

Gendering the Political Crisis in Hong Kong: A Cultural Analysis of Spectatorship on Marvel Superhero Movies in Hong Kong

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Abstract : Marvel superhero movies have obtained its unprecedented popularity around the globe. It is a dominant narrative in current scholarship on superhero studies that the political trauma of America, such as attack of September 11, and the masculinity represented in superhero genre are symbolically connected in a way of remasculinization, a standardized plot that before becoming a superhero, a man has to overcome its trauma in his life. Through this standardized plot, American audience finds their pleasure in the spectatorship of equating this plot of remasculinization with the situation of America, rewriting their traumatic memory and resolving around the economic, social, political, and psychological instability of precarity in their own context. Shifting the context to Hong Kong, where Marvel superhero movies have been reaching its dominant status in the local film market, this analysis finds its limitation in explaining the connection between text and context. This article aims to retain this connection through investigation of the Hong Kong audience's spectatorship. It is argued that the masculinity represented in Marvel superhero movies no longer fits into the stereotypical image of superhero, but presents itself in crisis. This crisis is resolved by the technological excess of the superpower, namely, technological remasculinization. The technological remasculinization offers a sense of futurity through which it is felt that this remasculinization can be achieved in the foreseeable future instead of remaining imaginary and fictional. In this way, the political crisis of Hong Kong is gendered as masculinity in crisis which is worth being remasculinized in the future. This gendering process is a historical product as the symbolic equation between politics and masculinity has for long been encoded in the colonial history of Hong Kong. In short, Marvel superhero's masculinity offers a sense of masculine hope for the Hong Kong audiences to overcome the political crisis they confront in reality through a postponed identification with the superhero's masculinity. After the discussion of the Hong Kong audience's spectatorship on Marvel superhero movies with the insights casted by spectatorship theory, above idea is generated.

Keywords : political crisis in Hong Kong, Marvel superhero movies, spectatorship, technological remasculinization

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