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Fist of Fury or *Drunken Master*: Masculinity, National Identity, and Contemporary China

Peter Benson

ABSTRACT

Despite being products of the same historical moment in Chinese culture, Bruce Lee and Jackie Chan approached the kung fu genre with radically different methods that effectually developed two contrasting kung fu identities: that of tragedy, and that of comedy, respectively. Lee and Chan's embracement of these distinct kung fu identities helped them to engage with transnational issues in Chinese history in ways that were easily accessible to global audiences. While Bruce Lee's films present Lee as a victor who successfully resists the imperial oppression that victimized China during the Century of Humiliation,* Jackie Chan's represent 21st century China's rise to power on the international stage. In this paper, I argue that the films of Bruce Lee and Jackie Chan can be deployed as a lens to demonstrate their engagement with the fluidity and evolution of the masculinity and national identity of the Chinese people.

Bruce Lee and Jackie Chan are two of the most legendary and influential figures in the history of Chinese cinema. Lee and Chan approached the kung fu genre by utilizing radically different methods; these methods effectually developed two contrasting kung fu identities: tragedy and comedy. Lee and Chan's embracement of these distinct kung fu identities helped them engage in China's history of transnational issues in ways that were easily accessible to global audiences. Specifically, Lee deployed the use of racial politics in his films through the advocacy of a Chinese national identity, and utilized his own body as a focal point to alter existing Chinese stereotypes by reinventing Chinese masculinity as resilient, powerful, and competitive. While the iconic Chairman Mao helped China confront the pains of the Century of Humiliation through politics and economics, Lee's films served as a form of catharsis for the national identity and masculinity of the disgraced Chinese people (Rowman & Littlefield, 2007). Just

as Mao's death led to the birth of a new China, it can be argued that Lee's death created a void in the genre that Lee's successor, Jackie Chan, refused to be molded by. Instead, by transforming kung fu tragedy into kung fu comedy, Chan generated a new wave of kung fu cinema that drastically altered the attitude of the medium, and consequently challenged Lee's portrayal of toughness. In contrast to Lee's hard-bodied image, Chan's utilization of humor and comedy returned humanity to the cold masculinity of Lee. This widened the appeal of the kung fu genre beyond the growing pains of the Chinese to the middle class on a global scale. While Bruce Lee's films present Lee as a victor who successfully resists the imperial oppression that victimized China during the Century of Humiliation, Jackie Chan's represent 21st century China's rise to power on the international stage. It can be argued that the films of Bruce Lee and Jackie Chan can be deployed as a lens to demonstrate their engagement with the fluidity and evolution of the

*The "Century of Humiliation" is a term used to describe a period that started in 1840 and ended in 1949 when Mao came to power. This period was characterized by a decrease in China's autonomy due to the expansion of foreign imperial powers such as Japan and Great Britain. According to historian Peter Hays Gries, the century of humiliation consists of two simultaneous narratives for the Chinese people, that of the victor and that of the victim. He discusses this extensively in his article "Narratives to live by: The Century of Humiliation and the Chinese National Identity Today." See Peter Hays Gries, *China's Transformations: The Stories Beyond the Headlines*, 2007.



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masculinity and national identity of the Chinese people.

In order to assess the perceptions of Chinese masculinity and national identity possessed by Lee and Chan, one must first understand the historical context in which they operated and the humiliation that they attempted to overcome. Bruce Lee was born in 1940, at the end of China's Century of Humiliation that spanned from 1840 to 1949. This period represents China's loss of territory and control of their region to imperialist powers. The Century of Humiliation emerged in the wake of the first Opium War in which a series of treaties would result in China losing Hong Kong to Great Britain and being forced to pay punishing indemnities to compensate colonial powers for its losses. These treaties were known as the "Unequal Treaties" because Britain had no obligations despite the amount China was forced to give up. The treaties represented the shift in the balance of power from China to the colonial state (Kaufman, 2010).

China also faced degradation from their eastern rival Japan, who had recognized the utility of western power and influence prior to their fellow easterners, and utilized it to annex Korea and Taiwan in 1910 and 1895 respectively. These acts contributed an additional devastating blow to China's regional influence. As the power of China declined, its government was targeted by various revolutionary movements, resulting in the fall of the Qing dynasty and rise of the Republic of China in 1912. However, this government still suffered from a lack of public support and geographical unification resulting in further harassment from the opportunistic Japanese, most notably during the second Sino-Japanese War (Wilson, 1982).

The most notable memory of the Sino-Japanese war for the Chinese was the infamous Nanking Massacre, also known as the "Rape of Nanking," in which 200,000 to 300,000 Chinese civilians were murdered by Japanese soldiers (Chang, 1997). Despite China appearing as Japan's main adversary during the war, in reality, China was propped up by German, American, and Soviet funding essentially making China a pawn in a game between imperial power players. Though it received economic aid, China still struggled to fend off Japanese aggression until the

United States eventually dropped atomic bombs on Nagasaki and Hiroshima in order to end the Second World War. Despite being a victor of World War II, the Chinese people had grown increasingly agitated after nearly a century of foreign oppression resulting in a post-war political and economic collapse, allowing Mao Zedong and his regime to rise to power and subsequently announce that the Century of Humiliation was at an end.



Figure 1. "Paratrooper manoeuvres," (CPC/1/J/18).
Courtesy of The University of Westminster Archive

The events of the Century of Humiliation drastically altered the Chinese people's understanding of their own national identity. For men in particular, every abuse from foreign imperial powers against China as a nation also symbolically stripped the individual of their own sense of masculinity. Exploring this concept, that Chinese national identity and masculinity are linked such that the role, or identity, of China on the international stage must be understood through its own perception of gender roles.

In her writing about the Chinese's understanding of gender during the Qing dynasty, historian Janet M. Theiss states, "The normative significance of chastity [is] disproportionately amplified by the concrete social and political value of female virtue as an aspect of...reputation" (as cited in Brownell & Wasserstrom, 2002, p. 48). This concept, despite having to do with femininity rather than masculinity, is applicable to

the violation of China's national identity when it is repeatedly, literally, and figuratively violated by the brutal influence of imperial nations. Meanwhile, these powers became the masculine partner in their relationship with China, placing them in an emasculated effeminate role.

For the Chinese, "illicit sexual intercourse represented an assault on the patriarchal household. Specifically, that assault was envisioned as being made by an outside male on another man's household" (Brownell & Wasserstrom, 2002, p. 69). Therefore, at the end of the Century of Humiliation, China's national identity consisted of the disgraced female, raped of her virtue and chastity by imperial powers, and the helpless male, who had failed to protect his household, a physical manifestation of his masculinity.

The way China traditionally categorizes gender roles further complicates the dilemma of their national identity. For westerners, gender is typically seen as a product of primary sex characteristics, but the Chinese believe that the way one acts and behaves is more insightful towards their gender identity (Brownell & Wasserstrom, 2002). Therefore, Chinese males were unable to look between their legs to reinforce their sense of masculinity, and instead had to assess their gender by reflecting on their actions, which, as stated earlier, would have been an incredibly humbling task following the Century of Humiliation. Due to China's self-perceived humiliation and masculine deficiencies, a space emerged for Mao Zedong and Bruce Lee to end the Century of Humiliation and return masculinity to the Chinese people.

To combat the victim image of China as a raped female during the Century of Humiliation, Mao stressed the heroic victories of the Chinese people against imperial powers. Gries (2007) states:

Under Mao, China's modern sufferings were blamed on the feudalism of the Qing dynasty and Western imperialism, and the Maoist account of the century highlighted the heroism of the anti-feudal, anti-imperialist masses in throwing-off their chains and repelling foreign invaders. (p. 116)

From this, Mao was able to reimagine the experience of the Chinese people during the Century of Hu-

milation as resilient, perseverant, and heroic rather than submissive and struggling. This transformation of a victim narrative into a victor narrative is indicative of the "fist of fury" that Lee would later utilize to bring national pride and masculinity back to the Chinese people.

In order to successfully manipulate the understanding of the Century of Humiliation and simultaneously cultivate pride for the Chinese Communist Party, Mao suppressed any writing that utilized the symbol of China as a raped woman (Gries, 2007). In its place emerged media regaling the bravery and masculinity of heroes, such as Lin Zexu, in their rebellion against foreign invaders as a rallying cry for the nation (Gries, 2007). Mao continued the effort of reinventing China's nationality and masculinity through a victor narrative throughout his career ultimately culminating in his sponsorship of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in August of 1966 (Schoppa, 2011).

Several Cultural Revolution posters hailed Chinese men, particularly those who were physically strong, as cultural heroes. Many of these posters featured men who were physically robust and were often depicted as having a background in the military or engaging in physically demanding labor. These posters celebrated the work ethic and tenacity of the prole-



Figure 2. "Women can hold up half the sky; surely the face of nature can be transformed," (CPC/1/Q/1). Courtesy of The University of Westminster Archive

tariat in addition to demonstrating the technological advances China had made in industry, military, and agriculture. Posters that depict females (who are not in the context of a man or simply studying Mao's philosophies) portrayed them as having masculine features, wearing masculine clothes, and engaging in physical labor. This celebration of ideal male characteristics in both men *and* women during one of China's most important revolutions highlights their strong cultural bond between masculinity and national identity.

Like Mao, Bruce Lee engaged with the victor narrative and utilized similar tactics to highlight the heroism of anti-imperialists. Throughout his entire filmography, Lee continually placed the national honor of the Chinese at stake by villainizing the Japanese, or conjured the history of contemporary Chinese colonialism by villainizing British imperials. According to his widow:

Bruce's whole life [is] a play between East and West. He hated the oppression of "little people," which he saw everywhere: in the Japanese occupations, the Boxer Rebellion, the foreign powers going into China, he...thought all of that was wrong. (sia gunn, 2014)

In essence, both Lee and Mao took the victim narrative of the Century of Humiliation and upturned it into a heroic victor narrative. Because he worked in a historical moment after China had been repeatedly disgraced and violated by foreign powers, Lee's cinematic triumphs acted as therapy to anyone in the act of reconfiguring their own cultural identity. Therefore, Lee became a champion to any Chinese person who had felt the oppression of colonial powers and successfully turned the victor narrative of the Century of Humiliation into a victor narrative.

Several common themes throughout Lee's films allowed him to act as a vessel for his own national identity, while also avoiding the alienation of his culturally diverse audience. Lee acted as a champion of the Chinese people. In films such as *The Big Boss* and *Way of the Dragon*, Lee leaves his ancestral homeland to aid expatriate Chinese who are living in oppression by foreigners. This strong commitment to family and a sense of national identity in a culturally for-

eign land resonated with third world audiences and migrant workers who were experiencing the same experiences of alienation. Additionally, the wardrobe of powerful figures in Lee's films, including Lee himself, typically consists of clothing traditional to mainland China (Chow & Wei, 1971). For example, in *Fist of Fury*, Lee sports a *Zhongshan* suit, which had grown in popularity among Chinese men because of Mao Zedong's fondness towards them starting in 1949. Conversely, Lee's Japanese adversaries wear traditional Japanese clothing, including *karategis*. This careful wardrobe selection polarizes, racializes, and radicalizes the conflict to audiences. The hero, Lee, was visually Chinese, and the villains were visually Japanese therefore thrusting the Chinese national identity in the face of foreign adversaries.



Figure 3. "Reap a big harvest and store grain everywhere," (CPC/1/A/60). Courtesy of The University of Westminster Archive

Lee's most legendary fight scene is an excellent example of this concept. In *Fist of Fury*, Japanese samurai question the strength and masculinity of the members of a Chinese martial arts school by sending them a banner inscribed "Sick Men of Asia" (Chow & Wei, 1972). This is a direct assault against both the Chinese national identity and the masculine body. Upon being presented the banner, Lee remains passive, seething in anger but also demonstrating level-headedness in the face of humiliation. This patience is later rewarded when Lee visits the Japanese dojo with banner in hand (thus branding the Japanese as "sick men") (Chow & Wei, 1972). He then proceeds to defeat the entire class and its instructor single-handedly before stating, "Now you listen to me... We are not sick men!" (Chow & Wei, 1972). By utilizing the

word “we,” Lee places the model of Chinese national identity and masculinity upon his own shoulders (Shu, 2004, p. 50). During the fight itself, Lee removes his shirt, drawing focus to his muscular body, which stands in contrast to the robed Japanese. Additionally, Lee picks up two Japanese combatants and whirls like a dervish before launching them across the room. If the 5'7" Bruce Lee, who weighed in at only 128 pounds, could man-handle two Japanese men in such a way, surely other Chinese men could do the same (Shu, 2003, p. 50).

The subservient role of women in Lee's films also strengthens Lee's own masculine image. Throughout his filmography, Lee drinks, has sex, and has frequent rendezvous with prostitutes (Chow & Wei, 1971). In *The Big Boss*, Lee gets drunk, impressing his friends, and then is “seduced” by a prostitute (Chow & Wei, 1971). Lee's domination of the female's contrasting femininity portrays Lee as a “man's man” with sex appeal, all of which reinforce his own masculine image, and therefore the Chinese national identity.



Figure 4. “Develop military sports activities and defend the socialist motherland,” (CPC/11/J/27).

Courtesy of The University of Westminster Archive

Understanding the effectiveness of Lee's utilization of the kung fu genre requires an exploration of the historical birth of the genre. By doing this, we can gain insight on why kung fu films were an effective medium and how they relate to China's national identity. Contrary to popular belief, the use of martial arts in Chinese cinema extends beyond just kung fu films. *Wuxia*, which translates to English as “martial hero,” is a wide genre of Chinese fiction concerning the story of a martial artist in ancient China (Teo, 2009). Despite being over 2,000 years old, the modern *wuxia* did not emerge into popularity until 1920.

The genre's modern growth was a result of the May Fourth Movement, which urged the Chinese people to value movies and literature that broke away from traditional Confucian values. Like the Chinese national hoped to do during the May Fourth Movement, the protagonist, or *xia*, of the *wuxia* genre became a symbol of freedom in defiance of tradition. As a result of its sudden relevance in modern culture, the *wuxia* medium and its popularity continued to grow. The popular genre subsequently developed subgenres, one of which was the *shenguai wuxia* (martial arts of ghosts and spirits) subgenre (Teo, 2009). *Shenguai wuxia* featured heavy usage of special effects and fantasy tropes that ended up turning off viewers to the film, rather than sparking their imaginations. As a reactionary backlash to the *shenguai* subgenre, kung fu films were developed after 1938. While kung fu films still feature a *xia*-like character, the genre utilized heavy realism, martial arts, and a contemporary setting, all of which stood in stark contrast to typical *wuxia* tropes. This realistic and modern setting served as the perfect backdrop, allowing Bruce Lee (and later Jackie Chan) to effectively shatter the silver screen and send a direct message to their respective audiences.

In addition to being realistic, kung fu films had the advantage of being relatively straightforward in plot. They were therefore able to portray a more abstract message, as the audience did not have to mentally process and interpret the proceedings of the film before analyzing its message. The focus of the film shifted instead to the characters who drove the actions, but, uniquely, the characters remained simple and served only to highlight Bruce Lee as the central point of the film. The names and backstories of the characters may have shifted from film to film, but Lee essentially played himself in all of his movies. This explains the success of the genre despite its shallowness: audiences were magnetized by the raw talent of Lee rather than intricate plots, interesting characters, or witty dialogue. In his films, Lee was not a Chinese man playing characters; he was simply a Chinese man being himself. Even timeless characters such as Chen Zhen, originally portrayed by Lee and later resurrected by Donnie Yen and Jet Li, are merely reflections of Lee. By allowing Chinese men to be themselves rather than attempting to portray a character, the simplistic realism of the kung fu genre

placed Chinese masculinity and physical prowess at the forefront.

Despite the effectiveness of Lee's films for conveying his ideologies, they also have limitations. Clearly, Lee had improved China's perception of its own masculinity and national identity; nevertheless, he was unable to extend his reach past his own anti-imperial sentiments. While Lee presented himself as the hero of the victor narrative in the face of oppression, his reliance on the victim/victor narrative as a backdrop perpetuated China's subservience at the international level. Furthermore, while China certainly had a variety of heroes during its Century of Humiliation, it is inarguable that these heroes are a minority and an exception to the suffering and tragedy endured by masses of Chinese people. The need for Lee and Mao's victim narrative only served to allow those not ready to confront the trauma to ignore their fears rather than overcome them. Toward the time of his death, Lee's caricature of hypermasculinity, treatment of women, and racial preoccupations no longer reflected the views of the global world around him. If the Chinese wanted to maintain the development of their national identity on a global scale into the late 20th and 21st centuries, the kung fu genre needed to evolve. The death of Bruce Lee created a void in the genre within which Lee's successor, Jackie Chan, refused to continue. Instead, by infusing the kung fu genre with comedy, Chan generated a new wave of kung fu cinema that drastically altered the attitude of and towards the medium.

China itself also underwent a massive shift in ideology under Deng Xiaoping. "Socialism with Chinese Characteristics" would allow China to shed the skin of prior economic failures and become included in transnational neoliberal capitalism on their own terms (Schoppa, 2011, p. 367). The People's Republic of China (PRC) government maintains to this day that it has not abandoned Marxism, but is simply redefining many of the aspects of Marxist theory to accommodate its new economic system. Similarly, Jackie Chan had to reimagine the kung fu genre in order to broaden the appeal beyond victims of oppression by instead marketing himself to a massive global middle-class audience that was dominated by western culture.

Chan's first films unsuccessfully attempted to fit the mold first pioneered by Lee (Shu, 2003). Chan was talented but was no replacement for the iconic Chinese hero. To solve this dilemma, Jackie Chan needed to change the kung fu genre and create his own mold. Once he gained creative control, he set out to (literally) change the face of kung fu cinema. To do this, Chan became the antithesis to Lee: "When he kicks high, I kick low. When he [is] not smiling, I [am] always smiling. He can [take] one-punch [to] break the wall; after I break the wall, I hurt. [After that] I do the funny face" (Shu, 2003, p. 50).

Chan adapted the kung fu genre to appeal beyond victims of oppression by marketing himself to a global middle-class audience. By abandoning China's victim narrative, Chan dissipated the threat of modern China seeking revenge on their imperial oppressors. Furthermore, in contrast to the cold, hardened masculinity Lee and Mao tied to China's national identity, Chan instead emphasized globality, hybridity, and circulation. Like Lee, Chan's earlier films typically featured a Chinese man in Asia, but, in his American cinema debut, *Rumble in the Bronx*, Chan is instead a Chinese man in New York City. Rather than providing western audiences with a window into Eastern culture, Chan shatters the fourth wall by placing himself in a middle-class western society. Chan's desire to return humanity to the Chinese kung fu star led to his great success in the genre.

Just as China needed to shed the skin of Mao to progress, Chan would need to uproot everything Lee had established in the genre to make it his own. In contrast to Lee's visibly Chinese wardrobe, Chan's American films featured him wearing jean jackets, boxer briefs, t-shirts, and light wash jeans, further demonstrating to the western audience that he could successfully adopt their culture. Lee's choice to wear Mao's suggested garment of choice in his films personified China, but had the drawback of portraying it through a figure who represented communism and other alienating concepts to the western world. Outside of Chan's wardrobe, the outfits worn by characters in *Rumble in the Bronx* highlight (in an almost corny way) New York City's own diversity with characters personifying punk, Native American, gangster, greaser, and a variety of other aesthetics. Therefore, Chan and his films advocate the expression of hybridity, plurality, and global circulation. Through

this careful wardrobe selection, Jackie Chan cemented himself as a homogenous part of western society.

Instead of racial politics fueling his films, Chan further differentiated himself from Lee by making racial diversity comical. Chan himself faced a variety of humorous growing pains as a Chinese man in the western world. For example, in *Rumble in the Bronx*, Chan believes the first Asian woman he sees is his aunt, only to learn that his aunt is actually African-American (Tung & Tong, 1995). In this way, Chan demonstrated his own faults, which, in turn, further humanized his character. Rather than subscribing to Lee's rigid racial preoccupation, Chan instead chose to adapt to a diverse society. By doing this, Chan immersed himself in the culture of the viewer, softening the Orientalist representations of Lee. Rather than playing the role of the victor in a victim narrative, Chan becomes a representative of China in the western world whose easy-going, nonalienating, and win-win approach to diversity is symbolic of China's emergence into neoliberal global capitalism.

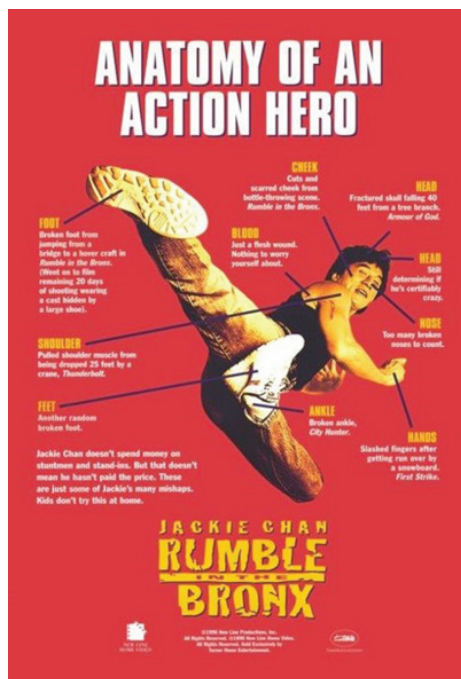


Figure 5. *Rumble in the Bronx*, 1995

Not only did Chan represent a more well-rounded worldview, his own emotions and actions were far more rational than Lee's. For example, if Chan faced an entire dojo of trained Japanese fighters as Lee did *Fist of Fury*, he would have made the logical choice to avoid confrontation. In fact, a majority of the action in Chan's films concern him narrowly escaping

swarms of adversaries through a variety of stunts and acrobatics. Chan typically only resorted to violence when necessary to protect himself, his friends, or his family. In this way, Chan presented himself as a problem solver, rather than a hotheaded vigilante whose actions were at the mercy of oppressing foreigners.

The role of women in Chan's films also stood in stark contrast to that of Lee's. In several of his movies, Jackie Chan has female sidekicks, who are equally as capable as him in a fight. In fact, women even had strong roles in his pre-American films, which took place in a pre-modern China. For example, in *Drunken Master II*, Chan's mother aids Jackie in deceiving his father, gambles, drinks, and refuses to shy away from violence (Tsang & Kar-leung, 1994). The equality between male and female figures in Chan's films stands in stark contrast to the hypermasculinity of Lee and the Cultural Revolution posters. Rather than needing to suppress femininity in order to demonstrate masculinity, Chan presents males and females as equal contributors (and patrons) to a globalized world. By utilizing both strong female characters and humor that drew attention to the weaknesses of filial piety, Chan dismissed archaic Chinese values and widened his global audience to reflect the modern treatment of women.

Chan's refusal to subscribe to Lee's caricature of hypermasculinity did not mean that he was not equally as masculine. Specifically, one major difference Chan implemented to the kung fu genre was the utilization of stunts. Like Lee, Chan refused to use special effects or stunt doubles, but he also extended the limits of the masculine body beyond choreographed fight scenes. Chan even included footage of his failed stunts during the credits of his movies, continuing to shatter the silver screen by showing the audience the exact amount of blood, sweat, and tears that are involved in his process (Tsang & Kar-leung, 1994). This behind-the-scenes look at filmmaking demonstrated not only Chinese advances in special effects (or lack thereof) and choreography, but also technology and industry.

Despite their promotion of the globality, plurality, and circulation of global capitalism, Chan's films are also aware of their negative aspects. This (ironically) further helps them to connect with his consumers. Just as Lee's resistance towards imperialism

empathized with victims of oppression, Chan's films empathize with victims of global capitalism. For example, the gang members portrayed in *Rumble in the Bronx*, who are representatives of different American stereotypes, are forced to band together and operate in gangs in order to survive the hardships of capitalism. This also highlights the loss of power experienced by the individual citizens in both the American and Chinese governments. While the lottery-like game of global capitalism greatly benefits those who control it, the individual is left without the voice or power to fend for themselves. Chan's portrayal of racial diversity also hides tension and competition which in turn highlights the hypocrisy of races who are pushed further and further together as globality increases. With an ironic sense of humor, Chan mocks the superficial success of global capitalism and therefore "socialism with Chinese characteristics" (Schoppa, 2011, p. 367).

By embodying modern transnational values, Chan foreshadowed and became symbolic of the rise of 21st century China. Similar to how Chan changed the perception of the Chinese by inserting himself into western culture and markets with a friendly face, "the PRC's speedy economic growth has bought it strategic, political, and commercial significance, all of which highlight its expanding relevance" (Wachman, 2011, p. 120). In comparison to the modern western action star, Chan stated,

In American movie now, walking is special effect, talking is special effect, everything special effect. And American heroes never scared. Put a gun to their head, they say "shoot me, shoot me." But I'm not a superhero, I'm a real human being...[With special effects] you can be superwoman. You can lift a car up. That's special effects. Everybody can be a superman, but nobody can be a Jackie Chan. My body is my special effects. (Shu, 2003, p. 50)

This quote embodies his separation from Hollywood action stars. Chan confidently challenged western action stars because of the uniqueness of his product. Because of the high-demand of his films, Chan was able to find a unique niche in the western box-office.

While it is easy to perceive Chan's capture of the western box office, China's grasp on the global political field is just starting to reveal itself. Chan may not use special effects or smoke and mirrors in his work, but it seems as if China is ready to step out from behind the curtain. Chan's fighting style displayed in *Drunken Master* exemplifies this (Wachman, 2011). This style involves feigning drunkenness to trick the opponent into letting their guard down, upon which the kung fu master strikes. By remaining off-balance and "drunk," the kung fu master is able to "roll with the punches" and use their opponent's momentum for his own retaliation.

Despite Bruce Lee and Jackie Chan being cultural figures, their films are also symbolic of modern China's political changes. Therefore, the title of this paper, "*Fist of Fury* or *Drunken Master*," is an illustration of two different approaches to China's relationship with its own history. *Fist of Fury* confronts the trauma of the Century of Humiliation by presenting China with a hero within its victim narrative. By re-inventing their masculine image, Bruce Lee was able to mend the previously shattered Chinese identity. As Deng Xiaoping began to ameliorate China from beyond this shame, cultural bandages and medicines became obsolete; instead, he worked to build upon China's new foundation (Schoppa, 2011). Despite western warnings of a Chinese threat often being derived from predictions of revenge against their imperial oppressors, Jackie Chan's *Drunken Master* made the entrance of the Chinese man onto the neoliberal global capital stage seamless and unintimidating to western society. China's emergence as a booming economy with a growing military force questions the supremacy of the western world. Now that China has successfully "bid its time," their display of wealth during the Olympic Games, economic mobility under "socialism with Chinese characteristics," and rapid military expansion signifies a return to the *Fist of Fury* of Bruce Lee as an attempt to resist and challenge the hegemony of Pax Americana (Schoppa, 2011, p. 367). While 21st century China has only begun to cement themselves as a global power, following the agile steps of Jackie Chan foreshadows its success on the international stage.

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