Foreward to Issue 5.1
For the past five years, the Kino Undergraduate Journal of Film Studies has prided itself on presenting the most accomplished work originating in Western University’s Film department. We hope that this issue continues in that tradition, not only by adhering to the same academic standards, but also by pushing forward new methodologies within this particular field of study. This volume includes a wide array of approaches, with particular attention paid towards uncommon tendencies or alternative applications of well-known theories. Following from this inclination in the selected papers, most of the works covered come to us from recognizable contexts: images and ideas that are not so easily divorced from our own experiences. This factor encourages not only further investigation, but also the empathetic innovation that arises from re-examination of the familiar.

Perhaps the most obvious example of “reconsidering the new” is Alissa Chater’s “Battling with Bart: Transmedia Storytelling in The Simpsons Arcade Game,” a piece which uses Henry Jenkins’ theories of cross-platform narratives and her own explorations of player/game interactivity to expound upon the titular video game adaptation. Her approach is accessible, fluent with the show’s iconography and tone, and consistently poses clever questions concerning not only the problematics of medium transfer, but also the conceptualization of gaming interfaces as fantasy objects.

The psychoanalytic nature of fantasy is also a preoccupation in Michael Conte’s work on Carrie, a film that simultaneously envisions (in a liminal manner befitting its generic roots) revenge as sublime and destructive. Following from Robin Wood, Conte locates this dialectic within the film’s metaphors of deviance, sexual becoming and the fraught hybridization of American culture. In this sense, Conte’s detailed close analysis suggests that Carrie’s rejection of
placid girlishness is invoked as not just a gendered, but also an explicitly nationalized negotiation of the politics of normalcy.

This alignment of anti-normative sexuality with freakishness and excess is the central concern of Saralynn Russell’s postmodern reading of *Party Monster*, which uses theories of masquerade to investigate queer typification and the possible reclamation of anti-reproductive as a sexual ethic. Russell considers the film’s camp portrayal of Club Kid culture through the historical slippage of homosexuality and horror, suggesting that its moral relativism reveals aporia not only within mainstream endorsement of consumerist plenitude, but also within cinematic principles of identification. Russell’s paper skilfully navigates between constructionist theories of sexuality and the history of the horror film, elaborating on both methodologies as extensions of each other.

Although Samantha Roach’s essay on *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* examines the most obviously classical work of the bunch, her inventive reconsideration of the film’s two stars, John Wayne and Jimmy Stewart is premised fervently on post-structural deconstructions of masculinity and the politics of the body. Through gestural analyses and her own close attention to the ways in which both men occupy the filmic space, Roach establishes a rigorous interpretation of Richard Dyer’s theories of stardom that is premised upon relational aesthetics: of not only its leads’ interactions with each other, but also an ethic of genre-based intertextuality.

The western – and its mirrored relationship to American utopia – is further examined in Thomas Boyer’s Deleuzian analysis of *McCabe & Mrs. Miller* as a kind of virtual history of Nixonian malaise and capitalistic amorality. Yet, Boyer’s piece also chooses to move beyond an easy genre allegory in order to consider the film’s investment in tragic inevitability and the philosophical suspension of the “time-image,” symbolized in his reading through Altman’s
democratic, gently empathetic sound design. Boyer’s portrait of McCabe thus emerges as not one of coolly distant revisionism, but rather of an experience that envelopes the viewer: italicizing its emphasis on stasis and death, but also presenting the possibility of forgiveness.

It is our hope that the essays that follow offer this same sense of generosity and nuance, and it is in this spirit that we wish to present our thanks to the Film Studies faculty, Jennifer Tramble, the members of the Western Undergraduate Film Society (in particular, past Kino editors Laura Conning, David Greenberg, Jesse Brossoit, Kylan Mitchell, Josh Romphf and Pat Martini) and everyone who submitted papers for consideration. We express our gratitude to all of these individuals for their continual mentorship and inspiration, and it is to them that we dedicate our fifth issue as a student-run publication.

We hope you enjoy our selections and that you continue to stay curious,

Erin Nunoda and Andrew Potter