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# The decline of the female lead in Jurassic Park vs Jurassic World

Bachelor's thesis in Filmvitenskap

Supervisor: Eva Bakøy

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Norwegian University of  
Science and Technology



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*“Character is that which reveals moral purpose, showing what kind of things a man chooses or avoids.”*

- Aristotle  
(Lynch)

## INTRODUCTION

In this assignment I will analyze and share my opinion something I have noticed in modern blockbuster films, which is the increase in questionable female characters. More specifically, I will be focusing on how female characters are lacking in heroic qualities and are even sometimes used as propaganda. Characters that are supposedly feminist or strong female characters have become rather insincere. This has happened to the degree that one might question the influence of “strong female characters”, which are actually often lacking in moral behavior.

“Morally questionable” does not refer to the kind of characters that are intentionally morally grey. I’ll be using it to refer to female characters that are intended to be looked up to as female leads but fail at having traits that make the women moral and heroic.

To prevent myself from stretching too wide and to remain within the 6000-word character limit I have selected a franchise to use as the perfect example of morally questionable female characters. This analysis will mostly be narrowed down to two blockbuster films from the *Jurassic Park* franchise, where I will be comparing Dr. Ellie Sattler from the 1993 original film (Spielberg) with Claire from the soft reboot *Jurassic World* (Trevorrow 2015).

I will be mentioning movies outside these two when necessary, with the intent to showcase that this trend has infected mainstream Hollywood. I will also describe the female heroine in previous decades to make a proper comparison and critique of the modern state of (insincere) strong female characters.

# The decline of the female lead in Jurassic Park versus Jurassic World

By Jonatan Myrbostad

The “point” of this paper is to show **how women characters in modern films are placed in high positions of power and are allowed to have increased physical strength, yet are not particularly noble or heroic.**

## THEORY AND METHOD

How will this analysis be performed? The behavior and action of the two female leads will be compared, with a particular focus on a moral lens, like classical heroes of old. Are these women behaving in a heroic and virtuous manner? Are they critical of Jurassic Park’s existence as an ethical dilemma? Do they risk their lives trying to save others?

When it comes to the plot of films action tends to drive the story forward and the story contains moral viewpoints, either consciously or unconsciously. If fictional characters are mirrors to beliefs in our society then it is important to consider what message the action and behavior of our heroes are communicating to audiences.

But before we go into the actual critique we need to talk a bit about Aristotle and what, according to him, a hero is supposed to be.

## ARISTOTLE AND VIRTUE ETHICS

Aristotle is worth mentioning not only in the context of morality, but also because he was monumental to storytelling and is perhaps the originator of the theory of structure and character, with his *Poetics* being one of the earliest books on storytelling:

«Den klassiske Hollywoodfilmen har vist seg spesielt anvendelig for narrativ analyse. Teorien om den klassiske fortelleformen for film kan føres helt tilbake til Aristoteles og hans studie *Om diktetekunsten*, også kjent som *Poetikken* (ca. 340 f.kr.). Aristoteles’ teori er forbløffende anvendelig for filmfortellingen. For Aristoteles er det fremstillingen av hendelser, selve handlingsutviklingen, som er det viktigste ved historien. dernest kommer egenskapene til karakterene, som er avgjørende for valgene de gjør. Siden karakterene er en del av handlingen og viser sine egenskaper gjennom den, er det viktig for Aristoteles at karakterene passer til de situasjonene og konfliktene de befinner seg i – at det er en sammenheng mellom

# The decline of the female lead in Jurassic Park versus Jurassic World

By Jonatan Myrbostad

hvordan de oppfører seg og de karakteregenskapene de besitter.» (Bakøy and Moseng 2008, 25)

Aristotle believes that action reveals character, which makes this both a film analysis in terms of how characters act in the story (narrative/character) and from that an analysis of what is portrayed as good and bad (ethics, although I will be using the term “morality”).

‘The man of good character,’ says Aristotle, ‘sees the truth in every kind of situation: he is a sort of standard and yardstick of what is fine and pleasant.’ (Willows, 340)

Aristotle’s claim that characters are defined by their actions and choices has become a default truism that almost any text on writing for film will agree with and eventually mention:

“In any narrative film, either fictional or documentary, characters create causes and register effects. Within the film’s overall form, they make things happen and respond to events. Their actions and reactions contribute strongly to our engagement with the film.” (Bordwell, Thompson and Smith 2020, 77).

This must remain a movie/character analysis over a philosophical paper. But let it suffice to say that Aristotle advocates behavior that can be considered classically noble and heroic by having good behavior and making that behavior into a habit, favoring moderation over excess and encouraging honesty, bravery and benevolence. I will be calling out selfish and lacking behavior of the modern “heroine” and praising the compassion and bravery of past female leads.

## JURASSIC PARK VERSUS JURASSIC WORLD

Both the original *Jurassic Park* and the twenty-two year later sequel *Jurassic World* were massive hits, worthy of the title “blockbuster” and starting a billion-dollar franchise. The reviews for the original were great across the board, characters and practical effects mixed with CGI and the Spielberg touch. It made about 1 billion at the international box office, which *Jurassic World* managed to overtake with around 1,6 billion internationally. However, I believe that *Jurassic*

# The decline of the female lead in Jurassic Park versus Jurassic World

By Jonatan Myrbostad

*World* lacks something that the original did better – the quality of the lead female character. It is rather baffling how a movie released in 2015 contains a “hero” so morally lacking it makes you wonder if her entire character is satirical. Yet this does not make sense, as *Jurassic World* is played straight.

## CLAIRE DEARING



Claire (Bryce Dallas Howard) is the Park Operations Manager of the Jurassic World theme park. She is well-dressed and successful. Unfortunately, I believe that there is a clear, inherent flaw with Claire – she is a bad person.

Claire does not display empathy for her own workers. When a dinosaur begins to attack the security forces on the island and someone suggests she shut down the island her reply is not one of agreement and concern for the people under attack, but her reply is, verbatim, “We would never reopen”. And Claire is not portrayed as the villain or any sort of antagonist. This is rather ridiculous if compared to the original *Jurassic Park*, where Dr. Grant (Sam Neil), who hates children, ends up protecting them, an actual arc of empathy. Claire has nothing going for her, simply



# The decline of the female lead in Jurassic Park versus Jurassic World

By Jonatan Myrbostad

running after the male co-lead, Owen (Chris Pratt). Owen has hints of chauvinism, yet the writing seems to encourage romance and sexual tension between him and the strong, independent Claire. This is rather disturbing – is the movie implying that in the end, even when a woman is successful in her own right, what a woman really needs (or wants?) is a man that conforms to the stereotypical male ideal? Most of their journey to survive is Owen giving orders. So in the end what a woman wants is simply a man who takes control?

Hopefully it is just poor writing and not a subtle or satirical mocking of powerful women. But the fact that we're having this discussion indicates that the writing of her character is poor. How are audiences supposed to take it when we can't tell the intention?

In the book *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women* (1991) Susan Faludi discusses women in film. She points out that women in film often must choose between motherhood and romance or being independent. What happens if we consider Jurassic World through this claim? Is Claire's character an insult to women, that she should be more focused on having a relationship with Owen rather than being the boss of a firm? But this doesn't truly work either, as Claire is rather callous and not that good of a person. If her arc is that of an independent woman she ends up lacking empathy and independent becomes just another word for selfish. If she's meant to realize love is more important than being a powerful CEO the arc seems to be that women aren't truly happy without a man. No matter which angle we're looking at her character is a failure.

Claire has no arc, no lesson learned, nothing. In an 80's film she would have been the corporate villain.

I am not the first person to notice the vapid characters and morality of this film. Mike Hill, an art director who also makes videos on film criticism and theory, uses *Jurassic World* as an example of morally lacking characters in his video "Jurassic World, Jurassic Values":

# The decline of the female lead in Jurassic Park versus Jurassic World

By Jonatan Myrbostad

“She ends the film literally asking for guidance from the male. We’re supposed to have cinema that inspires people, not just technically but morally, and this is not that.” (Hill 2017, 6:27)

Mike Hill and I are not the only people who think Claire is a lacking character:

“(…) She lacked depth. Her actions often felt forced and contrived. The film failed to explore her motivations and personal life, which made it difficult for audiences to connect with her. And her relationship with Owen practically ruined the film.” (Taylor 2023)

I would not in any way call Claire a good inspiration or role model and neither would I call her a true feminist character. She seems to be part of what I will call insincere girlboss feminism – strong female characters in film that are simply strong due to either having physical power or being wealthy and successful rather than being a good person.

There is something I must mention regarding Claire: She does “change” during the film and decides to try to rescue her nephews. But it feels insincere, as if her change came simply from a necessary writing standpoint, not because Claire is a good person deep inside. It purely comes from the need to be a driving plot that lets us explore the park rather than head for escape immediately. If her nephews weren’t in the movie there would be no characters she has empathy or compassion for. It feels as if they were added because one of the screenwriters went “Oh, Claire doesn’t have any motivation and nothing to fight for, and she’s kind of a bad person. We need to add something to fix this!” Also, where Dr. Grant spends almost the entire movie taking care of the kids on his own Claire must recruit Owen’s help, who immediately takes the lead. Couldn’t the movie have been rewritten so that Owen was in the tactical room and had to guide her via cameras and microphones? It’s still him giving orders, but it would have been a cool reversal of their roles and Claire would have more actions to be defined by - starting out as a selfish CEO who looks down on everybody to an aunt crawling low in the dirt to save her nephews. An actual arc. But the four (!) credited screenwriters were unable or unwilling to do this.

# The decline of the female lead in Jurassic Park versus Jurassic World

By Jonatan Myrbostad

Think about it this way: Is Claire intended to be the soft reboot stand-in for John Hammond? If so, the writers missed the point of the original film. In the original film the failures of the park come from Hammond's childlike naivete, his sincere ignorance and blinded love of dinosaurs without considering the consequences is what dooms the project. But Claire doesn't seem like a good person on the inside. She's a ruthless businesswoman at her core and only changes because that is what a cookie-cutter screenplay structure demands. It's not a natural change and alignment with the character.

In *Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom* (Bayona 2018) Claire changes her attitude and creates an organization dedicated to dinosaur conservation, a noble ideal. However, it feels more like a change purely due to the realization or backlash of her lacking moral integrity in the previous film. Too little, too late.

Claire is not a true heroine, she's not a morally strong female lead. I am literally sitting here trying to consider what we were supposed to get out of her character. I am a man, but even if Claire was intended to appeal to a female audience (a true heroic character would be respected by any gender and age) that fails too, as I highly doubt she would be anyone's role model or inspiration. Perhaps the youngest of girls would be able to put themselves in her shoes as they are dragged along by the exciting, blockbuster action. But characters are defined by their actions. If all a character engages in is a pure battle of survival there very likely is a disappointing lack of morality, philosophy and ideals being discussed. In the original 1993 film the action exists to drive the moral question of the film - Is bringing back extinct animals morally wrong?

What moral question does Jurassic World revolve around? Nothing. Literally nothing. Only the pure high-octane survival of a summer blockbuster film. And Claire might be the personification of this vapid lack of any morality, philosophy, ideals.

To summarize: Claire is a morally lacking character. She is not a good role model nor does she have much agency through the film. There's no meaningful arc, only what feels like a change coming out of nowhere, a change dishonest compared to her actual character. She's in charge of employees and gives commands, she

# The decline of the female lead in Jurassic Park versus Jurassic World

By Jonatan Myrbostad

dresses in expensive clothes and high heels. But if this is all a “strong female character” is then that term carries no meaningful or positive connotation.

ELLIE SATTLER



*“Jurassic Park is a feminist masterpiece. Sattler was a pioneer for female characters in monster/action/adventure blockbusters. She handles herself in the face of the dinosaurs better than most of the male characters, and does so as a brilliant, strong and confident super-woman.”* (Fisher 2014, 206)

*Jurassic Park* has three main characters: Malcolm, Grant and Sattler, all of whom are doctors in different fields. Malcolm gets knocked out pretty early and spends most of the film crippled while Grant and Sattler have their own life-threatening adventures.

Sattler is a paleobotanist, paleobotany being the recovery and research of plants from past geological eras. This may sound boring and useless in the context of real,

# The decline of the female lead in Jurassic Park versus Jurassic World

By Jonatan Myrbostad

living dinosaurs roaming the park, but her knowledge comes in handy in a brilliant scene where a triceratops is in pain. Not only does Sattler correctly conclude it has been poisoned, but it also displays Sattler's empathy. She feels the dinosaur and checks its eyes and tongues without hesitation, like a doctor checking out a patient. This scene gives us a closer look at a dinosaur, it shows how Hammond has not predicted everything regarding the park, it furthers the plot and displays the empathy of our characters through their actions. All of this in a single scene. Well done, Spielberg.

The basic plot of the film is how Jurassic Park falls apart and how our desperate heroes act to survive. Grant takes care of the kids even though he hates children, which shows how one can become virtuous through one's own choices and taking responsibility. But his story and arc are not the focus of this paper.

Sattler's role is to help reboot the park's electronic system together with the computer whizz Mr. Arnold. When they try to regroup she ends up with his bloody, dismembered arm on her shoulder. She reacts by screaming and running for safety. I truly like this scene because showing our heroes in distress is important. Not just for tension, but because a good role model should not be someone flawless but someone with fears just like you and me. And they still move forward even with the fear hanging over their shoulders.

If this scene had been done in this Marvel era Sattler would probably have made a sarcastic quip after discovering the hand, which would have ruined all tension. Her vulnerability makes her character better.

Sattler's character is indeed the best possible way she could have been. She's afraid, but keeps moving. She's smart, but doesn't predict everything. She is not a "Mary Sue" nor is she a pointless side-character that is dragged along without agency.

Not only is Claire a lacking character compared to Sattler, but *Jurassic World* as a whole is lacking regarding another issue – the ethics and morality of the original *Jurassic Park*. The focus of the 1993 film, beyond just the pure survival of our characters, is to ask if it is morally wrong to bring back extinct animals. I would go

# The decline of the female lead in Jurassic Park versus Jurassic World

By Jonatan Myrbostad

as far as to say the most important scene in the entire film is when Hammond, Malcolm, Grant, Sattler and the lawyer Gennaro discuss the ethics of the park. Sattler questions the park's safety:

“Well, the question is, how can you know anything about an extinct ecosystem? And therefore, how could you ever assume that you can control it?”

Jurassic World has no such ethical discussion. It is more concerned with the pure thrill of survival, and possibly a meta-commentary on the role of sequels. The genetically modified Indominus Rex seems to be a metaphor for an audience craving for amped-up sequels.



*Jurassic World* somehow implies that Ellie and Claire are equivalent in terms of character, which is baffling, as Ellie criticizes the dangers of John Hammond's dinosaur park and tries to save children while Claire doesn't want to shut down the park even after a dinosaur kills the security crew, because “we would never reopen”. *Jurassic Park* (1993) and *Jurassic World* (2015).

# The decline of the female lead in Jurassic Park versus Jurassic World

By Jonatan Myrbostad

At this point I should also say that I'm not sure if comparing Claire and Sattler's attractiveness or making any comparisons based on their bodies would be appropriate for this analysis, since this is an analysis of behavior and their actions. However, I will briefly mention a few things regarding their appearance and how Hollywood wants their female action leads:

1: Audiences criticized Claire for wearing high heels through the entire film. She literally runs from the T-Rex in high heels:

“Jurassic World has come under fire for its 'sexist' portrayal of heroine Bryce Dallas Howard. Radhika Sanghani says it's not just Hollywood actresses who are made to wear heels in ludicrous situations by out-of-touch dinosaurs (...) Has Hollywood actually regressed in the intervening 21 years, or is the 'heels' decision just another element of fantasy in a movie that bears little resemblance to reality?” (Sanghani 2015)

Sattler dresses in proper workingwoman attire. Yes, that means actually wearing boots.

2: Laura Dern is quite tall for a woman at about 179 cm (5'11).

3: As far as I could tell neither Sattler or Claire is portrayed as explicit eye candy or something to fulfill a male gaze (or female gaze?). Claire dresses “better”, but only in the sense that she is a rich businesswoman and not an out-in-the-field worker.

In Hollywood male action-adventure lead roles are frequently expected to have six-pack abdominals and bulging biceps. This pressure leads to many male leads having done steroids, actors like Arnold Schwarzenegger and Sylvester Stallone, The Rock. And those are the ones open about it – how many other men have used steroids and refuse to acknowledge it, misleading viewers?

However, women action lead standards revolve more around being thin. It is rare to see a truly muscular woman and I find this unfortunate. Not because women should also have to partake in unrealistic standards but because it would be nice to have some diversity among female actress's body types. And being more on the

# The decline of the female lead in Jurassic Park versus Jurassic World

By Jonatan Myrbostad

(non-steroid) muscular side makes more sense in an action film if there are fight scenes or feats of strength being performed.

To summarize: I have now compared Claire versus Sattler and it should be clear Claire is lacking in heroic and moral qualities. Sattler is much more fitting of the title “strong female character” not just for being the female action lead, but because she’s morally virtuous and heroic – she tries to save the others and also questions the ethics of the park itself. Claire fears shutting down the park because they would never reopen, but Sattler sees what’s really important. In a scene where she sits down with the still-in-denial Hammond she hits him with the hard truth:

“You never had control! That's the illusion! Now, I was overwhelmed by the power of this place. Well, I made a mistake, too. I didn't have enough respect for that power, and it's out now. The only thing that matters now are the people we love. Alan, Lex, and Tim. John, they're out there, where people are dying.”

Sattler sees that the lack of respect for power and the lack of morality regarding Jurassic Park has nearly doomed them all, and even then she refuses to give up on saving the rest of the survivors.

“(…) women were excluded from the hero’s journey, their roles and embodied meanings are, at times, traditional, ambiguous, contested, and even controversial.” (x). This quote appears in the introduction of the book *Heroines of Film and Television: Portrayals in Popular Culture* (2014) by Jones, Bajac-Carter and Batchelor. They do not mention Ellie Sattler, which is quite disappointing, because I find her to possibly be one of the best or the apex of female heroines to this date. But the fact that women have historically been excluded from heroic roles is something we have to be aware of, so that we can applaud when well-written female heroines do show in films.

My critiques of the female characters in this paper does not come from a place of being more critical of women characters than men, but the fact that the female heroine is in a decline. Indeed, not just in the Jurassic Park franchise, but this disappointing trend has infected other Hollywood blockbuster films as well.



# The decline of the female lead in Jurassic Park versus Jurassic World

By Jonatan Myrbostad

## FEMALE CHARACTER BEHAVIOR AND PAST CENSORSHIP

All character behavior and action matters, for men too (someone could write an essay on how the body standards and mental fortitude of the male hero gives men unrealistic standards). But I chose to write about women characters because I believe modern depictions of women in film are facing a direct contradiction. We're supposed to be more progressive than ever, our modern era allowing women to free themselves from the legacy of the Hays code and being purely objects of romance and reward that drives the male protagonist onward.

The time before Hays code sexualized women too much, then the Hays code censored too much and we now have ended up with a modern state of female characters where Hollywood doesn't really know what to do. Let me elaborate.

Pre-code Hollywood would display women as sexually promiscuous and based them on stereotypes. For instance, red-haired women could be seen as lusty solely because of the color of their hair. The 1932 movie literally titled *Red-Headed Woman* (Conway) portrays a redhead using sex to advance her own interests. And topics like these, whether sexual or criminal or other relatively edgy topics, were indeed popular among the movie-goers. Movies following a prude morality could receive less interest:

“It was Hollywood’s fortune, or misfortune, to be a major interpreter of these events. Films advocating the values of Victorian morality were not going to fill up America’s theaters. The “flapper”, the gangster, the speakeasy, the new woman, liberal attitudes toward sex, marriage and divorce were natural topics for the film industry.” (Black 1996, 27)

Then the influence of the Hays code made it so sexually explicit or sexually implied content was a no-no topic, and it seemed as if women had no sexual agency of their own, and any woman desiring a man in a non-marriage context was to be portrayed negatively, like a prostitute or other morally “degenerate” people.

And now we have arrived at our present situation. Hollywood seems to have no idea what it is doing. It makes women physically strong and puts them in positions of strength or power, but without realizing many men in positions of strength and

# The decline of the female lead in Jurassic Park versus Jurassic World

By Jonatan Myrbostad

power use it for questionable reasons. I'll briefly discuss some of these insincere "girl power" movies.

## MILITARY MISDIRECTION

To put it as blunt as possible: Captain Marvel (Boden and Fleck 2019) is a military propaganda film under the guise of having a strong, independent female character:

"An early montage looks staggeringly like a well-shot ad for the Air Force. It nailed this look so well that the film was used as marketing for the military. Brie Larson shot promos for the military, which turns the entire film's multi-million dollar marketing arm into a recruitment ad. This is inarguably a direct example of propaganda. The rest of the franchise isn't that blatant, but it still isn't free from advertising." (McCoy 2022)

# The decline of the female lead in Jurassic Park versus Jurassic World

By Jonatan Myrbostad



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It's unfair to call the Marvel movies "kid's movies", they also have serious political messages, such as:

- America is good
- the military is good
- military contractors are good
- billionaires are good
- heroes protect the existing power structure, villains try to change society

9:37 AM - 30 May 2019

2,770 Retweets 8,821 Likes



A tweet mocking the propaganda espoused by many of the Marvel Cinematic Universe films.

Perhaps you think this is not a big deal because it is clearly a fictional setting, that it doesn't matter because we all know it's just an exaggerated power fantasy. I disagree, but let us look at a female character from another film in a realistic setting.

*Zero Dark Thirty* (Bigelow 2012) stars Jessica Chastain as a character based on a real-life (anonymous) CIA agent. In the film torture is portrayed as necessary to extract information regarding Osama Bin Laden. The movie was so blatant about this that US senators McCain, Levin and Feinstein called the movie out:

# The decline of the female lead in Jurassic Park versus Jurassic World

By Jonatan Myrbostad

“McCain, a Republican senator for the state of Arizona, joined two Democrats – Dianne Feinstein and Carl Levin – to write a public letter to Michael Lynton, the chairman and chief executive of Sony Pictures, which backed the picture. They claim that Zero Dark Thirty is "grossly inaccurate and misleading in its suggestion that torture resulted in information that led to the capture".” (Brooks 2012)

The point I am trying to make is that having a strong female character should not mean the relaxation of the critical thinking of the viewer. Depicting women in roles that are described as strong or independent could be quite a misleading compliment when those positions could involve being an exploitative CEO, a warrior that violently punches her way through a conflict, a secret agent that engages in torture, and so on and so on.

To put it simply: Having women engage in exploitation is not empowerment:

“In reality, not everyone in this idealistic view of business gets to be the girlboss – only a few. These people who have built this vision have done so on the backs of everybody else, just like any other “guy boss” has. They’ve used the same exploitation of capitalism, and that’s not empowering for anyone beneath them; that’s not real feminism. It teaches us that to be leaders as women, we have to do it using the same oppressive tactics that many men have used, but we have to do it in pink and in heels. Real equality and freedom aren’t women doing the same as men to win their game. Instead, it’s creating our own systems where we can do what we want and still be successful.” (Marie).

## BACK TO THE PAST?

I’ve criticized *Jurassic World* and the modern state of the female “heroine” while explaining that Sattler is a proper strong female character. It is now time to give a few more examples of past characters that are handled correctly, because I don’t want to be overtly cynical – I do believe it is possible to reverse this course by looking back.

Ellen Ripley is a working-class woman on the spaceship USS *Nostromo* in Ridley Scott’s *Alien* (1979). When one of her crewmates is injured by an unknown creature Ripley refuses to let them back in because he might be carrying an

# The decline of the female lead in Jurassic Park versus Jurassic World

By Jonatan Myrbostad

infection. She is overruled and the injured crewmate is brought inside, eventually spelling doom for everyone except Ripley herself. It was a logical decision of her to be suspicious, but it was also rather callous and cynical to deny help to your own crewmate. However, in the sequel, *Aliens* (1986), by James Cameron, Ripley's story is that of a rescuing hero and not a cynical survivor. Even if she basically has PTSD from her previous encounters with the Alien she takes up the offer to go to the xenomorph infested planet. She is accompanied by space marines and yet she keeps her cool better than most. She is the one that takes care of the little abandoned girl Newt and rescues her twice: Once by going down into the sewer and the xenomorph egg-infested lair and then rescues her again when facing down the queen xenomorph.



It must be noted that Ripley is shown to have nightmares and fears, not just physical injuries. She is even shown to be judgmental towards the only android, Bishop, yet she overcomes that bigotry too as he earns her respect. She has flaws that humanize her. She is not a flawless human being like Superman or an unstoppable Amazon warrior. Her actions reveal her character: facing your fears, taking care of a child, doing her utmost to leave no one behind.

# The decline of the female lead in Jurassic Park versus Jurassic World

By Jonatan Myrbostad

Rikke Schubart's 2007 book, *Super Bitches and Action Babes: The Female Hero in Popular Cinema, 1970 – 2006*, analyzes the history of the female action star.

Chapter seven is dedicated to Ellen Ripley who is put under the “Mother” female archetype and opens with a quote from a fan:

“Ripley is a heroine like no other. She thrills you. Her powerful presence and unstoppable soul will always live on in the minds of movie-goers. She and Newt form a surrogate mother-daughter relationship that is more touching than anything I've seen before in the Alien series...she's the perfect action hero.” (169)

Note it is not being physically active and a “badass” that makes you a hero, yet this is almost always what is implied with “strong” female characters. A character who is not a fighter but a mother, sister, therapist, trauma victim or simply a good friend can also be a strong character. The label of “strong” gets railroaded into a female character kicking ass in a fight or being a woman in position of power rather than the label “strong” referring to their empathy, perseverance, and virtue. The reason female action leads are called strong is perhaps simply because films are a visual medium and thus action is the easiest way to show audiences how a character acts, it being harder to display internal mental strength. But a strong female character can be strong in a variety of ways. Here are some examples:

- Sarah Connor from *Terminator 2: Judgement Day* (Cameron 1992). It may seem like she is only strong because of her ability to be an action heroine like Ripley, but she is also a mother who tries to take care of her son while she herself learns to overcome her hatred against the T-800 terminator. Her overall arc is almost identical to Ripley's and regarding these characters as “strong” refers to physical acts, which is disappointing.
- Dr. Quinn from *Dr. Quinn, Medicine Woman* (1993-1998). A female doctor in the 19<sup>th</sup> century tries to aid the locals in an Old West town with the medical knowledge and tools existing at the time. “Strong” refers to her intelligence and effort to figure out what illness the patients have and standing up for herself as a female doctor.

# The decline of the female lead in Jurassic Park versus Jurassic World

By Jonatan Myrbostad

- Norma from *Norma Rae* (Ritt 1979). Norma tries to unionize her cotton mill factory. She stands up for herself and her co-workers as a working-class woman.

Ellie Sattler fits all these categories. She's working class, intelligent, and forced into becoming an action heroine where she proves her virtue by aiding others in their survival.

Claire doesn't really fit into any meaningful category, not in any of mine examples given above or in Rikke Schubart's: the dominatrix, the Amazon, the daughter, the mother and the rapeavenger. Claire is in a position of power and wealth...and that's it. There's no character there, no humanity. At times it feels like her character (and *Jurassic World* as a whole) was written by machines that did not fully comprehend human emotions. To have such a character portrayed as the female lead and be second-billed feels absurd. The only way it would have made sense is if she was the lead villain, which brings us back to what I said earlier: Claire is more fitting as a CEO antagonist than a heroine. There is nothing heroic or virtuous about her.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

By comparing Sattler from *Jurassic Park* with Claire from *Jurassic World* we can clearly see a decline within the franchise in the standard for female characters, particularly as protagonists that are meant to be heroic. To devolve from the intelligent, brave, empathic, and working-class scientist in Dr. Sattler to the soulless businesswoman Claire should be taken as a warning sign of the current state of female characters.

I hope that audiences become aware of this, but more importantly that whoever is the most to blame for this, whether the writers themselves or pressures from studio executives and producers, realizes that this trend makes the characterization of women worse. These kinds of narcissistic and morally lacking women might be apt in morally grey TV shows where the characters are intended to be disliked, but do we really need this in our blockbusters as well? Is there no room for a female character that has flaws and fears yet attempts to do the morally right thing, a

# The decline of the female lead in Jurassic Park versus Jurassic World

By Jonatan Myrbostad

character that can simply be described as a good person? “Strong female character” is becoming a rather deceptive term and could even be used for propaganda purposes.

We are losing high-quality female heroes. They are replaced by characters defined by their strength and position of power, instead of their moral character, their moral integrity.

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# The decline of the female lead in Jurassic Park versus Jurassic World

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Claire: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Claire\\_Dearing](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Claire_Dearing)

Sattler/Claire: <https://stayhappyanddontdie.com/?p=1377>

# The decline of the female lead in Jurassic Park versus Jurassic World

By Jonatan Myrbostad

Sattler: <https://www.ibtimes.co.in/jurassic-world-2-heres-everything-know-about-ellie-sattlers-return-fallen-kingdom-754255>

Tweet: <https://twitter.com/existentialcoms/status/1134136854704353280>

Ellen Ripley and Newt: <https://www.nerdon.tv/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Aliens-Ripley-and-Newt.jpg>

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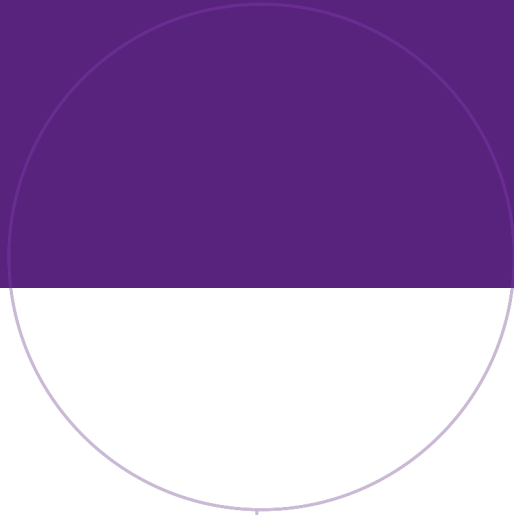
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