



## Superhero Synergies: Comic Book Characters Go Digital

*From Rowman & Littlefield Publishers*

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**Superhero Synergies: Comic Book Characters Go Digital** From Rowman & Littlefield Publishers

In the age of digital media, superheroes are no longer confined to comic books and graphic novels. Their stories are now featured in films, video games, digital comics, television programs, and more. In a single year alone, films featuring Batman, Spider-Man, and the Avengers have appeared on the big screen. Popular media no longer exists in isolation, but converges into complex multidimensional entities. As a result, traditional ideas about the relationship between varying media have come under striking revision. Although this convergence is apparent in many genres, perhaps nowhere is it more persistent, more creative, or more varied than in the superhero genre.

*Superhero Synergies: Comic Book Characters Go Digital* explores this developing relationship between superheroes and various forms of media, examining how the superhero genre, which was once limited primarily to a single medium, has been developed into so many more. Essays in this volume engage with several of the most iconic heroes—including Batman, Hulk, and Iron Man—through a variety of academic disciplines such as industry studies, gender studies, and aesthetic analysis to develop an expansive view of the genre's potency. The contributors to this volume engage cinema, comics, video games, and even live stage shows to instill readers with new ways of looking at, thinking about, and experiencing some of contemporary media's most popular texts.

This unique approach to the examination of digital media and superhero studies provides new and valuable readings of well-known texts and practices. Intended for both academics and fans of the superhero genre, this anthology introduces the innovative and growing synergy between traditional comic books and digital media.

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## **Superhero Synergies: Comic Book Characters Go Digital** From Rowman & Littlefield Publishers **Bibliography**

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## **Editorial Review**

### **Review**

Stork's clarity lays bare his extensive research, which digs not just into the financial logic of revised aesthetic approaches for maximal capital gains, but also film theorist Rick Altman's definition of 're-gentrification,' which finally makes clear that Marvel's strategies are not new as much as reinterpreted—'a new presentational model of crossover synergy.' Stork's work here is a must-read for anyone who wants to understand precisely how corporate control yields pop-culture product. I'll be sending his essay to my inquisitive colleague shortly—along with the rest of *Superhero Synergies*. (*Slant Magazine*)

Fearlessly leapfrogging media from cinema and comics to gaming and theater, this fresh, smart collection follows the superhero's storied trajectory across formats, franchises, and fandoms, mapping our evolving entertainment universe through innovative, risk-taking scholarship. Whether or not you're into Batman or the Avengers, DC or Marvel, look no further for a shining exemplar of the emerging field of transmedia studies. (Bob Rehak, Associate Professor and Chair, Department of Film and Media Studies, Swarthmore College)

Agile and witty as Spider-Man, brilliantly persuasive as Batman, these essays offer a series of new perspectives on the figure of the superhero across media platforms. The contributors are expert in both traditional scholarship and comic-book canon: Eisenstein's theory of shot-collisions meets 'Hulk smash,' and Bazin's view of the cinema screen as a 'mask' illuminates the interior of Tony Stark's helmet. This is an inspiring assembly of exciting essays. (Will Brooker, author of *Hunting the Dark Knight*)

An insightful and provocative set of case studies, bound to unsettle the 'bad object' status that film studies and critics frequently reserve for the superhero genre, even as the book challenges the techno-centric ethos of new media theory to more convincingly account for the complexities of genre and inter-media content. Together, the original essays collected here provide a useful interdisciplinary roadmap and productive critical framework that should spur other scholars to more fully engage a wider range of complexities—involving gender, genre, aesthetics, identity, labor, and industrial practice—that define intermedial superhero genre production and consumption today. (John T. Caldwell, Professor, Cinema and Media Studies, UCLA. Author of *Production Culture: Industrial Reflexivity and Critical Practice in Film and Television*)

### **About the Author**

**James N. Gilmore** is a graduate student in the Cinema and Media Studies program at the University of California, Los Angeles.

**Matthias Stork** is a graduate student in the Cinema and Media Studies program at the University of California, Los Angeles. His work has appeared in *Frames Cinema Journal*, *Mediascape*, and *Media Fields Journal*, as well as several anthologies.

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**Christine Hook:**

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