

Stephen Ramaley

Cathlena Martin

ENG1131

October 23, 2005

*The Incredible Hulk* Smashes Into New Markets

The Hulk is back on his anger-induced rampage thanks to some new and exciting adaptations of the original comic book series *The Incredible Hulk*. Before these latest revisions, *The Hulk* had been popular with comic book enthusiasts and fans of the original television show from the late 1970's ("Hulk (Comics)"). The recent movie *Hulk* and video game *The Incredible Hulk: Ultimate Destruction* successfully introduced *The Hulk* series to a new generation. In order to effectively reach this profitable population, the game and movie studios adapted *The Incredible Hulk* series to appeal to their respective consumers.

The adaptation of *The Incredible Hulk* by director Ang Lee is unlike other comic book movie adaptations in that it has very strong character development. The movie begins with Bruce Banner's father performing human regeneration experiments in the army during the 1960's. Instructed not to perform on humans, Bruce's father begins to do experiments on his own body. The story then jumps to Bruce and his ex-girlfriend Betty working together on similar experiments as Bruce's father. After the viewer begins to feel for the main character, Bruce has an accident in the lab, turning him into the Hulk. This movie advances the characters in a way that the audience can effectively relate to all of the characters, even the Hulk in all of his rage. Further, the movie explores the

relationship between Bruce and Betty, while also going into the changing relationship between Bruce and his father.

*Ultimate Destruction* begins with Bruce Banner after he had already transformed into the Hulk. Bruce is in Hulk form throughout all of the game play. The only time he is in human form is during the cutaways when the player is not in control. This game has a minimal amount of character or relationship advancement. The Hulk is seen to the viewer as an evil character that simply destroys everything for no given reason. Other characters, mostly villains do appear throughout the game play, however these characters are not developed and present no motivation for wanting to fight the Hulk.

Both movie and video game have character advancements relative to their medium presented. The movie has some rather deep character advancement and relations. The point of this was to help the viewer share the same emotions as Bruce, even his angry alter ego. Further, the movie effectively prepares the viewer by starting from the very beginning, how Bruce actually becomes the Hulk. The video game, also works very well for the medium presented. *Ultimate Destruction* has weak development and has focus on its fight scenes, which is actually quite effective for this type of video game. This game was designed to get the players interest from the beginning. Without long and drawn out Bruce Banner game play, the player is allowed to jump right into the adventure of the Hulk series. This game was designed to be an action game and not a dramatic one. This can be seen from the moment the player begins to play the game.

Director Ang Lee, who is also credited for *Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon*, at first seems like a strange choice for a comic book adaptation such as *The Incredible Hulk*. However, this choice turns out to be excellent with regards to the plot of the movie. The

movie successfully explains the foundation of the series, and does so without boring the viewer. Further, the movie does not jump into the action sequences; it spends time evaluating motives for the upcoming action shots. This pays off in the end as the viewer becomes more emotionally tied to the outcome of the hero and the story in general.

The main objective of *Ultimate Destruction* is to cure Bruce Banner of the Hulk. This game consists of two modes of game play, story mode and side mission mode. These missions are effectively incorporated into the game allowing for non-linear game play. However, the plot in the video game seems as a way to advance from one fight scene to the next. The plot mostly consists of doing small and disconnected tasks such as breaking a power generator. As a result the gamer is left confused if he tries to focus on the plot.

The casual moviegoer may not be a Hulk fan who has read the comic books. Therefore it is beneficial for such a movie to include the background of the whole Hulk series before jumping into the movie. In contrast, the video game is expected to draw a crowd who is much more in the know about the Hulk and his past. These may be comic book fans, or new fans that were introduced by the movie. Regardless, the producers of *Ultimate Destruction* designed the game to appeal to the general audience -- people who know the background of the Hulk. Consequently, the game does not go into detail of the basic storyline of the Hulk, it is assumed that the gamer already knows this.

Another aspect of such comic book inspired movies is the importance of graphics. In this aspect the movie succeeds as *Hulk* has some pretty amazing visual scenes. Further, the director stayed true to the comic book roots of *The Incredible Hulk* series by introducing spit screen styles to this movie. This technique gives the movie a genuine

comic book feel and further indicates the thought put into the development of the visuals. *Hulk* also includes remarkable fight scenes that seem to further blend the comic book into the movie.

As in movies, graphics are a pivotal point of video games. In this aspect, however, *Ultimate Destruction* appears to fall short. The graphics of *Ultimate Destruction*, while not extraordinary, are sufficient to appeal to the average player of the game. However, other aspects that cannot be included in movies such as interactivity and controls must be taken into consideration. The player can see that graphics were compromised as a result of the added interactivity and intuitive controls.

Facets such as graphics are key to a success of such a movie, even more so than plot. Because of this, the producers of *Hulk* created a visual masterpiece to appeal to their key audience: young moviegoers. This population expects such movies to be bursting at the seams with amazing graphics and fight scenes, which *Hulk* delivers. On the contrary, the video game does not have such astounding graphics. However, the developers took away detail in exchange for playability and interactivity. This compromise was most likely a very good move when comparing to the success of such interactive games as *Grand Theft Auto*. The creators of *Ultimate Destruction* fed off of this success when designing the game to appeal to their primary audience.

The moviegoer will most likely not know too much about the series. Further, such people go to such a movie for its plot, character advancement, and exciting visuals. The movie *Hulk* effectively elicits these aspects of the movie, successfully communicating with the movie consumer. On the other hand the gamer is probably somebody who is more familiar with the story of *The Incredible Hulk*. The producers

therefore played to this market by producing a game that has little back-story. Further, the market for an action game plays such games not for their plot or character advancement. Because of this the game studios left these aspects out in turn for things that such game players would value such as interactivity and playability. Further, while *Ultimate Destruction* may not be as deep as the movie version, it takes facets from the series that are more appealing to a gamer such as amazing fight sequences.

Consequently it can be established that both categories of *The Incredible Hulk* franchise have effectively and successfully accessed their respective consumers. This can be clearly seen when examining the character advancement, plot, and visuals of both media. The game and the movie successfully tailor each aspect of their media to their intended population. Such a strategy creates a considerable interest in the movie and gaming communities and proves to be profitable for *The Hulk* series. Further, the success of this strategy has led to the production of additional video games from the series and an upcoming sequel to the movie (Yarish). If this formula is implemented in the upcoming renditions of *The Incredible Hulk*, they are almost sure to be successful.

Works Cited

*Hulk*. Ang Lee. Perf. Eric Bana, Jennifer Connelly, and Sam Elliot. Universal Pictures, 2003.

“Hulk (Comics).” *Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia*. 28 October 2005, 18:57 UTC. 30 October 2005 < [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hulk\\_%28comics%29](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hulk_%28comics%29)>

*The Incredible Hulk: Ultimate Destruction*. Video Game: Xbox. Vancouver: Radical Entertainment, 2005.

Yarish, Stephen. *The Incredible Hulk: Engine Of Destruction*. 30 October 2005 <<http://www.incrediblehulk.com/comichistory.html>>