

L'interprétation des variations de "super-héros" du point de vue esthétique

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Résumé Le 12 novembre 2018, le père de "Marvel", Stan Lee, est décédé et d'innombrables fans de bandes dessinées lui ont adressé un message. Stan Lee a créé une série de super-héros qui ont balayé le monde entier, chacun ayant sa propre époque et sa propre mission historique. L'univers Marvel, comme tous les phénomènes de la culture pop, est devenu une fenêtre sur notre société tout entière. Dès les premiers jours, les films de super-héros ont attiré un groupe de spectateurs grâce à leurs personnages de genre et à la structure dramatique de leur histoire. Lorsque le personnage de super-héros de genre a continué à apparaître à l'écran, les créateurs ont commencé à penser qu'il était peut-être temps d'améliorer les héros en leur donnant une aura "conviviale". Le succès du premier essai du film "Deadpool" est-il une simple coïncidence ? Ou est-ce la tendance ? Dans une condition historique particulière, les gens ont besoin de héros et de sauveurs, et avec le changement de la tendance, un seul type de héros de fer n'est plus aimé par le jeune public, dans la programmation de la scène magnifique et des effets spéciaux, le public aimerait voir une image réelle et vivante des super-héros, plutôt que le travail sur la ligne de flux chez Hollywood.

Mots clés: super-héros, transformation, Deadpool, rébellion, déconstruction

The Interpretation of "Superhero" Variations from the Aesthetic Perspective

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Abstract: On November 12, 2018, the father of "Marvel", Stan Lee, passed away, and countless comic book fans sent him off with a message. Stan Lee created a series of superheroes that swept across the globe, each with its own era and historical mission. The Marvel Universe, like all pop culture phenomena, has become a window into our entire society. From the early days of superhero movies, they have attracted a group of viewers with their genre-based characters and dramatic story structure, and when the genre-based superhero persona continued to appear on the screen, the creators began to think that perhaps it was time to upgrade the heroes with a "people-friendly" aura. Is the success of the first attempt of the "Deadpool" movie just a coincidence? Or is it the trend? In a particular historical condition, people need heroes and saviors, and with the change of the trend, a single type of iron hero is no longer loved by the young audience, with magnificent shoot scheduling, the audience would like to see a real and vivid image of superheroes, rather than a stereotype of the Hollywood work.

Key words: superhero, transformation, Deadpool, rebellion, deconstruction

In "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," philosopher Benjamin argues that in the age of technology, artworks are reproduced in large quantities, so that the marks attached to the original, such as rust and stains, which are evidence of the work's identity as an authentic work, cannot be reproduced, and therefore the restoration of the original is no longer possible. By filming individual fragments and then editing them, the film is made up of events whose filming method also makes the "aura" that fills the actors' live performances disappear, and the "present-nowness" of art cannot be reconstructed, "restoration" is no longer possible. However, film, as a product of the interpenetration of science and technology, has led to the participation of other perceptions besides vision, such as hearing and feeling. Through the combination of visual and auditory senses, the audience's sense of unity is stimulated and details are magnified in the moving images. Through the camera film, we can delve into the ruins that we are so disgusted by in our daily lives, providing us with a huge and unexpected space to play¹.

Film makes possible artistic themes that are beyond the reach of traditional painting and

¹ Yang Lu, *Classic Texts of 20th Century Western Aesthetics, Volume 2 Return to the Source of Existence*, Fudan University Press, 2000.12, P.664

photography. The development of technology has enabled all the conditions for "surreal" expression, and the theme of science fiction films is complemented by cinematic special effects. While there are many genres of science fiction films, this paper will focus on superhero films from an aesthetic perspective. American superhero films date back to 1941 with *The Adventures of Captain Marvel*², and the special effects technology has brought to life the unique fantasy properties of superheroes. The superhero series began in the comics and was subsequently released on the screen, but I believe that the implantation of the "redeemer" consciousness began in religion and spanned the entire history of mankind, and that the archetypal superhero character, the "messiah," is the "savior". Superheroes and Jesus have common attributes of salvation, sacrifice, but different from the Savior is that the superhero is concerned about the peace and quiet of people's lives in the present world, while the Savior represents the redemption of humanity's original sin, establishes a relationship with God and in the final judgment of the elect can obtain eternal life.

Superman is the first superhero in the history of American comics.³ Superman grew up on Earth but was born on an alien planet. After Superman, "Captain America" appeared: the movie "Captain America" appeared against the background of the Second World War, "Captain America" as a comic first appeared in 1941 which greatly inspired people's enthusiasm for fighting. The surprise that this movie brought to the audience at the beginning of its release is self-evident, which first depends on the characterization of Captain America. Unlike "Superman", who was born with extraordinary abilities, Captain America was just a weak patriotic young man before the transformation, which also deepened the audience's sense of identification with this character. In the next few series of films, Captain America continues a tall, big, all-around image, coupled with patriotic sentiment, and the figure gradually lost its audience. It was not until 1960 that Marvel's writing about superheroes changed, and superheroes began to return to earth, and their identities became complex and diverse. The superhero is called both a blessing and a curse. X-Men heroes with magical superpowers need to face social prejudice against them, as well as their own uniqueness brought about by self-confusion. They have to live in a superhero school as a refugee, and at the same time, superpowered people have the ability to bear the greater responsibility of moral rules.⁴ At this time, the superheroes not only punish evil and promote good, but also need to face personal problems of life, such as in adolescence, when Spider-Man needs to pay tuition with a meager salary while at the same time dealing with relationship problems. Compared to Superman and Captain America, Spider-Man and the X-Men heroes are more abandoned by society. The superhero Hulk continues to be this contradiction. The dilemma is exacerbated in the Hulk, as even in the group of superheroes he is both the monster and hero doubting his identity.

² Ziye Song: *A Study of American Superhero Films in the Context of Ideology*, Master's Thesis, HuNan normal university, 2021

³ Andreas Rauscher, *The marvel universe on screen: a new wave of superhero movie*, Library of congress cataloguing in publication data, 2010

⁴ Andreas Rauscher, *The marvel universe on screen: a new wave of superhero movie*, Library of congress cataloguing in publication data, 2010

The third transformation of the superhero wave appeared in Deadpool.

The Deadpool comic book appeared in 1991 and the movie was released in 2016, breaking "The Matrix 2" as the box office champion for the month. This success is not only because of main actor Ryan Reynolds's wonderful interpretation, as the Deadpool script also has a very important role. In the movie "Deadpool", the hero is an ordinary retired veteran. Uncharacteristically, he feels no pressure to save the world and he carries no moral baggage, and he has a girlfriend that lives by taking money from others. But unfortunately he was diagnosed with cancer. The storyline here is reversed: to cure his cancer he was cheated by an organization that injected the mutant gene into his body. From then on he had an immortal body, but in the end, Deadpool avenges his disfigurement and is happy to be back with his girlfriend. Deadpool's movie inherits his "playful" and "cute" personal image from the comics, and unlike previous heroes, Deadpool has a lot of monologues and dialogues with other characters, and the content is mostly funny or sarcastic.

The "Deadpool 2" movie begins, accompanied by soft, with a bloody and violent fight. Because Deadpool's special ability is his immortal body, powerful opponents are turned into human targets, the scene switches from the bar to the funeral to the final bathroom, the protagonist always in a pool of blood. The film does not even explain the background of the battle, presumably it is just an act of revenge. Obviously, this is an anomaly in the superhero prelude, the previous superhero "self" is suppressed, the audience cannot even see their good and evil, the heroes are disguised as messengers of justice to punish evil. This rupture and differentiation is amplified at the beginning of the film and unfolds a new narrative pattern.

In the past, the superhero's "superego" was worshipped in a shrine, so their behavior was predictable, but in the portrayal of Deadpool, the "superego" and "ego" are intertwined and fused, which reflects the complexity and variability of his character. In Western philosophy, the subject of "I think", which is the foundation of modernity, has suffered another heavy blow since Nietzsche, and the rational subject has conceded the largest territory for its irrationality, which has also changed the modern view of cultural history to the greatest extent, revealing forcefully that the cultural history of human beings is not a glorious and rational history as depicted by the rational subject in the past. Rather, it is a history of constant conflict and struggle between the rational and the irrational, the conscious and the subconscious, the repressed and the instinctive.⁵ In Deadpool, the irrational is released, and the superhero is portrayed in a more expansive manner than the previous superheroes who focused on grand narratives. Deadpool embodies a degree of freedom, defiance of the rules, the intention not to be a "hero", the right to suppress discipline, so the audience will get a sense of pleasure and transcendence when they dare to watch this role.

Deadpool is a tragic character. In "Deadpool 2", when Deadpool and the villain fight in the process his girlfriend was shot dead. This blow is fatal to Deadpool, because his girlfriend is the only support for his life. After the death of his girlfriend, Deadpool tried to die in various ways but none of them worked. After that, Deadpool resists the cruelty of reality by creating sense of humor. In his 1927 book "On Humor", Freud said: "Like the joke and the comedy, humor has something

⁵ Hongbao Niu, *History of Modern Western Aesthetics*, Beijing University Press, 2014.6, P166

liberating, but it also has something solemn and noble... This solemnity, apparently, lies in the triumph of narcissism, in the triumphant assertion of the infallibility of the ego. The ego is conscious of not being troubled by the provocations of reality and is unwilling to submit itself to suffering. The ego is convinced that it is not affected by the traumas inflicted by the external world; indeed, it shows that these traumas are merely opportunities for it to obtain pleasure, and this last characteristic is the most essential element of humor." Humor is not subservient, it is rebellious, and it indicates not only the triumph of the ego, but also the triumph of the pleasure principle, which is here able to express itself against the harshness of real circumstances.⁶ It is with humor that Deadpool achieves the bridging of the tension between "ego" and "superego". The irrational at this point is the triumphant subject who is not repressed by the rational subject.

In addition to the pop culture characteristics of the "Deadpool" movie, another noteworthy phenomenon is the movie's dialogue, in which a large number of uncivil words are used in the course of conversations between Deadpool and his friends and enemies. Some researchers have categorized four major types of language, (1) swearing (2) insults (3) humorous swearing (4) supplementary swearing.⁷ The use of uncivil words has a long history in movies, but not for the subject of superheroes, which is used extensively. Beebe's instrumental purpose of impoliteness (1995) divided impoliteness to exercise power into three types: to appear as superior, get power actions, and dominate the conversation. The first is to appear as superior, where the speaker places himself as a superior and he considers his interlocutor to be of lower caste. The second is to get power over actions, where the speaker asks the other person to take the requested action. Then the last one is to dominate the conversation; where the speaker deliberately interrupts the conversation to stop the other person while speaking.⁸ Beebe (1995) argues that another reason for someone using impoliteness as an exercise of power is to get authority over actions, such as by getting interlocutors to do something, avoiding doing something, and using sarcasm or pushy politeness to get people to do something. In Nietzsche's view, "all rules are themselves empty, barbaric, purposeless; they are made to serve a certain object, to bend to the will of certain people"⁹, and Deadpool's use of foul language, on the one hand, reflects his dominant position as a superhero in the dialogue, and on the other hand, is a break with the order. Foucault argues that discourse is not only externally constrained by power factors such as laws, taboos, and rituals, but that there are other ways in which rights intervene in the workings of discourse: 1. discourse is internally constrained by representations of rights such as authorship, commentary, and disciplinary rules. 2. Discourse is governed by desire. For Foucault discourse is not a transparent or neutral element in

⁶ Guanglin Yang, translation of Freud's *"wit and its relation to the unconscious"* Shanghai Social Science Publishing House, 2010, p. 210

⁷ Febrian Romadhoni Khoirunnisa, *The use of swear words in Deadpool movie*, Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta, Bachelor degree thesis

⁸ M. Syahrul Faruq Aziz, *Impoliteness strategies and power relations reflected in the Deadpool movie*, UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya, Thesis

⁹ Foucault, *"Nietzsche, Genealogy, History"* in Du Xiaozhen, edited and selected by Foucault's Collected Works, Shanghai Far Eastern Publishing House, 1998, p. 115

which desire is surrendered and politics is pacified, but rather one of the special places where desire and politics exercise some of their more dangerous powers. 3. In any society, once discourse is produced, it is immediately controlled, filtered, organized, and redistributed by a number of procedures whose function is to guard against its rights and dangers, to grasp unpredictable events, and to control the reproduction of its meaning.¹⁰ This means that Deadpool's use of power as a superhero and his rebellion are revealed in language. Through language, Deadpool seeks to break free from the traditional rules of civilization and redefine his identity.

A superhero who shares some similarities with Deadpool is Spider-Man, such as the commonalities of being an ordinary young man with the characteristics of contemporary youth, and Spider-Man cannot escape the innate multiplicity of human characters. He is both good and evil. The French philosopher Derrida, a representative figure of deconstructionism, points out that "deconstruction is first and foremost a challenge to the dominant Western philosophical tradition, and its critique begins with the dismantling of grand narratives of tradition, rationality, and culture that have always been seen as stable deconstructions."¹¹ From the beginning of "Deadpool 1", Deadpool acts as a marginalized being outside the superhero system, resisting to be a hero and disobeying the rules that the superhero community adheres to. Deadpool is an anti-system presence even if he has a sense of justice.

But Deadpool's deliberate struggle has meaning, he fits the audience's residual rebellious psychology, life cannot or dare to take the measures found in Deadpool's anchor point. Identity reconstruction takes place at a critical point after the destruction, and the screenplay uses Deadpool's conversation with his dead girlfriend to achieve the purpose of tapping into his true inner self, which is to help those in need and become a better person. Films that inspired and comforted young people existed in 1937, when Studio 2 produced the sound film "Cross Street" in April 1937, which was considered a film "reflecting the problem of the youth's way out" in studies of Chinese film history in the 1960s. The subtitles in front of the film's trailer read: Love problems, lost love, life problems, unemployment, uncertainty, uncertainty in the cross streets, you will meet love, you will be bitter, bitter laugh, you should sympathize with them... At the end another subtitle was played, which stated: "to give you a little comfort and a hint". This direct way of preaching may seem very raw today, but for the younger generation in that era it was very meaningful. Just as Deadpool brings the impact of the mind of today's youth. Deadpool speaks in front of the camera five times in the movie, breaking the "fourth wall". The idea of the "fourth wall" originates from theater, where there are only three real visible walls on the theater stage, and the space between the audience and the stage is transparent, considered a non-existent wall.. The virtual "fourth wall" is equivalent to a camera lens. In "The Characterization of Deadpool", Christina Zhang argues that this unique approach more fully expresses Deadpool's masochistic nature and achieves the purpose of mocking the superhero in order to realize his rebellious spirit. However, Deadpool is not the first movie series that breaks the "fourth wall. In the American

¹⁰ Hongbao Niu, *History of Modern Western Aesthetics*, Beijing University Press, 2016. P.673

¹¹ Rui Gao: *A Structuralist Reading of Spider-Man*, 2012, Issue 4, Film Literature

drama "House of Cards" released in February 2013, the main character Francis used this to talk to the audience.

Deadpool's rebellious spirit also runs through the entire movie, from the way he acts and the language he expresses and even the team he forms, (in order to save the teenagers with superpowers, Deadpool organized a rescue team, and finally only one member survived but played a significant role, she is without any actual superpowers, but with lucky "Domino"). The subculture that best embodies the concept of "rebellion" is probably "punk," which emerged in the 1960s and 1970s. There is no doubt about it, and the music and the various ways in which it created chaos was the way in which "punk" youth embodied that rebellion. It wasn't until 1984 that "cyberpunk" was officially defined by the mainstream media, with William Gibson's work at the forefront of the sci-fi scene. Science fiction, led by the works of William Gibson, once again became a tool of expression for the rebels. In contemporary times, rebellion has become more diverse, with performance art, installation art, and film all attempting to realize this proposition, but for the average youth, language is undoubtedly the most convenient way. The postmodernist view of the subject holds that: (1) the subject is relative to the object, and without the object there is no subject; (2) the subject is produced in language; (3) subjectification is the result of a process, and this process is plural, so the subject is not single and fixed, but fluid. That is to say that the person as a subject is present in a complex linguistic change. The reason why language is so important to realize the proposition that human existence exists and expresses rebellion is that there is nothing less than language in the recognition or description of reality, in the narration or capture of history, in the elaboration of truth, and in the formation of the view of the subject. It is through characteristic language that Deadpool reveals his uniqueness from other superheroes, bringing a sense of freshness to the audience, which is the most frequent appearance of contemporary youth in self-expression making it is also easier to identify and resonate between the two. For example, in "Deadpool 2", after being shot with a gun by a wayward boy he was trying to save, Deadpool consoled his friend who had racist tendencies and quoted Martin Luther's speech, "Promise me that in the future you will judge a man by his character, not by the color of his skin, and not the color of his skin." This dialogue can be said to be inspiring, language can be both a good medicine or poison, it is in the social network to the maximum extent reflected in the role. Deadpool as a "spiritual symbol" has played an iconic role in guiding and setting the right values for the audience. Putting aside Deadpool's fighting ability and immortality, Deadpool himself is an insecure person who does not like to be alone. In both movies, Deadpool jumped from the back seat to the passenger side when taking a cab because he was too lonely; when he lost his girlfriend in grief, friends wanted to comfort him, but he refused by saying "I'm fine". Insecurity is a common feature of contemporary youth, which has led to the creation of a "low desire" society, in which "anxiety" has surpassed "depression", becoming the number one mental health enemy. The phrase "When people say they're 30 in two years, it sounds like they were born in 1970, but in fact, they're 90" is widely circulated on social media, simply because it speaks to the anxiety of most people.

In the 19th century, Nietzsche called for the death of God, which meant not only that God was no longer present, but also that the messianic function had failed. In a conversation between

Deadpool and another boy with superpowers, the boy says that he has been waiting for a savior to appear or someone willing to make sacrifices for him, yet in the value-oriented postmodern modern era, the meaning of sacrificial giving becomes blurred and man needs to self-establish self-organized meaning. The content of man as a human being is disappearing or being deconstructed. In this description of the internal deflection of the modern intellectual type, Foucault has shown the basic outline of postmodern intellectuality: an anti-humanism, anti-rationalist view of history, the end of the subject, the endless transformation and juxtaposition of the factors of the centerless in dispersal.¹² The Deadpool movie is a product of its time. The superhero exists because of his function as the messiah and is also deconstructed because of the death of God. In other words, the Deadpool movie dissolves the superhero in the traditional sense by blowing up Deadpool's body for the first time, and after the successful dissolution, it starts to reconstruct the image of the hero with post-modern characteristics, that is, Deadpool's line: "For four or five moments, it only takes this much time to be a hero, people think you wake up as a hero, brush your teeth as a hero. But no, it only takes a few minutes to be a hero, a few minutes to do the dirty work that other people don't want to do... Screw the rules, I fight for what's right, and sometimes you just have to use the dirty ones." Here human subjectivity is magnified, i.e. everyone can be a hero because everyone does not need an innate sense of purpose, but only needs to come in a few minutes to fight for what they define as right.

Bergson argues that we cannot perceive the whole thing or the whole picture, that our perception is always incomplete, that we can only perceive the parts that concern us or interest us according to our economic interests, ideological beliefs and psychological needs, and therefore we can only perceive the negatives. Traditional rational civilization deconstructs the human mind into rationalism, while the meaning of the existence of cinema is to enable the characters to escape from regulation. The variation of superheroes is attributed to the failure of messianic beliefs, while they are substitutes for the messiah, occupying the place where religious beliefs used to be; from the perspective of aesthetic psychology, that is, replacing the divine sublime with the human sublime, which plays the same role in people's minds as religious beliefs. The role played by this sublime in people's mind is similar to the role played by religious belief in people's mind world, from this perspective, it can also be said that superheroes are variations of the divine figures in religion.

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¹² Hongbao Niu, *The history Modern Western Aesthetics*, Beijing University Press, 2014. P.682

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