

INTRODUCTION

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Whether as sites of aesthetic marvel, peaks of conquest, national symbols, or evidence of environmental devastation and climate change, mountains pose challenges of many kinds, including physical, mental, technological, ethical, environmental, and representational ones. If one considers their geologic origins and geographic shapes and locations, mountains are impossible to behold unless one assumes a global perspective. By the same token, their expansive and diverse manifestations are impossible to comprehend unless they are conceptualized through models of human scales. They are not only privileged sites of survey and vision but reward us with cross-sectional and intersectional awareness. The past decade generated a resurgence of mountain and mountaineering scholarship, for instance Mathieu (2011), Kupper (2014), Price et al. (2013), Hansen (2013), Debarbieux and Rudaz (2015), Isserman (2016), Höbusch (2016), Ireton and Schaumann (2012 and 2020), Schaumann (2020), Rak (2021), and Ives (2021). Moving both at imperceptibly slow and violently fast paces through plate tectonics, erosion, sedimentation, and volcanism, mountains assume both liminal and central positions. They mark borders, margins, and peripheries and serve as signposts of national, religious, and cultural identities. In spite, or perhaps because of these challenging and elusive attributes, mountains afford us a multitude of diverse perspectives and insights. This volume interrogates cinematic models of understanding mountains. Exploring how cinema shapes—and has been shaped by—global and globalized perspectives of mountains, the contributions examine how cinema

mediates the manifold cultural dimensions that intersect with mountains and how cinema responds to legacies of mountain culture and its imperialist and (post-)enlightenment investments.

Throughout the Romantic and modern periods, mountains have been addressed as transcendental and quasi-transcendental objects. They have been considered sublime. For Edmund Burke, Immanuel Kant, and Friedrich Schiller, immense objects such as mountain peaks can trigger existential reflections that strain our affective and imaginative limits but ultimately allow human reason to triumph over the material world (Burke 1757, Kant 1764, Schiller 1793).

For the modernist philosopher Georg Simmel, mountains resonate with an almost otherworldly sense of remoteness. Drawing on Wilhelm Worringer's art historical distinction between empathy and abstraction, Simmel argues that high alpine regions affect us as "abstraction from life" ("On the Aesthetics of the Alps," 1911, 190). The vertical landscape of the Alps captures the opposing forces of life and freezes their oppositional dynamics in a seemingly eternal stasis of prehistorical and deep-temporal dimensions. Thus, mountains have not only come to represent perceptual and representational limits, they also figure as reminders of their cognitively impenetrable materiality:

On the one hand, the Alps appear as chaos, as the unwieldy mass of the formless, which has only randomly gained contours and is without any inherent sense of form; the secret of its materiality, of which one grasps more from a single glance at the configurations of the mountains than in any other landscape, reveals itself silently. (Simmel 1911, 189)

In the context of current environmental theories, mountains may be approached as what Timothy Morton has termed hyperobjects, referring to vast objects and forces such as climate change that defy comprehension and may only be grasped through abstraction and synthetic reasoning. Not unlike manifestations of the sublime and akin to the affective resonances of mountains described by Simmel, Morton describes hyperobjects as grounds of reflection for shared subjectivities: "These entities cause us to reflect on our very places on earth and in the cosmos. Perhaps this is the most fundamental issue—hyperobjects seem to force something on us, something that affects some core ideas of what it means to exist, what Earth is, what society is" (Morton 2014, 15).

As fundamental parts of our eco-mental system, mountains have been saturated with all kinds of totemism and animism, by which we extract from and project onto mountains forms of social order and cultural understanding (Bateson 2000, 492), and which render their geological massiveness into mythical, spiritual, social, economic, and political expressions of power. From an ecological perspective, mountains can be productively studied as a *dispositif* that shapes our epistemologies and helps to develop the intervening spaces of

our environmental networks. Approaching mountains as a *dispositif* can help us to conceptualize relations that span across oppositions and interdependent domains such as nature and culture, mythology and science, economy, and technology (Deleuze 1992; Peeters and Charlier 1999). The “nature” of mountains figures both as a material resource of geopolitical power and a symbolic form of cultural self-expression. This nature is itself mediated by cultural myths, scientific discoveries, and technological innovations and serves as mediator of national and transnational, cultural and intercultural relations.

Cinema is an especially effective vehicle to render the symbolic and cultural merit of mountains. According to W.J.T. Mitchell, mountains or landscape in general can be understood as transactional media that “naturalize” the interactions between humans and the environment: “[W]hat we have done and are doing to our environment, what the environment in turn does to us, how we naturalize what we do to each other, and how these ‘doings’ are enacted in the media of representation we call ‘landscape’” (1994, 2; cf. also Harper and Rayner 2010). The underlying model for Mitchell’s conception of landscape is cinema or the moving image, for it renders both humans and landscape in and as motion rather than arresting their nature in states or fixed forms: “[M]oving pictures, in a very real sense, are the subtext of these revisionist accounts of traditional motionless landscape images in photography, painting and other media” (1994, 2).

Explicating the cinematic subtext of Mitchell’s conception of landscape, Ian Christie points to additional ways in which cinema and classical film theory can deepen our understanding of landscape’s cultural work. Christie draws on André Bazin’s reflection on the ways landscape functions in neo-realist cinema of the 1940s and 50s:

Discussing the Po marshes episode in Rossellini’s film about the liberation of Italy, *Paisà* (1946), he notes that “the horizon is always at the same height,” because this “is the exact equivalent, under conditions imposed by the screen, of the inner feeling men experience who are living between the sky and the water and whose lives are at the mercy of an infinitesimal shift of angle.” (Christie 2000, 167)

Bazin draws attention to the ways the physical or concrete reality of the cinematic image interfaces with mental or abstract meanings added by the mind. Accordingly, the filmic image is “a fragment of concrete reality in itself multiple and full of ambiguity, whose meaning emerges only after the fact, thanks to other imposed facts between which the mind establishes certain relationships” (1948, 37). Cinema thus maps an important premise of Western landscape conception, in which one concrete *aspect* or sighting is put into mental relation with an idealized totality of the land (Jullien 2018).

GLOBALIZING THE ALPS

Historically, the Alps have assumed a powerful modeling role in shaping the perception and conception of not only mountains but the peoples, plants, and animals inhabiting the mountain world (Macfarlane 2003; Mathieu 2011; Debarbieux & Rudaz 2015). As early as in the sixteenth century, mountains became the locus of detailed surveys that recorded economic, political, and scientific facts, such as information about resources, infrastructure, geology, and climate. Later, these also included aesthetic qualities such as visual and sonic aspects of mountains (Mathieu 2011, 16–20).

In the wake of European exploration, conquest, and colonialism, the Alps globalized perceptions of mountains. Alexander von Humboldt’s paradigmatic cross-sections of global mountains feature vertically aligned vegetation and subterranean zones along with information on flora and fauna, agriculture, rocks, and the atmosphere, mirroring horizontally aligned climatic zones of the Earth. In Humboldt’s *Geographia plantarum lineamenta* (1817) (Figure 0.1), Mont Blanc is placed right in the center of the page, while images of Mount Chimborazo (Andes) to the left and Mount Sulitjelma (Lapland) to the right offer both a scaled-up and scaled-down version of Mont Blanc, with vegetation zones and snow lines replicating those of the Alps, but at different altitudes

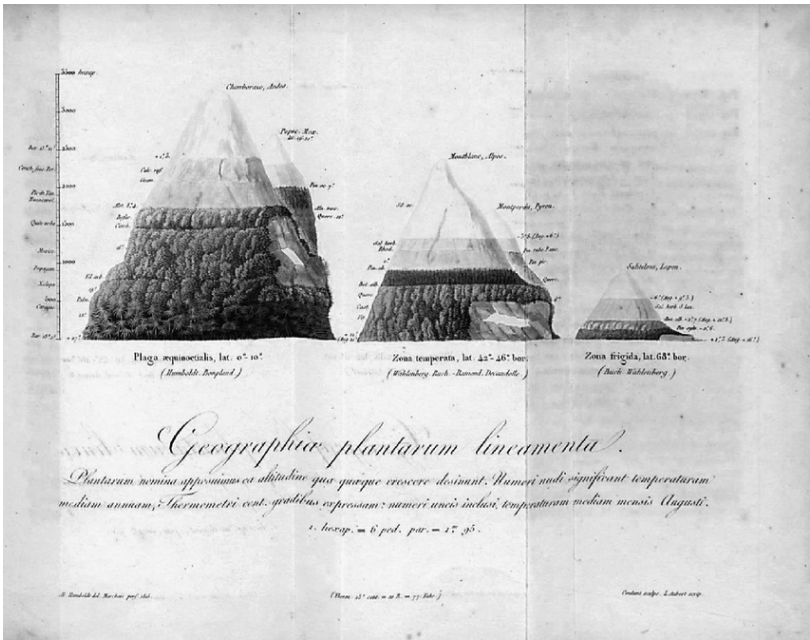


Figure 0.1 Humboldt’s *Geographia plantarum lineamenta* (1817)

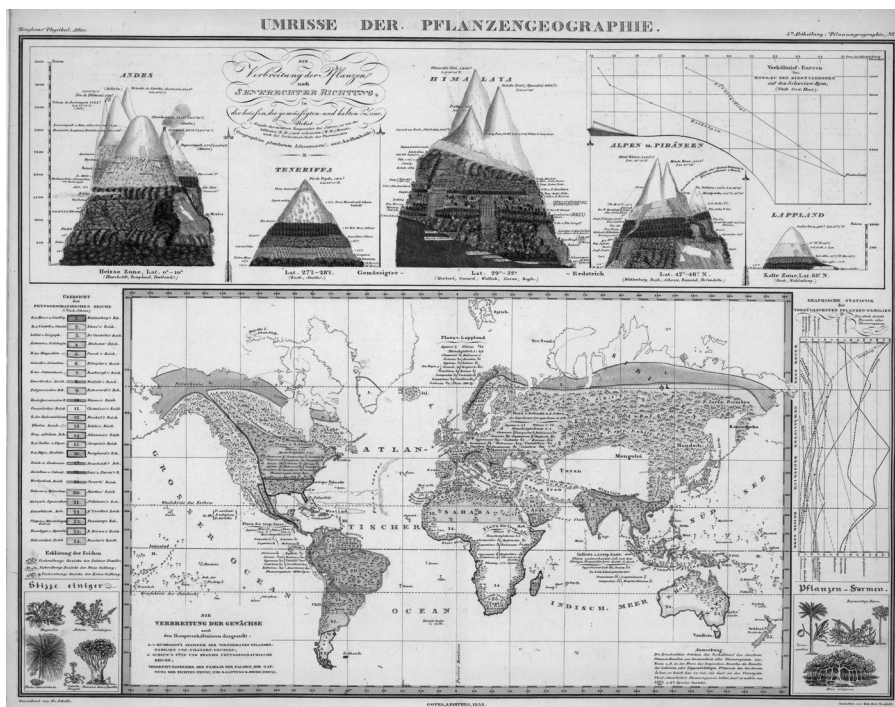


Figure 0.2 Berghaus's *Physikalischer Atlas* (1845–1848)

and latitudes. Heinrich Berghaus's popular *Physikalischer Atlas* (1845–1848) (Figure 0.2), the first comprehensive atlas of the world designed in part to accompany Humboldt's *Cosmos*, once again featured comparative height profiles, placing Mont Blanc and Monte Rosa at the center with Pyrenean peaks and Mount Sulitjelma serving as smaller scales to the right, outflanked by the Himalayan peak Dhaulagiri, Tenerife's Pico de Teide and Andean peaks to the left. In the world map below the peaks, Europe and the Alps form the center of the image, with the Americas to the left and Russia and Asia to the right. The Alps thus provided a standard against which global mountains and mountain ranges were measured, mapped, portrayed, and grasped.

The so-called Alpine model also determined aesthetic, scientific, and ethical approaches to mountain ranges and provided moral values and meaning. In this way, the British mountaineer Leslie Stephen, in his work characteristically entitled *The Playground of Europe* (1871), drew on Humboldt's height profiles but extended the model of vertically aligned botanical and climactic zones to zones of Alpine travelers. Delineating zones of nationality/ethnicity, gender, and class privilege in vertically aligned partitions, Stephen turned the geographical scope of the Alpine model into an ideological one:

Travelers, like plants, may be divided according to the zones which they reach. In the highest region, the English climber—an animal whose instincts and peculiarities are pretty well known—is by far the most abundant genus. Lower down comes the region where he is mixed with a crowd of industrious Germans and a few sporadic examples of adventurous ladies and determined sightseers. Below this is the luxuriant growth of the domestic tourist in all his amazing and intricate varieties. (211)

Stephen's taxonomy situated mountaineers, tourists, and women along a vertical scale, as if to follow a natural distribution according to gender, nationality, and physical fitness (Schaumann 2020, 226–27). Rooted in European imperialism, the Alpine model had a lasting and global impact on the ways mountains were perceived, marketed, and preserved. Fueled by coal-burning steam engines, the British Empire opened a network of train tracks and economic circuits transporting goods and people from all over Europe to the Alps. The model thus proved immensely successful in promoting mountains as global tourist destinations for climbers, skiers, and tourists alike and, more recently, catalyzed debates in relation to sustainable development (Mathieu 2019).

Many depictions of mountains, whether on maps, in written texts, photographs, or in films, explicitly or implicitly continue the Alpine model and its entrenched ideology. In *Mountaineering in the Sierra Nevada* (1872), North American explorer Clarence King christened the Californian mountains the “new Alps” (45) and continually juxtaposed his experiences with those of British climbers in the Alps. The North American naturalist John Muir advocated for European top-down models of forest management in his zeal to protect sequoia trees in the High Sierra, scorning Indigenous practices of deliberately setting fires—which, as we have now come to understand, actually protected the forests from larger fires and promoted healthy forest ecosystems. Since research originating in the Alps defined the concepts and vocabulary of scientific discourse in other mountain ranges, Alpine namesakes appeared in mountain ranges in North America, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, China, and Japan.

THE ALPINE MODEL AND MOUNTAIN CINEMA

While vertically-structured zones of exclusion were replicated and widely popularized in nineteenth-century narratives of mountain exploration, they also informed modern approaches that discovered the high alpine terrain as a scientific and technological laboratory of experimentation (Felsch 2007). Cinema played a crucial and manifold role in such techno-scientific explorations of nature and their commercial, aesthetic, and transnational contexts.

Beginning with the first decade of the twentieth century, films featuring mountains celebrated both spectacular ascents and cinematic feats and lastingly influenced modern notions of the picturesque. Divested from the aesthetic and political implications of Romantic art theory, these pictorial values became amplified in emerging commercial discourses, promoting Alpine tourism with powerful cultural ramifications. Until this day, cinematic appropriations of the mountain picturesque project a singularity of historical, ethnic, and cultural otherness in formulaic or stereotypical images, fueling social desires to fossilize and commodify nature, wildlife, and Indigenous cultures (Peterson 2013). At the same time, cinema was touted as a medium of modern animism. To filmmaker and early theoretician Jean Epstein, cinema's animating power is perfectly suited to bring out the true character and soul of the material world. Arguing against a picturesque aesthetic of cinema that arrests nature and forces the environment to conform to established notions of natural beauty, he promoted a film aesthetics that embarks on new terrains of unfamiliar sensations and reveals to viewers "the landscape's dance" (Epstein 1921, 237).

To some extent, the emergence of the German mountain film in the 1920s and 1930s integrated both picturesque and photogenic aesthetics of mountains. Arnold Fanck is often credited with having invented this genre and with initiating the acting and filmmaking careers of Leni Riefenstahl and Luis Trenker. Fanck discovered the mountain film as a field of cinepoetic experimentation that combined nineteenth-century iconography with constructivist aesthetics and brought together documentary and ethnographic impulses of field cinematography with the affective landscape of melodramatic narratives.

In contrast to earlier expedition and picturesque scenic films, the German mountain films of the 1920s mark a distinct shift from a transnational toward a national outlook. Arguably, this is also reflected in the generally congenial depiction of both tourists and locals, echoing a growing tourism industry and the development of alpinism (Klecker & Quendler 2023). Sometimes considered a German response to the American Western genre, the *Bergfilm* is indeed best understood in the context of national film histories that began to take shape in Europe and North America in the late 1910s. The rise of the Western in the 1910s as a signature national genre of the US followed concerted efforts by the film industry that sought to gain domestic control over the film market, which was largely in the hands of European companies. Moreover, the move of the film industry from New York to California allowed for year-round on-location shooting of exotic subjects and action-packed stories (Anderson 1979). Notably, the rise of the Western coincided with the demise of another landscape genre, the Southern mountain melodrama, which—by focusing on plots of feuding and moonshining—projected an internal national other on Appalachian mountaineering culture.

Although the German mountain film was well integrated in Alpine tourist networks and offered a comparable set of attractions, unlike the Western it did not advance to an international brand that would be emulated across the globe. Instead, the *Bergfilm*'s ties with national-socialist cinema (on ideological and personnel levels) posed critical challenges for both filmmakers and scholars (Rentschler 1990; Horak 1997; Rapp 1997; Koepnick 2002; von Moltke 2005; Baer 2017 & 2024). Thus, the German *Bergfilm* can be described as an attempt at domesticating mountain movies as a national genre, which (in rivaling the Western) projected its own nostalgic rhetoric of authenticity and its own ways of "naturalizing" a synthesis of technology and landscape.

Arnold Fanck's film *Der heilige Berg* (*The Holy Mountain*, 1926) is a case in point that accomplishes this synthesis by drawing on the Alpine model's vertically-structured zones of exclusion. The mountain peaks are reserved for male rituals of self-purification and self-discovery. When Diotima, a dancer from the city, asks the unnamed "friend" what is to be found on the top of the mountains, he laconically replies, "one's self." When she asks "the friend" to take her with him, he tells her to wait until he has found the perfect mountain for their engagement. While "the friend" is out looking for a church in the shape of a mountain dome, Diotima gets to know his friend Vigo, who not only wins a ski race for her but also falls in love with her. The lower competitive world of alpine sports and tourism is set apart from the higher spiritual world of mountaintops and they are linked together by a love triangle. Some sixty-five years later, Werner Herzog would apply the same template on a cosmopolitan scale in *Schrei aus Stein* (*Scream of Stone*, 1991; see also Quendler 2020).

The idea of mountains as sites where physiological and technological limits are tested prevailed throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. It took center stage in the national races to claim the first ascents of the highest peaks in the Himalayas in the 1950s (see Harald Höbusch's contribution to this volume). The extreme filmmaking conditions during such expeditions also inspired the French New Wave filmmaker Luc Moullet. In a review of the Trento Film Festival in 1963, at the time the only film festival dedicated to mountain films, Moullet declared mountains a paramount cinematic terrain precisely for the challenges they pose for the filmmaker. Moullet surmised that the different atmospheric pressure at high altitudes rids filmmakers of their usual ways of seeing and of deceptive habits and routines affording greater cinematic possibilities:

Under the effect of the pressure difference, everything takes on a different value, freed from incidental experiences, which the mind does not ignore, but restores to their real places; every word loses its symbolic meaning to take on its full formal value. One recognizes there the formal priority of modern cinema, the art of being and no longer that of the sign. (Moullet 2009, 53; translation cited in Klecker & Quendler 2023)

For Moullet, the mountain experience is a fundamentally cinematic one in which high altitude heightens our aesthetic sensibilities. Not coincidentally, Moullet's speculations on the effects of high altitude recall the nineteenth-century scientific experiments that explored mountains as "laboratory landscapes" (Felsch 2007) while also establishing heights of exclusion, displacing Indigenous inhabitants and explorers of mountain regions. Reinhold Messner's self-serving declaration in 1978 that alpinism was a joke, since there was nothing left to explore in the world's highest mountains except one's own limits, brings such reasoning to its problematic conclusion.

This cursory survey of mountain cinema reveals that the German *Bergfilm* is but one, albeit influential, moment in the history of mountain cinema, and that the prevalence of the Alpine model represents an obstacle for understanding the diversity of physical environments and social systems of different mountain regions in the world (Frolova 2001). In this way, the enthusiastic reception of the German *Bergfilm* obscured other national and transnational developments of mountain cinema drawing on different cultural models and conceptions of mountainous landscapes. By resituating mountain cinema in wider transnational contexts, this volume aims at correcting this bias in historical accounts of mountain cinema. This is not to devalue the historical importance of the German *Bergfilm* and its lasting, albeit ambivalent, influence on further developments in mountain cinema. On the contrary, the special role of the German *Bergfilm* in film history can only be fully appreciated when discussed in the contexts of earlier and other mountain film traditions. More importantly, in order to assess the role of cinema in the global dissemination and transformation of the Alpine model, it is necessary to parse transnational ramifications of both the German *Bergfilm* and other mountain film traditions.

Our volume's overall rationale progresses from practice (genre), entity (nation), territory (environment), to intermediality. While the German *Bergfilm* combined nineteenth-century iconography with constructivist aesthetics, fusing documentary and ethnographic impulses with melodramatic narratives, the book's first section reconsiders this legacy by exploring mountains as sites of cinematic innovations across a variety of genres and aesthetic traditions. Accordingly, the contributions map new ways of approaching the idea of mountain cinema along key dimensions of cinema such as semiotics (Gunning), genre (Müller), auteurism (Winkler), and aesthetics (Quendler) and explore the narrative potential of field cinematography and its ramifications in the mountain melodrama, comedy films, and political and ethical independent filmmaking.

In "Cinematic Mountains: The World and Vision from a Height," Tom Gunning analyzes how mountains gain meaning in different cinematic traditions and forms, from silent cinema to modern avant-garde film. If mountains serve as sites of transgressive moments that lead characters to either

sainthood or an outlaw life, they also point to ways of signification beyond norms and expectations. Gunning's chapter is a programmatic invitation to expand and revise global mountain cinema that sets the stage for the ensuing chapters, which follow different generic paths. Eva-Maria Müller excavates the comic tradition in mountain movies (from slapstick onwards) in her contribution "Ski Comedy: On the Light Side of Mountain Film." Beginning with Arnold Fanck's lesser-known comedies of the 1920s and 1930s, *Der große Sprung* (*The Great Leap*, 1927) and *Der weiße Rausch* (*The White Ecstasy*, 1931), and ending with the recent mountain comedy *La loi de la jungle* (*Struggle for Life*, Antonin Peretjako, 2016), Müller investigates the potential of comedy and traces a transnational tradition of cinematic slapstick. Daniel Winkler turns to volcanic mountains as a site of geological and artistic interplay in new auteur cinema in "High and Low: Porosity in the Neapolitan Anthology Film *I vesuviani* (*The Vesuvians*, 1997) and Mario Martone's Episode 'The Ascent'." Using Benjamin's and Lacis's concept of the porous, Winkler addresses the geological and generic amorphism in the New Neapolitan Cinema, investigating whether the five films that make up the anthology *I vesuviani* can be approached via a common geological underpinning of tuff and the porous, which likewise links Naples to nearby Vesuvius. In "Inversions of Mountain Cinema: Post-Humanist Ethics and Aesthetics in Zhao Liang's *Behemoth* (2015)," Christian Quendler looks at mountains through an inverted lens, thus expanding the canon of mountain films. Considering exploration films as an early genre of mountain cinema, Quendler introduces mining films to mountain cinema and discusses its changing aesthetics. Quendler locates *Behemoth* in relation to traditions of both cinematic and geographic humanism.

As the history of European mountain climbing followed colonial expansion, global aspirations in early exploration and travelogue films funneled capitalist and colonialist interests by promoting a readily accessible encyclopedic view of the world (Gunning 2008). The chapters in Part 2 address this legacy by outlining the sometimes competing national thrust of European mountain films, but also point to both global and local regimes of mountain films as transnational networks of film production, distribution, and reception. Investigating the national and transnational directives of mountain films across different periods and global relations, the contributions travel along a lateral West–East axis, following filmmakers and mountaineers from Europe to the Himalayas (Höbusch) and Japan (Shen), and also charting the reverse direction, as in Ralph J. Poole's examination of *Heimat* tropes in contemporary Westerns and Mehrbrey's analysis of alpine mountains in Bollywood films.

It should be pointed out that mountains not only serve as sites of transnational and transcultural filmic negotiations but also appear as persistent

protagonists that, throughout film history and across different genres, enact globalized and localized visions of the world. In this way, several chapters in other parts of the book (Müller, Quendler, Rak, Liu, Fuchs and Marini) also stage transnational negotiations taking place in cinematic characters, plot, setting, production, and reception. For instance, Mia Yinxing Liu's chapter sees mountains in film as activating the public memory of the Chinese Cultural Revolution, while Michael Fuchs and Anna Marta Marini's contribution on historical memory specifically looks at the ways that trauma is reconfigured in representations of the Andes in the medium of film. Tracing cinematic production routes from Europe to Asia, the United States, and South America, we move beyond generic and national confines toward a transnational history of mountain cinema.

In her chapter "Creative Geography and Volcanic Mountains: Arnold Fanck's *Die Tochter des Samurai* (*The Samurai's Daughter*, 1937) as Mountain Film," Qinna Shen uses Fanck's liberal use of geographic inaccuracies and his inclusion of Buddhist mythology and symbolism as a point of departure. Shen suggests that Fanck not only employed such iconic imagery to promote a somewhat formulaic representation of what is typically Japanese for Western audiences, but that he further exploited Buddhist iconography in the service of the larger goal of establishing a certain linkage to Nazi ideology. In this way, *Die Tochter des Samurai* presents Japan as a nation with justifiably colonial ambitions—like Nazi Germany. By comparing and equating both nations in their need of *Lebensraum*, Shen argues, Fanck engenders the tradition of the German *Bergfilm* to endorse a nationalistic and ultimately expansionist agenda.

Harald Höbusch's chapter, "Scaling the Mountain, Elevating the Nation: The 'Golden Age of Himalayan Climbing' on Film," traces similar ideological directions in the context and reception of European mountain climbing in the Himalayas. In the years between 1950 and 1954, four of the fourteen yet unclimbed 8,000-meter peaks were claimed in quick succession by French, British, German, and Italian mountaineering expeditions. Höbusch's contribution analyzes four widely screened documentaries—*Victoire sur l'Annapurna* (Marcel Ichac, 1953), *The Conquest of Everest* (George Lowe, 1953), *Nanga Parbat 1953* (Hans Ertl, 1953), and *Italia K2* (Marcello Baldi, 1955)—to maintain that these expedition films buttressed French, British, German, and Italian national identity and self-image in the aftermath of World War II. During this critical period of worldwide political, economic, and cultural reconfiguration, each film—albeit in different ways—inscribes the exploits of successful mountaineers into a national imagination that serves to rebuild the country's identity.

The following two chapters take an opposite direction of transnational negotiations moving from East to West. In "Unshaming *Brokeback Mountain*:

Rocking *Heimat* in Transnational Coming-Out Mountain Movies,” Ralph J. Poole uses the German concept of *Heimat* as both a physical location and a sense of belonging to map the construction of queer desire that is freed from heteronormative constrictions found not in urban subculture, but in the rural mountainscape of *Brokeback Mountain* (Ang Lee, 2005) and *God’s Own Country* (Francis Lee, 2017). Whereas *Heimatfilme* have traditionally promoted clear-cut, binary gender roles by way of safeguarding and promising straightness as a paradigm, Poole’s analysis of queer rurality calls for a space of belonging and defiance, thus claiming cinematic mountains as a space of possibility and reimagination.

In her chapter “Transcultural Negotiations of Mountain Aesthetics in *Tiger Zinda Hai* (2017),” Sophia Mehrbrey investigates depictions of the Austrian Alps in *Tiger Zinda Hai* (Ali Abbas Zafar, 2017), a controversial Bollywood action thriller banned in Pakistan for its political content. As Mehrbrey states, Bollywood films often establish romantic relationships in dancing scenes that use creative geography to demonstrate the mythical value of symbols such as wind, sunsets, and mountains. Due to the political tensions in Kashmir, Bollywood productions began filming in the Swiss and Austrian Alps. In *Tiger Zinda Hai*, the scenes that take place in the Austrian Alps do not hark back to mythical traditions in an imaginary mountain landscape but form a closed micronarrative within the intradiegetic reality, referring instead to the aesthetics of the *Heimatfilm*. This unconventional representation of mountains points out the self-reflexive dimensions of a mountain idyll that at times recall and offer new perspectives on the creative geography of Fanck’s volcanic mountains in *Die Tochter des Samurai* (Shen) and the negotiations of gender relations in an emotional-laden homeland of the *Heimatfilm* (Poole), proposing the possibility of continued (re)constructions of these tropes.

Since mountains are especially fragile environments where the effects of climate change are readily visible, mountain cinema has creatively engaged ecocritical perspectives and visual and narrative approaches in order to draw attention to an increasingly devastated mountain world. Part 3 gathers essays analyzing the diverse and wide-ranging cinematic strategies used to depict the human impact on mountain environments. While harking back to familiar tropes of mountain abundance and mountain scarcity, the scope of films discussed here is transnational and transgeneric. The contributions address not only climate change but also other anthropogenic changes, suggesting that mountain cinema can effectively and viscerally convey the intersections of social justice and environmental concerns and delineate the human condition of precarity in the Anthropocene. The axes in this section are both geographic and temporal. Beginning in Europe (Haque, Schaumann, Weik von Mossner), contributions move to the Arctic (Weik von Mossner) and the Americas (Rak). Chronologically, this section contains analyses of films from the 1920s to the present day.

Kamaal Haque's "Leni Riefenstahl's Mountain Films: Ecologizing the Genre" examines Leni Riefenstahl's films *Das Blaue Licht* (*The Blue Light*, 1932) and *Tiefland* (*Lowlands*, 1954) as being focused on ecological themes: mining in the former and the scarcity of water in the latter. Haque reads the different endings in the films (tragic in *Das Blaue Licht* and happy in *Tiefland*) as related to whether the natural resource in question is renewable or not. At the same time, he argues that Riefenstahl's environmental solutions always depend on deus-ex-machina situations. Haque shows how focusing on mineral extraction and water scarcity brings a new angle to the genre of the German mountain film.

In "From *Locus Amoenus* to *Locus Absurdum*: Skiing at the End of Nature in Ruben Östlund's *Force Majeure* (2014)," Caroline Schaumann shows how Östlund interweaves elements of both the German mountain film and the disaster film to investigate our disorientation and vulnerability in the Anthropocene by tracing a family's skiing vacation in the Alps with humorous absurdity. Schaumann suggests that the larger force majeure of climate change goes unmentioned in the film but forms an unstated backdrop to the film, as an incalculable combination of manmade and natural forces that leads to helplessness, guilt, shame, and disillusion. In this way, *Force Majeure* calls into question modern definitions of human control, exclusivity, masculine prowess, the meaning of family and friends, and the restorative power of nature.

If climate change is unmentioned but implicit in *Force Majeure*, it is at the forefront of the films considered in Alexa Weik von Mossner's "A Glacial Pace? Mountain Cinema and the Imagination of Climate Change." Weik von Mossner examines three films from the last fifteen years in which glaciers play major parts: *The Age of Stupid* (Franny Armstrong, 2009), *Peak* (Hannes Lang, 2011), and *Chasing Ice* (Jeff Orlowski, 2012). She argues that all show the urgency of the changing environment, but each film does so in a different tempo. Weik von Mossner attempts to determine which type of presentation is most effective in mobilizing viewers. While there is no one best way, Weik von Mossner argues that the most commercial of these films, *Chasing Ice*, with its urgent call for action, has attracted the most attention, but she alerts us to the importance of slower pacing and a focus on local inhabitants found in *The Age of Stupid* and *Peak*, as well.

Just as Weik von Mossner focuses on the viewer experience, Julie Rak's chapter, "Festival Obscura: Gender in Festival-Driven Mountaineering Documentaries," examines films screened in a different context than most of those in this volume, that is, at mountain film festivals. Noting a greater inclusion of female and minority climbers in mountain festival entries, Rak shows, through examples from both North and South America, how the dominant ideals of mountain heroism, with its masculine heritage, hamper widespread representational change. Rak argues that even when women are the focus

of films at mountain festivals, the audiences of those festivals still primarily wish to see adventure narratives, limiting the selection of female bodies and mountain activities. Thus, *Pretty Strong* (Leslie Hittmeier, Colette McInerney, & Julie Ellison, 2020) shows strong bodies, just as one would expect from a climbing film, while *Cholitas* (Jaime Murciego & Pablo Iraburu, 2019) places the Indigenous Andean climbers within more conventional mountaineering narratives of heroism. Rak points out that questions of female representation in mountain festival films remain, while emphasizing the increasing presence of women in the festival entries.

Cinematic mountains have been instrumental in conceptualizing the social, cultural, and technological mobility of the cinematic gaze. They have been crucial in remediating art-historical notions of landscape and in developing various strands of pictorial, figural, generic, and affective theories of film and media. The question of what cinema does to landscape also raises the question of what landscape does to cinema and media at large. The fourth section of the book examines conceptions of cinema that have emerged from pre- and post-cinematic encounters with mountains. How do mountainous “reinventions of cinema” remediate our environmental awareness and understanding? While the first three sections of this volume focus on films, Part 4 expands our investigations beyond cinema. Contributions focus on mountain cinema in intermedia and inter-art relations (Liu), technological implications (Peabody), historiographical ramifications (Fuchs and Marini), and, finally, in a videogame (Reynolds).

In “*The Evening Rains in Bashan: Mountains in Chinese Cinema in 1980*,” Mia Yinxing Liu views the prizewinning *Bashan yeyu* (*Evening Rain*, Wu Yigong & Wu Yonggang, 1980) through the lens of both Chinese film history and Chinese landscape history and theory. Taking many visual cues from the long history of Chinese visual arts, the film, Liu argues, updates traditional landscape art through cinema. Goddess Peak, halfway through the film and halfway through the journey of the film’s characters, serves as a focal point. Liu presents a reading of a film barely known outside of China and adds to our global mountain cinema repository. In a coda, Liu notes that, poignantly, the film takes place on the Yangtze River, where the Three Gorges Dam has changed the landscape since its completion in 2012. While the mountains of the title remain, they are now several hundred meters smaller, and the present-day viewer is confronted with a disappeared landscape.

Seth Peabody is interested in how digital technology affects change in two recent mountain film documentaries. In “Liberating the Captured Image: *Bergfilm* Legacies and Digital Technologies in *Free Solo* (2018) and *The Alpinist* (2021),” Peabody shows that questions of authenticity have been part and parcel of mountain films since the time of the classical German *Bergfilm*. Looking at *Free Solo* (Jimmy Chin & Elizabeth Chai Vasarhelyi, 2018) and

The Alpinist (Peter Mortimer & Nick Rosen, 2021), he considers how the use of digital technology—a digital camera and, above all, digital graphics including route maps—informs the films. Peabody coins the term “data-image” for those sequences where shots of routes or of climbing are merged with “data visualizations and digital graphic design.”

In “Film, Memory, and Intermediality: Exploring the Andes in *La cordillera de los sueños* (2019),” Michael Fuchs and Anna Marta Marini examine the role that the Andes play in the history of Chilean national identity, especially in the aftermath of the Pinochet dictatorship. Mountains are always present on the horizon but, Fuchs and Marini argue, are often barely noticed and taken for granted by Chile’s urban residents. As the authors show, the mountains allow the director Patricio Guzmán to address his and his country’s complicated past, especially the 1973 military coup and its continuing aftermath.

Finally, Daniel Reynolds brings a new perspective to the volume by analyzing the shape mountains take in the videogame *Death Stranding* (2019). In a fictional United States, now renamed the “United Cities of America,” the player controls the character Sam Porter Bridges as he travels West. According to Reynolds, Sam’s interaction with the landscape, including the mountains, shows how this is a reenactment of “the myth of westward expansion.” Mountains are but one example of the geography in the game, but the most extreme and the most immutable one. They are also the feature that best demonstrates Sam’s embodiment in the landscape and that makes the usually implicit relationship between technology and landscape explicit.

In *Global Mountain Cinema*, we refer to the so-called Alpine model not only with respect to the beginnings of Alpinism but also as a philosophical undergirding that informs the perception, depiction, and mapping of mountains, including the legacy of the German *Bergfilm*. We acknowledge that the Alpine model has left lasting imprints on a monolithic and largely Eurocentric mountain cinema, often shoving aside discussions of mountain cinema in other national contexts, especially the Global South. While we attempt to overcome this bias in gathering essays that go beyond the often-traditional focus on the nationalist bent in order to broaden the scope of mountain cinema, our coverage is by no means geographically encyclopedic, and some regions and mountain ranges of the world are not encompassed here. It is our hope that this volume will encourage further work on the topic, with special attention to hitherto neglected areas. The multiplicity of approaches in *Global Mountain Cinema* mirrors the diverse forms of global mountains themselves.

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