

# Letter from the Editors

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Dear readers,

As the field of film studies has developed, scholars have considered the influence of popular culture on the masses in a variety of ways, with particular attention paid to the role of popular media in perpetuating power structures. Pioneers of this subject discovered a rich space for academic debate, highlighting the important theoretical, philosophical, and sociological issues raised by widely recognized cultural texts. Cinema has long occupied a strange and variable place in culture apropos of the 'popular': it has been dismissed as mere entertainment, elevated as a legitimate art form, and derided as archaic in the face of new media and technologies. Despite and perhaps because of this variability, cinema has remained an object of fascination for those scholars seeking to determine its place in (popular) culture.

*Cinephile 13.1* aims to examine low culture in order to challenge the instinct to privilege critical engagement with texts deemed academically and culturally respectable. The concept of 'low culture' is often used to refer to popular texts consumed by the masses rather than by an elite few; similarly, it is used to strike a contrast with texts recognized as 'high art'. With this issue of *Cinephile*, we hope to enter existing conversations on low culture and provide a platform for scholars focusing on areas previously overlooked or continuing to develop in academic discourse.

*Cinephile 13.1* opens with an article by Scott MacKenzie on the late chef and television personality Anthony Bourdain, and his critically acclaimed television series *A Cook's Tour* (2002-2003), *No Reservations* (2005-2012), and *Parts Unknown* (2013-2018). MacKenzie argues that Bourdain's important use of dialogism functions so well within his shows specifically because he was working within the 'low culture' media form of reality television. Next, focusing on the British Film Institute's specialist home media label, Flipside, Kate Egan examines continuously shifting understandings and valuations of low culture as part of national film culture and Flipside's aim to rediscover, remaster and re-evaluate obscure, forgotten or low-budget British genre, exploitation and experimental films from the past. Following this, Michael Crandol examines the influence of British Hammer horror films on the Japanese filmic category of *kaiki eiga*. In the process he emphasizes the significance of considering foreign films in discussions of national genres. Eileen Totter's article discusses children's television shows *DuckTales* (2017-), *Voltron: Legendary Defender* (2016-2018), and the ani-

mated film *The Lego Batman Movie* (2017). She argues that current animation programs such as these reflect a possible shift in how Western writers present male characters, straying from past representations which have stuck to a narrow formula for masculinity and reinforced its hegemonic qualities. Devlin Grimm discusses cult classic *Robocop* (1987) and its reboot, *Robocop* (2014), through the lens of disability studies. Using the work of Donna Haraway and Vivian Sobchack, Grimm argues that *Robocop* as a film could be considered a cyborg in itself, functioning as an allegory for the identity of the atypical body and brain. The issue concludes with an article by Caroline N. Bayne that traces the role and representation of female wrestlers employed by World Wrestling Entertainment from the 1990s to present day. Bayne uses female wrestlers of the WWE as a case study to interrogate the interplay of feminism, wrestling, and pop culture.

We would like to express our most sincere gratitude to the faculty and staff of the University of British Columbia's Department of Theatre and Film who have provided their advice and support throughout the editorial process. For guiding us through our tenure as *Cinephile's* Editors-in-Chief, we would especially like to thank our faculty advisor, Dr. Christine Evans. Additional thanks is due to our editorial board for their hard work and expertise. To each of our contributors, we are deeply grateful for your original and insightful work. Thanks to you, *Cinephile 13.1* explores an extremely diverse and at times surprising range of media texts. For that, we cannot be more excited and appreciative.

To our readers, we hope that this issue of *Cinephile* implores you to consider the significance of cultural objects that have been overlooked in this academic discipline. The process of compiling our articles has reminded us that contemporary scholars are continuing to discover several unexplored margins of cinema and media studies, and we are delighted to publish a selection of these engaging ideas.

Sincerely,

**Zoë S. Sherman, Jared Aronoff, and Gabrielle Berry**  
Co-Editors-in-Chief, 2018-2019