

## A Hero, An Insect, A Lie

Among the countless superheroes brought into our mortal world by the comic book industry are those that emulate insects: Spiderman, Antman, The Green Hornet, Black Widow, to name a few. While their millions of fans question nothing about humans with insect traits flying about and saving their respective communities, the insects are left wondering if those who support these franchises really understand the realities and hardships bugs must face every day. The comic book industry is a perpetrator of Insect Appropriation as they take only certain qualities from chosen insects and conveniently leave out the actual challenges they confront.

Our first and most widely known example is Spiderman. While he did have to deal with some controversy as to his true motives, people never saw him and said anything to the effect of “ew” or “ah! spider!” Spiders face rejection every day by all humans. Humans don’t take sides and say, “you know what, I think they’re good for society.” No. There is a unanimous agreement that spiders are “gross” and “contribute nothing to this planet.” Spiders are so profoundly hated that when they die, they are simply left there to rot away. No burial, cremation or any sort of ritual is had. Humans simply say, “go to spider hell” and leave them there forever. And if they’re not dead, they squish them and flush them down a toilet into a dark abyss. Let’s consider Spiderman. If Spiderman were to die in a corner because he starved to death due to his own stupidity, a ceremony would ensue. He would be mourned, not left there to wither away. But that’s not something the executives at Marvel consider when they make multiple reboots in a franchise revolving around a spiderhuman.

This brings me to Antman. Unlike Spiderman, he did experience the hardships of being tiny, however he had the luxury of shrinking on his own command. I’m sure ants would love that choice, but they’re not given that freedom. Here’s a fun fact: there are more ants on Earth than there are humans. So why do they feel like a minority? Like outsiders? So much so that when they do come inside to greet their human friends and eat up the crumbs they left on the ground they are sprayed with liquid invented *especially for the purpose of killing them*. What if we were the ants for a day? What if we had to make our homes out of sand just to have them stomped on by the bored youth of the apparently “smarter” species? Antman did not have to deal with this adversity. He lived comfortably among other humans. He was not ostracized for his antness.

In conclusion, the rich hotshots behind the superhero franchises should educate themselves as to the difficulties that bugs encounter every day if they are going to steal elements from bug culture and inject them into their own stories for profit. Let us turn ignorance into understanding.