

## Introduction

The four speeches presented as founding in Argentina were selected using two criteria, which are based on the recognition of the performative power of words in a community. On the one hand, it has to do with constructing the audience, endowed with a certain identity and, on the other, about declaring the beginning of a new period in the country's history.

In Juan Domingo Peron's speech of 17 October 1945, we have a construction of the people with the identity of Peronist workers and the emergence of the working class mass in the public space; in Raul Alfonsin's speech of 10 December, 1983, there is a constitution of the people as a citizen and the (re) establishment of democracy after the military dictatorship between 1976 and 1983. The construction of the audience is articulated with images that differ from one another. While both speakers appeal to the same ethos of humility ("this humble man who speaks to you here today", says Peron, and Alfonsin represents himself as "the most humble of Argentines"), other images of self construct Peron as a leader, while Alfonsin is presented as representative of the citizens. Both refer to the situation of enunciation with the metaphor-cliché of the "celebration" in relation to democracy ("this true celebration of democracy" in Peron, and "the celebration of Argentine democracy" in Alfonsin). Nevertheless, in Peron's speech democracy is established in an unmediated relationship between the leader and the working class mass; in Alfonsin's address, democracy starts in liberal political representation.

The speech by de facto president Leopoldo F. Galtieri, declaring the Falklands War on 2 April 1982, precipitated the end of the military rule that had begun in 1976, as Argentina's defeat had led to the discrediting of the armed forces and irreversibly accelerated the democratisation process that had been announced with the Multiparty, a union of the political parties in 1981 that aimed to put pressure on the military to leave power. Raul Alfonsin, who would be elected democratically in 1983, was one of the few politicians who dared to publicly oppose a war that, as evidenced by the joy aroused by Galtieri's speech, had the support of much of the population. The dictator, however, as an indication of the difficulty in building a political bond with his audience, does not address it, he does not name it as such, by omitting the initial vocative that is the (re)creator of identity – unlike Peron, who names it "Workers", and Alfonsin who names it "Compatriots".

Among the founding speeches of Argentina presented here, the minority voice is that of a woman, Eva Peron. In her speech of 23 September 1947, the wife of former President Juan Domingo Peron publicly announced the Law of Women's Suffrage, and thus began a new civic period in the country. While she addressed all women and sought to capture those who were not Peronists – similarly to the speech delivered by Peron on 17 October, which created the people as Peronist workers – Eva Peron created her audience, in this case women, as Peronist women, and recalled that speech by her husband, among using other strategies, in order to reinforce him as a leader.

~ *Maria Alejandra Vitale* ~

The four founding speeches included of Argentina were delivered at the Plaza de Mayo (Juan Domingo Peron, Eva Peron and Leopoldo F. Galtieri spoke from the balcony of the Casa Rosada, as the Government House is known; Raul Alfonsin did so from the town council). The Plaza de Mayo is in terms of Pierre Nora, a place of memory constitutive for the Argentine nation.

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