



On continuity and corporate synergy in comic book film adaptations and beyond

Paweł Miszuk

(Faculty of English, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań)

MA/PhD Supervisor(s): prof. Bogusława Whyatt, dr Iwona Mazur

The study takes a look at popular cinematic universes to define the concepts of continuity, universes and multiverses and to ascertain the role they play in the popular culture, especially in the comic book film adaptations. The article tries to reconcile adaptation with transmedia storytelling. The study is based on Hutcheon's (2006) theory of adaptation, Lefevere's (1992) notion of manipulation in translation and Toury's (1995) concept of translation norms. The latter two have been adapted to the context of Adaptation Studies to analyze current trends in storytelling. It is argued that universes were a niche comic book concept that has been successfully adapted to the silver screen and that situating superhero movies within larger cinematic universes has become a strong, rule-like norm that has had an impact on movies outside of the comic book film genre. Both cinematic and transmedia universes capitalize on corporate synergy that has been identified as one of the driving forces behind such storytelling formats. Although transmedia storytelling has no clear point of origin, it is suggested that the success of the Marvel Cinematic Universe has facilitated the development of this phenomenon in the recent years. Finally, the fact that the relation between comic books is an element that could be adapted into other media on its own is a point that could drive non-case study oriented research on adaptation into new areas.

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