*Load-bearing concepts are those that enable us to think (or conceptualize) something else. [Any] mediation—between disciplines or subdisciplines, between interests within a field, and certainly between historical moments—can only be the result of the construction of a shared discourse within which a consensus must be sought for the use of specific words (hence, concepts).* — Peter de Bolla, "Mediation and the Division of Labor"

In *Films on Ice*, "Arctic Cinemas" is offered as a load-bearing concept upon which varying forms of Arctic filmmaking hitherto regarded as discrete traditions can be placed in dialogue, challenging, as the introduction claims, the very notion of "Arctic" as an unified concept and conventional views of film history, at the same time. By proposing "Arctic Cinemas" as a new lens through which to view the diverse film histories of nations and peoples spanning the vast Arctic region, including those that might seem more dissimilar than similar on first consideration—Inuit and Sámi cinemas, Scottish women filmmakers, and Norwegian horror flicks, to point out a few—*Films on Ice* stakes an innovative claim concerning the "dialogue between insiders and outsiders" that occur across the Arctic region (1). In so doing, the collection of essays recasts ground that has been stereotyped by the glare of otherworldly ice, Eurocentric-ethnography and the sublime.

While "Arctic Cinemas" is indeed a load-bearing concept, the introduction to the collection, penned by its editors MacKenzie and Westerståhl Stenport, performs methodological heavy lifting worthy of Atlas, and the introduction is a veritable gold mine for anyone wishing to either design a course or binge watch film from and about the North, although the rarity of many of the films in question would make finding them on *Netflix* a feat. As such, the introduction serves as an ample starting place for anyone needing to strengthen their broader knowledge of the Arctic and its many discourses, including Critical Arctic Studies and Arctic Art Cinema. Further, the introductions that open each of *Film on Ice's* four parts are equally indispensable and help frame the plurality of theoretical perspectives included in the collection.

Perhaps the clearest articulation of the context from which the collection emerges is located in "Transnational, World, Global, Arctic Cinemas?" Here, the editors put forth their goal: "to challenge standard national cinema histories that have generally overlooked film production in, about, and for the Arctic region" (13). By envisioning "Arctic Cinema" as a concept by which "geographically related subsections of various nation-states" are incorporated into

one conceptual rubric, *Films on Ice* also challenges normative definitions of World Cinema. This is equally achieved by including in the collection of essays examples of "sub-national" film, or those "not representative of what is understood as a 'national' tradition" (14). "Arctic Cinema," then, expands the purview of both World Cinema and "cinematic tradition."

It is because of this aim that the study focuses on what MacKenzie and Westerståhl Stenport describe as "three distinct, yet interrelated groups" (1). It is useful to describe these groups at length since it is through their interrelationships that the concept of "Arctic Cinemas" emerges. They are: "(1) films made by Arctic residents, but mostly seen in the South […]; (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" (1). As this list suggests, the collection is acutely attuned to the ways that perceptions of the Arctic, its regions, and its peoples have been amalgamated, marginalized and propagated in film.

The collection is equally attentive, however, to the ways in which pushback and reinscription have occurred with more frequency over the last several decades of filmmaking among the Arctic regions. Because of representation's implicit function in film, the collection equally takes cue from Critical Arctic Studies, which is interested in exploring how cultural representation can serve as a humanistic counterpoint to the definition of the Arctic region by climate, geopolitics, or cartography (2). The collection's broad scope is further organized into four parts, each highlighting a distinct frame of reference through which to view "Arctic Cinema."

Part I, "Global Indigeneity," focuses the notion of "unified singularity" on the indigenous peoples who populate the Arctic, representing "the first instance that the multiple cinematic traditions from various indigenous cultures and regions of the Arctic are placed in dialogue with one another" (31). There are very few venues, indeed, where an examination of Sámi, native Alaskan and Canadian, "Eskimo," Inuit, and Greenlander film traditions would make sense standing side-by-side; this is one of them. This juxtapositioning succeeds in large part because of the engagement with the relationship between hybridity (cultural, ethnic, cinematic) and play in contemporary Arctic film, which stresses the reality of transnationality for the region's indigenous peoples, both for the good and bad.

Part II, "Hollywood Hegemony," constructs a thorough history of how, beginning at the turn of the 20th century, "the Arctic" has figured in American cinema and its "cinematic imaginaries" (121). The tradition of "location substitution" is one of the focuses in this section, as is the line between fiction and "actuality" in representations of the North. Perhaps one of the most startling aspects of this section is, however, the connection drawn between polar expedition, film production, and the way in which proto-fascist aesthetics reemployed the Arctic in its own image within German *Bergfilm*, the arctic landscape inscribed with sublime, masculine whiteness.

At the core of Part III, "Ethnography and the Documentary Dilemma," are questions concerning time, chronology, the concept of historical progress and the ways in which ethnography and documentary film have grappled with and, in many cases, perpetuated notions of "cultural evolution" akin to those developed in stadial theory and disseminated in conjectural history and its descendants from the eighteenth century forward. It is in this section where the collection's multiple threads begin to fully unite, and "Arctic Cinema" begins to signify in ways indicative of a functional, load-bearing concept: by juxtaposing the Arctic's many unique regions and film histories with one another, it becomes apparent that, regardless of the differences among them, film made about the regions and peoples of the Arctic have repeatedly participated in forms of history-making predicated on the representation, evaluation and hierarchization of "otherness." From this premise, one can more fully appreciate the flip-side of "Arctic Cinema" set forth in Part I, that of contemporary, indigenous filmmakers subverting, hybridizing, and playing with tropes long held within a film tradition that for too long functioned outside of their control. Although I appreciate the choice to place "Global Indigeneity" first in the collection, allowing indigenous voices to speak first and for themselves, I cannot help but wonder if Part III should have come before it, as the incredible contrast between early ethnographic film and contemporary, indigenous responses to it would deepen the significance of the latter, especially for a reader not wholly versed in the cinemas of the Arctic. After finishing the collection, read in order, I felt as though I needed to return to the opening chapters with the insights I collected along the way.

Part IV, "Myths and Modes of Exploration," is perhaps the most daring section of the collection due to the broad geographical, cultural and temporal scope of its subjects: topics range from the earliest depictions of the race to the North Pole in silent film, circa 1901, to

a comparison of 1930 and 1970s Soviet images of the North where, in the case of the later films, the Arctic space is imagined as "the place of possibilities where socialist dreams come true" (321); the collection closes with two works that scrutinize contemporary, visual interactions with the Arctic, examining new models of representing the region through "creolization" and "info-aesthetics." Despite its diverse material, Part IV succeeds in connecting method, mythmaking, and exploration along several lines, including how film has mediated or attempted to mediate varying histories of the Arctic, personal, political, and environmental.

In its own words, *Films on Ice* demonstrates how the concept of "the Arctic" "elides the political, geographic, national, transnational and linguistic differences that define and populate the region;" foregrounding, even, how "the Arctic" encompasses an "intertwined" and "unifying singularity" (2). For even the most casual student of the Arctic, this conclusion will be unavoidable because although it signifies in so many interrelated ways, it is particularly prescient regarding climate change, which will not pause at borders and which will impact the Arctic and its peoples hardest, its uniqueness, its interwoven fabric, the first victim rent by modernity's hubris. As a whole, the essays in *Films on Ice* speak among one another, pick up threads of common focus, and, in numerous cases, offer readings and arguments concerning the same films, scaffolding up, as it were, from the concept of "Arctic Cinema" to demonstrate the concept's ability to provide a foundation for a new, counter history of film.