

Marvel

By Elizabeth Zhang

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Following the release of *Iron Man* in 2008, Marvel Studios absolutely dominated the film industry for over a decade – delivering hit after hit audiences of all ages adored. However, ever since *Avengers: Endgame* arrived in theatres in 2019, the quality of Marvel's projects seems to have been on a steady decline.

One of the main issues seems to be that they have become overly reliant on the use of computer-generated imagery (CGI) as a tool in their storytelling. Of course, when there is a massive explosion or if the characters are based in outer space, CGI is needed to make the story believable. The problem is that Marvel has begun utilising CGI in places where they are not required. For example, during a scene in *Black Widow* where Natasha and Yelena are talking to one another at a gas station, the gas station is CGI. This results in cheap looking background effects, and the overall quality of the CGI goes down as well, considering the team now has to divert their energy and attention into more areas than before.

Another problem is that the Marvel Cinematic Universe is expanding at such a rapid rate that there is no time for the audience to grow emotionally attached to all of the new characters that they are being introduced to, one after the other. In every movie the villain is bigger and more dangerous than ever before – but a point has been reached where the narratives are now so vast that it is no longer relatable or “real” for the average human being. It is hard to be emotionally invested in a story when it does not feel as if there are stakes.

Marvel has also become increasingly focused on the larger picture and the next big thing rather than the current project that they are working on. Each movie or television show is created with the intention of setting up a future film. Each story follows a formula and their outcomes have become easier to predict with every release. The individual piece of the bigger story is now unsatisfying as a standalone as they lack the innovation and uniqueness earlier Marvel projects

had. Marvel is obsessed with developing more and more storylines every year. New worlds and universes are constantly being introduced all the while truly interesting characters that people would like to see more of get left behind in the dust.

Marvel is a very well-oiled machine designed to pump out sensation after sensation. In their endless pursuit of greatness, it would seem that their countless larger than life projects have lost their ability to resonate with their audiences. This only goes to show that creativity cannot be replaced by computer generated imagery, quantity, or anything else. It is the human connection that first drew audiences to characters such as Tony Stark and ultimately it is the lack of such a thing that has caused the downfall of an industry titan.