



## Barcos varados en el monte. Restos del progreso en un río fantasma [

2015

text (article)

Analítica

In this article, I examine the debris that modernist projects leave in space and the ways in which these vestiges are interpreted, generations later, by people haunted by the long-term reverberations of their ruination. Drawing on theories of negativity, I look at local memories woven around these spatial sedimentations with the aim of examining the interpenetration of space, history, decline, and subjectivity. My narrative focuses on the remains of steamships that the attempts to turn the Bermejo River into a commercial fluvial route left around the town of Rivadavia in the Gran Chaco region of northern Argentina. In the 1860s and 1870s, businessmen and officials hailed the navigation of Bermejo as a project that would bring progress and prosperity to a savage region under the control of indigenous groups. Shortly thereafter, the Bermejo shifted its course, the navigation schemes collapsed, and Rivadavia entered a period of decline from which it never fully recovered. In this article, I examine how local views of the debris of ships and of a monument erected to commemorate them evoke multiple absences, chief among them that of the progress that the ships were expected to bring to the Chaco

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