

Adapting Character Personalities: Emotional Resonance in the Transition of Comics to Animation

Joseph Learoyd

Doctoral Student, University of Staffordshire

1052054m@student.staffs.ac.uk

Professor Carlton Reeve

Doctoral Supervisor, University of Staffordshire

carlton.reeve@staffs.ac.uk

Abstract

This paper explores how the adaptation of comic characters into animation reshapes personality and enhances emotional resonance. Rather than a simple shift from static panels to moving images, adaptation is treated as a creative process of negotiation between source material and reinvention for new audiences. Grounded in adaptation theory, transmedia storytelling, and semiotics, the paper examines two case studies: *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse* (2018), a Western example of superhero reinvention through multiverse storytelling and stylistic experimentation, and *YuYu Hakusho* (1992), a manga-to-anime adaptation that deepens shōnen characterisation and emotional engagement. The analysis demonstrates how animation extends character identity through movement, voice, and pacing, while also navigating challenges of localisation and cultural translation. The findings suggest that the sustainability of transmedia franchises depends on deliberate planning that preserves essential identity traits while allowing flexible reinterpretation across platforms and cultures.

Key Words: Animation, Adaptation, Localisation, Comics, Semiotics, Emotional Resonance

Introduction

Comics have long been a foundation of popular storytelling, combining text and images to bring complex characters to life both for children and adults. Yet as audiences expand and media landscapes shift, these characters rarely remain confined to the pages where they were first developed. The adaptation of comics into animation is more than a technical shift from static drawings to moving images; it is a creative and interpretive process that reshapes character personalities for new audiences and contexts. Here, we ask how comic characters change in the move to animation without losing who they are and suggest that animation heightens emotional resonance when creators protect a character's core identity and redesign its expression for medium and culture. We test this through two cases—*Spiderman: Into the Spider-Verse* and *YuYu Hakusho*—using three lenses: core identity, adaptable expression, and world cues.

Scholarly works such as Liam Burke's book, *The Comic Book Film Adaptation: Exploring Modern Hollywood's Leading Genre* (2015), highlight how characters are continually reinvented in animated formats, expanding their reach and deepening cultural impact. From the brooding atmospheric darkness of *Batman: The Animated Series* (1992) to the vibrantly styled experimentation of *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse* (2018), comic-to-animation adaptations reveal the ways character identities can remain recognisable yet evolve through transmedia storytelling, even localising between different cultural contexts in their translations. Academic journals have consistently examined how transmedia storytelling enables franchises to thrive by bridging the gap between comics and animation, offering fresh

opportunities and angles for narrative innovation and audience engagement (Leitch, 2017; Grosvenor, 2024).

A central driver of these adaptations is the concept of “emotional resonance”: the ability of audiences to empathise with characters, understand their personalities, and remain invested in their narrative journeys. Animation offers many unique opportunities to heighten emotional resonance: timing, gesture, movement, and voice, can add new layers of meaning to traits first sketched in panels. At the same time, adaptations face the artistic challenge of preserving the essence of beloved characters, adapting the original visions of the source material creators and working with the pacing of a new medium, while still attempting to make the result accessible and engaging. The transformation of character personalities across media is a critical aspect of franchise longevity with many animated franchises, alongside public domain IPs existing in multiple formats and iterations that have stood the test of time. The key to their success across various generations and audiences is the constant ability to reinvent their premises, bringing characters to life (Learoyd, 2019).

The transformation process raises a critical question: *How are characters adapted from comics into animation to better enhance emotional resonance and audience understanding of their personalities?* This paper examines how character personalities are adapted from comics into animation, with a particular focus on how these transformations enhance emotional resonance and strengthen audience understanding in the new medium. Drawing on adaptation theory, transmedia character design frameworks, and core comic and animation concepts, this paper analyses two case studies, animated adaptations from both Eastern and Western comics. Rather than offering an exhaustive survey of transmedia adaptation practices, the focus is placed specifically on how animation reshapes character personality to intensify emotional resonance.

The analysis proceeds with three sections: (1) defining key theoretical frameworks and the challenges associated with maintaining emotional resonance, comparing comics versus animation as vehicles for character and emotion, (2) Investigating creative strategies illustrated through notable case studies, and (3) synthesising findings on transmedia resonance in conclusion. This approach grounds the discussion in established theory before directly addressing the distinctive characteristics of each medium and practical examples of adaptation.

This study undertakes a comparative analysis of Eastern and Western adaptations of comic-based narratives, with particular emphasis on the previously noted, *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse* from the West and the popular 90s Japanese anime *YuYu Hakusho*. These two works, whilst different, are emblematic of their respective cultural and media traditions, offering rich case studies for examining how character personality, narrative structure, and emotional resonance translate across different adaptation practices. The *Spider-Verse* films represent a cutting-edge Western approach to reimagining comic superheroes through innovative animation techniques and diverse character iterations that reflect evolving cultural values and audience expectations. Conversely, *YuYu Hakusho* exemplifies the classic trajectory of manga-to-anime adaptation in the East, showcasing a deep evolution of character complexity and emotional engagement through animation’s distinctive tools.

Analysing these examples allows for an exploration of both convergences and divergences in adaptation strategies, highlighting how cultural contexts shape the translation of comic characters to screen, bridging theoretical frameworks and creative processes within the transmedia narrative environment. Drawing on interdisciplinary fields such as adaptation studies, media theory, and semiotics, this methodology facilitates an analysis of maintaining

and reshaping character personalities as they move platforms allowing emotional engagement with adapted characters.

Methodology

This study utilises qualitative analysis of selected animated content, *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse* and *YuYu Hakusho*, western and eastern adaptations respectively, to explore how character personalities are adapted from comics into animation, with particular focus on emotional resonance and cultural translation. The analytical framework operates along three primary axes: core identity, adaptable expression, and world cues, drawing from transmedia storytelling and adaptation theory literature.

Core Identity encompasses important traits that assure character recognisability across media. This includes ethical roles, silhouettes and shape language as well as critical interpersonal relationships that anchor the personality within expanding transmedia designs (Kelleter, 2017; Stein & Busse, 2016). Adaptable expression examines flexible components such as vocal tone, and rhythm, and culturally specific elements that enable local tailoring and audience-specific resonance without compromising the character's essential nature and personality (Ryan, 2013). Finally, world cues employ Ryan's (2013) and Dena's (2009) conception of transfictionality to analyse the interplay of mythos (background lore and moral codes), ethos (value structures embedded in narratives), and topos (recurring spatial choices and settings) that collectively shape immersive worlds that facilitating character meaning.

The animations chosen for analysis represent moments of narrative change and emotional intensity, allowing for detailed coding of strategies that balance preservation with inventive reimagination (Mittell, 2015; Jenkins, 2006). For *Spider-Verse*, assessment centres on maintaining Miles Morales's core responsibility arc and spider iconography, expression through innovative animation techniques and the multiversal context as a topos. For *YuYu Hakusho*, focus is placed on Yusuke's delinquent-to-hero archetype, the use of timing and deeper emotional understanding and development compared to its comic counterpart, to heighten affect, and backdrops grounded in subcultural contexts that serve as topos and ethos.

This approach bridges theoretical insights and concepts with practical creative decisions, enhancing understanding of transmedia character adaptation strategies across cultures and media. The case studies that follow apply a framework structured around the three analytical lenses outlined above. Rather than offering a purely descriptive comparison, each case study examines how animation-specific tools such as movement, timing, vocal performance, and design reshape character personality in ways that enhance emotional resonance. Core identity is assessed through the preservation of defining traits and narrative roles, while adaptable expression is analysed through changes in performance, style, and presentation. World cues are examined in relation to how narrative environments and cultural context support emotional engagement. This approach demonstrates how theoretical concepts from adaptation and transmedia studies are operationalised in the analysis, ensuring consistency and comparability across the two case studies.

Theoretical Foundations and Practical Challenges

Transmedia character personality design is a conceptual and practical strategy that focuses on the crafting and development of fictional characters whose essential personality traits,

emotional depth, and narrative purpose remain consistent and thematically developed, while being expressed differently across comics, animation, film, games, and other platforms. As these characters travel across media and markets, their semiotic traits, that is, the specific symbols, aesthetics, and storytelling devices that express their nature and three-dimensionality must be “adapted” to meet new cultural norms, audience expectations, and technological affordances. This approach to character design predominantly respects the original creator’s intent and the source material’s unique qualities, or at the very least, the essence of the intended characterisation. At the same time, it requires flexibility, to make such a character transition: characters must be adapted so that each new portrayal remains engaging and meaningful without losing the foundations that make them recognisable and relatable.

The shift from comics to screen-based media, such as animation and film, powerfully illustrates these challenges and opportunities (Lefèvre, 2007). Comic books, for example, present character identity through elements such as panel layout, expressive lettering, sounds written as onomatopoeic effects, and the reader’s own personal control over pacing and sequence (McCloud, 1993). By contrast, screen media, in this case, animation, builds character through movement, voice acting, timing, sound design, and paratextual elements such as credit sequences or tie-in digital content (Thompson & Bordwell, 2010). Therefore, successful transmedia adaptation shifts the focus from seeing character properties as attributes of a text to recognising them as persistent narrative features anchored in a broader world, or “storyverse,” whose coherence and comprehension is maintained across media boundaries (Hergenrader, 2020).

Transmedia storytelling, as a broader theoretical and industrial practice, supports the development of multidimensional characters by weaving their stories through multiple platforms, inviting direct audience participation, and cultivating expansive, interconnected worlds (Bin Hasri & Syed, 2025; Freeman, & Taylor-Ashfield, 2017; Guynes & Hassler-Forest, 2018). It also disrupts the traditional academic divisions between adaptation (moving stories or characters from one medium to another) and translation (moving them from one language or culture to another), because in transmedia, adaptation and translation often occur simultaneously (Milton & Cobelo, 2023). Canalès (2020) observes that adaptation is too frequently reduced to mere format transfer and translation to simple language substitution in discussion, when both processes in a transmedia context involve ongoing negotiation of meaning, form, and cultural relevance. For this study, these frameworks matter specifically because they explain how emotional resonance is preserved when character personality is reconfigured rather than simply transferred across media.

To track a character’s persistence and recognisability, world-based frameworks become essential. Audiences recognise characters not only by surface traits, but because these figures inhabit worlds with established mythologies, ethical structures, and places - key elements which Klastrop and Tosca (2016) term “mythos, ethos, and topos”. Continuity in roles, relationships, narrative stakes, and character arcs further anchors them within the story world (Klastrop & Tosca, 2016; Tosca & Klastrop, 2019). Adaptation theory, especially as presented by Hutcheon and O’Flynn (2013), reframes adaptation as creative “re-authoring under constraint,” rather than a process of simply forcing fidelity to an original concept. Meanwhile, transmedia storytelling perspectives (Jenkins, 2006; Scolari, 2009; Yu, 2023) highlight how industrial structures, marketing, and participatory culture shape not only the longevity of a character but how they are collaboratively interpreted and reimaged across generations.

Bertetti's (2014) *Towards a typology of transmedia characters* gives a clear framework for evaluating this balance: transmedia characters must combine replication (staying true to core aspects) with reinvention (adjusting to platform-specific needs) to maintain emotional resonance and narrative coherence. This enables emotional resonance for both new viewers on a new platform or to long term fans who are drawn to a change of platform due to the familiarity of character. Taking a world-oriented approach helps determine what aspects of a character, such as moral role, emblematic design, or key motifs should remain in place, and what can be adapted for the new animated form, like performance style, gesture, costume, or culture-specific references. Franchise analysis sheds light on how centralised creative managements, using tools like style bibles, licensing contracts, and approval systems, enforces non-negotiable aspects, while leaving room for local creators or market-specific adaptations to develop new ways of expressing the character to fit a key genre aesthetic or animation style (Johnson, 2013; Steinberg, 2012; Bourdaa, 2018).

This leads to the practical challenge of distinguishing between “core identity”, the aspects necessary for continuity within a character and “adaptable expression”, the leeway and freedom given to local or platform-specific reinvention. Core identity and emotion in a character encompasses, for example, a character's role in the world's ethical structure, defining relationships, silhouette or design (often focusing on shape language or colour scheme), and signature motifs (Lamerichs, 2019). Adaptable expression includes elements like voice, accent and humour. Clearly drawing this line assists both creators and localisation teams in managing the technical and cultural complexities and nuances inherent in translating comics' visual grammar into movement and sound, while also navigating censorship rules, and casting traditions (Miszuk, 2023).

Localisation is thus an important term that lies at the very heart of transmedia character design. Insights from translation studies provide concepts and strategies for how characters and stories move culturally. Venuti's (2008) theory of domestication versus foreignisation poses important decisions for creative teams: what unfamiliarity or uniqueness should be preserved, and what should be adjusted for local norms? This similarity to the above, acknowledges that adaptable expression and localisation processes are closely related within the process of panel to screen adaptation. It is the research that is important when these transfers take place. Research on culture-specific items (Dionísio & Nisi, 2021) gives further guidance on adapting names, jokes, forms of address, customs, and references. Audiovisual translation research details technical and creative challenges such as how to subtitle and dub dialogue so that it fits both the mouth movements of animated or live-action characters and the expectations of local audiences (Díaz-Cintas & Remael, 2014; Pérez-González, 2014; Ranzato, 2015), in such a way that maintains immersion as well as fitting the character's personality. Game-localisation offers further parallels to these as it introduces the practice of “transcreation,” where maintaining the function and emotional impact of content is more important than literal equivalence, a principle that applies directly to the adaptation of comic humour, timing, and music for screen (O'Hagan & Mangiron, 2013; Bernal-Merino, 2018).

Ultimately, this means that successful transmedia character design is an act of thoughtful planning rather than a last-minute edit to a media change. Creative teams must decide in advance which elements of character and story will remain consistent across all formats, which will be adapted, and how audience reception will be observed and measured across different linguistic and cultural communities (Halwani, 2022; Roxo, 2020; Glaude, 2023; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 2021; Zhang & Wu, 2024; Tasić & Stamenković, 2023; Giacomasso & Conforti, 2024).

Applying Creative Practices: Case Studies

Comics and animation are deeply interconnected art forms that share common historical and formal roots. The visual similarity between comic panels and animation frames, combined with influences from the silent film era, established a close relationship between the two media (Wells, 1998, Rahman, 2024). Both comics and animation rely on sequential frames to engage audiences in filling narrative gaps, creating an active storytelling dynamic (Atkinson, 2009), which supports their ease of transition in many ways. In comics, emotional expression and movement are implied through sequential expressive line work, and careful composition, with readers imaginatively bridging the spaces between panels, an interaction that fosters a unique emotional connection. Conversely, animation conveys character and emotion more explicitly through continuous movement, following established animation principles (Thomas & Johnston, 1981/1995), that enrich storytelling with deeper layers of contextualisation. Adaptation studies examining comics-to-screen transitions demonstrate how this narrative techniques complement one another, leveraging the strengths of each medium (Thompson & Bordwell, 2010).

Case Study 1: Into the Spider-Verse

A prime example of this interplay is the critically acclaimed film *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse*, which serves as a narrative and stylistic breakthrough in contemporary transmedia adaptations. The film masterfully translates the visual grammar of comics, incorporating halftone textures, effects, speed lines, and panel transitions into a cinematic vocabulary that maintains visual clarity and accessibility (Summers, 2019). This innovative visual strategy not only helps to stabilise the character of Miles Morales across different media platforms but also differentiates each “Spider-Person” through distinct animation styles that reference their unique worlds of origin, embodying transmedia storytelling’s potential to balance fidelity and creative reinvention and giving the film a distinct animation dialect. Figure 1 shows how *Into the Spider-Verse* translates comic-specific visual grammar, such as halftone textures and motion lines into animation. This is compared to the Dan Slott’s source material in figure 2. These stylistic choices are not merely aesthetic but function to preserve the affective qualities of the comic medium while exploiting animation’s capacity for movement and timing.



Figure 1: *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse* stylisation

The multiverse narrative device within recent years (Busi Rizzi & Di Paola, 2025), has become a prominent and effective storytelling strategy within superhero comics. The long history of *Spider-Man*, marked by multiple adaptations and reinterpretations over the decades, lends itself naturally to narratives that continually reinvent the character’s origins, emotional complexity, and nuances while keeping the essence fresh and relevant. *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse* (2018), based loosely on a 2015 comic book arc by Dan Slott,

exemplifies this approach by retaining the core emotional resonance that defines every iteration of *Spider-Man*: the struggles, achievements, and personal growth of a relatable individual rather than a distant superhero archetype (Summers, 2019). Although the film diverges significantly from its comic source, the narrative adaptation process takes the core of the variants of the multiverse, and utilises those that would best fit the screen, predominantly in how they differ from one another visually as well as the “What if?” concept of our favourite characters meeting and interacting with one another.



Figure 2: Artwork of the 2015 Spider-Verse comic depicting several variants that made it to the screen.

The film’s multiversal framework permits a layered adaptation that captures the diverse characterisations of *Spider-Man*, in all forms, making the narrative accessible and emotionally engaging to a wide and varied audience.

Miles Morales’s journey is particularly notable for its depth of emotional resonance. His story is shaped by trauma, uncertainty, and personal development, engaging viewers as he learns to navigate the challenges of newfound powers alongside his evolving sense of identity (Sharp, 2023). This inner conflict resonates deeply, reflecting universal experiences of self-doubt, cultural expectation, and the search for belonging, that weave their way through all the narrative’s various Spider-people (see figure 3), despite the style and presentation. Moreover, Miles’s narrative carries an optimistic message of perseverance and self-affirmation. His resilience in the face of external pressures, alongside his affirmation of cultural and personal identity, offers inspiring representation that transcends traditional comic superhero narratives and connects meaningfully with new and returning audiences (Gonzalez, 2023).



Figure 3: The stylistic differences of the various Spider People, Into the Spider-Verse

Critical readings remind us that advancements in representation within the Spider-Man franchise coexist alongside industry hierarchies. While the narrative rhetoric that “anyone can wear the mask” promotes inclusivity as well as noting that anyone from any diverse background can be a hero, industrial decisions continue to prioritise familiar legacy characters, thereby limiting the extent to which Miles Morales, a relatively modern creation by comparison, can be foregrounded throughout the expansive transmedia franchise (Jeffries, 2022/2023). Design choices around voice casting and music carry these tensions across dubs and subtitles, where the same cues can either preserve situated and often-under supported identity or alternatively, flatten it for further global circulation (Wang, 2024).

Eastern and Western comparative adaptation

While this paper does not analyse webtoons as a primary case study, their adaptation strategies provide an important comparative context for understanding how emotional pacing and character resonance are managed in East Asian comic-to-screen transitions. Korean webtoons offer a distinct and highly productive pathway for comic-to-screen adaptation, marked by their born-digital vertical scroll format that reshapes timing, and reader engagement in ways that challenge conventional adaptation practices. Despite the existence of a more Eastern formatted “Manhwa”, the webtoon has developed with the user platform in mind, meaning that stories are developed with the creator noting the pacing and characterisation resonance and how that is presented through mobile screen scrolling (Brown, 2013; Shao, 2021; Henchobdee & Teeravarunyou, 2022). As research shows, these adaptations go far beyond direct translation; intricately interconnected “IP engines” and the collaborative networks of creators and fans, guide webtoon intellectual property through layers of participatory practices, as the narratives are adapted for television and film (Yecies, 2020; Jin, 2024).

Decisions surrounding localisation in these cases commonly focus on nuanced elements such as kinship classifications, workplace or school traditions, and registers of humour anchored in original panel rhythm. Adaptation practices here, foregrounds a key guiding principle, that resonates with aforementioned similarities in Western comics: preserving the core function and spirit of material while allowing for the development of communication styles. The boundaries of creative adaptations are set not solely by formal license holders, but also by a variety of fan communities, whose interpretations, “headcanon,” and commentary on characterisations and narrative decisions help to play an active role in shaping perceptions of authenticity (Zhang & Wu, 2024; Yu, 2023) as well as guiding emotional resonance with characters.

The comparison with Japanese manga underscores parallel challenges inherent in adaptation processes, particularly those pertaining to emotional expression and narrative pacing. Scholarly analyses indicate that manga employs dynamic panel framing and atmospheric pacing techniques that serve to help with immersing readers directly in the emotional states of characters (Cohn, 2012; Shamooin, 2011). These visual strategies, ranging from exaggerated emotional depictions to intentional “silent” pauses, known as “ma” (Strnadová, 2024), are frequently transformed in anime adaptations. These strategies form ways in which to augment emotional resonance and character complexity through the integration of music, timing and vocal performance. Like Korean webtoon adaptations, manga adaptation necessitates a delicate negotiation of pacing, narrative rhythm, and culturally coded elements, discerning which aspects of identity are immutable and which may be adaptively translated without loss of source meaning. Both media strive to balance the preservation of authenticity with the demands of accessibility, particularly through careful localisation of humour and emotive cues. (Feathers, 2020; Artsology, 2024; Vleghert, 2022).

Comparative research shows that transmedia strategies in manga and webtoon franchises create characters whose identities resonate both locally and globally. Identity markers highlight the need for intentional, transparent planning in character migration and transformation (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 2021; Bourdaa, 2018; Roxo, 2020). Effective adaptation demands a methodical, world-aware design. This starts with diagnosing character functions and value systems (Klastrup & Tosca, 2016), followed by developing a detailed cross-media “bible” to secure non-negotiable elements. Localisation must be guided by frameworks such as Venuti’s (2008) translation theory, supported by audience testing and decisions on transference (Burke, 2015; Summers, 2019) alongside market alignment (Díaz-Cintas & Remael, 2014; Pérez-González, 2014). Finally, evaluating reception within subcultural and linguistic communities is vital, as successful transmedia storytelling relies on both local recognition and global marketing (Scolari, 2009; Yu, 2023).

Case Study 2: YuYu Hakusho

Comics function as foundational storyboards in animation, offering a narrative and visual framework that establishes story structure and character expression, which animators adapt into fluid sequences (Arby & Widiastomo, 2024; Mirades, Vorn, & Gasar, 2022). The manga-to-anime adaptation of *YuYu Hakusho* exemplifies how animation expands emotional and narrative depth in shōnen works. By embedding comic semiotics directly into animated motion (figures 4 & 5), the anime reinforces continuity of character identity while intensifying emotional immediacy. This demonstrates how adaptable expression can enhance resonance without undermining recognisability.



Figure 4: *YuYu Hakusho* Anime



Figure 5: *YuYu Hakusho* Japanese manga (vol.1)

While the manga conveyed story and character through panel composition and sequential art, the anime heightened this emotional resonance and character nuances beyond the page (Reddit: *Yu Yu Hakusho*, 2024; CBR, 2023). Yusuke Urameshi’s growth from delinquent to spirit detective gains weight not just through fight choreography but through deepened audience empathy. Additional scenes and interactions, such as moments of internal conflict and relationship building, further strengthen viewer connection (Collider, 2023). It is through these lengthened moments that we see a subversion of the typical shōnen tropes of constant fighting for power but rather a deeper study into the morality and psychological exhaustion that comes alongside this. The anime cultivates emotional resonance by depicting struggles of identity, friendship, and growth, building on the existing concepts presented in Togashi’s original work. Protagonists in shōnen narratives often embody awkwardness, persistence, and uncertainty, especially in social and romantic contexts, fostering strong viewer identification

(Ceylan-Dadakoğlu et al., 2022; Duckworth, 2021) with animation heightening these journeys (Safitri, 2012; Japan Powered, 2020; Ijmr, 2024). The characterisation of a protagonist needing to learn and “coming of age” supports real world resonance, deepens parasocial bonds, as audiences form enduring emotional and moral attachments to characters.

Manga such as that of *YuYu Hakusho* is somewhat reflective of the Japanese *yankii* subculture, providing a culturally specific lens, portraying youth marked by rebellion and social negotiation. Although articulating juvenile identity politics through design and backdrop, (Nippon.com, 2023; Unsriana, 2022), such anime adaptations preserve these socio-cultural cues while broadening their resonance through universal themes of belonging and resistance (Riessland, 2013; Leahy, 2023; Gutternaut.net, 2025). Successful adaptations depend on faithfully translating these culturally and emotionally embedded details to sustain authenticity to bridge gaps with unfamiliar audiences. *YuYu Hakusho* exemplifies the process of successful comic to animation adaptation, demonstrating how animation expands character development, deepens emotional stakes, and strengthens interpersonal dynamics.

Conclusion

Comparative studies of Korean webtoons, Japanese manga, and Western superhero comics demonstrate that transmedia adaptation is a decision-driven, informed process aimed at preserving continuity in narrative function and world-building. Strong adaptations build on these foundations while embracing local variability in vocal expression, kinetic performance, and framing. Transparent strategic planning is crucial for enabling audiences to recognise and emotionally invest in characters across cultural contexts (Cohn, 2012; Shamoon, 2011; Vlegghert, 2022; Yecies, 2020; Jin, 2024).

Adapting comic characters into animation is therefore more than technical translation; it requires balancing the preservation of core identity traits with adaptive expression suited to animation’s affordances and cultural diversity. Comparative examples such as *YuYu Hakusho* and *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse* illustrate how audiovisuals deepen emotional resonance and strengthen audience engagement. While this study focuses on animation, the examined franchises also extend into video games, where character personality is shaped through player agency rather than solely observation. In such contexts, emotional resonance emerges through interaction, mechanics, and control, contrasting with animation’s reliance on performance and expression. Acknowledging this distinction highlights how emotional engagement shifts across media, even when core character identity remains consistent. Further research could examine how agency reconfigures emotional resonance in transmedia characters.

In conclusion, the negotiation between localisation and cultural translation is central to sustaining authenticity across media platforms. Frameworks from transmedia storytelling, adaptation studies, and semiotics demonstrate how coherence is achieved within expanding narratives. The endurance of such franchises relies on strategic planning that balances global continuity with sensitivity to local contexts. Ultimately, adaptation as a means of solidifying emotional resonance must be understood not as a static process but as an active dialogue, one that preserves the integrity of the original work while harnessing the transformative capacity of animation.

Bibliography

Arby, S. P., & Widiastomo, Y. M. (2024, April). Adapting “Tickle Fickle” Comic Strip to an Animated Short Film. In *International Moving Image Cultures Conference (IMOVICCON 2023)* (pp. 227-239). Atlantis Press.

- Artsology. (2024, October). Key differences of anime manga vs Western comics. <https://artsology.com/blog/2024/10/key-differences-of-anime-manga-vs-western-comics/>
- Mirades, R., Vorn, H. L., & Gasar, C. (2022). *Adapting comics to storyboard language*. RIK Journals. https://rikjournals.net/download.php?file=Adapting_Comics_to_Storyboard_Language.pdf
- Atkinson, P. (2009). Movements within movements: Following the line. *Animation*, 4(3).
- Bernal-Merino, M. Á. (2018). Creativity and playability in the localisation of video games. *The Journal of Internationalization and Localization*, 5(1), 74–93. <https://doi.org/10.1075/jial.00011.ber>
- Bertetti, P. (2014). Toward a typology of transmedia characters. *International Journal of Communication*, 8, 1711–1735.
- Bin Hasri, U. H., & Syed, M. A. M. (2025). Exploratory worldbuilding: Bottom-up strategy and continuity in Ejen Ali transmedia narrative development. *Media International Australia*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1329878X251333803>
- Bourdaa, M. (2018). From one medium to the next: How comic books create richer storylines. *M/C Journal*, 21(1). <https://doi.org/10.5204/mcj.1355>
- Bräuchler, B. (2018). Bali Tolak Reklamasi: The local adoption of global protest. *Convergence: The International Journal of Research Into New Media Technologies*, 26(3), 620–638. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354856518806695>
- Brown, C. A. (2013, May 29). What panel layout should I use in my webcomic? *PekoeBlaze*. <https://pekoebaze.wordpress.com/2013/05/29/what-panel-layout-should-i-use-in-my-webcomic/>
- Busi Rizzi, G., & Di Paola, L. (2025). Ghosts of our lives: A hauntological reading of multiverse fiction in contemporary verbo-visual media. *Cinergie – Il Cinema E Le Altre Arti*, 14(27), 113–127. <https://doi.org/10.60923/issn.2280-9481/21677>
- Burke, L. (2015). *The comic book film adaptation: Exploring modern Hollywood's leading genre*. University Press of Mississippi. <https://doi.org/10.14325/mississippi/9781628462036.001.0001>
- Canalès, A. (2020). Transmedia, translation and adaptation: Parallel universes or complex system? *TTR: Traduction, Terminologie, Rédaction*, 33(1), 55–78. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1071148ar>
- CBR. (2023, December 21). Yu Yu Hakusho: 10 ways the anime is different from the manga. <https://www.cbr.com/yu-yu-hakusho-anime-vs-manga-comparison/>
- Ceylan-Dadakoğlu, G., et al. (2022). Gender and emotional motivations in anime viewing. *International Journal of Innovation and Applied Studies*. <https://psychopediajournals.com/index.php/ijiap/article/view/627>
- Cohn, N. (2012). Comics, linguistics, and visual language: The past and future of a field. In F. Bramlett (Ed.), *Linguistics and the study of comics*. Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137004109_5
- Collider. (2023, December 21). Yu Yu Hakusho's biggest differences to the original '90s manga [Article]. <https://collider.com/yu-yu-hakusho-anime-comparison/>
- Dena, C. (2009). *Transmedia practice: Theorising the practice of expressing a fictional world across distinct media and environments* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Sydney). <https://ses.library.usyd.edu.au/handle/2123/5477>
- Díaz-Cintas, J., & Remael, A. (2014). *Audiovisual translation: Subtitling*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315759678>
- Dionísio, M., & Nisi, V. (2021). Leveraging transmedia storytelling to engage tourists in the understanding of the destination's local heritage. *Multimedia Tools and Applications*, 80(26-27), 34813–34841. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11042-021-10949-2>
- Duckworth, A. (2021). From the TV to the brain: Anime's effect on emotion. *Central Washington University Honors Theses*. <https://digitalcommons.cwu.edu/source/2021/COTS/82/>

- Feathers, D. (2020). "Here in the Western world": A comparison between Japanese manga in America and American comics [Undergraduate thesis, West Chester University]. https://digitalcommons.wcupa.edu/eng_stuwork/3/
- Freeman, M., & Taylor-Ashfield, C. (2017). "I read comics from a feministic point of view": Conceptualizing the transmedia ethos of the Captain Marvel fan community. *The Journal of Fandom Studies*, 5(3), 317–335.
- Giacomasso, M., & Conforti, M. (2024). Design of a public science communication strategy on cultural heritage and local art in the center of the province of Buenos Aires (Argentina). *Desde el Sur*, 16(2), e0028. <https://doi.org/10.21142/DES-1602-2024-0028>
- Glaude, B. (2023). *Comics and novelization: A literary history of bandes dessinées* (1st ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003388210>
- Gonzalez, M. (2023). Into the Spider-Verse: Cultural identity in Spider-Man media [Master's thesis, Whittier College]. Poet commons. <https://poetcommons.whittier.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1034&context=scholars>
- Grosvenor, C. (2024). Secret origins: The disavowal of the comics medium within the promotional rhetoric of film trailers. *Adaptation*, 17(1), 52–75. <https://doi.org/10.1093/adaptation/apae003>
- Gutternaut.net. (2025). Bancho manga: A perspective on delinquent myths and life. <https://gutternaut.net/2020/05/bancho-manga-the-appeal-of-japanese-delinquency/>
- Guynes, S., & Hassler-Forest, D. (Eds.). (2018). *Star Wars and the History of Transmedia Storytelling*. Amsterdam University Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt207g5dd>
- Halwani, F. (2022). Narratives of enfoldment: Multi-linear and parafictional storytelling in media art. *International Journal of Film and Media Arts*, 7(2), 98–109. <https://doi.org/10.24140/ijfma.v7.n2.05>
- Henchobdee, W., & Teeravarunyou, S. (2022). The effect of mobile user interface design on comic reading performance. In *Proceedings of the 13th International Conference on Applied Human Factors and Ergonomics (AHFE 2022)*. <https://doi.org/10.54941/ahfe1001746>
- Hergenrader, T. (2020). Transmedia storytelling, immersive storyworlds, and virtual reality. *Frameless*, 2(1), Article 5. <https://repository.rit.edu/frameless/vol2/iss1/5>
- Hutcheon, L., & O'Flynn, S. (2013). *A theory of adaptation* (2nd ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203095010>
- Ijmr. (2024). Exploring parasocial relationships with anime characters. *International Journal of Mental Health Research*.
- Japan Powered. (2020). Why are shonen heroes so dense when it comes to love? <https://www.japanpowered.com/anime-articles/shonen-heroes-love>
- Jenkins, H. (2006). *Convergence culture: Where old and new media collide*. New York University Press.
- Jeffries, D. (2022/2023). "Anyone can wear the mask": The marginalization of Miles Morales in Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse. *JCMS: Journal of Cinema and Media Studies*, 62(5), 192–214. <https://doi.org/10.1353/cj.2022.a907197>
- Jin, D. (2024). Webtoon-based global transmedia storytelling: Bloodhounds. *Global Storytelling: Journal of Digital and Moving Images*, 4(2), 6. <https://doi.org/10.3998/gs.6906>
- Johnson, D. (2013). *Media franchising: Creative license and collaboration in the culture industries*. NYU Press. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt9qgc0q>
- Kelleter, F. (2017). *Transmedia storytelling*. Routledge.
- Klastrup, L., & Tosca, S. (2016). The networked reception of transmedial universes. *Mediekultur*, 32(60). <https://doi.org/10.7146/mediekultur.v32i60.23362>
- Lamerichs, N. (2019). *Character studies: An introduction*. Bloomsbury Academic.
- Leahy, A. (2023). Maturing manga: An analysis of adult themes in shōnen manga. *Georgia Southern University Honors Thesis*.

- Learoyd, J. (2019, July 2). From panel to screen: Adapting comics to animation. *Headstuff*. <https://headstuff.org/culture/visual-arts/from-panel-to-screen-adapting-comics-to-animation/>
- Lefèvre, P. (2007). Incompatible visual ontologies? Adaptation studies and comics. In J. M. Naremore (Ed.), *Film adaptation* (pp. 1–12). Rutgers University Press.
- Leitch, T. M. (Ed.). (2017). *The Oxford handbook of adaptation studies*. Oxford University Press.
- McCloud, S. (1993). *Understanding comics: The invisible art*. HarperCollins.
- Milton, J., & Cobelo, S. (2023). *Translation, adaptation and digital media*. Routledge.
- Miszuk, P. (2023). On continuity in comic book film adaptations and beyond. *Journal of Adaptation in Film & Performance*, 16(3), 213–231. https://doi.org/10.1386/jafp_00100_1
- Mittell, J. (2015). *Complex TV: The poetics of contemporary television storytelling*. New York University Press.
- Nippon.com. (2023). A brief history of juvenile delinquency via manga, from “Be-Bop High School” to “Tokyo Revengers”. <https://www.nippon.com/en/japan-topics/c11906/>
- O’Hagan, M., & Mangiron, C. (2013). *Game localization: Translating for the global digital entertainment industry*. John Benjamins. <https://doi.org/10.1075/btl.106>
- Pérez-González, L. (2014). *Audiovisual translation: Theories, methods and issues*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315762975>
- Piatti-Farnell, L. (2021). *Superhero multiverse: Readapting comic book icons in twenty-first-century film and popular media*. Bloomsbury. <https://doi.org/10.5040/9781978733107>
- Rahman, A. (2024, September 19). *Animation vs. Comics: The Bold Differences You Need to Know*. Toons Mag. <https://www.toonsmag.com/animation-vs-comics/>
- Ranzato, I. (2015). *Translating culture-specific references on television: The case of dubbing*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315681252>
- Reddit. (2024, April 5). Yu Yu Hakusho: Manga vs anime - The Spirit Detective arc [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CK2GK03mfjg>, Last accessed: 13/1/26
- Riessland, A. (2013). The public perception of the bōsōzoku in Japan. *Research Papers of the Anthropological Institute*, 1, 210–224. <https://rci.nanzan-u.ac.jp/jinruiken/publication-new/item/ronshu1-09%20Riessland.pdf>
- Roxo, F. (2020). Transmedia storytelling as a potential employer branding strategy. *U Porto Journal of Engineering*, 6(1), 66–77. https://doi.org/10.24840/2183-6493_006.001_00077
- Ryan, M.-L. (2013). Transmedia storytelling and transfictionality. *Poetics Today*, 34(3), 361–388. <https://doi.org/10.1215/03335372-2377441>
- Safitri, D. T. (2012). Emotion as a key role in successful acceptance of Japanese manga in Indonesia. *Academia.edu*. <https://www.academia.edu/106039777/>
- Scolari, C. A. (2009). Transmedia storytelling: Implicit consumers, narrative worlds, and branding in contemporary media production. *International Journal of Communication*, 3, 21.
- Sharp, K. (2023, June 2). A therapist's breakdown of the psychology behind Spider-Man. *Northeastern University News*. <https://news.northeastern.edu/2023/06/03/spiderman-psychology-therapist-breakdown/>
- Shao, K. (2021). Comic narrative expression and aesthetics: From print to webtoons (Publication No. 26) [Master’s thesis, Long Island University]. Selected Full-Text Master Theses 2021-. https://digitalcommons.liu.edu/brooklyn_fulltext_master_theses/26
- Shamoon, D. (2011). The films on paper: Cinematic narrative in Gekiga. In T. Perper & M. Cornog (Eds.), *Mangatopia: Essays on manga and anime in the modern world* (pp. 21–36). Libraries Unlimited.
- Simpson, W. (2021). Feelings in the gutter: Opportunities for emotional engagement in comics. *ImageText*, 10(1). <https://imagetextjournal.com/feelings-in-the-gutter-opportunities-for-emotional-engagement-in-comics/>

- Stein, L. E., & Busse, K. (2016). *Popular culture studies and transmedia: Transmedia research in cultural studies*. Routledge.
- Steinberg, M. (2012). *Anime's media mix: Franchising toys and characters in Japan*. University of Minnesota Press. <https://doi.org/10.5749/minnesota/9780816675494.001.0001>
- Strnadová, E. (2024) Identification and analysis of Japanese cultural aspects in Ghibli's anime adapted from British novels.
- Summers, S. (2019). Adapting a retro comic aesthetic with *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse*. *Adaptation*, 12(2), 190–194. <https://doi.org/10.1093/adaptation/apz014>
- Tasić, M., & Stamenković, D. (2023). Multimodal adaptations of Baš-čelik: From a fairy tale to a comic and illustrated book. *Facta Universitatis Series Visual Arts and Music*, 001. <https://doi.org/10.22190/fuvam230413001t>
- Thomas, F., & Johnston, O. (1995). *The illusion of life: Disney animation* [Original work published 1981]. Hyperion.
- Thompson, K., & Bordwell, D. (2010). *Film art: An introduction* (10th ed.). McGraw-Hill.
- Tosca, S., & Klasturp, L. (2019). *Transmedial worlds in everyday life: Networked reception, social media and fictional worlds*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315151175>
- Unsriana, L. (2022). Representation of delinquent juveniles (yankee) in Japan in “Gokusen: The Movie” and “Drop.” *Izumi*, 11(1), 31–43. <https://ejournal.undip.ac.id/index.php/izumi/article/view/44413/0>
- Venuti, L. (2008). *The translator's invisibility: A history of translation* (2nd ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203553190>
- Vleghert, J. M. (2022). Comparing Comics and Manga to Komiks: Cross-Cultural (Dis)Similarities in American, Japanese, and Filipino Comics [Master's thesis, Tilburg University]. <https://arno.uvt.nl/show.cgi?fid=159606>
- Wang, Y. (2024). Interpretation in reverse: Remixing the three kingdoms. *The Journal of Popular Culture*, 57(4), 233–246. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jpcu.13354>
- Warner Bros. Animation. (1992–1995). *Batman: The animated series* [TV series]. Warner Home Video.
- Wells, P. (1998). *Understanding animation*. Routledge.
- Yecies, B. (2020). Korean webtoons and collective innovation: Expanding Europe's creative industries through competitive localisation. *Creative Industries Journal*, 13(3–4), 200–217. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13511610.2020.1828839>
- Yecies, B., Shim, A., Yang, J., & Zhong, P. (2019). Global transcreators and the extension of the Korean webtoon IP-engine. *Media Culture & Society*, 42(1), 40–57. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443719867277>
- Yecies, B., Shim, A., & Ren, X. (2020). Cultural intermediation and the basis of trust among webtoon and webnovel communities. *Information, Communication & Society*, 23(14), 2000–2018. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2020.1751865>
- Yu, X. (2023). The cultivation system of cross-media narrative ability of scriptwriter talent based on cluster model. *Applied Mathematics and Nonlinear Sciences*, 9(1). <https://doi.org/10.2478/amns.2023.2.00221>
- Zhang, K., & Wu, S. (2024). Metafiction, intertextuality, and consumerism in transmedia resemiotization: A postmodern analysis of a comic book adaptation of the Chinese classic *Journey to the West*. *Adaptation*, 18(1). <https://doi.org/10.1093/adaptation/apae017>

Figure References

Figure 1: Sony Pictures Animation. (2018). *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse* [Film]. Sony Pictures.

Figure 2: Slott, D. (Writer), & Coipel, O. (Artist). (2015). *Spider-Verse* [Comic series]. Marvel Comics.

Figure 3: Sony Pictures Animation. (2018). *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse* [Film]. Sony Pictures.

Figure 4: Togashi, Y. (Writer), Abe, N. (Director), & Pierrot, S. (Production Company). (1992–1995). *Yu Yu Hakusho* [TV series]. Fuji TV.

Figure 5: Togashi, Y. (1991). *YuYu Hakusho: Volume 1* [Manga]. Shueisha.