

FILMS ON ICE
Cinemas of the Arctic

Scott MacKenzie and Anna Westerståhl Stenport

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TRADITIONS IN WORLD CINEMA

General editors: **Linda Badley and R. Barton Palmer**
Founding editor: **Steven Jay Schneider**

Traditions in World Cinema is a series of textbooks and monographs devoted to the analysis of currently popular and previously underexamined or undervalued film movements from around the globe. Also intended for general interest readers, the textbooks in this series offer undergraduate- and graduate-level film students accessible and comprehensive introductions to diverse traditions in world cinema. The monographs open up for advanced academic study more specialised groups of films, including those that require theoretically-oriented approaches. Both textbooks and monographs provide thorough examinations of the industrial, cultural, and socio-historical conditions of production and reception.

The flagship textbook for the series includes chapters by noted scholars on traditions of acknowledged importance (the French New Wave, German Expressionism), recent and emergent traditions (New Iranian, post-Cinema Novo), and those whose rightful claim to recognition has yet to be established (the Israeli persecution film, global found footage cinema). Other volumes concentrate on individual national, regional or global cinema traditions. As the introductory chapter to each volume makes clear, the films under discussion form a coherent group on the basis of substantive and relatively transparent, if not always obvious, commonalities. These commonalities may be formal, stylistic or thematic, and the groupings may, although they need not, be

popularly identified as genres, cycles or movements (Japanese horror, Chinese martial arts cinema, Italian Neorealism). Indeed, in cases in which a group of films is not already commonly identified as a tradition, one purpose of the volume is to establish its claim to importance and make it visible (East Central European Magical Realist cinema, Palestinian cinema).

Textbooks and monographs include:

- An introduction that clarifies the rationale for the grouping of films under examination
- A concise history of the regional, national, or transnational cinema in question
- A summary of previous published work on the tradition
- Contextual analysis of industrial, cultural and socio-historical conditions of production and reception
- Textual analysis of specific and notable films, with clear and judicious application of relevant film theoretical approaches
- Bibliograph(ies)/filmograph(ies).

Monographs may additionally include:

- Discussion of the dynamics of cross-cultural exchange in light of current research and thinking about cultural imperialism and globalisation, as well as issues of regional/national cinema or political/aesthetic movements (such as new waves, postmodernism, or identity politics)
- Interview(s) with key filmmakers working within the tradition.

INTRODUCTION: WHAT ARE ARCTIC CINEMAS?

Scott MacKenzie and Anna Westerståhl Stenport

With this book, we are intentionally coining a new conceptual rubric within World Cinema called ‘Arctic Cinemas’. This raises the question as to why we would bring together a diverse array of films made in and about the Arctic into one discrete category. We position different forms of Arctic filmmaking not typically placed in dialogue, whose interrelations are overlooked to uncover a counter-history that reveals the complexity of Arctic visual, cultural and ideological representation. *Films on Ice* is the first book to present a range of Arctic film traditions, genres, topics and practitioners, seeking to address a great cinematic diversity of representation and production practices in the region that have so often been overlooked. Engendering a dialogue between insiders and outsiders, the book’s examples are drawn from three distinct but interrelated groups: (1) films made by Arctic residents, but mostly seen in the South through film festivals, speciality TV channels, and the Internet; (2) films made outside the Arctic, typically by outsiders, and viewed mostly in the South and; (3) films made and viewed by Arctic residents through narrowcast, broadcast and alternative venues. *Films on Ice* explores, from both historical and contemporary perspectives: (a) how these three filmmaking practices interrelate with one another; (b) the stories and perceptions about the Arctic that they generate, and (c) what they teach us about the tension and mutual interdependence between local image-making and global spectatorship. *Films on Ice* challenges dominant notions of the Arctic in both popular and political culture, offering a thorough analysis of what the very concept of the Arctic has come to mean in image-making and how the term ‘The Arctic’ itself

postulates a unifying singularity that elides the political, geographic, national, transnational and linguistic differences that define and populate the region. This approach is based on the assumption that aesthetic, cultural, political, economic and scientific interests in 'The Arctic' always have been intertwined. This introduction provides a guide for understanding the present and past of the Arctic in ways that demonstrate how moving images (cinema, television, video and digital media) have been central to the very definition of the Arctic since the end of the nineteenth century. In so doing, we identify and challenge how dominant interpretive frameworks and categories of film scholarship are reframed when interpreted from the perspective of the Arctic. *Films on Ice* ultimately seeks to alter stereotypical views of the Arctic and therefore film history itself.

CRITICAL ARCTIC STUDIES AND ARCTIC CINEMAS

Current definitions of the Arctic are based on cartography, political geography or climate zones. Cartographically, the Arctic region is generally understood as 66-plus degrees North. Geopolitically, the region is composed of the eight nation states that surround the Arctic Ocean: Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden and the USA. These eight nation states are full members of the Arctic Council, alongside Permanent Participants the Arctic Athabaskan Council (AAC); the Aleut International Association (AIA); the Gwich'in Council International (GCI); the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC); the Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North (RAIPON); and the Saami Council (SC). Climatologically, the Arctic region is defined as any location in northern latitudes where the average daily summer temperature does not exceed 10 degrees Celsius (50 degrees Fahrenheit). We are both questioning and providing an alternative view of these fixed and discrete definitions of the Arctic. The emerging field of Critical Arctic Studies is a discipline united in its interest in challenging two dominant strands of Arctic research over the last decades: (1) a policy-driven governance and geopolitical-instrumentalist approach, and (2) a natural sciences model motivated by hypothesis testing and the determining of causal relationships. Both of these research approaches elide the complexities of the region's representational and cultural history. *Films on Ice*, by deliberately juxtaposing diverse examples of Arctic filmic expression, challenges narrow national or genre traditions that have previously barred them from being considered together.

Critical Arctic Studies foregrounds the necessity of analysing cultural representations and their circulation within various public spheres. Questions of representation are key to any understanding of the Arctic in both an historical and contemporary sense, and Critical Arctic Studies offers humanists

the opportunity to engage in the debate so that cultural analysis complements those of policy, governance, geopolitics and the natural sciences (for an example of this kind of Critical Arctic Studies approach, see Sörlin 2013; Bravo and Sörlin 2002; Christensen et al. 2013). Engaging with cultural representations of the Arctic is especially important in the present context, given the popular discourses surrounding climate change that are so often disseminated through moving images. Examining Arctic cinemas from a Critical Arctic Studies perspective therefore both reveals what has been excluded from the study of the Arctic thus far and reframes other discourses and approaches within a humanistic interpretive paradigm. We are thereby as interested in analysing articulations of the Arctic that homogenise as those that don't. While we argue for a heterogenous conceptualisation of the Arctic, we would be remiss in not exploring the historical drive towards homogeneity. As *Films on Ice* shows, this is not an isolated or discursively remote region: it is a profound part of a global system of representational interchange and, through moving images, has been so for over a century.

FROM THE TEDIUM AND TERROR OF ICE TO THE EXPLORATIONS AND ETHNOGRAPHIES OF DOCUMENTARY

Frozen, inhospitable, static and sterile: techniques and tropes of mass audience visual representation from the nineteenth century onward cemented the view of the Arctic as an exemplar of a sublime space overwhelmed by nature and as a point of desolation. This cultural understanding of the Arctic has been well articulated and critiqued in scholarly works representing a wide range of disciplines and points of view. A great deal of this work, while not addressing cinematic representations of the Arctic *per se*, has nevertheless set the stage for the works of many of our contributors in this volume (see, for example: Davidson 2005; Hill 2009; McGhee 2007; Potter 2007; Ryall et al. 2010; Scott 2007; Jørgensen and Sörlin, 2014). Robert David, for example, examines in *The Arctic in the British Imagination, 1818–1914* how the alien Arctic environment was technically difficult to capture in visual media: water colours froze, photographic equipment was sensitive to cold, small canvases or sketchbooks put limitations on rendering panoramic views, and draughtsmen were often amateurs (or had sometimes not even visited the Arctic themselves). Not only were techniques and media inadequate, a profound 'lack of language codes and artistic conventions' (David 2000: 12) hampered the possibility to convey the complexity of the Arctic landscape and its populations. Pictorial subject matter was perceived to be limited to seascapes, ships caught in vast expanses of ice, explorers and scientists struggling with the environment, or hunting and trapping, with representations of Inuit and indigenous populations decreasing from the mid-1800s onward (David 2000: 50).

A particular form of Arctic spectacle thereby emerged in the nineteenth-century European context which neglected diversity in motifs, perspective, figuration and, in most cases, colouration. In truth, the Arctic was indeed a visually varied and colourful landscape, as explorer and artist Julius von Payer (1895) attests in the essay 'An Artistic Expedition to the North Pole'. To most Western explorers, the Arctic was as visually disorienting as it was alienating. Blinding light in summer and consummate darkness in winter challenged clock (and photographic exposure) time, with optic atmospheric phenomena such as parheliae and sun mirages distorting ocular perception. Distance and perspective became thwarted, while reflections off the ice cast shadows and colourful prisms, creating a natural spectacle unknown in most other locations on earth. The unstable, varied, dynamic and shifting visual context of the Arctic experience thereby stands in stark contrast to the monochromatic and monotonous visual representations circulated through mass media, including early Arctic explorer and ethnographic films.

Developing means to render the spectacle of light, shadow and perspective inherent in the visual disorientation of the Arctic landscape was in no way the goal of early Arctic film. The emergence of cinema at the end of the nineteenth century led to the production of hundreds of *actualités* (an early prototype of the newsreel and documentary). The visual specificity of the Arctic was of no real interest to these filmmakers; they were far more focused on bringing remote and exotic parts of the world to film audiences. Early examples include Denmark's first film, the Copenhagen-shot *Traveling with Greenlandic Dogs* (*Kørsel med grønlandske hunde*, Peter Elfelt, Denmark, 1897), ostensibly set in Greenland and *actualités* such as *Klondike Gold Rush* (Edison Co., US, 1898) and *Packers on the Trail* (Edison Co., US, 1901), which are early films shot in the Yukon, detailing the trek taken by explorers on their way to the Gold Rush. The Arctic was a highly sought subject for these films; not only did the Arctic offer an exotic locale, but the trials and tribulations of getting there were already part of the popular imagination, and incorporated into the narratives.

Film cameras were brought on expeditions to the North, and the tales of endurance addressed not only the difficulties of exploration, but also the extreme testing of the technology itself. Arctic *actualités* were produced globally, including *The Voyage to the North Pole* (Robert W. Paul, UK, 1903), *From the North Cape to the North Pole* (Nordisk, Denmark, 1909) and *A Dash for the North Pole* (Charles Urban Co., UK, 1909), the last of these made from film shot in 1903–5 by Anthony Fiala from the Ziegler Polar Expedition (on the history and development of North Polar exploration film, see Diesen and Iversen 2011; Bottomore 2003; Diesen 2011). Arctic films not shot on location also used endurance as a narrative device familiar to spectators, including docudramas such as *Le ballon d'Andrée au pôle nord* ('André

at the North Pole', Pathé, France, 1903) and *Who Discovered the North Pole?* (Lubin Manufacturing Co., US, 1909). Polar exploration provided fodder for what Georges Sadoul calls *actualités reconstituées*, such as the perhaps unintentionally satiric and self-serving re-creation of Frederick Cook's 'discovery' of the North Pole, *The Truth About the North Pole* (Cook, US, 1912). Arctic exploration also became the stuff of magic and imagination. The most famous example is no doubt Georges Méliès's *Conquest of the Pole (À la conquête du pôle*, France, 1912), which instilled a fantastical, otherworldly depiction of the Arctic, complete with mystical creatures, and a tongue-in-cheek depiction of the fantasy of colonial power. These films demonstrate the diversity of approaches deployed in creating Arctic images.

In 1922, Robert Flaherty's *Nanook of the North* (US, 1922) was released and did more than any other film to codify how the Arctic was seen and imagined cinematographically well into the very last part of the twentieth century. Beyond the cinema, *Nanook* came to stand for the North, and the cold in particular: in Germany, 'Nanuk' was the brand name of a popular ice-cream sandwich. The film stands as the first true exemplar of documentary cinema, as argued by André Bazin (1967) and John Grierson ([1932] 2014). Of interest here is the fact that this so formative film was staged to a great degree through re-creations of Inuit cultural practices no longer in use. Nevertheless, Flaherty's film imposed a cinematographic understanding of realism onto the Arctic writ large. This points to the ways in which the Arctic has so often been reframed and reimagined for consumption for a global audience, as if the inhabitants of the Arctic, like its imposing and disorienting landscape, were visually and intellectually impenetrable without placing upon them an outside frame of reference. The Arctic had to be framed by narratives and images of the exotic other, in order to allow audiences to 'make sense' of what they were seeing. This, of course, is true of a great deal of early documentary cinema, Arctic and non-Arctic alike, but does foreground the way in which the Arctic had to be repackaged for consumption.

Shot nearly at the same time as *Nanook* but less well-known today, Leo Hansen's film about Danish-Greenlandic explorer Knud Rasmussen's crossing of the Northwest Passage (the Fifth Thule Expedition, undertaken in 1921–4 via dogsled from Northern Greenland to Western Alaska) offers a different but equally problematic representation of Inuit life and culture and its supposed loss and eradication. If, with *Nanook*, Flaherty tries to 'save' Inuit culture with his cinematic re-creations and re-imaginings of traditional Inuit practices, *With Dogsled through Alaska (Med hundeslæde gennem Alaska*, Denmark, 1926) showcases a quite different ethnographic practice. Rasmussen's journey was one not only of documenting, but of collecting; in contemporary parlance, he was a hoarder. This is made clear by the tens of thousands of Inuit objects appropriated and incorporated into the Danish National Museum.

Known as Denmark's first 'eskimologist', with his encyclopedic writings about Greenlandic and Alaskan Inuit culture and practices, Rasmussen set the stage for interpretations of these populations for most of the twentieth century. In *With Dogsled through Alaska*, though, Rasmussen wanted a stationary camera that captured the faces of the Arctic, thus drawing upon a long tradition in the region, including Roland Bonaparte's photographic documentation of Sámi populations in *Le Prince Roland Bonaparte en Laponie* (1884). Cameraman Hansen, on the other hand, sought to relay, with a moving camera, indigenous practices (Hansen 1953). This tension is creatively reimaged in *The Journals of Knud Rasmussen* (Zacharias Kunuk and Norman Cohn, Canada/Denmark, 2008), which retells the history of Rasmussen's Nunavut travels through the perspective of an Inuit man.

ARCTIC INTERNATIONALIST MELODRAMAS

Early feature filmmaking about the Arctic creatively appropriated aspects of polar, ethnographic and early documentary practices. In addition, it was often explicitly internationalist and generally melodramatic, including the trope of the journey over national boundaries or the outsider's experience of a foreign culture, both reflecting and transcending the production and distribution circumstances of commercial filmmaking as an emergent international enterprise. As a vehicle for Danish actress Asta Nielsen, *Eskimo Baby* (*Das Eskimobaby*, Heinz Schall, Germany, 1916) enacts a Danish colonial fantasy of a 'primitive' Greenlander being brought to urban modernity and making a fool of herself there. Based on an Icelandic play and set in Iceland, Victor Sjöström's *The Outlaw and his Wife* (*Berg-Eyvind och hans hustru*, Sweden, 1918) was filmed in northern Sweden and has subsequently come to stand as an exemplar of early 'realistic' outdoor location shooting. Sjöström's film also functions as an early instantiation of location substitution, which often played a central role in early Arctic cinemas globally. In the transition of silent film to sound, a number of popular and internationally released melodramatic films from the Nordic region and North America set in the Arctic (featuring indigenous as well as Western actors in native roles) exemplify a different mode of transnationalism in the guise of international co-productions (often recorded in different language versions for international distribution), and with actors, crew and funding from multiple national contexts. George Schnéevoigt's *Eskimo* (Denmark/Norway, 1930) is a case in point. The plot hinges partly on language and cultural acquisition: Swedish-speaking actress Mona Mårtenson plays 'Eskimo' woman Tikaluk who is taught (in Norwegian) to be civilised by a Dane stranded in Greenland (played by Norwegian Paul Richter). W. S. Van Dyke's *Eskimo* (US, 1933), set in Alaska and shot in the local Iñupiat language, is based on a novel about indigenous populations in Greenland by Dane Peter

Freuchen, who lived for many years in Thule and both acted in the film and served as MGM's consultant for it. The Leni Riefenstahl vehicle *SOS Eisberg* (Arnold Fanck, Germany/US, 1933) was funded by Universal Studios in the US and Deutsche Universal-Film in Germany (though Deutsche Universal-Film was a subsidiary of Universal Studios). Fanck's film was shot in two different versions (English and German), and filmed in Switzerland and Greenland. The latter location shoot included the active participation of local Greenlanders as well as Knud Rasmussen, who was simultaneously planning his own feature film about traditional Greenlandic customs: *The Wedding of Palo* (*Palos brudefærd*, Friedrich Dalsheim, Denmark, 1934).

INDIGENOUS FILM AND FOURTH CINEMA

While Flaherty's *Nanook* or Dalsheim and Rasmussen's *Palo* may be emblematic of facile conceptions of Arctic indigenous life in early film and cultural history, the 1960s and 1970s saw the rise of a large number of broadcasting and narrowcasting initiatives serving to document, relay and disperse information about and for indigenous communities all over the circumpolar North. As Elizabeth Weatherford and Emelia Seubert note: 'Since the beginning of filmmaking, Native Americans have been the subject of virtually thousands of works by both Hollywood directors and documentary producers. Not until the 1970s, with the rise of independent film and video, did native perspectives begin to be reflected' (1988: 7). Key to this development was government funding in Canada and the Nordic countries, quasi-government funding in the United States (through the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS)) and the rise of low-cost and portable filmmaking technologies. This development coincides with the rise of indigenous media self-representations around the world (see Wilson and Stewart 2008; Alia 2013), though these movements developed differently all over the circumpolar North, including for native populations of Alaska (see Fienup-Riordan 1995); Canada (see Evans 2008); Greenland (see Gant 2004; Nørrested 2011; Thisted 2013); Scandinavia and Finland (for example, Lehtola 2000; Petersen 2003; Pietikäinen 2008) and Northern Russia/USSR (Diatchkova 2008).

Jerry White argues 'in the Canadian Arctic particularly we are seeing a very radical renegotiation of the idea of public broadcasting and of the relationship among film, television, and video, a renegotiation that has produced work that is aesthetically vibrant, locally rooted, and globally relevant' (2005: 54; see also Bozak 2012: 192–4). Indigenous populations have deployed a plethora of moving image technologies to produce and circulate their own images of themselves. For both economic and aesthetic reasons Super-8, home video technologies and consumer digital technologies have been widely used, and incorporate the supposed limitations of these cameras into the

aesthetic choices made by practitioners. As White continues: ‘These films and videos are interesting to *look* at in a way that a lot of southern Canadian and U.S. activist video is not’ (2005: 56). Arctic indigenous media, then, work outside dominant modes of image-making to engage as a form of cultural counter-programming.

The IBC (Inuit Broadcasting Corporation), based in Iqaluit, Nunavut, is an example of this local, culturally specific and resistant form of broadcasting. The IBC was formed in 1980 to counteract the pervasive images of the United States and the rest of Canada coming to Nunavut (then part of the Canadian Northwest Territories) through satellite technology (for more on IBC, see Roth 2005: 134–7). Concurrent broadcast projects arose throughout Arctic indigenous populations. NRK Sápmi, a subsidiary of the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation (NRK) produces television programming in Sámi languages for the Sámi population. The Russian production of Chukchi and Yupik language television has the longest history, with its emergence in the Northern USSR in 1967 (Diatchkova 2008: 218).

Government organisations have also been active in this kind of alternative film production. For instance, the National Film Board of Canada’s *Netsilik* film series, made between 1963 and 1965 and released in 1967, deploys a participant-based restaging, where Inuit families enact for the camera the traditions of their ancestors. The twenty-one half-hour films grant agency to the Inuit to represent the past in a way that resonates with their own understanding of their history apart from the one often placed upon them by outsider filmmakers from Flaherty onward. The NFB’s Challenge for Change programme also made the participatory documentary *Labrador North* (Roger Hart, Canada, 1973), which analyses the socio-political structure of the Northern Labrador Inuit, featuring many scenes in which the inhabitants collectively debate where their society should go in the future.

In the mid-1980s, some indigenous filmmakers moved from broadcast to feature filmmaking for the first time. In the twenty-first century, examples of Arctic indigenous feature filmmaking continue to shape film history through the emergence of Fourth Cinema. Fourth Cinema develops from what Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino call ‘Third Cinema’ ([1969] 2014). They position Third Cinema in contradistinction to Hollywood film (First Cinema) and European ‘waves’ and art cinema, including Brazilian *cinema novo* (Second Cinema), giving priority to the documentary as a form that allows for social and political analysis and transformation, calling it the main basis of revolutionary filmmaking. Whilst Third Cinema is a major movement influential around the world, it does not adequately account for indigenous or aboriginal cinema practices. In his influential short essay ‘Celebrating Fourth Cinema’, Barry Barclay (2003) coins a new term to examine the emergence of feature-length art cinema by indigenous peoples. Of the six examples Barclay

lists as instantiations of Fourth Cinema, two are Arctic: Nils Gaup's *Pathfinder* (*Ofelaš*, Norway/Sápmi, 1987) and Zacharias Kunuk's *Atanarjuat: The Fast Runner* (Canada/Nunavut, 2001). For Barclay, these films are examples of Fourth Cinema because they are about local cultures and not implicitly or explicitly about national or international solidarity. These films also reflect the fact that Fourth Cinema becomes possible with the explosion of film festivals as a means of achieving a transnational audience, and by the way these films are subsequently purchased, if not for theatrical release, then for television broadcast and speciality TV channels (see also Columpar 2010). This is also the case for Gaup's *The Kautokeino Rebellion* (*Kautokeino-opprøret*, Norway/Sápmi, 2008), which retells a highly contested historical moment in Sámi history. It does so via a framing device of a woman's oral storytelling of the rebellion, while integrating genre characteristics recognisable from Hollywood historical epics, interspersed with captivating scenery of snow-covered mountains and migrating reindeer.

Atanarjuat was produced by Isuma, founded in 1990 in Igloolik by Kunuk and Norman Cohn. The group brought together a diverse array of filmmakers to make Inuit films. In one way, Isuma can be seen as a reversal of the colonial gaze of ethnographic cinema, with films such as *Atanarjuat* engaging in similar postcolonial and postmodern strategies to those found in Trinh T. Minh-ha's *Reassemblage* (Senegal, 1982). Isuma's reconstructions also work as antidotes to the narratives of Inuit life told by outsiders from Flaherty onwards, giving a voice to the local culture that has been silenced by others often speaking on their behalf, even for benevolent reasons. The associated collective Arnait Video Productions (AVP), founded in 1991, undertakes similar kinds of collective production from Inuit women's perspectives and brings an explicit gender focus that challenges long-standing assumptions of male normativity in the Arctic. The goals of AVP include employing women-only or women-dominated production crews, while embracing traditional forms of Inuit narration to produce works that, according to its website, will be of interest to all Canadians. For instance, Arnait's feature film *Before Tomorrow* (*Le jour avant le lendemain*, Marie-Hélène Cousineau and Madeline Ivalu, Canada, 2008), tells the story of a smallpox outbreak in Nunavik and takes a woman-centred perspective on Inuit culture, while also embodying feminist collective practice in terms of its mode of production. Co-directed by Cousineau, a Franco-Québécoise, and Ivalu, an Inuit woman, the film was made in a spirit of collectivity and solidarity, despite the lack of a shared language between Cousineau and some of the cast. In addition, Cousineau and Ivalu collaborated with indigenous film production groups in Greenland, re-enacting premodern communication routes not only of goods but also of cultural transfer, reflecting the fact that the novel upon which the film *Before Tomorrow* is based was written in Danish and is set in premodern Greenland (*Før Morgendagen*, Jørn

Riel, 1979). *Before Tomorrow* demonstrates how other modes of production can be of use in indigenous production, outside the ones mostly associated with the Arctic, namely those assumed to operate on the basis of North-South relationships or male prerogative.

Similar undertakings have developed in Sámi indigenous media production, though the outcomes of these initiatives are less well known in an international context. Support and infrastructure for facilitating Nordic indigenous film and TV production has increased during the past decade. The International Sámi Film Centre AS (ISF) opened in Norway in 2007 with ambitious plans to foster local filmmaking culture and co-produce shorts, features and documentary films. Owned by and operated in the municipality of Kautokeino/Guovdageidnu, a location rich in Sámi cultural heritage and home to one of the first Sámi theatre ensembles, the film centre is funded by the Norwegian government with contributions from the Sámi Parliament. While the primary aim of the centre is to encourage filmmaking in the Sámi language for the Sámi population of northernmost Scandinavia, the centre also seeks to foster connections with indigenous film production globally. In addition, on its website, the centre markets itself as located in a pristine and dramatic landscape, seemingly inviting runaway productions and location shooting. Establishing the ISF reflects Europe-wide developments in promoting regional film production and film-funding centres in the interest of employment and tourism, thus it operates at least partly in a context different to the growth of Isuma in Igloolik. Sámi involvement in conceptualising and implementing ISF has been paramount, with members of the board including director Nils Gaup and members of the municipality and the Sámi Parliament.

In Russia, Chukchi producer Elena Timonina has been at the forefront of indigenous film and television production. She co-produced with Alexander Rudoy *When the Men Cry*, a film about a boy learning about reindeer herding, which was popular with both indigenous and non-indigenous audiences (Diatchkova 2008: 214). Timonina has also produced other Chukchi films, including *The Feast of Language* and *The Stone Sail* (Diatchkova 2008: 218). Other projects have also made indigenous media available in Russia. Recently, the Afbare project has worked to preserve, archive and distribute works from the Barents region, prioritising films about indigenous people and Arctic nature. As of 2006, around 1,500 television shows and films from 1964 onwards had been digitalised and made available in Rovaniemi, Finland (Afbare 2006).

Anastasia Lapsui's and Markku Lehmuskallio's feature films *A Bride of the Seventh Heaven* (*Jumalan morsian*, Finland, 2004), *Pudana Last of the Line* (*Sukunsa viimeinen*, Finland, 2010) and *Seven Songs of the Tundra* (*Seitsemän laulua tundralta*, Finland, 1999) convey indigenous experiences, practices and history of the Yamal peninsula Nenets in Northern Russia. This *oeuvre*

is the first and so far only feature-length depiction of the Nenets and builds on Lapsui's biography (she is Nenets) and many connections among the local population, including as part of her work as a Nenets radio reporter. The films, slow-paced with stylised long shots of the tundra, combine legend and oral storytelling practices with historical commentary, especially about the ways in which Soviet socialism clashed with traditional nomadic life.

Since 2012, the Finnish Film Foundation has allocated funding targeted for Sámi film production, including support for the Indigenous Peoples' Film Centre in Inari. This is a regional resource centre for film and audiovisual production, operated in conjunction with the Finnish Sámi Parliament. The centre's mandate includes furthering Sámi language and culture, and providing ways for active participation by Sámi and other indigenous peoples in the Nordic and global film and media industry. Unduly overlooked in the context of major international film festivals, the Indigenous Peoples' Film Festival 'Skábmagovat' has been operating in Inari since 1998, and has grown to become one of the Arctic region's most prominent venues for screening Indigenous feature and documentary films from the global circumpolar North. The festival programme from 2014 makes its significance explicit, artistic director Jorma Lehtola states: 'For the indigenous peoples of the Arctic, film has become an important tool both in strengthening the identity and communicating with other peoples. The circumstances of production and the resources available vary, but the field keeps expanding'. Indeed, contemporary Sámi filmmaking is robust but little-known internationally, with the exception of Nils Gaup and Tommy Wirkola, both of whom have made internationally released feature films and have also made the crossover to Hollywood productions. Paul-Anders Simma is one of the most prolific contemporary Sámi filmmakers, whose works span political documentary such as *Give Us Our Skeletons!* (*Antakaa meille luurankomme!*, Finland, 1999), ethnographic faux-documentary like *Legacy of the Tundra* (*Duoddara árbi*, Finland, 1994) and the historical comedy epic *Minister of State* (*Minister på villovägar*, Sweden, 1996). Twenty-first-century Sámi directors Pauliina Feodoroff, Katja Gauriloff, Johs Kalvemo, Kira Jääskeläinen, Joar Nango, Marja Bål Nango, Lars-Göran Petterson and Liselotte Wajstedt make films for cinema and TV that range from fiction and feature-length works to mixed-genre, experimental and autobiographical documentary (see also Lehtola, forthcoming).

Indigenous film production in Greenland has grown over the past decade, with the bromance *Nuummioq* (Otto Rosing and Torben Bech, Greenland, 2009) often regarded as the first indisputably Greenland-only film, produced with local funding, and directed and cast by Greenlanders. Yet support for enhancing local film culture and building a robust film production culture has been slow, at least partially because Danish government film funding administered through the Danish Film Institute cannot be used for Greenland-only

productions. This may be about to change, with a number of Greenlanders reaching outside the country with their films and promoting indigenous film culture through the Greenland Eyes Film Festival, organised by Ivalo Frank, and through filmmakers such as Pipaluk Knudsen-Ostermann.

Various film commissions in the northernmost regions of the Nordic countries take a quite different approach to filming in the Sápmi region, promoting the locations as a vast wilderness. Founded in 2005, the Swedish Lapland Film Commission celebrates the ‘natural wonder’ of the area as a means by which to promote location shooting; many of the films it aids and promotes are set in the Swedish far north, but others use the area for its landscape, often divorced from any cultural specificity. The Finnish Lapland Film Commission, founded in 2008, provides similar scouting services, as does the North Finnish Film Commission, whose tagline is: ‘Tundra and taiga forests. Frozen harbours and the Sun that never sets. In the middle of nowhere but still close and well-connected. Northern Finland offers unique settings for unique stories’ (2008). This kind of virtual cultural tourism connects film commissions around the world, but most do not celebrate the fact that, visually, they seem to be ‘in the middle of nowhere’. The film commissions of northernmost Scandinavia, moreover, do not present themselves as particularly closely connected to indigenous cultures and film production, but rather come across in their web presence as conveying a conventional Southern approach to the Arctic North, namely as a blank canvas onto which imagery of a depopulated and supra-locational wondrous sublime can be conjured. This is the case also for the recent increase in international co-productions and runaway productions in Iceland, which attracts film crews because of the crisp and clean air, long light-filled summer days, relative proximity to North America, and awe-inspiring landscape. Recently called ‘Hollywood of the north’ (Hull 2014), Iceland, however, represents only one of many locations through the history of Arctic cinematic representation that stands in for a ubiquitous imagination of the region in popular, art, and experimental cinema.

ARCTIC ART CINEMA

Here and elsewhere (see MacKenzie and Stenport 2013) we argue for the creation of the category of ‘Arctic Art Cinema’, a form of cinema practice that often explicitly hovers between national and transnational cinemas (on Global Art Cinema, see Galt and Schoonover 2010; for a classic definition, see Bordwell 1979). This category allows us to cogently address some of the feature films set in the Arctic that engage with Arctic climate, locations, light and representational history (especially from the 1980s onwards), but do so in ways that narratively, aesthetically and thematically challenge established Arctic cinema conventions. Calling these works Arctic Art Cinema offers some

explanatory value by raising a salient question: what does this category offer us as an interpretive frame that sheds light on the films and their representation? One reason is because there are many films about the Arctic that go against some of the normative representational tropes that we have previously identified – namely the figures of the exotic other, the polar explorer, ethnographic and documentary ‘voice-of-God’ narration – and these films emphasise realistic settings, psychologically complex characters, and employ narrative ambiguity, faltering protagonists and the open-ended plot so central to art cinema, the European variety in particular. Here we are thinking of films like Jan Troell’s *The Flight of the Eagle* (*Ingenjör Andréas luftfärd*, Sweden, 1982), Knut Erik Jensen’s *Stella Polaris* (Norway, 1993), Erik Skjoldbjaerg’s *Insomnia* (Norway, 1997), Stijin Coninx’s *When The Light Comes* (*Licht*, Belgium/Germany/Netherlands/Denmark, 1998), Julio Medem’s *Lovers of the Arctic Circle* (*Los amantes del círculo polar*, Spain, 1998), Baltasar Kormákur’s *101 Reykjavík* (Iceland, 2000), Dagur Kári’s *Noi the Albino* (*Nói albínói*, Iceland, 2003), or John Akomfrah’s *The Nine Muses* (UK, 2011). In these films the Arctic location contributes more than just a backdrop; it is mobilised as part of long representational, political and national histories, themselves filled with contradictions and ambiguities.

TRANSNATIONAL, WORLD, GLOBAL ARCTIC CINEMAS?

If not solely polar exploration, ethnographic, internationalist, art cinema, indigenous or Fourth cinema, are Arctic cinemas to be categorised as transnational cinemas, world cinemas, postcolonial cinemas, or some combination thereof? Arctic cinemas necessarily challenge all of these different categorisations. When, as has often been the case, the Arctic is depicted as otherworldly and at the end of the earth, it is implicitly understood as existing beyond or transcending national borders. At the same time, however, an examination of a single country’s account of the Arctic usually posits the region as a subset of a national narrative, thereby marginalising it. A globally integrated understanding of the Arctic, taking into account its profoundly transnational character, is one that has not been rigorously explored in film studies.

Transnational film production is usually understood as amalgamating the production practices, cultural traditions, historical or contemporary events, and aesthetic movements of diverse countries (for related and complementary definitions, see Ezra and Rowden 2006: 1–12). At the same time, transnational cinemas can also be used to challenge assumptions of nationalism operative in other contexts and mobilised for ideological and political reasons. This is the context within which *Films on Ice* operates, as it seeks to challenge standard national cinema histories that have generally overlooked film production in, about, and for the Arctic region. Mette Hjort’s salient typology

of transnational cinemas as the ‘plurality of cinematic transnationalism’ is illuminating in this regard, since cinematic ‘transnationalism’ can productively be seen as a dynamic ‘scalar concept’ (2010: 13). Distinguishing between ‘marked’ and ‘unmarked’ transnationality (2010: 13), some forms of transnational cinema are more valuable for Hjort than others. The most valuable are those that demonstrate a ‘resistance to globalization as cultural homogenization’ (2010: 15), where a production’s economic profits and potentials do not supersede aesthetics or cultural authenticity, and where there is an impetus toward solidarity and equality in production, content and distribution.

In their introduction to *Traditions in World Cinema*, Linda Badley, R. Barton Palmer and Steven Schneider foreground how most

cinematic traditions are ‘national’ in the sense that they include only texts that constitute a form of difference within a larger, more diffuse and varied body of national films, and yet there are often dispensable transnational connections that foreclose any understanding of the tradition solely within the terms of its ‘native culture’. (2005: 2)

Films on Ice thereby expands not only definitions of World Cinema, but also of the notion of ‘cinematic traditions’, the latter by including examples that are sub-national, and not representative of what is understood as a ‘national’ tradition. Unlike most other books in the series, ours draws upon films from a number of national and sub-national cinemas. The difference we are postulating for Arctic cinemas with regard to the category of World Cinemas is that while, say, Latin American cinema or African cinema can be understood as components of World cinema as they coalesce around various groups of nation-states, Arctic cinemas, as part of a World cinema tradition, amalgamate geographically related subsections of various nation-states.

EXPERIMENTAL AND EXPANDED ARCTIC CINEMAS

Documenting the Arctic within a realist aesthetic has no doubt been the dominant approach. This makes sense, as the desire to film the Arctic comes in no small part from the difficulty of the endeavour. Experimental and expanded cinema works have, nonetheless, been produced about the Arctic that actively challenge the dominance of the realist tradition. American experimental filmmaker Stan Brakhage’s *Creation* (US, 1979) offers a vision of the Arctic at odds with most cinematic representations of it. Fragmentary and frenetic, almost devoid of life, Brakhage’s image of the Arctic nevertheless engages ‘a proximate inspiration for the sublime vision of a world of massive ice and scarred rock’ as inspired ‘by nineteenth-century American landscape painter, Frederic Edwin Church, whose works Brakhage had studied for more than a

decade' (Sitney 2001: 98). Sitney argues that the structure of the film offers a skewed version of 'Genesis': 'The organization of material . . . unmistakably follows the basic Biblical scenario, although even before the division of the waters, Brakhage introduces images of vegetation, as masses of fog rise from pine covered mountains. . . . Later the water is alive with living creatures – seals – and only then do birds fly under the vault of heaven' (Sitney 2001: 100). Yet, this basic description could as easily apply to the processes of evolution. In either interpretation, however, the Arctic in Brakhage's film is seen, whether theologically or evolutionarily, as the seedbed of life – almost devoid of humans – and not, as it so often is, the place of destruction. Other experimental representations of the Arctic also offer utopian visions. For instance, *Polar Life* (Graeme Ferguson, Canada, 1967), a key example of expanded cinema, was shown at Montreal's Expo '67. The installation ' . . . displayed eleven screens with two or three visible at a time as viewers sat on four revolving theatres on a large turntable' (Marchessault 2007: 34). In the 'global village', internationalist spirit of the World's Fair (titled 'Man and His World/*Terre des hommes*') *Polar Life* documents both the Arctic and Antarctic, and lives of the Inuit, Sámi and the Northern inhabitants of Alaska and Siberia. In this film, then, like many from Expo '67, it is the global similarities of the Arctic regions' human inhabitants that is shared, foregrounding the utopian and internationalist feeling of the times.

POPULAR (WHITE) AMERICAN CINEMA: FROM POLAR BEARS TO SANTA CLAUS

In mainstream American cinema, the Arctic has been popularly conceived as a singularity, but more importantly, as a blank slate for normative Western ideological projections. As 'literally and symbolically white' and the 'site of a privileged white masculinity' (Sandhu 2010), Western and US popular culture whitewashes the Arctic as the domain of snow, polar bears, Santa Claus and explorers, to the exclusion of almost anything else. Conceptualising the region as remote or alien necessarily involves pushing the area further away from real-world ethnic, gendered or social complexity, and from lived experience, imposing a cultural distance to mirror the geographical one. One way to de-alienate the Arctic in popular cinema is, not surprisingly, to infantilise or maternalise it, and thereby to incorporate it as utterly incongruent with assumptions of heteronormative, patriarchal, white normativity. In classical Hollywood cartoons such as Chuck Jones's *Frigid Hare* (US, 1948) which, among other things, conflates the Arctic with the Antarctic, an infantilised penguin in a top hat and bow-tie (who, when sad, cries ice-cubes) lives not-so-happily alongside an Inuit hunter. Bugs Bunny plays the role of wiser, older, male, and world-savvy protector to his innocent little friend. In the Fleischer Brothers' *The Playful Polar Bears* (US, 1938), anthropomorphised mega-mammal innocence

is rudely disrupted by an invasion of colonisers, with the plot focusing on a polar bear's maternal protection of her cubs. The Coca Cola polar bear filmic advertisements (1993-present) are supposedly about the bears and the need to preserve their habitat (yet they too co-mingle with penguins) while the realm of the pristine Arctic allows Coke to seem not only 'enviro'-friendly, but also, in the name of environmentalism, to reinforce normative 'family values', notwithstanding actual male polar bear behaviour that includes eating their own offspring. The educational IMAX documentary *To the Arctic* (Greg MacGillivray, US, 2012; see also *Arctic Tale* (Adam Ravetch, US, 2007)) is a prime example of a 'maternal melodrama', in which a polar bear mother must protect her cubs against both the effects of climate change (a reduced habitat in the wake of ice melt) and predatory male polar bears. The female polar bear is given narrative agency in the film through the voice-over of Meryl Streep, whereas the on-screen humans who are part of the team documenting the bears is all male. Here, then, the job of the white, male scientists is to protect the female, ventriloquised polar bear. As popular imagery of the Arctic from the outside has shifted from emphasising the terror and beauty of an unattainable sublime, it now conveys the region as endangered, volatile and in need of protection.

The figuration of masculinist, white polar heroism (often in the guise of a scientist or a military officer) has a long history in American culture (see also Bloom 1993). Superman's 'Fortress of Solitude' is only one of many examples that affirm the polar region as an appropriate location for essential masculinity. In contrast, Kathryn Bigelow's *K-19: The Widowmaker* (US, 2002), set in a 1960s nuclear submarine, pushes the boundaries of explorer masculinity in Hollywood cinema. Captain Alexei Vostrikov (Harrison Ford) embodies an über-masculine, take-no-prisoners approach to Soviet ideology, while Executive Officer Mikhail Polenin's (Liam Neeson) main concern is that of the well-being of his men, exemplifying a post-ideological, 'new male' explorer, where homosocial male bonds are more important than connections to duty and state.

Much like polar bears and die-hard explorers, Santa Claus figurations have dominated popular Arctic representations for nearly a century. In Christmas films, Santa Claus is a secular Christian capitalist, rewarding good deeds with gifts. His is an avuncular kind of Arctic masculinity; the one male representation of the Arctic, be it white or indigenous, that is safe and benevolent. As an Arctic dweller (and as of 2008, an honorary Canadian citizen), he familiarises and infantilises the Arctic through postulating an imaginary connection to a happy, primordial and uncomplicated childhood. The most widespread myth of the secular Western world's vision of childhood mirrors the infantilising and colonial vision of the Arctic world's actual inhabitants. A cornucopia of Hollywood films about Santa Claus and his merry band of elves propagate this white and benevolent view of the Arctic. An early example of this perpetually

popular subgenre is *Santa Claus* (Arctic Film Co., US, 1925), filmed in part in Northern Alaska by Arctic explorer Frank E. Kleinschmidt and set in the North Pole, where Santa is seen visiting his Inuit neighbours. The holiday film, propagating an image of the Arctic where magic and timelessness rule the day, also includes recent popular hits such as *Elf* (John Favreau, US, 2003), the *Santa Clause* series (US, 1994–2006) and *Polar Express* (Robert Zemeckis, US, 2004) all of which firmly locate a tradition of Western capitalist consumerism in Arctic.

Films about Santa Claus do not simply address Christmas Eve and Fordist toy production; they also reflect the fears and formulations about the Arctic and how its natural resources are exploited. For instance, in the television film *The Night They Saved Christmas* (Jackie Cooper, US, 1984), extreme oil exploration undertaken by dynamiting the North Pole endangers Santa (Art Carney), unbeknownst to the oil executives. Santa's elves and the children of oil executives work diligently to prevent the destruction of Santa's workshop, and therefore, the North Pole. This popular example of the effects of 'big oil' on the Arctic is not limited to Hollywood productions. Indeed, with the dawning realisation of the effects of global warming and resource extraction, a plethora of films have emerged that critically address the issue.

THE ARCTIC FROM LENIN AND MONTAGE TO STALINIST SOCIALIST REALISM

Perhaps the best-known Arctic film to come out of the USSR is Dziga Vertov's *A Sixth Part of the World* (*Shestaya Chast Mira*, USSR, 1926). Based on his theory of *kinoks* ('cinema-eyes', where the primacy of what is seen through the camera is superior to what is seen by the naked eye), Vertov's film was assembled via montage. Part of the film documents indigenous peoples of the USSR. Vertov does not use documentary in the Griersonian tradition; instead he cuts together various shots of the Chukchi through the plasticity of the image to create a composite image of indigenous life in the USSR. While Vertov's film is now canonised as a central work of Soviet cinema, the Arctic was used in a wide variety of films, just as it was in Hollywood. The Lenfilm catalogue (Catalogue of Lenfilm 1991) offers one of many examples of a Soviet production studio's use of the Arctic in a wide variety of genres. For instance, Adolf Minkin and Igor Sorokhtin's *Conquerors of the Night* (*Pobediteli nochi*, USSR, 1932) is an 'essay-film' on the icebreaker Malygin going to Franz-Joseph Land in 1931. Dramatic features such as *Same Brave Spirits* (*Semero smelykh*, Sergei Gerasimov, USSR, 1936) tell the tale of plucky and intrepid explorers who brave the harsh climate above the polar circle. Children's films such as *The Two Captains* (*Dva Kapitana*, Vladimir Vengerov, USSR, 1955) recount a tale of a polar explorer lost in the Arctic and the desire of his daughter's love interest to become an Arctic pilot to find the lost expedition. Cartoons like *Three*

Friends (Dri podrugi, Pavel Shimdt, USSR, 1941) feature a little girl and frolicking polar bears, and echo the same themes found in the Arctic cartoons of Disney, Warner Brothers and the Fleischer Brothers (the one key difference: the little girl wakes up, realises she was dreaming and starts to cry). What we see here is that popular Soviet cinema used the Arctic as a backdrop for adventure, propaganda, humour and romance to the same degree as Hollywood, although to a rather different ideological end.

THE BOUNTY OF THE LAND: RECORDING RESOURCE EXTRACTION AND CLIMATE CHANGE

While most recent ecocritical film theory does not explicitly address Arctic cinema, this burgeoning field of scholarship brings to the foreground nature and habitat, taking humans off their pedestal and placing them on equal footing with flora and other fauna (see Gustafsson and Kääpä 2013; Rust, Monani and Cubitt 2013; Willoquet-Maricondi 2010; Bozak 2012). Such an interpretive framework is especially significant for contemporary representations of the Arctic, given that dominant media renditions emphasise the ways in which climate change is directly impacting the region, from ice-melt and rising sea levels to increased resource extraction and the revelation of new territory. In contrast to a notion of environmentalism as ‘a sustaining vision of the human’, seeking ‘to make the world safe for it’, ecocritical perspectives ‘focus more on dynamic systems in which any one part is always multiply connected, acting by virtue of these connections and always variable, so that it can be regarded as a pattern rather than simply an object’ (Fuller 2005: 4). This dynamic view of the environment is especially important for understanding the vast and diverse range of documentary and activist films on climate change, resource extraction and their impact on the Arctic environment. This dynamic view also helps conceptualise the ways in which natural resources have been exploited and how these practices have been understood historically. Dating back to the eighteenth century, a perception of interminable and abundant resource availability has framed an understanding of the Arctic region. This notion extends from the colonial practice of harvesting whale blubber for oil lamps, soap and margarine to the contemporary extraction of oil, gas, and mining of rare minerals, and to the indigenous uses of the land for sustenance. Only scattered examples of recent ecocritical film theory explicitly address this Arctic dynamic. Yet resource extraction in particular has played a central role in cinema’s representation of the Arctic’s resources.

Depicting resource extraction in the Arctic has been central throughout film’s history, spanning feature, early documentary, art cinema, and activist and local films. For instance, the recently rediscovered *The Romance of the Far Fur Country* (H. M. Wyckoff, Canada, 1920), made by the Hudson’s Bay

Company, is an early example that dramatises fur trapping and the mythological role the trade played in the development of Canadian national identity. The first film to record both sound and dialogue on location – and a remote one at that – is *The Viking* (George Melford, Newfoundland, 1931), which focuses on the potential and dangers of the seal hunt (when the leader of the expedition and producer of the film Varick Frissell went out to shoot extra footage, the ship exploded, killing Frissell and twenty-seven other men). Well-known Swedish art film director Mai Zetterling's documentary *Of Seals and Men* (UK, 1980) conveys the primitivist and primordial appeal of seal hunting. The film was sponsored by the Danish Greenlandic Trade Company to counteract international public opinion against seal hunting, thus continuing a long tradition of resource extraction representation in the Arctic. Recent art films thematise the legacy of resource extraction in other ways. *Zero Kelvin* (Hans Petter Moland, Norway, 1995) is an existentialist chamber drama about a mercenary Norwegian trapper isolated on the east coast of Greenland who has utter disregard for both human life and wildlife sustainability. The Hollywood adaptation of Peter Høeg's Danish novel *Smilla's Sense of Snow* (Bille August, US, 1997) mobilises many tropes of colonialism and exploration in the service of science as it organises its plot around the thwarted discovery of a mysterious mineral mined on Greenland and its potentially disastrous consequences for the rest of the world.

The large-scale resource extraction that impacts Arctic ecosystems are often presented as clean, wondrous and beautiful technological feats that leave no real harm or trace behind, at least through the lens of 'big oil' and corporate globalisation. *Oil on Ice* (Bo Boudart and Dale Djerassi, US, 2004), for example, explores the environmental ramifications of oil extraction and the 'clean' rhetoric that surrounds potential drilling in Alaska. Oil extraction is not the only culprit in this regard: *Dreamland* (*Draumalandið*, Þorfinnur Guðnason and Andri Snær Magnason, Iceland, 2009), for instance, focuses on the intense environmental problems that emerge in the Arctic through the damming of hydroelectric projects while foregrounding how the Icelandic government brands Iceland as the home of clean and renewable energy sources.

The practices of indigenous resource extraction take on a different valence. Films such as *Eskimo Hunters* (W. Kay Norton, US, 1949) depict the sustainable practices of indigenous populations in such a way as to come across as visceral and gory, with long and bloody shots of animals, and especially seals, killed and skinned, metaphorically leaving a bright red smear across the pristine white snow. In contradistinction, historical and contemporary representations by indigenous populations living off the land – from *At the Winter Sea Ice Camp* (Quentin Brown, NFB, Canada, 1967) to *Seal Pups* (*Qulangisi*, Zacharias Kunuk, Isuma, Canada, 1995) – provide a necessary counterpoint to classical film storytelling that emphasises plot development

and psychologically motivated character action by providing documentary accounts of indigenous hunting practices. Indeed, the relationship between ‘man’ and ‘nature’ in representations of resource extraction and sustainability differs greatly in those portraying indigenous peoples and those of global modernity. If indigenous representations of Inuit hunting practices show the harsh struggle between ‘man’ and ‘nature’, images documenting ‘big oil’ resource extraction are dominated by (white) ‘man’s’ ability to master and conquer the natural Arctic world.

Films about Arctic resource extraction in a changing environment have also impacted policy and politics. For example, many Inuit and Sámi populations are deeply impacted by damming for hydroelectrical development and mining. Sámi opposition to building the massive Alta dam in Norway is depicted in a number of films influential within the Norwegian context (protests began in 1978 and continued until the dam was authorised in 1982). These films show, in ways quite unprecedented, the Sámi people with agency and interest in shaping not only representations of themselves as an indigenous population, but the ways in which they can challenge the Norwegian nation-state. The features *Let the River Live!* (*La elva level*, Bredo Greve, Norway, 1980) and *Land of the Dwarf Birches* (*Skierra – vaivaiskoivujen maa*, Markku Lehmuskallio, Finland, 1982) impacted local debates and help to spur a revival of Sámi indigenous cultures. These include the theatre group and community organisations in Kautokeino that proved a training ground for Sámi director Nils Gaup and his ensemble. Indigenous opposition against hydroelectric power development concurrent with the oil crisis of the early 1970s, such as the building of the James Bay hydroelectrical project in Canada, proved a lightning rod. It flooded Cree land and displaced them from their traditional land, as documented in the NFB’s Challenge for Change film *Our Land is Our Life* (Boyce Richardson and Tony Ianzelo, Canada, 1974).

An increase in scientific and media reports of melting ice as a direct result of global fossil fuel consumption has led to a tectonic shift in perceptions of the polar region. Transitioning from a representation of terror and the sublime, the Arctic is now emblematic of catastrophic climate change. The documentary *Chasing Ice* (Jeff Orlowski, US, 2012) offers, through the use of digital technology, a convincing visual document of how the burning of fossil fuels erodes ice. James Balog’s photography, screened around the world, emphasises the scale and perspective of the melting glaciers in Alaska, Greenland, Iceland and Montana (and, the digital ‘revolution’ aside, digital cameras and computer chips pose as many problems for Balog as analogue technology did for early explorers). The demands of climate and remoteness continue to dictate how the Arctic environment can be represented, even in a time of large-scale natural transformation. The ironic and self-reflexive documentary *The Expedition to the End of the World* (*Ekspeditionen til verdens ende*, Daniel Dencik,

Denmark, 2013) proclaims the expedition can reach previously unknown parts of the Greenlandic coast as a result of increased ice-melt. This ambitious work engages with the changing Arctic ecosystem in ways that tie a long history of scientific expeditions not only to nationalist pursuits, but also to representational traditions imported from elsewhere. The film is self-reflexive a tragicomedy and an existential road movie in the tradition of New German filmmakers Wim Wenders and Werner Herzog. The film also challenges dominant modes of representing climate change in the Arctic, by emphasising the subjective, the ad-hoc, and solipsistic aspects of environmental exploration and by seeking to pursue that exploration in ways that consume limited resources.

It would be misleading to argue that all contemporary Arctic documentaries engage with these issues. Some recent Arctic documentaries ignore climate change and resource extraction altogether, focusing instead on atemporal accounts of a 'year in the life' of the Arctic. This includes *Happy People: A Year in the Taiga* (Werner Herzog and Dmitry Vasyukov, Germany, 2010), a film shot in Arctic Russia by Vasyukov, but produced by Studio Babelsberg in Germany and edited by Werner Herzog, who first saw the Vasyukov footage in the United States. This film shows the changing environment of the Arctic, not through climate change, but the change of seasons, with Herzog's German romanticist, world-weary voice-over contextualising the images. In a similar vein, Jessica Oreck's *Aatsinki: The Story of Arctic Cowboys* (Finland, 2013) tells the story of a year in the life of white Arctic reindeer herders, in this case without voice-over or contextualisation, letting the inhabitants and their actions speak for themselves.

Indigenous accounts of climate change take a different tack. Isuma's *Inuit Knowledge and Climate Change* (Zacharias Kunuk, Nunavut, 2010) foregrounds local expertise that tells a complementary story of how climate change negatively affects indigenous resource extraction practices of hunting and fishing. Examining the effects of climate change and resource extraction on the Inuit of Greenland and Northern Canada, *Vanishing Point* (Stephen A. Smith and Julia Szucs, NFB, 2013) is conceived from a circumpolar and transnational perspective, while the indigenous production *People of the Feather* (Joel Heath and the Community of Sanikiluaq, Canada, 2013) connects the present state of the Arctic and the effects of climate change with the stories of the peoples who live there over seven winters. This diverse variety of films demonstrates the global concern about resource extraction and climate change and the plethora of approaches practitioners have adopted to address the issue.

THE COLD WAR: THE ARCTIC IN IDEOLOGICAL PERMAFROST

In the Cold War, the Arctic became a space that was used materially and ideologically to draw a line between East and West. The Arctic was seen as

potentially porous, but nonetheless a solid buffer because of its expanse, frigidity and desolation. This image of the Arctic as both barrier and expanse is exemplified by such diverse works as the horror film *The Thing* (Howard Hawks and Christian Nyby, US, 1952), the political allegory *Ice Station Zebra* (John Sturges, US, 1968), and the late Cold War allegory *Orion's Belt* (*Orions Belte*, Ola Solum, Norway, 1985). All these films illustrate how the Arctic 'came to be dominated by a militarized geography' (Chaturvedi 2000: 446) and 'perceived and treated throughout the Cold War as an inanimate, passive chessboard on which geostrategic moves and countermoves were made with very little reference to ecological considerations' (Chaturvedi 2000: 454). For Hollywood at the height of the Cold War, however, the Arctic was also conceptualised as a space beyond politics and ideology, as can be seen in *Superman* (Richard Donner, US, 1978). In the film, Clark Kent travels to the Arctic to discover his heritage as a (Kryptonian) man, a heritage that places him above politics, and a force of good for all humanity. In the process, he creates an Arctic Fortress retreat, which exists in a place no one ever goes, and therefore is outside geopolitical pressures.

It was thus no coincidence that these ideological battles were cinematically conceptualised in perhaps the most remote part of the planet, as the distance and exoticism of the Arctic allowed it to become the ultimate metaphoric and mediated space to create representations of these battles, as viewers had little outside frame of reference to understand the area, the people, its environment or its history. Precisely because of its apparent vacuity, the Arctic became invested with significant power as an abstract battleground, including as a stage for missile warfare. Symbolic and material initiatives were undertaken to strengthen ideological ownership of the Arctic. For example, Canadian Inuit were moved from Northern Québec to the High Arctic in 1953–5 to create the image of Canadian sovereignty, though the Inuit had in fact left these lands hundreds of years earlier (Marcus 1988). In an act of unintentional irony, this act of creating the symbolic High Arctic 'Eskimo' for Cold War ideological reasons also included moving Flaherty's illegitimate granddaughter Martha Flaherty, with the rest of her family to Grise Fiord (Ellesmere Island), when she was five. Martha's story of relocation is told in the NFB film *Martha of the North* (*Martha qui vient du froid*, Marquise Lepage, Canada, 2008).

The intensification of the Cold War during the early 1950s brought the Arctic into focus as part of renewed colonial engagements. Greenland was critical in this endeavour, not least through the US construction of the Thule Air Base at the top of the island in the late 1950s. Tension over this neo-colonisation is apparent in two government-sponsored Danish films about Greenland from the mid-1950s, the documentary *Where the Mountains Float* (*Hvor Bjergene Sejler*, Bjarne Henning-Jensen, 1955) and the melodramatic feature *Qivitoq: The Mountain Wanderer* (*Fjaeldgaengeren*, Erik Balling, Denmark, 1956).

These films eerily correlate with geopolitically motivated US depictions of the 1950s, from Disney's Oscar-winning feature documentaries *Men Against the Arctic* (Winston Hibler, 1955) and *White Wilderness* (James Algar, 1958) to the widely distributed United States Army Signal Corps Pictorial Service documentary TV series *The Big Picture* (1954–61). Taken together, these films represent the colonialist, nation-building final frontier, highlighting the fact that the Cold War was, in its Arctic iteration, global and endless, seemingly stretching to the ends of the earth.

Recent Hollywood films have restaged Cold War oppositions in the Arctic under the flag of environmentalism. For instance, *Big Miracle* (Ken Kwapis, US, 2012), set in 1988 in Point Barrow Alaska, addresses the plight of three stranded whales and, in doing so, conceptualises an environmental struggle through deliberate news media strategies on behalf of a Greenpeace activist (Drew Barrymore), an Iñupiat hunter (John Pingayak) and news reporter (John Krasinski), an oil executive (Ted Danson), and world leaders Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev. In this rendition, two superpowers come together in the Arctic, not over the threat of nuclear annihilation, but to save a photogenic Arctic mammal.

GREEN SCREEN: CONTEMPORARY GEOPOLITICS AND ENVIRONMENTALISM

While *Big Miracle* postulates a nostalgic view of the emergent global environmentalist movement as the turning point in the Cold War with Soviets and Americans joining forces to save the whales, other representations of the Arctic provide the strongest example of how Cold War discourses and representational strategies live on in the post-Cold War era. As J. R. McNeill and Corinna M. Unger argue, 'Modern environmentalism . . . is, among other things, a child of the Cold War' (2010: 11). At the end of the 1970s, European anti-nuclear protests (resulting in Sweden in a 1980 phase-out of nuclear power; in Germany municipal protests against locating US nuclear warheads there) conjoined with an increased environmental awareness in the public arena. 'Fears of radiation poisoning and nuclear winter scenarios helped tilt popular culture in the direction of ecological thinking', McNeill and Unger continue, though other 'segments of the population, more committed to the vigorous prosecution of the Cold War, often viewed environmentalism with equal suspicion' (2010: 11). In contrast, in 'the Soviet Union and several of its Eastern European satellites, environmentalism eventually served as one of the few – sometimes the only – permissible form of critique of the state and the Communist Party' (2010: 12). An identifiable discursive and representational trajectory thereby links Cold War geopolitics and East-West ideological and political opposition with thermoperception of cold climates and remote Arctic regions, environmentalism, and access to resource extraction in the region,

recently exemplified by Greenland lifting the ban on uranium mining and the concern this has caused in Denmark as well as in international politics. A recent Danish feature film, *The Shooter* (*Skytten*, Annette K. Olesen, 2013) exemplifies this tradition. As a remake of a 1977 eponymous Danish film by Franz Ernst and Tom Hedegaard, the contemporary version addresses the dangerous consequences of large-scale ice-melt from the Greenlandic ice sheet, while the earlier version focused on the threat of deadly contamination from a potential nuclear reactor meltdown.

The psychological horror film *The Last Winter* (Larry Fessenden, US, 2006) bases its environmental horror on a reimagining of the Cold War nuclear-winter threat, such as the one prophesied in *The War Game* (Peter Watkins, UK/BBC, 1965) and *The Day After* (Nicholas Meyer, US/ABC-TV, 1993). Set in Alaska and shot in Iceland, featuring expansive white vistas and sophisticated cinematography tailored to the stark contrast of white light against white snow, the threat of a perennial Arctic winter is deconstructed to become the threat of literal thaw prompted by climate change, turning nature back against humans and developing a vengeful agency of its own. The recent Russian film *How I Ended This Summer* (*Kak ya provyol etim letom*, Alexei Popogrebski, Russia, 2010) is set on a weather observation station in remote Chukotka in northeast Russia. A chamber play of two characters in isolation, surrounded by Cold War debris such as rusting antennas, oil barrels and, most prominently, a portable nuclear power plant (a radioisotope thermoelectric generator which works off isotopes of strontium), the film also mobilises the stark and captivatingly beautiful environment to make the legacy of the Cold War into an uncanny element of the landscape. A similar set of issues is raised in Greenlandic film artist Ivalo Frank's *Echoes* (Greenland, 2010), which juxtaposes Cold War debris in the Greenlandic landscape with the telling of personal stories by local Greenlandic populations about the implications of the American military presence in Greenland.

In what the *New York Times* and other media outlets have termed the contemporary 'Arctic Cold War', the tension lies less between state-sanctioned ideological points of view than between competing discourses of ecological environmentalism and extraction. In this sense, the New Cold War is driven by global capitalism and the desire for hegemony over resource extraction and shipping routes. Paul Arthur Birkman notes in the *New York Times* that the Arctic Council

identified sustainable development and environmental protection as 'common Arctic issues'. But another crucial concern – maintaining the peace – was shelved in the talks that led to the council's creation. The fear then, as now, was that peace implied demilitarization. It doesn't. But if these nations are still too timid to discuss peace in the region when ten-

sions are low, how will they possibly cooperate to ease conflicts if they arise? (Birkman 2013)

Birkman's fear is that a new Cold War, in the Arctic, is imminent. These concerns are implicitly addressed in a number of recent documentary films. With the contemporary 'Cold War', films engaging a contested Arctic adopt a variety of strategies that place the 'Arctic Cold War' in relation to concerns about the environment, sovereignty, indigenous populations, global warming and transnationalism. *The Battle for the Arctic* (UK, Channel 4/Canada, 2009) examines the new Arctic Cold War and the central role that oil plays in conflicts over sovereignty, environmental policy and security. The current battle over the Arctic is not simply about resource extraction; it is also about the ideologies that justify these activities, as nation-state players attempt to keep the resources contained therein as their own, under the guise of environmentalism and sovereignty, which also highlights the irony that the release of carbon emissions from the very oil extracted from below its surface further intensifies climate change.

THE BOOK ITSELF

Films on Ice brings together work by scholars that addresses both films highly identified with the representation of the Arctic, such as *Nanook of the North*, and little-known films that nevertheless play a key role in the global and local imaginations of the Arctic. Therefore, the book is comprehensive, but it is not a historical or geographical region survey. The book is divided into four parts: 'Global Indigeneity', 'Hollywood Hegemony', 'Ethnography and the Documentary Dilemma', and 'Myths and Modes of Exploration'. Each section contains its own introduction to the chapters that follow. The individual chapters of *Films on Ice* cover all the Arctic's geographical areas, major historical developments, and film and moving image practices and approaches. A number of chapters furthermore address policies and practices of funding, producing and distributing moving images in, about, and for the Global North. Many of these works are dispersed across the globe and often unseen, stored away in archives, private collections and local collectives. Many of these largely unseen images are uncovered and discussed in *Films on Ice*. This book approaches global Arctic film from multiple theoretical perspectives, from ecocriticism to postcolonialism, historiography, indigenous studies, archival research, gender theory, critical theory, cultural studies, cultural ethnography, questions of media specificity and digital media convergence. The book is both an introduction and stepping-off point for further research into an emerging field of Critical Arctic Studies, while providing key contextual and cultural information through analytically specific case studies that will fully situate

Films on Ice as a foundational text in the field because of its breadth, depth, and scope.

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