

# ALTHUSSERIANISM AND THE POLITICAL CULTURE OF THE ARGENTINE NEW LEFT

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*Abstract: Although it is widely acknowledged that Althusser's writings had a lasting impact in Latin America, the French philosopher's reception in the region has been underresearched. The present article investigates the impact of Althusserianism on the cultural politics of the Argentine New Left during the late 1960s and early 1970s. First, I survey the intellectual trajectory of Juan Carlos Portantiero, a New Left intellectual, scholar, and political activist whose writings left a mark on the Argentine historiography of Peronism. Second, I turn to Los Libros (1969–1976), a journal of cultural criticism run by a 1960 cohort of internationally renowned Argentine intellectuals. I analyze the group's Althusser-inspired intervention into contemporaneous debates on the meaning of Peronism and the link between aesthetics and politics. I close by registering the productive influence of Althusserianism on Argentine intellectual production after the country's transition to democracy in 1983.*

Louis Althusser is often remembered as a controversial communist philosopher whose intellectual prestige ended after the implosion of the May 1968 revolts in Paris, and whose academic career terminated as a result of his bizarre strangling of his wife in the residential quarters of the École Normale Supérieure. It is true that, between 1980 and 1990, as a result of his personal tragedy and prolonged periods of mental instability, Althusser dropped out of public sight. However, it cannot be denied that his oeuvre left a lasting impact not only in Europe but also in Latin America. The aim of this article is to trace the reception of Althusser's writings by the Argentine New Left before the 1976 military coup. Treating Althusserianism as a collective discourse articulated in reference to Althusser's early texts of the 1960s and 1970s, rather than as a closed and internally coherent conceptual system, I assess the impact of Althusserianism in reference to two main points of debate among Argentine New Left intellectuals: the ideological nature of Peronism and the relationship between culture and politics. First, I survey the intellectual trajectory of Juan Carlos Portantiero, a renowned New Left intellectual and political activist whose writings on Peronism constituted a turning point in the Argentine historiography of Peronism. Second, I explore the impact of Althusserianism on both the politically inspired understanding of Peronism and aesthetic criticism developed in *Los Libros*, an influential cultural journal published between 1969 and 1976 by a prominent group of New Left intellectuals, including Beatriz Sarlo, Carlos Altamirano, and Ricardo Piglia. I close by registering the productive influence of Althusserianism on Argentine intellectual production after the country's transition to democracy in 1983.

## ALTHUSSERIANISM AND THE ARGENTINE NEW LEFT

Althusser rose to prominence at a pivotal moment. Nikita Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalin at the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (1956), followed by the Sino-Soviet split and the invasion of Hungary (1956) and Czechoslovakia (1958), deepened the fragmentation of the international communist movement and precipitated the emergence of dissident leftist organizations. In the wake of these events, Althusser revisited Marx's writings in an attempt to invigorate the political culture of the French Left through a left-wing critique of communist orthodoxy and to restore the intellectual prestige of Marxism. His controversial interpretation of Marx in *For Marx* (1969) and *Reading "Capital"* (1970)—the latter coauthored with Étienne Balibar—was followed by equally influential texts on the intersection of philosophy, politics, and culture that generated a rich intellectual tradition on both sides of the Atlantic. Althusserianism—a “frame of thinking” (Kavanagh and Lewis 1982, 52–64) elaborated with the help of open-ended concepts and “questions raised by the ideas, even the words, introduced by Althusser”—prompted “an important shift in the theoretical language of Marxism” (Jameson 1981, 33). Among other things, Althusser challenged teleological accounts of history present in the Marxist tradition; provided a corrective to crude theories of ideology that treated cultural forms as mere reflections of economic arrangements; and denounced methodological individualism, an approach that explains social phenomena “through reference to the intentional states that motivate the individual actors” (Heath 2011).

In Latin America, Althusser's writings left a profound mark on the intellectual development of generations of scholars and political activists. During the 1960s, Althusserianism briefly became the hegemonic ideology of the Latin American Left; in Argentina, the Althusserian boom lasted until it was silenced by the 1976 military coup (Aricó 1988, 102). Althusser's writings were introduced in Argentina in the mid-1960s along with works of other seminal European authors translated at the time, including Claude Lévi-Strauss, Roland Barthes, Jacques Lacan, Gaston Bachelard, Nicos Poulantzas, and Antonio Gramsci. *For Marx*, or *La revolución teórica de Marx* (1967), and *Reading "Capital,"* or *Para leer "El Capital"* (1969), translated into Spanish by Marta Harnecker, a Chilean sociologist and a former student of Althusser, were published by Siglo XXI, first in Mexico City, and shortly afterward in Buenos Aires and Madrid.<sup>1</sup> Saúl Karsz's *Lectura de Althusser* (1970), advertised in left-wing journals such as *Los Libros*, promoted the philosopher's work. In 1972, a new edition of Karsz's study prefaced by Althusser appeared in Buenos Aires. The same year, a selection of Althusser's essays, including “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses” (1969), published under the title “La filosofía como arma de la revolución” in Córdoba, Argentina, came out as part of José Aricó's well-known series *Cuadernos de Pasado y Presente*. The series also included works by Althusser's followers Nicos Poulantzas and Alain Badiou. Althusser's texts, advertised by his former students upon their return from Paris—Mauricio

1. Harnecker's *Los conceptos elementales del materialismo histórico* (Mexico City, 1969; Buenos Aires, 1971)—an introductory survey of key Marxian concepts—underwent up to sixty printings and has been widely distributed across Latin America.

Malamud and Emilio de Ipola, among others—were rapidly disseminated in academic and activist circles. Tolerated and criticized within the Argentine Communist Party (Partido Comunista de la Argentina, or PCA), Althusser's writings received a more enthusiastic welcome outside party circles: taught in universities and debated in independent study groups, they became a mandatory point of reference for many participants of the nascent Argentine New Left (ANL) (Aricó 1988, 102; Fornillo and Lezama 2002).

The dissemination of Althusser's texts in the mid-1960s coincided with the consolidation of the ANL. The de-Stalinization process initiated by Khrushchev in the Soviet Union was echoed in Argentina in a series of internal splits inside the pro-Moscow Communist Party, resulting in the emergence of an ideologically ecumenical New Left comprising dissident splinter parties, armed formations, and cultural groups.<sup>2</sup> During the 1960s and 1970s, Argentina was deeply affected by the legacy of Peronism and witnessed a spiraling wave of social unrest. The 1955 military coup that ousted Perón, known as the Libertarian Revolution, set the stage for a volatile decade during which competing military and civilian regimes unsuccessfully attempted to "de-Peronize" the country in order to secure long-term institutional stability. In the context of escalating violence, the ANL emerged as a potentially revolutionary force and a contender for the allegiance of a predominantly Peronist working class. As a short-lived cluster of eclectic groups, the ANL remained an oppositional force that lacked solid leadership and a clear political program. Nonetheless, the ANL had a certain degree of unity insofar as the movement converged around a number of shared concerns (Tortti 1999, 205–234). Committed to the socialist ideal, critical of the Old Left, and mindful of the trajectories of the Chinese and the Cuban revolutions, the ANL searched for fresh ideological agendas conducive to a speedy transformation of society. As part of a broad counterhegemonic force responding to General Juan Carlos Onganía's coup (1966) and galvanized by the uprising known as the Cordobazo (1969), the ANL opposed military rule while explicitly rejecting liberal democracy as a model unsuitable for the resolution of local conflicts (Hilb and Lutzky 1984, 14). A number of unprecedented events also captivated the ANL's collective imag-

2. The ANL was as a relatively short-lived cluster of eclectic groups that converged at certain points in response to a series of international and local events, in particular the gradual loss of prestige of the international communist movement, the Cuban Revolution of 1959, the fall of Juan Domingo Perón's government in 1955, the appearance of the nationwide popular resistance movement known as *Resistencia Peronista* (Peronist Resistance), and the 1966 military coup against Arturo Illia. The ANL included splinter groups that broke with the Argentine communist and socialist parties, such as *Partido Socialista de la Revolución Nacional* (Socialist Party of National Revolution), *Partido Socialista Democrático* (Democratic Socialist Party), and *Partido Socialista de Vanguardia* (Vanguard Socialist Party); Trotskyist organizations such as *Palabra Obrera* (Workers' Word) and *Frente Revolucionario Indoamericano Popular* (Popular Revolutionary Indoamerican Front); and Maoist parties, including *Vanguardia Comunista* (Communist Vanguard) and *Partido Comunista Revolucionario* (Revolutionary Communist Party). The ANL also included Peronist guerrilla formations such as *Uturuncos*, *Fuerzas Armadas Peronistas* (Peronist Revolutionary Forces), and *Montoneros*; a wide range of intellectual groups with diverse ideological orientations clustered around cultural journals such as *Contorno*, *Rosa Blindada*, *Pasado y Presente*, *Táctica*, *Teoría y Política*, *Literatura y Sociedad*, and *Los Libros*, to name a few; and "unattached" intellectuals, for example, Peronist ideologues of the "national Marxist" historiographical trend—Rodolfo Puiggróss and Juan José Hernández Arregui (Tortti 1999, 205–234; Burgos 2004, 143–149).

ination. The urge to apprehend the historical significance of Peronism became a pressing issue for any political actor seeking to effectively organize the Argentine working class, whose overwhelming majority remained loyal to Perón. Aware of the inability of the communist and socialist Left to secure the support of the Peronist masses and eager to compete for working-class allegiance, the ANL sought to come to grips with Perón's legacy in an attempt to develop an adequate political strategy in the face of the possible collapse of the Argentine state. While some ANL organizations, inspired by the Cuban Revolution, rose up in arms, other groups remained wary of guerrilla strategy and debated which organizational forms were most suitable for channeling popular discontent.

The ANL's encounter with Althusser's texts in the aftermath of the Cuban Revolution allowed for the possibility of revisiting the theoretical tradition of classical Marxism at a time when the traditional Left, having lost political momentum, came under increasing scrutiny. Intellectuals who formed part of the ANL appropriated Althusser's writings in an effort to articulate the link between ideology, culture, and politics in ways that captured the militant spirit of the "people's spring" but transcended the limitations of the political culture of the orthodox Left. Although Althusser's reception was by no means always positive, Althusserianism provided the ANL with a conceptual road map useful for dealing with pressing questions such as the following: What is the ideological nature of Peronism? What are desirable forms of grassroots organizing? How should the links between the fields of intellectual and cultural production and the political sphere be articulated? More specifically, Althusser's texts opened up the possibility of a "theoretical intervention" suitable for demarcating the various currents of the ANL.<sup>3</sup>

#### SPARRING OVER THE MEANING OF PERONISM: JUAN CARLOS PORTANTIERO

Between 1955 and 1973, in the context of the state's long-term institutional crisis, which was aggravated by the polarization of civil society into Peronist and anti-Peronist camps, Argentine intellectuals sparred over the meaning of Peronism in the pages of party-sponsored publications and independent journals, as well as in university seminars, study circles, debates organized by cultural clubs, and activist meetings. The public role of intellectuals as participants in "symbolic struggles" waged around multiple interpretations of Peronism was of paramount importance given that "each representation of Peronism was associated with political formulas that in the last instance boiled down to the following disjuncture:

3. It is beyond the scope of this article to reconstruct the full extent of Althusser's reception by the ANL. It should be noted, however, that Althusser's writings—celebrated, chastised, or critically appropriated—were debated across the various ideological spectrums of the ANL. For example, Mauricio Malamud and Luis María Aguirre recovered Althusser's texts during their passage from the Argentine Communist Party to Fuerzas Argentinas de Liberación (Argentine Forces of Liberation) in an attempt to justify the need for guerrilla warfare in Argentina. Malamud and Aguirre's reading of Althusser in a "focoist" key was rebuked, among others, by Maoist intellectuals affiliated with the PCR (Starcenbaum 2013). Althusser's work was also repeatedly discussed through the prism of Gramscianism, mostly in a negative vein, in reference to non-Leninist forms of political organizing in the pages of *Pasado y Presente* and *Cuadernos de Pasado y Presente* (nos. 4, 8, 19, 39, 48) (Starcenbaum 2011).

either the masses had to be 'deperonized' in a relatively short period of time or one had to join the masses by embracing Peronism. . . . The Left's destiny hinged on its interpretation of the 'Peronist fact'" (Altamirano 2001, 25; my translation).

After the 1966 military coup headed by General Onganía, the radicalization of civil society induced an interpenetration of the political and intellectual spaces. Given that the borders separating intellectual groups from social movements and political organizations became increasingly porous, Argentine intellectuals acted simultaneously as cultural agents and political actors. Caught between Peronist and anti-Peronist forces, the New Left intelligentsia fostered a rich counterculture and sought to bridge the gap between working and middle classes in an attempt to build an oppositional political force.

The political and intellectual trajectory of Juan Carlos Portantiero, a prominent Argentine sociologist, exemplifies the hybrid nature of the ANL as active participant in the battle of ideas as well as organizer of popular will. Born in Buenos Aires in 1934 into a middle-class family that professed socialist values, Portantiero became one of the major figures of the ANL. In the 1950s, he worked as a journalist for *Nueva Palabra* and *La Hora*, partisan magazines published by the PCA; actively collaborated in the party's official organ, *Cuadernos de Cultura*; and wrote for the socialist magazine *Che*. At the invitation of the director of *Cuadernos de Cultura*, Héctor Agosti, Portantiero participated in the publication of annotated translations of Gramsci's work at Editorial Lautaro.

After his expulsion from the Communist Party and the implosion of the short-lived militant group Vanguardia Revolucionaria, which he founded in 1964, Portantiero turned to academic work, first as an independent scholar and later as a research fellow at the Center for Sociological Research at the Institute of Torcuato Di Tella. After Perón's triumph in the 1973 elections, in collaboration with José Aricó, Portantiero launched the second phase of *Pasado y Presente*—a cultural journal well known, among other things, for its Gramscian theoretical framework and its ties to the Peronist guerrilla organization Montoneros. During Jorge Rafael Videla's military rule between 1976 and 1983, Portantiero found refuge in Mexico at the Latin American School of Social Sciences (Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales, or FLACSO). After Argentina's transition to democracy in 1983, he returned to Buenos Aires, where he combined his research and teaching activities with public service and intellectual activism: Portantiero served as an adviser to Raúl Alfonsín's government and cofounded the Club de Cultura Socialista (Club of Socialist Culture) in collaboration with Beatriz Sarlo and Carlos Altamirano.

At the Di Tella Institute, together with Miguel Murmis, Portantiero published two pioneering papers on the origins of Peronism: "Crecimiento industrial y alianzas de clases en la Argentina, 1930–1940" (1968) and "El movimiento obrero en los orígenes del peronismo" (1969) (Tarcus 2007). The two papers were included in the now-famous volume *Estudios sobre los orígenes del peronismo*, co-authored with Miguel Murmis and published by Siglo XXI in 1971. *Estudios sobre los orígenes del peronismo*, written in the tradition of Althusserian Marxism developed by the Greek sociologist Nicos Poulantzas, among others, constituted a "turning point in the interpretations of the origins of Peronism" (Plotkin 1998, 38). The study's novelty lay in its rejection of influential contemporaneous inter-

pretations of Peronism. On the one hand, at various points in time, the orthodox Left had classified Peronism as a creole variant of fascism—an attitude that alienated the majority of workers whose choice of political allies reflected their loyalty to Perón (Altamirano 2001, 53–61; James 1998, 66–67).<sup>4</sup> The Argentine sociologist Gino Germani provided a more charitable reading of Peronism as a form of totalitarianism with a workerist orientation, an interpretation that became canonical in the 1960s. According to Germani, Perón's totalitarian regime marked Argentina's transition from traditional society to modernity insofar as it enabled mass participation in political processes. Perón's base of support was made up primarily of internal immigrants, or "new workers," who lacked solid trade union experience and were, therefore, susceptible to co-optation by Peronist ruling elites. The new workers embraced Perón for lack of a better alternative, but their endorsement of an authoritarian, rather than democratic, political model was "irrational" (Plotkin 1998, 33–36).

On the other hand, after the fall of Perón's second government in 1955, "revisionist" writers such as Rodolfo Puiggrós, Jorge Abelardo Ramos, and Juan José Hernández Arregui rejected the equation of Peronism with fascism or totalitarianism. The ideologues of what came to be known as Marxist nationalism resigified Peronism as a progressive national-liberation movement or an "anti-imperialist democratic dictatorship" (Hernández Arregui 1973) that justly challenged Argentina's dependency on industrialized countries and promoted a healthy sense of patriotism and class identity on the part of the working class. In celebrating the "revolutionary" zeal of the Peronist government, the nationalist Left challenged the liberal-democratic discourse of Western parliamentary regimes and accepted Perón's authoritarianism as a fair bargain price paid in exchange for "national sovereignty" and economic and political gains obtained by Argentine workers.

*Estudios sobre los orígenes del peronismo* rejected the interpretation of Peronism as a totalitarian regime comparable to European fascism while countering the reading of Peronism as a third-world variant of socialism. Relying on an Althusser-inspired method of analysis of state power and political subjectivities, the study offered a reading of the Peronist phenomenon that was innovative on at least two counts. First, it redefined Peronism as a populist movement buttressed by a polyclass coalition and conducive to the implementation of welfare capitalism in a postcolonial framework. Second, it undertook a novel analysis of the relationship between the Peronist leadership and the working class.

In his seminal 1969 essay "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," Althusser proposes to further Marx's general account of the state. Althusser describes the state as an "organized whole"—a complex structure comprising multiple repressive and ideological apparatuses traversed by class conflict—which, "in the last instance of analysis," reinforces the dominant position of ruling elites. Taking his cue from Althusser while simultaneously drawing on Gramsci's writings, Nicos

4. For an explanation of how the Peronism-fascism equation has been typically unpacked in the historiography of Argentina, see Brooksbank Jones (2000). For a detailed reconstruction of the Socialist and Communist Parties' analysis of Peronism, see Altamirano (2001, 13–21).

Poulantzas views the state not as a “monolithic, fissureless” entity but rather as a relation of power distributed among multiple sectors of the power bloc in which one particular class or class fraction exerts political and ideological leadership, or hegemony, over the other classes or class fractions (Poulantzas 1976, 74–75). In a similar vein, in *Estudios sobre los orígenes del peronismo*, Portantiero and Murmis (1971) seek to explain the ideological direction of the Peronist regime in terms of a hegemonic sway exerted by a particular class fraction of the ruling elites. According to the study, the Peronist state introduced welfare capitalism to implement a program of limited import-substitutive industrialization in response to the world economic crisis of the early 1930s. In an effort to displace the traditional ruling coalition of powerful industrialists and agrarian elites, Perón secured the support of the labor movement in exchange for political concessions and income redistribution. Peronism emerged in the form of a polyclass alliance of workers, sectors of the army, and small industrialists at a time when the satisfaction of labor grievances accumulated by Argentine workers was long overdue. However, contrary to poststructuralist theories of ideologies of the kind developed in the late writings of Ernesto Laclau, according to which polyclass alliances that form the basis of populist regimes do not have determinate class connotations, *Estudios sobre los orígenes del peronismo* treats Peronism as “the hegemonic project” of small industrialists—a “sector of the proprietary class” represented in the power bloc by “the military and political bureaucracy” (175).

Furthermore, Portantiero and Murmis’s account of the ideological nature of the alliance between the working class and the Peronist regime bears the mark of the Althusserian-Poulantzian paradigm in political theory. It is well known that, to avoid an oversimplified interpretation of the base-superstructure metaphor—a term coined by Marx and Engels in an attempt to capture the link between culture and economy—Althusser insisted that culture should be understood as a “relatively autonomous” field of social life “determined in the last instance” by the predominant mode of economic production (Althusser 1971, 90–91). With the help of Althusser’s concepts, Poulantzas articulated a more nuanced and empirically informed account of political subjectivities in *Political Power and Social Classes* (Poulantzas 1973b), *Fascism and Dictatorship: The Third International and the Problem of Fascism* (Poulantzas 1974), and *Classes in Contemporary Capitalism* (Poulantzas 1975). According to the Greek theorist, classes are to be defined primarily in terms of social agents’ place in the labor process, and secondarily in terms of their ideological and political makeup (which might or might not reflect a group’s economic position). It is true, argues Poulantzas, that collective consciousness is also constituted at the level of interpersonal relations and political practice, that is, in a sphere of life relatively independent of the economic organization of society. Individuals from a certain class background can appropriate some of the ideological elements characteristic of a different class or class fraction. For example, intellectuals often side with workers, and it is not uncommon for relatively well-off workers to adopt typically middle-class values. However, a person’s class identity is not exhausted by his or her “class membership” (Poulantzas 1973a, 35), in the sense that class consciousness cannot be equated with cultural

attitudes or “political number plates worn by social classes on their backs” (Poulantzas 1973b, 202). Rather, because classes are primarily constituted at the level of relations of production, a group’s collective consciousness displays ideological features “structurally determined” by the group’s activity in the economic life of society. For instance, despite their sympathy for workers, intellectuals remain petty bourgeois in their structural determination and often show “the fundamental characteristics of the petty bourgeoisie,” such as political instability or leftist extremism. On the other hand, “bourgeoisified” workers constitute a “layer” of the working class; consequently, the working-class nature of their political commitments can be discerned beneath their bourgeois discourse. In a similar vein, cultural or professional groups under political duress often undergo splits across class lines (Poulantzas 1973b, 40–43).

With a Poulantzian theoretical gesture, *Estudios sobre los orígenes del peronismo* challenged Germani’s orthodox view, according to which Perón’s popular base of support consisted primarily of “new” workers of rural origin employed in industries created after 1943. Contrary to Germani’s claim that Perón easily manipulated the new workers, inexperienced in long-term labor struggles, the study argued that Perón’s regime enjoyed the support of new and old workers alike. In Murmis and Portantiero’s view, a “culturalist” hypothesis that regarded the new workers as ideologically naive dupes susceptible to Perón’s charisma could not adequately explain the leader’s continued appeal to the masses. The weakness of this hypothesis lies in its tendency to “accentuate the fact that the fundamental basis of the new workers’ participation in the populist movement is the satisfaction of their emotional needs, oftentimes of an immediate nature” (Portantiero and Murmis 1971, 116–117; my translation). Instead of treating new workers as a distinct subgroup inside the labor movement whose availability for ideological co-optation is made possible by its cultural characteristics—in particular, the new workers’ inexperience and their self-identification as poor individuals rather than members of a disenfranchised class—*Estudios sobre los orígenes del peronismo* downplays the significance of the split inside the working class and underscores the symbiotic nature of the relationship between Peronist leadership and organized labor as a whole. The new and the old workers supported Perón not because they were irrational or because they thought Perón was good-hearted or held quasi-socialist beliefs but rather because they had common, long-held labor grievances that had some chance of being satisfied under Perón. In other words, the study accounted for the workers’ susceptibility to Peronist ideology not in terms of cultural differences but in terms of shared class interests that were structurally determined by the workers’ role as members of a newly formed industrial labor force, consolidated in the process of Argentina’s import-substituting industrialization throughout 1930s and 1940s.

It was pointed out earlier that Portantiero and Murmis’s interpretation of Peronism influenced the subsequent development of scholarship on Peronism. It should also be emphasized that their analysis of the Peronist phenomenon had a noticeable impact on the political practice of the ANL, which had to adjudicate between competing interpretations of Peronism in an attempt to develop a blueprint for radical politics.



THE CULTURAL POLITICS OF *LOS LIBROS* (1969–1976)

Founded during the year of the Cordobazo by Héctor Schmucler, an ex-student of Roland Barthes, and Guillermo Schavelzón of the publishing house Galerna, *Los Libros* (*LL*) started off as a cosmopolitan cultural journal rooted in the tradition of French intellectual culture. Intermittently funded by major Latin American publishing houses, including Fondo de Cultura Económica, Editorial Losada, Siglo XXI, Editorial Universitaria de Chile, Ediciones de la Universidad Central de Venezuela, and Mexico's Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, *LL* was distributed in Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Chile, Mexico, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Venezuela, as well as in the United States and Canada. The journal came out on a monthly basis and was sold in bookstores and street kiosks. Although its first issue reached a circulation of approximately fifteen thousand copies, the average number of subsequently sold issues did not surpass three thousand copies per month. Given the relatively modest scope of the journal's circulation, the extent of its theoretical sophistication, and the use of technical jargon—especially in the early phase of the publication—one may assume that *LL* was read primarily by an educated middle-class audience.

An eclectic medium with an impressive grasp of cultural, philosophical, and political issues, *LL* was one of the major modernizing forces in Argentina's fields of intellectual and cultural production. In its later, noticeably militant phase, *LL* attempted to bridge the divide between the intellectual and political spheres, and it functioned as a theoretical laboratory for the debate of critical issues. Throughout the seven years of its existence, the journal underwent significant shifts in its theoretical outlook and welcomed the collaboration of some of Argentina's major intellectuals, including Beatriz Sarlo, Ricardo Piglia, Carlos Altamirano, Germán García, Josefina Lúdmmer, Óscar Terán, Ernesto Laclau, Jorge Lafforgue, and Óscar del Barco, among others. The thematic and structural mutations of *LL* reflected the changing complexities of Argentine society on the eve of the 1976 military coup. Therefore, as two reviewers of the recently completed facsimile edition of *LL* have pointed out, the journal can be read as a rich metaphor of Argentina's political and intellectual life during the 1960s and 1970s (Somoza and Vinelli 2012).

In its initial phase, *LL* came out in a book-review format, which allowed the editorial board to broadcast cultural and intellectual novelties from Argentina and abroad. Although in the early phase of the publication the editorial board visibly privileged the literary medium, essays on linguistics, philosophy, anthropology, architecture, history, and theater, as well as research generated by "modernized" and new disciplines—sociology, psychoanalysis, media studies, and studies of popular culture—also figured regularly in the pages of *LL*. Although no single methodological line dominated *LL*'s early agenda, the journal encouraged an antiessentialist, antielitist view of culture reminiscent of structuralist theories of symbolic production and incompatible with "impressionistic and commercial" types of cultural criticism (Hoffmann 2001, 29). In the early 1970s, opting for a closer coverage of Latin American events, the editorial board shifted away from the cosmopolitan perspective and shortly afterward abandoned the book-review format to engage in cultural politics. The modification of the group's theoretical

agenda, reflected in the new subtitle “Para una crítica política de la cultura,” was accompanied by a gradual restructuring of the editorial board. As Carlos Altamirano, Ricardo Piglia, and Beatriz Sarlo—prominent intellectuals who at the time briefly fostered ties with Argentina’s two major Maoist parties, Vanguardia Comunista (Communist Vanguard, or VC) and Partido Comunista Revolucionario (Revolutionary Communist Party, or PCR)—joined and eventually replaced the editorial staff, the Maoist wing of the collective took charge of the publication. Whereas under the ideologically eclectic interim editorial board *LL* functioned as an independent cultural publication without an explicit gravitation toward a single political agenda, with the consolidation of the Maoist contingent, the journal acquired a more pronounced partisan character. In its Maoist phase, *LL* became a hybrid entity that functioned as a medium for the discussion of cultural matters and current political events, a forum for the analysis of ideological divergences among the various left-wing groups, and a vehicle for the promotion of the Maoist line (Piglia 1974a, 4–9; Toer 1974, 31–35; Daubier 1974, 14–26; Ciafardini 1974, 24–26).

*LL*’s cultural and political analysis, the symbiosis of which became particularly salient in the second phase of the publication, reflected the editorial board’s engagement with Althusser’s texts. The group’s vision of the “organic” relationship between political commitment and intellectual production bore the imprint of Althusser’s conceptualization of the reciprocal links between theoretical and political practice articulated in reference to Marx and Lenin in *For Marx, Reading “Capital,” Essays in Self-Criticism*, and *Lenin and Philosophy* (Hoffmann 2001, 31–32). Convinced that a critical social theory cannot be articulated without a coherent vision of social change, the *LL* collective came to embody the very image it advertised in the journal’s pages—that of political actors and partisan scholars acutely aware of the ideological impact of their intellectual production.

During the late 1960s and early 1970s, *LL*’s affiliates found themselves in the midst of large-scale popular mobilizations. At a time when the orthodox Left was losing its prestige in intellectual and labor circles, the PCR and the VC, despite their significant ideological differences,<sup>5</sup> developed strong ties with student and labor movements across Argentina. In particular, the Maoist Left exerted a significant degree of influence on the Córdoba-based *clasista* fraction of the labor movement that flourished in Argentina’s industrial belt. Unlike the majority of unions that remained loyal to Perón, the *clasista* current, represented by three sister unions of automobile workers—Sindicato de Mecánicos y Afines del Transporte Automotor (SMATA), Sindicato de Trabajadores ConCord (SITRAC), and

5. After Cuba condoned the Soviet Union’s invasion of Czechoslovakia, the PCR withdrew its support for Castro’s regime and disavowed the *foco* model of resistance. In 1974, the party officially adhered to the pro-Chinese line, abandoned its initial characterization of Perón’s first government as a protofascist power bloc, and reclassified it as an anti-imperialist, pro-labor, but potentially anti-popular regime. On the eve of the 1976 military coup, the PCR supported Isabel Perón’s regime—a stance that prompted Piglia’s break with Sarlo and Altamirano and his exit from *LL*. The VC, however, espoused an anti-Soviet, pro-Cuban, pro-Chinese line. The party criticized Peronist union leadership and advocated guerrilla-style armed struggle, first in rural areas and subsequently in urban areas (Campione 2007; Brega 1990).

Sindicato de Trabajadores MaterFer (SITRAM)—adopted anticapitalist forms of labor protest shaped by the recognition of workers' long-term political interests (James 1988, 229–230). Inserted into these three hubs of working-class dissidence, the Maoist Left struggled to attract the union rank and file to a clasista agenda incompatible with Peronist ideology (Brega 1990, 220; Brennan 1994, 213).

*LL's* intervention in the political conjuncture, which the group saw as a necessary counterpart to its cultural practice, was to an important extent grounded in Althusserian tradition. At the level of political analysis, Althusserianism proved useful in discussions of the ideological nature of Peronism. In an attempt to develop a coherent understanding of Peronist political culture, the editorial board publicized divergent readings of Peronism centered on the question of whether it should be regarded as a positive force that strengthened working-class consciousness or a form of state power that co-opted the revolutionary potential of the popular sectors and preempted social unrest. This pivotal question was complicated by that fact that, during Perón's exile from Argentina, a sizable portion of the Peronist labor movement, radicalized by the sustained struggle against military rule that was encouraged from abroad by the supreme leader, invoked elements of the official Peronist doctrine in conjunction with working-class counterdiscourse rooted in the workers' grassroots struggles. The formal rhetoric of the Peronist state had emphasized the notions of economic nationalism and anti-imperialism; promoted the vision of "humane capital," premised on the affirmation of common interests of workers and bosses; and glorified the state as the "insurer of social harmony and the protector of national sovereignty" (James 1988, 88–90). During his absence from Argentina, Perón opted for a more radical tenor: promising to carry the "Peronist revolution" to "its ultimate consequences" and entertaining the promise of building a "Socialist Fatherland," the deposed leader called for armed struggle against military rule (Hodges 1988, 32). No longer a form of state power, Peronism had mutated into a counterhegemonic ideology of the resistance movement that, to an important extent, instigated the workers' militancy rather than encouraging their compliance with the state. To complicate matters further, Argentine workers filtered Perón's charismatic ideology through the spontaneous beliefs generated in the process of labor conflicts, for example, by emphasizing the importance of workers' self-reliance and autonomy. The mixture of Peronist rhetoric and working-class counterdiscourse resulted in what historian Daniel James has described as the ideology of "resistance and integration" (James 1988, 262). Among other voices, *LL* registered the viewpoint of Peronist workers with such hybrid ideological beliefs (Torre 1970a, 1970b; Gazerra 1970; Viñas 1970).

Whereas in the early issues of *LL* the editorial board adopted the stance of a dispassionate observer convinced that any interpretation of Peronism is value laden insofar as it corresponds to the particular interpreter's ideological agenda, in the heated atmosphere of the post-Cordobazo mobilization, the *LL* group shifted from expository to normative criticism. Taking its cue from Portantiero's analysis of Peronism published in the early issues of *LL* under the heading "El peronismo: Civilización o barbarie"—an essay that foreshadowed the central arguments of *Estudios sobre los orígenes del peronismo*—the editorial board reclassified Peronism as a polyclass alliance "dominated by the bourgeoisie." The group's disavowal of

Peronism entailed a rejection of the view that the trade union movement was a “rupture force” capable of channeling working-class discontent in a truly revolutionary direction. For example, Carlos Altamirano, deploying Althusserian concepts, described labor unions as ideological state apparatuses, or conduits for “national-populist” ideology consolidated by the Peronist state to preempt labor discontent (Altamirano 1973, 12–14; Altamirano and Sarlo 1972, 18–24). Although Altamirano viewed the Córdoba-based clasista unions as a counterhegemonic force within the union apparatus insofar as they promoted an acute sense of working-class identity, their revolutionary fervor was likely to be neutralized by the status quo mentality of the mainstream Peronist union leadership. To prevent the co-optation of the working class by Peronism, argued Altamirano, an independent political organization—a vanguard party of the Leninist type—was required (Altamirano 1972, 10–12). Altamirano’s view, consistent with Althusser’s endorsement of Leninism as the adequate model of political organizing derived from a “correct conception of Marxist theory,” was adopted by the editorial committee throughout the remaining issues of *LL* (Althusser 2003, 162). This stance, consonant with the Maoist line advocated by the PCR and the VC, translated into a rejection of alternative political strategies such as guerrilla warfare prescribed by the Peronist Left (Mellis 1973, 34–35; Piglia 1974b, 4–9).

The significance of *LL*’s recourse to Althusser’s theory of ideology can be appreciated by situating the group’s intellectual project in the context of the long-term institutional crisis of the Argentine state and the fragmentation of civil society on the eve of the 1976 coup. Although the editorial board did not provide its readers with a comprehensive account of Peronism, partly because of the constraints inherent to the journalistic medium, it did outline an ideological vision of Peronism as a populist regime conducive to a restructuring of capitalism. This vision allowed the group to position itself politically in relation to the labor movement and competing factions of the ANL at a time when the Peronist resistance movement was gaining steam. Although Althusser’s notions of dominant ideology and ideological state apparatuses were not sufficiently unpacked in the pages of *LL*—a drawback that, as Althusser’s critics have justly argued, exposes the risk of advancing crude functionalist explanations—the notions proved useful in pointing out the demobilizing effects of Peronist political culture and arguing against using Peronist unions as the main anchor of oppositional struggles. All in all, Marxist groups achieved a “partial breach in Peronism’s monopoly” and provided “many of the new working-class activists . . . with a broader political identity at a time when many of them were seeking an alternative to both simple union militancy and an increasingly defensive traditional Peronism” (James 1988, 234). The theoretical politics of the *LL* group, formulated in reference to Althusserianism, encompassed a denunciation of Peronism and a restitution of Leninist politics to the ANL’s agenda.

#### LOS LIBROS: THE ALTHUSSERIAN PARADIGM IN AESTHETICS

As Argentina entered a period of political turbulence in the late 1960s, the field of intellectual and cultural production became increasingly politicized. Whereas

during the early 1960s cultural practices were evaluated on the basis of criteria internal to the field of cultural production, after the Cordobazo, the appreciation of cultural and artistic phenomena became increasingly mediated by ideologically driven considerations subordinated to collective political agendas (Sigal 1991, 196). Aware of the danger of trading pens for rifles and critical of the Soviet model of cultural politics institutionalized in the late 1930s under the leadership of Andrei Zhdanov, ANL intellectuals attempted to formulate fresh, nondogmatic approaches to the relationship between culture and politics.

Mindful of the Althusserian tradition of cultural criticism developed in Europe in the 1960s and 1970s, the *LL* group countered militant approaches to literature espoused by the Argentine Left while targeting traditional “great author” types of criticism. Althusser’s writings played a pivotal role in the theoretical re-orientation of Marxist literary studies in the late 1960s (Bennett 2003). Building on Althusser’s notion of the relative autonomy of culture from economic processes, Althusser-inspired theoreticians such as Pierre Macherey and Terry Eagleton denounced Georg Lukacs’s theory of realism by rebuking the Hungarian philosopher’s claim that certain literary texts offer a more “faithful” representation of the world than others and that, consequently, literature’s value depends on the extent of its correspondence to reality.<sup>6</sup> Both Macherey and Eagleton theorized literary discourse as a medium that, by virtue of its distance from the realm of nonartistic social practices, affords a uniquely aesthetic form of representation and understanding.

Echoing Macherey’s insistence that artworks “reflect” reality not in the sense of projecting a mirror image of the world but in the sense of revealing the ways in which the conditions of their possibility are inscribed in the texts themselves (Macherey 1978, 13–18, 58), the *LL* group countered increasingly ultra-left tendencies in literary criticism. For example, the journal’s coverage of the notorious Jorge Luis Borges case that gripped the attention of Argentine intellectuals in the late 1960s sensitized the readers to problems with the view that artworks should be appraised in terms of their compliance with desirable ideological agendas. Borges’s collaboration with the right-wing publication *Criterion* in the late 1920s; his conservative disavowal of Peronism; his adherence to the Argentine Conservative Party in 1960; and his subsequent nods to Francisco Franco, Jorge Rafael Videla, and Augusto Pinochet did not sit well with many leftist intellectuals. Militant left-wing critics appalled by Borges’s conservatism read his fiction against the backdrop of his ideological beliefs. *LL*’s contributor Nicolás Rosa’s polemic with Blas Matamoro—a left-wing critic who called for Borges’s removal from the Argentine literary canon—challenged Matamoro’s view that a merely aesthetic appreciation of literature was insufficient (Matamoro 1971; Rosa 1972a, 19–21; 1972b, 21–24). According to Matamoro, Borges’s playful treatment of metaphysical issues, instead of yielding serious philosophical insights, produced a “bastardized” version of idealism that could be only regarded either as a “pedantic” form of entertainment

6. See Macherey’s *Theory of Literary Production* (1978) and Eagleton’s *Criticism and Ideology* (1978). Regarding Macherey’s role as the first “Althusserian” critic, see Eagleton’s preface to the 2006 Routledge edition of Macherey’s *Theory of Literary Production*.

or a “symbolic revelation” of the author’s phobias and ideological conservatism. Invoking the arguments of Macherey, Rosa denounced Matamoro’s assumption that a “correct” interpretation of Borges’s texts was desirable and that such an interpretation could be somehow secured with the help of a biographical study. In Rosa’s opinion, literary texts—and by extension artworks—should be explained, rather than judged, in relation to the history of preceding aesthetic forms, not in relation to the author’s biography.

As a result of the group’s increasing politicization in the early 1970s, *LL*’s line of cultural criticism acquired an increasingly programmatic character. Having relinquished the book-review format in favor of a “critique of dominant cultural forms,” the editorial board took up an institutional analysis of cultural production modeled on Althusser’s essay “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses” and Gramsci’s writings on culture.<sup>7</sup> In the journal’s second phase, it explicitly portrayed cultural phenomena as institutionally embedded practices traversed by ideological tensions. The journal’s newly adopted single-issue format allowed the editorial board to zoom in on different types of cultural institutions—universities, mental health institutions, and labor unions, to name a few—in an attempt to flesh out differences between traditional and counterhegemonic cultural practices that subverted old patterns of collective behavior.

The field of literary production was likewise subjected to an institutional analysis.<sup>8</sup> On the one hand, the group’s treatment of literature as a complex “material system” yielded provocative and in many respects pioneering insights. *LL*’s focus on social uses of literature and its treatment of literary criticism as a powerful interpretative, taxonomic, and normative mechanism encouraged a sophisticated view of the literary field. For example, reviews of certain shortsighted types of literary criticism published in mainstream textbooks questioned canonical periodizations of literature that packaged texts as ready-made, “naturalized” objects of knowledge but failed to explain the rationale behind the texts’ classification. The group also challenged the traditional distinction between high and low art forms in an attempt to vitalize the study of literature and democratize the practice of literary criticism by focusing on popular culture underdiscussed in mainstream literary scholarship (Sarlo 1972, 8–10; Delgado 1974, 8–15). The metatheoretical thrust of *LL*’s criticism, as well as the group’s engagement with the various branches of social theory, promoted an interdisciplinary approach to the study of literature, thus foreshadowing the posterior refashioning of traditional text-centered literary studies into “cultural studies.” *LL*’s presentation of literary criticism as an “ideological apparatus,” or a “second-order” mechanism that shapes collective tastes, hierarchizes literary works, or otherwise intervenes in the relationship between text and reader, provided a healthy alternative to more fetishistic strands of literary criticism. Indeed, the group’s treatment of art and literature as fragments of a broader “social text”—visually reinforced by the journal’s layout—exemplified its bold but vigorous mixture of political thought, social criticism, and cultural analysis.

7. Editorial board, *Los Libros* 21 (1971): 3.

8. Editorial board, “Hacia la crítica,” *Los Libros* 28 (1972): 3–7.

On the other hand, the editorial board's shift to an institutional analysis of culture in the long run forestalled its initial attempt to depoliticize the fields of artistic production and art criticism. Ironically, the group's view of the cultural arena as a battlefield between dominant and counterhegemonic ideologies inspired by Althusser's essay "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses" canceled out the journal's prior focus on literature as a distinct type of discourse that commanded an "aestheticist gaze." The adoption of the class-struggle principle in the group's analysis of literature paved the way for, as Tony Bennett has aptly described it, a shift away from "Marxism and aesthetics" to "Marxism versus aesthetics"—a turn that the European brand of Althusserian criticism experienced in the mid-1970s (Bennett 2003; Balibar and Macherey 1981, 79–99; Eagleton 1996). In the journal's early phase, the editorial board expressed its preference for avant-garde literature (in the broad sense of the term) and evaluated texts in terms of their ability to produce a "defamiliarization" effect by breaking with the narrative mechanisms of traditional "realist" works. Aesthetically complex works that drew the readers' attention to the texts' "literariness" and forced them to actively participate in the process of interpretation were singled out for their positive ideological value. On the contrary, conventional works that reinforced the illusion of fiction's "mimetic" quality were treated as "complacent" texts that lacked aesthetic quality and produced an "alienation effect" (Lúdmer 1970, 5; Sarlo 1972b, 18–19; Piglia 1974a, 4–9). Yet the importance of the defamiliarization effect attributed to avant-garde forms was de-emphasized in the later issues of *LL*. The group's shift to an institutional analysis of literary production prompted an inquiry into the ontological status of literature. The question "Why are certain texts read as literary?" is frequently revisited in the second phase of the publication, and it is often claimed that literariness is not an inherent property of a text but rather a "mode of reading" or a "use" to which the text in question is put.<sup>9</sup> This antiessentialist approach to literature led the group to downplay the distinction between aesthetic and other types of cultural practices. For example, in his review of contemporaneous American narrative, Ricardo Piglia treats literature as an anthropological object of study—in Piglia's words, an instance of a collective "linguistic practice"—that, similarly to political speeches and pamphlet literature, yields interesting ideological insights (Piglia 1970, 11–14). As discussions of literature's specificity vis-à-vis other cultural forms were gradually dropped from *LL*'s agenda, literary texts became increasingly evaluated primarily in terms of their ideological value rather than their potential for aesthetic innovation (Piglia 1973, 22–27; Sarlo 1974, 24–25; Rivera 1973, 34–35). Although the editorial board of the second phase toyed with but never explicitly endorsed Plato's dictum that lying poets should, after all, be banned from the Republic, its slide toward a Lukacsian view of art truncated the initial attempt to work out an unorthodox line of literary criticism that broke free from the legacy of official Soviet formulas. The group's shift to a more militant understanding of the relationship between aesthetics and politics also exposed a tension underlying the journal's mixed status as a media outlet that registered

9. Editorial board, "Hacia la crítica," *Los Libros* 28 (1972): 3–7.

the latest developments on the cultural scene and a partisan entity interested in consolidating a politically effective line of cultural criticism.

Throughout the forty-four issues of *LL*, the editorial board vacillated between a descriptive and a normative approach to aesthetics (this tension was also inherent in the development of Althusserian aesthetics in Europe). The group's initial attempt to dispassionately survey literature was subverted by the urge to work out a coherent line of criticism predicated on the assumption that literature does and should have a social impact. Indeed, the very notion of the aesthetics of rupture advertised in the second half of the publication implied a prescriptive theory of art capable of discriminating between more and less desirable texts. Although no such theory was fully developed in the pages of *LL*, the group's shift to a normative view of art and its renunciation of the aestheticist gaze on literature were symptomatic of the hyperpoliticization of Argentine intellectual production on the eve of the 1976 military coup. The group's initial impulse to revitalize the Left's approach to aesthetics by treating literary works primarily as aesthetic rather than epistemological objects gave way to the formerly challenged conception of art as an ethical regime instrumental in the pursuit of political progress. As the frontier between the field of cultural production and the realm of political action became increasingly porous at the height of social unrest, the very effort to preserve the autonomy of aesthetic judgment was phased out as anachronistic.

#### CONCLUSION

The importance of Althusser's writings in Latin America during the decades of the 1960s and 1970s cannot be underestimated. In Argentina, until Videla's 1976 military coup, intellectual circles associated with the ANL vigorously absorbed Althusserianism. This theoretical tradition imported from Europe provided the ANL with a conceptual framework useful for analyzing ideological differences among its various factions. In the case of *LL*, the French philosopher's legacy cemented the link between the group's intellectual production and its political practice in a number of ways. Using the works of European and Argentine political scientists and sociologists influenced by Althusser's writings, the *LL* collective approached the highly contentious issue of Peronism from a theoretical position that superseded the dichotomous characterizations of Peronism as a creole variant of either fascism or socialism popularized in Argentina during the 1940s. Rather, viewing Peronism as a political culture with populist undertones conducive to the restoration of welfare capitalism, the group adopted a critical stance with respect to the Peronist movement despite its unprecedented appeal to the working class. Unmoved by the fact that vast constituencies of the labor movement as well as various sectors of the ANL were interpellated by Peronism, the *LL* intellectuals refused to endorse Peronism as a progressive regime, doctrine, political movement, or ideology suitable for a revolutionary transformation of society. The group's negative assessment of Peronism translated into a clasista form of political activism on the margins of the mainstream labor movement aimed to strengthen the anti-Peronist block of union activists interested in developing a socialist alternative to Peronism.



On the cultural front, the *LL* collective modernized the Argentine field of literary and cultural studies dominated by text-centered criticism. With the help of theoretical insights afforded by Althusserianism, the group undertook an institutional analysis of cultural production that, on the one hand, challenged the arguments of liberal critics and, on the other hand, countered the orthodox Left's militant discourse on art. In the long run, however, the group's attempt to depoliticize the field of artistic production was subverted by its effort to subordinate aesthetic judgment to its political and ideological priorities. The collective's endorsement of a heteronomous stance on art in the second phase of the publication, according to which the aesthetic merit of a literary text is measured—at least partially—in terms of the text's compliance with the critic's ideological agenda, attested to the tenuous nature of the frontier separating the field of intellectual production from the political sphere on the eve of the 1976 military coup.

Although Althusserian Marxism withered away after Argentina's transition to democracy in 1983, Althusserianism continued to influence Argentine sociopolitical thought throughout the 1980s and 1990s. However, on the eve of the collapse of Eastern European socialist states and the dissolution of the Soviet Union, intellectuals' engagement with Althusserianism took on a different form. Argentine social theorists such as Ernesto Laclau, Eliseo Verón, and Silvia Sigal dismantled the core of Althusserian Marxism with the help of the analytical tools of post-structuralism, psychoanalysis, linguistics, and semiotics, nonetheless retaining Althusser's notion of ideological interpellation to explain how cultural and political identities are constructed in and through discourse.

In the case of Ernesto Laclau, both Althusser's pre-1980 texts and Poulantzas's writings on political subjectivities served as stepping-stones toward a post-Marxist terrain, where traditional class analysis lost its privileged explanatory status. In the course of his journey away from classical Althusserianism, initiated in *Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory* (1979) and completed in *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (1985) and *On Populist Reason* (2005), Laclau developed a discursive theory of populism that emphasized the idea of the "radical nondeterminacy" of ideological processes. Instead of viewing populist politics as an expression of the interests of a particular class, Laclau redefined populism as a set of discursive events that unify heterogeneous social groups into a single entity—"the people," antagonistically positioned vis-à-vis ruling elites.

In their joint study *Perón o muerte: Los fundamentos discursivos del fenómeno peronista*, modeled on Laclau's theory of populism, Sigal and Verón (1986) turned their attention to Peronism as a paradigmatic case of populist politics. Starting from the premise that the systematic continuity of Peronism has to be sought in its discursive logic, with the help of close-reading techniques, the authors undertook an original analysis of the intricate "hailing" mechanisms by means of which Peronist political subjects—in particular, politically disoriented guerrilla militants loyal to Perón—were constructed. It is beyond the scope of this essay to assess the successes and shortcomings of the post-Althusserian methods of analysis elaborated by Laclau, Verón, and Sigal. Suffice it to say, in closing, that the understanding of Peronism as a populist form of politics with a strong cultural inflection in the writings of these three Argentine authors contributed

to the development of Latin American sociocultural criticism, prompting scholars to turn to cultural studies as a theoretical milieu adequate for conceptualizing the relationship between discourse, identity construction, and political behavior.

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