



Exploring the Impact of Heroic Images in Internet Literature IP-Adapted Animation on Adolescents' Moral Values: A Social Cognitive Theory Approach

Yuhan Wang

Convergence Media Center, Guangdong University of Technology, Guangzhou, China

yh_wang09@126.com

Abstract. In recent years, internet literature IP-adapted animations have become a significant market phenomenon, with adolescents forming the core audience for these adaptations. Consequently, this group is inevitably shaped by the characters and narratives these animations present. Drawing on social cognitive theory, this study examines how the heroic images depicted in IP-adapted animations influence adolescents' moral values. It focuses on three main dimensions: character design, cognitive and imitative processes, and the resulting value formation. The findings reveal that the animated hero serves as a behavioral model, providing guidance on moral decision-making and action styles through the storyline, multidimensional character portrayal, emotional engagement, and audience identification. Adolescents develop their attitudes and values by observing, imitating, and internalizing the behaviors and traits of these heroic figures. Based on these results, the study suggests that creators emphasize morally rich and diverse characterizations, while educators should prioritize media literacy education to help adolescents critically evaluate and interpret the media content they consume.

Keywords: Internet Literature, IP-adapted Animation, Social Cognitive Theory, Heroic Images, Adolescents, Moral Values

1 Introduction

In recent years, the development of Chinese Internet Literature has advanced rapidly, leading to profound transformations in literary creation and consumption patterns. The readership of Chinese Internet Literature is broad and diverse, with Generation Z (born after 1995) accounting for 60% of the audience [1]. This demographic has been exposed to various online literary works across genres, from fantasy and adventure to realism. With the ongoing growth of Internet Literature, an increasing number of online novels are being adapted into film and television works, particularly animations. Animation breathes new life into the original works by providing visual and auditory sensory stimulation. At the same time, intellectual property (IP) adaptations offer these works stronger market appeal and broader dissemination power [2]. Among these adaptations,

the heroic figures—often portrayed with extraordinary abilities and distinctive personalities—have rapidly become role models and sources of spiritual sustenance for young people.

Heroic figures are central characters in the narrative and convey social norms through their morally exemplary behaviors and values to young audiences. For example, in plotlines that depict the heroes facing challenges head-on, fighting adversity, and ultimately triumphing, the heroic figure represents the justice and strength that young people strive for during their growth process, thus influencing their cognitive and emotional development. These heroes' moral behaviors and belief systems and their confrontations with villains create the fundamental cognitive framework of right versus wrong and justice versus evil, which adolescents apply when watching these stories. Adolescents at a critical stage of cognitive and moral development may identify with and imitate these heroic figures, potentially influencing their moral judgments and behavioral choices. Therefore, it is necessary to understand the impact of the heroic figures in IP-adapted anime on adolescents' moral cognition and how this impact occurs.

While adolescents exhibit a strong enthusiasm for animations adapted from Internet Literature, existing research primarily focuses on their entertainment, cultural, and industrial aspects [3-5]. However, there remains insufficient research on the specific impact mechanisms of these animations on adolescents' moral values. Research suggests that when adolescents engage with these animations, they are not merely entertained; their values, attitudes, and behavior patterns are subtly influenced [6-7]. In traditional cultures, heroic figures are often depicted as paragons of selfless dedication and social responsibility, upholding collectivism and civic duty. However, in modern animations adapted from Internet Literature IPs, particularly those featuring popular protagonists, heroes frequently embody more individualistic and self-centered traits. For example, many animated heroes focus on grand narratives such as "saving the world", prioritizing personal fulfillment, and showcasing their abilities. While this shift reflects the increasing emphasis on self-identification and personal growth in contemporary youth culture, it may inadvertently diminish the importance of values such as cooperation and social responsibility. This could influence adolescents' understanding and internalization of moral and societal norms.

Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) provides a valuable theoretical framework for analyzing this phenomenon. According to SCT, individuals form perceptions and evaluations of social behavior by observing the actions of others and their consequences, using these observations to guide their behavior and develop self-efficacy [8]. As a highly imitable symbolic system with a significant role-modeling effect, heroic figures can directly or indirectly impact adolescents' moral cognition through their actions and ethical decisions.

Animated adaptations of Internet Literature IPs, with their complex and multifaceted depictions of heroism, offer a fertile environment for adolescents to engage in observational learning. By observing and imitating these characters, adolescents may unconsciously adopt value systems that align with or challenge traditional moral ideals, shaping their moral judgments and behavioral tendencies. Guided by SCT, this study explores how heroic portrayals in animations adapted from Internet Literature IPs influence the moral values of adolescents.

2 Animated Heroes in the Framework of SCT

SCT, proposed by Albert Bandura in the 1960s, posits that human learning and behavior are shaped through direct experience and knowledge acquisition by observing others and the consequences of their actions. This theory emphasizes the pivotal roles of observational learning, imitation, and an individual's perception of behavior outcomes in shaping actions [9]. Observational learning refers to an individual's ability to learn new behavioral patterns and internalize them through observing others' behavior and its consequences. Imitation involves the act of copying or mimicking the behavior of others after observing it, particularly in similar situations. Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in completing a task or coping with challenges. Bandura emphasized that an individual's behavior is influenced not only by environmental factors but also by self-efficacy, which is continually reinforced through observational learning.

SCT provides a suitable analytical framework for examining the influence of media on an individual's thoughts, emotions, and actions [10]. Adolescents' social cognitive abilities are still developing and undergoing refinement. As a result, media portrayals, such as heroic figures in animation, can have a powerful impact on their values and behaviors. These figures act as role models for adolescents, who often emulate their moral conduct, values, and the consequences of their actions. In animation, heroic characters are imbued with distinctive moral traits and compelling personalities and often undergo transformative and challenging growth journeys. This combination of characteristics resonates deeply with adolescents' innate curiosity and desire to explore the unknown. Adolescents gain insights into diverse social contexts by engaging with these characters and may adopt these heroic figures' moral judgments and behaviors.

The rise of Internet Literature in China has spurred a surge in IP adaptations, particularly in animation, which has gained significant popularity among young audiences [11]. This trend is driven by factors such as cultural identity, character design, and educational value [12]. China's animation industry has grown substantially, with successful IP adaptations such as *NeZha Conquers the Dragon King* achieving remarkable commercial success. These animations go beyond visual representations of literary works; they integrate rich cultural symbols, moral narratives, and value-oriented communication. For example, *The King's Avatar* and *Battle Through the Heavens*, as classic Internet Literature IP-adapted animations, feature heroic figures that go beyond simple plot devices. They also serve as vehicles for moral education and value guidance.

For young audiences, the heroic figures in animation typically exhibit the following characteristics: First, the values of these figures are often unambiguous, with a strong sense of justice and a clear moral stance. Second, these figures frequently face numerous challenges, and through hard work, wisdom, and courage, they overcome evil forces and ultimately prevail [13]. Such heroic figures are often seen as exemplars. By crafting these figures, animation producers can subtly influence young people's moral cognition and behavioral choices.

As Bandura suggests, individual behavior and cognition do not occur in isolation; they are intertwined within a social context. In this context, adolescents learn by "observing and imitating" heroic characters, internalizing these figures' moral values, thereby influencing their behavior patterns. Research shows that children and

adolescents learn moral values, gender roles, and moral decision-making by observing heroic characters in animated cartoons and films [14-15]. Character schemas, such as hero and villain archetypes, play a crucial role in shaping viewers' moral judgments and character development [16]. Moreover, animated content effectively teaches emotional literacy and diverse communication skills [17-18]. While some cartoons may blur the line between good and evil, many promote positive values and serve as vital tools for education and moral development.

This study explores how the hero image in the animation adaptation of Internet Literature IPs influences adolescents' moral values through social cognitive mechanisms. SCT provides a critical framework for analyzing this process, particularly in explaining how individuals learn and imitate by observing the behavior of others and its consequences. From the perspective of SCT, this study proposes the following influencing mechanism: character design → perception, and imitation → transformation of moral values.

3 Analysis of the Heroic Figures in Animated Adaptations of Internet Literature IP

Heroic figures in animated adaptations of Internet Literature IPs often embody complex moral and emotional dimensions. These characters typically possess idealized qualities—such as bravery, justice, and fearlessness—and relatable “realistic” weaknesses or human traits, including confusion, internal struggles, and emotional complexity. This dual nature fosters emotional resonance with young audiences, providing rich textual connotations for their developmental journeys and moral decision-making.

3.1 Justice and Responsibility of Traditional Heroes

In many of these animations, heroic figures are often positioned as symbols of justice and morality, demonstrating a strong sense of social responsibility and a commitment to resolving complex social conflicts or aiding those in distress. For example, Ye Xiu in *The King's Avatar* is legendary in the e-sports world and embodies team spirit and exceptional strategic thinking. His success is not attributed solely to individual heroism but to mutual support and cooperation with his teammates, who face challenges together. This portrayal reinforces collectivist values central to moral education, emphasizing that collective goals can be achieved through unity, collaboration, and persistent effort.

Similarly, Xiao Yan in *Battle Through the Heavens* exemplifies a traditional heroic figure. His journey is filled with challenges and hardships, strengthening his determination and fighting spirit. The animation portrays more than just his physical prowess, highlighting his deep sense of responsibility toward family and friends. These qualities enable him to maintain a steadfast moral compass when facing complex ethical dilemmas.

The design of these heroic figures reflects a strong moral orientation. By witnessing their growth, young viewers can easily identify with these characters and develop an

affinity for “right actions” and “moral judgment.” In this way, the moral choices of these figures not only propel the narrative but also serve as critical reference points for adolescents in shaping their moral frameworks.

3.2 The Growth Process and Moral Conflicts of Heroic Figures

Recent adaptations have introduced more nuanced and complex heroic portrayals. Moral conflicts serve as key catalysts for character development, requiring heroes to make difficult choices in the face of ethical dilemmas. These decisions directly influence their growth trajectory and ultimately shape their heroism. As these characters navigate personal challenges and emotional turmoil, they often show vulnerability and internal struggles, which resonate emotionally with young audiences.

In *Fighter of the Destiny*, Chen Changsheng, despite being burdened by a debilitating illness and a predetermined fate, remains resolute in his pursuit of saving others and realizing his self-worth. His determination to alter his destiny is central to his heroic journey. Chen Changsheng’s image deeply reflects the intersection of morality and responsibility. Confronted with an immutable fate, he demonstrates a profound concern for others’ well-being by choosing self-sacrifice. This spirit of selflessness leads to realizing his value and embodies the moral concept of “living for others.” This message of sacrifice and responsibility serves as a key moral guide for young people, urging them to consider what makes a “true hero” and to understand how to protect the interests of others in complex social environments.

By analyzing these characters’ developmental journeys, we observe that their moral conflicts provide valuable content for moral education. In confronting challenges and resolving conflicts, these figures strengthen their character and form moral relationships with others, society, and themselves. These complex characterizations help adolescents understand how to maintain a moral stance when facing injustices and challenges in their own lives, encouraging them to seek internal solutions. This reflects the integration of psychological cognition and moral judgment. Therefore, the psychological complexity of these heroic figures offers a more three-dimensional and realistic approach to moral education, positioning them as symbols of both “external behavior” and the “inner world.”

3.3 Cultural Symbols and Social Identity of Heroic Figures

Heroic figures in IP-adapted animations are often imbued with specific cultural symbols that convey individual heroism, broader social identities, and cultural values. For instance, Ye Xiu’s “invincible combat prowess” in *The King’s Avatar* represents personal strength and symbolizes cultural values such as resilience and fighting spirit. His journey from an unknown professional gamer to a world champion embodies values of hard work, personal growth, and teamwork, resonating with contemporary youth’s aspirations for success.

Furthermore, the moral conduct exhibited by these heroes aligns with contemporary social values. Xiao Yan’s growth in *Battle Through the Heavens* exemplifies themes of family responsibility, friendship, and loyalty, which carry strong cultural resonance and

universality. Young viewers identify with the characters' moral actions through these symbols and gain a deeper understanding and acceptance of social values.

The cultural symbols attached to these heroic figures serve as markers of social identity for young audiences. Guided by these symbols, they can better understand and internalize mainstream societal moral norms. By identifying with and emulating these heroic figures, adolescents shape their moral beliefs and strengthen their sense of connection to social and cultural identities.

4 The Social-Cognitive Effect of Heroic Figures

4.1 Observational Learning and Imitation Mechanisms

The portrayal of heroic figures extends beyond mere characterization, significantly impacting social cognitive processes. During the viewing experience, adolescents focus on the characters' behaviors and link these behaviors to their underlying motivations, values, and the resulting consequences [19-20]. Adolescents may be motivated by the behavioral choices of heroic characters within the narrative, emulating how these figures navigate moral dilemmas in challenging situations. For example, the protagonist Xiao Yan in *Battle Through the Heavens* faces significant difficulties and setbacks throughout his development. Despite these obstacles, he remains steadfast in pursuing his ideals and continually strives for a better future for himself and his family. This pattern of persistence and courage can have a profound impact on adolescents. By observing Xiao Yan's transformation from weakness to strength, young viewers may learn to persevere when facing challenges, confront adversity head-on, and continually enhance their self-awareness.

The imitation effect, rooted in observational learning, is not only reflected in the direct mimicry of characters' actions but also in the influence on young people's emotional cognition and behavior patterns, shaped by the details of the characters' emotional responses and psychological changes [21]. For example, Ye Xiu does not adopt an isolated or indifferent attitude when faced with workplace competition. Instead, he supports others, cares for his team, and ultimately leads his teammates to success. Adolescents are more likely to subconsciously internalize these behavior patterns as their habits, gradually developing a sense of responsibility towards others and the collective.

4.2 Characterization and Transmission of Moral Values

The complexity and multidimensional nature of the moral choices made by heroic figures prompt adolescents to engage in moral judgments and reflections during the viewing process. Particularly when heroes face moral dilemmas, their decisions guide the audience to consider what the "right choice" is and, in doing so, help form their perceptions of good and evil, justice and injustice.

In *The Fighter of Destiny*, Chen Changsheng is confronted with a world full of moral dilemmas as he continues his cultivation. Not only must he fight for his destiny, but he is also constantly battling against external enemies and malicious plots. In certain instances, Chen Changsheng's choices diverge from conventional notions of "justice."

For example, he shows a willingness to employ extreme, and at times ethically ambiguous, measures to protect those he cares about. These unconventional scenarios will likely provoke audience reflection on moral boundaries and encourage young viewers to think critically about navigating moral judgments in complex social situations.

By observing Chen Changsheng, adolescents can learn how to confront external pressures and challenges and evaluate the “righteousness” of actions within intricate contexts. This transmission of moral values goes beyond simplistic binary judgments, focusing instead on a nuanced analysis of actions and their consequences. This approach nurtures critical thinking and fosters a deeper understanding of the multifaceted nature of moral decision-making.

4.3 Emotional Resonance and Role Identification

Intense emotional experiences can stimulate an individual’s intrinsic motivation to take specific actions to mitigate or respond to emotional fluctuations. Adolescence is a critical period of emotional and psychological development. During animation viewing, adolescents are prone to forming strong empathetic connections with heroic figures, deepening their understanding of and identification with the character’s actions. Through emotional empathy, adolescents gain insight into the dilemmas and challenges the characters face and derive moral and emotional guidance from the characters’ inner worlds.

Research suggests positive emotions enhance an individual’s motivation to act, increasing proactive behaviors [22]. For example, Ye Xiu in *The King’s Avatar* exhibits considerable charisma and team spirit, fostering strong emotional identification among adolescent viewers. His affable humor and wisdom have solidified his role as a role model for young people. This emotional connection facilitates the internalization of his behavioral patterns and values. By resonating emotionally with Ye Xiu, adolescents experience the moral emotions embodied by the heroic figure and learn to demonstrate greater compassion, care, and responsibility in their daily lives.

4.4 Transformation of Social Cognition and Self-Efficacy

By observing how heroic characters overcome obstacles and achieve their goals, adolescents can strengthen their confidence and determination when faced with challenges. Particularly when these heroes succeed through unconventional means, adolescents may reevaluate their capabilities and potential, fostering a positive sense of self-efficacy.

For example, in *Battle Through the Heavens*, Xiao Yan’s transformation from an initially talentless individual to a powerful warrior is realized through dedicated effort and unwavering perseverance. His journey is marked by challenges and self-doubt; however, he ultimately triumphs over all obstacles through persistence and steadfast faith. This portrayal conveys a powerful message to young people: no matter the difficulties they face, perseverance will enable them to overcome adversity. Xiao Yan’s success not only represents strength but also exemplifies self-efficacy. He shows young people how to draw strength from setbacks and strive for self-transcendence.

5 The Moral Influence of Heroic Figures and the Shaping of Adolescents' Values

5.1 The Influence of Heroic Figures on Adolescents' Moral Decision-Making

Heroic characters in animation typically possess distinctive personalities and moral orientations, clearly reflected in their behaviors, values, and decision-making processes. For instance, some heroic figures adhere to traditional moral standards, prioritizing virtues such as justice, bravery, selflessness, and loyalty. On the other hand, some characters present more nuanced moral frameworks. Their decisions may not always align with conventional notions of “good” and may involve self-sacrifice, compromise, or unconventional approaches to achieving particular goals.

These heroes transcend their roles as mere fictional characters; they guide adolescents' moral cognition and behavioral choices, helping them make more thoughtful and equitable decisions in their own lives. This influence goes beyond simply imitating emotions and actions, extending to how adolescents use these experiences to shape their moral judgments.

For adolescents undergoing significant developmental transitions, each heroic figure they encounter has the potential to influence their moral decision-making. For example, Ye Xiu's wisdom and patience may encourage adolescents to approach complex social issues with more excellent composure and rationality. In contrast, Chen Changsheng's courage and self-sacrificing spirit may foster a more profound sense of social responsibility and collectivism, motivating them to stand up for justice when confronted with injustice.

5.2 Transformation of Moral Values and Improvement of Self-Awareness

Heroic figures also play a crucial role in transforming young people's moral values through psychological mechanisms and promoting self-awareness. Particularly when confronted with critical moral choices, these characters can inspire self-reflection in young viewers through their actions and decisions, broadening and deepening their moral understanding.

For example, Chen Changsheng in *The Fighter of the Destiny* functions as a challenger of fate and a bearer of moral values. When confronting “evil forces,” Chen Changsheng demonstrates unwavering resolve in upholding justice. In contrast, when navigating the “gray areas of justice,” he displays a profound understanding and practice of self-sacrifice. This multidimensional approach to decision-making in the face of complex ethical dilemmas enables young viewers to learn about responsibility, sacrifice, and loyalty. It encourages them to reflect on their roles and responsibilities within society.

Heroic figures are imitated in young people's external behaviors and are significant catalysts for enhancing internal moral awareness and self-awareness [12]. The moral influence of these characters is a multi-layered, multidimensional process. From the development of behavioral patterns and emotional identification to social cognition, these figures shape and influence adolescents' moral values in diverse ways [11]. These

influences go beyond shaping young people's perceptions of moral norms, profoundly affecting how they confront challenges, make moral judgments, and navigate behavioral choices in complex social contexts.

The portrayal of heroic figures in animation provides adolescents with role models for their emotions and behaviors. It creates a space for moral growth, helping them develop a more comprehensive social awareness and self-awareness during their formative years. A deeper understanding and analysis of this influence mechanism offers a novel perspective on the substantial potential of contemporary media—particularly animation adapted from online literature IPs—in shaping the moral values of young people.

6 Conclusion and Discussion

This article uses Social Cognitive Theory to examine the influence of heroic portrayals in animated adaptations of Internet Literature IPs on adolescents' moral values. The findings suggest that these heroic portrayals are key reference points for adolescents' moral cognition and behavioral choices within observational learning and imitation. The heroes' wisdom, courage, self-sacrificing spirit, sense of responsibility, and commitment to justice form the core moral characteristics of these figures. Over time, these traits shape adolescents' moral judgments and decisions through the mechanisms of observational learning, imitation, and behavior reinforcement, as outlined in Social Cognitive Theory.

Notably, the heroic figures in these animated works are not simply dichotomous representations of "good" and "evil." Instead, through intricate plot developments and characterizations, they present a multi-layered, multidimensional moral decision-making process. This complexity and depth allow young audiences to understand better and accept diverse moral concepts while cultivating more rational and mature moral reasoning skills as they mature.

Previous studies have analyzed the role of social cognitive theory in shaping adolescent behavior, particularly the influence of imitation and observational learning mechanisms on cognition and behavior. This study further confirms the role of media in shaping adolescents' moral values and, through specific case studies, explores how heroic images in these animated works influence adolescents' moral values via multiple levels of social cognitive mechanisms.

This study provides a fresh perspective on applying social cognitive theory in media communication at the academic level. It offers constructive suggestions for the creative direction of the Internet Literature and animation industries. First, the study provides a deeper understanding of how modern media—especially Internet Literature and IP-adapted animation—shapes young people's moral values. This understanding is crucial for educators and parents, as it helps guide young people to engage with media content critically and develop correct moral values. Second, the study offers valuable insights for animation creators, encouraging them to consider the moral development needs of young audiences during the creative process to produce works that have a more positive social impact. Additionally, as the Internet Literature and animation industries continue

to flourish, understanding how these cultural products influence the psychology and behavior of young people is critical for the healthy development of the cultural industry.

From a practical perspective, this study suggests that when developing heroic figures, creators should focus on moral guidance and present the multidimensional nature of the characters. It is important to avoid overly idealized or one-dimensional portrayals, ensuring that while the animation entertains, it also effectively conveys positive moral values. For educators, this study underscores the importance of cultivating young people's media literacy, equipping them with the skills to analyze complex media content critically, and encouraging the formation of more mature and rational moral values.

Acknowledgment

The work is financially supported by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Project of the Ministry of Education of China (Number: 24YJC710089); Guangdong Provincial Education Science Planning Project (Number: 2023GXJK282).

References

1. Xiao, J., Chen, D., Tang, Q., Suo, L., Zhou, X., Wang, W., Zheng, W., & Zhou, M. (2022). 2020 Report on the development of Chinese Internet literature. *New Techno Humanities*, 2(1), 1-12.
2. Yan, J., Lee, B. C., & Yun, T. (2021). A study on the elements of Chinese animation IP (intellectual property) development based on the pan-entertainment industry. *International Journal of Internet, Broadcasting and Communication*, 13(1), 168-179.
3. Daliot-Bul, M., & Otmazgin, N. (2020). *The anime boom in the United States: Lessons for global creative industries* (Vol. 406). Brill.
4. Fennell, D., Liberato, A. S., Hayden, B., & Fujino, Y. (2013). Consuming anime. *Television & New Media*, 14(5), 440-456.
5. Santiago Iglesias, J. A. (2018). The Anime Connection. *Early Euro-Japanese Co-Productions and the Animesque: Form, Rhythm, Design. Arts*, 7(4), 59. <https://www.mdpi.com/2076-0752/7/4/59>.
6. Grizsbacher, N., Kemény, I., & Varga, Á. (2022). Echoes of Our Favourite Childhood Figures: Examining the Role of Disney in Lifelong Character Development Through Its Generational Fairy Tales. *GiLE Journal of Skills Development*, 2(2), 51-72.
7. Zheng, Y. (2024). An Adolescents First Insight: On the Infiltration and Manifestation of Buddhist Four Noble Truths in East Asian Animation Works. *Communications in Humanities Research*, 26, 90-95.
8. Schunk, D. H., & Usher, E. L. (2019). Social cognitive theory and motivation. In R. M. Ryan (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of human motivation* (second ed., pp. 11-26). Oxford university press.
9. Bandura, A. (2001). Social cognitive theory: An agentic perspective. *Annual review of psychology*, 52(1), 1-26.
10. Bandura, A. (2009). Social cognitive theory of mass communication. In *Media effects* (pp. 110-140). Routledge.
- Krakowiak, K. M., & Tsay-Vogel, M. (2013). What makes characters' bad behaviors acceptable? The effects of character motivation and outcome on perceptions,

- character liking, and moral disengagement. *Mass Communication and Society*, 16(2), 179-199.
11. Tang, S. (2023). Multidimensional observation of the development of Chinese animation works and the spiritual resonance of youth. *Journal of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences*, 13, 360-365.
 12. Jin'e, L., Harun, A., & Nasir, M. N. F. (2024). Exploring the Elements of Chinese Animation Appeal to Chinese Teenagers. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 14(1), 801-810.
 13. Zeng, W., & Chan, K. (2021). Heroism as narrative strategy: Children's animation and modernity in Chinese TV. *Television & New Media*, 22(7), 743-759.
 14. Abdullah, M. A. R. (2023). Learning moral values through cartoons for Malaysian pre-school-aged children. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*, 22(6), 370-394.
 15. Zehnder, S. M., & Calvert, S. L. (2004). Between the hero and the shadow: Developmental differences in adolescents' perceptions and understanding of mythic themes in film. *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, 28(2), 122-137.
 16. Francemone, C. J., Grizzard, M., Fitzgerald, K., Huang, J., & Ahn, C. (2022). Character gender and disposition formation in narratives: The role of competing schema. *Media Psychology*, 25(4), 547-564.
 17. Muñoz, J., & Chang, N.-C. (2021). "Here Comes a Thought": Steven Universe as Social Emotional Curriculum. *The International Journal of Critical Media Literacy*, 3(1), 24-42.
 18. Passantino, F. (2021). Reflections: diversity, inclusion and belonging in education Post-Covid. *Intercultural Education*, 32(5), 583-589.
 19. Hahn, L., Tamborini, R., Aley, M., Baldwin, J., & Grady, S. M. (2024). Early Adolescents Can Extract Distinct Moral Lessons from Narrative Media Content. *Media Psychology*, 27(1), 26-49.
 20. Larisa, S., & Daria, S. (2021). PECULIARITIES OF TEENAGERS' PERCEPTION OF THE CHARACTERS OF A FILM NARRATIVE IN A SITUATION OF MORAL CHOICE. *International Journal of Media and Information Literacy*, 6(2), 416-425.
 21. Krakowiak, K. M., & Tsay-Vogel, M. (2013). What makes characters' bad behaviors acceptable? The effects of character motivation and outcome on perceptions, character liking, and moral disengagement. *Mass Communication and Society*, 16(2), 179-199.
 22. Løvoll, H. S., Røysamb, E., & Vittersø, J. (2017). Experiences matter: Positive emotions facilitate intrinsic motivation. *Cogent Psychology*, 4(1), 1340083.

Open Access This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits any noncommercial use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.

