

2011

Argentine Novel after the Recovery of Democracy: 1983-2006

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Recommended Citation

Vázquez, Karina Elizabeth. "Argentine Novel after the Recovery of Democracy: 1983-2006." In *World Literature in Spanish: An Encyclopedia*, edited by Maureen Ihrle and Salvador A. Oropesa, 49-50. Santa Barbara, California: ABC-CLIO, 2011.

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Argentine Novel after the Recovery of Democracy: 1983–2006

Argentine fiction written after the last military dictatorship (1976–1983) can be classified into two major strands: one which started during the 1960s and continues to this day, and another that began in the mid-1990s and has strengthened in recent years.

The first strand is characterized by allusion and allegory, the two narrative strategies inherited from the roughly 1940s anti-Peronist fiction written in collaboration by Jorge Luis *Borges and Bioy Casares. These two strategies required an engaged reader capable of deciphering veiled connections to the historical moment. Similarly, Argentine literature during the 1976–1983 dictatorship could only allude to political

repression, torture, and assassination. Paradigmatic novels of that dictatorship, such as Ricardo *Piglia's *Respiración artificial* (1980; *Artificial Respiration*, 1994), encouraged emerging writers to pursue a more indirect rhetoric. By the 1990s, the allusive style began to wane, and writers started to reconnect literary discourse to social identity. New readings of such authors as Osvaldo Lamborghini, who in the 1970s used political jargon and psychoanalysis in their work, encouraged the new direction.

In the second strand (1990–present), narrative allusion makes space for a literary discourse more interested in engaging directly with history, politics, and reality. By stressing multiple narrative voices and the coexistence of different narrative times, fiction becomes more realistic. Memory becomes a central topic in a literary discourse that addresses the time before the last dictatorship as well as the impact of the past on the present, as in Rodolfo Fogwill's novels. Faced with the social unrest of late 2001, literature began to represent what had until then been unnamed realities. Such novels as Florencia Abbate's *El grito* (2004; *The Scream*) reference past traumas that resonate with present-day uncertainties; and such texts as Sergio Chejfec's *Boca de lobo* (2000; *The Wolf's Mouth*) reference Argentine history to question the notion of community.

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