University Library



A gateway to Melbourne's research publications

Minerva Access is the Institutional Repository of The University of Melbourne

Author/s:
Lomax, Tara Josephine

Title:
Blockbuster Franchising: Transtextual Poetics in Early Twenty-First Century Hollywood Entertainment

Date:
2021

Persistent Link:
https://hdl.handle.net/11343/296617

Terms and Conditions:
Terms and Conditions: Copyright in works deposited in Minerva Access is retained by the copyright owner. The work may not be altered without permission from the copyright owner. Readers may only download, print and save electronic copies of whole works for their own personal non-commercial use. Any use that exceeds these limits requires permission from the copyright owner. Attribution is essential when quoting or paraphrasing from these works.

Blockbuster Franchising:

Transtextual Poetics in Early Twenty-First Century Hollywood Entertainment

Tara Lomax

Graduate Certificate in Screen Culture, *AFTRS*
Master of Film Studies, *The University of Sydney*
Bachelor of Arts (Hons), *La Trobe University*

ORCID: 0000-0003-0356-8382

Submitted in total fulfilment of the requirements of the degree
Doctor of Philosophy.

Date of Submission: 22 October 2021

Principal Supervisor: Professor Angela Ndalianis
Associate Supervisor: Dr Wendy Haslem

Screen and Cultural Studies
School of Culture and Communication
Faculty of Arts
The University of Melbourne
Australia

Abstract

Blockbuster franchising is a mode of practice that dominates Hollywood entertainment of the early twenty-first century: franchise properties such as ‘Star Wars,’ the ‘Marvel Cinematic Universe,’ ‘Wizarding World,’ ‘James Bond,’ ‘Jurassic Park,’ and ‘Fast and the Furious’ characterize the contemporary entertainment landscape such that expansive, serial, and multiplatform storyworlds constitute mainstream entertainment in the early twenty-first century.

Blockbuster franchising involves the intensification and multiplication of authorship, narration, and aesthetics managed by the legal procedures of intellectual property and licensing. In this context, this thesis argues that the franchise mode is a system that involves the interplay of creative and industrial dimensions and is driven by a dialectic of poetic utility between legal-industrial imperatives and creative development. Through the concept of poetic utility, I examine blockbuster franchising as a synergistic model whereby creative expression is shaped by law and economics, and industrial longevity is enabled by creative development. This thesis identifies that blockbuster franchising is a mode of practice that constitutes a reciprocal exchange of creative-industrial resources, in which dynamics between authors and owners, production structures, serial narration and formula, and cinematic aesthetics serve the poetic utility that drives the creative-industrial mechanism of blockbuster franchising.

This thesis employs transtextual poetics as an analytical framework through which to identify the key principles, conventions, and norms that constitute the franchise mode of production as an articulation of cinema in a total entertainment ecology; such norms of blockbuster franchising include intellectual property centralization, multiple authorship, seriality, high-concept formula, multiplatform storyworld development, and multiple intensified continuities. This research will examine how the systematic workings of blockbuster franchising enrich the dynamic between repetition and variation.

This thesis understands how blockbuster franchising works as a mode of practice in early twenty-first century Hollywood, and is facilitated by the economic, creative, and technological possibilities of media convergence and industrial synergy. As an articulation of blockbuster entertainment in the franchise era, blockbuster franchising represents the creative-industrial modulation of Hollywood cinema across its history and thus works to fulfil its ongoing pursuit of creative and commercial longevity.

Declaration

1. This thesis comprises only original work towards the Doctor of Philosophy; and
2. Due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other material used; and
3. The thesis is fewer than the maximum word limit in length, exclusive of tables, maps, figure captions, bibliographies, and appendices.

Tara Lomax

Signed: 22 October 2021

Preface

A portion of the Introduction appears in the publication: Lomax, Tara. 2019. "Blockbuster Franchising in the 2010s…and Beyond." *Senses of Cinema* 92, https://www.sensesofcinema.com/2019/cinema-in-the-2010s/the-franchise-era-blockbuster-hollywood-in-the-2010sand-beyond/

Portions of the chapter 1 case study, "Star Wars: Thank the Maker/s," appear in the publication: Lomax, Tara. 2017. "Thank the Maker! George Lucas, Lucasfilm and the Legends of Transtextual Authorship across the Star Wars Franchise." In *Star Wars and the History of Transmedia Storytelling*, edited by Sean A. Guynes and Dan Hassler-Forest, 35–48. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

This research was made possible by the Australian Government's Research Training Scheme.

The first three and a half years of this research candidature was supported by the Fay Marles Scholarship, awarded by the University of Melbourne.

Acknowledgments

The completion of this thesis has been an epic journey. Like traversing Middle-earth to get to the fires of Mount Doom in Mordor, this journey has been met with more Nazgûl, Orcs, Balrogs, and Uruk-hai than one could survive alone. Thankfully, it has also had a fellowship to help see it through to its completion.

Thank you to my principal supervisor, Professor Angela Ndalianis, whose mentorship has given me the confidence to find and claim my own academic path. Thank you for believing in me and my research and for sticking with me for so long.

At the University of Melbourne, I wish to thank the Chair of my advisory committee, Professor Seán Cubitt, and my associate supervisor, Dr Wendy Haslem. A special thank you to Gabrielle Grigg for her administrative support and patience over the years.

To everyone I have worked with at The University of Melbourne, RMIT University, Swinburne University of Technology, Monash University, Victorian College of the Arts, and Collarts, thank you for your collegiality and confidence in my abilities. Thank you to everyone I have collaborated with, especially Dr Jessica Balanzategui, Associate Professor Liam Burke, and Dr Andy Lynch. I wish to extend a special thank you to my colleagues at Collarts, Dr Bridget Haylock, Professor Tim Moss, and Dr Ben O'Hara. Your support during the final stages of this journey is greatly appreciated.

I am also grateful for the opportunities I have had to engage with passionate and talented people in the entertainment industry. These connections have not only informed my research and its relevance but have also affirmed my appreciation for entertainment franchising and motivated me to share its value. Thank you especially to Jeff Gomez and Diana Williams for expressing such enthusiasm towards my research.

I could not have achieved this feat without my family. Mum, thank you for accompanying me to midnight screenings of Star Wars movies and weekly visits to the cinema. Dad, I wish you could have made it to see me finally reach this point, but I'll never forget that you sat by my side to watch Superman movies with me when I was ill; much of this thesis was written by your side in your final weeks as I thought about the joy of us watching sequels and series together. Thank you to my parents for all they sacrificed to support my education against all odds. Mum, I guess I have finally finished that school essay you keep asking me about.

Thank you to Jenny, Pat, Megan, and Luke. As the Fast and the Furious franchise mythos teaches us, family isn't always blood. I am grateful for your encouragement and support. Special thanks to Megan for your friendship and for being a much-needed cheerleader through the final stages of this journey.

To my infinity gem, Mark. I could not have accomplished this without your support and understanding. You have been with me for the most important part of this journey and given me strength when I thought I didn't have any left.

And thank you to the movies that have given me life through really hard times.

Table of Contents

Abstract *1*

Declaration *2*

Preface *3*

Acknowledgments *4*

Table of Contents *5*

Figures, Tables, and Graphs *7*

INTRODUCTION: THE FRANCHISE ERA AWAKENS 10

Defining Blockbuster Franchising as a Mode of Practice *13*

The Hollywood History of Blockbuster Franchising *20*

Reviewing Scholarship: Media Franchising and Related Concepts *27*

Transtextual Poetics and Total Entertainment *36*

Poetic Utility in Blockbuster Franchising *40*

Structuring a Thesis Saga *42*

Case Studies: Scope and Significance *43*

EPISODE I: A NEW ORIGIN—AUTHORSHIP AND PRODUCTION IN THE FRANCHISE ERA 47

CHAPTER 1: TRANSTEXTUAL AUTHORSHIP 50

Multiple Origins *54*

Canonical Adaptation *64*

Concept-Auteurs *69*

Star Wars: Thank the Maker/s *77*

CHAPTER 2: FRANCHISING PRODUCTION 92

Intellectual Property Object *96*

Creative License *99*

Property-Unit System *102*

Harry Potter and the IP that Lived *104*

EPISODE II: HIGH-CONCEPT STRIKES BACK—NARRATION AND FORMULA IN THE FRANCHISE ERA 114

CHAPTER 3: TRANSTEXTUAL NARRATION 119

Architextual Systems *121*

Serial Narration *129*

Multiplatform Storyworlds *142*

Star Trek: The Franchise Frontier *147*

CHAPTER 4: FRANCHISING FORMULA 157

Higher-Concept *159*

Storyworld Mythos *164*

Composing Theme *167*

OO7: The Bondian Formula *172*

EPISODE III: RETURN OF THE ATTRACTION—AESTHETICS AND STYLE IN THE FRANCHISE ERA 183

CHAPTER 5: TRANSTEXTUAL AESTHETICS 186

Transmedia Specificity *192*

Cinema of Repetitions *201*

Assembled Illusions *207*

MCU: Assembling a Cinematic Marvel *214*

CHAPTER 6: FRANCHISING STYLE 228

Framing Franchises *231*

Mise-en-World *238*

Intensified Continuities *247*

Welcome to Jurassic World *254*

CONCLUSION: RISE OF THE FRANCHISE ERA, OR THE LAST FRANCHISE? 269

Appendix *274*

Reference List *277*

Total Entertainment List *307*

Figures, Tables, and Graphs

Figure 1: 'Chestburster' in *Alien* 63
Figure 2: ‘Chestburster’ nightmare in *Aliens* 63
Figure 3: ‘Dogburster’ in Alien[3] and ‘Headburster’ in *Alien: Resurrection* 63
Figure 4: ‘Backburster’ (left) and ‘Chestburster’ (right) in *Alien: Covenant* 63
Figure 5: Lucasfilm Ltd logo before *The Force Awakens* 79
Figure 6: “Dream Maker” (Tsuneo Sanda, 2013) 81
Figure 7: C-3PO exclaims “Thank the Maker!” in *A New Hope* 83
Figure 8: C-3PO and R2-D2 in *A New Hope* 84
Figure 9: C-3PO's arm in *A New Hope* 85
Figure 10: C-3PO's dismembered body in *The Empire Strikes Back* 85
Figure 11: C-3PO's eye is gauged out in *Return of the Jedi* 86
Figure 12: C-3PO's exposed body in *The Phantom Menace* 86
Figure 13: C-3PO's head is swapped with a battle droid in *Attack of the Clones* 86
Figure 14: “Thank the Maker” (*Star Wars Tales* #6, Dark Horse, 1999) 88
Figure 15: “Thank the Maker” (*Star Wars Tales* #6, Dark Horse, 1999) 88
Figure 16: C-3PO in *The Force Awakens* 91
Figure 17: C-3PO in *The Last Jedi* 91
Figure 18: C-3PO in *The Rise of Skywalker* 91
Figure 19: The 'Wizarding World' franchise logo. 106
Figure 20: *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* book 109
Figure 21: Darth Vader is placed into the iconic cybernetic suit in *Revenge of the Sith* 136
Figure 22: Bilbo Baggins finds the One Ring in *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey* 136
Figure 23: The opening crawl in *A New Hope* 137
Figure 24: Princess Leia is handed the secret plans in *Rogue One* (left) and passes them onto R2-D2 in *A New Hope* (right) 137
Figure 25: *Batman Begins* movie poster 140
Figure 26: Starfleet insignia with the *Star Trek* (2009) title card. 150
Figure 27: Starfleet insignia across time (D'Oria) 150
Figure 28: Charting the real-world history of exploration in the *Star Trek: Enterprise* title sequence 150
Figure 29: Enterprise NX-01 152
Figure 30: Enterprise NCC-1701 152
Figure 31: Enterprise NCC-1701-A 152
Figure 32: Enterprise NCC-1701-B 152
Figure 33: Enterprise NCC-1701-C 152
Figure 34: Enterprise NCC-1701-D 152
Figure 35: Enterprise NCC-1701-E 152
Figure 36: Enterprise NCC-1701 152
Figure 37: ISS Enterprise NCC-1701 (mirror dimension) 152
Figure 38: Reboot Spock and Sequel Spock in *Star Trek* (2009). 156
Figure 39: *The Mummy* publicity image. 164
Figure 40: The iconic “Force Theme” moment in *A New Hope* 169
Figure 41: “Hedwig's Theme” musical notation, copyright of Warner-Barham Music LLC 172
Figure 42: Gun barrel sequence in *Dr No* 177
Figure 43: First appearance of Durin's Bane in the novel, *The Fellowship of the Ring* (Tolkien 1945) 196
Figure 44: Durin's Bane in the animated movie, *The Lord of the Rings* 196
Figure 45: Durin's Bane in the blockbuster movie, T*he Lord of the Rings: Fellowship of the Ring* 196
Figure 46: Durin's Bane in the computer game, *Lord of the Rings Online* 196
Figure 47: Shattered glass in motion in *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse* 199
Figure 48: Emulating movement with comic book panels in *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse* 199

Figure 49: Using text on screen to represent sound in *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse* 199
Figure 50: Segment of celluloid in *The Fellowship of the Ring* 203
Figure 51: Hobbits escape in barrels along a flowing river in *The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug* 204
Figure 52: A shot alternation sequence in *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey* 206
Figure 53: VFX Breakdown: *The Fellowship of the Ring* (Weta Digital 2019) 213
Figure 54: VFX Breakdown: Gollum in *An Unexpected Journey* (Weta Digital 2013) 213
Figure 55: Andy Serkis in the role of Gollum using motion capture technology in *An Unexpected Journey* (Weta Digital 2013) 214
Figure 56: *Avengers* #16 (1965, 20) 216
Figure 57: *Avengers* #39 (1967, 20) 216
Figure 58: *Avengers* #93 (1972, 26) 217
Figure 59: The Avengers assemble in *The Avengers* 218
Figure 60: VFX Breakdown: *The Avengers* (1LM 2013) 219
Figure 61: The Avengers assemble in *Avengers: Age of Ultron* 220
Figure 62: Shot alternation sequence in *Avengers: Age of Ultron*. 221
Figure 63: Overhead wide shot of the Avengers assembled in *Age of Ultron.* 221
Figure 64: The Avengers assembled in battle in *Age of Ultron* 222
Figure 65: Pietro Maximoff's superhuman speed in slow motion (left) and Vision and Ultron in accelerated motion (right) in *Age of Ultron* 223
Figure 66: Heroes return through portals in *Avengers: Endgame* 224
Figure 67: Captain America voices the iconic rallying cry, "Avenger assemble" in *Endgame* 225
Figure 68: CG rendering of New Asgard through a portal in *Endgame* 226
Figure 69: CG portal layer (left) and CG characters and environment layer (right) in *Endgame* 227
Figure 70: Heroes charge in battle in *Endgame* 227
Figure 71: Star Destroyer enters frame from off-screen in *A New Hope* 233
Figure 72: The Avengers assembled in a 1.85:1 aspect ratio in *The Avengers* 236
Figure 73: Harry and Ron meet on the Hogwarts Express in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* 237
Figure 74: Harry and Ron ride a flying car in *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* 238
Figure 75: Ron looks out of the Hogwarts Express in *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* 238
Figure 76: Establishing shot of Hobbiton in The Fellowship of the Ring 241
Figure 77: Establishing shot of Hogwarts in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* 241
Figure 78: Establishing shot of Knowhere in *Guardians of the Galaxy* 241
Figure 79: Establishing shot of the Triskelion in *Captain America: The Winter Soldier* 241
Figure 80: Establishing shot of the New Avengers Facility in *Avengers: Age of Ultron* 241
Figure 81: Establishing shot of Hogwarts in *Fantastic Beasts: The Crimes of Grindelwald* 241
Figure 82: Establishing shot of Wakanda in *Avengers: Infinity War* 241
Figure 83: Establishing shot of Mustafar in *Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker* 241
Figure 84: Conflict shot in *Revenge of the Sith* 241
Figure 85: Conflict shot in *Casino Royale* 241
Figure 86: Conflict shot in *Star Trek* 242
Figure 87: Conflict shot in *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 2* 242
Figure 88: Conflict shot in *Captain America: Civil War* 242
Figure 89: Conflict shot in *Star Wars: The Last Jedi* 242
Figure 90: A high angle long shot centered on the poker table in *Casino Royale* 243
Figure 91: Right angle long shot centered on Le Chiffre in *Casino Royale* 243
Figure 92: Left angle long shot centered on Bond in *Casino Royale* 243
Figure 93: Push in tracking shot centered on Leiter in *Casino Royale* 243
Figure 94: Medium close-up of Vesper whispering to Bond in *Casino Royale* 244
Figure 95: Medium shot of Mathis whispering to Vesper in *Casino Royale* 244
Figure 96: Long shot of Bond seated alone at the poker table in *Casino Royale* 244
Figure 97: Bond (Sean Connery) in medium close-up (left) and long shot (right) in *Dr No* 246

Figure 98: Bond (George Lazenby) in long shot (left) and medium close-up (right) in *On Her Majesty's Secret Service* 246
Figure 99: Bond (Roger Moore) in long shot (left) and medium close-up (right) in *For Your Eyes Only* 246
Figure 100: Bond (Timothy Dalton) in long shot (left) and medium close-up (right) in *License to Kill* 246
Figure 101: Bond (Pierce Brosnan) in medium close-up (left) and long shot (right) in *GoldenEye* 246
Figure 102: Bond (Daniel Craig) in long shot (left) and a tight medium close-up (right) in *Casino Royale* 247
Figure 103: Children play with Transformer's toys in a 1980s Hasbro commercial (top) and shot stills based on cuts in an action sequence in *Transformers* (bottom) 249
Figure 104: A long take in *The Avengers* 253
Figure 105: Rear angle long shot of the Avengers (left) and a low angle medium shot of Dr Banner in *The Avengers* 254
Figure 106: Pteranodons fly out of containment at the end of *Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom* 255
Figure 107: *Jurassic World* poster (left) and *Fallen Kingdom* poster (right) 256
Figure 108: Looking off-screen in wonder and shock in *Jurassic Park* 258
Figure 109: Looking off-screen in shock and fear in *The Lost World* 259
Figure 110: Looking off-screen in wonder in *Jurassic World* 259
Figure 111: Looking off-screen in wonder and shock in *Fallen Kingdom* 259
Figure 112: Gates in 1:85:1 in *Jurassic Park* 260
Figure 113: Gates in 2.00:1 in *Jurassic World* 260
Figure 114: Gates in 2.39:1 in *Fallen Kingdom* 260
Figure 115: Gray Mitchell opens the sliding doors of his hotel room (left) to give way to an establishing shot of *Jurassic World* (right) 261
Figure 116: Establishing shot of the abandoned Jurassic World in *Fallen Kingdom* 262
Figure 117: Close-up of T.rex's reflection in a sideview mirror in *Jurassic Park* 263
Figure 118: Close-up of sideview mirror with text in focus (top) and same shot with Owen in focus (bottom) in *Fallen Kingdom* 264
Figure 119: Examples of reflection in the mise-en-scène of *Jurassic World* (top) and *Fallen Kingdom* (bottom) 264
Figure 120: Hybrid dinosaur, the Indoraptor, enters Maisie's bedroom in *Fallen Kingdom* 265
Figure 121: Conflict shot of the T.rex versus a lion at the end of *Fallen Kingdom* 265
Figure 122: Raptor sequence in *Jurassic Park III* 266
Figure 123: Still from a 71-second continuous shot in *Jurassic World* 267

Table 1: Gérard Genette's five typologies of transtextuality 38
Table 2: Gun barrel sequence in every 'Bond' installment 179

Diagram 1: Serial narration in the 'Fast and the Furious' franchise (2001–) 138

Graph 1: Share of US Box Office based on total number of franchises per year (Ball 2019) 11
Graph 2: Aspect Ratios in blockbuster franchises, 1962–2019. 235
Graph 3: Average Shot Length (ASL) in blockbuster franchises 1962–2019 251

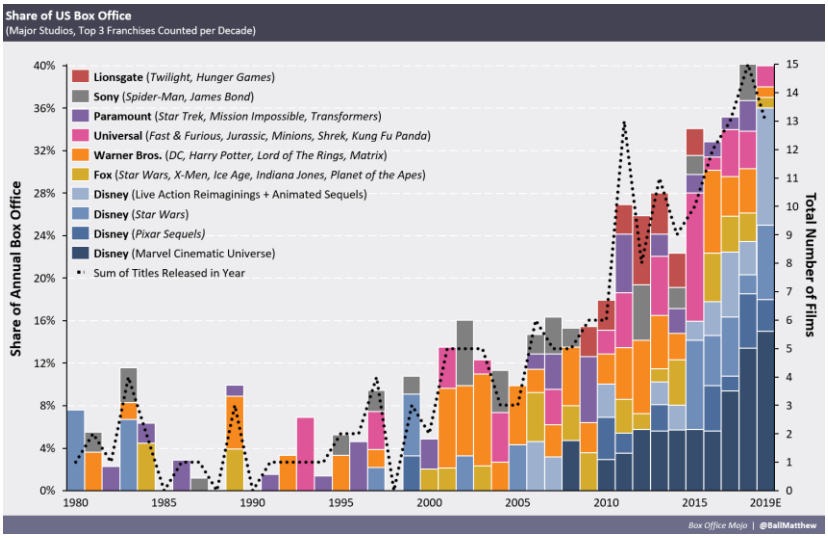
Introduction: The Franchise Era Awakens

Blockbuster franchising constitutes the principal mode of Hollywood entertainment in the early twenty-first century. The large-scale development of franchises, such as 'Star Wars,' the 'Marvel Cinematic Universe' ('MCU'), the 'Worlds of DC', 'Wizarding World,' and 'Bond,' dominates the current and upcoming slate of Hollywood output.[1] Blockbuster franchising is driven by the tenets of intellectual property law in tandem with the transtextual poetics of seriality and multiplatform storyworld design; as such, it reflects the intensified legal-industrialization of authorship, narration, and aesthetics in Hollywood of the early twenty-first century. Blockbuster franchising is a significant mode of entertainment that is discursively intertwined with Hollywood's creative-industrial history. Kristin Thompson acknowledges that "today the franchise is often the star" (2007, 6), which signals that franchising has superseded many of Hollywood's most established branding strategies and creative mechanisms: the franchise system thus reconfigures and intensifies traditional applications of auteurism, narration, and high concept. In this thesis, I argue that the franchise coalesces creativity and entertainment business in a creative-industrial mechanism, which is driven by a reciprocal exchange of benefit between creativity and business that I argue works as a force of *poetic utility*. This means that the creative-industrial mechanism of blockbuster franchising constitutes a reciprocal interplay of institutional production structures (such as intellectual property ownership, licensing relations, and authorial branding) and formal and stylistic devices (including seriality, multiplatform storyworld design, high-concept formula, and an open world aesthetic style). In this interplay, transtextual poetics works to enable economic longevity through an investment in intellectual property over a long period of time, while ownership procedures establish legal-industrial protection for the creative development of expansive storyworlds. The blockbuster franchise thus works to fulfil Hollywood's ongoing pursuit of commercial success and longevity, while facilitating an industrial foundation that enables creative development.

The early twenty-first century reveals the increasing dominance of franchised entertainment, with many declaring this period the 'franchise era' or 'age of the franchise' (Lewis 2003, 14; Elsaesser 2012, 283; Meikle 2019; Fleury, Hartzheim and Mamber 2019).

[1] This thesis uses single inverted commas to designate a specific franchise example (an intellectual property object) which distinguishes between the title of a higher-level franchise property and the titles of individual installments (formatted using italics, as per traditional style protocols). For example, 'Jurassic Park' refers to the broader franchise, which encompasses all licensed works across multiple media platforms, while *Jurassic Park* refers specifically to the 1993 movie installment (or the 1990 novel, where relevant and stated).

As such, Kyle Meikle (2019) defines the franchise era as beginning from 2001, and James Fleury, Bryan Hikari Hartzheim and Stephen Mamber (2019) say it corresponds with the digital era of the twenty-first century. Therefore, the franchise era is a period that predominantly encompasses the early twenty-first century, and its beginning is especially characterized by the 2001 release of blockbusters such as *The Fast and the Furious*, *Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring*, and *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*; this is followed by a steady increase in the franchise released over the during the 2000s and 2010s. Graph 1 illustrates the dominance of blockbuster franchising in the early twenty-first century based on the rising quantity of installments and share of total domestic box office per year (Ball 2019). While I acknowledge the significance of 2001 as the official beginning of the twenty-first century and its notable franchise installments, I extend my delineation of the franchise era slightly earlier to 1999 to also recognize blockbusters released at the millennial turn, such as *The Matrix* (1999), *Star Wars: Episode I—The Phantom Menace* (1999), *Toy Story 2* (1999), *The World is Not Enough* (1999), *X-Men* (2000), and *Mission: Impossible 2* (2000). These releases signaled the emerging dominance of blockbuster franchising in the early twenty-first century and should not be excluded from the parameters of this study; indeed, the respective franchises associated with each of these installments remain very active and successful two decades on. For the purposes of scope (and my inability to see into the future), I am working with 2019 as the most recent endpoint for this study; however, it remains to be seen whether this demarcates the end of the franchise era or whether, as Hollywood hopes, it will continue fruitfully into the next decade and beyond. Therefore, in this thesis I work with 1999 to 2019 to consider how the franchise era exists historically at the turn of the century and into the early twenty-first century.



Graph 1: Share of US Box Office based on total number of franchises per year (Ball 2019)

The expansive scale of media production in the franchise era implicates two crucial creative-industrial forces: seriality and blockbuster production. The intersection of seriality and the blockbuster has economic, industrial, and aesthetic dimensions, since they both work to facilitate commercial imperatives, brand synergies, and narrative longevity. Seriality is often associated with creative recycling, intertextual adaptation, and brand exploitation—as well as historical and ideological implications of nostalgia and memory. Such considerations are underpinned by an assumption that the ongoing rejuvenation of familiar stories challenges (or undermines) traditional notions of originality. At its foundation, however, seriality is a formal mechanism that, Carolyn Jess-Cooke explains, "internalize[s] forms of repetition and continuation within narrative structures, such as sequels, remakes, series, trilogies and adaptations" (2009, 1). Seriality also has the potential to facilitate creative experimentation with the spatiotemporal dynamics of long-form narrative development and multiplatform extension in negotiation with commercial and legal imperatives, whereby cinema market analyst David Hancock determines that, Hollywood output reveals "more an experimentation with sequels than a flogging to death" (quoted in Jess-Cooke 2009, 2). In my thesis, seriality is understood as a driving force of the creative-industrial mechanisms of blockbuster franchising: it facilitates transtextual dynamics like multiple authorship, seriality, and multiplatform storyworld development, which propel intellectual properties across narrative borders and distinct media platforms.

The expansive attributes of seriality are compatible and complementary with the blockbuster phenomenon, if not necessarily dependent. The blockbuster can best be described as a form of super-cinema: it is a '*big* cinema' strategy. Julian Stringer explains that when describing blockbusters, the "use of the 'super' implies excess: a going beyond of what had been the size norms of accepted or established practice; the adding on of something special; the presence of an extra dimension of some kind or other" (2003, 5). Seriality and the blockbuster logic thus both engage with the logic of *more*, *bigness*, *extension*, and *super-ness*: these forces realize the creative and industrial potential of cinema and entertainment beyond the limits of singularity and textual self-containment, economic expectation, or spectatorial experience. Seriality also performs a fundamental role as a risk-aversion tactic since its capacity to leverage familiarity with variation offers the safety of secured return in unpredictable industrial conditions (De Vany 2004, 134). While seriality and the blockbuster logic are not specific to the franchise era, the intensified 'super' features of these forms provide a fruitful context within which blockbuster franchising takes shape. As Jess-Cooke contends, "the blockbuster era—which has arguably morphed now into what could be called

the franchise era—made the sequel's inherent excesses, or its latent suggestion of 'more', a box-office star" (2009, 46). These inherent excesses and the dormant potential for 'more' not only establishes a foundation for the franchise era in the early twenty-first century, but also works to facilitate industrial futurity. This indicates that seriality and blockbuster production are intricately intertwined as forces that drive the logic of longevity and industrial survival that shapes the formalization of the franchise era.

Defining Blockbuster Franchising as a Mode of Practice

This thesis is framed by contemporary research on media convergence, industrial synergy, and blockbuster cinema to delineate its scope, context, and focus. Henry Jenkins considers franchising to be a catalyst for increasing industrial engagement with media convergence, stating that "extension, synergy, and franchising are pushing media industries to embrace convergence" (2006, 19). Jenkins conceptualizes media convergence as the merging of old and new media platforms and technologies, and the intersection of participatory consumption practices with corporate entertainment institutions. In the franchise era, convergence thus articulates the dynamics of multiplicity and synergy in the structure of media production, distribution, and consumption, which is caused by changing technological capabilities facilitated by the Internet and digital technology (2). This creative and industrial landscape, Jenkins identifies, enables franchising to take precedence, stating that "everything about the structure of the modern entertainment industry was designed with this single idea in mind—the construction and enhancement of entertainment franchises" (113). Media convergence is thus fundamental to the fruition of the franchise era because it facilitates an industrial and cultural landscape that can support, understand, and continue to sustainably support expansive creative production.

Convergence, extension, and synergy function as contextual referents that distinguish the kind of franchise production being addressed in this thesis, namely large-scale entertainment production as an articulation of the early twenty-first century Hollywood blockbuster. As franchise producer Jeff Gomez describes in interview, "the word franchise presumes a level of success that is quite astronomical" (2019a, question 13). Such astronomical success incorporates a spatiotemporal condition, in which the scale of economic and cultural impact must also extend across national territories and persists through time. Affirming this point, former CEO of The Walt Disney Company Bob Iger describes a franchise as "something that creates value across multiple businesses and across multiple

territories over a long period of time" (Siklos 2009, para. 5). Even though Iger's definition is shaped by industrial imperatives and context, it is not completely dissimilar to the definition presented by scholars like Thompson:

> Essentially [franchising] means a movie that spawns additional revenue streams beyond what it earns from its various forms of distribution, primarily theatrical, video, and television. These streams may come from sequels and series or from the production company licensing other firms to make ancillary products: action figures, video games, coffee mugs, T-shirts, and the hundreds of other items that licensees conceive of. In the ideal franchise, they come from both. (2007, 4)

Thompson's definition of franchising focuses on the creative and industrial means towards which astronomical success is strived for, negotiated, and achieved, which can involve serial storytelling, cross-media licensing agreements, ancillary product production, merchandising, and synergistic tie-ins. Through this understanding, an example like 'Lord of the Rings' constitutes a franchise once it triggers ancillary products and profits across multiple platforms, beyond its initial novelization. These approaches to defining the franchise—presented by Gomez, Iger, and Thompson respectively—focus on the achieved outcome or upshot of a creative project, rather than a means of identification that can also include franchises *in potentia* (that is, properties with unrealized potential to be blockbuster franchises).

While many franchise productions are only recognized as such after a relative period of success, it is also important to account for planned blockbuster franchises that fail or were short-lived, such as the 'Narnia' (2005–2010), 'Fantastic Four' (2005–2007, 2015), 'John Carter' (2012), 'Warcraft' (2016), and 'Dark Universe' (2017) franchises. These examples are franchises despite a failure to achieve aspired astronomical success. Thompson realizes that franchise failures "may reveal something about the workings of the production system that made them" (2009, 107). Therefore, the question of what constitutes blockbuster franchising must return a set of components that are consistent and measured across an exhaustive slate of output released in the early twenty-first century, which includes both successes over time and premature failures. Janet Wasko and Govind Shanadi work towards a definition of the franchise that identifies necessary occurring components, like sequels, property transferability across media, and the potential for synergy:

> The concept of a 'franchise', as it relates to film or entertainment, has been defined by some to mean simply sequels. However, a better description is a property or a concept

> that is repeatable in multiple media platforms or outlets with merchandising and tie-in potential. It works particularly well if the franchise includes reoccurring and copyrightable characters and story elements. (2006, 23–24)

This definition aptly centralizes the role of a property or concept as something that is extendable and, as Thompson also notes, has ancillary potential (2007, 4); however, a franchise does not need to engage multiple media platforms to be classified as such. This reveals a common misconception of franchise practice as something that is easily conflated with cross-media, media mixing, or transmedia storytelling. As Gomez clarifies, "a franchise can be one of the results of good transmedia storytelling, but you can have a franchise without transmedia" (2019a, question 5). Similarly, in an interview with Jenkins, Derek Johnson specifies that "all transmedia storytelling is a form of franchising, but not all franchising manages to count as transmedia storytelling" (2014, question 1). This is because, from an industrial perspective, all cross-media strategies depend on the centralization of intellectual property procedures to enable the authorized and canonical extension of narrative across multiple media; conversely, this centralization of creative property and branding does not always necessitate an engagement with transmedia narrative strategies. Therefore, transmedia storytelling, and other forms of transmedia practice, can be employed as devices for successful franchise development, but the occurrence of multiple media platforms does not in itself function as a defining component of blockbuster franchising. This thesis will consider the implications and function of multiplatform storyworlds in franchise narration and aesthetics but avoids conflating transmedia and franchising.

This thesis contributes a definition of Hollywood franchising that does not depend on markers of success or differentiating creative strategies, and which can be replicated across a large group of texts that can be understood as examples of blockbuster franchising. I define blockbuster franchising as requiring the interrelated co-presence of two vital components that work together in tandem:

1. The deliberate activation of a centralized intellectual property through ownership or licensing (legal-industrial dimension).
2. The textual multiplicity of authorship, narration, and aesthetics (creative dimension).

The first component—related to intellectual property and licensing—represents the legal and industrial imperatives that shape, condition and manage a franchise; however, independently this component does not account for the complex formal construction of franchising as a

textual multiplicity—that is, transtexuality. Transtexuality is a concept of textual multiplicity that accounts for the relationships between texts: it is "all that sets the text in a relationship, whether obvious or concealed, with other texts" (Genette [1982] 1997, 1).[2] Therefore, the second component relates to the dynamics of creative development and accounts for the formal and aesthetic conventions that characterize a franchise, including polycentric authorship, canonical adaptation, creative license, serial narration, multiplatform storyworld design, and intensified stylistic continuities. Moreover, while seriality is an essential element of blockbuster franchising, but it does not constitute its definition without an interaction with the tenets of intellectual property law.[3] Therefore, I propose that blockbuster franchising be defined as a coherent mode of productions that is driven by a creative-industrial mechanism that involves the centralization of intellectual property in tandem with expansive transtextual poetics.

The interplay of these two crucial components—intellectual property and creativity—constitutes the core logic of blockbuster franchising, and what I refer to as its creative-industrial mechanism. In this context, *creativity* broadly represents the expressions of artistry, craft, and experimentation in the areas of authorship, narration, and aesthetics; *industrial*, moreover, encompasses the conditions and freedoms enabled by intellectual property law, licensing agreements, studio ownership structures, industrial synergy, and commercial imperatives. I argue that as a creative-industrial mechanism the interplay of these impulses necessitates a reciprocal interplay of poetic utility: this is a contention I explain in detail below. For now, I have emphasized the importance of this two-pronged mechanism in defining blockbuster franchising. This definition is potentially contestable amongst other treatments of media franchising in scholarship. Johnson suggests that "one could define franchising in the terms of products and intellectual properties extended in an ongoing fashion within the culture industries" (2013, 28); this closely resembles the definition I present above, but Johnson states that the "media franchise will not be reducible to a tidy, universal definition" due to its "complexity and contingency" (29). Johnson's resistance to defining the franchise is driven by the multiplied industrial logic of franchising in the creative industries and the difficulty of pinning down a definition that can account for the heterogeneity of media franchise practices.

[2] The concept of transtextuality is central in this thesis and I expand on its components below.

[3] There are examples of film sequels or series that do not fit the classification of franchise. For example, semi-independent film series and 'themed trilogies' come to mind, such as Sofia Coppola's 'Young Girls' trilogy, Richard Linklater's 'Before' series, or Edgar Wright and Simon Pegg's 'Three Flavors Cornetto' trilogy (Perkins 2010; Palmer 2012).

While this thesis focuses on blockbuster franchising in early twenty-first century Hollywood, not all articulations of franchise production are necessarily blockbuster in scale, serial in form, and centered with a unifying intellectual property. Johnson emphasizes this when he clarifies that the ideal transmedia franchise, which is serialized and authored in a centrally unified manner, is different to other forms of franchising in the media industries, which can be uneven, non-narrative based, and decentered in a messy way (2013, 31). Similarly, Albert Moran identifies two forms of media franchising in the creative industries: the "television program format," which has emerged out of local media sectors and forges transnational licensing relations in television programming, and "the entertainment franchise or the transmedia brand" (2015, 54). It is Moran's second form of franchising—what he calls "media intertext franchising" (53)—that most corresponds with the focus of this thesis, which "has the virtue of referring to a product line or network of texts that are relatively distinct from one another, although also interrelated" (54). This explanation aptly accounts for intertextual dynamics of repetition and variation that are essential to the mechanics of seriality in the franchise era. Moreover, Moran also addresses the high-concept and cross-media strategies of blockbuster cinema when he notes that media intertext franchising "is an outcome of mass commercial culture, with its origins lying in such cultural forms as comic books, radio, film and early television" (54). Since there are multiple types of franchising within the media industries, it must be acknowledged that media franchising is a complex media practice with multilevel articulations at the local and global levels, with both cultural and corporate implications. While this thesis focuses on franchising in Hollywood blockbuster production, it is aware of the existence of other diverse forms of franchising in the media industries.

To understand how blockbuster franchising of the early twenty-first century works can be a difficult task not merely because of, as Johnson articulates, the heterogeneity of franchise practice and socio-cultural relations across the media industries globally (2013, 29), but because of the complex ways that blockbuster franchising cuts across genre, fandom, marketing, and history. I have posed the question of how to define franchising with many students in my classrooms over the last several years, who have too-often defined franchising by a conflation with fan loyalty, cross-media adaptation, and merchandising. Infrequently, a student would mention sequels, the fantasy genre, or nostalgia; on rarer occasion, a student might mention intellectual property or licensing. It is also common to define franchising by its examples, whereby the 'MCU' or 'Star Wars' franchises seem to work as shorthand to explain what franchising is as a type of entertainment; I admit to having had to do this myself

when asked what my thesis is about. Johnson states that "any attempt to define media franchising by reference to the texts it produces invokes many similar challenges to those facing genre analysis" (2013, 29). For example, Johnson explains that "if we claim that *Star Wars* is a franchise, but cannot explain franchising without reference to *Star Wars*, we can only tread intellectual water" (2013, 29). This means that in lieu of an articulated definition, many have struggled to describe the franchise in an accurate categorical way: reflecting Johnson's concern that franchising is often conflated with genre, it is also anecdotally common for students, critics, and the mainstream public to incorrectly call franchising a genre. This perhaps stems from an implicit recognition of the connections between seriality and genre. As Jess-Cooke identifies, "the immediate connection between sequelisation and genre is found in processes of variation, or, more exactly, in intertextual strategies by which 'variation' marks the modulations between textual reproductions" (2009, 52). Franchising is not a genre, but they share similarities in their mechanisms, which reflects the function and objectives of Hollywood through a coalesces of production process, narrative form and formula, aesthetic style, and reception practices.

Blockbuster franchising of the early twenty-first century can be productively classified as mode of practice. This is a critical typology that draws from the work of David Bordwell, Janet Staiger and Kristin Thompson, who explain that "the concept of a mode of film practice situates textual processes in their most pertinent and proximate collective context. This context includes both a historically defined group of films and the material practices that create and sustain that group" (1985, xvii). Bordwell, Staiger, and Thompson present this explanation in their seminal work on the classical Hollywood mode of production, in which they contribute a comprehensive account of the production, narrative, and stylistic norms and standards of Hollywood moviemaking before 1960. They elaborate that a mode of practice is a productive means of understanding Hollywood in its historical, industrial, and aesthetic context:

> A mode of film practice is not reducible to an oeuvre (the films of Frank Capra), a genre (the Western), or an economic category (RKO films). It is an altogether different category, cutting across careers, genres, and studios. It is, most simply, a context. And we cannot arrive at this context simply by adding up all the histories of directors, genres, studios, producers, etc. . . . Just as the railroad system is of another logical order than your or my trip on it, so the Hollywood mode of film practice constitutes an integral system, including persons and groups but also rules, films, machinery, documents, institutions, work processes, and theoretical concepts. (xvi)

In addition to the classical Hollywood system, the notion of a mode of practice has been used to define and understand the poetics of a variety of other types of cinemas, including 'early cinema' (Bordwell & Thompson 1983; Gaudreault & Gunning 2006 [1986]), 'art cinema' (Bordwell 1979; Staiger 2010), 'independent cinema' (Staiger 2010 & 2013), and 'post-classical Hollywood' (Kramer 1998; Maltby 1998; Thanouli 2006; Langford 2010). Understanding the franchise as a mode of practice is productive because it works to make sense of the categorical function of blockbuster franchising; it also documents the workings of textual production in the franchise era, in which "appearances and disappearances of practices might be accounted for in more historical terms of influence and reactions" (Staiger 2013, 23). Therefore, this study aims to historicize the franchise era not merely by positioning it within a discursive history of Hollywood production, but also in documenting the occurrence and existence of blockbuster franchising as a dominant mode of practice in the early twenty-first century.

As a cinema studies typology, a mode of practice can be understood using an analytic schema that identifies the historical context, formal conventions, and reception of a specific cinema practice. Bordwell identifies that a distinct mode of practice should "possess a definite historical existence, a set of formal conventions, and implicit viewing procedures" (1979, 56). Building on Bordwell, Staiger develops this schema further:

> I propose the following set of characteristics to define a film practice: (i) *A definite historical existence* involving specific political, economic, cultural (including language), and aesthetic contexts which helps explain the arrival of the film practice; (ii) *A set of conventions* including (a) form of narrative, (b) style of narration, and (c) subject-matter; and (iii) *Implicit viewing procedures*. (2010, 15; original emphasis)

This means that defining blockbuster franchising of the early twenty-first century as a mode of practice enables a productive entry into its historical context, its production conditions, its narrative and aesthetic conventions, and its reception practices. Using Bordwell's and Staiger's schemas for categorizing Hollywood cinema as a mode of practice, I identify the following characteristics in the blockbuster franchise mode:

(i) *A definite historical existence*: as a coherent and cohesive mode of practice, the blockbuster franchise emerges at the turn of the millennium and crystalizes into an entertainment modality across the first two decades of the twenty-first century. In situating the franchise mode historically, I identify the period of 1999–2019 as Hollywood's franchise era. Nonetheless, despite this definite historical existence, the

blockbuster franchise is not newly borne within this era but reflects the discursive industrial existence of Hollywood. In this introductory chapter below, I will expand on the historical context of franchising in relation to the persistence of Hollywood's blockbuster mentality.

(ii) *A set of conventions*: as stated above, I define the franchise as the interplay between centralized intellectual property and the transtextuality of authorship, narration, and aesthetics. The creative-industrial dynamic between these forces is fundamental to enabling a set of conventions that function in distinct ways in the franchise mode. Most importantly, seriality, expansive storyworld design, and thematic variation constitute the foundational conventions of franchising. Also fundamental to how these conventions are articulated is the authority, ownership, and relationships of intellectual property owners, licensing agreements, and studio organizations. Understanding this set of conventions is the principal objective of this thesis and will form the key concerns of each chapter.

(iii) *Implicit viewing procedures*: the serial and blockbuster logic of the franchise mode attracts distinct reception practices and viewing literacies that relate to fandom, cinephilia, and popular culture. While some of these viewing procedures will be addressed across this thesis where relevant, a detailed examination of franchise spectatorship and audience reception is regrettably beyond the scope of this thesis. This is an area of study that requires more attention, which I aim to investigate in future research.

Therefore, blockbuster franchising is a mode of practice that is defined by the dynamic interplay of intellectual property centralization and transtextual expansion of authorship, narrative form, and aesthetic style, whereby blockbuster franchising articulates the function of blockbuster cinema within the franchise mode and within the franchise era of Hollywood history.

The Hollywood History of Blockbuster Franchising

To understand blockbuster franchising as a mode of practice contextualizes the franchise era within Hollywood's history and its ongoing drive towards industrial survival and longevity. As Stringer acknowledges, the blockbuster's "promise of ever-increasing levels of audio-visual intemperance lies at the heart of the commercial film industry's ability to rejuvenate itself" (2003, 5). Historically, the blockbuster strategy is most-associated with the period between the late 1970s and early 1980s—known as the New Hollywood blockbuster era—

with productions such as *Jaws* (1975), *Star Wars* (1977), *Superman: The Movie* (1978), *Grease* (1978), *Star Trek: The Motion Picture* (1979), *Alien* (1979), *The Empire Strikes Back* (1980), *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (1981), *E.T.: The Extra-Terrestrial* (1982), and *Return of the Jedi* (1983). The blockbuster of the 1970s was characterized by the introduction of globally saturated distribution, big box office revenue (above $100 million[4]), risk-aversion high-concept marketing models, such as 'event' cinema hype, pre-established audiences based on already known source material, licensed merchandising, and the 'movie brats' such as directors Steven Spielberg and George Lucas. David A Cook considers that in this blockbuster era Hollywood "reconceptualized its product as the franchise, rather than the individual motion picture" (2000, xvii). During this period the term 'franchise' was used to represent the epic scale and scope of a blockbuster movie series that exceeded the traditional constraints of a singular movie (through sequels was well as licensed merchandise, toys, and other earlier fandom practices). However, despite this early existence of franchising in Hollywood, there was little awareness of its specific meaning or industrial function; unfortunately, not much has changed in this regard in contemporary cinema criticism and commentary.

Despite the strong historical association between the blockbuster and the 1970s, the logic of longevity and industrial stability that drives Hollywood's blockbuster phenomenon was not new in the 1970s, nor was the strategy uniquely borne from this period. Steve Neale describes the long history of the blockbuster mentality and its crucial role in Hollywood since its earliest years:

> the New Hollywood is no means the first in which Hollywood has invested in high-cost, large-scale films. Nor is it the first in which specially made, unusually lavish, and hence usually spectacular productions have been marked by special modes of promotion, distribution, and exhibition. Nor, for that matter, is it the first in which expensive technologies—including aural ones—have been deployed to enhance their status, experience, and profits. (2003, 48)

Here Neale refers to Hollywood's long and persistent history with epic moviemaking practices and strategies, in which big-scale movies (relative to respective output of the time) have been designed to stand out from the common slate to draw audiences to the cinema and increase economic revenue. The popular historical narrative claims that *Jaws* introduced

[4] Even though current blockbusters are characterized by a big production budget, this was not initially a qualifier of blockbuster status in the blockbuster era of the late-1970s: the primary indication of a blockbuster movie during this era was box-office revenue exceeding US$100 million dollars (Hall and Neale 2010, 386).

blockbuster strategies to Hollywood in the mid-1970s, but Sheldon Hall and Neale counter this historical account: "it has been said, for example, that *Jaws* was the first big-budget, major-studio film to be given a wide saturation release" and "it has been called the first film to be intensively advertised in a national TV campaign, and even the first summer blockbuster [but] none of this is strictly true" (2010, 210–211). In supporting this statement, Hall and Neale chart occurrences of "special" or "spectacular" moviemaking practices of relative blockbuster dimensions across history—from early cinema to classical Hollywood, through to the post-studio system and the New Hollywood era—before the formulation of the blockbuster-proper in the late 1970s (2010).[5] Therefore, to acknowledge the significance of the franchise mode as a blockbuster phenomenon in the early twenty-first century means to realize how epic and large-scale production reflects the aesthetic, economic, and industrial priorities of Hollywood across its history.

The broader historical precedence for the blockbuster is instrumental to its intensification in Hollywood of the late 1970s and its persistence in the contemporary franchise era. Since the collapse of the studio system in 1948—with the United States Supreme Court ruling against Hollywood's vertical integration in the antitrust case *United States v. Paramount Pictures, Inc*—Hollywood has strived to reclaim the economic and aesthetic stability that it achieved with the classical mode during the studio system of the 1920s to 1940s (Bordwell, Staiger, and Thompson 1985). The collapse of the studio system caused industrial fragmentation and aesthetic disruption,[6] but horizontal integration and early conglomeration practices enabled many studios to survive bankruptcy into the 1960s and

[5] Hall and Neale cite relative early 'blockbuster-esque' examples: event genres of the late-1890s (boxing and passion plays); multireel spectacular features of the 1900s (with "trick films" like *Trip to the Moon* [1902]); roadshow epics of the 1910s (like *Birth of a Nation* [1915] and *Intolerance* [1916]); biblical epics and superspecials and roadshows of the 1920s (like *The Queen of Sheba* [1921], *The Four Horseman of the Apocalypse* [1921], *The Three Musketeers* [1921], *The Ten Commandments* [1923], *Ben-Hur* [1925], and *The Phantom of the Opera* [1925]; prestige pictures of the 1930s studio system (like *The Grand Hotel* [1932], *The Great Ziegfeld* [1936], and *Gone With the Wind* [1939]) and the colossals (and experimentation with widescreen formats Cinerama and CinemaScope) in the 1950s (like *Quo-Vadis* [1951], and *Ben-Hur* [1959]) (2010).

[6] In the interim decades, between the late 1940s and the early 1970s, Hollywood experienced studio destabilization, economic collapse, crude conglomerate restructuring, and distribution competition (with the rise of television and independent theatres). This is not to ignore the resulting introduction of European cinema to American theatres, the rise of exploitation genres, the film school generation, and Hollywood's aesthetic renaissance. Ironically, these shifts facilitated the blockbuster's resurgence as much they challenged its prior dominance in the studio system (King 2002, 50).

1970s.[7] Incidental to this period of industrial instability was the emergence of what some have identified as a 'post-classical' aesthetic and narrative style (King 2002, 3), which is characterized by a disruption of classical form and convention and a new critical and economic confidence in the artistry of individual directors—or 'auteurs'—who made up the film school generation, including directors Francis Ford Coppola, Martin Scorsese, Brian DePalma, Peter Bogdanovich, Walter Murch, and Lucas with film examples such as *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967), *The Graduate* (1967), *Easy Rider* (1969), *Midnight Cowboy* (1969), *THX 1138* (1971), *The Last Picture Show* (1971) and *Taxi Driver* (1974). Known as the Hollywood Renaissance or early New Hollywood era,[8] much has been written about the significance of this period as a cornerstone moment of aesthetic and intellectual prosperity in the history of American cinema (Schatz 1983; Hoberman 1985; Hillier 1993; Biskind 1998; King 2002; Krämer 2005; Symmons 2016). Underpinning many of these accounts, moreover, is lamentation over a cinematic utopia that was purportedly thwarted by the emergence of the blockbuster in the mid-1970s. Such sentiments imply that the artistic renaissance of the early New Hollywood period may have continued had it not been for the blockbuster releases of *Jaws* and *Star Wars*. Even the presumptive label '*New* Hollywood' heralds a purportedly new moviemaking equilibrium. However, Cook describes the Hollywood Renaissance as an "aberration" in Hollywood's history and "a richly fruitful detour in the American film industry's march towards gigantism and global domination" (2000, xvii). This way of describing the Hollywood Renaissance positions the era not as a new or emerging equilibrium that was lost or thwarted but as an off-course deviation from the already established trajectory towards the blockbuster. Blockbuster production in the late 1970s thus realized this trajectory as it fulfilled an industrial and historical impulse that already fueled the Hollywood industry. Therefore, while some may have perceived the Hollywood Renaissance as a future status quo that was cut too short by blockbuster of the late 1970s

[7] For example, in 1966 auto bumper manufacturer Gulf+Western acquired Paramount Studios; in 1967 distribution company Seven Arts acquired a controlling interest in Warner Bros. before being sold again in 1969 to cleaning and parking conglomerate Kinney National Services, Inc. and in 1971 renamed Warner Communications; and in 1969, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM)—the most prestigious studio of the golden age—was acquired by hotel and aviation mogul Kirk Kerkorian, who would use the MGM name in Las Vegas hotel casinos like the MGM Grand, suspending movie production under the studio name until it merged with United Artists in 1981.

[8] The New Hollywood era constitutes two phases: the first, between approximately 1967 and 1977 (bookended by Arthur Penn's *Bonnie and Clyde* and William Friedkin's *Sorcerer* respectively), is associated with counterculture and political liberalism and is influenced by the aesthetic freedoms of European cinema; the second, which overlaps from 1975 (marked by the release of Steven Spielberg's *Jaws* and solidified with George Lucas' *Star Wars* [1977]), is dominated by the corporate blockbuster model (Cook 2000; King 2002; King 2004).

(Biskind 1998; King 2004; Thomson 2004), it was in effect a compelling symptom of the movie industry's propulsion towards economic sustainability and longevity that had been established much sooner.

The blockbuster era of the New Hollywood was not an abrupt takeover or aesthetic destruction as many lament, but the result of ongoing industrial shifts—some haphazard and some negotiated—that helped return Hollywood to a state of commercial and aesthetic dominance in the late 1970s. Ultimately, Justin Wyatt reveals, Hollywood's intensified turn to blockbusters in the 1970s and 1980s was an attempt at "economic salvation" for a destabilized industry that needed to reformulate its creative and industrial identity (1994, 78). There is thus a discursive relationship between the two phases of the New Hollywood era—Hollywood Renaissance and the blockbuster era—where the latter emerged from the industrial negotiations and reconfigurations facilitated by former. Geoff King reflects on the use of the term New Hollywood and considers how "it seems odd that the same term should have been used to describe the two. But the features of the corporate blockbuster can be explained by some of the same underlying changes that provided space for the Hollywood Renaissance" (2002, 50).[9] These changes led to a two-tier effect on moviemaking practices: at the aesthetic and narrative level, there was an experimental reworking of the conventions associated with classical Hollywood; at the industrial level, early conglomeration practices saw the establishment of transnational trade alliances, corporate synergies, and the formation of ancillary relationships between the movie industry and other industrial markets (music tie-ins, comic book licensing, television advertising, fast food merchandising, retail, and toy production).[10] Cook suggests that the Hollywood Renaissance is "the crucible in which the industry's current market structure was forged" (2000, xvii), which indicates that the blockbuster phenomenon was borne out of the renaissance period as much as it worked to reinstate industrial stability and economic strength. While it is paradoxical that this same context would be manifest in such different modes of practice, King acknowledges that "similar tendencies can have some very different outcomes" (2002, 50–51). Therefore,

[9] Of these changes, the U.S. government mandated studios to concede control of exhibition, effectively ending the studio system, vertical integration, and block-booking; this corresponded with changing audience demographics, rise of television and home entertainment, and censorship replaced by a ratings system.

[10] The early conglomeration of the movie industry during the 1960s and into the 1970s also articulates an historical juxtaposition between the negotiated survival of Hollywood through conglomeration and the formation of the "franchise industry" in American business practice (Dicke 1992, 124). Business-format franchising would eventually make its most impactful mark on the entertainment industry in the franchise era with the intensified application of licensing relations, but the soft emergence of media conglomeration and the rise of business-format franchising stem from the same economic shifts in American enterprise of the 1960s.

discourses concerned with how the blockbuster 'ruined' Hollywood ignore the ways that the Hollywood Renaissance enabled its emergence. Noel King describes how "the New Hollywood period of 1967 to 1977 and its films had become a benchmark against which developments in contemporary Hollywood cinema could be measured" (2004, 25). This suggests that the renaissance wave of the New Hollywood era is intricately tied to the blockbuster if even just as a marker of differentiation.

While popular history likes to celebrate *Jaws* for ushering in the blockbuster era (or blame it for ruining the Hollywood Renaissance—this depends on viewpoint), this ignores the occurrence of blockbuster movies earlier in the 1970s, released during the Hollywood Renaissance and earlier. Thomas Schatz explains that Hollywood's blockbuster mentality had already emerged in 1955 with the dominance of television (1993, 12). In downplaying the importance of *Jaws* as the genesis of the blockbuster era, Hall and Neale argue that "*Jaws* was the culmination to date of a revival that began much earlier" (2010, 212). For example, blockbuster releases that precede *Jaws* include *The Godfather* (1972), *The Exorcist* (1973), *Serpico* (1973), *Magnum Force* (1973), *The Godfather: Part II* (1974), *The Towering Inferno* (1974), and *Earthquake* (1974). Hall and Neale determine that "*Jaws* was part of a new wave of blockbusters, but not the beginning of one" (Hall and Neale 2010, 212). Moreover, Hall and Neale further illustrate, this was certainly not the only wave of blockbusters across Hollywood's history. Hall and Neale clarify that "what can be said with absolute confidence about *Jaws* is that its distributors and promotors learned from all its antecedents and applied their lessons particularly well" (2010, 212). Similarly, if the early twenty-first century franchise era is to be specifically associated with the late-1970s blockbuster era in a historically descendant way, it is through a process of industrial intensification that reflects upon the lessons taught across the broader history of Hollywood as much as the specific period of the blockbuster era. As a moviemaking strategy, I argue that the blockbuster mode is a product of an adaptive industrial process and a linchpin of Hollywood history. My emphasis on the historical basis for the blockbuster before and beyond *Jaws* informs the overarching premise of this thesis: blockbuster franchising is not an entirely new product of early twenty-first century entertainment, nor is it a fallout of the "*Jaws*-induced" blockbuster era of the late-1970s. Blockbuster franchising is discursively intertwined with the creative and industrial imperatives of survival and longevity that have been fundamental to Hollywood across its history.

What distinguishes the New Hollywood blockbuster era of the 1970s from the franchise era of the 2000s and 2010s is, put simply, the 1980s and 1990s. These intervening

decades intensified the conglomeration and corporate growth practices of the 1970s: high-risk acquisitions, mergers, and asset consolidation; industry deregulation; the globalization of the entertainment industries; the rise of multiplex cinemas, and the emergence of the high-concept aesthetic in marketing, production, and consumption. For these reasons, Jon Lewis aptly describes the 1980s–1990s as "the corporate era" (1998, 87). Through these industrial shifts and business practices, the blockbuster model continued to crystalize into a dominant force across these decades, with the contributions of producers such as Don Simpson, Jerry Bruckheimer, Joel Silver, and Kathleen Kennedy, and directors Steven Spielberg, Ridley Scott, James Cameron, and Robert Zemeckis. Notable blockbusters released during this period and created by these filmmakers include *The Terminator* (1984), *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* (1984), *Back to the Future* (1985), *Aliens* (1986), *Jurassic Park* (1993), *The Lost World: Jurassic Park* (1997), and *Titanic* (1997). The occurrence of sequels and franchise installments in this slate is significant. During the 1980s and 1990s, blockbuster production continued to develop and strengthen its strategy to intensify merchandise tie-ins, exploit licensing agreements, and establish corporate agreements in tandem with horizontal integration through studio acquisitions and mergers. Blockbuster franchising of the 2000s and 2010s employs the strengths of past blockbuster strategies with intent, while continuing to take ginormous economic risks with mergers and acquisitions.

In the early twenty-first century, the blockbuster phenomenon coalesces the various aesthetic, economic, and cultural components of Hollywood as a dominant entertainment industry. As such, the franchise era is enabled by the economic, technological, and narrative possibilities of media convergence and industrial synergy. According to Thomas Elsaesser, "the blockbuster in its contemporary form combines (in the most exemplary, but also the most efficient and evolved form) the two systems (film-as-production/cinema-as-experience), the two levels (macro-level of capitalism/micro-level of desire), and the two aggregate states of the cinema experience (commodity/service)" (2012, 276). In this regard, Elsaesser realizes that with blockbusters "anything goes, but sometimes it even connects" (280). When understood in tandem with other important blockbuster dynamics like industrial synergy and media convergence, connectivity is essential to the way blockbuster franchising works as a mode of practice because it underpins the logic of seriality, synergy, and convergence. This is exemplified by model franchise examples such as the 'MCU,' 'Star Wars,' 'Star Trek,' 'Fast and the Furious,' and the 'Worlds of DC' franchises, which combine creative conventions with industrial procedures to form blockbuster attractions of the early twenty-first century.

This thesis situates the franchise era within the critical purview of blockbuster entertainment as a means of establishing important intersections between contemporary entertainment and the broader historical, industrial, aesthetic, and cultural dimensions of Hollywood studies. As a mode of practice that dominates Hollywood in the early twenty-first century, blockbuster franchising rivals the classical Hollywood mode in terms of its significance in Hollywood history. Ben Fritz contends that "it is undeniable that the dawn of the franchise film era is the most meaningful revolution in the movie business since the studio system ended" (2018, 17). In stressing such importance on this historical context, this thesis considers the blockbuster phenomenon to encapsulate the teleological locus of the Hollywood condition—that is to say, blockbuster cinema represents the very nature of the American moviemaking industry, and blockbuster franchising extends this significance into the early twenty-first century.

Reviewing Scholarship: Media Franchising and Related Concepts

This thesis attributes great significance to the role of franchising in the history of Hollywood, which sets it apart from popular ways of understanding this form of entertainment. As Johnson concedes, "to some, media franchising is a bit of joke" (2013, 1). This is because modernist lenses of cultural taste and value continue to dogmatically assume that the way franchising employs seriality, rebooting, remaking, and commercial branding is unoriginal and unintelligent, as well as culturally and creatively redundant—even destructive. As Umberto Eco explains, "according to the modern aesthetics, the principal features of the mass-media products were repetition, iteration, obedience to a pre-established schema, and redundancy (as opposed to information)" (1985, 162). This assumption seems to underpin most criticism concerning the cinematic value of blockbuster franchising. Following the release of *Avengers: Endgame* (2019), Luke Buckmaster asked "what hope remains for the ravaged, apocalyptic state of modern cinema?," where he argues that the serial continuity of Marvel Studios' blockbuster juggernaut disqualifies it from even being a movie (2019, para. 7). At *The New Yorker*, Richard Brody shared similar sentiments about *Avengers: Infinity War* (2018), suggesting that it "only resembles a movie" (2018, para. 2). Previously, at *Vanity Fair*, Nick Bilton declared that "Hollywood as we know it is already over" due partly to its "over-reliance on franchises" (2017, para. 11). Johnson explains that the "implied cultural tragedy of media franchising derives here from the dominance of its patterned sameness and the imposition of an unthinking, instinctual biology over any human creativity or social

agency within the media industries" (2013, 1). Perhaps it is this imposing biology of instinctual sameness that also drives the invariably repetitive manner that critics and cultural commentators call on to review and classify sequels and blockbuster franchises. For example, colloquial terms like 'sequelitis' have pervaded entertainment journalism since the 1990s, when "Hollywood trades begin to utilize the term 'sequelitis' to describe the increasing ratio of sequels—often critically dubious sequels—in studios' slates" (Dalecki 2008, 48n2). This trend persists with the addition of 'franchise fever' added to the slate of pejoratives in entertainment commentary, which *Newsweek* describes as a potentially degenerative condition whereby movie studios are purportedly "churning out stories that are so easily identifiable that they can be completely understood by their titles alone" (Newsweek Staff 2002, para. 2). Similarly, *CNN Entertainment* reinforces this pathological sentiment with the title, "studios catch monstrous case of franchise fever" (Lowry 2017). The unchecked irony of such clichés is that these recurring criticisms of unoriginality and repetition are in themselves unproductively repetitive, while seeming to disregard the increasing insight available from scholars and practitioners of franchised entertainment.

Media franchising has had incidental presence in screen and media scholarship over the last decade and its coverage continues to steadily increase. Over the past seven years or so (and across the life of this research), media franchising has progressively attracted scholarly interest in the intersecting arts and humanities disciplines of screen and cinema studies, media studies, and cultural studies, as well as other fields of study within business and economics. With an even steadier increase over the last few years, there is a discernible correlation between this scholarly interest and the proliferating production of blockbuster franchising in the entertainment industries: the more that franchising enforces its dominance in the entertainment landscape, the more scholars and commentators have taken necessary interest. Despite this increasing interest, however, screen and cinema studies still lacks a comprehensive account of blockbuster franchising as a poetic modality that reflects the creative-industrial history of Hollywood, as in the manner undertaken by this thesis. Existing scholarship in media franchising can be organized in four primary categories: a) interest in media franchising as a distinct industrial logic; b) incidental consideration of franchising in relation to other concepts and strategies, such as media convergence, transmedia storytelling, global blockbusters, adaptation, and seriality; c) analysis of specific franchise case studies; and d) economics, law, and business interest in entertainment franchising.

a) *Media franchising as a distinct industrial logic*

Engagement with media franchising as an industrial logic or practice in itself—beyond case study specificity—is strong but limited. Johnson's *Media Franchising: Creative License and Collaboration in the Culture Industries* (2013) contributes a seminal examination of the cultural relations and political economy of media franchising as an example of "highly industrialized collaborative production" (25). Johnson's monograph undertakes a comprehensive examination of how franchise structures "enable exchanges between nodes in industrial networks" (29). These exchanges, Johnson explains, are not always unified and organized, but exist within "decentralized, episodic, and non-narrative modes of multiplied industrial production" (31). Johnson examines media franchising as a complex network of industrial structures, creative collaboration, social relations, and cultural hierarchies; in this way, the textual poetics of franchising is not of principle concern because, he says, "the franchise must not be understood as a function of textuality, but as an industrially and socially contextual dynamic constituted by historical processes and discourses" (29). This assertion is consistent with the methodological framework of Johnson's study, which is at a crossroads between political economy and cultural studies that examines the power relations of franchise production cultures.

This thesis employs a very different disciplinary methodology that forefronts the function of textuality in the franchise mode, but Johnson's work on media franchising is still fundamentally important to this study. Most importantly, it establishes a precedent for the franchise mode as a significant and necessary object of study and it contributes vital understandings of the industrial relations of franchising within the creative industries. However, this thesis has different disciplinary objectives and research questions. Where Johnson is most interested in the dynamic between social relations, cultural hierarchies, and the multiplied industrial production of franchising (29), this thesis examines the dynamic between intellectual property and textual multiplicity and seeks to contribute a formalist understanding of blockbuster franchising that is informed by cinema studies and its disciplinary framework. Where Johnson identifies franchising as a "cultural category" (29), this thesis is concerned with the formal construction of Hollywood franchising as a transtextual mode. Most significantly, Johnson provides a critically productive theorization of the relationship between intellectual property and creativity:

> Although intellectual property claims must never be confused with creativity itself, the cultural resources protected and monopolized by intellectual property law might simultaneously be considered a shared medium of exchange and social interaction

> obfuscated by the more stark claims of intellectual property law. By considering how the shared use of cultural resources in highly industrial contexts exceeds the precise prescriptions of intellectual property law and ownership, we can start theorizing franchising beyond the business terms of contracts to look to the cultural realms of discourse, affect, and creativity. (8)

Here Johnson describes a dynamic of exchange between intellectual property law and cultural relations, whereby "we might start by conceiving of franchising as an economic system for exchanging cultural resources across a network of industrial relations" (29). This thesis considers the implications of this system of exchange on how we understand the formal workings of franchise textuality. Johnson provides the first comprehensive scholarly examination of media franchising, but in contributing most productively to the disciplines of cultural studies and media studies there remains room for further examination of the formal norms, strategies, and dynamics of franchising as a distinct mode of practice in cinema studies.

The cultural function of franchising continues to interest scholars working across media and communication studies; so much so that even research that works to address textual relations is still most interested in its impact on the cultural domain. For example, Daniel Herbert's *Film Remakes and Franchises* (2018) extends Johnson's articulation of the franchise as a "cultural category," but also makes compelling associations with intertextuality and remaking. Herbert contends that franchises "link media producers and consumers to one another in the great, interwoven network of texts and discourses we call 'culture,' with all of these groups straining to mark their own significance through the relationships they forge with each other through these texts" (119–120). The notion that franchised intertextuality might generate its own "culture" is a compelling way of understanding the dynamic between franchise production and consumption, but in conflating issues of creativity with culture we risk obscuring the poetic paradigm of the franchise era. I recognize that Herbert's capacity to unpack this concept and identify the textual nature of this dynamic is perhaps constrained by the terse style of the 'quick takes' publication series, so I hope Herbert will continue to develop this idea further. Moreover, Herbert notes that "as a cultural form, film franchises are fairly new" (88): while this is true in relation to cultural trends, the industrial objectives and poetic function of franchising is not new at all, but discursively reflects Hollywood's creative and industrial history.

Despite existing literature leaning more toward the cultural dimensions of franchising, considerations of its formal properties have by no means been completely ignored. In the

article “Critics, *Clones*, and Narrative in the Franchise Blockbuster,” Bradley Schauer contributes a compelling examination of the blockbuster franchise as an example of classical narration and its role within the continuum of Hollywood history (2007). My own perspectives on the state of cinema criticism and commentary are affirmed in Schauer work, which identifies that “blockbusters are often studied only for their cultural or political significance—if they have any aesthetic appeal at all, it is on a visceral level alone” (192). Schauer employs *Star Wars: Episode II—Attack of the Clones* (2002) as a case study for examining the narrative complexities of the blockbuster franchise and concludes that “the relationship between today’s films and those of the studio era is much tighter than some would suggest” (2007, 204). Schauer avoids isolating the text as an example of distinctiveness, which is a common tendency in franchise studies. A similar method of engagement with textual examples can be found in Kimberly A. Owczarski’s article, “‘More Than Meets the Eye’: *Transformers* and the Complexities of Franchise Film Production in Contemporary Hollywood” (2015). Owczarski examines franchise film production as a site of complex industrial creative and commercial tension, using the ‘Transformers’ franchise to argue that “there is ‘more than meets the eye’ behind the creation of franchises, as these films often face a difficult journey of production, distribution, and marketing despite being based on well-known properties” (Owczarski 2015, 678). This thesis follows Schauer and Owczarski with a comparable view on the significance of blockbuster franchising as a creative and industrial mode.

Most recent scholarship that engages directly with media franchising has been concerned with forms of management that occurs as part of franchise production. The use of management here does not refer to business management in a traditional sense (although this occurs as part of studio practice) but refers to the kinds of textual and cultural strategy and stewardship that can occur in the management of brands and properties. For example, in his recent thesis, *Create, Reboot, Repeat: Franchise Management and Textual Evolution in the Cultural Industries*, Nicholas Benson argues that “franchises are managed, in part, via the stories told within them” (2019, 4). Benson draws upon Herbert’s conceptualization of ‘industrial intertextuality’ (9–10) to focus on the “circulation (or management) of audiences through intertextual relationships” (8). However, as with Johnson, Benson explicitly situates textuality and its formal relations outside his methodological purview with “an analysis of the industrial functions of their intertextuality” (8). Finally, the collection *The Franchise Era: Managing Media in the Digital Economy*, edited by James Fleury, Bryan Hikari Hartzheim, and Stephan Manber, turns attention to the different ways that “franchises have followed a

multimedia management strategy in which texts adapt shared material" (2019, 1). The book's contents explore this focus with chapters that examine a range of franchise examples (including 'Alien' and 'Star Wars'), media platforms (virtual reality, video games, television, and theme parks), and techniques (animation). With a forward by Johnson reflecting on the significance of franchising in the culture industries, the most compelling contribution of this edited collection is its forward-looking overview of how the franchise era might develop.

b) *Related and adjacent concepts*

In addition to the above key literature, some of the most critically formative work on media franchising has occurred as a by-product of studies focused on other concepts, like media convergence (Jenkins 2006), transmedia storytelling (Kinder 1991; Jenkins 2006, 2007 & 2011; Ryan 2016; Gomez 2019b), adaptation (Parody 2011; Burke 2015; Meikle 2019), seriality and sequels (Ndalianis 2004; Jess-Cooke 2009; Jess-Cooke and Verevis 2010) and storyworlds (Wolf 2012; Ryan and Thon 2014; Harvey 2015). The most productive and critically compelling treatment of franchise form and textuality can be found in literature focused on seriality and sequels, such as Angela Ndalianis' *Neo-Baroque Aesthetics and Contemporary Entertainment* (2004), Jess-Cooke's *Film Sequels* (2009), and Jess-Cooke and Constantine Verevis' *Second Takes*: *Critical Approaches to the Film Sequel* (2019). Ndalianis examines the nature of originality in seriality in her analysis of neo-baroque aesthetics, emphasizing that "rather than interpreting the serial logic of contemporary entertainment media as the product of an era steeped in sterile repetition and unoriginality," she argues, "the repetition inherent in serialized form is the result of a neo-baroque 'aesthetic of repetition' that is concerned with variation, rather than unoriginality and invariability" (2004, 33). Moreover, Jess-Cooke contributes a productive understanding of sequels as mode of production and examines how its function modulates in relation to historical context:

> Whilst a host of usages and methods of sequelisation emerge across the gamut of early film sequels, these characteristics suggest the sequel as a mode of production that means and results in different things at various historical junctures, and is always relevant to and reflective of greater industrial contexts at any moment in cinema's history. (2009, 16)

Jess-Cooke and Verevis argue that sequels function as a "deconstructive framework within which such sweeping generalizations and fundamentally problematic terms such as 'originality' and 'intertextuality' can be unpacked and repositioned in the new contexts within which contemporary film is produced" (2010, 4–5). These accounts establish a

framework for understanding the role of seriality in the creative-industrial mechanism of blockbuster franchising.

Understanding the expansive logic of franchising also owes much to literature concerned with adaptation, world-building, and transmedia narration. I have already discussed the importance of Jenkins' work on media convergence and transmedia storytelling in defining blockbuster franchising and its context, which remains key to discussions in this thesis; this area of research is also shaped by the works of scholars such as Marsha Kinder (1991 & 2014), Carlos A. Scolari (2009), Mark J.P. Wolf (2012 & 2017), Marie-Laure Ryan and Jan-Noël Thon (2014), Colin Harvey (2015), and Matthew Freeman (2017). In surveying significant contributions shaping franchise scholarship, I also highlight the recent work of Kyle Meikle in *Adaptations in the Franchise Era: 2001–16* (2019). Meikle makes a significant contribution to the study of franchising by making very important connection between adaptation theory and the textual extension of intellectual property, whereby "media franchises of the early 2000s reimagined both the textual and the actual bodies involved in adaptation, redefining adaptation's scope, legality, interactivity, and physically" (2019, 6). Moreover, in working within a scope he classifies as 'the franchise era,' Meikle reinforces the notion of a distinct historical period for franchise intensification; however, in delineating the period between 2001 and 2016—from *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (2001) to *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* (2016)—we perhaps disagree just slightly with the years of 'the franchise era.' However, it is unclear whether Meikle considers that these years to mark the franchise era itself, or perhaps simply constitutes a productive scope for the focused analysis of adaptation; nonetheless, his book historicizes franchising and contributes a productive understanding of adaptation.

c) *Case studies of specific franchises*

Some of the earliest instances whereby franchising is referenced in scholarly literature is in publications focused on specific franchises. When Johnson asserts that existing scholarly literature has been more than adequately concerned with franchise textuality (2013, 29), he is responding to a propensity to focus on specific franchise example with the pretense that such case studies can somehow account for franchising as a significant industrial practice. However, in such work, often the notion of franchising is not interrogated beyond its function as a naming classification. For example, *Jacking it to the Matrix Franchise: Cultural Reception and Interpretation* (Kapell and Doty 2004), *Finding the Force of the Star Wars Franchise: Fans, Merchandise, and Critics* (Kapell and Lawrence 2006), and *The Frodo*

Franchise: The Lord of the Rings and Modern Hollywood (Thompson, 2007) are some early examples of publications that explicitly used the term 'franchise' in when categorizing case studies. Subsequent works include chapters, "*Star Trek* and the Birth of a Film Franchise" (Booker 2012) and "Sherlock Holmes, the *De Facto* Franchise" (Pearson 2015), and the book *The Star Trek Universe: Franchising the Final Frontier* (Brode and Brode 2015). More recent examples include *The Marvel Studios Phenomenon: Inside a Transmedia Universe* (Flanagan, Livingstone, and McKenny, 2016) and *Star Wars After Lucas: A Critical Guide to the Future of the Galaxy* (Golding 2019). The years of release across these publications reinforce the intensified existence and impact of franchising across the early twenty-first century. However, publications like these reflect the tendency in scholarship to focus on the case study and not the mechanisms of franchising as an industrial mode. In some cases, scholars have used their chosen case studies to consider on how a respective text reflects the franchise mode and its patterns or innovations (Thompson 2003 & 2007; Schauer 2007; Owczarski 2008 & 2015), but most of the work focused on case studies have treated specific texts as exceptional examples of franchise production.[11]

d) *Sequels and media franchising in law and business studies*

In line with the legal and industrial imperatives of media franchising, it is important to also take note of relevant literature from the fields of entertainment law and business to understand the role of franchising in Hollywood. Suman Basuroy and Subimal Chatterjee's study, "Fast and Frequent: Investigating Box Office Revenues of Motion Picture Sequels" in the *Journal of Business Research* comes to compelling conclusions about the long-term revenue of sequels and franchises: while sequels perform worse at the box office than its parent film release, they perform better when quickly following the previous release, and there is greater success across the life of a franchise the longer a series lasts (2008, 803). While this study draws on a relatively small data set (11 sequels, which accounted for only

[11] There is also the propensity among scholars and those writing about specific franchises to understand the mode in relation to any number of transient typologies that are in vogue during the franchise era, such as specific genre cycles (superhero, fantasy, and science fiction genres), rebranding strategies (rebooting and remaking), thematic trends (revenge-return, legacy, and nostalgia), and audiences (fandoms, marketing, exhibition, and politics). Such work is often important to understanding a specific text, but in isolating a specific trend or cycle as indicative of franchising as a practice there is less reflection on how franchising works to achieve longevity beyond specific transient trends. The franchise mode can and does intersect with these classifications, trends, and strategies—and they often serve to sustain a franchise in any given cultural context—but studies of these trends rarely get to the crux of how blockbuster moviemaking works in the franchise era.

6.5% of the data) and takes place in the first decade of the franchise era, it does indicate promising box office revenue for longer running franchises.

It is largely agreed amongst scholars of media franchising that intellectual property and licensing relations are fundamental, but they seldom address the literature on intellectual property contributed by legal scholars that specialize in entertainment law. I think this is an unfortunate shortfall and to the detriment to how cinema studies and screen media scholars can productively participate in informed critical discourse on the topic. In the introduction to the edited collection *Law and Creativity in the Age of the Entertainment Franchise*, Kathy Bowrey and Michael Handler pose a question that crosses disciplinary boundaries: "looking at the franchise as a whole, the question might be asked as to what sustains the economic and cultural value of this sort of phenomenon?" (2014, 9–10). The answer, they suggest, is "tied up with something more nebulous and unfamiliar to the formal law—things that can be described at a higher level of abstraction" (10). Ultimately, they determine that the economic and cultural value of entertainment franchising is sustained by expressions of creativity. This question, and the resulting answer, is crucial to this thesis because it provides a legal precedent for the intersection of intellectual property and creativity in the understanding of franchises in the entertainment industry.

The literature review presented here represents some of the most prominent and influential franchise-focused work in existence at the time of writing. Based on the immediate currency of franchising, it is important to acknowledge that due to the realities of thesis completion scheduling there may be unavoidable omission of some recent relevant research. The above surveyed literature suggests that Hollywood franchising is increasingly more relevant to studies of contemporary entertainment and media culture—whether directly or as a by-product of other studies. However, in being preoccupied by the cultural impact of the assumed "new," rarely do scholars examine how franchising works as a textual mechanism with conventions and complex dynamics that can be situated within cinematic history, and in response to disciplinary questions of cinema studies. The increasing scholarly literature on media franchising continues to skirt formalist engagement with the systematic mechanisms of blockbuster franchising. In the journal article "Understanding Screen Franchising," Albert Moran identifies how media and communication scholars "fail to consider how media franchising works – even though the term 'franchising' is frequently adopted" (2015, 57). My research confirms this assertation, although there have been notable and compelling attempts, as I reviewed above. While Johnson rightly argues that media franchising constitutes a heterogeneous system of cultural hierarchies, social relations, and

creative collaboration, I determine that the franchise era of early twenty-first century Hollywood needs to be comprehensively accounted for as a coherent poetic mode of practice. This thesis contributes to a growing scholarly interest in franchise media, cinema, and entertainment but it sets itself apart from other research on this topic through its definitional framing of blockbuster franchising as mode of practice, and its application of transtextual poetics as a methodological approach to its analysis.

Transtextual Poetics and Total Entertainment

The methodological approach of this thesis employs historical poetics to examine the mechanisms, conventions, and norms of blockbuster franchising as a mode of practice in the early twenty-first century. Bordwell explains that "the poetics of any medium studies the finished work as the result of a process of construction—a process which includes a craft component (e.g., rules of thumb), the more general principles according to which the work is composed, and its function, effects, and uses" (1989, 371). The objective of this thesis is to understand how blockbuster franchising works: to identify its primary components and principles, to understand how these components exist and function together, and to determine what drives its mechanisms. To fulfill this objective, this thesis will answer two key questions adopted from Bordwell (1989, 371), but adapted to productively understand the construction of the blockbuster franchise:

1. How and why has blockbuster franchising arisen and developed as a distinct mode in empirical circumstances?
2. What are the principles and mechanisms according to which blockbuster franchising is constructed as a mode and what are the conditions and processes that enable this construction?

This introductory chapter has already worked towards answering the first of these questions in its overview of blockbuster franchising in Hollywood history, and the main chapters of this thesis will subsequently respond to both these questions with specific focus on answering the second question. As these questions suggest, poetics is an analytical approach that is concerned with description and explanation, rather than prescription or interpretation; this means that aim of this analysis is to understand how the franchise mode *has been* not *should be* constructed (Jenkins 1995, 100). To better guide the core explanatory objectives of

poetics, Bordwell argues for a functionalist model, "whereby the institutional dynamics of filmmaking set up constraints and preferred options that fulfill overall systemic norms" (1989, 374). This model is compatible with the institutions and means through which blockbuster franchising is constructed: the intersection of industrialized conditions of law and business with the creative norms and expressions of transtextual multiplicity, which corresponds with the poetic model Bordwell describes above. Therefore, the research conducted for this thesis works to understand the systematic workings of Hollywood blockbusters in the franchise era.

To contribute a descriptive poetics of blockbuster franchising, this thesis employs a nuanced poetic model that accounts for the relational dynamics of media convergence, textual multiplicity, and multiplatform entertainment. As Bordwell has recognized, "we lack a term for those trans-media architectonic principles that govern the shape and dynamics of a film" (1989, 375). As such, I propose *transtextual poetics* as a descriptive model that accounts for the complex poetic relations of blockbuster cinema in the franchise era. Transtextual poetics conceptualizes the multiplicity of textual form in the franchise mode with a focus on the relational dynamics that synthesize textual multiplicity. According to literary poetician Gérard Genette, "the subject of poetics is *transtextuality*, or the textual transcendence of the text" ([1982] 1997, 1). This means that transtextuality conceptualizes the way that multiple texts relate by challenging their own boundaries, whether it is in terms of narrative closure, self-contained coherence, proprietary restriction, or singular authorship; some texts refuse to adhere to such limitations, which thus facilitates a range of complex relationships between multiple texts. Blockbuster franchising is a prime example of transtextuality because it constitutes a multiplicity of texts that relate in various ways. Genette conceptualizes "transtextuality" and its various typologies as a textual system that activates the "across-ness" of textuality: that is, the "relations between texts" and "the ways they reread and rewrite one another" (Prince 1997, ix). Table 1 demonstrated the five types of transtextual relation that Genette identifies in the poetics of narration. With this typology Genette refers specifically to the literary medium, but Jonathan Gray has demonstrated the productive translatability of this typology—specifically paratextuality—to contemporary entertainment (2010). Moreover, while Genette's conception of transtextuality is concerned specifically with narration and narrative form, I borrow Genette's typology to also understand the poetics of authorship, genre and branding, and aesthetic style. In *Poetics of Cinema*, Bordwell recognized that "it's often useful to ask how a film relates to sets of transtextual norms" (2008, 22). Thompson has even noted that "Bordwell borrowed the term *transtextual* from Gerard Genette to account for

how artworks appeal directly to the conventions established by other artworks" (1988, 16n12). Nonetheless, even though Bordwell and Thompson have both utilized the concept of transtextuality in their work on poetics and neoformalism, this attention has remained lightly scattered across their publications (Bordwell 1985a; 1989, 381-82; 2008; Thompson 1988, 16). With transtextual poetics, I take the opportunity to fill a potentially fruitful gap in the study of poetics by working with a convergence of historical poetics and transtextuality to account for the complex textual construction of the blockbuster franchise in the early twenty-first century.

Intertext	"The relationship of copresence between two texts or amongst several texts" ([1982] 1997, 1).
Paratext	The threshold or "undefined zone" of a text: titles, intertitles, subtitles, chapter headings, author and publisher name ([1987] 1997, 2).
Architext	Overarching generic structure across texts, "which spins its web only by hooking it here and there onto that network of architexture" ([1979] 1992, 83).
Metatext	A "relationship that links a commentary to the text it comments on" ([1979] 1992, 82).
Hypertext	"Any text derived from a previous text either through simple transformation . . . or through indirect transformation" ([1982] 1997, 7).

Table 1: Gérard Genette's five typologies of transtextuality

In this thesis, transtextual poetics provides an analytical framework that make sense of the creative-industrial mechanisms of the franchise mode of practice, while productively positioning the mode within the total entertainment system. This means that transtextual poetics recognizes the formal impact of the multiplatform ecology of contemporary Hollywood and conceptualize its formal poetics through a logic of networked multiplicity. Blockbuster franchising epitomizes the concept of *total entertainment*, which is an all-inclusive principle of entertainment that intersects multiple industrial structures (like production and reception) with creative form, style, reception processes and technologies (Grainge 2008; Acland 2003; Elsaesser 2012). As Paul Grainge explains, 'total entertainment' "refers to industrial structures of corporate ownership as well as to particular textual and consumption practices that have developed at a juncture where entertainment content is inclined, and designed, to travel in mobile ways across media platforms and ancillary/territorial markets" (2008, 175). Blockbuster franchising exemplifies the logic of 'total entertainment' as a mode of production that connects artistry with business and

positions the medium of cinema as one part of a broader entertainment ecology. As Elsaesser further explains, 'total entertainment' means that "a specific film is both central and only one element among others" (2012, 333). Similarly, Jon Lewis notes how in this context the phrase 'film business' takes on metonymic function to denote "the diversified entertainment industries of which motion pictures are a part" (1998, 97). Blockbuster franchising constitutes the perfect system of total entertainment because its interplay of legal-industrial conditions with creative form enables and propels entertainment to extend and thrive across multiple texts, narratives, and media platforms on a global scale. As Charles R. Acland states, "the bigger the blockbuster, the more it connects with other sources of revenues and the more it is implicated in the circulation of other commodities" (2020, 6). Total entertainment therefore reflects an entertainment landscape shaped by a multiplatform logic.

Blockbuster franchising as a fulfillment of total entertainment—in which cinema is one part of a complex media landscape—and so this thesis must contend with the challenges of total entertainment and the impact of a multimedia entertainment ecology on contemporary cinema practice. Transtextual poetics is characterized by relations across a textual multiplicity, but it is also about addressing the state of cinema practice in the context of a creative and industrial system influenced by transmedia, multimedia, and other multiplatform media practices. This thesis has already made the point that blockbuster franchising is not synonymous with transmedia storytelling or defined by multiple media platforms; as such, this thesis is not directly concerned with transmedia storytelling, but transtextual poetics is a methodology that recognizes the role of transmedia and transtextual poetics in shaping the franchise mode. Transtextuality thus addresses the traversal relations of authorship, narrative form and aesthetic style that are in many ways indebted to the multimedia entertainment ecology of total entertainment in the early twenty-first century. To understand franchising as a mode of practice in a total entertainment ecology is to make sense of its conventions, patterns, and differences across a large group of works where blockbuster cinema is one central part. Transtextual poetics accounts for the intersections of multiple texts and media platforms, industrial systems, and the discursive manifestation of Hollywood history. To do this is productively converges a poetics methodology with transtextuality and total entertainment to understand the function and formal construction of blockbuster franchising in the early twenty-first century.

Poetic Utility in Blockbuster Franchising

This thesis argues that, through its interplay of intellectual property and transtextual poetics, the franchise mode is enabled by the creative-industrial force of poetic utility. This conceptualizes Gomez's point that "successful cinematic universes are the gift that keeps on giving. When properly developed, they can be thrilling, artful, and tremendously lucrative" (2017, para. 5). Poetic utility is a dialectic that articulates the reciprocal dynamic between creativity and industrialization. In these terms, poetic utility conceptualizes the functional convergence of *industry* and *creativity*, in which industrial viability of the franchise mode is enabled and enriched by the strategies and expressions of expansive creative norms (encompassing sequential form, transmedia storytelling, adaptation, and storyworld design); reciprocally, intellectual property stewardship and licensing relations can work to secure and support creative development and innovation. For example, the comic book convention of rebooting works as a force of poetic utility in the way it enables both creative revival and the sustainment of property viability. The release of *Batman Begins* (2005) utilized the reboot strategy—with a darker tone and style, serious plot, and the prestige of Christopher Nolan's auteur brand—to repair the creative and industrial strength of the 'Batman' franchise, following the damaging impact of the previous release *Batman and Robin* (1997). This is an example of how transtextual norms and industrial imperatives work in recursive dialogue to enable franchise longevity. Therefore, poetic utility articulates the force through which the mechanism of blockbuster franchising is sustained.

Poetic utility is a phenomenon defined by industrial poetics and creative utility. This corresponds with Bordwell's understanding of creative convention as poetic tools for "practical action" and "pragmatic utility" (2008, 62 & 129), in which "conventions are designed for utility in action" (442n14). According to Bordwell, the specific "utility" of a set of conventions or norms is contingent on the decisions of an artist and the modality in which an artist's work is situated (1989, 373). In this thesis I argue that, while blockbuster franchising can engage—or utilize—a range of developing or stabilized conventions and norms, all examples of franchising in Hollywood work to achieve the same fundamental aim: industrial longevity. Poetic utility is an effect of conventions and principles within the franchise mode that work to realize this aim. Correspondingly, Bordwell notes how poeticians of cinema may argue that contextual principles, like economics and industry, "operate as causes of constructional devices of effects" (1989, 374). To use a machinal analogy: if the interplay of intellectual property activation and transtextual creative

development constitutes the gears, cogs, and cylinders of the franchise mode, then poetic utility designates the quality of fuel that powers the engine. This thesis will highlight how the conventions and norms of blockbuster franchising engage with the force of poetic utility.

The relationship between creative development and industrial imperatives is central to how Hollywood functions as a moviemaking industry. There is nothing inherently new or theoretically original about the conceptualization of poetic utility as a convergence of creativity and industrialization. This principle corresponds with Richard Maltby's concept of "the commercial aesthetic," which reflects how "the aesthetic systems at work in Hollywood movies cannot sensibly be separated from their underlying commercial ambitions" (2003, 2). Moreover, Eileen Meehan presents the concept of the "commercial intertext" to describe contemporary Hollywood production as a "multimedia production line" (1991, 62). This works further towards accounting for multi-textual expansiveness and is developed by Daniel Herbert (2018) and Nicholas Benson (2020) with the concept of "industrial intertextuality." According to Herbert, the industrial intertext "is a cultural product designed to make money (industrial), and it is simultaneously connected to a wide range of existing products (intertextuality)" (2018, 9–10). However, with his focus on the cultural implications of the industrial intertext, Herbert adopts an understanding of intertextuality that is most concerned with its cultural impact, and not the mechanisms or function of its textual construction. The intersection of commercial industrialization and aesthetic intertextuality has been of ongoing interest to scholars of Hollywood entertainment, and often reflects an aim to justify the serious study of Hollywood. The concept of poetic utility is admittedly underpinned by a similar intension but seeks to also highlight crucial intersections between creative poetics and industrial utility in blockbuster production. As Jenkins notes in his chapter on historical poetics, "once all forms of cinema are understood to be both governed by artistic conventions and shaped by innovation or transgression, the tired distinction between the personal expression of high art and the conventionality of popular cinema starts to break down" (1995, 106-107). The concept of poetic utility is not exclusive to the franchise mode and can be applied to how we understand the function and effect of contemporary Hollywood cinema more broadly; even so, in the franchise mode, poetic utility is an especially effective quality for effecting the creative and industrial longevity of a franchise property.

Structuring a Thesis Saga

The main body of this thesis is divided into three sections, called ‘Episodes,’ where each section represents a key component of blockbuster moviemaking in the era franchise era. The chapters in Episode I explore the relations between origination and ownership in authorship and production. In Episode II, chapters examine the intersections of seriality, genre mechanisms and high-concept strategy in franchise narration and formula. Episode III considers questions of medium specificity in the aesthetics and style of the franchise mode. Each section includes an introduction and two chapters: the first chapter of each part conceptualizes transtextual poetics in relation to the critical traditions of each respective topic, whether authorship, narration, or aesthetics, and the second chapter presents an application of the principles of transtextual poetics in the franchise mode and with consideration of the industrial implications, with conventions that highlight the core elements of franchise production, formula, or style. Each chapter includes with a case study to illustrate the points made in each section.

‘Episode I—A New Origin’ is about the multiplicity of idea origination, ownership, and authorship in the franchise era. Through discussion and analysis of intellectual property, creative licensing, questions of canonicity and adaptation, and authorial multiplicity, the chapters in this section together form the building blocks for this thesis. Through the framework of transtextual authorship, chapter 1 will consider authorship as a network of multiple endless origins that intersects with the process of adaptation and principles of canonicity within this process, as well as the function of auteurs as concept brands in the franchise mode. This chapter will conclude with a case study on the ‘Star Wars’ franchise. Chapter 2 will discuss the production components of the franchise mode, with an examination of how intellectual property functions as a transtextual object. I argue that the intellectual property is the core textual object of the franchise mode and the central nucleus for adaptation, and so articulates how transtextual authorship works in the context of franchise production. Chapter 2 also examines the practice of creative licensing and a production synergy of creative development and intellectual property conditions, and I propose that contemporary production management in Hollywood now follows what might be best understood as a property-unit system; this charts a historical trajectory from the producer-unit system of the classical Hollywood studio system, into the package-unit system of post studio conglomeration, and now the property-unit system of the franchise era. This

chapter will conclude with a case study on the ‘Wizarding World’ franchise to exemplify these practices.

‘Episode II—High-Concept Strikes Back’ will address the function of high-concept strategies in the franchise era through an examination of narrative form, genre mechanisms, and multiplatform storyworld development in the franchise mode. Through the concept of transtextual narration, chapter 3 delves into the mechanism of franchising as an entertainment supersystem by employing Genette’s notion of architextuality. Chapter 3 will examine the tools of serial narration and the multiplatform dimensions storyworlds in franchise narration; this chapter will conclude with a case study of the ‘Star Trek’ franchise to explore the practical application of these tools. Chapter 4 focuses on the components of franchise formula to reinforce the importance of repetition and differentiation in the high-concept strategy and consider its intensification in the franchise era; this chapter identifies the primary components of narrative development in blockbuster franchising to include storyworld mythos and thematic score. These elements of franchise formula will be exemplified through the ‘Bondian’ formula of the ‘Bond’ franchise.

‘Episode III—Return of the Attraction’ directs attention to cinema as an apparatus of illusionism and a virtuosic performance of aesthetics and style in the franchise era. Chapter 5 examines the concept of transtextual aesthetics in the franchise mode and considers questions of medium specificity in the total entertainment ecology. This chapter addresses the aesthetic function of cinema in the franchise mode to consider how repetition and variation relates to the nature of frame rate, shot alternation, and composition. This chapter is driven by the question of what it means to be cinematic in a multiplatform system and will employ the ‘MCU’ franchise—specifically ‘The Avengers’ series—as a case study to engage with this question. Chapter 6 focuses on stylistic techniques in the franchise era through a focus on framing, mise-en-scène and editing. This chapter considers how these techniques work to create a style that expresses a multiplicity of intensified continuities in the franchise mode. This final chapter will conclude with a case study on the ‘Jurassic Park’ franchise.

Case Studies: Scope and Significance

This thesis employs a range of blockbuster franchise example to demonstrate its key points in all chapters, but it also concludes each chapter with a focused case study. In line with the principles of poetics, “emphasis on historically changing norms, devices, systems, and functions requires that the analyst complement the scrutiny of single films with a study of a

wide range of films" (Bordwell 1989, 382). The examples employed as case studies in this thesis have been chosen with two principles in mind, which fulfil the objectives of poetic analysis: 1) each case study serves to best exemplify the specific concepts and respond to the key research questions set up in each respective chapter, while also 2) supporting an understanding of franchising as a mode of practice with consistent conventions, mechanisms, and principles across a large range of examples. The structure of this thesis and its case studies has been organized to support this objective.

i. Scope

The scope of these case studies is delineated by the period in which I identify as 'the franchise era'—approximately 1999 to 2019 thus far. This is not to say that examples are confined to this era, but all case studies have a significant presence within this period. For example, 'Bond' is the oldest franchise in the slate of case studies in this thesis, with the first installment released in 1962 with *Dr. No*. 'Bond' is significant as the longest running franchise and to-date. It is within the scope of this thesis because it also has a strong existence in the franchise era, since the release of *Casino Royale* in 2006 and its subsequent installments. The 'Star Trek' franchise also has a long history, with the property first introduced in 1966 via the television series *Star Trek: The Original Series*, but it continues to maintain a strong presence in the franchise era with movies and television series. Other case studies employed in this thesis that precede the franchise era proper include 'Star Wars' (from 1977) and 'Jurassic Park' (from 1993). These franchises also continue to have a strong presence in the franchise era, and this serve to reflect how the mode has crystalized over time. The youngest franchise employed as a case study in this thesis—the 'MCU' (from 2008)—is also the most impactful in terms of shaping the franchise mode in the early twenty-first century. The serial and expansive nature of these blockbuster franchises means that they extend across years and demonstrate the development of the franchise mode over time.

ii. Significance

These case studies have been deliberately chosen to represent different dimensions of significance and impact. When selecting the case studies and examples employed throughout this thesis, I have been mindful of representing a few key aspects and asking questions that address impact in different ways: historical legacy (when was the first blockbuster iteration of the franchise and how long has the franchise lasted?), presence in the franchise era (has it had a significant existence in the early twenty-first century?), iconicity and brand awareness

(what are the most iconic franchises?), genre diversity (what genres should be represented in the chosen slate?), success and failure (is there a mix of successful and failed franchises?), cinema technology (is there a mix of celluloid and digital releases?), and media platforms (are there a variety of franchises with multiplatform engagement?).

I discussed the significance of historical legacy and contemporary presence above in relation to scope, and many of these other key aspects and questions will be further discussed in the respective case study chapters, but I want to first draw attention to genre. It is important that this thesis represent a variety of genres to overcome some shortfalls in the how we understand genre in the franchise mode. Work on franchising can often fall within a trap of focusing too heavily on the fantasy and science fiction genres to the point that analysis becomes more about the role of franchising within these genres rather than the incidental presence of these genres within franchising (Thompson 2003; Harvey 2015). As Johnson aptly identifies, "despite many such franchises sharing roots in science fiction and fantasy genres, franchising clearly cuts across genres" (2013, 28). That is not to say that this thesis does not employ case studies of the fantasy and science fiction genres: 'Wizarding World' is a fantasy adventure, 'Star Trek' and 'Jurassic Park are science-fiction adventure,' 'Star Wars' is a fantasy/science-fiction adventure hybrid, and the 'MCU' as a fantasy/sci-fi/superhero adventure hybrid. However, the 'Bond' franchise is of the adventure spy genre and often inflected by the comedy, science-fiction, and thriller genres for differentiation. The question of why some genres are more compatible with franchising will be incidental in this thesis, but not a central concern. To consider blockbuster franchising as a mode beyond specific genre associations is to be less concerned with the particulars of specific genres and more interested in what the broader mechanism of genre tells us about the construction the franchise mode.

While each case study illustrates specific points of focus, no single blockbuster franchise example employed in this thesis is an exclusive example of such conventions: each case study is potentially interchangeable across each section and chapter. For example, 'Star Wars' and 'Wizarding World' are employed in chapters 1 and 2 as case studies that exemplify the principles and norms of authorship and production in the franchise era respectively, but they could also be productively interchanged with any other case study in alternative sections. For example, the 'Jurassic Park' or 'MCU' franchise could also serve as productive case studies to illustrate questions of authorship in the franchise mode. Similarly, the 'Star Trek' and 'Bond' franchises are employed in chapters 3 and 4 respectively to support discussion of form, narrative, and the high-concept strategy in the franchise mode, but the questions and contentions of any other chapter can also apply to these franchises: this

is to say that these examples could also productively support analysis of franchise authorship or franchise aesthetics. Moreover, the ‘MCU’ and ‘Jurassic Park’ franchises are employed in chapter 5 and 6 to illustrate the principles of aesthetics and style in the franchise era, but any other franchise example could productively serve this analysis. This is not a thesis about specific franchises with formal analysis that proves the exceptionalism of specific case studies (this has been done before); this thesis is about how blockbuster franchising functions as a mode of production in early twenty-first century Hollywood, which employs a set of conventions across a large group of examples that all share in one primary principle: the interplay of intellectual property and transtextual poetics.

Episode I: A New Origin—Authorship and Production in the Franchise Era

The franchise mode involves the creation, development, and industrialization of ideas. Authorship and production are thus foundational principles of blockbuster franchising. The phenomenon of ideation—and the way it is enabled, constrained, protected, and expressed—is fundamental to how blockbuster franchising works in Hollywood of the early twenty-first century. Therefore, "it seems to be a common feature of many of the contemporary entertainment 'franchises' that they purport to derive from the creative act of 'an author'" (Bently and Biron 2014, 35). This point made by Lionel Bently and Laura Biron reflects both the practical utility of human ideation and the symbolic cohesion of an authorial brand. As defined in my introduction, the franchise mode is constituted by the interplay of intellectual property and transtextual poetics, which means that the fruition of such properties into expansive and long-lasting storyworlds implicates the often-conflicting discourses of authorship and ownership. Taking 'Star Wars' creator George Lucas as a quintessential example, Henry Jenkins notes that "the most successful transmedia franchises have emerged when a single creator or creative unit maintains control" (2006, 106). However, Warren Buckland identifies that "the management of creative freedom in contemporary Hollywood, or control of internal and external authorship via vertical integration, is a high-risk venture, particularly in relation to the high-priced blockbuster" (2003, 96). Authorship in the franchise mode is thus a complex negotiation of creative and industrial imperatives, such that "the entertainment franchise has prompted new questions about authorship" (Bently and Biron 2014, 35). Such questions are a necessary starting point for investigating how blockbuster franchising works: they are concerned with the nature of origins and originality, the procedures of idea ownership and authority, and relations between authorial roles in blockbuster production.

The two chapters in this section consider authorship to be a practice that intersects across processes of idea creation, procedures of industrial authority, and the poetics of textual originality. This section is concerned with authorship in blockbuster franchising as it relates to persons of creative or industrial authority and ideas that are protected, authorized, and leveraged for longevity. Therefore, in this thesis 'authorship' represents not only the creative practices of 'author/s,' but also implicates the principles of origins and originality, canonicity and adaptation, intellectual property and licensing, production process, and studio

organization. Bordwell notes how "assumptions about origin-of-the-text authorship are hard to avoid, even for critics who are—in theory—aware that since medieval exegesis, the string of terms *auctor, auctoritas, authenticus* inevitably linked author, authority, and authenticity" (1991, 159; original emphasis). This is to emphasize that authorship—in any medium—is ultimately bound-up with the conditions of canonical legitimacy, ownership, and control as much as it ostensibly symbolizes artistry, originality, and personal expression. This connection between authorship, authority, and authenticity relates to individual authors and the work they produce, but also influences the legitimacy and authority of modes of practice within the cinematic landscape, whether based on artistic or commercial intention. Elsaesser aptly articulates this situation in a passage worth quoting at length:

> When thinking about authorship today, it is not a matter of pitting art against commerce, critical acclaim against box-office figures, or conversely, asking rhetorically whether the arts have ever flourished without either patronage or a "market." Instead, it seems more productive to track the implications of what [Allen J.] Scott calls a "recursive relationship" [2005, 1]: extending it from the place "Hollywood" and the industry "Hollywood" to the different forms of creativity—artistic and artisanal, but also financial and managerial—that filmmaking implies, and to assess the conditions of possibility that exist for authorship in the sense of autonomy and authority outlined above, to thrive or survive in today's conjuncture. The challenge is to examine the individual options and the practical choices certain filmmakers have made, in light of the systemic givens and the general logic of a "creative industry" that likes to call itself "the business". (2012, 282)

In this passage Elsaesser reflects on multiple dimensions that make up authorship and creativity in contemporary Hollywood; he also signals the potential to understand the role of the singular author in more complex ways within the context of the movie industry.

The first section of this thesis examines how authorship practices are the most significant devices of poetic utility in the franchise mode, since authorial ideation and its function as an intellectual property is the cornerstone principle of the franchise. The first chapter of this section, "Transtextual Authorship," is concerned with broader concepts of authorship that have been significant to the study of cinema—originality, adaptation, and auteurism—but which operate in distinct ways in the franchise mode of practice. This chapter will conclude with a case study that examines transtextual authorship in the 'Star Wars' franchise. The second chapter in this section, "Franchising Production," considers the ways authorship and production work in the franchise era, which involves the management of ideation through intellectual property and licensing and its impact on the contemporary studio system. This chapter concludes with a case study on the 'Wizarding World' franchise to

demonstrate how the dynamics of authorship, intellectual property, and creative development can operate in franchise production. The objective of these first two chapters is to understand how the norms and conventions of authorship and production operate as forces of poetic utility in the construction of blockbuster franchises. These chapters argue that authorship and production constitute a set of stabilizing norms and conventions that work in tandem with innovation and creative vision and reflect the creative and industrial construction of ideation in blockbuster franchising.

Chapter 1: Transtextual Authorship

Authorship is a fundamental component in how blockbuster franchising works. In the franchise era, authorship takes on a multitude of dimensions—such as singular artistry, authorial multiplicity, industrial management, and symbolic branding—that requires reassessment of the definitional limits and evaluations of authorship in Hollywood of the early twenty-first century. The transtextual poetics of authorship in the franchise era are constituted by intensified tensions between originality and adaptation, singular and multiple authorship, and artistry versus industrial imperatives. This chapter conceptualizes these tensions through the principle of transtextual authorship, in which authorship practices are defined, shaped, and negotiated by dialogic relations between creative and industrial authorities, multiple media platforms, and the licensing of intellectual properties. In this way, transtextual authorship understands the relationship between authorship and textual multiplicity that is adaptable to industrial imperatives, such as intellectual property and licensing.

In publication elsewhere I have described transtextual authorship as a dynamic "in which the singular author is both in control of and subject to the multifarious and dynamic textual relations of transmedia storytelling" (Lomax 2017, 35); in that work I discussed how authorship is shaped by the multiplicity of mediums that work in dialogue through the strategy of transmedia storytelling. I maintain that transmedia dialogism is a significant factor in shaping how authorship functions in the franchise era, but here I build on my previous conceptualization of transtextual authorship to consider it as a principal norm of the franchise mode that reflects its complex intersection of creative expression and industrial structures. Notwithstanding, transmedia and the multiple media ecology of total entertainment remains fundamental to how transtextual authorship is constituted and how it disrupts traditional functions of authorship in Hollywood: Jonathan Gray and Derek Johnson note how authorship has played an important role in the distinct separation of mediums, explaining that "authorship has helped constitute the hierarchies between media, considering how literature and film have been legitimated through claims of the genius and vision of individual auteurs compared to forms of cultural production marked as more commercial or collaborative" (2013, 7). Transtextual authorship is thus a principle of blockbuster franchising that contextualizes authorship in relation to media convergence, industrial synergy, and total entertainment.

Many scholars and critics who maintain steadfast views of authorship as an expression of solitary genius will argue that industrially-motivated cinema—especially blockbuster franchising—is void of a complex authorial identity. This is perhaps most exemplified by recent discourse in film criticism and online commentary led by director Martin Scorsese, who argues that franchise movies are "not cinema," but more akin to a theme park: he thus explains that, while franchises are "well made by teams of talented individuals," they lack "the unifying vision of an individual artist" (2019, para. 18). Scorsese argues that the vision of an individual artist is "essential to cinema" (para. 18), and its absence in blockbuster franchising supposedly divorces it from being 'cinema'. While this perspective is itself somewhat anachronistic, it provokes timely debate about the state of authorship and cinema in the franchise era.[12] While the context for authorship has transformed with the intensification of media convergence and industrial synergy in the early twenty-first century, the poetic utility of authorship has not changed: authors are still of "considerable use" (Gray 2013, 91) in culture, criticism, industry, and creative production. As Johnson and Gray acknowledge, "to see press or marketing for almost any item of media today without seeing the invocation of at least one author figure is rare. Yet each and every item carries with it the ghosts of authors not mentioned" (Johnson and Gray 2013, 2). Authorship and individual artistic style still carry significant weight across all modes of Hollywood production, including blockbuster franchising, and so Scorsese's failure to identify the presence of authorial vision and artisitic expression seems driven by his own specific expectations of what this should look like in cinema and not its outright absence.

Despite its intensified industrial imperatives, blockbuster franchising has attracted persistent critical discourse concerned with the complex dynamic between autonomous creative control and authorial multiplicity. Some argue that blockbuster franchising lacks creative and cultural value because its industrial priorities put it at odds with its potential to reflect an individual artistic vision (Buckmaster 2019; Scorsese 2019). As Scorsese assumes, franchises are created by teams not individuals, and refers to the increasing appropriation of the writer's room protocol traditionally associated with creative development in television (not to ignore the pejorative judgement towards television writers that is implied by such a statement). This is further reinforced by Adam Rogers, who notes that in the franchise era "the auteur gives way to the team player" (2015, para. 26). The first point to clarify in

[12] David Bordwell has also contributed to this discussion with the online essay, "Captain Cinephilia: Scorsese Strikes Back" (2019).

response to this assertion is that it is grossly misguided to think that any kind of Hollywood production might be made by a solitary individual: as John Stillinger has argued, "it is simply not possible for one person, however brilliant, to provide the entire creative force behind so complex a work as a motion picture" (1991, 179). Therefore, any number of production roles can and should be attributed authorial status, including producers, screenwriters, actors, cinematographers, editors, production designers, composers, costume designers, visual effects artists, and so on. It appropriately follows that, in being constituted by a transtextual multiplicity of movie installments and iterations in other media platforms, blockbuster franchising demands an even larger creative team than the traditional single movie. This logic, nonetheless, does not preclude the existence of singular authorship, but it does influence its function and dynamic within this context.

Transtextual authorship conceptualizes authorship as a multiplicity of creative and industrial forces that gives blockbuster franchising a foundation, enables its development, but also drives its management. In this way, authorship is—as John Hartley puts it—a force of "*causal agency*" (2013, 24; original emphasis). However, this agency is not necessarily open and unrestricted, but regulated, controlled, and managed:

> Authorship emerged into modernity not as an attribute of persons but as a device for the efficient operation of a market. In other words, the author is a device for *limiting* rather than *expanding* meaning, reducing what any text or discourse means to the intentions of its designated originator, including their pecuniary intentions; the very opposite of the godlike polysemic liberality of the premodern author…and postmodern reader. (29; original emphasis)

Similarly, the authorial multiplicity, adaptation, and licensing dynamics of the franchise mode invokes constraints and challenges that shape the management of intellectual properties across serial development and production. Such challenges are not always a cause of creative insufficiency or deficit, but rather authorship works as force of poetic utility in how it shapes the construction of blockbuster franchising through limitation or license. For example, the transtextual poetics of the 'Bond' franchise has been creatively and industrially constructed by the complex multiplicity of authorial forces that have either conceived of, licensed, or adapted the 'Bond' intellectual property over time. A compelling case is the complex authorship and ownership rights of the novel *Thunderball* (Fleming 1961): the novel itself is written by and credited to Ian Fleming, but it is based on a screenplay initially co-written with Kevin McClory and Jack Whittingham. The copyright ownership of the story had been the subject of a legal dispute that ended in 2013 after fifty-two years, which restricted the

adaptation rights of narrative elements introduced in this story (most significantly, the villain Ernst Stavro Blofeld and the SPECTRE crime syndicate) until the release of *Spectre* (2015). The authorial coherence and centralized origination of the 'Bond' property is represented by Fleming and his novel series (1953–); however, the adaptation of his intellectual property across cinema, television, video games, comic books, and literature has involved a multiplicity of authors, authorities, and authorizations that have influenced what, why, how, and when particular aspects of the 'Bond' narrative (such as specific characters and narrative events) can or cannot be adapted in particular media.[13]

Transtextual authorship is a phenomenon of blockbuster franchising that works to make sense of the ways authorship intersects with the transtextual principles of multiplicity, adaptation, and seriality in the franchise mode. To explore this concept in more detail, this chapter will focus on three fundamental aspects of transtextual authorship in the franchise mode: multiple origins, canonical adaptation, and concept-auteurs. The principle of multiple origins addresses the ways that serial form multiplies notions of origination and creative ideation, so that a cascade of "textual creators—authors—exists across a text's life span" (Gray 2013, 94). Working in tandem with the multiplicity of authors and origins, canonical adaptation is instrumental in demarcating the authenticity and scope of transtextual authorship in the franchise mode. While the topic of storyworld expansion will be central to chapters 3 and 4, chapter 1 initiates discussion of this topic from the perspective of authorship: as Mark J.P. Wolf explains, "whether or not additions can be considered *growth*…depends on the canonicity of the added material, and thus its authorship" (2012, 246; original emphasis). As a process through which transtextuality and authorship work in tandem to define what aspects of a blockbuster franchise are considered authentic or 'official,' the principle of canonical adaptation reconceptualizes the authority of an 'original' text in the process of adaptation. Finally, the notion of concept-auteurs draws from Thomas Elsaesser's notion of the "concept author" (2012, 286) to examine the state of auteurism in the franchise era. These are principles and procedures of authorship that I argue operate as stabilizing norms and conventions of franchise production. Finally, this chapter culminates with a case study of the 'Star Wars' franchise to demonstrate these principles.

[13] The transtextual authorship of the 'Bond' franchise will be considered in more detail in the sections below. The 'Bond' franchise will also be the focus of a case study in chapter 4, in which I will build on this discussion of the franchise's legal history to consider the 'Bondian' formula.

Multiple Origins

The phenomenon of 'origination' is critical to the construction of blockbuster franchising because it drives questions of authorship and poetic utility. To think of the 'origin' of creativity most often incites notions of an author as a source of ideation, but to examine the nature of origins in the franchise mode it is also crucial to consider poetic distinctions between the 'original' master text and its 'derivative' copy. Blockbuster franchising is implicated in questions of originality and derivation as a result of its formal logics of seriality and adaptation, in which textual continuation and cross-media translation are inevitably bound up in the perceived dichotomy of original versus copy.[14] This is to say that transtextual authorship conceptualizes the nature of origination in the franchise mode as a potentially never-ending multiplicity both of authors and transtexts; in the franchise mode, the phenomenon of origination is not confined to the *beginnings* of a property and its creation, but is in a perpetual state of origination—or, what Gray calls, "perpetual beginnings" (2013, 94). I draw on this idea of perpetual beginnings to argue that, in blockbuster franchising, derivation should be reconceptualized as an effect of multiple endless originations. In her work on neo-baroque aesthetics in contemporary entertainment, Ndalianis considers a precedence for seriality that sees "the copy magically metaphorphosed into an original" (2004, 62); this signals the need to consider the relationship between originality and derivation as discursive rather than static. According to Jess-Cooke, "the dialogue that is created between an original and its potential derivatives revises the notion of originality and, in turn, redefines 'originals' as 'originaries'—or productions that are geared to spawn narrative offspring" (2009, 10). This reformulation of originality has implications for understanding authorship in the franchise mode because, in being 'geared to spawn narrative offspring,' the transtextual poetics of the franchise mode is constituted by a never-ending multiplicity of *originaries*. Transtextual authorship thus constitutes a multiplicity of origins—including authors, owners, and licensees of intellectual properties—and a potentially endless poetic construction of origins facilitated by seriality, adaptation, and transmedia narration. In this section I examine the nature and formulation of 'originality' and multiple textualities in the franchise mode, before turning to considerations of authenticity and adaptation below.

The concept of origination is a temporal phenomenon. As the source of and catalyst for the creation of ideas, the author is intimately tied to a text's beginnings: the "first cause of

[14] I will examine the logic of seriality in detail in chapters 3 and 4, with focus on its system of repetition and variation.

everything that was made" (Hartley 2013, 24). Moreover, in its classical and non-serialized form, the produced work is thought to constitute finality as it is passed on to an audience in a supposedly 'complete' form.[15] At the same time, the ostensibly 'original' work is assumed to have no past (Gray 2013, 90) since the nominal designation of a text as 'an original' implies the presence of continuation and thus futurity. Therefore, origins are always already an expression of temporality, and this is further complicated by the way that seriality can reject finality. Gray addresses this when he asks the pertinent question of "when is an author?" (2013), and thus argues that "authorship occurs over time, not in a blast of creative energy at the beginning of a text's life, and if we acknowledge this, we free ourselves to discuss multiple nodes of authorship" (89). Gray expands on this point further:

> if authorship is seen as an act of creation, once we recognize that texts never stop being created, and once we respect the phenomenology of textuality, it follows naturally that textual creators—authors—exist across a text's life span. The author's role is not limited to the ''beginning'' of a text, unless we allow that no text ever truly finishes, thereby meaning that texts are always perpetually beginning, and never move beyond this stage of development. (94)

Gray thus emphasizes that authorship is just as perpetually present as it is beginning; for this reason, he suggests the idea of perpetual beginnings with the caveat that such a concept could be inconducive to complex development (an apt example of this occurring is with the 'Spider-Man' franchise having realized the character's superhero origin story twice due to licensing conditions, in *Spider-Man* [2002] and *The Amazing Spider-Man* [2012]). While Gray is interested in authorship as a general concept and practice, his call to consider the author's significance "across a text's life span" is especially pertinent to understanding the effects of seriality. As already noted above, seriality is rarely appreciated for its originality and authorial vision, which means that to consider sequels as a series of perpetual beginnings—rather than ongoing derivation—does not impede development, as Gray warns, but recognizes the multiple endless articulations of origination and authorship that occur across a textual series. Therefore, it is more productive to understand authorship in

[15] In this sense, we might consider how the finality of the singular complete texts is challenges by director's cut re-releases (Coppola's *Apocalypse Now Redux* [(1979) 2001] or Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner: Director's Cut* [(1982) 1992], Cameron Crowe's *Almost Famous Untitled: The Bootleg Cut* [(2000) 2001], and *Zack Snyder's Justice League* [(2017) 2021]), extended editions (Peter Jackson's 'Lord of the Rings' extended cut versions [(2001) 2002, (2002) 2003, (2003) 2004]) and re-edited releases (George Lucas's 'Star Wars' trilogy Special Edition [(1977, 1980, 1983) 1997]).

blockbuster franchising as a multiplicity of beginnings that produce a series of multiple endless origins.

As a norm of authorship in blockbuster franchising, multiple endless origins can be charted across a range of franchise examples, occurring across different mediums and authorial roles. The convention of multiple endless origins challenges hierarchal dualities between authorial 'originality' and 'derivation' to realize that the franchise mode constitutes a rich tapestry of multiple and enduring originating forces. For example, the primary source of the 'Bond' property can be traced to literary author Ian Fleming's first James Bond novel, *Casino Royale* (1953), but the transtextual authorship of the franchise is constituted by multiple endless origins that include, but are not limited to:

- Producers: Albert R. Broccoli (1967–1995); Harry Salzman (1967–1975); Michael G. Wilson (1984–current); Barbara Broccoli (1995–current); Charles K. Feldman (*Casino Royale* [1967]); Kevin McClory (*Thunderball* [1965]); and Jack Schwartzman (*Never Say Never Again* [1983]).
- Copyright holders, production companies, and distributors: Danjaq L.L.C (intellectual property holding company owned by the Broccoli Estate, since 1962); Eon Productions (official Bond production company as a subsidiary of Danjaq, since 1962); United Artists (former distributor, from 1962–1981, and part copyright owner since 1975); Columbia Pictures (production company, *Casino Royale* [1967], and co-distributor, 2006–2015), Taliafilm Productions (production company, *Never Say Never Again* [1983]); MGM/UA (former distributor, 1981–1995); MGM (former sole distributor, 1997–2002), MGM-Sony consortium (former distributors, via Columbia subsidiary, till 2015), Universal Studios (distributor since 2017).
- Composers: Monty Norman, John Barry, George Martin, Bill Conti, David Arnold, and Thomas Newman; as well as 'Bond' title singles, performed by artists like Shirley Bassey ("Goldfinger" [1964], "Diamonds Are Forever" [1971], and "Moonraker" [1979]), Tom Jones ("Thunderball" [1965]), Louis Armstrong ("We Have All the Time in the World" [1969]), Paul McCartney and Wings ("Live and Let Die" [1973]), Duran Duran ("A View to a Kill" [1985]), Tina Turner ("GoldenEye" [1995]), Chris Cornell ("You Know My Name" [2006]), Adele ("Skyfall" [2012]), and Sam Smith ("Writing's On the Wall" [2015]).
- Directors: Terence Young (*Dr No* [1962], *From Russia With Love* [1963], *Thunderball* [1965]), Guy Hamilton (*Goldfinger* [1964], *Diamonds Are Forever* [1971], *Live and Let Die* [1973], and *The Man with the Golden Gun* [1974]), Lewis Gilbert (*You Only Live Twice*

[1967], *The Spy Who Loved Me* [1977], *Moonraker* [1979]), Martin Campbell (*GoldenEye* [1995] and *Casino Royale* [2006]), Sam Mendes (*Skyfall* [2012] and *Spectre* [2015], to name a few.

- Screenwriters: Richard Maibaum (1962–64; 1969–1971; 1974–1977; 1981–1989), Michael G. Wilson (1981–1989), Roald Dahl (1977), and Jack Whittingham (1983), Bruce Feirstein (1995–1999), Paul Haggis (2006; 2008), to name a few.
- Actors: Sean Connery (1962–1967; 1971; 1983), David Niven (1967), George Lazenby (1969), Roger Moore (1973–1985), Timothy Dalton (1987; 1989), Pierce Brosnan (1995–2002), and Daniel Craig (2006–2021).
- As well as other literary authors and comic book publishers, including Colonel Sun, John Gardner, and Raymond Benson; DC Comics (1963), Marvel Comics (1981; 1983), Acme Press (1989–1991), Dark Horse (1992–1995), Topps Comics (1995), Dynamite Entertainment (2015–).

This example surveys a relatively broad classification of authorial roles in the 'Bond' franchise, which I suggest constitutes a productive account of the kinds of originations that can occur across the franchise mode, or any other movie (as opposed to the limited traditionally focus on an initial literary author or a film director). Moreover, it is not even accurate to call the above survey an extensive account of authorship in the 'Bond' franchise, since I have highlighted only a representative selection of roles and highlighted mostly top-down and above-the-line creative roles due to scope.[16] With this example, I emphasize that transtexual authorship in the blockbuster franchise is driven by multiple endless origins that accumulate over time, which is to say that each articulation of authorship—including industrial owners, creative authors, and technical artists—contributes to the multiplicity of origination in blockbuster franchising.

It is important to clarify that this multiplicity of endless authorship is not a principle of collaboration, but of polycentricity. The concept of multiple authorship is often put in

[16] Above-the-line refers to top-billed 'creative' roles—such as directors, producers, screenwriters, and actors—as opposed to below-the-line roles, which are generally considered technical craft workers who are mostly under-credited and underpaid. Above-the-line and below-the-line examinations of authorship have received critical scholar attention in production studies, which is a field of inquiry within cultural studies that considers the labor contributions of workers in the media industries and argues that the traditional study of authorship in contemporary media must be destabilized in order to value below-the-line authorship as much as above-the-line (Mayer, Banks, and Caldwell 2009). My study here does not directly take the methodological approach of production studies, but the concept of transtextual authorship can account for below-the-line articulations of authorship in the franchise mode.

opposition to singular authorship and usually thought to be synonymous with collaborative authorship (Stillinger 1991, 22). In theory, any potential challenge to singular authorship might incidentally imply collaboration, but in practice this is an unsuitable expectation of how authorship works in blockbuster franchising because the protection of intellectual property remains a primary dimension. Transtextual authorship in blockbuster franchising is thus constituted by a polycentric network of multiple endless origins, in which intellectual property is an obligatory instance of origination but not the only point of authorial centrality. Blockbuster franchises are big enough to facilitate an authorial structure that allows for the recognition and canonicity of a centralized intellectual property creator or owner *and* foster the creative originality of multiple endless origins. This conceptualizes the authorship of vast franchise storyworlds differently to others such as Wolf, whose notion of "circles of authorship" maintains the hierarchy on a singular originator or main author (2012, 273). According to Wolf, authorship of franchise worlds

> can be conceptualized as a series of concentric circles extending out from the world's originator (or originators), with each circle of delegated authority being further removed from the world's originator and main author to estates, heirs, and torchbearer; employees and freelancers; the makers of approved, derivative, and ancillary products that are based on a world; and finally to the noncanonical additions of elaborationists and fan productions. (2012, 269)

There is indeed a precedent for conceptualizing authorship as a series of concentric circles, since relations between authors are thought to be organized in hierarchical levels that emanate out from one center; for example, prior to the Walt Disney Company's purchase of Lucasfilm in 2012, canonicity of the 'Star Wars' franchise was organized in levels of authorial hierarchy extending out from the centricity of George Lucas' authority (labelled the G-canon). In 2014, Lucasfilm announced a deliberate restructuring of 'Star Wars' canonicity, which involved a disbanding of this concentric organization "to give maximum creative freedom to the filmmakers" (Star Wars 2014, para. 5). In this new authorial organization, the formerly branded 'G-canon' would remain as one instance of authorial centrality but would be joined by new authorial originators across a "future of interconnected storytelling" that "will allow fans to explore this galaxy in deeper ways than ever before" (Star Wars 2014, para. 4). I return to authorship in the 'Star Wars' franchise as a case study later in this chapter, but for now I highlight the way that it reconceptualizes the hierarchy of authorship to allow for multiple endless origins; this is not to say that there is disruption of hierarchy in transtextual authorship, rather that there are multiple centers.

The ‘Alien’ franchise (1979–) is a compelling example of the polycentric dynamics of multiple endless origins. David Thomson poses the question “Who made *Alien*, then?” and offers a brief history that he hopes “has identified many authors” (1998, 15). Filmmaker Dan O’Bannon is responsible for the initial ideation and screenplay of the ‘Alien’ story and executive producer Ronald Shusett is also credited as co-developer; nevertheless, it is *Alien* director Ridley Scott who is often attributed with creating the ‘Alien’ franchise (Parrill 2011; Mamber 2019). Moreover, the franchise would not be what it is today without the work of other originators: concept artist H.R. Giger; producers Gordon Carroll, David Giler, and Walter Hill; studio Twentieth Century Fox and its executive Alan Ladd Jr.; practical effects artist Carlo Rambaldi; composer Jerry Goldsmith; and actor Sigourney Weaver—not to ignore the contributions of subsequent directors, James Cameron, David Fincher, and Jean-Pierre Jeunet and many other contributors.[17] Authorship of the ‘Alien’ franchise is thus a network of multiple authorial units, whereby each installment is characterized by different narrational and aesthetic styles that form distinct points of origin with endless creative influence. Similarly, Angela Ndalianis describes the ‘Alien’ franchise as dominated by “multiple narrative centers” across its multi-platform serial network that includes feature movies, shorts, comic book series, video games, novels, and an immersive installation:

> Within the spectrum of multiple ‘‘Alien’’ narratives like *Alien, Aliens, Alien Resurrection, Aliens: Stronghold, Alien Wars*, and *Aliens/Predator: The Deadliest of the Species*, one narrative center is not given priority over another. Instead, multiple narrative centers dominate, and the resulting polycentric structures engage in a process of intertextual and serial interaction that depends on a dynamic exchange between systems. (2004, 64)

Ndalianis analyses the ‘Alien’ franchise in terms of how it reflects the logic of neo-baroque aesthetics; while this frame of reference differs from the focus of this thesis, it provides insight into the poetic structures of blockbuster franchising, by incorporating the multiple systems of authorship, narrative, and aesthetics.

The principle of multiple endless origins primarily concerns authorship and ownership in blockbuster franchising, but it also accounts for the originality of narrative ideation shaped by seriality. Seriality within the same franchise storyworld in not inevitably derivative but rather represent multiple instances of origination. The roster of creative and

[17] As noted of the ‘Bond’ franchise, this is a cursory summary and does not reflect a comprehensive account of authorship and creation of the ‘Alien’ franchise. Even so, the principle of multiple endless origins accounts for and can incorporate a broad and intensive understanding of who and what roles can (and do) contribute to the creation of a blockbuster franchise.

industrial contributors to the 'Alien' franchise continues to grow with multiple sequels, multi-platforms extensions, and a storyworld cross-over with the 'Predator' franchise (1987–). Within this network of multiple authors, sequels, and multi-platform extensions, narration does not simply derive from what has come before but constitutes a series of endless origins in process. Despite O'Bannon and Shusett's ideation of *Alien* (and by extension the 'Alien' storyworld) Scott is attributed as creator of the 'Alien' universe in the publicity surrounding the later installment, *Alien: Covenant* (2017): according to the movie's official press release, the prequel installment "marks visionary director Ridley Scott's return to the universe he created" (Twentieth Century Fox 2017, para. 1). However, Scott did not *create* the 'Alien' universe in any direct or legal sense but derived his directorial vision for the 'Alien' universe from O'Bannon and Shusset's original ideation. This exemplifies the endlessness of Scott's originality at the same that it reinforces the importance of conceptualizing authorship as a series of multiple endless origins that account for the influence of multiple creators. Ndalianis makes a similar observation in her assessment of authorship and seriality across the 'Alien' franchise:

> While emphasizing elements of repetition, the authors of each variation may also be intent on outperforming and developing preceding works: refashioning the past. New story fragments introduced therefore dynamically interact with other story fragments, uniting to create multiple, yet unified, story formations. Within such polycentric systems the notion of the self-contained, closed text disappears and the reader or viewer becomes enraveled in the intricate network of connections that intersect numerous stories and media. (2004, 61)

With the 'Alien' franchise, this intricate network of authorial variations and story formations is demonstrated by the important narrative role played by the themes of 'origination' and 'creation' in its storyworld mythos. This is especially prominent in the prequels *Prometheus* (2012) and *Alien: Covenant*, which reveal the origins of the Xenomorphs (the alien creatures) as a means of also exploring the phenomenon of human creation (with tag lines like 'The search for our beginning could lead to our end' and 'Discover the Origin of Terror'). More significantly, the theme of creation is a catalyst in the development of the 'Alien' concept (initially titled *Star Beast*): Thomson reveals that "Dan O'Bannon had the first idea—yet he likely had it because of a disagreement over where ideas came from, and who owned them" (1998, 3).[18] Moreover, the topic of 'origination' is highlighted in the *Alien* documentary *Memory: The Origins of Alien* (2019), which honors O'Bannon's initial conception of the

[18] This disagreement involved John Carpenter and credit over *Dark Star* (1974).

story while he is also quoted admitting "I didn't steal from anybody, I stole from everybody," and Scott concludes that *Alien* is a "a symbiosis of a few people." *Memory* thus reflects on the phenomenon of authorship and its connection with creative originality, where in the documentary philosophy scholar William Linh suggests that "when a story comes from multiple people, and beyond the agency of multiple people, it has a special existence". With this idea Linh suggests that this power of narration and its intersection with multiple authors gives *Alien* (and implicitly the 'Alien' franchise) a special existence. I agree with this assessment and suggest that this symbiosis of creators and narrative—and the "special existence" of the produced work—is not exclusive to *Alien* or the 'Alien' franchise but is a norm of transtextual authorship in blockbuster franchising.

The existence and interaction of multiple endless origins is not new or inherent to authorship in the blockbuster franchise. It corresponds in many ways with the well-cited and over-theorized phenomenon of intertextuality, led by poststructuralist theorists Julia Kristeva and Roland Barthes. Kristeva defines the 'text' as "a trans-linguistic apparatus"—that is, "a permutation of texts, an intertextuality: in the space of a given text, several utterances, taken from other texts, intersect and neutralize one another" ([1969] 1980, 36). Drawing from Ferdinand de Saussure's 'semiology' and Mikhail Bakhtin's 'dialogism,' Kristeva conceptualizes intertextuality as a "mosaic of quotations," in which "any text is the absorption and transformation of another" (66). Therefore, intertextuality undermines the singularity of authorship and the ingenuity of originality in favor of a dialogic intersection between multiple authors, receivers, and cultural-historical contexts (65). Barthes is more radical in his articulation of how intertextuality disrupts authorship and originality, by which he proposes the loss of origin (1974, 10) and the death of the author in favor of the "birth of the reader" (1977, 148). Barthes argues that "a text's unity lies not in its origin but in its destination" (148), which is to say that textuality is constructed through its reception not its creation. Moreover, for Barthes, intertextuality determines that all texts are always already "a plurality of other texts, of codes which are infinite or, more precisely, lost" (1974, 10). In interchanging infinity and loss, Barthes paradoxically suggests that textual codes are endless because they are lost, and not that origin may always already be a multiplicity. In his rejection of the singular authority of the 'Author-God,' Barthes notes that "the text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture" (1977, 146); however, nothing seems to preclude these innumerable centers as instances of multiple endless origins based on creative persistence, rather than the loss of origination.

Intertextuality is commonly used to understand the relations and intersections of the multiple texts that make up a blockbuster franchise; such references to intertextuality are exhaustive, if not unproductively excessive. As surveyed in my thesis introduction, "intertextuality" has been used to define franchising (Herbert 2018), describe how franchises interrelate across media (Kinder 1991), and to account for the ways that franchises are contextualized culturally and industrially (Meehan 1991; Herbert 2018; Benson 2020). For example, Herbert defines franchises as "cultural texts whose intertextual linkages have been made by industrial design, with the aim to expand and spread that same property as far and wide as possible" (2018, 86). It seems that 'intertextuality' is used as a catch-all term to describe the interrelationships of multiple texts across time, which incidentally implicates questions of creative ideation, origination, and ownership. In contrast, Gérard Genette's articulation of intertextuality is restrictively defined as "a relationship of copresence between two texts or among several texts" ([1982] 1997, 1); Genette reserves the term 'intertextuality' for instances of quotation, allusion, and plagiarism. Moreover, where most scholars, theorists, and commentators broadly refer to 'intertextuality' to identify all instances of cultural and textual relationship, Genette prefers 'transtextuality' because it establishes a pragmatic paradigm for understanding structural poetics (1). As Graham Allen explains, for Genette intertextuality is "not a radical instability or pluralism à la Barthes and Kristeva, but a *pragmatic* structuralism" (2011, 97; original emphasis). Therefore, through Genette's conceptualization, intertextuality establishes the structural basis for the co-existence of multiple endless origins in blockbuster franchising.

To continue with the 'Alien' franchise as an example, intertextuality works to understand the co-presence of multiple endless origins across a franchise. This is exemplified by the endless iconicity of the franchise's 'chestburster' sequence and its perpetual reinvention across the franchise: it is initially realized in *Alien* (Figure 1), recalled by the threat of its repeat in a nightmare in *Aliens* (1986) (Figure 2), then reimagined with a dog in *Alien*^{3} (1992) and as a 'headburster' in *Alien: Resurrection* (1997) (Figure 3) before it is reinvented as a 'backburster' and a stylistically re-enacted 'chestburster' in *Alien: Covenant* (2017) (Figure 4). These are intertextual instances that negotiate the copresence of multiple endless origins across the 'Alien' franchise: they simultaneously represent the endlessness of origination while they articulate new proliferations of origination. Therefore, as a type of transtextuality, intertextuality underpins the poetic construction of multiple endless origins. Genette's treatment of intertextuality, and the broader framework of transtextuality,

productively makes sense of origination and textual relations in blockbuster franchising because it categorizes the nuances of textual relations into a stabilized poetic system.



Figure 1: 'Chestburster' in *Alien*

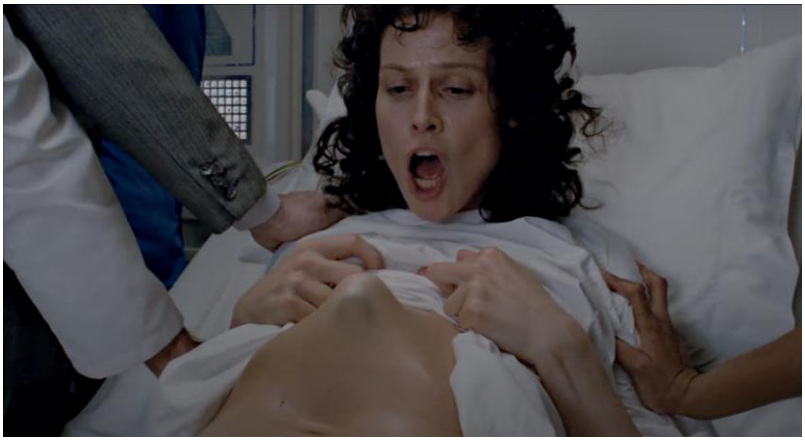


Figure 2: ‘Chestburster’ nightmare in *Aliens*



Figure 3: ‘Dogburster’ in *Alien*[3] and ‘Headburster’ in *Alien: Resurrection*



Figure 4: ‘Backburster’ (left) and ‘Chestburster’ (right) in *Alien: Covenant*

Canonical Adaptation

Canonical adaptation is a principle of transtextual authorship that concerns the recognition of authenticity, authority, and officialism in how creative ideation is translated across multiple texts and media platforms. In the above section, I identified that authorship in blockbuster franchising is constituted by a polycentric network of origination and that all instances of creative ideation—whether perceived to be 'original' or 'derivative'—contribute to a complex tapestry of multiple endless origins. The principle of canonical adaptation works in tandem with this tapestry of authorship to delineate a scope of authenticity and officialism within the ever-expanding volume of textual elements that can make up a blockbuster franchise. For example, the 'Bond' intellectual property has generated a vast intertextual assemblage of licensed adaptations, which as discussed above is constituted by an extensive network of multiple endless origins. In its broadest sense, the 'Bond' franchise is composed of a vast multitude of licensed adaptations across multiple platforms, including literary works officially licensed by Ian Fleming Publications, movies produced by Eon Productions (Broccoli and Salzman), Taliafilm Productions (Schwartzman), and Columbia Pictures (Charles K. Feldman), and other licensed works in the form of comic books and video games; however, not all these 'Bond' iterations are perceived as the 'official Bond franchise'—this is a label only attributed to movie adaptations produced by Eon Productions, and excludes 'non-Eon' licensed adaptations such as the segment "Casino Royale" in the television show *Climax!* (1954), and the movies *Casino Royale* (1967) and *Never Say Never Again* (1983).[19] Canonical adaptation thus relates to the ways that authorship and ownership delineate a specific scope of officialism for specific aspects of a franchise.

The concept of canon is defined simply as a "rule," "law," "norm," or "authoritative list," with the meaning of these usages bound up in the theological application to Biblical texts (Schnabel 1995, 17).[20] In the context of blockbuster franchising, canonicity is a principle whereby a core set of works are designated as an official and authentic realization of a franchise property, which is usually sanctioned by the author or a representative authority. Canon is an important aspect of authorship because the designation of 'canon' is

[19] I will consider how this distinction impacts formula in chapter 4.

[20] Canon's association with theological articulations of 'law' also translates to notions of 'mythic lore' in expansive narratives.

ultimately tied to the structures of authors and owners, which William Proctor calls "authorial governance" (2017, 242). Similarly, Wolf states how in the canon texts of a storyworld "the author is considered the true source of world material, the creative vision that makes a unified experience" (2012, 271). Canonicity is thus also a marker of origination. Benjamin W.L. Derhy Kurtz identifies that canon is constituted by three essential elements: "*consistency, authenticity markers,* and *authoritative figures*" (2017, 105; original emphasis). These elements account for the ways that canonicity is tied to how franchise authors and authorities represent sentiments of authenticity and how this works to secure and control transtextual multiplicity. For example, the 'Marvel Cinematic Universe' ('MCU') franchise establishes a cinematic canon within the broader Marvel Universe brand by consolidating a selected set of Marvel characters and stories for adaptation; in this context, 'Marvel Studios' is a marker of authenticity that contrasts with less-authentic adaptations of Marvel characters produced by other studios through licensing arrangements (with Sony, Fox, and Universal). As Genette explains, "the term *canon* means, among other things, 'official list of the works of an author or a group.' A work disowned by its author…departs from the canon—without, it seems to me, thereby leaving its author's bibliography" ([1987] 1997, 100n61; original emphasis). This indicates that canon is the principle through which authorship negotiates the authenticity of creative practice over an extended period, but it can also counter expressions of creative authenticity by ranking authorship into official and unofficial categories in line with industrial strategy.

While the designation of canon is based on the authority of authorship, the significance of canonical meaning is shaped by the relations between textuality, authorship, and reception. In this context, canonicity is a principle of liminal textuality, since "the canonicity status a given transtext has can also evolve through time, either positively or negatively, as further installments can shed light on its canonicity and canonical impact, or lack thereof" (Derhy Kurtz 2017, 111). This corresponds with Genette's concept of paratexuality, which accounts for elements of texts that inform, surround, and shape the text, but which are not explicitly part of the text itself, such as titles, author's name, production logo, interviews with creators, trailers, and official publicity ([1987] 1997; Gray 2010). Canon is therefore paratextual because it occupies the threshold between the authority, textuality, and reception of an author's brand status. I will expand on this function of paratextuality in the next section of auteurism, and the subsequent chapter on franchise production, but it is of relevance here to note Genette's point that "a paratextual element may appear at any time, it may also disappear, definitely or not, by authorial decision or outside

intervention or by virtue of the eroding effect of time" ([1987] 1997, 6). Apt examples of this are the *Star Wars Holiday Special* (1978), *The Ewok Adventure: Caravan of Courage* (1984), and *Ewoks: The Battle for Endor* (1985), which were initially created with Lucas' authority and categorized as canon but have since been disowned by Lucas.[21] According to Genette, "the *official* is any paratextual message openly accepted by the author or publisher or both—a message for which the author or publisher cannot evade responsibility" (10; original emphasis). In blockbuster franchising, canon is important to fandom and the processes of reception, which "demonstrates the desire for authenticity from the point of view of the audience, who are often concerned with demarcating what is 'official' for a world or franchise" (Wolf 2012, 271). This is clear in the backlash to Lucasfilm's reorganization of its canon, with its vast licensed works that were once sanctioned by Lucasfilm under the name 'Expanded Universe' now unified under the designation of 'Legends' and relegated to non-canon. It is logical that Disney would reorganize the 'Star Wars' canon upon its acquisition of Lucasfilm because the relationship between the intellectual property and its owner had changed, but this redefinition of canon had greater cultural significance for the franchise's fandom. As David Lindsay contends,

> it is important to appreciate the continued cultural significance of the distinction between canonical and non-canonical versions of an entertainment franchise. Owners of such a franchise naturally have a strong interest in being *a source* (although not necessarily *the sole source*) of canonical meaning, and in being perceived by a fan community as the responsible (and potentially responsive) guardians (or co-guardians) of canonical meaning. In other words, there must necessarily be some core, or 'authentic', meaning against which iterations of the universe can be played out. (2014, 63; original emphasis)

With this passage, Lindsay recognizes the potential existence of multiple origins and identifies how canon articulates coherence and cohesion as storyworlds expand and adapt across multiple installments and media platforms. As such, canonicity is a transtextual category that establishes industrial authority and creative coherence in extensive blockbuster franchises.

Adaptation is difficult to define because it continues to transform as the relationships between media evolve. As Robert Stam explains, adaptation "is less an attempted resuscitation of an originary word than a turn in an ongoing dialogical process" (2000, 64).

[21] Apparently, Lucas once said he wanted to track down every copy of *The Holiday Special* and smash it with a sledgehammer (Higgins 2019).

Adaptation is conventionally associated with the direct translation of narrative from one medium to another; traditionally, adaptation implies novel to film (McFarlane 1996), but this understanding must change in the era of media convergence. In his work on adaptation in franchise era, Kyle Meikle considers that "the media franchises of the early 2000s reimaged both the textual and actual bodies involved in adaptation, redefining adaptation's scope, legality, interactivity, and physicality" (2019, 6). In this context, Linda Hutcheon and Siobhan O'Flynn ask, "when it is not a single, fixed, recognizable story that is being adapted, but rather an on-going, unstable, open-ended 'multitext,' where do we draw the line at what we call an adaptation?" (2013, xxiv). Liam Burke points to the comic book film adaptation as a productive locus through which to interrogate the state of adaptation in contemporary Hollywood, arguing that "comics have proven uniquely positioned to navigate and thrive in the universal communication of convergence culture with its many transmedia ties" (2015, 73). This is exemplified by the creative-industrial strategy that underpins the 'MCU' franchise, which balances a dynamic between comic book adaptation practice in the conventional sense—that is, to retell the same stories, characters, and plot events in a different medium—and expansive transmedial world-building that extends beyond known comic book narratives.

The relationship between transmedia and adaptation is a point of contention for transmedia scholars and practitioners, with most divided in schools of thought based on 'adaptation exclusion' (Jenkins 2003 & 2006; Long 2007; Scolari 2009; Evans 2011; Bourdaa 2013; Dowd 2013 & 2015) and 'adaptation inclusion' (Dena 2009 & 2019; Ruppel 2012). The distinction between adaptation exclusion and inclusion is driven by pedagogical efforts to articulate what makes transmedia storytelling distinct as a narrative strategy; as Geoffrey Long explains, "retelling a story in a different media type is *adaptation*, while using multiple media types to craft a single story is *transmediation*" (Long 2007, 22; original emphasis). Implicated in this distinction is the notion that adaptation is redundant because it fails to contribute new or original characters and plot development not already represented by a source text (Jenkins 2006, 105). However, as a proponent of adaptation inclusion, Christy Dena points out that "adaptation rarely involves a simple retelling" (2019, 201), which signals that the instance of 'adaptation exclusion' in transmedia studies represents an underestimation of the potential for originality or differentiation to come out of the adaptation process; this relates to Hutcheon's point that, "from the adapter's perspective," adaptation always involves "interpreting and then creating something new" (Hutcheon 2006, 20). Such debates over whether adaptation be included or excluded in the definition and practice of

transmedia storytelling reveals the ways that adaptation negotiates questions of originality and intertextuality in authorship. Adaptation is thus firmly associated with how we understand the poetics of transtextual authorship in blockbuster franchising.

Regardless of whether a franchise installment employs the transmedia strategy, or whether transmedia storytelling is even conceptually or practically compatible with adaptation, I identify that the process of adaptation underpins all instances of blockbuster franchising. In her incisive article on franchise adaptations, Clare Parody asks "what, precisely, are franchise adaptations adapting[?]" (2011, 213). While conventional studies of adaptation focus on the adaptation of story, plot, genre, and character (Hutcheon 2006, 10), this falls short when dealing with franchise mode. Like seriality, adaptation is firmly grounded in the dynamic between a 'source' and a 'derivation'; as such, common perception points to the 'original' or initial text as the source—for example, the first novel in the 'Harry Potter' series, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (Rowling 1997). However, as blockbuster franchising becomes transtextually more complex and polycentric, it is no longer useful to identify the source text in this way. Parody aptly states that franchises adapt "a *brand identity*, the intellectual property" (2011, 214; original emphasis), and I entirely agree with this contention. In the franchise mode, the source text is not the initial or 'original' work, but the intellectual property as a transtextual object—that is to say, a legally protected creative idea. As such, the source text of the 'Star Wars' franchise is not *Star Wars: Episode IV—A New Hope* (1977), but it is "Star Wars" as a trademark and copyright created by George Lucas and owned by The Walt Disney Company (via Lucasfilm). Therefore, all franchise installments are the product and process of adaptation because they adapt a coherent intellectual property. I will elaborate on the idea of the intellectual property object as a source transtext in chapter 2.

In broader terms, canonicity and adaptation are concepts with distinct histories and critical discourses, as the above discussion alludes.[22] Moreover, the conceptual hybridization of canon and adaptation is productive for understanding how the franchise mode is constructed because a relationship between the proprietorship of creative ideation (intellectual property) and the transtextual expansion of storyworlds will always lend itself to matters of canonicity in adaptation. Nonetheless, canonicity and adaptation are not necessarily harmonious, but must negotiate a complex dynamic between the openness of

[22] For work on canon see: Wolf 2012, Derhy Kurtz 2017, and Proctor 2017; for work on adaptation see: Hutcheon 2006; Leitch 2007; Cartmell, Corrigan, and Whelehan 2008; Cartmell and Whelehan 2010; Burke 2015.

intertextual dialogism and the potential constraints of canonicity. Parody considers that canon might even work against the nature of franchise adaptation:

> The intertextuality of franchise adaptation is further complicated by the fact that the franchise multitext is characteristically diffuse and unstable. Its boundaries are indeterminate, in the sense that franchise production is typically ongoing and open ended, and insofar as its narratives and worldbuilding frequently spill over into liminal texts like creator interviews or authorized guides, material that is quasi-fictional and quasi-paratextual. Where franchise production is diasporic and development un-coordinated, canonicity, continuity, and authority become problematic concepts, constantly re-negotiated. (2011, 212)

In this passage, Parody signals the tension between canonicity and adaptation, in which canonicity is tied to notions of official authorial sanction, but adaptation is thought to undermine such authority; similarly, Jack Boozer suggests that authority is made "fragile" by adaptation (2008, 1). Conversely, I consider that canonicity draws upon authorial legacy and authenticity to stabilize the discursivity of adaptation. Stam describes adaptation as an "ongoing whirl of intertextual reference and transformation of texts generating other texts in an endless process of recycling, transformation, and transmutation, with no clear point of origin" (2000, 66); however, the conceptual integration of canon and adaptation draws attention to origination and stabilizes this 'whirl of intertextuality' through paratextual authority and authenticity. In canonical adaptation, canon can be thought to represent the paratextual authority and authenticity of authorship, while adaptation accounts for the intertextual logic of transtextual multiplicity in the translation of narratives across multiple works and media. In the previous section I identified that the transtextual authorship of blockbuster franchising is constituted by a potentially never-ending series of multiple endless origins; furthermore, I made the point that authorship in blockbuster franchising is not necessarily collaborative or concentrically hierarchal but forms a polycentric tapestry of origins. Adding to this, canonical adaptation is the principle through which a set of texts is assigned creative and/or proprietary authority while intellectual property is perpetually adapted into multiple works.

Concept-Auteurs

Auteurism has imposed an unrelenting burden on film criticism and scholarly inquiry, creative development, and movie production. Historically labelled the *la politique des auteurs* in *Cahiers du Cinéma* (Truffaut 1954; Bazin [1957] 1985), the *auteur theory* made a

lasting impact on Hollywood, and subsequently film scholarship, when it was introduced in the American journal *Film Culture* (Sarris 1962). The auteur theory is primarily characterized by the "recurrence of similar themes" and "a distinctive film style" (King 2002, 87) that constitutes the director's "personal stamp" (Bazin [1957] 1985, 255) or signature. The idea that individual Hollywood directors could be considered autonomous artists with a personal signature style ignited an influential movement of auteur criticism throughout scholarship and cultural commentary (Sarris 1962; Kael 1963; Wollen 1969), which elevated the auteur's signature to that of artistic genius. Also important to the 'auteur theory' as an approach to criticism, especially in Hollywood, is how the individual director works to express their creative vision within the context of industrial conditions and norms. Geoff King asserts that "notions of auteurism, or any cinema of 'personal' expression in Hollywood, always have to be qualified by consideration of the industrial dimension. Where freedom has been available, it has been the product largely of specific industrial factors" (2002, 104). For King, and for many scholars seeking to understand the ongoing function of auteurism in contemporary Hollywood, the industrial factor has been an important conditional influence on how auteurism operates in contemporary Hollywood cinema. While today many scholars and industry practitioners argue that moviemaking is not a singular endeavor in practice (Stillinger 1991; Johnson and Gray 2013), others will concede that the notion of individual artistic vision still maintains a functional presence in contemporary Hollywood (Grant 2000 & 2008; Elsaesser 2012). While the tenet of solitary artistic genius may no longer have the significance and practical value it once held in the Hollywood system, key aspects like signature style, recurrent patterns, and industrial barriers still hold function and utility within the franchise mode of production.

In the early twenty-first century, several scholars have re-engaged with the study of auteurism and sought to reconsider and re-adapt the relevance of auteurism in a contemporary context (King 2002; Buckland 2003; Lewis 2003; Bernstein 2008; Grant 2008, Elsaesser 2012). These contemporary engagements with auteurism seek to address the shortfalls of traditional auteur criticism, which often struggles to consider other factors that shape the work, such as industry, historical context, or multiple authorship. To this end, scholars have looked to other manifestations of the auteur: Matthew Bernstein considers the producer as auteur (2008); King examines the industrialized commerce of the contemporary auteur (2002); Buckland redefines the auteur based on the vertical re-integration across all facets of movie making (2003); Jon Lewis (2003) and Catherine Grant (2008) each present the function of the auteur as a commercial machine; and Elsaesser signals the return of the

"system as auteur" (2012, 223). These scholars have sought to preserve the legacy of traditional 'auteur theory,' particularly its historical influence on film scholarship, but have explored its capacity to critically engage with authorial meaning across multiple works. Such efforts to adapt and redefine the auteur role to suit contemporary production models is necessary, but the 'auteur theory' has always accounted for the context of a work and its director. Peter Wollen explains that "what the auteur theory argues is that any film, certainly a Hollywood film, is a network of different statements, crossing and contradicting each other, elaborated into a final 'coherent' version" ([1969] 1972, 167). Wollen realizes that the idea of the director as solitary artistic genius is underpinned by an awareness of unified patterns of textuality across a director's series of work.[23] Similarly, the franchise mode is 'a network of different statements' often also 'crossing and contradicting each other, elaborated into a final coherent version'. I consider that the dominance of the franchise mode forces us to recover aspects of the 'auteur theory' that have been there all along. One such aspect is the semiotic understanding of the text-as-subject perspective in singular authorship. Wollen suggests that even though the auteur 'directs' the construction of textuality the produced text "is open rather than closed; multiple rather than single; productive rather than exhaustive. Although it is produced by an individual, the author, it does not simply represent or express the author's ideas, but exists in its own right" (163). This perspective is reinforced by Dudley Andrew, who argues that "an auteur may be surrounded by the images for which it is claimed he is responsible, while not directing their reading" (1993, 83). This conceptualizes the auteur not as a super-presence that controls from above, but a transtextual presence that is propelled into a dynamic relationship with multiple texts and other authors.

Despite the occurrence of multiple endless origins, transtextual authorship remains grounded in centralizing authorial forces. As described above, canonical adaptation is instrumental in facilitating this because it works to organize multiple origins based on measures of authority and authenticity; moreover, the principle of the concept-auteur is also critical, since it acknowledges the persistent significance of the auteur in blockbuster franchising. The auteur theory is a staple of film criticism generally—and Hollywood cinema most especially—because it works to elevate the aesthetic value of the medium through the romanticized rubric of solitary artistic genius. As Warren Buckland describes,

[23] Wollen contributes this perspective in the postscript to his 1972 revised edition of *Signs and Meaning in the Cinema* (originally published 1969), which is often identified as an example of 'revisionist auteurism'. However, as Mitsuhiro Yoshimoto suggests, "Wollen's revisionist auteurism is not essentially different from classical auteurism" (2000, 58).

> The traditional criteria for identifying authorship are internal to films, and centre on the auteur's control of the filmmaking process. This internal approach to auteurism can be divided into two categories: the classical auteur, a skilled craft worker who has matured — and indeed represents — "the tradition"; and the Romantic auteur: a lone, creative genius who works intuitively and mysteriously outside of all traditions. The category of the Romantic auteur is reserved primarily for the (traditionally European) art film director, or American independents. (2006, 13)

For these reasons, the status of the auteur is frequently considered incompatible with the industrially driven authorship of blockbuster franchising; this perspective underpins Scorsese's assertion that blockbuster franchising is "not cinema" because, to recall, he argues that it lacks the "unifying vision of an individual artist" (2019, para. 18). Moreover, in making his argument Scorsese recalls how art "could be found in the films of Alfred Hitchcock" and then suggests that "you could say that Hitchcock was his own franchise. Or that he was *our* franchise. Every new Hitchcock picture was an event" (2019, para. 7; original emphasis). There is no doubt of underlying condescension here, since Scorsese uses the term franchise as a historically incongruous buzzword; however, there is indeed validity to the idea of an auteur as a transtextual property in itself,[24] in which the 'auteur' is—and perhaps in some way has always been—a concept or brand (Elsaesser 2012, 288) more than it has ever genuinely been a theory of unencumbered singular creation. The notion of the auteur has always worked in tension with the collaborative labor practices of Hollywood production, whether during the studio system, on a Hitchcock or blockbuster production. Nevertheless, authorship in the franchise mode is not divorced from singular or individualized expressions of creativity, origination, or ideation that are most associated with auteurism, but mediates a singular vision within the franchise system, as Hitchcock worked within the conditions and constraints of the classical Hollywood system.

Distinctive auteur directors have remained crucial to how blockbuster franchising attracts different audience segments, establishes creative prestige and authority, and facilitates product differentiation and variation. In interview with Gray, creative producer Ivan Askwith admits that "whether or not the notion of author makes sense, I think the notion of 'auteur' makes more sense than ever: the idea of a unified creative vision and sensibility that holds things together" (2013, 318). There are several examples of directors who have maintained their reputation as 'auteurs' in the franchise mode, some more successfully than

[24] It is possible to identify similar sentiments in the notions of a Tarantinoverse or Whedonverse (Kennedy-Karpat 2017; Bailey 2013; Kitchens and Hawk 2019).

others: J.J. Abrams (*Star Trek* [2009], *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* [2015], and *Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker* [2019], Ryan Coogler (*Black Panther* [2018]), Alfonso Cuarón (*Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* [2004]), James Gunn (*Guardians of the Galaxy* [2014] and *Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2* [2017]), Ron Howard (*Solo: A Star Wars Story* [2018]), Rian Johnson (*Star Wars: the Last Jedi* [2017]), Christopher Nolan (*Batman Begins* [2005], *The Dark Knight* [2008], and *The Dark Knight Rises* [2012]), Zack Snyder (*Man of Steel* [2013], *Batman v. Superman: Dawn of Justice* [2016], and *Justice League* [2017]), Taika Waititi (*Thor: Ragnarok* [2017]), Joss Whedon (*The Avengers* [2012] and *Avengers: Age of Ultron* [2015]). Singular authorship thus maintains a crucial presence in blockbuster franchising as a high-concept brand, a marker of artistic canonicity, and a source of stylistic differentiation. However, Gomez reveals that franchise development can be a "very difficult process when 1960s auteurist theory still drives so much of the Hollywood machine" (2019a, quest. 9). This statement specifically refers to the failure of the 'Dark Universe' franchise and "its rejection of the messaging of an entire storyworld, because of an adherence to auteurist filmic approach" (quest. 9); however, this is not an isolated problem and Gomez also cites Snyder's central role in the 'DC' franchise as an example of this clash between auteurism and storyworld development. In interview I asked Gomez if he thought there might still be potential for auteurism to play a role in transmedia franchising—referencing Coogler and Waititi as examples of auteurs that remain personally driven and creatively innovating within the 'MCU'—to which he affirmingly added, "I would even say that this has made the franchise even better for Marvel" (quest. 11). As Gomez clarifies, "it doesn't mean that there is no room for auteurs, but rather that the mythos of the franchise has to come first" (quest. 12). I will return to the idea of the franchise mythos in chapter 4 when I discuss the franchising formula, but here I emphasize that the transtextual authorship of the franchise mode constitutes a tension between the multiplicity of transtextual poetics, the complex authorial dynamics working within this context, and the obstinate persistence of singular authorship as an exceptional creative ideal.

The notion the *concept-auteur* productively conceptualizes the dialogism between singular creative genius and the industrial systematization of blockbuster production. This concept is based on Elsaesser's "concept-author," which he explains draws "attention both to the mode of production as 'high concept,' and to the resulting narrative as (in concept, if not actuality) a brand or franchise" (2012, 288). This also relates to J. D. Connor's discussion of the logo centricity of contemporary Hollywood, in which he uses *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (1981) as an example to say that while "the idea is Spielberg's" and "the property is

Paramount's" the movie "is the consummation of the marriage between auteur and studio" (2015, 25).[25] In this context, the term 'concept' in concept-auteur represents forces of ideation, branding, and creative property working systematically to coalesce individual creative expression with the conditions of the franchise mode. In the franchise mode, the auteur must work to maintain her or his creative vision, brand, and signature style in accordance with the creative and industrial conditions of the franchise, which includes the interests of the intellectual property or its licensing arrangements and the organization of the studio. For example, several directors—including Edgar Wright (*Ant-Man*, 2015), Colin Trevorrow (Star Wars: Episode IX), Phil Lord and Christopher Miller (*Solo: A Star Wars Story*, 2018)—have parted ways from blockbuster franchises due to 'creative differences' that often implies a failure to negotiate an auteurist vision within a franchise mythos or brand. An auteur working in the franchise mode needs to negotiate creative vision within the conditions and priorities of the broader narrative and studio organization. This principle is not that far removed from the traditional premise of auteur criticism that, as Andrew Sarris explains, "values the personality of a director precisely because of the barriers to its expression" (1968, 31). In blockbuster franchising, the auteur works towards the same goal she or he strives to achieve in any mode of production, which is to realize a singular creative vision within the Hollywood system; moreover, in the franchise mode, the concept-auteur must also take heed of the conditions, affordances, and interests of the intellectual property and its storyworld mythos.[26] Therefore, the concept-auteur is a principle of transtextual authorship that most strongly represents the poetic utility of individual creative genius in the Romanticist tradition, but recontextualizes its function in Hollywood of the early twenty-first century in relation to branding, blockbuster franchising, and total entertainment.

The *concept-auteur* conceptualizes multiple dimensions at play for authorship and the construction of the *auteur* in blockbuster franchising, whereby the auteur contributes to the creative expression of concepts (or franchise properties) and is also themself a concept-brand that serves a marketing purpose. This duality is driven by the various articulation of the auteur's 'signature style' where "cinema is part of the media economy that has reduced the auteur to a sign, indeed precisely to a signature" (Andrew 1993, 82). This takes on different dimensions for the concept-auteur in the Hollywood blockbuster, and specifically the

[25] However, this is not entirely correct because the story idea of *Raiders of the Lost Ark* is credited to George Lucas and Philip Kaufman, not Steven Spielberg, and the property is owned by Lucasfilm, not Paramount Pictures; even so, the relationship between auteur and studio is still significant in the notion of the concept-auteur.
[26] Storyworld mythos will be discussed in chapter 4.

franchise mode since an auteur's signature style must also negotiate itself in relation to the proprietary and storyworld conditions of a franchise. Jon Lewis writes about the evolution of the signature style in auteurism of the blockbuster era and suggests that "in the new Hollywood, auteurism and celebrity intersect in interesting ways. Auteurs gain notoriety less for a signature style than for a signature product" (2003, 18). This suggests that the blockbuster auteur both produces a product and *is* a product. Elsaesser considers 'signature product' to be a useful term for making a distinction in how the auteur expresses her or his 'signature' and considers it helps to redefine the auteur's role as director, to incorporate other authorial roles, such as producer, writer, editor and so forth (2012, 283). Moreover, the signature product positions the auteur within the entertainment marketing mix, as a name-brand creator of a recognizable (blockbuster) signature product. The notion of the auteur as brand is central to studies of contemporary auteurism, in what Timothy Corrigan terms the 'commerce of auteurism' (1998, 53), in which "auteurs are, often and largely, defined by their commercial status and their ability to promote a film, sometimes regardless of its distinction" (43).[27] While this might productively account for how the auteur functions in the New Hollywood blockbuster era, I consider it necessary to adapt the notion of the 'signature product' to the 'signature property' in the franchise era of the early twenty-first century. This slight shift reframes auteur practice not merely as creative *output* (implied by signature product) but also as having the authority of creative *input* (as a signature property). For example, in the MCU installment *Thor: Ragnarok*, Waititi's signature humor and marginalized awkward characters represent his style in a highly managed franchise model, but these attributes also reflectively bleed into the textual fabric of the franchise and its storyworld mythos. Waititi's realization of the Thor character also incidentally shapes how the character continues to develop in subsequent installments directed by other auteurs, such as *Avengers: Endgame* (2019) directed by Anthony and Joe Russo. As a concept-auteur, Waititi not only creates product output for the MCU, but he also inputs his signature property. Therefore, like with signature style and signature product, the signature property is a key component in characterizing the concept-auteur because it demarcates the auteur's presence within a franchise property in ways that account for the synergy of authorial signature, creative input, and ideation as property.

The signature property coalesces various creative and industrial functions in the

[27] For other examples of work on the auteur as brand see: King 2002; Buckland 2003; Staiger 2003; Leitch 2005; Williams 2006; Bernstein 2008; and Elsaesser 2012.

franchise mode: signature denotes recurrent aesthetic or narrative patterns, studio branding, author credits, and the auteur's literal signature on a contract that represents the agreement between studio and auteur. In the signature property, property refers to intellectual property and the authorship and ownership of ideas, but also accounts for properties that characterize the auteur's signature style. For the concept-auteur, these elements converge, and the notion of the signature becomes a mark of mediation between transtextual production and industrial branding. The auteur signature thus mediates the relationship between texts and authors, and thus occupies the paratextual threshold "between text and beyond text" (Genette [1987] 1997, 407). As a branding and crediting device, the signature names the concept-auteur: for Genette, the practice of naming the author has paratextual significance, whereby "the author's name fulfills a contractual function" between audience, reader, and text (41). The studio logo is an example of this, especially if the studio also incorporates the name of the auteur or creative source, like The Walt Disney Company (Walt Disney), Lucasfilm Ltd. (George Lucas), Marvel Studios (Marvel Comics), Scott Free (Ridley Scott), and SKG DreamWorks (Steven Spielberg, Jeffrey Katzenberg, and David Geffen). Gray considers how the author as brand becomes "an inter- or paratextual framing device," thereby rendering the author's name to be "a paratext that manages a broader textual system" (2010, 127). As such, Gray explains that "we can only approach texts *through* paratexts" (2010, 25; original emphasis). This signals how the name brand of the concept-auteur is fundamental to blockbuster franchising, regardless of creative control afforded. Dudley Andrew eloquently articulates the complexity of the auteur's 'signature' and its critical role in shaping the relationship between auteur and text:

> Always a problematic and very special sign, the signature of the author is a mark on the surface of the text signaling its source. The signature embeds within it – as in hypertext – a genuine fourth dimension, the temporal process that brought the text into being in the first place. The signature moors the film's image to a submerged reef of values by means of the slender line drawn by camera or pen. (1993, 83)

With this passage, Andrew speaks of dimensions to the way the auteur's signature is expressed in the film text, in which the auteur signature—whether expressed as style or as a product or property—becomes an indeterminate zone of meaning. Therefore, as an instance of multiple endless originations, the concept-auteur contributes to a franchise in a temporally infinite way.

The concept-auteur is both a product and an agent of blockbuster moviemaking. As such, Elsaesser identifies an intersection between 'high-concept' strategy and the conceptual

branding of auteur and narrative in contemporary Hollywood (Elsaesser 2012, 288). In coalescing these forces, the concept-auteur "either harness[es] the external energies of the blockbuster as new medium . . . or he re-appropriates the priorities of the system by 'personalizing' them" (288). Despite some efforts amongst film scholars to retire the auteur theory as an outdated critical lens, Elsaesser refuses to bolster such campaigns; instead, he re-characterizes the auteur through contemporary modes of moviemaking, such as the 'blockbuster mindset,' 'high concept,' 'total entertainment' and 'franchise' filmmaking (283). With the concept-author, Elsaesser signals and supports the need for a new wave of auteur discourse, which engages with the changing scope and complex networked conditions of contemporary entertainment. In this context, Elseasser assures, "agency and authority do not disappear, but become distributive [and] mobile" (288). This view of the auteur is contextual, since it views the auteur in relation to the changing creative and industrial conditions and technological changes in production and experience, whereby concept-narratives "may be external even to those who devise and implement them" (288). As such, the concept-auteur is an author of total entertainment (286), which means their authority and vision extends beyond a single movie—either as a single text or medium—and establishes itself in dialogue with the complex tapestry of transtextual authorship.

Star Wars: Thank the Maker/s

The history of the 'Star Wars' franchise (1977–) is intertwined with the creative and industrial legacy of its creator George Lucas. With his ideation of the 'Star Wars' storyworld and his founding and managing of its production company, Lucasfilm Ltd., Lucas is undoubtedly the initial source of the 'Star Wars' franchise.[28] Moreover, Lucas has had transformative impact on contemporary Hollywood entertainment, including its industrial structure and technologies, with his founding and ongoing involvement in multiple production facilities that have innovated filmmaking and cinema technology, including Industrial Light & Magic (ILM), Skywalker Sound, THX Ltd., LucasArts, and Lucasfilm Animation. As Lewis explains, Lucas exemplifies the blockbuster auteur working "in an industry that is no longer (just) about making movies" (Lewis 2003, 18). Lucas' authorship has never been effectively contained by one creative practice or role: over his career, Lucas has fulfilled the roles of director, screenwriter, story developer, producer, editor, and post-

[28] Lucasfilm Ltd. was founded in 1971 with the production of *THX-1138* (1971).

production supervisor. This multifaceted creative influence worked toward Lucas' "legendary" insistence on maintaining authorial control (Pollock 1999, 202), but this desire for creative and industrial authority had to also work in tandem with the expanding transtextuality of the 'Star Wars' franchise across its long and rich history. Lucas thus epitomizes the traditional idea of the auteur in the way he has worked to secure and facilitate his creative vision within the constraints of the Hollywood industrial system (Lewis 2003, 17). The primary source of the 'Star Wars' property is undeniably Lucas, but the transtextual nature of the 'Star Wars' franchise positions Lucas as but one originator in a complex tapestry of multiple endless origins that constitute authorship of the franchise. Even in its earliest history, 'Star Wars' was never the origination of just one man but exemplified the logic of polycentric authorship in a single production through the creative contributions of producers Gary Kurtz and Rick McCallum, composer John Williams, editors Marcia Lucas, Paul Hirsch, and Richard Chew, special effects supervisor John Dykstra, and actors Mark Hamill, Carrie Fisher, Harrison Ford, Anthony Daniels, Alec Guinness, including voice actor James Earl Jones. The 'Star Wars' franchise demonstrates that, in addition to a centralized originating source, a long-running transmedia franchise is constituted by multiple media, creators, and practices, including various directors, screenwriters, and producers, as well as practical and visual effects creators, technological innovators in sound and exhibition, and corporate owners and licensees, alongside fan creators and cultural commentators. In each their own way, these contributing forces constitute the multiple endless origins of the 'Star Wars' franchise working in tandem with the canonical authority of Lucas as concept-auteur.

Even after its acquisition by The Walt Disney Company in 2012, the 'Star Wars' property remains canonically demarcated with the source of its creation through the glistening studio logo that inscribes Lucas' name into the transtextual fabric of the franchise (Figure 5). This Lucasfilm trademark is attached to every 'Star Wars' installments across various media (cinema, television, literature, and comic books) and signifies the paratextual function of Lucas' name: it marks the entry point through which one approaches the text while also serving as a mediating device between author, text, and audience. This means that, despite the industrial shifts, creative mutations, and authorial re-organization that may take place across 'Star Wars,' Lucas will forever be "imagined to stand at the threshold between creativity, innovation, wonder, and magic, and us" (Johnson and Gray 2013, 3) as multiple authors continue to shape the 'Star Wars' franchise. Therefore, regardless of who shapes the multiple future instances of origination in the 'Star Wars' property—authors, owners, or fandom—Lucas constitutes the principle canonical concept-auteur of the franchise. As a

paratextual force, the Lucasfilm trademark remains in perpetual dialogue with the multiple endless origins that make up the past, present, and future of 'Star War.' Andrew contends that "the auteur marks the presence of temporality and creativity in the text, including the creativity of emergent thought contributed by the spectator" (1993, 83). As the *first* endless originator (not the only or the last), Lucas' legacy remains in paratextual dialogue with the series of multiple endless origins that continue to make up the transtextual authorship of the franchise, represented by the Lucasfilm Ltd. studio logo that reinforces Lucas as canonical originator with every iteration of 'Star Wars'.



Figure 5: Lucasfilm Ltd logo before *The Force Awakens*

Lucas' authority over 'Star Wars' is most officially and intriguingly inscribed in his legal dealings with Twentieth Century Fox, which took place during the initial development of what was then—in the early 1970s—titled *The Star Wars*. Most accounts of Lucas' early legal and economic negotiations with Fox refer to his control-driven decision to refuse an increase in his salary as writer and director to retain full rights to sequels and merchandise (Hearn 2005, 81–82). However, J.W. Rinzler reveals less-acknowledged circumstance in how Lucas secured ownership of his intellectual property, which reflects a legal dissociation of self: "On January 10, 1974, Lucas signed a necessary if somewhat surreal legal agreement with himself, whereby Lucasfilm loaned out 'George Lucas' as director to 'The Star Wars Corporation,' a subsidiary formed to facilitate the upcoming budget and legal dealings with Fox" (2007, 15). This peculiar legal procedure constructs Lucas as an authorial double—George Lucas as owner of Lucasfilm and "George Lucas" as employee of The Star Wars Corporation. This renders him both owner and property of Lucasfilm, and thus inscribes his authorial presence with a dialogical dynamic between his role as creator and proprietor. As a production company, Lucasfilm occupies a position between two authorial articulations: Lucas and "Lucas." This duality corresponds with Wollen's nominal separation of the auteur

identity, in which he distinguishes two articulations of the author, with and without inverted commas: he argues that "Fuller or Hawks or Hitchcock, the directors, are quite separate from 'Fuller' or 'Hawks' or 'Hitchcock,' the structures named after them" ([1969] 1972, 168). Applying this to George Lucas and Lucasfilm, 'Lucas' can be understood as a legal-industrial structure that represents Lucas's commitment to securing control of his intellectual property and creative license, as opposed the Lucas the director. This legal agreement, therefore, serves poetic utility as a paratextual threshold between different articulations of authorship and authority: the Lucasfilm trademark thus simultaneously represents multiple roles: Lucas the creator, "George Lucas" the legal entity, and Lucasfilm the corporate brand.

Lucas's long-lasting aversion to the structures and conventions of the Hollywood establishment is critical to any understanding of the industrial lore that surrounds 'Star Wars.' Since graduating from film school, Lucas has openly expressed distrust and cynicism towards the unchecked authority of the Hollywood studio system, especially because of the way it unjustly controlled the creative process. His first two studio productions, *THX-1138* (1971) and *American Graffiti* (1973), were marred by studio interference and "turned Lucas's mistrust of corporate Hollywood into resentment" (Hearn 2005, 43). These experiences heightened his determination to secure creative control of 'Star Wars'—both the produced film and the intellectual property. This provoked his progression from a young experimental filmmaker who valued the communal environment of the independent studio American Zoetrope, which he co-founded with Francis Ford Coppola in 1969, to a producer of blockbuster movies who independently owned and managed Lucasfilm from 1971 until 2012. Moreover, extending from this unrelenting commitment to securing creative control is his tendency towards thematic contradiction. Brooker characterizes Lucas's autobiographical and auteurist sensibilities as "dealing with his own conflicting desires for human community and solitude, order and creativity, discipline and play" (2009, 83). This creative exploration of the paradoxes of humanity parallels Lucas's progression from an independent-minded young filmmaker to a corporate Hollywood mogul. Like with 'Alien' creator Dan O'Bannon, Lucas' personal experience with the structures that control creative ideation would shape the construction of his signature product and property.

It is indeed ironic that Lucas would start his career with disdain for the Hollywood establishment before eventually shaping its re-invention. Lucas explicitly acknowledges this irony in the 2004 documentary *Empire of Dreams*:

> What I was trying to do was stay independent so I could make the movies I wanted to

> make, but at the same time I was fighting the corporate system, which I didn't like and I'm not happy with the fact the corporations have taken over the film industry. But now I've found myself being the head of a corporation, so there's a certain irony there, that I've become the very thing that I was trying to avoid. Which basically is what part of *Star Wars* is about—that is, Darth Vader.

This passage expresses many of the concerns that shaped Lucas's journey as auteur, including the resistance against industrial structures and the irony of becoming the very thing he fought against. It also highlights Lucas' continuing commitment to securing creative independence and control. What is most significant about this confession is how Lucas self-reflexively identifies with Darth Vader, who must both manage the consequences, implications, and resistances to their galactic creations. This association between Lucas and Vader is pointedly portrayed in the licensed artwork, "Dream Maker" (2013), by Tsuneo Sanda (Figure 6). In a supplement to the artwork, Sanda explains that "Dream Maker," is "a paean to Mr. George Lucas and the great contributions he has made over the years. It depicts a valiant and supreme Emperor who still wields power over the Star Wars World" (2013). This statement—and the artwork—seems to unwittingly illustrate the irony of Lucas as both celebrated hero and reluctant Emperor.

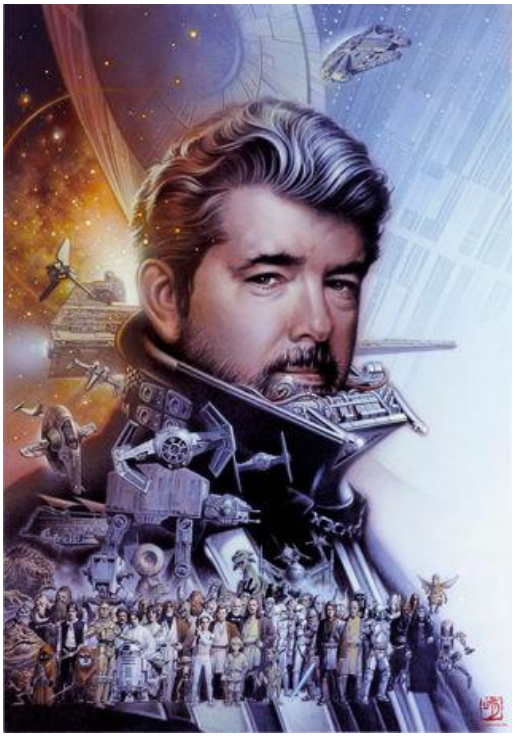


Figure 6: "Dream Maker" (Tsuneo Sanda, 2013)

This connection between Lucas and Darth Vader serves as a key point of entry for examining the conditions, boundaries, and signature property of Lucas as concept-auteur. This relationship between author and character reflects the traditional auteurist tendency to identify the author within the text itself, in which Sarris stipulates, "the way a film looks and moves should have some relationship to the way a director thinks and feels" (1962, 7). Concerned with identifying the director's personality in a work's aesthetic style, this approach to auteur criticism is geared by an autobiographical imperative. However, I am not convinced that this appropriately accounts for the complex dynamic between Lucas and 'Star Wars,' since it ignores the transtextual influence of other creators and its effect on producing a work with multiple dimensions. However, the autobiographical imperative can relate to the notion of a signature property because it occupies a complex nexus between author, text, industrial proprietary, and audience, whereby the work assumes its own lifeforce that the creator/s must negotiate. As Karina Longworth suggests, "Lucas's experimental filmmaking ambitions may have remained unrealized, but a more sympathetic read suggests that for Lucas, as for Vader, this was not a choice at all: instead, he has become trapped by his own creation, a rebel whose phenomenal success turned him, unwillingly, into an impenetrable power" (2012, 96–97). Similarly, Wollen considers how "a text can produce spaces within meaning, within the otherwise rigid straitjacket of the message, to produce a meaning of a new kind, generated within the text itself" ([1969] 1972, 162). This notion of being trapped by his own creation expresses how the 'Star Wars' franchise has taken on a transtextual momentum of its own, one that unconsciously inscribes its author into its textual system and which Lucas could neither have predicted nor controlled.

In the first official 'Star Wars' installment, *Star Wars* (later retitled *Star Wars: Episode IV—A New Hope*), the droid C-3PO (Anthony Daniels) enters an oil bath and rhapsodically exclaims "Thank the Maker!" (Figure 7). In the narrative world of the franchise, the 'Maker' is droid vernacular for 'The One Who Creates'; it also metatextually recognizes the congruity between droid-maker and filmmaker. This association resonates with the Star Wars fandom who extended similar adulations to Lucas himself as ultimate Maker of the franchise mythos. Moreover, in echoing the everyday idiom "thank god," C-3PO's expression incidentally recalls romanticized conceptions of the author as divine presence. This is another status previously granted to Lucas himself, who, for the first two decades in the history of 'Star Wars,' was elevated to the position of "latter-day god" by fans (Kapell 2006, 283). Both these understandings of 'the Maker'—artist or divine being—draw on notions of authorship that privilege the vision of a single creator. In consequence, this also

places on Lucas unnatural expectations that have often put him at odds with the Star Wars fandom. Such praise for Lucas was rescinded by many fans in 1997 with the special edition re- release of the original trilogy, and with more intensity in 1999 with the release of *Star Wars: Episode I—The Phantom Menace*.[29] Brooker explains that, for this reason, fans expressed a "harsh voice of criticism directed personally at George Lucas as director, and a general sense of distrust about his ability to handle the mythos" (Brooker 2002, 90). This was most clearly expressed in the documentary *The People vs. George Lucas* (2010), which highlights the tensions that can result between creators and fans of a long-running blockbuster franchise. Moreover, the relationship between Lucas and the fans has in many ways provoked, measured, and contended with Lucas's creative journey through authorial control, then disruption, and finally redemption.



Figure 7: C-3PO exclaims "Thank the Maker!" in *A New Hope*

C-3PO and his droid counterpart R2-D2 (Kenny Baker) are the most consistent characters across the Star Wars franchise: they appear in almost every canonical film and television series to date, as well as multiple comic books, novels, and video games. C-3PO and R2-D2 are the first characters to appear in the franchise and they also drive the plot forward in the first act of *A New Hope* (Figure 8). As Lucas states in director's commentary, "we follow the two most insignificant characters…in amongst this gigantic, intergalactic drama" (quoted in Klimo 2015, para. 13). However, C-3PO and R2-D2 are not insignificant: C-3PO and R2-D2 represent connections between the installments (and other characters), and they are a consistent presence as they represent textual cohesion and stability across the expanding franchise. More specifically, as a protocol droid who is programed for "human-

[29] The special edition, released for the franchise's twentieth anniversary, not only remastered the image quality and visual effects, but it added and altered key scenes in ways that changed character traits and plot elements that were deemed sacred by long-time fans. Furthermore, many fans and critics found the prequel trilogy's focus on digital innovation and computer-generated imagery to have diverged from the aesthetic, technological, and thematic principles of the original trilogy.

cyborg relations" and is "fluent in over six million forms of communication," C-3PO frequently functions as mediator between characters. As oral narrator by the campfire in *Star Wars: Episode VI—Return of the Jedi* (1983), C-3PO's role even extends to playing the part of storyteller, where he uses diegetic sound recordings to re-enact to the Ewoks a truncated version of his journey. Therefore, like Lucas's authorial presence, C-3PO and R2-D2 are an "inescapable link between texts" (Gray 2010, 31). C-3PO is thus diegetic mediator, and an intertextual anchor across the franchise's multiple texts and media forms; he is also the franchise's messenger that negotiates relations not only within the text itself, but also between Lucas, the audience, and the text.



Figure 8: C-3PO and R2-D2 in *A New Hope*

As already discussed in this chapter, intertextuality conceptualizes the co-presence of texts. This effect of this co-presence can be understood as a relational dialogism. For Kristeva, this dynamic is instrumental in propelling the author from a position that operates and controls from outside of the text, to one where the author is "transformed by his having included himself within the narrative system" (1980, 74). Wollen conveys a similar idea when he describes the auteur as "an unconscious catalyst" of a dynamic textual system ([1969] 1972, 168), while Corrigan also considers how the auteur becomes "absorbed as a phantom presence" within the text (1998, 42). C-3PO thus unwittingly mirrors some of the ways in which Lucas exists as an "unconscious catalyst" and "phantom presence" across the transtextual system of the 'Star Wars' franchise. The revelation in *The Phantom Menace* that Vader is C-3PO's Maker conveniently affirms a potential authorial connection between Lucas and C-3PO via Anakin/Vader: when C-3PO exclaims "Thank the Maker!" he inadvertently invokes both Lucas and Anakin and establishes a convenient dialogism not only between author and text, but also between multiple texts.

C-3PO is a marker of stability, familiarity, and consistency across multiple generations of 'Star Wars' narration—but, as a droid who sustains physical dismemberment and incompleteness, he also reflects the instability, fragmentation, and disruption that can occur because of transtextual authorship. For example, in *A New Hope*, C-3PO is attacked by

Tusken Raiders and his arm is blasted off (Figure 9); in *Star Wars: Episode V—The Empire Strikes Back* (1980), his entire body is disassembled into parts (Figure 10); and in *Return of the Jedi* (1983), his eye is gouged out by the Kowakian monkey-lizard Salacious B. Crumb at Jabba the Hutt's palace (Figure 11). In the prequel *The Phantom Menace* (1999), he appears as a mechanical skeleton, with his cables and gears markedly exposed (Figure 12). By *Star Wars: Episode II—Attack of the Clones* (2002), he has been provided with makeshift silver coverings but finds himself on a factory conveyer belt where his head and body are pulled apart and switched with a battle droid (Figure 13). Finally, at the end of *Star Wars: Episode III—Revenge of the Sith* (2005), C-3PO has his memory completely erased. These constant disruptions to C-3PO's body and mind intersect with his function as an "unconscious catalyst" of Lucas' transtextual authorial presence. C-3PO's susceptibility to physical dismemberment and his ongoing need for repair and reconditioning could be seen as an inadvertent expression of Lucas's continuous process of authorial revision. On one hand, C-3PO represents consistency, cohesion, and communication across the franchise's transtextual articulations—as an interpreter, but also as an intertextual anchor. However, on the other hand—well, the other hand, like his other parts, has unfortunately been dismembered. C-3PO's dismemberment playfully allegorizes how Lucas's attempt to achieve complete authorial control has been negotiated, regulated, and undermined by various surrounding forces, like other executives and creators, technological limitations, fans and commentators, and the inevitable contradictions and transformations that arise across any author's career.



Figure 9: C-3PO's arm in *A New Hope*



Figure 10: C-3PO's dismembered body in *The Empire Strikes Back*



Figure 11: C-3PO's eye is gauged out in *Return of the Jedi*



Figure 12: C-3PO's exposed body in *The Phantom Menace*

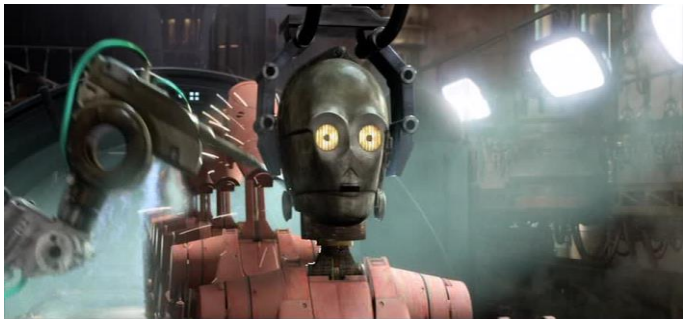


Figure 13: C-3PO's head is swapped with a battle droid in *Attack of the Clones*

C-3PO's stripped-down and exposed form in *The Phantom Menace* provides a most interesting reflection on Lucas' vulnerabilities and insecurities as a concept-auteur. The appearance of C-3PO in this installment surprisingly reveals that C-3PO's Maker is Vader; this revelation is accompanied by C-3PO's humiliation because R2-D2 teases him for being naked. While C-3PO's bare frame—with exposed wires and gears—reflects a sense of creative vulnerability, it also represents the temporality of origination: *The Phantom Menace* is a work of canonical adaptation that explicitly intertwines Vader's and C-3PO's origin stories, thus also signifying an attempt to reformulate (that is to say, re-"make") Lucas's authorial presence. In making the prequel trilogy, Lucas took on the roles of director, screenwriter, editing supervisor, and executive producer so to maintain as much control as possible. As Longworth recognizes, "the prequels are, for better and for worse, pure Lucas. They were built so independently that there was no one to tell him 'no'" (2012, 92). C-3PO's

incomplete body may be seen to represent the prequel trilogy as an opportunity for Lucas to complete his unfinished work without restriction. As Longworth adds, the "difference between Star Wars and other franchises…is that Lucas cannot seem to leave his ostensibly completed series alone" (93). However, the prequel logic through which C-3PO's 'origin' is realized further characterizes Lucas's authorial control of the franchise as something that can never be truly complete: when C-3PO bids farewell to Anakin as he leaves home to become a Jedi, he admits that "you are my Maker and I wish you well; however, I should prefer I were a little more completed." C-3PO's incomplete body, therefore, reflects authorial anxieties about how to maintain control and authorship over a body of work that will remain perpetually unfinished.

As an official Lucasfilm production controlled by Lucas, *The Phantom Menace* is an example of canonical adaptation and is grounded in the tenets of author consistency and legitimacy; for this reason, the relationship between author and text is relatively controlled. In contrast, licensed adaptations—while authorized—are usually created at a distance from the centralized canonical source and present a compelling space to explore questions of narrative legitimacy and creative authority. The licensed comic book series *Star Wars Tales*, published by Dark Horse Comics, poses the speculative scenario: what if Darth Vader had an opportunity to reunite with C-3PO? This "What If?" short story, aptly titled "Thank the Maker" (2000, 50-59), is set during the events on Cloud City in *The Empire Strikes Back*. Interjecting in canonical plot events, Vader shares a moment with a disassembled C-3PO, decades after their last parting in *Revenge of the Sith*. As Vader grasps C-3PO's decapitated head, the story transports to Vader's childhood memory from when he first found the discarded droid parts in Watto's junkyard on Tatooine. The comic book juxtaposes two panels (Figure 14) that are similar in framing, composition, and layout, but which present a spatiotemporal crossover between young Anakin and Vader, both holding C-3PO's head in the same pose. Then, in a later panel (Figure 15), Vader holds C-3PO's head up for an iconic meeting between Maker and creation. This story (intra)textually intervenes into the plot of *The Empire Strikes Back* during the events in Cloud City, and recalls memories inspired by *The Phantom Menace* that harken back to a young Anakin on Tatooine.

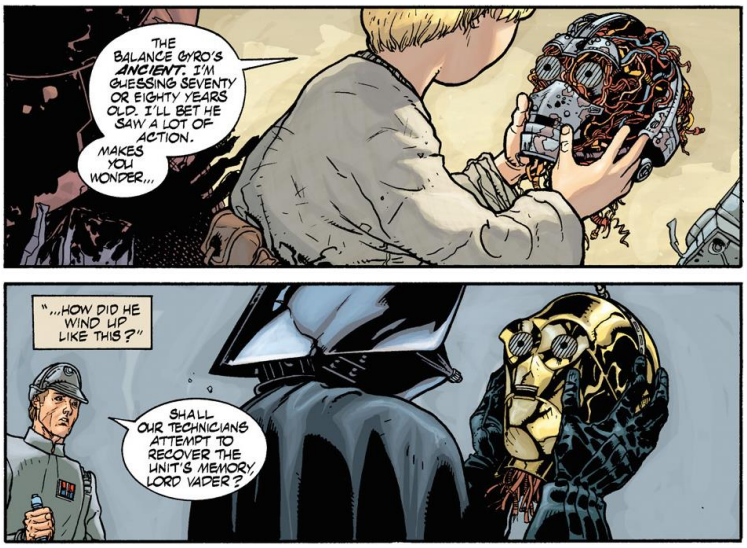


Figure 14: "Thank the Maker" (*Star Wars Tales* #6, Dark Horse, 1999)


Figure 15: "Thank the Maker" (*Star Wars Tales* #6, Dark Horse, 1999)

Prior to 2014, most licensed material fell into one of several canon categories known as the "Star Wars Expanded Universe" (EU), which meant that such work was authorized but still distanced from Lucas' creative control or intensions.[30] Lucas claims to have intentionally divorced himself from licensed texts; although he had a varied degree of involvement in what kinds of stories would get told across various licensed media, he admitted, "I don't read that stuff … that's a different world than my world" (Spelling 2005, 48). As a licensed work now classified under the Legends banner, the comic book story "Thank the Maker," and other similar works, now occupy a compelling space through which to explore questions of legitimacy and authenticity at the margins of transtextual authorship. As a non-canonical story, "Thank the Maker" explores the relationship between Lucas's canonical storyworld and licensed content. In one way, it participates in the transtextual disruption of Lucas's authorial presence, because it intervenes in a plot event involving C-3PO's dismembered body. C-3PO is deactivated during this encounter with Vader and therefore has no capacity to

[30] In 2014, all licensed 'Star Wars' content across multiple media platforms, and outside the official films and television series, was retroactively classified under a new continuity banner, Star Wars Legends. This content was previously organized using the multi-tiered system of the EU. These tiers included G-canon ("George Lucas" canon; T-canon (Television content); C-canon (Continuity canon); S-canon (Secondary canon); D-canon (Detours canon); N-canon (non-canon).

directly communicate with his Maker and, as far as C-3PO is aware, this encounter never actually happened; and, most importantly, as far as the boundaries of canon are concerned, it never did. In another way, this comic book story works to resolve this division through a metatextual dialogue across media and authors. Published after *The Phantom Menace*, it is creatively inspired by canonical plot, imagery, and character development as it responds to the retroactive revelation that Anakin is C-3PO's Maker. As such, the integration of multiple texts—both Lucas's own and the licensed content of the franchise—complicates Lucas' deliberate separation of his own world from its licensed works.

A new era began for the 'Star Wars' franchise when the Walt Disney Company acquired Lucasfilm in 2012, including all its subsidiary companies and intellectual properties ('Star Wars,' as well as the 'Indiana Jones' and 'Willow' properties). For Lucas, this signaled his retirement from 'Star Wars' and a departure from the empire he created; for Lucasfilm, a new organizational structure was formed with new Makers: including Kathleen Kennedy as president, the Lucasfilm Story Group as creative development team, new directors and writers, and many creative roles across multiple media; for 'Star Wars,' this acquisition was followed by the restructuring of canon and facilitated a new creative strategy, including new small screen series and standalone anthology movies, designed for maximum property longevity (Rogers 2015; Jamieson 2016). This new era signaled a significant increase in the number of new authors, or Makers, who would shape the franchise, including the strategic assigning of auteur-type figures with a background in independent filmmaking, such as J.J. Abrams (*The Force Awakens* [2015]), Gareth Edwards (*Rogue One: Star Wars Story* [2016]), Rian Johnson (*The Last Jedi* [2017]), Jon Favreau, Rick Fumuyiwa, and Taika Waititi (*The Mandalorian* [2019 –]). For C-3PO, this new authorial structure is represented by even more physical transformations that intertwine with the transtextual authorship of the franchise.

C-3PO's function as a mediator of transtextual authorship arguably persists across the Disney-produced sequel trilogy, although now it may be more appropriate to describe him as barometer of authorial negotiation rather than an intertextual anchor. When C-3PO appears in *The Force Awakens*, he has a red arm and worries that he might not be recognized: he awkwardly interrupts Han and Leia's reunion to declare, "It is I, C-3PO—you probably don't recognize me because of the red arm" (Figure 16).[31] The comically exaggerated risk of

[31] *The Force Awakens* never explains the narrative reason for C-3PO's obtrusive limb replacement, but the Marvel Comics one-shot "The Phantom Limb" reveals how C-3PO's arm was lost on a mission for the Resistance and adopts the red replacement as a tribute to a fallen droid comrade (*Star Wars Special: C-3PO* #1, 2016).

misrecognition causes C-3PO anxiety as his function as protocol droid now extends to the mediation of multiple authors, or Makers: Lucas and Abrams, but also Anthony Daniels, who portrays C-3PO. Daniels has performed the role of C-3PO in every iteration to date (including voice work) and reveals that "the one thing that J.J. and I argued about was the fact that . . . C-3PO doesn't like the red arm!" (Simpson 2016, para. 10). Abrams unwaveringly insisted on this new physical transformation, which emphasizes his influence as a new Maker in the 'Star Wars.' In the documentary *Secrets of The Force Awakens: A Cinematic Journey* (2016), Abrams concedes that he gave C-3PO a discernible red arm because he "wanted to mark him." Perhaps it was out of respect for this territorial demarcation that prompted Rian Johnson to seemingly forget about the existence of C-3PO in *The Last Jedi*, whereby the droid—one of the last remaining "legacy" characters (Golding 2019)—is relegated to the edges of frame, out of focus, and disappointingly described by Daniels as having been treated as nothing more than "a table decoration" (Travis 2019, para. 2) (Figure 17). In *The Rise of Skywalker*, again directed and co-written by Abrams, C-3PO is subjected to more physical disruption as his memory is *again* wiped after his circuitry is reprogramed to translate Sith (together with a set of bright red eyes) (Figures 18). Contrary to his character's treatment in *The Force Awakens* and *The Last Jedi*, Daniels approves of C-3PO's conclusion in *The Rise of Skywalker*, but he admits that when he suggested his character meet a meaningful death Abrams insisted "not on my watch" (Bradley 2019). This exchange between Abrams and Daniels continues to position C-3PO between multiple authors, or concept-auteurs. There are many dimensions to the significance of C-3PO in the 'Star War's franchise: he is (like the Force) the intertextual glue that binds the galaxy together, even after 'The Maker' has surrendered control. This case study has demonstrated how the 'Star Wars' franchise exemplifies the principles of transtextual authorship in the franchise mode, by exploring the ways that a singular author can be both in control of and subject to the multifarious and dynamic textual relations that characterize the transtextual poetics of blockbuster franchising.



Figure 16: C-3PO in *The Force Awakens*


Figure 17: C-3PO in *The Last Jedi*


Figure 18: C-3PO in *The Rise of Skywalker*

Chapter 2: Franchising Production

In the franchise era, origination and ideation extend beyond conceptual ideas of authorship to include the legal procedures of copyright and intellectual property, and the industrial strategies of production. The phenomenon of intellectual property is ultimately tied to the question of originality and creativity (Brown 2009, 240), and conceptions of authorship have developed in tandem with the emergence of copyright law (Harding 2012, 25-26). Albert Moran emphasizes the intersection between origination, authorship, and copyright:

> Copyright is a notion founded on the Romantic concept of authorship. It seeks to offer a limited protection to the author's expression as it is embodied in a work. This expression is regarded as a unique, original creative, self-contained work that is given a limited monopoly to help protect the livelihood of the author-originator. However, the concept was extended over time. Originality became synonymous not only with qualities of expression, including novelty and creativity, but also with a source—a point of origin. This shift made it possible under copyright law to recognise the owner of any rights in a creative work—whether individual or corporate—over the real author. (2015, 54)

In this passage, Moran articulates a contradiction in the relationship between authorship and ownership in the context of copyright, whereby despite seeming to protect 'author's rights,' copyright essentially protects the ownership of ideas over expressions of authorship. Peter Decherney corrects common misconceptions about the protection of authors under copyright: such laws are geared towards provoking the advancement of ideas and knowledge through the legally affirmed and managed designation of original ideas and thus author's rights are merely incidental in this procedure (2012, 3). This positions intellectual property as the critical object of creativity and origination, and thus articulates a view of authorship that foregrounds ideation and its potential. As already defined, intellectual property is a critical component in the franchise mode, and thus the dynamic between law and creativity is pertinent to understanding the construction of franchise production.

Blockbuster franchising is instrumental to the organization and management of production in Hollywood of the early twenty-first century. As an industrial strategy, the franchise mode plays a critical role in efforts to secure the industrial longevity of Hollywood by nurturing the expansive and endless potential of intellectual property. Kimberly A. Owczarski states that "for the studios, franchise films are the key engines driving revenue across conglomerate divisions" (2015, 690). This is demonstrated by the organizational

structures of the contemporary Hollywood studio, whereby franchise properties have become central to production process, asset management, and revenue projection, such that "franchises hold a unique place in today's corporate landscape" (Owczarski 2015, 676). A media conglomerate such as The Walt Disney Company has a reputation as a franchise-driven studio through a calculated mergers and acquisitions strategy that is focused on leveraging the value of hidden assets—that is, the unrealized potential of intellectual property (Calandro 2019). Disney has acquired an extensive slate of media companies and properties since the beginning of the twenty-first century: Fox Family Channel for $2.9 billion (2001); Jim Henson's 'The Muppets' for approximately $90 million (2004); Pixar for $7.4 billion in a cash and stock transaction (2006); part acquisition of Hulu (2009); Marvel Entertainment for $4.24 billion (2009); Lucasfilm Ltd and its properties for $4.05 billion (2012); and Twentieth Century Fox and its franchise properties and licenses for $71.3 billion in stock (2019). Through these acquisitions, Disney gained control of company brands and operations, film catalogues, distribution agreements and broadcast licenses, and most significantly entire catalogue of franchise properties. As Disney's Chief Financial Officer Jay Rasulo explains, "unlike other media companies, we really do have a very clear strategy of an ecosystem in which we both own the franchises and own the means of distribution to get those franchises out across almost all consumer touch points" (2012, quest. 4). Disney stands out as an exemplar of blockbuster franchising, but more broadly Hollywood has increasingly normalized a franchised production system that enables the productive interplay of intellectual property and transtextual poetics.

At the foundation of the franchise production system are the principles of synergy and branding, which converge corporate marketing demands with aesthetic signification. As such, Paul Grainge explains that "corporate logos remains an enduring narrative and affective threshold within the film experience" through a synthesis of organizational identity, intellectual property, style, and theme (2008, 16). Synergy and branding strategies thus translate intellectual property conditions into scalable and applied strategies of poetic utility to shape the landscape of total entertainment because, "ultimately, the status of any brand is secured by its legal recognition as intellectual property" (11). Grainge says that synergy is "the language of the franchise" and branding is crucial to its "extended commercial environment, as well as to the spaces created through, and in relation to, the cultural lexicon of film" (11). Synergy and branding work in tandem to articulate the symbolic, aesthetic, and industrial value of intellectual property across multiple sites of production and reception. As Grainge defines, "synergy is best described as a principle of cross-promotion whereby

companies seek to integrate and disseminate their products through a variety of media and consumer channels, enabling 'brands' to travel through an integrated corporate structure" (10). Branding is thus "a locus of rich symbolic activity" (12) and works to package and streamline expansive franchise production into a manageable communication unit that secures essential iconography, while also enabling effective integration across strategic multiplied production.

Synergy is employed in franchise production as an integrated marketing communications strategy that activates the value and meaning of brands across a multiplied media ecology. Marvel is a good example of an iconic brand that employs synergy in coordinated cross-promotion for multiple media campaigns and audience segments. While Marvel Studios attracts a mainstream family audience with blockbusters centered around The Avengers character properties, Marvel Television sought to strategically capture a more mature and culturally diverse audience segment with its Netflix suite of series, including *Daredevil* (2015–2018), *Jessica Jones* (2015–2019), *Luke Cage* (2016–2018), *Iron Fist* (2017–2018), *The Defenders* (2017), and *The Punisher* (2017–2019), and Marvel Comics continues to publish works that appeal to a narrower readership and rejuvenate its intellectual property catalogue for ongoing research and development supply. The Marvel-Netflix strategy lacked longevity (2015–2019), but it was instrumental in enabling the Marvel brand to travel across creative, industrial, and market boundaries. The success of this strategy is no doubt aided by the organizational infrastructure of its parent company Disney, which Grainge explains has "shaped the mainstays of brand practice in the entertainment industry, bringing together promotional synergy with ruthless assertion of intellectual property rights" (2008, 49). Synergy and branding are crucial to the effective convergence of copyright law and the transtextual poetics of total entertainment because these strategies deliberately seek to exploit the nexus between corporate identity and symbolic communication.

Branding in the franchise mode is frequently overlooked as a practice of rich poetic and creative value because it is so strongly aligned with corporate identity and marketing. Similarly, blockbuster franchising is often aligned with business format franchising as a strategy that focuses primarily on exploiting a pre-recognized brand. As Peter M. Birkeland explains, "business-format franchisors sell a business concept—a trademark that implies consistency of standards, operating methods, products, and services," and this concept is licensed for use as a brand package or "franchise unit" (2002, 3). These attributes correspond with the way that blockbuster franchising centralizes intellectual property and strives to maintain brand consistency. In the context of business format franchising,

> The legal concept essentially involves a business owner giving a number of independent parties the right to carry on that business under a system or plan determined by the owner. This legal definition is useful in setting up the general idea that can be applied to the entertainment franchise: that, at its core, there is an entity exercising overarching control over distributed activity, and that, in turn, goods or services produced by any given franchisee will have a consistent expectation through the maintenance of brand reputation. (Bowrey and Handler 2014, 11)

However, this association often underpins the too-often simplistic disparagement of the objectives, procedures, and output of franchise production. For example, the *Newsweek* article "Franchise Fever!" assumes that the "franchise movie typically works backward from the Happy Meal to the plot" with the aim to "make the movie business as predictable and profitable as serving up Mocha Frappaccinos" (Newsweek Staff 2002, para. 3 & 2). The connection between blockbuster franchising and business format franchising is not entirely unfounded; as Derek Johnson concedes, "the origins of the franchised media of the latter twentieth century lie as much in the culture of McDonald's, Mr. Goodwrench, and Chicken Delight that emerged in the 1950s and '60s as any specific media culture" (2013, 29). This association primarily stems from the similar role of intellectual property, its licensed production and, by extension, its signification as a brand. However, despite the associations made between blockbuster franchising and business format franchising, Kathy Bowrey and Michael Handler assert that "the entertainment franchise is only tangentially related to the business law construct of a 'franchise' or 'franchising,'" and realize that "while the legal notion of the business franchise might have analogues with some forms of cultural activity. . . it does not come close to capturing the complexity of the entertainment franchise" (2014, 11). This complexity, I determine, can be attributed to the way in which the legal tenets of the business franchise unit—intellectual property distribution, product consistency, and brand recognition—converge with the industrial and creative norms of blockbuster Hollywood production to forge a distinctive unit of poetic utility. If, as Birkeland explains, "the franchise unit itself is a profit center" (Birkeland 2002, 3), then in blockbuster franchising the 'franchise unit' is a transtextual brand facilitated by the principle of synergy and driven by the poetic demands of Hollywood production.

This chapter builds upon my preceding discussion of transtextual authorship to consider the legal and industrial dimensions of creation in franchise production. The objective of this chapter is to further unpack the question of origination in the franchise mode by focusing on the implications of copyright, licensing, and intellectual property on the organization and

procedures of production in the early twenty-first century. Bowrey and Handler acknowledge that "the relationship between creativity, economic opportunity and intellectual property law in the context of entertainment franchises is not well understood" (2014, 3) and to address this shortfall they consider the ways that "existing legal concepts, such as 'authorship' and 'property.' are being actively extended to create new cultural meaning and value" (11). To further correct this critical gap, Bowrey and Handler recommend that "more attention needs to be paid to existing managerial and professional practices that allow for authorship to function more effectively in the context of entertainment franchises" (11). This assessment signals an undervaluation of how the franchise mode has impacted the procedures and processes of creative development and production in the Hollywood entertainment system of the early twenty-first century. To address this critical shortfall, this chapter identifies the principles and norms of franchise production, with a focus on the function of intellectual property, creative licensing, and organizational structure. This presents a crucial dimension to the analysis of origination and ideation in the franchise mode, and it is intended to complement the previous chapter's explication of transtextual authorship. As such, Owczarski identifies that franchise production is "the result of a multi-faceted chain of ownership and authorship, extending across companies, producers, and even the director" (2015, 677). The fundamental principle of this chapter is that in the franchise mode intellectual property is not just a legal object but a complex phenomenon of transtextual poetics; this means that questions of textual originality and derivation must consider how intellectual property itself functions as an object of transtextuality. This chapter proceeds to consider how intellectual property, creative license, and franchise-centered production function as norms of the franchise mode.

Intellectual Property Object

In the previous chapter I asserted that all productions in the franchise mode—including the initial 'original' work—are adaptations and intellectual property should be treated as its source. That is to say that an 'original' work in the franchise mode is not the initial iteration, whether novel, feature movie, comic book issue, theme park or television series, but the higher-level intellectual property: the 'IP object'. More than a legal or corporate entity, the IP object is a complex site of poetic utility in blockbuster franchising: it is a rich locus of creative originality underpinned by legal and industrial procedures. For this reason, I argue that the IP object is the principal site of transtextuality in the franchise mode. As a transtext,

the IP object constitutes a dynamic tapestry shaped by several creative and industrial forces, including authorship and ownership, narrative form and formula, and aesthetics. As such, the IP object represents the creative and industrial lifeforce of blockbuster franchising. The notion of intellectual property as a transtext builds upon Gérard Genette's conceptualization of transtextuality to articulate the poetic function of intellectual property, whereby transtextuality is not simply a taxonomic umbrella that encompasses a range of multi-textual dynamic relationships, but it is also a phenomenon of creative-industrial multiplicity, synergy, and poetic utility.

The 'Marvel Cinematic Universe' ('MCU') franchise for example is an adaptation of the characters, stories, and events published in Marvel Comics, but it is not possible to designate any single comic book series of the eight decades worth of comic book issues as the franchise's 'source.' It is more productive to identify the 'Marvel IP' as the locus of the 'MCU,' which accounts for the historical, creative, industrial, and cultural attributes that shape the franchise. As many contemporaneous scholars have demonstrated, the proliferation and intensified multiplicity of franchise production makes it difficult to identify a single textual source or base—whether for analytical function or simply convenience of expression. Kathy Bowrey explains:

> what is different about the late twentieth and twenty-first century form of the entertainment franchise is that with the diversification and financing of the large entertainment businesses, it is no longer very clear or obvious what the primary asset is. It is not production of a finished book, play or film with good commercial potential per se that drives the process of product and income creation . . . The primary property at stake has become the immaterial entertainment concept: an aspiration to own a fictional universe coupled with the promise of its materialisation in a bottomless array of consumer relationships with fans—exchanges that hopefully endure across the decades. (2011, 193–94)

Scholars such as Jason Mittell (2012), Suzanne Scott (2013), and Liam Burke (2018) have all used the term 'franchise mothership' to refer to the "primary text that a franchise story is built around" (Scott 2013, 46). However, while this term might account for the organizational control and management of a franchise that occurs at the studio level, the concept of a 'franchise mothership' says very little about the creative and industrial attributes of a primary source or singular text. Thererfore, IP object as transtext thus designates the poetic nucleus of a franchise since it effectively synergizes the creative and industrial forces that make up its construction.

As a legal phenomenon, intellectual property is a broad concept that protects the materialization of ideas; included under the umbrella of intellectual property law is copyright law, trademark law, and licensing.[32] By nature of its connection with human thought and the mind, intellectual property is not fixed or clearly defined:

> The difficulties associated with defining 'intellectual property' are well recognized. The term does not describe an easily identifiable object, emotion, belief, or behaviour, and there is no single checklist of criteria that can be used to identify whether or not something is 'intellectual property'. 'Intellectual property' is instead an umbrella term that refers to a diverse collection of rules and the objects with respect to which they regulate human behaviour. (George 2012, 32)

This suggests that the nature and conditions of intellectual property law are often defined in metaphysical dimensions (81). Alexandra George explains that the objective of intellectual property law is to protect the "intangible," "incorporeal," and "imaginary" object of the intellect, (83) and the negotiation of such dimensions is unavoidably subjective because "the boundaries of an intellectual property object are fuzzy" (126). There is thus potential for creative interpretation and critical interrogation in how the intellectual property object is defined and appraised. As George continues: "an intellectual property object's boundaries are multi-dimensional, and they are usually impossible to determine except when measured against the scope of other (actual or potential) intellectual property objects" (125–126). The multi-dimensional and metaphysical nature of the intellect works in tension with the material conditions of property: as Marilyn Strathern explains, "intellectual property can only apply to material objects that reembody those intangible processes in things" (2006, 154), but then intellectual property is not incontestably physical. Therefore, the conceptual nature of intellectual property is, as I have already stated elsewhere, "fundamentally inscribed with an abstract dialectic between the immaterial phenomena of the intellect and the tangible object of property" (2019b, 124); in the context of the blockbuster franchising, the boundaries that define the intellectual property object shapes its creative development across multiple platforms, creators, corporations, and narratives.

This thesis considers the IP object to be a conceptual cluster that constitutes the franchise attributes of creative ownership, transtextual poetics, and industrial synergistic branding. According to Bowrey and Handler explain, "it is accepted that intellectual property law is essentially a dynamic of allocating properties" (2014, 15). Therefore, I suggest that

[32] Design law and patent law are also part of intellectual property law but are of less relevance to entertainment law and franchising.

intellectual property is shaped by transtextuality as much as it is defined by legal definition. Toby Miller describes the interaction between intellectual property and transtextuality as a tug of war when he says that "intertextuality is everywhere and paratextuality a norm, even as intellectual property is constantly seeking to secure territory" (2016, vii). Contrary to this, the IP object is enriched and shaped by transtextual dynamics. As a transtext, the intellectual property object is constituted by the dynamics of poetic textuality in a franchise just as much as its legal conditions. For example, the 'MCU' is a franchise phenomenon produced by Marvel Studios and defined by a specific collection of creative attributes drawn from the 'Marvel Universe' intellectual property catalogue and owned by The Walt Disney Company via its acquisition of Marvel Entertainment in 2009. The specificity of what constitutes the 'MCU' as an intellectual property transtext is tied to Marvel Comics' history of licensing the film rights of its A-list characters to Hollywood studios—namely Spider-Man (to Sony Pictures in 1998), Hulk (to Universal Studios, until 2005), X-Men and Fantastic Four (to 20th Century Fox from 1993 and 1999 respectively, until 2019)—thus restricting its catalogue of adaptable properties to B-list characters, such as Iron Man, Captain America, and Thor.[33] This means that the 'MCU' is characterized both by what it is and what it is not. Also instrumental in shaping the 'MCU' IP object as a transtext is its formalization as a strategically designed storyworld that expands serially across multiple media and texts. The 'MCU' exemplifies the metaphysical dimensions of intellectual property law, since its boundaries are both legal and creative in function.[34] Therefore, in blockbuster franchising, intellectual property is a transtextual phenomenon: it is a locus for creative and industrial utility that coalesces multiple forces of franchise production.

Creative License

The IP object is made up of dynamic relations between brands, owners, producers, and other industrial interests, which are facilitated by licensing. Licensing is a procedure of intellectual property law through which a brand owner (licensor) grants official rights to a third-party producer (the licensee) to create affiliated franchise production within agreed set terms and for a recurring fee (Hardy 2010, 79; Laurichesse 2017, 190). To 'grant license' thus means to

[33] This slate of available character properties changed in 2019 when The Walt Disney Company acquired Fox Studios, which reunited the X-Men and Fantastic Four properties with Marvel. Nevertheless, the fragmentation of these properties across multiple studios between the 1990s and 2019—and thus off-limits to Marvel Studio for its first decade—is crucial to defining the 'MCU' franchise.

[34] In publication I have conceptualized this metaphysical dimension as a force of superhuman law (Lomax 2019b).

authorize use of an intellectual property, whether as part of a coordinated franchise production managed by a centralized production team (as in the 'MCU,' 'Star Wars,' or 'Wizarding World' franchises), or a fragmented licensing arrangement that lacks transtextual cohesion (such as the 'X-Men' or 'DC' brands). Moreover, as a procedure of assent, licensing is as much about the interrelation between licensor and licensee as it is an authorization to use a brand. Johnson explains that "licensed creativity must negotiate a position of contractual subordinance to another party within a different set of market orientations and concerns. Though franchised worlds may have been designed as engines for emergent elaboration, licensing subjects elaboration of that world to approval by a higher authority" (2013, 141). Therefore, licensing is an integral component of transtextual authorship: it works to centralize intellectual property ownership in relation to the ever-increasing multiplicity of authorial origins and maintains the significance of canonical adaptation as a principle of authenticity. As such, licensing forges connections between multiple sites of production while is also reinforces the central authority of the IP object.

Creative license is an inflection on the procedures of licensing that also incorporates the dynamic between transtextual poetics and the industrial conditions of intellectual property law in the franchise mode. Johnson employs the concept of creative license to "explore franchising as a mediation of creativity and highly industrialized collaborative production" (25); with this usage, Johnson takes some 'license' with "accepted assumptions about terms like creativity and collaboration" in relation to licensing, to explore the concepts of "collaborative creativity within media franchise and the licensing relationships and other hierarchal industrial structures shaping it" (24). I draw upon Johnson's articulation of creative license as a 'mediation of creativity,' but I am reluctant to also embrace the concept of collaboration in the context of blockbuster franchising: as I articulated in the previous chapter on transtextual authorship, authorship and origination in blockbuster franchising reflect a polycentric not collaborative logic. Nonetheless, the point to takeaway here is the relational dynamic that holds the franchise system together and facilitates connections between creative sources and production, where "franchising must be understood as relational given its dependence on sustained, strategic relationships between stakeholders with unequal interest in shared cultural resources; franchises are not reflective of intellectual property monopolies, but instead negotiation of imperfectly aligned interests" (Johnson 2010, 6). The foundational crux of the franchise mode is the relationship between intellectual property ownership and its canonical adaptation in the context of a dynamic between industrial procedure and

transtextual poetics. This establishes creative license as a binding agent that mediates the dynamic between creativity and business in franchise production.

As a fundamental legal procedure of blockbuster franchising, licensing is critical to multiplatform narrative strategies because it legally enables the poetic use of an intellectual property across multiple media (but not necessarily in an organized fashion as per the transmedia narrative strategy). Creative license is thus the legal instrument that facilitates canonical adaptation. For example, the comic book industry has a long history of operating as a "licensing farm" for Hollywood studios, in which comic books function primarily "to develop and maintain characters that can be sold for use in other media" (Rogers 1999, 134). Historically, comic book licensing agreements gave Hollywood studios "creative and economic control over production, marketing, and sublicensing" of its character properties (Johnson 2012, 9). Moreover, Johnson explains, "while licensing agreements extended contractually from the licensors' ownership of intellectual property, in practice they loosened licensors' direct control of labor and rendered media franchising a meaningful site of negotiation among the varied corporate interests of licensor, publisher-licensee, and developer" (2013, 97). To further draw upon Marvel Comics as an example, by licensing multiple properties to Hollywood studios the publishing company relinquished creative authority over its most high-profile superhero brands—X-Men, Spider-Man, and Fantastic Four—as a source of ongoing revenue.[35] Although this strategy helped rescue Marvel Comics from bankruptcy, it also destabilized the publisher's creative control of its own characters by entering into a licensing relationship with producers at Sony, Fox and Universal.[36] In this example, licensing attenuates to some degree the hierarchal divide between intellectual property owner and creative production. Comic book licensing is one example of the complex relationships that occur through licensing agreements, and in the case study below I will examine how creative license presents in literary licensing through the example of the 'Wizarding World' franchise. At this point it can be stated that creative license is a force of poetic utility that conceptualizes the intellectual property transtext as a multiplicity of dynamic relations between intellectual property and its creative production.

[35] I reflect further on the principle of creative license and the 'Spider-Man' intellectual property in publication elsewhere (Lomax 2019b).

[36] The formation of Marvel Studios and the 'MCU' franchise is in many ways a response to this loss of creative control through licensing: in the television documentary *Marvel Studios: Assembling a Universe* former president Marvel Entertainment Alan Fine reveals "we wanted to control the destinies of our own characters. We wanted to decide when, how, and in which ways we would bring them to filmed-entertainment" (2014).

Property-Unit System

While conglomeration constitutes the overarching business structure of contemporary Hollywood and remains so in the franchise era, there have been some shifts in how blockbuster franchising is organized in terms of its labor-force and production management. Historically, Hollywood has charted multiple labor management models in accordance with changes in the production system: early cinema modes followed the 'cameraman' system (1896–1907), the 'director' system (1907–1909), and the 'director-unit' system (1909–14); early Hollywood introduced the 'central producer' system in 1914, before being replaced by the 'producer-unit' system as the dominant mode of production of the studio system from 1931 until 1951; moreover, with the disruption of the studio system emerged the 'package-unit' system from 1955, which remains the defining labor model of contemporary Hollywood production (Bordwell, Staiger, and Thompson 1985, 95–96).[37] Unlike the long-term contract-based labor of the studio system, the package-unit system untethered its labor-force from multi-year contracts with a single studio in a high-efficiency production line to facilitate a short-term production package wherein labor is sourced from across the entire industry (330). Also referred to as independent package production (Smith 1998, 7), the package-unit system emerged as the production management norm following the end of the studio system and evolved with the increase in semi-independent and independent production, as well as specialist independent technical craft firms (7). Package production persists in contemporary Hollywood with the rise of conglomeration in the 1990s and into the 2000s and by all accounts still constitutes the standard management structure in the early twenty-first century, whereby production labor is for the most part still sourced from the entire industrial pool on a short-term and film-by-film basis. Little scholarly or industrial attention seems to be directed at how package-unit system continues as the mode of production in the franchise era. There is more scope to investigate this point further beyond this thesis, but for now I pose the question of whether the franchise era has actuated a revised production management system that reinforces the centralization of intellectual property into what could be understood as a 'property-unit' system.

[37] These models have varied in management structure from a social division of labor, wherein craft roles are unified across the production process (as in the 'cameraman' system), the division of the cameraman and director labor roles (as in the 'director' system), centralized management of production line efficiency (as in the 'central producer' system), and the specialized management of production 'units' to increase turnover and quantity (as in the 'director-unit,' the 'producer-unit,' and the 'package-unit' systems) (Bordwell, Staiger, and Thompson 1985, 95–96).

As with authorship and ownership, in the franchise mode workforce structures and financial management increasingly center around the ongoing utility of intellectual property. This resembles the way that "the screenplay formed the core of a package that might attract a director and a star" in the package-unit system (Bordwell 2006, 27). In the property-unit system, the above-the-line workforce—director, screenwriter, actors—are attracted to (or deterred from) a franchise property based on returned clout; moreover, talent is increasingly secured under multi-production contracts over an extended period. This is particularly the case with actors: for example, actors hired to star in the 'MCU' franchise—such as Robert Downey Jr., Scarlett Johansson, and Chris Hemsworth—are often contracted under multi-project commitments for productions scheduled many years in advance. This is in contrast from the package-unit system in which each movie is "a one-off production" (27) and all "the necessary ingredients of production [are] assembled film by film" (King 2002, 28). Production workforce in the 'MCU' and other franchises with multi-project contracts signal a need to consider whether the package-unit system continues to work effectivity in the franchise mode and I suggest that it exemplifies the property-unit system as a model of its 'factory-like' machination. In other instances, production employs the package-unit system with minor shifts in organization to reflect the needs of franchise production, particularly concerning the 'one-off' arrangement: for example, the 'Lord of the Rings' trilogy (2001–2003) was intended as a 'one-off' trilogy in the package production sense, whereby adaptation rights, workforce, studio and locations were organized by its producers and finances were secured through a deal with New Line Cinema; nonetheless, the 'Lord of the Rings' franchise leaned towards a property-based workforce with some of the same talent, sets, locations, and post-production house re-engaged to produce 'The Hobbit' trilogy (2012–2014). With the property-unit system, management should aim for production labor and workforce stability to extend beyond one production, such that the longevity of an intellectual property can bear on the stability of a workforce unit and its financial security.

The property-unit system is not entirely discrete from its two predecessors, the producer-unit and package-unit systems, but converges aspects of the two unit-management structures. Bordwell, Staiger, and Thompson explain how "each management system in one of a few areas differed from the prior one, changed out of it. But in many ways each new system retained much of its predecessor's organization" (1985, 335). The property-unit system has emerged out of the package-unit system to retain non-exclusive labor contracts, whereby talent, creatives, and crew are not bound to work exclusively for one studio (or one franchise property); moreover, the property-unit system also effectively restored some

practices of the producer-unit system of the studio system, like centralized studio management led by producer units and longer-term multi-production labor contracts. While a property-unit production workforce is not exclusively bound to a property-based production, the intellectual property itself is exclusively tied to its production studio as proprietor. This means that in the franchise mode producer roles reflect studio representation in a manner more like the producer-unit system of classical Hollywood than the package-unit system. Prime examples of the producer working as studio authority in the property-unit system are Marvel Studios' president Kevin Fiege, Lucasfilm's president Kathleen Kennedy, DC Film's president Walter Hamada, and former Co-Chairman of Sony Pictures Amy Pascal. If in the package-unit system a narrative property is one aspect of the means of production that the producer must organized (Bordwell, Staiger, and Thompson 1985, 330), in the property-unit system the property is the means of production that secures the producer. As franchise production works to restabilize Hollywood and secure its longevity, it also reactivates some aspects of labor management from the studio system. Although the property-unit system is not yet a formalized component of franchise production, I consider it an emerging norm of the franchise mode of production that can work to maximize efficiency and enhance brand synergy through a reconsolidation of studio ownership and labor management.

Harry Potter and the IP that Lived

The 'Wizarding World' franchise is not inherently unique in its articulation of franchise production, but it functions as a flagship synergy brand for WarnerMedia (formerly AOL-Time Warner 2001–2003 and Time Warner 2003–2018) and its persistence through the first two decades of the twenty-first century makes it a productive exemplar of the key principles set out in this chapter. Formerly branded as the 'Harry Potter' franchise, the change to the 'Wizarding World' brand represents—in its nomenclature and visual identity—a shift from a cross-media adaptation logic the revolves around the 'Harry Potter' brand, to an expansive storyworld brand that works to facilitate creative and industrial longevity. The 'Harry Potter' brand (from 1997) was primarily associated with the series of seven fantasy novels written by J.K. Rowling and published by Bloomsbury (UK) and Scholastic (US) from 1997 to 2007 and the series of eight movie adaptations produced by Warner Brothers Pictures and Heydey Films between 2001 and 2011. Despite the blockbuster success of the movie series, which has returned over $2.7 billion in lifetime revenue to-date (Box Office Mojo), the 'Harry Potter' brand is still strongly associated with the novel series as the initial source of

origination. This is highlighted through ‘the Harry Potter effect’ phenomenon, which refers to the impact that the novels have had on children’s literature (Flood 2016), children’s reading (Shemroske 2016), and debates about what kinds of books belong on the bestseller’s list (Fitzsimmons 2012). Similarly, Susan Gunelius examines the ‘Harry Potter’ brand as a global literary phenomenon based on ‘the book that lived’ (2008, 1), which is a phrase that plays on the notion of ‘boy that lived’ taken from the ‘Harry Potter’ narrative. The ‘Harry Potter’ brand—and the ‘Wizarding World’ it launched—will always rightfully be associated with the novels that first introduced the storyworld and brand; however, with a one-way novel-to-movie adaptation logic driven by a series of novels that ended in 2007, the ‘Harry Potter’ franchise undermined its own longevity.

Since the release of the final move adaptation, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 2* (2011), the ‘Harry Potter’ franchise has expanded to include multiple iterations across media platforms: the online site *Pottermore* (2012); the *Wizarding World of Harry Potter* theme parks at Universal’s Islands of Adventure (2010), Universal Orlando (2014a), Universal Studios Japan (2014b) and Universal Studios Hollywood (2016); the two-part stage play and published script, *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child* (2016); the exhibition *Harry Potter: A History of Magic* (2017); the movie series including *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* (2016) and *Fantastic Beasts: The Crimes of Grindelwald* (2018); the virtual reality game *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them VR* (2018); and the augmented reality mobile game, *Harry Potter: Wizards Unite* (2019). These iterations affirm the continuing value of the ‘Harry Potter’ property and chart a progression towards the more open ‘Wizarding World’ brand. In 2018, *Pottermore*—the official Harry Potter website at the time—announced the launch of the new ‘Wizarding World’ brand, which “signals a new era of limitless possibilities . . . and so much more magic yet to come” (para. 7); in 2019, the *Pottermore* site was redirected to a new *Wizarding World* website as the new online home for the franchise. Warner Brothers’ shift from the ‘Harry Potter’ to the ‘Wizarding World’ brand represents a reformulation of the IP object as a franchise that centers around a novel series to a complex transtextuality, whereby the higher-level property is redefined to maximize creative and industrial longevity. As the standard copy in ‘Wizarding World’ news releases note, “people of all ages have been enthralled by these extraordinary adventures, set within an ever-widening shared universe, inspired by the vision of J.K. Rowling” (Wizarding World 2018, para. 2). Therefore the ‘Wizarding World’ rebrand ensures that the initial ‘Harry Potter’ intellectual property could live well beyond its initial adaptation.

Where the ‘Harry Potter’ brand is defined mostly by the novel series as its originating source, the ‘Wizarding World’ distances itself from any specific iteration to form an IP object that sits at a higher level in a branding sense. In this context, any canonical iteration should be considered an adaptation of the ‘Wizarding World’ property, whether theme park, movie, or video game. The new brand logo first appeared at the opening of *The Crimes of Grindelwald*, in which the familiar Warner Brothers logo floats forward off-screen to make way for the ‘Wizarding World’ logo (Figure 19). An online news release describes the compelling iconography of the logo:

> The new *Wizarding World* logo is an open book, reflecting its literary origins, and contains elements emblematic of the beloved characters from both Harry Potter and Fantastic Beasts. Astute fans will instantly notice the iconic lightning bolt, as well as a subtle nod to magical creatures, embedded in the logo. Additionally, the book’s fanned-open ‘pages’ are actually wands, each belonging to one of the legendary wizards or witches from the two franchises. The order of the wands is also symbolic: reflecting the evolution of the films, they begin with those chosen for the Harry Potter characters, followed by key characters from Fantastic Beasts. From left to right, they are the wands belonging to Voldemort, Ron Weasley, Hermione Granger, Harry Potter, Albus Dumbledore (the Elder Wand), Newt Scamander, Tina Goldstein, Queenie Goldstein, and Gellert Grindelwald (the wand he possessed before claiming the Elder Wand). All of the wands point inward, inviting both devoted and new fans, as well as future generations, to discover more of the magic and adventure of the *Wizarding World*. (Wizarding World 2018, paras. 4-6).

This description reveals the ways that this logo honors the legacy of the ‘Harry Potter’ brand, including its initial book platform and the symbols that constitute it, while also representing the assemblage of newer elements and the opening of the brand to future directions.



Figure 19: The 'Wizarding World' franchise logo.

As an IP object that represents the franchise and its history, the ‘Wizarding World’ brand exemplifies the principle of the IP object as a transtext: it is deliberately constructed as

a higher-level articulation that synergizes the various current and future iterations—licensed or conceived by Rowling herself—to form a more cohesive and coherent franchise entity that can drive future creative development. Therefore, as an IP transtext, the 'Wizarding World' brand is a force of poetic utility because it reinforces canonical authority upon the various expressions of the storyworld, while it facilitates a broader scope of creative exploration for future iterations by multiple authors. Rowling's function as initial author within this transtextual dynamic is particularly compelling since she holds so much canonical authority over the 'Harry Potter' brand, but increasingly attracts negative attention for her personal political views.[38] Kathy Bowrey considers that "the creator needs to be present to found the identity or character of the enterprise, but need not remain for the duration of the productive life of the franchise" (2011, 197). Moreover, Bowrey argues that, in the 'Harry Potter' franchise, "what is of value in IP terms is not JK Rowling as the author of a particular text in which she owns copyright, but JK Rowling as a more generic creative force that fans can refer to as the anchor, but not necessarily the author, of all aspects of the enterprise" (2011, 192). Rowling is thus embedded as a vital component in the transtextuality of the 'Wizarding World' IP object—not exclusively as a top-down force but as a paratextual element of the franchise brand. Warner Brothers' movement from 'Harry Potter' to the 'Wizarding World' brand signals this negotiation, with the interim rebrand to 'J.K. Rowling's Wizarding World' (2016–2018) (Gardner 2016) and the subsequent removal of Rowling's name from branding material (Sims 2018). Andrew Sims considers this to be a sign that Rowling endorses the opening up of the storyworld, both in terms of its creative scope and also the involvement of new creators (2018); this signals a new dynamic for the transtextual authorship of the 'Wizarding World,' in which canonical adaptation is not defined exclusively by Rowling's involvement but by the 'Wizarding World' brand as a trademark that is owned exclusively by Warner Brothers Entertainment and functions as a mark of authenticity and authority.

The 'Wizarding World' brand is an overarching entity that consolidates textual multiplicity and can further expand in scope, but the 'Wizarding World' brand has a more complex function as an IP object: it is not simply an external brand, but also an internal nucleus of the storyworld. Currently, the 'Wizarding World' is made up of the 'Harry Potter' and 'Fantastic Beasts' series, but it also encompasses various other official iterations such as

[38] Rowling has publicly voiced controversial opinions about feminism and transgender people (Nunn 2020; Kirkpatrick 2020). These opinions and the subsequent backlash are beyond the scope of this analysis and not within the purview of this discussion; however, it is worth highlighting how the "Wizarding World" brand works to incidentally reframe Rowling's connection to the franchise to enable an inclusion of multiple origins.

theme parks, a stage play, and video games. Even the 'Harry Potter' story is itself is a complex entity of layers and components. As Stephen Brown and Anthony Patterson explain, "the Harry Potter master narrative is made up of several subsidiary stories. These are the story in the novels; the story of the author; the story behind the books, the story in the movies; the story about the merchandise; the story of its critics; and, not least, the all-important cyber story" (2010, 543–544).[39] These components are not ancillary to the 'Wizarding World' franchise in their association with the 'Harry Potter' brand, rather they inform the blueprint that constitutes the IP object of the 'Wizarding World' and supports the future expansion of the franchise.

As a spin-off and prequel, the 'Fantastic Beasts' series emerges through an interstice created by Rowling in the 'Harry Potter' storyworld: initially referenced in the novel *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (1997), the book *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* (2001) is a diegetic school textbook about magical creatures written by a fictional character, the magizoologist Newt Scamander, and published in 1927 by the fictitious Obscurus Books. In 2001, Rowling wrote and published the textbook to raise money for charity, using the pen name 'Newt Scamander' to establish narrative authenticity. The original version also included margin notes as if it were Harry Potter's own used textbook (Figure 20). The *Fantastic Beasts* book is thus firmly positioned within the wizarding world of 'Harry Potter'—since the real-life publication presents itself as 'property of Harry Potter' to reinforce its narrative coherence, it also affirms itself as part of the 'Harry Potter' property. The *Fantastic Beasts* movie series reflects a different articulation of adaptation, since it does not repeat plot and character from one medium to the next as in the *Harry Potter* series, but it is an adaptation of the 'Wizarding World' brand that takes the centralized intellectual property as its source material. This reflect Kyle Meikle's point that "franchises restore adaptations to their intrinsic multiplicity, underscoring that even seemingly individual adaptations of seemingly individual sources have always been more massive—more intertextual and more multimodal—than critics suppose" (2019, 170–171). As an IP object the 'Wizarding World' works at the external level as an overarching brand, and internally as a driving force of the franchise. In this mechanism, the 'Harry Potter' and 'Fantastic Beast' brands constitute a transtextual dynamic that represents the franchise's history and the dynamic between media, licenses, stories, narrative strategies, audiences, and realities.

[39] Brown and Patterson identify the cyber story of 'Harry Potter' to be role of the Internet, and particularly Web 2.0, in the franchise's development (2010, 546).

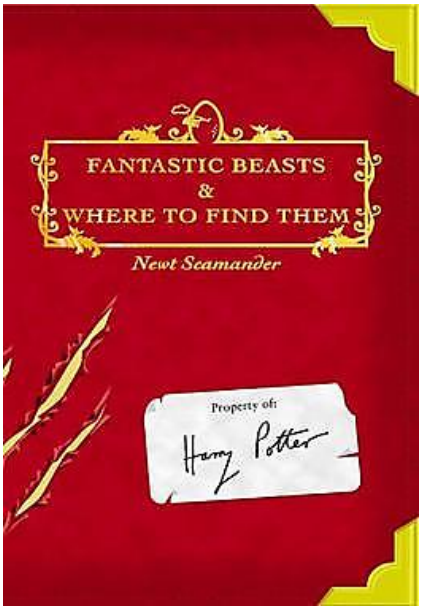


Figure 20: *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* book

Although Rowling is a canonical authority that anchors the 'Wizarding World' franchise, she is not its only creative force: the transtextual authorship of the franchise is constituted by Rowling as initial originator in tandem with its multiplicity of endless origins, represented by many creative practitioners who have shaped the franchise. Such creators include actors (such as Daniel Radcliffe, Rupert Grint, Emma Watson, and Eddie Redmayne), directors (Chris Columbus, Alfonso Cuarón, Mike Newell, and David Yates), screenwriters (Steve Kloves, Michael Goldenberg, and JK Rowling), composers (John Williams, Patrick Doyle, Nicholas Hooper, Alexandre Desplat, and James Newton Howard), cinematographers (John Seale, Roger Pratt, Michael Seresin, Slawomir Idkiak, Bruno Delbonnel, Eduardo Serra, Philippe Rousselot), editors (Richard Francis-Bruce, Peter Honess, Steven Weisberg, Mick Audsley, Mark Day), and production designer (Stuart Craig), among other creative forces. These authorial figures are part of the transtextual authorship of the 'Wizarding World,' but they also make up the production labor force hired in the service of adapting the IP object.

A compelling example of this dynamic at work in the 'Wizarding World' franchise is Alfonso Cuarón, director of third movie installment, *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (2004). As a concept-auteur in the franchise mode, his reputation as a prestigious auteur works in tension with the blockbuster logic of franchise production. As Cuarón himself reveals, director Guillermo Del Toro called him an "arrogant bastard" for first rejecting the role of director (Sharf 2008, para. 3). Moreover, in an interview with Helen

O'Hara, Cuarón describes how directing the third installment of the adaptation involved "creating a balance" between different objectives:

> To honour the books [and] to honour JK Rowling's universe. Then I had to honour my own vision. And then I had to funnel that into what is already established in very successful films that were already very loved. So the balance was, 'Okay, I want to make these my own, but at the same time I have to honour these elements." It was a beautiful exercise. (2013, quest. 3)

As O'Hara observes in setting up her further questioning, "It seems like each of the directors on the series has faced some big challenges: Chris Columbus had to create the world in the first place but you had to do something slightly different while providing continuity. Is this fair?" To which Cuarón insightfully responds:

> Well, that's what is brilliant. You can watch the films one after the other and you'll see Harry growing up before your eyes. To maintain that continuity for ten years is a major achievement for David Heyman and Warner Bros. It's a *major* achievement. I don't think there's anything like that in the history of cinema. Stuart Craig kept a sense of the amazing continuity of the thing. I think David [Yates], more than any of the directors, exploited the possibilities of the canvas. The universe of Harry Potter expanded with David's films as the witching world begins to interact with the muggle world. The refinement of the visual effects in David's films is stunning and the quiet poetry of his films is really beautiful. (quest. 4; original emphasis)

With these interview responses Cuarón articulates the principles of transtextual authorship that I identified in the previous chapter: the multiplicity of authors and origins (Rowling, Heyman, Warner Brothers, Columbus, Craig, and Yates), the canonical adaptation authorized by Rowling and Warner Brothers, and his own function as concept-auteur who must negotiate his own creative vision within the conditions of the franchise mode.

Cuarón's role as director in the 'Harry Potter' series reiterates how the principles of transtextual authorship work in franchise production, but production of the 'Wizarding World' franchise is also constituted by the relations of creative license that facilitate its brand synergy strategy through deliberate cross-media adaptation and merchandising. In 1998, Warner Brothers secured the worldwide licensing and merchandise rights for 'Harry Potter' beyond the novel series (*The Economist* 2003); its parent company—the newly merged AOL-Time Warner—engaged its various communication and entertainment channels to facilitate a synergy strategy for the franchise that journalist Ken Auletta dubbed "the Potter Offensive" (2001, para. 3). As *The Economist* explains:

> The case for the merger between AOL and Time Warner rested on a belief in this cross-promotional power. Harry Potter, argues Richard Parsons, AOL Time Warner's co-chief operating officer, is a prime example of an asset "driving synergy both ways". He explains that "we use the different platforms to drive the movie, and the movie to drive business across the platforms." So, in America, AOL.com has offered subscribers the chance to win tickets to an advance screening; while in Britain, AOL has attracted new subscribers with the promise of tickets. (2001, para. 5)

Synergy undoubtedly worked for Warner Brothers since the 'Harry Potter' franchise sparked 'Pottermania' worldwide. Nonetheless, despite the integrated conglomerate structure and global saturation of the 'Harry Potter' brand, the franchise's initial marketing strategy demonstrated "new restraint in the hype business" (*The Economist* 2003, para. 1). It is well-documented that Rowling's licensing arrangement with Warner Brothers stipulated that the property was not to be "over commercialized" through excessive licensing (*The Economist* 2001, 2003; Galligan 2004, 37). As is explained in *The Economist*, the early 'Harry Potter' marketing strategy exemplified a "new conservatism in Hollywood merchandising," where only 75 product licensees had been granted in the United States, including Mattel (toys), Electronic Arts (computer games), and LEGO (toy construction), which was a relatively small number compared to the 200–300 domestic licenses that would have been expected of such a production (2003, para. 8). Moreover, only one global license had been granted to Coca-Cola, which was met with strict conditions not to portray the lead child characters drinking the soft drink or feature their faces on the drink itself (Lyman 2001; *The Economist* 2001, 2003; Galligan 2004, 37). It might appear as though this licensing restraint contradicts the brand synergy that drives the franchise's marketing strategy, so it is then important to clarify that in this context 'synergy' is not synonymous with excess—rather, brand synergy is a dynamic of creative license that stabilizes the brand for long-term survival (*The Economist* 2003, para. 8). The licensing restraint in 'Harry Potter' merchandising subsided as the franchise grew in global recognition across the early twenty-first century, as a cross-media phenomenon incorporating theme parks, stage play, and mobile games, but the brand would also continue to retain strength as it extended across licenses.

This less-is-more approach to licensing the 'Harry Potter' brand early in the franchise's history was instrumental in establishing a foundation for the ways that creative licensing also works to enrich the storyworld and its relationship with the audience. According to Anne Galligan, "the synergies created by the Potter brand name are working dynamically to create that extra edge in the marketplace. The consumer can now read the books, watch the movies and videos, play with the toys, master the computer games, and then

perhaps, buy into the company" (2004, 37). This buy-in is not merely a commercial imperative for the 'consumer' but also reflects the openness of the franchise as a storyworld, in which audiences *enter into* the 'Wizarding World' as they also buy into the commercial phenomenon. Diane Nelson fulfilled the role of global brand manager for the 'Harry Potter' franchise until 2004 (after which she was promoted to Executive Vice President, Global Brand Management at Warner Brothers) and has explained that the 'Harry Potter' brand strategy followed a set of guiding principles: "less is more;" characters are flawed and should not be "sugar coated;" and "take people into Harry's world, don't put Harry into our world" (Lyman 2001, para. 9–12). All these principles reflect the way that the dynamic of creative licensing works to mediate the conditions of creativity and intellectual property protection: licensing restraint and character authenticity work to represent a storyworld that is perceived to be inhabitable, yet only accessible through brand engagement. Moreover, these principles establish a manageable scope that allows Warner Brothers executives and producers to maintain control of the brand and ongoing development. Licensing and marketing are therefore strategies of poetic utility because they are instrumental in constructing the 'Wizarding World' and its capacity to exist as both a commercial brand that can be protected as a legal entity and a transtextual object made up of a multiplicity of creative forces.

As an exemplar of brand synergy, the 'Wizarding World' franchise centralizes the intellectual property as the driving force of its production management system. The initial adaptation of the 'Harry Potter' novel series employs the standard package-unit system of contemporary Hollywood: producer David Heyman secured the license agreement between Rowling and Warner Brothers and, in collaboration with each hired director, sourced and managed the labor force that would drive production. As producer of every 'Harry Potter' movie installment and two 'Fantastic Beasts' releases to-date, Heyman remains the most consistent management authority across the franchise's production history, beside Rowling herself, such that "if he never made another film, Heyman would have carved a niche in screen history" (*Sydney Morning Herald* 2010, para. 11).[40] While this refers to the global entertainment phenomenon that arose from the production of the 'Harry Potter' franchise, that niche is also found in the emergent structures of production that are borne from the franchise's global success—that is, a movement towards a property-based production system that privileges the longevity and security of a franchise brand.

[40] Heyman is not the only figure affiliated with multiple 'Wizarding World' installments, but as producer his production authority rivals Rowling.

This shift is represented by multiple key developments related to licensing and production: in 2011, Rowling left her literary agent to join Neil Blair's newly launched agency, The Blair Partnership, which claims to have "pioneered a new approach to representation that has helped to create and continues to constantly grow one of the world's major entertainment franchises" (The Blair Partnership 2020); in 2013, Rowling and Warner Brothers established an "expanded creative partnership" that would initiate development of the 'Fantastic Beasts' series (Garner 2013); and in 2014, Warner Brothers launched the Harry Potter Global Franchise Development (HPGFD) team, which is "focused on continuing the expansion of J.K. Rowling's universe" (Ritman 2016) to "develop and execute a high-level strategic vision for the Harry Potter brand and its ancillary businesses, working closely with J.K. Rowling's team at The Blair Partnership and other internal and external stakeholders and partners" (Warner Bros. 2014, para. 2). The HPGFD manages the creative and licensing interests of the 'Wizarding World' franchise in much the same way that the Lucasfilm Story Group functions as a steward of the 'Star Wars' franchise. These new initiatives and affiliations demonstrate the increasing focus on managing intellectual property in blockbuster franchising, in which the rebranding of 'Harry Potter' to the 'Wizarding World' franchise reflects the shifts towards a production management system that supports the IP object and its transtextual dynamics to secure the future of the 'Wizarding World'. However, such strategies also work in contestation, since the 'Harry Potter' part of the 'Wizarding World' brand is still largely controlled by Rowling and The Blair Partnership, while Warner Brothers—currently owned by the merged AT&T-Time Warner since 2018[41]—tries to negotiate with this authority while serving the brand. As Nicole Laporte writes, "at a moment when all of Hollywood is desperate for giant pieces of IP . . . real estate, the Harry Potter struggle reveals how fraught it is to try to beat Disney at its own game. Warner Bros. is now fighting to do just that with all of its big-name properties, but in the case of Potter it has to align its own ambitions with a business-savvy author intent on controlling her creation" (2018, para. 5). This assumed tension further speaks to conditions and limitations that are put on the IP object through production management structures. For this reason, it becomes even more important to also understand the narrative system and its conventions that constitute the IP object.

[41] Further to this, AT&T is currently in the process of merging WarnerMedia (including Warner Brothers) with Discovery to create a new standalone company due to take effect on 2022 (AT&T 2021).

Episode II: High-Concept Strikes Back—Narration and Formula in the Franchise Era

The first section of this thesis examined the ownership and production of ideas in the franchise mode and this second section focuses on the substance and organization of these ideas through narrative form. In blockbuster franchising, questions of narration are ultimately bound up in high-concept as a logic that has worked to effectively develop norms and conventions in form and style that fulfil economic priorities and suit industrial organization, like risk-aversion and conglomerate synergy. As Justin Wyatt explains,

> High concept can be considered as one central development—and perhaps the central development—within post-classical cinema, a style of filmmaking molded by economic and institutional forces. Through high concept, the diverse manner through which economics and aesthetics are joined together can be understood, and even appreciated, at one particular time in American film history. (1994, 8)

High-concept thus articulates an effective nexus between economics and poetics that informs the context in which the franchise formula exists; however, it is worth reinforcing that this creative-industrial nexus reflects a broader imperative of Hollywood moviemaking and is not necessarily unique to the high-concept strategy or contemporary production. As Kristin Thompson suggests, "the phenomena described by Wyatt are best thought of as intensifications of Hollywood's traditional practices" (1999, 3). The high-concept strategy intensifies this interplay between economics and aesthetics, or narrative form, by operationalizing the *idea* as a force of poetic utility. As such, Wyatt identifies the high-concept formula to be "a progression from the blockbuster," whereby it "shares the emphasis on pre-sold components, yet modifies the style and narrative of the blockbuster" (1994, 80–81). The franchise mode lends itself to the tenets of high-concept because it works to stabilize formula based on the familiarity of intellectual property, the exploitation of scale and scope through licensing and serialization (including spin-offs, merchandise tie-ins, and promotional synergy) and the marketability of branding and differentiation; nonetheless, as the following chapters examine, blockbuster franchising does not subvert or disrupt narrative coherence and development in the service of synergy or marketing in the ways often claimed of high-concept.

The title of this second section— "High Concept Strikes Back" —represents the persistence of the high-concept logic in blockbuster moviemaking of the early twenty-first

century, specifically the poetic utilization of pre-sold properties, and the assimilation of this logic into the classical Hollywood paradigm.[42] Based on its existence in the contemporary Hollywood post-studio system era, and its connection with the high-concept logic, blockbuster franchising is incidentally implicated in the critical purview of what is often identified as post-classical narration (Wyatt 1994; Kramer 1998; King 2002; Thanouli 2006; Langford 2010; Arnett 2015). These accounts vary in the degree of narrative disruption that is attributed to post-classicism, where some suggest a break from classical narrative convention through its subordination of narrative cohesion and fragmented visual spectacle (Wyatt 1994; Langford 2010; Arnett 2015) and others use the classification to signal revisionism but not a complete disruption of the classical (Kramer 1998; King 2002; Thanouli 2006). As Kramer states, "post-classicalism does not refer to a complete break in American film history; rather the term is meant to highlight the fact that, despite overriding stylistic and institutional continuities, Hollywood has undergone a set of fundamental changes which deserve critical attention" (1998, 63). This is the very mechanism of change and assimilation that Bordwell identifies in classical narration, without a required addition of the 'post-' prefix: "the debate about postclassical Hollywood raises the question of how to gauge change over history," whereby "critics have exaggerated the novelty of current developments" because "our perceptual and cognitive systems are geared to take a great deal for granted and to monitor the world for change" (Bordwell 2006, 9). Similarly, Bradley Schauer considers that "post-classicism exaggerates the differences between the old and new while ignoring the numerous similarities" (2007, 192)—he proceeds to argue that the blockbuster franchise closely resembles classical narrations and adds that "if Hollywood narrative has changed at all, it is only in order to remain the same" (2007, 193). This aligns with points made in this thesis at its outset: that there is nothing exceptionally new about the industrial and creative mechanisms driving blockbuster franchising in the early twenty-first century—only that its formal construction is shaped by the conditions and imperatives of its historical context.

Narrative in the franchise mode remains inherently classical, with some tendencies—especially seriality—that alter its formal construction and have become assimilated into the norms of contemporary Hollywood narration. Some scholars and commentators have assumed that seriality, spectacle, and merchandising in the franchise have destroyed classical

[42] Admittedly, the title 'High-Concept Strikes Back' implies that high-concept has reappeared after an absence or reduced dominance, but that is not the intended meaning; rather it expresses the intensification of the high-concept strategy in blockbuster franchising (and fulfills the 'Star Wars' homage running through the section titles of this thesis).

narration and instead reflect the post-classical condition. However, Kramer implies that this is informed more by assumption (1998, 307), and I question whether these assumptions are informed by sustained viewing practice. Moreover, Schauer considers how franchise narration appeals to difference audience segments in various ways:

> The narrative of the franchise blockbuster is constructed in order to appeal simultaneously to two distinct audiences: the general public and also a smaller, more discriminating fan audience that is familiar with the intricacies of that particular narrative world . . . Narrative seen as thin or boring by the typical moviegoer can be richly rewarding and complex for a fan who has consumed the ancillary products associated with a film franchise. (2007, 193)

This dual perception of franchise narration perhaps runs the risk of story gaps that could alter the process of narration for those who have not experienced every prior installment in a franchise, but, as Schauer further explains, "this does not indicate that the film in question in narratively *incoherent* to a mass audience—simply that the average spectator might not find the film particularly interesting" (307; original emphasis). With this point, it is also worth remembering that blockbuster franchising is made to enable maximum box office revenue, and so the assumption that a producer would set out to intentionally alienate the populace through incoherent or fragmented narration is ultimately misguided. Nonetheless, there are qualities in franchise narration that I consider have emerged and been assimilated into classical narration through the franchise mode, which is most especially represented by a reformulation of the classical Hollywood ending. It is unfortunate that the notion of 'post-classicism'—and the use of the 'post' prefix generally—is loaded with such critical baggage and imprecision, because in many ways it appropriately articulates the ongoing temporality and perpetual afterness that drives the seriality of narrative form in the franchise mode.

The dimensions of narrative form are instrumental to the expansive construction of the franchise mode and its ability to enable industrial longevity. As such, blockbuster franchising is ultimately driven by the poetic utility of seriality and the dynamic of repetition and difference, whereby "'just like . . . only different' is the engine that drives film" (Kolker 2015, 4). In this thesis, form is understood as the infrastructural shape of the franchise mode and seriality characterizes its functionality as a structure that propels narration. Bordwell and Thompson recognize that "most film industries need to both standardize and differentiate their products. Audiences expect a new take on some familiar forms and materials. Sequels offer the possibility of recognizable repetition with controlled, sometimes intriguing, variation" (2011, 14). This means that, as a mode of narration, seriality cuts across both form

and content as it impacts the types of narrative elements that are used and how they are organized through narration. For Noël Carroll, "content is the matter; form is the manner" (1998, 391) and considers it problematic to conceptualize form without differentiating it from content; moreover, he adds, "one cannot determine the manner of its organization, until one knows what is being organized" (391). Nonetheless, Carroll concedes that it is often impossible to make this distinction because "form is undeniably one of the things that make up a film" (392). This also holds true in blockbuster franchising, which should be characterized by form as an essential component of its constitution as much as the intellectual properties that are adapted and make up its content. In blockbuster franchising, seriality is an expression of both content and structure—it is the mechanism that fuels franchise narrative and propels its form. This thesis identifies this mechanism as an example of 'transtextual narration,' which conceptualizes the intersection of form and content through seriality and the dynamic of repetition and variation as a force of poetic utility in shaping the high-concept logic of the franchise mode.

The two chapters in this section examine narrative form and formula to identify the functions of narration, genre, plot, story and setting in the franchise era, with attention to how formal systems and mechanisms are used to tell expansive stories. [43] This thesis focuses on narrative as a "succession of events" and "their several relations of linking, opposition, repetition" (Genette 1980, 25) across the transtextuality of a franchise. The following chapters break down the key principles and practices that shape this narrative system. Chapter 3, "Transtextual Narration," is concerned with broader concepts of narratology that inform how stories are constructed in the franchise mode, with a focus on how the dynamic between repetition and variation shapes narration through narrative systems, serial dynamics, and storyworld design. This chapter will conclude with a case study that examines transtextual narration in the 'Star Trek' franchise. High-concept is incidental to the narrative components that ultimately inform the understanding of formula and high-concept. Chapter 4, "Franchising Formula," turns to the practical implications of transtextual narration to identify how formula functions in the franchise era; it will address high-concept strategy, the importance of mythos as a formal foundation, and the articulation of thematic branding through score. This chapter concludes with an analysis of the 'Bond' franchise to demonstrate how formula can both define and differentiate a franchise. The objective of these

[43] Other functions of narrative in the blockbuster franchise that require further examination but are beyond the scope of this study include point of view, character focalization, and narrative iteration within each franchise installment.

two chapters is to understand how the norms and conventions of narration, genre, and form operate as forces of poetic utility in the franchise mode. These chapters argue that narration and formula constitute a set of stabilizing norms and conventions—and the existence of emerging shifts and deviations—that reflect the creative and industrial construction of storytelling in the franchise mode.

Chapter 3: Transtextual Narration

This chapter contributes a narratology of the blockbuster franchise; it is concerned with the way franchise narration functions as a system—or rather, a supersystem—that interlaces the components of story, plot, characterization, genre, and theme to realize the creative and poetic dimensions of the IP object. In blockbuster franchising, narration is the mechanism that translates a legal entity into an expansive process; put another way, franchise narration synthesizes the strategies of blockbuster franchising with the principles of narration. As Edward Branigan explains:

> *Narrative is a perceptual activity that organizes data into a special pattern which represents and explains experience*. More specifically, narrative is a way of organizing spatial and temporal data into a cause-effect chain of events with a beginning, middle, and end that embodies a judgement about the nature of the events as well as demonstrates how it is possible to know, and hence to narrate, the events" (1992, 3, original emphasis).

In classical Hollywood narration, this spatial and temporal data can refer to narrative elements, such as character, setting, and plot structure, or aesthetic elements like mise-en-scène, editing, and sound.[44] Moreover, in blockbuster franchising this narrative data set must also include the intellectual property as a transtextual object that incorporates the dimensions of serial temporality and expansive spatiality; franchise narration is thus shaped by the transtextual principles of multiplicity, polycentricity, and longevity. As Branigan signals, narrative is already constituted by a multiplicity of data elements and the various ways such data can be sequenced; through seriality, the franchise mode takes this multiplicity of data to a higher level. According to Noël Carroll, "parts and relations . . . are basic ingredients of film form" (1998, 393) and "when we speak of the form of an individual film, then, we may take that to refer to *all the webs of relations* that obtain between elements on the work" (394; original emphasis). Carroll here recognizes how in each single movie form is a complex web of multiple elements, so when we consider this statement in relation to the franchise mode, we must take that to mean all the webs of relations that occur between elements across many works, thus multiplying and intensifying the organization of form in the franchise mode. This chapter thus conceptualizes this systematic organization of multiple story elements in

[44] Chapters 3 and 4 of this thesis focus on narration and chapters 5 and 6 examine the aesthetic elements.

blockbuster franchising through the notion of transtextual narration to account for the intersections of multiple stories, media platforms, and textualities in the franchise mode.

Transtextual narration is a phenomenon of blockbuster franchising that conceptualizes the ways that narrative intersects with principles of transtexual poetics, such as multiplicity, adaptation, and seriality in the franchise mode. Transtextual narration does not disrupt the continuity of classicism in blockbuster production of the early twenty-first century; rather, it represents the development and stabilization of new norms and conventions of form within the classical paradigm, specifically concerning the principles of narrative closure and containment. Many scholars have acknowledged that coherent closure and the tying up of all open questions are fundamental norms of classical Hollywood narration (Bordwell, Staiger, and Thompson 1985; Bordwell 1985a; Branigan 1992, 3; Gaines 1992, 1; Neupert 1995; Thompson 1999). Franchise narration largely maintains this convention, but it also works to balance that closure with serial openness to enable the creative and economic longevity of a storyworld property. Even though blockbuster franchising employs a mostly serial plot structure, this does not mean that narration in the franchise mode is open in any way that radically challenges classical narration—the main plot line of each installment is concluded and, even in the most complex or long-lasting franchises like 'Bond,' containment is also enabled by licensing limitations and brand delineation. For example, as Richard Neupert argues:

> The continual survival of James Bond is not sufficient to produce narrative irresolution [and] opening a new question mark at the end of the film is not sufficient grounds to consider that story as a whole open. In practice, many of the serial film do reach a termination point, then simply open another action code to guarantee a continued audience by playing with audience expectations, but this does not necessarily lead to a narrative strategy of "ambiguity," since it may simply be a tactic providing simple narrative delay. (1995, 109)

Although Neupert refers to serial film that precedes the early twenty-first century, such as film serials of the studio system and earlier 'Bond' installments, this assessment still stands in relation to the franchise mode of the early twenty-first century. It would not be amiss to consider this passage could relate to the mid- and post-credit 'stinger' sequences of the 'Marvel Cinematic Universe' ('MCU'), which end each movie with new action to tease the next installment. Despite these teasers, this is still a material ending that audiences expect as part of the procedures of resolution in franchise narration (such that an omission of a post-credit scene would seem a departure from the norms of resolution in the franchise).

Transtextual narration is thus not a challenge to classicalism, and it is not a radical disruption of established narrative norms: it is reformulation of classical norms that accounts for intersections and connections between installments that are facilitated by multiplicity and seriality in the franchise mode.

As a phenomenon of blockbuster franchising, transtextual narration coalesces the conventions and norms of blockbuster franchising and classical narration to enable a poetic synergy of intellectual property and narrative development; it does this through architextual systems, seriality, and multiplatform storyworlds, which are the focus of this chapter. These principles largely account for the ways that story, plot, and narration are organized in the franchise mode. Architextuality, as Gérard Genette explains, is a type of transtextuality that understands a text across its multiplicity in relation to its function through genre discourse and structure; that is to say, it addresses the systematic mechanisms of a text: "the entire set of general or transcendent categories—types of discourse, modes of enunciation, literary [or other] genres—from which emerges the singular text" ([1982] 1997, 1). To identify the notion of the architextual supersystem as a principle of organization in the franchise mode means to consider its broader mechanisms of form in its multiplicity. In this context, the serial dynamics of the blockbuster franchise drive the narrative plot across its larger form, but there is also temporal complexity in how seriality functions as a narrative device, which will be unpacked in this chapter. This will be further enriched through an understanding of the multiplatform potential of storyworld development as a principle of transtextual narration in the franchise mode, with attention to the characterization of expansive space and the role of characters within this context. This chapter will conclude with a case study of the 'Star Trek' franchise that further exemplifies these principles in practice.

Architextual Systems

As a mode of practice, blockbuster franchising is an entertainment supersystem. It is *super* because of its epic blockbuster scale: in budget, creative scope, global distribution, expected box office revenue, media convergence and synergy; it is a *system* because it "depend[s] on a large collection of texts and potential texts" (Branigan 1984, 29; original emphasis). In the franchise mode, this large collection of texts and potential texts traverses the multiplicity of iterations that constitutes a franchise, which tell different stories and can be of different genres and aesthetic styles, produced by many creators, and across multiple media platforms. Marsha Kinder described the narrative structure of the franchise as a "an ever-expanding

supersystem of entertainment, one marked by transmedia intertextuality" (1991, 1). Kinder articulates a complex system at play in blockbuster franchising, which constitutes an ever-growing network of narrative forms, media platforms, and textualities with "sliding signifiers that move fluidly across various forms of image production and cultural boundaries" (3); the shifting dynamic of franchise narration is one of the reasons why it is so important to identify the transtextual poetics of the franchise mode and consider how it works as a system. Branigan explains that to understand cinema as a narrative system "presupposes that our level of inquiry encompasses more than one film. Meaning structures are not unique to one film but extend over a range of films which may be compared as to meaning. Consequently no one film *is* the system, only an instance—a transformation—of the system" (1984, 29–30; original emphasis). The primary variation between this traditional system and blockbuster franchising is that in the franchise the *one film* or *one instance* of the system—the IP object—is itself a transtextual multiplicity. There are two levels of systematicity that operate in relation to blockbuster franchising: first, the franchise as an entertainment supersystem, which functions as a creative-industrial modality that dominates early twenty-first century Hollywood; second, each 'individual' franchise text, or transtext (for example, the 'Star Wars,' 'Wizarding World,' 'Star Trek,' 'Lord of the Rings,' 'Bond' franchises, and so on) that centers around the intellectual property and is made up of a multiplicity of texts and potential texts. In this way, systematicity relates to blockbuster franchising not only as a higher-level industrial strategy of which individual franchise properties make up a part, but each franchise is also a transtextual system by nature of its seriality and expansive potential.

As a system, blockbuster franchising is an architextual network made up of relations of form, content, and medium. When Kinder identifies that the franchise as an entertainment supersystem "marked by transmedia intertextuality" (1991, 1), she draws from Julia Kristeva's conceptualization of intertextuality as a broad interrelation between texts (2) and not Genette's specific use of the term to designate a co-presence of multiple texts ([1982] 1997, 1); even so, Kinder's notion of the transmedia intertextuality actually aligns with Genette's broader concept of transtextuality.[45] More specifically, I identify that as an entertainment supersystem blockbuster franchising is marked by architextuality, which Genette explains accounts for "that relationship of inclusion that links each text to the various types of discourse it belongs to" and are "thematic, modal, formal and other (?)" ([1979] 1992, 82). In the franchise mode, this "other" discourse includes proprietary linkages as a

[45] The relationship and distinction between transtextuality and intertextuality is discussed in chapter 1.

driving force of systematicity in the franchise; in relation to the use of genre in cross-over comic books, Nicolas Labarre proposes the idea of a franchise as a *proprietary architext* and identifies that "labels, trademarks and brands are architext whose boundaries are legal" (2020, 9). This thesis has already made the point that the franchise mode is fundamentally a legal and industrial phenomenon, but on its own this tells us little about the poetic construction of its narration. For example, most blockbuster franchises—such as the 'MCU,' 'Star Wars,' 'Lord of the Rings,' 'Wizarding World,' 'Star Trek,' 'Jurassic Park,' 'Mission: Impossible,' and 'Fast and the Furious'—strive for *some degree* of consistent story continuity and narrative spatio-temporality, regardless of plot sequence, to maintain cohesion across multiple texts and platforms; however, this is not always the case in franchises such as the 'Worlds of DC,' 'Bond,' 'X-Men,' 'Spider-Man,' 'Planet of the Apes,' 'Terminator,' and 'Mad Max' franchises, which employ a range of organizational structures driven by genre, theme, characterization, rebooting, episodicity to achieve transtextual cohesion. The notion of the architextual system establishes a foundation for understanding the relations between texts and media in each franchise—that is, its architexture—beyond intertextuality, and accounts for the mechanisms of serial form, genre, and multiplatform relations within this structure. This means that to understand a franchise as an architextual system is to identify how it functions as a transtextual discourse; architextuality does not work the same in every example of blockbuster franchising, but it is an analytical principle that can be articulated differently across various franchises.

As a principle of transtextual narration, the architextual system establishes a basis for understanding that each example of blockbuster franchising is a complex assemblage of narrative devices and narrational processes. As a type of transtextuality, the architext is a networked text, which Genette explains is "everywhere—above, beneath, around the text, which spins its web only by hooking it here and there onto that network of architexture" ([1979] 1992, 83). Architextuality thus articulates a "whole endlessly forming and re-forming poetics" made of intersecting theories of genology, modistics, narratology, form, style, and thematics (83–84). The architextual system, therefore, is constituted by the poetics of textual content and form. For Genette, this refers specifically to literary forms or genres like poetry, essay, the novel or novella ([1982] 1997, 4), but in this thesis I extend its scope to also incorporate other media platforms, such as cinema, television, and comic books. Robert Scholes explains that architexts are the "persistent or durable links between particular modes and themes" (1992, ix), which suggests that architextuality can productively account for the way that, "as a principle of organization, narrative transcends the formal differences between

the media through which it is expressed" (Maltby 2003, 454). As an architextual system, blockbuster franchising is a singular entity (the IP object) that is constituted by an ever-expanding multiplicity of, to recall Kinder, "sliding signifiers" (1991, 3) that are shaped by a multiplicity of poetic forces, including authors, genres, and media.

Genre is an important force of poetic utility in the architextual system of blockbuster franchising because it establishes intersections across narrative and proprietary features. Rick Altman defines genre as "patterns/forms/styles/structures which transcend individual films" (1999, 14), which signals how genre is always already transtextual. In the franchise mode, however, the transcendence of individual films is structured first and foremost by propriety connection to an IP object; in this context, genre becomes a tool for differentiation and multiplicity within franchise transtexts and simultaneously a point of connection with established genre structures beyond the cohesion of a proprietary object. For example, in the 'Bond' franchise, genre provides differentiation in an architextual system principally shaped by proprietary elements (more on this in chapter 4) that draw from the spy action genre, but are distinct to the achitextual system of the 'Bond' franchise specifically: working in tandem with the action spy genre in 'Bond' are generic tendencies from comedy (*Casino Royale* [1967]), blaxploitation (*Live and Let Die* [1973]), kung-fu (*The Man with the Golden Gun* [1974] and *Tomorrow Never Dies* [1997]), and science-fiction (*Moonraker* [1979], and *Die Another Day* [2002]). Similarity, while the architextual system of the 'Star Wars' franchise is principally formed in relation to the science-fiction sub-genre of the space opera, it is also inflected with other genres such as the western (*A New Hope* [1977], the episode "Bounty Hunters" [2:17] in series *Star Wars: The Clone Wars* [2008–2020], and *The Mandalorian* [2019 –], the war genre [*The Clone Wars* and *Rogue One: A Star Wars Story* [2016]), and heist genre (*Solo: A Star Wars Story* [2018]). These examples represent how the franchise mode draws from various genres to form an architextual system that is both distinct to a specific franchise but also puts it into an ongoing relationship with broader generic discourse. As such, Altman considers how genre "bridges multiple concerns":

> Only short of magical in its versatility, genre endures within film theory because of its ability to perform multiple operations simultaneously. . . [G]enres provide the formulas that drive production; genres constitute the structures that define individual texts; programming decisions are based primarily on generic criteria; the interpretation of generic films depends on the audience's generic expectations. (1999, 14)

The next chapter will consider the formulaic function of genre, but here I highlight the role of generic structures in the formation of architextuality in the franchise mode. The connection between genre and architextuality in the franchise mode is thus twofold: the architextual system of a franchise employs the formal structure of genre as a recognizable pattern of repetition with differentiation (such that franchise properties constitute their own genre-like systems) and draws from the conventions of established genres to shape its quality of its patterns and conventions (where architextuality synthesizes genre conventions with propriety features). The 'magical versatility' of genre that Altman speaks of above is in its functions as a heterogenous system that can constitute different terms of reference based on multiple contexts: genre, intellectual property, and the various media platforms that realize an IP object.

Like genre, the architextual system of a blockbuster franchise is a formal framework made up of connections based on generic patterns. For example, consider the 'Worlds of DC' franchise produced by Warner Brothers, which adapts intellectual properties from the DC Comics catalogue and is so far made up officially of *Man of Steel* (2013), *Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice* (2016), *Suicide Squad* (2016), *Wonder Woman* (2017), *Justice League* (2017), *Aquaman* (2018), *Shazam!* (2019) and so on. Unlike the 'MCU' franchise, which is defined by a set of legal constraints based on the intellectual properties that Marvel Studios has rights to use, and those that had been held up in license agreements elsewhere (such as Spider-Man, X-Men, and the Fantastic Four) (Lomax 2019b), Warner Brothers has had relatively unencumbered licensing rights to DC Comics' intellectual property catalogue[46]; this means that the 'Worlds of DC' franchise is not demarcated by sets of legal constraints as in the 'MCU,' but its boundaries are complicated by other adaptations that Warner Brothers has continued to produce concurrently, but which canonically sit outside the 'Worlds of DC' franchise, including *Joker* (2019), the television series *Gotham* (2014–2019), *Constantine* (2014–2015), *Lucifer* (2016–2021), *Titans* (2018–), *Watchmen* (2019), *Doom Patrol* (2019–), and the 'Arrowverse' television-based franchise that includes *Arrow* (2012–2020), *The Flash* (2014 –) *Supergirl* (2015–2021), *Legends of Tomorrow* (2016–), *Black Lightening* (2018–2021), *Batwoman* (2019–), and so on. The 'Worlds of DC' franchise is an ostensibly incoherent system of intersecting narrative strategies, and it is difficult to delineate what constitutes its form before even trying to make sense of its formal structure: legal

[46] Warner Brothers came to own DC Comics via Kinney National Company's acquisition of both National Comics Publications (itself an amalgamation of National Allied Publications and Detective Comics) in 1967 and Warner Brothers in 1969, which then became Warner Communications in 1972.

boundaries and conditions are too broad, and it is not enough to focus only on narrative continuity across installments and media platforms, or to identify the intertextual co-presence between texts. Nonetheless, the 'Worlds of DC' is not an exception to the franchise mode, but its textual multiplicity exemplifies the breadth of relations that constitutes transtextual narration in the franchise mode.

As an architextual system, franchise production based on 'DC' properties (including the 'Worlds of DC' franchise) draws primarily from the formal structures of the comic book medium, which include serialized multiplicity, rebooting, and retroactive continuity, and the generic discourses of superhero narratives. Put simply, the architexture of the 'Worlds of DC' franchise is intricately shaped by the mechanisms of repetition, multiplicity, and variation in the superhero genre and the comic book medium as persistent and elastic transtextual discourses (Jenkins 2009, 18). Henry Jenkins explains that the superhero comics "have entered a period where principles of multiplicity are felt at least as powerfully as those of continuity" (2009, 20), and in which "difference is felt much more powerfully *within* a genre" (17). Similarly, Jack Teiwes identifies a "wider phenomenon in the superhero genre, demonstrate[d] via their frequent revisions and relaunches of continuity, [that involves] a process of deeply palimpsestuous self-adaptation" (2016, ii). Tiewes attributes this process to intertextual relations, but I consider this more specifically informs a productive understanding of 'DC' franchise production as an architextual system. Architextuality makes sense of how franchise narratives often draw from a variety of narrative and media formations, as well as genre discourses, to make up a system that—to recall Branigan—involves a "large collection of texts and potential texts" (1984, 29).[47]

In 2017, former president of DC Entertainment, Diane Nelson, explained that the strategy behind this multiplicity of content is to "*rethink the whole universe thing*" (Riesman [2017] 2020, para. 6; original emphasis) with "no insistence upon an overall story line or interconnectivity in that universe" (para. 6). Subsequently, in 2020, Andy Muschietti, director of the forthcoming DC movie *The Flash* (scheduled for 2022), discussed the planned introduction of the multiverse into the 'Worlds of DC' franchise, which "implies a unified universe where all the cinematic iterations that we've seen before are valid" and "it's

[47] The point of *potential* texts is part of understanding each franchise as a system because, by its definition as an expansive entity, every example of a blockbuster franchise is a multiplicity *in potentia.* For example, as at the time of writing, the 'Avatar' franchise is made of one movie, *Avatar* (2009), as the property's initial origination, plus a theme park, video games, and comic books; however, even before production of further licensed iterations across other media, 'Avatar' exists as a franchise with multiple sequels in development. There is thus also a spatiotemporal dimension to how this system manifests, which is driven by seriality as a formal construct.

inclusive in the sense that it is saying all that you've seen exists, and everything that you *will see* exists in the same unified multiverse" (quoted in Breznican 2020, para. 16).[48] However, the "unified" and "inclusive" strategy of the 'Worlds of DC' franchise is not driven by narrative continuity or coherence, but rather blurs the boundaries between multiple texts, characters (and the actors who play them), properties, and media platforms that are associated with DC Comics. Ndalianis aptly describes how "the continuities that the superhero genre attempts to contain actually serve to expand the genre's parameters" (2009, 285). Aside from the lack of clear distinction that already exists between official installments in the 'Worlds of DC' franchise and other iterations like *Joker*, the 'Worlds of DC' franchise is also unavoidably associated with the breadth of earlier DC Comics adaptations, from *Superman* (1978) to *Batman* (1989) and their sequels, *Catwoman* (2004), *Constantine* (2005), *Superman Returns* (2006), *Watchmen* (2009), *Green Lantern* (2011), and the 'The Dark Knight' trilogy (2005–2012). The 'Worlds of DC' franchise, and 'DC' franchise production generally, perhaps exemplifies what Derek Johnson realizes as the "messy discourse of franchising" (2013, 47), which complicates attempts to define or make sense of all industrial and narrative structures within the franchise mode. Labarre's point about architextual brands rings true here: "as the borders of the branded architexts are redrawn and perimeters extended, they align with the larger architexts which these branded properties simultaneously belong to and help shape" (Labarre 2020, 68). In the 'Worlds of DC' franchise, the superhero genre remains stable as a dynamic system, whereby architextual constancy is driven by the genre as a "*by-product* of an ongoing *process*" (Altman 1999, 54). This is to say that genre stability is not based on constancy by on the dynamics of multiplicity. In the 'Worlds of DC' franchise, narrative elements such as characterization (including actor's performances and casting), plot, and story vary in consistency across specific iterations. This relates to how the 'DC' brand has struggled to establish a cohesive franchise strategy, which has resulted in a uncoordinated creative system that provides more authority to concept-auteurs, such as Tim Burton, Christopher Nolan, Zack Snyder, James Wan, Patty Jenkins, and James Gunn, than to an organized narrative system. I do not draw upon the 'Worlds of DC' franchise to suggests

[48] This multiverse strategy unifies more than just the cinematic iterations. The 'Arrowverse' event, "Crisis on Infinite Earths" (aired 2019–2020), includes several intertextual connections with various 'DC' iterations: Burt Ward as Dick Grayson (Robin), who portrays the character in the ABC television series *Batman* (1966–1968), the movie *Batman* (1966) produced by 20th Century Fox, and the CBS animated television series *The New Adventures of Batman* (1977); Robert Wuhl as Alexander Knox, who portrays the role in *Batman* (1989); reused footage of the planet Oa from the movie *Green Lantern* (2011); Brandon Routh as Clark Kent (Superman) from *Superman Returns* (2006); and Ezra Miller as Barry Allen (The Flash), who portrays the character in the 'World of DC' installments, *Batman v Superman Dawn of Justice*, *Suicide Squad*, *Justice League*, and so on.

that this example is indicative of narration in the franchise mode more broadly, but that the principle of architextuality allows us to make sense of systematic differentiations in narrative systems across different examples of blockbuster franchising.

Seriality and genre are principal components in how transtextual narrative works as an architextual system. Where seriality shapes the multiplicity of form as a mechanism of continuation and extension, genre establishes a "formal framework" composed of patterns, themes, and concepts that shape content. As different dimensions of narration, both these components serve the same mechanism of repetition and variation that drives narration as a process and system (Grant 1986, xvii, Budra and Schellenberg 1998, 17). Carolyn Jess-Cooke recognizes that, "in its repetitious re-organisation of familiar features, genre shares much in common with sequelisation" (2009, 52). Similarly, Moine suggests that genre "serves to indicate a form of seriality" (2008, 99) through a dialectic between "standardization and differentiation" (64). This emphasizes the systematic nature of these narrative modes, which work both as discrete systems of narration and in dialogue. This is not to say that seriality or franchising are genres, and I have already made the case against this in previous discussion, but that seriality and genre share systematic mechanisms that in principle draw from a contradiction between repetition of conventions and variation. Steve Neale considers this contradiction is "symptomatic of the very nature of the genres themselves as systemic processes and, also, it is indicative of their function to produce regularised variety. The appearance of contradiction is due, in other words, to the fact that genres are instances of repetition and difference" (1980, 48). While there is no contestation that genre is a system of repetition and difference, the balance between these forces often attracts scrutiny with frequent emphasis towards its repetitive and formulaic nature. This scrutiny is also frequently directed towards seriality and, by association, blockbuster franchising. Contrary to such assumptions, Neale emphasizes the importance of difference in the genre system:

> Difference is absolutely essential to the economy of genre. . . Moreover, repetition and difference are themselves not separable, either as 'entities', so to speak, or, even, as tendencies: they function as a relation. There is hence not repetition *and* difference, but repetition *in* difference. Bearing in mind the nature of the economy of genre, an economy of variation rather than of rupture, a better formulation as far as genre is concerned would be: difference *in* repetition. (150; original emphasis)

This articulation of *difference in repetition* is fundamental to how transtextual narration functions as an architextual system in the franchise mode because it drives multiplicity; as

discussed above in relation to the 'Worlds of DC' franchise and the superhero genre, differentiation and multiplicity are crucial to understanding the formal construction of franchise narration as an architextual system. These mechanisms of genre lay the foundation for understanding the way seriality works as an essential force of poetic utility in franchise narration. This chapter and the next will build on this foundation to focus more specifically on the dynamics of seriality, thematic patterns, and a formula of narration that takes account of variation and difference that work within standardization and continuity.

Serial Narration

Seriality is the principal device of poetic utility in the blockbuster franchise. It is the formal mechanism that extends or expands textuality: "it relates to the copy that seeks to reproduce, multiply, or allude to versions of an 'original'" (Ndalianis 2004, 33). As such, seriality is the driving force of transtextual narration and the locus of creative development in the franchise mode; to some, such a statement probably sets a low bar for the creative value of franchise narration since, as I addressed in my introduction chapter, seriality attracts the brunt of critical disparagement towards blockbuster franchising. Such criticism is motivated by the assumption that repetition and seriality are directly opposed to originality and artistry (Calabrese 1992, 27). Nonetheless, Umberto Eco considers the occurrence of dynamic relations of difference in repetition, where "seriality and repetition are not opposed to innovation" because "nothing is more 'serial' than a tie pattern, and yet nothing can be so personalized as a tie" (1985, 175). Moreover, Eco recognizes, "when we fail to find innovation in the serial, this is perhaps less a result of the structures of the text, than of our 'horizons of expectations' and our 'cultural habits'" (175). This assertion frames my approach to seriality and repetition in franchise narration: I am not interested in further serving narrow ideological attitudes to seriality and will thus focus primarily on what it reveals about the construction of transtextual narration in the franchise mode.

The logic of repetition is a key component of seriality and its capacity to facilitate difference. According to Thomas Elsaesser, seriality "constitutes a significant textual form" (1998, 146) that relies "as much on multiplication as it does on repetition" (148). This involves a multiplication of time (narrative time and viewing time), space, and characters to create "infinitely greater narrative complication" (Hagedorn 1995, 28); this multiplication thus encapsulates why seriality is a principal component of the transtextual poetics of blockbuster franchising. Angela Ndalianis identifies that "the repetition inherent in serialized

form is the result of a neo-baroque 'aesthetic of repetition' that is concerned with variation, rather than unoriginality and invariability" (2004, 33).[49] This corresponds with Neale's conceptualization of genre as an economy of *difference in repetition* as discussed above, but with seriality this articulates a formulation of narrative structures that is not contingent on a stabilization of recognizable generic elements, such as characterization, setting, iconography, and theme. Moreover, Jess-Cooke consider how in seriality the mechanism of repetition and difference is concerned with broader narrational structures that complicate the relationship between story and plot through "repetition, difference, continuation and memory" (2009, 3). Seriality is thus a transtextual principle that designates the organization of narrative elements across multiple textual iterations and so it most concerned with plot in franchise narration. For Roger Hagedorn, episodicity is the essential quality of seriality and it refers to the independent episodes—or installments—that constitute a serialized text, but also the episodic mode of presentation that enforces gaps between episodes (1995, 28).[50] Hagedorn considers episodicity to be in opposition to classic narrative structures, where the mode of presentation is self-contained, and no narrative elements are left unresolved. However, as discussed above, these components are not entirely absent in seriality, which still retains expectations of containment and resolution within the serial structure; the entire impetus to continue narrative beyond the singular text is driven by the anticipation of narrative coherence and resolution.

I employ *seriality* as an umbrella term that constitutes the breadth of poetic dynamics and relational strategies that can be employed in the expansive organization of narration in blockbuster franchising. Within this broad structure sits a range of classifications, like the series, serial, and sequel, which attract distinct media-based associations but often intersect in practice. Terms like series, serials, or seriality primarily invoke television, but historically the term *serial* also applies to Victorian literary serials (periodicals), radio serials, and Hollywood film serials of the studio system; similarly, the term *series* is used in the comic

[49] While I do not engage directly with neo-baroque aesthetics, its treatment of seriality as a labyrinth of textual folds and polycentric networks is a vital resource for understanding the complexity of serial form more broadly (Eco 1985; Calabrese 1992; Ndalianis 2004).

[50] Streaming, or subscription video on demand (SVOD), has complicated this aspect of episodicity and its importance in defining seriality, since it allows for an uninterrupted stream of serialized content; however, as a larger system, the franchise mode of production and presentation maintains these enforced interruptions between installments through its orchestrated development strategy.

book series, novel series, video game series, or film series.[51] Despite the occurrence of the series and serial in cinema (for example, the 'James Bond film series' or film serials of the studio system), the term *sequel* is commonly aligned with commercially-driven Hollywood production; even so, the sequel has its own history and critical context that informs how it functions in Hollywood.[52] Several scholars have worked to understand film sequels as a commercial, historical and aesthetic form (Budra and Schellenberg 1998; McLarty 1998; Ndalianis 2004; Jess-Cooke 2009; Jess-Cooke and Verevis 2010; Verevis 2010; Bordwell and Thompson 2011; Palmer 2010 & 2012; Perkins 2010 & 2012); specifically, Constantine Verevis contends that the film sequel is a "a complex situation" and "a function of a *network* of commercial interests, textual strategies, critical vocabularies, and historical contexts" (2010, 12; original emphasis). This "complex situation" arises as much from a lack of comparative distinction with other episodic forms, such as the series and serial, as it does from its intersection of various critical and practical procedures.[53] Eco urges his readers to consider seriality "as a very wide category or, if one wants, as another term for repetitive art" (1985, 166). Ndalianis also employs seriality in this way because "a distinction between the series, the serial, and the sequel has become more and more difficult to sustain [and] the entertainment industry now supports media examples that can contain elements of all three" (2004, 262n1). Despite assumptions to the contrary, seriality is not distinct to any specific medium or genre (Hagedorn 1995, 27): it is distinguished by the discourses that occur between the producing industry, its mode of presentation, and its narrational form, which are shaped by media and genre but not determined by them in any defining way. I identify seriality as a principal convention of transtextual narration in the franchise mode, which

[51] From a formal perspective, these terms have traditional distinctions: *series* are composed of discrete stories that often maintain character and setting consistency but lack character development and overall narrative memory, which enables its audience to skip episodes and watch out of sequence order; *serials*, by contrast, establish continuity across a set of episodes, or chapters, which weave story threads across episodes to maintain narrative memory and facilitate character development across multiple episodes—this form expects its audience to watch all episodes in the order of release and is increasingly associated with contemporary 'complex television' (Ndalianis 2005; Mittel 2015). Even so, the use of the term *series*—in examples like the comic book series, novel series, and video game series—is not always consistent with these formal definitions, since many of these forms contain narrative memory and development.

[52] According to Jess-Cooke, the sequel is "a mode of production that means and results in different things at various historical junctures, and is always relevant to and reflective of greater industrial contexts at any moment in cinema's history" (2009, 16).

[53] Jess-Cooke argues that "whereas seriality and series defy change, the sequel champions difference, progress and excess" (2009, 5). Jess-Cooke supports this argument with examples of series and serials that, she identifies, present unchanging narratives and characters, such as *The Perils of Pauline* film serial (1914), the James Bond movie series (1962 –), and *The Simpsons* TV series (1989 –) (5). I am not confident that such an assessment can really be made based on such a historical breadth of examples, or that this distinction is useful since it implies that seriality is incompatible with difference. As such, the 'Bond' franchise is a typical example of the capacity for variation within a series structure.

encompasses various narrational strategies that extend and expand the poetic utility of an IP object and inform its architextual system.

Under the umbrella of 'seriality' I locate multiple devices that construct relations between installments that constitute an expansive transtext across time, particularly the sequel, prequel, midquel, and reboot. These devices make up the seriality toolkit and articulate the type of connections that can occur between two installments across any media platform. An important consideration in classifying types of serial narration is the temporal order of presentation—that is, the sequence of production and release in tandem with narrative chronology. Spatio-temporality is a crucial dimension in how such relations between installments operate: these terms are defined by the dynamic between story and plot, where story relates to a continually expanding narrative world and plot refers to the order in which that narrative world is organized across the ongoing life of a franchise. In the blockbuster franchising, serial narration complicates the relationship between story and plot since narrative time is not always organized and presented across installments chronologically. For example, *Captain Marvel* (2019) is the twenty-first movie installment in the 'MCU' franchise, but its story explores an earlier period in the narrative's history, chronologically following the fifth movie installment, *Captain America: The First Avenger* (2011), the one-shot short film *Marvel One-Shot: Agent Carter* (2013), and the ABC television series *Agent Carter* (2015–2016).[54] The later occurrence of *Captain Marvel* in the plot organization of the 'MCU' is significant because it not only multiples the narrative with additional characters, settings, and narrative events, but also demands a reappraisal of previously released installments that precede in plot but succeed in narrative time. This process of reappraisal is a critical effect of serial narration that establishes a hypertextual relationship between multiple texts. As one of Genette's typologies of transtextual poetics, hypertextuality makes sense of the relations between texts caused by a "second text" that is "derived from another preexistent text" ([1982] 1997, 5). In this dynamic, Genette explains, text B—the *hypertext*—is "grafted" upon text A—the *hypotext*—through a process of transformation (5). This transformation corresponds with Ndalianis' conceptualization of seriality as the neo-baroque "work in process" (2004, 73), where transtextual narration is never static and always open to a reappraisal of meaning with every degree of multiplication. The various typologies of seriality—whether the sequel, prequel, midquel, or reboot—all

[54] Both the one-shot short and television series were also presented out of chronological narrative sequence.

articulate a process of hypertextual transformation using different serial tools to enable different spatiotemporal dynamics between a hypotext and hypertext.

The *sequel* is the most common sequence type and designates a hypertext that follows a hypotext chronologically in production, presentation, and narrative time. The sequel, R. Barton Palmer contends, "is an exemplary category of hypertextuality" because it "must offer 'something more,' [but] . . . cannot reproduce the hypotext precisely, and yet there must be enough that is repeated in the hypertext to signal their connection" (2010, 75–76). Other designations like *trilogy* and *series* are usually composed of sequel dynamics between installments, with the *trilogy* designating three installments with a specific narrative structure (Perkins and Verevis 2012). The sequel articulates a relatively coherent process of continuation, but its function within serial narration is far from simple: it complicates matters of originality, temporality, and meaning in narration. According to Palmer,

> The essential nature of the sequel is thus a paradoxical transtextual textuality. The sequel is characterised by a double nature as both an emergent singularity and also a part of what has gone before, as an entity for but not entirely in itself, as a textualization that is sufficiently insufficient, never hermetic, but rather always open to extension. (2012, 45)

This means that the sequel is a textual entity that is singular in presentation but also part of a developing multiplicity of texts that constitute transtextual narration in the franchise mode. The sequel's hypotext is also sufficient or complete in its singular presentation but similarly rendered incomplete by the occurrence of a sequel. This is a process of hypertextual transformation, in which narrative meaning in the hypotext must be reappraised through the presentation of a hypertext.

The process of transformation that occurs in the hypertextuality of the sequel is a temporal process of remembrance, revision, and the tensions between them. Jess-Cooke explains that "the sequel makes the past re-present, and in so doing creates a secondary version of the past that is marked by repetitions of and differences from an 'original'. The relationship between this secondary version or the 'original' and the 'original' itself is shown here to operate in tension" (2009, 131). For example, each installment (as hypotext) of the 'Star Wars' franchise is singular in its material presentation, and presents narrative coherence in its singularity, but it is also subsequently insufficient with every additional sequel (hypertext): its initial installment, originally titled *Star Wars* (1977), is seemingly sufficient and conclusive until the release of *The Empire Strikes Back* (1980) which revealed itself to be 'Episode V' in its opening crawl, at which point *Star Wars* is made incomplete and emerges

as the middle of a narrative journey and not the beginning (such that in 1981 it would also be retitled *Episode IV—A New Hope*). *The Empire Strikes Back* transforms narrative meaning in *Star Wars* (*A New Hope*) since it reveals its principal protagonist, Luke Skywalker, to be the son of the antagonist, Darth Vader; a similar process of transformation continues with the presentation of an additional hypertext, *Star Wars: Episode VI—Return of the Jedi* (1983), and the further revelation that another principal protagonist, Leia Organa, is Luke's twin sister, which demands a reappraisal of *The Empire Strikes Back* as its hypotext. As Anna Lancashire puts it, "building backwards as well as forwards, each *Star Wars* episode also revises in retrospect our readings of some aspects of the earlier films" (2000, 24). Similarly, Palmer aptly describes how "the sequel makes 'come to life again' something that appeared 'in its own moment as finished,' turning the end into yet another beginning" (Palmer 2010, 77). The occurrence of a sequel means that every installment is singular as a coherent and cohesive narrative during its moment of presentation but, as it contributes to the multiplication of plot at the transtextual level, it propels an entire serial narrative into a process of hypertextual transformation across the temporality of a franchise.

The *prequel* designates a hypertext that follows a hypotext in production and presentation but precedes it in narrative time. It is the most complex type of seriality in terms of the spatio-temporal relationship between story and plot since its function is to present the past in the sequential future. Unlike the sequel, the prequel's ending is fixed by what has come 'before' in presentation, which is 'after' in narration. Paul Sutton calls this "the logic of 'afterwardsness,'" in which the prequel "possesses a peculiar dual temporality that enables it to both precede and follow" (Sutton 2010, 141–142). The 'Star Wars' prequel trilogy exemplifies how this logic facilitates temporal liminality to shape narrative meaning and characterization. Elsewhere I have examined how the dual temporality of the 'Star Wars' prequel trilogy—*Episode I—The Phantom Menace* (1999), *Episode II—Attack of the Clones* (2002), and *Episode III—Revenge of the Sith* (2005)—represents the tragic villain's journey of Anakin Skywalker because the character's destiny is fixed by the events of the 'original trilogy' (Lomax 2020, 218). This characterization is dependent on the temporal dynamic established by the prequel and its logic of afterwardsness; more than an idiosyncrasy of the franchise, this plot organization is integral to its architextual system. The 'Star Wars' prequel trilogy is the most explicit example of this dynamic, but a similar dual temporality is also at work in prequels like *Red Dragon* (2002) and the television series *Hannibal* (2013–2015) ('Hannibal Lecter' franchise), *X-Men: First Class* (2011) ('X-Men' franchise), *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey* (2012) ('The Lord of the Rings' franchise), *Paranormal Activity 3*

(2011), ('Paranormal Activity' franchise), *Captain America: The First Avenger* (2011) ('MCU' franchise), *Prometheus* (2012) ('Alien' franchise), and *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* (2016) ('Wizarding World' franchise) which present origin stories for characters and settings following future narrative events.[55] In some viewing procedures there is an impulse to eliminate this duality retrospectively by replotting prequels based on linear narrative chronology—that is, to watch installments in the order of narrative not presentation—but this risks sacrificing vital meaning in characterization and causal logic. The prequel is not an error in a plot sequence that need to be retroactively corrected through viewing procedure but is a complex temporal mechanism of seriality in transtextual narration.

The dual temporality of the prequel reorientates the relationship between the hypotext and the hypertext. Where the sequel is a hypertext that transforms its hypotext through forward continuation, the prequel engages with a process of backward continuation, or what Genette calls *analeptic* continuation: "meant to work its way upstream, from cause to cause, to a more radical or at least a more satisfactory starting point" ([1982] 1997, 177). This describes a hypertextual transformation that is based on reappraisal of a previously presented starting point; this contrasts with the sequel, which transforms its hypotext by reformulating the bounds of its ending. In this way, Mark J. P. Wolf states that the prequel "is not so much about the destination, but about the journey to that destination" (2012, 207). To inform this temporal dynamic, Ken Ireland contributes the idea of the "analeptic phase" as the "retrospective evocation of an event" across a diachronic continuity (2001, 115). As an analeptic phase, the prequel precipitates a moment of temporal juncture that Ireland calls a "hinge-point": "when an analeptic phase functions to unmask an enigma or mystery, it might well occupy a pre-final position" (116). The 'Star Wars' prequel trilogy depicts such a hinge-point in *Revenge of the Sith* with the duel between Jedi Master Obi-Wan Kenobi (Ewan McGregor) and his former padawan, the recently anointed Darth Vader (Hayden Christensen); during this duel, Kenobi cuts off Vader's limbs and leaves his body to burn in the lava of Mustafar—this pre-final hinge-point is later affirmed with the highly anticipated clasping on of Vader's cybernetic helmet (Figure 21).[56] Another example of the prequel hinge-point is exemplified in *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey* when Bilbo Baggins (Martin Freeman) finds the One Ring—the iconic symbol of the 'Lord of the Rings' franchise

[55] Some of these examples are adaptations of novels—*The Hobbit* (Tolkien, 1937) and *Red Dragon* (Harris, 1981)—that are not prequels, but initial introductions to the respective narratives. This makes the prequel presentation of their cinematic realizations more compelling as a locus for spatio-temporal complexity.

[56] Elsewhere I have published an extended analysis of this scene as an analeptic hinge-point (Lomax 2020).

(Figure 22). This event is already described through voice-over and briefly depicted in the prologue to *The Lord of Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring* (2001) and it is a significant moment in the narrative history. Therefore, the significance of this moment in *An Unexpected Journey* is punctuated by slow motion, the iconic "One Ring Theme" musical leitmotif, and a loud thud as the ring hits the floor. Although this is not the pre-final moment (the single initial novel is adapted into three installments), it establishes a temporal nexus to evoke a significant narrative event in the 'Lord of the Rings' franchise. These are only two examples of many that demonstrate how the prequel complicates temporality in serial narration. However, as a tool for extending seriality across time the prequel can often risk annexing narrative events outside the architextual system, to the point where questions of creative authenticity, integration, and value are debated, regardless of canonical authority.



Figure 21: Darth Vader is placed into the iconic cybernetic suit in *Revenge of the Sith*



Figure 22: Bilbo Baggins finds the One Ring in *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey*

The *midquel* shares qualities with the prequel, especially its 'afterwardsness' and analeptic temporality, but it is unique as a narrative entity that presents the 'in-between' of serial narration. Wolf suggests that the midquel is better understood as a broader classification that includes two distinct serial types: the *interquel* is a hypertext that presents a narrative event set discretely between two hypotexts and the *intraquel* is a hypertext that

intervenes in a narrative opening of a hypotext (Wolf 2012, 207). As Wolf explains, in both midquel types, "beginning and end points are known in advance, and the focus is on the transition between states, added detail, and revealed motivations that help to fill out an ellipsis, making character arcs and world arcs more complete" (207–208). For example, the 'Star Wars' interquel *Rogue One: A Star Wars Story* (2016) follows *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* (2015) in presentation but its narrative is set between *Revenge of the Sith* and *A New Hope*. *Rogue One* depicts a narrative event described in the opening crawl to *A New Hope*: "Rebel spies managed to steal secret plans to the Empire's ultimate weapon the DEATH STAR" (Figure 23); moreover, its conclusion leads into the opening moments of *A New Hope* on the Tantive IV, when Princess Leia Organa is handed the secret plans to that are subsequently passed onto R2-D2 at the beginning of *A New Hope* (Figure 24). There several examples of interquels in the franchise era: *Solo: A Star Wars Story* (2018) ('Star Wars' franchise); *Captain Marvel* ('MCU' franchise), *Anabelle Comes Home* (2019) ('The Conjuring' franchise); *Fast & Furious* (2009), *Fast Five* (2011) and *Fast & Furious 6* (2013) ('Fast & Furious' franchise); as well as sequels to prequels, such as *Attack of the Clones* and *Revenge of the Sith* ('Star Wars'), and *The Hobbit: Desolation of Smaug* (2013) and *The Hobbit: Battle of the Five Armies* (2014) ('Lord of the Rings'). The interquel is thus often identified as a prequel because it precedes a hypotext in narrative but follows in presentation; such a label is not wrong but the interquel is essentially both a prequel *and* a sequel and is therefore driven by a logic of betweenness.



Figure 23: The opening crawl in *A New Hope*


Figure 24: Princess Leia is handed the secret plans in *Rogue One* (left) and passes them onto R2-D2 in *A New Hope* (right)

The *intraquel* intensifies the betweenness of the interquel because it positions itself within the gaps and crevices of a complete hypotext. Wolf notes how this practice is significantly limited by the constraints of an already existing work and so frequently depicts transitional moments between narrative events (2012, 209). Even so, the intraquel may not always present itself as a discrete text that fits neatly into a gap, but as a sequence or part of a hypertext that folds itself into one or multiple hypotexts; intraquels are not always neat and tidy in their presentation, as is demonstrated by franchises like 'Fast & Furious,' 'Saw' and 'Paranormal Activity'. The 'Fast & Furious' franchise exemplifies how the intraquel works to complicate plot in serial narration: the first two hypertexts, *2 Fast 2 Furious* (2003) and *The Fast and the Furious: Tokyo Drift* (2006), are sequels whereas the fourth and fifth hypertexts, *Fast & Furious* (2009) and *Fast Five* (2011), emerge as interquels between the second and third hypotexts; the sixth hypertext, *Fast & Furious 6* (2013), is essentially a sequel but also partly an interquel located between the fifth and the third hypotexts, with a post-credit intraquel scene that supervenes onto key events of the third hypotext; the seventh hypertext, *Furious 7* (2015), is an intraquel that intervenes into the events of the sixth and third hypotexts (which already folded into the end of the sixth hypotext); finally, the eighth hypertext, *The Fate of the Furious* (2017), is presented as a sequel but, with the spin-off hypertext, *Fast & Furious Presents: Hobbs & Shaw* (2019), this franchise undoubtedly exemplifies the "work in process" (Ndalianis 2004, 73) of serial narration. Diagram 1 illustrates the complexity of serial narration in the 'Fast & Furious' franchise, which also includes two interquel short films, *Turbo Charged Prelude to 2 Fast 2 Furious* (2003) and *Los Bandoleros* (2009), and the television series sequel *Fast & Furious Spy Racers* (2019 –).

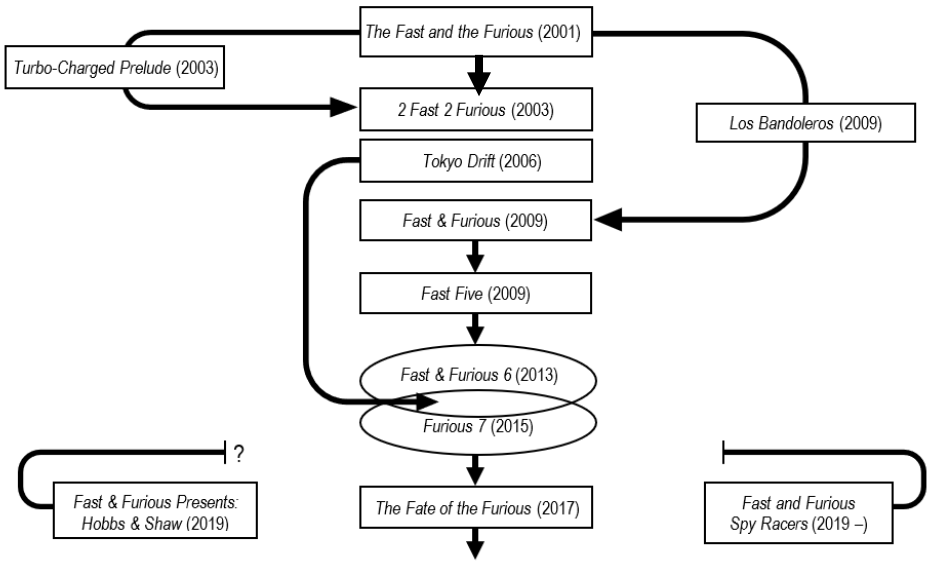


Diagram 1: Serial narration in the 'Fast and the Furious' franchise (2001–)

This complex seriality of the 'Fast & Furious' franchise is driven by the character arc of supporting character Han 'Han Seoul-Oh' Leu (Sung Kang), who is introduced in *Tokyo Drift* and dies at its conclusion. Nonetheless, Han reappears in the subsequent three hypertexts, *Fast & Furious*, *Fast Five*, and *Fast & Furious 6*, which all emerge as interquels located between *2 Fast 2 Furious* and *Tokyo Drift* as Han expresses his intention to go to Tokyo in each installment—thus delaying his predestined demise. These hypertexts use the character of Han to play with serial tools, audience expectations, and narrative memory. Han's ultimate trip to Tokyo occurs concurrently with the credit sequence of *Fast & Furious 6* when a post-credit intraquel scene intertextually repeats Han's death in *Tokyo Drift* and reveals antagonist Deckard Shaw to be responsible. The beginning of *Furious 7* also occurs concurrently with the end of *Fast & Furious 6* and *Tokyo Drift*, thus exploiting narrative memory to intratextually fold into the seriality of the franchise. Diagram 1 may visually imply that *Tokyo Drift* is an intraquel that intervenes into *Fast & Furious 6* and *Furious 7*, this is not so because it precedes these hypertexts in presentation—that is, plot organization. As this example demonstrates, the employment of intraquels complicates serial narration since it presents narrative across a seemingly fragmented plot structure; this means that intraquels are not merely based on the dynamics of narrative and presentation in the relationship between a hypertext and a hypotext but reflect a broader transtextual survey over time.

The *reboot* pushes the restart button on a serial narrative. It is not a sequel or a prequel in definitive way because, as William Proctor explains, "it strives to disconnect itself, in a spatio-temporal sense, from the earlier incarnation in a quest for autonomy" (Proctor 2012a, 5); as such, reboots are "serialised narratives beginning . . . again" (Proctor 2012b, 10; original ellipsis). This relates back to the principle of multiple origins explored in chapter 1 and Jonathan Gray's assertion that "texts are always perpetually beginning" (2013, 94). The reboot therefore serves to reformulate markers of originality in seriality through what Heather Urbanski calls "a process of defamiliarization" (2013, 8), which places emphasis on difference within the architextual system. This defamiliarization complicates the hypertextual process of transformation that occurs in serial narration because, as David Hollands identifies, the reboot works to "readapt, update, pay homage to, and destroy the 'original text,' while also denying the existence or importance of said text's sequels" (2010, 10). For example, the reboot *Batman Begins* (2005) adapts the 'Batman' property—in particular, the comic book story arc "Batman: Year One" (*Batman* #404–407, 1987)—but through narrative and marketing tries to ignore the existence of previously produced installments, especially

Batman Forever (1995) and *Batman & Robin* (1997). Nonetheless, Proctor emphasizes that this strategy "does *not* render past narratives obsolete and irrelevant, regardless of industry intention, but rather reactivates them within an increasingly complex web" (2012a, 12; original emphasis). The reboot perhaps best articulates Genette's conception of metatextuality more than hypertextuality (although it can do both), since its poetic function is to indirectly comment on its canonical authenticity: "it unites a given text to another, of which it speaks without necessarily citing it (without summoning it), in fact sometimes even without naming it" (Genette [1982] 1997, 4). This kind of serial dynamic occurs at the level of narration, where it rejects diegetic memory and continuity but exists in the shadow of previous narrative events (like the death of Batman's parents), and through marketing that inescapable speaks of an iconic history while trying to ignore it (Figure 25 shows this iconicity played out in the *Batman Begins* movie poster). While the reboot has been embraced as a "franchise-specific concept" (Proctor 2012a, 4), it is a narrative strategy that has adopted the poetics of comic book seriality (Ndalianis 2009, 272)—with devices the include rebooting and retroactive continuity—to facilitate narrative revision and revival for creative and industrial longevity.

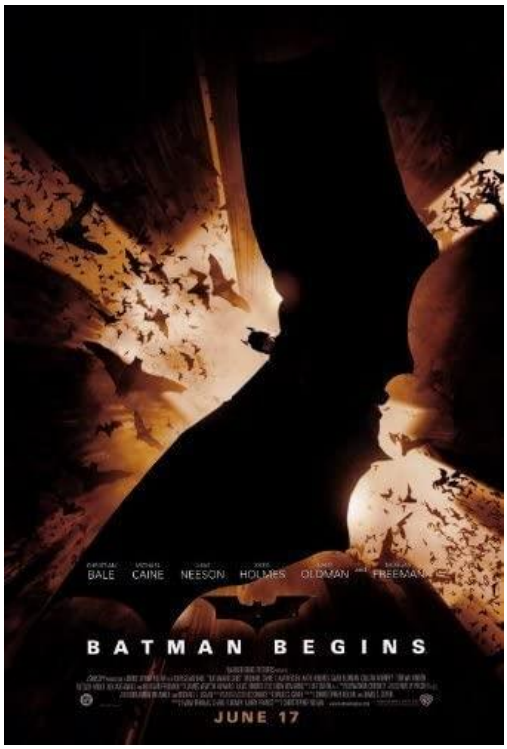


Figure 25: *Batman Begins* movie poster

The reboot traverses both industrial and creative imperatives as it experiments with the limits of seriality for brand rejuvenation to preserve the commercial longevity of an intellectual property. A disruption of continuity is the characteristic aspect of the reboot, but Proctor contributes some hard and fast rules, boundaries, and limitations on what can and cannot be understood as a reboot (2012b, 8).[57] By contrast, Urbanski considers the variability of the reboot as a "continuum of increasing separation from their inspiration franchises" (2013, 10). On one extreme, Urbanski locates reboots that exist within the same continuity as previous installments, but still reformulates components of the narrative; she offers *Star Wars: Episode I—The Phantom Menace* (1999) as an example of the mildest extreme of this continuum, which is most inconspicuous as a reboot.[58] On the other extreme is the most overt use of the reboot strategy, which completely reforges new and discrete narratives and characters; Urbanksi offers the example of the television series *Caprica* (2010), which is a prequel spin-off to the reimagined, *Battlestar Galactica* (2004–2009). In the middle of the reboot continuum Urbanski locates *Star Trek* (2009) because it exists in the same storyworld but offshoots on a different spatiotemporal chronology within the diegesis (2013, 10). In addition to these examples, many of the more notable examples of reboots fall on different points of this continuum on a sliding scale from least conspicuous to most conspicuous, such as *Casino Royale* (2006) ('Bond'), *The Amazing Spider-Man* (2012) ('Spider-Man'), *Man of Steel* (2013) ('Superman'), *Rise of the Planet of the Apes* (2011) ('The Planet of the Apes'), and *Batman Begins* (2005) ('Batman'). These examples break continuity to some degree and reformulate different narrative and aesthetic elements: change in origin story and cinematic tone and style, as with the *Batman Begins* and *Man of Steel*; the reformulation of character, plot, and genre elements in *The Amazing Spider-Man*; and new characters, plot events, and narrative history as in the reboot *Rise of the Planet of the Apes*. In the context of a reboot continuum, we could also locate the notion of the legacy movie or 'legacyquel (Singer 2015; Golding 2019), with examples like *X-Men: Days of Future Past* (2014), *Creed* (2015), *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* (2015), and *Blade Runner 2049* (2017), which preserve continuity but pass on the franchise to a new generation of characters (and for a new generation of

[57] I question this definitive categorization of the reboot in the franchise mode because it undermines the capacity for difference that is so important to the poetic utility of the reboot strategy. Like seriality, the reboot will continue to evolve to serve the creative and industrial needs of the franchise mode.

[58] Elsewhere I have explored how *Star Wars: The Last Jedi* (2017) might relate to questions of rebooting at this milder extreme (Lomax 2018).

audiences). The concept of a reboot continuum reformulates this strategy as an alternative expression of seriality in transtextual narration that promotes experimentation and play.

As a principle of poetic utility, seriality provides a transtextual canvas through which to develop creative and industrial strategies that enable longevity of a franchise property. For Paul Grainge, one such strategy involves branding blockbuster franchising as a "sustained event" (2008, 130), which is a long-term investment that could mobilize "a discourse of product competition" to ensure the longevity of a franchise property (149). As a "sustained event," the franchise lifecycle follows "a principle of maturation," whereby younger audiences can grow with the franchise and its characters and attract new audiences coming of age though the "periodic re-release of the first film" (140). Grainge provides examples like the 'Lord of the Rings' and 'Harry Potter' ('Wizarding World') franchises, which "would sustain their event status in and between installments over a period of three or more years" (135); moreover, Grainge employs these examples to make a point about the connection between the fantasy genre and the sustained event strategy (130). However, I consider this connection too limiting. The fantasy genre plays a prominent role in the development of transtextual narration because its expansive setting makes it particularly compatible with multiplatform storyworld development (Thompson 2003). Nonetheless, to understand narration in the blockbuster franchise as a sustained event extends beyond the fantasy genre and is intricately bound with seriality and its poetic utility as a device of transtextual narration.

Multiplatform Storyworlds

Transtextual narration is fundamentally a principle of narrative world-building, which involves the creation of "imaginary territories and perennial, collectively built, semiotic realms" (Boni 2017, 9). In this phenomenon, narratives function as "blueprints for a specific mode of world-creation" (Herman 2009, 105). This mode of world creation, or storyworld-building, gives depth to questions of society, culture, language, and history, as well as architecture, technology, and physical law, in the narrative setting to represent a verisimilar world that is perceptually inhabitable and functional. Blockbuster franchises do not always achieve storyworld coherence or cohesion but the principle of an expansive diegesis that is believably inhabitable is an essential convention of narration formation in the franchise mode. As such, storyworld design is essentially about building a narrative cosmology that can facilitate at the creative level the imperatives of industrial synergy and the ecology of total

entertainment. Storyworld design is a crucial force of poetic utility in franchise narration because it works to realize the ongoing extension of the IP object through a sprawling narrative across multiple media platforms. As Jenkins explains, "storytelling has become the art of world-building, as artists create compelling environments that cannot be fully explored or exhausted within a single work or even a single medium. The world is bigger than the film, bigger than the franchise—since fan speculations and elaborations also expand the world in a variety of different directions" (2006, 114). Storyworlds thus facilitate imperatives related to the industrial and creative sustainability of an IP object and thus reinforce the synergy of intellectual property and narrative development. As Jeff Gomez identifies, the most successful storyworlds are "fictional universes that have stood the test of time and incarnated themselves across multiple media platforms" (2019b, 210). Storyworld design is not new or inherently unique to franchise narration and David Herman identifies worldmaking to be one of the basic elements of narrative (2009, xvi). Nonetheless, the transtexual poetics of franchise narration engages with storyworld design as a principle that effectively supports and sustains narrative and media multiplicity.

Multiplatform storyworlds involve the enrichment of narrative setting and fictional environments to sustain multiple stories, characters, and media platforms; this enriched setting can also provoke conflict that has a ripple effect upon these multiple stories and characters across multiple media platforms. As Jenkins contends, "a good character can sustain multiple narratives and thus lead to a successful movie franchise. A good 'world' can sustain multiple characters (and their stories) and thus successfully launch a transmedia franchise" (2003, 14). In this context, storyworlds are complex characterizations that can exist without and beyond the journey of any singular character because, according to novelist Nina Munteanu, "story is place" and "place is character" (2019, 14). In his work on media convergence, Jenkins shares insights offered by an experienced Hollywood screenwriter who reveals, "when I first started, you would pitch a story because without a good story, you didn't really have a film. Later, once sequels started to take off, you pitched a character because a good character could support multiple stories. And now, you pitch a world because a world can support multiple characters and multiple stories across multiple media" (quoted in Jenkins 2006, 114). For example, the 'Star Wars' galaxy, the 'Wizarding World,' the 'Marvel Cinematic Universe' (or multiverse), Middle-earth and Arda of the 'Lord of the Rings' franchise, 'Westeros and Essos' (of 'Game of Thrones'), Panem in the 'Hunger Games' franchise, the 'Worlds of DC,' and the 'Planet of the Apes,' all exist beyond the perspective of any one character or narrative event since they privileged setting in the

storyworld. These storyworlds are rich and robust enough to sustain multiple characters and events across a long narrative history.

The shift from 'story' to 'character' to 'world' as a focal creative concept of creative development has implications for characterization and its function within transtextual narration. Traditional narratology might suggest that characters must be conceived of as a coherent identity within the bounds a single text and to extend characters across multiple texts could disrupt coherent characterization (Bertetti 2014, 2344; Richardson 2010, 527). In contrast, Jenkins signals that "moving characters from books to films to video games can make them stronger and more compelling" (2003, para. 1). Storyworlds are not incompatible with complex and consistent characterization and there is the potential for characters to be enriched by well-developed storyworlds. Even so, Brian Richardson fairly notes how the identity of James Bond in the movie adaptations is inconsistent with the character represented in the novels (2010, 537–38). As a result, Richardson identifies a paradox in transtextual characters, in which they are mimetically different but semiotically the same (538). Moreover, Paolo Bertatti contends that, "in the case of transmedia (or simply transtextual) characters, with their ever-changing but still recognizable identities, their overall construction will result from the whole of texts that contribute to their definition" (2014, 2345). This means that without context of the storyworld that characters inhabit, it is perhaps difficult to recognize enriched characterization. This can be seen in Richard Brody's *The New York Times* review of the 'MCU' installment, *Avengers: Infinity War* (2018), of which he suggests that "characters aren't introduced; they just show up, and their behavior is entirely defined by the template set for them in other movies" (Brody 2018, para. 2). It is a shame that Brody does not offer evidence to support his comments, nor seems take the time to view the multiple installments in which characters were indeed introduced and developed. In response to the way film critics view multiplatform storyworlds, Jenkins recognizes that "most film critics are taught to think in terms of very traditional story structures. More and more, they are talking about a collapse of storytelling . . . Rather, we are seeing the emergence of new story structures, which create complexity by expanding the range of narrative possibility rather than pursuing a single path with a beginning, middle, and end" (2006, 118–119). When such critics and commentators talk about a collapse of character development and storytelling in relation to storyworlds and narrative in blockbuster franchising, they often perceive the displacement of complex characterization without considering the importance of the storyworld to the character's journey, or even how the world itself functions as a character.

Storyworlds situate narratives and characters in a context that is shaped by a multiplicity of textual and semiotic cues that are provided by a diversity of media platforms.

Storyworld design ultimately lends itself to multiplatform narrative strategies like multimedia, cross-media, and transmedia storytelling; seriality also plays an important role in storyworld design since it functions as "a key component for extending narrative across borders" (Freeman 2014, 42). Although storyworld design is not formally a tool of seriality—as per the sequel, prequel, midquel, or reboot—seriality is the formal mechanism that drives narration across the borders of texts, stories, and media to help realize sprawling storyworlds that maintain momentum across time. The distinction between types of multiplatform narrative strategies reveals a lot about the poetic utility of storyworld design in franchise narration. As Herman considers, narrative representation must encompass the specific semiotic cues of the relevant medium (2009, 17), which means that stories are not only situated *in worlds* but also *by media*. Distinctions between multiplatform strategies are based on the relationship between narrative content, media platform, and presentation: *multimedia* refers to a work that represents one story, using many media platforms, in one presentation experience—for example the stage play *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child* (2016) (a sequel to the movie *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part II* [2011]); *cross-media* designates a multiplatform relationship that represents one story in multiple media platforms and in multiple presentation modes—this corresponds with the common understanding of adaptation, which translates the same story from one platform to another, as in the initial eight *Harry Potter* movies installments (2001–2011) and *The Lord of the Rings* movie trilogy (2001; 2002; 2003); and *transmedia storytelling* involves the expansion of *one storyworld* that constitutes multiple stories *across* multiple media platforms and can be accessed through multiple modes of presentation—for example, the 'Star Wars,' 'MCU,' and 'Star Trek' franchises. In its ideal application, transmedia storytelling is a strategy that involves the orchestrated spread of a storyworld across media: it is "a process where integral elements of a fiction get dispersed systematically across multiple delivery channels for the purpose of creating a unified and coordinated entertainment experience" (Jenkins 2011, para. 4).[59] Similarly, the Producers Guild of America (PGA) officially defines that a "Transmedia Narrative project or franchise must consist of three (or more) narrative storylines existing within the same fictional universe on any of the following platforms: Film, Television, Short

[59] Transmedia storytelling is its own field of study shaped by media studies, narratology, cultural studies, fan studies, and entertainment studies (Kinder 1991; Jenkins 2006; Dena 2009; Scolari 2009; Kinder and McPherson 2014; Boni 2017; Guynes and Hassler-Forest 2017; Freeman and Gamberato 2019).

Film, Broadband, Publishing, Comics, Animation, Mobile, Special Venues, DVD/Blu-ray/CD-ROM, Narrative Commercial and Marketing rollouts, and other technologies that may or may not currently exist" (Finke 2010, para. 4). To be sure, ideal transmedia storytelling is difficult to do and requires a specialized creative skillset,[60] but blockbuster franchises that employ the strategy well—including 'Star Wars,' 'MCU,' and 'Star Trek'—are also economically and creatively more viable long-term. However, as already explained in the introduction chapter, transmedia storytelling is not synonymous with blockbuster franchising because not all franchises are deliberately organized across multiple media in the way designated by transmedia storytelling (Johnson 2013 & 2014; Gomez 2019a & 2019b); similarly, not all storyworld design depends on the systematic organization of narrative associated with ideal transmedia storytelling.

Although transmedia storytelling designates a specific practice that is not a necessary convention of the franchise mode, its development within the study of narratology has provoked possibilities for multiplatform narratology beyond basic cross-media processes. Marie-Laure Ryan and Jan-Noël Thon conceptualize the dynamic between media and narrative as facilitating a "media-conscious narratology" (2014), in which media shapes the representation of textual cues that constitutes the storyworld (Ryan 2014, 25). Blockbuster franchising is not always a practice of transmedia storytelling, but the poetics of transtextual narration lends itself to a media-conscious narratology. For example, the storyworld of Middle-earth was initially represented by J.R.R. Tolkien in his 1937 children's novel *The Hobbit*, and subsequently explored in the three-volume novel *The Lord of the Rings* (1954–55) and the posthumous literary collection edited by Christopher Tolkien, *The Silmarillion* (1977). Even though Middle-earth is primarily associated with the literary works of Tolkien, representation of the storyworld in other media platforms has shaped the poetics of the narrative through the multiplicity of textual and semiotic cues provided by each medium. As a multiplatform storyworld, Middle-earth—and thus the 'Lord of the Rings' franchise—has been realized by and across multiple media: multiple radio plays; animated movies, *The Lord of the Rings* (1978) and *Return of the King* (1980); live-action movies, *The Fellowship of the Ring* (2001), *The Two Towers* (2002), *The Return of the King* (2003), *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey* (2012), *The Hobbit: Desolation of Smaug* (2013), and *The Hobbit:*

[60] In 2010, the PGA created a new credit for the Transmedia Producer role: "given to the person(s) responsible for a significant portion of a project's long-term planning, development, production, and/or maintenance of narrative continuity across multiple platforms, and creation of original storylines for new platforms" (Finke 2010, para. 4).

Battle of the Five Armies (2014); Finnish television series, *Hobitit* (1993); graphic novel by Charles Dixon and David Wenzel, *The Hobbit* (1989); music album by Bo Hansson, *Sagan om ringen* (1970); video games, *The Lord of the Rings: The Battle for Middle-Earth* and sequel (2004 & 2006), *The Lord of the Rings: Conquest* (2009), and *The Lord of the Rings: War in the North* (2011); tabletop games, *Lord of the Rings* (2000) and *War of the Ring* (2004); and multiple stage plays and musicals, including West End production *The Lord of the Rings* (2007). These examples engage with multiplatform storyworld design in various ways, whereby some may be multimedial (stage plays), most are cross-media adaptations, but some are transmedial (games and some movies): the primary story of Frodo Baggins and the One Ring is retold in these multiple platforms relatively unchanged, but some examples use the components of other media—audio-visual spectacle, seriality, interactive game play, and aural storytelling—to extend the main story, and enrich narrative interstices. In chapter 5, I examine the aesthetic function of multiplatform storyworlds and build on this discussion of the 'Lord of the Rings' franchise, but for now I identify that media-conscious narratology is a force of poetic utility in transtextual narration and is thus a convention of how blockbuster franchising works in the context of a total entertainment ecology.

Star Trek: The Franchise Frontier

The 'Star Trek' franchise exemplifies the conventions and norms of transtextual narration in the franchise mode: its historical longevity of more than five decades provides an extensive canvas to consider its function as an architextual system that is driven by the tools of serial narration to represent a comprehensive storyworld shaped by multiple media platforms across time and space. Conceived by Gene Roddenberry with the television series *Star Trek* (1966–1969)—since retitled *Star Trek: The Original Series* (*TOS*)—the 'Star Trek' franchise has developed a complex transtextual poetics composed of a rich narrative system made up of story events and histories, realities and timelines, serial dynamics, media platforms and a multitude of licensed works over its long history. As an example of transtextual narration, the 'Star Trek' franchise has established an extensive multiplatform storyworld constituted by multiple fictional characters, cultures, species, languages, planets, and institutions represented across its continuing narrative development. The blueprint for this storyworld was provided by the television series *TOS* and enriched by its expansion across live action and animated television, movies, video games, tabletop games, graphic novels, comic books, and novels. As former co-producer Gene Coon is quoted saying,

> Gene [Roddenberry] created a totally new universe. He invented a starship, which works, by the way, and is a logical progression from what we know today. He created customs, morals, modes of speaking, a complete technology. . . . We know how fast we can go. We know what we use for fuel. We know what our weapons will do. And Gene invented all these things. . . . He created an entire galaxy and an entire rule book for operating within that galaxy, with very specific laws governing behavior, manners, customs as well as science and technology. He created a universe and it works, and it works well. (quoted in Whitfield and Roddenberry 1968, 74)

The 'Star Trek' franchise can thus by aptly described as a transmedia storyworld because each media platform contributes to its development in an expansive manner; every iteration of the 'Star Trek' franchise across multiple media platforms introduces new characters, new stories, and new environments that exist in the same active narrative cosmology. Djoymi Baker identifies the 'Star Trek' franchise as "myth, twenty-first-century style": "a complex set of stories passed on and updated from one generation to the next, in various media, that have become part of the broader cultural heritage" (2018, 5). This signals the expansive scale of 'Star Trek' as a work of transtextual narration: the franchise is a complex narrative system constituted across space and time at the levels of story, presentation, and platform.

The 'Star Trek' franchise is not exceptional in the early twenty-first century, but it is definitive; this is largely because it is so influential in shaping the norms of narration in the franchise mode, including its recognizable system of iconography, characters, and narrative histories, the generic discourses it draws upon and shapes, its spatiotemporal continuities and displacements, and the storyworld it works to build across time and space. The iconic voice-over introduction (first heard in the opening of every *TOS* episode but subsequently spoken by various captains of the USS Enterprise across the franchise) establishes the expansive setting that drives narrative in the franchise: "Space, the final frontier. These are the voyages of the Starship Enterprise. Its continuing mission: to explore strange new worlds. . . To seek out life and new civilizations. . . To boldly go where no man has gone before. . ." As a mission statement, the introduction also productively facilitates narrative longevity for a continuity franchise; this is reflected in the shift from a "five-year mission" in *TOS*, to a "continuing mission" in the television series *The Next Generation* (*TNG*) (1987–1994), and "ongoing mission" in the movie reboot *Star Trek* (2009). Moreover, in *TNG* this mission statement changed from "where no man" to "where no one" to reflect a more open demographic representation. As such, this mission statement has changed as the franchise reformulates its boundaries, and thus its own frontier. Central to the franchise mode is that

every blockbuster franchise should strive towards an *ongoing* mission "to explore strange new worlds," which is fundamentally the franchise frontier and has been achieved by only a handful of franchises, including 'Star War,' the 'MCU,' 'Wizarding World,' 'Bond,' and 'Star Trek'. For this reason, the 'Star Trek' franchise provides a productive case study to demonstrate the principles of transtextual narration.

As an architextual system in the franchise mode, the 'Star Trek' franchise is composed of various elements—iconography, characters, settings, timelines, and themes—that establish cohesion in the franchise's transtextual narrative across its extensive seriality. There are many elements that define narrative in 'Star Trek': Starfleet and its symbols, technology, and procedures like the 'Prime Directive'; the United Federation of Planets and its history; characters Captain James T. Kirk (William Shatner), Commander Spock (Leonard Nimoy, Zachary Quinto, and Ethan Peck), Captain Picard (Patrick Stewart), Commander Riker (Jonathan Frakes), and Lieutenant Commander Data (Brent Spiner); alien species like Vulcans, Klingons, Romulans, Borg, Ferengi, and Kelpians; and the themes of peace, utopia, progress, innovation, and discovery. Many of these elements make up the storyworld as a verisimilar and inhabitable setting, but they also systemize narrative cohesion in the franchise through sustained repetition across multiple installments; this narrative system facilitates identification with the franchise property as IP object and, through familiarity, also subsequently enables differentiation and variation across this mechanism. For example, the Starfleet insignia is a narrative sign that identifies the 'Star Trek' franchise through repetition and variation and reflects its connection to broader science fiction discourses. The opening title of the movie *Star Trek* (2009) reinforces how strongly the insignia represents the franchise (Figure 26) and an infographic by illustrator Tadeo D'Oria (Figure 27) details some of the developments of the Starfleet insignia across the multiple texts of 'Star Trek.' More than just a visual icon, each iteration of the symbol represents the characters who wore it, the procedures that govern its placement and ranking, the technologies that gave it communication and location tracking abilities, and the histories—both fictional and real-world—which it reflects through narrative development. The official 'Star Trek' website even charts the history of the Starfleet insignia from the NASA logo (Kelly 2020). Similarly, reinforcing the generic context of science-fiction, the opening title sequence of the series *Star Trek: Enterprise* (2001–2005) represents the real-world history of the 'Star Trek' storyworld (Figure 28). The Starfleet insignia is thus a vital element in the iconography of 'Star Trek' as an architextual system and the science fiction genre, as it represents the working of its narrative system and the possibilities of speculative science.



Figure 26: Starfleet insignia with the *Star Trek* (2009) title card.

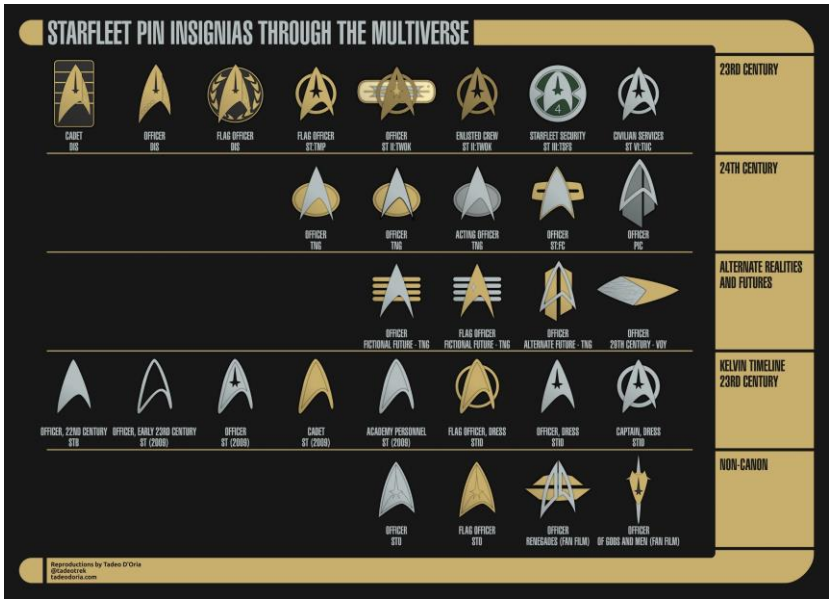


Figure 27: Starfleet insignia across time (D'Oria)



Figure 28: Charting the real-world history of exploration in the *Star Trek: Enterprise* title sequence

A further example of this system at work in the 'Star Trek' franchise is the starship USS Enterprise, which is one of the most recognizable elements of the 'Star Trek' franchise. It is the primary recurring setting for many installments, starting with *TOS* and including *Star Trek: The Animated Series* (*TAS*) (1973–1974), the television series *TNG*, *Enterprise*, some episodes of *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* (*DS9*) (1993–1999), *Star Trek: Discovery* (2017 –), and *Star Trek: Picard* (2020 –) and all the feature movies thus far. However, despite its

familiar consistency, the USS Enterprise does not remain the same throughout 'Star Trek' and the variations and revisions in design, function, and crew are crucial to driving the narrative and facilitating difference across its extensive multiplicity of texts. The prototype NX-01 (Figure 29) is the first starship in 'Star Trek' narrative history to bear the name Enterprise and features in the prequel series *Star Trek: Enterprise* (2001–2005), and *TOS* introduces the Constitution-class starship, NCC-1701 (Figure 30), captained by Kirk—this model features throughout the entirety of the television series *TOS* and *TAS*, and (with a refit) the first three movie installments, *Star Trek: The Motion Picture* (1979), *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan* (1982), and *Star Trek III: The Search for Spock* (1984). The second starship to bear the name Enterprise is the NCC-1701-A (Figure 31), which is introduced in the movie *Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home* (1986) and remains throughout *Star Trek V: The Final Frontier* (1989) until the movie *Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country* (1991) when it is decommissioned. The Excelsior-class NCC-1701-B (Figure 32) is the third starship to be called Enterprise—it is introduced in the movie *Star Trek: Generations* (1994) and is captained by John Harriman (Alan Ruck). The fourth Enterprise is the Ambassador-class NCC-1701-C (Figure 33), which is captained by Rachel Garrett (Tricia O'Neil) and makes its only appearance in the *TNG* episode "Yesterday's Enterprise" (3:15). The fifth starship to bear the name is the Galaxy-class NCC-1701-D (Figure 34): the iconic ship captained by Jean-Luc Picard, this is the setting for the entire *TNG* series, features in the movie *Generations*, and appears in the first episodes of the series *DS9* and *Enterprise*. Finally, the Sovereign-class NCC-1701-E (Figure 35) is the fifth ship to be named Enterprise and features in the movies *Star Trek: First Contact* (1996), *Star Trek: Insurrection* (1998), and *Star Trek: Nemesis* (2002).[61] Meanwhile, versions of the NCC-1701 (Figure 36) and NCC-1701-A exist in an alternative timeline, as depicted in the reboot movies *Star Trek*, *Star Trek Into Darkness* (2013), and *Star Trek Beyond* (2016), and versions of the NCC-1701 (Figure 37) and NX-01 exist as the ISS Enterprise operated by the Terran Empire in the mirror universe as depicted in episodes of *TOS*, *DS9*, *Enterprise*, and *Discovery*.

[61] The NCC-701-J also appears in the *Enterprise* episode "Azati Prime" (3:18) during a time travel event.



Figure 29: Enterprise NX-01



Figure 30: Enterprise NCC-1701



Figure 31: Enterprise NCC-1701-A

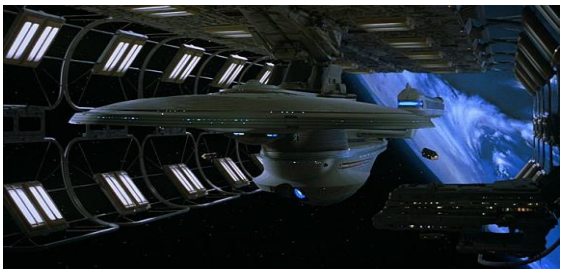


Figure 32: Enterprise NCC-1701-B



Figure 33: Enterprise NCC-1701-C



Figure 34: Enterprise NCC-1701-D



Figure 35: Enterprise NCC-1701-E



Figure 36: Enterprise NCC-1701 (alternative timeline)



Figure 37: ISS Enterprise NCC-1701 (mirror dimension)

The starship Enterprise is a crucial component in the architextual system of the 'Star Trek' franchise: it is a locus of both cohesion and difference as it remains a persistent setting and symbol through change and variance. More than just a repeated registry code (NCC-1701) with a series of appended letters (A, B, C, D, E), each iteration of the Enterprise embodies narrative elements that enrich the architextual system of the franchise: the various distinctions in crew and character relationships—whether it is the friendships between Kirk and Spock, Picard and Riker, or Picard and Data, romances between Riker and Commander Deanna Troi (Marina Sirtis), Spock (Quinto) and Lieutenant Nyota Uhura (Zoe Saldana)—as well as narrative events, technological advancements, and physical architecture that reflect scientific and societal advancements in the storyworld. As Richard Conway writes in *Time*, "the *USS Enterprise* is no mere starship—it's a character in its own right," whereby "several ships, all bearing the proud name, have carried captains and crews on their long and dangerous missions to seek out new life and civilizations in the farthest reaches of the galaxy" (2013, para. 1). The various iterations of the Enterprise and the Starfleet insignia correlate with Umberto Eco's generic tie pattern, of which nothing is more 'serial'—or repetitive—yet so personalized (1985, 175). The Enterprise and the Starfleet insignia are two examples of components in the architextual system of the 'Star Trek' franchise: they work as generic markers of 'Star Trek' and articulate distinctions between iterations. Previously in this chapter I discussed how the 'Worlds of DC' franchise lacks its own internal cohesive system and so draws from the narrational discourses of its comic book source material and superhero genre to form an architextual system. While the 'Star Trek' franchise has established its own internal narrative system through markers of familiarly and differentiation, it also draws from the broader discourses of the science-fiction action genre and media context of television to shape the workings of its architextual system. The narrative components that constitute the architextual system of any IP object as transtext are specific to the franchise property in question, but they also draw from broader generic discourses. What makes the Enterprise so important as a function of architextuality in the 'Star Trek' franchise, like the Starfleet insignia, is that its design is also inscribed with the conventions of the science fiction genre, beyond the bounds of the franchise property. Although it also explores uncharted space in a future world using speculative science, the Enterprise honors a real-world ship in name, which is depicted in the opening title sequence of the television series *Enterprise* (Figure 28), a holodeck simulation in the movie *Generations*, and an aircraft carrier named Enterprise in *The Voyage Home*. The Enterprise is

more than a persistent setting that articulates variation, but also a vehicle (literally) of generic development as it transports characters and stories through narrative time and space.

Seriality is integral to how the 'Star Trek' franchise organizes narrative content across its expansive architextual system: not least due to the series form of its initial iteration *TOS*, and the ongoing engagement with the television medium and its own narrative developments towards serial complexity, but also on account of the spatiotemporal hypertextuality caused by its time-travel narratives. Roberta Pearson and Máire Messenger Davies chart the history of seriality in 'Star Trek' and its connection to various television formats, from the series form of broadcast syndication with *TOS* to "flexi-narrative" (using a blend of series and serial form) of the multichannel era with *TNG*, *DS9* and *Star Trek: Voyager* (1995–2001), and the emergence of more complex seriality early in the postnetwork era with *Enterprise* (2014, 130); Ina Batzke adds to this history with an analysis of seriality in the streaming series *Discovery* (2020, 105), and it goes to follow that *Picard* continues to reflect seriality of the post-network streaming era of television. Pearson and Messenger Davies argue that 'Star Trek' employs a form of narrative organization they identify as "extended seriality," which they use "specifically to refer to *Star Trek*'s capacity to form narrative links among five television series and, occasionally, the feature films" (2014, 128). It seems redundant to qualify seriality as "extended" since the form already accounts for longevous narrative extension across media, but Pearson and Messenger Davies rightly acknowledge that seriality in the 'Star Trek' franchise is intensified by the significant presence of television series and movies (not to ignore the breadth of licensed works, like novels and video games) and the well-developed interconnections between the formats. This idea of "extended seriality" acknowledges the way that seriality in 'Star Trek' balances traditional narrative formats within the expansive storyworld: "whereas Star Trek's deployment of extended seriality atypically built worlds across four decades, five series, and the feature films, the individual series more typically conformed to the prevalent narrative formats of their historical periods" (Pearson and Messenger Davis 2014, 130). The same can be said about how the plot of 'Star Trek' is shaped by transtextual narration in the franchise era: yes, this includes the intensified seriality of postnetwork television as mentioned above, but it is also useful to recognize that a range of serial tools are used across this period to enrich narrative form, including a prequel and intraqual (*Enterprise*[62]), a reboot (*Star Trek* [2009]), sequels to a reboot (*Star Trek Intro*

[62] The television series *Enterprise* functions as a prequel up until its final episode, "These Are the Voyages…" (4:22), when it is revealed that the entire series was actually a hologram simulation operated by Commander Riker during *TNG* episode "The Pegasus" (7:12) and thus emerges as an intraquel, not a prequel.

Darkness [2013] and *Star Trek Beyond* [2016]), and an interquel (*Discovery*). Moreover, these dynamics of seriality are further complicated by time-travel narratives that occur within each instalment or episode. As Colin Harvey identifies, in 'Star Trek' "time travel and parallel universe are effectively 'hard-wired' into the diegesis." For these reasons, the 'Star Trek' franchise exemplifies the poetic utility of serial form as a principle that enriches transtextual narration while enabling franchise longevity.

Plot in the 'Star Trek' franchise is an intricate tapestry of spatio-temporal dimensions, in which multiple serial tools often overlap and work in tandem in ways that are not always easy to identify and trace. The movie *Star Trek* (2009) is primarily recognized as a reboot that works to relaunch the franchise with a new timeline for a new generation, but it does not divorce itself from what has come before; rather, it taps into the architextual system of the franchise to use its pre-established precedent for time-travel and generate its own futurity. *Star Trek* begins when a time-travelling Romulan named Nero (Eric Bana) attacks the USS Kelvin, resulting in the death of its first officer and father of Captain James Kirk, Lieutenant Commander George Kirk (Chris Hemsworth); this narrative event is a catalyst for a new timeline in the franchise—the 'Kelvin timeline'—which is a temporal offshoot that catalyzes an additional narrative future. As Urbanski describes, "the rebooted Star Trek acknowledges and exists within the established narratological system but employs a time travel/parallel universe event to create another branch of the story in which the events of the original fabula have both occurred and not occurred" (2013, 71). For this reason, Urbanski locates *Star Trek* between the two extremes of conspicuity on the reboot continuum. While this reboot does indeed "begin continuity afresh," as Proctor defines, it does not do this "from a new spatio-temporal position" (2012a, 10), since it also employs sequel and prequel serial tools. The initial catalyzing narrative event on the USS Kelvin begins this continuity from a prequel position set prior to *TOS* (just prior to Kirk's birth) before launching a new causal chain, with versions of Kirk (Pine), Spock (Quinto), Uhura (Saldana), and the rest of the USS Enterprise (NCC-1701) crew; moreover, later Kirk encounters Spock (Nimoy) from the future of the 'Prime timeline,' who was involved in the same time-travel event with Nero but arrived in a different time and space. Therefore, this version of Spock has come from a point in the narrative history after *Star Trek: Nemesis*. Essentially, this is 'sequel Spock,' which results in two versions of Spock in the 'Kelvin timeline' (figure 3.24), of different ages and of different narrative histories, and establishes a spatiotemporal nexus that revolves around a central unifying character. As a reboot inflected with prequel and sequel dynamics, *Star Trek* is a metatextual commentary on the state of the 'Star Trek' franchise in the twenty-first century:

at a spatio-temporal crossroads between the present and the future. It also facilitates a hypertextual enrichment of its storyworld through familiarity with variation. The 'rebooted' *Star Trek* reinforces that seriality in the 'Star Trek' franchise is dynamic and active and typifies the formal organization of transtextual narration in blockbuster franchising.



Figure 38: Reboot Spock and Sequel Spock in *Star Trek* (2009).

There are many dimensions that make up 'Star Trek' as a blockbuster franchise, including its authorship and ownership, licensing relations and production structures, narrative organization, aesthetics and style, marketing and branding strategies, and its cultural reception; like all examples employed as case studies in this thesis, 'Star Trek' could also serve to productively exemplify principles and conventions discussed in any other chapter. Nonetheless, here I have engaged the 'Star Trek' franchise to demonstrate how the principles of transtextual narration discussed in this chapter—the architextual system, serial narration, and multiplatform storyworlds—function in a long-lasting and expansive blockbuster franchise. In this chapter, I have considered the different ways in which the dynamic between repetition and variation is articulated through narrative content and form; in this context, the principles of architextuality, seriality, and multiplatform storyworlds have poetic utility since they work to enrich the narrative system and secure longevity of the franchise property. While I have framed my discussion and analysis in this chapter around narratology, it would not be amiss to identify formulaic tendencies in the application of transtextual narration; the following chapter moves on to examine the implications of formula, high-concept, and branding in narrative development.

Chapter 4: Franchising Formula

As a system shaped by patterns of repetition and variation in narrative form and content, transtextual narration in blockbuster franchising lends itself to questions of formula. Blockbuster franchising is frequently associated with formula as a depreciated assessment of its economically driven (and legally protected) repetition of recognizable conventions, iconography, and brands (Newsweek Staff 2002, para. 7; Greig 2020, para. 6). Edward Jay Epstein even calls Hollywood franchising "the Midas formula" (2005) to describe the repeated economic success of narrative, branding, and licensing strategies. It is in this regard that formula in franchise mode articulates an intensification of the high-concept strategy, since it involves "the repetition of bankable material to guarantee audience interest" (Wyatt 1994, 162). This chapter considers formula to be a practical application of transtextual narration and implicit in the principles of architextuality, seriality, and multiplatform storyworlds discussed in the previous chapter. Similarly, Thomas Schatz states, "to identify a popular cinematic story formula . . . is to recognize its status as a coherent, value-laden narrative system" (1981, 16). At the semiotic level, formula pertains to the conventions of creative works because it constitutes "principles for the selection of certain plots, characters, and settings" (Cawelti 1969, 390); as such, it relates to notions of genre and myth in how it employs recognizable narrative patterns. Scholars have different ideas about how to distinguish between formula, genre, and myth. John G. Cawelti considers that formula synthesizes universal archetypes with mythic symbols and themes (1976, 33) and genre and formula function as "two phases or aspects of a complex process," whereby a formula develops for a while before it is recognized as a genre (7–8). Schatz identifies that, in its classical form, genre involves the working together of narrative formula and the cinematic medium to communicate a social message or popular mythology (1981, 38); this means that, for Schatz, formula is a narrative construct and genre articulates formula through cinematic form. Moreover, for Barry Keith Grant, formula is genre that is most archetypal and lacks the potential for artistic variation (2007, 58). Despite variation in how scholars frame the distinction between formula, genre, and myth, these contentions all point to formula as a semiotic system that is recognized by a very specific pattern of iconography and narrative patterns, which underpins the concepts of genre and myth.

An essential component in the recognition of formula is in its capacity *to be recognized* by a large audience. Cawelti argues that formula is inherently cultural, since it

reflects “particular preoccupations and needs of the time in which they were created and the group which created them” (1969, 387). According to Cawelti, formula is “a conventional system for structuring cultural products,” which contrasts with form as “an invented system of organization” (386). This distinction understands *form* to be a deliberate semiotic construction at the level of authorial intention and narrative mechanics, and *formula* to be a conventionalized semiotic system shaped by the cultures of production and reception; that is to say that form refers to how the text works and formula depends on being recognized as such. Schatz explains that “a limited number of film stories have been refined into formulas because of their unique social and/or aesthetic qualities” and the significance of formula “is immediately evident to those who produce and consume it” (1981, 16). Therefore, formula designates a narrative system constituted by a “*reciprocal* relationship between artist and audience” and an “essential process of production, feedback, and conventionalization” (6; original emphasis). In Hollywood, formula serves various processes that work beyond narration, in the domain of marketing, audience reception, and cultural reflection; in this context, a formula is sustained by how well a mainstream and global audience can identify with and relate to pre-established brands, recognizable conventions, and recurrent themes. According to Justin Wyatt, “‘formula’ films are designed to be ‘appreciated’ as much as possible by the target audience, and, it is hoped, by other audience segments as well” (1994, 161). Therefore, as a phenomenon grounded in popular culture and the pursuit of mainstream recognition, formula is crucial to franchising as a mode of *blockbuster* production because it depends on its large-scale success as a global product. This thesis has already explained that audience reception of blockbuster franchising is its own significant topic and outside the scope of this thesis, but that is not to deny the importance of a mainstream audience in shaping franchise formula. It is for this reason that formula has poetic utility since it serves both a creative and industrial purpose as a mechanism that shapes creative conventions through cultural reflection to forge a pre-established audience and guarantee economic return.

The use of formula is instrumental in how the blockbuster franchising intensifies the high-concept strategy in early twenty-first century Hollywood. The defining mechanism of the blockbuster franchise—that is, the interplay of intellectual property licensing and the transtextual poetics of seriality—is the essential formula that sustains the franchise mode. Licensing and seriality are primary components of the high-concept strategy, but in the franchise mode they coalesce into a supersystem that can incorporate multiple other production and marketing systems, including auteurism, genre, and stardom, within the larger total entertainment ecology. Similarly, Wyatt explains that “high concept can be seen as a

type of ‘economy’ on the part of producers: the repetition of bankable material to guarantee audience interest. The most obvious forms of this repetition are remakes, sequels, or series films, which together represent one ‘formula’ for commercial success” (1994, 162). Over time this formula for commercial success has evolved into blockbuster franchising. Cawelti says that “for publishers and film studios, the production of formulaic works is a highly rationalized operation with a guaranteed minimal return as well as the possibility of large profits for particularly popular individual versions” (1976, 9). This means that, as with high-concept, formulaic narration is primarily associated with commercialization and economics in Hollywood entertainment. However, as Cawelti puts it, “if the production of formulas were only a matter of economics, we might well turn the whole topic over to market researchers. Even if economic considerations were the sole motive behind the production of formulas—and I have already suggested that there are other important motives as well—we would still need to explore the kind and level of artistic creation possible within the boundaries of a formula” (9). This signals that formula has a capacity to provide poetic utility as a system driven by economic security and the challenge of creative variation, in which “formula has its own set of limits that can determine what kind of new and unique elements are possible without straining the formula to breaking point” (10). In blockbuster franchising, formula is made up of practical tools like higher-concept marketing, storyworld mythos, and leitmotif to the facilitate recognition of the familiar and provide differentiation. This chapter will examine these principles followed by a case study of the ‘Bond’ franchise to demonstrate how formula functions in long-lasting franchise.

Higher-Concept

At its foundation, high-concept moviemaking elevates an idea—a concept—to its highest potential through an interplay of marketing, licensing, narrative, and style; it is for this reason that high-concept is an important force of poetic utility in franchise formula because, as already stated in this thesis, the *idea* is the nucleus of blockbuster franchising. As a mode of production driven by the development of intellectual property, the franchise mode elevates the high-concept strategy *even higher*. Typically, high-concept narration is characterized as simplistic, two-dimensional, and brand-driven (Wyatt 1994, 12) and Geoff King describes it as “a style of filmmaking based around simplified narrative concepts designed to fit into strategies led by marketing and merchandising” (2002, 216). This aspect of high-concept formula also defines narrative concepts in Hollywood blockbusters; for example, *Jaws* (1975)

involves a simple concept about a large killer shark that attacks a beach town during summer and *Jurassic Park* (1993) can be succinctly summed up as a story about a theme park of cloned dinosaurs that escape containment. These succinct concepts constitute what Wyatt calls a "pitch" (1994, 7) and are also made clear by the movie titles. As director Steven Spielberg is often quoted saying, "what interests me more than anything else is the idea. . . I like ideas, especially movie ideas, that you can hold in your hand" (quoted in Hoberman 1985, 36). Wyatt identifies that such ideas can contain one or more traits that serve the high-concept strategy: "the look, the hook, and the book," which refers to "the look of the images, the marketing hooks, and the reduced narratives" (Wyatt 1994, 22). The notion of a 'hook' remains central to the marketability of a concept or property, but blockbuster franchising constitutes a more comprehensive suite of conventions, norms, and strategies that work to develop the IP object at a higher level to these traditional high-concept traits, including the formula of its architextual system and its storyworld mythos.

Crucial to the connection between high-concept and formula in blockbuster franchising is the aim to achieve product differentiation through the negotiation of repetition and variation. Producer Don Simpson is an early pioneer of high-concept moviemaking and responsible for formalizing the strategy in the ranks of Hollywood studios with his 1980 memo, the "Paramount Corporate Philosophy":

> A powerful *idea* is the heart of any successful movie. The creative premise is what first attracts people to the product. . . A good idea is one that seems imaginative, original, and in some way new and unique. The power of the biggest blockbuster movies is that they come from out of nowhere and break new ground. In many cases, a compelling idea may not be strictly original, but it will seem different and exciting for its time. The most distinctive quality of a strong concept is that it does not seem familiar. (Quoted in Fleming 1998, 192)

In this sense, a "good idea" in the high-concept strategy is not one that is obviously familiar or repeated, but one that seems different and stands out in the market. Cultural commentators highlight Simpson's uncouth statement that says, "the pursuit of making money is the only reason to make movies" (quoted in Hornaday 1998, para. 12; quoted in Rule 1999, para. 10); however, it is important to also acknowledge his additional point that adds, "we have no obligation to make art . . . Our obligation is to make money, and to make money it may be necessary to make history, art or some significant statement" (quoted in Rule 1999, para. 10). For Simpson, the high-concept strategy is about the recognition of how variations in creative expression play a crucial role in the economic success of a movie idea or concept: to say that

Hollywood moviemaking is obligated to make money not art, but that art may be necessary to make money, is not the same as saying that moviemaking is incompatible with artistry. This misrepresentation of the high-concept strategy exemplifies Wyatt's observation that "the industry focuses on the uniqueness and originality of the concept" while "the media critics stress its creative bankruptcy" (1994, 14). As such, Simpson's memo is as much about striving towards audience satisfaction as it is about the commercialism of movies: it returns to the notion of formula as participating in a reciprocal relationship between producer, movie product, and audience.

In high-concept moviemaking, product differentiation and pre-established familiarity are different sides of the same strategy, since difference is expressed in relation to what already exists (Wyatt 1994, 12); this dynamic strengthens the high concept 'hook' and its ability to effectively grab the attention of an audience through marketing and merchandising (20). The 'hook' of a concept emerges when its point of differentiation is compelling enough to be distinguished from similar concepts. As Robert Kolker aptly describes, "to get a film made in Hollywood, an agent or a producer or a studio head has to be convinced that the film you have in mind is 'just like' some other film 'only different'" (2015, 4). For example, *Jaws* (1975) leveraged the success of *The Exorcist* (1973) and tapped into its genre system with the TV spot tagline "it is as if God created the Devil and gave him Jaws" ("Jaws Official Trailer #1). Dan O'Bannon is said to have pitched *Star Beast* (the original *Alien* [1979] screenplay) as "Jaws in space" (Harris 2016); and *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (1981) is based on the premise of "a James Bond without the hardware" (McBride 2011, 309). These high concepts use the repetition-with-variation mechanism of genre and seriality to establish a marketing 'hook' since these narrative systems provide the benefit of pre-sold elements and thus a pre-established audience; such pre-sold elements draw both from genres, such as horror and science-fiction, and brand familiarity. However, Rick Altman realizes that genre cannot be legally owned or licensed, so "Hollywood regularly eschews genre logic for production and publicity decisions, in favour of series, cycles, remakes and sequels" (1999, 115). Similarly, Wyatt emphasizes the strength of sequels, series, and remakes to foster pre-sold elements (1994, 129). To illustrate this point, Altman refers to marketing for the 'Bond' franchise movies *Dr No* (1962) and *From Russia with Love* (1963) which concentrate on its "propriety features," such as the character of James Bond, author Ian Fleming, and star Sean Connery, rather than the iconography of the spy genre (Altman 1999, 118). Correspondingly, Altman also notes how marketing for Universal Pictures' *The Ipcress File* (1965) "had to depend on generic identification and comparison to the rival Bond films" because its proprietary

features lack marketability (119). In this example, Altman described that genre formula is "a discursive strategy for gaining access to competitors' pre-sold audiences" (120). It is for these reasons that the franchise mode intensifies the high-concept strategy because it uses its strong propriety mechanism to maintain control of its marketability. Thomas Elsaesser puts this best when he identifies that "one of the most productive areas of the so-called revisionist historiography of American cinema since the 1970s has been the study of how the industry has developed new marketing strategies, has taken advantage of new technologies in sound and vision, and has turned its genre prototypes into 'franchises'" (2012, 332). While the same-but-different principle is not unique to high-concept or new in Hollywood, blockbuster franchising activates it as a force of poetic utility that synthesizes genre, seriality, and other formulaic mechanisms.

As an articulation of high-concept, blockbuster franchising takes the high-concept to a higher extreme as it incorporates and reconfigures traditional industrial systems—like genre, auteurism, and stardom—in the service of extending the value of *super*imposing IP object across multiple texts and media platforms. Therefore, in the franchise mode, these well-known and previously effective production and marketing systems are not obsolete or replaced but are reappropriated as modalities of differentiation that must be negotiated within a larger strategic network. For example, the 'Marvel Cinematic Universe' ('MCU') franchise is defined by the creative continuity and industrial synergy afforded by intellectual property ownership, but within its branded supersystem are variables of differentiation and audience distinction facilitated by genre and concept-auteurs. The 'MCU' franchise instils its formula with variation using genre hybridity between the superhero, science-fiction, fantasy, and adventure action genres with other styles, including the historical period film (*Captain America: The First Avenger* [2011]), the political thriller (*Captain America: The Winter Solider* [2014]), space opera (*Guardians of the Galaxy* [2014]), the heist movie (*Ant-Man* [2015]), and the teen movie (*Spider-Man: Homecoming* [2017]). Similarly, a broad range of concept-auteur styles have added degrees of variation across the 'MCU,' with directors that include Jon Favreau (*Iron Man* [2008] and *Iron Man 2* [2010]), Kenneth Branagh (*Thor* [2011]), Joss Whedon (*The Avengers* [2012] and *Avengers: Age of Ultron* [2015], Shane Black (*Iron Man 3* [2013]), Anthony and Joe Russo (*Captain America: The Winter Solider*, *Captain America: Civil War* [2016], and *Avengers: Endgame* [2019]), James Gunn (*Guardians of the Galaxy* [2014] and *Guardians of the Galaxy: Vol. 2* [2017]), Taika Waititi (*Thor: Ragnarok* [2017]), and Ryan Coogler (*Black Panther* [2018]). The 'MCU' formula can thus be described as "'genres-within-genres' operating in a 'fractal' manner," which

"play a significant role in keeping this enterprise together and making it available for different levels of consumer engagement" (Flanagan, Livingstone & McKenny 2017, 79). The 'MCU' is a successful franchise formula because it employs systems like genre and auteurism to support the IP object and add variation to the development of its transtextual narration; this also relates to the formation of an architextual system, as discussed in the previous chapter. It is crucial to the 'MCU' strategy, and blockbuster franchising generally, that such generic conventions and the stylistic expression of individual creators work in deference to the IP object.

In blockbuster franchising, the high-concept strategy must elevate the the IP object—the higher concept—to a position above the other industrial systems of genre, auteurism, and stardom. Wyatt identifies that in high-concept moviemaking the star is "perhaps the most significant pre-sold property from a commercial standpoint" (1994, 31). However, the star system and blockbuster franchising are "two modes of Hollywood production differentiation" that often work in tension (Johnson 2008, 216). The star system has remained central to Hollywood moviemaking since the studio system, but in the franchise era of the early twenty-first century "star and celebrity persona arguably take a back seat" (217); therefore, stardom is no longer the most effective marketing strategy or the most significant tool in the high-concept strategy. Elsewhere I have discussed the relationship between stardom and blockbuster franchising using Tom Cruise as an example of a franchise star in the 'Mission: Impossible' and 'Dark Universe' franchises: in this study I examine the points of contestation between the star system and the storyworld development of intellectual property in the franchise mode (Lomax 2021, 205). As Jeff Gomez has said in interview, transmedia development must "put the intellectual property—the storyworld—über-alles" (2019a, quest. 9); this means that stars should "behave in honor of their character" and "while they're playing these characters, they're in deference to them"; this, Gomez asserts, is "the way a fine actor can contribute to the storyworld communication of the franchise and benefit from doing so" (quoted in Lomax 2021, 190). For example, the 'Dark Universe' is a failed franchise produced by Universal Studios based on the Universal Monsters cycle of the studio system, with classical Hollywood movies that include *Dracula* (1931), *Frankenstein* (1931), *The Mummy* (1932), *The Invisible Man* (1933) and *The Wolf Man* (1941). The initial (and only) installment in the 'Dark Universe' franchise, *The Mummy* (2017), starred Tom Cruise in a role conceived for him as a high-profile star positioned within a pre-established horror storyworld, into which he carried the baggage of his prior associations with the action genre and other franchises such as 'Mission: Impossible.' Therefore, as I have said elsewhere,

"Cruise's iconic star brand obscured storyworld development, and neither the star system nor the franchise system could function effectively" (Lomax 2021, 191). This tension is demonstrated by a movie poster for *The Mummy* (2017), in which Tom Cruise's name is more prominent than the storyworld tagline "welcome to a new world of gods and monsters" (Figure 39). Gomez identifies that in this adaptation of *The Mummy*, "the star of the movie—the monster —played a secondary role to Cruise, and that's not the building block for a shared universe franchise—that's a star vehicle and no matter how you slice it, it becomes muddled because cosmology and everything else becomes wayside" (quoted in Lomax 2021, 202). This example demonstrates that the higher elevation of the concept or intellectual property means that the high-concept strategy should work to support and amplify the IP object and its storyworld at the marketing level, not supplant it. Blockbuster franchising thus adheres to a high-concept logic as a primary tenet of its formulaic strategy, but reconfigures its marketing to support and elevates, not suppress or reduce, expansive storyworld development.



Figure 39: *The Mummy* publicity image.

Storyworld Mythos

To say that in blockbuster franchising high-concept formula must be driven by the storyworld and its mythos means that marketing strategies and formula systems remain guided by a core narrative premise. The previous chapter discussed multiplatform storyworlds as an expansive narrative structure that sustains multiple stories, settings, characters, and media platforms; adding to this, the storyworld mythos is an underlying nucleus of the franchise formula that works to maintain a stable foundation in transtextual narration. Broadly speaking, Barbara

Whitmer describes the mythos as "a pattern of beliefs that articulates, often symbolically, the prevalent attitudes in a culture. It is more than a single myth, which only tells one narrative of story. Mythos is a collection of beliefs; a cultural mindset; the framework that expresses a pattern of beliefs, attitudes, behaviors, discourses, and practices in a society" (1997, 1). Therefore, the narrative mythos includes a set of recurring themes and values, tone and generic identity, an internal narrative logic, and a worldview or message, that remain consistent in the storyworld—we can think of this as the thesis or "unified theory" of narrative in blockbuster franchising (Gomez 2019b, 291). The concept of a narrative mythos has the potential to be abstract and conceptual—especially when defined in relation to Aristotelian literary theory (Belfiore 2000)—but the way I employ it here draws upon practical applications in storyworld development, as the essence of franchise formula. Gomez explains this as "a core set of narrative tenets from the storyworld, a system to which various creative stakeholders can adhere in order to generate consistent and persistent content" (2019b, 213). These narrative tenets, Gomez states, include a "storyworld essence" (or a narrative or brand essence, translatable to different creative and industrial stakeholders) and a "primal message," which is "the central theme of the storyworld" and a "singular and unique aspirational message" (210). These narrative elements are not just points of study in narratological analysis but should be identified, examined, and expressed during concept development in the form of a coherent and consistent 'franchise mythology' that "must be infused into all extensions of the story world if the franchise is to feel authentic and continue to achieve success. Fail to do this, and it won't be long before the franchise loses its way, withers, and dies" (211). The formalization and application of a strong narrative mythos, as Gomez describes and practices, is frequently evaded by producers and studios wanting to exploit intellectual property (Gomez 2017 & 2019a)—this is to the detriment of franchise longevity, as is exemplified by the failed 'Dark Universe' franchise.

Narrative mythos is an effective force of poetic utility in blockbuster franchising because it has both a creative and industrial function. The narrative mythos is a key formulaic component because it should be familiar to both creators and audiences of a particular property; as Cawelti explains, "since the pleasure and effectiveness of an individual formulaic work depends on its intensification of a familiar experience, the formula creates its own world with which we become familiar by repetition" (1976, 10). For example, for a long time the 'Star Wars' franchise maintained a mythos grounded in the hero's journey, the duality of good versus evil, and an optimistic faith in *hope* all packaged within the unifying concept of *the Force*. This mythos is important to the objectives and actions of characters in

the storyworld, but also to marketing and popular culture: the phrase 'May the Force be with you' epitomizes the synergy of narrative and marketing through formula since it is entwined with the core narrative mythos of the franchise and is so entrenched in the cultural consciousness as a brand that represents 'Star Wars.'[63] Similarly, in his discussion of narration in the contemporary blockbuster, King describes how "a long-running series can develop a shorthand of its own, based on assumptions of familiarity. This does not constitute an 'evacuation' of narrative, however, and is probably not qualitatively different from the intertextual operations of stardom, genre or auteurism" (2002, 219). This correspondence with other such narrative systems highlights the related importance of familiarity as part of formula, but it also implicates the potential for variation and differentiation. As Jason Mittell notes in dialogue with David Bordwell, "knowing a storyworld actually allows for greater opportunities for excitement and unpredictability" (quoted in Bordwell and Thompson 2011, 16). Similarly, Gomez's advice to studios looking to expand their franchise properties is "know your brand essence (and how to adjust it)" (2017, pt. 2); this means that variation and revision of a franchise formula is possible if creators first have a firm understanding of the mythos.

Formula adjustment can be crucial to the longevity of a franchise property to avoid oversaturated dependence on repetition and familiarity. To continue with 'Star Wars' as an example, Gomez identifies how the franchise underwent "self-disruption" with the installment *Star Wars: The Last Jedi* (2017), since it contradicted the causal logic set up in its hypotext, *The Force Awakens* (2015), subverted the hero's journey, and altered its worldview from one that centralizes collectivism over individualism (2018). This disruption polarized audiences who could sense something had changed in the formula, so much that "by moving from the lone hero to the heroism of the collective, the engine of conflict, the engine of narrative itself in Star Wars has been disrupted — dismantled and transformed" (Gomez 2018, para. 69). Elsewhere I have also reflected on this disruption by considering whether this shift signals a rebooting of the franchise's narrative mythos (Lomax 2018)—I am no longer as convinced that the mythos has been 'rebooted' as much as it has merely been reformulated, but this signals the challenge of balancing the expectations of narrative familiarity with the need to revitalize a franchise formula. As Gomez explains, "in the short-term [the self-disruption strategy] can generate consumer confusion, alienate fans and result

[63] This is demonstrated by the commercial appropriation of the 'Star Wars Day' event that takes place on May the 4th each year; what was initially a grassroots commemorative day led by fans, has now been appropriated by Lucasfilm as an official event based on the phrase 'May the 4th Be With You,' with a trademarked logo.

in sales drops. But in the long-term they can lead to *brand renewal*, the kind of change that engages with and meets the needs and aspirations of far greater numbers" (2018, para. 23; original emphasis). Therefore, perhaps *The Last Jedi* did not destroy its underlying mythos, but reinterpreted its message, whereby "Star Wars is finally practicing what it has always preached. The Force is shown to be with us all" (Gomez 2018, para. 66). This illustrates that a strong narrative mythos is a creative and industrial locus that can support an expansive multiplatform storyworld and a high-concept marketing strategy; moreover, it can provide a sense of stability in the familiar, and an opportunity for renewal to preserve the longevity of an IP object.

Composing Theme

While narrative concept and mythos are crucial components in the composition of formula in blockbuster franchising, the musical score is instrumental in shaping the structure and affective meaning of narrative formula through repetition and variation. Musical score is fundamental in the Hollywood blockbuster and works in various ways across moviemaking styles more broadly; as such, music in the cinema is a field of study with its own rich history and principles (Gorbman 1987; Donnelly 2001; Scheurer 2008; Cooke 2008; Buhler, Neumeyer, and Deemer 2010; Bribitzer-Stull 2015; Coleman and Tillman 2017). Among the various techniques and conventions that constitute musical composition and its history in Hollywood, the thematic score is of particular significance in blockbuster franchising because it involves the repetition of a specific thematic melody or musical sequence—the *leitmotif* (or *leitmotiv*)—that is "consistently associated with a character, a place or an object, a certain situation or a current idea or the plot" (Apel and Daniel 2013, 156) and communicates narrative meaning through variation. There are broad historical associations between the thematic score in cinema and Wagnerian operas such as *Der Ring des Nibelungen* (1848–1974), in which the recurring thematic *motiv* worked to establish connections across the "gigantic dimensions" of epic narratives (Adorno and Eisler 1994, 4). For this reason, Theodore W. Adorno and Hanns Eisler argue that "there is no place for [the leitmotif] in the motion picture," because its traditional "limited dimension does not permit of adequate expansion of the leitmotif" (2). I consider that the transtextual narration of blockbuster franchising counters this limitation to provide the leitmotif with the expansive canvas it requires. In blockbuster franchising, the leitmotif heightens narrative concepts and themes, communicates character development, reinforces structural patterns, and punctuates

connections across serial narratives, whereby "the recurrence, elaboration and transformation of motifs allow musical connections to be drawn over the whole span of a film (or in the case of sequels, over the span of the series)" (Neumeyer and Buhler 2001, 29). For these reasons, the thematic score is an important component in the composition of seriality and narrative formula in blockbuster franchising.

The thematic score is a particularly effective device in the franchise mode because it establishes cohesion across expansive narrative form; in this context, the leitmotif functions "as a building block to give structural unity" (Donnelly 2001, 9) since its pattern of repetition and variation helps to establish a franchise formula in the musical register. As Claudia Gorbman describes, "the thematic score provides a built-in unity of statement and variations, as well as a semiotic subsystem. The repetition, interaction, and variation of musical themes throughout a film contributes much to the clarity of its dramaturgy and to the clarity of its formal structures" (1987, 91). Each leitmotif connects to a character, setting, object, or idea, so that its repetition and variation across the development of a multiplatform storyworld reveals narrative meaning. For example, the "Force Theme" is composed by John Williams for the 'Star Wars' franchise and helps bind the franchise together—just as the Force "binds the Galaxy together" in the storyworld. The "Force Theme" is introduced in *Episode IV—A New Hope* (1977) and is iconic in its associated with the moment the protagonist, Luke Skywalker, looks out to the binary sunset of his Tatooine home (Figure 40) (although it can be heard earlier when Leia Organa gives R2-D2 the Death Star plans). In *The New Yorker*, Alex Ross considers this to be the moment the movie "steps out of the adolescent-adventure arena and into the realm of modern myth" (Ross 2018, para. 9). While the "Force Theme" is seemingly aligned with Luke, it is—as its name suggests—the leitmotif of the Force, which means it relates to the narrative mythos of the franchise, much like the phrase 'May the Force be with you.' The repetition or variation of the "Force Theme" communicates the nature of the connection between the Force and a range of narrative situations, settings, characters, and objects; when the leitmotif plays over a conversation between Luke Skywalker and Rey near the beginning of *The Last Jedi* (2017), its clouded and hesitant quality reveals Luke's troubled relationship with the Force through its variation. Dan Golding suggests that,

> thinking about *Star Wars'* seriality through music is immediately more instructional and nuanced than as merely narrative or images alone. Each new score provides new and imaginative contexts for old themes. . . . It would be difficult to argue that the reuse of William's "force theme" in a new *Star Wars* film was somehow unimaginative in the same way that some have suggested

> the similarities in plot between films is: it is simply part of the *Star Wars* landscape (2019, 122–123)

The "Force Theme" is one of the fundamental components of the 'Star Wars' formula because it transcends media platform, character, story, and history, and it will thus maintain longevity as the recognizable signature theme of the franchise.



Figure 40: The iconic "Force Theme" moment in *A New Hope*

As a crucial component of franchise formula, the thematic score enriches and complicates the experience of the familiar through contrast and recontextualization. Thomas Grey explains that the leitmotif "is not just a musical labeling of people and things (or the verbal labeling of motives); it is also a matter of musical memory, of recalling things dimly remembered and seeing what sense we can make of them in a new context" (2008, 114). This process of meaning making through the recontextualization of the familiar is essentially tied to the mechanism of repetition and variation that drives seriality in the franchise mode. Stan Link describes the thematic score as the "centre from which deviation or innovation must be measured" (2009, 183). It is for this reason I identify the musical articulation of theme through the leitmotif to be one of the primary components of formula and transtextual narration in blockbuster franchising. The thematic score exemplifies the importance of structures of repetition when considering variation: with the leitmotif, variation cannot occur without the recognized and recurrent presence of an idea or concept. As David Neumeyer explains, "the recurrence is necessary: the appearance of a melody sets up a referential possibility, but the recurrence confirms it as a narrative referential function" (1993, para. 17). If the logic of this mechanism is valid in the thematic score, then it can also be such in seriality, genre, and high-concept formula.

The mechanism of repetition and variation that defines the leitmotif corresponds with the formal structure of serial narration, in which difference emerges through familiar context.

As Link says of the leitmotif, "beyond the musical, affective and symbolic features of the original motive, we might naturally look for a deepening of its expression through change" (2009, 183). For example, the "Avengers Theme" is one of the primary musical themes of the 'MCU' franchise; the original leitmotif is composed by Alan Silvestri for *The Avengers* (2012) and its variations and recurrences chart the development of the 'Avengers' narrative across the sequels *Avengers: Age of Ultron* (2015), *Avengers: Infinity War* (2018), and *Avengers: Endgame* (2019). Although Brian Tyler composed the score for *Age of Ultron*, Danny Elfman reworked Silvestri's original theme into "a new theme, which became kind of a hybrid" (quoted in Jagernauth 2015, para. 2). It is unclear why Marvel Studios engaged Elfman to alter Silvestri's original leitmotif, but the result is a variation that reflects hesitancy and restraint in the development of the Avengers team in *Age of Ultron*, with the final bold sustained notes of the original version replaced with additional melodic ornamentation to correspond with the changing dynamic of the Avengers roster. The "hybridity"—as Elfman describes it—of the "Avengers Theme" in *Age of Ultron* is a variation of the leitmotif that works to punctuate the return of the original motif in *Endgame*, as Captain America finally exclaims the battle-cry "Avengers assemble," with Silvestri as composer.[64] While Elfman's variation of the "Avengers Theme" continues the musical and narrative development of the 'MCU,' it also demonstrates that such variation can also be facilitated through the interplay of multiple composers. Elfman reveals that he really enjoys composing for sequels because it allows him to create variations on original themes (Bribitzer-Stull 2015, 269). The "Avengers Theme" thus demonstrates that the development of thematic score can also intersect with the multiple origins of transtextual authorship discussed in chapter 1. While the narrative of the 'MCU' maintains coherence and cohesive seriality across multiple platforms, musical composition does a lot to imbue the 'MCU' formula with variation.

As a centralizing component of the thematic score, the leitmotif is also a branding device that simultaneously articulates narrative theme and provides a marketing hook; through "musical labeling" (Grey 2008, 114), the leitmotif is a crucial component in the high-concept strategy that drives the development of formula in blockbuster franchising. Neumeyer suggests that the recurrence of a leitmotif in relation to a character, place, or object "will tend to recall or 'name' that thing" (1993, sec. 17). This process of musical naming and identification corresponds with the way branding works to represent the IP object as a visual symbol. Adorno and Eisler describe how in cinema the leitmotif functions as a "trademark,"

[64] Variation to the "Avengers Theme" can also be heard in *Infinity War*, which is also composed by Silvestri.

whereby "persons, emotions and symbols can easily be identified" (1994, 2) through the repetition of a musical cue; here Adorno and Eisler seem to use the term 'trademark' in a symbolic not legal sense, but the point also extends to legal meaning since notated musical score can constitute a "sound mark" for trademark registration purposes (WIPO 2009, para. 6). Therefore, like intellectual property, the leitmotif has both symbolic and proprietary dimensions. This means that familiarization with a leitmotif musically extends beyond the parameters of narration and into the popular consciousness as a mark that invokes a particular franchise property. For example, "Hedwig's Theme" is the iconic leitmotif of the 'Wizarding World' franchise, composed by John Williams and owned by Warner-Barham Music; it is most-associated with the character Harry Potter (Daniel Radcliffe) and the Hogwarts setting (Figure 40). However, despite the omission of Harry Potter in the 'Fantastic Beast' series, the leitmotif continues to be heard in the prequels, *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* (2016)—in the trailer, soundtrack, and accompanying the opening Warner Brothers logo—and during the return to Hogwarts in *Fantastic Beasts: The Crimes of Grindelwald* (2018). "Hedwig's Theme" establishes unity between the two primary stories that make up the 'Wizarding World' franchise, even though they represent distinct histories, characters, and narrative events in the storyworld. The use of "Hedwig's Theme" in the relation to *Fantastic Beasts* and its sequel is a branding strategy that establishes an effective (and affective) connection between the stories of Harry Potter and Voldemort (Ralph Fiennes) in the *Harry Potter* series, and Newt Scamander (Eddie Redmayne) and Gellert Grindelwald (Johnny Depp) in the *Fantastic Beasts* series. The branding function of "Hedwig's Theme" was already established in the 'Harry Potter' movie series as the leitmotif recurringly accompanies the Warner Brother logo at the beginning of each installment. Gorbman explains how

> Music normally accompanies opening and end titles of a feature film. As background for openings titles, it defines the genre ["Hedwig's Theme" signals fantasy and adventure]; and it sets a general mood [together with the altered Warner Brothers logo, variations to "Hedwig's Theme" across each the opening signals the shifts in tone and style to come as the characters and plot develop]. Further, it often states one or more themes to be heard later accompanying the story; the distinctness of the distinctness of the melody can cue even the nonmusical listener into this promissory function, setting up expectations of the narrative events follow. (1987, 82)

This indicates that the leitmotif can be a significant force of poetic utility in the blockbuster franchise, as it does a lot of the work to structure, symbolize, and brand formula and genre in

narrative. In the ‘Wizarding World’ franchise, “Hedwig’s Theme” adds a musical dimension to its high-concept marketing strategy and in doing so exemplifies the role that thematic score performs in shaping narrative formula. In the blockbuster franchise, the thematic score is the connective tissue between transtextual narration and narrative form, brand synergy, and marketing.



Figure 41: “Hedwig's Theme” musical notation, copyright of Warner-Barham Music LLC

OO7: The Bondian Formula

The ‘Bond’ franchise is one of the longest running blockbuster franchises in Hollywood history. The property first originated in 1953 with Ian Fleming’s novel *Casino Royale* and was established as a movie series with the adaptation of *Dr. No*, released in 1962 by producers Albert R. Broccoli and Harry Salzman with their production company, Eon Productions (now owned by Barbara Broccoli and Michael G. Wilson).[65] As discussed in chapter 1, ‘Bond’ has a complex ownership and licensing history that determines what narrative elements in Fleming’s novel series can be adapted for cinema, who has legal permission to produce such adaptations, and when such adaptations can be produced. To

[65] The first adaptation of a Bond novel was the segment “Casino Royale” in the live broadcast anthology series, *Climax!* (1954).

recall, the centralized authorship of the 'Bond' property is tied to Fleming and Ian Fleming Publications, with Eon Productions (via holding company Danjaq, LLC) as the canonical producing authority for its movie adaptations. However, in the 'Bond' franchise canonical adaptation has taken shape around legal interventions and licensing rights pertaining to Fleming's original property: until 1999, Columbia Pictures (now owned by Sony Pictures Entertainment) retained the adaptation rights for Fleming's first Bond novel, *Casino Royale* (1953), following its 1967 adaptation of the same name (which meant the adaptation license was off-limits to Eon Productions during this time); moreover, until 2013, adaptation of Fleming's novel *Thunderball* (1961) had been restricted by legal procedure initiated by producer Kevin McClory because Fleming's novel was not an original literary work but an adapted novelization of a screenplay he co-wrote with McClory and Jack Whittingham. After successful litigation that recognized his author rights, McClory produced the movie *Thunderball* (1965) for Eon Productions and his own remake, *Never Say Never Again* (1983), directed by Irvin Kershner and starring Sean Connery. The eventual consolidation of Eon Production's authority over all Fleming's novels enabled the production of *Casino Royale* (2006) and *Spectre* (2015) and thus rebooted the 'Bond' property in the franchise era.[66] For these reasons, the 'Bond' formula is indebted to the complex legal procedures of the franchise across its history, which signals an intersection between the conditions of transtextual authorship and transtextual narration. This demonstrates how formula in blockbuster franchising is both a proprietary and creative phenomenon.

With a history spanning almost seven decades—made up of novels, movies, an animated television series, comic books, video games, and tabletop games—the 'Bond' franchise constitutes an extensive transtextual canvas through which to trace the development of formula in blockbuster franchising. Umberto Eco identifies how Fleming's novels established a foundation for the 'Bond' formula: "in [the novel] *Casino Royale* there are already all the elements for the building of a machine that functions basically on a set of precise units governed by rigorous combinational rules. The presence of those rules explains and determines the success of the '007 saga'" (1979, 146). The narrative 'machine' established by Fleming's novels meant that the movie series would also be amenable to a formulaic narrative structure. The 'Bond' formula even has its own name: the 'Bondian'. Janet Woollacott explains that "Bondian was the phrase used by Broccoli and other members of the production teams to mean 'in the spirit of James Bond'" (2003, 101). This signals how

[66] Subsequent reference to *Casino Royale* refers to the 2006 movie unless indicated otherwise.

the notion of the Bondian is principally an articulation of narrative mythos, which is to say that the unifying thesis that drives the longevity of the 'Bond' franchise is its pattern of repetition and difference; when scholars talk about the "James Bond mythos," they often refer to the unspecific constitution of its formula (Arnett 2009, 2; Weiner, Becker, and Whitfield 2011, xix). While this may seem cyclical and merely treading the water when defining the Bondian mythos, there is something to be said about how integral the mechanism of formula is to the 'Bond' franchise. Tony Bennett and Woollacott identifies the difficulty involved in identifying fixed meaning in 'Bond': "differently constructed at different moments of the Bond phenomenon, 'James Bond' has been a variable and mobile signifier rather than one that can be fixed as unitary and constant in its signifying functions and effects" (1987, 42). A primary reason for this is that its longevity relies on the balance of familiarity and differentiation, which defines the unifying mythos of the 'Bond' franchise. According to Bennett and Woollacott, Bond is a "mythic figure who transcends his own variable incarnations, Bond is always identified with himself but is never quite the same" (274). This is exemplified by the serial pattern of actors who have played the role of James Bond: Sean Connery (1962–1967; 1971; & 1983), David Niven (1967), George Lazenby (1969), Roger Moore (1973–1985), Timothy Dalton (1987 & 1989), Pierce Brosnan (1995–2002), and Daniel Craig (2006–2021). Therefore, the figure of James Bond as at once a repetition and difference: same character, different actor.

As a formula, the Bondian is composed of elements that both creators and audiences must recognize as being distinctively 'Bond'. Woollacott identifies such "Bondian effects" as "the sets, the gadgets, the foreign locations, the threatening character of the villains (which must incorporate both a physical threat and an intellectual threat to the hero), Bond's relationship with the girl in the story, the jokes, and the form of the crucial pre-credits sequence" (2003, 102). Additionally, the 'Bond' franchise is composed of many more transtextual elements that are recognizably 'Bondian': the action spy genre, with its associated gadgets, explosions, and geopolitical settings, as well as its variation through science fiction, fantasy, and comedy genres; the series form, which lacks memory, character development, and a sense of temporality (all with some minor exceptions) so that each installment is a discrete narrative that is connected through intertextuality rather than hypertextuality (as with other long-running franchises, such as 'Star Trek' and 'Star Wars'); the changing of actors in the role of James Bond so the character can potentially continue in perpetuity, with the history of the franchise classified by its 'star eras'—for example, the 'Sean Connery era,' 'Roger Moore era,' or 'Daniel Craig era'; the recurrent catchphrases,

such as “the name is Bond, James Bond” and “I’ll have a martini, shaken not stirred”; the Aston Martin DB5 with license plate BMT 216A; the orchestral “James Bond Theme” composed by Monty Norman, introduced in *Dr. No* (1962) and repeated (with variation) in every installment; the credit sequence accompanied by a new release title song; and—most importantly—the iconic gun barrel sequence that opens (almost) every installment. As such, the ‘Bond’ franchise is an example of what Eco describes as “the work that speaks of itself: not the work that speaks of a genre to which it belongs, but a work that speaks of its own structure, and of the way in which it was made” (1985, 173). While some of these elements, such as the sets, locations, gadgets, and politics, draw more broadly from the spy genre than the ‘Bondian’ distinctly, the organization and pattern of these elements as an architextual system also defines the formula of the ‘Bond’ franchise.

The ‘Bondian’ formula is an effective force of poetic utility because it constitutes generic and proprietary components. James Chapman identifies that the “Bond film-makers have developed their own production ideology based on the notion of what is and what is not ‘Bondian’. This production ideology constitutes a set of expectations about what a Bond movie should be like, what it should contain, how it should be made, and so on” (2008, 22). As signaled above, this production ideology is defined by creative and legal parameters. Woollacott elaborates on the idea of the ‘Bondian’ to say that “to a certain extent the term ‘Bondian’ was used to describe the Bond films, which were seen as a distinctive formula, a specific genre of film” (2003, 101). Scholars often conflate formula and genre when discussing the ‘Bondian’ (Woollacoot 2003; Chapman 2008); for example, Chapman suggests that “James Bond films are genre films of a unique and special kind” because it uses a recognizable formula (2008, 19). However, there is nothing essentially unique about genre in the ‘Bond’ franchise as Chapman suggests, and thus a distinction must be made between the employment of genre in the ‘Bond’ franchise and the ‘Bondian’ formula. The ‘Bond’ franchise is unmistakably of the action spy genre and is often inflected with science fiction, fantasy, and comedy tone and tropes—this level of recognition draws from the broader generic discourses that exist beyond ‘Bond’ as an IP object; by contrast, the ‘Bondian’ formula refers to the creative and proprietary components that constitute the IP object, including high-concept elements of narrative mythos, stardom, source material, music, paratextual branding, and also genre, where the action spy genre is only one element in the ‘Bondian’ formula. For example, the ‘Bond’ adaptation produced by McClory, *Never Say Never Again*, is also a ‘Bond movie’ of the action spy genre, but it is not ‘Bondian’ because it is not a canonical adaptation with legal authority to use the proprietary conventions of its

formula. While *Never Say Never Again* includes familiar Bond effects—Sean Connery, the catchphrase "Bond, James Bond," and the *Thunderball* plot—it excludes trademarked elements, including the gun barrel sequence, the "James Bond Theme," and the opening credit sequence. The absence of these conventions in *Never Say Never Again* reinforces the proprietary dimensions of the 'Bondian' formula that distinguish it from genre.

The *gun barrel sequence* is the most significant component of the 'Bondian' formula. As a convention that frames the opening of (almost) every 'Bond' movie, the gun barrel sequence establishes a paratextual connection between canonical adaptations of Fleming's novels. First introduced with *Dr. No* (Figure 42), the sequence begins with a black screen accompanied by indistinct electronic sounds as white dots move horizontally from left to right across the frame to form part of the credit line "Harry Salzman & Albert R. Broccoli present"; the white dots continue to move across the screen and then open out to reveal the inside of a gun barrel as it attempts to aim at a man—James Bond. At this point the soundscape shifts to resemble a toy box winding up as the aimed gun follows Bond from right to left across the frame. The audience unwittingly adopts the point of view of an assassin as Bond takes aim and shoots. The frame bleeds red from the top of the frame and the only sound heard is the long echo of Bond's gunshot. Then, as the red wash engulfs three-quarters of the frame, the big brass sequence of the "James Bond Theme" plays. The gun barrel then moves erratically across the screen as it returns to a white dot and segues into the credit sequence (another important component of the 'Bondian' formula). This describes the initial sequence as it was created by film title designer Maurice Binder for *Dr. No* and constitutes the basis on which subsequent variations and omissions would be compared.



Figure 42: Gun barrel sequence in *Dr No*

This gun barrel sequence is central to the iconicity of the 'Bond' franchise because it synergizes many of the conventions that constitute the Bondian formula: the iconography of the spy genre, the seriality of Bond actors, and the "James Bond Theme." As a paratext, this sequence is a canonical mark of Eon Production's 'Bond' franchise and is a creative signature of the formula. The most notable omission of the gun barrel sequence in a 'James Bond' movie is in *Never Say Never Again*; instead of the iconic gun barrel sequence, McClory's production opens with the entire frame covered in a repeated pattern of OO7s—just to make it clear that this is also a OO7 movie, or perhaps to represent the notion of a repeated pattern. Therefore, the gun barrel sequence guards the threshold of the 'Bondian' formula and frames the entryway into the 'Bond' franchise. Through this sequence, spectators are introduced to the tone and style of the movie and prepared for the degree of variation that might ensue. Jonathan Gray identifies that "Bond is always open for re-decoding, for any new text or paratext can re-infect our notion of who and what Bond in

general is" (2010, 35). This reinforces Bennett and Woollacott's point that the mythos of 'Bond' is shaped by the variation of signifiers in its formula (1987, 42). As such, the gun barrel sequence has undergone a range of different changes that reflect the different actors in the Bond role, the style and culture of the historical period, and the creators involved: across the twenty-four to-date 'Bond' installments, the "James Bond Theme" has changed in tone, rhythm, timbre, style, and cue; each actor has changed their walking style and gunshot pose; the blood has changed in speed, shape, shade and vibrancy; and the aspect ratio has changed depending on the cinematography of the respective production. Table 2 demonstrates how the gun barrel sequence exemplifies the 'Bondian' mechanism as a pattern of repetition with variation; the juxtaposition of one frame of every gun barrel sequence to-date draws attention to the negotiation of repetition and change across the 'Bond' franchise. Although difficult to represent fully in single images, it should be evident that every sequence is slightly different: while the first three installments duplicate the same sequence (performed by stuntperson Bob Simmons, not Connery[67]), all other sequences vary in musical cue and style, speed of the blood red wash down the screen, and whether it segues directly into the credit sequence or the first scene of the movie. Other variations reflect the style and technology of the decade, budget, production design, and which actor portrays Bond. The most significant variation to the gun barrel sequence is in the 'Daniel Craig era,' whereby in *Casino Royale* (2006) the sequence blurs intertextuality and paratextuality as the gun barrel sequence is integrated into the narrative of the opening scene to punctuate the moment James Bond becomes OO7. In contrast, the sequence is merely an appendage in *Quantum of Solace* (2008) and *Skyfall* (2012), which highlights its return to formula in *Spectre*. This realizes Jim Leach's point that "each Bond film is judged by its variations on a well-established formula that provides its own terms of reference" (2009, 250); the gun barrel sequence is thus crucial to defining the terms of reference for what constitutes the Bondian and its modulation because it is both a device for unifying stability and a locus through which developments can occur.

[67] Connery appears in the gun barrel sequence from *Thunderball*, replacing Simmons.

Sean Connery/George Lazenby



Dr. No (1962)



From Russia with Love (1963)



Goldfinger (1964)



Thunderball (1965)



You Only Live Twice (1967)



On Her Majesty's Secret Service (1969)



Diamonds Are Forever (1971)

Roger Moore/Sean Connery



Live and Let Die (1973)



The Man with the Golden Gun (1974)



The Spy Who Loved Me (1977)



Moonraker (1979)



For Your Eyes Only (1981)



Octopussy (1983)



Never Say Never Again (1983)



A View to a Kill (1985)

Timothy Dalton



The Living Daylights (1987)



License to Kill (1989)

Pierce Brosnan



GoldenEye (1995)



Tomorrow Never Dies (1997)



The World Is Not Enough (1999)



Die Another Day (2002)

Daniel Craig



Casino Royale (2006)



Quantum of Solace (2008)



Skyfall (2012)



Spectre (2015)

Table 2: Gun barrel sequence in every ‘Bond’ installment

The ‘Bond’ franchise demonstrates that variation in a formula is crucial to the longevity of the franchise. With almost twenty-five movie installments to-date,[68] the conventions of the Bondian define the formula of the ‘Bond’ franchise through recurrence, but also difference and omission. This means that changes to a familiar convention, or its entire exclusion, reveal just as much about what constitutes a formula as its repetition. Chapman explains that “the Bond movies have to find the right balance between repetition and variations, between continuity and change, so that they can simultaneously provide the sort of entertainment pattern which audiences expect while at the same time providing new thrills, new set pieces, new variations on old situations” (2008, 271). Many of the Bondian elements I have highlighted here recur across the franchise in different contexts that keep the formula engaging. For example, above I note that seriality in the ‘Bond’ narrative has traditionally lacked character memory; this means that, while a familiar set of characters feature across multiple installments—James Bond, M, Q, Moneypenny, Felix Leiter, and a ‘Blofeld-esque’ villain (represented by a white cat),[69] narrative events that occur in one installment bear little impact on the narrative of subsequent installments. However, there are some compelling exceptions that stand out: the death of Bond’s wife and the narrative continuity emerging across the ‘Danial Craig era’. At the end of *On Her Majesty’s Secret Service* (*OHMSS*) (1969), James Bond (George Lazenby) marries Teresa Draco (Diana Rigg), who is killed on their wedding day in a drive-by shooting orchestrated by Blofeld. Despite the usual lack of narrative memory across the ‘Bond’ franchise, in *For Your Eyes Only* (1981) James Bond (played by Roger Moore) visits Teresa Bond’s grave, which notes her death as 1969 (the year of *OHMSS*’s release) and is inscribed with the text ‘we have all the time in the world’ (Bond’s final words to her as she died and the name of the title song by Louis Armstrong); her death is also implied in multiple subsequent installments, *Live and Let Die* (1973), *The Spy Who Loved Me* (1977), *License to Kill* (1989), *GoldenEye* (1995), and *The World Is Not Enough* (1999). Despite these brief references, the memory of Teresa Bond’s death stands out because it contrasts with the lack of continuity across the rest of the franchise. Any reference to Bond’s deceased wife in the abovementioned installments attracts a rare expression of sorrow in Bond; such moments signal characterization beyond the boundaries of the formula while it works to maintain those same boundaries by reinforcing what repetition and variation looks like in the Bondian formula.

[68] *No Time to Die* (2021) will be the twenty-fifth official installment in the ‘Bond’ franchise and is scheduled for release in October 2021, following multiple delays caused by the pandemic.

[69] The use of Blofeld is often obscured because of the legal dispute with McClory.

Traditionally, 'Bond' installments have adhered to a series form that is made up of discrete narratives that lack continuity, but the seriality of the Bondian formula has transformed during the 'Daniel Craig era' as it works to renew the 'Bond' franchise in the early twenty-first century. The installments that make up the 'Daniel Craig era'—*Casino Royale*, *Quantum of Solace*, *Skyfall*, *Spectre*, and *No Time to Die* (2021)—progressively reformulate Bondian narration towards more complex hypertextual seriality: from discrete installments that form part of a series, to sequels that bear the memory of previous narrative events. Like in *OHMSS*, *Casino Royale* ends with the death of Bond's lover—in this case, Vesper Lynd (Eva Green); however, unlike the installments that follow *OHMSS*, *Quantum of Solace* is a direct sequel to *Casino Royale*, in which Bond seeks revenge for Vesper's death. *Skyfall* continues to push the boundaries of the Bondian formula by revisiting Bond's childhood home and developing his characterization as an orphan and his relationship with M. Moreover, *Spectre* presents the most significant shift in the seriality of the Bondian formula as it ties the crime organization SPECTRE to the villains of the previous three installments: Mr. White (Jesper Christensen) and Le Chiffre (Mads Mikkelsen) in *Casino Royale*, Dominic Greene (Mathieu Amalric) in *Quantum of Solace*, and Raoul Silva (Javier Bardem) in *Skyfall*. Moreover, *Spectre* reveals that Blofeld, the leader of SPECTRE, is James Bond's foster brother.[70] This degree of interconnection between installments presents a significant variation to the Bondian formula and exemplifies Chapman's point that "on the one hand the narrative formula of the Bond series remains constant . . . On the other hand, however, the Bond series is in a process of constant renewal" (2008, 272). Therefore, while the 'Bond' franchise remains recognizably Bondian, the longevity of its formula is driven by the process of change and development just as much as its repetition of conventions.

The production of *Casino Royale* and *Spectre* marks a significant milestone in the history of the 'Bond' franchise: these installments represent the consolidation of Eon Production's canonical authority of all aspects of the 'Bond' mythos—most notably, his origin as OO7, the iconic villain Blofeld and the SPECTRE crime syndicate. Chapman recognizes the significance of this when he recalls Eon's 2014 announcement that the twenty-fourth 'Bond' installment would be titled *Spectre* because the "word has long been part of the Bond mythology" (2017, 13). As already discussed, the licensing rights associated with *Casino Royale* and *Spectre* were the elusive parts of the incomplete Bondian whole. As such,

[70] This a curious character development since it seems to metatextually relate to the Bond parody series, 'Austin Powers.' The third installment, *Austin Powers in Goldmember* (2002), reveals that the British hero spy, Austin Powers (Mike Myers), and his nemesis, Dr. Evil (Mike Myers), are twin brothers.

the ‘Bond’ franchise had already shaped itself to counteract this deficiency since the development of the Bondian formula is intertwined with its legal and production history—that is to consider whether the Bondian formula would exist as it does today if Eon Productions had the legal authority to adapt Fleming’s *Casino Royale* and *Thunderball* novels at any earlier point in history. While this is a speculative question, it articulates the complexity of poetic utility in franchise mode, whereby formal conventions take shape through legal conditions. The ‘Daniel Craig era’ represents the Bondian in the franchise era of the early twenty-first century and to do this it reconfigures the formula to make way for the inclusion of the previously estranged narrative and proprietary elements related to *Casino Royale* and *Spectre.* As such, multiple scholars have noted how *Casino Royale* works to transform the ‘Bondian’ formula: Chapman describes it as a “revisionist Bond narrative” that “strips the Bond mythology down to its bare essentials [but] still expects the audience to be familiar with aspects of that mythology (2008, 245); similarly, Robert P. Arnett considers that “the producers of *Casino Royale* have ‘sampled’ the transmediated mythos of James Bond and created a film remix: a transformation of the franchise that acknowledges previous iterations while claiming its own autonomy” (2009, 1–2). Arnett’s analysis is particularly compelling because it draws connections between the representation of Bond’s origin in *Casino Royale* and the superhero genre, which works to further contextualize the ‘Bond’ franchise in the franchise era through its generic associations with other popular genres of the franchise mode (2009). As a case study that demonstrates the principles of this chapter, the ‘Bond’ franchise is an exemplar of formula in a long-running blockbuster franchise. The conditions that shape the ‘Bondian’ formula—creative and legal—are instrumental in enabling the future of the ‘Bond’ franchise and ensuring that, as is foretold in the title card that ends almost every ‘Bond’ installment, “James Bond will Return.”

Episode III: Return of the Attraction—Aesthetics and Style in the Franchise Era

Authorship and narration are crucial in the franchise mode, but they do not comprise the entire picture. Blockbuster franchising has an aesthetic dimension that reflects the state of cinema as a developing audiovisual and technological medium in early twenty-first century Hollywood. The aesthetic developments of blockbuster franchising have attracted some scholarly interest (Ndalianis 2004; Rombes 2009; Issacs 2011; Elsaesser 2012), but this topic is still largely underrepresented in scholarship, which often looks past the aesthetic dimensions of blockbuster franchising to focus on its cultural and narrative implications. Nicholas Rombes suggests that "we do not recognise the avant-garde qualities of blockbuster films today because we get caught up in the stories they tell, no matter how worn-out and familiar they may be to us. We are distracted by plot. By the stars. By the music. And so moments of glorious, surreal mayhem come and go, often so fast that their physics-bending glory gets forgotten" (2009, 148). This is even more of the case with blockbuster franchising, whereby judgements are often concerned with the artistic inferiority of cinema driven by intellectual property—to recall Martin Scorsese, blockbuster franchising is apparently "not cinema" but more like a theme part attraction because it lacks the complexity of narrative (Scorsese 2019, paras. 1 & 4). Scorsese is partly correct: blockbuster franchising is an attraction, but this does not mean it is any less "cinema".[71] As André Gaudreault and Tom Gunning have demonstrated through their work on early cinema prior to 1915, cinema was as an attraction before it was employed as a storytelling apparatus (Gaudreault & Gunning [1986] 2006; Gunning 1990]), and so judgements that define cinema based on its narrative alone are incongruous with history. Gunning explains that, in the 'cinema of attractions,' "display dominates over narrative absorption, emphasizing the direct stimulation of shock or surprise at the expense of unfolding a story or creating a diegetic universe" (1990, 59). Blockbuster franchising in the early twenty-first century is of course not early cinema, and the previous two chapters have demonstrated that the creation of a diegetic storyworld is fundamental to the franchise mode. Nonetheless, as Geoff King notes of contemporary blockbuster cinema, "narrative and spectacle can work together in a variety of changing relationships" (2000, 2). Therefore, blockbuster franchising does not function as either a

[71] Chapters 3 and 4 of this thesis demonstrate that Scorsese has also underestimated the potential for depth and complexity in franchise narration.

narrative system or aesthetic attraction exclusively but coalesces the two to form a dialectic between narration and attraction.

Critical to the aesthetic and stylistic dimensions of blockbuster franchising are the principles of audiovisual spectacle, artistic and technological virtuosity, and the cinema as an apparatus of illusion-making. Bruce Isaacs identifies in the blockbuster a "high concept aesthetic" driven by "a performance of spectacle": "the image is always already a technologized object; the image is always already a commoditized object. The image has been built by the high concept filmmaker and, born technologically, must demonstrate the virtuosity of itself and its creator" (2011, 100). This high-concept aesthetic thus articulates the "look" to the "hook" and "book" of the high-concept strategy (Wyatt 1994, 22), whereby in blockbuster franchising image and sound must also work to display the virtuosic spectacle of the IP object. This perhaps corresponds with what Justin Wyatt calls "industrial expressivity" to describe "the strong commercial orientation" of style as a "mark of high concept" (61). Therefore, the image is itself an intellectual property (Mitchell 2005, 85) that stylizes and aestheticizes the IP object. As with the *higher* concept of franchise narration, aesthetics and spectacle constitute the transtextual poetics of the IP object as these qualities work to elevate the intellectual property as the attraction of the franchise mode. As Angela Ndalianis considers of the neo-baroque aesthetic in blockbuster entertainment, "the delight in exhibitionism revealed in displays of technical and artistic virtuosity reflects a desire of the makers to be recognized for taking an entertainment form to new limits" (2004, 25). Therefore, the aesthetics of the franchise mode reflect the audiovisual style of blockbuster moviemaking, but is inflected by transtextual poetics, the primacy of intellectual property, and the multiplatform ecology of total entertainment. This add a further expansive dimension to the conventional Hollywood blockbuster: blockbuster moviemaking was already aesthetically and industrially *big*, but blockbuster franchising is *bigger*.

This final section is concerned with the question of how cinema persists as an attraction in early twenty-first century Hollywood. However, this is not a particularly straightforward exercise because in the franchise era the aesthetic boundaries of cinema are increasingly blurred by the multiplatform logic of total entertainment (Grainge 2008, 175; Elsaesser 2012, 333). Blockbuster franchising is influenced by the aesthetics of the surrounding media (often connected through creative license) such as comic books, television, theme parks, video games, literature, and theatre. As such, media converge, remediate, imitate, and transform because of the dialogism—facilitated by creative licensing and adaptation—that occurs between these platforms; moreover, media also work to retain

distinctiveness within this environment. As Laura Mulvey recognizes, in this context "the specificity of cinema, the relation between its material base and its poetics, dissolves while other relations, intertextual and cross-media, begin to emerge" (2006, 18). In one sense, these intensified interactions between media are a result of industrial synergy, since conglomerate integration puts different goods and services—movies, television, music, toys, information technology—within the same organizational structure; in another sense, the nature of cinematic aesthetics cannot be clearly defined by the function of celluloid or the camera apparatus, since cinema technologies blur the distinction between materiality and the digital. The intensification of creative licensing, adaptation and multiplatform entertainment is thus a product of this context.

The chapters in this section examine what cinema looks and sounds like in the franchise era, with consideration of the transtextual poetics of blockbuster cinema in the franchise mode. Chapter 5, "Transtextual Aesthetics," examines the broader principles of cinema as a medium in the context of a total entertainment ecology, with a focus on the intersection of transmedia and medium specificity, the aesthetics of repetition, and the assemblage of illusions. This chapter considers the overarching concepts that inform and shape the dynamic between media multiplicity and media specificity and will consider what it means to be cinematic in a multiplatform storyworld, with a case study that examines the transtextual aesthetics of the 'Marvel Cinematic Universe' ('MCU'). Chapter 6, "Franchising Style," focuses on the specific stylistic techniques of cinema in the franchise mode, including framing and aspect ratios, mise-en-scène, and editing. This chapter concludes with a case study on the 'Jurassic Park' franchise to illustrate these techniques. The objective of these two chapters is to understand how the norms and conventions of cinematic aesthetics, attraction, and illusionism operate as forces of poetic utility in blockbuster franchising. These chapters argue that aesthetics and style constitute a set of stabilizing norms and conventions that reflect the creative and industrial construction of the 'cinematic' in the franchise mode. It is at this point that my analysis more specifically turns to *cinema* or *blockbuster cinema* to narrow its focus within the franchise mode.

Chapter 5: Transtextual Aesthetics

Hollywood of the early twenty-first century is an expansive total entertainment ecology increasingly shaped by a multiplatform logic. This means there is a proliferation of media—many screen- and sound-based, such as cinema, television, video gaming, social media, and podcasting, as well as performance and themed experiences, including theatre, theme parks, and museums—competing for audience attention through a similar growth in distribution platforms.[72] The expansive scale of blockbuster franchising is especially compatible with this media landscape, creatively and industrially, and it is not difficult to see why the franchise mode—with its principle of multiplatform storyworld design—dominates Hollywood entertainment in the early twenty-first century. Ultimately, the IP object is a centralizing locus of media multiplicity and media convergence—that is, "where old and new media collide" (Jenkins 2006, 2)—simply based on its function as legalized nucleus of creative ideation that can be adapted across media. However, the conditions of this collision of media is not always clear or predictable, whereby "the emergence of new media sets in motion a complicated, unpredictable process in which established and infant systems may co-exist for an extended period or in which older media may develop new functions and find new audiences as the emerging technology begins to occupy the cultural space of its ancestors" (Thorburn and Jenkins 2004, 2).[73] This has led to theorizations of a post-cinema age (Woycicki 2014; Denison and Leyda 2016; Willis 2016; Hagener, Hediger, and Strohmaier 2016), which "is not just *after* cinema, and it is not in every respect 'new.'. . . Instead, it is the collection of media, the mediation of life forms, that 'follows' the broadly cinematic regime of the twentieth century" (Denison and Leyda 2016, 2; original emphasis). Such concerns suggest that cinema is seemingly decentralized in this new media environment. By contrast, I consider the dominance of blockbuster franchising in early twenty-first century entertainment works to reaffirm the centrality of *cinema* in Hollywood, which is most especially signaled by the choice of nomenclature used to designate a multiplatform storyworld such as the 'Marvel *Cinematic* Universe' ('MCU') and is also demonstrated by the studio mergers and acquisitions driven by intellectual properties associated with long-running blockbuster movies, such as Amazon's recent acquisition of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer to gain access to the

[72] This growth is largely driven by entertainment opportunities provided by digital technology, including the Internet, smart phones and handheld devices, streaming video on demand (SVOD), and virtual production.

[73] Some scholars have examined the emergence of digital technology and 'new media' and its impact on traditional media (Fidler 1997; Manovich 2001; Thorburn and Jenkins 2004; Flew 2008).

'Bond' franchise (Lang and Spangler 2021). As discussed in the introduction of this thesis, blockbuster franchising is tied to the history of Hollywood cinema, its aesthetic norms, and industrial procedures. [74] This chapter thus considers how the blockbuster franchise enables the persistence of cinema in early twenty-first century Hollywood.

The intensifying multiplicity of media in the franchise mode facilitates a polycentric logic whereby individual media work in concert within an expansive media ecology. Across this thesis, transtextual poetics has functioned as a framework for making sense of the dynamics of textual multiplicity in the franchise mode, and thus far this has worked to understand how principles of seriality, systemization, polycentricity, and synergy operate at the foundation of authorship and narration in blockbuster franchising. Similarly, the concept of transtextual aesthetics establishes a framework through which to conceptualize the polycentricity of media within the context of an expansive total entertainment ecology. According to Gérard Genette, a "characteristic feature of the artistic realm" is "the endless, multiform relations that connect works with one another—a network whose presence and powerful effects the most naïve student of the arts cannot fail to sense, however dimly" (1999, 180). This thesis has so far established an analytical thread from *transtextual authorship* to *transtextual narration*, and this chapter continues this trajectory with the notion of *transtextual aesthetics*. As with transtextual authorship, which conceptualizes authorship as a polycentric network of creative and industrial forces wherein the singular and multiple work in dialogue, and as transtextual narration accounts for the complex dynamics of difference and repetition in franchise form, transtextual aesthetics is a principle of medium specificity that recontextualizes style and aesthetics as forces of poetic utility in a multiplatform system. That is to say that the specificities of a particular medium—in this case blockbuster cinema and its aesthetics of scale, spectacle, attraction, and illusion—no doubt persist because they serve a vital creative and industrial purpose within the total entertainment ecology of the early twenty-first century. Transtextual aesthetics is a phenomenon of the franchise mode because it recognizes that an effective multiplatform logic is driven by medium specificity.

[74] This is not to say that cinema is an essentialism of the franchise mode. There is no media-based determinant in my definition of the franchise mode and there are examples of franchise properties that are not (yet) realized through blockbuster cinema and represented by other media, such as television, comic books, video games, and novels. Examples of successful franchise properties that are associated with other media include the television property 'Doctor Who,' the comic book and television property 'The Walking Dead,' the literary and television property 'Game of Thrones,' and the video game property 'Assassin's Creed.' I would hesitate to call these blockbuster franchises but they are examples of the franchise mode, nonetheless.

Transtextual aesthetics overarches various ways of thinking about the relations between specific media and aesthetic works, including remediation and intertextuality. Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin describe *remediation* as the "representation of one medium in another" through the double logic of immediacy (erasure of mediality) and hypermediacy (visibility of media through multiplication) (1999, 45). According to Bolter and Grusin, one of the functions of this double logic is a "mediation of mediation," whereby "media need each other in order to function as media at all" (55). As a "defining characteristic of new digital media" (45), remediation is a useful way to understand the relationship between old and new media, but I do not consider such a concept fully accounts for the aesthetic function of specific media in the total entertainment ecology, and in the franchise mode particularly. The concept of *intermediality* gets closer to this concern, since it works to understand the relations *between* individual media, whether based on aesthetics, narrative, or technology. Intermediality acknowledges the aesthetic function of a medium in relation to other media, while preserving some notion of medium distinctiveness or immanence (Gaudreault and Marion 2002; Szczepanik 2002; Rajewsky 2005; Elleström 2010; Pethő 2011; Johansson and Petersson 2018; Bruhn 2018). For André Gaudreault and Philippe Marion, intermediality considers that "a medium's identity is in part composed of permanent features," while "all media are engaged in a process of constant development" (2002, 15). Similarly, Christer Johansson and Sonya Petersson define intermediality as "relations between media conventionally perceived as different" (2018, 1). Based on these definitions, intermediality is a crucial component in transtextual aesthetics because it conceptualizes the relation between multiple media without abandoning media specificity. However, intermediality is itself a heterogenous concept that attracts various conceptual interpretations, which often require qualification (Rajewsky 2005, 45). In its breadth, intermediality "allows for making fundamental distinctions between intra-, inter-, and (ultimately) transmedial phenomena, at the same time representing a transmedially useful category" (46). This means that intermediality is related to a range of different concepts of media multiplicity, such as media convergence, remediation, intertextuality, cross-media, and transmediality. However, Jørgen Bruhn identifies a limitation in intermediality: as a concept based on the relations *between* media, intermediality is concerned most with texts that "move between medialities or cross any mediality borders," rather than the convergences of media "within a single medium or a single artifact" (2018, 14). I share in Bruhn's reservation about intermediality for this same reason; to understand the aesthetic function of media in the franchise mode, it is necessary to account for the ways that a single medium—for example, a blockbuster movie—can exist as

an aesthetic transtext that stands alone as a specific medium and can reflect a bigger multiplatform system. Therefore, transtextual aesthetics can incorporate remediation and intertextuality, but not be fully represented through such concepts.

As an articulation of transtextual poetics, transtexual aesthetics is principally a concept of textual transcendence that draws upon Genette's modes of transcendence in the work of art ([1994] 1997, 163), which extend his project of poetics from narrative to aesthetics. While Genette does not directly consider transtextuality in relation to aesthetics, this work shares the common principle of textual transcendence, which I have discussed at the outset of this thesis.[75] Genette defines the work of art as "an artifact (or human product) with an aesthetic function" (4), which constitutes two primary *modes of existence*: immanence and transcendence. *Immanence* is meant not in terms of aesthetic spiritualism but the properties of a work of art that articulate its existence as such (91)—immanence of this kind is what enables medium specificity; *transcendence* is "something that happens to immanence" and "encompasses all the extremely diverse and by no means mutually exclusive ways a work can obscure or else surpass the relation it maintains with the material or ideal object it basically 'consists in'" (161). Transtextual aesthetics is therefore an articulation of textual transcendence that works as a "compensatory supplement to immanence" (161). This relationship between immanence and transcendence in the work of art effectively accounts for the legacy of aesthetic materiality, convention, and essence that defines the specificity of a medium—in this case I am thinking about cinema particularly—and its capacity to exist in concert with potential transformations, evolution, and interaction across media.

There is a great deal to unpack from Genette's work in this area, but here I focus on his modes of transcendence and the relationship between multiple object/s of immanence in the work of art because they provide tools for understanding the franchise mode as a multiplicity of attractions. While the multiplatform logic of blockbuster franchising complicates the boundaries of medium specificity, the means through which specificity is expressed across the adaptation process is itself a performance of display. For example, the process of adaptation in blockbuster franchising makes an attraction out of the specificities of different aesthetic apparatuses and the capacity to express a "a series of attractions, as a

[75] Genette indirectly acknowledges his previous work on transtextuality when he explains "the author of *Palimpsests* here sets out to broaden his field of inquiry by moving to the (logically) next highest level" (1999, xi); as such, the relationship between Genette's work on transtextuality in narrative and his aesthetics of transcendence charts a similar trajectory intended across this thesis.

succession of astonishing numbers" (Strauven 2006, 17). This is most especially true of adaptations of novels into blockbuster cinema—for example, with 'The Lord of the Rings' and 'Harry Potter—but is a factor in any adaptation process. In this context, textual transcendence is a form of attraction that challenges the perception of aesthetic immanence. Genette identifies three types of transcendence that conceptualize the ways that "'play' of one sort or another springs up between the work and its object of immanence": plurality of immanence, partiality of immanence, and the plural work (161). The *plurality of immanence* (or plural immanence) is when a "work immanates, not in one object . . . but in several nonidentical, concurrent objects" and "the symbolic formula for this mode might be 'n objects of immanence for 1 work'" (162). Genette consider this type includes aesthetic replication, adaptation, revision, and mutation. The *partiality of immanence* (or partial manifestations) "occurs whenever a work is manifested in a fragmentary or indirect manner" and can be represented by the formula "1/n object of immanence for 1 work" (162); this type can include lacunary, quotational, and imitational manifestation—I identify this type of transcendence relates most productively with the concepts of remediation and intertextuality.[76] Finally, the *plural work* is a "plurality of effect" wherein one object of immanence "serves as support for several works" that have a plurality of aesthetic functions and procedures of reception—this mode follows the formula of "n works for 1 object of immanence" (162).[77] These modes of transcendence recognize the potential for multiplicity in both aesthetic immanence and the work of art. I consider the first and the last of these modes to be most useful to this discussion (plural immanence and the plural work) because they account for a dynamic between singularity and multiplicity in the franchise mode.

Whether the textual transcendence of the franchise mode is best understood as plural immanence or a plural work is based on whether the IP object is to be identified as the work of art or as an object of immanence: while plural immanence would recognize the multiplatform array of a franchise as the emanation of the IP object as 'the work,' the concept of the plural work would consider that the IP object is a manifestation of immanence that supports several works (media platforms) with various procedures of reception and functions

[76] This second mode (partial immanence) may prove to be a useful tool for examining the way some mediums adopt aesthetic principles or techniques from other mediums, as when video games employ cinematic cutscenes, when cinema framing is influenced by comic book panels, or sequential narrative across comic book panels employs the continuity editing techniques of cinema.

[77] While there may be some correspondence between Genette's 'plural work' and Umberto Eco's 'open work,' Genette's concept is not tied to notions of audience interpretation or, what Eco describes as the "*theoretical, mental* collaboration of the consumer" (1989, 11; original emphasis).

within the whole. The first mode (plural immanence) best serves the project to be undertaken here because it offers a framework for understanding the polycentricity of media specificity (immanence) within the whole (transcendence); even so, there are aspects of other types of transcendence—particularly the distinct function and reception of plural works—that may be found to be productive and relevant to this project. Genette describes how "transcendence through plurality of immanence is thus ultimately very easy to define—indeed, almost disappointingly so . . . A work with plural immanence does not 'consist' in each of its objects of immanence, but in their totality—a totality whose definition is established, or rather *modulated*, by ordinary usage alone" (1999, 210; original emphasis). This means that each iteration of a work (a text) is both a manifestation of immanence and a transcendent reflection of the whole (a transtext). As a mode of textual transcendence, plural immanence is of poetic utility in the work of art since the specificities of its manifestation and function defines the totality of the work. That is to say that the total work—the IP object—can only be defined through the utility of its plural immanence within a modulating transtextual whole.

Through the concept of transtextual aesthetics, this chapter provides a framework of textual transcendence and polycentricity through which to examine the aesthetic function of individual mediums within an expansive media system.[78] The ideas explored in this chapter provide a basis for the following chapter to examine the aesthetic function of blockbuster cinema within the franchise mode. To do so, this chapter identifies three primary principles of transtextual aesthetics that serves the aesthetic function of blockbuster franchising: transmedia specificity, cinema of repetition, and assembled illusions. Transmedia specificity addresses the relationship between medium specificity and multiplatform storyworlds, with attention to the unique contribution cinema makes to expressing the transtextual aesthetics of the IP object. Moreover, there is compatibility between cinema specificity and the franchise mode, which I consider stems from the properties of "cine-repetitions" (Bellour 1979) that are inherent to the constitution of cinema. Finally, the transtextual aesthetics of blockbuster cinema facilitates a complex assemblage of illusions that synthesizes the materiality of production with the immateriality of audiovisual effects. According to Genette, "arts like music and dance, popular film, cartoons, comic strips, and many others combine, to various degrees, the function of amusement with an aesthetic purpose" (1999, 133). These principles

[78] While this thesis focuses specifically on the aesthetics of blockbuster cinema, it would be also possible to speak of the transtextual aesthetics of a television series, video game, comic book, novel, or short story within this context.

address different components of transtextual aesthetics in blockbuster franchising to understand the aesthetic function and poetic utility of cinema in the franchise mode.

.

Transmedia Specificity

Transmedia specificity is a principle of transtextual aesthetics and a phenomenon of the franchise mode; as an interface of transmedia and medium specificity, transmedia specificity is a state of multiplicity in a single medium that exists within the multiplatform system of total entertainment. The concept of medium specificity posits that every artform can be individuated by the distinctive properties and qualities of its medium. This is to say that blockbuster cinema has specific features and function that distinguish it from, for example, novels, video games, television, comic books, or even other modes of cinema. Noël Carroll explains that "the medium-specificity thesis has two components. One component is the idea that there is something that each medium does best—alternatively, best of everything else a given medium does or best in comparison with other media" (1985a, 12). However, Carroll is critical of media specificity based on its implications of essentialism, purism, excellence, and exceptionalism; he therefore expresses concern that medium specificity implies that an artist should express themselves through an artform within the boundaries of what the respective medium does best (7). Even so, the specificity of cinema has preoccupied film theorists since the early twentieth century, with the aim to validate a burgeoning medium as a legitimate artform (Epstein [1921] 1977 & [1924] 1981; Arnheim [1932] 1957; Bazin [1967] 2005; Perkins 1972; Bellour [1979] 2001; Abel 1988). However, the distinctiveness of cinema seems no longer of central import in this so-called 'post-cinema age' of media convergence, remediation, and intermediality. In this context, "the notions of media and mediality are at a chiasm as the medium of moving images itself vanishes against the background of an aesthetic of presence and revelation" (Gaafar and Schult 2014, 17). Similarly, in their work on remediation and media hybridization, Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin identify that "our culture wants both to multiply its media and to erase all traces of mediation: ideally, it wants to erase its media in the very act of multiplying them" (1999, 5). This is reinforced by Henry Jenkins, who recalls that one of the central claims of his work on media convergence is that "it no longer made sense to think in terms of the specificity of individual media, because we were entering a world where every story, image, sound, brand, etc. would flow across every available media platform" (2017a, 3). Such statements describe a media environment wherein the multiplatform logic obscures notions of aesthetic and stylistic

distinctiveness to support media convergence, transmedia storytelling, and other cross-media adaptation practices.

The intersection of transmedia and media specificity may seem contradictory, but there is an unrealized overlap. So far in this thesis I have traversed the topic of transmedia storytelling and considered its implications in the franchise mode where relevant.[79] While transmedia storytelling primarily functions as a narrative devise, its theoretical grounding offers more to consider in relation to medium specificity and transtextual aesthetics. Media multiplicity is a principal tenet of transmedia storytelling; however, despite Jenkins' suggestion that medium specificity no longer makes sense in this context, as referenced above, a critical component of his definition of transmedia storytelling points to a continuing need to understand the distinctiveness of individual media within this context: "a transmedia story unfolds across multiple media platforms, with each new text making a *distinctive and valuable contribution to the whole*. In the ideal form of transmedia storytelling, *each medium does what it does best*" (2006, 95; my emphasis). Media specificity is therefore of some relevance to understanding and applying transmedia storytelling as a narrative strategy because it involves each medium doing what it does best, incidentally recalling both Carroll's definition of medium specificity (Carroll 1985a, 12) and Jenkins' definition of transmedia storytelling (Jenkins 2006, 95). This correlation may be a simplification, but it seeks to sidestep the critical baggage that comes with medium specificity, as highlighted by Carroll (1985a & 2008), to consider the poetic utility of medium specificity in the franchise mode and the total entertainment ecology more broadly. Jeff Gomez uses the analogy of a symphony to exemplify this point, whereby instruments and musicians contribute individual sounds and qualities that have aesthetic function independently and in concert with other instruments (van Gool 2010, para. 10). This dynamic between the singular and the multiple in transmedia storytelling corresponds with the Japanese media mix (an antecedent relation of transmedia in Western entertainment), in which medium specificity is just as important as the connections between media (Steinberg 2012, xi). Marc Steinberg considers how anime characters are represented across the media mix, where "each manifestation of the character foregrounds the distinct properties of the medium in question" (2012, 84); it is this dynamic between specificity and multiplicity that Steinberg suggests "gave rise to the phenomenon of media synergy" (2012, 85). In this context, medium specificity is not a principle of media

[79] To recall, transmedia storytelling is a narrative strategy whereby stories are dispersed systematically across multiple media platforms; moreover, while all transmedia storytelling involves franchising, not all franchising employs transmedia storytelling as a narrative approach (Johnson 2014; Gomez 2019a).

exclusivity, separation, or purity (Gaudreault and Marion 2002, 15), but it is about identifying the aesthetic functions that specific media platforms contribute within the whole; such awareness is crucial to successful storyworld design that draws upon the strengths (and limitations) of each medium—and associated audience segments—to realize different aspects of a franchise storyworld.

Despite a movement away from medium specificity in screen and media studies, there remains some scholars who consider there to be various analytical opportunities for further understanding the aesthetic function of individual mediums within the context of media convergence and multiplicity. For example, D.N. Rodowick thinks that Carroll throws away all the good with the bad when he criticizes medium specificity so harshly and thus reinforces the importance of medium specificity in relation to media multiplicity and hybridity: "one may want to preserve an idea of medium flexible enough to comprehend how media may individuate themselves while nonetheless preserving certain properties in common" and that "what makes a hybrid cannot be understood if the individual properties being combined cannot be distinguished" (2007, 41). Marsha Kinder advances debates around transmedia to call for attention towards medium specificity: "given that new media forms are replacing each other so rapidly—usually before we have time to fully explore their social and aesthetic potential—perhaps a discourse on medium specificity might enable us to recuperate unique possibilities that otherwise would have been lost" (2014, 3). Moreover, Steven Maras and David Sutton identify some overlap between medium specificity and remediation; they consider that, despite its focus on media hybridization, the double logic of immediacy and hypermediacy that drives remediation resembles the contradiction between excellence and differentiation at work in medium specificity: "the contradiction is that this drive to excellence is driven by a desire for differentiation, or specificity, and thus the multiplication of forms" (2000, 107). As such, Maras and Sutton observe that "the classical desire for medium specificity gives expression to a logic of remediation" (107). Ironically, much of the retreat from media specificity is aligned with the emergence of digital and new media and the aim to understand its specificity; Lev Manovich draws attention to this when he recognizes that, despite criticism towards medium specificity, there is an expectation that computer-based media should have its own specific aesthetic identity: "in short, we want them to be new media specific" (2001, 237). This suggests that a double standard underpins the aesthetic function of media convergence: while new media welcomingly provides new and distinctive aesthetic possibilities, older media are treated to post-media discourses; nonetheless, this

signals that medium specificity remains relevant to conceptualizations of media convergence and the total entertainment ecology.

The principle of medium specificity within the context of media multiplicity is not only relevant to transmedia storytelling, or the Japanese media mix, but should underpin cross-media adaptation practice more broadly. As such, some stories are better represented by a novel (depth of character and point of view, plot development, extensive length, and prose style), a comic book (text and image, sequential storytelling, and panel form), a television series (long-form seriality, character development, small screen, and home exhibition), a video game (interactivity and play, open-world storytelling and exploration, and virtuality), a theme park (scripted space and physical immersivity), or blockbuster cinema (high-concept, attraction event, spectacle, big screen, high production quality, and global exhibition).[80] Some of these distinctions relate more to form and narration than aesthetics, but we can see how the intersection between these dimensions remains crucial to questions of medium specificity and transmedia storytelling. To exemplify the function of medium specificity in adaptation, consider the cross-media representation of the Balrog, named Durin's Bane, from 'The Lord of the Rings' franchise in the novel *The Fellowship of the Ring: Being the First Part of the Lord of the Rings* (Tolkien 2007 [1954], 429) (Figure 43), the animated movie *The Lord of the Rings* (1978) (Figure 44), the blockbuster movie *Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring* (2001) (Figure 45), and the MMORPG video game *Lord of the Rings Online* (2007) (Figure 46). Each of these adaptations contribute different qualities and features to the transtextual aesthetics of the 'Lord of the Rings' franchise. Put simply, the novel uses literary prose to describe the character's emotional and physical experience of facing Durin's Bane in Khazad-dûm, while the two movie adaptations realize the audiovisuality of this moment with different styles suited to the mode of presentation (animation and blockbuster), and in the computer game Durin's Bane is encountered in a multiplayer online space—in other computer games, players must defeat other Balrogs to pass a level.

[80] These are just some of the most obvious features that differentiate these media and serve different narrative functions, but this account does not intend to simplify the aesthetic specificity of these media platforms.

It came to the edge of the fire and the light faded as if a cloud had bent over it. Then with a rush it leaped across the fissure. The flames roared up to greet it, and wreathed about it; and a black smoke swirled in the air. Its streaming mane kindled, and blazed behind it. In its right hand was a blade like a stabbing tongue of fire; in its left it held a whip of many thongs.

'Ai! ai!' wailed Legolas. 'A Balrog! A Balrog is come!' Gimli stared with wide eyes. 'Durin's Bane!' he cried, and letting his axe fall he covered his face.

Figure 43: First appearance of Durin's Bane in the novel, *The Fellowship of the Ring* (Tolkien 1945)



Figure 44: Durin's Bane in the animated movie, *The Lord of the Rings*



Figure 45: Durin's Bane in the blockbuster movie, *The Lord of the Rings: Fellowship of the Ring*



Figure 46: Durin's Bane in the computer game, *Lord of the Rings Online*

The distinctions between these media adaptations of Durin's Bane in the 'Lord of the Rings' franchise relate to narrative, aesthetics, interactivity, and audience market; each of these mediums articulate a specific artistic style and provide a different mode of aesthetic engagement with the franchise—otherwise, there would be little creative or economic incentive to produce or consume different adaptations of the IP object. In the case of blockbuster cinema, such an adaptation is a high-risk venture that no amount of pre-sold high-concept narrative familiarity can counter if a production does not provide audiences with a significant aesthetic experience; as such, medium specificity can be a form of differentiation in the high-concept franchise formula. Moreover, this signals how medium specificity is a principle of reception as much as it is about poetic construction. This is particularly true for blockbuster cinema, since its big scale presentation facilitates a form of contemporary attractions-cinema, which—like early cinema's cinema of attractions—"directly solicits spectator attention, inciting visual curiosity, and supplying pleasure through an exciting spectacle" (Gunning 1990, 58). Figure 45 illustrates a moment of exciting spectacle as Durin's Bane is realized through cinematic scale and the attraction of illusion to solicit audience attention and direct it toward the virtuosic audiovisual image. Therefore, to speak of the medium specificity of blockbuster cinema in the franchise mode is not about media purity or essentialism, but poetic utility.

Transmedia specificity is a principle of transtextual aesthetics that recognizes the polycentric logic of media differentiation. While the term 'transtextual specificity' may be just as fitting, 'transmedia specificity' serves multiple functions: it maintains reference to the presence of the 'medium', it articulates a process of modification of the medium through transcendence and multiplicity (expressed by the trans- prefix and pluralized 'media'), and it situates specificity within a multiplatform context. In transmedia specificity, *transmedia* is something that happens to *specificity*. This relates to Genette's explication of transcendence as "something that happens to immanence" ([1994] 1997, 161); as such, Genette explains, transcendence depends on the existence of immanence, but not vice versa (161). A similar dynamic underpins the use of the term transmedia: as Jenkins explains, "transmedia is an adjective, not a noun" and "needs to modify something"—it thus "implies a structured or systematic relationship between multiple media platforms and practices" (2017b, 220). This follows that transmedia specificity is a principle of *specificity across media*; nonetheless, unlike with how intermediality privileges the relations between media (Bruhn 2018, 14), transmedia specificity considers the existence of specific transmedial immanences, to recall

Bruhn, "within a single medium or a single artifact" (14). Transmedia specificity is about understanding media specificity within a total entertainment context.

For example, the animated movie *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse* (2018) is lauded for its unique aesthetic that is obviously inspired by the comic book medium, with use of onomatopoeia in screen text, emanata to demote spider-sense, Ben-Day dots, color offsetting, and panel framing (Figures 47–49). Entertainment critic Tracey Brown considers *Spider-Verse* to be "more than a movie" and a "comic book come to life" (2018, para. 3). However, while the animated movie clearly draws influence from an older comic book aesthetic (many of the comic book elements in *Spider-Verse* are anachronistic), this does not make it any less a movie—such a statement seems to imply that both animated cinema and the comic book medium are lacking something that is corrected by this aesthetic hybridity (are comics books lifeless in their own right?). By contrast, Sam Summers contends that "the 'comic book' aesthetic employed by *Spider-Verse*, then, is one drawn from the popular imagining of the medium's unique visual qualities . . . as potent signifiers to achieve a particular cinematic effect: foregrounding its artificiality to highlight its stylistic innovation" (2019, 192). This point identifies how the comic book aesthetic is employed to enhance the already-present cinematic qualities of the animation style. The panel-like framing seen in Figure 48 and the depiction of sound through screen text in Figure 49 might be obviously inspired by a comic book aesthetic, but they are stylized through motion across the frame—the fact that the motion cannot be captured in the stills provided below reinforces that this is indeed cinema, not a comic book 'come to life.' Summers notes that this practice demonstrates Bolter and Grusin's notion of hypermediacy because it draws attention to mediation (1999, 192), but it also reinforces the aesthetic specificities associated with the comic book medium and animated cinema—I am unconvinced that we could even talk about the presence of a 'comic book aesthetic' in an animated movie without medium specificity. As an example of transmedia specificity, *Spider-Verse* demonstrates how aesthetic transcendence (beyond the singular work) modifies aesthetic immanence (specificity within with singular work). Transmedia specificity follows a polycentric logic because it recognizes the total entertainment landscape as a multiplicity of medium centers working in dialogue.



Figure 47: Shattered glass in motion in *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse*



Figure 48: Emulating movement with comic book panels in *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse*



Figure 49: Using text on screen to represent sound in *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse*

Transmedia specificity is not exclusive to the franchise mode, but as a principle of transtextual aesthetics it is implicit in the adaptation of an IP object across media. Even though Hollywood is increasingly shaped by a total entertainment ecology—whereby, to recall, "a specific film is both central and only one element among others" (Elsaesser 2012, 333)—media remains relatively segregated by production procedures, protocols, and cultures; as *The Economist* reports, movie and television production are two separate businesses even though studios are increasingly involved in both (2013 para. 4). Similarly, Gomez explains that producing transmedia franchises involves an awareness of the different production processes across media platforms (2019a, quest. 16). G.R.R. Martin, author of the novel series *A Song of Fire and Ice* (1996–), has revealed that there was intention to end the *Game of Thrones* (2011–2019) television series with a movie trilogy but apparently this was thwarted because its production network, HBO, are "not in the cinema business" (Katz 2020,

para. 6). Therefore, with the different procedures, protocols, and cultures that shape movie and television production, there must also be some awareness of the aesthetic specificities produced by and in the context of those procedures.[81] In blockbuster franchising, the property-unit system centers around the interests of the IP object, but this does not mean that it seamlessly integrates its production processes across the boundaries of media production. For these reasons, transmedia specificity articulates a more nuanced expression of medium singularity and centralized production within a total entertainment ecology.

The media system of the early twenty-first century has developed a level of complexity that requires an awareness of transmedia specificity. Despite his criticisms towards medium specificity, Carroll recognizes that the value of medium specificity can be tested through the question of why we have diverse mediums in the first place and how these mediums function as a media system. In answering this question, he suggests that medium specificity only has value when mediums are in close competition with each other (1985a, 7). As Carroll explains, "in the days when [medium specificity] arguments raged, theater and film could be thought of as directly competing for the same audience. They were locked in economic conflict as well as aesthetic struggle" (1988, 85). Writing in the late-1980s, Carroll identified that this competition and battle for the same audience was no longer an issue, stating that artistic mediums are only "honorifically refer[ed] to as a *system*" but that they would be better understood as a *collection*: he says, "we have no need for the specificity thesis, for the question it answers —"Why is there a system of different arts?"—is really not an admissible question at all" (88). It is curious that Carroll would suggest that there is no system of mediums in the years he was writing, since Kinder wrote about transmedia supersystems of the 1980s only a few years later in 1991 in the book *Playing with Power*, which I have referenced above in multiple chapters. Nonetheless, surely the question of medium specificity and media systems is admissible today in the era of total entertainment, media convergence, industrial conglomeration and synergy, and blockbuster franchising. Based on Carroll's criterion for evaluating the value medium specificity, I consider it to be not only relevant but of more value than ever as a method for understanding the transtextual aesthetics of total entertainment in the early twenty-first century. Perhaps the most important point to take away in relation to the transmedia specificity of blockbuster cinema in the franchise mode is that no matter how much a movie may be perceived to be 'like a comic

[81] Denise Mann examines the negative impact of transmedia franchising on the television writer's room and "the heightened demands placed on television writer-producers who, albeit well paid for their efforts, have been handed greater responsibility for steering massive, global, corporate TV empires" (2009, 99–100).

book' (Brown 2018) or a theme park attraction (Scorsese 2019), it is still immanently a work of cinema. The next two sections will examine how the medium of cinema persists in the franchise mode through repetition and illusionism.

Cinema of Repetitions

Blockbuster franchising is a cinema of repetitions. The dynamic between repetition and variation in the franchise mode has already been identified in this thesis in relation to authorship and narration—through chapters that have examined origination, production, seriality, and high-concept formula—and here I discuss how this dynamic is also crucial to its aesthetic function. With this point, however, I do not consider repetition to contribute exceptional or distinctive aesthetic qualities in the franchise mode but highlight how it affirms a relationship of poetic utility between cinema and franchising. This section works to counter claims that blockbuster franchising is somehow a less 'cinematic' mode of production because it functions within a multiplatform and total entertainment context, or less 'artistic' because it is driven by repetition. As such, Raymond Bellour identifies repetition to be crucial to the aesthetic composition of cinema and suggests that it "activates the different interwoven levels of experience presiding over the production, the products themselves and the understanding of cinema" (1979, 65). Bellour considers repetition to be a defining component of the immanence of the cinema medium, which relates to the repetition of frames in sequence, shot alternation through repetition, and a "scenography of repetition" that consists of micro-repetitions in the serial repetitions of shots, segments, and fragments, and macro-repetitions pertaining to the paradoxical interaction of progressive and cyclical narrative structures (69–70). These articulations of repetition are intricacies of the cinema apparatus and form the technical tools and mechanisms used to shape aesthetics and form. Omar Calabrese contends that examples of narrative repetition—such as the serial, sequel, and remake—are "born from mechanical repetition and a perfecting of the work process" (1992, 27). This reinforces a connection between transtextual narration and transtextual authorship through repetition. That repetition is to be considered both "the exact opposite of originality and the artistic" (Calabrese 1992, 27) and intrinsic to the artistic mechanisms of the cinematic apparatus is an irony not lost in this discussion; Bellour's treatise on cine-repetitions also incidentally works to uphold the artistic value of repetition in the franchise mode and contemporary entertainment more broadly. This is to say that, if repetition is an immanent component of the cinematic medium, then perhaps its significant role in the

franchise mode requires reappraisal. Here I argue that repetition is a locus through which to understand the precedence of blockbuster franchising as an articulation of cinema before identifying the aesthetic and stylistic norms of the franchise mode in the next chapter.

As a cinema of repetitions, blockbuster franchising puts the cinematic apparatus on display as a performative attraction. Following Bellour, repetition is a critical component of cinema's specificity as a medium and, through its capacity to facilitate varying degrees of variation, it is crucial to how the franchise mode can be a virtuosic attraction. Bellour identifies six types of "cine-repetitions," three external and three internal to the medium of cinema. The external repetitions relate to the production, distribution, and spectatorship and encompass rehearsals, print reproduction for distribution, and spectatorial desire (1979). The internal repetitions, which are of most relevance here, pertain to the repetition of frames per second to convey movement, shot alternations, and multiplicity within the textual system. These internal repetitions relate to "the very body of the film, to its most elementary and paradoxical level: that of the single frame" (66). The cinema is thus a single frame in "an endless repetition, twenty-four times per second" (66). The endless repetition of the single frame is Bellour's first internal cine-repetition and relates to the fundamental illusion of movement through frame rate. This illusion of movement through the mechanism of repetition with miniscule variation underpins the very attraction of cinema as an apparatus based in the illusion of movement. According to Bellour, the internal repetition of the single frame is elementary because its mechanisms are rendered invisible by the speed of projection, which is "designed to mask this mechanical repetition" (66). Figure 50 presents a segment of celluloid from *The Fellowship of the Ring* that demonstrates how at its basis the illusion of movement is depicted through the repetition and difference of frames in series. This filmed sequence depicts 1/6th of a second in the moment Gandalf (Ian McKellen) drives his staff into the ground to channel a spell towards the Balrog, Durin's Bane. Bellour considers this repetition to be paradoxical because the repetition of the single frame is a sequence constituted by "perpetual oscillation, from one frame to another, between a minute or zero difference and a more marked difference" (66). The celluloid strip draws attention to the fact that recorded film is not a single moving picture but a series of multiple single frames in repetition, with minuscule variation. This reveals how the mechanism of repetition and variation that drives the franchise mode is not a quality that challenges its artistry but reflects the fundamental condition of cinema as an attraction based in the virtuosity of cinematographic movement.



Figure 50: Segment of celluloid in *The Fellowship of the Ring*

The cine-repetition of the single frame is of course complicated by the digital transformation of moviemaking and its immanent qualities, including how frame rates convey movement. Consider the below still taken from the digitally captured and projected movie in high frame rate (forty-eight frames per second), *The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug* (2013) (Figure 51): this is not a frame on a celluloid strip, but a fragment of digital motion. If celluloid depicts the illusion of a moving picture through a series of single frames with a synchronized soundtrack, then ultimately digital cinema fulfils the virtuosic aim to capture the flow of movement as a single audiovisual moving image. Mulvey reflects on the implications of the digital still as an aesthetic attraction that possesses the spirit of the celluloid frame:

> Digital technology enables a spectator to still a film in a way that evokes the ghostly presence of the individual celluloid frame. Technically this is an anachronism. It is only due to an imaginative association with film's archaic structure that the materiality of celluloid comes to mind. But the imaginative association can lead to intellectual and aesthetic reverie as the delay in the film's flow acts as a 'conduit', in Kracauer's phrase, that then flows into multiple possible channels from personal memory to textual analysis to historical research, opening up the past for a specifically cinematic excavation. (2006, 26).

This passage is worth referencing in length because it effectively articulates the potential associations between the cine-repetitions of the celluloid frame and signals an opportunity to establish connections between cinema specificity across technologies. As Julie Turnock identifies, "digital technology resembles the frame-by-frame celluloid technology as closely as possible (presumably to fit easily into other practices in the workflow that have relied on the 'frame' as a unit of measure, such as editing and compositing), rather than reimaging how the images might 'flow' from one to another" (2013, 33). Therefore, although digital capture provides no material film strip or tangible trace of its recording, it retains traditional protocols of nomenclature and workflow that points back to the mechanisms of cine-repetition in a celluloid strip.



Figure 51: Hobbits escape in barrels along a flowing river in *The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug*

The persistent nomenclature and structuring of frames and frame rates in digital technology positions the cine-repetition of the single frame as an object to be preserved or indexed through digital capture. While cinema is defined by the indexical trace that is ostensibly lost in digitalization (and supposedly cinema specificity along with it), the cine-repetition of the digital frame is an index of a different kind: the deixis, or a 'pointing.' Mary Ann Doane considers that, as an index important to cinema, "the pointing finger, instantiated in the 'this' of language, incarnated the very ideal of indexicality, its purest form . . . When it appears in writing, it can only refer back, recursively, to previous words in the syntactical chain" (2007, 136). This suggests that digital capture and projection remains an index of cinema as it recursively—that is, as a cine-repetition—points to cinema's mechanical and technical immanence and thus "opening up the past for a specifically cinematic excavation" (Mulvey 2006, 22). The cine-repetition of the single frame persists through innovations that have led to high frame rates, such as forty-eight frames per second employed in production of the 'Lord of the Rings' installment, *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey* (2012), and sixty

frames per second touted for the forthcoming instalment in the 'Avatar' franchise. However, Turnock explains that high frame rate filmmaking is not new or distinctive to digital capture, with Douglas Trumbull having developed the Showcase process in the 1970s–80s that involved recording and projecting 70mm film at sixty frames per second; this means that "a history of high frame rate filmmaking (HFR) and its various uses certainly places its recent revival into a long continuity describing historical aesthetic and marketing strategies" (Turnock 2013, 30). The high frame rate thus intensifies the cine-repetitions of cinematography since it involves more repeated frames in series with less degrees of variation; digital capture and projection provide further flexibility and control of a process that was already internal to cinema specificity.

Bellour's second internal cine-repetition broadens out from the frame in sequence to the shot in alternation; as a device that "pertains to that fundamental form of cinematic language" (1979, 67), shot alternation is unchanged through digital capture and maintains established cinematic codes such as shot-reverse-shot, point-of-view oscillation between subject and object, and the cut from movement to statis across shots. Bellour describes shot alternations as "the return of either one or both terms according to a process of more or less limited expansion: a/b/a', a/b/a'/b'/, and so on" (67). This process of return, Bellour admits, is rarely acknowledged as a repetition, but he suggests that this misidentification fails to recognize shot alternation as a form of serial structuring and "the fundamental condition of textual expansion" (69): it is "a particular repetition, determined by syntagmatic proximity [and] the serialisation of its elements into strings" (68). This perhaps articulates the foundational structure of transtextual poetics, across the dimensions of authorship, narration, and aesthetics, as a syntagma formed through the tension between difference and equivalence. This sets up "a unique order of repetition, which structures the textual expansion though the interaction of forms" (Bellour 1979, 68). Cine-repetition is therefore a fundamental component of transtextual aesthetics as it works to enable the expansion or extension of textuality from within its aesthetic immanency and through interaction across various forms of textual sequence. This has compelling implications for the interplay of serial narration and cine-repetitions in blockbuster franchising. For example, Figure 52 illustrates a shot alternation sequence from *An Unexpected Journey*: a point-of-view and shot-reverse-shot exchange. This is a prequel set before *The Fellowship of the Ring* but produced after *The Lord of the Rings: Return of the King* (2003). The first shot in this sequence depicts an older Bilbo Baggins (Ian Holm) smoking pipe-weed during a narrative moment already depicted in *The Fellowship of the Ring* (Gandalf's arrival in Hobbiton before Bilbo's birthday party). The

second shot depicts his point-of-view of the smoke ring he just blew (this shot also serves a paratextual function as the movie title momentarily appears in the ring). The third shot 'returns' to Bilbo (Martin Freeman) still smoking, only now he is younger and set within the historical presence of the prequel. This shot alternation sequence establishes the analeptic temporality of this installment. As Bellour signals of the shot alternation, this example does not seem like repetition proper because it returns to an almost entirely alternative shot (depicting two separate moments of story history), but it does form a syntagmatic sequence across franchise installments that works to facilitate transtextual expansion through cine-repetition. The dynamic between repetition and variation is not only relevant to narrative form but constitutes a fundamental mechanism of transtextual aesthetics through cine-repetition.



Figure 52: A shot alternation sequence in *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey*

This textual expansion through shot alternation is further enriched in Bellour's third cine-repetition, what he calls textual repetition. According to Bellour, textual repetition is a process of *mise-en-abyme* or a "scenography of repetition" with a "striking ability to produce the effect of volume" (1979, 69). What seems to be repeated in this system are the components that constitute the cinematic world of the text: "a narrative segment, a gesture, a sound, a frame, a colour, an exchange of sentences, a decor, an action, a camera movement, or any of them together" (69). This is to recognize that the aesthetic construction of a

cinematic world is fundamentally an articulation of elements in repetition and variation: a narrative event, a lighting scheme, an editing pattern, a soundscape, the sound and rhythm of a voice, or a furnished production design. Essentially, this third internal cine-repetition relates to the multilayered construction of a cinematic text through image composition, visual compositing, and sound design. This cinematic assemblage constitutes the aesthetic dimension of storyworlds as an attraction that showcases the complete performance of the apparatus as a synthesis of the digital and material. As such, this cine-repetition traverses the technical mechanisms of both celluloid recording and digital capture and is even further enriched by digital advancements that intensify the complexities and multiplicities of composition through the layering of live action, animation, practical effects, computer-generated imagery, virtual production, visual effects, and digital sound. Bellour's internal cine-repetitions chart a trajectory of cinema immanence and attraction from the frame to the shot sequence, to the filmic system, which is constituted by multiple layers and elements that add to cinematic volume. In the next section I expand on the complexities of cinematic compositing and layering that contribute to the transtextual aesthetics of blockbuster franchising.

Assembled Illusions

Cinema is a phenomenon of assembled illusions. That is to say that it is constituted by multiple elements—such as image, sound, text, performance, design, narrative, spectacle, and technology—that combine to produce illusions. W.J.T Mitchell identifies cinema to be "not just a ratio of sight and sound, but of images and words and of other differentiable parameters such as speech, music, and noise" (2015, 193). Nonetheless, the aesthetic integrity of these elements is not contingent on their cinematic assemblage, but each component is also drawn from other illusion-making mixed media systems (Mitchell 2015, 192): whether it is the speech of performance, the music of a symphony, or the text of a novel. Manovich explains that "although computer multimedia became commonplace only around 1990, filmmakers had been combining moving images, sound, and text (whether the intertitles of the silent era or the title sequences of the later period) for a whole century. Cinema was thus the original modern 'multimedia'" (2001, 50–51). This interaction of multimedia elements is crucial to the way transmedia specificity works as a principle of aesthetic immanence and transcendence in the multi-platform system of the franchise mode because, as Mitchell asserts, although all media are mixed media "they are not all mixed in the same way, with the

same proportion of elements" (2015, 129). It is this specific mixture of multimedia elements of cinema that is further activated as an articulation of transtextual aesthetics in blockbuster franchising, whereby the terms of assemblage are multiplied through seriality and the tools of illusion-making are advanced by innovations in digital technology and aesthetic convergences across multiple media platforms. Mulvey recognizes such convergences also reflect the state of cinema at the turn of the century: "while the coincidence between the cinema's centenary and the arrival of digital technology created an opposition between the old and the new, the convergence of the two media translated their literal chronological relation into a more complex dialectic" (2006, 22). I consider this dialectic between old and new cinema technology and aesthetics—and between moments in cinema history—is central to the assembled illusions of blockbuster cinema in the early twenty-first century, where "the digital [is] unlike the cinema in its material composition but able to carry the mechanical, celluloid-based moving image into a multi-media future" (22). Blockbuster franchising is thus an exemplar of assembled illusions because it facilitates a multi-level dialectic between the aesthetic functions of serial form, mixed media, and the technological convergence of celluloid-based recording and digital capture. It is not that there is anything particularly exceptional about this practice in blockbuster franchising, but the mode enables this cinematic assemblage to be more overtly realized through creative and economic scale and scope. If cinema is a phenomenon of assembled illusions, as I stated above, then the transtextual aesthetics of blockbuster franchising intensifies and multiplies what are already fundamental tenets of cinema.

Central to the assembled illusions of cinema is defining the object of illusion, which is grounded in questions of realism, fantasy, and the cinema of attractions. As Tom Gunning explains, the cinema of attractions is based on illusion as the common thread that unites the two modes of early cinema: the illusion of realistic movement provided by the *actualities* of Auguste and Louis Lumière, and the magical illusion of fantasy produced by George Méliès (1990, 64). Both these modes represent early cinema's innovations in illusionism in different ways, with the Lumières focused on recording reality (particularly realistic movement, but also everyday life) and Méliès realized the potential of the camera and projector as a technological tool for magical tricks and fantastical amusement. Extending the realist tradition pioneered by the Lumières, André Bazin theorized that the essence of photography and cinema is in its ability to capture reality in its purest and objective state ([1967] 2005, 14); nonetheless, Carroll describes that, while contemporary film theory rejects the literalness

of Bazin's hypothesis, there is now a clearer sense that "film imparts a *realistic effect*" (1985b,79; original emphasis)—thus, a realistic illusion. As Carroll further suggests,

> the arresting thing about movies, *contra* realist theories, is not that they create the illusion of reality, but that they reorganize and construct, through variable framing, actions and events with an economy, legibility, and coherence that are not only automatically available, but which surpass, in terms of their immediately perceptible basic structure, naturally encountered actions and events. Movie actions evince visible order and identity to a degree not found in everyday experience. (1985b, 93)

This is to say that, whether depicting reality or fantasy, the illusion of cinema is in its organized assemblage of aesthetic components that produce a realistic effect. This point is reinforced by Sean Cubitt in his work on 'the cinema effect,' who says that "distinctions between realism and illusion make no sense in an epoch when it was neither the illusion of life nor the illusion of illusion that fascinated but rather the spectacle of their making" (2004, 11). It is thus the poetic construction of the cinema as an illusory apparatus that is at the crux of its attraction and immanence. This leads to the importance of fantasy as a defining principle of cinema—not as a genre, but as a framework for making sense of what remains imminently cinematic, whereby "we might justifiably be tempted to say that any fictional film can be read as fantasy" (Walters 2011, 1). As Katherine Fowkes contends, the history of fantasy in cinema is also intricately connected with the development of cinema itself, whereby "both science fiction and fantasy might be seen as expressions of the birth and evolution of cinema itself" and "if science fiction uses technology to tell stories about technology and science, we might say that fantasy harnesses cinema's ability to create illusions in order to tell stories about illusions themselves" (2010, 17). Similarly, David Butler remembers that "film, by its very nature, is founded on a trick—that of watching flowing continuous movement when in fact we are watching a series of still images flickering past us at 24 frames a second" (2009, 78). These points aptly reinforce Gunning's cinema of attractions as a concept that traverses both the illusion of realistic movement and the illusion of fantastic effects.

Assembled illusions a principle of cinema that is intensified through the transtextual aesthetics of blockbuster franchising and is situated at the interface of attraction and digital innovation. Although Gunning contributes the cinema of attractions as a historically-specific concept that articulates the function and reception of early cinema during its time, there are scholars who continue to make connections between Gunning's conceptualization of cinema as an attraction—either independently or in concert with narrative formation—and

contemporary blockbuster entertainment (Ndalianis 2004, 181; Dulac and Gaudreault 2004, 242–243; Strauven 2004). As the "screen's image strives for complete illusion and visual plentitude" (Manovich 2001, 96), digital technology works towards this plentitude through a virtuosic integration of pro-filmic elements captured by camera during principal production (lighting, performance, dialogue, costume, special effects [SFX], locations), virtual production captured and produced across the production process but persistently associated with post-production (computer-aided design [CAD], computer-generated imagery [CGI], motion capture [mocap] and visual effects [VFX]), sound design and dubbing added in post-production (Foley, automated dialogue replacement [ADR], soundtrack mixing, score), and other technical processes for quality assurance and finishing for exhibition (digital intermediate [DI], color grading, and THX).[82] Using tools and techniques such as compositing, chromakey, and digital matting, these various layers combine to give the illusions of spatial and temporal synchronicity and cohesion in the final cinematic presentation. As Cubitt highlight, "the major advantage of digital editing is that it allows compositing of live-action and digital components, and the mixing, in layers, of cinematographic, bitmapped and vector graphics" (2002, 25). Similarly, Doane describes how "digital imaging allows for the manipulation of intensities, the seamless combination of image fragments from different sources, and invisible constructions or interventions in image formation" (2007, 142). Therefore, as a principle of transtextual aesthetics, digital technology thus intensifies the dimensions of multiplicity within the construction of the audiovisual image.

Sound design and VFX are two components of this multilayered composition that exemplify the practice of assembled illusions in blockbuster franchising, especially the transtextual aesthetics of cinematic storyworld design. Where the "blockbuster effects cinema interweaves the represented frames of computer-generated, filmic, and architectural realities" (Ndalianis 2004, 199), sound design "shrouds the theatre space in a spectacle of movement, music and immersive environments" (Whittington 2009, 560). These elements both have important ties to blockbuster cinema: it is in the blockbuster era that—championed by sound and film editor Walter Murch—the practice of 'sound design' replaced 'sound montage' to account for the "dense layers of sound" incorporated into the 70mm format needed to "create the immersive effect" in *Apocalypse Now* (1979) (2001, 560); similarly, VFX emerges from a

[82] Elsewhere I have examined the temporal distinction between SFX and VFX as practices association with different stages of the production process—principal and post-production respectively—to explore the implications of this distinction for notions of creative value and artistry in VFX (Lomax 2019a).

"new style of blockbuster filmmaking" that "emphasized a sense of immersion and bodily engagement" and was thus "driven by sound and vision" (Turnock 2015, 3). Sound design and VFX are of course both rich objects of study with the potential for a breadth of considerations related to aesthetics, technology, industry, labor, and history; most of these areas are unfortunately beyond the scope of this study, but here I consider the layered composition of sound design and VFX in transtextual aesthetics.[83]

In this thesis so far, the transtextual poetics of blockbuster franchising has been thought of as a textual multiplicity based on the dimension of diachronic breadth facilitated by seriality or multiplatform design, but transtextual aesthetics in the blockbuster franchise is also about the dimensions of synchronous depth since multiplicity also occurs within any frame or shot. Kristen Whissel proposes the notion of a 'cinematic verticality' to understand the aesthetics of contemporary blockbuster cinema, which conceptualizes "the spatial dialectics of contemporary cinema's vertical imagination" (2006, 23). Where widescreen formats of the 1950s emphasized the cinematic spatiality of width and depth, "digital processes are currently giving rise to a new film aesthetic based on height and depth. As a result, verticality is no longer confined to hair-raising stunts and dramatic camera angles but has become a cinematic mode that structures and coordinates setting, action, dialogue, and characterization along radical lines of ascent and descent" (25–26). Allain Daigle builds upon this concept of cinematic verticality to consider the implications for VFX and its relationship to vertical editing practice, whereby "vertical editing, as an alternative classification of visual effects work, suspends and reworks time on the level of a single spatial image. Vertical arrangements of visual fragments per frame, per spatial moment of time, enables new intensities and permutations of visual order from the macro level of the frame to the micro level of the pixel" (2015, 170). Murch predicted this movement to verticality in editing and constructing the image in his reflections on the future of digital editing; he explains how

> picture editors have thought almost exclusively in the horizontal direction: The question to be answered was simply, "What's next?" . . . That's complicated enough—there are a tremendous number of options in the construction of a film. In the future,

[83] Although the industrial organization of VFX is beyond the scope of this study, Dan North, Bob Rehak, and Michael S. Duffy make a point worth noting when he makes a connection between the industrial separateness of visual effects from production—and the resulting fragility of visual effects studios—and the propensity for synergy and creative license in Hollywood of the early twenty-first century. North says, "this industrial crisis is mirrored in debates around blockbuster franchises and their seemingly unavoidable 'transmedia' extensions. Within the world of ramifying tie-ins and product engineering, special effects provide a rhetorical arena for combat between two terms ever more frequently bandied about in public/critical//industry conversation: the distinction between the 'human element' and 'world building'" (2015, 3).

> that number is going to become even more cosmic because film editors will have to start thinking vertically as well, which is to say: "what can I edit *within the frame*?" (Murch 2001, 130; original emphasis).

As Murch further explains, in sound editing verticality has always worked in tandem with horizontal dimensions, whereby "the sound editor naturally moves forward through the film in 'horizontal' time—one sound follows another. But he also has to think vertically, which is to say, 'What sounds are happening at the same time?'" (129–130). This means that the transtextual aesthetics of the image must be understood as a locus of horizontal and vertical dimensions, since sound and vision intersect across levels of space and time in the production process, but which are represented through synchronous coherence in cinematic presentation.

To continue with the example of the 'Lord of the Rings' franchise, Figure 53 is a still taken from a 'VFX Breakdown' reel of *The Fellowship of the Ring* by Weta Digital (2019): this superimposed image demonstrates the compositing of layers of live action principal photography using chromakey, whereby the shot of Gandalf is recorded independently from the shot of Bilbo and assembled in post-production. Similarly, Figure 54 is a series of images taken from a 'VFX Breakdown' reel of the character Gollum (Andy Serkis) in *An Unexpected Journey*, which demonstrates the digital layers that are assembled to create the illusion of the character, and Figure 55 adds a further layer to this composition to highlight the dialectic between the digital character and the human performer, Andy Serkis, through motion capture (Weta Digital 2013). The assemblage of these layers—digital computerization and pro-filmic performance—constitutes an illusion based not on the realism of the digital effect but on the virtuosity of its construction. This example corresponds with North's assessment that

> within every film in which special effects play a significant part lies the theme of illusionism. Whatever other stories they may tell, these films are also about special effects and techniques of visualisation. They are about the relationship between the real and its technological mediation. By compositing pro-filmic (broadly speaking, those which are physically present at the point of principal photography) and synthetic elements (those which are manufactured separately) within the same frame, they construct a spectacular dialectic between them; the effect is characterised not by the absolute undetectability of the mechanisms behind it, but by the interdependence of those elements. (2008, 2)

Although in Figure 54 I set out this example horizontally to demonstrate each layer, the character of Gollum is realized in the composite assemblage of these layers along a vertical axis that merges technologically mediated pro-filmic performance (physical and vocal) with

digital VFX animation. As Murch suggests, in digital editing there is a shared dynamic between vision and sound composition, whereby digital image editing must work along both the horizontal and vertical axis (2001, 129–130). This corresponds with how Michel Chion describes the sound film as a "palimpsest effect," whereby "sound film is partly silent film to which layers of audible and synchronized sound have added—while not preventing the image from continuing to emit its own inaudible sound" (2009, 170 & 171). Moreover, Chion adds, every sound film "carries something of a silent film within" (171). This is especially true with VFX since the digital image is silent cinema waiting to be assembled with layers of sound, including Foley, sound effects, dialogue, and score. Therefore, the illusion of blockbuster cinema is not that a particular storyworld is believed to be 'real' but that a multiplicity of aesthetic and technological elements is believed to be synchronically cohesive. If cinema has always been a locus of assembled illusions, blockbuster franchising of the early twenty-first century multiplies the intensities and dimensions of this assemblage not only along across the serial breadth of multiple textualities but also through its aesthetic depth.



Figure 53: VFX Breakdown: *The Fellowship of the Ring* (Weta Digital 2019)


Figure 54: VFX Breakdown: Gollum in *An Unexpected Journey* (Weta Digital 2013)



Figure 55: Andy Serkis in the role of Gollum using motion capture technology in *An Unexpected Journey* (Weta Digital 2013)

MCU: Assembling a Cinematic Marvel

The 'Marvel Cinematic Universe' ('MCU') franchise exemplifies blockbuster franchising in the early twenty-first century. Conventions that are most associated with the economic and popular success of the 'MCU,' and which have influenced Hollywood in this period, include interconnected serialized narration adapted from its comic book source material and the aesthetic possibilities of its expansive scale shaped by multiplatform design across blockbuster movies (beginning with *Iron Man* [2008]), television series (broadcast on ABC and Freeform and streaming on Netflix, Hulu, and Disney+), short films ('Marvel One-Shots' [2011–2014]), comic book tie-ins (limited series and one-shots published by Marvel Comics), and digital series (YouTube series, *WHIH Newsfront* [2015–2016]). This is in addition to Marvel Studios' industrial identity as an "*organization of storytellers*" (Flanagan, Livingstone, and McKenny 2016, 60; original emphasis) and its 'property-unit' production system (discussed in chapter 2), which have influenced how blockbuster franchise are increasingly produced in Hollywood. Across the franchise era, the 'MCU' has thus emerged as a classical model of the franchise mode in the areas of authorship, production, narration, formula, and aesthetics. While the case studies in this thesis aim to demonstrate the principles and conventions of the franchise mode, rather than focus on the exceptionalism of specific examples, the 'MCU' has a distinction that sets it apart from other IP objects: despite its

multiplatform storyworld, it is formally branded as *cinematic*.[84] Martin Flanagan, Andrew Livingstone, and Mike McKenny consider that "the continued use of the term Marvel Cinematic Universe, as opposed to a Marvel Transmedia Universe, begs an explanation of how the transmedia approach taken by Marvel Studios (MS) can be understood as fully utilizing a range of platforms, generating 'connective tissue' that nevertheless leads back to that central, privileged cinematic hub in the web of content" (2016, 177). There have been some who question whether the 'MCU' exemplifies transmedia storytelling since the early phases of its interconnected narrative were arguably tokenistic and superficial: Matthias Stork considers the MCU to be a "big transmedia entity" but not transmedia storytelling (2014, 87), since it is "primarily a cinema creation, and not a transmedia construction"—it is an "economically inflected trans-film structure" (85). Similarly, Flanagan, Livingstone, and McKenny state that the centralization of cinema in this 'transmedia entity' "shows a certain bias, a hierarchy organized around the cinematic" (2016, 181). There has been much development in the 'MCU' since these assessments, particularly with the launch of the Disney+ streaming platform that has enabled further multiplatform narrative integration across the franchise.[85] The detail of these developments is beyond the scope of this case study since narration is not the central focus in this chapter, but what should be clear is that it is not possible to confine the 'MCU' to a specific media platform despite its 'cinematic' nomenclature—even just on account of the ongoing dynamic at play with its comic book source material. The 'MCU' thus provides a productive case study to exemplify transmedia specificity, cine-repetition, and assembled illusions of transtextual aesthetics in blockbuster franchising since it provokes the question of what it means to be 'cinematic' in a multiplatform franchise.

Within its expansive multiplatform structure, the 'MCU' is a composed of multiple intra-franchise series that focus on individual characters, such as Iron Man, Captain America, Thor, and Hulk, which intersect in the flagship series based on these characters teaming-up as the Avengers in the movies *The Avengers* (2012), *Avengers: Age of Ultron* (2015), *Avengers: Infinity War* (2018), and *Avengers: Endgame* (2019). These 'Avengers' installments form the spine of the 'MCU' both in terms of its serial mechanism and as an industrial strategy; as a highly anticipated event across the first three phases of the 'MCU,' the 'Avengers' series

[84] The name "MCU, Marvel Cinematic Universe" was coined by Marvel Studios President and Chief Creative Officer of Marvel Entertainment Kevin Feige and mentioned publicly in an interview in 2010 (Douglas 2010, question 11).

[85] With series like *WandaVision*, *Falcon and the Winter Soldier*, *Loki*, and *What If?* (All released 2021).

promised the attraction of the Avengers assembling. This attraction is driven by the blockbuster spectacle of an 'Avengers' movie but it is also fueled by the transmedia specificity of the 'MCU' as a cinematic adaptation of comic books published by Marvel Comics. This process of adaptation is thus itself a spectacle and attraction in the 'MCU' that is underscored by the representation of the Avenger's iconic comic book rallying cry, "Avengers assemble!" (Figures 56–58). In Marvel Comics, the "Avengers assemble!" exclamation is more than a catchphrase but is also central to the comic book poetics of Avengers-based comics since it can shape page layout, panel composition and the dynamic between image and text, whether through speech bubble (Figures 56 & 57) or as a sound effect (Figure 58). The rallying cry is thus an important component in the architextual system of the Avengers as a transtextual object associated with Marvel Comics—as discussed in chapter 3, architextuality relates to the network of form, content, and platform that defines the IP object. It is for these reasons that the battle cry was so strongly anticipated in *The Avengers*, especially by its pre-established audience of Marvel Comics readers. Despite the build-up towards the Avengers' cinematic assemblage, it is not until *Endgame* that the cry, "Avengers assemble," is explicitly voiced by Captain America (Chris Evans). However, the rallying exclamation is not absent in the installments that lead up to *Endgame* but is represented through a series of cinematic attractions across *The Avengers* (Battle of New York), *Age of Ultron* (Battle of Sokovia), *Infinity War* and *Endgame* (Battle of Earth). Each of these installments feature key cinematic moments that use dynamic camera movement and framing, faster frame rate, editing, sound, music, and visual effects to assemble the Avengers. This case study focuses on the cinematic representation of the rallying cry "Avengers assemble!" across key moments in *The Avengers*, *Age of Ultron*, and *Endgame* to consider the various ways that the 'MCU' assembles the Avengers through the transmedia specificity of blockbuster cinema.



Figure 56: *Avengers* #16 (1965, 20)



Figure 57: *Avengers* #39 (1967, 20)

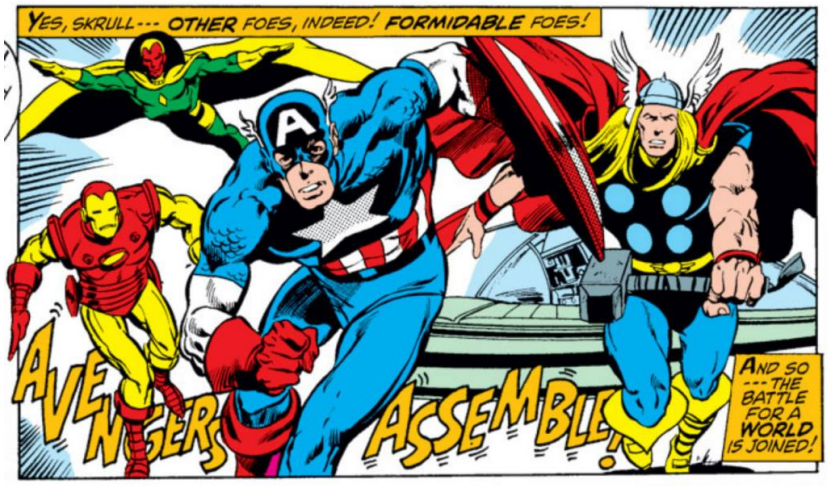


Figure 58: *Avengers* #93 (1972, 26)

The Avengers is pivotal in the creative and industrial history of the 'MCU' and the successful realization of Marvel Studios' ambition towards a team-up event that assembles characters previously established in their own installments, starting with *Iron Man* (2008), and followed by *The Incredible Hulk* (2008), *Iron Man 2* (2010), *Thor* (2011), *Captain America: The First Avenger* (2011). *The Avengers* culminates Phase One of the 'MCU' franchise and its interconnecting serial structure: as Stork describes, "assembled, converged, synergized, *The Avengers* essentially acts as a cinematic display case for Marvel's most valuable character *assets*—at least those they have not licensed out" (Stork 2014, 78). While the attraction of *The Avengers* is as a blockbuster spectacle, it is also an exhibition of Marvel Studios' creative and industrial strategy come to fruition. When asked why the catchphrase "Avengers assemble" is not said in *The Avengers*, Kevin Feige admits "there wasn't a right place for it . . . You do it without saying, it gives more impact" (Woerner 2012, para. 3). This impact is made during the climactic Battle of New York in *The Avengers*, where the team are reunited with the return of Bruce Banner/Hulk (Mark Ruffalo); in a cooperative attack, the Avengers destroy a Chitauri Leviathan, which is one of the many large alien vehicles causing damage across New York City, and thus demonstrate their power as a team. The significance of this power through 'assembling' is punctuated by Alan Silvestri's orchestral "Avengers Theme" as the camera tracks counter-clockwise around the team in an encompassing movement that unifies the group cinematically: beginning with a low-angle close-up of the digitally animated Hulk in the foreground and Iron Man (Robert Downey Jr.) descending behind him in the background, the camera pans down and around to the right to consecutively reveal Hawkeye (Jeremy Renner), Thor (Chris Hemsworth), Black Widow (Scarlett Johansson), Captain America, and a now grounded Iron Man, standing in a circle together

looking out at the surrounding Chitauri. Figure 59 illustrates the final shot of this sequence as the team briefly hold this position like a comic book panel without text—as Feige reflects, there was no reason for Captain America to voice the rallying cry at this point because the team "just assembled" (Woerner 2012, para. 3). Stork identifies this shot to be a

> moment of superhero synergy with a spectacular display of digital convergence, translating the trademark comic book slogan 'Avengers Assemble' to the big screen through visualized iconography, by virtue of an uninterrupted 360-degree CGI-inflected tracking shot . . . The shot proudly proclaims the on-screen existence of *The Avengers*, and Marvel sells this iconography as a special event commodity in cinema history while equally delivering on a promise, a hope, a discursively constructed myth. (2014, 77–78)

Therefore, as a "product shot" (Stork 2014, 80), the cinematic assemblage of the Avengers exemplifies the transtextual aesthetics of the audiovisual image as an IP object of the 'MCU.' It is the assembled illusions of cinema that unites the Avengers: the textual multiplicity of the moving camera, dynamic framing, orchestral score, pro-filmic production, and visual effects assembles the Avengers. For example, Figure 60 is a still taken from a VFX breakdown reel by Industrial Light and Magic (ILM), which demonstrates the layers of pro-filmic and digital elements that are assembled to create this shot. As the first team-up instalment of the franchise, *The Avengers* signals that to be 'cinematic' in the 'MCU' is principally about heightening cinema's immanent assembling capabilities as an aesthetic attraction. This is a practice of transmedia specificity that simultaneously establishes connections between the mediums of comic books and blockbuster cinema and finds poetic utility in the aesthetic differentiation between these platforms.



Figure 59: The Avengers assemble in *The Avengers*



Figure 60: VFX Breakdown: *The Avengers* (1LM 2013)

This cinematic assemblage of the Avengers through camera movement, frame composition, and frame rate is reaffirmed in the sequel, *Avengers: Age of Ultron*. As the penultimate installment of Phase Two, following *Iron Man 2* (2013), *Thor: The Dark World* (2013), *Captain America: The Winter Soldier* (2014), and *Guardians of the Galaxy* (2014), and preceding *Ant-Man* (2015), *Age of Ultron* is grounded in the attraction of the Avengers as an already-assembled team. During the opening sequence—an extended continuous shot that reunites the team using cohesive camera movements across a battle ground—the team assume attack positions in a wide shot as the frame rate slows down the moving bodies travelling across the frame to create a profile image that appears inspired by a comic book panel (Figure 61). As VFX supervisor Chris Townsend describes, "in a single shot we wanted to bring them altogether in a single splash" (quoted in Failes 2015, para. 6). The cine-repetition of the frame is of most impact in this shot; since a higher frame rate per second is required in cinematography to slow down the movement in presentation, this shot involves an intensified multiplicity of frames with a miniscule—almost non-existent—degree of variation across frames per second. To recall Bellour, the speed of presentation (traditionally matched between recording and projection to provide the illusion of realistic movement) works to hide its cinematographic repetition (1979, 66). Therefore, when a higher frame rate is recorded to slow the movement in presentation—as with this shot in *Age of Ultron*—it draws attention to the cinematographic repetition of frames across the sequence. For Bellour, this repetition is instrumental to the aesthetic function of a cinematic work: "through the smallest to the largest differences between photograms, the repetition of the successive frames thus carries the coming into being of the film" (67). It is also of import that this shot is a focal point in the opening sequence of *Age of Ultron* since its "coming into being" is marked by its function as another cinematically expressed "Avengers assemble" moment. As an expression of

transtextual aesthetics, this shot works in dialogue with the above example in *The Avengers* and continues the practice of assembling the Avengers using cinematic techniques. While *The Avengers* focuses on the culminating team-up and thus the build-up toward the climactic "Avengers assemble" moment, *Age of Ultron* assembles the team from its outset.



Figure 61: The Avengers assemble in *Avengers: Age of Ultron*

As in *The Avengers*, *Age of Ultron* features a battle that intensifies the attraction of the Avengers' cinematic team-up. Where the opening long take discussed above assembles the Avengers in a single frame, the climactic Battle of Sokovia uses shot alternations, such as the shot-reverse-shot, point-of-view, and oppositions between slowed and sped-up movement across cuts and within the frame to intensify the cinematic assemblage of the team. The scene begins with low angle medium shot of the android villain, Ultron (James Spader), as he looks down at the Avengers and boasts, "all of you, against all of me. How could you possibly hope to stop me?" During this dialogue, the shot cuts to a point of view high angle shot of the Avengers enclosed under an archway, and back to Ultron (Figure 62). This shot-reverse-shot/point of view alternation establishes the cooperative terms of the battle as Iron Man responds with "like the old man said: together!" The camera then tracks across the rumble to follow the hundreds of Ultron replicas as they approach for the attack, then cuts to an overheard wide shot of the Avengers assembled around the Vibraniam reactor core they need to protect (Figure 63)—this is followed by a sequence of fast cut close-ups of each Avenger in battle. There is no orchestral score to accompany this series of shots and for almost thirty seconds all that can be heard are the diegetic sounds of clanging android metal and superhero power effects to highlight the war setting and reveal the sounds of superheroes together in battle. When the orchestral music eventually chimes in, it begins with rallying percussion

sounds that build into the majestic melody of the track, “Avengers Unite,” composed by Danny Elfman. In effect, this is the “Avengers assemble” moment of *Age of Ultron*: the camera tracks clockwise around and through the battle scene as Figure 64 demonstrates how the moving frame is activated by flying bodies and the colors of superhero costumes and power effect that cinematically emulates a comic book splash page. There is thus transmedia specificity in how this series of shots articulates a specifically cinematic display through a multiplatform aesthetic logic, which situates itself as both an adaptation of its comic book source material and a uniquely cinematic spectacle.



Figure 62: Shot alternation sequence in *Avengers: Age of Ultron*.



Figure 63: Overhead wide shot of the Avengers assembled in *Age of Ultron*.



Figure 64: The Avengers assembled in battle in *Age of Ultron*.

As an aesthetic attraction, this cinematic display is heightened by the alternation between slowed and accelerated movement across shots that depicts the spectacle of battle and emphasizes the unity and power of the assembled team. The alternation between slow and fast movement is most perceptible through the capacity to see the superhuman speed of Pietro Maximoff (Aaron Taylor-Johnson) in slowed motion juxtaposed with the accelerated movement of Vision (Paul Bettany) as he fights Ultron only a couple of shots later (Figure 65). The inability to capture legible still images of these shots in non-standard frame rate—demonstrated by the blurriness of Figure 65—reinforces the alternating dynamics of movement across this sequence. Of note here is that the distinction between fame rates is not overtly obvious across the flow of the sequence, which adds to the expansion of cinematic intensities across this textual sequence. According to Bellour, shot alternation displays a "plurality of combination," which "stems from a unitary and diversified principle" of cine-repetition that integrates aesthetics and narrative (1979, 68). This aptly describes how this battle sequence in *Age of Ultron* cuts across the entire narrative formation of the 'MCU' to call back to the "Avengers assemble" moment in *The Avengers* and motion forward towards subsequent team-up installments. As an expression of transtextual aesthetics, this sequence in *Age of Ultron* articulates a plurality of cinematic dimensions that activates the immanent features of cinema and establishes connections of textual transcendence across 'MCU' installments, beyond the singular aesthetic attraction of one "Avengers assemble" moment. Bellour says that the textual sequencing of shot alternation forms a "fundamental tension between difference and equivalence which regulates the serial structuring," whereby "in most if not all films, this renewed tension does indeed set up a unique order of repetition, which structures the textual expansion through the interaction of forms specifically linked to the

formation of the narrative into image" (68). Here Bellour describes a complex network of cinematic intensities at work in the sequencing of shot alterations—whether as a shot-reverse-shot sequence, a point-of-view, or alteration of movement—where the tension between difference and equivalence across shots is instrumental to the transtextual aesthetics of narrative. In the case of *Age of Ultron* and being cinematic in the 'MCU,' this means that the cine-repetition of frames and shots in sequence forms the basis through which the Avengers assemble across the transtextual narrative structure of the franchise.



Figure 65: Pietro Maximoff's superhuman speed in slow motion (left) and Vision and Ultron in accelerated motion (right) in *Age of Ultron*

In retrospect, the Avengers assembled in battle at the climax of *Age of Ultron* is the last time the Avengers are together in full force again until the climax of *Endgame*; this reaffirms the significance of the team-up sequence discussed above as a focal point in the Avengers' journey, but also develops narrative contrast as the Avengers experience intergroup conflict, disassembling, and loss across Phase Three of the 'MCU'—primarily in the installments of *Captain America: Civil War* (2016) and *Infinity War*—in the lead-up to *Endgame* as the ultimate culminating event of the franchise.[86] *Civil War* divides the Avengers by political lines as the United Nations demand the Avengers be registered and regulated by the Sokovia Accords—a fallout of the damage inflicted during the Battle of Sokovia in *Age of Ultron*; subsequently, the divided Avengers are no match for the supervillain Thanos (Josh Brolin) in *Infinity War*, who wipes out exactly half of all living organisms in the universe, including the Avengers. This journey towards unity in *The Avengers* and *Age of Ultron*, to division in *Civil War*, and then loss and grief following *Infinity War* is central to the significance of the climactic battle in *Endgame*, as all who had been erased by Thanos return for the most anticipated attraction of the 'MCU': the moment Captain America finally voices the rallying cry "Avengers assemble."

[86] Phase Three also includes *Doctor Strange* (2016), *Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2* (2017), *Spider-Man: Homecoming* (2017), *Thor: Ragnarok* (2017), *Black Panther* (2018), *Ant-Man and the Wasp* (2018), and *Captain Marvel* (2019) before *Endgame*, followed by *Spider-Man: Far from Home* (2019) as phase epilogue. The first three phases make up the 'Infinity Saga.'

As the ultimate culmination of twenty-two installments, and especially the four Avengers movies, *Endgame* takes its heroes to the precipice of ultimate defeat before magical portals open and lost heroes return. As the score begins its build up to the familiar "Avengers Theme," an extreme aerial shot travels backwards across the vast setting to display the spectacle of uniting heroes (Figure 66). A medium long-shot then tracks forward to reveal the heroes lined-up for battle as Captain America loudly exclaims "Avengers…!" The camera holds on Captain America in a medium close-up with a shallow depth of field (framing Iron Man, Thor, and Hulk in the background) as he seizes Mjolnir in one hand and his broken shield in the other—the orchestral "Avengers Theme" pauses and through clenched teeth Captain America finishes the catchphrase: "…assemble" (Figure 67). It is compelling that this is not a loud exclamation expected of a battle cry, but rather a steely undertone that works in contrast with the epic scale of the battle scene demonstrated in Figure 66. Chion identifies that "the presence of a human voice instantly sets up a hierarchy of perception" and "structures the sonic space that contains it" (1999, 5). In *Endgame*, Chris Evans' temperate performance of the line "Avengers assemble" in medium close-up restructures the proximity between the epic scale of battle and the personal space of the spectator: this rallying sentiment aims to capture the attention of 'MCU' spectators more than it is directed at diegetic characters. This moment exemplifies Chion's notion of vococentrism, which privileges the sound of the human voice as a sonic attraction of cinematic aesthetics (6). This point attests to the importance that spectators, commentors, and creators have placed on *voicing or hearing the catchphrase* across the history of the 'MCU' and the Avengers installments. The eventual voicing of the catchphrase in *Endgame* structures a transtextual dialogue between similar sequences in *The Avengers* and *Age of Ultron* discussed above, which are aesthetically framed by the lack of anticipated voice.



Figure 66: Heroes return through portals in *Avengers: Endgame*



Figure 67: Captain America voices the iconic rallying cry, "Avenger assemble" in *Endgame*

The impact of this voicing in *Endgame* is driven by more than just the utterance of a familiar comic book catchphrase but represents the culminating effect of transtextual aesthetics in the 'MCU'. This relates to Bellour's conceptualization of textual repetition, which produces the effect of volume in the filmic system (1979, 69). In transtextual aesthetics, this volume is produced by the assemblage of multiple cinematic elements that intersect with the industrial conditions of the IP object and the narrative formations of seriality. As discussed above, *The Avengers* and *Age of Ultron* demonstrate how being cinematic in the 'MCU' is principally driven by cinema's immanent function as a phenomenon of assembled illusions. In these earlier 'MCU' installments, the lack of the vocalized catchphrase focuses attention on the poetic utility of transtextual aesthetics and its assembling function. This is to say, in *The Avengers* and *Age of Ultron,* the Avengers assemble through the transtextual multiplicity of cinema as an aesthetic non-vocalized expression of the Marvel Comics catchphrase. The ultimate vocalization of the Avengers rallying cry fortifies the 'MCU' as a cinematic phenomenon of assembled illusions because, as Chion notes, "the voice is the first of special effects—the one requiring the fewest accessories, the least technology and money" (1999, 169), which is to say that the voice is a principal unit in the cinematic construction of the audiovisual image.

The climactic Battle of Earth in *Endgame* puts this function into ultimate practice as the sequence intensifies the scale and scope of assembled elements—both profilmic and digital—such as the dimensions of space and setting, performers, VFX, music, and voice. This is exemplified by the portals that open to transport the returned heroes from where they were erased in *Infinity War,* including Wakanda, New Asgard, and Titan, where Figure 68 demonstrates the fully rendered space of New Asgard visible through a digital portal (Marvel

Entertainment 2019), and Figure 69 illustrates the digital layers (CG portals and CG characters and environment) that are assembled to construct this portals sequence. This offers a compelling example of Bellour's description of textual repetition as a process of *mise-en-abmye* (an image within an image): "a spectacular construction, constituting the fundamental condition of the textuality of the filmic system" (1979, 69). In *Endgame*, this spectacular construction is an expression of transtextual aesthetics since its poetic utility intersects with the seriality of the 'MCU': this is demonstrated by the culminating build-up towards the voicing of "Avengers assemble" and in how the portals blur the boundaries between installments as the spaces of *Infinity War*, effectively open out into *Endgame* (Figure 66). When Captain America utters "Avengers assemble" in *Endgame*, the heroes flow out from the portals and charge towards the camera before a series of alternating shots set up the opposition between heroes and villains in the vast setting. Then, as the heroes charge toward the frame, the camera begins a panning sequence in medium long shot to profile the assembled heroes in attack (Figure 70), in a shot that calls back to the early moment in *Age of Ultron* (Figure 61). The ultimate vocalization of the rallying cry is therefore a locus of poetic utility for the 'MCU' as an expansive multiplatform franchise, since it creates a transtextual nexus between the comic book source material and blockbuster cinema, and between each installment of the 'MCU'. This attests to how this specific component of the 'MCU' works to frame this case study and explore the potential application of transmedia specificity, cine-repetition, and assembled illusion in blockbuster franchising.



Figure 68: CG rendering of New Asgard through a portal in *Endgame*



Figure 69: CG portal layer (left) and CG characters and environment layer (right) in *Endgame*



Figure 70: Heroes charge in battle in *Endgame*

The ‘MCU’ demonstrates how narration and aesthetics function as intersecting dimensions of transtextual poetic in blockbuster franchising. This chapter has examined that transtextual aesthetics can be conceptualized through a polycentric logic that situates medium specificity within the context of an expansive total entertainment ecology. As an example of transtextual aesthetics in blockbuster franchising, the ‘MCU’ is activated by the multiplicity and intersections of its architextual system; this is to say that being cinematic in the ‘MCU’ is not based on an exceptionalism of cinema within its multiplatform context but is driven by an awareness of cinema’s transtextual poetics and its capacity to remain imminently cinematic within a total entertainment ecology. The interconnecting and serialized fabric of the ‘MCU’ is not only related to narrative formation but is also articulated through its aesthetic construction. As the Avengers assemble at various moments across the franchise—in *The Avengers, Age of Ultron,* and *Endgame*—the ‘MCU’ embraces the attraction of cinema as a phenomenon of assembled illusions. As such, the ‘MCU’ is driven by a system that coalesces the creative and industrial dimensions of the IP object into a transtextual aesthetics of assembled illusions.

Chapter 6: Franchising Style

Blockbuster cinema in the franchise mode is not fundamentally different to other instances of blockbuster and epic moviemaking or classical Hollywood cinema more broadly. As the previous chapter examined, the principles of cine-repetition and assembled illusions are immanent to the aesthetic function and composition of the cinematic medium in both its celluloid and digital forms, and are intensified in the franchise mode through the transtextual poetics of seriality, polycentricity, and total entertainment; to reiterate the point, this intensification can be conceptualized through transtextual aesthetics and its key principle of transmedia specificity, which establishes a framework for making sense of the polycentricity of the singular medium within a multiplatform ecology. Where the previous chapter considered transtextual aesthetics as the broader conceptual terrain that frames the franchise mode and the function of blockbuster cinema, this chapter focuses on the stylistic tendencies of blockbuster cinema in the franchise era, with a focus on the key techniques of framing, mise-en-scène, and editing. David Bordwell defines style in cinema as the "systematic and significant use of techniques of the medium," which "fall into broad domains: *mise en scene* (staging, lighting, performance, and setting); framing, focus, control of color values, and other aspects of cinematography; editing, and sound. Style is, minimally, the texture of the film's images and sounds, the result of choices made by the filmmakers(s) in particular historical circumstances" (1997, 4). This chapter identifies that in blockbuster franchising stylistic techniques remain consistently classical but are inflected by the transtextual poetics of seriality and polycentricity, and the industrial context shaped by synergy, creative licensing, and higher-concept strategy. The aim of this chapter is to identify how inflections in classical style shape blockbuster franchising at the aesthetic and stylistic level to constitute the franchise mode as a group style that reflects blockbuster cinema in the Hollywood franchise era of the early twenty-first century.

The interaction of classical techniques and transtextual poetics in blockbuster franchising reflects a dynamic between stylistic persistence and change that drives Hollywood moviemaking. Bordwell has argued that contemporary Hollywood has remained relatively consistent in its use of classical style through techniques such as framing, composition, and editing (2002, 16). Bordwell explains how "in representing space, time, and narrative relations (such as causal connections and parallels), today's films generally adhere to the principles of classical filmmaking" (16). With this point Bordwell refers to

moviemaking at the turn of the twenty-first century, which he states seems dominated by "endless remakes and sequels" (16); not much changed as Hollywood continued with this trend and moved further into the franchise era. While there has been some stylistic variation, this is best articulated as "an *intensification* of established techniques" and "traditional continuity amped up, raised to a higher pitch of emphasis"—what Bordwell calls "intensified continuity" (16; original emphasis). Conversely, Steven Shaviro argues that in the twenty-first century this *intensified continuity* has been supplanted by *post-continuity* in the context of a post-cinematic logic (2010, 123; 2016, 55).[87] Citing examples such as the 'Transformers' and 'Bourne' franchises, Shaviro asserts that "most high-budget blockbusters today follow this new stylistics," whereby "a preoccupation with immediate effects trumps any concern for broader continuity—whether on an immediate shot-by-shot level, or on that of the overall narrative" (2010, 123). There are always exceptions to the norm (and of course it is the recurrence of exception that influences inflection and change), but I consider that the claim of complete stylistic disruption as a new stylistic regime in contemporary Hollywood is overstated, even misdirected. Bruce Isaacs aptly examines the function of continuity in the 'Transformers' franchise and identifies "sophisticated, complexly designed and deeply affecting mechanisms of spatio-temporal continuity" that represent a "continuity *style*, a way of cutting or framing the image through logical relations" (2015, para. 3; original emphasis). Such relations are the product of a multiplicity of continuities, where "cinema contains *several* continuities rather than a denotative continuity field in its entirety" (para. 7; original emphasis). This suggests that *Transformers* (2007) is not divorced of stylistic continuity but rather multiplies its sphere of perception to include the extensive transtextual array of an IP object: "fragments of images are composited into a broader and richer perceptual field encompassing an array of preceding text and image forms," whereby as spectators who "engage both the physical materiality of a Hasbro Transformer toy and the digital cinematic image, we simply do not require the constant affirmation of continuity style . . . to infer the continuity intrinsic to an experiential field" (para. 14). In franchise style there is thus a multiplication of intensive continuity—or simply, *intensive continuities*. This means that the

[87] The concept of *post-continuity* and its relationship with *post-cinema* as a state of disruption also relates to the idea of *post-classicism* discussed in the introduction to Episode II of this thesis. Citing scholars such as Bordwell (2006) and Bradley Schauer (2007) who argue that such disruption is exaggerated, I identified that franchise narration is not a post-classical deviation. Overall, I do not consider *post*-based discourses to be very productive in this thesis because they obscure the role of poetic utility and historical discursivity in blockbuster franchising.

perception of stylistic continuity is shaped by a broader field of engagement with the IP object and its transtextual iterations.[88]

The intensification and multiplicity of classical convention already features across this thesis in analysis of authorship and intellectual property ownership, narration and formula, and aesthetics; as such, the principle of *same but more* parallels the dynamic of *repetition with variation* as both mechanisms that underpin blockbuster cinema in the franchise era. This intensification is the result of industrial structures, including conglomeration, synergy, convergence, and higher-concept strategies, and is fueled by the formal characteristics of transtextual poetics, such as multiplicity, polycentricity, and repetition. In this context, stylistic intensification is the result of a coalescence of creative and industrial forces and a force of poetic utility: franchise style thus intersects cinematic aesthetics with industrial utility. According to Michael Allen, the blockbuster is used by Hollywood as an "industrial advertisement" to display "new developments in technical and artistic expertise" (2003, 101). This is true of a range of franchise examples: *Star Wars: Episode II—Attack of the Clones* (2002) is the first blockbuster movie to be recorded on high definition 24p digital video; *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey* (2012) is the first blockbuster recorded and presented in forty-eight frames per second; *War for the Planet of the Apes* (2017) is a display of advanced technological and artistic achievements in motion capture; as well as advancements in de-aging technology and digital resurrection.[89] This interaction of artistic and technical excellence corresponds with Gérard Genette's notion of the "artistic function," which is "the locus of interaction between the aesthetic and the technical" (1999, 155–156); furthermore, he explains, *"there exists* an artistic function *whenever* the technical and the aesthetic are conjoined: whenever an activity, and therefore a technical factor, produce an aesthetic effect by influencing aesthetic appreciation" (156; original emphasis). The artistic function is of poetic utility in blockbuster franchising because it inscribes a space for creative and technological innovation across a pre-established

[88] To clarify, the use of the term *continuity* in relation to style refers to the coherence and orientation of space and time in the aesthetic construction of the audiovisual image and is not to be confused with narrative continuity in seriality, even though this section will make some connections between seriality and continuity style.

[89] There are many examples de-aging in blockbuster franchising: Patrick Stewart and Ian McKellen in *X-Men: The Last Stand* (2006); Arnold Schwarzenegger in *Terminator Salvation* (2009) and *Terminator Genisys* (2015); Jeff Bridges in *Tron: Legacy* (2010); Orlando Bloom in *The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug* (2013); Michael Douglas in *Ant-Man* (2015); Carrie Fisher in *Rogue One: A Star Wars Story* (2016); Robert Downey Jr. in *Captain America: Civil War* (2016); and Samuel L. Jackson in *Captain Marvel* (2019). Examples of digital resurrection include Marlon Brandon in *Superman Returns* (2006), Philip Seymour Hoffman in *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 2* (2015), Peter Cushing in *Rogue One*, Paul Walker in *Fast & the Furious 7* (2015), and Fisher in *Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker* (2019).

franchise formula, which adds a further aesthetic and stylistic dimension to the potential for differentiation in higher-concept strategy and repetition in seriality.

The aesthetic and technical development of the cinema medium is fundamental to the question of aesthetic immanence and medium specificity, and thus of its transcendence through transtextual aesthetics and transmedia specificity. This question of what is (and when is) cinema is fundamental to the seminal treatise contributed by André Bazin, who identifies the guiding "myth of total cinema" to be that its original invention and iterative technical innovations across history are driven almost entirely by its capacity to reconstruct "a perfect illusion of the outside world in sound, color, and relief" ([1967] 2005, 20). This *myth*, Bazin explains, indicates that innovations in silent and sound cinema are merely "stages of a technical development that little by little made a reality out of the original 'myth'" (21); it is thus possible to reconsider whether advancements in digital technology (including digital video, sound recording and presentation, computer-generated imagery [CGI], and visual effects [VFX]), indicate a disruption of 'cinema'—as per post-cinema discourses—or reflect a continuing effort to achieve this *myth of total cinema*. As Bazin further suggests, "every new development added to the cinema must, paradoxically, take it nearer and nearer to its origins. In short, cinema has not yet been invented!" (21). While Bazin's treatise is presented as a myth based primarily in the primacy of stylistic realism, it provokes the question of whether total cinema has come and gone, or perhaps it has not yet been achieved; it also signals that there may be scope to rethink what it means to construct a "perfect illusion of the outside world" (20) as an expression of reality and stylistic realism as per Bazin, or as a stylistic articulation of an outside world—*any* illusive world outside our own—depicted through the images and sounds of cinema. This chapter surveys three techniques of cinema—framing, mise-en-scène, and editing—before concluding with a case study of the 'Jurassic Park' franchise. The aim of this chapter is to consider how blockbuster franchising constitutes a group style that is grounded in intensive continuities and the illusion of a world to construct a coherence aesthetic and stylistic dimension in the transtextual poetics of blockbuster franchising.

Framing Franchises

The cinema screen represents a perceptual threshold into another world; the screen is not unlimited but constitutes a frame that delineates the seen and unseen to situate the world of the screen within the experience of our own reality; Lev Manovich aptly describes that "the

frame separates two absolutely different spaces that somehow coexist" (2001, 95). Stanley Cavell describes the screen as a "barrier" that screens the spectator from the world it represents and screens that world from the spectator (1979, 24). While the cinema experience demands complete attention from the spectator and a blocking out of the everyday world to immerse in the representation on screen, the world of the screen is also subject to the physical and perceptual limitations of the frame. Leo Braudy realizes that "too often we accept a film as a window on reality without noticing that the window has been opened in a particular way, to exclude as well as to include" ([1976] 2002, 22). Similarly, Manovich describes the screen as "aggressive" because "it functions to filter, to *screen out*, to take over, rendering nonexistent whatever is outside its frame" (2001, 96; original emphasis). The screen is designed to filter out two worlds: the reality of the spectator that exists in a kind of limbo during screening time and parts of the world represented by the screen beyond the frame. The latter of these two worlds is a fundamental component of the transtextual aesthetics of blockbuster franchising because it gives the perception that there is more to be seen and thus more to be represented on screen; moreover, there is an unwitting interaction of these two worlds—reality and representation beyond the frame—since the perception of more in the represented world bleeds into reality through the deliberate stylistic process of framing. Angela Ndalianis considers how "the visual and sensory games that entertainment technologies articulate flaunt their capacity for making a reality out of an illusion. Increasingly, and through their own media-specific methods, entertainment spectacles strive to obliterate the frame that demarcates a distance between reality and representation" (2004, 207); as such, the cinema "relies on widescreen formats, computer-generated special effects, and surround-sound experiences" (207) to blur these boundaries. Blockbuster cinema is founded in framing techniques based in both image and sound to shape a perception of a world beyond the screen; moreover, blockbuster franchising extends techniques such as aspect ratios, shot scale, and surround sound to intensify this perception of more through its multiplicity of installments and screens. In this section I focus on aspect ratio to consider the role of frame shape.

Framing forms the aesthetic foundation of storyworlds in blockbuster franchising. As a window into another world the screen is both the foundational apparatus of cinema and its limitation. Cavell considers that the limitation of the screen is not based on its edges but is analogous to the capacity of a container—as such, "the screen *is* a frame" and "the frame is the whole field of the screen" (1979, 25). Michel Chion uses the same idea when he defines the frame as "a preexisting container, which was there before the images came on and which

can remain after the images disappear" (1994, 67). The screen thus contains as much of a represented world as its shape can allow, and cinema fills this container with enough to capture attention and omit enough to give the impression of more: the frame is therefore "limited in the smallness of the object it can grasp only by the state of its technology, and in largeness only by the span of the world" (Cavell 1979, 25). As an example, consider the frequently discussed opening shot of *Star Wars: Episode IV—A New Hope* (1977) when the Star Destroyer emerges into the frame from overhead and takes twelve seconds for its entire mass to fully enter the frame from off-screen (Figure 71). This relates to Braudy's two distinctive but interrelated methods for representing the visual world of cinema: in a closed style, the represented world is self-contained and "everything within it has its place in the plot of the film" and within the limitations of the screen ([1976] 2002, 46); in an open style, "the world of the film is a momentary frame around an ongoing reality," whereby "the objects and the characters in the film existed before the camera focused on them and they will exist after the film is over" (46–47). These methods shape the relationship between the frame and the storyworld, in which a closed style tightly contains its represented characters and objects while an open style lets them to move across the frame to inhabit the represented world (50). In a closed style, *A New Hope* may have framed the Star Destroyer in an extreme wide shot to contain its entire form within the frame and a title card to orientate the spectator; instead, it barely skims the top of the frame as it emerges from a world yet unknown—this starship existed before the movie began, it will exist after, and it will be seen again in the interquel installment, *Rogue One: A Star Wars Story* (2016). The franchise mode is not adverse to a close style, as will be seen in the 'Jurassic Park' case study below, but blockbuster franchising is primarily a cinema of open style that is designed to overfill multiple screen containers and blur the threshold between worlds that are seen and unseen.

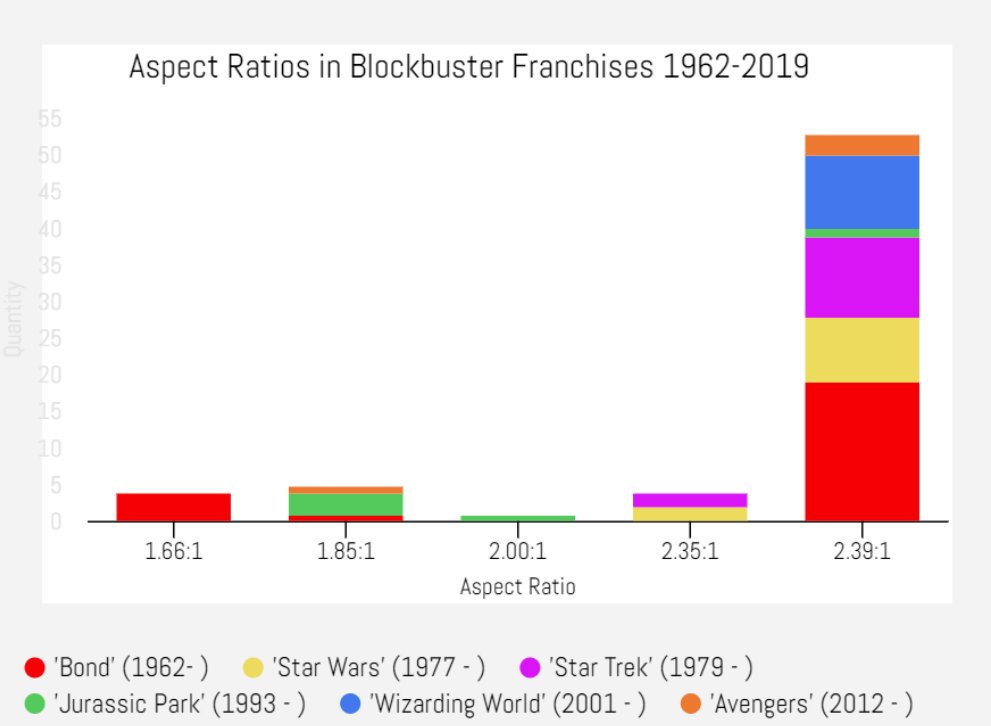


Figure 71: Star Destroyer enters frame from off-screen in *A New Hope*

Blockbuster cinema privileges an aesthetic of epic scale and scope, and blockbuster franchising intensifies this epic aesthetic through the multiplicity of transtextual aesthetics; this is to say that in the franchise mode the cinema screen is never big enough to contain an entire storyworld. When Chion identifies the screen frame as a container, he also considers how—unlike other multimedia screen mediums—the cinema "has just *one place for images*" (1994, 67). Seriality in the franchise mode thus facilitates—or demands—more screens to contain the expansive transtextuality of the IP object, whether in the form and shape of more cinematic installments, or television, video game, comic book panel and other mediums. The screen of blockbuster cinema is a specific shape that distinguishes it from other platforms: it is a rectangular and horizontal widescreen with an aspect ratio of 2.39:1. The history and significance of widescreen moviemaking has been well-documented by scholars who have examined the industrial, technological, and aesthetic transformations of aspect ratio standardization in Hollywood (Bordwell 1985b & 2008, 281–333; Belton 1992; Belton, Hall, and Neale 2010; Cossar 2011). These scholars trace the development from classic ratios, 1.33:1 (4:3) and 1.37:1 (Academy Ratio), to the conventionalization of widescreen formats, such as the standard 1.85:1, and the anamorphic 2.35:1 and 2.39:1, which largely occurred in competitive response to the arrival of television and an industrial need to differentiate the aesthetic experience of cinema from the small screen of the home; this led to experimentation with widescreen technology across the 1950s, with key innovations such as Cinerama (1952), CinemaScope (1953), VistaVision (1954), and Todd-AO (1955) forming the technological foundations of the widescreen format in cinema. As Harper Cosser highlights, "after 1953, *widescreen* implicitly means *cinema*" (2011, 228; original emphasis). This signals how widescreen aspect ratio emerges as a specificity of cinema and a feature that distinguishes it from other screen-based media, namely television.

As a further expansion of widescreen cinema, the anamorphic format most especially characterizes blockbuster cinema as an epic event of gigantic scale. Anamorphic aspect ratios of 2.35:1 and 2.39:1 are not exclusive to blockbusters (although they do demand blockbuster budgets), and blockbusters do not always use these formats (often as a stylistic choice), but the use of a wider screen appeals to the attraction of blockbusters as an audiovisual spectacle of expansive scope. Anamorphic widescreen continues to dominate blockbuster cinema in the franchise era, with 2.39:1 as the standard aspect ratio used for theatrical release. For example, from the franchise properties employed as case studies in this thesis— 'Bond,' 'Star Wars,' 'Star Trek,' 'Jurassic Park,' 'Wizarding World,' and 'Avengers'—the aspect ratio 2.39:1 stands out as the preferred format for blockbuster cinema in the franchise era, with the

franchises ‘Star Wars,’ ‘Star Trek,’ and ‘Wizarding World’ framed in either 2.35:1 or 2.39:1 for all installments (Graph 2). Of this sample of franchise properties, 91.4% of installments released during the franchise era of the early twenty-first century use an anamorphic aspect ratio of 2.35:1 or 2.39:1. However, there are some exceptions: the earlier ‘Bond’ installments *Dr. No* (1962), *From Russia with Love* (1963), *Live and Let Die* (1973), and *Man with the Golden Gun* (1974) use the European widescreen standard of 1.66:1, and *Goldfinger* (1964) is framed in the standard widescreen format of 1.85:1; *Jurassic Park* (1993), *The Lost World: Jurassic Park* (1997), and *Jurassic Park III* (2001) all use 1.85:1 and *Jurassic World* (2015) uses the rarer 2.00:1 (these are deliberate stylistic choices that will be discussed below in the concluding case study); and *The Avengers* (2012) is framed in 1.85:1 as a stylistic choice because, cinematographer Seamus McGarvey explains, director Joss Whedon “wanted to be able to create both vertical and horizontal movement in the frame” and they “had to leave space for the Hulk” who would have been beheaded by a 2.39:1 frame (Witmer 2012, para. 12) (Figure 72). These exceptions demonstrate that variations reflect historical and industrial standards or stylistic decisions, but they also reinforce the norm through differentiation.



Graph 2: Aspect Ratios in blockbuster franchises, 1962–2019.



Figure 72: The Avengers assembled in a 1.85:1 aspect ratio in *The Avengers*

The widescreen format is an important stylistic tool in blockbuster franchising because it enhances the perception of movement through space and enables a panoramic view of a storyworld. The *panorama*—etymologically, the 'view' of 'all'—is "the tendency to see the discrete indiscriminately" (Schivelbusch 1977, 61); moreover, *panoramic perception*, according to Wolfgang Schivelbusch in his work on the industrialization of railroad travel, is a "mobility of vision" whereby "the traveler saw the objects, landscapes, etc. *through* the apparatus which moved him through the world" (64; original emphasis). Scott Bukatman discusses the compatibility between the widescreen format and panoramic perception, whereby "cinema extended panoramic perception through its own emphasis on objects and movement" and highlights how even John Belton has made connections between widescreen cinema and travelogues (1998, 251). Nanna Verhoeff considers how "the panorama is never just a static visual experience, it is an experience based on movement" which is "plural and diverse" (2012, 48). For Verhoeff, panoramic perception is a "visual regime of navigation" wherein "looking is dialogic and self-referential" as the spectator looks for recognizable landmarks based on point of view, travel direction and destination (43). This charts a compelling perspective through which to understand the function of the widescreen format in blockbuster franchising, where the franchise frame enables a visual regime of navigation across the transtextual aesthetics of an IP object.

For example, panoramic movement reoccurs across early 'Harry Potter' installments in the 'Wizarding World' franchise in the journey to Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. Figures 73–75 illustrate how the widescreen frame establishes panoramic continuity across the first three installments, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (2001), *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* (2002), and *Harry Potter and the Prisoner*

of Azkaban (2004). With these shots, the panoramic perspective is not only represented using the anamorphic 2.39:1 aspect ratio, but also through the framing of panoramic travel in the diegesis as Harry and Ron take the Hogwarts Express train—or a flying car across the same train tracks—across the English countryside to travel to school. Here the anamorphic widescreen is reinforced by the mise-en-scène. In this example, the widescreen format navigates changing character and setting dynamics in the storyworld: the dark, intense, and isolating shot of Ron in fear as soul sucking Dementors board the train in *Prisoner of Azkaban* (Figure 75) is heightened by the dialogic relationship across installments, where the widescreen has previously established the vastness of worlds between Harry and Ron when they first meet (Figure 73) and the developing closeness as their journey continues (Figure 74). Moreover, these 'Harry Potter' examples signal how, as a device of panoramic perception, the widescreen frame also facilitates a dynamic and dialogic mise-en-scène that also shapes the visual regime of navigation and enriches the stylistically open world of blockbuster franchising. These shots reinforce the relationship between the widescreen frame and the panoramic perspective as a plural and diverse dynamic that works to visually navigate the storyworld. The transtextual aesthetics of blockbuster franchising is thus also an expression of panoramic perception as the seriality of installments presents an illusion of a continuous scene.



Figure 73: Harry and Ron meet on the Hogwarts Express in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*



Figure 74: Harry and Ron ride a flying car in *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*



Figure 75: Ron looks out of the Hogwarts Express in *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*

Mise-en-World

While framing choices shape the size of the screen used to contain a world through cinema, it is the contents of the frame—the places, bodies, objects, lights, and sounds—in a storyworld that fill the dimensions of the screen. To quote Michel Mourlet in *Cahiers du Cinéma* (1959), when the "rectangle of light presently vibrates before our eyes" it is soon "invaded by gestures and sounds"— "it is on *mise en scene* that our attention is set, which organizes a universe, which covers the screen" (quoted in Hillier 1985, 224). This universe as it is seen and heard does not occur indiscriminately but is staged to construct spatial depth and expanse in tandem with the perception of proximity and containment. The notion of coherence and presence of a world beyond the screen is crucial to staging within the shot or scene. As V.F. Perkins describes, in cinema "the extended world is continually manifest in the ways in which things enter and leave the space of the frame. The fictionality of the world is usually

most marked in the characters' relationship to the off-screen zone which is the space forward of the frame—their unawareness of the apparatus though which their actions and images are relayed" (2005, 24). This means that the characters who occupy such a universe are usually unaware of the cinematic apparatus (there are exceptions), but as performers they are activated by it and staged before it (by the director's design). The diegetic world of the characters is therefore always already off-screen space: "there is always an out-of-sight just as there is always an off-screen. Out of sight cannot be entirely out of mind: we may not know what lies beyond the horizon but we do known that there is a beyond" (22). This 'beyond' is not simply a perception of a world outside the frame, but also refers to the world of the characters that exists at the threshold of the frame, inside the screen.

Mise-en-scène mediates a tension between characters and performers, space and setting, presence and pretense, and scene and world. These dichotomies are crucial to any conceptualization of mise-en-scène and its "art of arranging, choreographing and displaying" (Martin 2014, 15); the process of *putting into the scene* (its popular translation) the various cinematic elements of setting, performers, costume, décor, light, and sound negotiates a dynamic between containment of the frame (its physical and technological limitations) and the perception of openness in the diegetic world. As with how Matthias Stork describes the 'MCU' franchise as "a large-scale mise-en-universe" (2014, 85), mise-en-scène in the franchise mode intensifies the perception of an expansive world beyond and inside the screen to also articulate a mise-en-world—a *putting into the world*—wherein the arrangement of a shot or scene is also the arrangement of a storyworld; this conception of mise-en-world in blockbuster franchising is not a departure from established conceptualizations of mise-en-scène (Perkins 1972 & 2005; Bordwell, Staiger, and Thompson 1985; Gibbs 2002; Martin 2014), but an emphasis on the storyworld as a key component of mise-en-scène that is intensified in the franchise mode. Mise-en-world thus works in tandem with mise-en-scène in the blockbuster franchise, where the cinematic shot is a means to distil the world into a representative unit. As Captain America says in *Avengers: Age of Ultron* (2015), "The world is a big place—let's start making it smaller." Mise-en-world therefore represents how staging within shot must give the impression of continuity, totality, and expansiveness beyond the frame, inside the screen, and across a transtextual poetics. This is to consider how questions of mise-en-scène work in the contexts of a transtextual aesthetics and are implicated in seriality and multiplatform storyworld design.

In privileging the stylistic arrangement of a storyworld in the shot, the mise-en-scène of blockbuster franchising intensifies classical Hollywood style, which focuses on

maintaining coherence, balance, and spatial continuity of a storyworld. Bordwell, Janet Staiger and Kristin Thompson explain that "the classical style makes the sheerly graphic space of the film image a vehicle for narrative" (1985, 50), such that "centering, balancing, frontality, and depth—all these narrational strategies—encourage us to read filmic space as story space" (54). Similarly, Martin affirms this strong integration of style and story in classical mise-en-scène when he identifies that, "in essence, according to classicism, style exists to *serve* the subject or story" (2014, 22; original emphasis). Style in blockbuster franchising maintains an aesthetic of centrality, balance, and the perception of depth to serve the subject or story, but more often privileges setting and spatial order to a degree that was perhaps not so emphasized in classical Hollywood style. Therefore, extreme establishing shots (the *setting shot*) are very common in blockbuster franchising: newly introduced locations often provide an explanatory title card and recurring locations rely on audience recognition of the world and its locations (see Figures 76–83). Moreover, crucial to the centralization of story in classical style is the perception of a stable and coherent fictional world with "systematically ordered thematic development" (Martin 2014, 33). Similarly, the mise-en-world of blockbuster franchising continues to serve narrative as per classical style but also privileges the higher-order components of franchise narration and formula, such as concept, theme, and mythos, as discussed in chapters 3 and 4. Blockbuster franchises frequently use wide shots that stage opponents on either extreme of the widescreen frame, which opens the setting, centralizes the environment by decentering the characters, and uses the widescreen format to mediate thematic conflict through setting. I call this a *conflict shot* and it is commonly used in franchises to represent a catalyst or climactic moment in the transtextual narration of the storyworld (Figures 84–89). Therefore, stylistic causality and function in blockbuster franchising works not only in service of the story that unfolds in a specific installment, but often reflects the broader architextual system at work across a franchise—as Martin puts it, "style is what *articulates*, *modulates* and *develops* a thematic structure/pattern" (2014, 24; original emphasis), and so it follows that franchise style reflects the storyworld mythos of the IP object in tandem with the specific story at play in an installment.



Figure 76: Establishing shot of Hobbiton in *The Fellowship of the Ring*



Figure 77: Establishing shot of Hogwarts in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*



Figure 78: Establishing shot of Knowhere in *Guardians of the Galaxy*



Figure 79: Establishing shot of The Triskelion in *Captain America: The Winter Soldier*



Figure 80: Establishing shot of the New Avengers Facility in *Avengers: Age of Ultron*



Figure 81: Establishing shot of Hogwarts in *Fantastic Beasts: The Crimes of Grindelwald*



Figure 82: Establishing shot of Wakanda in *Avengers: Infinity War*



Figure 83: Establishing shot of Mustafar in *Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker*



Figure 84: Conflict shot in *Revenge of the Sith*



Figure 85: Conflict shot in *Casino Royale*



Figure 86: Conflict shot in *Star Trek*



Figure 87: Conflict shot in *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 2*



Figure 88: Conflict shot in *Captain America: Civil War*



Figure 89: Conflict shot in *Star Wars: The Last Jedi*

The poetic utility of mise-en-scène in blockbuster franchising is twofold: it serves the story being told within the coherent bounds of a single installment as per classical style, but it also serves the higher-concept mechanism of the IP object. For example, the 'Bond' installment *Casino Royale* (2006) features a poker game of approximately twenty-five minutes that "plays as a masterful microcosm of the movie," with its own narrative structure, action-packed intermissions, and character dynamics between James Bond (Daniel Craig) and the antagonist, Le Chiffre (Mads Mikkelsen) (Kring-Schreifels 2020, para. 6). The mise-en-scène of this narrative event reflects a classical style as it adheres to the tenets of balance, frontality, centrality, and depth to present a coherence of space and orientate the spectator in the setting: as the camera briefly pans around the table to the right, the spectator is effectively situated in the scene as an observer (Figures 90–92), while the quick push-in shot towards CIA agent Felix Leiter (Jeffrey Wright) at the head of the poker table reinforces the center of the action and directs attention towards Leiter to signal him as a potential person of interest (Figure 93). These long shots also maintain depth of field to depict both spatial proximity and presence of other characters, British treasury agent Vesper Lynd (Eva Green) and Secret Intelligence Agent René Mathis (Giancarlo Giannini), situated within the gaps and openings of the space (Figures 91 & 93). The frontality of each shot is juxtaposed with the depth of field to give the perception of a closely arranged space, where the distance between members of the table and those observing from the perimeter appears relatively proximate.



Figure 90: A high angle long shot centered on the poker table in *Casino Royale*



Figure 91: Right angle long shot centered on Le Chiffre in *Casino Royale*



Figure 92: Left angle long shot centered on Bond in *Casino Royale*



Figure 93: Push in tracking shot centered on Leiter in *Casino Royale*

The use of sound in this scene represents depth and distance in the setting, where characters whisper to each other within what seems like close proximity to other characters. In Figure 94, Vesper enters the room to greet Bond with a kiss and in a whisper he reminds her that she was meant to enter from the front entrance so everyone could see her—this is a curious comment that draws attention to her staged movements within the scene, while the whisper seems loud enough for the audience to hear from a distance across the table, where Le Chiffre sits. The audience is left to trust that this comment in unintelligible by others around the table. In Figure 95, Mathis explains Bond's gameplay to Vesper (and the audience), drawing attention to the high stakes of the game. While the scene is underpinned by a soft tense score that fills the relatively quiet scene, these whispers are clear and comprehensible by the audience, which implies that perhaps the space is not as close and intimate as the mise-en-scène suggests. This seems to exemplify what Chion calls the "audiovisual scene," where "the scenic space has boundaries [because] it is structured by the edges of the visual frame" (1994, 68) and so sound perspective works to perceive depth and distance based on the arrangement of the scene (71). Martin calls this "sonic space," which refers to how "sound influences or shapes our apprehension of pictorial space" and how the fusion of image and sound can create "often unreal or hallucinatory spaces" (Martin 2014, 111). The arrangement of sonic space is reinforced in this scene through medium close-ups and medium shots to depict whispered dialogue, which contain the sound by implying spatial distance from others around the table. Conversely, Figure 96 presents a long shot of Bond as

he sits alone at the empty poker table, with Vesper and Mathis in view in the background, and despite the emptiness of the table it is one of the noisiest moments of the entire poker sequence: sounds of chattering conversation can be heard from around the space as if to surround Bond with taunts that draw attention to his insecure ego. This poker game exemplifies the well-crafted mise-en-scène of *Casino Royale*, where setting, shot scale and sound work in concert to create a microcosm of a world in a scene.



Figure 94: Medium close-up of Vesper whispering to Bond in *Casino Royale*

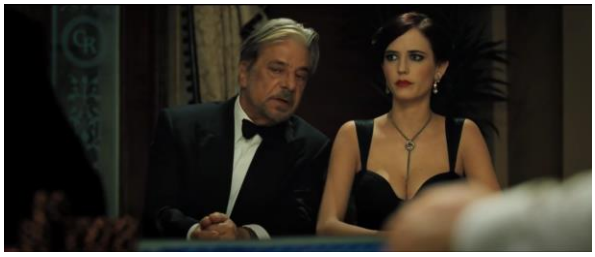


Figure 95: Medium shot of Mathis whispering to Vesper in *Casino Royale*



Figure 96: Long shot of Bond seated alone at the poker table in *Casino Royale*

This poker game in *Casino Royale* is crucial to how this installment functions as Bond's 'origin story' as a new OO7 agent; the mise-en-scène of this scene thus also orientates Bond in his own new world as he meets Leiter, struggles with his ego, and invents his own martini recipe (all familiar characteristics of the Bondian formula). The mise-en-scène of this poker game therefore occupies a threshold between the diegesis of this specific installment (as a prequel-esque reboot, OO7 origin story, and Daniel Craig's first foray as Bond) and the spectator's familiarity with the mise-en-*world* of the casino setting across the 'Bond' franchise. Bond first introduces himself as "Bond, James Bond" while lighting a cigarette in a medium close-up while playing a game of Baccarat in *Dr No* (1962) (Figure

97)—his identity as the Bond character and the formation of the Bondian formula is defined through this medium close-up encased by cigarette smoke and the European widescreen that reveals slightly more torso than the American widescreen standard. The casino setting recurs across the 'Bond' franchise with a consistently familiar mise-en-scène of Bond in long and medium close-ups seated at a Baccarat table and surrounded by visual and sonic patterns: black and white tuxedos and bowties, the torsos of well-dressed casino patrons visible in the background of medium close-ups, casino décor (particularly the frilly lampshade often visible at the top of frame in long shot), clear and direct dialogue delivered in shot reverse-shot sequences that match the rhythm of gameplay, and the sounds of background chatter create the sonic setting of the casino that surrounds Bond as the center of attention. Figures 97–102 illustrate these patterns and variations across the 'Bond' franchise to provide a sense of how the mise-en-scène of the poker scene in *Casino Royale* also functions within the familiar mise-en-world of the Bondian formula: where the mise-en-scène of the poker scene creates spatial depth and serves the narrative development of the single installment, it also adds depth and variation to the representation of setting in the 'Bond' franchise. This is a kind of depth and enrichment of setting that is achieved through the aesthetic connections that occur across the expanding multiplicity of transtextual poetics in blockbuster franchising. Bordwell considers the ways that the spectator perceives depth in a flat screen and notes how "pictorial codes function to help efface the image surface and push us toward reading the picture as an imaginary space, a scenography" (Bordwell 1977, 19). The mise-en-world of blockbuster franchising functions at the interface of setting and cinematic space to arrange a scenography of visual and sonic cues that shape the cinematic style of a blockbuster franchise. While there are many more elements of mise-en-scène in blockbuster franchising worth paying close attention to, such as production design and the staging of performance, it is the stylistic norms of screen space that are of most import to the principle of mise-en-world in blockbuster franchising. The 'Bond' franchise is one example of how mise-en-world exists as a dimension of mise-en-scène that accounts for the stylistic norms of a storyworld that work in concert with narrative formula.



Figure 97: Bond (Sean Connery) in medium close-up (left) and long shot (right) in *Dr No*



Figure 98: Bond (George Lazenby) in long shot (left) and medium close-up (right) in *On Her Majesty's Secret Service*



Figure 99: Bond (Roger Moore) in long shot (left) and medium close-up (right) in *For Your Eyes Only*



Figure 100: Bond (Timothy Dalton) in long shot (left) and medium close-up (right) in *License to Kill*



Figure 101: Bond (Pierce Brosnan) in medium close-up (left) and long shot (right) in *GoldenEye*

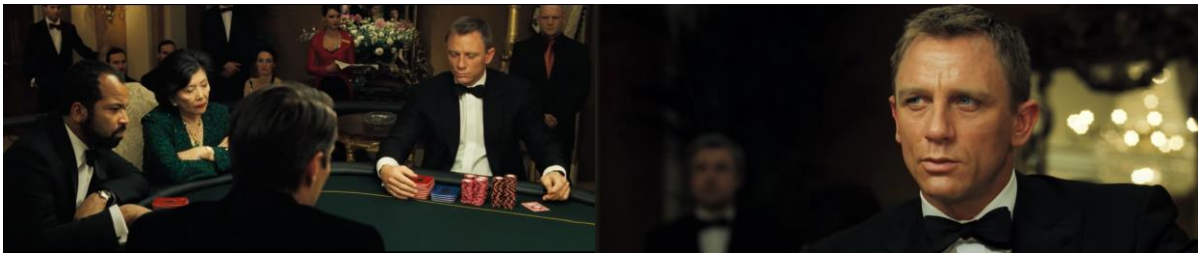


Figure 102: Bond (Daniel Craig) in long shot (left) and a tight medium close-up (right) in *Casino Royale*

Intensified Continuities

This chapter has so far considered how the stylistic techniques of framing and mise-en-scène create the perception of a cohesive and expansive world beyond and inside the screen, and in service of the transtextual poetics of the IP object in blockbuster franchising. Editing complicates this cohesion since it cuts this world up and splices it together, but the classical continuity style of editing overcomes this spatial and temporal fragmentation to systematically assemble a network of shots and sounds—as well as gaps and interstices—to construct a cinematic storyworld. As Manovich puts it, "editing, or montage, is the key twentieth-century technology for creating fake realities" because, "through editing, images that could have been shot in different locations or at different times create the illusion of contiguous space and time" (2001, 148). In service of this illusion, classical editing style strives for invisibility: it aims to hide evidence of a cut in space and time and normalize the splice to give the impression of a seamless world. This means that editing is crucial to the stylistic construction of a storyworld on screen. There is therefore a compelling relationship between editing practice as a technique for assembling spatial and temporal fragments into a coherent world and seriality as a formal principle for the extension and multiplication of an IP object. Both editing and seriality work by the principle of cutting and producing spatial interstices and temporal ellipses and rely on the spectator's own creative and perceptual faculties to establish the whole.

Classical Hollywood style employs editing devices such as cross-cutting (alternating cuts between parallel action), sequential montage (the 'montage sequence' that truncates events over an extended period of time with unifying music), and long takes to enrich the sense of temporal order and duration in narrative development; moreover, continuity editing provides an effective system for maintaining spatial and temporal coherence and adhere to a 180° axis (a line of action that that camera should not cross), analytical cuts (cutting from wider to closer, or closer to wider shot sizes), eye-line matching, and shot reverse-shot cutting (Bordwell, Staiger, and Thompson 1985, 58). To recall discussion of continuity style

at the top of this chapter, Bordwell identifies that contemporary Hollywood style is not fundamentally different from the classical continuity style but reflects *intensified continuity*; in addition to the employment of bipolarized lens lengths, closer framing in dialogue, and a free-ranging camera, Bordwell identifies more rapid cutting to be a key stylistic tactic of intensified continuity (Bordwell 2002, 16–20). Other scholars consider that intensified continuity is no longer applicable to early twenty-first century cinema: Stork argues that the contemporary action blockbuster is better understood as a style of "chaos cinema," whereby editing style propagates confusion and audiovisual hysteria (2011), and, in Shaviro's idea of post-continuity editing style, "continuity itself has been fractured, devalued, fragmented, and reduced to incoherence" (2016, 55). I disagree with these assertions in relation to blockbuster franchising: when applied to the franchise mode (as the dominant form of blockbuster cinema in the contemporary era), such assessments fail to address the perception of this style in the context of a transtextual whole that includes pre-existing familiarity with the architextual system of the franchise. Isaacs astutely considers this field of engagement in his analysis of the 'Transformers' franchise, when he accounts for the "array of preceding texts and image forms," including Hasbro toys (2015, para. 14). What Isaacs seems to imply here, but does not say overtly, is that the perception of continuity across the editing style of the 'Transformers' franchise is shaped by the experience of playing with Transformers toys, which adheres to a different kind of experiential perception of space and time (Figure 103). Isaacs calls for a consideration of the spectator's "capacity to infer continuity within the fields of radical image discontinuity" (2015, para. 7). This echoes a point made by Henry Jenkins in relation to the emergence of MTV-style rapid cutting across the entertainment landscape: "it is not so much that these viewers have a short attention span, as critics protest, but rather that they know all the stories already and they are ready to shift their attention to other levels of the film presentation, to glossy colour schemes, rapid-fire editing, or dizzying camera movements which challenge their comprehension and intensify their emotional engagement" (1995, 116). This reinforces a confluence between the transtextual poetics of narration and aesthetics, and thus the intersection of high-concept formula and seriality with intensified continuity. Therefore, I recall the notion of *intensified continuities* I mentioned at the top of this chapter, which reflects the serial mechanisms and multiple continuities that drive blockbuster franchising. The principle of intensified continuities extends Bordwell's notion of intensified continuity editing but considers the impact of multiplicity, polycentricity, and seriality to intensify temporality and expand spatiality across the transtextuality of an IP object.

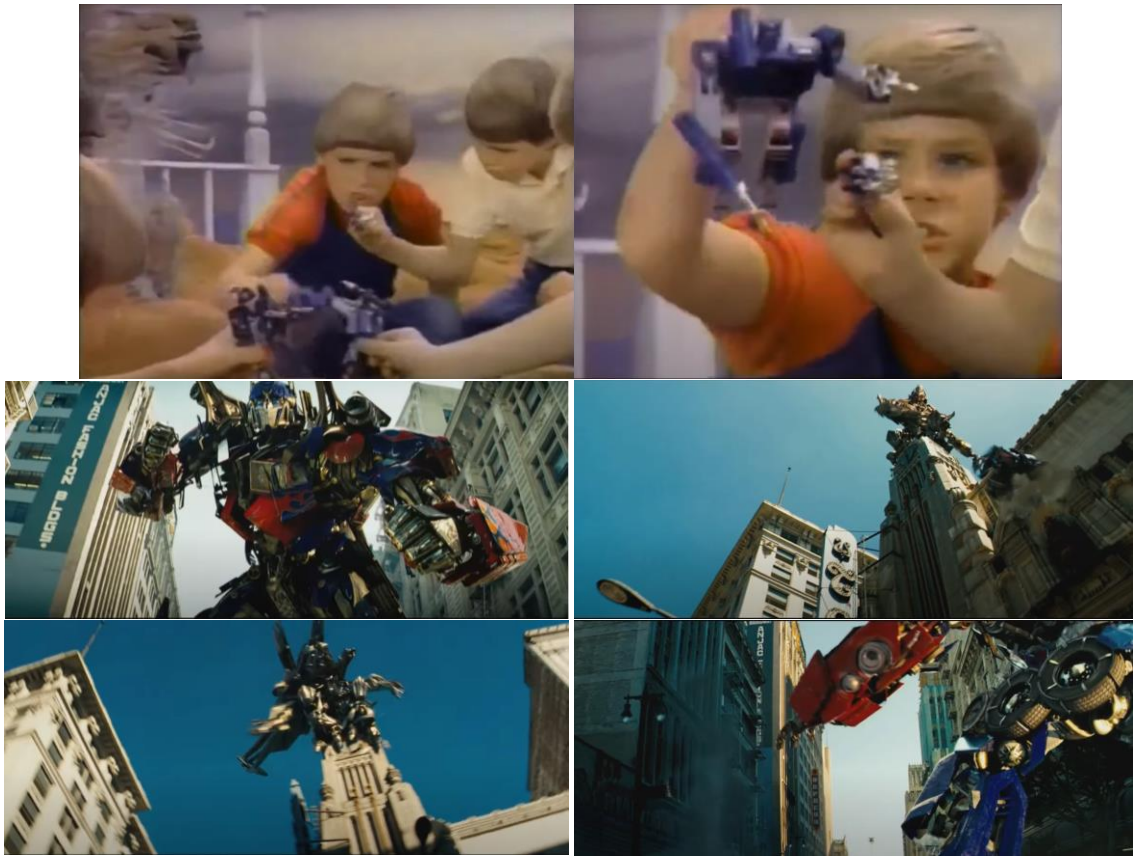
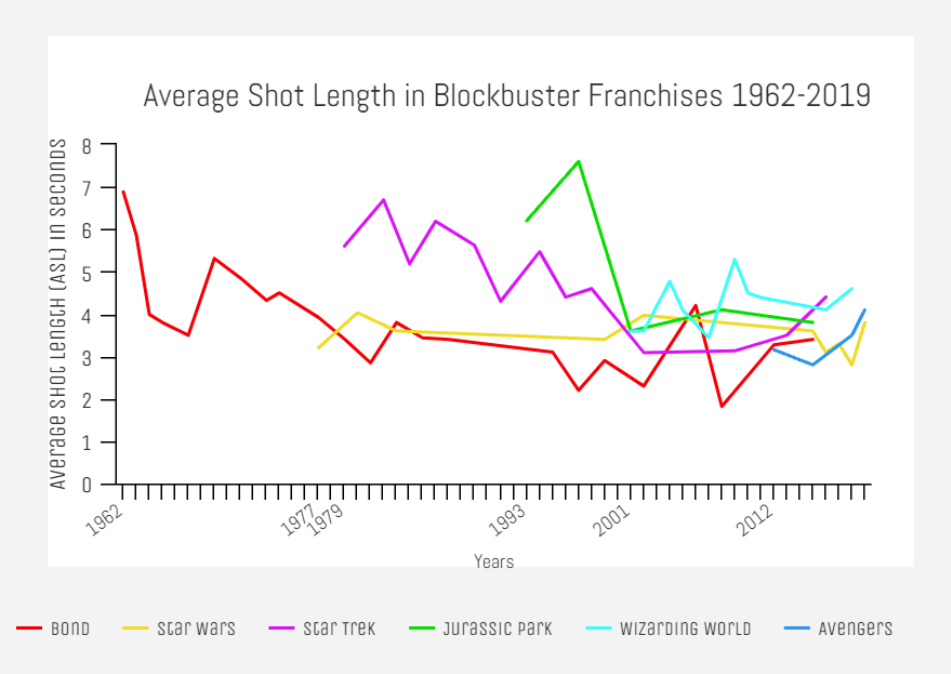


Figure 103: Children play with Transformer's toys in a 1984 commercial (top) and stills based on cuts in an action sequence in *Transformers* (bottom)

The increased editing pace of contemporary blockbuster cinema has been central to debates about the persistence of classical continuity style. Bordwell explains that the classical Hollywood era of the studio system favored long takes and the average shot length (ASL) during this period was between eight and eleven seconds—an A-pic (the blockbuster of the time) "would seldom boast an ASL of less than six seconds" (2002, 16). There was a marked reduction in the ASL of movies across subsequent decades and by 1980s and 1990s shot lengths averaged between four and five seconds (17); this is often attributed to the influence of fast-paced advertisements and the MTV music video aesthetic, but must also be understood in the context of innovations in computer technologies and the standardization of non-linear editing systems (Rubin 2000) that increased the capacity to expand coverage during production and edit across multiple continuities. There is something to be said here about the virtuosity of rapid cutting as a reflection of technological innovation and its capacity to accelerate the pace and rhythm of editing as a cinematic attraction. Even so, despite the rapid editing pace of contemporary blockbuster cinema, it seems as though ASL in the franchise era has fulfilled Bordwell's prediction that "editing rates may soon hit a wall"

(2002, 17). Using the franchise properties employed as case studies in this thesis as a data set— 'Bond,' 'Star Wars,' 'Star Trek,' 'Jurassic Park,' 'Wizarding World,' and 'Avengers'— Graph 3 illustrates the ASL of these franchises over time. This ASL data has been collected from multiple sources, including Barry Salt's Database, the Cinemetrics database, and Shot Logger, and I have also contributed to this ASL data sample myself using the Cinemetics measurement tool.[90] Although this is a relatively limited sample (67 installments over 6 franchise properties), it demonstrates that over time the ASL has found an equilibrium at around 3–5 seconds (with an average of 3.6 seconds) in the franchise era. The 'Bond' franchise establishes a consistent foundation from 1962 onwards: the graph demonstrates a drastic and early reduction in ASL from 5.68 seconds with *From Russia with Love* (1963) to 3.99 seconds with *Goldfinger* (1964), and then a later increase to 5.31 seconds with *On Her Majesty's Secret Service* (1969); this is followed by a steady decrease and then a drastic reduction from 4.2 seconds with *Casino Royale* to 1.82 seconds with *Quantum of Solace* (2008). Despite similar years of origination in the 1970s blockbuster era, the 'Star Wars' and 'Star Trek' franchises follow quite different trajectories in terms of ASL: 'Star Wars' has remained relatively consistent with an average of 3.5 seconds, while 'Star Trek' has reduced from between 5–6 seconds to 3 seconds, with an average of 4.7 seconds. From this data set, the 'Jurassic Park' franchise involves the most erratic fluctuation across time, with a drastic decrease from 7.6 second with *The Lost World: Jurassic Park* (1997) to 3.6 seconds with *Jurassic Park III* (2001) and an average of 5 seconds. In contrast, the two case studies that originate entirely during the franchise era of the early twenty-first century— 'Wizarding World' and 'Avengers'—have remained relatively consistent with an average of 4.2 seconds and 3.4 seconds respectively. This data set indicates that the ASL of franchise installments has accelerated in pace across time until the turn of the century, and then stabilized during the franchise era. The data presented in Graph 3 visualizes how ASL finds an equilibrium in the franchise era, and editing rates present another opportunity for stylistic differentiation across franchise properties and installments that also reflects genre and audience.

[90] See Appendix for data and sources.



Graph 3: Average Shot Length (ASL) in blockbuster franchises 1962–2019

Despite a rapid editing style, blockbuster franchises have not completely abandoned the long take. Writing about the rise in long takes in blockbuster franchising, Jayson Greene cites examples such as *Avengers: Age of Ultron* (2015), *Spectre* (2015), *Creed* (2015), *Black Panther* (2018), and *Star Wars: The Last Jedi* (2018) to suggests that the long take has experienced a "rebirth" in the franchise era (2018). Also known as the single take, continuous shot, or 'one-er,' John Gibbs and Douglas Pye acknowledge that the minimum acceptable duration of a long take is a matter of context and relative to the ASL of the movie in question; they say that "in the context of rapid cutting between shots of only a second or two, a 10-second shot might *feel* long" (2017, 6; original emphasis). This means that, in the context of a blockbuster franchise with an ASL of 3–5 seconds, a long take could be reasonably defined by a duration of 15–20 seconds. As such, the long take is not opposed or distinct from rapid cutting but exists in relation to its rhythm and pace. As Gibbs and Pye explain,

> the long take deals in the experience of unbroken duration, the continuity of real time, as opposed, for instance, to the synthetic continuity of time that is achieved in continuity editing. Continuity of time brings with it continuity of space—if the camera moves, it reveals space that extends beyond and around the static frame-and also continuity of action—what we see unfolds before us in the unbroken shot. (2017, 6)

In blockbuster franchising, the long take often works in concert with the intensified continuities of rapid cutting to maintain spatial and temporal coherence and counter potential multiplicities.

For example, *The Avengers* (2012) involves multiple long takes of 18 seconds or more: the most notable is during the Battle of New York (40 seconds) and follows the "Avengers assemble" shot discussed in the chapter 5 case study, but a more compelling 'one-er' occurs during an argument between the Avengers on the S.H.I.E.L.D Helicarrier (30 seconds). The scene builds up towards the one-er with a series of longer than average shots (the ASL of *The Avengers* is 3.16) where the camera moves between characters in heated conversation. At this point in the franchise, these characters have each been introduced and pre-established in their own installments, in which they are the central figure and featured hero. This means that these characters represent their own continuities, both in terms of narrative continuity and the perception of their own cohesive world beyond this installment and sequence of events. The long take begins with a dutch angle medium shot of Nick Fury (Samuel L. Jackson) in the center of frame, surrounded by Steve Rogers (Chris Evans), Thor (Chris Hemsworth), and Tony Stark (Robert Downey Jr.); the camera then follows Fury around the space—he is the only character to move out of the set blocking arrangement throughout the scene. The strict and rigid positioning of each character in the space during this dialogue exchange, with their feet firmly placed on the floor, is a rather unnatural formation but removes variables in the space—it allows the camera to move freely around Fury and between the characters to effectively orientate the spectator in the space (Figure 104).

The camera maintains a medium shot size as it glides around the space in tilted angles. While the camera primarily follows the key thread of dialogue, Stark's incessant chatter can be heard from off screen; this established multiple spatial directions in the scene. This framing, camera movement, and mise-en-scène presents contrasting impulses: it forges connections between characters while the uneasy and suspecting long take also signals a mounting distance between them. The 1.85:1 aspect ratio also allows the space to seem simultaneously open and crowded. The camera proceeds past Natasha Romanoff (Scarlett Johansson) and pushes in towards Dr Bruce Banner (Mark Ruffalo); it then glides over his shoulder for a bird's eye view of the scepter before rotating further to finally settle on a close-up of the scepter upside-down in shallow focus as the Avengers fill the background. Whedon explains that he usually uses long takes to produce "a sense of community and continuity" (quoted in Lavery 2014, 199); while this long take maintains a sense of spatial continuity, it

is divisive not unifying: the camera intervenes in the space, finally settling on the scepter as it cuts across the frame and through the mise-en-scène to disrupt the cohesion and continuity achieved through the long take.



Figure 104: A long take in *The Avengers*

This long take intensifies the tensions between the multiple continuities represented in the space: it draws out conflicts through the continuous camera movement, then cuts across it through the mise-en-scène and, eventually, a literal cut. The second part of this scene changes in style as it employs a more rapid cutting pattern with an ASL of 3 seconds and follow a series of shot reverse-shot alternations between the character pairs of Thor and Fury, Banner and Fury, Stark and Roger, interjected with medium shots of other character's reactions across the room. These shot alternations and the spatial relations between the characters are coherent, but the editing style cuts across the space in such a way that the 180° line of action is difficult to identify; as such, the editing style seems to follow multiple lines of actions based on the dialogue exchange between character pairs. Therefore, the long take has done the work to establish multiple intensified continuities in the space. Finally, this scene comes

to a climax when Dr Banner involuntarily picks up the scepter, risking the emergence of his alter ego, the Hulk. A rear angle long shot displays the entire team—still firmly placed in their blocked positions—looking at Dr Banner who is centered in the background in deep focus; the shot cuts to a low angle medium shot of Dr Banner holding the scepter as the prop cuts across the frame and his body to represent the threat to the space (Figure 105). This scene employs the classical device of the long take to orientate the spectator to the existence of multiple intensified continuities in this scene and counter the disruption of rapid editing across multiple lines of action. *The Avengers* exemplifies how the long take and rapid editing can work in concert to normalize the occurrence of multiple intensified continuities of style in blockbuster franchising.



Figure 105: Rear angle long shot of the Avengers (left) and a low angle medium shot of Dr Banner in *The Avengers*

Welcome to Jurassic World

The 'Jurassic Park' franchise is based on a concept created by Michael Crichton, which originated with his novel *Jurassic Park* (1990) and its blockbuster movie adaptation of the same name released in 1993, produced by Universal Pictures and directed by Steven Spielberg with screenplay written by Crichton and David Koepp. Despite considerable differences between the initial novel and its cross-media movie adaptation (mainly in terms of plot and story resolution), both early iterations of the 'Jurassic Park' concept center on the establishment of a theme park on the fictional island of Isla Nublar in Central America, which has been built to display cloned dinosaurs as its main attraction. The 'Jurassic Park' storyworld expanded with Crichton's sequel novel *The Lost World* (1995) and its relatively loose movie adaptation, *The Lost World—Jurassic Park* (1997)[91] also directed by Spielberg, which extends the spatial terrain of the storyworld with the incorporation of a second island,

[91] Hereafter, mention of *Jurassic Park* and *The Lost World* refer to the movie installments unless otherwise stated.

Isla Sorna, which is used for scientific exploration and to breed the dinosaurs before moving to the main park.[92] The 'Jurassic Park' franchise has continued to evolve as a multiplatform storyworld with theme park attractions, novels, comic books, motion comics, video games, a virtual reality game, an animated television series, a short film, toys, and exhibitions, as well as the blockbuster movie sequels *Jurassic Park III* (2001), *Jurassic World* (2015), and *Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom* (2018).[93] The 'Jurassic Park' franchise has embraced its historical evolution from 'theme park' (in subject matter and branding) to 'storyworld attraction' with the resurgence of the property in the franchise era and an opening out of its spatial parameters in accordance with the creative and industrial trends of early twenty-first century entertainment. Where *Jurassic Park* theme park creator Dr John Hammond (Richard Attenborough) utters the memorable statement, "welcome to Jurassic Park," *Fallen Kingdom* answers with a stern warning from Dr Ian Malcom (Jeff Goldblum), "welcome to Jurassic World," as dinosaurs are let out of the island's containment into populated areas (Figure 106). The movie posters for *Jurassic World* and *Fallen Kingdom* reflect this opening up of the storyworld from the containment of a park on an island to dinosaurs wandering uninhibited, with taglines "The Park is Open" and "The Park is Gone" respectively (Figure 107). This movement from park on a contained island to an open world reflects the emergence of franchise style in the early twenty-first century. The 'Jurassic Park' franchise provides a productive case study to illustrate the principles of framing, mise-en-world, and multiple intensified continuities in blockbuster franchising.



Figure 106: Pteranodons fly out of containment at the end of *Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom*

[92] The video game *Jurassic Park Evolution* (2018) plays with this spatial expansion as it involves setting up dinosaur parks on all five islands of the Muertes Archipelago ('the Five Deaths').
[93] The sixth installment, *Jurassic World: Dominion*, is set for released in 2022.



Figure 107: *Jurassic World* poster (left) and *Fallen Kingdom* poster (right)

The 'Jurassic Park' franchise provides an apt final case study in this thesis because it coalesces many of the most significant aspects associated with blockbuster franchising, total entertainment, and industrial synergy in early twenty-first century Hollywood: commercialization and "industrial expressivity" (Wyatt 1994, 61), the mythic power of a creator-inventor's vision (Spielberg and Hammond),[94] the hybridization of traditional special effects and digital visual effects technologies to optimize the perception of realism, and the

[94] While this point relates to the thematic representation of the creator's vision in the 'Jurassic Park' franchise, it must also be noted that Spielberg epitomizes the notion of the concept-auteur in blockbuster franchising, as is discussed in chapter 1 of this thesis. Moreover, beyond this concept-auteur role, the transtextual authorship of the 'Jurassic Park' franchise constitutes a polycentric system of multiple endless origins: Crichton as initial creator and novel author; production companies Universal Pictures, Amblin Entertainment, Legendary Entertainment, The Kennedy/Marshal Company and Perfect World Pictures; executive producers Steven Spielberg and Collin Trevorrow; producers Kathleen Kennedy, Gerald R. Molen, Frank Marshall, and Patrick Crowley; screenwriters Crichton, Koepp, Peter Buchman, Alexander Payne, Jim Taylor, Rick Jaffa, Amanda Silver, Trevorrow, and Derek Connolly; directors Spielberg, Joe Johnston, Trevorrow, and J.A. Bayona; composers John Williams, Don Davis, and Michael Giacchino; animatronics technician Stan Winston; visual effects supervisors Dennis Muren and Tim Alexander; actors Richard Attenborough, Sam Neill, Jeff Goldblum, Laura Dern, Samuel L. Jackson, B.D. Wong, Julianne Moore, William H. Macy, Téa Leoni, Chris Pratt, Bryce Dallas Howard, Irrfan Khan, and Vincent D'Onofrio; and of course dinosaur supervisor Phil Tippett. This survey of authorial roles in 'Jurassic Park' signals the breadth of creative influence that has shaped the franchise.

multiplatform themed entertainment attraction. The initial movie installment, *Jurassic Park*, has attracted a significant body of scholarly work in relation to these practices: the commercial dimension (Schatz 1997; Balides 2000; King 2002, 211; Grainge 2004; Dalecki 2008; Jess-Cooke 2009, 76); the author's vision (Morris 2017; Buckland 2006); innovations in effects technologies (Prince 1996 & 2012; Pierson 1999; Ndalianis 2004; Morris 2007; North 2008); and the theme park attraction (Ndalianis 2004; Gunelius 2008, 114). Each of these perspectives is underpinned by the self-reflexivity of *Jurassic Park* and its apparent hyper-awareness of its function as a meta- (and mega) commercial entity that realizes the ambitious vision of a creator using innovative technologies and puts it on show as an attraction to a paying audience. This synthesis through metatextual commentary represents the thematic basis of the franchise beyond its classical narration or its simple "Jaws with claws" pitch (Elsaesser 2012, 294). As Dan North summarizes, "not only does *Jurassic Park* assume that the audience is fully aware that dinosaur do not exist in the real world, but it also thematises their very non-existence in a narrative about their technologised re-creation" (2008, 22). This commercial self-consciousness of *Jurassic Park* and its sequel *The Lost World* reflects the "corporate era" of blockbuster cinema in the 1990s (Lewis 1998, 87), which is characterized by conglomerate stabilization and deregulation, cinema megaplexes, and globalization (Acland 2003). The third installment, *Jurassic Park III*, sits at the threshold of the franchise era: it is the first installment to not be directly adapted from a novel and, although this ideally works to expand the property beyond the perceived constraints of a novel, it lacks the expansive qualities of franchise narration. *Jurassic Park III* is best understood as a transitionary installment at the precipice of the franchise era before the installments *Jurassic World* and *Fallen Kingdom*.

In the franchise era, the 'Jurassic Park' franchise continues the self-consciousness of the early installments in the development of its storyworld, as it moves from the contained world of Jurassic Park as an unopened park on an island owned by a start-up tech company, InGen, to the open world of Jurassic World as a fully operating theme park and globally recognized brand owned by Indian telecommunication and energy company, Masrani Global Corporation. This is also reflected by the form of serial narration employed across the franchise, where *Jurassic Park* maintains a sense of closure through sequels that are each relatively self-contained narratives, *Jurassic World* presents the perception of closure with the high-stakes and unresolved implications of dinosaurs set free on Isla Nublar (again). With this movement from a contained to open storyworld—in the diegesis, serial form, and branding—Braudy's two methods for representing the visual world of cinema come into play

as tools that work to draw attention to the overt focus on an open world in franchise style. *Jurassic Park, The Lost World,* and *Jurassic Park III* employ a closed style where everything experienced within the frame has its place in the narrative. Even as the wonder or shock of the "Spielberg face" (Lee 2011; Rybin 2017) looks out and reacts to the off-screen space, the mise-en-scène provides security and balance through centered composition, medium shots where the faces are encased by the surrounding environment (vehicle or logs), or the tighter close-ups (Figures 108 & 109). Nonetheless, openness is still important in these first installments: it functions as a threat as the represented world tries to push beyond the containment of the screen, which poses a risk to the characters and the space. *Jurassic World* embraces the threat of openness with a style of framing and composition that incorporates reflective surfaces to embed off-screen space into the mise-en-world of the shot, and in *Fallen Kingdom* characters often occupy the side of the anamorphic widescreen frame to share the shot with the threat of the open environment (Figures 110 & 111). Therefore, the open style is used in *Jurassic World* and *Fallen Kingdom* to present the illusion of an "ongoing reality" ([1976] 2002, 46) that is familiar in its danger and in its use of style, which intertextually coexists with previous installments that play a central role in shaping the opening out of the franchise as an ongoing reality. In the earlier 'Jurassic Park' installments, style is driven towards fixation and attention, whereas the installments of the franchise era use a style that promotes distraction and reflection as a means of representing multiple intensified continuities. These multiple continuities reflect the various previous installments and multiplatform experiences that constitute the 'Jurassic Park' franchise and is expressed through multiple aspect ratios, mise-en-world that represents the threat of proximity in the storyworld, and rapid cutting that intensifies the perception of threat in the open space.



Figure 108: Looking off-screen in wonder and shock in *Jurassic Park*



Figure 109: Looking off-screen in shock and fear in *The Lost World*



Figure 110: Looking off-screen in wonder in *Jurassic World*



Figure 111: Looking off-screen in wonder and shock in *Fallen Kingdom*

The 'Jurassic Park' franchise employs three different aspect ratios across its five blockbuster movie installments thus far: *Jurassic Park*, *The Lost World* and *Jurassic Park III* use a standard widescreen format of 1.85:1, *Jurassic World* uses 2.00:1, and *Fallen Kingdom* uses the anamorphic widescreen format 2.39:1. Spielberg decided to shoot *Jurassic Park* in standard widescreen instead of the anamorphic format "to give visual emphasis to the huge size and bulk of the biggest dinosaurs" (Fisher 2019, para. 20); similarly, cinematographer Dean Cundey explains "you get a better sense of the sheer size of tyrannosaurus rex compared to the people in the 1.85:1 format" (quoted in Fisher 2019, para. 21). The 'Jurassic Park' franchise maintained this aspect ratio until *Jurassic World*, which uses the rarer 2.00:1 ratio (also known as the Univisium ratio) as a middle ground between standard and anamorphic widescreen: while director Colin Trevorrow and cinematographer John Schwartzman wanted to use anamorphic format, executive producer Spielberg insisted that the frame needed more height, so they found a compromise with 2.00:1 (Panavision, n.d.). The anamorphic widescreen format finally appears in the franchise with the installment

Fallen Kingdom, because director J.A. Bayona wanted to go "bigger," fill the entire format "from the extreme right to the extreme left," and make a movie that "cannot be seen on a plane" (quoted in Evangelista 2018, para. 6). Figures 112–114 illustrate the distinctions between these aspect ratios through the framing of the entry gates into the park, which simultaneously reflects the entry into the themed experience and the screen frame as threshold of the storyworld. In *Jurassic Park*, the standard widescreen frame reveals the gate in its entirety: as the characters enter through the gates the emphasis is on height as an expression of the threat and danger contained in the space (Figure 112). In *Jurassic World*, the 2.00:1 aspect ratio retains some of that height of the gate to reinforce the attraction on display (as the faces of wonder suggested in Figure 111), but the added width and low angle side view shot of the gate emphasizes the open and operationalization of the park (Figure 113). Moreover, in *Fallen Kingdom*, the anamorphic aspect ratio presents the gate as an integrated aspect of the open setting: the shorter and wider frame reveals more of the surroundings and emphasizes the unfunctional state of the gate (Figure 114). These depictions of the park gates in multiple installments demonstrates that franchise style is dialogical and intertextual since the framing style establishes a pattern of repetition and variation across the franchise.



Figure 112: Gates in 1:85:1 in *Jurassic Park*



Figure 113: Gates in 2.00:1 in *Jurassic World*


Figure 114: Gates in 2.39:1 in *Fallen Kingdom*

Working in tandem with framing style, *Jurassic World* and *Fallen Kingdom* exemplify the principle of mise-en-world in blockbuster franchising. Both installments feature an extreme establishing shot that centralizes the setting and characterizes its history within the franchise. In *Jurassic World*, excited twelve-year old Gray Mitchell (Ty Simpkins) arrives in this hotel room on Isla Nublar, throws down his things and heads directly to the balcony; as he opens the double sliding doors the camera pushes forward over his right shoulder to reveal the fully operational Jurassic World, while John William's "Jurassic Park Theme" escalates to punctuate the historical and emotional resonance of this establishing shot (Figure 115). In *Fallen Kingdom*, a team return to Isla Nublar four years after the collapse of Jurassic World to rescue the dinosaurs from an erupting volcano; the team includes familiar characters from *Jurassic World*—former park operations manager turned dinosaur protection activist Claire Dearing (Bryce Dallas Howard) and dinosaur trainer and behaviorist Owen Grady (Chris Pratt)—and new characters, paleo-veterinarian Zia Rodriguez (Daniella Pineda), and systems analyst Franklin Webb (Justice Smith). The establishing 'setting shot' occurs as the team approach the main attraction's facilities to reveal a desolate abandoned park with an erupting volcano in the background, which is eerily reminiscent of the establishing shot in *Jurassic World* but is stripped its orchestral spirit (Figure 116). These establishing 'setting shots' reinforce the legacy of Isla Nublar in the 'Jurassic Park' franchise, not only as a geographical setting for narrative events to occur but also as a vital part in the franchise's scenography.



Figure 115: Gray Mitchell opens the sliding doors of his hotel room (left) to give way to an establishing shot of *Jurassic World* (right)



Figure 116: Establishing shot of the abandoned Jurassic World in *Fallen Kingdom*

The scenography of the 'Jurassic Park' franchise consists of stylistic repetitions that enrich the connection between the mise-en-world and the storyworld mythos. The use of reflective surfaces is a particularly prominent stylistic device that explores perceptions of spatial proximity and develops a mise-en-world based on thematic resonance in the franchise. This is first represented in *Jurassic Park* when the Tyrannosaurus rex chases Dr Ellie Sattler (Laura Dern), Dr Ian Malcom (Jeff Goldblum), and Robert Muldoon (Bob Peck); as the T.rex closes in on their jeep, the scene cuts to a close-up of the dinosaur's reflection in the sideview mirror and the legible warning that "objects in mirror are closer than they appear" (Figure 117). This shot is often understood as a metatextual gag about cinematic illusionism. Ndalianis discusses the implication of this shot in *Jurassic Park*:

> This detail is extraneous to the film's concerns, and the text is not meant for anyone within the narrative space. Instead it is a play on words that addresses us, the audience . . . The computer graphics have constructed such a convincing tyrannosaurus that, in conjunction with the editing, acting, sound effects, and special effects, the suspense heightens to a point at which, for the audience, the tyrannosaurus appears to be closer than it is. This proximity is but an illusion, and these words become a sort of in-joke that speaks of a cinema that lures us into embracing its representation of a simulated, fantastic illusion *as* reality. (2004, 168)

Despite being extraneous in *Jurassic Park*, this shot becomes a thematic and stylistic template in *Jurassic World* and *Fallen Kingdom*. An overt intertextual connection occurs in *Fallen Kingdom* when Owen searches the island to find and rescue the velociraptor, Blue. The scene presents a close-up of a sideview mirror (belonging to a destroyed Jurassic Park jeep), with the upside-down text "objects in mirror are closer than they appear" in focus (Figure 118); the focus pulls to reveal Owen's reflection in the mirror as the text on the mirror blurs. This intertextual reference directly acknowledges the legacy of this shot then pulls away to transtextually absorb it into the thematic scenography of the scene. Also worth

observing is that this shot is simultaneously a close-up of the mirror and a long shot of Owen, effectively multiplying stylistic continuity. The mise-en-world of *Jurassic World* and *Fallen Kingdom* is infused with reflective surfaces that use cinematic illusion to display proximity as a danger of open and uncontained space. While an open and expansive world might suggest distance and safety, Figure 119 illustrates how *Jurassic World* and *Fallen Kingdom* inscribe off-screen space into the image to create spatial depth through proximity and reflection. This proximity takes on deeper thematic significance in *Fallen Kingdom* when it is revealed that the child Maisie Lockwood (Isabella Sermon)— 'granddaughter' of Benjamin Lockwood (James Cromwell), former business partner of Hammond—is a clone of Lockwood's daughter and thus a product of the same science that populated Isla Nublar and Isla Sorna with dinosaurs. When the narrative action (and a herd of dinosaurs) moves to a gothic-style mansion in *Fallen Kingdom*, the threat of proximity enters the domestic space and becomes a further point for human self-reflection (Figure 120). These examples signal how mise-en-scène and storyworld mythos intersect in the 'Jurassic Park' franchise to produce a mise-en-world, where the broader storyworld implications are effectively reinforced in the penultimate shot of *Fallen Kingdom*, which is a conflict shot of the T.rex and a lion in a zoo (Figure 121), which catalyzes the theme of spatial proximity in the mise-en-world and signals high narrative stakes for the future of the franchise.



Figure 117: Close-up of T.rex's reflection in a sideview mirror in *Jurassic Park*



Figure 118: Close-up of sideview mirror with text in focus (top) and same shot with Owen in focus (bottom) in *Fallen Kingdom*



Figure 119: Examples of reflection in the mise-en-scène of *Jurassic World* (top) and *Fallen Kingdom* (bottom)



Figure 120: Hybrid dinosaur, the Indoraptor, enters Maisie's bedroom in *Fallen Kingdom*



Figure 121: Conflict shot of the T.rex versus a lion at the end of *Fallen Kingdom*

While the 'Jurassic Park' franchise employs mise-en-scène techniques to incorporate the threat of proximity within a shot, and thus establish a mise-en-world of stylistic repetitions and variations that coexist intertextually, the editing style intensifies the threat of the open setting as multidirectional and always in motion. This is emphasized by scenes involving velociraptors, which activate the multidirectional and 360-degree nature of space outside the frame. As Dr Alan Grant (Sam Neil) explains in *Jurassic Park*, raptors hunt in packs "using coordinated attack patterns" that come "not from the front, but from the sides." Every 'Jurassic Park' installment features at least one raptor attack where editing heightens the threat of open space. As an example, consider the scene in *Jurassic Park III* when a pack of raptors surround Dr Grant, his protégé Billy Brennan (Alessandro Nivola), Paul Kirby (William H. Macy), and Amanda Kirby (Téa Leoni) after Billy steels raptor eggs. This shot sequence establishes multiple lines of continuity based on the position of each raptor in the space: the cuts alternate between short right panning shots around the humans and left panning shots from raptor to raptor in medium shot before closing into a close-up of Dr Grant and panning to a medium close-up of Amanda as raptors close in behind the group (Figure 122). The most spatially unsettling part of the editing style in this sequence is the cut to Dr

Grant in close-up, which interjects mid-pan from one raptor to the other—this style of cut happens twice in this scene and breaks the established circular line of action to emulate the sudden movement of a raptor and reinforce the imminent threat of proximity and movement. This example reinforces Isaacs' call to consider the spectator's ability to perceptive "continuity within the fields of radical image discontinuity" (2015, para. 7)—as such, the serialized spectator of the franchise is also familiar with raptor movement patterns based on previous installments. Moreover, the ASL of this sequence is 2.5 seconds, which is on average a second less than the ASL of the entire movie at 3.6 seconds and works to intensify the threat of movement in this space.



Figure 122: Raptor sequence in *Jurassic Park III*

From the case studies employed in this thesis, the 'Jurassic Park' franchise includes the most disparate change in ASL between installments, with a markedly faster cutting style in the franchise era: *Jurassic Park*'s ASL is 6.2 seconds, *The Lost World*'s ASL is 7.6 seconds, *Jurassic Park III*'s ASL is 3.6, *Jurassic World*'s ASL is 3.8, *Fallen Kingdom*'s ASL is 4.1. There is therefore a significant acceleration of the editing pace from *The Lost World* to *Jurassic Park III*, which aligns the franchise with the pace of other blockbuster franchise installments in the franchise era; the ASL of *Jurassic Park* and *The Lost World* is considerably slower than the 3- to 6-second-ASL of movies of any genre at the time (Bordwell 2002, 17), so the acceleration that occurs in *Jurassic Park III*, *Jurassic World* and *Fallen Kingdom* is more pronounced, but still not as rapid as installments in other properties in the franchise era (see Graph 3). Despite its overall rapid editing pace, *Jurassic World*

incorporates multiple continuous takes in its final battle sequence between the T.rex, the hybrid dinosaur Indominus rex, and the raptor Blue. One notable long take lasts 22 seconds and ends with the T.rex's seeming defeat by the Indo rex, until Blue arrives to provide back-up. The more significantly long continuous take lasts 71 seconds as the three dinosaurs battle through the park's Main Street retail precinct towards the lagoon where the Mosasaur leaps out and pulls the Indo rex down into the lagoon (Figure 123). This long take involves panning close-ups of the dinosaurs in battle to give the impression of an event that exceeds the frame in space and time, to reinforce the notion of open style as a "momentary frame around an ongoing reality" (Braudy [1976] 2002 46), where the continuous camera movement works to unify and expand space. This continuous shot fulfils Gibbs and Pye's observation that camera movement "reveals space that extends beyond and around the static frame" (2017, 6). In this *Jurassic World* example, the camera glides over the fighting dinosaurs in continuous movement to reinforce the openness of the space and the dominating force of these creatures within the frame; the continuous shot also changes perspective for a moment to follow the humans through the hazardous space, which simultaneously contrasts the physical scale of four humans—two adults and two adolescents—against the size of the T.rex large head. This continuous take works in tandem with the rapid editing style to represent open space through differentiation—this is to say that this continuous take is a focal point befitting a climax because it uses editing style to punctuate this spectacular narrative event as the ultimate declaration of open space.



Figure 123: Stills from a 71-second continuous shot in *Jurassic World*

This case study has demonstrated how the ‘Jurassic Park’ franchise reflects the norms and conventions of style in the franchise era, with a particular focus on how the construction of an open storyworld has influenced the use of stylistic techniques but also become absorbed into the thematic foundation of its storyworld mythos. As implied in this case study, the style of *Jurassic Park* suggests that it is not dinosaurs (or specifically the T.rex) that are of threat, but openness and a lack of containment. It is thus thematically and stylistically logical that ‘Jurassic Park’ in the franchise era would rebrand its setting from a park on a contained island to an open storyworld with a fully operational theme park. The primary objective of this chapter has been to establish key principles for understanding style in the franchise era, but it has not been exhaustive. This chapter has not had the scope to consider the entire breadth of elements that make up mise-en-scène, such as performance, lighting, costume, and make-up, or pay even more attention to sound. Moreover, questions of stylistic differentiation based on multiple authorial influences, genre, or platform also certainly shape the patterns and conventions of style in the franchise mode. In this thesis, the ‘Jurassic Park’ franchise signals that blockbuster franchising employs techniques of framing, mise-en-world, and multiple intensified continuity in editing, which reflect the articulations of classical style in the franchise mode of the early twenty-first century.

Conclusion: Rise of the Franchise Era, or The Last Franchise?

Blockbuster franchising is the dominant mode of production in early twenty-first century entertainment, such that this period can be aptly designated the franchise era in Hollywood history. This thesis identifies the franchise era as occurring at the turn of the twenty-first century—approximately 1999—with the release of franchise installments such as *Star Wars: Episode I—The Phantom Menace* (1999) and *The Matrix* (1999). Nonetheless, this is not a definitive point of origin for the franchise era: there are influences that precede this moment and practices and conventions—such as the property-unit management system, multiplatform storyworld design and creative license—that do not emerge as being of the distinct mode until years later. That is to say that the franchise era is a product of its history and its norms and conventions emerged over time. Blockbuster franchising strengthened its presence in Hollywood through the 2000s and 2010s to crystalize into the franchise mode of production. The 'MCU' franchise has played an important role in the solidification of the franchise era from late in the 2000s, but the increasing dominance of other franchises properties like 'Star Wars,' Wizarding World,' 'Fast and the Furious,' 'Lord of the Rings,' 'Worlds of DC,' and 'Bond' has promoted the rise of the franchise era in the early twenty-first century.

This thesis has worked with 2019 as an endpoint to demarcate a manageable research scope, and counter my lack of precognition abilities, but this is not meant to claim that 2019 is the end of the franchise era. To be sure, an end to the franchise era would be at odds with its aim to achieve ultimate longevity and persistence, but Hollywood is currently at a crossroads as it contends with a pandemic and its impact on theatrical exhibition. Moreover, the United States Department of Justice's termination of the Paramount Consent Decrees in 2020 marks a significance historical occurrence for Hollywood since it ends the seventy-two-year Supreme Court ruling.[95] While this may lead to a resurgence of a studio system style of movie production, and thus reinforce industrial continuity, Hollywood and its industrial institutions must also contend with shifts in the global entertainment landscape driven by an intensifying multiplatform logic and a proliferation of home entertainment options, including online streaming, digital gaming, and smartphones. We may draw some connection here between the challenges of home entertainment now and those caused by television in the 1950s; if we are to make this connection, then Hollywood may anticipate that forthcoming

[95] The termination of the Paramount Decrees includes a two-year sunset period on block-booking and circuit dealing, which means the full impact of this termination will not be seen until after 2022 (US DOJ 2020).

installments in blockbuster franchises such as ‘Bond,’ ‘The Matrix,’ ‘Star Wars,’ ‘Jurassic Park,’ ‘MCU,’ ‘World of DC,’ and ‘Avatar’ will entice audiences back to the cinema, despite the plethora of home entertainment options available. It remains to be seen whether the franchise mode continues to dominate Hollywood moviemaking into the 2020s and beyond, or whether installments such as *Avengers: Endgame* (2019) and *Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker* (2019) will go down in history as the peak before a decline. Whatever the future holds for blockbuster franchising, its dominance in the early twenty-first century must be understood as a significant mode of Hollywood production.

This thesis has contributed a comprehensive understanding of blockbuster franchising and determines the franchise mode to be a creative-industrial mechanism constituted by the reciprocal interplay of intellectual property and transtextual multiplicity. This interplay defines blockbuster franchising and characterizes its driving force of poetic utility, whereby industrialization and creativity provide mutual benefit in the sustainment of franchise longevity. In this mechanism, the legal and economic procedures that surround intellectual property and its licensing work to safeguard the market through branding, synergy, and convergence, as well as enable expansive development of storyworlds across multiple media platforms; reciprocally, transtextual multiplicity realizes the creative potential of intellectual property through the formal and stylistic dynamic between repetition and variation. This thesis has engaged in poetic analysis to examine how the systematic workings of blockbuster franchising enrich the dynamic between repetition and variation that underpins the functions of authorship, production, narration, formula, aesthetics, and style in the franchise era. This presents blockbuster franchising as an entertainment supersystem wherein industry and creativity interact through a set of key principles and procedures; this system has facilitated the emergence of a distinct mode of production made up of common conventions and techniques that have stabilized in the early twenty-first century to form the franchise mode. This thesis has identified that the franchise mode takes precedence as a creative and industrial strategy during this period because it synergizes many of Hollywood’s strengths—production process, corporate ownership, auteur branding, narrative norms and variations, genre formula and differentiation, the star system and classical style—all within the legal and industrially-managed conditions of entertainment law.

At the intersection of intellectual property and creativity is the IP object, which articulates the core originating concept of a franchise property: it is the nucleus of the franchise mode and a locus of poetic utility. In this thesis I described the IP object as a conceptual cluster that constitutes the franchise attributes of creative ownership, transtextual

poetics, and synergistic branding. The IP object is thus best conceptualized as a transtext, since it encapsulates complex mixture of legal procedure and creative ideation. In addition to the breadth of conventions and mechanisms examined in this thesis, the IP object is an original contribution of this thesis that provides a way of identifying the primary text (or transtext) of a franchise. This works to counter common confusion about the originating source of a franchise—that is, the source text of the 'Star Wars' franchise is the 'Star Wars IP,' not *A New Hope* (1977), which is adapted through creative licensing and seriality to realize the franchise across multiple texts and platforms. As a transtext, the IP object is a product of its poetic relations over time: the IP object absorbs the essence of an expanding franchise, which allows it to adapt with the mythos of a storyworld. For example, the IP object of the 'Star Trek' franchise represents the storyworld blueprint first developed by Gene Roddenberry, but also reflects the storyworld essence of the franchise in its authorial multiplicity, seriality, and stylistic differentiation over time. The IP object is a symbolic steward of a storyworld that defends the mythos and is adaptive to change. As a central component of transtextual poetics in the franchise mode, the IP object mediates repetition and variation.

Transtextual poetics has been a productive methodological approach in this thesis because it provides a breadth of tools to understand relations within a textual multiplicity. This framework has worked to make sense of the construction of blockbuster franchising and identify the principles and conventions of the franchise mode, which include multiple endless origins, canonical adaptation, the IP object as transtext, creative license, architextual systems, serial tools, the storyworld mythos, thematic score, transmedia specificity, assembled illusions, mise-en-world, and multiple intensified continuities. These conventions can be identified across the breadth of movies identified as blockbuster franchises in the early twenty-first century. The examples and case studies in this thesis have demonstrated a variety of ways these conventions operate in different properties. For example, there is variation in how architextual systems work between multiple franchises. In this thesis I considered how architextuality works to make sense of the 'Worlds of DC' franchise through a system shaped by the narrational devices of serialized multiplicity, rebooting, and retroactive continuity and the generic discourses of superhero narratives, since it lacks defining licensing parameters and narrative continuity to establish cohesion. In contrast, the architextual system of the 'Star Trek' franchise is based on the formation of its own iconography, themes, characters, settings, and timelines that work as its own genre system; a similar function of archtextuality is at work in the 'Bondian' formula. All blockbuster franchises have an architextual system

that provides cohesion and interconnection, but the terms and components of that system are distinct to the specific IP object. As a system of transtextual narration in the franchise mode, architextuality gains strength and clarity as an IP object multiplies and expands. In this thesis, transtextual poetics has provided a framework that includes transtextual authorship, transtextual narration, and transtextual aesthetics: these are functional schemas within which singularity—authors, narratives, installments, platforms—work in the context of seriality, multiplicity, and polycentricity. As such, the franchise mode does not disrupt or challenge singularity, but accounts for it within a system of transtextual poetics.

This thesis has been guided by two primary questions related to the construction of blockbuster franchising. The first relates to determining the historical, industrial, and creative context from which the franchise mode has emerged and taken shape. The blockbuster phenomenon is a pillar of industrial, economic, and aesthetic strength and stability throughout Hollywood history and the franchise era is an articulation of this history for the early twenty-first century. Blockbuster franchising is thus not inherently new but is discursively intertwined with the creative and industrial imperatives of longevity that Hollywood has sought to regain since the demise of the studio system. The emergence of the franchise era thus reflects the creative-industrial modulation of Hollywood cinema as it works to secure its futurity. Blockbuster franchising is an effective mode for achieving this security because seriality and its dynamic of repetition with variation provides a formal tool for narrative continuation, textual multiplicity, and expansive storytelling practices. This thus relates to the second question of this thesis, which is based on identifying the principles and conventions that constitute its construction. Seriality is perhaps the most important convention in the construction of blockbuster franchising and relates to more than just narrative form: in the franchise mode, seriality has implications for ideation and its ownership, production procedures and management structures, canonical adaptation, branding strategy, musical orchestration, cinematography, directing, and editing. As a principle of transtextual poetics in the franchise mode, seriality is a force of poetic utility that works as an inflection on classical conventions and style; such conventions and stylistic techniques are intensified and multiplied in the franchised mode as an effect of seriality.

The intensification and multiplication of classical Hollywood conventions in blockbuster franchising has been a recurring consideration throughout this thesis, which identified that blockbuster franchising intensifies many of the established conventions and techniques (such as classical narration and continuity style) and systems (auteurism, genre, and stardom) of classical Hollywood moviemaking, but reconfigures their function to account

for textual multiplicity. This has drawn from the approach of scholars like David Bordwell, Kristin Thompson, and Bradley Schauer who consider that contemporary cinema adheres to classical conventions with some variation based on creative and industrial conditions. However, Angela Ndalianis has questioned whether intensification remains an appropriate descriptor for the creative, industrial, and technological shifts in contemporary entertainment: "'intensification' can reach a point at which it begins to transform into something else. In the instance of the contemporary entertainment industry, this 'something else' has embraced classical storytelling and placed it within new contexts, contexts that incorporate a further economization of classical narrative form, digital technology, cross-media interactions, serial forms, and alternate modes of spectatorship and reception" (2006, 4). For Ndalianis, this "something else" in the contemporary entertainment industry is a neo-baroque poetics that "embraces the classical" while "integrating its features into its own complex system" (5). I have identified a similar function of the classical at work in the transtextual poetics of the franchise mode, which shares much in common with neo-baroque poetics, including seriality, polycentricity, and intertextuality; even so, my examination of the franchise mode determines that the franchise era is defined less by a sense of newness or transformation and more by the persistence of historical and industrial continuity.

This thesis has aimed to contribute a coherent understanding of blockbuster franchising for future scholars—including myself—to build upon. Other scholars may like to use the outcomes of this research to understand other examples of blockbuster franchising that I have not had the scope to consider in this thesis. This thesis has focused on blockbuster cinema as one articulation of an IP object's multiplatform potential, but other scholars may like to direct specialized attention to how other media platforms—such as television, video games, or novels—apply the principles and mechanism of the franchise mode discussed in this thesis. This research constitutes only the first stage of understanding the mechanisms of blockbuster franchising and has had to stop short at questions related to franchise reception; this area has been afforded attention in disciplines such as fan studies and media communications, but there is the potential to also consider questions related to franchise spectatorship within the purview of cinema studies and its concepts of cinephilia and cineliteracy. The primary objective of this thesis has been to demonstrate that blockbuster franchising is a significant mode of production in the early twenty-first century that deserves examination within the context of Hollywood's rich history and industrial structures.

Appendix

Average Shot Length (ASL) of Blockbuster Franchises 1962–2019

ASL data is obtained from Barry Salt's Database, unless otherwise indicated in footnotes: Cinemetrics. "Barry Salt's Database." Accessed September 22, 2021. http://www.cinemetrics.lv/satltdb.php#asl

'Bond' (1962 –)	**ASL in seconds**
Dr No (1962)	6.88
From Russia with Love (1963)	5.68
Goldfinger (1964)	3.99
Thunderball (1965)	3.80
You Only Live Twice (1967)	3.50
On Her Majesty's Secret Service (1969)	5.31
Diamonds Are Forever (1971)	4.85
Live and Let Die (1973)	4.32
The Man with the Golden Gun (1974)	4.50
The Spy who Loved Me (1977)	3.92
Moonraker (1979)	3.41
For Your Eyes Only (1981)	2.85
Octopussy (1983)	3.80
A View to a Kill (1985)	3.44
The Living Daylights (1987)	3.40
License to Kill (1989)	3.33
GoldenEye (1995)	3.10
Tomorrow Never Dies (1997)	2.20
The World is Not Enough (1999)	2.90
Die Another Day (2002)	2.30
Casino Royale (2006)	4.20[*]
Quantum of Solace (2008)	1.82
Skyfall (2012)	3.27
Spectre (2015)	3.40[†]

[*] Data submitted to the Cinemetrics Database on October 27, 2015, by Marloes Strapper. Accessed September 22, 2021. http://www.cinemetrics.lv/movie.php?movie_ID=18962

[†] Data submitted to the Cinemetrics Database on March 17, 2016, by edkupfer. Accessed on September 22, 2021. http://www.cinemetrics.lv/movie.php?movie_ID=19726

'Star Wars' (1977 –)	**ASL in seconds**
Star Wars: Episode IV—A New Hope (1977)	3.20
Star Wars: Episode V—Empire Strikes Back (1980)	4.03
Star Wars: Episode VI—Return of the Jedi (1983)	3.60
Star Wars: Episode I—The Phantom Menace (1999)	3.40
Star Wars: Episode II—Attack of the Clones (2002)	3.97
Star Wars: Episode III—Revenge of the Sith (2005)	3.61
Star Wars: The Force Awakens (2015)	3.60[‡]
Rogue One: A Star Wars Story (2016)	3.10[§]
Star Wars: The Last Jedi (2017)	3.30[**]
Solo: A Star Wars Story (2018)	2.80[††]
Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker (2019)	3.80[‡‡]

'Star Trek' (1979 –)	**ASL in seconds**
Star Trek: The Motion Picture (1979)	5.60
Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan (1982)	6.69
Star Trek III: The Search for Spock (1984)	5.18
Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home (1986)	6.19
Star Trek V: The Final Frontier (1989)	5.62
Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country (1991)	4.30
Star Trek: Generations (1994)	5.47
*Star Trek: First Contact (*1996)	4.40
Star Trek: Insurrection (1998)	4.60
Star Trek: Nemesis (2002)	3.09
Star Trek (2009)	3.13
Star Trek Intro Darkness (2013)	3.50[§§]
Star Trek Beyond (2016)	4.40[***]

[‡] Data submitted to the Cinemetrics Database on October 5, 2021, by Tara Lomax. Accessed on October 8, 2021. http://www.cinemetrics.lv/movie.php?movie_ID=27698

[§] Data submitted to the Cinemetrics Database on August 13, 2021, by Tara Lomax. Accessed on September 22, 2021. http://www.cinemetrics.lv/movie.php?movie_ID=27663

[**] Data submitted to the Cinemetrics Database on October 18, 2021, by Tara Lomax. Accessed on October 20, 2021. http://www.cinemetrics.lv/movie.php?movie_ID=27703

[††] Data submitted to the Cinemetrics Database on October 19, 2021, by Tara Lomax. Accessed on October 20, 2021. http://www.cinemetrics.lv/movie.php?movie_ID=27704

[‡‡] Data submitted to the Cinemetrics Database on October 20, 2021, by Tara Lomax. Accessed on October 20, 2021. http://www.cinemetrics.lv/movie.php?movie_ID=27705

[§§] Data submitted to the Cinemetrics Database on September 7, 2013, by Erik. Accessed on September 22, 2021. http://www.cinemetrics.lv/movie.php?movie_ID=14687

[***] Data submitted to the Cinemetrics Database on September 24, 2021, by Tara Lomax. Accessed on September 24, 2021. http://www.cinemetrics.lv/movie.php?movie_ID=27689

'Jurassic Park' (1993 –)	**ASL in seconds**
Jurassic Park (1993)	6.20
The Lost World: Jurassic Park (1997)	7.60
Jurassic Park III (2001)	3.60
Jurassic World (2015)	3.80[†††]
Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom (2018)	4.10[‡‡‡]

'Wizarding World' (2001 –)	**ASL in seconds**
Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone (2001)	3.60
Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets (2002)	3.60
Harry Potter and the Prison of Azkaban (2004)	4.77
Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire (2005)	4.09
Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix (2007)	3.44
Harry Potter and the Half Blood-Prince (2009)	5.29
Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 1 (2010)	4.50
Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 2 (2011)	4.39
Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them (2016)	4.10[§§§]
Fantastic Beasts: The Crimes of Grindelwald (2018)	4.60[****]

'Avengers' (2012 –)	**ASL in seconds**
The Avengers (2012)	3.16[††††]
Avengers: Age of Ultron (2015)	2.80[‡‡‡‡]
Avengers: Infinity War (2018)	3.50[§§§§]
Avengers: Endgame (2019)	4.10[*****]

[†††] Data submitted to the Cinemetrics Database on August 24, 2021, by Tara Lomax. Accessed on September 22, 2021. http://www.cinemetrics.lv/movie.php?movie_ID=27680
[‡‡‡] Data submitted to the Cinemetrics Database on August 25, 2021, by Tara Lomax. Accessed on September 22, 2021. http://www.cinemetrics.lv/movie.php?movie_ID=27681
[§§§] Data submitted to the Cinemetrics Database on October 15, 2021, by Tara Lomax. Accessed on October 17, 2021. http://www.cinemetrics.lv/movie.php?movie_ID=27701
[****] Data submitted to the Cinemetrics Database on October 17, 2021, by Tara Lomax. Accessed on October 17, 2021. http://www.cinemetrics.lv/movie.php?movie_ID=27702
[††††] Data submitted to Shot Logger on July 10, 2015. Accessed on September 22, 2021. http://www.shotlogger.org/TitleListDetail.php?recordID=971
[‡‡‡‡] Data submitted to the Cinemetrics Database on August 18, 2021, by Tara Lomax. Accessed on September 22, 2021. http://www.cinemetrics.lv/movie.php?movie_ID=27674
[§§§§] Data submitted to the Cinemetrics Database on March 9, 2020, by Youri Tonk. Accessed on September 22, 2021. http://www.cinemetrics.lv/movie.php?movie_ID=25951
[*****] Data submitted to the Cinemetrics Database on September 27, 2021, by Tara Lomax. Accessed on September 27, 2021. http://www.cinemetrics.lv/movie.php?movie_ID=27691

Reference List

Abel, Richard. 1988. *French Film Theory and Criticism, Volume 1*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Acland, Charles R. 2003. *Screen Traffic: Movies, Multiplexes, and Global Culture*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Acland, Charles R. 2020. *American Blockbuster: Movies, Technology, and Wonder*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Adorno, Theodor W., and Eisler, Hanns. 1994. *Composing for the Films*. New York: The Athlone Press.

Allen, Graham. 2011. *Intertextuality*. New York: Routledge.

Allen, Michael. 2003. "Talking About a Revolution: The Blockbuster as Industrial Advertisement." In *Movie Blockbusters*, edited by Julian Stringer, 101–113. London: Routledge.

Altman, Rick. 1999. *Film/Genre*. London: British Film Institute.

Andrew, Dudley. 1993. "The Unauthorized Auteur Today." In *Film Theory Goes to the Movies*, edited by Jim Collins, Hilary Radner, and Ava Preacher Collins, 77–85. New York: Routledge.

Apel, Willi, and Ralph T. Daniel. 2013. *The Harvard Brief Dictionary of Music*. Reprint. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Arnett, Robert. 2009. "*Casino Royale* and Franchise Remix: James Bond as Superhero." *Film Criticism* 33, no. 3: 1–16.

Arnett, Robert. 2015. "Understanding Tony Scott: Authorship and Post-Classical Hollywood." *Film Criticism* 39, no. 3: 48–67.

Arnheim, Rudolf. (1932) 1957. *Film as Art*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Askwith, Ivan. 2013. "Transmedia Architectures of Creation: An Interview with Ivan Askwith." By Jonathan Gray. In *A Companion to Media Authorship*, edited by Jonathan Gray and Derek Johnson, 314–323. Malden: John Wiley & Sons.

AT&T. 2021. "AT&T's WarnerMedia and Discovery, Inc. Creating Standalone Company by Combining Operations to Form New Global Leader in Entertainment." Press release, May 17, 2021. Accessed June 24, 2021. https://about.att.com/story/2021/warnermedia_discovery.html

Auletta, Ken. 2001. *The New Yorker* 77, no. 33: 050.

Bailey, Jason. 2013. *Pulp Fiction: The Complete Story of Quentin Tarantino's Masterpiece*. West Vancouver: Voyageur Press.

Baker, Djoymi. 2018. *To Boldly Go: Marketing the Myth of Star Trek*. London: I.B. Tauris.

Balides, Constance. 2000. "Jurassic Post-Fordism: Tall Tales of Economics in the Theme Park." *Screen* 41, no. 2: 139–160.

Ball, Matthew. 2019. "The Absurdities of 'Franchise Fever' and Sequelitis (Or, What Is Happening to the Box Office?!)." August 1, 2019. Accessed October 8, 2021. https://www.matthewball.vc/all/franchisefatigue

Barthes, Roland. 1974. *S/Z*. Translated by Richard Miller. Malden: Blackwell. Originally published as *S/Z*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil.

Barthes, Roland. 1977. *Image Music Text*. Edited and translated by Stephen Heath. London: Fontana Press.

Basuroy, Suman, and Subimal Chatterjee. 2008. "Fast and Frequent: Investigating Box Office Revenues of Motion Picture Sequels" in the *Journal of Business Research* 61: 798–803.

Batzke, Ina. 2020. "Series to Seriality: *Star Trek's* Mirror Universe in the Post-Network Era." In *Fighting for the Future: Essays on Star Trek Discovery*, edited by Sabrina Mittermeier and Mareike Spychala, 105–126. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.

Bazin, André. (1957) 1985. "On the politique des auteurs." Translated by Peter Graham. In *Cahiers du Cinéma the 1950s: Neo-Realism, Hollywood, New Wave*, edited by Jim Hillier, 248–259. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. Originally published as "de la politique des auteurs," *Cahiers du Cinéma* 70.

Bazin, André. (1967) 2005. *What is Cinema? Vol.* 1. Translated by Hugh Gray. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Belfiore, Elizabeth. 2000. "Narratological Plots and Aristotle's Mythos." *Arethusa* 33, no. 1: 37–70.

Bellour, Raymond. (1979) 2000. *The Analysis of Film*, edited by Constance Penley. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. Originally published as *L'analyse du film*. Paris: Calmann-Levy

Bellour, Raymond. 1979. "Cine-Repetitions." *Screen* 20, no. 2: 65–72.

Belton, John. 1993. *Widescreen Cinema*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Belton, John, Sheldon Hall, and Steve Neale., eds. 2010. *Widescreen Worldwide*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Bennett, Tony, and Janet Woollacott. 1987. *Bond and Beyond: The Political Career of a Popular Hero*. New York: Methuen, Inc.

Benson, Nicholas. 2019. "Create, Reboot, Repeat: Franchise Management and Textual Evolution in the Cultural Industries." PhD diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Bentley, Lionel, and Laura Biron. 2014. “The Author Strikes Back: Mutating Authorship in the Expanded Universe.” In *Law and Creativity in the Age of the Entertainment Franchise*, edited by Kathy Bowrey and Michael Handler, 29–51. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bernstein, Matthew. 2008. “The Producer as Auteur.” In *Auteurs and Authorship: A Film Reader*, edited by Barry Keith Grant, 180–189. Malden: Blackwell Publishers.

Bilton, Nick. 2017. “Why Hollywood As We Know it is Already Over.” *Vanity Fair*, January 29, 2017. https://www.vanityfair.com/news/2017/01/why-hollywood-as-we-know-it-is-already-over

Bertetti, Paolo. 2014. “Toward a Typology of Transmedia Characters.” *International Journal of Communication* 8: 2344–2361.

Birkeland, Peter M. 2002. *Franchising Dreams: The Lure of Entrepreneurship in America.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Biskind, Peter. 1998. *Easy Riders, Raging Bulls: How the Sex-Drugs-and-Rock ‘N Roll Generation Saved Hollywood*. New York: Simon & Shuster.

Blair Partnership, The. 2020. “About.” Retrieved November 27, 2020. Accessed September 15, 2021. https://web.archive.org/web/20201127005113/https://www.theblairpartnership.com/about/

Bolter, Jay David, and Grusin, Richard. 1999. *Remediation: Understanding New Media*. Cambridge: The MIT Press.

Boni, Marta. 2017. “Introduction: Worlds, Today.” In *World Building: Transmedia, Fans, Industries*, edited by Marta Boni, 9–27. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

Boozer, Jack. 2008. “Introduction: The Screenplay and Authorship in Adaptation.” In *Authorship in Film Adaptation*, edited by Jack Boozer, 1–30. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Bordwell, David. 1977. “Camera Movement and Cinematic Space.” *Ciné-Tracts* 1, no. 2: 19–25.

Bordwell, David. 1979. “The Art Cinema as a Mode of Film Practice.” *Film Criticism* 4, no. 1: 56-64.

Bordwell, David. 1985a. *Narration in the Fiction Film*. London: Routledge.

Bordwell, David. 1985b. “Widescreen Aesthetics and Mise-en-Scène Criticism.” *The Velvet Light Trap* 21: 118–125.

Bordwell, David. 1989. “Historical Poetics of Cinema.” In *The Cinematic Text: Methods and Approaches*, edited by R. Barton Palmer, 369–398. New York: AMS Press.

Bordwell, David. 1991. *Making Meaning: Inference and Rhetoric in the Interpretation of Cinema*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Bordwell, David. 1997. *On the History of Film Style*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Bordwell, David. 2002. "Intensified Continuity Visual Style in Contemporary American Film." *Film Quarterly* 55, no. 3: 16–28.

Bordwell, David. 2006. *The Way Hollywood Tells It: Story and Style in Modern Movies*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Bordwell, David. 2008. *Poetics of Cinema*. New York: Routledge.

Bordwell, David. 2019. "Captain Cinephilia: Scorsese Strikes Back." *Observations in Film Art*, November 21, 2019. Blog post. Accessed January 16, 2020. http://www.davidbordwell.net/blog/2019/11/21/captain-cinephilia-scorsese-strikes-back/

Bordwell, David, Janet Staiger, and Kristin Thompson. 1985. *The Classical Hollywood Cinema: Film Style & Mode of Production to 1960*. London: Routledge.

Bordwell, David, and Kristin Thompson. 1983. "Linearity, Materialism and the Study of Early American Cinema." *Wide Angle* 5, no. 3: 4–15.

Bordwell, David, and Kristin Thompson. 2011. *Minding Movies: Observations on the Arts, Craft, and Business of Filmmaking*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Bowrey, Kathy. 2011. "The New Intellectual Property: Celebrity, Fans and the Properties of the Entertainment Franchise." *Griffith New Review* 20, no.1: 188–220.

Bowrey, Kathy, and Michael Handler. 2014. "Franchise Dynamics, Creativity and the Law." In *Law and Creativity in the Age of the Entertainment Franchise*, edited by Kathy Bowrey and Michael Handler, 3–28. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bourdaa, Mèlanie. 2013. "Following the Pattern: The Creation of an Encyclopaedic Universe with Transmedia Storytelling." *Adaptation* 6, no. 2: 202–214.

Box Office Mojo. 2021. "Franchise: J.K. Rowling's Wizarding World." Box Office Mojo. Accessed September 15, 2021. https://www.boxofficemojo.com/franchise/fr558337797/?ref_=bo_frs_table_4

Branigan, Edward. 1984. *Point of View in the Cinema: A Theory of Narration and Subjectivity in Classical Film*. Berlin: Mouton Publisher.

Branigan, Edward. 1992. *Narrative Comprehension and Film*. London: Routledge.

Braudy, Leo. (1976) 2002. *The World in a Frame: What We See in Films*. 25th Anniversary ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Breznican, Anthony. 2020. “Ben Affleck With return as Batman in *The Flash*. *Vanity Fair*. August 20, 2020. Accessed September 17, 2021. https://www.vanityfair.com/hollywood/2020/08/ben-affleck-returns-batman-the-flash-multiverse-keaton

Bribitzer-Stull, Matthew. 2015. *Understanding the Leitmotif: From Wagner to Hollywood Film Music*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Brode, Douglas, and Shea T. Brode., eds. 2015. *The Star Trek Universe: Franchising the Final Frontier*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.

Brody, Richard. 2018. “‘Avengers: Infinity War’ Reviewed: The Latest Marvel Movie Is a Two-and-a-Half-Hour Ad for All the Previous Marvel Movies.” *The New Yorker*, April 27, 2018. Accessed September 8, 2021. https://www.newyorker.com/culture/richard-brody/avengers-infinity-war-reviewed-the-latest-marvel-movie-is-a-two-and-a-half-hour-ad-for-all-the-previous-marvel-movies

Brooker, Will. 2002. *Using the Force: Creativity, Community and Star Wars Fans*. New York: Continuum.

Brooker, Will. 2009. *Star Wars*. London: British Film Institute.

Brooker, M. Keith. 2012. “*Star Trek* and the Birth of a Film Franchise.” In *Science Fiction Film, Television, and Adaptation*, edited by J.P. Telotte and Gerald Duchovnay, 101–114. New York: Routledge.

Brown, James, Jr. 2009. “Essjay’s *Ethos*: Rethinking Textual Origins and Intellectual Property.” *College Composition and Communication* 61, no. 1: 238–258.

Brown, Tracy. 2018. “Commentary: ‘Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse’ is More Than a Movie. It’s a Comic Book Come to Life.” *Los Angeles Times*, December 18, 2018. Accessed June 28, 2021. https://www.latimes.com/entertainment/herocomplex/la-et-hc-spider-man-into-spider-verse-comic-book-art-20181218-story.html

Brown, Stephen, and Anthony Patterson. 2010. “Selling Stories: Harry Potter and the Marketing Plot.” *Psychology & Marketing* 27, no. 6: 541–556.

Bruhn, Jørgen. 2016. *The Intermediality of Narrative Literature: Medialities Matter*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Buckland, Warren. 2003. “The Role of the Auteur in the Age of the Blockbuster: Steven Spielberg.” In *Movie Blockbusters*, edited by Julian Stringer, 84–98. New York: Routledge.

Buckland, Warren. 2006. *Directed by Steven Spielberg: Poetics of the Contemporary Hollywood Blockbuster*. New York: Continuum.

Buckmaster, Luke. 2019. “Avengers: Endgame and the Apocalypse of Cinema,” April 25, 2019. Accessed September 7, 2021. https://dailyreview.com.au/avengers-endgame-apocalypse-cinema/

Budra, Paul, and Betty A. Schellenberg. 1998. “Introduction.” In *Part Two: Reflections on the Sequel*, edited by Paul Budra and Betty A. Schellenberg, 3–18. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Buhler, James, David Neumeyer, and Rob Deemer., eds. 2010. *Hearing the Movies: Music and Sound in Film History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bukatman, Scott. 1998. “Zooming Out: The End of Offscreen Space.” In *The New American Cinema*, edited by John Lewis, 248–272: Durham: Duke University Press.

Burke, Liam. 2015. *The Comic Book Film Adaptation: Exploring Modern Hollywood’s Leading Genre*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi.

Burke, Liam. 2018. “‘A Bigger Universe’: Marvel Studios and Transmedia Storytelling.” In *Assembling the Marvel Cinematic Universe: Essays on the Social, Cultural and Geopolitical Domains*, edited by Julian C. Chambliss, William L. Svitavsky and Daniel Fandino, 32–51. Jefferson: McFarland.

Butler, David. 2009. *Fantasy Cinema: Impossible Worlds on Screen*. London: Wallflower.

Calabrese, Omar. 1992. *Neo-Baroque: A Sign of the Times*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Calandro, Joseph Jr. 2019. “M&A Deal-Making: Disney, Marvel and the Value of ‘Hidden Assets.’” *Strategy & Leadership* 47, no. 3: 34–39.

Carroll, Noël. 1985a. “The Specificity of Media in the Arts.” *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 19, no. 5: 5–20.

Carroll, Noël. 1985b. “The Power of Movies.” *Daedalus* 114, no. 4: 79–103.

Carroll, Noël. 1988. *Philosophy Problems of Classical Film Theory*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Carroll, Noël. 2008. *The Philosophy of Motion Pictures*. Malden: Blackwell Publishing.

Carroll, Noël. 1998. “Film Form: An Argument for a Functional Theory of Style in the Individual Film.” *Style* 32, no. 3: 385–401.

Cartmell, Deborah, Timothy Corrigan, and Imelda Whelehan. “Introduction to Adaptation.” *Adaptation* 1, no. 1: 1–4.

Cartmell, Deborah, and Imelda Whelehan. 2010. *Screen Adaptation: Impure Cinema*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Cavell, Stanley. 1979. *The World Viewed: Reflections on the Ontology of Film*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Cawelti, John G. 1969. “The Concept of Formula in the Study of Popular Literature.” *The Journal of Popular Culture* 3, np. 3: 381–390.

Cawelti, John G. 1976. *Adventure, Mystery, and Romance: Formula Stories as Art and Popular Culture*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Chapman, James. 2008. *Licence to Thrill: A Cultural History of the James Bond Films*. New Revised Edition. Originally published 1999. London: I.B. Tauris.

Chapman, James. 2017. "'A Thoroughly English Movie Franchise': *Spectre*, the James Bond Films, and Genre." *The International Journal of James Bond Studies* 1, no. 1: 1–22.

Chion, Michel. 1994. *Audio-Vision: Sound on Screen*. Translated by Claudia Gorbman. New York: Columbia University Press.

Chion, Michel. 1999. *The Voice in Cinema*. Edited and translated by Claudia Gorbman. New York: Columbia University Press.

Chion, Michel. 2009. *Film, A Sound Art*. Translated by Claudia Gorbman. New York: Columbia University Press.

Cinemetrics, n.d. "Barry Salt's Database." Accessed September 22, 2021. http://www.cinemetrics.lv/satltdb.php#asl

Coleman, Lindsay, and Joakim Tillman., eds. 2007. *Contemporary Film Music: Investigating Cinema Narratives and Composition*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Connor, J.D. 2015. *The Studios after the Studios: Neoclassical Hollywood (1970–2010)*. Standford: Stanford University Press.

Conway, Richard. 2013. "Star Trek, Before Darkness: 47 Years of Starship Designs." *Time*. May 16, 2013. Access September 17, 2021. https://entertainment.time.com/2013/05/17/star-trekkin-a-geeks-guide-to-the-uss-enterprise/

Cook, David A. 2000. *Lost Illusions: American Cinema in the Shadow of Watergate and Vietnam, 1970–1979*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Cooke, Mervyn. 2008. *A History of Film Music*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Corrigan, Timothy. 1998, "Auteurs and the New Hollywood." In *The New American Cinema*, edited by Jon Lewis, 38–63. Durham: Duke University Press.

Cossar, Harper. 2011. *Letterboxed: The Evolution of Widescreen Cinema*. Lexington: University of Kentucky Press.

Cubitt, Sean. 2002. "Digital Filming and Special Effects." In *The New Media Book*, edited by Dan Harries, 17–29. London: BFI Publishing.

Cubitt, Sean. 2004. *The Cinema Effect*. Cambridge: The MIT Press.

Daigle, Allain. 2015. "(Post)Production: Classifications and Infrastructures of Digital Visual Effects." *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 32., no. 3: 161–176.

Dalecki, Linden. 2008. “Hollywood Media Synergy as IMC.” *Journal of Integrated Marketing Communications* 8, no. 1: 47–52.

Decherney, Peter. 2012. *Hollywood’s Copyright Wars: From Edison to the Internet.* New York: Columbia University Press.

D’Oria, Tadeo. “Starfleet Combadges and Insignias.” Tadeo D’Oria. Accessed September 17, 2021. https://tadeodoria.com/projects/KVPVo

Dena, Christy. 2009. “Transmedia Practice: Theorising the Practice of Expressing a Fictional World Across Distinct Media and Environments.” PhD diss., The University of Sydney.

Dena, Christy. 2019. “Transmedia Adaptation: Revisiting the No-Adaptation Rule.” In *The Routledge Companion to Transmedia Studies,* edited by Matthew Freeman and Renira Rampazzo Gambarato, 195–206. New York: Routledge.

Denison, Shane, and Julia Leyda. 2016. “Perspectives on Post-Cinema: An Introduction.” In *Post-Cinema: Theorizing 21st-Century Film*, edited by Shane Denison and Julia Leyda, 1–19. Falmer: Reframe Books.

Derhy Kurtz, Benjamin W.L. 2017. “Set in Stone: Issues of Canonicity in Transtexts.” In *The Rise of Transtexts: Challenges and Opportunities*, edited by Benjamin W.L Derhy Kurtz and Mélanie Bourdaa, 105–118. New York: Routledge.

De Vany, Arthur. 2004. *Hollywood Economics: How Extreme Uncertainty Shapes the Film Industry*. London. Routledge.

Dicke, Thomas S. 1992. *Franchising in America: The Development of a Business Method, 1840–1980*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Doane, Mary Ann. 2007. “The Indexical and the Concept of Medium Specificity.” *differences: A Journal of Feminist Critical Studies* 18, no. 1: 128–152.

Donnelly, K.J., ed. 2001. In *Film Music: Critical Approaches*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Douglas, Edward. 2010. “Exclusive: Marvel Studios Production Head Kevin Feige.” *SuperHero Hype*. April 26, 2010. Accessed September 18, 2021. https://www.superherohype.com/features/100681-exclusive-marvel-studios-production-head-kevin-feige

Dowd, Tom. 2015. *Transmedia: One Story, Many Media*. Boca Raton: CRC Press.

Dowd, Tom, Michael Niederman, Michael Fry, and Josef Steiff. 2013. *Storytelling Across Worlds: Transmedia for Creatives and Productions*. Burlington: Focal Press.

Dulac, Nicolas, and André Gaudreault. 2004. “Circularity and Repetition at the Heart of the Attraction: Optical Toys and the Emergence of a New Cultural Series.” In *Cinema of Attractions Reloaded*, edited by Wanda Strauven, 277–245. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

Eco, Umberto. 1979. *The Role of the Reader: Explorations in the Semiotics of Texts*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Eco, Umberto. 1985. “Innovation and Repetition: Between Modern and Post-Modern Aesthetics.” *Daedalus* 114, no. 4:

Eco, Umberto. 1989. *The Open Work*. Translated by Anna Cancogni. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Economist, The. 2001. “Harry Potter and the Synergy Test.” Business, 361, no. 8247: 59–60. Accessed September 15, 2021. https://www.economist.com/business/2001/11/08/harry-potter-and-the-synergy-test

Economist, The. 2003. “Harry Potter and the Merchandising Gold.” Business, 867, no. 8329, June 19, 2003. Accessed September 15, 2021. https://www.economist.com/business/2003/06/19/harry-potter-and-the-merchandising-gold

Economist, The. 2013. “Split Screens: A Tale of Two Tinseltowns.” Business, 406, no. 8824: 61.

Elleström, Lars. 2010. “The Modalities of Media: A Model for Understanding Intermedial Relations.” In *Media Borders, Multimodality and Intermediality*, edited by Lars Ellestöm, 11–50. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Elsaesser, Thomas. 1998. “Fantasy Island: Dream Logic as Production Logic.” In *Cinema Futures: Cain, Abel or Cable?*, edited by Thomas Elsaesser and Kay Hoffmann, 143–158. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

Elsaesser, Thomas. 2012. *The Persistence of Hollywood*. New York: Routledge.

Epstein, Edward Jay. 2005. “The Midas Formula.” *Slate*, May 31, 2005. Accessed June 24, 2021. https://slate.com/culture/2005/05/how-to-create-a-billion-dollar-movie-franchise.html

Epstein, Jean. (1921) 1977. “Magnification.” Translated by Stuart Leibman. *October* 3: 9–15. Originally published as “Grossissment.” Tn *Bonjour Cinema*, 93–108. Paris: Editions de la sirène.

Epstein, Jean. (1924) 1981. “On Certain Characteristics of *Photogénie*.” Translated by Tom Milne. *Afterimage* 10: 20–23. Originally published as “De quelques conditions de la photogénie” in *Cinéa-Ciné-pour-tous* 19: 6–8.

Evans, Elizabeth. 2011. *Transmedia Television: Audiences, New Media, and Daily Life*. New York: Routledge.

Evangelista, Chris. 2018. “Why ‘Fallen Kingdom’ is the First ‘Jurassic Park’ Movie Shot in CinemaScope.” *SlashFilm*. April 24, 2018. Accessed September 18, 2021. https://www.slashfilm.com/557728/fallen-kingdom-aspect-ratio/

Failes, Ian. 2015. “Casting the Vendors on *Avengers*.” *FX Guide*. May 4, 2015. Accessed September 18, 2021. https://www.fxguide.com/fxfeatured/casting-the-vendors-on-avengers/

Fidler, Roger F. 1997. *Mediamorphosis: Understanding New Media*. Thousand Oaks: Pine Forge Press.

Finke, Nikki. 2010. “Producers Guild of America Agrees on New Credit: ‘Transmedia Producer.’” *Deadline*. April 5, 2010. Accessed September 17, 2021. https://deadline.com/2010/04/producers-guild-of-america-vote-on-creation-of-new-credit-transmedia-producer-30751/

Fisher, Bob. 2019. “*Jurassic Park*: When Dinosaurs Rule the Box Office.” *American Cinematographer Magazine*. October 18, 2019. Accessed September 18, 2021. https://ascmag.com/articles/jurassic-park-when-dinosaurs-rule-the-box-office

Fitzsimmons, Rebekah. 2012. “Testing the Tastemakers: Children’s Literature, Bestseller Lists, and the ‘Harry Potter Effect,’” *Children’s Literature* 40: 78–107.

Flanagan, Martin, Andrew Livingstone, and Mike McKenny. 2016. *The Marvel Studios Phenomenon: Inside a Transmedia Universe*. New York: Bloomsbury Publishing.

Fleming, Charles. 1998. *High Concept: Don Simpson and the Hollywood Culture of Excess*. New York: Doubleday.

Fleury, James, Bryan Hikari Hartzheim, and Stephen Mamber. 2019. “Introduction: The Franchise Era.” In *The Franchise Era: Managing Media in the Digital Economy*, edited by Bryan Hikari Hartzheim, James Fleury, and Stephen Mamber, 1–30. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Fleury, James, and Stephen Mamber. 2019. “The (Im)Perfect Organism: Dissecting the Alien Media Franchise.” In *The Franchise Era: Managing Media in the Digital Economy*, edited by Bryan Hikari Hartzheim, James Fleury, and Stephen Mamber, 31–51. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Flew, Terry. 2008. *New Media: An Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Flood, Alison. 2016. “Has Harry Potter Made the Trend for Longer Children’s Books Fly?” *The Guardian*, March 4, 2016. Accessed September 15, 2021. https://www.theguardian.com/books/2016/mar/03/harry-potter-trend-for-much-longer-childrens-books-booklist-jk-rowling

Fowkes, Katherine. 2010. *The Fantasy Film*. Malden: Blackwell Publishing.

Freeman, Matthew. 2014. “*Superman*: Building a Transmedia World for a Comic Book Hero.” In *Transmedia Archeology: Storytelling in the Borderlines of Science Fiction, Comics and Pulp Magazines*, edited by Carlos Scolari, Paolo Bertetti, and Matthew Freeman, 39–54. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Freeman, Matthew. 2017. *Historicizing Transmedia Storytelling: Early Twentieth-Century Transmedia Storyworlds*. New York: Routledge.

Fritz, Ben. 2018. *The Big Picture: The Fight for the Future of Movies*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

Gaafar, Rania, and Schultz, Martin. 2014. "Post-Media Technologies of Desire: Performances of Images." *Technology and Desire: The Transgressive Art of Moving Images*, edited by Rania Gaafar and Martin Schultz, 1–22. Bristol: Intellect Books.

Gaines, Jane., ed. 1992. *Classical Hollywood Narrative: The Paradigm Wars*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Galligan, Anne. 2007. "Truth is Strange Than Magic: The Marketing of Harry Potter." *Screen Education* 35: 36–41.

Gardner, Eriq. 2013. "Warner Bros. Partners with J.K. Rowling on 'Harry Potter'-Inspired Film Series." *The Hollywood Reporter*, September 12, 2013. Accessed June 23, 2021. https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/news/new-harry-potter-movie-jk-628244

Gardner, Kelvyn. 2016. "Fantastic Beasts Release Shows the Magic in Brand Reinvention." *Campaign*, November 22, 2016. Accessed September 22, 2021. https://www.campaignlive.co.uk/article/fantastic-beasts-release-shows-magic-brand-reinvention/1416310

Gaudreault, André, and Philippe Marion. 2002. "The Cinema as a Model for the genealogy of Media." *Convergence* 8, no. 4: 12–18.

Gaudreault, André, and Tom Gunning. (1986) 2006. "Early Cinema as a Challenge to Film History." Translated by Joyce Goggin and Wanda Strauven. In *Cinema of Attractions Reloaded*, edited by Wanda Strauven, 365–380. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press. Originally published as "Le cinéma des premiers temps: un défi à l'histoire du cinéma?" *Histoire du cinéma. Nouvelles approches*, edited by Jacques Aumont, André Gaudreault and Michel Marie, 49–63 Paris: Sorbonne/Colloque de Cerisy.

Genette, Gérard. (1979) 1992. *The Architext: An Introduction*. Translated by Jane E. Lewin. Berkeley: University of California Press. Originally published as *Introduction à l'architexte*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil.

Genette, Gérard. 1980. *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method.* Translated by Jane E. Lewin. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Genette, Gérard. (1982) 1997. *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree*. Translated by Channa Newman & Claude Doubinsky. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press. Originally published as *Palimpsestes: La littérature au second degré***.** Paris: Éditions du Seuil.

Genette, Gérard. (1987) 1997. *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*. Translated by Jane E. Lewin. Cambridge: University of Cambridge. Originally published as *Seils*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil.

Genette, Gérard. (1994) 1997. *The Work of Art: Immanence and Transcendence*. Translated by G.M. Goshgarian. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. Originally published as *L'Oevere de l'art: Immanence et Transcendence*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil.

Genette, Gérard. 1999. *The Aesthetic Relation*. Translated by G.M. Goshgarian. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

George, Alexandra. 2012. *Constructing Intellectual Property*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Gibbs, John. 2002. *Mise-en-Scène: Film Style and Interpretation*. London: Wallflower.

Gibbs, John, and Douglas Pye. 2017. "Introduction 1: The Long Take—Critical Approaches." In *The Long Take: Critical Approaches*, edited by John Gibbs and Douglas Pye, 1 – 27. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Golding, Dan. 2019. *Star Wars After Lucas: A Critical Guide to the Future of the Galaxy*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Gomez, Jeff. 2017. "10 Keys to Building Successful Shared Universe Movie Franchises: A Memo to Studio Executives." *Medium*, June 13, 2017. Access September 9, 2021. https://medium.com/@Jeff_Gomez/10-keys-to-building-successful-shared-universe-movie-franchises-a9d983884ad3

Gomez, Jeff. 2018. "The Self-Disruption of Star Wars." *Collective Journey*. January 24, 2018. Accessed September 17, 2021. https://blog.collectivejourney.com/the-self-disruption-of-star-wars-ae3311bedc08

Gomez, Jeff. 2019a. "Talking Franchises: The World of Transmedia Development with Jeff Gomez." By Tara Lomax. *Assembled Illusions*, March 1, 2019. Accessed July 12, 2021. https://assembledillusions.wordpress.com/2019/03/01/talking-franchises-jeff-gomez/

Gomez, Jeff. 2019b. "Transmedia Developer: Success at Multiplatform Narrative Requires a Journey to the Heart of Story." In *The Routledge Companion to Transmedia Studies*, 207–213. New York: Routledge.

Gorbman, Claudia. 1987. *Unheard Melodies: Narrative Film Music*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Grainge, Paul. 2004. "Branding Hollywood: Studio Logos and the Aesthetics of Memory and Hype." *Screen* 45, no. 4: 344–362.

Grainge, Paul. 2008. *Brand Hollywood: Selling Entertainment in a Global Media Age*. New York: Routledge.

Grant, Barry Keith. 1986. "Introduction". In *Film Genre Reader IV*, edited by Barry Keith Grant, xvii–xxii. Austin: The University of Texas Press.

Grant, Barry Keith. 2007. *Film Genre: Film Iconography to Ideology*. London: Wallflower.

Grant, Catherine. 2000. "www.auteur.com?" *Screen* 41, n. 1: 101–108.

Grant, Catherine. 2008. "Auteur Machines? Auteurism and the DVD." In *Film and Television After DVD*, edited by James Bennett and Tom Brown, 101–115. New York: Routledge.

Gray, Jonathan. 2010. *Show Sold Separately: Promos, Spoilers, and Other Media Paratexts*. New York: New York University Press.

Gray, Jonathan. 2013. "When is the Author?" In *A Companion to Media Authorship*, edited by Jonathan Gray and Derek Johnson, 88–111. Malden: John Wiley & Sons.

Greene, Jayson. 2018. "The Rebirth of 'the Oner': How Single-Take Shots Invaded Franchise Movies." *The Ringer*. June 6, 2018. Accessed September 18, 2021. https://www.theringer.com/movies/2018/6/6/17432142/black-panther-last-jedi-oner-single-take-shot-ryan-coogler-rian-johnson

Greig, James. 2020. "The Four Reasons Why Hollywood Stopped Making New Stories." *Vice*. December 12, 2020. Accessed September 17, 2021. https://www.vice.com/en/article/bvx7m4/hollywood-franchises-remakes-reboots-why

Grey, Thomas S. 2008. "Leitmotif, Temporality, and Musical Design in the *Ring*." In *The Cambridge Companion to Wagner*, edited by Thomas S. Grey, 85–114. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Gunelius, Susan. 2008. *Harry Potter: The Story of a Global Business Phenomenon*. Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan.

Gunning, Tom. 1990. "The Cinema of Attractions: Early Film, Its Spectator and the Avant-Garde." In *Early Cinema: Space, Frame, Narrative*, edited by Thomas Elsaesser and Adam Barker, 56–62. London: BFI Publishing.

Guynes, Sean and Dan Hassler-Forest., eds. 2017. *Star Wars and the History of Transmedia Storytelling*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

Hagedorn, Roger C. 1995. "Doubtless to be Continued: A Brief History of Serial Narrative." In *To Be Continued…: Soap Operas Around the World*, edited by Roger Hagedorn, 27–48. London: Routledge.

Hagener, Malte, Vinzenz Hediger, and Alena Strohmaier., eds. 2016. *The State of Post-Cinema: Tracing the Moving Image in the Age of Digital Dissemination*. London: Palgrave Macmilllan.

Hall, Sheldon, & Steve Neale. 2010. *Epics, Spectacles, and Blockbusters: A Hollywood History*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press.

Harding, Anthony John. 2012. Authorship, Genre, and Copyright in the Romantic Period: Introduction." *ESC: English Studies in Canada* 38, no. 2: 25–28.

Hardy, Jonathan. 2010. *Cross-Media Promotion*. New York: Peter Lang.

Harris, Charles. 2016. *Jaws in Space: Powerful Pitching for Film and TV Screenwriters*. Harpenden: Oldcastle Books.

Hartley, John. 2013. “Authorship and the Narrative of the Self.” In *A Companion to Media Authorship*, edited by Jonathan Gray and Derek Johnson, 23–47. Malden: John Wiley & Sons.

Harvey, Colin. 2015. *Fantastic Transmedia: Narrative, Play and Memory Across Science Fiction and Fantasy Storyworlds*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Hearn, Marcus. 2005. *The Cinema of George Lucas*. New York: Abrams.

Herbert, Daniel. 2018. *Film Remakes and Franchises*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

Herman, David. 2009. *Basic Elements of Narrative*. Malden: John Wiley.

Higgins, Bill. 2019. “Hollywood Flashback: The ‘Star Wars’ Holiday Special Got Past George Lucas in 1978.” *The Hollywood Reporter*. December 25, 2019. Accessed October 1, 2021. https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/movies/movie-news/hollywood-flashback-star-wars-holiday-special-got-past-george-lucas-1978-1263309/

Hillier, Jim., ed. 1985. *Cahiers du Cinéma the 1950s: Neo-Realism, Hollywood, New Wave*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Hillier, Jim. 1993. *The New Hollywood.* New York: Continuum.

Hoberman, James. 1985. “Ten Years that Shook the World.” *American Film* 10 (June): 34–59.

Hollands, David. 2010. “Toward a New Category of Remake: A First Analysis of the Reboot.” *Film Matters* 1, no. 3: 9–13.

Hornaday, Ann. 1998. “Movies Have Gone Rotten, but Maybe Not Forever After 20 Years of 'High Concept' Commercialism, is Art Waking Up?” *The Baltimore Sun*, April 26, 1998. Accessed September 15, 2021. https://www.baltimoresun.com/news/bs-xpm-1998-04-26-1998116067-story.html

Hutcheon, Linda. 2006. *A Theory of Adaptation*. New York: Routledge.

Hutcheon, Linda, and Siobhan O’ Flynn. 2013. Preface to the Second Edition. *A Theory of Adaptation*. 2nd ed. London: Routledge.

ILM. 2013. “ILM: Behind the Magic in Marvel Studios’ *The Avengers*,” YouTube video, 00.04.43, January 11, 2013. Accessed September 7, 2021, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MnQLjZSX7xM

Ireland, Ken. 2001. *The Sequential Dynamics of Narrative: Energies at the Margins of Fiction*. London: Associated University Presses.

Isaacs, Bruce. 2011. “Art, Image and Spectacle in High Concept Cinema.” In *The Films of James Cameron: Critical Essays*, edited by Matthew Wilhelm Kapell and Stephen McVeigh, 90–108. Jefferson: McFarland.

Isaacs, Bruce. 2015. “The Mechanics of Continuity in Michael Bay’s *Transformers* Franchise.” *Senses of Cinema* 75. http://www.sensesofcinema.com/2015/michael-bay-dossier/michael-bay-transformers-continuity/

Jagernauth, Kevin. 2015. “Danny Elfman Says He’s Working on a ‘Hybrid’ Theme for ‘Avengers: Age of Ultron,’ Plus New Poster.” *IndieWire*, May 16, 2021. Accessed June 24, 2021. https://www.indiewire.com/2015/03/danny-elfman-says-hes-working-on-a-hybrid-theme-for-avengers-age-of-ultron-plus-new-poster-266248/

Jamieson, Natalie. 2016. “More Star Wars & Marvel Films Coming.” *BBC*, January 26, 2016. Accessed September 14, 2021. https://www.bbc.com/news/newsbeat-35354293

Jenkins, Henry. 1995. “Historical Poetics.” In *Approaches to Popular Film*, edited by Joanne Hollows and Mark Jancovich, 99–122. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Jenkins, Henry. 2003. “Transmedia Storytelling.” *Technology Review*, January 15, 2003. Accessed June 23, 2021. https://www.technologyreview.com/2003/01/15/234540/transmedia-storytelling/

Jenkins, Henry. 2006. *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*. New York: New York University Press.

Jenkins, Henry. 2007. “Transmedia Storytelling 101.” *Confessions of an Aca Fan*, March 21, 2007. Accessed September 9, 2021. http://henryjenkins.org/blog/2007/03/transmedia_storytelling_101.html

Jenkins, Henry. 2009. “‘Just Men in Tights:’ Rewriting Silver Age Comics in an Era of Multiplicity.” In *The Contemporary Comic Book Superhero*, edited by Angela Ndalianis, 16–43. New York: Routledge.

Jenkins, Henry. 2011. “Transmedia 202: Further Reflections.” *Confessions of an Aca Fan*, July 31, 2011. Accessed September 9, 2021. http://henryjenkins.org/blog/2011/08/defining_transmedia_further_re.html

Jenkins, Henry. 2017a. “On Cinema and Convergence.” *Revista Brasileira de Estudos de Cinema e Audiovisual* 6, no. 1: 1–11.

Jenkins, Henry, 2017b. “Transmedia Logics and Locations.” In *The Rise of Transtexts: Challenges and Opportunities*, edited by Benjamin W.L Derhy Kurtz and Mélanie Bourdaa, 220–240. New York: Routledge.

Jess-Cooke, Carolyn. 2009. *Film Sequels: Theory and Practice from Hollywood to Bollywood*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Jess-Cooke, Carolyn, and Constantine Verevis. 2010. “Introduction.” In *Second Takes: Critical Approaches to the Film Sequel*, edited by Carolyn Jess-Cooke and Constantine Verevis, 1–10. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Johansson, Christer, and Sonya Petersson. 2018. “Introduction.” In *The Power of the In-Between: Intermediality as a Tool for Aesthetic Analysis and Critical Reflection*, edited by

Sonja Petersson, Christer Johansson, Magdalena Holdar, and Sara Callahan.1–24. Sweden: Stockholm University Press.

Johnson, Derek. 2008. “A Knight of the Realm vs. the Master of Magnetism: Sexuality, Stardom, and Character Branding.” *Popular Communication* 6: 214–230.

Johnson, Derek. 2010. *Learning to Share: The Relational Logics of Media Franchising*. Convergence Culture Consortium White Paper.

Johnson, Derek. 2012. “Cinematic Destiny: Marvel Studios and the Trade Stories of Industrial Convergence.” *Cinema Journal* 52, no. 1: 1–24.

Johnson, Derek. 2013. *Media Franchising: Creative License and Collaboration in the Creative Industries*. New York: New York University Press.

Johnson, Derek. 2014. “Rethinking the ‘Value’ of Entertainment Franchises: An Interview with Derek Johnson (Part Two).” *Confessions of an Aca-Fan*, January 16, 2014. Accessed July 12, 2021. http://henryjenkins.org/blog/2014/01/rethinking-the-value-of-entertainment-franchises-an-interview-with-derek-johnson-part-two.html

Johnson, Derek, and Jonathan Gray. 2013. “Introduction: The Problem of Media Authorship.” In *A Companion to Media Authorship*, edited by Jonathan Gray and Derek Johnson, 1–22. Malden: John Wiley & Sons.

Kael, Pauline. 1963. “Circles and Squares.” *Film Quarterly* 16, no. 3: 12–26.

Kapell, Matthew, and William G. Doty., eds. 2004. *Jacking it to the Matrix Franchise: Cultural Reception and Interpretation*. New York: Continuum.

Kapell, Matthew and John Shelton Lawrence., eds. 2006. *Finding the Force of the Star Wars Franchise: Fans, Merchandise, and Critics*. New York: Peter Yang.

Kapell, Matthew Wilhelm. 2006. “Conclusion: Finding Myth in the History of Your Own Time.” In *Finding the Force of the Star Wars Franchise: Fans, Merchandise, and Critics*, edited by Matthew Kapell and John Shelton Lawrence, 283–290. New York: Peter Yang.

Katz, Brendon. 2020. “We Almost Had a ‘Game of Thrones’ Movie Trilogy, George R.R. Martin Says.” *Observer*, January 22, 2020. Accessed June 27, 2021. https://observer.com/2020/01/hbo-game-of-thrones-movies-finale-george-rr-martin/

Kelly, Sean. 2020. “Let’s Revisit the History of the Starfleet Insignia.” StarTrek.com. January 28, 2020. Accessed September 17, 2021. https://intl.startrek.com/news/lets-revisit-the-history-of-the-starfleet-insignia

Kennedy-Karpat, Colleen. 2017. “Trash Cinema and Oscar Gold: Quentin Tarantino, Intertextuality, and Industrial Prestige.” In *Adaptation, Awards, Culture, and the Value of Prestige*, edited by Colleen Kennedy-Karpat and Eric Sandberg, 173–192. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Kinder, Marsha. 1991. *Playing with Power in Movies, Television, and Video Games*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Kinder, Marsha. 2014. "Medium Specificity and Productive Precursors: An Introduction." In *Transmedia Frictions: The Digital, the Arts, and the Humanities*, edited by Marsha Kinder and Tara McPherson, 1–19. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Kinder, Marsha, and Tara McPherson., eds. 2014. *Transmedia Frictions: The Digital, the Arts, and the Humanities*. Berkeley: University of California Press

King, Geoff. 2000. *Spectacular Narratives: Hollywood in the Age of the Blockbuster*. London: I.B. Tauris.

King, Geoff. 2002. *New Hollywood Cinema: An Introduction*. London: I.B. Tauris.

King, Noel. 2004. "'The Last Good Time We Ever Had': Remembering the New Hollywood Cinema." In *The Last Great American Picture Show: New Hollywood Cinema in the 1970s*, edited by Thomas Elsaesser, Alexander Horwath, and Noel King, 19–36, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

Kirkpatrick, Emily. 2020. "J.K. Rowling Proves Her Commitment to Transphobia in Her New Novel." *Vanity Fair*, September 14, 2020. https://www.vanityfair.com/style/2020/09/jk-rowling-transphobia-new-novel-troubled-blood-controversy

Kitchens, Juliette C., and Julie L. Hawk. 2019. "Exploring a Whedonverse, the Whedonverses, and the Whedonverse (s): The Shape of Transmedia Storytelling in Joss Whedon's World (s)." In *Transmediating the Whedonverse(s): Essays on Texts, Paratexts, and Metatexts*, 1–15. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Klimo, Mike. 2015. "Parallel Journeys: Why the *Star Wars* Films Are More Connected Than You Think." StarWars.com. October 5, 2015. Accessed September 14, 2021. https://www.starwars.com/news/parallel-journeys-why-the-star-wars-films-are-more-connected-than-you-think

Kolker, Robert. 2015. *Film, Form, and Culture*, 4th ed., London, Routledge.

Kramer, Peter. 1998. "Post-Classical Hollywood." In *The Oxford Guide to Film Studies*, edited by John Hill and Pamela Church Gibson, 289–309. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Krämer, Peter. 2005. *The New Hollywood: From Bonnie and Clyde to Star Wars*. London: Wallflower.

Kring-Schreifels, Jake. 2020. "Casino Royale's Poker Scene Was as Elaborate as a James Bond Stunt." *Polygon*. November 26, 2020. Accessed September 18, 2021. https://www.polygon.com/21623336/james-bond-casino-royale-poker-scene-breakdown

Kristeva, Julia. (1969) 1980. *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*. Translated by Thomas Gora, Alice Jardine, and Leon S. Roudiez. New York: Columbia University Press. Originally published as *Séméiôtiké: recherches pour une sémanalyse*, Paris, Éditions du Seuil.

Labarre, Nicolas. 2020. *Understanding Genres in Comics*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.

Lancashire, Anne. 2000. "*The Phantom Menace*: Repetition, Variation, Integration." *Film Criticism* 24, no. 3: 23–44.

Lang, Brent, and Todd Spangler. 2021. "Amazon Buys MGM, Studio Behind James Bond, for $8.45 Billion." *Variety*, May 26, 2021. Accessed June 23, 2021. https://variety.com/2021/digital/news/amazon-buys-mgm-studio-behind-james-bond-for-8-45-billion-1234980526/

Langford, Barry. 2010. *Post-Classical Hollywood: Film Industry, Style and Ideology Since 1945*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Laporte, Nicole. 2018. "The $25 Billion Question: Is Harry Potter a Blessing or a Curse for AT&T Time Warner?" *Fast Company*. May 15, 2018. Accessed September 15, 2021. https://www.fastcompany.com/40570921/is-harry-potter-a-blessing-or-a-curse-for-att-timewarner?utm_source=postup&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Fast%20Company%20Daily&position=2&partner=newsletter&campaign_date=05152018

Laurichesse, Hélène. 2017. "Considering Transtexts as Brands." Translated by Katherine Taylor. In *The Rise of Transtexts: Challenges and Opportunities*, edited by Benjamin W.L Derhy Kurtz and Mélanie Bourdaa, 187–203. New York: Routledge.

Lavery, David. 2014. *Joss Whedon, A Creative Portrait: From Buffy the Vampire Slayer to Marvel's The Avengers*. London: I.B. Tauris.

Leach, Jim. 2009. "'The World Has Changed': Bond in the 1990s—and Beyond." In *The James Bond Phenomenon: A Critical Reader*. 2nd edn., edited by Christoph Linder, 301–311. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Lee, Kevin B. 2011. "The Spielberg Face." Vimeo video. 00.0939. Accessed September 18, 2021. https://vimeo.com/199572277

Leitch, Thomas. 2005. "The Adaptor as Auteur: Hitchcock, Kubrick, Disney." In *Books in Motion: Adaptation, Intertextuality. Authorship*, edited by Mireia Aragay, 107–124. Amsterdam: Rodopi.

Leitch, Thomas. 2007. *Film Adaptation and Its Discontents: From Gone with the Wind to The Passion of the Christ*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.

Lewis, Jon. 1998. "Money Matters: Hollywood in the Corporate Era." In *The New American Cinema*, edited by Jon Lewis, 87–124. Durham: Duke University Press.

Lewis, Jon. 2003. "The Perfect Money Machine(s): George Lucas, Steven Spielberg and Auteurism in the New Hollywood." *Film International* 1: 14–26.

Lindsay, David. 2014. "Franchises, Imaginary Worlds, Authorship and Fandom." In *Law and Creativity in the Age of the Entertainment Franchise*, edited by Kathy Bowrey and Michael Handler, 52–74. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Link, Stan. 2009. “Leitmotif: Persuasive Musical Narration.” In *Sound and Music in Film and Visual Media: A Critical Overview*, edited by Graeme Harper, Ruth Doughty and Jochen Eisentraut, 180–193. London: Bloomsbury.

Lomax, Tara. 2017. “‘Thank the Maker! George Lucas, Lucasfilm, and the Legends of Transtextual Authorship Across the Star Wars Franchise.” In *Star Wars and the History of Transmedia Storytelling*, edited by Sean Guynes and Dan Hassler-Forest, 35–48. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

Lomax, Tara. 2018. “‘That’s Not How the Force Works!’ Rebooting the Franchise Mythos in *Star Wars: The Last Jedi*.” *Assembled Illusions*. January 15, 2018. Accessed September 18, 2021. https://assembledillusions.wordpress.com/2018/01/15/thats-not-how-the-force-works/

Lomax, Tara. 2019a. “‘Make it in Post’: Digital Visual Effects and the Temporality of Creative Value in Post-Production.” In *The Palgrave Companion to Screen Production*, edited by Craig Batty, Marsha Berry, Kath Dooley, Bettina Frankham, and Susan Kerrigan, 269–280. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Lomax, Tara. 2019b. “Practicing Superhuman Law: Creative License, Industrial Identity, and Spider-Man’s Homecoming.” In *The Superhero Symbol: Media, Culture, and Politics*, edited by Liam Burke, Ian Gordon, and Angela Ndalianis, 118–134. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

Lomax. Tara. 2020. “‘You Were the Chosen One!’: Darth Vader and the Sequential Dynamics of Villainy in the Star Wars Prequel Trilogy.” In *The Supervillain Reader*, edited by Robert G. Weiner and Robert Moses Peaselee, 214–223.Oxford: University Press of Mississippi.

Lomax, Tara. 2021. “Cruising Stardom in Hollywood Franchising: Tom Cruise as Franchise Star in the *Mission: Impossible* and *Dark Universe* Storyworlds.” In *Starring Tom Cruise*, edited by Sean Redmond, 187–208. Detroit: Wayne State University Press.

Long, Geoffrey. 2007. “Transmedia Storytelling: Business, Aesthetics and Production at the Jim Henson Company.” Master’s thesis, Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Longworth, Karina. 2012. *Masters of Cinema: George Lucas*. London: Phaidon Press.

Lowry, Brian. 2017. “Studios Catch Monstrous Case of Franchise Fever.” *CNN Entertainment*, June 7, 2017. Accessed September 8, 2021. https://edition.cnn.com/2017/06/07/entertainment/franchise-fever-studios/index.html

Lyman, Rick. 2001. “Coming Soon: Harry Potter and Hollywood’s Cash Cow.” *The New York Times* 4. https://www.nytimes.com/2001/11/04/us/coming-soon-harry-potter-and-hollywood-s-cash-cow.html

Maltby, Richard. 1998. “‘Nobody Knows Everything’: Post-Classical Historiographies and Consolidated Entertainment.” In *Contemporary Hollywood Cinema*, edited by Steve Neale and Murray Smith, 21–44. New York: Routledge.

Maltby, Richard. 2003. *Hollywood Cinema*. Hoboken: Wiley Blackwell.

Mann, Denise. 2009. “It’s Not TV, It’s Brand Management TV: The Collective Author(s) of the *Lost* Franchise.” In *Production Studies: Cultural Studies of Media Industries*, edited by Vicki Mayer, Miranda J. Banks, and John T. Caldwell, 99–114. New York: Routledge.

Manovich, Lev. 2001. *The Language of New Media*. Cambridge: The MIT Press.

Maras, Steven, and David Sutton. 2000. *Convergence* 6, no. 2: 98–113.

Martin, Adrian. 2014. *Mise en Scène and Film Style*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Mayer, Vicky, Miranda J. Banks, and John T. Caldwell., ed. 2009. *Production Studies: Cultural Studies of Media Industries*. New York: Routledge.

McBride, Joseph. 2011. *Steven Spielberg: A Biography*. Jackson: University of Mississippi.

McFarlane, Brian. 1996. *Novel to Film: An Introduction to the Theory of Adaptation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

McLarty, Lianne. 1998. “‘I'll be back’: Hollywood, Sequelization, and History.” In *Part Two: Reflections on the Sequel*, edited by Paul Budra and Betty A. Schellenberg, 200–217. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Meehan, Eileen. 1991. “‘Holy Commodity Fetish, Batman!’ The Political Economy of a Commercial Intertext.” In *The Many Lives of the Batman: Critical Approaches to a Superhero and His Media*, edited by Roberta E. Pearson and William Uricchio, 47–65. New York: Routledge.

Meikle, Kyle. 2019. *Adaptations in the Franchise Era: 2001–16*. London: Bloomsbury.

Miller, Toby. 2016. “Transmedia Storytelling and Free Labor.” Forward to *The Rise of Transtexts: Challenges and Opportunities*, edited by Benjamin W.L Derhy Kurtz and Mélanie Bourdaa, vii–xi. New York: Routledge.

Mitchell, W.J.T. 2005. *What Do Pictures Want? The Lives and Loves of Images*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Mitchell, W.J.T. 2015. *Image Science: Iconology, Visual Culture, and Media Aesthetics*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

Mittell, Jason. 2012. “Playing the Plot in the *Lost* and *Portal* Franchises.” *Eludamos: Journal for Computer Game Culture* 6, no. 1: 5–13.

Mittell, Jason. 2015. *Complex TV: The Poetics of Contemporary Television Storytelling*. New York: New York University Press.

Moine, Raphaëlle. 2008. *Cinema Genre*. Translated by Alistair Fox and Hilary Radner. Malden: Blackwell Publishing.

Moran, Albert. 2015. “Understanding Screen Franchising.” *Media International Australia* 156: 51–59.

Morris, Nigel. 2007. *The Cinema of Steven Spielberg: Empire of Light*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Mulvey, Laura. 2006. *Death 24x a Second: Stillness and the Moving Image*. London: Reaktion Books.

Munteanu, Nina. 2019. *The Ecology of Story: World as Character*. Vancouver: Pixl Press.

Murch, Walter. 2001. *In the Blink of an Eye: A Perspective on Film Editing*. 2nd ed. Hollywood: Silman-James Press.

Ndalianis, Angela. 2004. *Neo Baroque Aesthetics and Contemporary Entertainment*. Cambridge: The MIT Press.

Ndalianis, Angela. 2009. "Enter the Aleph: Superhero Worlds and Hypertime Realities." In *The Contemporary Comic Book Superhero*, edited by Angela Ndalianis, 270–290. New York: Routledge.

Neale, Steve. 1980. *Genre*. London: British Film Institute.

Neale, Steve. 2003. "Hollywood Blockbusters: Historical Dimensions." In *Movie Blockbusters*, edited by Julian Stringer, 47–60. London: Routledge.

Neumeyer, David. 1993. "Schoenberg At the Movies: Dodecaphony and Film." *Music Theory Online* 0, no. 1. Accessed September 17, 2021. https://mtosmt.org/issues/mto.93.0.1/mto.93.0.1.neumeyer.art.html

Neumeyer, David, and James Buhler. 2001. "Analytical and Interpretive Approaches to Film Music (I): Analysing the Music." In *Film Music: Critical Approaches*, edited by K. J. Donnelly, 16–38. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Neupert, Richard John. 1995. *The End: Narration and Closure in the Cinema*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press.

Newsweek Staff. 2002. "Franchise Fever!" *Newsweek*, April 21, 2002. Accessed September 8, 2021. https://www.newsweek.com/franchise-fever-142905

North, Dan. 2008. *Performing Illusions: Cinema, Special Effects and the Virtual Actor*. London, Wallflower.

North, Dan, Bob Rehak, and Michael S. Duffy. 2015. "Introduction." In *Special Effects: New Histories/Theories/Contexts*, edited by Dan North, Bob Rehak, and Michael S. Duffy, 1–13. London: Bloomsbury Publishing.

Nunn, Gary. 2020. "Will JK Rowling's Controversial Trans Tweets Hurt the Sales of her New Robert Galbraith Book?" *ABC News* September 13, 2020. Accessed September 15, 2021. https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-09-13/jk-rowling-controversy-transgender-will-it-affect-sales-new-book/12653990

O'Hara, Helen. 2009. "Alfonso Cuarón Talks Harry Potter." *Empire*. Retrieved November 5, 2013. https://web.archive.org/web/20131105231922/http://www.empireonline.com/interviews/interview.asp?IID=1309

Owczarski, Kimberly A. 2008. "Batman, Time Warner, and Franchise Filmmaking in the Conglomerate Era." PhD diss., The University of Texas at Austin.

Owczarski, Kimberly A. 2015. "'More Than Meets the Eye': *Transformers* and the Complexities of Franchise Film Production in Contemporary Hollywood." *Quarterly Review of Film and Video* 32, no. 8: 675–694.

Palmer, R Barton. 2010. "Before and After, Before Before and After: *Godfather I, II,* and *III*." In *Second Takes: Critical Approaches to the Film Sequel*, edited by Carolyn Jess-Cooke and Constantine Verevis, 65–86. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Palmer, R Barton. 2012. "Some Thoughts on New Hollywood Multiplicity: Sofia Coppola's Young Girls Trilogy." In *Film Trilogies: New Critical Approaches*, edited by Claire Perkins and Constantine Verevis, 35–54. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Panavision., n. d. "Devising A New Aspect Ratio for the Dinosaurs of Jurassic World." Panavison. Accessed September 18, 2021. https://www.panavision.com/devising-new-aspect-ratio-dinosaurs-jurassic-world

Parrill, William B. 2011. *Ridley Scott: A Critical Filmography*. Jefferson: McFarland.

Parody, Claire. 2011. "Franchising/Adaptation." *Adaptation* 4, no. 2: 210–218.

Pearson, Roberta, and Máire Messenger Davies. 2014. *Star Trek and American Television*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Pearson, Roberta. 2015. "Sherlock Holmes, the *De Facto* Franchise." In *Popular Media Cultures*, edited by Lincoln Geraghty, 186–205. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Perkins, Claire. 2010. "Sequelizing Hollywood: The American 'Smart' Film." In *Second Takes: Critical Approaches to the Film Sequel*, edited by Carolyn Jess-Cooke and Constantine Verevis, 87–104. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Perkins, Claire. 2012. "The Scre4m Trilogy." In *Film Trilogies: New Critical Approaches*, edited by Claire Perkins and Constantine Verevis, 88–108. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Perkins, Claire, and Constantine Verevis. 2012. "Introduction: Three Times." In *Film Trilogies: New Critical Approaches*, edited by Claire Perkins and Constantine Verevis, 1–31. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Perkins, V.F. 1972. *Film as Film: Understanding and Judging Movies*. London: Penguin.

Perkins, V.F. 2005. "Where is the World? The Horizon of Events in Movie Fiction." In *Style and Meaning: Studies in the Detailed Analysis of Film*, edited by John Gibbs and Douglass Pye, 16–41. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Pethö, Ágnes. 2011. *Cinema and Intermediality: The Passion for the In-Between*. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Pierson, Michelle. 1999. "CGI Effects in Hollywood Science-Fiction Cinema 1989–95: The Wonder Years." *Screen* 40, no. 2: 158–176.

Pollock, Dale. 1999. *Skywalking: The Life and Films of George Lucas*. New York: Da Capo Press.

Prince, Gerald. 1997. Foreward to *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree,* by Gérard Genette, ix–xii. Translated by Channa Newman & Claude Doubinsky. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Prince, Stephen. 1996. "True Lies: Perceptual Realism, Digital Images, and Film Theory." *Film Quarterly* 49, no. 3: 27–37.

Prince, Stephen. 2012. *Digital Visual Effects in Cinema: The Seduction of Reality*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

Proctor, William. 2012a. "Regeneration & Rebirth: Anatomy of a Franchise Reboot." *Scope: Online Journal in Film and Television Studies* 22: 1–19.

Proctor, William. 2012b. "Beginning Again: The Reboot Phenomenon." *Scan: Journal of Media Arts Culture* 9, no. 1.

Proctor, William. 2017. "Canonicity." In *The Routledge Companion to Imaginary Worlds*, edited by Mark J.P. Wolf, 236–245. New York: Routledge.

Rajewsky, Irina O. 2005. "Intermediality, Intertextuality, and Remediation: A Literary Perspective on Intermediality." *Automne* 6: 43–64.

Rasulo, Jay. 2012. "Q & A." Presentation at *Citigroup 22nd Annual Global Entertainment, Media and Telecommunications Conference,* January 5. Accessed June 15, 2020. http://cdn.media.ir.thewaltdisneycompany.com/2012/events/jar-citi-2012-0105-transcript.pdf

Richardson, Brian. 2010. "Transtextual Characters." In *Characters in Fictional Worlds: Understanding Imaginary Beings in Literature, Film, and Other Media*, edited by Jens Eder, Fotis Jannidis, and Ralf Schneider, 527–541. Berlin: De Gruyter.

Riesman, Abraham. (2017) 2020. "DC Rethinks Its Universe." *Vulture,* December 2020. Originally published July 2017. Accessed September 17, 2021. https://www.vulture.com/2020/12/dc-wonder-woman-movie-strategy-universe.html

Rinzler, J.W. 2007. *The Making of Star Wars,* New York: Ballantine Books.

Ritman, Alex. 2016. "Warner Bros. Finalizes Harry Potter Global Franchise Team." *The Hollywood Reporter,* June 8, 2016. Accessed 23 June 2021. https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/news/warner-bros-finalizes-harry-potter-900719

Rodowick, D.N. 2007. *The Virtual Life of Film*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Rogers, Mark C. 1999. “Licensing Farming and the American Comic Book Industry.” *International Journal of Comic Art* 1, no. 2: 132–142.

Rogers, Adam. 2015. “Star Wars and the Quest for the Forever Franchise.” *Wired*, December 2015. Accessed September 13, 2021. https://www.wired.com/2015/11/building-the-star-wars-universe/

Rombes, Nicholas. 2009. *Cinema in the Digital Age*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Rubin, Michael. 2000. *Non-Linear: A Field Guide to Digital Video and Film Editing*. Triad Publishing.

Rule, Vera. 1999. “Son of a Pitch.” *The Guardian*, March 12, 1999. Accessed June 24, 2021. https://www.theguardian.com/film/1999/mar/12/features

Ruppel, Marc. 2012. “Visualizing Transmedia Networks: Links, Paths and Peripheries.” PhD diss., University of Maryland.

Ryan, Marie-Laure. 2016. “Transmedia Narratology and Transmedia Storytelling.” *Artnodes* 18: 1–10.

Ryan, Marie-Laure and Jan-Noël Thon., eds. 2014. *Storyworlds Across Media: Toward a Media-Conscious Narratology*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Rybin, Steven. 2017. “The Spielberg Gesture: Performance and Intensified Continuity.” In *A Companion to Steven Spielberg*, edited by Nigel Morris, 159–171. Malden: John Wiley.

Sanda, Tsuneo. 2013. “Dream Maker.” Sandaworld.com. Retrieved July 17, 2021. Accessed September 14, 2021. https://web.archive.org/web/20210717062951/https://sandaworld.com/shop/en/dreammaker.html

Sarris, Andrew. 1962. “Notes on the Auteur Theory in 1962.” *Film Culture* 27: 1–8.

Sarris, Andrew. 1968. *The American Cinema: Directors and Directions, 1929–68*. New York: E.F. Dutton.

Schatz, Thomas. 1981. *Hollywood Genres: Formulas, Filmmaking, and the Studio System*. New York: Random House.

Schatz, Thomas. 1983. *Old Hollywood/New Hollywood: Ritual, Art, and Industry*. Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press.

Schatz, Thomas. 1993. “The New Hollywood.” In *Film Theory Goes to the Movies: Cultural Analysis of Contemporary Film*, edited by Jim Collins, Hilary Radner, and Ava Preacher Collins, 8–36. New York: Routledge.

Schatz, Thomas. 1997. “The Return of the Hollywood Studio System.” In *Conglomerates and the Media*, edited by Erik Barnouw and Patricia Aufderheide, 73–106. New York: The New Press.

Schauer, Bradley. 2007. “Critics, *Clone*, and Narrative in the Franchise Blockbuster.” *New Review of Film and Television Studies* 5, no. 2: 191–210.

Scheurer, Timothy E. 2008. *Music and Mythmaking in Film: Genre and the Role of the Composer*. Jefferson: McFarland.

Schivelbusch, Wolfgang. 1977. *The Railway Journey: The Industrialization of Time and Space in the 19th Century*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Schnabel, Eckhard. 1995. “History, Theology and the Biblical Canon: An Introduction to Basic Issues.” *Themelios* 20, no. 2: 16–24.

Scholes, Robert. 1992. Forward to *The Architext: An Introduction*, by Gérard Genette, vii – ix. Translated by Jane E. Lewin. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Scolari, Carlos A. 2009. “Transmedia Storytelling: Implicit Consumers, Narrative Worlds, and Branding in Contemporary Media Production.” *International Journal of Communication* 3: 586–606.

Scorsese, Martin. 2019. “I Said Marvel Movies Aren’t Cinema. Let me Explain.” *The New York Times*, November 4, 2019. Accessed 14 September 2021. https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/04/opinion/martin-scorsese-marvel.html

Scott, Suzzanne. 2013. “Who’s Steering the Mothership? The Role of the Fanboy Auteur in Transmedia Storytelling.” In *The Participatory Cultures Handbook*, edited by Aaron Alan Delwiche and Jennifer Jacobs Henderson, 43–52. New York: Routledge.

Sharf, Zack. 2018. “Alfonso Cuarón Didn’t Want to Direct ‘Harry Potter’ Until Guillermo Del Toro Called Him an ‘Arrogant Bastar’ and Change His Mind.” *IndieWire*, September 4, 2018. Accessed June 23, 2021. https://www.indiewire.com/2018/09/alfonso-cuaron-harry-potter-prisoner-azkaban-guillermo-del-toro-1202000189/#

Shaviro, Steven. 2010. *Post-Cinematic Affect*. Winchester: O Books.

Shaviro, Steven. 2016. “Post-Continuity: An Introduction.” In *Post-Cinema: Theorizing 21st-Century Film*, edited by Shane Denison and Julia Leyda, 51–64. Falmer: Reframe Books.

Shemroske, Briana. 2016. “Middle-Grade Novels Have Gotten 17% Longer Over the Last 40 Years.” *The Booklist Reader*. February 29, 2016. Retrieved July 25, 2021. Accessed September 15, 2021. https://web.archive.org/web/20210725131439/https://www.booklistreader.com/2016/02/29/childrens-literature/middle-grade-novels-have-gotten-173-longer-over-the-last-40-years/

Siklos, Richard. 2009. “Bob Iger Rocks Disney.” *Fortune International (Europe)* 159.1: 58–64.

Simpson, George. 2016. “Star Wars: Anthony Daniels Disliked C-3PO’s New Red Arm.” *Screenrant*, March 20, 2016. Accessed September 14, 2021. https://screenrant.com/star-wars-force-awakens-c3po-arm/

Singer, Matt. 2015. “Welcome to the Legacyquel.” *Screen Crush*. November 23, 2015. Accessed September 17, 2021. https://screencrush.com/the-age-of-legacyquels/

Smith, Murray. 1998. “These on the Philosophy of Hollywood History.” *Contemporary Hollywood Cinema,* edited by Steve Neale and Murray Smith, 3–20. New York: Routledge.

Spelling, Ian. 2005. “New Hopes.” *Starlog* 337: 46–51.

Staiger, Janet. 2003. "Authorship Approaches." In *Authorship and Film,* edited by David A. Gerstner and Janet Staiger, 27–57. New York: Routledge

Staiger, Janet. 2010. “Film History, Film Practices.” *Scandia* 76.2: 13–30.
Staiger, Janet. 2013. “Independent of What?” In *American Independent Cinema: Indie, Indiewood and Beyond*, edited by Geoff King, Claire Molloy and Yannis Tzioumakis, 15–27. London: Routledge.

Stam, Robert. 2000. “Beyond Fidelity: The Dialogics of Adaptation.” *Film Adaptation*, edited by James Naremore, 54–78. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

Star Wars. 2014. “The Legendary Star Wars Expanded Universe Turns a New Page.” StarWars.com, April 25, 2014. Accessed September 13, 2021. https://www.starwars.com/news/the-legendary-star-wars-expanded-universe-turns-a-new-page

Steinberg, Marc. 2012. *Anime’s Media Mix: Franchising Toys and Characters in Japan*. Minneapolic: University of Minnesota Press.

Stillinger, Jack. 1991. *Multiple Authorship and the Myth of Solitary Genius*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Stork, Matthias. 2011. “Chaos Cinema, Part 1.” Vimeo video. 00.10.23. August 22, 2011. Accessed September 18, 2021. https://vimeo.com/28016047

Stork, Matthias. 2014. “Assembling the Avengers: Reframing the Superhero Movie Through Marvel’s Cinematic Universe.” *Superhero Synergies: Comic Book Characters Go Digital,* edited by James N. Gilmore and Matthias Stork, 80–98. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.

Strathern, Marilyn. 2006. “Divided Origins and the Arithmetic of Ownership.” In *Accelerating Possession: Global Futures of Property and Personhood*, edited by Bill Maurer and Gabriele Schwab, 135–173. New York: Columbia University Press.

Strauven, Wanda. 2004. “Introduction to an Attraction Concept.” In *Cinema of Attractions Reloaded,* edited by Wanda Strauven, 11–27. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

Stringer, Julian. 2003. “Introduction.” In *Movie Blockbusters,* edited by Julian Stringer, 1–14. London: Routledge.

Summers, Sam. 2019. “Adapting a Retro Comic Aesthetic with *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse*.” *Adaptation* 12, no. 2: 190–194.

Sutton, Paul. 2010. “Prequel: The ‘Afterwardsness’ of the Sequel.” In *Second Takes: Critical Approaches to the Film Sequel*, edited by Carolyn Jess-Cooke and Constantine Verevis, 139–152. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Sydney Morning Herald. 2010. “The Man Behind the Potter Movie.” November 20, 2010. Accessed September 15, 2021. https://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/movies/the-man-behind-the-potter-magic-20101119-180cr.html

Symmons, Tom. 2016. *The New Hollywood Historical Film 1967–1978*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Szczepanik, Petr. 2002. “Intermediality and (Inter)media Reflexivity in Contemporary Cinema.” *Convergence* 8, no. 4: 29–36.

Teiwes, Jack. 2016. “Crisis of Infinite Earths! Continuity as Adaptation in the Superman Multimedia Franchise.” PhD diss., The University of Melbourne

Thanouli, Eleftheria. 2006. “Post-Classical Narration.” *New Review of Film and Television Studies* 4.3: 183–196.

Thompson, Kirstin, 1988. *Breaking the Glass Armor: Neoformalist Film Analysis*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Thompson, Kristin. 1999. *Storytelling in the New Hollywood: Understanding Classical Narrative Technique*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Thompson, Kristin. 2003. “Fantasy, Franchises, Frodo Baggins: The Lord of the Rings and Modern Hollywood.” *The Velvet Light Trap* 52: 45–63.

Thompson, Kristin. 2007. *The Frodo Franchise: The Lord of the Rings and Modern Hollywood*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Thompson, Kristin. 2009. “Franchise Failures.” *The Velvet Light Trap* 64: 107–109.

Thomson, David. 1998. *The Alien Quartet*. London. Bloomsbury.

Thomson, David. 2004. “The Decade When Movies Mattered.” In *The Last Great American Picture Show: New Hollywood Cinema in the 1970s*, edited by Thomas Elsaesser, Alexander Horwath, and Noel King, 73–82, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

Thorburn, David, and Henry Jenkins. 2004. “Introduction: Toward an Aesthetics of Transition.” In *Rethinking Media Change: The Aesthetics of Transition*, edited by David Thornburn and Henry Jenkins, 1–16. Cambridge: The MIT Press.

Travis, Ben. 2019. “Anthony Daniels Promises ‘Weird Stuff’ From C-3PO in The Rise of Skywalker.” *Empire*, November 26, 2019. Accessed September 14, 2021. https://www.empireonline.com/movies/news/star-wars-anthony-daniels-promises-weird-stuff-from-c-3po-in-the-rise-of-skywalker/

Truffaut, François. 1954. “Un Certaine Tendence du Cinéma Français.” *Cahiers du Cinéma* 31: 26–27.

Turnock, Julie. 2013. “Removing the Pane of Glass: *The Hobbit,* 3D High Frame Rate Filmmaking, and the Rhetoric of Digital Convergence.” *Film Criticism* 37, no. 3: 30–59.

Turnock, Julie. 2015. *Plastic Reality: Special Effects, Technology, and the Emergence of 1980s Blockbuster Aesthetics*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Twentieth Century Fox. 2017. “Twentieth Century Fox and AMD Partner on ‘Alien: Covenant’ and Launch ‘Meet Walter’ Campaign.” *Business Wire*, press release, March 10, 2017. Accessed September 13, 2021. https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20170310005368/en/Twentieth-Century-Fox-and-AMD-Partner-on-%E2%80%9CAlien-Covenant%E2%80%9D-and-Launch-%E2%80%9CMeet-Walter%E2%80%9D-Campaign

Urbanski, Heather. 2013. *The Science Fiction Reboot: Canon, Innovation and Fandom in Refashioned Franchises.* Jefferson: McFarland.

Van Gool, Daniel. 2010. “Jeff Gomez Reveals Secrets to Transmedia Franchise Development at CineKid.” *ARGNet*. November 1, 2010. Accessed September 18, 2021. https://www.argn.com/2010/11/jeff_gomez_reveals_secrets_to_transmedia_franchise_development_at_cinekid/

Verevis, Constantine. 2010. “Redefining the Sequel: The Case for the (Living) Dead).” In *Second Takes: Critical Approaches to the Film Sequel*, edited by Carolyn Jess-Cooke and Constantine Verevis, 11–29. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Verhoeff, Nanna. 2012. *Mobile Screens: The Visual Regime of Navigation*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

Walters, James. 2011. *Fantasy Film: A Critical Introduction*. Oxford: Berg.

Warner Brothers Entertainment. 2014. “Warner Bros. Entertainment Creates Harry Potter Global Franchise Development Team.” Press release, July 30, 2014. Accessed June 23, 2021. https://www.warnerbros.com/news/press-releases/warner-bros-entertainment-creates-harry-potter-global-franchise-development-team

Wasko, Janet, and Govind Shanadi. 2006. “More than Just Rings: Merchandising for Them All.” In *The Lord of the Rings: Popular Culture in Global Context,* edited Ernest Mathijs, 23–43. London: Wallflower Press.

Weiner, Robert, Jack Becker, and Lynn Whitfield. 2011. “Introduction.” In *James Bond in World and Popular Culture: The Films Are Not Enough*, edited by Robert G. Weiner, Jack Becker, and Lynn Whitfield, xvii–xix. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Weta Digital. 2019. “The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring VFX.” YouTube video, 00.00.32, March 1, 2019. Accessed September 6, 2021, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L5GUFxkSqyM

Weta Digital. 2013. “The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journal VFX.” YouTube video, 00.01.57, January 22, 2013. Accessed September 6, 2021, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HUGdsjwTf2s&list=PLsG5ktO3sYGz0M4Mym8KQd_hCBqpW5iRF&index=89

Whissel, Kristen. 2006. “Tales of Upward Mobility: The New Verticality and Digital Special Effects.” *Film Quarterly* 59, no. 4: 23–34.

Whitfield, Stephen E., and Gene Roddenberry. 1968. *The Making of Star Trek*. New York: Ballantine Books.

Whitmer, Barbara. 1997. *The Violence Mythos*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Whittington, William. 2009. “Sound Design in New Hollywood Cinema.” In *Sound and Music in Film and Visual Media: A Critical Overview*, edited by Graeme Harper, Ruth Doughty and Jochen Eisentraut, 555–568. London: Bloomsbury.

Williams, Linda Ruth. 2006. “Auteurism and Auteurs.” In *Contemporary American Cinema*, edited by Linda Ruth Williams and Michael Hammond, 139–147. London: McGraw-Hill.

Willis, Holly. 2016. *Fast Forward: The Future(s) of the Cinematic Arts*. New York: Columbia University Press.

WIPO (World Intellectual Property Organization). 2009. “Smell, Sound and Taste—Getting a Sense of Non-Traditional Marks.” *WIPO Magazine*, February 2009. Accessed June 24, 2021. https://www.wipo.int/wipo_magazine/en/2009/01/article_0003.html

Witmer, Jon D. 2012. “All Together Now.” *American Cinematographer*. June 2012. Accessed September 18, 2021. https://theasc.com/ac_magazine/June2012/TheAvengers/page1.html

Wizarding World. 2018. “New Logo Marks an Exciting Year Ahead for the Wizard World.” Wizarding World, news release, March 12, 2018. Accessed September 15, 2021. https://www.wizardingworld.com/news/wizarding-world-brand-logo-launch

Woerner, Meredith. 2012. “Why the Avengers Don’t Say Their Most Famous Catchphrase in *The Avengers*.” *Gizmodo*. July 5, 2012. Accessed September 18, 2021. https://gizmodo.com/why-the-avengers-dont-say-their-most-famous-catchphrase-5908245

Wolf, Mark JP. 2012. *Building Imaginary Worlds: The Theory and History of Subcreation*. New York: Routledge.

Wolf, Mark JP., ed. 2017. *Revisiting Imaginary Worlds: A Subcreation Studies Anthology*. New York: Routledge.

Wollen, Peter. 1969. *Signs and Meaning in the Cinema*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Wollen, Peter. 1972. “Conclusion (1972).” In *Signs and Meaning in the Cinema*. 3rd ed. 155–173. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Woollacott, Janet. 2003. “The James Bond Films: Conditions of Production.” In *The James Bond Phenomenon: A Critical Reader,* edited by Christoph Lindner, 99–118. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Woycicki, Piotr. 2014. *Post-Cinematic Theatre and Performance*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Wyatt, Justin. 1994. *High-Concept: Movies and Marketing in Hollywood*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Yoshimoto, Mitsuhiro. 2000. *Kurosawa: Film Studies and Japanese Cinema*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Total Entertainment List

2 Fast 2 Furious. 2003. Directed by John Singleton. ‘Fast & Furious’ franchise. Universal Pictures, Original Film, and Mikona Productions GmbH & Co. KG. Movie.

Agent Carter. 2015–2016. Created by Christopher Markus and Stephen McFeely. ‘Marvel Cinematic Universe’ franchise. Originally broadcast on ABC, January 6, 2015. Fazekas & Butters, Marvel Television, and ABC Signature. Television series.

Alien. 1979. Directed by Ridley Scott. ‘Alien’ franchise. Brandywine Productions. Movie.

Aliens. 1986. Directed by James Cameron. ‘Alien’ franchise. Twentieth Century Fox, Brandywine Productions, Pinewood Studios, and SLM Production Group. Movie.

Alien^3. 1992. Directed by David Fincher. ‘Alien’ franchise. Twentieth Century Fox and Brandywine Productions. Movie.

Alien: Resurrection. 1997. Directed by Jean-Pierre Jeunet. ‘Alien’ franchise. Brandywine Productions and Twentieth Century Fox. Movie.

Alien: Covenant. 2017. Directed by Ridley Scott. ‘Alien’ franchise. Twentieth Century Fox, TSG Entertainment, Scott Free Productions, and Brandywine Productions. Movie.

Almost Famous Untitled: The Bootleg Cut. (2000) 2001. Directed by Cameron Crowe. Director’s cut of *Almost Famous*. Columbia Pictures, DreamWorks, and Vinyl Films. Movie.

The Amazing Spider-Man. 2012. Marc Webb. ‘Spider-Man’ franchise. Columbia Pictures, Marvel Entertainment, and Laura Ziskin. Movie.

American Graffiti. 1973. Directed by George Lucas. Universal Pictures, Lucasfilm, and The Coppola Company. Movie.

Anabelle Comes Home. 2019. Directed by Guy Dauberman. ‘The Conjuring’ franchise. New Line Cinema, Atomic Monster, and the Safran Company. Movie.

Ant-Man. 2015. Directed by Peyton Reed. ‘Marvel Cinematic Universe’ franchise. Marvel Studios and The Walt Disney Company. Movie.

Ant-Man and the Wasp. 2018. Directed by Peyton Reed. ‘Marvel Cinematic Universe’ franchise. Marvel Studios, the Canadian Film or Video Production Tax Credit, the Province of Ontario. Movie.

Apocalypse Now. 1979. Directed by Francis Ford Coppola. United Artists and American Zoetrope. Movie

Apocalypse Now Redux. (1979) 2001. Directed by Francis Ford Coppola. Extended version of *Apocalypse Now*. American Zoetrope. Movie.

Aquaman. 2018. Directed by James Wan. ‘Worlds of DC’ franchise. Warner Brothers, DC Entertainment, and the Safran Company. Movie.

Arrow. 2012–2020. Created by Greg Berlanti, Marc Guggenheim, Andrew Kreisberg. 'Arrowverse' franchise. Originally released on The CW, October 10, 2012. Berlanti Productions, DC Entertainment, and Warner Brothers Television. Television series.

A Song of Fire and Ice. 1996–. Written by George R. R. Martin. New York: Bantam Books. Novel series.

Austin Powers in Goldmember. 2002. Directed by Jay Roach. Gratitude International, Team Todd, and Moving Pictures. Movie.

Avatar. 2009. Directed by James Cameron. 'Avatar' franchise. Twentieth Century Fox, Dune Entertainment, and Lightstorm Entertainment. Movie.

Avengers #16 (1963–1996). 1965. Written by Stan Lee. Art by Jack Kirby and Dick Ayers. Lettering by Artie Simek. May 10, 1965. Marvel Comics. Comic book.

Avengers #39 (1963–1996). 1967. Written by Roy Thomas. Art by Don Heck and George Bell. Lettering by Art Simek. April 10, 1967. Marvel Comics. Comic book.

Avengers #93 (1963–1996). 1971. Written by Roy Thomas. Art by Neil Adams and Tom Palmer. Lettering by Sam Rosen. November 10, 1971. Marvel Comics. Comic book.

The Avengers. 2012. Directed by Joss Whedon. 'Marvel Cinematic Universe' franchise. Marvel Studios and Paramount Pictures. Movie.

Avengers: Age of Ultron. 2015. Directed by Joss Whedon. 'Marvel Cinematic Universe' franchise. Marvel Studios and The Walt Disney Company. Movie.

Avengers: Endgame. 2019. Directed by Anthony and Joe Russo. 'Marvel Cinematic Universe' franchise. Marvel Studios and The Walt Disney Company. Movie.

Avengers: Infinity War. 2018. Directed by Anthony and Joe Russo. 'Marvel Cinematic Universe' franchise. Marvel Studios and The Walt Disney Company. Movie.

"Avengers Theme." 2012. Composed by Alan Silvestri. 'Marvel Cinematic Universe' franchise. Marvel Superheroes Music (BMI). Score.

"A View to a Kill." 1985 Performed by Duran Duran. Written by John Barry and Duran Duran. EMI and Capitol. Song.

"Azati Prime." 2004. *Star Trek: Enterprise.* 3:18. Directed by Allan Kroeker. 'Star Trek' franchise. Originally broadcast, March 3, 2004. Braga Productions, Paramount Network Television, and Paramount Television. Television episode.

Back to the Future. 1985. Directed by Robert Zemekis. Universal Pictures and Amblin Entertainment. Movie.

"Batman Year One." 1987. *Batman* #404—407 (1940–2011). Written by Frank Miller. Illustrated by David Mazzucchelli. February 1987–May 1987. DC Comics. Comic book.

Batman. 1966–1968. Created by Lorenzo Semple Junior. ‘Batman’ franchise. Originally broadcast on ABC, January 12, 1966. Twentieth Century Fox Television and Greenway Productions. Television series.

Batman. 1966. Directed by Leslie H. Martinson. ‘Batman’ franchise. Greenlawn Productions. Movie.

Batman. 1989. Directed by Tim Burton. ‘Batman’ franchise. Warner Brothers, the Goober-Peters Company, PolyGram Filmed Entertainment. Movie.

Batman Begins. 2005. Directed by Christopher Nolan. ‘Batman’ franchise’. Warner Brothers. Syncopy, DC Comics, and Patalex III Productions Ltd. Movie.

Batman Forever. 1995. Directed by Joel Schumacher. ‘Batman’ franchise. Warner Brothers and PolyGram Filmed Entertainment. Movie

Batman & Robin. 1997. Directed by Joel Schumacher. ‘Batman’ franchise. Warner Brothers and PolyGram Pictures. Movie.

Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice. 2016. Directed by Zack Snyder. ‘Worlds of DC’ franchise. Warner Brothers, Atlas Entertainment, and Cruel & Unusual Films. Movie.

Battlestar Galactica. 2004–2009. Created by Glen A. Larson and Ronald D. Moore. ‘Battlestar Galactica’ franchise. Originally October 18, 2004. British Sky Broadcasting, David Eick Productions, and NBC Universal Television. Television Series.

Batwoman. 2019 –. Created by Caroline Dries. ‘Arrowverse franchise.’ Originally released on The CW, October 6, 2019. Berlanti Productions, DC Entertainment, and Warner Brothers Televisions. Television series.

Ben-Hur. 1925. Directed by Fred Niblo. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Movie.

Ben-Hur. 1959. Directed by William Wyler. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Movie.

Birth of a Nation. 1915. Directed by D.W. Griffith. David W. Griffith Corp and Epoch Producing Corporation. Movie.

Black Panther. 2018. Directed by Ryan Coogler. ‘Marvel Cinematic Universe’ franchise. Marvel Studios and The Walt Disney Company. Movie.

Black Lighting. 2018–2021. Created by Salim Akil. ‘Arrowverse franchise.’ Originally released on The CW, January 16, 2018. Berlanti Productions, DVC Entertainment, and Warner Brothers Television. Television series.

Blade Runner 2049. 2017. Directed Dennis Villeneuve. ‘Blade Runner’ franchise. Alcon Entertainment, Columbia Pictures, and Sony. Movie.

Blade Runner: Director’s Cut. (1982) 1992. Directed by Ridley Scott. Director’s cut of *Blade Runner*. The Ladd Company, Shaw Brothers, and Warner Brothers. Movie.

Bonnie and Clyde. 1967. Directed by Arthur Penn. Warner Brother/Seven Arts and Tatira-Hiller Productions. Movie.

"Bounty Hunters." 2010. *Star Wars: The Clone Wars*. 2:19. Directed by Steward Lee. 'Star Wars' franchise. Originally broadcast on Cartoon Network, April 2, 2010. CGCG, Cartoon Network, Lucasfilm Animation. Television episode.

Caprica. 2010. Created by Remi Aubuchon and Ronald D. Moore. 'Battlestar Galactica' franchise. Originally broadcast on Syfy, January 22, 2010. David Eick Productions and Universal Media Studios. Television series.

Captain America: Civil War. 2016. Directed by Anthony and Joe Russo. 'Marvel Cinematic Universe' franchise. Marvel Studios, Vita-Ray Dutch Productions III, Studio Babbelsberg. Movie.

Captain America: The First Avenger. 2011. Directed by Joe Johnson. 'Marvel Cinematic Universe' franchise. Paramount Pictures, Marvel Entertainment, and Marvel Studios. Movie.

Captain America: The Winter Soldier. 2014. Directed by Anthony and Joe Russo. 'Marvel Cinematic Universe' franchise. Marvel Entertainment, Marvel Studios, and Walt Disney Pictures. Movie.

Captain Marvel. 2019. Directed by Anna Boden and Ryan Fleck. 'Marvel Cinematic Universe' franchise. Walt Disney Pictures, Marvel Studios, and Animal Logic. Movie.

Catwoman. 2004. Directed by Pitof. 'Batman' franchise. Warner Brother, Village Roadshow Pictures, and DiNovi Pictures. Movie.

Casino Royale. 1953. Written by Ian Fleming. London: Jonathan Cape. Novel.

"Casino Royale." 1954. *Climax!* (1954–1958). Season 1, episode 3. Original air date October 21, 1954. CBS Television. Television show sequence.

Casino Royale. 1967. Directed by Val Guest, Ken Hughes, and John Huston. Famous Artist Productions and Columbia Pictures. Movie.

Casino Royale. 2006. Directed by Martin Campbell. 'Bond' franchise. Eon Productions, Columbia Pictures, and Casino Royale Productions. Movie.

Constantine. 2005. Directed by Francis Lawrence. 'DC' franchise. Warner Brothers, Village Roadshow Pictures, and DC Comics. Movie.

Constantine. 2014–2015. Television series. Created by Daniel Cerone and David S. Goyer. 'Arrowverse' franchise. Originally released on NBC, October 24, 2014. DC Comics and Warner Brothers Television. Television series.

Creed. 2015. Directed by Ryan Coogler. 'Rocky' franchise. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, Warner Brothers, and New Line Cinema. Movie.

Daredevil. 2015–2018. Created by Drew Goddard. ‘Marvel Cinematic Universe’ franchise. Originally released on Netflix, April 10, 2015. Marvel Television, ABC Signature, DeKnight Production, and Goddard Textiles. Television series.

The Dark Knight. 2008. Directed by Christopher Nolan. ‘Batman’ franchise. Warner Brothers, Legendary Entertainment, and Syncopy. Movie.

The Dark Knight Rises. 2012. Directed by Christopher Nolan. ‘Batman’ franchise. Warner Brothers, Legendary Entertainment, and DC Entertainment. Movie.

Dark Star. 1974. Directed by John Carpenter. Jack H. Harris Enterprisers and the University Southern California. Movie.

The Defenders. 2017. Created by Douglas Petrie and Marco Ramirez. ‘Marvel Cinematic Universe’ franchise. Originally released on Netflix, August 18, 2017. ABC Signature, Goddard Textiles, and Marvel Television. Television series.

Der Ring des Nibelungen. 1848–1974. Composed by Richard Wagner. Musical drama.

Diamonds Are Forever. 1971. Directed by Guy Hamilton. ‘Bond’ franchise. Eon Productions. Movie.

“Diamonds Are Forever.” 1971. Performed by Shirley Bassey. Composed by John Barry and Don Black. United Artists Records. Song.

Die Another Day. 2002. Directed by Lee Tamahori. ‘Bond’ franchise. Eon Productions, Danjaq, and Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Movie.

Doom Patrol. 2019 –. Created by Jeremy Carver. ‘DC’ franchise. Originally released on DC Universe, February 15, 2019. DC Comics. Television series

“Dream Maker.” 2013. Tsuneo Sanda. https://sandaworld.com/shop/en/dreammaker.html. Artwork.

Dr No. 1962. Directed by Terence Young. ‘Bond’ franchise. Eon Productions. Movie.

Earthquake. 1974. Directed by Mark Robson. Universal Pictures and the Filmmakers Group. Movie.

Easy Rider. 1969. Directed by Denis Hopper. Pando Company Inc. and Raybert Production. Movie.

Empire of Dreams: The Story of the Star Wars Trilogy. 2004. Directed by Edith Becker and Kevin Burns. Prometheus Entertainment, Fox Television Studios, Lucasfilm. Movie.

The Empire Strikes Back. 1980. Directed by Irvin Kershner. ‘Star Wars’ franchise. Lucasfilm Ltd. Retitled *Star Wars: Episode V—The Empire Strikes Back.* Movie.

ET: The Extra Terrestrial. 1982. Directed by Steven Spielberg. Universal Pictures and Amblin Entertainment. Movie.

The Ewok Adventure: Caravan of Courage. 1984. Directed by John Korty. 'Star Wars' franchise. Originally aired on ABC November 25, 1984. Korty Films and Lucasfilm Ltd. Television movie.

Ewoks: The Battle for Endor. 1985. Directed by Jim Wheat and Ken Wheat. 'Star Wars' franchise. Originally aired November 24, 1985. Lucasfilm Ltd. Television movie.

The Exorcist. 1973. Directed by William Friedkin. Warner Brothers and Hoya Productions. Movie.

Doctor Strange. 2016. Directed by Scott Derrickson. 'Marvel Cinematic Universe' franchise. Marvel Studios and Walt Disney Pictures. Movie.

Dracula. 1931. Directed by Tod Browning. Universal Pictures. Movie.

The Falcon and the Winter Soldier. 2021. Created by Malcolm Spellman. Originally released on Disney Plus, March 19, 21. Marvel Studios. Television series.

Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them. 2001. Written by J.K. Rowling (as Newt Scamander). London: Bloomsbury.

Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them. 2016. Directed by David Yates. Heyday Films and Warner Bros.

Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them VR. 2018. Developed by Framestore and Warner Bros. Published by Warner Bros. Entertainment Group. Vive, Daydream, Oculus Rift, and Gear. Virtual reality video game.

Fantastic Beasts: The Crimes of Grindelwald. 2018. Directed by David Yates. Heyday Films and Warner Bros.

The Fast and the Furious. 2001. Directed by Rob Cohen. 'Fast & Furious' franchise. Universal Pictures, Original Film, and Mediastream Film GmbH & Co Productions FG. Movie.

The Fast and the Furious: Tokyo Drift. 2006. Directed by Justin Lin. 'Fast & Furious' franchise. Universal Pictures, Relativity Media, and Original Film. Movie.

Fast Five. 2011. Directed by Justin Lin. 'Fast & Furious' franchise. Universal Pictures, Original Film, and One Race Productions. Movie.

Fast & Furious. 2009. Directed by Justin Lin. 'Fast & Furious' franchise. Universal Pictures, Relativity Media, and Original Film. Movie.

Fast & Furious 6. 2013. Directed by Justin Lin. 'Fast & Furious' franchise. Universal Pictures, Relativity Media, and Original Film. Movie.

Fast & Furious Present: Hobbs & Shaw. 2019. Directed by David Leitch. 'Fast & Furious' franchise. Chris Morgan Productions, Dentsu, and Seven Bucks Production. Movie.

Fast & Furious Spy Racers. 2019 –. Created by Brett Haaland and Tim Hedrick. 'Fast & Furious' franchise. Originally released on Netflix, December 26, 2019. Chris Morgan Productions, Dreamworks Animation, and One Race Films. Movie.

The Fate of the Furious. 2017. Directed by F. Gary Gary. 'Fast & Furious' franchise. Universal Pictures, the China Film Group Corporation, and Original Film. Movie.

The Fellowship of the Ring: Being the First Part of the Lord of the Rings. 1954. Written by J.R.R. Tolkien. London: Allen & Unwin. Novel.

The Flash. 2014 –. Created by Greg Berlanti, Geoff Johns, and Andrew Kreisberg. 'Arrowverse franchise.' Originally released on The CW, October 7, 2014. Berlanti Productions, DC Entertainment, and Warner Brothers Television. Television series.

"Force Theme." 1977. Composed by John Williams. 'Star Wars' franchise. Warner-Tamerlane Publishing Group. Score.

For Your Eyes Only. 1981. Directed by John Glen. 'Bond' franchise. Eon Productions. Movie.

The Four Horseman of the Apocalypse. 1921. Directed by Rex Ingram. Metro Pictures Corporation. Movie.

Frankenstein. 1931. Directed by James Whale. Universal Pictures. Movie.

From Russia with Love. 1963. Directed by Terence Young. 'Bond' franchise. Eon Production. Movie.

Furious 7. 2015. Directed by James Wan. 'Fast & Furious' franchise. Universal Pictures, Media Rights Capital, and China Film Group Corporation. Movie.

Game of Thrones. 2011–2019. Created by David Benioff and D.B. Weiss. 'Game of Thrones' franchise. Originally released on HBO, April 17, 2011. Television series.

The Godfather. 1972. Directed by Francis Ford Coppola. Paramount Pictures and Alfran Productions. Movie.

The Godfather: Part II. 1974. Directed by Franchise Ford Coppola. Paramount Pictures, the Coppola Company, and American Zoetrope.

GoldenEye. 1995. Directed by Martin Campbell. 'Bond' franchise. Eon Production and United Artists. Movie

"GoldenEye." 1995. Performed by Tina Turner. Written by Bono and the Edge. Virgin and Parlophone. Song.

Goldfinger. 1964. Directed by Guy Hamilton. 'Bond' franchise. Eon Productions. Movie.

"Goldfinger." 1964. Performed by Shirley Bassey. Composed by John Barry. Lyrics by Leslie Bricusse and Anthony Newley. Columbia United Artists. Song.

Gone with the Wind. 1939. Directed by Victor Fleming. Selznick International Pictures and Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Movie.

Gotham. 2014–2019. Created by Bruno Heller. 'DC' franchise. Originally released on Fox, September 22, 2014. Primrose Hill Productions, DC Comics, Warner Brothers Television. Television.

The Graduate. 1967. Directed by Mike Nichols. Lawrence Truman Productions. Movie.

The Grand Hotel. 1932. Directed by Edmund Goulding. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Movie.

Grease. 1978. Directed by Randal Kleiser. Paramount Pictures, Robert Stigwood Organization, and Alan Carr Production. Movie.

The Great Ziegfeld. 1936. Directed by Robert Z. Leonard. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Movie.

Green Lantern. 2011. Directed by Martin Campbell. 'DC' franchise. Warner Brothers, De Line Pictures, and DC Entertainment. Movie.

Guardians of the Galaxy. 2014. Directed by James Gunn. 'Marvel Cinematic Universe' franchise. Marvel Studios, Walt Disney Pictures, and Moving Pictures Company. Movie.

Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2. 2017. Directed by James Gunn. 'Marvel Cinematic Universe' franchise. Marvel Studios and Walt Disney Pictures. Movie.

Hannibal. 2013–2015. Created by Bryan Fuller. 'Hannibal' franchise. Dino DeLaurentiis Company, Living Dead Guy Productions, and AXN: Original X Production. Television series.

Harry Potter: A History of Magic. 2017. British Library. Museum exhibition. https://artsandculture.google.com/project/harry-potter-a-history-of-magic

Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets. 2002. Directed by Chris Columbus. 'Wizarding World' franchise. Warner Brothers, Heyday Films, and 1492 Pictures. Movie.

Harry Potter and the Cursed Child: Parts One and Two. 2016. Written by John Thorne. 'Wizarding World' franchise. New Jersey: Arthur A. Levine Books. Playscript.

Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 1. 2010. Directed by David Yates. 'Wizarding World' franchise. Warner Brothers and Heyday Films. Movie.

Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 2. 2011. Directed by David Yates. 'Wizarding World' franchise. Warner Brothers, Heyday Films, and the Moving Pictures Company. Movie.

Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone. 1997. Written by J.K. Rowling. 'Wizarding World' franchise. London: Bloomsbury. Novel.

Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone. 2001. Directed by Chris Columbus. 'Wizarding World' franchise. Warner Brothers, Heyday Films, and 1492 Pictures. Movie.

Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban. 2004. Directed by Alfonso Cuarón. 'Wizarding World' franchise. Warner Brothers, 1492 Pictures, and Heyday Films. Movie.

Harry Potter: Wizards Unite. 2019. Developed by Niantic and WB Games San Francisco. Published by Niantic, under license from Portkey Games. Android and iOS. Augmented reality mobile game.

"Hedwig's Theme." 2001. Composed by John Williams. 'Wizarding World' franchise. Warner-Barham Music. Score.

The Hobbit. 1937. Written by J.R.R. Tolkien. London: George Allen & Unwin. Novel.

The Hobbit. 1989. Written by Charles Dixon and Sean Deming. Illustrated by David Wenzel. Graphic Novel.

The Hobbit: Battle of the Five Armies. 2014. Directed by Peter Jackson. 'Lord of the Rings' franchise. New Line Cinema, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, and WingNut Films. Movie.

Hobitit. 1993. Produced by Olof Qvickström. Originally broadcast on Yle TV1, March 29, 1993. Ryhmäteatteri and Yleisradio. Television series.

The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey. 2012. Directed by Peter Jackson. 'Lord of the Rings' franchise. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, New Line Cinema, and WingNut Films. Movie.

The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 2. 2015. Directed by Francis Lawrence. 'Hunger Games' franchise. Lionsgate, Color Force, and Studio Babelsberg. Movie.

The Incredible Hulk. 2008. Directed by Louis Leterrier. 'Marvel Cinematic Universe' franchise. Universal Pictures, Marvel Enterprises, and Marvel Studios. Movie.

Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom. 1984. Directed by Steven Spielberg. 'Indiana Jones' franchise. Paramount Pictures and Lucasfilm Ltd. Movie.

Intolerance. 1916. Directed by D.W. Griffith. Triangle Film Corporation and Wark Producing. Movie.

The Invisible Man. 1933. Directed by James Whale. Universal Pictures. Movie.

Iron Fist. 2017–2018. Created by Scott Buck. 'Marvel Cinematic Universe' franchise. Originally released on Netflix, March 17, 2017. Marvel Television, Devilina Productions, and ABC Signature. Television series.

Iron Man. 2008. Directed by Jon Favreau. 'Marvel Cinematic Universe' franchise. Paramount Pictures, Marvel Enterprises, and Marvel Studios. Movie.

Iron Man 2. 2010. Directed by Jon Favreau. 'Marvel Cinematic Universe' franchise. Marvel Studios. Movie.

Iron Man 3. 2013. Directed by Shane Black. 'Marvel Cinematic Universe' franchise. Marvel Studios, Paramount Pictures, and DMG Entertainment. Movie.

"James Bond Theme." 1962. Composed by Monty Norman. 'Bond' franchise. United Artists Music Ltd. Score.

*Jaw*s. 1975. Directed by Steven Spielberg. 'Jaws' franchise. Zanuck/Brown Productions and Universal Pictures. Movie.

"Jaws Official Trailer #1." 1975. Movieclips Classic Trailers, YouTube channel. December 13, 2011. Accessed October 3, 2021. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U1fu_sA7XhE

Jessica Jones. 2015–2019. Created by Melissa Rosenberg. 'Marvel Cinematic Universe' franchise. Originally released on Netflix, November 20, 2015. 3 Arts Entertainment, ABC Signature, and Marvel Television. Television series.

Joker. 2019. Directed by Todd Phillips. 'DC' franchise. Warner Brothers and Village Roadshow Pictures. Movie.

Jurassic Park. 1990. Written by Michael Crichton. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. Novel.

Jurassic Park. 1993. Directed by Steven Spielberg. 'Jurassic Park' franchise. Universal Pictures and Amblin Entertainment. Movie.

Jurassic Park III. 2001. Directed by Joe Johnson. 'Jurassic Park' franchise. Universal Pictures and Amblin Entertainment. Movie.

"Jurassic Park Theme." 1993. Composed by John Williams. 'Jurassic Park' franchise. Songs of Universal Inc. Score.

Jurassic World. 2015. Directed by Colin Trevorrow. 'Jurassic Park' franchise. Universal Pictures, Amblin Entertainment, and Legendary Entertainment. Movie

Jurassic World Evolution. 2018. Developed by Frontier Developments PLC. PS4, Nintendo Switch, Xbox One, and Microsoft Windows. Video game.

Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom. 2018. Directed by JA Bayona. 'Jurassic Park' franchise. Universal Pictures, Amblin Entertainment, and Legendary Entertainment. Movie.

Justice League. 2017. Directed by Zack Snyder. 'Words of DC' franchise. Warner Brothers, RatPac Entertainment, and DC Entertainment. Movie.

The Last Picture Show. 1971. Directed by Peter Bogdanovich. Columbia Pictures, BBS Production, and Last Picture Show Productions. Movie.

Legends of Tomorrow. 2016 –. Created by Phil Klemmer, Greg Berlanti, Marc Guggenheim. 'Arrowverse franchise.' Originally released on The CW, January 21, 2016. Berlanti Productions, Bonanza Productions, and DC Entertainment. Television series.

Lord of the Rings Online. 2007. Developed by Standing Stone Games and Turbine. Published by Standing Stone Games, Turbine, Daybreak Game Company, Midway Games, Codemasters. Mac OS and Microsoft Windows. Computer game.

The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring. 2001. Directed by Peter Jackson. 'Lord of the Rings' franchise. New Line Cinema, WingNut Films, and The Saul Zaentz Company. Movie.

The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers. 2002. Directed by Peter Jackson. 'Lord of the Rings' franchise. New Line Cinema, WingNut Films, and The Saul Zaentz Company. Movie.

The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King. 2003. Directed by Peter Jackson. 'Lord of the Rings' franchise. New Line Cinema, WingNut Films, and The Saul Zaentz Company. Movie.

The Lost World. 1995. Written by Michael Crichton. New York: Kopf. Novel.

Let and Let Die. 1973. Directed by Guy Hamilton. 'Bond' franchise. Eon Production. Movie.

License to Kill. 1989. Directed by John Glen. 'Bond' franchise. Danjaq, Eon Productions, and United Artists. Movie.

"Live and Let Die." 1973. Performed by Paul McCartney and Wings. Written by Paul McCartney and Linda McCartney. Apple. Song.

The Living Daylights. 1987. Directed by John Glen. 'Bond' franchise. Eon Productions. Movie.

Loki. 2021. Created by Michael Waldron. Originally released on Disney Plus, June 9, 2021. Marvel Studios. Television series.

The Lord of the Rings. 1978. Directed by Ralph Bakshi. 'Lord of the Rings' franchise. Fantasy Films, Bakshi Productions, and Saul Zaentz Film Productions. Movie.

Lord of the Rings. 2000. Designed by Reiner Knizia. Published by Kosmos, Hasbro, Fantasy Flight Games, and 999 Games. Tabletop game.

The Lord of the Rings: The Battle for Middle Earth. 2004. Developed by EA Los Angeles. Published by EA Games. Microsoft Windows. Video game.

The Lord of the Rings: The Battle for Middle Earth 2. 2006. Developed by EA Los Angeles. Published by EA Games. Microsoft Windows and Xbox 360. Video game.

The Lord of the Rings: Conquest. 2009. Developed by Pandemic Studios. Published by Electronic Arts. Microsoft Windows. PlayStation 3, Xbox 360, and Nintendo DS. Video game.

Lord of the Rings: War in the North. 2011. Developed by Snowblind Studios and Feral Interactive (OSX). Published by Warner Brothers Interactive Entertainment and Feral Interactive (OSX). PlayStation 3, XBox 360, Microsoft Windows, and OSX. Video game.

Los Bandoleros. 2009. Directed by Vin Diesel. 'Fast & Furious' franchise. One Race Productions and Terrero Films. Short film.

The Lost World: Jurassic Park. 1997. Directed by Steven Spielberg. 'Jurassic Park' franchise. Universal Pictures, Amblin Entertainment, and Digital Image Associates. Movie.

Lucifer. 2016 –2021. Created by Tom Kapinos. 'DC' franchise. Originally released on Fox, January 25, 2016. Aggressive Mediocrity, DC Entertainment, and Jerry Bruckheimer Television. Television series.

Luke Cage. 2016–2018. Created by Cheo Hodari Coker. 'Marvel Cinematic Universe' franchise. Originally released on Netflix, September 30, 2016. ABC Television Studio, Disney-ABC Domestic Television, and Marvel Entertainment. Television series.

Magnum Force. 1973. Directed by Ted Post. Malpaso Company and Warner Brothers. Movie.

The Man with the Golden Gun. 1974. Directed by Guy Hamilton. 'Bond' franchise. Eon Production. Movie.

The Mandalorian. 2019 –. Created by Jon Favreau. 'Star Wars' franchise. Originally released on Disney Plus November 12, 2019. Fairview Entertainment, Golem Creations, and Lucasfilm. Television series.

Man of Steel. 2013. Directed by Zack Snyder. 'Words of DC' franchise. Warner Brothers, Legendary Entertainment, and Syncopy. Movie.

Marvel One-Shot: Agent Carter. 2013. Directed by Louis D'Esposito. 'Marvel Cinematic Universe' franchise. Marvel Studios. Short film.

Marvel Studios: Assembling a Universe. 2014. Produced by Brad Baruh. Originally released on ABC, March 18, 2014. ABC Signature, Disney-ABC Domestic Television, Marvel Television. Television movie.

The Matrix. 1999. Directed by Lana and Lilly Wachowski. 'Matrix' franchise. Warner Brothers, Village Roadshow Pictures, and Groucho Film Partnership. Movie.

Memory: The Origins of Alien. 2019. Directed by Alexandre O. Philippe. Exhibit A Pictures, Milkhaus, and Screen Division. Documentary movie.

Midnight Cowboy. 1969. Directed by John Schlesinger. Jerome Hellman Productions and Florin Productions. Movie.

Mission: Impossible 2. 1999. Directed by John Woo. 'Mission: Impossible' franchise. Paramount Pictures, Cruise/Wagner Productions, and Munich Film Partners & Company (NFP) MI2 Productions. Movie.

Moonraker. 1979. Directed by Louis Gilbert. 'Bond' franchise. Les Production Artistes Associés and Eon Production. Movie.

"Moonraker." 1979. Performed by Shirley Bassey. Composed by John Barry. Lyrics Hal David. United Artist Records. Song.

The Mummy. 1932. Directed by Karl Freund. Universal Pictures. Movie.

The Mummy. 2017. Directed by Alex Kurtzman. 'Dark Universe' franchise. Universal Pictures, Dark Universe, and Perfect World Pictures. Movie.

Never Say Never Again. 1983. Directed by Irvin Kershner. 'Bond' franchise. TaliaFilm II Productions, Woodcote, and Producers Sales Organization. Movie.

The New Adventures of Batman. 1977. Produced by Don Christensen. Originally broadcast on CBS, February 12, 1977. Filmation Associates and Warner Brothers Television. Television series.

No Time to Die. 2021. Directed by Cary Joji Fukunaga. 'Bond' franchise. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, Universal Pictures, and Eon Productions. Movie.

Octopussy. 1983. Directed by John Glen. 'Bond' franchise. United Artists, Eon Productions, and Danjaq. Movie.

"One Ring Theme." 2001. Composed by Howard Shore. 'Lord of the Rings' franchise. New Line Tunes, Universal Music Corporation, and EMI Blackwood Music Inc. Score.

On Her Majesty's Secret Service. 1969. Directed by Peter R. Hunt. 'Bond' franchise. Eon Productions. Movie.

The Phantom of the Opera. 1925. Directed by Rupert Julian. Universal Pictures. Movies.

The People vs George Lucas. 2010. Directed by Alexandre O. Philippe. Exhibit A Pictures and Quark Films. Documentary movie.

Pottermore. 2012–2019. 'Wizarding World' franchise. Discontinued October 2, 2019. www.pottermore.com. Website.

The Punisher. 2017–2019. Created by Steve Lightfoot. 'Marvel Cinematic Universe' franchise. Originally released on Netflix, November 17, 2017. ABC Signature, Disney-ABC Domestic Television, and Marvel Entertainment. Television series.

The Queen of Sheba. 1921. Directed by J. Gordon Edwards. Fox Film Corporation. Movie.
Quo-Vadis. 1951. Directed by Mervyn LeRoy. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Movie.

Paranormal Activity 3. 2011. Directed by Henry Joost and Ariel Schulman. 'Paranormal Activity' franchise. Paramount Pictures, Blumhouse Productions, and Solana Films. Movie.

The Perils of Pauline. 1914. Directed by Louis J. Gasnier and Donald MacKenzie. Pathé Frères. Film serial.

Prometheus. 2012. Directed by Ridley Scott. 'Alien' franchise. Twentieth Century Fox, Dune Entertainment, and Scott Free Productions. Movie.

Quantum of Solace. 2008. Directed by Marc Forster. ‘Bond’ franchise. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, Columbia Pictures, and Eon Productions. Movie.

Raiders of the Lost Ark. 1981. Directed by Steven Spielberg. ‘Indiana Jones’ franchise. Paramount Pictures and Lucasfilm Ltd. Movie.

Red Dragon. 1981. Written by Thomas Harris. ‘Hannibal’ franchise. New York: Dell Publishing. Novel.

Red Dragon. 2002. Directed by Brett Ratner. ‘Hannibal’ franchise. Universal Pictures, Dino DeLaurentiis Company, and Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Movie.

Return of the Jedi. 1983. Directed by Richard Marquand. ‘Star Wars’ franchise’. Lucasfilm Ltd. Retitled *Star Wars: Episode VI—Return of the Jedi.* Movie.

Return of the King. 1980. Directed by Jules Bass and Arthur Rankin Jr. ‘Lord of the Ring’ franchise. Topcraft and Rankin/Bass Productions. Movie.

Rise of the Planet of the Apes. 2011. Directed by Rupert Wyatt. ‘Planet of the Apes’ franchise. Twentieth Century Fox, Dune Entertainment, and Chernin Entertainment. Movie.

Rogue One: A Star Wars Story. 2016. Directed by Gareth Edwards. ‘Star Wars’ franchise. Lucasfilm Ltd. Walt Disney Pictures, Allison Shearmur Productions. Movie.

Serpico. 1973. Directed by Sidney Lumet. Artist Entertainment Complex and Produzioni De Laurentiis International Manufacturing Company. Movie.

Shazam! 2019. Directed by David F. Sandberg. ‘Worlds of DC’ franchise. Warner Brothers, DC Entertainment, and DC Comics. Movie.

The Simpsons. 1989 –. Created by James L. Brooks, Matt Groening, and Sam Simon. Originally broadcast on Fox, December 17, 1989. Gracie Films, Twentieth Century Fox Television, and Fox Television Animation. Television series.

Solo: A Star Wars Story. 2018. Directed by Ron Howard. ‘Star Wars’ franchise. Lucasfilm Ltd, Walt Disney Pictures, and Allison Shearmur Productions. Movie.

Sorcerer. 1977. Directed by William Friedkin. Film Properties International N.V, Paramount Pictures, and Universal Pictures. Movie.

Secrets of The Force Awakens: A Cinematic Journey. 2016. Directed by Laurent Bouzereau. Burbank: The Walt Disney Company. Documentary movie.

Skyfall. 2012. Directed by Sam Mendes. ‘Bond’ franchise. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, Columbia Pictures, and Danjaq. Movie

“Skyfall.” 2012. Performed by Adele. Written by Adele Adkins and Paul Epworth. XL and Columbia. Song.

Spectre. 2015. Directed by Sam Mendes. ‘Bond’ franchise. B24, Columbia Pictures, and Danjaq. Movie.

Spider-Man. 2002. Directed by Sam Raimi. ‘Spider-Man’ franchise. Columbia Pictures, Marvel Enterprises, and Laura Ziskin Productions. Movie.

Spider-Man: Far from Home. 2019. Directed by Jon Watts. ‘Marvel Cinematic Universe’ franchise. Columbia Pictures, Pascal Pictures, and Marvel Studios. Movie.

Spider-Man: Homecoming. 2017. Directed by Jon Watts. ‘Marvel Cinematic Universe’ franchise. Columbia Pictures, LStar Capital, and Marvel Studios. Movie.

Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse. 2018. Directed by Bob Persichetti, Peter Ramsey, and Rodney Rothman. ‘Spider-Man’ franchise. Sony Pictures Entertainment, Columbia Pictures, and Marvel Entertainment. Movie.

Sagan om ringen. 1970. Recorded by Bo Hansson. Silence Records. Music album.

The Silmarillion. 1977. J.R.R. Tolkien. London: George Allen & Unwin. Novel.

The Spy Who Loved Me. 1977. Directed by Louis Gilbert. ‘Bond’ franchise. Eon Productions. Movie.

Star Trek. 2009. Directed by J.J. Abrams. ‘Star Trek’ franchise. Paramount Pictures, Spyglass Entertainment, and Bad Robot. Movie.

Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan. 1982. Directed by Nicholas Meyer. ‘Star Trek’ franchise. Paramount Pictures. Movie.

Star Trek III: The Search for Spock. 1984. Directed by Leonard Nimoy. ‘Star Trek’ franchise. Paramount Pictures and Cinema Group Ventures. Movie.

Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home. 1986. Directed by Leonard Nimoy. ‘Star Trek’ franchise. Paramount Pictures and Industrial Light & Magic. Movie.

Star Trek V: The Final Frontier. 1989. Directed by William Shatner. ‘Star Trek’ franchise. Paramount Pictures. Movie.

Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country. 1991. Directed by Nicholas Meyer. ‘Star Trek’ franchise. Paramount Pictures. Movie.

Star Trek: The Animated Series. 1973–1974. Created by Gene Roddenberry. ‘Star Trek’ franchise. Originally broadcast on NBC, September 8, 1973. Filmation Associates, Norway Productions, and Paramount Television. Television series.

Star Trek Beyond. 2016. Directed by Justin Lin. ‘Star Trek’ franchise. Paramount Pictures, Skydance Media, Alibaba Pictures. Movie.

Star Trek: Deep Space Nine. 1993–1999. Created by Rick Berman and Michael Piller. ‘Star Trek’ franchise. Originally broadcast via syndication, January 3, 1993. Paramount Television. Television Series.

Star Trek: Discovery. 2017–. Created by Bryan Fuller and Alex Kurtzman. ‘Star Trek’ franchise. Originally broadcast on CBS, September 24, 2017. CBS Television Studios, Living Dead Guy Productions, and Master Key Production. Television series.

Star Trek: Enterprise. 2001–2005. Created by Rick Berman and Brannon Braga. ‘Star Trek’ franchise. Originally broadcast on UPN, September 26, 2001. Braga Productions, Paramount Network Television, and Paramount Television. Television series.

Star Trek: First Contact. 1996. Directed by Jonathan Frakes. ‘Star Trek’ franchise. Digital Image Associates and Paramount Pictures. Movie.

Star Trek: Generation. 1994. Directed by David Carson. ‘Star Trek’ franchise. Paramount Pictures. Movie.

Star Trek: Insurrection. 1998. Directed by Jonathan Frakes. ‘Star Trek’ franchise. Paramount Pictures and Digital Image Associates. Movie.

Star Trek Into Darkness. 2013. Directed by J.J. Abrams. ‘Star Trek’ franchise. Paramount Pictures, Skydance Media, and Bad Robot. Movie.

Star Trek: The Motion Picture. 1979. Directed by Robert Wise. ‘Star Trek’ franchise. Paramount Pictures, Century Associates, and Robert Wise Productions. Movie.

Star Trek: Nemesis. 2002. Directed by Stuart Baird. ‘Star Trek’ franchise. Paramount Pictures and Digital Image Associates. Movie.

Star Trek: The Next Generation. 1987–1994. Created by Gene Roddenberry. ‘Star Trek’ franchise. Originally broadcast via syndication, September 28, 1987. Paramount Television. Television series.

Star Trek: The Original Series. 1966–1969. Created by Gene Roddenberry. Originally aired on NBC September 8, 1966. Desilu Productions, Norway Corporation, and Paramount Television. Originally titled *Star Trek.* Television series.

Star Trek: Picard. 2020 –. Created by Kirsten Beyer, Michael Chabon, and Akiva Goldsman. ‘Star Trek’ franchise. Originally released on CBS All Access, January 23, 2020. CBS Television Studios, Roddenberry Entertainment, and Secret Hideout. Television series.

Star Trek: Voyager. 1995–2001. Created by Rick Berman, Michael Piller, and Jeri Taylor. ‘Star Trek’ franchise. Originally broadcast on UPN, January 16, 1995. Paramount Television and United Paramount Network. Television series.

Star Wars. 1977. Directed by George Lucas. Lucasfilm Ltd and Twentieth Century Fox. Retitled *Star Wars: Episode IV—A New Hope*. Movie.

Star Wars: The Clone Wars. 2008–2020. Created by George Lucas. ‘Star Wars’ franchise. CGCG, Cartoon Network, Lucasfilm Animation. Television series.

Star Wars: Episode I—The Phantom Menace. 1999. Directed by George Lucas. ‘Star Wars’ franchise. Lucasfilm Ltd. Movie.

Star Wars: Episode II—Attack of the Clone. 2002. Directed by George Lucas. ‘Star Wars’ franchise. Lucasfilm Ltd. Movie.

Star Wars: Episode III—Revenge of the Sith. 2005. Directed by George Lucas. ‘Star Wars’ franchise. Lucasfilm Ltd. Movie.

Star Wars: Episode IV—A New Hope. 1977. Directed by George Lucas. Lucasfilm Ltd and Twentieth Century Fox. Previously titled *Star Wars*. Movie.

Star Wars: Episode V—The Empire Strikes Back. 1980. Directed by Irvin Kershner. ‘Star Wars’ franchise. Lucasfilm Ltd. Previously titled *The Empire Strikes Back*. Movie

Star Wars: Episode VI—Return of the Jedi. 1983. Directed by Richard Marquand. ‘Star Wars’ franchise’. Lucasfilm Ltd. Previously titled *Return of the Jedi*. Movie.

Star Wars: The Force Awakens. 2015. Directed by JJ Abrams. ‘Star Wars’ franchise. Lucasfilm Ltd, Bad Robot, Truenorth Productions. Movie.

Star Wars Holiday Special 1978. Directed by Steve Binder. ‘Star Wars’ franchise. Originally aired on CBS on November 17, 1978. Smith-Hemion Productions, Twentieth Century Fox Television, and Lucasfilm Ltd.

Star Wars: The Last Jedi. 2017. Directed by Rian Johnson. ‘Star Wars’ franchise. Walt Disney Pictures, Lucasfilm Ltd, and Ram Bergman Productions. Movie.

Star Wars: Rise of Skywalker. 2019. Directed by JJ Abrams. ‘Star Wars’ franchise. Walt Disney Pictures, Lucasfilm Ltd, and Bad Robot. Movie.

Star Wars Special: C-3PO #1. 2016. Written by James Robinson. Art by Tony Harris. Lettered by VC’s Joe Caramagna. April 13, 2016. Marvel Comics. Comic book.

Suicide Squad. 2016. Directed by David Ayer. ‘Worlds of DC’ franchise. Atlas Entertainment, DC Comics, and DC Entertainment. Movie.

Supergirl. 2015–2021. Created by Ali Adler, Greg Berlanti, and Andrew Kreisberg. ‘Arrowverse franchise.’ Originally released on The CW, October 26, 2015. Berlanti Productions and Warner Brothers Television.

Superman: The Movie. 1978. Directed by Richard Donner. ‘Superman’ franchise. Dovemead Films, Films Exports A.G, and International Film Production. Movie.

Superman Returns. 2006. Directed by Bryan Singer. ‘Superman’ franchise. Warner Brothers, Legendary Entertainment, and Peters Entertainment. Movie.

Taxi Driver. 1974. Directed by Martin Scorsese. Columbia Pictures and Bill/Phillips. Movie.

The Ten Commandments. 1923. Directed by Cecil B. DeMille. Paramount Pictures and Legend Films. Movie.

The Terminator. 1984. Directed by James Cameron. 'Terminator' franchise. Cinema '84, Euro Film Funding, and Hemdale. Movie.

Terminator Genisys. 2015. Directed by Alan Taylor. 'Terminator' franchise. Paramount Pictures, Skydance Media, and Annapurna Pictures. Movie.

Terminator Salvation. 2009. Directed by McG. 'Terminator' franchise. The Halcyon Company, Wonderland Sound and Vision, and Columbia Pictures. Movie.

"Thank the Maker." 2000. *Star Wars Tales* #6 (1999–2005). Written by Ryder Windham. Penciled by Killian Plunkett. Lettered by Steve Dutro. Colored by Dave McCaig. December 20, 2000. Dark Horse Comics. Comic book.

"These Are the Voyages…" 2005. *Star Trek: Enterprise.* 4:22. Directed by Allan Kroeker. 'Star Trek' franchise. Originally broadcast, May 13, 2005. Braga Productions, Paramount Network Television, and Paramount Television. Television episode.

The Three Musketeers. 1921. Directed by Fred Niblo. Douglas Fairbanks Pictures. Movie.

Thor. 2011. Directed by Kenneth Branagh. 'Marvel Cinematic Universe' franchise. Paramount Pictures, Marvel Entertainment, and Marvel Studios. Movie.

Thor: Ragnarok. 2017. Directed by Taika Waititi. 'Marvel Cinematic Universe' franchise. Walt Disney Pictures, Marvel Studios, and the Australian Government. Movie.

Thunderball. 1961. Written by Ian Fleming. London: Jonathan Cape Films. Novel.

Thunderball. 1965. Directed by Terence Young. 'Bond' franchise. Eon Production. Movie.

"Thunderball." 1965. Performed by Tom Jones. Composed by John Barry. Lyrics by Don Black. United Artists Records. Song.

THX-1138. 1971. Directed by George Lucas. American Zoetrope and Warner Brothers. Movie.

Titanic. 1997. Directed by James Cameron. Twentieth Century Fox, Paramount Pictures, and Lightstorm Entertainment. Movie.

Titans. 2018–. Created by Greg Berlanti, Akiva Goldsman, Geoff Johns. 'DC' franchise. Originally released on DC Universe, October 12, 2018. Berlanti Productions, DC Entertainments, and Warner Brothers Television. Television series.

Tomorrow Never Dies. 1997. Directed by Roger Spottiswoode. 'Bond' franchise. Eon Productions, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, and United Artists. Movie.

The Towering Inferno. 1974. Directed by John Guillermin. Twentieth Century Fox, Warner Brothers, and Irwin Allen Productions. Movie.

Toy Story 2. 1999. Directed by John Lasseter. 'Toy Story' franchise. Pixar Animation Studios and Walt Disney Pictures. Movie.

"Transformers Hasbro Toy Commercial." 1984. MemoryMuseum, YouTube channel. March 19, 2021, 2021. Accessed October 13, 2021. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0RIcWpaNUtM

Transformers. 2007. Directed by Michael Bay. 'Transformers' franchise. DreamWorks Pictures, Tom DeSanto/Don Murphy Production, and Paramount Pictures. Movie.

Trip to the Moon (*Le voyage dans la lune).* 1902. Directed by George Méliès. Star-Film.

Tron: Legacy. 2010. Directed by Joseph Kosinski. 'Tron' franchise. Walt Disney Pictures, Sean Bailey Productions, and LivePlanet. Movie.

Turbo Charged Prelude to 2 Fast 2 Furious. 2003. Directed by Philip G. Atwell. Original Film. 'Fast & Furious' franchise. Short film.

WandaVision. 2021. Created by Jac Schaeffer. Originally released on Disney Plus, January 15, 2021. Marvel Studios. Television series.

War for the Planet of the Apes. 2017. Directed by Matt Reeves. 'Planet of the Apes' franchise. Twentieth Century Fox, Chernin Entertainment, and TSG Entertainment. Movie.

War of the Ring. 2004. Designed by Roberto Di Meglio, Marco Maggi, and Francesco Nepitello. Published by Ares Games. Tabletop game.

Watchmen. 2009. Directed by Zack Snyder. 'DC' franchise. Warner Brothers, Paramount Pictures, and Legendary Entertainment. Movie.

Watchmen. 2019. Created by Damon Lindelof. 'Watchmen' franchise. DC Comics, Home Box Office, Paramount Television. Television series.

"We Have All the Time in the World." 1969. Performed by Louis Armstrong. Composed by John Barry. Lyrics by Hal David. Warner Brothers. Song.

What If…? 2021. Created by A.C. Bradley. Originally released on Disney Plus, August 11, 2021. Marvel Studios and Flying Bark Productions. Television series.

WHIH Newsfront. 2015–2016. Created by Marvel Studios. 'Marvel Cinematic Universe' franchise. Originally released on YouTube July 2, 2015. Marvel Studios and Google. YouTube series.

Wizarding World. 2019. 'Harry Potter' website. Accessed September 24, 2021. https://www.wizardingworld.com/

Wizarding World of Harry Potter. 2010. Universals Islands of Adventure, Orlando. Theme Park.

Wizarding World of Harry Potter. 2014a. Universal Studios Florida, Orlando. Theme Park.

Wizarding World of Harry Potter. 2014b. Universal Studios Japan, Osaka. Theme Park.

Wizarding World of Harry Potter. 2016. Universal Studios Hollywood, Los Angeles. Theme Park.

The Wolf Man. 1941. Directed by George Waggner. Universal Pictures. Movie.

Wonder Woman. 2017. Directed by Patty Jenkins. 'Worlds of DC' franchise. Warner Brothers, Atlas Entertainment, Cruel and Unusual Films. Movie

The World is Not Enough. 1999. Directed by Michael Apted. 'Bond' franchise. Danjaq, Eon Productions, and Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Movie.

"Writing's On the Wall." 2015. Performed by Sam Smith. Written by Sam Smith and Jimmy Napes. Capitol. Song.

X-Men. 2000. Directed by Bryan Singer. 'X-Men' franchise. Twentieth Century Fox, Marvel Enterprises, Donners' Company. Movie.

X-Men: Days of Future Past. 2014. Directed by Bryan Fuller. 'X-Men' franchise. Twentieth Century Fox, Marvel Entertainment, and TSG Entertainment. Movie.

X-Men: First Class. 2011. Directed by Matthew Vaughn. 'X-Men' franchise. Twentieth Century Fox, Marvel Entertainment, and Dune Entertainment. Movie.

X-Men: The Last Stand. 2006. Directed by Brett Ratner. 'X-Men' franchise. Twentieth Century Fox, Marvel Enterprises, and Donners' Company. Movie.

"Yesterday's Enterprise." 1990. *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. 3:15. Directed by David Carson. 'Star Trek' franchise. Originally broadcast, 19 February 1990. Paramount Television. Television episode.

"You Know My Name." 2006. Performed by Chris Cornell. Written by Chris Cornell and David Arnold. Interscope. Song.

You Only Live Twice. 1967. Directed by Louis Gilbert. 'Bond' franchise. Eon Production. Movie.

Zack Snyder's Justice League. (2017) 2021. Directed by Zack Snyder. 'Words of DC' franchise. Director's cut of *Justice League*. Atlas Entertainment, DC Entertainment, and HBO Max. Movie.