

THE INTERTEXTUALITY OF CULTURAL REPRESENTATIONS AS SEEN FROM *SPIDERMAN ACROSS THE SPIDER-VERSE* (2023) AND *MS MARVEL* (2022)

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Abstract

This study aims to reveal the intertextual of cultural diversity of *Spiderman Across the Spider-Verse* (2023) and *Ms. Marvel* (2022). This study focuses on Spiderman characters: Miles Morales and Pavitr Prabhakar and also Ms. Marvel named Kamala in Ms. Marvel, social life and their surroundings. This study uses the theory from Kristeva (1989) to examine the intertextuality between the two films and representative theory from Stuart Hall(1997) to analyze the cultural representation of Spiderman Miles Morales, Spiderman Pavitr Prabhakar, and Kamala Khan. The researchers used qualitative research methods. Research results show that cultural representation in movies appears beyond superficial markers, incorporating meaning, signs and symbols that are relevant to the characters' backgrounds in society. Both films depict elements such as food, stereotypes, and religious norms that represent a specific culture or religion. However, both films clearly reflect traditional fashion symbols, musical instruments, language, traditions, decorations, and religious rituals. This intertextual exploration enriches the story and offers a more inclusive depiction of superheroes in a globalized world. This study is expected to provide insightful and nuanced understandings of cultural representation in this modern era of globalization through the eyes of *Spiderman Across the Spider-Verse* (2023) and *Ms. Marvel* (2022).

INTRODUCTION

In the modern world of globalization, films are powerful tools for discourse and understanding. Globalization has increased the availability of films from various countries via international streaming and distribution platforms. This allows people all over the world to experience and appreciate different cultures. Pop culture, particularly film, has a significant impact on the world because of its ability to transcend cultural boundaries and create a space in which people from various cultures can relate to one another and be accepted by a broad audience. Films frequently include cultural representations that can help audiences from various cultures feel recognized and valued. This is essential for developing intercultural identity and empathy.

Film and cultural representation share a close and interconnected relationship. Film, as a visual and narrative art form, frequently mirrors, shapes, and influences the culture in



which it is created and produced. Films are frequently used as a medium for representing various aspects of culture, such as a group or society's values, traditions, beliefs, and identity. Movies can depict the daily lives, challenges, and pride of various cultural groups through their characters, plots, and settings. Representation encompasses not only how identities are presented, but also how they are constructed and maintained (Hall, 1997). Movies can promote intercultural understanding and tolerance, as well as positive social change, by depicting cultures authentically and diversely.

In the framework of cultural representation, intertextuality could assist in comprehending how distinct cultural identities along with complicated narratives are formed and conveyed through contemporary media such as films and television shows. Intertextuality is the process by which one text shapes the meaning of a subsequent one. It offers a lens within which the researchers can observe how cultural stories are constructed, pointed out, and evolved. Intertextuality provides the opportunity to understand the way various cultural aspects work together to form a cohesive narrative that appeals to a wide range of audiences. Intertextuality is a literary and cultural research term that encompasses the connection within different texts and how it affects and engage with one another (Kristeva, 1980). Intertextuality serves several purposes, one of which is to enrich meaning by connecting the text to other texts, resulting in new layers of meaning. Readers, on the other hand, may discover that intertextual references can enhance their reading experience by making it more immersive and participatory. Intertextuality can also reflect cultural influences, which frequently reflect and critique the cultural and historical context in which the text was written.

In the current global media setting, representing diverse cultures has evolved into an important focus, reflecting a multicultural society's complex identities and narratives. This shift is especially visible in superhero stories, which have expanded to include characters and narratives that speak to a broader range of cultural scenarios. This trend is exemplified by *Spiderman Across the Spider-Verse* (2023) and *Ms. Marvel* (2022), which incorporate intertextual substances to highlight the wide range of cultural diversity.

The value of cultural representation in entertainment is impossible to overstate. As society becomes more connected, the significance of media in establishing and expressing cultural identities becomes more important. Contemporary superhero tales not only deliver representation, but they also foster greater comprehension and appreciation for cultural diversity. This approach helps to break down stereotypes and encourage inclusivity, making the narratives appealing and impactful to a worldwide audience.

Spiderman Across the Spider-Verse provides audiences with a diverse cast of Spider-People, each of whom contributes their own cultural identity to the larger story. For instance, Miles Morales, an Afro-Latino adolescent from Brooklyn, balances his dual heritage with his portrayal as Spiderman. This duality is more than just a backdrop; it is central to his character advancement and storyline. His path is complemented with cultural references that represent his Afro-Latino heritage, resulting in a rich intertextual embroidery that adds depth and significance to the narrative. According to Gonzalez (2023), the portrayal of Miles Morales in *Spiderman Across the Spider-Verse* demonstrates abundant intertextuality, where aspects of Afro-Latino culture are implemented to construct a more profound and authentic personality and narrative." It is demonstrated in the utilization of Spanish in the conversation, as well as the portrayal of Brooklyn's vibrant, ethnically diverse neighborhoods.

In the meantime, Pavitr Prabhakar is the Indian portrayal of Spiderman is also featured in the movie *Spiderman: Across the Spider-Verse* (2023). Pavitr Prabhakar, unlike Spiderman's other alter egos, is from Mumbattan, an imagined city that combines Mumbai and Manhattan. He lives with his aunt, Maya, and uncle, Bhim Prabhakar. Pavitr wears Spiderman outfits with Indian influences, expressing his traditional bases and belonging. His involvement in this film enriches the story by providing broad and distinctive cultural viewpoints, as well as emphasizing the diversity of the superhero universe.

Comparably *Ms. Marvel* (2022) implies Kamala Khan, a Pakistani-American adolescent from New Jersey who struggles with her cultural background and superhero persona. As the initial Muslim superhero to star in her superhero comic series, Kamala's narrative is based on the adventures of a young girl managing ancestral beliefs with the challenges of contemporary life in the United States (Wilson, 2014). The series combines features from Pakistani customs, Islamic heritage, and the immigrant experience to create a story that is both distinctive and universal. This intertextual approach enables *Ms. Marvel* to connect with a wide audience while also providing a true representation of the marginalized population.

These two movies illustrate the importance of intertextuality as an instrument for cultural representation by incorporating cultural elements from multiple cultures into the primary narrative. Intertextual analysis reveals how these works of literature not only reflect various social realities but also bring a greater comprehension of cultural identity. According to Kristeva (1980), "texts remain in discussions with other texts," which means that cultural representations in Spiderman and Ms. Marvel are inextricably linked to their larger cultural

and historical backdrops. This allows the researchers to better understand how cultural identities can be shaped and communicated through intricate connections between different texts and narratives.

Based on this academic involvement, this study aims to investigate how Spiderman Miles Morales and Spiderman Pavitr Prabhakar represent cultural representation in *Spiderman Across the Spider-Verse* (2023) and Kamala Khan in *Ms. Marvel* (2022). This article examines how the significant animated films *Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse* (2023) and *Ms. Marvel* (2023) integrate cultural representation into contemporary media. This study examines three different superheroes: Miles Morales, a half-black, half-Latino teenager from Brooklyn; Pavitr Prabhakar, an Indian-American student from Mumbai; and Kamala Khan, an Islamic superhero. In this paper, researchers will examine how *Spiderman Across the Spider-Verse* and *Ms Marvel* navigate the complex landscape of cultural representation and diversity, focusing on a variety of characters. The researchers would like to discover the numerous layers of implications embedded in these films through careful visual data analysis. By concentrating on how multiculturalism is received and achieved in the superhero genre, the researchers desire to contribute to broader media studies discussions about the transformative power of popular culture as a tool for social transformation and cultural understanding.

Several studies have been conducted related to the term intertextuality and cultural representation to analyze several literary works. First is the study from Nurmaya (2019) entitled "Intertextuality and Culture in Shrek 2 Movie." This study analyzes the intertextuality using Kristeva's theory in Shrek 2 Movie and found three kind of intertextuality, there are pastiche, bricolage, and calque.

Second is the study entitled "Ms. Marvel: Marvel's New Model of Islam's Representation in Popular Culture" by Hanifah, et al (2024). This study focuses on examining the character of Ms. Marvel through Islamic representation by using John Storey's theory to construct meaning of the culture. This study also analyzed the new image of Islam in popular culture when Ms. Marvel shows her Islamic identity, values, ethics, and tradition.

Third is the study from Matthew & Tran (2023) entitled "Still Never at the Top: Representation of Asian and Black Characters in Sony/Marvel Studio's Spider-Man Trilogy." This study aimed to understand how Asian and Black Characters in the Spider-Man trilogy are portrayed through the lens of racial triangulation. Matthew & Tran (2023) used the theory of Kim (1999) to analyze cultural triangulation between white Americans and black Americans.

Not only focused on Spider-Man, Matthew & Tran also focused on Ned, Brad, Liz, and MJ as the part of secondary data of the study.

Fourth is the study from Mosquera (2019) entitled "Limbo of the Gutters: The Omission of Color in the Construction of Afrolatinidad in Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse (2018)." This study focuses on understanding the Afro-Latiness' constitutive elements constructed by Spiderman Miles Morales. Mosquera (2018) showed that Spiderman Miles Morales represents Latino heritage which can be seen from the involving parents who carried their original identity. However, the difference between this study and those previous studies above that this study focuses to analyze the intertextuality of cultural representative *on Spiderman Across the Spider-Verse* (2022) and *Ms. Marvel* (2022) using theory of intertextuality by Kristeva (1986) and theory of cultural representation by Hall (1997).

Intertextuality and cultural representation have gained attention in recent years due to its significance in literary works. Despite those studies that have investigated intertextuality and cultural representation, there still remains a gap in understanding of those topics. This study aims to fill the gap by combining the analysis of intertextuality and cultural representation specifically in superhero movies, focusing on superhero movies, *Spiderman Across the Spider-Verse* (2023) and *Ms, Marvel* (2022).

LITERATURE REVIEWS

The concept of representation has come to occupy a new and important place in the study of culture (Hall, 1997). Representation means using language to say something meaningful about, or to represent, the world meaningfully, to other people (Hall, 1997). Representation is an essential part of the process by which meaning is produced and exchanged between members of a culture. It does involve the use of language, signs, and images that stand for or represent things (Hall, 1997). Representation connects to the study of culture, by connecting meaning and language to culture.

Meaning

According to Hall (1997, p.16) retrieved from *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, meaning is to represent something to describe or depict it, to call it up in the mind by description or portrayal or imagination; to place a likeness of it before us in our mind or in the senses. Briefly, representation is the production of meaning through language. Meaning depends on the system of concepts and images formed in our thoughts which can stand for or 'represent' the world, enabling us to refer to things both inside and outside our heads (Hall, 1997, p.17).

When people say 'It is a lamp' - or a table or a book or whatever, the concept of the objects has passed through people's mental representation via the word which they have used. The word to represent the concept can be used to reference or designate a real object in the world or an imaginary object. The concept has forms, they are a form concept for things we can perceive, a form concept of rather obscure and abstract things, which we cannot in any simple way see, feel, or touch, and a form of concept about things we never have seen, and possibly cannot or will not ever see (Hall, 19777, p.17).

A form concept for things we can perceive

Things that we can perceive are people or material objects, like chairs, tables, and desks (Hall, 1997:17). They simply exist and we can see that they exist. Those material objects' presence can be seen clearly.

A form concept of rather obscure and abstract things,

The abstract things here according to Hall (1997, p.17) are which we cannot in any simple way see, feel, or touch things like concepts of war, death, friendship, or love. People can feel the concept of those things, but they cannot see them clearly, which makes them abstract

A form of concept about things we never have seen and possibly cannot or will not ever see

Hall (1997, p.17) explained the concept of things like God, angels, the devil, heaven and hell. Even these things are also related to people and places that have been made up such as fictional places in George Eliot's novel and fictional characters in Jane Austen's novel. These things cannot be seen whether because those are fictionals or it is just about time people did not enter the afterlife.

Language

Language is therefore the second system of representation involved in the overall process of constructing meaning (Hall, 1997, p.18). The general term we use for words, sounds or images that carry meaning is sign. Signs are organized into languages and it is the existence of common languages that enable us to translate our thoughts (concepts) into words, sounds or images and then use them to operate as a language that can express meanings and communicate thoughts to other people. it can be a language of facial expression, gesture, fashion, etc. (Hall, 1997, p.18).

Words are translations of language to express meaning (Hall, 1997, p.18). It can be writing or speaking a particular language Meanwhile, sound or music is a language with complex relations between different sounds and chord, and images are visuals produced by

hand, mechanical, electric, digital, or some other means, facial expressions, gestures, the fashion of clothes, or even traffic lights (Hall, 1997, p.19).

Along with the Hall's theory of cultural representation, the researchers also used the theory of intertextuality by Kristeva. According to Kristeva (1980, p.66), When any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotation: any text is the absorption and transformation of another. It means that a word always contains other words, just as text holds other texts. The idea of intertextuality means to see texts not as independent units, but as connected and influenced by other texts. They are shaped by repeating and transforming elements from other writing (Alfaro, 1996:268). In the modernist era, intertextuality is apparent in every section of culture: literature, art, music, photography, etc., even if it is interpreted in different ways (Alfaro, 1996:271). Movie has several different names that can be called a film or cinema is part of literature (Tariq, 2024:10). Trns (23) retrieved from Tariq (2024:11) literature then was an art of sound as was a music, in the beginning literature was listened and literature too was sung, but now literature is read. Today script or writing has taken the place of sound and now literature being no more an art of listening has become an art of watching. Thus, film is also a script in which literature is being created.

The intertextuality concept by Kristeva (1980) retrieved from Alfaro (1996, p.268) proposed the text as a dynamic site in which relational processes and practices are the focus of analysis instead of static structures and products. In this study, the researchers applied the theory of intertextuality to dissect the cultural representation that represents in *Spiderman Across the Spider-Verse* (2023) and *Ms. Marvel* (2022). To analyze these movies, not limited limited to analyzing the main characters of those movies, but also the social life and their surroundings in the movies. Intertextuality is a notion that acknowledges that texts cannot exist independently and are always linked to previous texts (Kristeva, 1980, as cited in Raj, 2015). These movies were produced by Marvel Comic which those two movies are talked about superheroes. Here, the intertextuality theory is used to compare and to delve the cultural representation are constructed the one to another object of the study in different texts, dialogues, visualizations, music, and other narrative components.

RESEARCH METHODS

In *Spiderman Across the Spider-Verse* (2023) and *Ms Marvel* (2022), researchers applied qualitative methodologies to examine the intertextuality of Cultural Representations as Seen from *Spiderman Across the Spider-Verse* (2022) and *Ms Marvel* (2022). The form of data from this research is images and dialogues. The data collection technique of this research

is by capturing each scene and quoting the dialogues related to the cultural representation as portrayed in *Spiderman Across the Spider-Verse* (2023) and *Ms Marvel* (2022). After gathering, categorizing, and analyzing data, the researcher will use observational methods and a literature review to conclude the study.

Stuart Hall's (1997) cultural representation theory is the main theory that was applied in this study. In the study of culture, the idea of representation has taken on a new and significant role (Hall, Stuart 1997). Representation is the process of utilizing words to communicate with others in a meaningful way about the world (Hall, Stuart 1997). As demonstrated in *Spiderman Across the Spider-Verse* (2023) and *Ms Marvel* (2022), the researchers will find cultural representation and diversity through these theories. Books, journals, and articles that are pertinent to the subject will be used as references by the researchers.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Miles Morales is Afrolatinidad Spiderman who lives in Brooklyn, New York. Miles Morales is a major character in the Marvel's Spider-Man series. He is the protagonist of in *Spiderman Across the Spider-Verse* (2023). His father is Jefferson Davis, a police officer, and his mother is Rio Morales, a Puerto Rican nurse. And then, Pavitr Prabhakar is an Indian Spiderman who lives in Mumbattan. Pavitr Prabhakar was born and raised by his aunt Maya and uncle Bhim Prabhakar. He appears in *Spiderman Across the Spider-Verse* (2023) and becomes one of the major characters in that movie alongside Miles Morales and Gwen Stacy. Kamala Khan is the central protagonist in the "Ms. Marvel" series, which debuted in 2022. Kamala, a Pakistani-American Muslim teenager, lives in Jersey City. As a huge fan of superheroes, particularly Captain Marvel, Kamala finds out that she possesses superpowers that enable her to enlarge and transform her body. This series follows Kamala's daily life as a teen attempting to keep up with school, family, and her superhero individuality.

Meaning

Figure 1

Spider-man: Across the Spider-Verse, min. 00:39:10



A cultural representation associated with a meaning is depicted in this scene. In this instance, food serves as the signifier, which is something that is perceived. At a rooftop celebration to honor Jeff Morales's promotion, Miles Morales's Puerto Rican family—especially his mother—served traditional Puerto Rican fare, such as pasteles, which are delicious pastries wrapped in banana leaves, and soup made with meat and root vegetables named sancocho.

In this scene, the choice for expressing one's identity comes down to traditional cuisine. Traditional foods are those that are inextricably related to a region, a historical depth, and a constellation of associated knowledge, meanings, values, and behaviors. The Miles Morales family's identity is revealed through the food that is served at this gathering, representate that they have Puerto Rican blood.

Figure 2

Spider-man: Across the Spider-Verse, min.01:07:17



This scene is the next data that demonstrates a cultural representation that is linked to a meaning that we can perceive. Pavitr is having a short tour of Mumbattan, the city where he is from. Pavitr, India's Spiderman, depicts traffic jams throughout the city. This is in line with the congested situations found in Indian cities in real life. India is a densely populated country. According to Worldometer.info, India will have the largest population in 2024. Furthermore, according to Statista.com, the vast majority of Indians prefer to drive their own cars. Not surprisingly, India's congested environment, combined with the prevalence of private vehicles, makes the roadways feel extremely narrow, resulting in traffic jams everywhere. Congestion is something we can see and feel that is connected to a cultural representation through meaning. The filmmaker was able to show the face of India which is full of crowds and traffic jams in the film Spider- man: Across the Spider-Verse nicely.

Figure 3

Ms Marvel, Episode 3 min. 00:13:37



This scene represents a cultural representation that has a particular meaning. Close relatives and family members attended a party hosted by Kamala's family. The vibe of the party was very Pakistani. It serves traditional food along with decorations, costumes, and other items. The meal being served in this scene is called samosas. A classic dish from Pakistan, samosas are constructed of fried pastry dough and are packed with spices and vegetables.

A culture can be portrayed through a variety of media, including traditional food, music, and clothes. Since traditional food is intimately associated with the local culture, it can serve as a highlight and provide insight into an individual's background. Pakistan is a spice-rich nation, hence a lot of spices are used in traditional cuisine. Additionally, samosas are comprised of spices and vegetables. In this scene, the Pakistani character Kamala is strengthened by samosas.

Figure 4

Ms Marvel, Episode 1 min. 00:11:12



There is a scene in which Kamala watches a television show featuring actors kissing. At the exact same time, her mother instructs Kamala to turn off the television program because it violates her religious beliefs. Kissing publicly or explicit romantic scenes are frequently considered inappropriate and contrary to Islamic principles. This reflects religious

teachings on manners and modesty. This scene not only indicates religious rules, but it also depicts a mother's desire to protect her child from potentially harmful influences. This exemplifies family dynamics and moral education in the Islamic context. A related proposition appears in the Holy Qur'an.

وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ خَشْيَةَ إِمْلَاقٍ ۗ نَحْنُ نَرْزُقُهُمْ وَإِيَّاكُمْ ۗ إِنَّ قَتْلَهُمْ كَانَ خِطَاً كَبِيرًا

(17:31) Do not kill your children for fear of want. We will provide for them and for you. Surely killing them is a great sin.

32. “*And do not come near to adultery*”. This commandment is meant both for individuals and society as a whole. It warns each individual not only to guard against adultery or fornication itself but against all those things that lead to or stimulate it. As regards to society as a whole the commandment enjoins it to make such arrangements as prevent adultery and eradicate the means and stimulants that lead to adultery. Therefore, the society should employ all those legal and educative means that help develop such an environment as prevents and eradicates indecency. (Tafseer from Sayyid Abul A'la Mawdudi).

This verse encourages Muslims to avoid any behavior that may lead to adultery, such as watching inappropriate scenes. Ibn Kathir's interpretation emphasizes the importance of maintaining one's gaze in order to avoid adultery. This scene, in terms of intertextuality, connects representations of Islamic culture with Western cultural norms while also depicting family dynamics and moral education. Evidence and interpretations from the Qur'an provide a strong religious foundation for understanding Kamala's mother's reaction to protecting her child from perceived negative influences.

Language

Words

OLD FRIEND 2: Miles! ¿Te va bien en la escuela?- (*Miles, Are you doing well at school?*)

MILES: Seguro que si- (*Surely, yes*) |

(Spider-man: Into the Spider-Verse, min. 0:04:00)

One of the representative examples of signs in the form of words is the scene that occurs in the 4th minute when Miles has just arrived at school. From the scene, it can be seen that Miles is being greeted by his friends. Instead of greeting him in English, which is their daily language, Miles' friends greet him in Spanish. This shows that the environment has recognized

that Miles is a person who can speak Spanish and shows a representation of Miles and his ancestral culture.

The use of language in this communication is an intentional narrative choice that conveys multiple layers of meaning. First and foremost, it emphasizes the setting's multicultural fabric. New York City, specifically Brooklyn, is presented as a melting pot in which diverse cultures thrive and communicate on a daily basis. By addressing Miles in Spanish, the film recognizes and appreciates this diversity, emphasizing the linguistic versatility found in such urban settings. Second, Miles' friends' use of Spanish reflects his Afro-Latino heritage. It indicates that his cultural identity has been recognized and accepted by his peers. This recognition not only acknowledges Miles' ability to speak Spanish, but also shows homage to his cultural and family-related roots. Language appears an embodiment of cultural pride.

Figure 5

Spider-man: Across the Spider-Verse, min. 01:06:17



Cultural representation is deliberately incorporated into the plot of *Spiderman Across the Spider-Verse* by the fictional character of Pavitr Prabhakar, the Spiderman coming from India. A memorable scene that demonstrates this is when Pavitr defines himself while a poster titled "Spiderman India" appears prominently. The scenario is an influential instance of cultural representation using sign language, strengthening the film's narrative by emphasizing the characters' distinct cultural backgrounds. Pavitr's initiation and the "Spiderman India" poster are explicit representations of his cultural identity. Posters, at their core, are visual and verbal signifiers that evoke particular meanings and cultural contexts. The inclusion of the term "India" in the poster's title instantly places Pavitr in a specific cultural and geographical context.

It demonstrates that his portrayal of Spiderman has a strong foundation in India's cultural milieu, which includes its distinct aesthetics, customs, and social values. The above scene can be analyzed using Hall's framework of cultural representation which highlights the

significance of language, signs, and symbols in developing and communicating cultural identities (Hall, 1997). The term "Spiderman India" serves as a strong cultural signifier, capturing Pavitr's heritage while also bridging the gap between global superhero stories and local backgrounds. The appearance of Pavitr Prabhakar along with the "Spiderman India" poster is also consistent with the notion of glocalization, which involves adapting global media products to incorporate local cultural elements (Robertson, 1995). This strategy not only makes the story more accessible to a global audience but also points out the universal appeal of the superhero background while acknowledging and promoting cultural differences.

One of the most notable examples of cultural representation in "Ms. Marvel" is its utilization of language, particularly Arabic words which represent Kamala Khan's Muslim identity and the larger Muslim community. The characters use words like "Bismillah" (In the holy name of Allah), "Astaghfirullah" (I look for forgiveness from Allah), and "Allahu Akbar" (God is the greatest) throughout the scenes. Aside from that, there is a scene in which Kamala wears a necklace written in Arabic, representing her culture. These terms are common in daily Muslim conversation and emphasize the characters' backgrounds in culture and faith.

Figure 6

Ms Marvel (2022), Episode 3 min. 00:03:27



While in Ms Marvel (2022), the cultural representation is represented in one of the scenes when Kamala Khan is in a driving test. Before she started to turn on the car, she said "Bismillah ". In Arabic, the word *bismillah* means in the name of Allah. *Bismillah* is a word that Muslims usually say before doing something. By saying that, we hope for blessings from God. It is proof that Kamala has an identity as a Muslim by saying that word.

Hall (1997) developed a framework of cultural representation that can be used to evaluate the scene above. This framework emphasizes the importance of language, signs, and symbols in the development and communication of cultural identities. The way Kamala says bismillah really defines who she is, especially when she says it with the proper momentum,

like when she is about to start anything. When he takes his driving test, he prays that Allah will always bless him.

Sounds

Figure 7
Spider-man: Across the Spider-Verse Pinterest



Cultural representation in *Spiderman Across the Spider-Verse* goes further through textual and visual components and includes auditory cues, specifically through the soundtrack. The film heavily incorporates hip-hop music, an underground genre firmly grounded in African-American culture, with tracks performed by black musicians. This choice of music is not coincidental; it is an intentional and strong form of cultural representation that enhances the story and strengthens its relation to the protagonist, Miles Morales. Hip-hop music, which originated in the African-American communities of New York City, is culturally and historically significant. It is a genre used to convey societal realities, cultural pride, and rebellion. This musical choice adds to Miles' character's reliability, as he is an Afro-Latino adolescent from Brooklyn, a borough known for its vibrant hip-hop scene.

Songs such as “Annihilate” by Metro Boomin, Swae Lee, Lil Wayne, Offset, “Silk and Cologne” by EI8HT, and Offset, for example, add an urban and culturally relevant soundscape to the film. These songs not only set the mood for Miles' journey but also represent his own emotions and identity. The inclusion of hip-hop music is relevant to Miles' daily life and the context of the culture in which he lives, serving as an audible representation of his heritage and belonging. In short, the use of the hip-hop soundtrack in *Spiderman: Across the Spider-Verse* is a noteworthy instance of cultural representation within sound signs. This musical selection emphasizes the significance of sound in constructing and relaying cultural narratives, adding to the film's primary point of diversity and inclusion.

Figure 8

Sony Soundtracks VEVO Youtube



Pavitr Prabhakar, the Indian Spider-Man, appeared in the film *Spiderman: Across the Spider-Verse* (2022), which featured a soundtrack shift that represented Indian music and instruments. This became a prominent type of cultural representation in the film. Intertextuality relates to how texts connect and refer to one another in the process of making meaning. In terms of cultural representation in *Spiderman: Across the Spider-Verse* the use of Indian music when Pavitr Prabhakar appears is an instance of intertextuality that links the character's cultural heritage to the film's narrative and aesthetic components. Whenever Pavitr Prabhakar shows up on screen, the Indian music and instruments add to the visual narrative while also reinforcing the character's identity as an Indian. This allows the audience to associate Pavitr with his cultural and geographical roots, adding depth to his character. As stated by Bakhtin (1981), every text is comprehended through the perspective of other pre-existing texts; in the present instance, Indian music serves as a "text" that adds cultural meaning to the film's narrative.

Figure 9

Ms Marvel (2022), Episode 3 min. 00:44:43



In addition to linguistic and visual elements, cultural representation in *Ms. Marvel* (2022) also incorporates auditory clues, particularly through the music. The music director selected some Pakistani songs from this capture to reflect Kamala's Pakistani culture. Despite the fact that the main character of this series lives in New Jersey, USA, it also significantly supports Pakistani culture. The music used in this series, including "Hadippa" and "Mehendi Rachnawali," is highly pertinent to the history of Ms. Marvel, a Pakistani Muslim superhero. This musical choice reinforces the film's main theme of diversity and inclusivity by highlighting the importance of sound in creating and delivering cultural narratives.

Images

Figure 10

Spider-man: Across the Spider-Verse, min. 01:04:46



The setting in *Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse* involving Pavitr Prabhakar, the Indian Spider-Man, is an effective illustration of cultural representation within sign images. This scene depicts an avenue in Mumbattan, an imaginary fusion of Mumbai and Manhattan, overflowing with cultural markers representative of Indian society. The image shows people attired in traditional Indian apparel, such as turbans and saris, and depicts a bustling street scene with vibrant hues and colorful decorations. The existence of a cow, which is considered holy in Indian culture, further grounds the situation in its cultural context. The detailed illustration of an Indian street scene lends originality to Pavitr Prabhakar's character and origins. By incorporating recognizable components of Indian culture, the movie assures that Pavitr is not merely a generic superhero, but one who has a firm foundation in his cultural environment. This authenticity allows audiences, particularly those who are used to Indian culture, to connect with the fictional character on a deeper level.

Figure 11

Spider-man: Across the Spider-Verse, min.01:06:03



Pavitr Prabhakar, the Indian Spider-Man, appears in *Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse*, and his scenes depict Indian culture. Pavitr's Spider-Man costume, which combines classic Spider-Man attire with Indian customs like dhoti and jooti, demonstrates his status as a local superhero. This exemplifies how culture can be incorporated into superhero symbols. The presence of an Indian Spider-Man can be interpreted as a symbol of cultural empowerment. It demonstrates how superheroes may originate from different cultural identities and represent various communities. The film conveys an inclusive message by demonstrating that anyone, regardless of culture, can become a superhero.

Pavitr Prabhakar's Spider-Man costume includes elements that are distinctively Indian. The design incorporates traditional patterns and motifs, including the ornamental gemstone shape on his forehead, which is reminiscent of a bindi, a popular accessory in Indian culture. This incorporation of cultural features into his superhero costume serves as a visual representation of his Indian heritage, distinguishing him from other Spider-Men across the multiverse. The costume's color scheme, which includes vibrant reds and golds, reflects the rich and vibrant colors frequently connected with Indian festivals and attire. These colors are used for more than just aesthetic reasons; they represent prosperity, joy, and spirituality in Indian culture. These visual cues encourage the audience to understand Pavitr's cultural heritage and identity.

Figure 12

Ms Marvel, episode 2 min. 00:08:56



Kamala Khan, the main character of *Ms Marvel*, represents her identity as a Muslim woman through this scene. This scene shows her praying in a mosque together with her friend. The praying scene is such strong proof that she is a Muslim. The praying scene above is called *Shalat*. Shalat is a form of worship that a Muslim must perform 5 times a day. This shows that Kamala has a religious side. Kamala is also dressed in compliance with Islamic clothing regulations, which dictate that one should cover one's private areas (those portions of the body that are not visible). It is dressed as a cloak for prayer. The aforementioned evidence places this data under the sign image category because, according to Stuart Hall's (1997) theory, visual images can be created by hand, mechanical, electric, digital, or by some other means, as well as by gestures, facial expressions, clothing styles, or even traffic signals. Kamala Khan has demonstrated the *shalat* and prayer cloak, two emblems of a Muslim, in this picture.

CONCLUSION

The research examines the characters Miles Morales, Pavitr Prabhakar, and Kamala Khan to investigate the intertextuality of cultural representation in *Spiderman: Across the Spider-Verse* (2023) and *Ms. Marvel* (2022). Using Kristeva's intertextuality theory and Hall's structure of cultural representation, the researchers investigated how these fictional people embody their various backgrounds through meaning, language, music, and visuals. Miles Morales' Afro-Latino culture is brought out through Spanish conversation, Puerto Rican traditional food and hip-hop music; Pavitr Prabhakar's Indian heritage is illustrated within Indian social phenomenon, music and traditional outfits; and Kamala Khan's Pakistani and muslim identity is highlighted through the use of Arabic terminology, Islamic law, Pakistani traditional food and praying scenes.

In the context of intertextuality, films serve not only as static reflections of existing cultures, but also as texts that constantly interact with other narrative forms and cultures.

Intertextuality emphasizes how these film texts are influenced by, and subsequently affect, other texts from both the past and present. For example, in films such as "Spiderman: Across the Spider-Verse" and "Ms. Marvel," the researchers see how superhero stories draw on previous mythologies and hero narratives while also incorporating relevant elements of contemporary culture.

Research results show that cultural representation in movies appears beyond superficial markers, incorporating meaning, signs and symbols that are relevant to the characters' backgrounds in society. Both films depict elements such as food, stereotypes, and religious norms that represent a specific culture or religion. However, both films clearly reflect traditional fashion symbols, musical instruments, language, traditions, decorations, and religious rituals. This intertextual exploration enriches the story and offers a more inclusive depiction of superheroes in a globalized world. The study emphasizes the significance of genuine cultural representation in media by proving how numerous cultural elements could be seamlessly constructed into mainstream narratives, giving audiences a deeper attachment to the characters and their stories.

Through these movies, Miles Morales represent Afro-Latino community, Pavitr Prabhakar represent Indian community, and Kamala Khan represent Pakistani-Muslim community. By investigating these intertextual connections, the research contributes to a more comprehensive comprehension of how cultural identities are portrayed and valued in modern media. This study emphasizes the importance of cultural diversity for forming characters and narratives, solidifying the notion that superheroes can come from and represent a variety of cultural backgrounds, fostering inclusivity and a sense of belonging in the global media environment.

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