

Escaping the Visual Trap of the Agricultural Frontier: Fernando Solanas's *Viaje a los pueblos fumigados*

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ABSTRACT: In this work, I describe how the film *Viaje a los pueblos fumigados*, directed by Fernando Solanas, help us escape what I call the “visual trap” of the agricultural frontier. The agricultural frontier, sometimes called the farming frontier, is often defined as the division zone between the ranching and farming lands and those that have never been cultivated before. Images of the agricultural frontier, with their symmetric forms and stark color contrasts, form a “visual trap” that prevents us from grasping the numerous processes that take place in these spaces and ecosystems, as well as the effects of human activity on living and nonliving beings. I propose that Solanas’s film gives us tools to break away from such a trap, as it allows us to follow the invisible paths of agrochemicals and realize that they are material agents not bounded by this artificial border. I pay particular attention to how representations of sickness are used to convey the unbounded nature of agrochemicals. An essential notion in this respect is that of “agrosickness narratives,” representations of sick bodies that challenge us to examine how we engage with images of environmental degradation.

KEYWORDS: ecocriticism, Fernando Solanas, environmental documentary film, agricultural frontier, toxic chemicals.

The “agricultural frontier,” sometimes called the “farming frontier,” or *frontera agrícola* in Spanish, is a concept that regularly appears in discussions, debates, and controversies related to the expansion of ranching and farming lands. As Germán Rosati reminds us, there are significant differences in how this concept is defined, each with distinct implications. According to Rosati, there are at least three common ways of thinking about the expansion of the agricultural frontier, each of which has an underlying definition of the concept (97). First, its growth can be defined as incorporating new areas—forests or other unexploited ecosystems—into agricultural production. Under this conceptualization, the agricultural frontier would be the limit that separates farming lands from those that have never been cultivated before. This perspective emphasizes the dichotomy between agricultural production and environmental conservation, evoking notions often associated with untouched environments and the wilderness. The second one refers to the adoption of capitalist forms of agricultural production—commonly known as agribusiness⁵—in areas that could have been under other production regimes, like communal farming and subsistence agriculture. This characterization moves away from the wilderness imaginary and implies a definition of the agricultural frontier as a dynamic environment where the change in land use and farming practices transforms human and nonhuman lives. A third conceptualization describes a situation when a particular agricultural activity—for example, large-scale soybean farming—begins to displace other economic activities already taking place in the same land. In this last case, the agricultural frontier would be a transitional space where human agency takes prominence, lead-

ing us to think about the transformations it signals in economic, cultural, and social terms.

The ways we represent the agricultural frontier, whether in words or images, both portray a particular understanding of the concept and shape how others think about it. In recent years, images of the agricultural frontier have become more prevalent in newspapers, tv shows, films, websites, and social media. These images tend to be aerial shots taken with cameras positioned at high and top angles that emphasize clear-cut divisions between cultivated and uncultivated land through regular geometric forms and color juxtaposition. Such depictions seek to highlight how human action has radically transformed the environment and, as a result, they have become part of the iconography tied to environmental issues such as deforestation. The popularity of these pictures can be explained in part due to how easily they can attract our eyes’ attention: they are full of symmetric forms, consistent patterns, stark color contrasts, precise lines, and perfectly defined angles. The power of attraction of such images is precisely at the center of what I call a “visual trap,” that is, overwhelming visual stimulation that makes us think of the separation between adjacent ecosystems in these zones as absolute and impenetrable.

The consequences of “falling” into this trap might seem innocuous at first, but thinking about the agricultural frontier in these terms can significantly affect how we perceive the mobility of human and nonhuman beings in these areas. As is the case with most borders, the agricultural frontier is changeable, porous, and even illusory. Contrary to images of machinery making way for new farmable land, the most common agroindustrial strategies to keep

nature at bay are not mechanical but chemical (Schiesari et al. 2). Agrochemicals are so widespread and used in such large quantities that they are among the fastest-growing global change agents (Bernhardt et al. 88). A large proportion of chemicals used in agriculture are pesticides and herbicides intended to act as watchdogs tasked with protecting crops from various plants, insects, snails, slugs, birds, bacteria, and fungi, among other living beings, which can be considered a threat to agricultural production. However, like human-created borders elsewhere, the agricultural frontier is a very porous one. In this sense, agricultural frontier dynamics at times seem to mirror those of other border environments. Animal, plant, fungal, and bacterial species, along with nonliving matter, cross such a border regularly, challenging the farmers, machinery, and chemical agents that try to stop them. Conversely, biological and chemical agents originated in the crops travel to uncultivated areas, transported by air and water currents, among other ways. The most familiar images of the agricultural frontier invisibilize this mobility and prevent us from grasping the complexity of the numerous processes that take place in these spaces and ecosystems, as well as the effects of human activity on living and nonliving beings.

Like other artistic expressions, film can provide invaluable tools to break away from the visual trap of the agricultural frontier. It allows us to see beyond symmetric patterns and clearly defined lines to understand their artificiality. When it follows the invisible paths of toxic chemicals, it can also make us realize that thinking about such substances as watchdogs, the metaphor I previously mentioned, is not only incorrect but dangerous. Toxic chemicals are themselves material agents that could not care less about this artificial border. They spread beyond its apparent limits with ease, both within and outside, on the surface and underground, attached to the crops they are supposed to protect and transported by neighboring water currents, popping up in the most inconspicuous places.

In this article, I examine how Fernando "Pino" Solanas's documentary film *Viaje a los pueblos fumigados* (2018), or *A Journey to the Fumigated Towns*², helps us overcome the visual trap of agricultural frontier images. Although this film examines the social, political, economic, and historical circumstances that have promoted the use of massive quantities of agrochemicals in Argentina, I pay particular attention to representations of border environments and the mobility of pesticides. *Viaje* pushes us to interrogate how we engage with images of environmental degradation and, at the same time, reveals the intricate connections between representational, environmental, and health issues. It does so by juxtaposing aerial shots and representations at ground level of humans, nonhuman animals, and plants that inhabit the ecosystems transformed by the clearing of woods and forests. Thus, the film explicitly resists the "flattening" of the land, a neoliberal impulse that disregards the ecologies of the areas portrayed. Moreover, it makes evident the artificiality of the human-made boundary by highlighting the unrestrained nature of the agrochemicals used to keep the frontier in place.

A Technosocial Perspective

In recent years, we have witnessed the emergence of a significant number of Latin American films that look at the effects of pesticide use in agriculture, with a large percentage of them coming from Argentina. The list is long and includes fiction films like *La tierra roja* (*The Red Land*; Dir. Diego Martínez Vignatti, 2015), *El rocío* (*Dew*; Dir. Emiliano Griego, 2018), and *Respira: Transgénesis* (*Breathe: Transgenesis*; Dir. Gabriel Grieco, 2019). However, the documentary genre is perhaps the most prolific in this area. We could mention, to name a few, *Desierto verde* (*Green Desert*; Dir. Ulises de la Orden, 2013), *Pueblo verde* (*Green Town*; Dir. Sebastián Rodrigo Jauris, 2015), *Andrés Carrasco: ciencia disruptiva* (*Andrés Carrasco: Disruptive Science*; Dir. Valeria Tucci, 2019), and Colectivo Documental Semillas's web series *El agronegocio letal* (*Lethal Agribusiness*), directed by Juan Pablo Lepore, which includes *La jugada del peón* (*The Pawn Move*; 2015), *Dique Chico: fumigación impune* (*Dique Chico: Unpunished Fumigation*; 2018), and *Arroyo Leyes: la frutilla del postre* (*Arroyo Leyes: The Icing on the Cake*; 2019). Many of these films feature images of the agricultural frontier, depictions that allow us to study how it is represented and what effects such representations have on our understanding of the concept. In this article, however, I focus only on one of them: the documentary film *Viaje a los pueblos fumigados*, by Fernando "Pino" Solanas.

Solanas was a very productive Argentinian filmmaker, directing more than twenty films, including fiction and documentary feature and short films. Some of his works have received significant critical attention and recognition, including *Tangos, el exilio de Gardel* (*Tangos, the Exile of Gardel*; 1985), *Sur* (*The South*; 1988), and *El viaje* (*The Journey*; 1992), as well as the documentary film *Memoria del saqueo* (*Social Genocide*; 2004). His work as a filmmaker is devoted to examining historical, political, social, economic, and cultural issues related to his home country. When it comes to his documentary films, critics have noted the presence of a national political project against the dehumanizing effects of globalization (Levit Koldorf 333), a personal style influenced by his political militancy that resembles a reporter's search for answers (Tavares 18), and his reflective use of voice-over to build arguments that highlight neoliberalism's incongruities (Bonano and Sánchez). Indeed, his film production is deeply concerned with exploring the effects of decisions taken by those in power on the lives of Argentinians, especially the most vulnerable, being at the same time an integral part of social and political struggles.³ One notable aspect of Solanas's production is its analysis of how interwoven politics and technology have been in Argentina's recent history. Although this concern emerges in many of his works, it is central in what I call his *technosocial* films, that is, those that center on issues at the convergence of science, technology, politics, and society. Such films include *Argentina latente* (*Latent Argentina*; 2007), *La próxima estación* (*The Next Station*; 2008), *Tierra sublevada: Oro impuro* (*Riotous Land: Impure Gold*; 2009), *Tierra sublevada: Oro negro* (*Riotous Land: Black Gold*;

2011), *La guerra del fracking* (The Fracking War; 2013), and *Viaje a los pueblos fumigados*.

Viaje is part of the long and deep-rooted tradition of social documentary films in Latin America, that is, “documentaries with a human subject and a descriptive or transformative concern” (Burton 3). However, it is also a film in dialogue with global trends, a characteristic of contemporary documentary filmmaking in the region (Arenillas and Lazzara 7). The film also continues Solanas’s overall project, characterized by the inseparability of politics and aesthetics, as many critics have noticed. Solanas is a leading figure of Third Cinema, or *Tercer Cine*, a movement originated in the 1960s that sought to push audiences to take action in social issues by positioning itself as an alternative to Hollywood film productions and European art cinema. Scholars such as Soledad Fernández Bouzo and Patricio Bruno Besana see a connection between Third Cinema and contemporary networks of *cine comunitario ambientalista*, or environmentalist community cinema, locating *Viaje* at this convergence (90).

The film brings together many recurrent concerns, themes, techniques, and perspectives found in Solanas’s work. While aesthetically and discursively the film is shaped by Solanas’s unique style, it is also informed by conventions and iconography associated with the environmental documentary film, a genre that exhibits the tensions and complex negotiations at the intersection of raising environmental awareness and contemporary documentary filmmaking (Hughes 10). In *Viaje*, Solanas’s primary concern is to reveal what Amalia Leguizamón has called the “synergies of power” in Argentina’s agrarian transformation, that is, the “structural and symbolic dimensions of domination that operate simultaneously and across time to create, compound, and legitimate environmental injustice” (15). It does so by traveling across *la Argentina fumigada*, or “the fumigated Argentina,” a term Fernanda Sánchez has used to describe the widespread presence of agrochemicals across Argentinian towns and cities. Even though this film’s scope is much more ambitious, I believe it provides a good example of how the agricultural frontier is visually constructed and how such construction is then challenged.

Unflattening the Land

Before we see any footage and while the opening credits of *Viaje* are being shown on a solid black background, we can hear whirling helicopter rotors. The non-diegetic sound prepares the audience for the opening sequence. When the dark background gives way to the first images, we are in the air, flying above northern Argentina, as indicated through on-screen text. A series of aerial shots comprises this first sequence. We notice a similar composition of the frame in each of them: an individual bulldozer at the center tearing down trees. The sound of the whirling rotors is drowned out by diegetic sounds of roaring bulldozers and falling trees, directing our com-

plete attention to the scenes. The percentage of cleared land on the screen increases in each shot, from a single lane created by a machine as it goes through the forest to a site in which no tree is left standing. New agricultural frontiers are emerging before our eyes. The 40-second sequence fulfills a variety of goals. Discursively, it shows the amount of destruction that one piece of machinery can do in what seems to be an incredibly short amount of time, bringing attention to how urgent this issue is. This is an example of what Gabriela Merlinsky and Paula Serafini have called *estética de urgencia*, or “urgency aesthetics,” which seeks to convey the magnitude of environmental devastation by visibilizing the violence exerted on the land and the communities that inhabit it (82). Structurally, the sequence works as a succession of establishing shots to locate us at the origin—and end—of the problems that emerge with the use of large amounts of agrochemicals. Soon after, the camera at ground level is traveling with a group of people through cleared woodland, which could very well be one of the areas we saw from the air. Rhetorically, it establishes a contrast between two perspectives on the issue: one that witnesses the devastation from afar, and another one, which the film favors, that is interested in exploring what is behind those images and hearing the stories of those affected. As a result, this sequence also juxtaposes distinct conceptualizations of the agricultural frontier.

The opening sequence reproduces some iconographic images of the agricultural frontier: aerial shots of heavy machinery clearing uncultivated land to give way to future crops, symmetric deforestation patterns, and large brownish sections of dusty cleared land contrasting with an adjacent green wooded area. However, we are immediately transported to ground level, accompanying a group of local residents who travel to cleared areas to remove fallen trees before they get burned. This time, the camera shows us scenes with little in common with the flatness and homogeneity we saw from the air. We now witness a group of young people climbing mountains of fallen trees that take the bottom half of the screen, walking between the trunks as if it was an irregular maze of wood that frequently rises above their heads, at times making them indistinguishable from branches and trunks. The composition of the frames defies the “flattening” of the land that is common in aerial shots of the agricultural frontier. In this case, we have a tridimensional space that challenges the symmetry, unwavering lines, and defined patterns portrayed from the sky, a space in which human and nonhuman beings blend. Aerial shots, particularly those from a top angle, tend to evoke human efforts to discipline the land, such as those we find in maps. If maps—the expression of “flatten” land par excellence—represent symbolic possession and support colonizing enterprises, Solanas’s “unflattening” of the land, that is, his intentional effort to move away from bidimensional representations of complex ecosystems, becomes even more significant: it defies neoliberal claims of ownership.

Solanas then visits a Wichí community surrounded by *desmontes*, as the zones of recently cleared land—or in the process of

being cleared—are known in Spanish. The camera focuses on an elder member of the Wichí, identified as Cacique Don Juan. He walks through an area where the soil still shows the marks of machinery, and in the background, we can see many fallen trees mixed with a few still standing. An agricultural frontier is being created. He walks towards a wrecked mistol, describes how the tree used to provide food for his community, and explains how destroying it is a direct attack against his community's survival. The camera takes a step back to give us a better idea of the tree's size, which almost doubles Don Juan's height. As he carefully touches the leaves and fruits of the smashed tree, a lump grows in his throat, overwhelmed by the devastation. We, the viewers, can feel some of Don Juan's pain and become enraged by the situation. Here, Solanas appeals to our affective response to denounce how erecting the agricultural frontier is an act of violence that affects human and nonhuman beings alike. It will not be the only time the director asks for our empathy. Throughout the film, he relies on various affective processes to mobilize our anger, disgust, and indignation into action.

Agrosickness Narratives

While visiting the Wichí, the film's attention changes from the physical destruction of habitats caused by *desmontes* to the chemical assaults against this community. The seamless transition announces one of the main arguments in this film: these two acts of violence are inextricable. Using an inductive technique common in the director's work, Solanas takes the Wichí experience as a starting point to discuss the effects of toxic chemicals on farmworkers and rural and urban populations more generally.

In this part, we begin to see the deployment of what I call "agrosickness narratives," which are present in many contemporary works that look at agribusiness's social, cultural, and environmental effects. My definition of this concept is informed by what Heather Houser calls ecosickness fiction. Houser uses this term to identify a group of contemporary novels and memoirs that, through the deployment of affect in representations of sick bodies, bring readers to environmental consciousness (2). Houser revisits the notion of sickness, warning us that she does not use it as a synonym of either "disease" or "illness." Instead, she sees sickness as a relational concept that "cannot be confined to a single system and links up the biomedical, environmental, social, and ethico-political; and it shows the imbrication of human and environment" (11). Ecosickness fiction, according to the critic, makes us realize that dilemmas in the environmental and biomedical domains pose representational dilemmas that no single literary movement or genre can fully resolve (4). I find Houser's concept stimulating and helpful to analyze recent Latin American literary and film works that interrogate the effects of large-scale global agricultural production.

Thinking of the notion of ecosickness as it relates to the particular context of agribusiness and at the same time beyond the realm

of literary fiction, I consider agrosickness narratives as a sort of trope, a set of discursive and aesthetic motifs that characterize the representations of sick bodies in works that intend to raise awareness about the negative effects of modern agriculture and foster environmental consciousness more generally. Sickness is commonly triggered by pesticides, herbicides, and other toxic chemicals commonly used in intensive farming, and it affects human and nonhuman living beings alike. Moreover, sick bodies work as a metonymy of a more extensive system of environmental degradation, one that extends to not only the physical health of human and nonhuman beings but has boundless ramifications over many other domains. Agrosickness narratives can be found in various novels, graphic novels, short stories, fictional films, and documentary films, among others. In many of these works, agrosickness narratives are often a starting point in a quest to examine the decisions, actions, processes, and systems causing environmental degradation, of which sickness becomes a visible symptom. Such narratives are central in *Viaje*, as they trigger an examination of the Argentinian agricultural industry's profound changes during the last decades. For our purposes, agrosickness narratives draw attention to the artificiality of the agricultural frontier and help us think about the unbounded nature of agrochemicals.

Agrochemicals Unbounded

The majority of the film is devoted to exposing how agrochemicals cannot be contained. After leaving the north of Argentina, Solanas travels to Mar del Plata, where we find him in the kitchen of a middle-class home. While washing some leafy plants in the sink, his host explains that most vegetables are contaminated with pesticides and herbicides. Shots of fields been treated with agrochemicals are introduced to remind us about the connection visually. In the next scene, Solanas and his host sit at a dining table next to a field cultivated with organic techniques. The host explains the origins of the organic farm by describing how they went to the market to buy vegetables, took them to a laboratory to analyze them, and found agrochemicals in them. Then they had an analysis performed on themselves and found some of the same agrochemicals present in the vegetables. Solanas wonders about the presence of agrochemicals in his body, and the host encourages Solanas to get an analysis. This brief encounter speaks to what Stacy Alaimo describes as a "material memoir," a text that "epitomizes life in risk society [...] as it dramatizes the compulsion to undertake 'scientific' investigations of one's daily life" (95). When Solanas visits the laboratory and then gets the analysis results, we see a convergence of the self and the social, a diffusion of the limits between the external and the internal, and a recognition of the material continuity between the human and the other-than-human world.

In a sequence of about two minutes, Solanas presents a series of shots that seem to follow the path of agrochemicals. First, im-

ages of planes, tractors, and other machinery spreading agrochemicals in fields are presented while Solanas, in a voice-over, describes the widespread use of toxic chemicals in Argentinian fields. Next, we see shots of metallic silos that characterize storage facilities, followed by trucks transporting agricultural products. Solanas tells us how agrochemicals are also used at this stage to combat certain plagues, a use that had resulted in the death of many truck drivers. A shot of a drain dropping water into a water current closes the sequence. By following the invisible path of agrochemicals, the director is explicitly describing their unbounded nature. The voice-over reminds us by example that not seeing something does not mean it does not exist.

As in many agrosickness narratives, the testimonies of experts play a significant role in *Viaje*. Solanas visits many experts, including physicians, veterinarians, biologists, and agricultural engineers. A common theme in his conversations with these experts is how there is significant scientific evidence that connects the use of pesticides and herbicides with certain health conditions, but such evidence does not receive the attention it deserves. Solanas's journey attempts to bring more attention to this matter and, as agrosickness narratives commonly do, uses the human body as evidence of the negative health effects of agrochemicals. An important portion of the film is devoted to providing such evidence. At some point, a doctor describes a high incidence of physical malformations among inhabitants of fumigated neighborhoods and towns, while the camera focuses on newborns whose bodies visibly depart from the norm. In another instance, human bodies in glass jars are shown as evidence of the kind of effects toxic chemicals can have. Solanas also visits some of the communities affected, where the camera visually documents the cases they find. Through agrosickness narratives, the film establishes how toxic agrochemicals cannot be contained, much less restricted to zones adjacent to the agricultural frontier, by relying on the trope of overlooked scientific expertise. Moreover, just as the disregarded experts commonly found in disaster movies, we ignore their warnings at our peril.

Relying on agrosickness narratives to promote environmental consciousness, as *Viaje* does, certainly comes with ethical problems. Scholars in disability studies have been particularly vocal about how disabled bodies, including those affected by disease, should not be used as signs to represent a departure from normalcy and the idea that things can be "really bad." Indeed, one can raise these concerns regarding the ethics of representation of sickness in the film. *Viaje*, nonetheless, deploys other mechanisms to dismantle the visual trap of mainstream agricultural frontier images.

Unstable Borders

Close to the end of the film, the camera returns to the agricultural frontier. New aerial footage shows us images that parallel the sequence at the beginning. There are, however, important distinc-

tions. Although the symmetric patterns and contrasting tones are still present, we now see a shot in which the frontier has been established. Different shades of green indicate the presence of crops growing in the claimed land as if suggesting an irreversible process. Nevertheless, the camera does not give us enough time to fall into this visual trap. In the next shot, the frame is filled with a mixture of irregular shapes of land and water. Solanas tells us that we are before the results of flooding. Water has destroyed the agricultural frontier and drawn its own border at its will. We can see irregular patterns that extend through cultivated and uncultivated lands. The sequence continues with more footage of water roaming through urban spaces, destroying houses, eroding land, and covering streets. In these images, water becomes a material agent that highlights the instability of human-made divisions. It is no longer possible to think about the agricultural frontier as an impenetrable barrier.

The camera then follows Solanas back to the area where the documentary began. Through voice-over, the director describes the continuous advances of heavy machinery that push the agricultural frontier further and displace the Wichí from their lands. At some point, a member of the Wichí points to a wire fence and describes how it passes through an area that serves as the community's cemetery, leaving their buried ancestors on both sides. The camera is located on the side of uncleared land, next to the man, literary positioning us on his side. The underlying notion of the agricultural frontier that Solanas seems to favor is one in which agribusiness modes of production are not taming the wilderness but destroying existing modes of life in which humans relate to their environment through more sustainable practices. This position is supported by images of Wichí communities displaced by previous *desmontes*. Barefoot Wichí children in dirty old clothes push us to empathize by indignation.

The previous sequence is essential in dismantling the visual trap of agricultural frontier images. It refuses to portray uncultivated land as untouched by humans. As the group walks through the forest, we become aware that the Wichí have long-lasting roots in these lands. This scene points to the continuity between human and nonhuman bodies in the material world, particularly by emphasizing the connections between the Wichí and their environment. As spectators, we realize the frontier is a neoliberal construction and, by acknowledging its nature, we begin to understand its contradictions.

Final Remarks

Even though Solanas's documentary film *Viaje a los pueblos fumigados* focuses on issues that go beyond thinking about the agricultural frontier, it is important to analyze how this film, like many other visual culture texts, represent this concept given that it is through the cumulative effect of these images that we make sense of it. Simi-

larly, agrosickness narratives—a term I proposed to characterize the recurrent representations of sick bodies in works concerned with the negative effects of agribusiness practices—are not limited to areas close to the agricultural frontier or where it is being created. Many of them take place in areas traditionally devoted to agriculture that have been transformed by the expansion of large-scale, intensive, monoculture farming. Moreover, agrosickness narratives stretch across numerous other film and literary genres, from horror and science fiction to biographies.

Understanding the agricultural frontier as a dynamic environment is crucial when it comes to examining the effects of pesticides and herbicides—and toxic chemical substances more generally. In this sense, literary and cinematic representations allow us to go beyond what we see at first sight. This is the case of *Viaje*, which urges us to interrogate how we engage with images of environmental degradation and reflect on the connections between representa-

tional, environmental, and health issues. The film's critical potential, however, presents some limitations. Although it thoroughly examines the paths followed by agrochemicals into rural and urban communities, it tells us very little about how those agrochemicals travel and affect the ecosystems beyond the border, where humans are no longer at the center. Nonetheless, it gives us some much-needed tools to be able to grasp the intricacies of how globalized agribusiness practices are changing our world. As I have described, the film explicitly resists the "flattening" of the land by highlighting its multiple and complex dimensions, for example, juxtaposing aerial shots and representations at ground level of humans, nonhuman animals, and plants that inhabit the ecosystems transformed by the clearing of woods and forests. Furthermore, it makes evident the artificiality of the human-made boundary by showing us the unrestrained nature of the agrochemicals used to keep the frontier in place.

NOTES

¹By "agribusiness" I understand the system that enables large-scale industrial agriculture. Although agribusiness encompasses many areas related to agriculture (e.g., financing, distribution, marketing, etc.), in this article, I use the term to refer to industrial agricultural production and the set of practices that characterize it, like intensive farming, large areas of land dedicated to monocultures, the marginalization of small-scale farmers in favor of corporations, and its reliance on a wide range of proprietary technologies controlled by multinationals that include heavy machinery, biotechnology and genetic engineering of crops, and the use of large amounts of agrochemicals for pest control.

²Throughout this article, when the Spanish title of a film is mentioned, I provide in italics the English title if one is available. If there is no official English title for the film, I include an English translation of the Spanish title without using italics.

³The enthusiastic adoption of neoliberalism in Argentina, from the 1970s by the military junta and later by democratic governments in the 1980s and 1990s, affected all areas of life in the country, including agricultural production. The neoliberal model had a significant impact on agricultural policies and priorities. During the 1990s, the government promoted the transformation of the Argentine countryside, with a spectacular expansion of land devoted to large-scale industrial agriculture based on monocultures, such as soybeans (Leguizamón 49). This model had significant environmental consequences, including the destruction of habitats (i.e., the expansion of the agricultural frontier) and the toxic effects of using large amounts of agrochemicals.

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