Introduction

A History of Erasures

To begin to illustrate the cultural field in which filmic representations of Argentine national space were conceived, I will open this book with a poem written as the cinematic medium had only begun to take on importance in the national culture. "El hermoso día" (The Beautiful Day), written by the conservative nationalist intellectual Leopoldo Lugones, was published in 1917, the year after the first commercially successful run of an Argentine feature-length film, *Nobleza gaucha*.[1] The poem is apposite for both its erasures and its origin in a far more restricted field of production. For its reader, who likely belonged to an elite, urban, highly cultured minority, the poem's antimodern conception of national space conspicuously erases any trace of modernity and the accompanying influx of immigrants, and in doing so naturalizes the privileged position in a hierarchy of being of the *terrateniente*, the landowning lyric subject of the poem:

Tan jovial está el prado,
Y el azul tan sereno,
Que me he sentido bueno
Con todo lo creado.

El sol, desde su asomo,
Derramó por mi estancia
El oro y la fragancia
Del polen del aromo.

Sentimental, el asno,
Rebuzna su morriña,

Y ayer, como una niña,
Floreció ya el durazno.

So cheerful is the land,
And the blue so serene,
That I've felt fine with
With all of creation.

The sun, upon its rise,
On my ranch spilled
Gold and the fragrance
Of the pollen of the myrrh tree.

Sentimental, the ass,
Brays his nostalgia,
And yesterday, like a young girl,
The peach tree already flowered.

The lyric subject is in prelapsarian harmony with a landscape he owns, and which in turn envelopes him with a sense of timeless, natural serenity through the stimulation of his sensorium. The blue he sees, the warmth of the sun he feels, the flowers of myrrh he smells, the braying ass he hears, and the peach he anticipates tasting all contribute to an affective order in which he is the privileged subject of aesthetic rapture. This timeless space was "created" (*creado*) by an entity of whom the *terrateniente* lyric subject is the favored son, but such solitude, such an insular perspective, to what is it responding? To insecurities regarding a national landscape conquered by coercion and violence only decades before, and at present undergoing a rapid and problematic modernization, primarily in the form of massive immigration? The only trace the poem contains of this modernity is its complete erasure from the landscape. So, the questions must be asked: What is the nature of this structuring absence? What was happening in the nation's rural spaces at the time Lugones was idealizing it for elite readers? Elina Tranchini offers an answer:

> Desde 1901 se sucedieron con una mayor o menor violencia, huelgas, movilizaciones y protestas de braceros, trilladores, estibadores, carreros, y otros trabajadores rurales. En la región pampeana los conflictos comenzaron en 1912 y se extendieron

> durante toda la década de 1910 por las provincias de Buenos Aires, Santa Fe, Córdoba y La Pampa, incluyendo a chacareros, arrendatarios, pequeños proprietarios, que se oponían a las condiciones impuestas por terratenientes, intermediarios colonizadores, comerciantes y acopiadores. (1999, 126)
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> After 1901 there occurred, with varying degrees of violence, strikes, mobilizations, and protests by temporary farm workers, threshers, stevedores, cart drivers, and other rural workers. In the region of the Pampa the conflicts started in 1912 and extended throughout the 1910 decade in the provinces of Buenos Aires, Santa Fe, Córdoba and La Pampa, including farmers, tenants, small landowners, who were opposed to the conditions imposed by the large landowners, middlemen, traders, and brokers.

When contextualized by such conflict, Lugones's poem takes on a far different meaning, as yet another salvo in a cultural struggle to justify control over the national space in the face of a modernization project that brought demands, sometimes violent, from the dispossessed. His strategy was to portray space in ways that would favor the claims of elite sectors to national authenticity and cast out the immigrants as unredeemably alien.

But as the poem was being written and first read, the national culture was also undergoing rapid modernization as new media were fast expanding, with already a far wider reach than that of Lugones's lyric poetry. The most notable of these is the cinema, which by 1917 was settling into the feature film format with which it would find a mass popular audience. Friedrich Kittler's conception of the discourse network, as "the network of technologies and institutions that allow a given culture to select, store and process relevant data" (369), is useful to address the changes in the representation of the nation as data that might be included or omitted as the modern massification of culture accelerated. I would propose that a shift from a nineteenth- to a twentieth-century discourse network, analogous to those shifts elsewhere discussed by Kittler and many others, turns especially agonistic around the decade of the Centenary, during which the Sáenz Peña law establishes universal male suffrage, Hipólito Irigoyen is elected to the presidency, and progressive social reforms are passed. In opposition to such advances, a conservative historic revisionism led by Lugones comes into prominence. But paradoxically, while Lugones's representation of the national space might seem proper to a remnant, nineteenth-century discourse network

that would soon cede to one more proper to the twentieth century, until almost 1960 the erasures that formed the cinema's conventional representation of rural space would be closer to those of the Lugonian image than might be expected. While often contested in the silent cinema, the *criollista* representation of rural space eventually becomes the default as the cinema is industrialized and finds a mass audience. But before turning to the cinema, a brief excursion into these apparently remnant representations and their erasures will help to further contextualize the arrival of the cinema.

A history of the canonical conceptions of Argentine national space could do worse than start with the image of fifteen cavalrymen on an otherwise empty plain that until recently appeared, along with the caption "La conquista del desierto" (The Conquest of the Desert), on the back of the Argentine hundred-peso note. The representation is in consonance with the imaginings of America as an empty desert and of Europe (and Buenos Aires as an extension of it) as plenitude that structured conceptions of space in the nation-defining texts of the mid-nineteenth century:

> ¿Qué nombre daréis, qué nombre merece un país compuesto de doscientas mil leguas de territorio y de una población de ochocientos mil habitantes? Un desierto. ¿Qué nombre daréis a la Constitución de ese país? La Constitución de un desierto. Pues bien, ese país es la República Argentina; y cualquiera que sea su Constitución no será otra cosa por muchos años que la Constitución de un desierto.
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> Pero ¿cuál es la constitución que mejor conviene al desierto? La que sirve para hacerlo desaparecer; la que sirve para hacer que el desierto deje de serlo en el menor tiempo posible, y se convierta en un país poblado . . .
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> Así, en América, gobernar es poblar.[2]

> What name would you give, what name does deserve, a country made up of two hundred thousand leagues of territory and a population of eight hundred thousand inhabitants? A desert. What name would you give to the Constitution of that country? The Constitution of a desert. Well then, that country is the Republic of Argentina, and whatever form its Constitution takes, for many years it will be nothing but the Constitution of a desert.
>
> But which is the best Constitution for the desert? That which serves to make it disappear, that which serves to make

> the desert stop being a desert in the shortest time possible, and to become a populated country . . .
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> So, in America, to govern is to populate.

This passage, from the writings in which Juan Bautista Alberdi laid out the foundations for the nation's Constitution, demonstrates the logic that justified Argentina's territorial expansion. Alberdi eliminates ethical complications by eliding the victims, thus presenting conquest not as a conflict between peoples, but as a simple movement into empty, abstracted space. The image on the banknote tells a similar story. It is a detail reproduced from an 1894 painting by Juan Manuel Blanes, *Ocupación militar del Río Negro bajo el mando del General Julio A. Roca, 1879* (*Military Occupation of the Rio Negro under the Command of General Julio A. Roca, 1879*). Commissioned by the National History Museum to celebrate the event in its immediate aftermath, the original painting allegorically depicts a heroic conquest of *barbarie* by military force, through the inclusion of indigenous figures and a white female captive. But the portion reproduced a century later on the note excludes these peripheral figures, and in doing so presents the conquest not in conflictually epic terms, but as a peaceful, even inevitable occupation of empty space.[3]

The terrain conquered is once again characterized by lack—*desertum*: an unpopulated place—and the land beneath the horses' hooves is a featureless, prenational void. There are no conquered, no evidence of culture or *civilización*, so in the all-encompassing terms of Argentina's foundational binary this could only be *barbarie*. This fictive emptiness is the basis for much of nineteenth-century discourse on the territory, despite the fact that rural space was indeed inhabited, as Fermín Rodríguez notes:

> El hecho de que bandas de jinetes nómadas, indios, gauchos solitarios, partidos de soldados, desertores, arrieros, caravanas de carretas, viajeros criollos y europeos, pulperos, estancieros y peones poblaran la llanura con sus idas y vueltas, no fue suficiente para romper el desierto teórico formado en el cruce de discursos científicos, políticos y económicos. (15)
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> The fact that bands of nomadic horsemen, Indians, solitary gauchos, parties of soldiers, deserters, mule drivers, caravans of wagons, Creole and European travelers, storekeepers, ranchers,

> and laborers populated the plains with their comings and goings, wasn't sufficient to break the theoretical desert formed in the crossings of scientific, political, and economic discourses.

Despite the real existence of such a variety of inhabitants, the mediating texts and images tended to represent rural space negatively, in terms of what it lacked. It was imagined as a landscape "sin árboles, sin cultivos, sin montañas, sin límites naturales, sin habitantes permanentes, sin viviendas, sin espíritu de progreso, sin vías de comunicación, sin instituciones, sin sentido de la autoridad, sin tradiciones, sin historia (without trees, without crops, without mountains, without natural limits, without a spirit of progress, without lines of communication, without institutions, without a sense of authority, without traditions, without history) (Rodríguez 16). This description of a geography of lack returns us to the image on the banknote, in which the alterations to Blanes's original are yet another example of this process of subtraction, but also to Lugones's poem, and upon comparing the three it becomes evident that while the objects of erasure vary over time—from *indios* to gauchos to, with the shift to a modern discourse network, immigrants, hunger, and social unrest—the act of erasure that opened a chasm between representation and reality remained constant.

This chasm between nineteenth-century national reality and discourses on the nation can be attributed to the fact that those who formulated the national project were primarily creole oligarchs who conceived of national identity in European terms, and for whom all things American were obstacles to their plans. But while this Europeanized national identity is dominant throughout the nineteenth century, at that century's end a shift was already underway toward a more Lugonian conception of national identity, one modeled after the decidedly non-European figure of the gaucho, in texts both visual and literary. Francisco Ayerza's photography of the 1890s and Lugones's literary texts and lectures contributed to the transfiguration of the gaucho into the representative of national identity sine qua non by the first decades of the twentieth century, in a rural-centered revision of national history that, paradoxically, again distanced representations from the reality on the land.[4] This time it was the history of links between landowners and the state that was, as Tranchini writes,

> diluída con ficciones, a través de la imagen de un mundo rural tan natural e inagotable como pródigo en virtudes y riquezas, y en el que el desprecio del inmigrante hacia el nativo convivió acostumbrado con el recelo del criollo hacia el extranjero. (108)

> diluted with fictions, through the image of a rural world as natural and infinite as it was abundant in virtues and riches, and in which the contempt of the immigrant toward the native lived side by side with the distrust of the creole toward the foreigner.

The old conflicts, then, were forgotten and the new conflicts erased, in favor of a *costumbrista* pampa: "Las costumbres pastoriles de un campo sin conflictos, la pampa inmensa e insondable, el gaucho de a caballo . . . se fueron construyendo como mitos de la argentinidad . . ." (The pastoral customs of a countryside without conflicts, the immense and unfathomable Pampa, the gaucho on horseback . . . were constructed as myths of Argentinity . . .) (108). This newly invented tradition, which reached its apogee with the national Centenary of 1910, was a very elaborate and widespread response to anxieties surrounding the rapid modernization the country was undergoing, and the inequalities and resulting conflicts this process produced.

Ericka Beckman discusses the need for consensus among late nineteenth-century Latin American elites on the desirability of economic liberalization, and thus the role literary culture played in denying "the frequently dismal outcomes of capitalist modernization . . . which then as today have been marked by grave inequalities on the level of individual societies, as well as by poverty and subordination with respect to major centers of capital" (ix). Beckman refers to the "Export Age" of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but the undesirable aspects of modernization are also conspicuous erasures of the classical cinema through the mid-twentieth century. This cinema is, of course, made and viewed in a period—from the 1930s to the 1950s—during which capitalist modernization is tempered by the Depression and its aftermath, when the Argentine state implemented more nationalistic and developmentalist economic policies, but the problems described by Beckman are of continued relevance under governments that needed to justify themselves as effectively solving them.

Perhaps the most productive way to conceive of these problems is in terms of uneven development, a term with various definitions, two of which are especially relevant to a discussion of representations of the national space. In his definitive book on the subject, Neil Smith discusses both. One is a simple uneven rate of development or modernization between spaces that would reflect somewhat negatively on the state and support a critique of neglect or incompetence. The other more directly refers to capitalism's effects on the land: "The pattern which results in the landscape is well known: development at one pole and underdevelopment at the other" (Smith 6). This stark expression of the relation between capital and labor is a necessary

spatial division of labor that generates and maintains uneven development and a tendency toward the dual centralizations of capital and of the subjects of labor. Argentina has certainly not been an exception to this dynamic, but this type of uneven development has only very exceptionally been represented in its cinema, usually in the form of conflicts between labor and capital. While the Pampas of the early twentieth-century export economy was an unprecedented generator of wealth, it is clear that the *criollista* representations of it as a peaceful space where domesticated gauchos labored contentedly, which stood in metonymically for the nation's rural spaces, had very little to do with the reality on the land, since they elided those forms of existence that did not form part of a harmonious coexistence of rural laborer and landowner.

Following on Smith's discussion of the production of marginalized space, we can reconfigure the term "barbarism," so often used in the nineteenth-century Argentine tradition to describe that which had to be eliminated in order for the nation to become civilized, to instead conceive of a produced barbarism (or secondary barbarism) brought about by uneven development. The idea that the civilizing project might have produced spaces of *barbarie* is contested by *criollismo*, which represents rural poverty not as produced by modern Argentina, but rather as both preexisting it and as persisting within it, instead of as produced by capitalist modernization.

During the decades preceding the arrival of the cinema in the late 1890s, profound societal changes had been taking place that greatly altered the national culture's relationship to its rural spaces. The "conquest of the desert" had violently cleared the way for expansion into, and transformation of, those spaces that had been portrayed a few decades earlier as *barbarie* and *desierto*, and production and exchange expanded rapidly into them. The state functioned in assemblage with private capital to capture human and natural resources in those rural spaces where they had been until then subjected to more local power relations. As Jens Andermann writes, "(t)his mutually constitutive enhancement of state power and of capitalism depended on new forms of knowledge that registered, classified, and distributed human and natural resources in time and space" (2007, 1). Since obtaining knowledge of rural spaces was the first task necessary for their incorporation into the nation, the state-capital apparatus developed the visual tools—maps, photos, museums—to gather knowledge of the territory. Andermann calls this knowledge-gathering gaze the "optic of the state." Film, with few exceptions, had limited participation in this knowledge-gathering gaze aligned with the state, and in the mass-consumption form it would take on definitively in the 1930s, it performed quite the opposite function.[5] Far more in line

with the erasures seen on the 100-peso note, the dominant cinematic gaze intentionally avoids gathering knowledge of marginal spaces, instead limiting its gaze to certain spaces and certain representations, foreclosing the possibility of documenting the national space.

But the uniquely modern, indexical nature of filmic representation, in which a profilmic reality is documented even in the process of creating fictions, alters the game of erasure. This quality unique to filmic mediation, a kind of friction exerted by the real on its representations, is of central importance, since its spectator tends to believe that what is seen on screen did exist in reality. This study asks how this friction of the real manifests itself in an Argentine cinema often under pressure, both state and commercial, to suppress its effects, especially when the reality causing the friction is that of spaces that contradict constructions of national identity and discourses of successful modernity. This contradiction between reality and representation is at first most pronounced in the case of rural space, and later in that of the edges of the urban, which in the last half-century have grown in extension and visibility as uneven modernization has driven internal immigration to populate urban margins. These spaces have gone from being excluded from the cinema, to being glimpsed, then documented, and finally serving as a not-infrequent setting for narrative fiction.

A productive way to conceive of these contested terrains of filmic mediation would be to consider what Judith Butler refers to as the field of representability. She writes that

> we cannot understand the field of representability simply by examining its explicit contents, since it is constituted fundamentally by what is cast out and maintained outside the frame within which representations appear. We can think of the frame, then, as active, as jettisoning and presenting, and as doing both at once, in silence, without a visible sign of its operation . . . (953)

In the specific case of Argentine cinema, the frame of representability has tended, with varying degrees of zeal, to actively jettison representations of certain spaces or to fictionalize them. When representations of these spaces have appeared in the cinema they have tended toward *costumbrismo*, and thus to erase the uneven modernization that has long characterized much of the nation's territory.

But the place of marginal spaces in Argentine cinema is anything but static. It varies from film to film, while forming wider patterns as various factors pressure the medium through time. By tracing these factors and their

effects, this book finds that in the history of Argentine cinema there have been several periods of greater autonomy for filmmakers relative to state and economic power, during which the frame of representability becomes more porous. By autonomy I am not referring to aesthetic purity over the political à la art for art's sake, but rather an autonomy like that enjoyed by the modern writer or the *literato* described by Julio Ramos, one freed from the earlier *letrado* function of "writing as a rationalizing practice, authorized by the project of state consolidation" (53). This kind of autonomy does not bring with it an obligation to challenge national projects and associated discourses of national identity, and it will come as no surprise that some filmmakers of these periods chose to conform to these discourses. These periods of greater filmmaking autonomy are inevitably accompanied by shifts in viewership, as new cinemas contribute to the production of new viewers, with new expectations and desires and new ways of consuming sounds and images. These viewers in turn produce new ways of making film, as distinct cinematic gazes are formed at the intersection of ways of representing with ways of viewing. As these gazes both structure and are structured by representations of national space, the clearly enforced boundary between fiction and nonfiction film turns permeable, allowing the unacknowledged realities of the most contested sites of representation to enter into the cinema. The three periods of greater filmmaking autonomy are the 1910 decade, the period of roughly 1958 to 1974, and that of the late 1990s to the present.

Many, but by no means all films of the 1910s—the decade in which the feature-length format arrived in Argentina—renounce film's documentary charge, to instead narrate fictional stories, but when sound film appears around 1930 the near totality of both production and exhibition shifts to fiction. This negation of film's original scientific function, that of credibly documenting reality, prompts questions about its contribution to how rural space was imagined by its mass public. By the early twentieth century, in spite of the rapidly growing body of knowledge on rural space as it was integrated into the nation, the cinema persisted in a fictional conception that roughly corresponded to preexisting visual and literary discourses that depicted an idyllic rural space. Although the "mitología pacífica y armónica del gaucho" (peaceful and harmonious myth of the gaucho) (Montaldo 117) of *criollismo* tended to represent new immigrants to Argentina as illegitimate by way of contrast, this was the vision of rural space that, with a few important exceptions, the cinema embraced in its first several decades, even as it catered to a public composed largely of these recent immigrants and their children.

The role of the cinema of the 1910s as purveyor of conceptions of rural space is the subject of the first chapter of this book. During its first, silent decades, film production was cheaper and the camera more mobile than it would become with the invention of sound technology, so filmmaking was not yet as studio-bound as it would become with the dominance of the sound feature film of the studio system. Filmmakers of the 1910 decade enjoyed an authorial autonomy that would be lost with the industrialization of cinema and the heightening pressures from a state that increasingly recognized the power of cinema to influence the masses. The chapter closely examines three works by filmmakers who did not necessarily identify with the project of state consolidation and were therefore able to contest the conservative nationalism of the *Centenario* and the version of the rural universe it used to legitimize state violence against popular movements. Some do so through allegorical reconfigurations of national identity, portraying a gaucho in conflict with the state and national elites, and thus represent a conflictive rural space as produced in the modernizing process. Another, Alcides Greca's *El último malón*, uses the camera to document pernicious conditions produced by the modernizing project, portraying an unevenly modernized space—the *reducción*, or reservation—as a site of a violent struggle by an indigenous population impoverished and exploited for its labor.

The second chapter moves to the sound period, which began in the early 1930s, and the loss of filmmaking autonomy with the capture of production and exhibition by large studios and the recognition by the state of the cinema's power to influence the masses. Soon after 1930 and José Félix Uriburu's *golpe de estado* (military takeover), as the cinema was consolidated as a form of popular entertainment it increasingly restricted itself to the canonical conceptions of rural space. As a result, the image of a territory cleansed of traces of social conflict and its underlying causes and successfully integrated into a prosperous Argentina began to prevail in representations of national space by an industrial studio cinema that had to naturalize such conceptions of space in order to convincingly tell its stories. In its films, a reality effect produced by the cinema's inherent documentary charge functions in tandem with specific formal conventions that include the use of transitional ellipses (usually employing the train) that elide rural space and a cinematic version of the *cuadro de costumbres* that usually centers on cliched portrayals of gauchos or their rural heirs. These conventions result in the predominance of very partial but totalizing representations of the national space as prosperous, modernized towns or cities in which the story takes place, surrounded by a pastoralized rural universe. The study

finds that during the period of the cinema studios—or, as it is often referred to, the classical cinema—even the few films that thematize the exploitation of the rural by urban or foreign interests remain invested in these kinds of canonical images of rural space, which went largely unexamined as the cinema eschewed the documentary possibilities of the filmic image.

The same chapter goes on to examine other aspects of the classical cinema, discussing how several narrative fiction films of the late 1930s participate in the generation of public consent for state-driven modernization projects (which included a road network, tourism, and petroleum extraction and distribution) by publicizing these projects and portraying a successfully interventionist state that undertakes them. The chapter then discusses masculinity, which the classical cinema often negotiates along an urban–rural trajectory, in which rural space typically corrects defective, urban masculinity. This section centers on *Con el diablo en el cuerpo* (1947), directed by the prolific Carlos Hugo Christensen, a road movie in which the mechanism of normalization is laid bare through a parody of conventional rural masculinities. The chapter closes with an examination of the first studio films to represent the *villa miseria* (shanty town)—a highly fraught space during the last years of the Perón presidency—which, at the classical cinema's demise, begin to open the field of representability and stimulate a spectatorial gaze that is more inquisitive about the nation and its lesser-known spaces.

Toward the late 1950s, certain filmmakers began to more directly address the cultural invisibility of certain spaces, formulating alternative representations of the *villa miseria* and questioning the canonical depictions of rural space. Chapter 3 begins with an account of how one of the earliest of these, Fernando Birri, documents marginal spatial practices in *Tire dié* and *Los inundados*. Among the various strategies employed by Birri, this chapter examines how he employs the train's movement through the landscape to take advantage of the capacity of film to document spaces and their inhabitants that are excluded by the classical cinema's conventions. Birri's films, then, help inaugurate a cinema that both responds to spectatorial curiosity and elicits a new gaze that inquires about the nation and questions the conventions through which it had been represented until then.

After Birri, many others turned the camera away from the train toward the rural, nonmodern or marginalized spaces that had gone willfully unrepresented in the previous decades. As a strategy of engaging with Argentine reality that responds to the national territory and the opportunities presented by the technology found there, this turn of the camera exemplifies how the

cinema of the inquisitive gaze increasingly contested canonical representations of marginal space in the next two decades and expanded the field of representability.

The same chapter continues with an examination of the relatively independent feature films of the *Generación del 60*, centering on Lautaro Murúa's *Shunko* (1960) and Fernando Ayala's *Paula cautiva* (1963), which demonstrate a variety of strategies that call into question long-dominant representations of the national space, before it moves on to other modes, among them Gerardo Vallejo's militant film *El camino hacia la muerte del Viejo Reales* (1971) and the ethnographic films of Jorge Prelorán, whose innovative methodology is designed to explore the subjectivities of individuals from the most isolated places of the nation. Also discussed is Eva Landeck's *Gente en Buenos Aires* (1973), a narrative feature made during the brief cultural *apertura* (opening) that preceded the slide into dictatorship. Landeck made the film with a cooperative production model that allowed her a great degree of independence, and its incisive critique at the intersection of class and space contributed to its suffering industry and state pressures and the truncation of her career. The chapter ends with an account of how, after these filmmakers had brought marginal spaces into the cinema, certain commercial films responded to their presence and the spectatorial expectations they cultivated. The films examined—Armando Bó's Isabel Sarli vehicle *Carne* (1968) and the Palito Ortega–starring *Yo tengo fe* (Enrique Carreras 1974)—recuperate the settings and formal conventions of the cinema of the inquisitive gaze in order to depoliticize the representation of marginal spaces.

Chapter 4 closes the book by pursuing two lines of inquiry. First, it examines films that engage with a key feature of contemporary neoliberal space, the opposition between the *villa miseria* as locus of fear and the protected enclosure of the middle-class neighborhood and its most highly distilled form of the gated community (or *country*). Second, the chapter seeks out contemporary filmic strategies of revisiting the representation of rural space that engage with metropolitan conceptions of it. The chapter concentrates on the work of a very limited selection of contemporary filmmakers, most notably Lucrecia Martel, Lisandro Alonso, and Fernando Solanas. The films examined all engage with aspects of the neoliberal spatial configuration: the conception of the social margins in the national culture—particularly the widespread fear of less wealthy sectors and the spaces they inhabit—the resulting fear-driven concentration of wealth in the *country*, and the intensified dispossession inflicted on rural subjects. This final chapter

traces up to the present the representation of rural spaces and of the urban margins, which, despite the changes in cinema's technology, viewers, and the nation itself, have remained a central concern of Argentine cinema for more than a century.