

**A Semiotic Analysis of Character Design in *Spider-Man: Into
The Spider-Verse***

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Summary

This study will focus on the character design portrayed in the animated Marvel film *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse*. It will explore how the design techniques used in the film differ from those used in the comic books, with consideration also of the steps the film has taken to integrate a wider range of diversity. This will entail examining the inclusion of characters of different ethnicities and genders in order to represent a wider ranged audience.

Introduction

Character design is one of the earliest and most vital key components of storytelling. Specific focus on this area of design has become especially prevalent in the past one hundred years, within the diverse realms of illustration and animation, as well as the wider areas of film, television and books. It helps to convey the characters' role in the media they are part of through visual and audio means to help the audience understand the role of the character as soon as they make an appearance. With the recent release of *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse* (2018), the film has set a new bar for character design, specifically in animated media. It includes a wide cast of hugely diverse and colourful characters that apart from just fulfilling their roles as characters, make the film an absolute joy to watch and experience. This movie does an exceedingly good job of pushing the boundaries of their comic-book counterparts' appearance whilst still remaining true to who that character is supposed to be, and makes incredible strides forward with the successful integration of diverse characters of different ethnicities and genders, allowing it to appeal to a wider range of audiences.

This study into character design will be focusing namely on Marvel's *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse* (2018), a story of a young boy called Miles Morales who is bitten by a radioactive spider and comes into contact with people from alternate universes who carry the same title of "Spider-Man". This inquiry will explore in depth the use of character design within the movie to visually portray the characters of the heroes, the villains and how a few of them can be compared to how they are portrayed in other versions of the story. This could come from the

comics or other movies, as this movie has taken the original designs of the comic characters and given each of them their own unique twists and changes. The animated medium allows for exaggerated body type features, gender changes and, for certain individual characters, a completely different art style from another era. Its unique animation style, subject material and progressive thinking makes *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse* one of the most unique Marvel movies to be released. This inquiry will also explore how the portrayal of characters in the movie is progressive in comparison to characters of the same genders or ethnicities portrayed in similar media such as superhero or action movies and comic books, to show how movies and comic books in recent years are becoming more and more inclusive, and appeal to a more diverse and widely ranged audience of people.

This inquiry will be split into two chapters, covering first the heroes featured in the movie who are all alternate versions of the titular hero, and second, the villains who also have roles to play in the film. Each have their own unique design styles that make them vary from their classic visuals in the comics. This area of research relates to my artistic practice as it explores the techniques employed in the process of character design, outlining the ways in which characters can be depicted to evoke varying reactions. This is a core component relevant to my illustration process, and will aid my ongoing development of skills in the area of character creation and design.

Chapter 1: Heroes of the Spider-Verse

Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse has a colourful cast of protagonists, both primary and secondary, that really challenge what the audience know and love about Spider-Man. For a start, this is the first instance where a Spider-Man movie doesn't star Peter Parker as the primary protagonist of the movie. Instead, it begins with Miles Morales, a teenaged boy from Brooklyn, New York. He is instantly so much different from Peter Parker in that he is of mixed race, being both African-American on his Father's side and Puerto Rican on his Mother's. This immediately sets this movie apart from all others, because it is a completely different character and a completely different story to follow. This subject is brought up by Denise Koyoma (2018), the story artist for *Into the Spider-Verse*:

He's a kid and he's African American and Puerto Rican so for me I was like 'well who is Miles?' you know? He's got to have that swagger and a little bit more innocence because he's a kid.

This suggests that the designers really wanted to enforce the idea of this being a completely separate story from the many other incarnations of the classic hero, making it more inclusive and engaging, and allowing diverse audiences to feel empowered and ready to take on anything. Steinberg (2018) further supports this inclusion of wider diversity and relatability, asserting that "you can watch this movie and believe that you could also be a superhero, and that we all have that power in us." Miles was very much inspired by African-American celebrities of the time, feeding into his appearance, inspiring attitude and determination, as

well as his comical and endearing teenage personality. This point is supported in the accompanying concept art book for the film, where Zahed (2018, p. 26) states that “Miles Morales,[...], is a dynamic half-black, half Puerto Rican Thirteen-year-old boy, who is reportedly inspired by then-U.S. President Barak Obama and Actor Donald Glover.”

Miles Morales is portrayed as the youngest and most naive of the primary protagonists, certainly the one who has most recently received his powers and is the only one trying to get to grips with them. This is a classic superhero origin story setup, and, as well as appearing to have additional superpowers which Peter Parker never had, Miles’ powers include invisibility and an electric “Venom-strike” touch.



Fig. 1: *Peter admiring Miles’ invisibility*

This Further enforces his character archetype of the young upcoming protagonist of the story by adding these extra pressures for him to live up to Peter's reputation, and perhaps even surpass him. Being the youngest and most inexperienced out of all of the spiders of the multiverse when so much depends on just him causes the other spiders to question his skills and talents and drill him on what he can and can't do, further pressuring him to live up to his great expectations as a Spider-person. In the film, the other spiders are drilling Miles in a stressful scene which ultimately leads him to run away from them. They ask him questions such as:

Okay little fella, Kingpin's gonna send a lot of mugs after you and i'm talking hard boys, real biscuit boxers! Can you fight them all off at once? Can you Re-wire a mainframe while being shot at? [...] Above all, no matter how many times you get hit, can you get back up?

(Spider-Man: Into The Spider-Verse, 2018)

This helps to further put Miles' position into perspective when he is compared to these other older and more experienced spiders who are obviously not willing to put their faith in this new kid. In order to be a hero of the same name, but portrayed by a different person, Miles needed not only to prove himself as a Spider, but needed to live up to the amazing reputations of these other Spiders that are suddenly judging him and sizing him up. Beiman (2007, p. 43) states in her book on character design that "heroes may overcome some obvious personal weakness or external obstacle by working together or going on a journey". By the end of the film, the rest of the spiders grow to appreciate Miles for who he is.

Peter Parker, or rather, Peter B. Parker, an alternate Spider-Man to the one from Miles' universe is a stark contrast to the one we know and love, let alone to the perfect looking, blond Peter from Miles' universe, who is "affectionately known as 'RIPeter' by the film's artists (because he dies early on in the first act.)" (Zahed, 2018, p. 24). Peter B. Parker is much older than most of the Spiders and is past his prime, tired and disinterested. His appearance, while still incorporating the classic suit, is covered up by a big green coat he wears over the top of it, sweatpants and mismatched shoes, which gives him a look that is disheveled, disorganised and exhausted. His hair and facial features are almost identical to that of RIPeter, but with greying brown hair instead of blond, a broken nose and grey stubble on his jaw and chin.

In the movie, he plays the role of the old master who is reluctantly agreeing to train and pass the mantle down to a new skilled protégé. Contrary to this, at the beginning of the movie he is shown to be not at all interested in teaching Miles the ropes of being Spider-Man, and is more interested in just getting back to his own universe. As said by Peter in the movie, "We're like a team! Me as the teacher who can still do it! You as the student who can do it just not as good" (*Spider-Man: Into The Spider-Verse*, 2018). He could be compared to characters from different movies with the same archetype and character development, such as Master Shi-Fu from Dreamworks' *Kung-Fu Panda* (2008), and Toph Beifong from *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, who makes her appearance in the episode *The Blind Bandit* (2005). These are both characters who, at first, show extreme reluctance to teach the protagonist and take them under their wing to teach them. Much like Peter, they refuse to follow the stereotypical role of the mentor, which is summed up by Jerry Nyback (2013, p.10) in his thesis *What Is Good Design*:

While the hero archetype is the main character that must make an inner and outer journey in order to resolve the dramatic conflict of the story, [...] the mentor is the force of good behind the hero, pushing him forward.

Another aspect of the mentor archetype that Peter fulfills is to supply the protagonist of the story with items or skills which are essential to their success in the conflict ahead. Nyback (2013, p.10) states that:

Vladimir Propp refers to the character type by the names “donor” and “provider”, which accurately reflects the function of supplying the hero with not only useful, but needed things for the journey.

By the end of the movie, however, while he is teaching Miles how to be Spider-Man he realises just how much he sees Miles as a son to him and just how much he actually wants children of his own. This is one of the highlighted reasons in his character introduction that he and his partner Mary-Jane split up. Zahed (2018, p. 86) goes on to say about Peter, “This thirty-something version of the web slinger is a bit jaded, not in the greatest of shapes and is dreaming of a happy carefree retirement in Costa Rica.” This can also imply that he was made into this older, more tired version of himself to appeal more to fans of the comics who have been reading and following him since his earlier appearances. He shows the struggles he goes through in his life, being burnt out by his work and crime fighting, making bad money decisions, and losing a family member (his Aunt May). These are all very real struggles that many people go through

every day and everyone hopes will not happen to them. Zahed (2018, p. 86) goes on to explain that “I thought it was a great way to connect with fans of the comic book who have been following this character through the years. He feels authentic and appealing.”

This version of the usually titular protagonist has been somewhat humbled in this iteration of the story, showing that the Spider-Man we know and love isn't as invulnerable as he might seem. He certainly seems very human and relatable in the way he reacts to situations. Making Spider-Man into this more vulnerable and human version of himself can be compared to Robert Parr from *The Incredibles* (2004). Robert is a superhero who is past his prime in a world that abhors superheroes. He is portrayed as being glum, balding and overweight. This is not too dissimilar to Peter B. Parker, in that they both have gone through events in their life that have impaired their ability to truly feel 'super'. For example, Peter mentions in his introduction that he “saved the city some more, maybe too much,” (*Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse*, 2018). However, for him his marriage with Mary-Jane ended, while Robert has a family, but he has had the freedom of being able to work as a superhero taken away from him at the start of the film. Both of these events in their life have hindered their happiness as a whole. In *The Art of The Incredibles* the designers describe how they wanted Bob to look in his depressed state. Vaz (2004, p.17) states that “we wanted him to feel like a Greek god, although somewhat in decay and rough around the edges.”

Throughout the movie he tries multiple times to turn miles away from being Spider-Man and refuses to teach him anything or take him along to missions, however he seems to eventually

cave most of the time and let Miles come and learn, possible because Peter B. Parker would have loved to have had a mentor like this when he was first starting out. Tillman (2011, p. 86) states that:

The Mentor plays a key role in making the protagonist realise their full potential and is often portrayed as an old man or woman. This is because most cultures associate age with having wisdom.

Joining Miles and Peter in their struggle is Gwen Stacey, known as Spider-Gwen, Spider-Woman or Ghost Spider in the comics. Her out-of-costume character design is a disguise to make herself blend in with the people at Miles' school. Her hair is shoulder length and blonde and halfway into the movie one side is shaved to get rid of Miles' hand mark he left after his hand accidentally stuck to it. Her costume, like most of the Spiders, is an alternate take on the classic Spider-Man outfit, with a different colour scheme that incorporates some features of a ballerina outfit, including a black leotard from her feet up to her chest, with white shoulders, arms and mask, also including purple sections of the arms and inside of her white hood. On her feet are two turquoise ballerina shoes.

Zahed (2018, p. 108) explains that "she is remarkably graceful, but you also don't want to mess with her. Her costume reflects that duality. This great mix of elegance and forceful spirit." She is the youngest Spider who is in her prime as well, still in her teens, and has been Spider-Woman for a few years. She is very resolute to not make strong ties with anyone or make friends in any way, since her backstory depicts her losing her friend who is Peter Parker from that universe, stating in her backstory, "I couldn't save my best friend, Peter Parker. So now I

save everyone else. And I don't do friends anymore. Just to avoid distractions" (*Spider-Man: Into The Spider-Verse*, 2018).

It is certainly apparent that she is the most capable out of the three primary protagonists and has a difficult history, probably taking her friend's death the hardest, which causes her to actually avoid making friends again in the future. She is a stark contrast to female characters in earlier marvel comics who are portrayed as weak, small in stature, have very little character depth and in general some very poor representation of female characters. In fact, even now, the current Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) struggles to include well rounded female characters, let alone integrate them naturally without just having them back up the male characters. There has not been a female led film in the MCU until *Captain Marvel* (2019), and many of the female characters in supporting roles in the films leading up to this are usually either love interests or devices used to somehow further the development of the male characters' story arcs. Gwen, along with many of the female characters of this movie are shown in a more positive light, shown to be on equal footing as the male characters, and have fleshed out, deep character traits. Although this is a minimal step forward, there is also more than one female character included in the main protagonists. Making this a standard is a progressive step in film-making and really shows how far we've come in terms of gender equality in the media.

Another example of strong female characters in superhero media is Helen Parr from *The Incredibles* (2004). This film gives us a look at a female superhero protagonist who is both a strong and capable character in battle, as well as the fact that she is the one who practically

singlehandedly raised her children while her husband is away. Throughout the film she seems to handle the fact that she has to give up her hero career a lot better than her husband does, and on top of all that, she has to go out of her way to save him when he succumbs to his desire to be a hero again and gets into deep trouble because of this. Vaz (2004, p.22) states that they “wanted her to be maternal, but still wanted to see her in her Elastigirl of the glory days.”



Fig. 2: *Peni Parker's Anime Expressions*

Some of the more interesting examples of character design in *Into The Spider-Verse* are the three main supporting protagonists, Peni Parker, Spider-Man Noir and Spider-Ham. These three characters push the boundaries of the animation styles used in the movie since they are all

animated in unique ways. Peni is inspired by Japanese anime style with a vast range of over the top facial expressions, shown in figure 2. Zahed (2018, p. 122) explains that:

One of the design's greatest pleasures is stark contrast, from her look to her behaviour, Peni is anime through and through. To see her standing alongside Miles creates the kind of variety the film embraces.



Fig. 3: *Spider-Man Noir standing Between Spider-Ham (Left) and Peter B. Parker (Right).*

Noir is always seen in black and white with intense shading used on his figure to give him the atmosphere of having just come through from the 1920s or 1930s. “We depict him in gritty black and white, because that’s the world he is coming from. There’s a lot of cross hatching [...]

involved with noir” (Zahed, 2018, p.128). As well as the classic suit, he wears clothing that is iconic of the era he originates from to further imply he has just come from that time period, including a Fedora and a black long-coat. His eyes are also replaced by a pair of shining silver goggles.

The most unique and strange of the three is most certainly Spider-Ham who is an anthropomorphic pig in a Spider-Man costume, drawn in a style reminiscent of the 1930-60s cartoons of Looney Tunes. He follows the laws of cartoon physics like pulling an oversized wooden mallet from his pocket or floats through the air when he can smell something nice.

Zahed (2018, p. 118) states that:

This version of the character allowed the artists to have a lot of fun with rubber-hose style animation and visuals that are loose and graphic and stand out from the other figures in miles’ universe.

Having a fully animated feature with a character animated in such a different way to rest of the characters, and still having them fit well into the narrative, is a difficult thing to have achieved. Creating a diverse character of different height, shape yet still wearing the iconic red and blue colours of the Spider-Man outfit really ties together what the designers are trying to convey with this film. Having the freedom to allow him to move much like a cartoon character from an earlier time period, but superimposed into a 3-D animated world, is certainly a task that most would both relish and dread. In *Born to be Wild* by Barbara Robertson (2005), animator Rex Grignor talks about the task of creating the 3-D cartoon animals from *Madagascar* (2005),

explaining that "the characters had to do big, broad poses, every pose needed to have personality and attitude, and the animation had to be very snappy." He then goes on to talk about certain struggles of taking these techniques into the 3-D medium:

These are traditional animation tricks, but there was no touchstone for what we wanted to do in 3D. We knew we'd have to distort the models, bend them the wrong way, stretch their torsos, squash them. It was scary.



Fig. 4: *Spider-Ham/ Peter Porker's Appearance in the Movie*

What the subject matter allows the designers and animators to do is to incorporate not only vastly different characters into scenes all together, which must be difficult to achieve in a stylish way that does not make a scene too crowded, but also to combine different art styles into it too.

To be able to make all of those conflicting styles of character design work together is a real feat of animation. This is something that designers are not able to even try a lot of the time, making this opportunity unique to the subject matter of this movie which is interdimensional and involves many alternate versions of the same character who all have different gimmicks. They all offer their own sets of skills, being unique Spiders from alternate universes. Peni is shown to be incredibly tech-savvy, re-creating a USB stick that is the key to getting home with ease, Peter Porker is capable of outsmarting his opponents with his fluid, cartoon fighting style and pocket sized mallet, and Spider-Man Noir is able to swiftly take out classically deadly foes with minimum effort. They all offer unique and amazing talents that are unique to their own universes that make for some incredible fight scenes. Beiman (2007, p. 42) states that “stories become interesting when the heroes use their virtues and skills to overcome obstacles and character flaws and reach a defined goal.”



Fig. 5: *Peni Parker quickly and fluidly re-making the USB stick*

Chapter 2: Villains of the Spider-Verse

The Heroes of this 'Spider-Verse' have so many interesting variations, taking influence from different cultures, types of media from different time periods from the past, present and future and managing to tailor them into something that fits so beautifully together. It is only fitting that the villains of Miles' universe also differ from the classic villains that we know and love from Peter's Universe. As stated by Zahed (2018, p. 80): "Considered by many to be Spider-Man's most engaging and powerful archenemy, the Green Goblin is one of the first villains we encounter in the movie." This immediately throws the audience into something familiar, yet re-designed to still fit the same soul and atmosphere of the classic green villain. The design employs changes in such a way that has never been done before, in that it shows the audience the lengths to which this film can go with its characters. The Green Goblin, in stark contrast to the classic human sized figure on a hovering glider board in a mask, is portrayed as this huge monster that is the size of the house with reptilian skin, dragon-like wings and a reptilian body. As explained by Zahed (2018, p. 80) "The Goblin was more of a monster, not merely a powerful guy in a suit." He goes on to state that:

We already saw Andrew Garfield fight a lizard, so we thought it would be cool to have Spider-Man fight a Godzilla-like monster. We only had him for this one scene before he blows up, so the filmmakers wanted to have as much fun with him as possible.

(Zahed, 2018, p.80)



Fig. 6: The Green Goblin's finalised design

His huge muscular form combined with the new reptilian features, giving him the features of both a dragon and a huge archetypal goblin, makes him look more like he is a human who has mutated into this creature. This helps the character stay true to its classic incarnation who would normally be the size of a regular man with green skin and yellow eyes, and would fly by riding a hover-glider machine and hurl pumpkin bombs at foes.

Among the classic Spider-Man villains that have been revamped and redesigned is the terrifying Doctor Octopus, another iconic and classic villain who has perhaps undergone one of the biggest changes in the movie, which is a complete gender change. Classically the villain was a male scientist gone mad with power and uses four mechanical arms in combat, earning him his namesake. In the movie, Olivia Octavius is, at first, portrayed as a regular scientist, brilliantly intelligent and incredibly passionate and enthusiastic in her work, as well as energetic and light on her feet. Zahed (2018, p.102) states that “the creative team took a page from *Particle Fever*, the celebrated documentary which looked at the experimental physicists who worked at the large hadron collider in Switzerland”. She appears early in the movie in an educational video that Miles and his classmates are watching, and is later revealed to work at Alchemax, a science company funded by the primary antagonist, Kingpin, to make a collider that can punch through to alternate dimensions.

This is also where her alter-ego of Doc Ock is revealed as well as her truly disturbing and terrifying nature. Her whole character is one that feels very frantic and mad, and multiple things about her suggest this. Firstly her overall casual look exemplifies this, including her hair

and outfit which seems very hastily put together, with her mad hair and her brightly coloured scarf and headband. Secondly her desktop on her computer is incredibly cluttered and full of rubbish, much to the dismay of Miles. Her actual combat outfit (see figure 7) is also a very jumbled amalgamation of technology and doesn't look sleek, on the contrary, it looks like a prototype that she has yet to finish. In *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse The Art of the Movie* it states that the tentacles which are classically metallic and silver are made of “Semi-transparent silicon material that expands and contracts like membranes” (Zahed, 2018, p. 103). This almost makes this incarnation of the mad scientist more terrifying than before, showing that she has a more manic yet equally precise look to her, working with technologies that are modern and non-compliant with everyday science. The creative designers behind Doc Ock’s appearance in the movie did an incredible job of making her suit the innocent but eccentric scientist look while in her casual clothes, while also making her seem all the more terrifying when she reveals her true colours.

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Fig. 7: *Doc Ock's Villain outfit*

The Prowler is another one of the classic supervillains who has been included in the movie. The Prowler as an identity has been taken up by several people: the one who makes an appearance being the alter ego of Aaron Davies, the uncle of Miles Morales, which certainly adds plenty of drama to Miles' already hectic and chaotic backstory. Classically portrayed as just a muscular male figure with green and purple clothes with high tech gloves and boots, he shows the audience just how deadly normal humans can be when armed with high tech weaponry. As described by Zahed (2018, p. 136), "the prowler is a tall, lanky, ultra-fit trained assassin who is one of the kingpin's main henchmen."

In the movie his colour scheme is changed ever so slightly from the classic comics into black and purple, with chunky metallic gauntlets that oversize his hands and boots that likewise oversize his feet. He is a sinister and terrifying figure in the movie, really creating a sense of panic as he chases at superhuman speed after Miles in an almost animalistic style. He is portrayed as silent, ruthless and one of the most unnerving villains in the movie and is described as:

The low-fi Iron Man. Prowler has these steel claws that are like gloves, which have power punches in them, he wears pneumatic boots that give him the ability to jump really far.

(Zahed, 2018, p. 138)

The Character of Uncle Aaron in the movie showed himself at first to be Miles' mentor figure, being less strict with him and more like a big brother, encouraging his street art and helping him finish a piece he had been working on since the very start of the movie. He is a playful character with a strong sense of humor who is a stark contrast to the silent assassin we see him

as later on in the film. The Prowler's cape (see figure 8) is another interesting feature of the supervillain. It almost acts as a sort of glider but makes him look larger than he actually is and appears more imposing when he stands at his full height, with a large spiked collar that pokes up behind his head in a way reminiscent of Dracula.

As described by Zahed (2018, p. 138), "he has this giant towel-like glider cape that almost seems comedic, but on him it looks quite gritty." His mask is also reminiscent of a classic Spider-Man mask, albeit baggier and with much smaller eyes and shadow surrounding them, almost like a warped and twisted version of the hero. The mask hangs over his head and is a lot less fitted to his face, and is also depicted as being a hockey mask in some concept art of the movie by Jesus Alonso Iglesias. His abilities also mimic that of the titular hero, being able to climb up walls, exert incredible strength and leap great distances with the aid of his technology. He also moves in an inhuman way, clawing his way across walls and perching himself on high up places. He could be seen as this more monstrous version of Spider-Man, having a warped and dark appearance which is in a similar vein. Beiman (2007, p.98) touches on this: "Characters with highly deformed or asymmetrical facial proportions are called MONSTERS. [...] Highly irregular faces can excite fear in the viewer."



Fig. 8: *The Prowler's villain outfit*

The final supervillain to look at from the movie, and the one who takes the role of the main antagonist throughout the movie is The Kingpin, shown in figure 9. Possibly one of the most intimidating villains of the Spider-Man franchise as he is a master of intrigue as well as combat. In the comics and cartoons he is portrayed as a large bald headed man in a black or white suit. The most intimidating feature of this villain is certainly his size and stature, towering over most normal people. He follows a very square theme in his design, showing rigidity, stubbornness,

incredible strength and durability (which, classically, are two of his main abilities). In the movie, the designers have taken his design and multiplied it tenfold, creating this gargantuan block of a man, dressed in mostly black clothing and still following the square shaped theme in both his body and head. Zahed (2018, p.160) explains that as the character is “often portrayed as an imposing heavysset man, kingpin offered the creative team another chance to go bigger than life and explore the villainous character’s full possibilities.” His huge clunky body would be expected to move slowly and heavily, however during the movie, he moves with surprising speed and reflexes, able to easily predict and counter the Spider’s attacks against him.



Fig. 9: Kingpin’s finalised design

The character's form in most of the scenes he is in takes up a considerable chunk of the screen, sometimes filling it entirely, with only his head floating around on a black background which is his suit. Zahed (2018, p.164) states that "this guy's head and his hands sort of float on this void. We even created this special rig for him that allowed us to almost pose him independently from his anatomy and get these amazing silhouettes out of our shots." His huge body and his fighting style suggest something quite primal about him. His head also slouches forward to the front of his body so he appears hunched over, and when he slams his hands down into the ground, there's something certainly ape-like about his stature and movement. This suggests an underlying feral, animalistic nature beneath his civilised sharp suit and cane that comes out when he loses his temper.

Conclusion

In conclusion to this study, the characters that have been analysed from the film: *Spider-Man: Into The Spider-Verse* have each undergone such monumental alterations for this feature alone that they themselves have made a huge change in what defines them as characters in the Marvel universe. Hopefully these designs will continue to influence further designs in the future. The Film has made such huge strides both socially and technically, being amongst the first marvel films of recent years to feature a primary protagonist who was a person of colour and include his whole family who are deep and fleshed out characters that each had their own place and role in his story. As well as this, the film has taken steps to have female characters who are not depicted as weak or left on the bench, as well as not being sexualised and not having them just be a tool for a romance story or to further the Male lead's character development. The film takes a unique action to explore animation styles to give certain characters their uniqueness amidst several others who are similar to them. It tests the boundaries of what can be done with character design in animation, having one character look like they've just stepped out of a grainy black and white noir film, and another like they're something that's stepping out of a Warner Brothers cartoon. Walking the fine line between making the scenes look cluttered and disjointed, and having them move as smoothly as they did in the finalised feature was a big risk to take. This film takes all that we knew about the characters featured within it and morphs them, scales them and shapes them into brand new, fresh and interesting designs that are sure to influence future generations of superhero comic, film fans and designers alike. It explores how characters such as the Green Goblin and Kingpin

can be supersized to completely change their dynamic in the film from something realistic to something completely hyperbolised, but well suited to the overall style and how they are classically portrayed. Every design choice of the characters in this film is well made and brilliantly executed to have that perfect balance of different but not too different and is an instant classic amongst the hordes of other Marvel films out there, setting a new bar to reach, especially for animated superhero content.

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