

ISSN 1751-8229

Volume Seven, Number Four

Vikings in Cinema: a Case Study of *How to Train Your Dragon*

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Introduction

If there is any lesson to be learnt from Slavoj Žižek, it is that cinema is the “royal road” to the unconscious, so to speak; a place where social fantasies and dreams are staged (e.g. Žižek 2001). Although archaeology is usually perceived as dealing only with the distant past as well as being a way of unearthing prehistoric artefacts through excavations (Thomas 2004), there are close – and why not – dialectical relations between cinema and archaeology. Two of the most famous archaeologists in the world are Indiana Jones and Lara Croft; both of whom are products of Hollywood. This is one of the ways in which cinema shapes archaeology and how it is perceived by society (Holtorf 2007). This process might likewise work in reverse: archaeology may offer a theoretical framework for understanding films, especially those which are about the distant past.

Archaeologists have invariably been interested in how Hollywood perceives (e.g. Holtorf 2007), or maybe more accurately, misperceives the practice of archaeology (e.g. Fowler 2007). A far rarer perspective has been to use films with no clear references to archaeology and the past to discuss both archaeology itself and archaeological finds. Here two exceptions worth

mentioning are Michael Shanks' (Shanks & Pearson, 2001) interpretations of *Tetsuo: The Iron Man* (1989), *Tetsuo II: Body Hammer* (1991) and *Full Metal Jacket* (1987) as well as a fascinating analysis of *Wall-E* (2008) by Ben Marwick (2010). This paper combines archaeological attention to the past (the Vikings and their material culture, beliefs and so on and a Žižekian fascination with Hollywood films to examine *How to Train Your Dragon* (2010), a 3-D animated film about Vikings for children.

Archaeology and meta-stories

In the contemporary world archaeology matters *not* so much because of the stories it tells about the past but rather, as Cornelius Holtorf (2010: 391) recently pointed out: 'archaeology matters when its meta-stories matter'. By the same token, the German archaeologist claims that archaeology today needs more careful reflection upon how archeological discoveries, interpretations, etc. evoke more general dilemmas of humanity. In other words, the relevance of archaeology might lie in making itself meaningful existentially, socially, and politically for present-day society. That is why an epistemological level of archaeological research (e.g. how can one gain reliable knowledge about the past?) seems to be of less social importance.

Archaeological stories may be considered in different ways (Pluciennik 1999). For example, an archaeological story can be defined as 'an account of one or more characters acting out plots in a sequence of events that contain a distinctive beginning, middle and end' (Holtorf 2010: 381; see also Pluciennik 1999: 654-5). Such stories are usually about archaeologists and their profession (e.g. conducting excavations). Analysing this kind of archaeological story means to scrutinise its explicit messages e.g.: how the past and archaeology in documentaries screened on the *Discovery Channel* are presented. Without any doubt, archaeological stories do not only include those produced or supervised by archaeologists. Such kind of stories also include Hollywood films about archaeology and different visions of the past for example, *10.000 B.C.* (2008) directed by Roland Emmerich. That is why meta-stories of archaeology should be perceived as underlining aspects of archaeological stories where 'contemporary audiences feature themselves as characters, engulfed in a plot about archaeology or the past that gives meaning and perspective to their lives' (Holtorf 2010: 383). These stories touch upon such almost eternal dilemmas of humanity as e.g.: a) what it means to be human, b) who we are as members of a particular group, and c) how we might live under different circumstances (Holtorf 2010: 384). Hollywood films often belong to this type of story as well. Which one of us, while watching *Indiana Jones* did not dream of discovering the

same priceless artefacts? Being an archaeologist is a way to oppose Nazi Germany. This is another meta-story of archaeology: through unearthing artefacts, one is always in the middle of the fight between good and evil.

Very often archaeological stories collapse with their own meta-stories. Let us say that an archaeologist somewhere has published a book on swords dating from the Early Middle Ages. Such a book is definitely an archaeological story. However, people interested in the archaeology, history and prehistory of their own countries, read it at a meta-level. This is precisely the case of many historical re-enactors of the Early Middle Ages, at least in Poland where I conducted research into this subject during the last three years (2011-2013). A typical sword is seen as a token of the greatness of a historical Poland. A quite ordinary axe from the tenth century is proof of the fearlessness of Slavic warriors, etc. (Figure 1)



FIGURE 1 Meta-artefacts, Wolin 2012, Poland (Dawid Kobiałka).

The same claim is valid about the films featuring Indiana Jones and Lara Croft. Although these films are about archaeology and archaeological finds, they are at the same time about the fight between good and evil; they are meta-films. If Indy had not halted the Nazis in *Indiana Jones: Raiders of the Lost Ark* (1981), World War II would have had a different outcome. The story continues, if Lara had not stopped the evil forces in *Lara Croft Tomb Raider: The Cradle of Life* (2003), we would be living in a rather different world. My point here is very simple: when an

archaeological story overlaps with its own meta-story, it is not usually an innocent process. Such moments are often ideologically stigmatized and deserve careful analysis.

Cinema and ideology

Žižek has recently proposed, apropos of a way of interpreting films, a useful distinction between two kinds of ideology. On the one hand, one can speak of a *constituted ideology* which is about empirical manipulation with regard to 'objective' reality, history etc. In other words, this kind of ideology is operative at the level of content. On the other hand, there is also *constituent ideology* – 'the ideological form which provides the coordinates of the very space within which the content is located' (Žižek 2010: 55).

Žižek discusses the film *Enigma* (2001), directed by Michael Apted, among others, as an example of how these two levels of ideology work. Set in England during World War II, the title *Enigma* is taken from a German secret code which the Allies are attempting to crack. According to the Slovenian philosopher, an analysis of constituted ideology would focus upon the elements of the film which contradict the reality of World War II, for example: this event did not occur in reality; it is simply a fantasy created by the director, etc. Worth pointing out is the fact that this is essentially the path that academics (including professional archaeologists) have followed in their analyses of Hollywood films. For instance, 'Indiana Jones has nothing to do with a true archaeology' – I used to hear similar words very often as a young student of archaeology.

Nonetheless, there is also constituent ideology to be taken into account. At first sight *Enigma* seems to be about cracking the German code. However, Žižek claims that this is only half of the story. *Enigma* is also a love-story between Tom Jericho and Claire Romilly. Tom, a skillful cryptologist falls in love with Claire but she soon disappears. That is why the film is simultaneously about cracking the code and finding out what happened to the missing woman. The underlying message of the film is easy to detect: what is the *enigma*, the top-secret German code in comparison with the *true enigma*, woman? In accordance with this, the film projects the fantasy that men will sooner or later break any secret code, however what cannot ever be cracked (understood) is woman, the only true (the only Real, as Lacan would have said) enigma. As Žižek (2010: 56) claims: 'By re-framing the story of the effort to break the German "enigma" code into a story about the enigma of woman, what the film adds to the narrative is ideological surplus-enjoyment: it is this re-framing which sustains our pleasure in the otherwise narratively rather dull work of cracking secret codes'. Constituted ideology is relatively easy to approach. It is based on the premise of detecting moments when historical facts are misused, so when the

film is about World War II, a good historian is necessary to pinpoint all the manipulations with regard to 'objective historical reality'. By the same token, when a film is about archaeology, what is required is a professional archaeologist who would highlight these elements of the film which are inconsistent with archaeological knowledge about the past. Constituent ideology is a trickier thing. It usually appears in the guise of the very opposite, of non-ideology, of something so natural that does not deserve critical analysis.

A further example of Žižek's discourse on ideology at a formal level is *Kung Fu Panda* (2008), an animated film about a young, rather inept, panda who becomes a Kung Fu warrior. The film is full of oriental mysticism and Kung Fu ethos. The heroes know very well that it is all based on an irrational belief, and though they make fun of it all the time they do practice these beliefs. And this is how constituent ideology generally functions today. People are well aware that something is simply an irrational practice, but they continue to uphold it as part of their culture, a way of life. It is no coincidence that *Kung Fu Panda* stages contemporary ideology so directly (Žižek 2010: 66):

When even products of an allegedly "liberal" Hollywood display the most blatant ideological regression, is any further proof required that ideology is alive and kicking in our post-ideological world? It should not surprise us, then, to discover ideology at its purest in what may appear to be products of Hollywood at its most innocent: the big blockbuster cartoons.

"The truth has the structure of fiction" – is there a better exemplification of this thesis than those cartoons, in which the truth about the existing social order is rendered in such a direct way that it would never be allowed in narrative cinema with "real" actors?

Assuming that the past (e.g. the Vikings) is relevant because of the meta-stories it refers to, I am going to claim that one another interesting example where a story overlaps with its own meta-story is *How to Train Your Dragon*.

How to Train Your Dragon in itself

How to Train Your Dragon is a 3-D computer-animated film directed by Chris Sanders and Dean DeBlois based loosely on a series of books by Cressida Cowell (2003).¹ The story takes place on Berk, a mythical isolated island inhabited by the Vikings. The chieftain of Vikings is Stoick the Vast, the most fearless of all the Vikings. Stoick must protect his community from the terrifying dragons which threaten its very existence. This idyllic village where everyone lives in harmony with nature and each other has been under attack from these extremely dangerous beasts for seven generations. The dragons have been stealing sheep, the Viking's main source of food.

And so this is where the film begins, with the village defending itself from another onslaught. As almost always in the case of Hollywood productions, a parallel motif of the film is the Oedipal relationship between son and father, in this case, between Hiccup Horrendous Haddock III and his father – Stoick the Vast.

When the dragons attack the village once again, Hiccup wants to show that he is just like everyone else. He has built a special catapult which should enable him to catch a dragon. Surprisingly, or perhaps not, as there is always some sort of *deeper historical necessity* in such stories, he manages to hit the most dangerous of all known dragons, a Night Fury. No one believes him for the dragon fell to the ground somewhere in the forest. Then, Hiccup is attacked by another dragon. Stoick runs to the aid of his son and in so doing deserts his defensive post. As a result, the dragons take many sheep and Hiccup is blamed for this loss. The village elders hold a meeting where it is decided that the hive of dragons has to be destroyed. Stoick, together with a number of other fearless Vikings set off in order to find and destroy, once and for all, the cause of their misery. At the same time Hiccup decides to find the Night Fury. Believing in the elders' stories, he is afraid of this, the most dangerous of all dragons. An old Viking saying goes round and round in his mind: 'Remember, a dragon will always... always go for the kill'. Hiccup discovers that this terrifying creature is as afraid of him as he is of it. Worth noting is the deeply Levinasian dimension of this scene, as Hiccup stated to a friend in the middle of the film: 'I looked at him [the Night Fury – D.K.] and I saw myself'. Or, as Emanuel Levinas (1967: 198) pointed out: 'the face speaks to me and thereby invites me to a relation'.

One of the *rites of passage* (Van Gennep 2010) of the young Vikings is to kill a dragon; only then does one truly become a Viking. Young boys (and one girl – Astrid) are put in a dragon-killing class where they are taught how to effectively fight the dragons. Hiccup spends more and more time with the Night Fury. They become friends. The Night Fury now has a name – Toothless. Hiccup also discovers many weak points of the dragons and uses this knowledge in the training class. Meanwhile, Stoick returns. They did not find the hive Hiccup is chosen as the one to slay a dragon at the ceremony. Instead of killing a dragon, Hiccup wants to show that the dragons can be friends of the Vikings. This causes a paternal outburst, Stoick is furious. Things start to get messy and the frightened dragon tries to kill Hiccup forcing Stoick to intervene. Toothless, who hears the commotion, quickly appears in the ring to help his friend. Of course, everyone is scared of the Night Fury, the most dangerous dragon. Stoick discovers that Hiccup, Astrid, and Toothless have visited the hive of dragons. He decides to take the Night Fury (because only a dragon can find the hive) and all the Vikings to find and destroy the dragons once and for all. Their attack however is unsuccessful. The hive is a home to a much bigger and

even more dangerous dragon. The viewer learns that the poor dragons have been taking sheep because they were afraid of this monster. Although he had been ordered to stay on the island, Hiccup decides he has to do something. Riding on dragons, Hiccup and some friends fly out to help the tribe. Of course it is Hiccup and the Night Fury who kill the terrible hive dragon. There is a happy ending, the last scene is of the Vikings living happily on Berk side by side with the dragons.

How to Train Your Dragon for itself

An analysis of constituted ideology regarding *How to Train Your Dragon* would need to emphasise all the empirical manipulations seen in the film. A *deep* critic (Kobiałka 2013a) would definitely start by complaining about the Vikings' helmets. In the film the Vikings wear helmets with cow's horns, which have no confirmation in archaeological finds (Figure 2). The same has to be said apropos of the different types of fibulas, axes and swords used by the Vikings. In short, they use material culture unknown to archaeologists and historians. The story goes on, one should criticise the film because of how the Vikings are presented only as warriors. Many detailed archaeological studies have shown the Vikings traded with different tribes (e.g. Roesdahl 1991; Klaesøe 2010), that the role of women in society was much more important than it is usually assumed (e.g. Graham 2008; Norrman 2008), up to and including the fact that Viking life was not only about conquering other lands (e.g. Byock 2001) etc. The result of such a critique would be the claim that the film is just an animation and cannot be treated seriously, as something that can say something significant about the past, archaeology, and the contemporary world overall. The critique of constituent ideology is focused upon different aspects.



FIGURE 2 A young Viking during a historical re-enactment event, Grzybowo 2012, Poland (Dawid Kobiałka).

The first step in the analysis of the constituent ideology of any film is to imagine the same story but without its leitmotif. The first question then is by definition a very naïve one such as: what do the birds embody in Alfred Hitchcock's *The Birds* (1963); why did the *Titanic* (1997) hit the iceberg in James Cameron's film of the very same title; or, in the case of *How to Train Your Dragon*, what do the dragons manifest in the film? According to Žižek, the birds stand for the possessive maternal (Lydia Brenner's) super-ego, an agency trying to prevent sexual relations between her beloved son Mitch and a very attractive young woman, Tippi Hedren. Similarly, the *Titanic* hit the iceberg to prevent a true catastrophe which would be the life of a rich woman (Rose DeWitt Bukater) if she had married a poor workman (Jack Dawson). In a homologous way, what is the film about the dragons but *without the dragons*? In fact, it would just be a dull story about a young boy who is not accepted by others.

Although Berk is located – as Hiccup claims – ‘12 days north of hopeless and a few degrees south of freezing to death’, surprisingly, the Vikings' crucial problem are the dragons, something rather external to their otherwise harmonious, peaceful society. To put it simply, are the dragons not an embodiment of a right-wing ideological fantasy of immigrants who dare to disturb and destroy our society and fatherland?² The dragons kill the Vikings, burn down their houses and – as this issue is always raised with regard to immigrants – steal the results of the Vikings' hard work. Of course, in the film the dragons are not a cheap workforce but they are the ones who steal the fruit of the Vikings' labour (sheep). To account for such an archaeological

meta-story in *How to Train Your Dragon* one has to refer to Adolf Hitler. Please recall how Hitler, in the 1930s, explained the misery and troubles of the Germans. The blame was put on an external foreign body, the Jewish people. Hitler's fantasy hinged on a belief that once the problem of the Jews was solved the harmonious development of a German society would be possible (Žižek 1989). However, from a politically left-wing position it should always be emphasised that there is no harmonious social body; there is no such thing as society. This alleged body is inherently wounded and divided by the *class struggle*. In other words, the problem is not the Jews, as for Hitler; not the dragons, as for the Vikings living in Berk, but domination, exploitation etc. – in short, the system (capitalism) itself.

It needs to be highlighted that life in either a Viking village in the ninth century or the imagined mythical Berk was definitely not, for most of its inhabitants, heaven on earth. If there is a chieftain, then there must be those who follow his orders, work for him, are – to put it simply – exploited by him. If there is a class of warriors, then there are also those who have been conquered, taken into slavery, or killed. In such a patriarchal and, if you will, 'phallogocentric' universe (e.g. Derrida 1976, 1978) women, the disabled and children are factually excluded from the life of society. All these antagonisms are surprisingly absent in the film. Instead of a dynamic internal struggle *within* the Viking society, one common external enemy is projected: the dragons (Figure 3).



FIGURE 3 World without class struggle?: an entrance to the Museum of Foteviken, Höllviken 2013, Sweden (Dawid Kobińska).

Berk can be interpreted much more generally too. Is not this nice and peaceful village where the Vikings live strangely familiar? The village is like many archaeological open-air museums where historical re-enactment events often take place (Paardekooper 2012). During such events, historical re-enactors live a utopian life without all the troubles and antagonisms of their day-to-day reality. Such an interpretation of Berk may be supported by Hiccup's own words: 'It's [Berk is – D.K.] located solidly on the Meridian of Misery. [...] It's been here for seven generations but every single building is new'. The same concerns archaeological open-air museums. Their facilities look very old, as if they were from a different reality (e.g. the Viking times) *but every single building is new* (Figure 4).



FIGURE 4 One of many contemporary Berks, Wolin 2012, Poland (Dawid Kobińska).

The official ideology of the Vikings in the film is very masculine. A good patriot, an ideal Viking is muscular, strong, fearless and always ready to kill the dragons. Hiccup most definitely is not one of them. He is truly a multicultural left-wing character, if there ever was one in animated films for children. Instead of fighting against the enemies, Hiccup tries to *understand them* ('I looked at him [Toothless – D. K.] and I saw myself'). He is clumsy, thin, and weak. This

is how young left-wing activists are usually portrayed by the *real* men, which here means strong, traditional, patriotic right-wing men. There is more, Hiccup even has a notebook where he writes down all his observations and ideas. It is as if, the differences between Hiccup and the other Vikings represent another contemporary ideological fantasy: 'lefties' visit libraries, whereas those who support the right spend time in gyms³.

Another aspect of contemporary ideology is pictured in the scene when Hiccup and other young Vikings, after the first lecture in dragon-killing class, eat dinner together. The teacher (Gobber the Belch) advises his pupils to carefully study *The Dragon Manual*. As he clearly points out, it is the book on 'Everything we know about every dragon we know of'. It is not only that one simply knows something. Knowledge is self-referential here: one knows that one knows. When there are things which we know that we know (known knowns), then there is an open space for further speculations: what about things we know that we do not know (known unknowns), about unknown unknowns (things we cannot even imagine), and finally, things we do not know that we know (unknown knowns – the Freudian definition of the unconscious; see Žižek 2008). Following Gobber's advice, there is a wonderful, purely ideological conversation between the young students:

- Wait? You mean read?
- While we're still alive?
- Why read words when you can just kill the stuff the words tell you stuff about?

Is this not precisely the issue which one confronts every day in one's own academic life? Theory yes, but better in practice! Show the students things in practice rather than *metaphysical* speculations which are more and more, as often stated, useless in the contemporary world. No wonder then Žižek likes to paraphrase the famous 11th thesis on Feuerbach: we wanted to change the world too much, maybe the time has come to interpret it once more.

Last but not least, an interesting problem concerns the colours of the dragons themselves. The viewer sees red dragons, brown dragons and others too. Of course, every dragon is extremely dangerous and ready to kill the poor Vikings but still the most dangerous, far more dangerous than can possibly be imagined, is the Night Fury, a black dragon. To put it plainly, the fantasy behind this idea is that every immigrant is a potential threat to the existence of this harmonious Viking society but the black dragon is the worst of them all. If the film were about the things indicated briefly above, then one could, without hesitation, ban the animation as obscene right-wing ideology. However, the film still touches upon a crucial left-wing axiom. From the perspective of emancipatory politics (e.g. Badiou 2010, 2012; Žižek 2010, 2012; see also

Hewlett 2007), a scene of essential weight is the moment in the first part of the film when Astrid suddenly discovers how Hiccup became the best student in the dragon-killing class. As a result, Hiccup decides to show *the human face* of the Night Fury. They both fly on Toothless. Toothless meets other dragons and follows them. That is how Hiccup and Astrid discover the mythical hive of dragons the goal many unsuccessful Viking enterprises. There is an important dialogue between the heroes:

Hiccup: What my dad wouldn't give to find this.

Astrid: Oh, it's satisfying to know that all of our food has been dumped down a hole.

Hiccup: They're not eating any of it.

Astrid: What ... was that?

Hiccup: Alright, bud, we gotta get out of here. Now!

Astrid: No, no, it totally makes sense. It's like a giant beehive. They're the workers, and that's their queen. It controls them. Let's find your dad.

Now it becomes clear that the Vikings' enemies – the dragons – are not their true enemy. That is to say, the Vikings and the dragons have a common enemy in a big, disgusting dragon. Of course, from the left-wing position this dragon cannot but embody the fundamental lesson according to which our enemy is the system which exploits us all: capitalism itself.

The biggest dragon cannot be defeated by the Vikings alone. Attempts by the Vikings to kill the dragon (capitalism) on their own fail mercilessly every time. The dragon is only defeated when the young Vikings and their dragons cooperate with the older Vikings, fight side by side. Stoick is finally able to understand that the dragons (immigrants), were not the real problem but rather the system (the biggest dragon). He changed his mind because earlier he had seen things differently. Here is a short dialogue between Stoick and Hiccup in the ring:

Stoick: The dragon? That's what you're worried about? Not the people you almost killed?

Hiccup: He [Toothless – D.K.] was just protecting me! He's not dangerous.

Stoick: They've killed hundreds of us!

Hiccup: And we've killed thousands of them. They defend themselves, that's all. They raid us because they have to. If they don't bring enough food back, they'll be eaten themselves.

Žižek (2010) in *Living in the End Times* discusses the new contours of emancipatory politics. He refers, among other things, to the events which happened in the Netherlands. Working-class Arabs attacked gays. The Slovenian philosopher does not approve of such violent attacks on sexual minorities but asks a pertinent question:

Our question to the gays should thus be: what did you do to help the immigrants socially? Why not go there, act like a Communist, organize a struggle with them, work together? The solution of the tension is thus not to be found in multicultural tolerance and understanding but in a shared struggle on behalf of a universality which cuts diagonally across both communities, dividing each of them against itself, but uniting the marginalized in both camps (Žižek 2010: 138).

This is precisely the lesson to be found in *How to Train Your Dragon* too: act together. The Slovenian philosopher refers on the same page to another event of common struggle:

Something along these lines occurred during 2009 in the West Bank village of Bilin, where a Jewish lesbian group, complete with pierced lips, tattoos, etc., came each week to demonstrate against *the village's* partition and demolition, joining ranks with conservative Palestinian women, each group developing a respect for the other. It is through such events, rare as they are, that the conflict between fundamentalists and gays is exposed *for what it is*: a pseudo-struggle, a false conflict obfuscating the true issue (Žižek 2010: 138).

Žižek's observations above are especially valid today. We are all the victims of the financial meltdown of 2008. Many *deep thinkers* were ready to criticise Wall Street, this hive of greed and pure financial speculation. Specific individuals were responsible, not the very system which allows such things to take place in the first place (Žižek 2012).

How to Train Your Dragon ends when there is no longer a *we-they* division, the 'included-excluded' in Berk. Berk is now like a communist society. Is this not a truly Žižekian universe? In *The Year of Dreaming Dangerously* (2012), Žižek highlights a most important axis of contemporary politics, that between the included and the excluded. According to him, without this antagonism other fields of the left-wing struggle (e.g. ecology, intellectual property, biogenetics) can transform into an issue of sustainable development (Žižek 2012: 98). It is only when there is no longer a *we-they* divide that things can start to change for the better. Such a dream is not definitely a utopia. Utopia is rather a belief that things can continue the way they are now (Žižek 2012; Kobiałka 2013b). That is why one can simply claim: *dragons and Vikings of the world unite!* Fortunately, this is the lesson (meta-story) in *How to Train Your Dragon*.

Conclusion

The initial impression of *How to Train Your Dragon* is of a banal, harmless animated film for kids. It was chosen as a case study because it is a film about (a vision of) the past, fearless Vikings who have to confront serious obstacles. Whenever archaeologists have been interested in

Hollywood films, it is usually a critique of how archaeology and, generally, the past are distorted. The point of this paper was that Hollywood can also be used in a positive way. That is to say, cinema can be a tool to show true problems, obstacles, common enemies. *How to Train Your Dragon* can be seen as a story about the past and its empirical manipulations. But, each film is always a meta-story, a film for itself. *How to Train Your Dragon* could therefore be interpreted as an archaeological meta-story of the excluded and the included. There is a lesson to be drawn from such productions like the film studied in this paper. When something appears to be banal, ordinary, it should always give us pause for thought.

Although archaeology is usually perceived as science dealing only with the distant and dead past, it can be of value for the contemporary world as well. Archaeology is relevant to present-day society when its stories are important, when they are meta-stories. *How to Train Your Dragon* is one such archaeological meta-story. Its meta-story, a meta-political message is the following: *dragons and Vikings of the world, unite!* Indeed, this is truly a Marxian (and Žižekian) message for the contemporary world.

Acknowledgements

This publication is part of my research work at Linnaeus University, thanks to a Swedish Institute scholarship.

Notes

1 I rely here on *Wikipedia* (see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/How_to_Train_Your_Dragon_\(film\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/How_to_Train_Your_Dragon_(film)), accessed 15 September 2013).

2 The idea for this paper was born in November 2012. During my work on any paper I am always, among other things, logged onto Facebook. When I was writing down the ideas about immigrants and how they allegedly want to overtake one's fatherland, I found on a friend's (but don't worry, he is not a very good friend of mine) Facebook wall a long discussion about an event which took place in the small Danish town of Kokkedal. Unfortunately, there was not to be Christmas tree in the old market of Kokkedal in 2012 (see <http://pl.radiovaticana.va/Articolo.asp?c=638505>, accessed 15 September 2013). This was the decision of the town council. This would probably all have gone unnoticed by the media and my poor right-wing friends, but the town council consists mostly of Muslims and this fact worries so many of my right-wing friends. They complained that Europe no longer belongs to the Europeans but is being conquered by immigrants.

3 Nowadays the Internet is also one of the ideological battlefields. 1st of November is All Souls' Day. Poland is still a very Catholic country. That is why Halloween is seen as something that undermines Polish traditions which should be cultivated. *True Poles* then try to fight against this process. One of the ways in which this struggle takes place is through different pictures which either make fun of a *stupid* American tradition or call for a patriotic attitude. Just before All Souls' Day, one picture in particular was especially popular on the Internet (see <http://www.dlapolski.pl/10/31/halloween-mamy-wlasne-tradycje/>. Accessed 15 September 2013).

It shows a crossed-out pumpkin. Above the pumpkin are the words: 'Halloween. Are you once again aping Americans?' (my translation). Below the pumpkin are the following interpolations: 'Have you lit a candle for your (dead) grandmother? Don't let it fool you. We have our own traditions!' (my translation). On first sight, everything is clear and easy to interpret. Some Poles are against the 'Americanisation' of their own culture and tradition, worth adding, it is a very right-wing dream. But, is it all really so obvious? What if the case is the opposite? Is it not rather that the underlying message, the message between the lines, is more or less: *Don't let it fool you. We have our own stupid traditions!?* So, this would be proof of Žižek's analysis of *Kung Fu Panda*: we all know that our traditions, ways of life, are fake; nobody takes them seriously but nonetheless they are practised as our own culture.

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