

Episode 3.1 JURASSIC PARK!

October 5, 2018

Hannah (Host):

[00:08](#)

[Music: "Mesh Shirt" by Mom Jeans] Hi, I'm Hannah McGregor and this is *Secret Feminist Agenda*. Welcome back. I am really excited to be starting up season three of *Secret Feminist Agenda*. Got another 30 episodes at least to bring you of conversations about the insidious, nefarious, insurgent, and mundane ways we enact our feminism in our daily lives. I've actually already got some guests lined up for this season and they're amazing. And I've got some topics in mind for minisodes, and after one month hiatus, I am just full of energy. September 2018 was a really hard month to be making a podcast about feminism, [chuckles] as it turned out, because it was a month of rampant, raging, exhausting public misogyny that I'm sure has left a lot of us feeling a little bit burnt out, so I'm delighted to be back with this this project that, I don't know, brings me a huge amount of joy, and, and I'm hoping does the same for at least some of you. Before I get into the very first minisode of season three, a brief announcement: I am doing the first ever live episode of *Secret Feminist Agenda*. It's happening here in Vancouver. It is happening specifically on Friday, November 9th at 1:00 PM, at the downtown location of the Vancouver Public Library. My guests are not 100% confirmed yet, but fingers crossed, I think I'm going to have a couple of super interesting lawyers to talk to about feminism and the law. And this live podcast recording is actually part of a podcast festival that I'm helping to organize here in Vancouver. The Vancouver Podcast Festival is happening Thursday, November 8th to Saturday, November 10th. There's a bunch of really awesome ticketed shows happening at The Rio, with some really fantastic podcasts-- local podcasts like *Pop This*, and then podcasts coming into the city specifically for this like *In the Dark*. If you're a fan of Karina Longworth, who makes *You Must Remember This*, she's going to be there talking about her podcasting and launching her new book. Lot of really fantastic programming. I'm particularly excited that Helen Zaltzman's going to be here doing a live show of *The Allusionist* on the Saturday and I get to introduce her. And I'm going to totally, totally keep my together. You-- You don't even know. It's worth the price of the ticket to watch the degree to which I am going to be a mature professional about this. There's also a bunch of free daytime programming at the Vancouver Public Library. So the *Secret Feminist Agenda* show is going to be free. It's just sort of first come first serve, so come be served by me. And by served, I mean served some live podcast. There's also panels happening

at the library and if you are a podcast maker, there's a bunch of master classes that you can pay to take that are going to be at CBC building also in downtown Vancouver. Yeah. There's workshops about how to make a fiction podcast, about interviewing skills, about sound design, that are really affordable and all sort of hosted by professional journalists and podcasters. So I think the festival is really cool. There's passes you can get if you want to go to everything, if you get a pass, there's parties where you can come and schmooze with the podcasters and the organizers. I will be at everything. So if that is unappealing, don't come. But if it's appealing, then you should come. That's my sales pitch. Anyway, I'm really excited to do the first ever live *Secret Feminist Agenda* and I hope that some of you come there because it will be sad to do a live podcast to an empty room, even though it's not sad to do this recorded podcast to an empty room every week. The other heads up is that I'm going to be in Chicago in early January and, somebody suggested that maybe a *Secret Feminist Agenda* meetup would be fun. So if you are a Chicago-based human and that sounds appealing to you, maybe just like drop me a tweet or a note, or a comment on this episode to indicate such, because again, a meetup-- a meetup where I meet no one but myself would just be pretty heartbreaking. Okay, that's enough announcements. Okay. No, wait, wait. One more announcement. The last announcement is that we're in the midst of transcribing season two and the episode transcriptions will be up before the end of 2018. That is the end of the announcements. So let me tell you what my Secret Feminist Agenda is this week. [Music: "Mesh Shirt" by Mom Jeans]

Hannah (Host):

[05:30](#)

I want to talk about *Jurassic Park*. I realized something about myself maybe a month ago, maybe a couple of months ago, but it's a recent revelation. And that revelation is that if you let me start talking about *Jurassic Park*, I am going to deliver a minimum 10-minute monologue about the importance of this film. And you know, if I've got a 10-minute monologue in me, I might as well record it for a podcast because what this medium for anyway? So consider this my sales pitch for *Jurassic Park*, a movie that absolutely does not need to be sold to anybody because it is very old and also extremely famous and successful. And yet, here I go. *Jurassic Park* was one of the first movies that I saw in theaters and it was also one of the only movies that we owned on VHS. And so I have watched it approximately a million times, and I believe very strongly that *Jurassic Park* is one of the most important feminist films of our time. In fact, it is undoubtedly in my Top Five Movies of All Time, and it might be number one. It might actually be my favorite movie. And my argument is that at its very heart, the core of this film is a

subversive feminist rewriting of the action film. That it's all about taking, all of the sort of standard expectations of the way that an action movie can work and flipping them upside down. So, let's start with the basic scientific premise of the movie. We have John Hammond, the, the naive, and semi-abusive patriarch. The man who believes not only that he is capable of caring for his immediate family, but also of subverting the natural order because, because of his, sort of, personal fantasies about the pleasure that he can bring other people via a sort of carnivalesque experience. And the pleasure he wants to bring other people is the ability to ogle at wild animals that he has taken control of. This is, you know, classic, patriarchal culture at work, classic white culture at work, a belief in a sort of godlike capacity and right to alter the order of things based out of a sense of sort of personal pleasure. And so the thing that he wants to alter is, he wants to bring dinosaurs back. But being a white patriarch, his understanding of how he can control this species is, get this, he'll make them all female, because if they're all female, they won't be able to reproduce, and thus he'll be able to control the population. It's the most incredible microcosm of patriarchal and misogynistic thought to think that reproduction will be impossible in the absence of male dinosaurs, in the absence of a penis. That somehow reproduction lies in the hands of masculinity and that these female dinosaurs will have no means of reproducing on their own. So, so he's so he's, he's wrong. Surprise! He's wrong. Ladies are doing it for themselves. The dinosaurs absolutely figure out how to reproduce. They also figure out how to begin to dismantle the, sort of, orderly structure that he has built. An orderly structure that is importantly run entirely by men. We only see male employees at *Jurassic Park*. And these male employees are fascinated with technologies of control and management. They're interested in fences, and walls, and computer systems, and electrified things, and circuit networks. I mean, they're, they're about technology. They're about modernity. And the dinosaurs are, you know, meant to stand in in a lot of ways for the sort of primal, chaotic female force. And okay, the association of men with modernity, order, control, and with the feminine, with the primordial, the chaotic, the monstrous. Obviously this is, in and of itself, sort of, part of a patriarchal culture's construction of gender along essentialist binaries. So it's bullshit. We know that it's bullshit. No problem. Along come some really reasonable scientists. Not the kind of scientists who think that it is their right and their job to alter things, but the kinds of scientists who want to understand things. And these scientists say that it is wrong and inappropriate to fuck around with these species. And these scientists also understand that the dinosaurs are not monstrous

and chaotic, but rather that they are animals, and that they need to be cared for properly as animals and treated appropriately as animals. And the scientists end up being the heroes of the movie, and they solve a series of problems. Interestingly, science plays into it, but for the most part they do not solve problems through hyper-intelligence through, again, through mastery or control of the environment. So our two, sort of, main protagonists are a couple, played by Laura Dern, who is the most important character in the movie, and by Sam Neill, who is listed first, but is the second most important character in the movie. So Laura Dern's character Ellie, solves problems primarily through being the main action hero of the film. So Ellie is wearing some badass work boots and is like, fucking running around doing things. She's getting shit done. She's fixing problems. Meanwhile, Sam Neill's character, Dr. Alan Grant-- Sorry I should've called Ellie Dr. Ellie Sadler. She is also a doctor. That is very important. Anyway, Dr. Alan Grant's main personality quirk is that he does not like children and lacks the capacity for nurture. And he, you know, while Ellie is being an action hero and just like fucking solving shit, Dr. Alan Grant is left alone with the two grandchildren of John Hammond, and it is his job to care for these children and to successfully bring them home. Another really beautiful traditional gendered role reversal in which he has to learn how to nurture and care properly for these children, while at the same time at no point letting the children or himself believe that the dinosaurs are monstrous or in some way to be vilified. It's just an environment with, you know, with, with risks in it and somebody just trying to navigate that environment as best he can while extending as much care as he's capable of extending. So we've got a bunch of other male characters at work. Most of them get eaten by dinosaurs. I'll get to the importance of getting eaten by dinosaurs really shortly. But the other super important character we need to talk about is Jeff Goldblum's character, Dr. Ian Malcolm. You know, I'm looking at IMDb DB right now to make sure that I get the characters right, but I'm like, naming them before I click, cuz this movie's in my heart. Anyway, the important and interesting thing about Dr. Ian Malcolm, is that he is injured very quickly, almost immediately out of the running, performs no important feats of heroism, and most significantly spends an important piece of the film, reclining half-dressed, while injured on a table in the scene in which the camera sort of both sexualizes and, I would argue, feminizes him in yet another sort of subversion of the traditional representation of masculinity in action films.

Hannah (Host):

[13:23](#)

And so there's all kinds of exciting fucking with gendered roles happening in the movie. The men who participate in traditional

forms of gendered behavior are consumed by dinosaurs. So, if we want to talk about the film having a feminist ethos, we've got these, sort of, monstrous feminine figures, the dinosaurs, who in some ways represent the, sort of, most terrifying version of feminism as per the popular imagination. This all female society that has figured out how to reproduce without, without men, that is completely out of control, that is actively breaking down and subverting the boundaries and barriers and walls and structures that the patriarchy is trying to erect around them. And any characters who believe that they can control that force are devoured by it, but meanwhile, the characters who respect these powers and who treat it as it ought to be treated, who treat these, this [laughs] feminist society of dinosaurs-- There I said it! --as they ought to be treated, survives. Should I have said "spoiler alert" for *Jurassic Park*? No, this movie was made in 1993. It's fine. There's also a couple of children and they're important too, but I think for the most part they're important because they are the opportunity that Dr. Alan Grant has to prove his capacity for nurture. Also significantly, the conclusion of the movie is not about a regaining of control, a rebuilding of walls, the restoration of order. It is the successful exit of our protagonists from a space where they are not welcome. It is them recognizing that that is not a place for them, that they have no right to be there, and that in fact the dinosaurs get the island now. And you know the triumphant image of the Tyrannosaurus Rex roaring while the pathetic banner representation of her, which is a sign of capitalism's failed attempt to control nature, sort of flutters down in front of her. It's just an incredibly triumphant conclusion to a film which is really clearly saying that patriarchy, white supremacy and capitalism are failed ideologies and dinosaurs are going to eat them. I don't know if I've ever spoken so quickly.

Hannah (Host):

I have continued to be a huge fan of the world of Jurassic movies. The *Jurassic Park* oeuvre and have diligently gone and seen all of the *Jurassic World* movies, and so can confidently tell you that the reboots, in the form of *Jurassic World* and then *Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom*, are a complete reversal of the ethos, the ethics, the politics of the original movie. One that desperately attempts to reinstate a belief in order, a belief, and white masculinity and its ability to control and manage femininity. Chris Pratt's character in the new movies is this, you know, hunter figure who is able to dominate, via his superior knowledge, the velociraptors who are, you know, the most hyper-intelligent dinosaurs, you know, the stars of *Jurassic Park*, in a lot of ways. And who very importantly in *Jurassic Park*, consume the hunter who thinks that he can control them. But now here comes Chris Pratt ready to, to dominate via greater

knowledge and greater masculinity, this female pack, and then meanwhile the, the female lead, whose name I can't remember, and I'm not even going to look it up cuz, I mean. She's played by Bryce Dallas Howard. They've got character names, but you know what, they don't deserve them. She, I mean, she's literally running around in high heels through the first movie, which as a contrast to Dr. Ellie Sadler's work boots is real bullshit. but she is also presented as a, sort of, perverse and wrong female character because of her disinterest in, in children. And she needs to be corrected in the same way that Dr. Alan Grant needs to be corrected in *Jurassic Park*, but there's nothing subversive or interesting in it. There's no reversal of the relationship between gender and nurture because she's a woman, and she is being told that her job is to nurture and care for children. She's also implicitly being punished for her participation in industry, which is just, again, significantly less interesting than anything that's happening in *Jurassic Park*. So *Jurassic World*, I mean dinosaurs remain cool, but when it comes to feminist politics, two thumbs way down. But *Jurassic Park* just remains one of those films that, that informed a lot of my early thinking, particularly a lot of my early thinking about, about the monstrous and the notion of the monstrous, and the way that, that the monstrous is coded feminine. And the way that *Jurassic Park* both, both plays on that and rejects it, because the dinosaurs are not monsters. And those who treat them as monsters, or as objects, or as commodities, who, who reduce their animal otherness in any way, like are literally eaten by them. And it's respect for the profound alterity and otherness and power of these creatures that, that allows people to survive. And I think that there's, there's a really important ethics at work in that, alongside just the incredible, sort of consistent subversion of gendered roles in action movies. I mean, it is not a perfect movie by any means. It is a movie that glorifies whiteness the way that mainstream Hollywood movies always do. You know, we can find plenty of space to critique the flaws of the film. And at the same time it was so formative for me and still provides me with such a deep and profound pleasure. I'm so delighted to say that on Friday, the day that this episode will drop, I'm actually getting to rewatch *Jurassic Park* with my friend Megan, who will be watching it for the first time. I'm so, so excited. If you've never seen *Jurassic Park*, please go watch it because it is so good. And if you have seen *Jurassic Park*, please go watch it again because it's so, so good. [Music: "mesh Shirt" by Mom Jeans] You know what else is so, so good? Kaarina.

Kaarina:

[20:33](#)

[Music: "I Will" by Mitsky] Hello and welcome to Pachycephalosaur Self Care Corner. That's right. We have a

special name in honor of this week's episode theme, which I believe is *Jurassic World: Misandry*. And in the recent *Jurassic World* movie, my favorite dinosaur was the pachycephalosaur, that adorable little creature with a very hard head who smashed through things. Is there a better dinosaur for smashing the patriarchy? I think not. So this week on Pachycephalosaur Self Care Corner I have two things to talk to you about, and neither of them are smashing. So maybe you just think about smashing on your own time. So number one, it's October. Apparently it's Liptobar? #Liptober. Any excuse to wear lipstick is fine with me. It's October, and October is a beautiful fall month full of darkness, and goth, and bat-like feelings. So embrace your inner ghoul, bat, or monster by darkening up your lipstick. My favorite lipstick trick, I learned from the wonderful Rebecca Jade, is to line your lips with black lip liner, black eyeliner, or black lipstick. Eyeliner works fine. I mean preferably the pencil stuff. You don't want to like, be smearing liquid eyeliner all over your lips. [Whispers] Although I have and it was fine. And then wear Whatever lipstick shady we're planning on wearing on top, and everybody will ask you what color of lipstick you're wearing and compliment you on it. I swear everybody. Well, everybody worth talking to. Sorry, no shade to the nonfemmes out there. I love and respect you even if you aren't obsessed with lipstick. Number two on Pachycephalosaur Self Care Corner is something that I might have talked about in a past Self Care Corner, but bears speaking about again. And this is about communication in friendships and care in friendships. So I think one of the most important things you can do in a friendship, especially in this day and age, is to check in before you vent, share, seek advice, seek support, unload, whatever term you want to use for that thing where you just really need to talk to someone or tell them all the terrible things that are in you, and in your head, and in your heart, and that you need to unleash, or that you need support carrying. So before you have those very important conversations where you seek support, or where you seek somebody to listen to you, and hear you, and validate you, check in with your friend and see if they have the capacity to do that at that given moment. And it's pretty easy, especially if you're talking through messenger, or text, or email. You can say, "Hey, do you have the capacity to help me with a problem right now?" Or "I'm having some really terrible feelings and I'd love to talk to someone about it. Are you available to be that person right now?" And leave it open. Structure it so that they have out. You can even say, "I know you have strong boundaries and you'll feel comfortable saying 'no' to me if that's where you're at." People have said that to me. And just them saying, "I know you have strong boundaries," makes me feel like, "damn, I got strong boundaries and I am in the position to enforce them. And

this person anticipates my boundaries." And that's really nice. So check in with your friends. I found that those friendships that I do that in are doing a lot better than those friendships where I don't. And that's my fault as much as other people's. Took me a long time and a lot of kind patient, educational work from good friends to realize how important this kind of check in is. Just remind yourself that is wonderfully valid as your feelings are, and as important as it is to seek support in coping and in dealing with this hellscape of a world we're living in right now, that everybody else is going through their own things too and they might want to carve out a space in the future to be that supportive person for you, or that they might want to say, "yes, I can talk to you for 10 minutes now, but I need you for 10 minutes after that to listen to me," or "I can only give you 15 minutes. Is that enough?" So start building that kind of communication into your friendships and I'm pretty sure that they'll benefit. I'm working on that every day. Not always succeeding, but trying to make it a force of habit. And a necessary structure of care in the friendships that I value and the friendships that I want to build. So, that's all for this week. Gosh, I missed you all. Draw a picture of me as a pachycephalosaurus and I will give you my heart. No, not my heart. Something, my, my, my esteem. [Laughs] Have a great weekend. [Music: "I Will" by Mitski]

Hannah (Host):

[25:51](#)

Alright, It's a new season, but some things have stayed the same. So you can still find show notes and the rest of the episodes of *Secret Feminist Agenda* on secretfeministagenda.com. You can follow me on Twitter @hkpmcgregor. You can find me on Instagram under the same handle. And you can follow Kaarina @Kaarinasaurus,. Don't forget to tweet about the podcast using the hashtag #secretfeministagenda. The beginning of season three is also a great time to help spread the word about the show. So go do that. The podcast theme song is "Mesh Shirt" by Mom Jeans, off their album Chub Rub. You can download the entire album on freemusicarchive.org, or follow them on Facebook. Kaarina's theme song is "I Will" by Mitski. Secret Feminist Agenda is recorded on the traditional and unceded territory of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh first nations where I'm grateful to live and work. This has been Secret Feminist Agenda. Pass it on. [Music: "Mesh Shirt" by Mom Jeans]