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The Psychic Antagonist: Telepathic Violation and Shared Isolation as Mutant World-Building in *Spider-Man: Brand New Day*

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Abstract: The film *Spider-Man: Brand New Day* (2026), directed by Destin Daniel Cretton, introduces the X-Men character Jean Grey into the street level narrative of Peter Parker. Jean Grey appears as the antagonist who is portrayed as a psychologically vulnerable adolescent mutant with volatile psychic abilities such as telepathy, telekinesis, and body-hopping possession. Through the portrayal of Jean Grey, the film redefines the aspect of psychic intrusion as an embodied violation that destabilises bodily autonomy, subjective identity, and the sense of social belonging. The study is qualitative in nature. It employs detailed textual analysis and uses insights from Vivian Sobchack's phenomenology of embodied spectatorship (53–78), Laura U. Marks' concept of haptic visuality (162–94), Julia Kristeva's theory of abjection (3–4), and Henry Jenkins' theory of transmedia storytelling and additive comprehension (123–30) to examine how cinematic adaptations in transmedia storytelling transform an invisible mental phenomenon into an affective, bodily experience. The study focuses on the shared experience of Peter Parker's loss of identity after Doctor Strange's memory-erasure spell and Jean Grey's displacement as a persecuted mutant who desperately seeks to rescue her elder sister from the custody of the Department of Damage Control. The study also explores how Jean Grey's representation contributes to the gradual integration of mutant identity and world-building within the MCU. The study concludes that *Brand New Day* serves as a reconceptualisation of telepathy through sensory perception, shared isolation and as a strategic means of mutant world-building in the MCU.

Keywords: *Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU), Mutant World-Building, Spider-Man: Brand New Day, Superhero Studies, Telepathic Violation*

Introduction

While tracing the history of transmedia storytelling and cinematic adaptations of superhero narratives, not many superheroes have been reimagined on screen as frequently as Spider-Man. Created by Stan Lee and Steve Ditko in 1962, Spider-Man's narratives have over the years popularised the phrase that with great power comes great responsibility. Across three live-action series over the last two decades, the friendly neighbourhood superhero Peter Parker, known to the masses as Spider-Man, has evolved from a lone local teen hero to a tech-savvy Avenger with pop references, as portrayed in the MCU. In Sam Raimi's trilogy of *Spider-Man* (2002), *Spider-Man 2* (2004), and *Spider-Man 3* (2007), Tobey Maguire's portrayal of Peter Parker depicts heroism through sacrifice and moral duty. In Marc Webb's *Amazing Spider-Man* (2012) and *The Amazing Spider-Man 2* (2014), starring Andrew Garfield as Peter Parker, the focus shifts toward his loneliness and teenage identity. The MCU changed this course by placing Tom Holland's Peter Parker, powered by technology provided by Tony Stark, the Iron Man. Spider-Man was first introduced in the MCU through *Captain America: Civil War* (2016). Although MCU's association with Tom Holland continues through four individual films namely *Homecoming* (2017), *Far From Home* (2019), *No Way Home* (2021), and *Spider-Man: Brand New Day* (2026) the plot of *No Way Home* reverses this integration of technology as Peter's acceptance of Doctor Strange's spell erases him from collective memory, social ties, recognition as an Avenger and deprives him of Stark Industries assistance.

Spider-Man: Brand New Day (2026) is the thirty-eighth film of the MCU and is directed by Destin Daniel Cretton. Released on July 31, 2026, as part of Phase Six of the MCU, this superhero film is set four years after Doctor Strange's memory-erasure spell. As a result, it presents a more vulnerable Peter Parker, who lives alone and anonymously protects New York City. Without the integrated suit from Stark Industries, the Iron Spider armour, E.D.I.T.H glasses, and Tony Stark's financial backing and personal support, Tom Holland's Spider-Man is reimagined in this film as the friendly neighbourhood hero who swings into action to protect ordinary citizens and stop villains. His devotion to the superhero role often forces him to neglect his civilian responsibilities, which reveals the tension between Peter Parker's personal life and his heroic identity. The sense of loss and loneliness that affects him is because of the pain of losing Aunt May in *No Way Home* (2021). As he carries this grief while still serving his community, he personifies both vulnerability and resilience. Therefore, he opts for isolation to keep his girlfriend, Michelle Jones (MJ), his best friend Ned, and his other loved ones safe from the dangers of his double life as Peter Parker and Spider-Man. However, his plight puts

Peter into a psychological trauma which is intensified when he endures a frightening biological mutation. To his surprise and shock, Peter develops organic web-shooters, heightened senses, and blackened eyes, which makes him fear he is turning into a monster. This bodily breakdown is used as a physical metaphor for portraying psychological grief. Peter experiences an abnormal evolution of his spider powers triggered by intense stress and deep loneliness. Therefore, he goes without revealing his identity to seek guidance from his friend from the Avengers, Dr Bruce Banner, who has also forgotten Peter Parker's identity as an Avenger and as his friend Tony Stark's mentee. Peter adapts and uses Banner's siRNA inhibitor device to regulate his erratic arachnid DNA, connecting Peter's bodily crisis to biochemical control. As he operates without external assistance, Peter's bodily crisis sets the stage for introducing mutant identity into the MCU. In this film, Peter confronts powerful adversaries such as Punisher, the Hulk, and the vengeful Jean Grey.

Spider-Man: Brand New Day (2026) deviates from the quintessential stereotypes of the MCU by featuring Jean Grey from X-Men in a street-level Spider-Man narrative. Jean Grey, played by Sadie Sink of *Stranger Things*, is portrayed as an unstable adolescent whose emerging abilities include mind control, telekinesis, and body-hopping. She becomes the main antagonist who creates psychological and social turmoil in the film. Traditionally, Jean Grey appears in X-Men stories as an Omega-level mutant, a leader at Xavier's School, and host of the Phoenix Force. In this film, however, she is reimagined as a teenager driven by grief and trauma over her sister Sara's abduction and death in Department of Damage Control (DoDC) custody under Director Bill Metzger. In Spider-Man's urban world, Jean's unstable powers cause emotional pain and intrusive disturbances, and the narrative shifts it from spectacle to lived experiences of intrusion and vulnerability. Psychic power becomes a way of showing the violation of selfhood rather than a simple plot device. This reinterpretation also paves the way for the MCU's world-building. The film presents mutant identity through isolation, persecution, and surveillance and depicts mutanthood as tied to institutional control and personal separation.

Prior studies in superhero studies have explored adaptation, mutant identity, and franchise storytelling. However, telepathy has often been examined primarily as a narrative device, metaphor, or visual effect. Less attention has been given to how film techniques depict psychic intrusion as an embodied sensory experience and how this representation contributes to mutant world-building. This study addresses that gap by analysing telepathy as psychic violation and by connecting embodied spectatorship through the industrial development of the MCU's emerging mutant narrative. The specific research objectives of the study are the following:

1. To analyse how *Spider-Man: Brand New Day* represent telepathic power and mind possession as an embodied experience of psychic violation, bodily vulnerability, and loss of agency.
2. To examine how the shared experiences of Peter Parker's social erasure and Jean Grey's mutant displacement and trauma construct themes of identity, alienation, surveillance, and belonging.
3. To investigate how Jean Grey's representation contributes to the gradual integration of mutant identity and world-building within the MCU.

Based on the research objectives, the following research questions are formulated for detailed analysis

1. How does *Spider-Man: Brand New Day* transform telepathic power from a conventional superhero ability into an embodied experience of psychic violation?
2. In what ways do Peter Parker's social erasure and Jean Grey's mutant displacement function as shared narratives of identity, alienation, and belonging?
3. How does Jean Grey's introduction contribute to Marvel Studios' evolving strategy of mutant integration and franchise world-building?

This study is based on the hypothesis that *Spider-Man: Brand New Day* reconceptualises telepathic power not just as a spectacular supernatural ability but as an embodied form of psychic violation. Through its cinematic adaptation, the film constructs experiences of mental intrusion, bodily vulnerability, and loss of agency. At the same time, Jean Grey's portrayal as a persecuted adolescent mutant places her identity within Marvel Studios' visionary strategy of mutant integration and franchise world-building.

Research Methodology and Theoretical Framework

This study uses a qualitative research design. The film *Spider-Man: Brand New Day* (2026) is used as the primary source for textual analysis. As no research article has yet been published on the newly released film, selected promotional interviews and paratextual materials are consulted as secondary references. The analysis focuses on Jean Grey's telepathic abilities, psychic intrusion, her interactions with Peter Parker, experiences of exclusion, and scenes that contribute to the portrayal of mutant identity alongside institutional anti-mutant oppression. The theoretical frameworks of phenomenological spectatorship, haptic visuality, abjection, and franchise world-building are used to examine the film. This study is descriptive in nature and therefore does not aim to measure audience reactions or establish statistical correlations. Instead, it interprets how cinematic techniques construct psychic violation as an embodied experience and how this representation supports the gradual

integration of mutant identity into contemporary superhero cinema.

This study is based in the cultural and industrial context of Superhero studies. Richard Reynolds' *Super Heroes: A Modern Mythology* reads the superhero as a modern mythic figure whose stories negotiate responsibility, authority, and social order (7–28). Similarly, Liam Burke's *The Comic Book Film Adaptation* (2015) argues that contemporary superhero films function within franchise systems where character arcs and narrative continuity extend across interconnected texts (24–48). In *Carnal Thoughts: Embodiment and Moving Image Culture* (2004), Vivian Sobchack describes viewers as “cinesthetic subjects” who engage with cinema through sight, sound, touch, and bodily sensation (53–78). Laura U. Marks develops this perspective through her concept of “haptic visuality” in *The Skin of the Film* (2000), and shows how cinema can engage spectators through texture, proximity, and sensory suggestion rather than visual clarity alone (162–94). Julia Kristeva explores psychic violation in her 1982 work, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*. She describes the “abject” as anything that disturbs identity, system, order, and blurs the boundary between self and other. Kristeva's concept of abjection is useful in this context because psychic possession can be read as a disturbance of the boundary between self and other. Barbara Creed engages with Kristeva's ideas in *The Monstrous Feminine* (1993). She analyses horror through themes of bodily instability, transgression, and vulnerability. These ideas define telepathy as a breach of subjective and bodily autonomy. The study also uses the notion of “additive comprehension” by Henry Jenkins, as explained in his seminal work *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide* (2006), in which successive texts contribute new narrative information to an expanding fictional universe (95–133).

Telepathic Possession as Trauma and Loss of Agency

The portrayal of telepathy and mind control as a physical violation is an important feature of *Spider-Man: Brand New Day*. In this movie, telepathic possession through psychic intrusion is presented not just as a visual spectacle but as physical and emotional responses of those affected by the antagonist's powers. Computer-Generated Imagery (CGI) visual effects are effectively used with a focus on bodily reactions such as muscle tension, heavy breathing, facial distress, and loss of control. This visual technique makes psychic disturbance and telepathic possession perceptible through the body, as portrayed in numerous scenes that feature Jean Grey. One such instance is when Jean's powers are introduced in the film, as she body hops across random people to orchestrate Mac Gargan's prison breakout. Another important instance is when Jean uses her telepathic powers to possess MJ, where she stages a false romantic web-swinging moment and an emotional kiss that tricks Peter into believing MJ is finally recovering her memories. The emotional warmth of the scene suddenly vanishes when MJ's behaviour turns cold and flat as Jean speaks directly through MJ to mock Peter's desperation.

Sobchack's phenomenology of embodied spectatorship clarifies this approach as her notion of the "cinesthetic subject" focuses the spectator's bodily participation in the cinematic experience (53–78). Close-ups, reaction shots, camera movement, and restricted perspectives transform telepathy into felt affect, not just narrative understanding. Flashy CGI is avoided, and the camera is tightly focused on the victims when Jean body hops between people. The sequence shifts attention away from telepathy as a superhuman display and reveals the vulnerability it creates by focusing on the physical reactions of ordinary bodies. This presentation style turns mind-control into a bodily violation and shows the human cost of Jean's power. The sound design of the film intensifies this sense of psychic disturbance. The sense of horror is escalated by manipulating sound during both the subway panic and the Roosevelt Island outburst. The shift from familiar noise to unsettling resonance makes Jean's psychic intrusion palpable, and turns everyday environments into spaces of dread. Telepathic invasion is conveyed through an unstable sound-and-picture environment. It forces the audience to share the characters' panic, not just receive telepathy as information.

Kristeva argues that abjection "disturbs identity, system, order" and threatens the boundary between self and other (3–4). Telepathic coercion and psychic possession embody this collapse, as the line between one's own thoughts and an external psychic presence dissolves. When Jean takes control of MJ in Peter's apartment, MJ's body continues to move as if she were herself, but her voice turns cold, flat, and stripped of emotion as Jean speaks through her. This possession robs MJ of her agency and forces Peter into a terrifying encounter with a loved one whose body is present but whose identity has been hijacked. The scene makes psychic violation feel immediate and personal because Jean not only controls MJ's actions but also takes over an intimate moment. She transforms an intimate romantic experience into a psychological violation. As a result, the kiss embodies the film's broader theme of losing bodily and emotional agency.

Laura U. Marks' "haptic viscosity" explains how the film treats mental experiences as physical feelings (162–94), as she explains how close-ups, clear textures, and limited view angles invite the audience to imagine how a scene physically feels. The film makes the experience of telepathy feel physically real by showing how it affects bodies in distress. Details such as glistening sweat, trembling fingers, and the sudden stillness of people frozen in Jean's psychic field all project visible signs of fear that turn telepathy from an abstract power into a tangible experience of dread, and they also make the audience sense its impact through the body rather than just through spectacle. A quintessential example of his breakdown of personal space is the DoDC facility, where an enraged Jean discovers that the final mental vision her sister Sara communicated before dying, 'V-Max', for which she had been constantly searching, was simply the weathered label on an air vent. This realisation instils in Jean the urge to unleash a massive psionic field that freezes everyone within it, except Peter, and this turns nearby

bodies into helpless statues and traps them in a collective psychic link.

Sadie Sink's performance as the red-haired Jean Grey shows exhaustion, distress, hesitant movement, and strained expression. Her powers are shown as a burden and a weapon born of desperation to save Sara, and that destabilises her own body. Jean becomes more than a conventional antagonist: she is both a source of psychic threat and a figure suffering from her unstable abilities. Barbara Creed's analysis of abjection also offers insight (8–27) as Jean's potential for threat arises from her vulnerability, exclusion, and psychological stress. The sense of difference becomes unsettling because it distances her from stable social structures. As a result, Jean's portrayal challenges the simple binary of innocent victim versus threatening antagonist. Telepathy is depicted using cinematic techniques such as cinematography, sound, editing, and performance, as a bodily and emotional disruption. The movie shifts focus from the spectacle of psychic power to its consequences for agency, identity, and vulnerability. In the film, telepathy becomes a somatic horror not because it destroys the body, but because it penetrates the boundaries of the self.

Peter Parker, Jean Grey, and Shared Isolation

The protagonist Peter Parker and the antagonist Jean Grey share a bond that goes beyond the conventional hero-versus-villain archetype. Although they are on opposite sides of the narrative, both characters are young and affected by isolation, displacement, and difficulty in belonging to the social world around them. Marvel shows the devastating impact of Doctor Strange's spell on Peter right from the beginning of the film. The opening montage reveals how Peter's life has changed as he is shown a street-level Spider-Man without Aunt May, Tony Stark, E.D.I.T.H, or Karen to support him. Scenes of Peter walking alone through bustling streets, deserted subway stations, and impersonal city squares represent Marc Auge's concept of "non-places", the spaces designed for brief transit where individuals remain anonymous and disconnected (78–82). The crowded city acts as a reflection of Peter's complete social isolation. Peter's situation after *Spider-Man: No Way Home* is pathetic, as he has been erased from memory, leaving him cut off from friends, family, and his past, though physically alive. As he opts for isolation to protect MJ and Ned, Peter lives alone, defined by loss and the absence of social recognition. Nevertheless, Peter cannot restore MJ's memory when they meet, and it forces him to keep his distance. His isolation escalates as he endures painful biological mutation and sharp aggression that is similar to Jean's involuntary transformation. Peter's sight of MJ kissing her new boyfriend at her MIT graduation deepens his withdrawal and leaves his reintroduction letter unread, a letter Jean later exploits to reach MJ. In this sequence, Peter takes off his mask as demanded by MJ to reveal his hidden identity directly to her, tells her that she means everything to him and that he loves her, only for a cold MJ to respond that she does not love him.

Jean Grey's experiences of isolation and loneliness rise from her identity as a mutant and from the public fear her wild telepathic powers provoke. In her painful memory sequence, the film reveals that Jean's mother rejected both sisters after Jean's mutant abilities first manifested. Abandoned by her family out of fear and prejudice, Jean and her elder sister Sara were left with no one in the world except each other, so the abduction of Sara, followed by DODC, triggers Jean to use her powers to search for Sara desperately. Her movements through back alleys, hidden doorways, and temporary shelters reveal a constant need to hide. Whether taking refuge in abandoned subway tunnels or hiding out in makeshift rooftop encampments, Jean's physical displacement mirrors her mental volatility. Auge's ideas about anonymous spaces apply here too, showing how moving through temporary spaces is directly connected to feeling unsafe in society (85–90). For Jean, these transient city spaces are not merely places of transit, but survival zones where an outcast adolescent attempts to evade state surveillance and public hostility. Though their reasons differ, Peter and Jean share the same deep disconnection from the world and a profound grief over lost loved ones. Their shared experiences transform the conflict into something deeper than a simple clash between heroism and villainy. In the course of time, Peter recognises his own trauma reflected in Jean, encountering a young girl who is desperate rather than inherently evil. In Peter's small apartment, their quiet interaction reveals Peter's loneliness reflected in Jean. At the same time, Jean encounters someone who treats her as a person, not a dangerous monster. His shared grief culminates in a touching conversation where Peter offers his condolences for her sister, and Jean responds with sympathy for Aunt May. This incident enhances their connection in shared loss. Their bond blurs the line between the protagonist and the antagonist, and transforms their conflict into a meeting between two young people shaped by loss. Their emotional connection enhances when Peter willingly allows Jean to read his mind and lets her experience his memory of Aunt May's unconditional love. Peter rejects violence and lowers his defences to let Jean see Aunt May comforting him after discovering his secret identity, reminding him that having powers does not alter his core self. May's wisdom bridges their divide and allows Jean to experience genuine empathy rather than cold thought-scanning. This shared psychic vulnerability leads to their mutual reconciliation over loss.

Tom Holland's restrained performance as Peter Parker strengthens this bond. His small movements, quiet speech, and tired body language show the heavy weight of Peter's loneliness. Sadie Sink's tense posture and clear distress show Jean's constant battle to control her mind and life. Their performances create a shared feeling where human vulnerability matters more than hero poses or villain threats. The film projects the shift from confrontation to acknowledgement in addressing psychic violence. Peter's engagement with Jean fosters understanding and empathy. This mutual support is explicitly portrayed on screen when Frank Castle fires a lethal shot at Jean. Peter senses the sniper threat through his

spider-sense while deep within the psychic connection, and leaps in to take the bullet meant for Jean. Peter shields Jean from the sniper fire and gets a grave injury to protect her. Jean sobs while holding his bleeding wound and uses her powers to save him. As Peter lies in the hospital, near death, in the climax scene, Jean uses her telepathy to help him breathe and keep him alive through their psychic connection. In this way, Jean reciprocates by using her powers to stabilise the wounded Peter, and forges a permanent bond between them. After calming down and ensuring help arrives, Jean leaves New York, creating a possible narrative pathway for further mutant integration within the wider MCU. The narrative also suggests that recognising someone's vulnerability can disrupt cycles of fear and coercion. Jean is portrayed not as an enemy to defeat, but as a young person caught in circumstances that put her at odds with others.

This character-focused approach also shapes the future of mutants in the MCU. Henry Jenkins' idea of "additive comprehension" describes how each instalment adds new narrative details to a growing fictional universe (123–30). Jean's introduction via personal conflict allows mutant identity to be integrated into the MCU through emotion and character. Her story provides audiences with a simple, relatable entry into the mutant world while creating a narrative pathway toward the broader development of X-Men stories within the MCU. The connection between Peter Parker and Jean Grey works on dual levels. Narratively, it turns the protagonist versus antagonist dynamic into an emotionally charged meeting defined by mutual loneliness and vulnerability. On a broader franchise scale, Jean's internal conflict serves as a gradual pathway for integrating mutants into the MCU. The film connects psychic violation to human empathy and employs intimate character struggles to strengthen the development of the mutant universe.

Telepathy and Mutant Integration in the MCU

Beyond its narrative and style, *Spider-Man: Brand New Day* holds an important place in the industrial evolution of the MCU. It works not just as another Spider-Man story but as a bridge film that prepares audiences for the incorporation of mutants into an already expansive franchise. By selecting a psychologically vulnerable adolescent mutant as the main antagonist in a realistic, street-level setting, Marvel Studios shifts away from their traditional method of introducing new superhero teams via dramatic origin stories or large crossover events. The filmmakers choose character-centred world-building and establish emotional bonds before enlarging the focus to include major superhero groups. Henry Jenkins's concept of "additive comprehension" provides a useful lens for this strategy (123–30). Jenkins argues that transmedia storytelling succeeds because fictional worlds grow slowly, letting each film add new facts without confusing viewers. The film can be read as following this pattern by bringing mutants into the MCU through a single, personal story rather than through an extended exposition of

X-Men history.

Jean Grey is shown not as a famous superhero, but as an isolated teenager struggling with powers that neither she nor society can handle. As a result, viewers experience mutant life as a real social struggle before seeing mutant schools, political fights, or team-up movies. This restrained approach also addresses a real problem in the industrial challenges facing big movie franchises. After their multiverse storylines, Marvel Studios faced criticism that its movies were becoming too crowded with special effects and complex plots. Film scholar David Bordwell notes that modern blockbusters often allow technological spectacle to overshadow emotional engagement (82–105). *Spider-Man: Brand New Day* addresses this by shrinking its scale. Its story is set in neighbourhood streets, subways, and small apartments, where mental disruption feels personal and urgent. This shift away from giant explosions directs viewer attention back to human fear, vulnerability, and personal responsibility.

Marvel assimilates Peter with other street-level characters who endure physical and psychological trauma, such as Frank Castle, the Punisher, Bruce Banner, the Hulk, Detective Jean DeWolff, and Hand ninjas employed by DoDC Director Bill Metzger, and this strategy foreshadows urban crime as the means of its world-building. The social factors that will drive the need for mutant institutions are also examined in the film. The DODC uses its power, weapons, and prisons to hunt down and detain mutants like Jean Grey and Sara Grey. This shows that the government's current laws and technology cannot handle people with special powers, as they only know how to treat them like dangerous criminals. As the government is hostile and unsafe, the film suggests the potential need for safe spaces where young mutants can develop and control their abilities. This can be read as creating a narrative rationale for institutions such as Professor Xavier's School for Gifted Youngsters. Earlier superhero films depicted Professor Xavier's school as an established, fully operational institution. However, this film reveals the social necessity of such a school, where public fear is triggered by prejudice and by real-life encounters with unpredictable psychic abilities. In this setting, Xavier's School could be subtly portrayed as a secure refuge for young individuals whose dangerous powers leave them feeling isolated from society. The movie avoids the good-versus-evil tropes and traditional superhero binaries.

In *Spider-Man: Brand New Day*, Jean Grey is portrayed as someone who needs help but must also be stopped from harming others. Such a portrayal makes Jean both a victim and a threat. This moral grey area enables Marvel to introduce mutants with emotional complexity, moving beyond simple rules and offering richer character choices for future films. Peter uses Bruce Banner's siRNA technology to develop a universal inhibitor that temporarily blocks Jean's psychic powers. This introduces power-dampening technology into the MCU and can be read as anticipating the broader use of technological restraints in future mutant narratives. The homemade inhibitor chip, which Jean destroys during their

fight, can therefore be interpreted as a symbolic precursor to technological forms of mutant restraint and to the anti-mutant imagery that may become significant in subsequent narratives. From an industrial perspective, this strategy strengthens long-term sustainability. As Marvel builds steady audience comfort with mutants through self-contained, personal stories, the characters get clear psychological depth before team identities are formed. This step-by-step growth matches Jenkins's model of building story worlds where every film adds meaningful personal knowledge.

The film also shows a shift in Marvel's traditional storytelling approach, where creating a universe is not just about introducing more powerful heroes and larger villains. *Spider-Man: Brand New Day* proves that a movie world can grow through quiet spaces, close feelings, and human experiences. Telepathic power matters not for its visual effects, but because it exposes weak connections among personal identity, safety, government authority, and belonging. Mutant introduction becomes a human and emotional milestone before turning into an industrial spectacle. The film can therefore be read as an indicative model for a possible direction in future MCU storytelling. By integrating traditional film techniques with strategic franchise development, the film reveals that expanding a universe doesn't necessitate larger special effects. It shows that focused character development can enhance viewer engagement, add depth to the fictional worlds, and establish a solid base for upcoming Marvel phases. Thus, the film signifies the introduction of mutants and an intelligent evolution in how the MCU advances.

Scope of the Study

This study analyses the on-screen depiction of telepathic abilities in *Spider-Man: Brand New Day* (2026). The study does not attempt to review every past MCU film or trace the full history of mutants in comics. It focuses on how the film turns telepathy into an embodied experience of psychic violation and sets up a narrative path for future mutant integration. The scope therefore includes three main areas: firstly, it examines formal aesthetics such as cinematography, editing, sound design, and acting, and analyses how mental intrusion translates into a tangible physical sensation for viewers. Secondly, it explores the character narratives, focusing on how Peter Parker and Jean Grey's shared experiences of isolation and displacement alter the classic hero-villain dynamic. Thirdly, it places these creative decisions within a franchise analysis and shows how Marvel uses emotionally constructed storytelling to support long-term world-building. This approach *presents Spider-Man: Brand New Day* (2026) as a transitional film in the MCU's franchise-building.

Significance of the Study

This study contributes to advances in Superhero Studies as it introduces an interdisciplinary approach that combines phenomenological film theory, horror studies, spatial anthropology, and franchise studies. Prior studies quintessentially looked at telepathy as a narrative device, surveillance metaphor, or visual effect. This study reveals that psychic ability can be understood as an embodied experience that shows vulnerability, emotional spectatorship, and fluctuating personal autonomy. As a result, it facilitates discussions of superhero aesthetics from mere special effects to focus on physical sensations and sensory involvement. This study also contributes to Film and Media Studies by connecting close film analysis directly with industrial media analysis. It separates film style from studio business strategy and shows how camera and sound choices actively support long-term world-building. By connecting telepathy to Marvel's expansion of mutants in its storytelling, the study reveals an undeniable connection between film style and transmedia storytelling. This is indeed an area that has been largely overlooked academically.

Limitations of the Study

The study is qualitative in nature and employs textual analysis. Therefore, it has a few limitations that need to be addressed. The study focuses on a single film and therefore does not claim to predict the future development of mutants in the MCU. References to future mutant integration are interpretive readings of the narrative possibilities suggested by the film. Mentions of earlier Spider-Man or X-Men films are limited to brief background information and do not involve in-depth comparisons. The approach is interpretive, with conclusions based on critical theory and does not involve empirical data or physical measurements. The paper lacks empirical research such as audience surveys, cognitive tests, or viewer statistics. Statements about audience emotions are rooted in phenomenological film theory and are not based on direct empirical evidence. Most importantly, since *Spider-Man: Brand New Day* (2026) is a recent release, Marvel's long-term mutant storyline remains in progress. The insights shared here reflect Marvel's current approach, which might evolve or shift in future MCU projects.

Directions for Future Research

This study facilitates opportunities for future scholars to track how telepathy is portrayed in upcoming MCU mutant films and to determine whether this film portrays a lasting visual aesthetic for mutants or remains a one-off experiment. Moreover, this study enables researchers to explore other mind-related abilities, such as memory modification, illusions, precognition, or reality warping. Film analysis could also be used with empirical research by scholars. Focus groups, surveys, and digital ethnography can

test whether real viewers experience tactile telepathy differently from standard visual effects. Future research could also compare the current mutant strategy adopted by Marvel Studios with previous models from 20th Century Fox or other cinematic universes. This could also enrich discussions on transmedia storytelling and the construction of superhero world-building.

Conclusion

This study examines how *Spider-Man: Brand New Day* (2026) portrays psychic intrusion as a source of agency loss, emotional distress, and bodily vulnerability. Viewers physically experience Jean Grey's powers through cinematography, editing, sound design, and acting, which makes her abilities more visceral rather than just visual effects. This study analyses the shared experiences of the protagonist, Peter Parker, and the antagonist, Jean Grey, as both are caught in isolation and social instability. After learning of their shared sense of loss and trauma, Peter helps Jean, refuses to see her as a monster, and responds with empathy. Her grief instigates Peter to let her enter his mind and share Aunt May's memory, which restores her humanity. Later, his leap to intercept a sniper's bullet leads Jean to stabilise him before leaving. The study reveals that Jean's introduction is character-driven, foregrounds trauma, and serves as a strategy to let mutant identity emerge through emotional resonance. The film establishes narrative possibilities for future Phase Six developments through elements such as Bruce Banner's siRNA inhibitors and its suggestion of the social need for institutions capable of protecting young mutants. The findings of the study validate the hypothesis that *Spider-Man: Brand New Day* presents telepathy as an embodied breach, using Jean Grey's story to set the stage for mutant integration. It shows that mind-based powers don't have to remain intangible, as skilled filmmaking can make them tangible and emotionally convincing for viewers. In this film, telepathy becomes a compelling tool to explore experiences of losing control, living in the shadows, and seeking understanding. By projecting human vulnerability and shared experiences, the film offers a relatable, accessible entry point into the MCU's expanding mutant storyline.

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