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Enter The Žižekian: Bruce Lee, Martial Arts, and the Problem of Knowledge

Q: What's your style?

Lee: My style? I suppose you could call it the art of fighting without fighting.

Q: *Fighting without fighting?...* Show me some of it!

Lee: Later.

*Enter The Dragon*¹

1. "What's your Style?" The Problem of Knowledge

In a famous exchange in *Enter the Dragon*, a belligerent martial artist who has been bullying the crew and staff of the boat on which a group of martial artists are travelling to a competition, asks Mr Lee (Bruce Lee) "What's your style?" He is clearly out for a fight. Lee replies: "My style? I suppose you could call it the art of fighting without fighting." This unusual and unexpected response baffles his questioner, who demands to be shown some of it. Unable to avoid a confrontation, Lee's response takes the form of a completely banal and pragmatic demonstration of "fighting without fighting:" by proposing that they would hve more room to fight if they were to row to a nearby island,

he tricks the aggressor into climbing aboard a small rowing boat in a perilously rough sea. Lee then untethers the boat and hands the rope to those who had been bullied, who proceed to toy with their now-helpless erstwhile persecutor. Hence, Lee shows what “fighting without fighting” most literally means. Nevertheless, despite the banality of this demonstration, every viewer *knows* that the phrase “the art of fighting without fighting” *really* encapsulates something *more*, something enigmatic, “deep” and profound. We sense with heady anticipation that there is going to be a lot more to this mysterious oriental art than tricks.

We know this because in *Enter the Dragon* the sense of the enigmatic profundity of Lee’s Shaolin art is omnipresent. From the very first scene of the film, the presentation of Lee and his Shaolin art insistently urges the viewer to believe that there really is more to martial arts than fighting. The opening scene of *Enter the Dragon* is a ritualistic “rite of passage” combat sequence in a Shaolin Temple. This is immediately followed by a koan-like question-and-answer session between Lee and his master, in which the master begins by saying “I see your talents have gone beyond the mere physical level. Your skills are now at the point of spiritual insight.”² The mysticism of this exchange is immediately further consolidated by the following scene in which Lee tutors a young monk, Lau, and explains that a correctly executed kick (or any combative exchange) “is like a finger pointing away to the moon.”³

In its attribution of some enigmatic depth to martial arts, *Enter the Dragon* is an exemplary instance of the most popular kind of discourse about them. For the myths and messages of the discourses and texts of martial arts often insist that there is indeed more to these fighting practices than fighting. But what “more” is there? What more is there to

martial arts than fighting? Or indeed, a more appropriate question perhaps: given that martial arts practice often consists entirely in endless training sessions without any actual fighting on the horizon, what more is there to “martial” arts than fighting without fighting?

But perhaps we have already moved too fast. For, if martial arts can equally easily be more and less and other than “fighting” (and all at the same time), then surely the *first* question to be asked is what actually are martial arts? This may seem obvious: an unnecessary question. But, as Hegel cautioned, “What is ‘familiarily known’ is not properly known, just for the reason that it is ‘familiar’.... [For, familiarity itself] is the commonest form of self-deception.”⁴ Stephen Chan gives a clear account of the crisis that scratching the surface of apparent obviousness can precipitate when he explains that “a UNESCO survey of the world’s martial arts” that he was involved with had to be abandoned “because the various authors could not agree on the nature of the project.”⁵ They could not agree on a workable definition or delimitation of their shared object of study, “the martial arts.” In other words, this putatively obvious and stable referent immediately turned out to be a rather deceptive signifier, something that can be drastically differently construed depending on one’s standpoint. The UNESCO group was unable to agree on *how* to conceive of the martial arts: how to contextualise them, how to establish and assess their limits, their “essence,” and indeed how to ascertain what constitutes their “reality.” They were especially unable to agree on whether the “reality” of martial arts should include or exclude the myths, fictions, fantasies, and fabrications that constantly blur the edges and muddy the waters of this subject.

2. “My Style?” The Disciplined Production of Difference

Chan’s area in the UNESCO study was to have been Japanese martial arts. On this topic, he offered the view that “mythology plays a large role in the internationalization of Japanese martial arts.”⁶ However, this proposition, he observes, “seemed particularly contentious” to the other authors; who, holding different notions of what constitutes the reality of a martial art (and implicitly therefore a different notion of what constitutes reality as such), wanted to downplay or ignore myth. According to Chan, however, “little progress seem[s] possible in separating histories from mythologies,” when it comes to martial arts.⁷ This is because in their formation, dissemination and proliferation, myth demonstrably often trumps history. We might merely consider the explosive impact that a film like *Enter the Dragon* had on the fantasy life and martial arts practice the world over to see Chan’s point: namely that when it comes to the martial arts, myths and fictions can be far more influential and orientating than truth.⁸

It is widely known that the choreography seen in *Enter the Dragon* has little direct relation with the “real” Shaolin kung fu that the character of Lee in *Enter the Dragon* “would really” have practised; just as the “celluloid” cinematic choreography in Bruce Lee films had little in common with the interdisciplinary *bricolage* of different approaches to combat actually developed and taught by Bruce Lee himself (of which more will be said in due course).⁹ But it was not just Hollywood and Hong Kong cinema that unleashed “myth” by manipulating fantasies worldwide, conjuring up spurious yet putatively ancient arts (now called “wushu” and “wire fu,” namely, the dramatic athletic kung fu of film choreography). Chan himself lists a whole host of Japanese martial arts that are often deliberately represented, exported and consumed as if they are authentically

ancient warrior arts, but which are in fact relatively recent, often twentieth-century inventions.

His point is simple: what he calls “mythologising” more than muddies the waters of reality: it actually constitutes it. As he points out, there are millions “worldwide who practise the Japanese martial arts and believe that these arts have antique and spiritual values beyond what passes for history and cultural value in the constructions of their own cultures.”¹⁰ Indeed, he suggests that those who have bought into many of the myths of Japanese martial arts have in a sense been duped by the cynical ministrations of what he calls “the Japanese cultural authorities.” These, he argues, have deliberately worked as the “editor of mythologies”¹¹ in order deliberately to make Japanese culture into a commodified artefact. This mythology is commodified in myriad ways: both “in fact” (through the production of new “ancient” martial arts) and “in fiction” (through film, literature and other such productions). These artefacts are produced and consumed as if authentically ancient culture, when in actual fact they have been deliberately produced: conjured up, exported, (re)imported and consumed.

Given this complexity, the question of how to define, delimit and make sense of the “martial arts” inevitably encounters the problem that “martial arts” exceed simple categorisation. So, in order to try adequately or exhaustively to approach and to attempt to understand *fully* what martial arts “are,” one must seemingly cover a vast interdisciplinary breadth. For, to grasp the “whole truth” would seem to demand mastery of realms as diverse as archival research, history and historiography, translation, comparative philosophy, culture and religion, psychology, sociology, political economy, marketing, aesthetics, politics, cinematography, and popular culture, to say the least.

Given the multiple dimensions of “martial arts,” the question is: what sort of a paradigm could possibly hope to be adequate to the task? The problem here is that any approach will privilege certain dimensions and subordinate, be ignorant of or otherwise exclude others. Every version of “interdisciplinarity” cannot but be led by a *particular* disciplinary preference, and so will differ from other possible versions of interdisciplinarity, and therefore produce different (often utterly contradictory forms of) knowledge. Omniscience is not possible. Every account or manner of “understanding” will be enabled and limited by a particular partial bias.

Given Chan’s argument about the ensnarement of Japanese martial arts within a commodifying process, then, from a Marxian perspective, such as that recently (re)developed by the influential Slovenian cultural critic, Slavoj Žižek, Chan’s observations might immediately be taken to be the start and end-point—the *culmination*—of an argument. That is, from the perspective of Marxian economism (the view that the dictates of the economy determine in the last instance the beliefs and practices of culture and society), then the point about commodification may be regarded as the last word on the matter—as if proving that culture has been decisively colonised by capitalism, and that all beliefs and practices are ideological (because they are commodified myths that we have bought into), and that cultural practices like martial arts are simply a kind of modern “opium of the masses.”

However, Chan himself is evidently neither a Žižekian nor any other kind of economic reductionist, as he does not propound such a view. On the contrary, he contends that whilst, on the one hand, one cannot simply or uncritically believe all of their “history” (“Much of what seems to be antique is not”),¹² on the other hand, martial

arts cannot just be viewed as commodity pure and simple. In this respect, he gives examples of martial arts in “African shanty townships,” where karate has become “an alternative source of values and cultural shelter to those shut outside the wealth of the Western economy, and who have been divorced by location and the exigencies of poverty from a deep indigenous sense of culture.”¹³ Here, there is something strongly “cultural,” indeed even *political* about martial arts. They become bound up in identity, in identification, in organic community, and can be construed as taking on a place and significance that is far from simply consumerist.

So, an over-economistic or reductively Marxian take on culture as capitalist-colonised seems limited. What alternative paradigms are available that we might bring to bear on martial arts? Any answer will already be biased and therefore in every way “partial.” But, from the point of view of the contemporary interdisciplinary arts and humanities, there is “obviously” much that is psychoanalysable in martial arts (given the palpable presence of masculine desire, fantasy and fear, as well as cultural projections about “the other,” for instance). There is also much that seems to cry out for Foucauldian styles of analysis of the body in discourses and relations of power—not forgetting post-Foucauldian and post-colonial considerations of “orientalist discourse.” Martial arts phenomena demand historicisation, too, of course. But even if something “universal” is discerned in the impetus to begin martial arts training—perhaps the sense of “lack” that might crystallise in the subjective desire to become powerful or invincible—such a “symptom” can of course be treated in many manners: reiterated or recurring “symptoms” need not necessarily be approached through Freudian or Lacanian optics. There are vastly differing ways to interpret even a “universal” or “general” feature, from the most positivist,

behaviourist or essentialist paradigms to the most relativist, postmodern or deconstructive. In terms of the latter, for instance, Jacques Derrida's ruminations on death and its relation to questions of responsibility in *The Gift of Death*¹⁴ almost call out to be applied to a consideration of the martial arts. Or, to put this another way: surely consideration of the martial arts should be accorded the dignity and seriousness of philosophy, especially insofar as they seem so closely related to questions of death, desire, responsibility, discipline, mortality and purpose. As Derrida argues at one point:

a concept of *discipline* covers a number of senses...: that of training, first of all, or exercise, the idea of the work necessary to maintain control over orgiastic mystery.... Secondly, this discipline is also philosophy, or the dialectic, to the extent that it can be taught, precisely as a discipline, at the same time exoteric and esoteric; as well as that of the exercise that consists in learning to die in order to attain the new immortality, ... the care taken with death, the exercise of death, the "practicing (for) death" that Socrates speaks of in the *Phaedo*.¹⁵

To regard Derrida or even Socrates as Samurai/martial theorists may not turn out to be as preposterous as it might at first sound. For, many things come in response to the inevitability of death and the problem of responsibility: philosophy and discipline are but two. There are even uncanny affinities and connections between the samurai manual, the *Hagakure*, and Hegel's master-slave dialectic.¹⁶

Yet nor can martial arts unequivocally be said to be "philosophical." For they are also sites of sheer pleasure, thrill-seeking, competition, engagement, escapism, fantasy; and as available to the ideology of individualism as to that of community. Sociologically-aware claims have been made about some of the contexts in which they proliferate: the immediate and enduring popularity of martial arts films and practices in American black ghetto communities has been widely noted and theorised, for instance.¹⁷ But "martial

arts” arise and function in these contexts very differently from when martial arts tropes and themes are appropriated in management self-help discourses (wherein Japanese swordsmanship texts like *The Book of Five Rings* or books like *The Art of War* are made to play the part of business manuals).¹⁸ Furthermore, martial arts again take on a very different function, form and status in New Age and hippy ideologies and lifestyles in the West, where the hippy fetishism about mystical “universal harmony” replaces capitalistic, macho or militaristic fetishism about “conflict.” And what may be just playful, hobbyist hippy (or indeed hip hop) ideology in the West is something quite different in East Asia, where many “martial” practices (such as *chi-gung/qigong* and *Falun gong*) have been variously repressed *and* recruited in nationalist political discourses.¹⁹

3. “The art of fighting *without* fighting?”

So, there is no simple or univocal answer to the question even of what is being “done” when martial arts are said to be “done”—or indeed, “what is there” when martial arts are said “to be.” Greg Downey broaches some of the ramifications of this in a study of *capoeira*,²⁰ a Brazilian phenomenon that hovers undecidably somewhere between combat, dance, ritual, sport, subculture, quasi-religion and aimless game, all at the same time. He relates this to its complex history: *capoeira* was a fighting art developed by slaves in Brazil that, like arts devised by colonised peoples in the Philippines and elsewhere, was from the start disguised as a dance and passed off as a harmless ritual. Accordingly, this carnivalesque aspect became inscribed into its practice, at the same time as it served as the primary fighting resource, first of slaves and thereafter of the Brazilian underclass. Viewed as a scourge by the authorities (like Karate in Okinawa, and

indeed many other underclass martial practices worldwide—including those of Europe and the UK),²¹ *capoeira* in Brazil was actually illegal until the 1920s, until the force of various militaristic and nationalist discourses led to its incorporation into military, police, and educational syllabi.

Although Downey does not use such language in his study of the complexity and uncertainty of *capoeira*'s ontological status and its ensnarement in always politically motivated contexts, what his study nevertheless points to is the *undecidability* of *capoeira*. What is it? What is being done, and why? What does it *mean*, what does it *do* – in *any* register? He convincingly argues that *capoeira* does not fit into any of the dominant categories for classifying and dealing with physical activities, and that because of this difference (or divergence, or excess), regular “efforts by the state (and other nationalist institutions) to co-opt, control and recast [it] as a sport have failed repeatedly.”²² However, despite its demonstrably politically-charged status—first a slave activity, then an illegal underclass practice, then subjected to various politically motivated efforts of institutional appropriation and domestication—Downey wants to criticise the academic tendency to leap to the conclusion that therefore there must be something fundamentally political about such activities. Against this impulse he contends: “these projects failed not because of politically-motivated ‘resistance,’ but because of growing boredom, dissatisfaction and disinterest in sporting projects” among *capoeira* practitioners. Thus, he suggests, “the case of *capoeira* may point to a more widespread pitfall in macrosocial interpretations of historical events as political processes.”²³

So, in this schema, martial arts both are and are not political. They *are* political insofar as they exist within an irreducibly political context (for what context is not in some sense contingent, structured by bias and therefore political?) and may be appropriated by various discourses, ideologies, agencies or interests. But on the other hand, they are *not* political, if by political we are referring to some conscious political intention or even just a clear kind of politicised impetus. Downey's criticism of the implicit "Cartesian" conception of politics operative within too much scholarship is admirable (even if this is unintentional on his part). So is the sense in which it emphasises that just because something is problematic or uncontrollable, that does not necessarily make it politically subversive. Yet his conclusion nevertheless leaves a lot to be desired, for it proceeds almost schizophrenically, both acknowledging the unavoidable intrusion of the political context into any activity or identity and yet writing that off as if it is an insignificant supplement, and choosing instead to construe the practice in terms of what Lacanian psychoanalysis would call pure "*jouissance*"—pure pleasure, enjoyment: as if it's all simply a bit of fun.

Of course, what psychoanalysis calls "*jouissance*"—not to mention fantasy, fear, projection, identification, and a whole host of other psychoanalytically specifiable factors—is in play in the largely unconscious constitution of desire. But the point to be emphasised is that any such unconscious formation will come in response to a contingent situation, and hence it will be a *political or contextual unconscious*. The factors bearing on the formation of desire and orientation will be in some sense "political." This suggests that practices might be diagnosed in terms of their historical, political context. Jian Xu gives an account, for instance, of the repression of esoteric and occasionally martial

practices, such as Falun Gong and Qigong, in Maoist China. This repression was followed by a veritable explosion of interest in the post-Maoist context. The repression and the interest continue. How does one make sense of this? As Xu puts it, all of the recent key studies of martial arts “place the body-in-cultivation in a specific historical context; they maintain that the individual, physical body both registers and reveals the national sociopolitical landscape [and that] the body can express the emotional self repressed by the state.”²⁴ The logic of this is based on the claim that, as Derrida puts it, “Repression doesn’t destroy, it displaces something from one place to another within the system.”²⁵

However, Xu is discussing China, where the state could be regarded as indubitably hegemonic. But, one might ask, what about the formation of desire and practice *elsewhere*? The nation state is not necessarily that which dominates the political context or indeed constitutes the form and content of the political unconscious everywhere else. In the postmodern context and condition, analyses are perhaps to be weighted differently. What could be said to be “behind” or “at the root” (or roots) of the proliferation of the martial arts in the contemporary West? In what way might this relate to a political unconscious? And what significance might this have for anything?

4. “Fighting without Fighting:” Interdisciplinarity, Bruce Lee and Multiculturalism

To broach this, let us first recap and reiterate that myths supplement reality, and hence are not simply untrue or imaginary. Thus, what needs to be asked is in what way reality might supplement myth? We began with the cinematic emergence of Bruce Lee, which certainly blazed an influential trail that fired up the imaginations, fantasies and practices

of untold numbers of people the world over. This cinematic tipping-point is widely known and has been much remarked upon, as a “real mythic” event. But in what way might this origin relate to other origins—as it were the historical and cultural conditions of possibility for such a “mythic” emergence?

Bruce Lee’s senior student, a Philippino *eskrimador* called Dan Inosanto, gives this account of the formation, birth, and baptism of “jeet kune do,” the martial art that Bruce Lee devised:

It all began in the early part of 1968 while Bruce and I were driving along in the car. We were talking about fencing, Western fencing. Bruce said [that] the most efficient means of countering in fencing was the *stop-hit*. A stop-hit is when you do not parry and then counter, it’s all done in one step. When the opponent attacks, you intercept his move with a thrust or hit of your own. It is designed to score a hit in the midst of the attacker’s action, and is the highest and most economical of all the counters.

Then Bruce said, “We should call our method of fighting the ‘stop-hitting fist style,’ or the ‘intercepting fist style.’”

“What would that be in Chinese?” I asked.

“That would be Jeet Kune Do,” he said.

Jeet Kune Do means the way of the stopping fist, or the way of the intercepting fist. So, instead of blocking and then hitting, our main concept is to dispense with blocking completely, and instead to intercept and hit. We realize that this cannot be done all the time, but this is the main theme.

Up until 1967 our method was called “Jun Fan” Gung Fu, which was a modification of various techniques from Northern Praying Mantis, Southern Praying Mantis, Choy Li Fut, Eagle Claw, Western Boxing, Hung Gar, Thai Boxing, wrestling, Judo, Jiu Jitsu, and several Northern Gung-Fu styles. [But] It is obvious that Wing Chun was the main nucleus and [that] all the other methods evolved around it.

[....]

In later years he became sorry that he ever coined the term Jeet Kune Do because he felt that it, too, was limiting, and according to Bruce, “There is no such thing as a style if you totally understand the roots of combat.”²⁶

There is far more to be mined from this remarkably rich passage than there is space for here. But, in terms of the consideration of the place of myth or fantasy in martial arts discourse, what is perhaps most remarkable in Dan Inosanto’s account of the formation of

jeet kune do, is the *absence*—indeed, the strict *exclusion*—of classical (orientalist or oriental-esque) martial arts mythology.

Is this an absence of myth as such? Inosanto's account (like most of Bruce Lee's own similar accounts) might be classed as a text that is centred on efficiency and economy, on the one hand, and on the other organised by a multiculturally promiscuous interdisciplinarity. In other words, in place of the mythology of "ancientness," what is present in Lee and Inosanto are the themes of efficiency and economy, and the—at the time definitively radical and controversial—advocation of *interdisciplinarity* and *hybridity*. Inosanto tells us that jeet kune do was conceptualised, baptised and inaugurated in California, given a Chinese name but inspired equally by the Western art of fencing, derived from an interdisciplinary approach to any and every fighting style available, selected and dissected with a view to efficiency. Viewed in this way, this may be very telling. For, what we have here is interdisciplinary *bricolage*, multiculturalism, and efficiency. And surely one need not belabour the point that the 1960s saw more than one inventive, interdisciplinary "revolution." Perhaps merely mentioning "1968" may be enough to conjure up a certain *zeitgeist* (or a certain dread!)

What else was going on in the sixties? Apart from the wars and famous student revolts, let me just point to the following. In 1962, the same year Jacques Derrida's first book, his translation and introduction to Edmund Husserl's *Origin of Geometry*²⁷ was published, Bruce Lee gave a spectacular demonstration of kung fu at Ed Parker's International Karate Championships, an event that, according to Inosanto, "proved to be the major turning point in his career."²⁸ The following year, Lee published *Chinese Gung-fu: The Philosophical Art of Self-Defense*.²⁹ America met Lee's kung fu as France

met Derrida's deconstruction. In 1964, the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies was established in Birmingham, the same year that the tape of Lee's demonstration secured him a screen test that would lead to the role of Kato in the TV series, *The Green Hornet* (produced by the makers of *Batman*). Only in 1968, the year Stuart Hall became director of the Birmingham Centre, did Lee—slightly after Derrida—baptise his own “method-that-wasn't-really-a-method.” However, he would come to regret the name (jeet kune do) slightly before Derrida would come to regret calling deconstruction “deconstruction.” (Stuart Hall, incidentally, has always defended the name “cultural studies.”)³⁰

Now, you might be concerned about the legitimacy of the implicit but telegraphed presupposition that one might possibly even begin to generalise anything at all from such conspicuously select, heterogeneous and unrelated things as these moments in the institution and dissemination of “cultural studies,” “deconstruction,” and “Bruce Lee.” You might protest, as Fleiss protested to Freud about psychoanalysis, that making such preposterous connections is simply “wit gone wild, overingenious analogizing lacking the necessary discrimination.”³¹ And you would, of course, be wise to do so. Nevertheless, there is a theoretical proposition that might be inferred here; namely that something that might be called a “political unconscious” exerts an influence in a historical context, which acts upon *formation*. In this sense, the *formation* of Bruce Lee's approach to martial arts seems to be comparable to the *formation* of cultural studies. Both, I am suggesting, may be further compared with the *formation* of Derridean deconstruction. The question is: what enables and what is the status and significance of this apparent similarity or “structural” (or, rather, *post-structural*) affinity? And what might be the importance, legitimacy, verifiability and status of such a claim?

Let us turn, first, to the formation of cultural studies. Stuart Hall describes cultural studies as “a discursive formation, in Foucault’s sense,”³² within the “milieu” of the open and radical New Left:³³ open (as they say) to alterity, ethico-politically motivated, pushing limits, borders, conventions, boundaries, hierarchies, exclusions. Second: deconstruction. Derrida captures the same sense (if not exactly the “same” scene)³⁴ when he says of deconstruction and the many, *many* detractors to it:

If it were only a question of “my” work, of the particular or isolated research of one individual, [these scandalised denunciations of deconstruction] wouldn’t happen. Indeed, the violence of these denunciations derives from the fact that the work accused is part of a whole ongoing process. What is unfolding here, like the resistance it necessarily arouses, can’t be limited to a personal “oeuvre,” nor to a discipline, nor even to the academic institution.... If this work seems so threatening to [some], this is because it isn’t eccentric or strange, incomprehensible or exotic (which would allow them to dispose of it easily), but as I myself hope, and as they believe more than they admit, competent, rigorously argued, and carrying conviction in its re-examination of the fundamental norms and premises of a number of dominant discourses, the principles underlying many of their evaluations, the structures of academic institutions, and the research that goes on within them. What this kind of questioning does is to modify the rules of the dominant discourse, it tries to politicize and democratize the university scene...³⁵

And now to Bruce Lee. Bruce Lee—uncannily similarly to the declared ethos of Hallian cultural studies and Derridean deconstruction, and indeed “a whole ongoing process”—deliberately and self-consciously “inter-disciplined,” “democratised,” and “anti-essentialised” kung fu. Lee insisted that there is no substantial essence to it and that one need not be Chinese to do it. Moreover, perhaps because of his experience of racism at the hands both of Chinese and American institutions, Lee was obdurately colour-blind. As a youth in Hong Kong, the discovery that Lee had some German ancestry led to his exclusion from Grand Master Yip Man’s Wing Chun tutelage for some time; whilst, later, in America, Lee consistently interpreted his failure to secure a lead acting role as a matter

of Hollywood's racism (for instance, Lee's ideas for a show called "The Warrior" only became the TV series *Kung Fu* when the starring role was given to a ridiculously orientalist white American actor, David Carradine).³⁶ Similarly, Lee's egalitarian approach to teaching met with quite a lot of "institutional" resistance in the form of the racially inflected anger of the American Chinese martial arts community.

This kind of multiculturalism would seem to be the bread and butter of cultural studies—a formation that arose in response to or in tandem with and as part of "a whole ongoing process" of deconstruction and reconstruction. But with this observation comes a serious question. Does the very claim that this is all part of the same interrelated ensemble undermine cultural studies' own ability to construct a reliable knowledge of it? Given that cultural studies is directly implicated in the *same* "discursive formation," what is the nature of this formation, movement or conjuncture, this "whole ongoing process" in which Bruce Lee, cultural studies, deconstruction, and—crucially, perhaps—the more widespread or generalised "democratisation" of multiculturalism, interdisciplinarity, and "openness to alterity" are all active players?

5. "The First American-Produced Martial Arts Spectacular!"³⁷ Bruce Lee as

Ideology

In order to broach these questions and to enter into some of the wider issues and problematics that arise here, let us consider further the cultural relations and effects of the factual and fictional "event" of Bruce Lee. One biography of Bruce Lee puts it particularly well. Bruce Thomas begins the biography *Bruce Lee: Fighting Spirit* by inviting us to ponder the significance of the ostensibly banal fact that the influence of

Bruce Lee was such that the biographer, as he puts it, “an Englishman... was able to begin learning a Chinese martial art from a Welshman.”³⁸ This otherwise quite mundane observation—that Bruce Lee, thanks to the Hollywood cinematic apparatus, could popularise the main art he studied, Wing Chun kung fu, all over the world—is not insignificant. In fact, as Lee’s biographer goes on to suggest, Bruce Lee could in this and many other respects actually be said to have “bridged cultures [and] revolutionized the martial arts.” At the same time he explicitly “taught a fierce philosophy of individualism, became a film icon and remade the image of the Asian man in the West.”³⁹

Such an achievement is no mean feat. Just because *now—after* Bruce Lee—“kung fu” and “Bruce Lee” seem ordinary, usual, trivial, very little, almost nothing, this does not mean that they *are*. In fact, surely we need to remember Hegel’s caution that “What is ‘familiarily known’ is not properly known, just for the reason that it is ‘familiar’ [and that familiarity itself] is the commonest form of self-deception.”⁴⁰ So, on this remarkable transformation, Bruce Lee’s biographer actually expresses an approbation that is in fact a fairly typical view: Bruce Lee, he says, both revolutionised and popularised the martial arts. Moreover, he both “bridged cultures” and “remade the image of the Asian man in the West.”⁴¹ He certainly did the latter. But were cultures really bridged? For, when facing the facts of Bruce Lee’s emergence, the interpretive options available remain contradictory. For instance, either Bruce Lee the icon worked to *counter* racial stereotypes and orientalist prejudices, and to “bridge cultures;” or Bruce Lee the icon actually *relied upon, exploited and deepened* racial stereotypes and orientalist prejudices—simply changing the western stereotype of the oriental from negative contempt or hatred to putatively “positive” yet nevertheless fetishistic fascination with a

now exoticised other. And do films really “bridge cultures”? Or do they divide a culture from itself, replacing a possibly traditional self-perception with a Eurocentric celluloid simulacrum?

Of course, the remaking of the image of the Asian man in the West may prove ethically and politically positive, insofar as certain representational boundaries and conventions are modified, with monolithic whiteness whittled-away, Eurocentrism decentred, multiculturalism multiplied, and so on. But is this a cultural *encounter*, or a *bridge*, as such: part of a widespread or generalised “democratisation” and “openness to alterity”? This can be rephrased: Has there really been a multicultural encounter or transformation, (1) when Hollywood makes a martial arts movie, or (2) when a white Westerner watches this kung fu film, or, as a consequence, practises a nominally oriental martial art? If we answer “yes” (with Bruce Lee’s biographer), then we also confirm an implicit proposition of cultural studies: that *all* culture (from “physical” activity to filmic fantasy) *is effectively political*. (And one might be said to hold a version of this view if, for instance, one ever gets really bothered by a racist, sexist, or otherwise unjust or inaccurate representation on television. For, if we *didn’t* think such things as cinematic or media representations “really” made any difference, then we would not be bothered.) What would it be to answer: No, there is no real cultural or political transformation with the “entrance of the dragon” (except possibly the further fetishistic commodification of that “dragon”)? What position could say “no”?

One such position is that of Slavoj Žižek. For Žižek is unequivocal in the claim that the putatively “radical” ethical and political insights of what he calls deconstructionism, postmodernism, multiculturalism or “politically correct” cultural

studies are completely ideological: i.e., in the service of the inexhaustible commodification processes of capitalism. Any “celebration” of such “multicultural encounters” is, for Žižek, straightforwardly wrong. This is precisely why Žižek disavows what he calls “politically correct cultural studies” approaches and adopts instead a stalwart Marxist perspective: he regards all anti-essentialism and multiculturalism as mere indices, symptoms and signs of the success of capitalism’s neoliberal ideology. The supposedly “radical” insights of cultural studies are, he argues, merely the forefront of neoliberal commonsense and are as such necessarily false.

In this paradigm, all the multicultural hybrid, East-meets-West identity-performativity of Welsh Wing Chun masters and spectacular Asian-American pseudo-Shaolin celluloid stars “inspiring” countless imaginary and actual, factual and phantasmatic encounters, interventions and events across the world, *actually* indicates nothing more than the deceptive deconstructive simulacrum of global capitalism. Indeed, for Žižek, just as Protestantism was the necessary ideology of “industrial stage” capitalism (life is hard, then you die, but if you’ve been good and sedulous, you go to heaven), so the western appropriation of Taoism and Buddhism equals the necessary ideology of postmodern “late capitalism” (don’t cling—go with the restructuring flow). This is because the belief systems that Žižek interchangeably calls “Western Buddhism” or “Taoism” are belief systems that, he claims, “perfectly fit” the “*fetishist* mode of ideology of our allegedly ‘post-ideological’ era.”⁴² These, he claims, enable “you to participate fully in the frantic pace of the capitalist game while sustaining the perception that you are not really in it.”⁴³ (You may work in the city, but the “real you” is you when you are doing yoga.) So, for Žižek, what he calls contemporary Taoism, Western

Buddhism, “New Ageism,” the neoliberal ideology of “tolerance,” and so on, are all best seen as equivalent reaction formations to, and in the service of, a relentless capitalism. The job of such practices and belief systems is to keep us shopping and “tolerating” and “respecting difference”—as long as that difference is merely the difference of different types of shopping, and not the rejection of consumerism. Hence: Feng Shui good; Islamic fundamentalism bad. The one amounts to “out with the old, in with the new—constantly;” the other to “out with the new, in with the old—once and for all.” For Žižek, we have all become accommodated to the permanent, relentless revolution of capitalism. As he argues, “To put it in Hegel’s terms, the ‘truth’ of [the 1960s’] transgressive revolt against the Establishment is the emergence of a new establishment in which transgression is part of the game.”⁴⁴

In this picture, then, the essential “truth” of Bruce Lee and “western” martial arts ideology and practice, along with cultural studies, Derridean deconstruction, and multiculturalism *tout court*, could basically be characterised as exemplary—indeed, sublime—objects of ideology. In this picture, too, therefore, despite all appearances to the contrary, and despite any apparent ethico-political improvement of reduced racism, cultural hybridity, apparent meetings of East and West, or anything else, *all* that we meet in Bruce Lee (and “multiculturalism”) would be the ideological effects of commodification and ideological fetishisation.⁴⁵ This, for Žižek is the effect and power of capitalism’s “real abstraction.” And this is why he lumps together and disdains so much multiculturalism, deconstructionism, new ageism, cultural-studies-ism and postmodernism as expressions of capitalist neoliberalist ideology. In this paradigm, Jacques Derrida, Stuart Hall and Bruce Lee—or at least their progeny—clearly meet. And

the political implication seems clear. Deconstruction, cultural studies, and Bruce Lee are equivalent lapdogs of neoliberalism; both culture and academia are “political” or have “implications” only insofar as they are hapless indices or symptoms of capitalism’s unfettered reign. The popularity of martial arts is fetishistic, phantasmatic, and an unfortunate displacement away from authentic political acts or practices.

6. “Show me some of it!” The Way of Authenticity

In this, the Žižekian position is not only crudely Marxian (not dissimilar to the Adorno of “The Culture Industry”) but—surprisingly, perhaps—also philosophically Heideggerian. The relevance and significance of this claim will hopefully become clear. For Heidegger, as is well known, was deeply interested in the texts of oriental philosophy, in particular the *Tao Te Ching*. Specifically, as is extremely pertinent here, Heidegger was very interested in the question of whether there could be an authentic *philosophical* “bridging” across cultures—and, hence, whether there could be a “genuine” or “authentic” multiculturalism ungoverned by a capitalist logic of commodification.

We see this interest most clearly in Heidegger’s “Dialogue on Language: Between a Japanese and an Inquirer.”⁴⁶ In this Socratic Dialogue-style essay, the Inquirer character (“Heidegger”) argues that “a true encounter [between East Asian and] European existence is still not taking place, in spite of all assimilations and intermixtures.” Translated into the terms of this discussion, such a claim would be as much as to argue that Bruce Lee did not “bridge” anything. To this assertion, Heidegger’s obsequious “Japanese” guest suggests: “Perhaps [‘a true encounter’] cannot take place.”⁴⁷ The reason given for this impossibility is what the “Dialogue” calls the problem of (“American” or)

“Europeanization” —namely, the “modern technicalization and industrialization of every continent, [from which] there would seem to be no escape any longer.”⁴⁸ As such, this is *like* Žižek’s point about capitalism. But Heidegger takes it elsewhere. Indeed, interestingly, the Žižekian position is actually contained within and “sublated” (i.e., completed and superseded) by the Heideggerian argument. For Žižek’s argument is that capitalism is the condition of possibility and therefore of *impossibility*, and the motive force, of cultural (non)encounters today. However, for Heidegger, the fundamental problem—more fundamental than Žižek’s capitalism—is what the “Dialogue” calls “European conceptual systems.”⁴⁹ In the “Dialogue” these are claimed to be essentially different from East Asian conceptual systems. But the difference is also material, as well as aesthetic. In fact, for Heidegger, here, the “European conceptual systems” are said to be most pointedly present in that synthesis of “Western” aesthetics and “Western” technics: the film camera.

Accordingly, in Heidegger’s text—or at least for his imaginary visitor—*all* film (even Kurosawa’s film, *Rashomon*, which the two characters discuss) is an index of an unavoidable Europeanisation. This is because as soon as something—*anything*—is captured on camera, it is committed to a fully Western “objectness.”⁵⁰ This “objectness,” we are told, is apparently alien to all things essentially East Asian, because cinematic “objectness” demands conventions of representation and conventions of *reading* representations that are irreducibly European. Thus, as Stella Sandford points out, Heidegger’s “Dialogue” is in fact fundamentally “preoccupied with the issue of the possibility or impossibility of an East-West dialogue.”⁵¹ Scholars like Reinhard May have read this text “as proof both of Heidegger’s indebtedness to East Asian sources and

his attempts to cover this over.”⁵² But, argues Sandford, “it is equally plausibly read as a statement of Heidegger’s belief in the fundamental and incommensurable *differences* between philosophical traditions, and of the extraordinary difficulty, if not the outright impossibility, of a true dialogue, despite the best intentions of the interlocutors.”⁵³

So, where does this leave us? It suggests that the fundamental problem with Žižek’s position, despite the obvious moment of truth it contains, remains its economic reductionism—the reduction of *everything* to the pseudo-profound “fact” (or objectness) that there *is* an economy and that things can and will be bought and sold. Yet, despite Žižek’s *ad hominem* insinuations, it is important to note that it is certainly *not* actually the economy that cuts off the possibility of “authenticity” or that compromises “encounter.” Rather, the problem is with the very concept itself, what Derrida would once have called its “logocentrism,” its essentialism. Authenticity, conventionally construed, is impossible. Similarly, the problem with this Heideggerian position is, as Sandford clearly points out, that in fact there *is* no “essential East” or “essential West” that are somehow two coherent identities as if tragically cut off from each other. There is only a coherent and distinct “East” and “West” in the fantasy productions of reductive, essentialist, Eurocentric and orientalist or occidentalist paradigms. Indeed, Sandford reminds us, *any* interest that Heidegger might have had in “*the*” East is purely an index of his investment in fantasies about “*the*” West.

7. “These styles become institutes:” The (Political) Institution of Culture

Why does this matter? Its significance relates to the political status of events of institution: it is the question of what passes for knowledge and what sociopolitical effects

that may have. If this seems too grandiose a claim, on a more modest note what it at least means is that a different theoretical paradigm is required for the cultural studies of martial arts than a Žižekian (non-)approach to culture. A straightforwardly *psychoanalytic* approach might tend to universalise and depoliticise, independent of context. A straightforwardly economic approach is insufficient, to the extent that it descends into equally universalistic mantras about the delusions and simulacra of capital. Both of these mutually incompatible and ultimately incoherent failings are present—actually as the key ingredients—in Žižek’s approach. As such, Žižek’s approach to culture and politics is actually anathema to cultural studies (and political studies), even if on first glance his writings sometimes appear to be a kind of political or cultural studies. This is not to say that the insights of psychoanalysis or Marxism are to be rejected. On the contrary, they are necessary—“necessary but insufficient,” as it were—at least as long as they overlook the institutional problematic, the broadly Gramscian post-Marxist matter of the contingency and power of institution. Žižek simply dismisses this when he claims “the ‘truth’ of [the 1960s] transgressive revolt against the Establishment is the emergence of a new establishment in which transgression is part of the game.”⁵⁴ For Žižek, the fundamental backdrop to this constant change is the supposedly unified entity called capitalism. With this, he renounces not only the political propensities of culture and institutions but also the propensities of both politics and study themselves.

What is the alternative to such renunciation? Appropriately enough, it is actually very enlightening to turn from Žižek to one of Bruce Lee’s remarkably perceptive insights. Discussing the martial arts of his day, Lee argued that:

Each man belongs to a style which claims to possess truth to the exclusion of all other styles. These styles become institutes with their explanations of the “Way,” dissecting and isolating the harmony of firmness and gentleness, establishing rhythmic forms as the particular state of their techniques.

Instead of facing combat in its suchness, then, most systems of martial art accumulate a “fancy mess” that distorts and cramps their practitioners and distracts them from the actual reality of combat, which is simple and direct. Instead of going immediately to the heart of things, flowery forms (organized despair) and artificial techniques are ritualistically practised to simulate actual combat. Thus, instead of “being” in combat these practitioners are “doing” something “about” combat.⁵⁵

This insight can surely be generalised. However, the mistake that Bruce Lee made was to believe that what he constructed actually succeeded in going “directly” and “immediately to the heart of things.” That is, Lee too (like Žižek) falls into the trap of believing that his own constructions are “objective,” free from “institution,” free from belief, from theory, from myth and fiction—as if simply “true.” But there is no getting away from the contingency of institution, the contingency of culture. Everything is instituted. And institutions are consequential. As we have clearly seen, Bruce Lee was from the origin a postmodern, interdisciplinary, multicultural and—despite Žižekian dismissiveness of such things—*consequential institution*. The “event” of Bruce Lee was clearly not simple. Perhaps not “deep” or “enigmatic” in any romantic sense, it was nevertheless multiple and complex, simultaneously mythic and real, both theoretical and practical, equally imaginary and institutional. So, *vis-à-vis* the martial arts and questions of cultural knowledge more widely, what is clear is that the approach must always be supplemented with the awareness that “An institution... is not merely a few walls or some outer structures surrounding, protecting, guaranteeing or restricting the freedom of our work; it is also and already the structure of our interpretation.”⁵⁶ So the question will always remain: what’s your style?

¹ *Enter The Dragon* (Robert Clouse, Hong Kong/USA, 1973).

² The full exchange runs:

[*Lee approaches an elderly monk on a path*]

Lee: [*bowing*] Teacher?

Teacher: Hmm. I see your talents have gone beyond the mere physical level. Your skills are now at the point of spiritual insight. I have several questions. What is the highest technique you hope to achieve?

Lee: To have no technique.

Teacher: Very good. What are your thoughts when facing an opponent?

Lee: There is no opponent.

Teacher: And why is that?

Lee: Because the word “I” does not exist.

Teacher: So. Continue.

Lee: A good fight should be like a small play, *but* played seriously. A good martial artist does not become tense, but ready. Not thinking, yet not dreaming: ready for whatever may come. When the opponent expands, I contract; when he contracts, I expand; and when there is an opportunity, I do not hit: [*he raises his fist, but does not look at it*] it hits all by itself.

³ The full scene (actually, a scene within a scene, as Lee has to break off his conversation with the British Agent Mr Braithwaite), runs like this:

Lee: It’s Lau’s time.

Braithwaite: Yes, of course...

Lee: Kick me.... Kick me. [*Lau throws a kick*] What was that? An exhibition? We need [*pointing to his head*] emotional content. Try again.... [*Lau kicks again*] I said emotional content. Not anger! Now try again! With me! [*Lau throws two more kicks, causing Lee to respond*] That’s it! How did it feel to you?

Lau: Let me think.

Lee: [*slaps Lau’s head*] Don’t think! *Feel!* It is like a finger pointing away to the moon. [*slaps Lau’s head*] Don’t concentrate on the finger or you will miss all that heavenly glory. Do you understand?

Lau: [*smiles, nods, bows*]

Lee: [*Slaps the back of Lau’s head*] Never take your eyes off your opponent, even when you bow.... That’s it.

⁴ Quoted by G. C. Spivak in her Translator’s Preface to Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), xiii.

⁵ Stephen Chan, “The Construction and Export of Culture as Artefact: The Case of Japanese Martial Arts” (*Body and Society* 1, 2000), 69.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ Brian Kennedy and Elizabeth Guo have recently gone further than this, focusing on the myths associated with the romanticised “Shaolin Temple.” They write:

“The myth was largely created in two books. In his article, ‘On Politically Correct Treatment of Myths in Chinese Martial Arts,’ Henning states: ‘The origins of this myth cannot be traced back earlier than its appearance in the popular novel, *Travels of Lao Can*, written between 1904 and 1907, and there is no indication that it was ever part of an earlier oral tradition.’

“The second myth that popularized the Bodhidharma-Shaolin temple myth was *Secrets of Shaolin Temple Boxing*, written in 1915 by an unknown author. In his article titled ‘The Chinese Martial Arts in Historical Perspective,’ Henning writes of this book: ‘Both Tang Hao and Xu Je Dong exposed this book’s lack of historicity but, unfortunately, it became popularly accepted as a key source for Chinese martial arts history enthusiasts, and its pernicious influence has permeated literature on the subject to this day.’”

Brian Kennedy and Elizabeth Guo, *Chinese Martial Arts Training Manuals: A Historical Survey* (Berkeley, California: North Atlantic Books, 2005), 70-71.

⁹ Both of these points are regularly clarified in the extensive literature on Bruce Lee. One good discussion can be found in Dan Inosanto, *Jeet Kune Do: The Art and Philosophy of Bruce Lee* (Los Angeles, Know How Publishing, 1980).

¹⁰ Chan, 71. He aligns this with the postmodern condition, proposing that “These days you choose your own myths.”

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid., 70.

¹⁴ Jacques Derrida, *The Gift of Death* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

¹⁵ Derrida, *The Gift of Death*, 12.

¹⁶ This can be seen played out in exemplary fashion in the film *Ghost Dog: The Way of The Samurai* (Jim Jarmusch, 1999). See also, of course, the similarities between G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977) and Tsunetomo Yamamoto and William Scott Wilson, *Hagakure: The Book of the Samurai* (Tokyo and London: Kodansha International, 1979).

¹⁷ See, for instance, Leon Hunt, *Kung Fu Cult Masters* (London and New York: Wallflower, 2003); and Gina Marchetti, *Romance and the "Yellow Peril": Race, Sex, and Discursive Strategies in Hollywood Fiction* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 1993).

¹⁸ The first testimonial on the cover of one edition of *The Book of Five Rings* reads: “Today’s business people will find ... [this] 350-year-old martial arts classic ... compelling and tantalizingly relevant. Perseverance, insight, self-understanding, inward calm even in the midst of chaos, the importance of swift but unhurried action: Musashi’s teachings read like lessons from the latest business management gurus. Who couldn’t succeed in business by applying Musashi’s insights on conflict and strategy!” Mayamoto Musashi, *The Book of Five Rings*, trans. Thomas Cleary (Boston and London: Shambala, 1994).

¹⁹ Jian Xu, “Body, Discourse, and the Cultural Politics of Contemporary Chinese Qigong” (*The Journal of Asian Studies*, 58.4, November 1999), 961-991. This is discussed further below.

²⁰ Greg Downey, “Domesticating an Urban Menace: Reforming Capoeira as a Brazilian National Sport” (*The International Journal of the History of Sport* 4, December 2002), 1-32.

²¹ Terry Brown, *English Martial Arts* (Frithgarth, Norfolk: Anglo-Saxon Books, 1997), 18. See also Gichin Funakoshi, *Karate-Dō: My Way of Life* (Tokyo, New York and London, Kodansha International, 1975).

²² Downey, 2.

²³ Downey, 2-3.

²⁴ Xu, 961.

²⁵ Jacques Derrida, *The Gift of Death*, 8. Those who are very self-reflexively inclined might propose that the tendency of so many recent studies to proceed like this could *itself* be related to something like a common subjection to the dictates of a shared political unconscious, which skew such studies in a particular direction. According to Slavoj Žižek, this is a kind of “cognitive suspension” characteristic of deconstruction and cultural studies: a refusal to ask direct ontological questions about reality in favour of discussing “different discursive formations evaluated not with regard to their inherent truth-value, but with regard to their sociopolitical status and impact.” See Slavoj Žižek, *Did Somebody Say Totalitarianism?: Five Interventions in the (Mis)Use of a Notion* (London: Verso, 2001), 219. Nevertheless, the basic point here is that, for Xu, dealing with China, it *is* possible to tie the body to the nation and to the state, because that which indisputably dominates and defines the geo-political and bio-political context *is* the state. The ability to specify precisely what sets the parameters and determines the state of praxis (or, that is, valid, viable, legitimate activity) enables Xu’s analysis and argument to be clear.

²⁶ Inosanto, 66-67.

²⁷ Jacques Derrida, *Edmund Husserl’s Origin of Geometry: An Introduction* (New York and Brighton: Harvester, 1978 [1962]).

²⁸ Inosanto, 36.

²⁹ Bruce Lee, *Chinese Gung-fu: The Philosophical Art of Self-Defense* (Santa Clarita, California: Ohara Publications, 1987 [1963]).

³⁰ Stuart Hall never seems to have had problems with the name “cultural studies,” apparently because unlike names like “deconstruction” or “jeet kune do,” the name “cultural studies” effectively works in an

opposite direction; i.e., denoting the multiple, the partial, the incomplete and the amorphous, in its very plural vagueness, as opposed to denoting some putatively singular and definite identity.

³¹ Quoted in Sam Weber, *The Legend of Freud* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982), 106.

³² Stuart Hall, David Morley and Kuan-Hsing Chen, eds., *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies* (London: Routledge, 1996), 263.

³³ Chris Rojek, *Stuart Hall* (London: Polity, 2003), 23.

³⁴ However, the similarities between Derrida's statements about the problems and problematics of "Grep" (Groupe de Recherches sur l'Enseignement Philosophique) and "Ciph" (Collège International de Philosophie) and Hall's statements about cultural studies and "the Centre" are striking. See Jacques Derrida, *Who's Afraid of Philosophy? Right to Philosophy I* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2002).

³⁵ Jacques Derrida, *Points... : Interviews, 1974-1994* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1995), 409-410.

³⁶ Carradine would later also star in another unmade Lee project, *The Silent Flute* (a.k.a. *Circle of Iron*, Richard Moore, USA, 1978).

³⁷ This was the proud declaration on the original movie posters advertising *Enter The Dragon*.

³⁸ Bruce Thomas, *Bruce Lee: Fighting Spirit* (Basingstoke and Oxford: Sidgwick and Jackson, 2002), xii.

³⁹ Thomas, xi.

⁴⁰ Quoted by Spivak, xiii.

⁴¹ Thomas, xi.

⁴² Slavoj Žižek, *On Belief* (London: Routledge, 2001), 12, 13.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 31. It may seem "radical," but, he counters, "in the generalized perversion of late capitalism, transgression itself is solicited" (20); "transgression itself is appropriated—even encouraged—by the dominant institutions, the predominant doxa as a rule presents itself as a subversive transgression" (*Totalitarianism*, *Ibid.*: 141); or, "To put it in Hegel's terms, the 'truth' of [any] transgressive revolt against the Establishment is the emergence of a new establishment in which transgression is part of the game" (*On Belief*, 31). Needless to say, to Žižek's mind, this rings true even for such supposedly radical, emancipatory or otherwise transformative intellectual efforts like the "progressive" cultural studies impulse towards inter-, post- and anti-disciplinarity that developed "to overthrow the Eurocentrist curriculum" (*On Belief*, *ibid.*: 215). To him, it is merely another facet of the "deconstructive" or "deterritorialising" logic of capital.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 12-15.

⁴⁶ Martin Heidegger, "A Dialogue on Language: Between a Japanese and an Inquirer," *On the Way to Language* (New York: Harper Collins, 1971).

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁵¹ Stella Sandford, "Going Back: Heidegger, East Asia and 'the West'" (*Radical Philosophy* 120, July/August 2003), 11-22: 14.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ Žižek, 31.

⁵⁵ Bruce Lee, *The Tao of Jeet Kune Do* (Santa Clarita, Ca.: Ohara Publications, 1975), 14.

⁵⁶ Jacques Derrida, "Mochlos; or, the Conflict of the Faculties," *Logomachia: The Conflict of the Faculties*, ed. Richard Rand (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1992), 22-23.