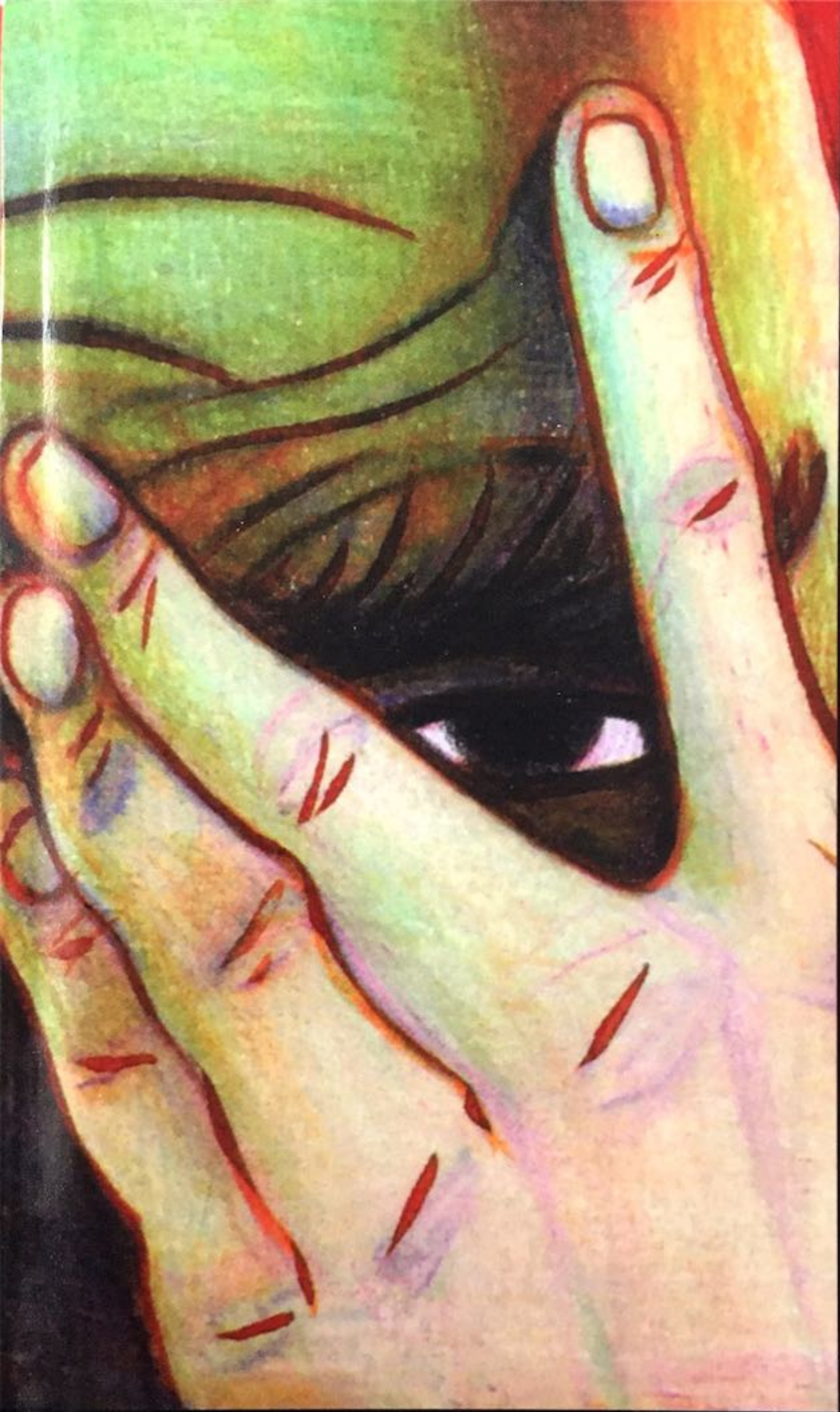


COMICS AND ADAPTATION



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From Marvel Comics to Marvel Studios: Adaptation, Intermediality, and Contemporary Hollywood Strategies

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Over the past few years, a host of new, original films have spurred an explosion of studies on the relationship between comics and cinema.¹ Inspired by the graphic arts, these films question the status of images, their translation from one medium into another, as well as their use of technological innovations. This chapter will focus on a specific contemporary corpus, namely, the superhero movies adapted from Marvel comics. In the 2000s, in search of expansion and new audiences, the publishing house went into film production,² proceeding to develop an original adaptation strategy characterized by its hybridity and intermediality.³ By borrowing typical features from comics (seriality, crossover, shared universes, and so on), these films have ultimately revitalized the poetics of the Hollywood blockbuster. In turn, they have influenced the aesthetics of comics, inverting the usual hierarchy between the original and the adaptation. The issue of adaptation, or *transécriture* (Groensteen 9–29), which is made somewhat opaque given the reciprocal interactions between comics and films,⁴ becomes even more complex given that comics and films are not the only media or practices in play: animation, toys, and video games must also be considered. To identify the stakes of Marvel's current adaptation strategy from an aesthetic as well as commercial point of view, this chapter will focus on three related issues. First, it examines the superhero film and the influence of comics on the renaissance of the action film. Secondly, it describes the production methods at Marvel Studios. Lastly, it identifies what makes Marvel adaptations so unique through a case study of the iconic film *The Avengers* (Joss Whedon, 2012).

The Superhero Film: Comics to the Rescue of Action Movies

Over the last twenty years, Hollywood seems to have rediscovered the colorful world of comics, finding new sources, subject matter, visuals, and, above all, new characters.⁵ Film's renewed interest in comics follows a change in

its target audience (the increasing importance of adolescents since the 1970s), the revival of special effects (digital technology making possible what had previously been unimaginable onscreen), the consecration of pop culture (what some refer to today as “ludic art”; Kriegk, 11–124), the resurgence of paranoid narratives,⁶ and, of course, the obsession with the moving body as the defining feature of what was hitherto the most profitable Hollywood genre: the action movie.⁷

A quick overview shows that most of these superhero action films are adaptations of comics published by Marvel,⁸ one of the two largest comic publishers, which owns the rights to popular individual characters such as Spider-Man and the Hulk, as well as the X-Men and Avengers franchises. These blockbusters belong to a veritable subgenre with a clear commercial logic, while sharing a series of narrative, referential, and cinematographic codes.

These films have sometimes been discussed as examples of the formal renewal of the action movie genre. In terms of poetics, certain characteristics are particularly conspicuous. The camera appears free from its usual technical and physical constraints, as if it were liberated—unleashed, even, with its frantic, mostly virtual movements made possible by digital imagery. Scenes from *Spider-Man* (Sam Raimi, 2002, 2004, and 2007) show the hero swinging from web line to web line, closely followed in the air by a camera that no crew member, crane, or helicopter could ever operate. These fully digital scenes allow the camera to move in the sky with the same ease as the hero, creating a spectacle that revives the attractions of fairground films. When the franchise was relaunched, the trend was even more pronounced. *The Amazing Spider-Man* (Mark Webb, 2012) uses 3D depth of field, which is especially striking in the character’s motion sequences. If this type of filming, with its spectacle of swirling bodies, is now shared by many other action movies, it remains specific to superhero films, as the shots in *The Avengers* (2012) illustrate.

Other recurrent figures remind us, directly or indirectly, of how these films have adapted the comics medium. This is especially true of the temporal changes and use of slow motion in the final images of a shot. The slowing down of the shot seems intended to create a parallel between film montage and the reading of comics with its successive panels, compelling the gaze to linger on the individual image. The films (of Sam Raimi, Zack Snyder, Steven Johnson, Stephen Norrington, Guillermo del Toro, and Jon Favreau) freeze the actions of the characters as a way to anchor them and reproduce the efficacy of comics panels. These variations of speed are supported by an overall intensification of the characters’ poses, further reinforced by perspective and

background lighting, which, in the absence or suspension of movement, seemingly evokes the dynamism of the drawings in typical action comic books. In this respect, *Hulk* (Ang Lee, 2003) is probably the most extreme example, going so far as to reproduce the split panels and simultaneity found in comics pages.

The intrusiveness of the images,⁹ the organization of action scenes into a series of snapshots, and the graphic treatment of shots make the genre easily recognizable, even though these films are, of course, governed by multiple generic codes. Some are narrative (for example, the genesis of the superhero, accompanied by what are often alternatively amusing or belabored scenes detailing the discovery of superpowers or the invention of gadgets such as costumes, armor, and weapons, the crisis of faith and doubt haunting the superhero, the final battle against the villain, and so forth). Others are referential, including the appearance of writers, artists, or creators of comics characters (Stan Lee being the most prominent, but also Kevin Smith or J. M. Straczynski, for example) or references to objects or characters from Marvel's extended diegetic universe. Finally, the Marvel Studios logo, a kind of flipbook leafing through the most famous of their comics panels (now imitated by their main rival, DC), emphasizes the provenance of the motifs and the process of adaptation itself (to put the comic into moving images) by branding the film as belonging to the superhero genre from the start.

It seems that the superhero film has become sufficiently homogeneous to become a genre distinct from that of the 1980s–90s action movie. This process, which took about a decade, was spearheaded by two producers who played a major role in the renewal of the Hollywood industry¹⁰: Avi Arad and Kevin Feige. Their main business asset was the catalog of Marvel characters. However, a study of the close ties between film and comics must also pay attention to the cross-media approach at the core of their production practices.¹¹

Producing to Adapt: Marvel Studios

Among today's most influential Hollywood producers, Avi Arad first worked in the toy business (he led Toybiz in the early 1990s), later in television (especially cartoons), and then in comics publishing (merging the toy industry with children's and teenager's literature, both in crisis at the time).¹² After a series of events too elaborate to be recounted here (Raviv 18–44), Arad, a majority shareholder of the Marvel publishing house, became head of Marvel Studios in 1993; he founded the division to make film adaptations, produced

first in partnership with large companies (mainly Sony Pictures and 20th Century Fox) before becoming independent in 2008. Independence was short-lived as Disney purchased Marvel in 2009. Today, Marvel Studios is part of Walt Disney Studios, where it enjoys relative artistic freedom and a status similar to that of Pixar. Arad left Marvel in 1998 and continued to work as an independent producer and consultant during the 2000s on numerous film adaptations from the Marvel back catalog—not just for Marvel Studios, but also for Sony Pictures, 20th Century Fox, and Columbia Pictures.

The businessman has always been closely involved with his productions, overseeing preproduction (choosing directors, writers, cast) and being quite active on the set (possibly delegating some of his authority to close associates).¹³ The producer developed the genre thanks to three trilogies, all of which testify both to the intentions and nuances foundational to the genre. The first, the *X-Men* series (2000–2006), explores paranoid allegorical motifs while being partly consistent with 1990s action film tropes. The *Spider-Man* series brought more spectacle, color, pop culture, and sheer entertainment, and was explicitly targeted at teenagers. Finally, the *Blade* trilogy (1998–2004) is more violent, openly flirting with horror and B movies. Each of these series was aimed at specific audiences and involved a differentiated merchandising strategy. These trilogies still stand as the canonical reference points for every new superhero film.

Avi Arad has created numerous interactions between comics and films, each benefiting from the success of the other.¹⁴ Examples are legion, but the most famous involve the casting of the films. In the *Ultimates*¹⁵ series, whose editing purposely evokes Hollywood action movies, Mark Millar and artist Bryan Hitch decided to draw Nick Fury in the likeness of actor Samuel L. Jackson in the comics, though he did not exactly correspond to the traditional representation of the character. A few years later, the same actor made a brief appearance at the end of the screen version of *Iron Man* (Jon Favreau, 2008). Since then, the character associated with the actor has become an important figure in several films and publications.¹⁶ Conversely, certain films (especially *X-Men*) have changed the print series.¹⁷ Arad's policy has consistently encouraged the interaction between comics and film, transforming the meaning of "tie-in," as the production of toys and figurines is, from the start, integrating it into the conception stage of the film.¹⁸

Thus, behind the relatively interchangeable roles of the directors and writers lies a shrewd producer who targets teen audiences while combining three major media: comics, action films, and animation.¹⁹ What they all have in common is the fantastic and phantasmagorical image of the characters of the protagonists. Indeed, the superhero film systematizes a link with

extraordinary body—latent in the action movies of the late 1980s—and seduces its audience with the promise of the spectacular exploits accomplished by this amazing body. Of course, such an image of the body predates cinema, but its appearance in moving pictures points to a significant displacement: the story of the exploits matters less than the representation of the bodily performance itself (unlike the comics, which recount the superhuman epics through serialization and cliffhangers).²⁰ In other words, the body becomes the site of adventure, and the spectacle of the body becomes the crux of the film. Transformation scenes are crucial; think, for example, of the change in Flint Marko's cellular structure in *Spider-Man 3* (Raimi, 2007), which endows him with the dynamogenic power of quicksand and, incidentally, evokes the medium of animation. In these films, the characters exhibit extraordinary bodily properties.

Given Avi Arad's expertise in the toy industry, merchandising, and spinoff business, it should come as no surprise that the producer was quick to capitalize on the characters by imposing a commercial logic that crosses multiple platforms; one need only compare the film characters' trademark poses to those of the toy figures.²¹ Animated TV series, movies for the big screen, video games, and toy design echo one another. Whether it is Webb's *Spider-Man* (Marc Webb, 2012), *Iron Man 2* (Jon Favreau, 2010), or *The Avengers* (2012), the characters not only appear in films, comics, television series, toys, and video games, but they do so with a high degree of similarity. Their visual identities show such uniformity that it is practically impossible to distinguish the cinematic image from comic book covers or the video game avatars. The superhero movie is part of a commercial transmedia chain and must adapt to various extra-cinematic factors and changes in product design. It has become an essential link in the current development of convergence and hybridization strategies across different modes of expression and entertainment sectors.

This transmedial aspect is, of course, also at the heart of the work of producer Kevin Feige. Unlike Arad, Feige's career has always centered on Hollywood. A graduate in film studies, he began his career at Richard Donner's production company at Warner Bros. (Donner famously directed the *Lethal Weapon* trilogy of the late 1980s and the *Superman* film of 1978), before being hired as an associate producer for *X-Men* (Bryan Singer, 2000). He quickly became a close associate of Avi Arad and participated in the development of numerous Marvel films (the *X-Men* saga, the *Spider-Man* trilogy, *Daredevil* in 2003, *The Punisher* in 2004, *Elektra* and *Fantastic Four* in 2005, and so on), before being hired to head Marvel Studios in 2007. A self-proclaimed fan of the Marvel universe and especially its tie-ins (toys, figurines, and so on),

Feige intensified the convergent strategies and enlisted film in the crossover logic so essential to the world of comics. The diegetic universe is shared by multiple films, allowing the most popular Marvel characters (or at least the licensed characters) to meet or clash.²² The construction of this “Marvel Cinematic Universe” (the diegetic world these works share), as the producer himself calls it (Salard 54), became reality in 2008 after the studio obtained autonomy and produced the first installment of *Iron Man*. The films are the basis of a dizzying game of references from one film to the next, thereby contributing to the creation of the shared universe.²³

First, there are the more or less explicit allusions and references in the films. Costumes, props, names, and quotes appear from one film to another. These include, for example, Captain America’s shield in the background of the *Iron Man* films; the cosmic cube, the famous tesseract, is the MacGuffin shared by *Captain America* (Joe Johnston, 2011), *Iron Man 2* (Favreau, 2010), *Thor* (2011), and *The Avengers* (2012); Odin’s treasure chamber in *Thor* holds several talismans referring to upcoming Marvel movies. Certain musical themes are also repeated, including that of the Stark Expo in *Captain America* and *Iron Man 2*. These references are primarily intended for fans and those familiar with the Marvel universe, and can be read as knowing clues, just like the cameos by the creator of all these characters, Stan Lee, who never fails to make an appearance in each film.

Secondly, the final scenes after the credits have, ever since the first films produced by Arad (*Blade* and *X-Men*), invited the viewer to the follow-ups of the superhero adventure, with the implication that the stories are never-ending. Originally, this form of cliffhanger marked the serialized nature of the stories. Under Feige, these sequences announce future crossovers in the character of Colonel Fury, who unites these heroes under the banner of the *Avengers*.

Third, an important role is given to spinoffs and additional plot lines through a series of sporadic short films (either as DVD bonuses or posted on the web) presented under the label Marvel One Shot. *The Consultant* (Leythum, 2011), *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to Thor’s Hammer* (Leythum, 2011), and *Item 47* (Louis Esposito, 2012) bring together other narratives by referring to S.H.I.E.L.D. Agent Phil Coulson, for example, a character designed for the “Marvel Cinematic Universe,” who plays an increasingly important role in the Marvel stories (a recurring character appearing in different films, his sacrifice is central to the plot of *The Avengers*). Coulson also became a prominent character in the comics and is featured in the TV series *Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.* (ABC, 2013–).²⁴

To manage this crossover and its effects in cinema and comics, Feige relies on a creative team to maintain the cohesion of the project. This “Marvel committee” consists of four major names in the Marvel comics company: Joe Quesada, editor in chief of Marvel Comics from 2000 to 2011, who is now the creative director, having successfully overseen major crossovers these past few years²⁵; Dan Buckley, Marvel’s managing editor; Alan Fine, vice president and Marvel’s chief marketing officer (before joining Marvel in 1996, Fine was head of the toy distributor Kay Bee Toys); and finally, Brian Michael Bendis, one of the main writers at Marvel Comics, who oversees several major series and crossovers. Other scriptwriters (Matt Fraction,²⁶ Ed Brubaker,²⁷ and J. Michael Straczynski)²⁸ are sometimes invited to the committee to discuss specific characters or outstanding issues. The comics artists and publishers thus play an important role as consultants.

The Avengers: Gatherings and Convergences

The focus of all this creative energy was directed at the launch of what quickly became one of the biggest blockbusters of all time—a “tent-pole”²⁹ for Disney, really, after *John Carter* had flopped (Andrew Stanton, 2012) a few months before—the film *The Avengers* (2012), conceived by Avi Arad in 2005, whose unique structure reflects the culmination of multiple crossover and trans-media strategies.

The production of the blockbuster was entrusted to Joss Whedon, an inexperienced director whose single previous film, *Serenity* (2005), is relatively unknown. However, Whedon is a legend among science fiction and comics fan communities. He owes this status to his work as screenwriter for *Toy Story* (John Lasseter, 1995) and *Alien Resurrection* (Jean-Pierre Jeunet, 1997), as creator of the cult series *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* series (WB, 1997–2003), *Angel* (WB, 1999–2004), *Firefly* (Fox, 2002–2003), and *Dollhouse* (Fox, 2009–2010), as well as author of the cult web series *Dr. Horrible’s Sing-Along Blog* (2008).³⁰ He is also the scriptwriter of *Astonishing X-Men* (2005–2007), a series loved by many Marvel comics readers. Previously approached by Warner Bros. to direct an adaptation of *Wonder Woman*, Whedon, an expert dialogue writer and crossmedia enthusiast (his television series *Buffy* lives on today in comic book form), was eventually chosen by Marvel Studios to write and direct *The Avengers* (2012), on the condition that he conform to precise specifications based on the pre-established characters and narratives he was inheriting.

The film was announced with great fanfare at the San Diego Comic-Con, one of the world's largest comics events, which now includes television series, video games, manga, "Japanimation," toys, trading cards, and fantasy novels. Though a film, *The Avengers* (2012) clearly follows a commercial and multiplatform logic.

Backed by a major marketing campaign on social media and inspired by the world of the comic book series *The Ultimates*, the film also draws on previous film adaptations featuring Marvel heroes. *The Avengers* taps into an episodic structure that recalls, if not the first superhero serials of the 1940s,³² then at least the serialized writing of comics and television series including those created by Whedon. Not only is each character allowed his or her time in the limelight to preserve narrative balance (and to avoid offending fans), but the film's iconography also plays on the world of toys and collectible figurines. In a remarkable metadiegetic gesture, the very idea of collecting superhero merchandise is integrated into the film: the fact that Agent Coulson collects Captain America cards has a substantial impact on the narrative. The film multiplies disguised references and allusions to create a sense of collusion with fans, enhancing the feeling of community to the point of momentarily breaking the logic of the story. This type of break is reminiscent of the vivid and complicit writing of Stan Lee, which set Marvel apart from its competitors in the 1960s.³³

Moreover, many of the scenes are designed to evoke not only the comics panels, but also—perhaps even primarily—the Turbomedia panels, a type of interactive animation developed online by publishers striving to attract readers to the electronic comic book version.³⁴ With its spectacular metamorphoses³⁵ and cartoony moments,³⁶ animation film is another major source of inspiration, and undoubtedly refers to the many produced by Marvel Animation studio for the Disney XD channel among others.³⁷ Lastly, there are multiple cinematic sequences that suggest parallels with the video game universe: the use of overhead or over-the-shoulder shots, the fusing of character and background textures, the unique perspective provided by a virtual camera focusing on a specific part of the action—these techniques frequently appear in video games.

One particular sequence exemplifies this intermedial logic [116:38–117:19]. The amazing long sequence shot of the final battle scene in Manhattan, with its frenetic camera movement, unites all the protagonists. The camera, portraying a Homeric battle scene, moves from the Black Widow to Thor, and lingers on Iron Man, Captain America, Hawkeye, and the Hulk. The aim was to capture the heroes' titanic battle in just a single shot. More than an action scene, this is a moment where the characters are presented in all



Fig. 29: *The Avengers* (Whedon, 2012): the superheroes in their characteristic (and marketable) poses before the final battle.

their glory and celebrated in their characteristic poses. Obviously, integrating this type of shot in the middle of a heavily edited action scene makes it especially emblematic. The vision will not surprise gamers, who are accustomed to varying points of view and the impact of cut scenes that highlight characters or meaningful moments in the story. Overall, the film breaks with the prevailing imagery of recent action films (high speed editing of the action, elliptical montage, the fragmentation of the body, and so on). The reason is twofold. First, the conversion to 3D film imposes the need for a less hectic pace and the extension of shot lengths.³⁸ However, more important, perhaps, is Whedon's desire to make the body wholly legible, something that is characteristic both of his TV series and of mainstream comics in general. Moreover, throughout the film, the camera avoids getting too close to ensure figurative omnipotence, evincing a desire to abolish the offscreen by foregrounding omniscient, alternating montage. The long sequence with the attack on S.H.I.E.L.D.'s flying fortress is exemplary in this respect; the storm scatters the assembled heroes inside and outside the craft into different pairs, who either stick together or are at loggerheads (Iron Man and Captain America / Black Widow and Hulk / Hulk and Thor / Thor and Loki / Loki and Agent Coulson / Black Widow and Hawkeye, and so on) [72:20–89:10]. The camera seems ubiquitous, while its alternating perspectives allow the viewer to follow all characters and actions simultaneously; the film is an exploration of the dialectic between the heroes' scattering and regrouping. Whedon's directing preserves the integrity of the statuettes and aspires to create a large picture book (fig. 29).

The Avengers (2012) thus represents the culmination of a logic of film production inspired by characteristics of the comics industry.³⁹ This successful film⁴⁰ requires us to consider not only the forms and stakes of Hollywood structures and the aesthetics of the blockbuster, but also the question of film adaptations of comics that goes beyond a trans-semiotic perspective to account for interactions across various media. Of course, film has maintained intermedial relations since its beginning (Gaudreault 111–44). Winsor McCay, a comics and animation pioneer, had already adapted his *Little Nemo* from the page to the screen by bringing together other cultural and media practices.⁴¹ The transfer of works from Marvel Comics to Marvel Studios thus fits into a long history of intermediality. Given the multi-platform strategies, the generalization of cross-media practices and changes in the culture industry, the adage that adaptation always involves more than two media or art practices is perhaps even more relevant today.

Notes

1. The 2009 international conference *Cinema e fumetto : Cinema and Comics* at the University of Udine was a highlight.
2. There is, however, little overlap between the comics and movie audience (Rae and Gray 86–100).
3. This is a process characterized by constant interaction between media concepts (Müller 113).
4. In their serial form, comics resist closure and reflect current cinematic trends. In fact, the influence of comics serialization on film merits a full examination that would consider film history as a whole (Oms 153).
5. The superhero has been adapted to numerous media throughout the twentieth century, especially in film (Misiroglu 17–20).
6. Once again, Hollywood cinema seems to reflect America's anxieties in the countless paranoid plots of contemporary films (Aknin 156; Bidaud 7; Guido 7–40; Letort 9–14; Tomasovic, *Le Palimpseste noir* 69–92).
7. The body is the structuring element of the superhero genre regardless of the media (Haver and Meyer 170).
8. Founded in 1939 by Martin Goodman under the name of Timely Comics.
9. Characters and landscapes surge at full speed before the spectators' eyes, harking back to the early cinema of attractions (Belloi 86–154).
10. The industry had to develop new business strategies within the constraints of a global market and complex industry model (Martel 97–119; Mingant 75–100).
11. I use the term "cross-media" to refer to the articulation of different target media responding to a global communication project (Azemard 232).
12. After years of struggle, Marvel filed for bankruptcy in 1996 (Picciau, "Marvel, super-héros de l'entertainment").
13. See the interview with Avi Arad (Pierce 32–34).

14. Here I am developing points made in a previous article entitled "Images dessinées / images animées."
15. Created by Mark Millar and Bryan Hitch and launched in 2002, the series chronicles the exploits of a superhero team similar to the Avengers in an alternate, modernized Marvel universe.
16. In comic books, the character appears in the series *Ultimate Origins*, *Ultimate X-Men*, *Ultimate Enemy*, and *Spider-Man*, and is featured in the films *Thor* (Kenneth Branagh, 2011) and *The Avengers* (2012). A film with the title *Nick Fury* is in development according to the website *Comicbookmovie.com* (accessed on April 9, 2013).
17. One example is the way the *New X-Men* series (2001–2004) by Grant Morrison and Frank Quitely adapts the costumes of the film to their characters.
18. Storyboards and studies of the characters' designs take into account the positions of the figures, as shown by the illustrated book *Art of Marvel Studios* (2012).
19. For more on Arad's career and vision, as well as details on these three intertexts, see my previous article, "Le masque et la menace."
20. Myths and the epic genre are central to comic books (Klock 19–25).
21. For example, the figure "Black Widow The Avengers" produced by Hot Toys in 2012 shows surprising similarities with the character played by Scarlett Johansson in *The Avengers* (2012).
22. At the time of writing, Fox has the rights to *Daredevil*, the *X-Men* (including *Wolverine*), and the *Fantastic Four*; *Spider-Man* and *Ghost Rider* are licensed to Sony. Disney has expressed its desire to obtain these licenses.
23. So far, six films take place in this universe: *Iron Man 1* and *2*, *The Incredible Hulk*, *Thor*, *Captain America: The First Avenger*, and Marvel's *The Avengers*.
24. In August 2012, Marvel Studios and ABC News announced they were developing the S.H.I.E.L.D. series with Joss Whedon and his brother Jed at the helm.
25. Comics like *House of M*, *Civil War*, *World War Hulk*, and *Secret Invasion*, just to name a few.
26. Fraction wrote numerous episodes of *The Invincible Iron Man*. He was recently put in charge of *Fear Itself*, one of the few crossovers not written by B. M. Bendis.
27. Brubaker is a prolific author best known for his contributions to the *Captain America* series.
28. Straczynski is a novelist and writer of TV series, including *Babylon 5* (PTEN, 1994–1998). He has been one of the key writers of the *Thor* series in recent years.
29. A huge, successful blockbuster's box-office revenue can offset the failure of other films as well as protect the producers.
30. Viewed 2,225,000 times in five days (Rose 187).
31. Comic-Con can be described as a space of transmedial convergence for popular cultures (Salkowitz 190–200).
32. *Batman* by Lambert Hillyer in 1943, *Captain America* by John English and Elmer Clifton in 1944, and *Superman* by Gordon Spencer Bennet and Thomas Carr in 1948.
33. According to Alain Boillat, most film adaptations of Marvel comics avoid audience complicity and reflexivity to facilitate immersion (35).
34. One example is the scene with the frozen image of Thor and the Hulk facing the audience when the green giant suddenly hurls his companion sideways into the background [117:31].
35. Examples include shots of Tony Stark putting on the Iron Man armor or of Bruce Banner transforming into the Hulk [74:30].
36. The scene where the Hulk grabs Loki by the feet and slings him to the floor repeatedly recalls the wild and sudden humor of Tex Avery's cartoons [120:20].

37. *The Avengers: Earth's Mightiest Heroes* has been on air since late 2010.

38. Whedon's unease with this technique is well-documented. After testing the 3D camera for the post-credit sequence of *Thor*, Joss Whedon abandoned it for *The Avengers* (2012) in favor of 3D conversion.

39. According to Kevin Feige, the film became even more successful in the following months (Salard 54).

40. Third in the list of the most profitable films of all time, *The Avengers* (2012) prompted Warner and DC entertainment to restructure (Delcroix 149).

41. In this case, the burlesque, vaudeville, and dance (Tomasovic, "Les Greffes du corps animé" 83-100).

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HOW COMICS ARE ADAPTED FROM LITERARY SOURCES AS WELL AS BROUGHT TO THE SCREEN

Both comics studies and adaptation studies have grown separately over the past twenty years. Yet there are few in-depth studies of comic books and adaptations together. Available for the first time in English, this collection pores over the phenomenon of comic books and adaptation, sifting through comics as both sources and results of adaptation.

After an introduction that assesses adaptation studies as a framework, the book examines comics adaptations of literary texts as more than just illustrations of their sources. Essayists then focus on adaptations of comics, often from a transmedia perspective. Case studies analyze both famous and lesser-known American, Belgian, French, Italian, and Spanish comics. Essays investigate specific works, such as Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, the Castilian epic poem *Poema de Mio Cid*, Ray Bradbury's *Martian Chronicles*, French comics artist Jacques Tardi's adaptation *120, rue de la Gare*, and Frank Miller's *Sin City*. In addition to Marvel Comics' blockbusters, topics include various uses of adaptation, comic book adaptations of literary texts, narrative deconstruction of performance and comic book art, and many more.

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