Nothing Stays the Same: A Typology of Markers and Functions of Reimagination

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ABSTRACT

Reimagination has become a common practice in milking the revenues of comics, animated films, films, and games that experienced a past glory. However, the discussions over reimagination specifically on its markers and a typology of functions remain under investigated. In response to this gap, we investigated 31 reimagined titles from comics, animated films, films, and games by implementing the theories of space and place reimagination by Richardson (2012), the death of the reader by Gray, Sandvoss, and Harrington (2007), transtylisation by Genette (1997), and narrative identity by Ricoeur (1991). The findings indicate that reimagined works have two shared markers namely mutation and presentness on the textual, visual, and operative elements of the works. Mutation deals with the alterations of the three elements while preserving the core narrative identity of the works while presentness refers to the adjustment of the three elements in chronospatial context of the present time. The investigated works also indicate that six reimagination functions could be formulated. Those functions are stylistic, ludic, methectic, medial, branding, and cultural reimaginations.

Keywords: *reimagination, mutation, presentness, narratives, transtylisation*

INTRODUCTION

Publishers, developers, and authors have to formulate a creative way of offering alternative narratives to keep the fans hyped and faithful toward certain comics, animated films, films, and games. One of these creative ways is through reimagination. This act of offering an alternative narrative for the already existing titles is made possible since, as Gray, Sandvoss, and Harrington (2007) imply, literary works are representative and mediative frames from which meaning might vary in the imagination of the fans. Due to this nature of being representative and mediative frames between fans and the idols—the literary works—the narratives of comics, films, and games have to adhere and address what the fans might want. One of the examples is restyling a Western animated character into a Japanese animation style—the anime.

DC comes up with the reimagination of Batman into *Batman Ninja* to address the growing fanbase of Japanese animation or commonly called anime in the Western. Applying anime style in the drawings and narratives, *Batman Ninja* offers an alternative *animesque* narrative while preserving the dark hero narratives and bat motifs of the superhero. This Batman with katana, bat shaped *shurikens*, and gigantic robot fights feels more *animesque* since the narrative plausability tool is through the adoption of *isekai* genre. This genre, as implied by Gottesman (2020), revolves around a character being drifted into a different world. Though *isekai* is adopted to trigger a more *animesque* nuance, in delivering the *isekai*, *Batman Ninja* remains faithful to technological incident trope from which Batman is drifted to an alternate Japan. This combination of *isekai* and technological incident trope points out that Batman is genealogically mutated from its original narratives.

The mutation is seen from the fact that Batman in *Batman Ninja* has undergone what Genette (1997) calls as transtylisation, in which the styles of a particular literary work are altered at such length that what remains of the work is the core narrative. This "trans" in the context of Batman in *Batman Ninja* strengthens the status of being mutated.

We argue that mutation in reimagined works might be one of the markers in reimagined works from which a typology of the functions of reimagination might be constructed. These markers and typology of reimagination are the gap left by previous studies on reimagination. Previous studies on reimagination tend to focus on the medialities and modalities of reimagination. This is seen from monumentalism in epic film reimagination (Bronfen 2013), the reimagination of children picture book from iconic and performative elements (Todorova 2018), reimagination from fandom perspectives (McClellan 2018), identity reimagination (Welang 2018), and reimagination in augmented reality context (Woods 2020). The focus on textual, visual, and operative markers that distinguish a reimagined work from the source work is under investigated. Departing from these issues, we plan to answer the following questions:

1. What markers of reimagination can be formulated from the investigated reimagined comics, animated films, films, and games?

2. What typology of reimagination functions can be formulated from the investigated reimagined comics, animated films, films, and games?

To answer these two questions, we employed the theories of space and place reimagination by Richardson (2012), the death of the reader by Gray, Sandvoss, and Harrington (2007), transtylisation by Genette (1997), and narrative identity by Ricoeur (1991). The first theory was applied to address how space and place are reimagined and how space and place work in a reimagined work in reference to the source work. The second theory was implemented to reveal what frames of representation and mediation the analysed works have. The third theory was intended to signify how the styles of the 30 titles of comics, animated films, films, and games underwent an alteration and preservation over their textual, visual, and operative elements. The fourth theory was employed to indicate the presence of shifts over the narrative identity of the analysed works. Departing from the findings of each theory, the markers and typology of reimagination functions were formulated.

TEXTUAL, VISUAL, AND OPERATIVE MARKERS OF REIMAGINED LITERARY WORKS

Reimagination, as implied by Sanders (2006), is a part of adaptation. Since reimagination is a part of adaptation, which Leitch (2008) claims to be a genre of its own, reimagined works have specific markers that distinguish them from the other adaptations. These markers, as suggested by Purnomo et al. (2021), cover general constructing elements of literary works namely textual, visual, and operative elements. In a simple sense, textual elements refer to any verbal elements, visual to images and visual effects, and operative to mechanical engagement to the works.

Reimagination performs deconstruction and reconstruction the three constructing elements through what Genette (1997) calls as transtylisation, adjustments to fit target cultures, markets, or audiences. Through this act of transtylisation, the source textual, visual, and operative markers might suffer significant shifts or changes to distinguish the reimagined works. These shifts or changes signify that reimagined works might be of their own specific sub-genre of adaptation. The possibility of being sub-genre of its own points out that reimagined works might also have their own narrative identities. Since these identities, as suggested by Ricoeur (1991), are a postulation of internalised experiences and the evolving story of self, reimagined literary works tend to pertain some of the source elements while at the same time transforming them to fit the target purposes.

The preservation and the transformation of the source elements are made possible since, as implied by Gray, Sandvoss, and Harrington (2007), literary works operate like a frame vulnerable with adaptations and adjustments. This vulnerability positions everyone as a creator, an author, or a developer of the works attempted for reimagination. Fanfictions are an example on how reimaginations are exercisable by anyone even the fans. Through fanfictions, an alternate narrative is offered—an alternate the original authors might even have never thought of. In doing so, space and place reimaginations might hold a significant key in negotiating the narratives they need to preserve and to transform. This reimagination of space and place, as implied by Richardson (2012), might produce a new identity. To indicate the newness of the identity, markers are in the work.

METHOD

Data and Data Sources

The data of this qualitative study comprise of textual, visual, and operative data from the source and reimagined works. Textual data are the verbal expressions as found from the dialogues, descriptions, and the other textual sections of the source and reimagined works. Visual data are images and visual effects taken in the forms of screenshots. Operative data are the mechanical engagement through specific methods of reading, watching, or playing with or without specific peripherals. The data were taken from the sources that conform to the criteria of a work reimagined by a different artist, for a different platform, for a different community, or for a different generation of audiences (see Table 1).

Table 1   Data sources.

Comics	Animated films	Films	Games
Just Imagine's Batman	Batman Ninja	Dragon Ball: Evolution	Alice: The Madness Returns
Saiyuki	Dr. Slump	Jumanji: the Next Level	Final Fantasy VII Remake
Snow White with Red Hair	Knights of the Zodiac	Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle	Final Fantasy X-2
Spider Man: India	Marvel Anime Series	Sonic the Hedgehog (2020)	Final Fantasy XV: Pocket Edition
Tokyo Akazukin (Tokyo Red Hood)	Powerpuff Girls Z	Street Fighter: Assassin's Fist	Gwent: The Witcher Card Games
		Superhuman Samurai Syber Squad	Kingdom Hearts Series
		Supaidaman (Spider-Man)	Kirby Super Star
			Lego the Lord of the Rings
			Mega Man Battle Network
			Mighty Final Fight
			Rise of the Tomb Raider
			SNK Heroines: Tag Team Frenzy
			Stranger of Paradise: Final Fantasy Origin
			Super Robot Wars

Thirty-one titles from comics, animated films, films, and games were selected based on the criteria mentioned before. These titles indicated the presence of mutation, where a new narrative different from the source narrative emerged. This new narrative was characterised by the presence of textual, visual, and operative markers to which this study focuses.

Data Analysis

Analysis technique from Spradley (2016) was applied in this study. Four phases of analysis were taken namely domain, taxonomy, componential, and cultural theme. In the first phase, domain, the theory of space and place reimagination by Richardson (2012) and transtylisation by Genette (1997) were applied to reveal what textual, visual, and operative elements are changed and preserved in the reimagined works in reference to the source works. In the second phase, taxonomy, the theory of death of the reader by Gray, Sandvoss, and Harrington (2007) was applied to reveal how representative and mediative frames influence the changes and the preservation from which an understanding toward the mutation was expected to be grasped. In the third phase, componential, the markers of mutative markers were constructed based on the findings from the previous two phases. Narrative identity theory from Ricoeur (1991) was applied here to point out the presence of new narrative from the reimagined works. In the last phase, cultural theme analysis, the markers and typology of reimagination were constructed with the findings from the previous three phases as the foundation.

FINDINGS

This section is divided into two subsections. The first subsection talks about the markers of reimagined works and the second about the typology. The findings indicate that there are two markers of reimagined works namely mutation and presentness. The findings also indicate that six types of reimagination can be formulated namely stylistic, ludic, methectic, medial, branding, and cultural reimaginations.

Reimagination Markers

Mutation and presentness on textual elements

Markers here refer to textual, visual, and operative elements distinctive to reimagination. This distinctiveness can be used as a tool of analysis to reveal the differences between reimagination and the other forms of adaptation. Two markers are identified. They are mutation and presentness. To ensure a smooth reading, the discussion of these two markers is not separated but displayed in an interconnective fashion.

Mutation in this study refers to the birth of new narrative through reimagination from the preservation and transformation of some textual, visual, and operative elements to provide audiences a fresh and alternate reading of the already known one. This mutation is indicated by what we call as mutative markers. These markers appear on the textual, visual, and operative elements of the reimagined works. On textual level, mutative markers might appear on any verbal parts of the reimagined works. One of the most visible and immediately recognised part where mutative markers appear is the title.

As seen from Table 2, augmentation tends to textually mark the reimagined titles to indicate that mutation has taken place. Though textually augmented, the titles tend to preserve the source's verbal elements. *Powerpuff Girls*, for instance, is reimagined through textual augmentation on the title by adding *Z*. The addition of *Z* is the formula of anime when it comes to animated films with consequential story arcs or fresh narratives. *Dragon Ball Z*, *Gundam Z,* and *Mazinger Z* are some of the examples. Besides *Z*, anime titles also use other alphabetical signs like *R*, *GT*, *GX*, *W*, *X,* and *Y* to indicate the presence of a revisit on narratives, visuals, or both.

Reimagination might also be marked with reductive transtylisation. This reduction tends to be a total deletion of the whole source titles. Through a complete deletion, the sense of being local might be preserved. In the case of *Gridman the Hyper Agent*, for instance, the title was totally deleted and replaced by *Superhuman Samurai Syber Squad*. The target title intended for North American audiences tends to show mutation since it blends the use of *super–* to reflect and represent the superhero traits of the character and *samurai* to indicate that the narrative roots from the source title.

Reimagination might be textually marked also by the presence of neither augmentation nor reduction. The titles are preserved as the source to signify the narratives which might be considered successful. *Spider Man*, for example, was localised into the same name in Japanese katakana *supaidaman*. The Japanese title which basically tells the same name of the superhero tends to point out that the film still shares connections to the source Spider Man though changes like the use of robot or known as *mecha*, transformation acts called *henshin*, motorbikes to share the feeling of being a combination of *super sentai* and *kamen rider*—the trademarked Japanese superheroes.

Besides titles, mutative markers on textual element might appear also on the onomastic aspects of the reimagined works. In *Just Imagine's Batman*, where the narratives were rewritten by Marvel's Stan Lee, the White American Bruce Wayne was altered into the African American Wayne Williams with different narratives yet preserving the same tone and mood of the source narratives. Another example is *Spider Man: India*, where Peter Parker was altered into Pavitr Parabakhan and Mary Jane into Mirajana. Though altered, the onomastic elements of the name are still preserved—the altered names still hold the initials of the source with PP and MJ. What can be learned from the alteration of onomastic elements as seen from the two examples is that the alteration is not an act of total transformation—the source onomastic elements are still preserved. The blending of source and target elements further signifies the presence of a mutation.

After titles and onomastic aspects, mutative markers on textual elements might be immediately recognised on verbal elements involving chronospatial gaps or presenteness—the state of being present. In Son's *Knights of the Zodiac*, a reimagined work of Kurumada's *Saint Seiya*, the time difference between the source series and the reimagined series spans for 36 years and thus, the technologies are quite different. In the reimagined version, the use of smartphones is introduced to fill in the gap and to align with the presentness of

the time when the work was reimagined. Due to this chronospatial adjustment, verbal expressions linked to the chronospatial adjustment follow. One of the examples is when Seiya gets beaten by street ruffians. The boss of the ruffians recorded the beating while saying:

> Ruffian boss: You're gonna get more hits than this video!

The word "hit" in the era of social media might refer to the state of being viral. The virality might be seen from the numbers of a video being viewed, liked, or shared. The use of "hit" in this case serves as a word play for being viral and being beaten.

Chronospatial differences expressed through verbalism, besides taking the forms of utterances as seen from the example of *Knights of the Zodiac*, also take the forms of terminologies. *Mega Man Battle Network*, the reimagined version of *Mega Man* series, has 14 years of time difference. As the name implies, *Mega Man Battle Network* focuses on the Internet with network related terms e.g., email and network. Combined with robotic terms, which are the markers of the source *Mega Man, Mega Man Battle Network* indicates the presence of maturation through the preservation of robotic terms in tandem with network terms.

Table 2   Mutative markers on the reimagined titles.

Source titles	Reimagined titles	Transtylisation	
		Reduction	Augmentation
Batman	Batman Ninja	×	√
Batman	Just Imagine's Batman	×	√
Dragon Ball	Dragon Ball: Evolution	×	√
Dr. Slump	Dr. Slump	×	×
Final Fantasy VII	Final Fantasy VII Remake	×	√
Final Fantasy X	Final Fantasy X-2	×	√
Final Fantasy XV	Final Fantasy XV: Pocket Edition	×	√
Final Fantasy Origin	Stranger of Paradise: Final Fantasy Origin	√	√
Gridman the Hyper Agent	Superhuman Samurai Syber Squad	√	×
The King of Fighters Series	SNK Heroines: Tag Team Frenzy	√	×
Journey to the West	Saiyuki	×	×
Jumanji	Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle	×	√
Jumanji	Jumanji: The Next Level	×	√
Kirby Super Star	Kirby Super Star	×	×
Little Red Riding Hood	Tokyo Akazukin (Tokyo Red Hood)	√	√
Lord of the Rings	Lego Lord of the Rings	√	√
Mega man series	Megaman Battle Network	√	√
Mighty Final Fight	Mighty Final Fight	×	×
Multiple Titles from Disney's animated films and Square Enix's games	Kingdom Hearts series	√	√
Multiple titles of Japanese robots (*mecha*) series	Super Robot Wars	√	√
Multiple Marvel Titles	Marvel Anime Series	√	√
Saint Seiya	Knights of the Zodiac	√	×
Snow White	Snow White with Red Hair	×	√
Spider Man	Spider Man: India	×	√
Spider Man	Supaidaman	×	×
Street Fighter	Street Fighter: Assassin's Fist	×	×
Powerpuff Girls	Powerpuff Girls Z	×	√
The Witcher Trilogy	Gwent: the Witcher Card Game	×	√
Tomb Rider	Rise of the Tomb Raider	×	√

Mutation and presentness on the visual elements of reimagined works

Mutations on visuals might be the most immediate spotted elements on reimagined works. Chronospatial differences, as what textual elements suffer from, also trigger the presence of visual alterations of reimagined works. These alterations encompass characterial, spatial, and peripheral aspects. The first refers to visual alterations over characters, the second over setting of place and anything related to spaces, and the third to objects or properties that signify the presentness of time and space.

Characterial and peripheral aspects tend to intertwine in a chronospatial sphere—meaning that the presence of visual alterations on one aspect are reciprocally influenced by the others. In Toriyama's *Dr. Slump*, for instance, most the characters underwent visual alterations when the 1981's series were reimagined in 1997. One of the examples is Taro Soramame. In the source work, he had a greaser hair style, donned in jacket, and styled himself with sunglasses. This visual corresponds to the trend of youngsters in the 80s. When reimagined, Taro was visualised in blonde with spike hair, donned in blank tank top, and wearing a Chinese style rounded glasses to adjust the presentness of the time when the anime was launched. This necessity of presentness requires alterations over the visualisation of the characters as seen from Taro's hairstyles and over peripherals e.g., Taro's attires.

Presentness sometimes also demands a visual alteration over spatial aspects of a reimagined work. This spatiality driven visual alteration is made aligned with visual alterations over characterial and peripheral aspects. In Toriyama's 1997 *Dr. Slump*, for instance, there was a scene where Akane Kimidori and Arale played *Dragon Ball Z* video game. *Dragon Ball Z* was another masterpiece by Akira Toriyama, the same author that wrote *Dr. Slump*. He wrote the story after the completion of *Dr. Slump*. That Akane and Arale played the game pointed out that chronospatiality adjustment influences the presence of spatial visualisation in the form of playing *Dragon Ball Z* video game.

Presentness is not always related to real time alignment but it might also deal with pseudo presentness. Through this presentness, clear time differences or gaps are not presented. However, the fill-in-the-gap is indicated through the use of visual as mimetic signs. Minekura's *Saiyuki*, which is the reimagined work of Cheng'en's Chinese classic *Journey to the West*, have five protagonists that consist of Xuanzang the monk, Sun Wukong the monkey king, Zhu Baije the pig, Sha Wujing the water buffalo, and the dragon prince who became Xuanzang's steed, which were all reimagined with modern touch. The touch was not only applied on characterial aspects but also spatial and peripheral ones. The use of gun by Xuanzang or Genjo Sanzo, jeep to replace the steed, the depiction of cigarettes, and the other modern feel triggering objects only indicate presentness in general not referring to a specific period of time.

The use of visuals as mimetic signs might disclose problems of cultural bias. In *Dragon Ball: Evolution*, which was the reimagined work of *Dragon Ball* series in a live action fashion, cultural bias occurs. This bias is reflected through the transformation of Goku into a teen with American boy's problems e.g., parties, finding a girlfriend, and bullies. This transformation creates a mutation in the narrative since the film still preserves the source name while trying to blend it with American teenager's culture.

Mutation and presentness on the operative elements of reimagined works

Operative elements tend to have an association with video games in which reciprocal and procedural interactivity take place between players and game avatars facilitated through game controllers. Each game genre has a different operative system which provides a different level of difficulty and immersion. Role Playing Games (RPG), for instance, blend actions and narratives or stories. When it comes to the action, combinations of button smashing are required. When it comes to the narratives, the combinations are less complex. Thus, these acts of button smashing define the genre of RPG.

When RPGs are reimagined, these button smashing combinations might suffer from alterations. Square Enix's *Final Fantasy VII Remake*, for instance, has 20 years of gap. The original *Final Fantasy VII* was played on Playstation's first generation while the reimagined version was on Playstation's fourth generation. To adjust this platform's presentness, the alterations are not only implemented on the visuals but also on the operatives. The combat system of the reimagined version has two modes namely turn-based and strategic hybrid. The former refers to a combat in which the players take turn in attacking with the foes. The latter demands the players to think strategically how to deal with the foes in a flowing sequence. The former has a nostalgic value since it was the original combat system while the latter is an adjustment of the growing trend in an action RPG game's combat system. The presence of two combat systems indicates that Square Enix attempts to address the nostalgia from veteran players while at the same time offering fresh approach to garner new players. In

the perspectives of mutative markers, these two combat systems are a mutation on operative elements since they define what *Final Fantasy VII Remake* is—not totally the same source game but also not totally a different game.

The issues of platform's presentness plays a significant role in the alterations of operative elements. The alterations primarily revolve around the control scheme in playing the games. These alterations commonly occur in games ported from consoles to handheld/mobiles which require a simplification of operation. In Square Enix's *Final Fantasy XV: Pocket Edition*, for instance, is reimagined from *Final Fantasy XV* for mobile users. Since mobile games have to be designed in a simple operative mode, the exploration and combat systems have to be made simpler than those of the source platform—Playstation 4. This simplification is necessity since mobile or handheld games tend to be played in a lighter core than those of console games. On the other hand, when mobile/handheld or console games are ported to personal computer (PC), simplification approach does not apply. What occurs from this inclining hierarchical port is a complication of control scheme to adjust to a more advanced gaming system.

Operative elements might also be adjusted in the context of fan service. When it comes to fan service, it tends to refer to narrative sexualisation e.g., revealing clothes and the baring of skins. In SNK Playmore's fighting game *SNK Heroines: Tag Team Frenzy*, the characters of the source work, *The King of Fighters* fighting game series, were vestimentarily sexualised through revealing visualisation. The sexualisation even involves gender bending from male to female donned in revealing costumes. To complete the fanservice which highlights more on the sexualised visualisation, the combat controls for the reimagined games tend to be simplified and narratively adjusted to the sexualised theme. Though simplified, the combat still preserves the source feel of *The King of Fighters*. This condition indicates the presence of mutation from which a fresh narrative identity might be attached to *SNK Heroines: Tag Team Frenzy*.

A Typology of The Functions of Reimagination

Reimagination, based on the findings, serves six functions. They are stylistic, ludic, methectic, medial, branding, and cultural. Stylistic functions are style oriented, ludic mood oriented, methectic fans oriented, medial platform oriented, branding company oriented, and cultural target cultures, norms, and legals oriented.

Stylistic functions of reimagination

Stylistic functions deal primarily with styles. Here styles might refer to textual, visual, and operative styles. Textual styles circumnavigate around how the works are narratively reimagined, visual around the reimagination of images, and operative around the mechanical elements of operations. In Spicy Horse's *Alice: Madness Returns*, for instance, Carroll's Alice as seen from *Alice in the Wonderland* was textually, visually, and operatively reimagined. The tone of being a good kid was altered to evoke the expected gruesome and horrific tone. Gamers were presented a new fresh way to enjoy the story from mature perspectives.

In the context of games, stylistic functions of reimagination might not only end up in mutations in tone but also the whole gameplay. In CD Projekt Red's *Gwent: the Witcher Card Game*, *The Witcher* trilogy, an action RPG, was reimagined into a computer card game. The card game still preserves the source visual and textual elements in regard to the lores as storytold in the trilogy but the operative element suffered from a drastic change. The drastic change was seen from the alteration of the genre. What is interesting is that though the genre was reimagined, the card game to some extent details some lores of the source. This condition points out that stylistic functions are interconnected and inter-influential between the three elements. Card games, due to the fact that their numbers could span for hundreds, disclose more spaces for the card makers to instil information on them. One of the information commonly instilled in a card game with narratives as the core play is the lore.

Ludic functions of reimagination

Ludic functions circumnavigate around inciting a playfulness. Reimagined works executed in this ludic context aim at being playful from which laughters are ignited. Visual elements are commonly the most reimagined elements to serve ludic functions since visuals are visibly vulnerable for modification and transformation. One of the most used visual modification and transformation is *chibification* or super deformation where the source characters are designed in a small size with a big head to evoke cuteness and parodical sense. Traveller's Tale's *Lego the Lord of the Rings*, for example, is a reimagination of Tolkien's *the Lord of the Rings* intended for the

consumption of younger audiences. The induction of lego blocks to construct the visuals of the characters and settings aligns the necessities to address younger audiences since lego blocks generate the sense of being ludic.

The ludicity occurs not only on visual and textual elements but also on the operative ones. Capcom's *Pocket Fighter* or dubbed *Super Gem Fighter Mini Mix* in the North American market is a crossover game from Capcom's fighting games series. Compiled, super-deformed to incite cute look, and textually parodied, the fighting game gives a fresh parodical fashion of playing a fighting game which tends to be serious. *Pocket Fighter*, as found also from *SNK Heroines: Tag Team Frenzy* and *Final Fantasy XV: Pocket Edition*, also has simpler button inputs to cast the fighter's moves. This simplicity in button inputs strengthens the light mood or the ludicity of the reimagined works.

Methectic functions of reimagination

The word "methectic" derives from Platonian term "methexis" which refers to audience involvements in theatrical context. Methectic functions are fans related. The decision to reimagine a work sometimes is based on the intention of providing a service to the fans. As discussed on the subsection of mutation and presentness on operative elements, fan services tend to mull over sexualisation of characters though that is not always the case. In the trailer of *Sonic the Hedgehog (2020)*, Sonic, as indicated by the protests of fans via YouTube, was unfaithfully reimagined. In the reimagined visual, Sonic appears so skinny and less energetic—far from the visualisation in the source games. The film makers listened to the protests from fans and decided to visualise Sonic the way he appeared in the game. This is an example how fans are positively served.

In the context of methectic reimagination, fan service might also refer to fan made works. In this unique reimagination, fans produced, directed, and developed their own reimagined versions of the original works with or without the permissions from the copyright holders. Ansah and Howard's reimagination of Capcom's *Street Fighter*, *Street Fighter: Assassin's Fist,* for instance, was granted permission by Capcom. The two writers are a fan of the game series and try to reimagine it in a live action version. The support by the copyright holders, in mutation perspectives, indicates a unique status of the work—is it a work of fans, the copyright holders, or both? Further, this case of reimagined works by fan with the backup of copyright holders discloses insights on to what extent a mutation could occur. If this case is a mutation, the question is whether the mutation is textual, visual, operative, or belonging to an umbrella element like authorship element.

Medial functions of reimagination

The next function is medial. In this function, reimagination is bound to the target platforms. The most commonly found cases are games of an old generation reimagined and ported to current generation. Since the technologies are different in a sense that the current generation is far more advanced than the old one, reimagination with primary focuses on visual and operative is required.

Visual and operative elements, though might be the primary focus, in some cases, the alterations of visual and operative in regard to the currentness of platform might impact on how the narratives are designed. One of the examples, as discussed on the subsection of mutation and presentness on operative elements, is *Final Fantasy VII Remake*. To adjust the technology and the market of the current generation of Playstation, visual and operative elements were overhauled. This overhaul influences the narrative also. One of the influences can be seen from the presence of expansive narrative of a minor character, Jesse Raspberry. In the Playstation 4 version, Jesse's story background was expanded to detail her narratives. This expansion and along with the overhaul forces Square Enix not to launch the game in a single launch—they planned to have a trilogy to cover the whole story of the original *Final Fantasy VII*.

Branding functions of reimagination

Branding functions are related to the narrative identity a developer, a publisher, or a company attempt to build and signify. Reimagination might also be influenced by this branding especially when a company buys another company. Buying another company means that the products the bought company has will be narratively adjusted with the identity of the buyer. Eidos Interactive, for instance, was bought by Square Enix in 2009. The purchased game developer was known for the action game *Tomb Raider* series while the purchaser was known for its Japanese Role Playing Games (JRPGs). As the result of this purchase, *Rise of the Tomb Raider*, the first of the series under Square Enix as the publisher, has the feelings of RPG since the game immerses the players deeper with RPG elements like character class orientations.

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Branding functions, in some cases like Square Enix and Team Ninja's *Stranger of Paradise: Final Fantasy Origin*, might mull over a temporal hybrid fusion of narrative identities between two or more developers or publishers. Due to its temporarility and the absence of buying-selling circumstances, the reimagination tends to explicitly indicate that particular game elements are identical to each respective developer or publisher. Team Ninja, for instance, is known for its action games with punishing difficulties while Square Enix for its JRPGs. When Square Enix's *Final Fantasy Origin* or the first *Final Fantasy* series are reimagined into an action game, *Stranger of Paradise: Final Fantasy Origin* becomes an action game laden with JRPG elements. Just as with *Rise of the Tomb Raider*, the action RPG allows the players to develop the controlled characters based on the character classes they favour.

Cultural functions of reimagination

Cultural functions deal with orientation over cultural, normative, and legal elements. When a product was reimagined by leaning over cultural considerations of the target market or users, the reimagined works will mutate as the results of negotiation between the source culture with the target. Capcom's *Mighty Final Fight*, for instance, has female characters called Poison and Roxy who were considered to be oversexualised in the game. When Capcom attempted to distribute the game for North American market, protests over the oversexualised characters sparked. The publisher decided to positively respond the protests by reimagining Poison and Roxy through gender bending which transformed the two into male characters by the names Billy and Sid. This decision of reimagination by altering the gender to avoid protests indicate that cultural considerations had been taken by Capcom.

The concerns over race also become a major cultural consideration besides norms and legal matters. In Nintendo's *Kirby Super Star*, for instance, had to reimagine one of the villains in the game going by the name Wham Bam Rock. The character is depicted as a face with pitch black colour surrounding a pair of big eyes and a big pair of red lips. This visual invited concerns over racism directed toward Africans. Added by the semantic fact that "wham" and "bam" onomatopoeically refer to the sound of impactful force with the word "rock" strengthening the violent nuance, the cultural implication of being racist was more intensified. In response to this concern, Nintendo reimagined the character by visualising it as an anthropomorphic living rock.

DISCUSSION

The Problems of Defining Reimagination

Reimagination basically revisits a work with a different approach over textual, visual, and operative elements with concerns over chronospatiality. If we take this as a definition, it will tend to indicate an overlapping with remakes. Three primary elements of remakes, as implied by Eberwein (1998), are rereading, time contextualisation, and audience reception. Departing from these three primary elements of remakes, we understand that remade works will not change the meaning of the source or original works—the core meaning is the same yet the way to deliver it changes. The "animesation" of Marvel superheroes, for instance, as seen from Marvel and Madhouse's *Marvel Anime* tend to preserve the core narratives e.g., Jean Grey's inability to control her alter ego Phoenix. However, that the universe where animesque Marvel superheroes was a separate universe—called Earth-101001—from the source universe of the superheroes, can we still call it a remake? Is it still a rereading? It might fit to call it reimagination since Marvel superheroes are "what-iffed" they were anime.

The revisit in reimagination aims at generating a fresh or alternative narrative or mechanics over the work. The problems that arise are whether a reimagined work can be called a reimagination when the whole elements of a work are not altered. Square Enix and Disney's *Kingdom Hearts* series, for example, have both Disney's and Square Enix's characters revisualised to adjust the RPG-ness of the game. This transtylisation, as Genette (1997) coined, indicates both a reduction and an augmentation of the characters—reduced from being the characters of their respective owners and augmented to adjust the alternate narratives. The problem with *Kingdom Hearts*, if we are to perceive it from reimagination, is that the sources are multiple—famous characters along with their respective narratives from both Disney and Square Enix are compiled. The main narrative is not a reimagination since it lacks of source narrative. However, the main narratives involve sub narratives which depict various famous places from both the worlds of Disney and Square Enix. This spatial involvement in the form of sub narratives indicates a reimagination. Therefore, from this case, we learn that reimagination could exist in an umbrella fashion where the umbrella is not a reimagination.

Another problem in defining reimagination is deciding what is being core in narrative identity. Whether core refers to theme, to messages, to plot, to motifs or to the combination of these four literary elements is the point of perplexity when it comes to deciding what a core is. If we are to take what is implied by Herman et al. (2012) that the core of narratives lies on literary elements which contribute to how the story is told, then, any of those four literary elements could be the core narratives from which narrative identity is evoked. Since each element might contribute differently in constructing a storytelling, to ensure that the core narratives are comprehend is to reveal how each of the four elements is related to weave and to tell the story. In the context of reimagination, this act of revealing how the elements tell a story points out that the preserved elements might function as the core. In Akizuki's *Snow White with the Red Hair*, for instance, preserves the concept of being beautiful and all the danger that follows as the core narratives from which the story rolls. The problem lies on the different concept of being beautiful. In the source *Snow White*, being beautiful tends to mull over around physical beauty while in *Snow White with the Red Hair*, having unusual red hair and scientific knowledge about herbal are what being defined as beautiful. Whether the changes on the concept of beauty erodes the source core narratives is the point of the problem in revealing the core narratives. If core narratives suffer from changes or alterations, can it be still called a core? The question requires further research from which the results could complete the discussion about reimagination.

CONCLUSION

Reimagination, to differentiate it from the other types of adaptation, is identified through the use of two markers namely mutation and presentness markers. These two markers operate on textual, visual, and operative elements. Mutation markers identify and indicate how the three elements are altered to generate an alternate narrative while presentness markers deal with how the three elements are adjusted to fit with the current time and space. Through these markers, reimagined is constructed to indicate also the functions the reimagined works carry. Those functions are stylistic, ludic, methectic, medial, branding, and cultural.

The discussion of reimagination still discloses issues to discuss. One of the issues is the problem of reimagination definition. Future research could identify and formulate the definition of reimagination with the point of departure on what is meant by core narratives. The research could define core narratives, formulate the typology of core narratives, and design a framework on how the definition and the typology is intertwined with the markers and functions of reimagination. The research results of this future research and our research could generate implications on the form of a guide in designing reimagination with markers and functions as the goggles to perceive.

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