

# Franchising *Jurassic Park*: Introduction

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## 1 This Special Edition

As I type this introduction, it is a year and a half since the release of *Jurassic World: Dominion* (Trevorrow, 2022) and 30 years since the release of Steven Spielberg's seminal *Jurassic Park*, in July 1993 — a film which re-invented popular cinema and the Hollywood blockbuster in the 1990s just as his *other* masterpiece, *Jaws*, did in the 1970s. Film scholar Peter Krämer reminds us that,

*Jurassic Park* was [...] an almost unprecedented success at the US box office. In *Variety*'s all-time rentals chart from May 1994, with earnings of \$205 million, the film was second only to *E.T.* (\$228 million). And in a 1995 all-time *grosses* chart, *Jurassic Park*'s \$357 million box office gross was second only to *E.T.*'s \$400 million. Also in 1995, video sales of 16 million units placed *Jurassic Park* fifth in the all-time video sales chart in the US, an extraordinary achievement in light of the fact that this chart was dominated by Disney animations (the only other non-animated film in the top ten was *E.T.* at number 10 with 12 million units) (Krämer: 2023, 44).

Given *Jurassic Park*'s popularity and seismic importance in late 20<sup>th</sup> century western cinema in opening the door for a new era of digital effects, it is curious that there has been very little in the way of dedicated critical examination. Hence this special edition of *Cinergie*, 'Franchising *Jurassic Park*', is published not only in celebration of *Jurassic Park*'s 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary but as the second part of a project intended to bring the *Jurassic* IP more surely into the critical spotlight. It intends to act as a companion volume alongside the recently published *The Jurassic Park Book: New Perspectives on the Classic 1990s Blockbuster* (Melia 2023) — building on that publication's focussed discussion of the original film. While *The Jurassic Park* book focuses primarily on Steven Spielberg's original film and offers a diverse range of critical perspectives around its production, marketing, reception and legacy, this special edition of *Cinergie* aims to widen the scope of the discussion by offering a much-needed critical engagement with the wider franchising of the *Jurassic* IP, its evolution, and its transmedia paratexts. The range of essays gathered in this volume engage with a diverse range of topics including representations of gender across both branches of the *Jurassic* IP; its transmedia convergence in computer games; a focus on the unmade *Jurassic Park IV*; ecohorror and the gothic and how the franchise

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has influenced a range of conspiratorial approaches to history and culture. Each of these will be summarised in more detail in the final section of this introduction.

## 2 Nostalgia and Franchising

It may seem both surprising and counter-intuitive to begin at the end, but the release of the final film *Jurassic World: Dominion*<sup>1</sup> presents a suitable vantage point to look back on the evolution of a franchise which has been both highly profitable but often critically maligned. Furthermore, *Dominion*'s emergence out of a period of global chaos and disaster allows us also to understand the franchises' position against the state of popular, blockbuster cinema post-2018. *Dominion* was released on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2022, as the original film's 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary approached, amid a whirlwind of public expectation and strategic marketing which was heavily anchored in franchise nostalgia. The intervening 29 years since the start of the franchise had witnessed two *Jurassic Park* sequels (*The Lost World: Jurassic Park* [Spielberg 1997] and *Jurassic Park III* [Johnston 2001]) followed, 14 years later, by the start of a new franchise trilogy: *Jurassic World* (Trevorrow 2015); *Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom* (Bayona 2018) and then, finally, *Dominion*. This belated second franchise was conceptualised around the idea that the thematic lessons from the first trilogy voiced by the 'Rock star' chaotician Ian Malcom (Jeff Goldblum) ("Your scientists were so preoccupied with whether they could, they didn't stop to think whether they should") have not been learned, and that a new SeaWorld style pre-historic dino-theme park has been built on the ruins of the first *Jurassic Park* (just as this second franchise has been built on the remnants of the first). *Jurassic World* presents a new era in the franchise where the spectacle of cloned and resurrected dinosaurs has become passé — consumers are looking for something 'cooler' and with 'bigger teeth' (in *Jurassic World*, this is the uncontrollable 'new' dinosaur, the *Indominus Rex*, hybridised from the *T. Rex* and the *Velociraptors*). Both *Fallen Kingdom* and *Dominion*, further the narrative by concerning themselves respectively with the illegal and corporate trade of the creatures (including the vicious *Indoraptor* — spawned from the DNA of the *Indominus Rex*) as well the cloning of humans, the escape of the dinosaurs into the already unstable ecosystem of 21<sup>st</sup> century earth and the corporate monopolisation of global food supplies.

*Jurassic World* "extracted the DNA of the first film and cloned it over a further two films" (Melia 2023a: 2) for a new younger generation of fans to watch with parents — who were the target audience for the original trilogy. Furthermore,

The rejuvenated brand brought *Jurassic Park* roaring back into the cultural landscape as part of a transmedia empire of blockbuster films, computer games (forty titles across different platforms — and counting), *Lego* toys and kits, animated *Lego* Netflix series (*Jurassic World: Legend of Isla Nublar* [2019]; *Jurassic World: Secret Exhibit* [2019]), and the animated series, *Camp Cretaceous* (produced by Spielberg, *Jurassic World* director Colin Trevorrow and director Frank Marshall) (Ibid).

*Dominion* had its premiere in Mexico City nearly a month before its UK release and it was rolled out across the US and South Korea in early June of 2022. The staggered release of the film was, primarily, due to the impact that the world-wide COVID-19 pandemic had on the film's production and which had delayed its release in the years prior. Principle photography on *Dominion* began in February 2020 with production going into a state of hiatus between March and June of that year as the world went into lockdown. In early October *Variety* reported that filming had been (briefly) suspended again due to an outbreak of the coronavirus on the set — news which came a day after Universal announced they had pushed the release date back from 2021 to 2022 (Rubin 2020a). Social media became the chosen way of communicating to waiting audiences the state of production — the news of the film's postponement was announced on Twitter with Trevorrow posting an accompanying image of a dinosaur wearing a facemask.

Disaster and existential crisis loom large over both branches of the *Jurassic* franchise, and, elsewhere, I have noted the ways in which Spielberg's original *Jurassic Park* may be understood as a disaster film anticipating the popular resurgence of the disaster genre in the years after (Melia 2023b: 239-263) as it came to dominate Hollywood production from the mid-1990s (*Jurassic Park*'s own production, cast and crew were also put in

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1. Although rumours persist of a future return to the *Jurassic universe*.

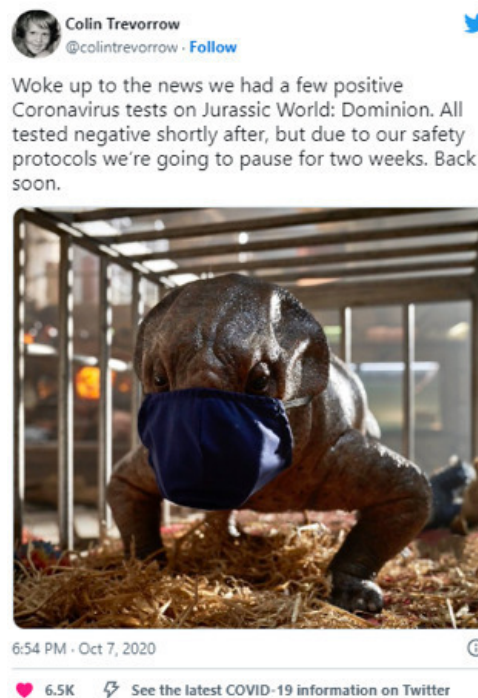


Fig. 1. Tweet: Colin Trevorrow, Oct 7 2020, @colintrevorrow.

real jeopardy also when Hurricane Iniki destroyed the set on the Island of Kauai, Hawaii). As film scholar Claire Hines was planning to argue in this journal before having to, unfortunately and unavoidably, withdraw, for all its faults, *Dominion* might be read, as *the* Covid-19 movie: a film which deals with the impact of globalisation and an environment in which humanity is subject to both an invasive presence and planetary, environmental change (within the narrative of the film the dinosaurs have escaped their captivity and have inserted themselves into the precarious global ecosystem). Hence it seems apt then that the closing film of the franchise (dealing as it does with global environmental change and the impact of global capitalism and neo-liberalism) was born amid real world international catastrophe and crisis.

Writing in *Variety* in October 2020, Rebecca Rubin announced the delayed release until March 2022 (Rubin 2020b), observing how the already growing expectations and anticipation for the film were firmly rooted in the nostalgia of its marketing and promotional material which connected it back imaginatively to Spielberg's original 1993 film. Furthermore, director Colin Trevorrow had used social media to counter the negative impact of the delay by releasing the film's poster which prominently figured a variation on the original film's famous logo — which at the same time confirmed the return of the original trio of 1993 cast members: actors Sam Neill as palaeontologist Alan Grant, Laura Dern as palaeobotanist Ellie Sattler and Jeff Goldblum (who had already had a cameo appearance in *Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom*) as Ian Malcom.

However, despite this nostalgia push, on its eventual release *Jurassic World: Dominion* met with a mixed reception. It was both a critical failure and a box office smash grossing over \$1 Billion world-wide. It was the third highest grossing film of 2022 (after *Avatar: The Way of Water* [Cameron 2022] and *Top Gun: Maverick* [Kosinski 2022]); the third film, post-COVID, to reach \$1 billion and the fourth film in the franchise to do similar. The reviews, however, were not good. Writing in *The Guardian* (UK Press) film critic Mark Kermode observed how *Dominion* followed a pattern of recent franchise closing films which, while being hugely financially successful, had neglected to provide a satisfying and cohesive conclusion to their stories (and which had also divided opinion among their respective fandoms). He compared *Dominion* to *Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker* (Abrams 2019) noting also how Trevorrow had also been responsible for the second film in the *Star Wars* sequel trilogy (the most divisive among the fandom), *The Last Jedi* (2017), before directing duties were transferred to Rian Johnson. Reviewing *Dominion*, he wrote,



11:19 PM - Oct 6, 2020

Fig. 2. Tweet: Colin Trevorrow, October 6th 2020, @colintrevorrow.

Fans of the furiously divisive penultimate instalment, *The Last Jedi*, have argued that *The Rise of Skywalker's* original co-writer/director, Colin Trevorrow, would have delivered a far more rewardingly risk-taking finale had he not left because of “creative differences”. Now, Trevorrow, who graduated from the Sundance prize-winning indie fantasy *Safety Not Guaranteed* to directing the behemoth *Jurassic World* in 2015, gets another shot at closing out a blockbuster trilogy in adventurous fashion. Yet perhaps chastened by his bruising experiences on *Star Wars*, he has gone for the Abrams option following a formula in which surprises are few, plodding is the order of the day and safety is *absolutely* guaranteed. (Kermode 2022)

Between December 2021 and the release of Marvel's *Spiderman: No Way Home* (Watts 2021) and *Jurassic Park: Dominion* in June 2022, there had been no less than 5 major tentpole franchise releases in cinemas simultaneously. These other three had included *Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness* (Sam Raimi) (opening weekend of May 6-8, taking \$187,420,998 million); *The Batman* (Matt Reeves) (Opening weekend: March 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup>, taking \$128 million) and *Top Gun: Maverick* (Opening Weekend: May 27<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup>, taking \$126,707,459 million).<sup>2</sup> Pamela McClintock noted that concerns it would be difficult for more than one tentpole release to ‘do well in the post Covid-19’ era where well and truly put to bed:

The June 10-12 weekend was a significant moment for the domestic box office reset as *Jurassic World: Dominion* stomped to a better than expected \$145.1 million, while *Top Gun: Maverick* flew to a \$51.9 million in its third outing. Until not, the biggest weekends of the pandemic era have been propelled by one title, prompting concern that the concept of having multiple films work on the marquee — especially during the summer season — is an endangered one (McClintock 2022).

Certainly, *Dominion* rode the crest of a wave — one of a series of nostalgic big budget Hollywood (“legacy”) blockbusters which had been delayed by COVID-19 and for which, expectation and anticipation was, naturally, extremely high among global audiences deprived of cinema. *Dominion* emerged into a highly competitive period and went up against some stiff competition. *Spiderman: No Way Home*, for instance was notable for both for its success and its positive critical response. As reported in *Forbes* it took a total of \$1.982 billion world-wide making it the highest grossing issue film of 2021 and the seventh highest grossing film of all time (Mendelson 2021). It was widely credited (certainly by Mark Kermode) with being the film that brought audiences back into the cinema. Daniel Craig's final outing as James Bond in *No Time to Die* (Fukunaga 2021), released the year before *Dominion*, is also a notable and comparable example of a ‘closing’ franchise film for which expectations were high and which also had an embedded self-aware sense of franchise nostalgia and whose ending divided audiences — leaving many unsatisfied and bewildered as to the future of the franchise. *No Time to Die* was also (as reported by *The Guardian*) to be,

the first major film to fall victim to the pandemic when its April 2020 release was pushed to November as the virus swept around the world. In October it was delayed to April when it became clear Covid-19 was still rampant and cinemas would not be widely reopening (Press Association 2021).

While its financial success was considerable (\$774.2 million worldwide), it did not break even (Rubin noting that with promotional costs it would need to gross at least \$800 million to do so).

Nostalgia, is deeply rooted in the DNA of the *Jurassic* franchise. As has been noted elsewhere, *Jurassic Park* was not simply a film about dinosaurs— just as *Jaws* was not just about a shark. It was about cinema itself and the spectacular power of the moving image. Certainly, anyone who saw *Jurassic Park* on its initial release back in 1993 will remember the power of its digitally rendered dinosaurs<sup>3</sup> — the enormous *Brachiosaurus*, for instance, eating leaves from the top of tree as Grant et al, enter the park for the first time, staring in wonder — and fear. Our incredulousness at the way Spielberg had brought Dinosaur's back from extinction was filtered through theirs. In the post-Covid landscape franchise nostalgia emerged as a key marketable commodity across the 2021/2022 releases. *Jurassic Park: Dominion's* unique selling point was that it closed the loop

2. All data was taken from BoxOfficeMojo.com and are figures for domestic openings.

3. Although the film mixed digital FX with animatronics - the use of digital FX accounted for only 14 minutes of screentime!



on the whole *Jurassic* franchise, bridging the gap between ‘Park’ and ‘World’ and *promising* the return of the original *Jurassic Park*’s central trio of characters and their actors. This, however, was not unique to *Dominion* and we may observe a similar pattern across contemporary releases: *Spiderman: No Way Home*, using the Marvel Cinematic ‘Multiverse’ narrative device, brought back previous Spidermen Tobey McGuire and Andrew Garfield (actors from previous incarnations of the webslinger prior to the rights to the character being obtained from Sony — a long and drawn-out process). Nor was it the first time that the *Jurassic* franchise had employed such a device itself — Sam Neill and Laura Dern had returned for *Jurassic Park III* (Dern in a minor cameo) and Jeff Goldblum had appeared as the lead in *The Lost World: Jurassic Park* and as a cameo in *Fallen Kingdom*. Up to that point the two *Jurassic* franchises, however, had only been tangentially connected via a series of easter eggs and returning minor characters — offering Dr Wu (a returning B.D. Wong) as a major early antagonist (undergoing a redemption arc in *Dominion*) and, in an early sequence in *Jurassic World* amplifying the nostalgia when Claire Dearing’s (Bryce Dallas Howard) two young nephews Zach and Gray (Nick Robinson and Ty Simkins) discover the remnants of the old park, its iconic tour jeeps and its gift shop to a melancholic rendition of John Williams, original, rousing, score.

Nostalgia was the economic imperative that drove *Dominion* to success (as it did other contemporary post-Covid blockbusters -audiences being keen for the comfort of the familiar after the upheaval of the pandemic) despite the poor reviews. And although any film (concluding or otherwise) that is part of such a major heritage franchise is bound for financial success (regardless of quality), *Dominion* doubled down on its nostalgic elements. Fans came to witness the *Jurassic* franchise finally circle back to where it all began. As Tom Lethbridge wrote in *Screenrant*, in June 2022,

Much like *Star Wars* and *Spider-Man: No Way Home* before it, *Dominion* focuses on old characters as much as new faces, feeding off the goodwill from long-term series fans. While the utility or the necessity of these returning characters is up for debate, the prospect of seeing Drs. Alan Grant, Ellie Sattler, and Ian Malcolm together again is an understandable draw. Coupled with the other compelling aspects of the sequel, it’s easy to see why *Jurassic World Dominion* is defying the critics (Lethbridge 2022).

### 3 A Tale of Two Franchises

It is useful here to briefly consider the nature and contextual history of contemporary franchise cinema. Fleury, Hartzheim and Mamber’s own study is a useful point of reference here (2019). They begin their examination by citing Ben Fritz — suggesting that the “franchise film era is the most meaningful revolution in the movie businesses since the studio system ended, in the 1950s” (Ivi: 1). They clarify this assertion by reminding the reader that Fritz’s statement refers to the effect of the franchise industry on the Hollywood film industry and that its “epicentre extends far beyond the 30-mile zone of Hollywood” (Ibidem). Fleury et al. go back as far as early 20<sup>th</sup> century cinema citing *Tarzan of the Apes* (Sidney 1918) (like *Jurassic Park*, a ‘Lost World’ narrative) as an early example of a film that launched what might, these days, be considered an early franchise (Ivi: 4) — the *Tarzan* films where cheaply and quickly made, exemplifying the mechanisms of what Adorno and Horkheimer termed the ‘culture industry.’ Furthermore, the authors are quick to note that transmedia franchising has an embedded and lengthy history and may be traced back across early to mid-20<sup>th</sup> century culture:

As Avo Santo reminds us, the early twentieth-century [...] introduced several ‘cross media entertainment franchises, in which stories told across a range of media forms are linked together by a shared affiliation with a brand’ (2016: 16). During this time, however, brands (for example *The Lone Ranger*, *Buck Rogers* and *Superman*) tended to appear less often in feature films than in formats with lower production budgets, such as film and radio serials — and later television (Ibidem).

Fleury et al. also remind us that the reach of the concept of the franchise now extends beyond simply a family of films to transmedia storytelling across a variety of multi-media and digital platforms in order “to tell a single intertextual narrative” (Ivi: 1). This, they note, is a ‘multimedia management strategy’ that has displaced the previous one — in which ‘texts adapt shared material (for example, a novelization or tie-in video game that retells a film’s story, running in parallel to it rather than as part of a single narrative):

While both management styles involve collaboration between media industries (for example, film, television and video games), franchises continue to move from multimedia to transmedia strategies in order to create heightened interest across their brands. In other words, what originally harbingered an innovative shift in constructing multimedia entertainment has become co-opted and incorporated into existing franchise management strategies in response to shifting audience and technological trends (Ibidem).

From the mid-noughties popular franchises again came to dominate the cinematic landscape extending their reach and cross pollinating (as Fleury et al. note) intertextually and transmedially across a wide variety of multimedia platforms. As such academic interest has surged around the all-conquering Marvel Cinematic Universe (beginning in 2008 with *Iron Man* [Favreau]) and around the ever-expanding narratives of *Star Wars*; critical discourse around the super-hero has grown and given rise to new fields of academic study. These are also franchises which have displaced the once dominant 'trilogy' consisting of a beginning film, a middle and an end (with already established trilogies belatedly expanding into wider multimedia and transmedia franchises). Such contemporary approaches to franchising allow for ever expanding fractal metauniverses which expand across a variety of paratexts and spin-offs (some with their own spin-offs — as in the case of *Star Wars*) which orbit around the central narrative mythos.

So where do the *Jurassic* films stand in relation to the evolution of franchise cinema since the mid-2000s? They can be compared to *Star Wars* in that an original trilogy is extended into, in this case, two interconnected trilogies. Unlike *Star Wars*, however, there is much less of a sense of cohesive singular narrative (or saga) between the two strands. Are these two separate but interconnected trilogies (although as I discuss later in this collection, the original trilogy was almost extended into a quadriology with the planned *Jurassic Park IV*), or do they constitute one cohesive narrative? The Jurassic Park franchise is spread over period of time in which the nature of franchise cinema was in flux; its two branches located on either side of the change. 14 years separate *Jurassic Park III* and *Jurassic World*, with *Dominion* and *Jurassic Park* being separated by very nearly 30 years. As I discuss later in this collection when dealing with the unmade script for *Jurassic Park IV*, Spielberg's original *Jurassic Park* was released during a period in the 1990s during which time Hollywood mainstream film production was in parallel with the emergence of Independent Hollywood (signified by the predominance of Miramax). However, rather than existing in conflict, both independent and mainstream found themselves in a co-dependent dialectic. So, it is also with the contemporary blockbuster and the modern independent. The Marvel Cinematic Universe, for instance, has looked to directors who had emerged out of the Indie scene (Taika Waititi, John Favreau, Chloe Zao or Ryan Coogler). *Jurassic World* and *Dominion's* Colin Trevorrow had also emerged from this milieu with the film *Safety Not Guaranteed* [2012]. As Fleury et al. have also noted

Owing to the diminished importance of directors, cinematic universes have inspired a trend of hiring directors for studio franchise productions with only indie film or television projects to their name — such as Patty Jenkins (2017's *Wonderwoman*) and Taika Waititi (2017's *Thor: Ragnarok*). This trend even has extended beyond cinematic universes to franchise films in general (for example, Colin Trevorrow helming 2015's *Jurassic World*) (Fleury, Hartzheim and Mamber: 13).

*Jurassic World* (along with *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* [Abrams] six months later in December 2015) was at the forefront of an era of industrialised nostalgia. It was released a month after *Mad Max: Fury Road* (Miller) — another Indie/mainstream cross-over and, arguably, the film which established the precedent for the 'legacy' sequel: a nostalgic return to a franchise after some considerable time and in which we return to the wider world of the property further along the timeline. In *Creed* (Coogler 2016) for instance we return to the world of the boxer *Rocky* to focus on a new central character (the son of Carl Weather's Mohammed Ali-like 'Apollo Creed' — a feature of the first 3 films), who is facing his own trials in the ring and who an older Rocky (Sylvester Stallone) takes under his wing to train.<sup>4</sup>

4. It should be noted here that Stallone had already made two returns to the franchise in *Rocky Balboa* (Stallone 2006) — regarded, canonically, as the belated sixth film in the original series.

In their wake a whole host of 'legacy sequels' followed.<sup>5</sup> *Halloween* (Green 2018), and more recently films such as *Ghostbusters: Afterlife* (Reitman 2021), and *Top Gun: Maverick*. However, like other resurgent franchises of the late 2000s (e.g., *Halloween*) *Jurassic World* largely ignored the earlier sequels to Spielberg's original film, positioning itself textually as the defacto second film. This further problematises the identity of the *Jurassic* franchise, offering a multiplicity of ways for the viewer to consume them: as two independent but intertextual trilogies, a complete franchise, as a four-film franchise which excludes *The Lost World* (a film which Spielberg was famously unhappy about and which caused him to withdraw from directing any more *Jurassic* films) and *Jurassic Park III*. As a property we might say that in this way the *Jurassic IP* has something of an identity crisis when compared to the heavily strategized worlds of *Star Wars*, the MCU or even the Craig-era Bond films and the singular vision of their Svengali like producers: Kathleen Kennedy, Kevin Feige, Barbara Broccoli and Michael G. Wilson.

Kennedy (President of Lucasfilm) and her husband director Frank Marshall had produced Spielberg's original film and its two sequels, with Marshall overseeing production of the *Jurassic World: Films*. Compounding the sense of 'identity' crisis however is the presence/absence of Spielberg himself. Spielberg is indelibly associated with the property, he is part of its identity, the nostalgic cues embedded in *Jurassic World* and its sequels inevitably call to mind Spielberg as the progenitor of the franchise (displacing even Michael Crichton, author of the novel upon which the first film was based and who authored the first film script). Spielberg had, however, taken a step back from the franchise in any major creative way (acting only as an executive producer across the *World* films). However, the franchise, was produced by Amblin (the production company set up by Spielberg, Kennedy and Marshall) and its digital dinosaurs a product of Industrial Light and Magic (ILM). As Linda Ruth Williams notes in her foreword to *The Jurassic Park Book: Across the franchise* "the figure of Spielberg emerges as both entirely and confidently in control of his monster, and as simultaneously left behind by its many lives and legacies".

Compared to other more recent franchise properties, there is comparatively little critical engagement with the *Jurassic Park* films — much less the *Jurassic World* films. There are several reasons that might account for this. The diminishing returns of *The Lost World* and *Jurassic Park III*, and the extended 14-year period between both branches of the franchise made it appear that the property was dead in the water. During that time the contemporary and spectacular Hollywood blockbuster, which *Jurassic Park* had paved the way for moved on, with a numerous new popular film franchises, appealing to a new generation of film goers (in the same way that *Jurassic Park* had in 1993) displacing the *Jurassic* films in the cultural consciousness — not least the *Harry Potter* film series (2001-2011) which also employed pioneering special FX in order to bring a bestiary of fictional beasts and monsters to life and which established its own encompassing and narratively immersive transmedia 'Wizarding' world. Furthermore, the MCU which, until recently, has dominated the box office since 2008 was already 10 films and two 'phases' in — with an 11<sup>th</sup> film, *Ant-Man* (Rudd 2015), released a month later. As I write this introduction, the Marvel machine is moving into its 5<sup>th</sup> Phase.

The intervening years, had also seen a variety of digital and spectacular cinematic beasts come and go to varying degrees of success: not least of these was the similarly overlooked reboot of the *Planet of the Apes* franchise (*Rise of the Planet of the Apes* [Wyatt 2011] *Dawn of the Planet of the Apes* [Reeves 2014] and *War for the Planet of the Apes* [Reeves 2017]). The intervening years also saw emergence of the intersecting 'Monsterverse' — the transnational adaptation of Japanese Kaiju (monster films) by Legendary pictures which began with *Godzilla* (Edwards 2014). This attempt at intertextual narrative world-building and franchising was expanded to include a host of other returning Japanese film monsters of the 1960s as well as King whose visual impact and power was also increased by the emergence of new cinematic technology such as IMAX and 4kHD (also emergent in the *Jurassic* interim). These films were similarly subjected to a mixed critical reception, but their popularity was both a product of and an impetus for the new *Jurassic* franchise, and spurring a renaissance of interest in the original trilogy. It should be noted as well that the critically underperforming *Jurassic Park III* was released six months prior to the first instalment of Peter Jackson's landmark and epic adaptation of J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, *The Fellowship of the Ring* (2001) which took over \$800 million at the box office compared to *JPIII*'s films more modest \$368 million dollars. The series offered its own pioneering digital imagery produced by Jackson's own company Weta Workshop (now Weta Digital) in much the same way that

5. We might note here that an even earlier 'legacy' sequel was released in 2010 — *Tron: Legacy* (Kosinski).



Spielberg's ILM had produced the pioneering visual effects for *Jurassic Park*, and which would become the main developers of digital motion capture technology (Jackson would employ this new technology for his next project, a remake of the 1933 *King Kong*).

#### 4 Franchising *Jurassic Park* – This Special Edition

This special edition *Cinergie* looks to the wider franchise and the relationship between its two strands from a range of historical and critical perspectives. The first two articles explore the representation of gender across both the franchise history. In the first, 'Inheritance: the Legacy of Ellie Satler across the Franchise' Lauren Chochinov examines Sattler's changing position across the franchise. Chochinov contextualises Sattler against other cinematic feminist icons such as Sarah Connor (Linda Hamilton) from the *Terminator* franchise or *Alien's* Ellen Ripley (Sigourney Weaver), before going to discuss how the franchise subsequently moves on from this depiction to adopting more heteronormative versions of femininity and of family — especially in the *Jurassic World* films. Gillian Kelly then goes on to consider, masculinity across the franchise from a comparable angle and how the male stars of *Jurassic Park*, by and large, express a more 'normalised' version of masculinity compared to the 'Musculinity' or the hyper-masculine stars of the 1980s and early 1990s (Arnold Schwarzenegger, Sylvester Stallone for instance). In her article Kelly focuses on *Jurassic World's* Owen Grady (Chris Pratt) as a 'safer' more 'everyday' version of 1980s 'Musculinity' as compared to the version portrayed by the films' scientist characters.

Articles 3 and 4 turn to the transmedia *Jurassic* paratexts — they focus particularly on the *Jurassic* Video games with a focus on the *Evolution* games. In her chapter, 'Boring Lizards: Ludic Management, Affect and Ambivalence' Merlyn Seller focuses on both *Jurassic World: Evolution* and *Jurassic World: Evolution*. Seller adopts three key approaches — games studies, animal studies and affect studies, and considers how *Evolution* explore ideas of boredom and captivity and the shared experience of the banal between both player and dinosaur. In his article 'Gamified Dinosaurs and Prehistoric Play: The *Jurassic Park* Ludo Mix,' Justin Wigarde, follows Merlyn Seller's discussion by looking in detail at the evolution of *Jurassic Park* video games. Focusing on the idea of the 'portable game elements' which transfer across different game and media texts, the article considers how the games mediate the films dinosaur representations.

In the fifth article, I turn to a detailed examination of the unmade film *Jurassic Park IV*, which was written by the director and Hollywood script doctor John Sayles. The article examines the importance of *Jurassic Park IV* in laying the foundation for the *Jurassic World* trilogy and how, while it would have taken the series in a radically different direction, it provides many of the narrative beats for the second trilogy. Through this discussion I also consider the under-discussed role of the Hollywood script doctor and the questions of authorship that it raises. The second half of the article turns to a detailed critical reading of the script and how the second trilogy can be mapped against it. Finally, this examination offers an archaeological examination of how early internet platforms provided space for speculation around this abandoned project. It is by excavating these sites we are able to understand the timeline of its non-production.

Finally Articles 6 and 7 turn to both and examination of the 'Eco gothic' across the franchise and its place in relation to conspiracy culture. In 'Swallow You Whole: *The Jurassic Park* Franchise, Eco-gothic and the Devouring Gothic' Catherine Pugh turns to the aspects of gothic horror across the franchise (and in particular in *Fallen Kingdom*). She considers the threat of environmental revolt in the films and the uncontrollable 'nature' of the series. She argues for the presentation of a 'devouring' and hostile nature and its combination with film's use of the gothic tropes of 'mad science', sinister architecture, and the film's engagement with the Frankenstein mythos. Finally, in 'Dinosaurs and Nazis: The Influence of the *Jurassic* Franchise on Popular and Conspiratorial Versions of History and Historical Culture', historian Steve Woodbridge examines how both dinosaurs and Nazis have co-existed in popular culture together since the end of the second world war, and across a variety of transmedia platforms including films, comics, video games — and not least the *Jurassic Park* franchise itself. Woodbridge considers the ways in which the first trilogy impacted on the historical study of the Third Reich and their approach to both science and nature. He then notes how this has fed into subsequent popular mass entertainment — particularly at a time in the early 1990s (and with the fledgeling internet) that conspiratorial ideas around lost worlds and animal species were coming to the fore. Woodbridge's article

explores how the *Jurassic Park* franchise discernibly affected the image of Nazis in popular culture and fed into wider conspiracy culture around the agenda of the Third Reich.

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