

# The Pilagá of the Argentine Chaco through an exoticizing and ethnographic lens: The Swedish documentary film *Following Indian trails by the Pilcomayo River*

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## Abstract

In this article, we explore how traveling relates to image production and how transcultural filmic representations both uphold and are sustained by a “coloniality of seeing.” We pay special attention to the historical conditions of film making in an expedition context and the expectations associated with early film in Sweden. We discuss this through the study of the documentary film *Following Indian Trails by the Pilcomayo River*, which was recorded during a Swedish expedition to the Argentine Chaco in 1920 and later released in Stockholm in 1950 during a private screening organized by the Swedish Chaco Travellers Association. We argue that the film presents an account inspired by classic ethnography which rescues and puts into circulation images of indigenous people from the “impenetrable” and “savage” Chaco. The ethnographic emphasis in the narrative seems to have shifted with time as it was probably only partly present during the shooting of the footage. In the narrative mode of “monstration,” when bodies meet machines “in the field,” native performances are presented as an “unstaged” and realist spectacle. Later in the 1950 macro-“narration,” encompassing the final cutting and editing of the original footage, fragments of spectacle are systematized into an ethnographic description of primitive life.



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la cámara, devolución por la memoria (Trilce, Buenos Aires, 2010), *Identidades en foco. Fotografía e investigación social* (IIGHI-CONICET/FADyCC-UNNE, 2011), *Memoria e imaginario en el Nordeste Argentino. Escritura, oralidad e imagen* (Prohistoria, 2013).

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This article's discussion and analysis focus on the production processes and visual narrative of the documentary *Following Indian Trails by the Pilcomayo River*.<sup>1</sup> This silent<sup>2</sup> film, which is 50 minutes long, was directed by Wilhelm Hansson and filmed in 1920 during a Swedish expedition to the Pilcomayo River in the Argentine Chaco<sup>3</sup> that was led by Gustav Emil Haeger. It was released in Sweden in 1950 with the support of the Swedish Chaco Travellers Association<sup>4</sup> and is considered a re-edited version of the first documentary feature film of the Chaco. It narrates the journey of the expedition, showing different landscapes and scenes from the everyday lives of indigenous Pilagá,<sup>5</sup> *gauchos*, and *criollo* settlers through photographic and filmic images and explanatory text slides.

This article explores the relationship between expedition and representation by attending an interesting case of how traveling relates to image production. The analysis of the film's different contexts of production and editing establishes a fertile dialog between what Gaudreault calls "monstration" and "narration." He emphasizes how these two narrative modes operate in film: "monstration" is associated with shooting the footage, a sort of "micro-narrative" upon which another narrative is constructed by the narrator through edition and scriptwriting.<sup>6</sup> We have found that in the film, the mode of "narration" imposes upon the represented subjects a Eurocentric discourse, informed by a "coloniality of seeing." In contrast, the "micro-narratives," which are obtained in the field, have transcultural potential since they are negotiated between the filmmaker and the "represented" in an asymmetrical contact zone. That is to say, we aim to examine the representation of the "other" as it operates within and toward a Eurocentric "coloniality of seeing." As Shohat and Stam argue, Eurocentricism operates as "a form of vestigial thinking which per-

meates and structures contemporary practices and representations even after the formal end of colonialism."<sup>7</sup> The "coloniality of seeing" is linked to other central concepts in the postcolonial theory such as "coloniality of power" and "coloniality of knowledge." Anibal Quijano, who coined this terminology, argues that the structures of power and knowledge in Latin America, before as well as after its political independence from Europe, both uphold and are sustained by and through Eurocentric images.<sup>8</sup>

Joaquín Barriendos further develops this concept into what he calls "coloniality of seeing," characterized by "the presence of a matrix of colonialism that underlies all visual schemes based on polarization and inferiority between the observing subject and the object (or subject) observed."<sup>9</sup> In the film, we analyse some visual stereotypes, or "archive-images" that have been informed by this historically constructed "coloniality of seeing."<sup>10</sup> As mentioned in this article, we also consider that there exist transcultural elements in filmic images that escape an all-encompassing discourse of imposed coloniality. Even though Mary Louise Pratt focuses her analysis on travel writing, we consider that her concepts of transculturalism and contact zone are useful in our filmic analysis. Although the encounter and relationship between the traveler and the colonized are asymmetrical, the traveling and the narratives it has generated guarantee what Pratt calls a "contact zone." This zone permits a shared spatial and temporal presence of subjects previously separated geographically and historically, a place where these subjects' paths intersect.<sup>11</sup> The transcultural potential of these narratives lies in the colonial encounters' dimensions of interaction and improvisation, which are at times ignored or suppressed in diffusionist explanations of conquest and domination.<sup>12</sup>

We also discuss some historical, social, and cultural conditions surrounding the expedition and making of the film, as well as the development of the documentary film as a filmic genre, especially the ethnographic documentary. The latter was in its early stages at the time the footage was shot (1920) and when premiered in its first version (1922). Later, in the 1950s, when the film appeared in its re-edited version, ethnographic film had already been established as a genre.<sup>13</sup> At that time, different indigenous peoples of South America were a common topic in documentaries as well as in fiction films.<sup>14</sup> We argue that the film presents intersections between anthropological concepts and topics of exoticism and romantic nostalgia. We sustain our point by discussing the place of both filmic travelogs about exotic places in Swedish society in the interwar period, as well as anthropological texts about Chaco indigenous groups published in Sweden. Thus, this analysis seeks to understand the transcultural narrative construction of these images of South American indigenous people that were circulating in northern Europe in the early twentieth century in terms of their coloniality and in dialog with other filmic material that was produced at the time.

Ethnographic films are characterized by the filmmaker's interest in establishing and communicating a view on "other cultures," assuming that the camera allows for the "visibilization" of certain tangible and intangible aspects of their culture. Ethnographic documentaries can be made by anthropologists, ethnographers,<sup>15</sup> or other emitters (filmmakers, travelers, journalists, etc.) who pursue an ethnographic motive, by building a narrative that elicits an interest in these "others" through the representation of their social and cultural lives. This originally meant a kind of documentary characterized as being "objectivist" and "naturalistic" (i.e. without the participation of the "actors" in the representation of their culture), something that has been questioned by David MacDougall, one of the leading figures in visual anthropology.<sup>16</sup> Elisenda Ardevol notes that "ethnographic film is a combination of two techniques: the cinematographic production and ethnographic description."<sup>17</sup> In our case, we stress that these two techniques are not necessarily implemented simultaneously; rather, they occur in varying degrees across time and throughout the production process.

The expedition members did not express in their writings the exact purpose of shooting a film, but their comments suggest that they saw a commercial potential in turning the footage into spectacle. At the time, the cinematographic form of spectacle included "travelogs" or "actualities," which are "short films shot around the world, nominally 'unstaged', although many were documents of performances, dances, processions, and parades."<sup>18</sup> As Catherine Russell claims, early cinema had its own logic of spectacle: whatever was filmed was turned into spectacle, and collecting filmic images of "native people" and their human bodies in movement was popular in early actuality filmmaking.<sup>19</sup> It is also possible to include in our analysis Fatimah Tobing Rony's reformulation of Haraway's concept of "taxidermy,"<sup>20</sup> which she applies to the representations of the "colonized body" which cinema, understood as social practice, generated during the first third of the twentieth century. According to Rony, this form of representation encouraged a "romantic view of the primitive," untainted by Western civilization, as a resident of a prehistoric time in which the past is presented as innocent and picturesque, denying the members of these communities any type of historic character. From this viewpoint, struggles against colonial rule or the problematic incorporation of Western lifestyles are kept hidden and silenced. The ethnographic object is "staged" in order to seem "unstaged" and more real to the audience. This form of representation insists on maintaining the filmic fiction that shooting a film does not alter reality.<sup>21</sup>

Although nothing indicates up until now that the expedition members initially intended to contribute to the anthropology of the indigenous people of the Chaco, we argue that the final edition which was released in 1950 contains various narrative elements which pertain to the ethnographic genre. That is to say, the film contains visual and textual narratives which combine and juxtapose discursive elements common in early ethnographic film, travelogs, and actualities.

We assert the hypothesis that the film's ethnographic lens pertains mostly to the guide of the expedition and the documentary's scriptwriter, Mauricio Jespersen. This lens is based on his perception of the indigenous people with whom he had contact since his arrival in Argentina in 1913, first in the province of Santa Fe and later

in Formosa. His view also relates to the endangered “living relics” that Europeans of the time were “expecting to see,” associated with sacralized primitivism and a nostalgic feeling. Nonetheless, the subjects and matters presented in the documentary also respond to Jespersen’s reading of anthropological literature, especially that written by the Swedish ethnographer Erland Nordenskiöld, who had traveled the region at the beginning of the twentieth century. We also maintain that the final act of “editing” the film, which was entrusted to Jespersen after Hansson’s death, was inspired by the ethnographic film genre, especially the German films about the indigenous people of the Gran Chaco, which had by the 1950s acquired a certain status.

We thus claim that Jespersen, who turns the Pilagá into the main subject of the film, was deeply informed by not only his long-standing personal experience in the Chaco but also the place that Chaco and its people had come to represent in some Swedish circles during World War II. On the one hand, there was a commemorative nostalgia surrounding the Chaco travelers gathered in Sweden in the 1940s and 1950s, and, on the other hand, a growing scientific interest in films containing ethnographic data. In this trans-cultural and “transtemporal” filmic production, Hansson undertakes the “capture” of images, the “monstration” of the expedition, while Jespersen, as the final narrator, tells the filmic tale of the Pilagá through the acts of editing and script-writing, inspired by ethnographic description.

### THE HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL CONDITIONS OF THE EXPEDITION AND THE FILM

We present the rare tale of the life of a filmic object. The film *Following Indian trails by the Pilcomayo River* is today a museum–archive object, and it has lately awakened great interest in Argentina among historians and anthropologists who study Chaco. It was premiered in 1950 to commemorate the expedition which shot the footage in 1920 and to pay tribute in more general terms to Swedish adventurers and travelers of the South American Chaco. It was screened outside movie theatres’ commercial and artistic circuits in a gala context organized by the Swedish Chaco Travellers’ Association, its main audience being

the Swedish-Argentine community in Stockholm. The private nature of its screening might explain why it never entered the national film history of Sweden<sup>22</sup> and why few scholars and film critics know of its existence.

Nonetheless, before the film acquired a memorial, scientific, and heritage status, the photographer and filmmaker Hansson tried its success as entertainment or infotainment in the years after his return from Chaco. The filmic footage was actually screened as a 60-minute feature film at Viktoriasalen in Stockholm in 1922 under the titles *With Stockholmers amongst redskins* and *Amongst Indians and Gauchos*.<sup>23</sup> Some scenes were also used as newsreels and as preludes to feature films shown at cinemas in Sweden, Germany, Italy, and France between 1921 and 1943. Even so, as expressed by Hansson, the actual economic gains from its commercialization were much lower than he had expected.<sup>24</sup>

We are interested in underlining some of the historical, social, and cultural conditions which might have contributed to the making of both the expedition and the film. Who were the members of the expedition, what social class did they belong to, and what interests did these Swedes have in Argentina?

Gustav Emil Haeger held the rank of lieutenant for the Svea artilleri, the Swedish Army artillery regiment. He was also known to have participated as a major in Finland’s Civil War, during which the Swedish government remained neutral but individual Swedish citizens came to the aid of the Whites. Lieutenant Per Svanbeck, the expedition’s cartographer, also participated in this war as a Swedish citizen who flew, together with John-Allan Hygerth, the first plane which was bought and delivered to the Whites in Finland in 1918.<sup>25</sup> The third member, Wilhelm Hansson, was known for acting, especially for his leading role in Mauritz Stiller’s early feature *Hämmaren* (*The Avenger*, 1915). Stiller, who was born in Finland, had worked at the Swedish Theatre in Turku (Åbo Svenska Teater) before arriving in Sweden.

All three were Swedish citizens who had strong personal relations and sympathy with Finland, especially the Swedish-speaking community in Finland. Mauritz Jespersen was the only one of the four expedition members with university studies. He obtained a *fil. kand* (bachelor) from Lund University before starting his travels in

1912. He first traveled to Monte Carlo, then to Genova, and in 1913 he arrived at Buenos Aires as a sailor. The biographical data and the nature of the expedition indicate that all four members came from the better standing social classes in Sweden: in the case of two, this is shown by their high rank of Lieutenant; in the case of one, it is indicated by his university degree; and the fourth's social standing is reflected by his keen interest in and knowledge of the seventh and upcoming art (i.e. cinema), an expensive hobby at the time.

Haeger had brought along Hansson for the exclusive purpose of filming and taking photographs. Although not remembered today as an important director in Swedish film history,<sup>26</sup> we consider that Hansson belonged to a reduced group of amateur filmmakers who were interested in and could afford to acquire and experiment with the new technology of film. In 1920 in Sweden, it was common for movie makers to refer to themselves as amateurs and actually take pride in their amateurism. This is the case with one of Sweden's first filmmakers, Helmer Bäckström. This changed in the 1950s, when more people gained access to film technology which called for a distinction between professional and amateur filmmakers. Photography and filmmaking both in Sweden and abroad should thus be regarded as class-related media practices.<sup>27</sup>

What did it take to travel from Sweden to Chaco in the 1920s? Travel is materially made possible by infrastructure and means of transport. As these are modified and revolutionized, the horizons of travel are expanded, and places which once were deemed distant seem closer. In 1920, Sweden and Argentina were more connected logistically and seemed closer than ever. As a result of growing trade between the two countries, Axel Johnson inaugurated in 1904 the first maritime route for steamboats between Gothenburg and Buenos Aires. As of 1909, there was a boat every 5 weeks, and a few years later the frequency increased to one every 3 weeks.<sup>28</sup> Haeger, Svanbeck, and Hansson left Stockholm in May 1920, but it is uncertain on what date they arrived at Buenos Aires. Their original plan was to explore mining possibilities in Patagonia, but this changed in Buenos Aires when Sven Hedén, director of the company SKF in Argentina, introduced the party to Mauritz Jespersen.<sup>29</sup> Although certain local Argentine *uppdragsgivare* (employers) are

mentioned in the archive material, such as the Museo de Ciencias Naturales (Natural Science Museum) in La Plata, it seems that Haeger alone financed the expedition. In the Argentine capital, it was decided and arranged that Jespersen would lead and guide the expedition to Formosa and the Pilcomayo River.<sup>30</sup>

The objectives of the expedition and means to achieve them are explicitly expressed by Hansson:

We were to study the feasibility of installing colonies and exploiting natural resources by carrying out the necessary measurements and cartographic work. In addition, a film was to be made, a collection of ethnographic objects was to be put together and some scientific studies were to be carried out at the request of the Museum of La Plata.<sup>31</sup>

Nonetheless, in a manuscript used for a radio lecture delivered by Jespersen on February 28, 1951, the commercial and colonizing aspects of the enterprise are silenced: "the aim of the expedition was to make a film about the life of the Toba-Pilagá population who lived on the banks of the Pilcomayo River in the National Territory of Formosa in the Argentine Chaco."<sup>32</sup> The purpose of the expedition is reinvented 31 years after it took place, this time oriented by the ethnographic value that Jespersen had sought to stress in the commemoration of the expedition and movie screening in 1950. It is also possible that this silencing is due to the personal advantage that Jespersen drew from the studies carried out during the expedition. Already in 1921, he started his own cotton plantation, Campo Luminoso, in Formosa a short distance from the Pilcomayo River; and then in 1922, 1 year after Haeger passed away, he was hired by a financial firm in Buenos Aires to colonize an area of 1 million hectares.<sup>33</sup>

At the same time, we should understand the expedition's colonizing interest in the context of the larger settler expansion in the Argentine Chaco, which was driven partly on the initiative of the Argentine state, and where regional and foreign capital played a prominent role.<sup>34</sup> Consequently, the visual and textual discourse in the documentary not only is *exoticizing* but also naturalizes a social order in which the state, the *criollos*, and the European settlers have the right to colonize the recently conquered indigenous territory.

## EARLY FILM IN SWEDEN: THE ENTERTAINING POWER OF EXOTICISM, TRAVEL, AND REALISM

Hansson expected the exhibition of the film material and the photographs to generate profits in Europe. In this sense, cinema replaced the live exhibitions or so-called human zoos,<sup>35</sup> that were common in nineteenth-century Europe. When writing about the results of the expedition in 1943, Hansson regrets the commercial failure of the film as a product and at no point mentions his first film about the Chaco, which premiered in Stockholm in 1922.<sup>36</sup>

To understand the expectations that the expedition members had on making a film, we need to consider the place of documentary film, expedition film, and newsreel inside and outside Swedish movie theatres at the beginning of the twentieth century. In the case of Sweden, the great quantity of screenings outside of the movie theatre context is to be taken into account when dealing with filmic production and reception in this country. Although the first movie theatre in Sweden opened in 1907, many films were shown before and after this year, not at markets as was the case in other European countries, but at places related to social movements such as the sobriety movement and Free Churches.<sup>37</sup> Hansson used many of these types of venues to speak about the expedition. He claims that he gave thousands of lectures, and presented images at associations, study circles, schools, and clubs in Sweden and Finland.<sup>38</sup> It is possible that some of these venues had the possibility to screen films.

As mentioned in this article, we know that the footage filmed during the expedition was screened at Victoriasalen in Stockholm, and as a prelude to feature films across Europe. When it comes to the use of expedition film in the form of a newsreel and feature film at movie theatres, we know, thanks to Furhammar's mapping of early documentary film in the interwar period of the 1920s and 1930s, that there was a growing tradition and market for the production and consumption of filmic images depicting "the nearby and local" as well as "foreign places."<sup>39</sup> There is no indication that there existed an interest in Sweden to show the aftermath of World War I in neighboring European countries. On the one hand, a market for these depictions was developing, and the film

companies saw the possibility of making profits; and, on the other hand, scientifically oriented expeditions and travelers saw the potential of film as a documentation medium in which to preserve observations, findings, and research results.<sup>40</sup> It is in this context that films like *Bland vildar och vilda djur* (*Amongst Savages and Wild Animals*) and *Med prins Wilhelm på afrikanska jaktstigar* (*With Prince Wilhelm on African Hunting Tracks*) were shot in exotic and foreign places and premiered in Sweden, both in 1922. Oscar Olsson made these two contemporary feature films from the material he shot during expeditions to British East Africa in 1919–1921. Olsson's Africa films can be seen as examples of touristic edutainment.<sup>41</sup> According to Jernudd, early "travelogs" were often considered a substitute for actual traveling. They can even be seen as a cross between anthropology and education. The travelog is defined by Roby (from the corpus that she analyses going from 1898 to 1922) as containing common denominators such as being short; opening and finishing with panorama shots of a landscape, port, or city; containing a map to illustrate the route; and showing the travels through point of view (normally that of a bourgeois tourist). It was also common that the presence of the camera was not hidden, the white tourist was shown beside the natives as an element of humor and there was an interest in capturing the movements of dances and rituals.<sup>42</sup>

## TRAVELERS AND TRAVELING TO CHACO

The role played by voyages of exploration to the Gran Chaco during the nineteenth century has received significant attention.<sup>43</sup> As in other parts of the Americas, European expeditions were expressed through text and images. However, there are few studies that analyse such ventures into this region during the twentieth century, and even fewer that focus specifically on the role played by images.

Many expeditions to Chaco were made in the name of science, although this "noble" motive of travel has many times been combined with economic and political interests. The beginning of the twentieth century is of particular interest since expeditions were at this time drawn to these border areas as a way to gain knowledge about



territories which had recently been incorporated into the domain of the national states of Argentina, Paraguay, and Bolivia. During the first decades of the twentieth century, these three national states had divided up the Chaco into corresponding portions. The indigenous population was being “subjugated,” while colonization projects were carried out with a gradual incorporation of these territories, including the Argentine Chaco, into the national economic production processes.<sup>44</sup> Voyages of exploration and expeditions undertaken to this region at the time are to be understood and viewed in light of these political, social, and economic contexts.

In Sweden, a scientific interest in the indigenous population of the Chaco and a continuous contact between Gothenburg and this region were born during Erland Nordenskiöld’s second expedition to South America (1901–1902), also known as the Swedish Chaco Cordillera expedition. In fact, Nordenskiöld returns to the region in 1908–1909 to continue his investigations. It is during the first half of the twentieth century that a new academic tradition is founded by Nordic ethnologists, which focuses specifically on ethnographic fieldwork in the Gran Chaco as well as other regions of South America. In Gothenburg, a school of thought is established which later would become known as the Nordenskiöld School.<sup>45</sup> Several scholars who made expeditions to the same region studied with Nordenskiöld, such as Rafael Karsten from Finland, Alfred Métraux from Switzerland, and Stig Rydén from Sweden. This has led to a strong link during the first half of the twentieth century between two such distant and distinct areas as Sweden and the Gran Chaco. Actually, Erland Nordenskiöld himself, the botanist Carl Skottsberg, the traveler and aristocrat Eric Von Rosen, and the anthropologist and writer Gustaf Bolinder, to mention only a few, dedicated large parts of their lives to the diffusion of South American indigenous culture to a broad Nordic public. According to Mörner,<sup>46</sup> the degree of attention paid by diverse sectors of the population in Sweden and even Scandinavia to the Latin American indigenous question probably does not have a parallel in other European countries.

In the 1920s and 1930s, many explorers of different nationalities traveled through Gran Chaco and produced important visual sources—especially photographs. Besides Haeger’s expedi-

tion, the Anchorena Expedition to Chaco (1918, Argentina and Bolivia); Montt and Fialho Expedition to Alto Paraguay, Rio Apa, and Matto Grosso (1924);<sup>47</sup> and von Zakrzewski Expedition to the Argentine and Bolivian Chaco (ca. 1915) are worth mentioning. In these expeditions, the main interest and focus were on hunting. Nevertheless, it also seems that they had some geopolitical interest in these territories.<sup>48</sup> A few years after Haeger’s expedition to the Pilcomayo, foreign naturalists and anthropologists such as Métraux (during different expeditions as of 1928) and the German ethnographer and zoologist Hans Krieg (in the 1930s) showed a growing interest in this region, producing important visual sources: mostly photographs, but also a documentary film. *Indianer* was released in Berlin in 1940. Another edition is *Indianerleben im Gran Chaco*, edited in 1950 by the German Institut für Wissenschaftlichen Film (IWF). The footage for both films was shot during expeditions to Chaco in 1925–1927 and 1931–1932. The IWF edited many films about the indigenous people of Latin America.

This means that although photography had entered the region quite early, recording moving images was only slowly emerging in Argentina, especially in peripheral areas such as Chaco. The practice of filming indigenous groups was introduced in the Pilcomayo area of Chaco in 1920 by a group of Swedish explorers who articulated an economic interest in the land with an *exoticizing* view of the indigenous population.

## THE EXPEDITION AND THE MAKING OF THE FILM

Haeger’s expedition to the Pilcomayo takes place in the context and tradition of expeditionary traveling to Chaco as described here. According to the itinerary marked on the map and used as an illustration in the film, the expedition set out from Buenos Aires traveling northwards, eventually reaching Km.263—today known as Pozo del Tigre—on the Formosa railway branch. From Haeger’s diary,<sup>49</sup> written during the course of the expedition, we know that they traveled by boat on the Paraná River to the city of Formosa, where they continued by train on tracks that had been newly built by the national government thanks to British investments. The last stop in 1920 was called “km 263,”<sup>50</sup> which indicated its distance

from the city of Formosa. This was as close as they could come to the Pilagá by means of modern transport; the rest would be carried out on mules and by foot. On September 17, 1920, they headed into what they called the “impenetrable bush” toward the indigenous *tolderias* of the Pilagá communities along the Pilcomayo, where they were received by the head *cacique* Nelagadik.<sup>51</sup> It is interesting to note that, as revealed by the archive material, none of the members had been trained in anthropological or ethnographic methods, and the expedition lacked endorsement or funding from any scientific institution in Sweden. On this last point, it bears resemblances with the Chaco Cordillera expedition (1901–1902) led by Erland Nordenskiöld and funded privately by its members, especially Eric Von Rosen. The difference between the two expeditions lay not only in the clearly stated scientific purpose of the Chaco Cordillera expedition and its members’ scientific training (von Rosen had e.g. studied ethnography with the Swedish anthropologist Hjalmar Stolpe) but also in how these expeditions have been remembered by the discipline of anthropology in the Nordic countries and in Argentina, based on what their members became after having completed the endeavour.

The way in which Haeger’s expedition was organized called for a division of roles in which the tasks related to the production of the film were intertwined with the different functions undertaken by the expedition members: “Hansson together with Don Mauricio would film the indians in their camps, Haeger with the help of Manuel would study the flora and Svanbeck was to be in charge of their own camp site [...] He was also expected to collect ethnographic material and draw maps of the explored areas.”<sup>52</sup> It is also important to consider the technical possibilities and limitations of making an expedition to a faraway place which is compatible with the presence and handling of film equipment and the staging of scenes. In his diary, Haeger mentions a big and a small camera, and many of the entries include descriptions of preparations for filming at night and for long absences during the day as the cameras were installed in order to capture wildlife.

As mentioned before, Mauricio Jespersen and Wilhelm Hansson were the two key actors during the different stages of the production process of the documentary, from the shooting in 1920 to the

editing between 1947 and 1950. The sources<sup>53</sup> indicate that Jespersen accompanied Hansson during filming in the Pilagá communities, and when Hansson passed away in 1948 Jespersen wrote the final script and finished editing the film.

In their texts, both Hansson and Jespersen describe how they negotiated with the head chief of the communities to receive a permit to stay on indigenous land and shoot a movie there. According to Hansson:

After several diplomatic negotiations, conducted through messengers and gifts, we had a meeting with the chief Nelagadik, an entertaining and impressive episode, during which we obtained a formal permission to stay, hunt and fish in their territory. I was even allowed to circulate freely between their huts [...] at first we were operating in the larger community where Nelagadik himself resided.<sup>54</sup>

To achieve the desired results through their negotiations, Jespersen and Haeger used a resource from the time of the discovery of the Americas. Jespersen refers to himself in the third person as he writes:

Don Mauricio informed chief Nelagadik that Heager was a very powerful man [...] he showed him a newspaper from Buenos Aires with a picture of the members of the expedition, in which the chief was very interested. He was surprised by the high fidelity of the portrait [...] Don Mauricio said it was easy to achieve if one counted on a suitable machine, and that someday Nelagadik and his tribe could be portrayed the same way, since the white chief had a machine that could take pictures of everyone.<sup>55</sup>

The negotiations also included various moments of “staging” in preparation for shooting the footage in which indigenous dances and rituals were to be (re)presented as “unstaged” without the involvement of “actors.” Paradoxically, before shooting images of what should look like “unstaged performances,” the Pilagá were given a “voucher” made out of reed as a payment for collaboration and “acting.” This piece of reed could then be used as currency in an improvised trade post set up by the expedition members. The use and management of the body hereby become yet another element to be negotiated in the mounting of a “show,” which does not differ in its conception from the live indigenous exhibitions



so common in Europe in the twentieth century as well as those put up in the 1920s and 1930s in Buenos Aires portraying Paraguay's indigenous population.<sup>56</sup> As Russell would argue, such a show involved bodies in movement and was presented as unstaged and authentically primitive.

However, it is precisely because these micro-narratives are negotiated in the field that we can claim that they are transcultural. The Pilagá in their acting and through the movement of their bodies are also narrating what they suppose is expected in the staging of primitive life. Even though the audio-visual narration is based on an exoticizing European gaze, the mode of "monstration" is constructed in an asymmetrical dialog between the filmmaker and the filmed body, the colonizer and the colonized.<sup>57</sup>

The expedition not only was interested in collecting photographic and filmic images, but also put together some ethnographic collections which were sent to different Nordic scientific institutions: to Erland Nordenskiöld at the Museum of Gothenburg, Gerhard Lindblom at the State Ethnographic Museum in Stockholm, and Rafael Karsten at the National Museum of Helsinki.<sup>58</sup> The objects may have been collected for commercial reasons and not necessarily by request from these institutions. We should note that it was common during this period for museums in Scandinavia to buy ethnographic material through private donations. These acquisitions usually involved three different actors; the traveler, explorer, and scientist who had obtained the material in the field; the museum director aspiring to increase his valuable collections; and the patrons, commonly belonging to the upper class. The latter would, through generous donations that allowed the museum to purchase valuable objects, acquire social status by being named on several occasions by the institution.<sup>59</sup>

### **VISUAL AND TEXTUAL NARRATIVE IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE ARGENTINE CHACO NATIVES**

To (re)construct and analyse the narrative, we use published and unpublished written sources<sup>60</sup> and the film (images and written inserts). We believe, as suggested by Ginzburg,<sup>61</sup> that archival records and books are imbued with history. They contain representations of a past reality that we can

reconstruct partially thanks to voluntary and involuntary elements, without ever losing sight of the author's intentions. In this sense, these sources can offer us clues that make it possible to reconstruct the documentary's production process, the objectives of the expedition, as well as the technical and ideological conditions<sup>62</sup> that made a certain aesthetic effect possible.

The narrative of the 1950 film was based on certain ethnographic criteria which were not usually found in travelers who lacked training in anthropology.<sup>63</sup> But the film also contains *exoticizing* assumptions about the Chaco region upheld by the members of the Swedish expedition. We analyse both aspects based on the visual narrative, the inserts in the film, and Jespersen's published and unpublished writings. We clarify again that these audio-visual discourses present both analytical complexity and density in the construction of meaning, to which the script and the editing process comprise one of the possible entries.<sup>64</sup>

The footage presents us with an ethnographic discourse that "rescues" and puts into circulation images portraying the indigenous inhabitants of the "impregnable" and "savage" Chaco. Here, concepts such as "primitive" versus "civilized" work as oppositional forces, and the camera operates as an element that contributes to stressing that confrontation. Per Olov Qvist describes a similar situation when contextualizing Swedish film of the 1930s. He relates the crisis years to an interest in primitivism and the production of film depicting nature and exotic lands and people.<sup>65</sup> Furhammar, however, argues that during the 1930s the exotic travelog (*reseskildring*) lost its ambition for authenticity, partly due to the incorporation of complicated sound equipment and also because sound enhanced film's power of suggestion—it was now possible for one to relate to the images through a speaker voice, something which both the newsreel and the short film benefited from.<sup>66</sup>

With respect to the representations of South American indigenous people, certain stereotypes are (re)produced in the film such as nude people bonding with nature in a mythical life. These images synthesize the idea of "naturalized" primitivism, as opposed to modern life and industrialized culture, evoking nostalgia for the origins of humankind. The narrator chose a poetic and mythical image of the indigenous Pilagá consistent

with a nostalgic sense, discarding a rebellious and combative image of the indigenous groups of Gran Chaco. They are shown as living a primitive life without being portrayed as dangerous.<sup>67</sup> These images were consistent with contemporary screen attractions topics. They are, in Barriendos words, “archive-images,” which means that they are constructed on top of historical ones, which they are informed by. The representation of the hunter is another example of “archive-images” or stereotypes, an image already present in Renaissance portulan charts. Other examples include the image sequence of dancing, which has been repeated for centuries in textual narratives.

If we analyse the literary works published by Jespersen,—*En Lundensare i Chaco (A Native Man from Lund in Chaco)* from 1941, *En Svensk Caballero vid Pilcomayo (A Swedish Gentleman by the Pilcomayo Riverside)* published in 1942, and *I Vildmarkens Våld (Under the Prevalence of the Desert)* also published in 1942—the representations of the Chaco region and its inhabitants are both *exoticizing* and romanticized. In both the film and Jespersen’s literature, the narrative refers to a social imaginary of “the savage indigenous people on the verge of extinction” and “the friendly and courteous gaucho.” This imaginary legitimizes a social order in which the coming of “civilization” to the region requires, on the one hand, its colonization by *criollos*, *gauchos*, and European settlers and, on the other hand, the presence of military outposts on newly conquered indigenous territory. In the documentary, *gauchos* are represented carrying out “productive” activities in the cattle ranches, while the indigenous Pilagá are shown outside their tents, or hunting and gathering for survival. Thus, the opposition between these groups is a way of legitimizing a colonialist discourse.

In the book *I Vildmarkens Våld*,<sup>68</sup> the Chaco region is described as a frontier and militarized zone where the Argentine army, *criollo* and immigrant settlers, and *gauchos* are permanently struggling to overcome an inhospitable territory with little access to fresh water. Besides, this narrative depicts how these social groups resist the numerous *malones*,<sup>69</sup> led by the native Mocoví, in order to transform this region into a productive area. In the title of the book, Jespersen uses the Swedish word *Vildmark*, which means “unspoiled land” or “wilderness.” This word can be asso-

ciated with the concept of “desert,” which was used by the Argentine political elites, among others, to refer to the Pampa, Patagonia, and Chaco regions while striving to contribute to the national state building at the end of the nineteenth century. As Jespersen puts it, “Civilization had not yet reached these Indians.”<sup>70</sup>

## BETWEEN SCREEN ATTRACTIONS AND ANTHROPOLOGICAL DATA

As argued in this article, Hansson’s capture of images and Jespersen’s literary writing are based on *exoticizing* and romantic preconceptions. On the one hand, we should take into account that the filming of these documentaries was not necessarily based on a previously written script. Instead, as described here, the scenes were often improvised and “negotiated” in the field, thereby setting up certain limits as to what could be filmed and represented. On the other hand, Jespersen’s scriptwriting, almost 30 years after the expedition, is another element to consider in the discursive construction of the documentary: “monstration” and “narration,” in terms of micro-narrative and macro-narrative forms, are associated with these two moments in time. It is important to emphasize the film’s character of serving as a “gateway” into the cultural and ethnographic contexts of Chaco. This is done by deploying a representation model commonly used in the narrative of travelers, where emphases on the journey, the route, and the movement constitute core elements of the exotic experience, implying a process of distancing both culturally and spatially. This discourse is supported by the historically constituted exoticist imaginary of Chaco.<sup>71</sup>

However, the script was also based on certain criteria commonly found in ethnographic texts, which is why this film can be included in the ethnographic genre. Some of the central subjects and methods developed in classic anthropology,<sup>72</sup> including the description of “primitive” peoples’ social institutions as well as the production techniques, usage, and functionality of material culture, are present in part of the argumentative and visual organization of the film. This classic ethnographic objective was an integral part of the “salvage” anthropology common in European and North American universities during the first half of the twentieth century. It consisted in precisely

“salvaging” the practices, traditional knowledge, and institutions pertaining to “endangered cultures and societies” which would otherwise be lost to science by means of observation and documentation.<sup>73</sup> These concerns intersect in the filmic images taken by Hansson in 1920 and in the film script for the 1950 documentary written by Jespersen. They are also present in the text published by Jespersen in 1943, “Indianliv” (“Indigenous life”), which describes the way of life and social organization of the Pilagá.<sup>74</sup>

When the film focuses on the type of data which seem of interest to an ethnographer, we can assume Nordenskiöld’s influence on the scriptwriter. Jespersen mentioned him several times in his writings and referred to some of his ethnological humanistic concepts concerning the indigenous population of Chaco.<sup>75</sup> When writing in 1943 about the Pilagá, Jespersen also refers to Swedish scientists such as Eric Von Rosen and Stig Rydén, who had visited and studied the indigenous people of the Chaco. Jespersen believed that they had made great scientific contributions yet lacked a deeper kind of knowledge and insight into the indigenous communities they visited, and that this insight was something which could be acquired only by actually residing in the territory for long periods of time, as was his own case.<sup>76</sup>

It is also important to point out that the expedition’s collection of images was gradually being used and valued in scientific circles, although this might not have been the purpose when shooting them. Eric Von Rosen and Rafael Karsten were present at the public presentation of an earlier version of the documentary at a scientific institution in Stockholm in 1925.<sup>77</sup> In 1932 Karsten, who had studied with Erland Nordenskiöld in Gothenburg, published a number of Hansson’s photographs of Pilagá from the 1920 expedition<sup>78</sup> in his book *Indian Tribes of the Argentine and Bolivian Chaco*.

We argue that the ethnographic data that have been included in the film intentionally correspond to the topics of an ethnographic monograph. The observed “data” are translated into a visual record and turned into a dense and detailed description of Pilagá life, in which the Pilcomayo River is a recurrent topic, as well as the display of artefacts, objects, tools, and actions. There is even sometimes a written description of the sounds that could have been heard if the movie had not been

silent. When we compare the filmic narrative and the script produced in 1950 with the ethnographic account written in 1943 by Jespersen, “Indianliv” in the book *Chacofarare*, we argue that an ethnographic discourse is at work, in both cases operating within a “salvage” anthropology, based on the idea that the ethnographer had a duty to register a world that was about to disappear. Nordenskiöld’s 1910 book about the indigenous people of Chaco presents a similar title: *Indianliv i El Gran Chaco (Syd Amerika) (Indigenous life in the Gran Chaco, South America)*. That is to say, it is important to analyse the relationship between, on one hand, ethnography as a form of popularized narrative and vision of the social world inhabited by “others,” and, on the other hand, ethnography as scientific methodology, developed by anthropology. In the case of the visual and textual production being analysed here, the boundaries are blurred between these two types of descriptions of “others”; hence, having an ethnographic gaze does not necessarily mean taking on a scientific one.<sup>79</sup>

It is worth mentioning that the original narrative of the film, shown in 1922 under the title *Bland indianer och gauchos*<sup>80</sup> (*Among Indians and Gauchos*), had different protagonists than the version we are analysing here. The 1950 film dedicates 70% of the film to constructing an ethnographically inspired account of the tribal life of the Pilagá, using the remaining time of the film for a brief and “lighter” depiction of *criollo* and *gaucho* settlers. In contrast, both the movie title and the description–synopsis of the first version (made in 1922) indicate that the explorers and the *gauchos* were to a greater degree protagonists in 1922 than in 1950. In the case of the 1950 film, the script’s closing lines declare that a decade after the end of the expedition, white people finally seized Pilagá land, and the lifestyle which is reflected in the images of the film belongs to the world of memories. Thereby, the importance and value of the film as a visual record of a historic social world that no longer exists are emphasized. Thus, the 1950 edition accentuates both visually and textually a greater interest in as well as a greater cultural distance from the Pilagá as opposed to the *gauchos*.

Speech and sound are significant elements that are absent in the visual narrative but sought to be compensated by the inter-titles. Not only are scenes of dialog between indigenous figures

depicted but also dances. In other words, not just that which can be seen but also that which is meant to be heard are represented. Ethnographers of the time had a significant interest in the description of language. In this case, the absence of sound was both a technical and ethnographic limitation for the movie. This is something the editors tried to overcome by incorporating into the inter-titles some words in the Pilagá language. The presence of the filmmakers inside and outside of the scene is another significant factor in the visual discourse. When the narrative is about the journey, their own camps, and the ranches where they stayed, the expedition members appear on the scene together with *gauchos* and *criollo* settlers, but when the scenes are about indigenous people, the producers are located outside the scene. Sometimes, photographs have also been used as inserts in the film. In both film and photographed scenes, actors have been placed in a fashion that has facilitated the capturing of their image.<sup>81</sup>

## CONCLUSIONS

During the early twentieth century, Swedish explorers known as *forskningsresande* commonly discussed the natives of South America in their travel literature and popular lay ethnographies. The filmography of the time also reflects Swedish society's interest in images of indigenous South America. Indeed, the film's narrative structure was also largely consistent with the public's expectations. Although we do not analyse the circulation of the film, we have found information about different editions and screenings, suggestive of a positive reception in Swedish society and in other European countries.

As we have discussed in this article, the filmic material and the expedition itself gradually acquired a scientific status during the span of 30 years between the shooting and its final edition. The 1950 film presents an account inspired by classic ethnography which rescues and puts into circulation images of the indigenous people from the "impenetrable" and "savage" Chaco. The film also reflects what Quijano describes as the "coloniality of knowledge," translated through a "coloniality of seeing." Within the film, the Pilagá world is organized by anthropological structures of knowing and seeing and a popularized conception of the indigenous. And this is associated with image

production as another mode of knowledge and power. The documentary projects images that are constructed by a Eurocentric gaze and suggestive of a vanishing indigenous world. These are present in both the *narration* and *monstration* of the documentary. Transcultural micro-narratives of "what to show," "what to see," and "how to see," which are negotiated in the field, are organized in the edition—macro-narrative—in terms of "what to know" and "how to show." Multiple archive-images, stratified over preterit ones, build this "coloniality of seeing."

The visual and textual narrative presented in the 1950 film contains elements commonly used in European travelogs. A large quantity of the photographic and filmic material in the film depicts the life led by part of the indigenous population of the Argentine Chaco, with particular attention paid to traditional Pilagá dances and rituals. However, we have argued that, as the lens captures the life of the Pilagá, it adopts a tourist's perspective as well as an ethnographic gaze interested in describing the institutions at work in the community: family life, housing, hunting and gathering, games, cooking, making objects and handicraft, and so on.

The personal viewpoint of the narrators, Jespersen and Hansson, in the 1950 edition syncretizes the initial aspirations of the expedition and the documentary film. The ethnographical emphasis in the narrative was probably not present during the shooting of the material, although this emphasis takes concrete form in the narrating instance. In the narrative mode of "monstration," when bodies meet machines "in the field," native performances are presented as "unstaged" and realist spectacle. Later, in the 1950 macro-"narration," encompassing the final cutting and montage of the original footage, fragments of spectacle are systematized into an ethnographic description of primitive life.

## Notes

1. Original title in Swedish: *På Indianstigar vid Pilcomayofloden*.
2. There are some parts of the 1950 film which were originally accompanied by a musical piece, but the sound has been lost. It is mentioned in the credits as *Inkamarschen*, which was registered by Eric Von Rosen in the Tarija Valley in 1902 during the

- well-known Chaco Cordillera expedition, which constituted the foundational moment for the Americanist tradition in Gothenburg led by Erland Nordenskiöld in the first half of the twentieth century.
3. The Argentine Chaco is a geographically and historically constructed region that includes the provinces of Formosa and Chaco, as well as the east of Salta, the east of Santiago del Estero, and the northern portion of Santa Fé provinces. It is the Argentine portion of a larger region known as Gran Chaco, which is a wide, mostly semiarid plain that stretches eastward from the last slopes of the Andes to the Paraná and Paraguay rivers and north from the Pampas to Chiquitos in southeast Bolivia. The Haeger expedition took place in the northern part of the current province of Formosa, close to the Pilcomayo River which today constitutes the border with Paraguay.
  4. Original name in Swedish: *Föreningen Svenska Chacofarare*.
  5. The Pilagá live in central Formosa and are currently one of three officially recognized indigenous peoples in this Argentine province, the two others being the Wichí and the Toba or Qom. The Pilcomayo River, which also includes large wetlands, has historically constituted a significant environment for their social reproduction. This was the last region where highly mobile Pilagá and Nivaclé groups occasionally clashed with the military in the 1930s. *Gastón Gordillo Landscapes of Devils: Tensions of Place and Memory in the Argentinean Chaco* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 83.
  6. André Gaudreault, "Narration and Monstration in the Cinema", *Journal of Film and Video* 39, no. 2 (1987), <http://jstor.org/stable/20687768> (accessed March 23, 2011).
  7. Ella Shohat and Robert Stam, *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 2.
  8. Anibal Quijano, "Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Social Classification", in *Coloniality at Large: Latin America and the Postcolonial Debate*, ed. Mabel Moraña, Enrique Dussel, and Carlos A. Jáuregui (London: Duke University Press, 2008), 181–224.
  9. Joaquín Barriendos, "La colonialidad del ver. Hacia un nuevo diálogo epistémico", *Nómadas* 35 (2011): 15.
  10. Barriendos asserts that the "archive-images" are formed by multiple representations sedimented over each other from which a certain integrity and iconic hermeneutic unity are formed. Barriendos, "La colonialidad del ver", 27.
  11. Mary Louise Pratt, *Ojos imperiales. Literatura de viajes y transculturación* (Quilmes: Universidad Nacional de Quilmes, 1997), 26.
  12. *Ibid.*, 26–7.
  13. In spite of the fact that "ethnographic film" is a well-established genre in the history of documentary cinema, it was in its initial phases when the photographer Wilhelm Hansson shot the footage during Haeger's expedition. Actually, the period between the year when it was shot (1920), and the year when the version we know of today was edited and premiered (1950) can be seen as the lapse of time during which the ethnographic film was consolidated as a genre.
  14. See Gaston Carreño, "Miradas y alteridad. La imagen del indígena latinoamericano en la producción audiovisual" (master's thesis, Universidad de Chile, 2007).
  15. Anthropology has used representation as a piece of information about a culture and as a research method. See Elisenda Ardevol, "Por una antropología de la mirada: etnografía, representación y construcción de datos audiovisuales", *Revista de Dialectología y Tradiciones Populares* 53 (1998): 217–40.
  16. David MacDougall, *Transcultural Cinema* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998).
  17. Ardevol "Por una antropología de la mirada", 220.
  18. Catherine Russell, *Experimental Ethnography: The Work of Film in the Age of Video* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 51.
  19. Russell, *Experimental Ethnography*.
  20. Fatimah Tobing Rony, *The Third Eye. Race, Cinema and Ethnographic Spectacle* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001).
  21. *Ibid.*
  22. Tytti, Söderberg-Widding, and Iversen define the concept of national cinema in terms of a country's film history that can be considered from certain stylistic and thematic parameters, related to the country's culture. It discusses national film as a counterbalance to the hegemony of Hollywood. This concept has been criticized for being merely a theoretical construction. The authors stress that it can be used as an analytical tool. Determining to which national cinema a film belongs can be tricky; it depends if one places the stress on production or reception. See Soila Tytti, Astrid Söderberg-Widding, and Gunnar Iversen, *Nordic National Cinemas* (London: Routledge, 1998). We would add in the case of documentary film that the place where it was shot can also play a role, as in the cases of the first travelogs and films shot in Argentina by foreigners.
  23. To promote the film, the cinema made the following presentation in 1922: "Movie in four parts about travels of a Swedish expedition in a partly unexplored region in central South America. 1. Following the trails of travelers in Buenos Ayres. 2. Among gauchos and herds in la Pampa. 3. Through the Desert (The Gran Chaco). 4. Visiting Toba Indigenous people. Brief introductory lecture with pictures delivered by the film's director Vilhelm Hansson." Detailed information on the index card of the film reveals that it was known under two titles: *Bland indianer och gauchos* (*Amongst*

- Indians and Gauchos*) and *Med Stockholmare bland rödskind* (*With Stockholmers amongst redskins*). The card is in the online Swedish Film Database, <http://www.sfi.se/en-GB/Swedish-film-database/Item/?type=MOVIE&itemid=17445&ref=%2ftemplates%2fSwedishFilmSearchResult.aspx%3fid%3d1225%26pslanguage%3den-GB%26searchword%3dbland+indianer+och+gauchos%26type%3dMovieTitle%26match%3dBegin%26page%3d1%26prom%3dFalse> (accessed May 15, 2013).
24. Wilhelm Hansson, "Haegers Expedition", in *Chacofarare berättas*, ed. Curt Munthe (Göteborg: Hugo Gerbers Förlag, 1943), 53–54.
  25. The war concerned the control and leadership of the Grand Duchy of Finland after it had become sovereign in 1917. The war was fought from 27 January to 15 May 1918 between the forces of the Social Democrats, commonly called the "reds," and the forces of the non-socialist, conservative-led Senate, commonly called the "whites."
  26. Actually, the movie premiered in 1922, based on the footage recorded during the expedition to Chaco, and it stands today as the only film he directed.
  27. Erik Hedling and Mats Jönsson, *Välfärdsbilder: svensk film utanför biografen. Amatörfilm, beställningsfilm, undervisningsfilm speglar 1900talets välfärdssamhälle* (Stockholm: Carlssons, 2007).
  28. This lasted until the 1950s. The boats were loaded in Gothenburg with Swedish export products and left the port of Buenos Aires full of linseeds, cereals, wool, and leather. Between 1905 and 1909, the Swedish exports to Argentina increased fivefold. See Anna Dahlstein, *Azul y oro en la Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Asociación Sueca en Buenos Aires, 1998).
  29. See "Bland indianer och gauchos" i *Veckans Krönika*, *Allas Journal* 41 (1923); and the manuscript written by Mauricio Jespersion, "Haegerska Expeditionen till Chaco", stored as part of the "Mauritz Jespersens Efterlämnade papper" collection at Lund University.
  30. Jespersion, "Haegerska Expeditionen till Chaco".
  31. Hansson, "Haegers Expedition", 53–4. The studies were requested by the biologist Carlos Bruch at the Museo de Ciencias Naturales de La Plata.
  32. Manuscript written by Mauritz Jespersion in Stockholm in 29 March 1951 titled "La expedición Haeger al Chaco en agosto-diciembre de 1920" ("The Haeger expedition to Chaco August–December 1920"), stored at the archive of Världskulturmuseet, Gothenburg.
  33. Between 22° and 24° south latitude and 60° and 62° west longitude lies the land that had been acquired by this firm in the Bolivian Chaco, north of the Pilcomayo. See Mauricio Jespersion, *En Svensk Caballero vid Pilcomayo* (Stockholm: Norstedt, 1942).
  34. Hugo Beck, *Relaciones entre blancos e indígenas en los Territorios Nacionales de Chaco y Formosa. 1885–1950* (Resistencia: IIGHI-CONICET, 1994).
  35. With regard to this, see Christian Baez and Peter Mason, *Zoológicos humanos. Fotografías de fueguinos y mapuches en el Jardín d'acclimatation de Paris, siglo XIX* (Santiago: Pehuen, 2006); and Lilian Thuram, cur., *Human Zoos. The Invention of the Savage* (Paris: Musée du Quai Branly, 2011).
  36. Hansson, "Haegers Expedition".
  37. Hedling and Jönsson, *Välfärdsbilder: svensk film utanför biografen*.
  38. Hansson "Haegers Expedition".
  39. Leif Furhammar, *Filmen i Sverige- en historia i tio kapitel och en fortsättning* (Stockholm: Dialogos i samarbete med Svenska filminstitutet, 2003); and Johan Österholm, *Civiliserade nordbor och primitiva främlingar. En kritisk diskursanalys av journal och förfilm i folkhemmets Sverige* (C-uppsats, Örebro Universitet, 2006).
  40. Ibid.
  41. Åsa Jernudd, *Oscar Olsson's African Films— Examples of Touristic Edutainment* (Örebro: Örebro Universitet, 1999).
  42. Rony, *The Third Eye*.
  43. The bibliography on travelers to the Gran Chaco is abundant, although generally the focus is on travel literature. Visual images are only dealt with in a few cases in which the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are prioritized. Among others, see Beatriz Dávila and Claudia Gotta, comps., *Narrativas del desierto, geografías de la alteridad. Viajes de cronistas, misioneros y exploradores de la Patagonia y el Chaco (siglos XVIII y XIX)* (Rosario: UNR, 2000); Mariana Giordano, *Discurso e imagen sobre el indígena chaqueño* (La Plata: Al Margen, 2004); and Ileana Sansoni, "Río Arriba, río abajo. La literatura de viajes y la exploración de los ríos interiores Orinoco, Bermejo y Pilcomayo", *Theomai* 3 (2001), <http://redalyc.uaemex.mx/redalyc/src/Inicio/ArtPdfRed.jsp?iCve=12400304> (accessed February 8, 2012).
  44. Nicolás Iñigo Carrera, *La colonización del Chaco* (Buenos Aires: CEAL, 1983).
  45. Christer Lindberg, "Anthropology on the Periphery: The Early Schools of Nordic Anthropology", in *A New History of Anthropology*, ed. Henrika Kuklick (Malden: Blackwell, 2008), 161–172.
  46. Magnus Mörner, "La imagen de América Latina en Suecia en los siglos XIX y XX", *Estudios Latinoamericanos* 6 (1980): 237–85.
  47. Known as de Bocard's Expedition, named after the expedition's guide, the naturalist Luis de Bocard.
  48. There is no bibliography on these expeditions. They are currently being studied.
  49. Stored at the archive of Världskulturmuseet, Gothenburg.
  50. The railway was seen as a way to push forward the productive frontier, to secure land close to an international border, and most importantly to bring civilization to the Chaco "desert" where savage Indians still roamed. Although the conquest of the Chaco is linked to Victorica's campaign in 1884, military expeditions are made well into the twentieth



- century in order to control and “pacify” the “fierce Indians” of the Pilcomayo. To see the concept of “Chaco desert,” see Carla Lois, “La invención del desierto chaqueño. Una aproximación a las formas de apropiación simbólica de los Territorios del Chaco en los tiempos de formación y consolidación del Estado Nación Argentino”, *Scripta Nova* 38 (1999); and Pablo Wright, “El desierto del Chaco. Geografías de la alteridad y el Estado”, in *Pasado y presente de un mundo postergado*, ed. Ana Teruel and Omar Jerez, comps. (Jujuy: UNJU, 1998), 35–56.
51. Jespersen, “La expedición de Haeger al Chaco”.
  52. *Ibid.*
  53. Among the sources that refer to this topic, see Jespersen, “La expedición de Haeger”, and also the text slides included in the film *Following Indian trails by the Pilcomayo River*. Even though the text inserted into the film is written in Swedish, we have found a Spanish version of the script, stored at the archive of Världskulturmuseet, Gothenburg.
  54. Hansson, “Haegers Expedition”, 87. The expedition members distributed among the Pilagás gifts and other objects as means of compensations; this included clothes and beads, and especially appreciated were the tobacco leaves and cigarettes from Paraguay. In the 1920s and 1930s, it was common for explorers, merchants, or scientists to trade Paraguayan tobacco for furs or other goods offered by the indigenous people. See Enrique Palavecino, “Los Indios Pilagás del Río Pilcomayo”, *Anales del Museo Nacional de Historia Natural XXXVII* (1933): 317–82.
  55. Jespersen, “La expedición de Haeger al Chaco”.
  56. See Mariana Giordano, “De Boggiani a Métraux. Ciencia antropológica y fotografía en el Gran Chaco”, *Revista Chilena de Antropología visual* 4 (2004), [http://www.antropologiavisual.cl/mariana\\_giordano.htm](http://www.antropologiavisual.cl/mariana_giordano.htm) (accessed May 15, 2013).
  57. See Mariana Giordano and Anne Gustavsson, “Entre la narrativa de viaje y el discurso antropológico. La primera filmografía en el imaginario del indígena chaqueño”, in *Memoria e imaginario en el Nordeste Argentino. Escritura, oralidad e imagen*, ed. Mariana Giordano et al. (Rosario: Prohistoria, 2013), 23–49.
  58. Giordano, “De Boggiani a Métraux ...”.
  59. Adriana Muñoz, “From Curiosa to World Culture. The History of the Latin American Collections at the Museum of World Culture in Sweden”, *GOTARC* 58 (2011).
  60. It is not our aim here to analyse the reception of the film, but we do consider the different written and visual contexts in which the expedition was (re)presented. It is important to further enquire about the representation of indigenous people from Chaco in Sweden.
  61. Carlo Ginzburg, *Threads and Traces: True, False, Fictive* (California: University of California Press, 2012).
  62. Sel and Gasloli argue that “the cinematographic technique saw its dawn thanks to its potential to profit from the representation of reality. And this is one of the consequences on an ideological level since the pursuit of benefits is reflected in both the reality which is chosen to be represented and the way it is represented. Cinema is then not ‘ideological’ in itself, but is so within the social relations it generates, including the cinematographic technique.” Susana Sel and Luis Gasloli, “A propósito de ‘Reflexiones sobre una estética del cine’”, *Herramientas* (1913), <http://www.herramienta.com.ar/print/downloads/proposito-de-reflexiones-sobre-una-estetica-del-cine-1913> (accessed March 10, 2012).
  63. At the beginning of the twentieth century. there was still in many cases a fine line between traveling and producing ethnographic descriptions that were used scientifically. Expedition members played the double role of traveler and ethnographer, producing valuable written and visual sources of the people they came across. Since anthropology as a discipline was still in the process of being institutionalized and professionalized, there were also blurred limits between a formally educated anthropologist or ethnographer and a self-taught enthusiast traveler or ethnographer who lacked training in anthropology but possibly was educated in another discipline. See George W. Stocking, “Delimitando la antropología: reflexiones históricas acerca de las fronteras de una disciplina sin fronteras”, *Revista de Antropología Social* 11 (2002): 11–38.
  64. For a filmic analysis of the documentary, see Giordano and Gustavsson, “Entre la narrativa de viaje y el discurso antropológico”.
  65. Per Olov Qvist, *Folkhemmetts bilder-modernisering, motstånd och mentalitet i den svenska 30-talsfilmen* (Lund: arkiv förlag/A-Z förlag, 1995).
  66. Furhammar, *Filmen i Sverige*.
  67. In the film, there is a reference to the historical interethnic war between the Nivaclé and the Pilagá, and there are many images showing Pilagá warriors. Nonetheless, they are not shown as dangerous or bellicose. The warrior attitude is seen as a virtue.
  68. Don Mauricio Jespersen, *I Vildmarkens våld* (Stockholm: Folket i Bilds Förlag, 1943).
  69. *Malón* is a word derived from Mapudungun and refers to a surprise raid practiced by the indigenous groups attacking towns and settlements.
  70. Jespersen, “La expedición de Haeger al Chaco”.
  71. Gordillo asserts that the Chaco emerged in various regional imaginaries as a space where barbarism was an attribute of both natural and social landscapes; forests, rivers, and marshes were mimicked in their impenetrability; and white hostility was due to the actions of indigenous groups who violently resisted the advance of civilization. Gastón Gordillo, “‘Un Rio tan salvaje e indómito como el indio toba’: una historia antropológica de la frontera del Pilcomayo”, *Desarrollo Económico* 41 (2001): 261.

72. The three assumptions upheld by classic anthropology, related to viewing the ethnographic object as an “isolated primitive,” can be found in the documentary’s visual and textual narrative: (1) The first one refers to a matter of scale—that is, these societies because of their small size and simple organization, unlike modern complex societies, could be observed as a whole. (2) The second is related to criteria of historical relevance (actually pre-historic): these simple societies were conceived as representative of the first social types known to humankind, as present relics of an archaic past. (3) The third assumption is based in this geological view of the history of humankind, which upheld that the demise of these societies was inevitable as they faced the expansion of “progress” on a global scale. Crispina Gonzalez et al., “Antropología, Nación y Poder: la construcción del objeto etnográfico en Argentina”, *RECERCA* 2 (2003): 68.
73. Ibid., 67–92.
74. Mauricio Jespersen, “Indianliv”, in *Chacofarare berättas*, ed. Curt Munthe (Göteborg: Hugo Gerbers Förlag, 1943).
75. See Erland Nordenskiöld, *Indianliv i El Gran Chaco, Syd-amerika* (Stockholm: Albert Bonniers Förlag, 1910). Both Nordenskiöld and Jespersen expressed an admiration for indigenous people.
76. Jespersen, “Indianliv”, 90.
77. In 1925, a version of the film was presented at the Geografiska sällskapet (Geographical Society) in Stockholm. The presentation took place after a ceremony in which Rafael Karsten was given the Andreeplaketten distinction by Eric Von Rosen. Karsten was another Nordic scholar who was schooled partly by Nordenskiöld and completely dedicated to the study of the magic thinking of the indigenous people of El Gran Chaco (personal communication, Ilona Salomaa, 15 August 2011).
78. Rafael Karsten, “Indian Tribes of the Argentine and Bolivian Chaco”, *Ethnological Studies* 4 (1932).
79. Notably, in their writings about the expedition and the production of the film, Hansson and Jespersen do not mention its scientific or ethnographic peculiarity, even though our (re)construction emphasizes this aspect.
80. This is one of the films which has been lost to Sweden’s film history. It is registered as having existed and was presented to the public, but there is no original or copy of the material at the Filmarkivet, Sweden’s Archival Film Collections. Kajsa Hedström, Project Manager, Filmarkivet, e-mail message to authors, 20 February 2012.
81. Although we have found the photographs belonging to the Jespersen collection, we still have not located the corpus which corresponds to the shots taken by Hansson, referred to in the film and the written sources.