



Argentina on the Couch: Psychiatry, State, and Society, 1880 to the Present (Dialogos)

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Argentina is the world's center of psychoanalysis in the twenty-first century. Not only have many Argentines undergone psychoanalytic therapy, but Argentines from taxi drivers to actresses, from politicians to generals, all speak in "psychoanalese," and two of the most popular TV shows in the country have psychoanalysis as their central issue. This pathbreaking collection of essays explores the prevalence of psychoanalysis in Argentina. It traces the way Freud's theories took hold in Argentina and probes the ways in which the history of psychiatry illuminates our understanding of modern Argentina.

The contributors use the diffusion of psychiatry as a window through which to examine the development of the Argentine state, the process by which European ideas are "Argentinized," and the general social and cultural evolution of the country, especially efforts to ensure order and a civil society. Three of the essays examine psychiatry as an instrument of social control in the realms of female sexuality and the development of hospitals and prisons in the first half of the twentieth century. In a poignant concluding chapter, Plotkin discusses mental health and the 2001-2 Argentine crisis. In the complex social, political, and economic situation gripping the nation, the country's media continues to turn to psychoanalysis as a lens that filters reality rather than identify and address individual and collective responsibility for the origin and nature of the crisis.

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