



Fighters, Thinkers, and Shared Cultivation: Experiencing Transformation Through the Long-Term Practice of Traditionalist Chinese Martial Arts

Submitted by George Bradley Jennings, to the University of Exeter as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy by Research in Sport & Health Sciences, August 2010.

This thesis is available for Library use on the understanding that it is copyright material and that no quotation from the thesis may be published without proper acknowledgement.

I certify that all material in this thesis which is not my own work has been identified and that no material has previously been submitted and approved for the award of a degree by this or any other University.

George Bradley Jennings

Acknowledgements

There are so many people that deserve thanks for their individual and collective contributions to this study. To borrow a popular metaphor, this PhD has been a magnificent journey assisted by the guidance of some brilliant people who all played a role in me enrolling in University to finishing the draft after an intense three years. I'll write these acknowledgements in an attempted chronological order of guidance, but my sincere apologies to those who I have left out. Due to ethical reasons, I cannot name some of the individuals featuring in this study, so pseudonyms will be used in various instances. However, if you're reading this, you know who you are, and thank you so much. Without their willing enthusiasm and passion in martial arts, I probably would have never considered starting this PhD, let alone complete it. I hope the finished project does their stories justice in regards to evocativeness, vividness and respect.

First of all, my family – my grandparents, mum and brothers - have provided a solid source of love and support over the years. They have been proud of my achievements and have allowed me to tread my own path in my career, which has allowed me for an individual journey. They have also supported (and put up with) years of serious martial arts training in my leisure, and often family time. My Mum helped kick start the PhD with a Kung Fu twist via Bruce Lee's biography, which was a bible for me as a teenager. My grandmother has always supported me with interest in whatever I do, and I look forward to sharing the PhD with my grandparents – heavy reading indeed! Without them, I wouldn't have been able to start, continue or even know as much as I do about martial arts. The lifts, books and videos all contributed to my identity as a martial artist. My brothers have shared my affection for the Kung Fu movie genre, so are certainly partly responsible for my first publication on Asian martial arts films. Perhaps we'll one day direct a film with you as star Laurence!

My dear friend Tim and his family opened my eyes to the world of Chinese culture from the age of 10, and I first heard about Bruce Lee and saw a few Kung Fu movies before trying the real thing for myself at 14, when I joined Tim's Taekwondo class. Thanks to you Tim, and your family, as those Chinese meals opened my mind to cross cultural thinking, which continued in secondary school. Thanks are also due to the

martial artists I crossed paths with during my teenage years as I ventured around various schools trying to find the best style for me.

A sincere thank you to my old Sifus and Kung Fu brothers (and occasional sisters) at my first Wing Chun school, who inspired me to train hard and achieve recognised skill in this wonderful art. From the first lesson I developed a passion for Wing Chun, and without your hands I wouldn't have had the foundations to move on to other systems.

Various school teachers provided me with an excellent platform from which to explore new cultures and seek new horizons. In particular, Mr. Tony Saunders, my geography teacher, inspired me through his praise and fellow appreciation of the world beyond Britain. His geography of sport module was an excellent starting point for a sociological way of thinking. Mr Leigh, the Head of PE, also welcomed me to the A Level PE group despite my lack of jock traits and sporting dispositions. His teaching, and those of his colleagues, provided an excellent foundation for my degree.

My various friends have always been interested in my research, and have been appreciative of my different lifestyle and habits to the regular student, and have always taken me for the individual I am. A particular thanks to Alex Austerberry for his encouragement when we were first year undergraduates, a time when I felt I didn't fit into the often narrow minded, binge drinking 'jock culture.' Nuno Matos, Sean, Alex and John have also provided very fascinating conversations around philosophy, culture and research, which have led me to question what I do and why, and how this links to other forms of knowledge. My friends back home, Alex and Adam, have boosted my confidence and self-belief, which are guiding forces for my daily work.

My fellow students at 'Bridge's Wing Chun Academy' have been a great source of inspiration over the last seven years. I have stuck hands with dozens of students, and I have become a more rounded martial artist and human being because of these conversations through our limbs. My Sifu 'John Bridge' has acted as a mentor and has nurtured my skill in Wing Chun to the level of instructor. A major thank you is due to him and his team of black belts for their honesty, patience and guidance.

Thanks are also due to my Taiji instructors 'Bill' and Joe, who introduced me to this beautiful art in their own unique ways. Although I am not currently practising the art at

the time of writing, it is certainly something I would consider returning to and even seriously practising as a practitioner-researcher. Without your insights and praise I wouldn't have the knowledge and experience in this unique art form.

Dr. David Brown, my supervisor, has been the main guide for my research since I came to him as a timid undergraduate looking for a dissertation tutor in 2004. Our relationship has been an interesting one worth writing about in an academic paper: Supervisor-supervisee, martial arts student-teacher (a reverse in power relations), and finally, academic colleagues at different institutions. Together we have accomplished many things, and I know we will work closely with the PhD material and other collaborations in the future as we learn and grow as practitioners.

Prof. Andrew Sparkes, my second supervisor, has also been a great source of inspiration and support. He has been a strong influence through his writings and leadership of the Qualitative Research Unit, whilst offering sound advice and comments during important stages of the PhD project. His later feedback and work with our collaborative publications has been immensely useful, and I also look forward to working with him over many years to come.

My other lecturers have been a brilliant source of support and inspiration. A particular big thank you to the staff at the Qualitative Research Unit (QRU) at the School of Sport & Health Sciences, University of Exeter for helping fund, manage and supervise the PhD project. Brett Smith gave me the opportunity to teach in his Sporting Narratives module, which enabled me to develop further knowledge of this contemporary area of qualitative research. Jaqui Allen Collinson has been a great source of encouragement for my teaching and research, and has kindly invited me to teach on the phenomenology section of this module, which again has helped my research. Cassie Phoenix has been kind enough to act as internal examiner for my MPhil/PhD conversion, and made some excellent suggestions for the continuation of the project. Finally, Pirkko Markula provided an excellent foundation for qualitative research in my BSc degree, and opened my eyes to a new way of thinking.

The students at the QRU have also been very supportive and encouraging from the outset of the PhD, and I look forward to working with them in the future. David Aldous, my close friend, has been an especially strong source of support in a world where

qualitative research is often frowned upon in a physiology dominated discipline. I've enjoyed our discussions and look forward to future collaborations in our careers as academics.

Recent conferences have offered a springboard for ideas, both theoretical and empirical. I have met some fantastic people, and this is one of my favourite aspects of academia. I am grateful to Prof. David Gilbourne for his post beer insight into Taiji, and to the panel that awarded me the Early Career Qualitative Researcher Award. This has been a major inspiration that I will always remember.

My colleagues at St. Mary's University College have been very influential at the later stages of the project. They have supported me through allowing me to work on the PhD in office hours, and have invited me to present my research to a wider audience. In particular, I'd like to thank Mike Drayson and Rob Lake for supporting my teaching during a busy term, and for showing interest in my research area. I've certainly learned a lot from them and from my other colleagues.

Finally, my wonderful girlfriend Eri has loved and supported me through some tough phases of the PhD, when I had to stay up late or even all night. Living with me at those times probably wasn't easy! She has been a keen hear to listen to my stories, doubts and triumphs, and has not only shown an interest in the project but has contributed to several ideas to its dissemination.

Abstract

Traditionalist Chinese martial arts (TCMAs) are popular in Britain, and some advocates have made extensive claims of their body-self transformation through sustained training. Despite extensive physiological research, there are few investigations of these practices regarding their socio-cultural practice. This qualitative sociological study examines long-term British practitioners' experiences of transformation via Taijiquan (Tai Chi) and Wing Chun by addressing five issues: 1) Rationales behind practice 2) Resulting transformations 3) Explicit/implicit pedagogic strategies 4) Cultural transmission 5) Relations to broader social life. It approaches these questions through an emergent research design incorporating autobiographical vignettes as a practitioner-teacher-researcher, life histories of experienced practitioners and ethnographic fieldwork of two case study schools. Following thematic, metaphorical and narrative analysis, a structurationist theoretical framework illuminates the data by incorporating sensitising concepts from diverse thinkers including Bourdieu, Frank, Giddens and Yuasa. The findings are represented through autobiographical, modified realist, impressionist and confessional writing and structure the thesis as follows: Firstly, my own story demonstrates shifts in transformation from a technique-orientated approach to a more spiritual/holistic perspective, finally emerging as a scholarly position of a thinker-martial artist. Secondly, practitioner case studies further articulate transformations along a flexible continuum of changing body-self-society relations interpreted here as three ideal types: Fighters, martial artists and thinkers. Thirdly, the connecting pedagogical issues are addressed, as well-rounded TCMA systems possess specific partner exercises to develop intercorporeal awareness and embodied sensitivity, which are explicit aspects of each association's martial habitus and body lineage. Meanwhile, socio-linguistic metaphors articulate these transformations and are also interpreted as transformations in thinking and schemes of perception. Overall, these sensitising concepts and empirical findings offer a social theory of shared cultivation that acknowledges transformation on individual, relational, institutional and art levels. This shared cultivation framework may be useful for future methodological, theoretical and empirical considerations of wider physical culture.

Key words: Autobiography, Body-self transformation, Chinese martial arts, cultural transmission, ethnography, life histories, qualitative research, sociology, shared cultivation.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	2
Abstract	6
List of Figures	11
List of Tables	13
Abbreviation of Terms	14
1. Introduction	15
1.1. Background to ‘Kung Fu’, Taijiquan and Wing Chun	15
1.1.1. Wing Chun	16
1.1.2. Taijiquan	18
1.2. EMAs in Britain: Sociologically Situating Practice	21
1.3. Study Rationale	23
1.4. (De)constructing the Research Question	25
1.5. Thesis Outline	27
2. Me, Myself & Martial Arts - Autobiographical Vignettes	30
3. Literature Review	52
3.1. (Neo)positivist Research	53
3.1.1. Physiology	53
3.1.2. Biomechanics	55
3.1.3. Psychology	56
3.1.4. Summary	57
3.2. Life (Hi)stories and Autoethnographies	57
3.2.1. Interviews	58
3.2.2. Autoethnography	59
3.3. Ethnography	62
3.3.1. The ‘West’	62
3.3.2. The East	67
3.3.3. Cross-cultural	70
3.4. Socio-historical Research	75
3.4.1. Chinese Styles	75
3.4.2. Other Styles	77
3.5. Summary	83
3.5.1. Previous Research	83
3.5.2. Research Questions	84
3.5.3. Study Outline	85
4. Theoretical Overview of Perspectives	87
4.1. Giddens: Structuration as Framework	88
4.2. Bourdieu: Reflexive Sociology and the Transformative Habitus	94
4.3. Weber: Ideal Types, Leadership and Legitimation	100
4.4. Arthur Frank: Ideal Typical Embodiment	103
4.5. Narrative Perspectives: Connecting Individuals and Society	107
4.6. Phenomenologically-inspired concepts	110
4.6.1. Merleau-Ponty: Phenomenology and Embodiment	111
4.6.2. Schutz: Intersubjectivity	114

4.7. Modern Japanese Mind-Body Theories.....	115
4.7.1. Yuasa: Self-Cultivation and the Changing Body Scheme.....	116
4.7.2. Nagatomo: Attunement Through the Body.....	119
4.7.3. Extending the Theories of Cultivation and Attunement.....	120
4.8. The Contemporary Theory of Metaphor: Body, Culture and Language.....	122
4.9. Summary of Conceptual Framework.....	125
5. Methodology.....	127
5.1. Adopting Interpretivism: The Paradigms Debate.....	127
5.2. Going Qualitative: A Rationale.....	129
5.3. Emergent Research Design.....	130
5.4. Sampling 1: The Research Settings.....	133
5.5. Sampling 2: The Collaborators and Interviewees.....	136
5.6. The Three Data Collection Strategies.....	138
5.7. Ethnography.....	139
5.7.1. Sensual Ethnography.....	140
5.7.2. Thick Participation.....	142
5.8. Life History Interviews.....	144
5.9. Autobiographical Vignettes.....	148
5.10. Data Analysis: Content and Structure.....	149
5.11. Ethical Considerations.....	154
5.12. Representing Embodiment, Communicating Stories.....	158
5.13. Judgement Criteria and ‘Validity’.....	162
5.14. Summary.....	165
Analysis Part 1: Ideal Types & The Embodied Continuum.....	166
6. The Fighters.....	168
6.1. The ‘Natural’ Fighters.....	168
6.1.1. Individual Cultivation.....	170
6.1.2. Relational Cultivation.....	177
6.1.3. Institutional Cultivation.....	179
6.1.4. Art Cultivation.....	184
6.1.5. Other Aspects.....	187
6.2. The Trained Fighters.....	189
6.2.1. Individual Cultivation.....	191
6.2.2. Relational Cultivation.....	195
6.2.3. Institutional Cultivation.....	198
6.2.4. Art Cultivation.....	200
6.2.5. Other Aspects.....	202
6.3. Conclusions.....	203
7. The Martial Artists.....	206
7.1. The Modernizers.....	206
7.1.1. Individual Cultivation.....	210
7.1.2. Relational Cultivation.....	215
7.1.3. Institutional Cultivation.....	218
7.1.4. Art Cultivation.....	224
7.1.5. Other aspects.....	228
7.2. The Traditionalists.....	229
7.2.1. Individual Cultivation.....	234
7.2.2. Relational Cultivation.....	238
7.2.3. Institutional Cultivation.....	240
7.2.4. Art Cultivation.....	245

7.2.5. Other Aspects.....	248
7.3. Conclusions.....	249
8. The Thinkers.....	251
8.1. The Healers.....	251
8.1.1. Individual cultivation.....	254
8.1.2. Relational Cultivation.....	257
8.1.3. Institutional Cultivation.....	260
8.1.4. Art Cultivation.....	263
8.1.5. Other Aspects.....	268
8.2. The Meditators.....	270
8.2.1. Individual Cultivation.....	272
8.2.2. Relational Cultivation.....	276
8.2.3. Institutional Cultivation.....	278
8.2.4. Art Cultivation.....	280
8.2.5. Other Aspects.....	283
8.3. Conclusions.....	284
Analysis Part 2: Shared Cultivation Across Ideal Types.....	286
9. Shared Cultivation Through Intercorporeality.....	287
9.1. Individual Phenomenological Experiences.....	289
9.2. Intersubjective Partner Training.....	290
9.3. Partner Training in the Pedagogy.....	296
9.4. Sensual Transformation and Wider Society.....	302
9.5. Training Without a Partner.....	305
9.6. Conclusions.....	306
10. Martial Metaphors: Voicing Transformation or Transformation in Thought?.....	309
10.1. Journey.....	310
10.2. Discovery.....	318
10.3. Religion.....	321
10.4. Family.....	329
10.5. On metaphors.....	334
10.6. Conclusions.....	337
11. Discussion: Practitioner Reflections.....	340
12. Conclusions.....	348
12.1. Addressing the Research Questions.....	348
12.2. Thesis Philosophy: A Social Theory of Shared Cultivation.....	356
12.3. Theoretical, Methodological & Empirical Contributions to Knowledge.....	361
12.3.1. Theoretical Contributions.....	362
12.3.2. Methodological Contributions.....	364
12.3.3. Empirical Contributions.....	366
12.4. Possibilities for PhD Dissemination.....	369
12.4.1. Academic Dissemination.....	369
12.4.2. Popular dissemination.....	371
12.5. Study Limitations - Issue for Consideration.....	373
12.6. Future Research: Continuing the Project.....	374
12.6.1. TCMFs.....	376
12.6.2. TCMAAs.....	378
12.7. Final Reflections.....	379
Web References.....	380
References.....	382

Glossary of Terms	412
List of Appendices	440

List of Figures

Figure 3.1 Adaptation of Wilber's (2000) integral matrix

Figure 4.1 Representing Giddens' (1984) Structurationist framework

Figure 4.2 Model of Structuration Theory

Figure 4.3 Bourdieu's (1990) field-habitus-capital relationship

Figure 4.4 Elaboration of the field-habitus-capital relationship

Figure 4.5 Frank's (1991) embodiment matrix

Figure 4.6 Yuasa's (1993) body circuit 1 - The external sensory-motor circuit

Figure 4.7 Yuasa's (1993) body circuit 2 - The circuit of coenthesisis

Figure 4.8 Yuasa's (1993) body circuit 3 - The emotion-instinct circuit

Figure 4.9 Yu's (2007) relationship between body, culture & metaphor

Figure 5.1 PhD Research Design

Figure 6.1 Matrix of the 'Natural' Fighters

Figure 6.2 Matrix of the 'Trained' Fighters

Figure 7.1 Matrix of the Modernizers

Figure 7.2 Matrix of the Traditionalists

Figure 8.1 Matrix of the Healers

Figure 8.2 Matrix of the Meditators

Figure 12.1 A linear representation of the practitioner continuum

Figure 12.2 Ideal types and subtypes in the TCMA's

Figure 12.3 Adaptation of Yu's (2007) body, metaphor and culture model

Figure 12.4 A linear representation of TCMA transmission

Figure 12.5 A dynamic representation of TCMA transmission

Figure 12.6 Field-habitus-capital relationship in TCMA's

Figure 12.7 Ideal Type Framework as Questions

Figure 12.8 Matrix of Ideal Type Generic Structure

Figure 12.9 Matrix of Transformation and Transmission

List of Tables

Table 4.1 Structuralist, Voluntarist and Structurationist Theories

Table 4.2 Weber's ideal types of leadership

Table 4.3 Narrative Theory in Philosophical Perspective

Table 5.1 Philosophical assumptions behind paradigms

Table 5.2 Ethical considerations based on Plummer's (2001) guidelines

Table 9.1 A comparison between pushing and sticking hands

Table 12.1 Ideal types and initial rationale for training

Table 12.2 Theoretical contributions of the PhD

Table 12.3 Methodological contributions of the PhD

Table 12.4 Empirical contributions of the PhD

Table 12.5 Empirical questions emerging from the PhD

Table 12.6 Adaptation of Bolelli's (2008) MAs model for TCMFs

Abbreviation of Terms

Abbreviation	Term
BCCMA	British Council for Chinese Martial Arts
EMAs	East Asian martial arts
EMFs	Eastern movement forms
IOC	International Olympic Committee
JMAs	Japanese martial arts
MAs	Martial arts
MMA	Mixed martial arts
NHS	National Health Service (UK)
PRC	People's Republic of China
SMAAs	Sports martial arts
TC	Taijiquan/Tai Chi (in field notes)
TCM	Traditional Chinese medicine
TCMAAs	Traditionalist Chinese martial arts
TCMFs	Traditionalist Chinese movement forms
TCUGB	Tai Chi Union for Great Britain
TMAAs	Traditional martial arts
UK	United Kingdom
WC	Wing Chun (in field notes)
WHO	World Health Organisation

1. Introduction

In this chapter I outline the historical development and current context of TCMA practice in Britain that help frame the research project. Firstly, I introduce the arts of *Taijiquan* and *Wing Chun Kung Fu* via an exploration of their history, philosophies and cultural representations. This is accompanied by an examination of their following in Britain and a consideration of the various ways they are taught, practised and interpreted. I then offer some sociohistorical perspectives on this wider, increasing interest and involvement in East Asian martial arts (EMAs). These all assist in construction of a rationale behind the study and the formation of appropriate research questions to guide this qualitative sociological investigation. Finally, I provide a framework for the remainder of the thesis chapters, which follow the structure outlined in the above abstract.

1.1. Background to 'Kung Fu', Taijiquan and Wing Chun

Kung Fu or *Gung Fu* literally means skills attained through hard work, being derived from the Chinese characters 'gung' meaning work and 'fu' meaning time. Together they have been translated in popular literature as the accomplishment of skill through time and effort (see Crudelli, 2008). Therefore, Kung Fu is not necessarily synonymous with TCMA as in Chinese culture anyone skilled in an art or profession is recognised as possessing Kung Fu. More appropriate terms have been used recently, including *Wushu*, meaning 'martial way' in Mandarin (see Theeboom & De Knop, 1997 for a historical analysis). However, in popular and martial culture, Kung Fu is the generic term for TCMA including thousands of styles, all of which to certain degrees focus on discipline towards the cultivation of health, spirituality and self-defence. Such cultivation is claimed by some TCMA practitioners as being the conscious, long-term striving for Kung Fu i.e. the skill in TCMA that teachers embody and display as exemplars (Little, 1997a). It is the path towards Kung Fu that can last a lifetime should the practitioner choose these arts as a way of life. Wing Chun and Taijiquan are two well-known styles of Chinese martial arts that can offer similar, yet potentially contrasting perspectives on the cultivation of Kung Fu, which make them suitable case studies for this investigation.

1.1.1. Wing Chun

Wing Chun (also known as *Ving Tsun* and *Wing Tsun*) is a popular form of Chinese Kung Fu. There are various arguments about the art's origins, as research by Chu et al. (1998) has established. One plausible account claims that Wing Chun originates in the Chinese Southern *Shaolin Temple*, where it derives from a more complicated TMA system that took decades to use effectively, although others argue that it was developed by a Buddhist Shaolin Nun, *Ng Mui*, who taught a young girl, *Yim Wing Chun*, to defend herself. Both perspectives agree that a new system was developed that could be employed within a few years of training, and they often claim it to be based upon scientific principles of the *centerline* and *economy of motion*, which relies less on strength and power than many other martial systems (Gee *et al.*, 2004). Some even claim that the embodied principles of art would be valuable for less strong and powerfully built martial artists, especially women.

Technically, Wing Chun is a simple kinaesthetic system composing three solo forms, a *wooden dummy* (a wooden training aid representing the human body) form and two weapons sequences, the butterfly knives and long pole. In addition, there is a focus on the *san sau* (fighting applications), alongside partner training drills focused on development of embodied sensitivity through *chi sau* (sticking hands) and *chi gerk* (sticking legs). Overall, it is often promoted as a non dualistic system that places emphasis on felt body awareness that develops unconscious, reflex action rather than any presupposed mind-body division that is common in many Western cultures (McFarlane, 1989). Although there are many variations of Wing Chun, these concepts remain largely the same (Chu et al., 1998). It is famous for its close range fighting and rapid hand techniques, and is regarded as extremely effective for self-defence, therefore providing a potential strategy for life within a perceived violent or dangerous society.

In recent decades, since the death of the late Grandmaster *Yip Man* (a.k.a. Ip Man) in 1972, and the fame of his student, martial arts superstar *Bruce Lee*, Wing Chun has spread internationally at a rapid rate. It is now practised widely in the Occident by men, women, and in some schools, children, hailing from a variety of class, educational and ethnic backgrounds as one of the most popular TMAs available. The Yip Man branch alone is estimated to have over two million lineage descendants (Chu et al., 1998).

Overall, Wing Chun's passage from the Canton province of China, Hong Kong and Macao, amongst other Asian regions to Australia, North America and Europe emerged from the emigration of Wing Chun teachers and the later long-term and regular visits of Western practitioners. From this two-way relationship, it is now one of the world's most popular Chinese martial arts, with a burgeoning following in Britain. The exact participation rates are hard to discern due to the different branches, associations, governing bodies and political divisions, although school listings in international websites like www.wingchun.org, forums such as www.wcinternational.ning.com and also a new International Wing Chun Day on March 20th all demonstrate the great number of instructors, practitioners and enthusiasts throughout the world. Beyond international bodies such as the Ving Tsun Athletic Association (www.vingtsun.org.hk), there is a Ving Tsun Museum in Foshan in China, which is where most of popular Wing Chun developed.

Nevertheless, there is no unifying governing body for Wing Chun in the UK. TCMAs have an established popularity, with the British Council for Chinese Martial Arts (BCCMA) being the largest body overseeing many Kung Fu schools, and claims to represent over 75 organizations, with around 10,000 practitioners of various Chinese martial arts (www.bccma.com). More specifically, in London there are over 20 Wing Chun organizations registered with www.londonwingchun.com, and many more instructors teaching outside any registry of collective websites. To complement such widespread practice, many UK suppliers of martial arts equipment store Wing Chun weapons and wooden dummies, and there are even specialists for the art, such as Pagoda Imports (www.woodendummies.co.uk).

Wing Chun is also known outside formal organizations as it is often seen in martial arts magazines such as *Inside Kung Fu*, *Black Belt* and British monthly publications such as *Combat*. It even has its own dedicated online paper, *Wing Chun Magazine* (formally *Wing Chun Teahouse*, www.wingchunmagazine.com), which allows practitioners to exchange ideas and learn about different perspectives on the art. Several Hong Kong films have been loosely based around Wing Chun historical figures including *Prodigal Son* (1982), *Warriors Two* (1978), *Wing Chun* (1994), and more recently, *Ip Man* (2008), which is due for two sequels. The modern adaptation of *Sherlock Holmes* (2009) has even made use of Wing Chun techniques as it shares some technical characteristics with bare knuckle, pre-Queensbury rules boxing.

Considering this broad dissemination, Wing Chun has undergone several changes, having been modernized to suit today's self-defence environment and expectations of students unfamiliar with the strict, slow learning process found in Chinese schools (Ip & Tse, 1998). Hence, much of Wing Chun today in Britain is likely to be very different from the original Shaolin art or even modern Chinese Wing Chun. Furthermore, even though it still focuses on self-defence, its stability as a traditional non-competitive art remains uncertain because modernization is increasingly influencing martial arts (see for example: Back & Kim, 1984; Theeboom & De Knop, 1997; Villamon et al., 2004). Regulated, semi contact Wing Chun competitions are emerging in Britain such as the Wing Chun International Chi Sau Open led by Alan Orr (www.alanorr.com), whilst some practitioners such as Kevin Chan are engaging in mixed martial arts events and cross training in a range of styles through a modernizing approach (www.kamonwingchun.com). Despite its popularity and increasing diversity, Wing Chun has yet to receive much academic attention beyond McFarlane's (1989) earlier writing. Is this the case with Taijiquan?

1.1.2. Taijiquan

Taijiquan is commonly written *Tai Chi Chuan* or *Tai Chi*, and is another very popular TCMA. As with Wing Chun, Taijiquan's history is quite ambivalent. A common legend reproduced by much of the popular literature (e.g. Goodman, 2000) states that it was developed by a Daoist hermit, *Zhang Fang Zheng*, who was inspired to develop the art by watching a fight between a snake and a crane. Yet some scholars such as Henning (1981) have critiqued such folklore, and have suggested a more military origin via organised martial arts for the Chinese Imperial army. A third, and generally well-documented claim is now accepted by the People's Republic of China (PRC), which has now adopted it as a health exercise. It claims that the art developed in the *Chen Village* by the Chen clan, a large family of skilful martial artists. Like many styles, it was only taught to male family members, until the art passed to *Yang Luchan*, the founder of *Yang style* Taijiquan, the most popular form of the art today. Since Luchan's time it has transformed from a tried and tested, secretive fighting system to a widespread health exercise in the popular imagination.

Like Wing Chun, Taijiquan focuses on the development of a range of *internal* principles and skills. One perspective on *internal martial arts* is that they are methods of self-cultivation as moving meditation, and have been strongly influenced by Daoism (Brecher, 2000), a religion that Miller (2003) summarises as being concerned with health, longevity and living harmoniously with nature. A more technical understanding is that internal martial arts use principles of leverage, sensitivity, relaxation and softness to overcome an opponent's force or strength. These are opposed to *external* martial arts, which are sometimes depicted (often by 'internal' martial arts practitioners) as relying on physical strength, endurance and speed to defeat an opponent. As we will see, different Taijiquan and Wing Chun practitioners use these perspectives to give an authentic or modern legitimisation to their interpretation of the art.

Following the first definition of internal and external martial arts, Taijiquan is often associated with health and spirituality rather than fighting (see Montaigne, 2000 on this changed emphasis). Like Wing Chun, the focus on relaxation, meditation and *qi gong* occurs from the very beginning in Taijiquan training. Brecher (2000) claims that mind-body unity is emphasised in this Daoist art, as the calm, flowing movements of form practice result in release of physical and mental tension. This common focus on internal energies or *qi* can be seen as a paradigm shift contrasting with the contemporary Western mind-body dichotomy originally developed by Descartes (1968) in which the body is postulated as a machine. Such qualities make Taijiquan part of a growing movement of holistic activities in the West, such as yoga and *traditional Chinese medicine* (TCM), which has a growing practitioner based in Britain (see www.atcm.co.uk).

It has already been mentioned the art has undergone dramatic changes since its formation. There are five styles commonly practised today: Yang, Wu, Chen, Hao, and combination (Frantzis, 2003). Overall, according to Ryan (2008), the art contains five main components: Solo forms, weapons sequences, *qigong* exercises for energy development and health, *neigong* exercises (inner work for taking blows), *pushing hands* and *san shou* (applications). Yet according to her, very few British schools balance all five aspects of Taijiquan due to the strong emphasis on the more accessible form and qigong practice. Overall, according to Ryan (2008), the more martial and 'traditional' Chen and *Wudang* styles are reasonably popular in Britain, although the easy to learn *24-step* combination form is more widespread and is normally associated

with large commercial organisations. Yet without the martial aspects, the art only contains theoretical knowledge and could never be applied in a real self-defence situation, which may lead different kinds of people to become involved in the art. This is something worth considering when selecting a school to investigate as a case study, and will be further explored in the Methodology (chapter four).

Despite these variations, Taijiquan has been claimed by some writers (Goodman, 2000; Frantzis, 2003) to be the world's most popular TMA with millions of people in China and the West regularly practising. Various governing bodies have been established by master practitioners to spread their own institutional version of the art, to emphasize the connections with Daoism and like the International Taoist Tai Chi Society (www.taoist.org.uk) or to unite Taijiquan under one banner, such as the Tai Chi Union for Great Britain (www.taiunion.com). Some institutions are even named after nature metaphors used amongst practitioners such as 'river' and 'mountain' Tai Chi. Because of these diverse organisations, overall participation statistics are again hard to calculate, but the immense popularity is evident on the Tai Chi Finder website (www.taichifinder.co.uk), which lists over 1,800 instructors in England, around 275 of which are in London alone. So we can estimate that Taijiquan is far more popular than Wing Chun in Britain, and this popularity is also reflected in magazines such as *T'ai Chi*, *Qi* and *Tai Chi Chuan and Oriental Arts*. Furthermore, as part of the increasing commercialisation of the art, specialist clothing is being developed by professional companies to cater for the growing number of students. Taijiquan is being taught in commercial fitness centres such as David Lloyd gyms (where it forms part of their 'holistic' package on www.davidlloyd.co.uk), weekend and longer rural retreats and also as a competitive combat sport through organised pushing hands contests through the BCCMA. The art is also popular in primary schools, where it is being taught for children's health and concentration benefits as part of the Health Schools Initiative (www.primarytaichi.com), and in hospitals and retirement homes, as it is regarded as a suitable exercise for the elderly. With increasing technology, there are many DVD instructional courses and even online lessons that last only 10 minutes. Clearly 'Taijiquan' is a very broad term that carries a great deal of meaning with it, which means my selection of a school will be an important one.

Outside the actual practice of the art, Taijiquan is generally well known in British society, as it is a visible component through outdoor training and retreats in national

parks, and media footage such as a BBC advert between television programmes. There is a wide range of popular literature, although very little academic research outside physiology, which reflects the common emphasis on the health benefits. It has played a minor role in Western action films such as *Assasins* (1995) and *Kickboxer* (1989) alongside a larger piece in Asian films such as *Tai Chi Master* (1993) starring *Jet Li*.

In summary, it is clear that Wing Chun and Taijiquan share principles, philosophies and training methods that make a dual investigation possible. For instance, their connections to the three major religions of China (Buddhism, Confucianism and Daoism) make them excellent examples of TCMA in Britain, as does their focus on internal aspects and partner sensitivity exercises. Both styles are not usually associated with competition as sporting competition goes against its philosophical premises, as TMA practitioners attempt to overcome themselves, rather than their opponents (Kauz, 1977) and, unlike many Western sports, they are intended to be practised for a lifetime, as demonstrated by many masters today such as Yip Man's own sons *Yip Chun* and *Yip Ching*. These highly important aspects are a major focus in this investigation, as they may be mechanisms underpinning body-self transformation, which are yet to be explored sociologically. I consider some of the reasons for this next.

1.2. EMAs in Britain: Sociologically Situating Practice

This section considers some sociological perspectives on the popular contemporary practice of traditionalist martial arts (TMAs) in Britain, which are being regularly practised in organized schools by many people for various reasons. There has been little research investigating the rationales behind TCMA training, although some scholars have examined traditionalist martial arts (TMAs) more generally (see Jones *et al.*, 2006), and found a variety of reasons behind regular practice from an interest in defending oneself to issues of social identities. Some possible legitimations behind practice are suggested below.

In recent decades in the West, there has been intensified interest in Asian physical practices, which Brown and Leledaki (2010) term *Eastern movement forms* (EMFs), including *yoga*, meditation, *qi gong* and martial arts. Overall, Britain's intensifying interest in TMAs can be seen as a reflection of the interest in Asian practices and

beliefs. Said (2003) referred to this larger interest as *orientalism*, a philosophy distinguishing between ‘the Orient’ and ‘the Occident’ where “the Orient was (and is) approached systematically, as a topic of learning, discovery and practice” (p. 73). Elsewhere, Clarke (1997) considers Orientalism as manifested in a fascination for EMFs like Taijiquan that are often accompanied with the questioning of Western life and values, including perceptions of a mind-body dualism, presumed to be absent in TMAs (see Payne, 1981). The contemporary period has provided space for the pursuit of body-mind integration (Fahlberg & Fahlberg, 1997) through what Markula (2004) terms *holistic body practices* concentrating on internal focus and awareness. These include TMAs, which have become increasingly popular in the West amongst a range of ages as part of a broad set of body culture practices (Eichberg, 1998).

One possible way of understanding this growth in interest is Giddens’ (1991b) notion of *ontological (in)security* i.e. our fear of uncertainty and desire for trust through the maintenance of routines. In the case of mind-body dualism, separating the mind and body during exercise reinforces Descartes’ Cartesian dichotomy of the rational mind being the centre of our existence, our senses distrusted and the body being treated as a machine. Yet according to Giddens (1991), there is a wide societal shift toward increasing levels of *reflexivity* (reflecting and potentially acting upon one’s circumstances and actions that can change forms of knowledge, institutions and other social structures), a process linked to a loss of what we commonly understand as tradition and the emergence of *reflexive modernisation* (explored later in chapter 2). Potentially because of this process, some established ideas such as mind-body dualism have been re-examined by numerous people, and often are replaced by alternative philosophies such as ideas of holism and even ‘traditional arts’, something that some TCMA associations claim to be. Other TCMA schools often claim to provide security resources through self-defence and highly structured rituals and routines that might help people take a different meaning to their bodies, selves and identities. What kinds of rationales exist behind TCMA associations? How do they offer practitioners solace in today’s increasingly complex world? These are questions worthy of consideration.

In a similar vein to Giddens, Beck (Beck, 1992, 1994) noted that the consequences of scientific and industrial development are a set of risks and hazards humans have never faced before. This has resulted in a highly individualized *risk society*, involving both a greater freedom of choice in people's lifestyles and increased self-reflexivity. Mythen

(2004) clarifies this: "Greater access to information about risk has empowered people to enact positive lifestyle changes, particularly in relation to health, fitness and diet" (p. 3). Possibly because of this, Asian TMAs are now being practised in different cultures more than any historical era, a trend that scholars have noticed (Dykhuizen, 2000a). This might be partially a result of living in a risk society where the perceived risk of physical attack is ever present within Western societies such as Britain (Brown & Johnson, 2000).

Using New Zealand as an example, Looser (2006) explored some reasons why so many people have begun and continue TMA training, which vary from self-defence to ideas of health. She suggests martial arts may be sought to provide a solution for anxieties regarding: 1) Personal safety 2) Health and fitness 3) Social solidarity 4) Meaning and purpose in life. More specifically, Looser (2006) interprets this as being due to a prevalent risk consciousness encouraging people to search for various forms of ontological security. What kinds of long-term, transforming experiences are being interpreted by British practitioners? This is a key question for my investigation, which is formed and examined later on.

1.3. Study Rationale

So far we have seen that TCMAAs are popular and widespread in contemporary British society, yet transformations resulting from their regular and long-term practice remain to be addressed. Notable previous qualitative research (for example, Alter, 1992; Assunciao, 2005; Back & Kim, 1984; Brown & Johnson, 2000; Kohn, 2004; Lantz, 2002; Levine, 1991; N. Stephens & Delamont, 2006a; Villamon et al., 2004; Zarrilli, 1998) has not employed the life history approach alongside the more widespread ethnography and personal practitioner-researcher reflections, which may offer different perspectives on the social nature of transformation. Additionally, they have not sufficiently explored the embodied experiences of everyday experienced practitioners, as there is a focus on well-known masters' life stories in the popular literature (e.g. Ip & Heimburger, 2001) and internal TCMAAs (J. O'Brien, 2007). Specifically, there is need for research into: 1) Why people begin TCMAAs 2) Transformative experiences 3) The implicit and explicit pedagogic mechanisms behind these transformations 4) Embodied transmission of body culture 5) Transformations in daily living. These will act as

guiding research questions for the thesis.

I have chosen to explore two particular TCMA's, Taijiquan and Wing Chun for three main reasons. Firstly, as we have seen from an initial consideration of the popular martial arts media (books, magazines and Internet) they are amongst the most popular TMA's in Britain, and are highly accessible to numerous people, including the elderly because of their less physically demanding, 'internal' nature compared with other styles (Frantzis, 2003; Ip & Tse, 1998). Yet despite this popularity, there is little sociological research on them, unlike investigations of TMA's from other cultural origins (to name but a few: Assunciao, 2005; Carr, 1993; Chan, 2000; Delamont, 2005; Dykhuizen, 2000a; Kohn, 2004; Villamon et al., 2004). The TCMA's' noticeable popularity necessitates a qualitative sociological study to examine how people may benefit from these arts in Britain and wider Western society.

Secondly, as I have just hinted, these arts share many philosophical and strategic foundations reflected in 'softer' techniques employed based on the Chinese *yin/yang* principle, by yielding and redirecting the opponents' energy, rather than meeting force with force (Ip & Tse, 1998; Wong, 1996). The focus on internal energies, an important element of many traditionalist styles (Brecher, 2000), is illustrated by the unique partner sensitivity exercises of Taijiquan's 'pushing hands' (Wong, 1996) and Wing Chun's 'sticking hands' (Little, 1997a). Other TCMA's commonly practised in Britain, such as *Choy Lay Fut* or *Hung Gar*, are not examined in this study because of the different principles used (see Crudelli, 2008, for an extensive catalogue of martial styles), which may have formed a less focused research design. This is also why I chose to focus on two distinct case studies from one cultural context, as analysis of Japanese, Korean and other systems, while potentially insightful, would require multiple, and cross-cultural comparisons, that, given the study's exploratory nature, would be undesirable.

Thirdly, and more personally, I have been fascinated by these TCMA's for many years. I have been a dedicated Wing Chun practitioner since 1999 and have also practised Taijiquan over various periods since 2005. My experience and embodied knowledge may provide 'insider' insights during this study alongside 'outsider' perspectives through social theory. Furthermore, this insider knowledge may assist in finding suitable participants via purposeful/theoretical sampling. It also might offer new

perspectives on practitioner-research in qualitative inquiry as seen in chapter four, the methodology, which provides critical perspectives on this positioning.

Considering these points, this study examines the experiences of various practitioners of two TCMAAs, one primarily a self-defence art (Wing Chun), and the other, often practised solely for health (Taijiquan). I aim to investigate their potential to transform the lives, bodies and identities of British long-term practitioners. My research question can therefore be read as:

“How do long-term practitioners experience transformation through TCMAAs?”

Hitherto, no study has specifically approached this question. Research investigating Taijiquan and TMAAs has been primarily quantitative and informed by the Western biomedical model, and, although important, has not considered social aspects of transformation through TMAAs training, particularly in TCMAAs. Yet it is important to explore the social transformations or benefits of practice, as this forms a component of total health defined by the World Health Organisation's (WHO's) Constitution as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being not merely the absence of disease or infirmity (Üstün & Jakob, 2005). This research is also important for continual understanding of EMFs, highly justifiable considering their social popularity importance. Such a new research area requires guiding questions, which I have established below.

1.4. (De)constructing the Research Question

Here I define the terms composing the research question, although many other technical and foreign language terms are defined in the Glossary. The main purpose of this thesis is to sociologically explore the potential for how two popular *traditionalist Chinese martial arts* in Britain, *Taijiquan* and *Wing Chun Kung Fu* might act as *body-self transforming practices*. The question has now been posed as: How do long-term practitioners experience transformation through TCMAAs?

Firstly, I use the term ‘long-term practitioners’ to describe the regular, committed practitioners of a TCMA who have studied within a school for at least four years. This

criterion has not been established in previous research, despite four years being a typical period for a student to progress from a beginner to senior student and possibly even assistant instructor status within a school. Within and beyond that period, a person moves from the position of a participant to a practitioner as the TCMA may become an important part of their identity and even as a way of life as much of the popular literature suggests. Further sampling criteria for participants explored in chapter four.

Secondly, we might ask what are the ‘traditionalist Chinese martial arts’ (TCMAs)? The term ‘traditionalist’ is used to describe key dispositions of the arts’ leading teachers and practitioners. Like Brown and Leledaki’s work on EMFs (2010), I have identified three main approaches to practising and teaching these arts. The *preservationist* and *conservationist* approaches to practising and transmitting bodily knowledge and martial culture in attempt either to preserve or conserve socially constructed traditions through practice. This contrasts with *modernizers* holding a strong enthusiasm for change, regarding every technique or principle as open to scrutiny, although they may mix ‘traditional’ styles to form their own martial art. Bruce Lee, for example, was an early modernizer through his art and philosophy of *Jeet Kune Do* (for further elaboration, see Lee, 1975; Little, 1997b). Today many martial artists may be described as modernizers, especially those who compete in *mixed martial arts* (MMAs) tournaments, where all technique and related theory is constantly evolving according to their practitioners’ individual dispositions (Downey, 2007a; Spencer, 2009).

Connected to the three approaches to tradition, ‘Chinese martial arts’ are fighting arts that belong to the larger category of *traditionalist Chinese movement forms* (TCMFs), the physical disciplines originating in China including qigong, various approaches to meditation, *lion dancing* and acrobatics. According to a sociohistorical analysis by Theeboom and de Knop (1997), these TCMAs are now practised worldwide and have undergone changes within China and the cultures they have been transmitted to, from the sportification and modernisation of Communist *Wushu* to preservation of individual styles.

Finally, what are ‘transforming practices?’ In principle, sociologist of the body Shilling (2003) points out that all individuals are body-selves, as they have a body and an interconnected self. We can be effectively transformed (physically, mentally and socially) via certain life changing experiences, such as long-term commitment to

bodybuilding, a conventional sport, or TCMA training, which Shilling (2003) might regard as a *body project*. In relation to the broad range of EMFs, there have been substantial claims of transformation in documents and life histories of practitioners in the West, which provides a strong rationale for further study using a variety of methods and theoretical perspectives (see Brown & Leledaki, 2010). I aim to explore these transformations through this, via the ideas of the *body-self-society complex* i.e. the complex and dynamic relationship between people's bodies, their inner selves, and wider society, although as we may see later, these can be interpreted as being inherently linked.

1.5. Thesis Outline

This thesis is divided into twelve chapters. This introduction chapter very briefly contextualised TCMA in modern Britain from their Chinese origins, explained the structure of both kinaesthetic systems, considered wider socio-cultural issues relating to EMFs and provided a rationale for this qualitative sociologically orientated study.

The following chapter, the autobiography, offers my own story to the reader in order for you to understand my place in this dynamic cultural and embodied context of TCMA. It therefore shares my key martial arts experiences and reflections leading up to the formation of the PhD project. These were selected in an attempt to paint a picture of my socio-cultural and embodied perspectives leading to the research design, data collection, analysis and representation displayed in this thesis.

Following that, chapter three, the literature review examines existing research on TCMA. It acknowledges the importance of quantitative research, but focuses on qualitative sociological case studies potentially useful for this investigation. It highlights the usefulness of certain methods, and forges a rationale for the study, which forms the starting point for the research design.

Chapter four outlines the main sensitising concepts that will be drawn upon to assist this investigation. These are broad in scope due to the emergent nature of the investigation, and include elements of phenomenologically-inspired concepts, contemporary Eastern

mind-body theory, narrative alongside Western sociology as TCMAAs are Eastern practices in Western contexts.

Chapter five considers the methodological strategy for this study. It covers the philosophies underpinning qualitative research, and describes the methods selected for this investigation: Ethnography, life history interviews and autoethnography. The forms of analysis, representation and possible ways to judge this eclectically written research are also addressed in light of new conventions in qualitative research.

Part 1 of the study findings focuses on three ideal typical ways to practise TCMAAs that have mainly emerged as composites from the participants' interview data. These are: fighters (chapter six), martial artists (chapter seven) and thinkers (chapter eight). In constructing these emergent ideal types, Part 1 provides case studies of practitioners experiencing transformation in each chapter, illustrating how broad these transformations are even in one Wing Chun school, which is extended as a case study from my earlier research projects.

Part 2 contains a further two empirical chapters including accounts that emerged from all three ideal types. The first, chapter nine, explores experiences of collective transformation through intersubjective partner training, and emphasises the shared nature of Kung Fu cultivation. The second, chapter ten, looks at the metaphorical transformations in thinking and speaking about TCMAAs from long-term practice.

Finally, after some practitioner reflections on my conceptual findings in the discussion (chapter eleven), I conclude the thesis by offering theoretical interpretations to answer the research question: How do long-term practitioners experience transformation through TCMAAs? This chapter summarises the potential contributions in regards to theory, methods and empirical themes. It also offers possibilities for further areas of study through a theoretical framework of shared cultivation and points for dissemination of this thesis, which may have practical implications in TCMAAs and wider society.

Due to the focus on life histories and autobiographical data, some of the reflexive writings and ethnographic elements are contained in the Appendix. This also helps with reference when looking at the main chapters, as it contains an extensive glossary of many of the Chinese and technical terms highlighted in italics. The ethnographic

impressionist and confessional tales have been placed in the Appendix (1.1 & 1.2), an example interview transcript, consent forms and other important documents, which are further clarified in the methodology. There are two impressionist tales: One on a combat-orientated Wing Chun school and one on a health-orientated Taijiquan school. These are result of extended periods of participant observation, mainly as a complete participant, and offer experiential insights into the embodied social world of the two styles to be explored further in interviews. Hopefully the impressionist and confessional tales will allow the reader to understand my biographical and social positioning during the research process in an attempt towards representing the reflexivity engaged in during this qualitative research study. In this light I first turn to my own story through an autobiography, which demonstrates my prior socialisation and martial experiences that shaped the entire thesis, from research design to representation.

2. Me, Myself & Martial Arts - Autobiographical Vignettes

These vignettes account for memorable events in my martial arts life prior to the PhD investigation. They therefore explore some of my embodied experiences, thoughts and feelings that led me to begin the PhD in the first place. Hopefully by reading these you will gain an insight into my world and my socialisation into Chinese martial arts which has led me to select a PhD topic, certain case studies, and of course, my analysis. All names, places, organisations and proper names have been changed appropriately.

My first experience of martial arts: Taekwondo

It was a hot summer's day. After our usual muck-around game of basketball in the local recreation centre, my best friend Tim and I dribbled and passed the ball down the road towards his house. Somehow our conversation drifted to the mysterious art of Taekwondo, which always interested me since I first met him at the age of 10. Tim was a regular member of a Taekwondo club, and I had often seen him change into his Taekwondo attire before a class when I visited his house for dinner. I hadn't done any martial arts, but was interested in its discipline and connections to Eastern culture, which I had been exposed to in Tim's family, who were of Chinese decent.

"Could I join?" I asked hesitantly, worrying if there were minimum standards of physical ability.

"Yeah, of course mate. There's gonna be a beginners' class coming up soon." He replied, sounding pleased with my interest.

"Isn't it too late to join though?" I asked, thinking of all the images of young children practising martial arts on TV. Could I become good at 14?

"No, adults join!" Tim replied with great surprise, chuckling at my silly comment. "Oh great! I'll turn up to the beginner's session then." I felt a bit embarrassed about that, but I took the details from Tim. That was it – I was then fixated on the martial arts!

From that day on, my whole life evolved around the martial pursuit, practice and study of the Eastern martial arts. I had never imagined that from this point, I would do a PhD investigating traditional Chinese martial arts. In fact, I was a complete neophyte beginner with no knowledge of what a PhD even was.

The first ever lesson: Courage to enter the gym

I changed into some sports clothing, and tied my shoelaces hurriedly as not to be late. I checked myself in the mirror: I had grown up since I had left Stateside, my home town's largest comprehensive school. Yet even with my new short hair cut, my old adversaries would recognise me.

As we got into the car, I felt agitated: What if there were some 'late hangers' who had sports practice after school? What if the handful of bullies, who had made two years of school quite uncomfortable for me, were there? I brushed off my worries and concentrated on my breathing in order to relax. That's it – I was calmer now.

Mum, as supportive as ever, walked with me to the sports centre. Mr Humphries, my old Head of PE, who had just moved to this much larger school, cycled past me, and gave a puzzled look of recognition. Well here I was: One of the thousands of adolescents in the UK, about to have their first lesson in martial arts. Mum gave me a reassuring, but slightly embarrassing hug goodbye. "See you at seven." She called.

Here, I was alone in an all too familiar sports centre. I was never any good at PE or games in school. Unlike my academic grades of A's and B's, I only ever got D's and E's for the more embodied activities. I was never really a fan of rugby, and didn't feel competitive out on the field unlike many of my friends. Thoughts ran through my mind: Would I be any good at this? What would the others in the class think of me? Would I be able to tell anyone at school about this? Well, there was only one way to find out – I entered the training hall...

I said a shy hello to a group of adults and teenagers gathered in the nearest corner of the room. An Asian man, possibly of Indian descent, dressed in a bright red Taekwondo uniform stood amongst them. This colour was different to his assistant, a black belt in white. When I entered, he called enthusiastically: "Alright guys, let's line up!" His voice resonated with confidence and authority, something I'd like to have. We followed immediately as he introduced himself as Rakesh.

We formed two rows, as in the military. He first requested: "OK. Let's all form a fist. I want to see how you punch." Again, without question, we followed his commands. Something about him gave him an air of authority and respect that we couldn't help follow.

I placed out a fist, or at least what I thought was a fist! My thumb was tucked into my clenched hand, making it prone to breaking upon impact. I'd be horrified to see a

beginner present that to me in his/her first lesson. Rakesh, the instructor, quickly spotted this, and gently moved my thumb to present a proper 'horizontal' fist.

From then on, we learned the horizontal twisting punch, launched from the hip, quite unlike the Wing Chun centreline punch that I now perform effortlessly, which originates from the solar plexus.

I quickly got the hang of this basic manoeuvre, and the punches soon flowed progressively. My legs burned, and felt like hot iron as we were standing slowly in horse stance for five minutes without any rest.

This was completely different to any form of physical activity that I had ever done. Instead of focusing on a rugby ball that was never passed to me, or a javelin that I was wielding in a very uncoordinated fashion, I was able to totally focus on the end of my fist. I wasn't distracted by what my peers were doing, or what they thought of me. I was no longer self-conscious. I felt comfortable in my new, emerging, performing body. In fact, I was beginning to realise the potential of my body, and the fact that I was a body rather than consciousness surrounded by flesh.

It was at this point that I decided to become a martial artist, and this was how I defined myself. 'Martial arts' were always put first in my hobbies and interests list. Training, or at least thinking about training, occupied my activity and thought pattern throughout each day. Within a matter of weeks, I had become hooked. Even though my peers might not agree, I was a martial artist in my eyes. Later on, my name would be synonymous with all of the Eastern martial arts. I was the school's authority on the subject! If anyone had a question about Bruce Lee or any styles, they'd come to me.

Finding Wing Chun

I loved Taekwondo. It had given me so much: Health and fitness, coordination, flexibility. Yet there was something it lacked that made it personally incomplete for me. Was it the lack of close contact training? An over emphasis on unrealistic high kicks? The focus on sporting competition? I had been experimenting with a range of styles before coming across a man who died 11 years before my birth, but would become my role model.

Mum had thoughtfully bought me Bruce Lee's biography for a Christmas present. I unwrapped it with glee. I saw a picture of an extremely lean, muscular Chinese man – one that I had heard so much, but knew so little about. This was him: Bruce Lee, the

most famous martial artist in the world! This was an opportunity to learn about him and his training methods. Funnily enough, this was how I pictured him, as an athletic man in black trousers in a guard position. I remember Tim telling me about him during a Year 6 class, and he seemed in awe of his Chinese hero.

At night, I delved into the book with my usual obsessive enthusiasm about the martial arts. Being a relatively quick reader, I soon came to the chapter when Bruce was a teenager beginning his martial arts training. It was here that I learned that he originally practised Wing Chun, a close range style of Southern Chinese Kung Fu. Apparently, Wing Chun focused on low kicks and practical moves, helped develop a mystical energy known as ‘chi,’ and used a strange contraption called the wooden dummy. These were all alien terms to me, but the art certainly seemed fascinating. I was convinced that this was the art for me!

My first Wing Chun lesson: New experiences of embodiment

I entered the small community hall in an area not far from my Taekwondo class. Before I got to train with the rest of the class, the two senior students (sihing in Cantonese) approached me to identify what I already knew about Wing Chun.

“Well, I know that you use the wooden man.” I replied enthusiastically, remembering this from Bruce Lee’s biography.

“Wooden dummy, yes.” Nodded Pete, correcting me.

“And you do sticking hands.” I continued.

“Yes, we do.” They gave a brief demonstration. I looked flowing and beautiful. Not quite how I imagined from seeing Bruce Lee’s brief exchange of slap and punch in *Enter the Dragon*, which had to be slowed down as he was so fast.

“The only thing that could be described as similar is pushing hands, which they have in Taiji.” Said Simon, linking arms with Charlie in an attempt to visually explain this through changing weight distributions and large circles.

The two men were clearly the top students in the class. As with Taekwondo, it was evident that the senior students in Wing Chun played a central role in the instruction of beginners and junior students. Pete and Charlie, both seemingly well-educated men in their early thirties, ran me through the basic stance and punch. The stance felt quite awkward and narrow, unlike Taekwondo’s wide and very low horse stance. Fortunately, however, I had received a few lessons in a hybrid Kung Fu system derived from Lau

Gar, which used this stance in the punching practice. The punch was also the same; I performed it with a snappy speed that I had developed over the last one and a half years.

“That’s pretty good for a first lesson.” Commented Charlie, looking impressed.

“That is pretty good.” Nodded Simon in approval, walking to inspect the other lower grades.

“Thanks.” I replied, continuing my punches. A feeling of pride and accomplishment swept through me.

After I was deemed ready to continue, I joined the other newcomers, who were segregated to one side of the room, to learn the forwards step with punch.

I’d never trained in this manner before, having no previous knowledge of Wing Chun footwork. We began in the basic stance, and brought one foot forwards. We were then instructed to take a 70/30 weight distribution, which meant leaning onto the back leg. This felt uncomfortable and heavy, as we were flatfooted. When I stepped forward, it seemed like I had an anchor attached to my back ankle. How could anyone fight like this? I asked myself. However, at the same time, I felt grounded and supported. They asked me to lift my front leg as if to kick. That was so easy!

The last part of the two-hour lesson went by in a flash. It was dedicated to dan chi sau, a foundational exercise for the double handed chi sau I had seemed performed by Pete and Charlie.

I stood opposite a young man in his early twenties. I shocked me at first that he looked so much like Gavin Thomas, the boy who bullied me in school. However, it wasn’t him! I was told to ‘stick’ to him and ‘feel’ for the techniques. His arms were soft and relaxed, and we helped each other along the basic sequence, which seemed quite complex at first. Here I began my journey towards embodied sensitivity through some rather bizarre and seemingly unnatural positions.

Kung Fu crazy!

I soon became hooked on Wing Chun Kung Fu. It was exactly what I wanted from a martial art. It was practical, close range, fast and ferocious, intelligent, and was for adults only. As I was becoming an adult, this fitted in perfectly.

At school, I quickly identified myself with the martial arts, and became the authority on the arts, and in particular, Bruce Lee, my idol. I read feverishly on Bruce and his training methods in a vain attempt to follow him. I was impressed to read that he was

among the first martial artists to effectively cross train between different styles and incorporate Western conditioning methods such as running and weight training. It wasn't long before I incorporated many of these into my already hectic training schedule.

In the weekends, early morning runs were a must. At lunchtimes in school, I took advantage of my Year 11 status to make use of the gym, with its rowing machine, cycles, machine and free weights. After many hours of diligent and lonely training, I sculpted a toned and powerful body for a slightly built teenager, and other students complimented my enhancements and dedication.

I became addicted to Kung Fu and physical training. Because of the demands required by these in terms of time and energy, I became quite socially withdrawn. I rarely went out drinking with my friends, who managed to blag their way into nightclubs, or had any relationships. At times, I felt sad about this, but now that I reflect back on the 'sacrifices' and realize that they helped me develop into the disciplined and balanced individual that I am today.

My home training consisted of a great deal of speed development. Bruce Lee had punches and kicks of a blinding speed that I struggled to see. I desired this immense physical ability, and pursued them with frenzied intensity. Punch after punch after punch, I launched rapidly in the air, or smacked against my makeshift punch bag in the garden. My knuckles became sore and red, but I continued with my characteristic focus. My body changed: Instead of a skinny, uncoordinated teenager who was one of the least talented athletes in my year group, I transformed into a lean but muscular, explosive, agile and powerful young man. I was a martial artist now, and everyone knew it! These dispositions even transferred to cross country running and lunchtime football, where my fitness made up for a lack of skill.

An egotistical moment

I will always remember that Saturday morning session. I had trained hard all week in anticipation for the week's best, and most popular lesson. Punch after punch after punch I had thrown into the air, trying to develop the blinding speed that Bruce Lee possessed. I had even begun to punch with light dumbbells in an attempt to add some resistance to this exercise. I was getting there!

It was time for chi sau at the end of the lesson. Damian, my first ever training partner, rolled with me. He was relaxed, but floppy in structure, which I easily sensed with my developed sensitivity. I sensed a gap between his arms and instantly took this golden opportunity. I landed a few controlled strikes to his chest and face, just stopping short of actually hitting him.

“Nice one mate.” Remarked Damian calmly, nodding in approval.

“Thanks.” I replied shortly, thinking (rather than feeling) of what attacks to throw out next. Instead of ‘listening’ to his movements, and responding accordingly, I was showing off in front of my peers. I wanted recognition from the senior grades, who were now stopping to look at the spectacle. Although I didn’t wear the t-shirt of the group, I was better than many of those who wore it with pride. Why hadn’t the Sifus invited me to join the group? They must think I’m too young (at 15) to be one of them. I’ll show them!

I continued in this fashion until Charlie offered to play with me. As our arms met, I sensed a higher skills level. Despite this, I continued attacking in the same manner, but couldn’t get through his seemingly impregnable defences. He seemed so relaxed and placid, whereas I was frenzied and out of breath.

“Now you’re younger than me.” Said Charlie who was in his early thirties. “So why are you out of breath?”

“I don’t know.” I relied in a calm a manner as I could muster.

I left the class at the end feeling deflated and embarrassed. Although Damian probably didn’t realize, I was letting my ego run wild. Charlie and the seniors could see this. That’s why they hadn’t invited me to join the group: I was still too immature and cocky. To be a member of the family, you had to be sincere and humble. It took me a while longer to develop these qualities.

Meeting Grandmaster Yeung Wang

My first Wing Chun school belonged to the Yeung Wang lineage. The teachers and my fellow students were all very proud of belonging to this ‘family,’ and we always mentioned out lineage and generation level when introducing a new entrant to the group. It was part of out introductory spiel.

This made me connected to my idol Bruce Lee. He was effectively a cousin of the Grandmaster, so that made him a great great uncle in Kung Fu term! Wow, I was related to Bruce Lee! I was part of his Kung Fu family!

My two teachers frequently reminded us of Yip Chun's imminent visit: "Remember, he's your Kung Fu grandfather. Treat him like you would your own grandfather." They said this in a very stern manner as Sifu White eyed me for a moment. This was effectively a warning: Don't let the group down – Make us proud.

The big day arrived on a Sunday, and we entered a large community hall to see dozens of people play chi sau. I had never seen them before, and they wore the t-shirts of different Wing Chun organisations. I spotted a few familiar faces in the corner, as they were my seniors in our club. They greeted me with smiles, taking a few photos of the action. Then silence erupted, for Grandmaster Yeung Wang entered with his entourage of our Sigung (teacher's teacher) Peter Harris, my Sifus and some Chinese interpreters. All eyes were on the Grandmaster as we made way for them to move to the end of the hall.

Yeung Wang was a tiny gentleman in his late seventies who spoke in a soft Cantonese dialect, interpreted by Yang, one of Harris' top students. It was interesting that Harris, a white Englishman, learned from Yeung Wang whilst Yang learned from Harris. The Master spoke about the principles of relaxation, which I was struggling to grasp. Despite my hand speed and understanding of Wing Chun, I had difficulty relaxing my shoulders and avoiding using strength, especially when in tight situations. Yet Yeung Wang effortlessly avoided Sifu White's attacks when in chi sau, as we laughed in amazement of his skill. Yet I also noticed lots of deference by Sifu White as he held back in his attacks. I looked around the room to see my peers astounded by his defensive abilities. When we returned to partner training – the focus of the seminar – I saw one of my classmates struggling against a large East European Wing Chun practitioner, who was steaming into him like a raging bull.

The seminar was a great experience as I met the legendary Yeung Wang, and had managed to speak to him at the end. I should have brought a book for him to sign as it was one of his last visits to the UK from his Hong Kong base. I was certainly impressed that he continued to train and teach in his late seventies, which was a very different thing to many styles of martial art that I had encountered.

Beginning the journey of spirituality

I had come to realize that I was relying on speed, explosiveness, and aggression in my Kung Fu, which are effectively the ‘external’ attributes. However, after attending Yeung Wang’s seminar, I came to understand that there was much more to do with Wing Chun than that. I thought back to my first lesson – when I learned dan chi sau. This drill seemed very strange at first, as it was distinctly unrelated to real fighting.

I reflected upon my egotistical moment, and tried to calm my feelings of annoyance and shame through the peaceful Siu Lim Tao form. I slowed this down so that I eventually ran through it over 45 minutes. Sweat ran down my brow and down my t-shirt as I stood in my hot living room, observing and monitoring my positions against the mirror. Instead of focusing on my hand, I drew my attention to the elbow and tried to move it as slow as possible.

My legs were trembling after this time. I felt as if I was carrying another person on my shoulders. Yet my hands felt relaxed, particularly around my fingers and wrists. I religiously practised the form everyday in this disciplined fashion. Soon it had a great influence on my chi sau, which became more structurally intact, yet surprisingly loose and relaxed. Yet what was most striking was that I felt calm within my body – within my consciousness. I no longer possessed the need to show off or out do opponents. I was comfortable in myself. I was maturing as a Wing Chun practitioner.

Saying goodbye to the family

I remember my final lesson with the English Wing Chun Association. We had played chi sau in the final 20 minutes, and I received praise from Brian, one of the advanced students, for my chi sau: “It’s so relaxed and flowing!” He exclaimed with a smile on his face, like an older brother pleased with his sibling’s progress.

Inwardly I felt proud, but I continued playing using a poker face. My hands moved with his, a physical game of chess that never left a move uncovered. No one was going to be checkmated here!

We all lined up for the close in our usual relaxed fashion, with our hands behind our backs. Sifu Peters had an announcement to make: “As many of you will know, it’s George’s last lesson for a while with us, as he’s off to University in Adderton. George has been training for quite a few years with us now. I’d like to wish him all the best, and

we hope to see you return soon George. You're always welcome to return at anytime." I nodded and beamed in appreciation of his kind words, which recognised my status as a member of our Wing Chun family. It had taken a long time, but I was now one of them!

Changing schools...and styles

I was very apprehensive about leaving the security and familiarity of my local Kung Fu school. After all, I had spent the last three years honing my skills in the Yeung system. Would Li's style be very different? I certainly hoped not! I didn't want to learn the basics all over again, despite what my elder Kung Fu brother Pete said once to me with a sad look on his face: "I wish I spent more time on my Siu Lim Tao, I really do."

I just had to go to university where there was Wing Chun. Whilst applying to courses, I had gone through my collection of *Combat* (a monthly martial arts magazine) in an attempt to assert where Wing Chun was taught throughout the country. I spent a great deal of time circling possible schools based on the reputation of the styles and teacher. Toningham was an option, as that was where my Sigung (Kung Fu grandfather) Harris taught.

When I eventually found the right course for me, my immediate thought was: Will I find good Kung Fu down here? I wrote to the local council to see if they had any information on the range of classes available. After they promptly replied with a thoughtfully produced booklet on all the classes available, I saw it: Bridge's Wing Chun! I was sold! Bridge had advertised in the magazine for many years, and his teacher Yi had a good reputation worldwide. I slowly dialled the number on the page. I hope he still lived there as the guy in Adderton had moved house! The call connected... I then heard the heavily accented voice of my Sifu, a man who would later become my teacher and mentor.

The first lesson: A shock to the system

Sifu Bridge has provided me with contact details of two practitioners who travelled to his base in Rigmouth. On our walk around Adderton town centre, Steve had described the Gym, and it sounded very impressive: "It's a full time hall. It's got the ying/yang on the floor and everything!" I was particularly impressed by the fact that the Sifu taught

full time, rather than the usual evening job as a hobby. “It’s his life.” Explained Steve enthusiastically. I hoped the group would be of a high standard!

Nothing had prepared me for this! I entered the room in awe and rapture. It had everything I needed to develop excellence in Kung Fu: Dummies, bags, mitts, focus pads, skipping ropes, the lot! The atmosphere was of a professional training hall like in the classic Kung Fu movies! I could see myself being happy here!

It seemed that Steve was here to look after me tonight. He seemed a friendly, approachable and extremely funny character, so I imagined him to be a great teacher. However, nothing prepared me for the power of his techniques, or the strength of his structure. Unlike in my style, he kept an equal distribution of weight, making him sturdy. I was always told to take a 70:30 distribution. I had never refuted this, as everyone around me was doing exactly the same thing, without question. Only I secretly critiqued our stance and limited range of techniques via my loyal following of Bruce Lee. It seemed that this Wing Chun style had ‘evolved’ into a devastating fighting system fit for modern purposes.

Even in a simple stationary drill, I felt as helpless as a small child when paired up with Steve. His punches were launched like rockets from a steady stance and guard structure. I struggled to defend his repetitive punches with my pak sau. In fact, my hand began to hurt me as my palm smashed against his solid forearm! Most of all though, my shoulders were aching, as was my back leg, which was absorbing and therefore bearing the brunt of his power. “Try standing 50/50.” Suggested Steve. I attempted this, but it felt so strange. After years of constant practice in the 70/30 position, I had eroded the natural tendency to fight with a 50/50 weight distribution.

On the journey home, I sat silent in the dark car. Talk was minimal at this point, as we were all exhausted after a hard session. Tears slowly rolled down my cheeks, and I tasted salty water in my mouth. I felt isolated and ashamed of myself. I had three years experience, so how could people with half of my experience be more skilled than me? It was time to adjust my body’s habits, but this would take a long time. As Sifu commented that evening: “It’s gonna be like learning a new martial art. Every day’s a penny.” I’ve kept these feelings of anguish silent until now.

My career path: Forged by the martial arts

Why did I end up coming to Adderton? Why did I choose to study sports science? Why did I spend so much time in the gym during my school and undergraduate days? The answer: Kung Fu. Without the martial arts, I probably would have never taken so much notice of previously neglected body, let alone consider taking a degree in sports science.

Furthermore, I would never have envisaged myself doing a PhD! I thought I'd leave Adderton after my bachelors in seek of a job. However, I stayed for a Masters, and continued my studies to PhD level. *Bridge's Martial Arts Academy* is one of the major deciding factors for this. I have a family down here, a strong support network.

Changing the habitus: Home practice

I was determined to eradicate these 'bad' habits of 'leaning.' Yet it seemed so natural to me. It was almost like walking and talking – it required nearly no conscious effort. How might I overcome this? The answer: By putting in thousands of hours of hard training to re-write my neuromuscular system.

I practised wherever I got the chance. Often I just turned continuously in front of my reflection in the window of the laundry room whilst waiting for my washing to dry. I turned and turned, and turned in front of my reflection in the window, only stopping when people went by. I tried to keep my head in the same place, but it kept shifting!

The recent memory of my first lesson fuelled my changed attitude. I took the opportunity of a relaxed first term to train as much as I could.

Once, my neighbour Adam barged into my room without knocking, only to find me semi naked (waist upwards fortunately!), wielding a pair of butterfly knives like someone in a Bruce Lee movie! "Shit, you are a psycho!" Laughed Adam, who helped reinforce my new nickname on this rugby orientated, 'jock' campus.

Everyone on campus seemed aware of my skills. Despite being sports science students, they had little socialisation into the martial arts. Without little effort on my behalf, I quickly became known as the authority of martial arts in the halls.

Modifying the habitus: The new Siu Lim Tao form

I remember my first private lesson with Sifu. I was very excited! I didn't know him particularly well at the time, and he was initially a strict and daunting figure, but we had begun to get along nicely!

I had been practising the new turning daily, and tried to modify the first form from what I briefly observed in the class. However, there were too many subtle differences between the two styles that I was very unsure of why things were done differently here.

Sifu decided that we needed to focus on the Siu Lim Tao form. He asked me to run through it in my own time in front of the huge mirror that ran across the wall. I complied, feeling awkward and exposed by him hovering over me, watching my every move with the utmost concentration as he sipped his tea. His eyes didn't leave me for a second. I thought to myself: I'm not going to be able to get away with anything with this guy!

Sifu kept a poker face, and patiently watched me run through the sequence in my own time. When I had finished, he had a lot to say! "Run through it again George." He commanded silently. I complied, moving a little faster this time.

"Stop!" Ordered Sifu.

I stopped immediately, like a soldier obeying a command.

"Look at that." Said Sifu, pointing at my wu sau. "You're retracting your hand. A lot of people do it, don't worry too much." He reassured me, sensing my embarrassment. He gave a quick physical demonstration of what I had been doing, moving to the side so I could see it from a different angle. "But that's weak. You need to keep the same angle in your arm." He added.

I nodded in agreement, amazed that he could detect such seemingly small details. I had never realised that I was collapsing my arm, as no one had picked me up on this before. It seems that Sifu has a high sense of perception between technical right and wrongs. I was so pleased that I had chosen this gym to train in. In my old school, I would probably have got away with these sloppy habits as I never had any private lessons as the teachers had full time jobs.

Beginning my teaching duties

After several months of hard training, I had re-programmed my body to perform the Yi style of Wing Chun. Each time I turned, I was 50/50 in my stance. Each time I stepped, I landed with the heel, rather than the toe. Every time I performed the Siu Lim Tao form, my elbow was in the correct position. The hard training had paid off!

The Adderton class had been recently founded by Steve and as the most experienced student in the town's group I was assigned as assistant instructor. I felt great honour and privilege for this position, as it was a public acknowledgement of my skills.

From the warm up to the partner drills, I took an integral part in the teaching of the students. Whenever it was odd numbers, I stepped out to oversee everyone else's training. When it was even numbers, I would be allocated the newest student for training.

Each week I learned more about teaching by watching Steve. His electrifying charisma and enthusiasm for the class helped immensely. Although I couldn't match the former quality, which seemed almost magical, I made up for it with my patience and understanding, something he lacked slightly as an advanced practitioner who couldn't understand why the beginners were struggling.

Soon the class developed into a strong and coherent group. The six or so regular members benefited from my feedback. Although I didn't know them particularly well, we had good rapport and a common aim: The development of excellence that only Steve possessed here.

Assisting teaching: Hindering my body-self transformation?

Although I enjoyed teaching, it started to have a negative effect on my own training, for which I was paying monthly fees. On Wednesday evenings, I took three hours out of my time for teaching, which meant no physical practice or alternatively, some partner training with beginners who provided no challenge. This began to frustrate me. Outside, I was all smiles and enthusiasm, maintaining the air of authority. But inside, I was intensely jealous of the students who got to train hard and practise all of these wonderful techniques, while I was left to walk around. After all, I was hardly a master, was I?! I was still learning the same things as they were, but not in an embodied way as

they were fortunate enough to have. Steve seemed oblivious of this. It was if he was taking me for granted.

For a short while, I didn't attend any of the Adderton classes. Instead, rather selfishly, I went to the gym in the afternoon for an intense fitness session. I had texted Steve to let him know, and he replied "Slacker!" each week as he always did to 'part timers', who were those who didn't devote themselves to the new class. Why shouldn't I develop my physical abilities? Yet Sifu soon picked up on this during a private lesson: "Now Steve's not said anything George, but you've not been going to the Adderton classes. I can tell by looking at the register. We need the senior students there." I nodded in agreement, feeling a little ashamed of myself for my selfish behaviour. I wasn't acting for the good of the group.

From then on, I was a regular contributor to the class. Steve encouraged me to join us wherever the opportunity arose: "Come on mate, get involved! Try out your skills!" He commanded jovially.

However, certain friends were shocked that I wasn't getting paid for this: "I just can't believe you're teaching and getting paid for this! You should start your own group!" Remarked Al, my housemate. Al was a qualified coach in a number of sports and to him, my passive behaviour was nonsensical. Why teach if you don't get anything from it? But I did – the better they got, the better I'll get. As Sifu once said to me: "I know it's hard. But remember – the better they become, the more they can challenge you and help you develop." He was completely right. So teaching is eventually essential after a certain point in one's Wing Chun practitioner's training. Either that, or the art isn't passed on, and body-self transformation freezes.

Biu Jee – The inner techniques of 'the family'

I had been training continuously for three and a half years, and had been receiving regular private lessons from Sifu. Our relationship had developed beyond the distinct professionalism as seen in the class. It was now like a mentor/mentee bond – very personal and individualised. The context of the private lessons suited this perfectly.

After the usual running through of the dummy form, Sifu gave some brief feedback. It appeared that I was doing very well. Sifu marched to the other side of the room: "Right, I think it's about time we started you on the Biu Jee."

I was taken aback by this, as I had never imagined Sifu introducing me to this form quite so soon. Was I ready for this? I had always believed from reading popular books and magazines, that this was only for advanced students – in this case, the black sashes.

“Do you think I’m ready Sifu?” I asked, half excited, half agitated.

“I see no reason why not. There’s no point in holding you back.” He casually responded. “I now know you pretty well, and after talking to you, it seems like you intend to stay in the family. I won’t teach the Biu Jee to the guys from Rothshire because they’re taking their techniques outside the family.”

I felt honoured to receive his teaching of the secretive third form. It was a true privilege. I watched in awe of his emergency power punch, which made a vibration throughout the room, resonating from the floor as the lion dance drums hummed. When I tried to emulate this, there was no sound at all, and it felt weak and clumsy! Instead of unifying hip, shoulder and elbow action, I was meant to lead from the shoulder. This illustrated the danger of the Biu Jee punch, which could end the life of a human being. I felt a new understanding, and fear, of my developing skills. With great power comes great responsibility!

The closing of the Adderton class

As usual, I spent most of the summer holidays back at home with my family. One evening as I was settling into bed for some badly needed sleep, I received a text message. That’s strange. It was 11:30pm, and no one would normally text me now, unless some mates were out in town. But instead, the message was from Steve, who had been a major source of inspiration over the years for his fighting skills and martial ability. What I read completely shocked me and left me speechless: “Due to the inability to control my temper, and the declining numbers of students, I am officially retiring as a Wing Chun instructor as from today.”

I didn’t know how to respond. Or should I respond, or leave him to cool down for a bit? I didn’t realise that things were so bad in the Adderton classes whilst I was away. I had left only about five weeks ago. The classes had been getting smaller, yes, but it was the summer period, and lots of people had gone on holiday, or were on University vacation like myself and my friend Thomas.

Perhaps this was just short term? Maybe Steve had lost his temper and was just upset? I’m sure he’ll calm down later? However, after talking to my classmate Sarah the

next day, it seemed clear that things wouldn't just return to normal. Something had happened that made Steve turn his back on teaching. He meant the words he wrote in that message.

Steve didn't answer any of my calls of the summer, and I heard nothing from or about him. Was this the end of Adderton Wing Chun? I was about to find out when I returned for the new term.

Wednesday and Friday evenings without Wing Chun were empty and dull. I was so accustomed to having my evenings structured by the training, teaching and interactions with my fellow Kung Fu brothers and sisters. Although I had more time for my academic studies, I felt lost without the Kung Fu. Thankfully I had the monetary means to make it to the Rigmouth classes with Sarah, who kindly gave me a life twice a week. Steve had vanished from the scene for a while.

Beginning Taijiquan: A completely different world

I had always held a great respect for Taiji. It looked graceful, elegant and peaceful, quite distinct from Wing Chun's sharp and crisp movements. As a traditional Chinese art, it shared a similar heritage to Wing Chun, but as far as I knew, it focused on a completely different area: Health and spirituality rather than realistic self-defence.

Liam, one of my Kung Fu brothers from the Adderton class, had highly recommended the art to me as a Wing Chun practitioner. "I found it a good combination." He explained. "The Siu Lim Tao's good, but there's not enough movement. That's why I do Taiji." When I quizzed him further, he enthusiastically claimed: "When you do it in the morning...it does feel good." His smile said it all: Give it a go sometime.

So what was my first experience of Taijiquan? Very different to the daunting first lesson in Bridge's Academy! I travelled with my Grandmother in hope that she would take this up as a form of regular physical activity as I knew she was aware of the art and had a book on it in her home, which I had read from cover to cover one afternoon.

The class was set in a health spa in a large Georgian house. The interior was stylishly decorated, and was run by some young, toned and tanned people advertising the benefits of this health spa through their gleaming bodies. Quite different to the hardened faces of the working class Wing Chun practitioners.

We were led upstairs to a balcony room curtained off from the outside world. Here I met Bill, the instructor. He seemed a gentle, well-spoken and intelligent man, well spoken and graceful in movement. I couldn't quite guess his age, but I'd say he was in his mid seventies. I looked around. The class was very small and personal, as only six people were present. This made me feel comfortable as a beginner.

We approached the instructor and made introductions. My Grandmother mentioned to Bill that I had done lots of martial arts. "Right." Replied Bill, looking uncomfortable and surprised. He probably thought it strange that a young martial artist would be interested in Taiji as the rest of the class were all above forty. It was clear that he wasn't used to dealing with people like me!

From the outset, it was clear that my body was riddled with tension. Throughout my practice of Wing Chun, I developed all the necessary attributes required of a good practitioner, apart from physical relaxation. Nevertheless, I expected that my martial attributes would be transferable to Taijiquan. However, it seemed that the tension was slowing my progress. John strolled over to me in the corner of the room, and stepped in front of me. He commented: "The martial will never leave your bones, will it? Like most martial arts people, your qi stops here (pointing to the elbow)."

Throughout my first few weeks, my tension just wouldn't disappear. However, on a positive note, I became more consciously aware of it, which increased the likelihood of change.

On the journey home, Nan commented, "you're very tense, aren't you? I can see that clearly, and so can the teacher." I was a little annoyed by this comment, but kept quiet and just nodded in agreement. I felt ashamed and embarrassed as I believed Taijiquan would be far easier to learn than the complex techniques of Wing Chun. How wrong was I! The soft, flowing movements were completely alien to me. I was accustomed to delivering power in all of my strikes, and moving as quickly as possible. This art, however, required slow, flowing movements and a tranquil mind.

The closing of the class was quite bizarre from my previous experiences of a warm down. We huddled into a circle, raising our arms in standing meditation. We chanted: "Lau gung, lau gung, dantien" several times. I had absolutely no idea what was being said. It was like being a member of a bizarre cult! I left the class feeling drained and dizzy, strange considering that I hadn't expended many calories. I even had to lie down before lunch. This was exactly how I felt when I first began Wing Chun, even though I wasn't expending that much energy in either martial art. It was more a mental drain after all the concentration and 'letting go' required of me.

Green Tea and Cake: Chen Taiji Culture

I turned up to the usual village hall expecting the thriving regular class, but was surprised to see the members sorting out rows of chairs in front of a large TV screen, which must have been brought in especially as it normally wasn't there. The kettle was boiling rather loudly and I could hear friendly chatter amongst a smaller group of core practitioners surrounding the rising steam. There were few beginners around this week, which made the whole thing rather mysterious.

Bill, as placid as ever, approached me: "We're going to have some green tea and some cake." He paused. "I'm not sure if you eat cake?" He added hesitantly, probably questioning my health conscious behaviour as a sports science student.

"Yes, I do." I reassured him with a smile.

"Good. We're going to watch a video from my recent trip to China, so we won't have a normal lesson." He explained as I remembered that he regularly visited the Chen village, the 'home' of the Chen style and his particular teacher, who is one of the five leaders of the system.

Everyone sat down in keen anticipation. The video began to play, and it came out as a video camera running from the bumpy car journey along rural tracks to the Chen village. As they neared the training centre, Bill pointed out a few landmarks such as the golden statue of Yang Luchan kneeling down to his Chen master in a pledge to become his disciple.

"What's Yang Luchan doing there?" Asked a lady in surprise, as if everyone in the room could recognise who it was. John explained that this was a symbol that recognised Chen's status as the original form of Taiji.

I sipped my piping hot tea, and sat back in comfort, imagining what it would be like to train in this world famous village. I bit into my moist slice of chocolate cake, and as the flavours merged I enjoyed a colourful display of some marvellous Taiji. A small child moved around with flamboyance in bright red silk suit. He must have been no more than seven years old, and looked very cute and innocent. The whole group gasped in amazement of his immense body control and fluidity.

"I wish I could move like that. He puts us all to shame!" Exclaimed Pat, Bill's most senior student who had accompanied him to this trip and several others. Others laughed nervously with their eyes fixated on the boy.

The camera then paused and turned to a different scene: To a courtyard full of different groups, each with their own unique uniforms. The background was of China of

popular imagination: Shrines, beautiful roofs and elegant gongs and steps, giving the place a mystical quality.

“There’s Simon Chow’s group.” Bill pointed out to a group of people in gold uniforms. I instantly recognised the name as I was aware that Chow taught both Wing Chun and Taiji, like several masters in Britain.

The video continued through several form sequences and weapons work, plus two small children pushing hands, which turned out to be a bit of a scrap in the end as we laughed at their boisterousness. I finished my perfectly brewed tea, allowing the slight bitterness to simmer as I helped clear up. Although this evening’s ‘class’ was a little strange for me, I felt a stronger connection to Chen style Taijiquan, and this event began to forge my identity as a practitioner of the art under my teacher Bill. I couldn’t see myself leaving the group to join another strand of Taiji, which seemed to be less pure and connected to any lineage.

Taiji on the hills: Mind, body & nature

Quite soon after my Grandmother and I had begun learning Taiji, we turned up to the hall to see a few students gathering around the building, which featured as a scout hut and a village hall.

“We’re off to the hill today.” Chuckled one gentleman in his fifties, as if this was a normal thing to do on a Tuesday evening.

“Really?!” We both couldn’t believe it.

Nan and I followed the man in my car up to a remote country park quite near this picturesque village, which was a new area to me. The trail led us up a hill until we arrived to a car park with a few familiar faces waiting patiently with huge smiles on their faces. They were certainly looking forward to some training! The air was fresh and a breeze started to pick up as we gathered in a circle for some warm up exercises. We loosened our waists as I felt my lower back relax after a day of study at home. Bill seemed tranquil and calm with a serene smile across his face as we moved together through the motions as a group, and I felt refreshed and invigorated on top of the hill, forgetting about my worries and what other people might think of me. A few dog walkers went by, but as we were a group of 12 I didn’t feel concerned about what they thought of me.

As the wind intensified, the ruffling sound grew louder, and people's coats and jumpers started to shake around, along with the ladies' longer hair, as they struggled to keep their composure. I sunk in my stance and 'rooted' to the earth as Bill has previously instructed us. I glanced around as other struggled with the one legged postures as their hair and clothes fluttered around in the increasingly gusty wind. I brought my attention back to my own motions as my distractions led me to struggle with the balance.

We concluded the class with some standing meditation circling a large oak tree with the usual chanting of "lau gung, lau gung, dantien." Bill assured us that we would gain extra 'energy' as natural settings were far better than man-made areas. I felt very calm and in the moment, with all thoughts of stigma, stress or other people vanishing. We stood still for several minutes until Bill gently instructed us to close off. As I recalled one of my first sessions: "You get qi from the air around you, from the environment and of course, from the food that you eat. Yet nowadays with all these computer screens we lose all our energy."

"It's true!" Exclaimed Jan, a friendly lady in her fifties, with her husband vigorously nodding.

This was my first experience of practising Taiji in open public spaces. Although I had devoted my Saturday afternoons to running through the motions I had learned in Bill's morning class, I had never dared to practise in public for fear of stigma. This was a wonderful experience where I felt connected to the earth, the tree, the wind and other people as we moved slowly in unison like one unit.

An important day: The black belt decision

I had returned to University, and had kept up my practice of Taiji at home as I devoted most of my training to Wing Chun. Today was a milestone in my Wing Chun career. Unexpectedly, after playing some gor sau, Sifu asked me what my grade was. "Green two." I replied quickly, surprised that he didn't know. I had been at that grade for around a year now. I never expected to be promoted, although I thought I was improving in comprehension and ability. Was Sifu going to promote me? To my great surprise, he was.

"I think you're ready for your black belt." He said casually, as if it was an everyday occurrence. "Your Wing Chun is coming along really well."

I was shocked by this, as I had never imagined receiving my black sash until the latter stages of my PhD. Sifu noticed my confusion: “What would you like to work on then?”

“Well...everything!” I laughed.

On parting, Sifu repeated his praising feedback: “Your Wing Chun is coming along exceptionally well.” This was rare of him, as he usually says I’m doing ‘pretty well’ rather than ‘exceptionally well.’ Was this because of the excellent rapport between us today because Sifu was in such a good mood? He closed with an important comment: “I’d like to see you getting up there and teaching, to see if you can pass on the knowledge.” I left the gym smiling, asking myself a question that helped frame the PhD: Is the ability to effectively transmit martial culture a requirement of an experienced practitioner, or just a preference of the Sifu? It was time for the investigation to begin.

3. Literature Review

Today there are many strands of research and approaches to the knowledge and forms of ‘truth.’ Such seemingly diverse strands can be understood as disciplines from physics to literature or from history to psychology. The contemporary philosopher and psychologist Wilber (2000) has adopted a new perspective that sees connections between these seemingly divided areas of study. For him, any single case study, such as the development of human intelligence, can be understood from an *integral* perspective, which sees knowledge as composed of four interconnected levels: 1) The ‘*it*’, being the measurable approach to the body or an object of study 2) The ‘*I*’, the subjective, personal accounts found in disciplines such as phenomenology and autoethnography 3) The ‘*we*’, the social and interactive perspective on human life as found in ethnography and symbolic interactionism 4) The ‘*they*’ the pluralistic approach to groups of people and human processes such as the industrial revolution and philosophical enlightenment. This philosophy combines individual and pluralistic understandings alongside the objective and subjective, and can be illustrated by my simplified adaptation of his model below:

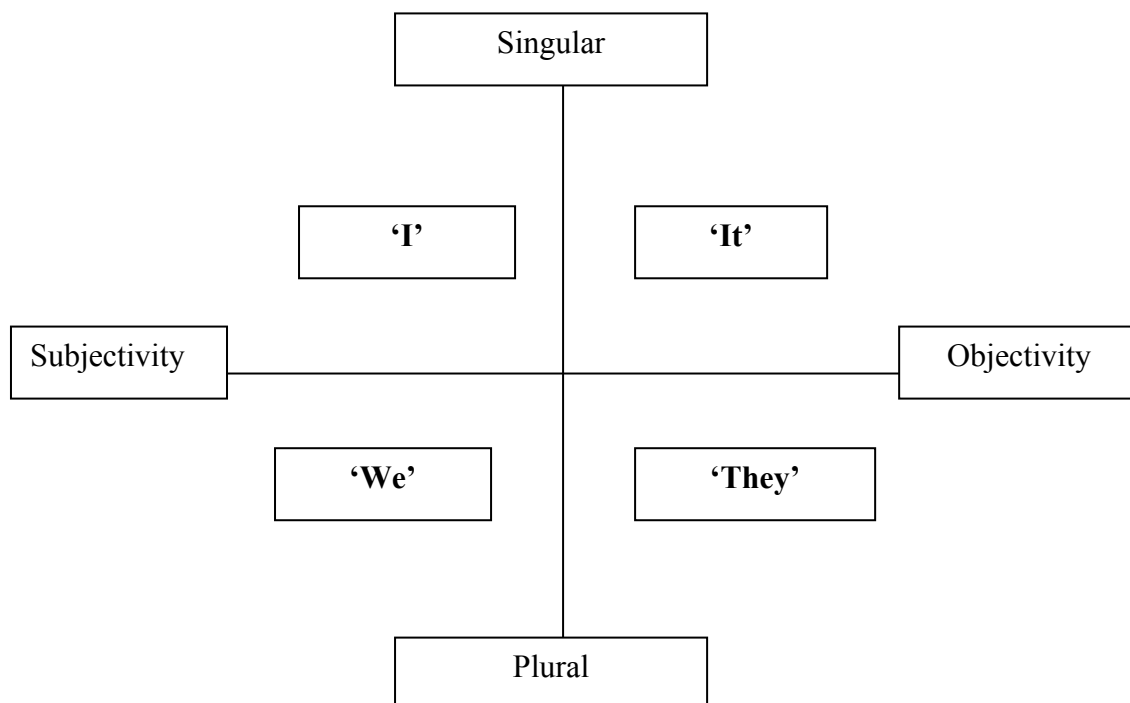


Figure 3.1 Adaptation of Wilber's (2000) integral matrix

From examining this diagram, we may be tempted to think that research approaches stick to one quadrant. Wilber claims that disciplines are fluid, and can move between boundaries, but from assessing the research literature on TCMAs, I saw most of the research fitting into the four quadrants, which will help me frame this chapter. Consequently, this literature review has four main components following Wilber's (2000) *integral philosophy*: 1) The quantitative scientific approaches to 'it', in this case the measurable TMA body 2) The subjective approach to 'I', through individual autoethnographical and life history accounts of TMA practice 3) The 'we', the subcultural practice and shared social experience of TMAAs 4) The focus on 'they', the sociohistorical research on TMAAs in the Western and Eastern contexts. As I have employed life histories, autoethnography, reflective writings and ethnography in this investigation, I pay greater attention to the 'I' and 'we,' although I also emphasise the importance of the sociohistorical processes that possibly frame modern British practitioners' experiences.

As research on Wing Chun is sparse, I turn to literature on general TMAAs, focusing primarily on EMAs, but drawing upon other styles whenever appropriate. Hitherto, the major approaches on Taijiquan and TMAAs have been physiological, biomechanical and psychological, with an emerging amount of sociocultural material. The (neo)positivist quantitative research ('it') is briefly examined, before qualitative ('I' and 'we') and socio-historical ('they') studies are critically appraised in more detail, as many are highly relevant to this particular study, and may assist my theoretical considerations and research design seen in later chapters.

3.1. (Neo)positivist Research

3.1.1. Physiology

Most of the quantitative research that investigated Taijiquan has done so from the perspective that the art is an activity suitable for frail and elderly individuals rather than as a martial art for all types of people. A good example of this is provided by a review by Lan, Lei and Chen (2002), who suggest long-term practice of Taijiquan attenuates the age decline in physical function, and thus is very suitable exercise for older individuals. Moreover, they highlighted a range of studies that support this claim

including those that indicate Taijiquan to be beneficial to cardiorespiratory function, strength, balance, flexibility, microcirculation and psychological profile. Physiologically, Taijiquan is therefore regarded as a ‘balanced’ exercise integrating key components of modern exercise training (endurance, strength, balance and flexibility), although the exercise intensity depends on training style, posture and duration. As these vary between classes, it is highly likely that the physiological benefits gained will also differ. These findings support a review by Jancewicz (2001), which claimed Taijiquan has the potential to prevent and treat many conditions associated with ageing including loss of balance and strength and cardiorespiratory function. It is therefore an exercise that is highly beneficial for both fitness and health. The author also identified several psychological benefits, including increased self-esteem and confidence.

Another review by Li, Hong and Chan (2001) concluded that Taijiquan is a moderate intensity exercise beneficial to cardio-respiratory function, immune capacity, mental control, flexibility and balance control. They argue that it improves muscular strength whilst reducing the risk of falls in the elderly. Similar findings were made by Hong, Xian and Robinson (2005) regarding balance control, flexibility and cardiovascular fitness yet with more experienced Taijiquan practitioners, which is largely overlooked as most research examines the frail and elderly medical patients. A more recent review by Judge (2003) declared Taijiquan to be a promising type of balance and mobility intervention yet advised that further research into its acceptance and adherence was necessary before it is declared as a ‘preferred’ exercise mode.

Elsewhere, Taijiquan has been found to impact favourably upon defined biomedical and psychosocial indices of frailty, whilst reducing the risk of multiple falls (Wolf *et al.*, 2003) through improving balance and mobility in older people (Choi *et al.*, 2005). However, other studies do emphasise that continued training is necessary for maintenance gains for strength and balance (Wallsten *et al.*, 2006), which is something I will consider in this study. Furthermore, Taijiquan was deemed particularly beneficial when opportunities were made for social or community networks between participants outside of the class, which supported their ongoing participation (Hill *et al.*, 2005). This potentially long-term transformation in social relations and social identities within and outside schools, lineages and martial arts institutions will be considered in my study as it connected to the idea of ‘family’ that I will explain later in this review.

Regular practice is also associated with improved skin blood flow in older individuals and possibly delay the age-related decline of venous compliance and hyperaemic arterial response (Wang *et al.*, 2002). In addition, Taijiquan has been found to be a safe and effective non pharmacological approach to sleep enhancement for sleep-disturbed and insomniac elderly individuals (F., Li *et al.*, 2004).

However, there have been surprisingly few investigations of the health and fitness benefits of other EMAs, despite their widespread popularity. Melhim (2001) examined the very popular martial art of *Taekwondo*, often recognised for its overall fitness benefits. Surprisingly, this art was concluded to be beneficial to anaerobic, but not aerobic power, in male adolescent practitioners. Connected to this competitive art, there have been numerous investigations of injuries attained through sports martial arts (SMA) competitions (Buse, 2006; Deshmukh & Shah, 2003; Kochhar *et al.*, 2005; Macan *et al.*, 2006; Zazryn *et al.*, 2003). However, Burks and Satterfield (1998) remind us, “the severity and number of injuries sustained in competition are much greater than in regular, ‘traditional’ settings. Indeed, many people practise the martial arts for years without sustaining any injuries” (p. 270). It is the latter form of training cultures that I am investigating in this study.

3.1.2. Biomechanics

The few biomechanical studies on Taijiquan (S. P. Chan *et al.*, 2003; Wu *et al.*, 2004; Xu *et al.*, 2004) have focused solely on lower limb movements due to its effective balance and mobility enhancement. For instance, Chan *et al.* (2003) found Taijiquan to be an effective way to strengthen the legs via eccentric muscle contractions to prevent injuries caused by poor balance. Wu *et al.* (2004) effectively quantified the biomechanical characteristics of Taijiquan’s gait important for understanding its effect on balance, flexibility, strength and health. Furthermore, Xu *et al.* (2004) detected excellent proprioception in the ankles and knees of Taijiquan practitioners, which was argued to be beneficial for balance control in older people.

Despite the varied kinaesthetic movements of various TMAs, there have been few peer-reviewed studies. The majority of studies so far have focused on kicking techniques in styles such as Taekwondo (Sorensen *et al.*, 1996). As a result of such emphasis, there

have been no scientifically rigorous studies on Wing Chun, despite the regular practitioner claims of the art's sound underlying biomechanical principles (see Rawcliffe, 2003).

3.1.3. Psychology

The few published psychological investigations on Taijiquan (Chui *et al.*, 2005; Hernandez-Reif *et al.*, 2001; Jeng *et al.*, 2002; Sattin *et al.*, 2005; Taylor-Piliae & Froelicher, 2004; Taylor-Piliae *et al.*, 2006) are mainly quantitative, positivist studies based on a Western medical perspective that regards Taijiquan as an exercise for psychological well being for the elderly, adolescents and culturally appropriate for Asian populations. These studies did not consider experienced Western practitioners and the non-medical benefits of sustained training. Furthermore, a very simplified, non-martial form of Taijiquan was used in these studies. Consequently, it is likely that individuals practicing Taijiquan in its entirety, with all forms, weapons and partner drills, gain different psychological transformations beyond becoming 'normal' for their age and gender category in a sense of cultivation outlined earlier in the introduction. In this light, it is hoped that my study will contribute to new knowledge of this art among non-clinical populations.

An older review by Fuller (1988) explored the quantitative research linking the relationship between TMAs training and psychological health, using Japanese Aikido as a suggested form of psychotherapy. Overall, Fuller identified several major psychological benefits of general TMAs training: Lowered aggression, increased assertiveness, a form of self-help and socialization. He also suggested Aikido's focus on thinking, feeling and action are dynamic mechanisms behind positive psychological change, particularly through partner training. Physical and mental relaxation were identified; as were developed mind-body coordination, stress management and a feeling of empowerment. Nevertheless, Fuller (1988) suggested future research to investigate the teaching systems and daily training in different styles of TMAs beyond the predominantly Japanese styles he examined. Surprisingly, this aspect of research has not been followed up on the martial arts, although work on yoga and meditation has progressed steadily. This is part of what I am attempting to look at in this study with two TCMAs.

Other studies have found TMA training to be effective in reducing aggressiveness in juveniles (Trulson, 1986) and adults (Nosanchuk, 1981). Furthermore, two studies have taken a gendered approach, examining the psychological benefits of martial arts and self-defence training for women (Brecklin, 2004; Brecklin & Ullman, 2005). They found such training was beneficial in scenarios of rape and sexual assault, providing the participants with positive instrumental traits such as independence, less sexual conservatism, greater assertiveness and an enhanced capacity to defend themselves. I will remain gender sensitive in my argument, as many martial arts cultures are both historically and contemporarily patriarchal.

3.1.4. Summary

To briefly conclude, there have been a number of quantitative studies suggesting TMAs having many health transformations in terms of physical and mental health. In most studies, Taijiquan is regarded as an ‘intervention’ for elderly and frail individuals rather than a way of life (as for many experienced practitioners) for healthy people of various ages, or a spiritual practice, although some scholars have argued the case for this (e.g. Lewis, 2000). This biomedical model is strongly influenced by the dominant ageing narratives in modern Western society where the attempt to achieve healthy ageing is met by such alternative therapies (G. N. Thomas *et al.*, 2005). Considering the limited range of the previous quantitative studies, it is evident that the social aspects of Taijiquan need to be explored following WHO’s definition of total health outlined in the introduction (Üstün & Jakob, 2005). Could another perspective be adopted by research? Since Cox’s (1993) report, which cited only one qualitative article, there has been a slowly emerging qualitative approach to TMAs. Life stories and autoethnographies provide an alternative perspective.

3.2. Life (Hi)stories and Autoethnographies

The life stories of experienced TMA practitioners have been publicized through the popular martial arts press in magazines alongside scholarly texts e.g. O’Brien (2007). Practitioners’ own stories have also been shared through autobiographies accessible to the public such as *Angry White Pyjamas* (Twigger, 1997) and more recently, *Waking Dragons* (Powell, 2006). However, by their nature, few have offered any theoretical

understandings of their transformative experiences as they instead leave interpretations up to each reader, who will often have limited knowledge or experience of the arts. More recently, there is a small but increasing body of literature that focuses exclusively on the profound personal change experienced through continuous TMA training (Brown & Leledaki, 2005; Dykhuizen, 2000a; Jennings, 2005, 2006; Kohn, 2004; Luckenchuk, 2006; Zarrilli, 2002).

3.2.1. Interviews

O'Brien's (2007) recent book *Nei Jia Quan: Internal Martial Arts* is a rich source of life stories from highly experienced, often world renowned masters of Taijiquan and two other 'internal' Chinese martial arts, *Baguazhang* and *Xingyiquan*. However, despite the lengthy and articulate accounts from these teachers of TCMA's, her interview-based study lacks a theoretical framework to work from. Nevertheless, these are informative. Moreover, as I will argue later in this thesis (chapter twelve), this is a useful format that might be employed to represent life history data collected in this study to lay readers and martial artists. Instead, I have used this as an example of how my life history interviews might be useful when modified into a book for lay readers and martial artists. Such alternative formats are important, as practitioner stories can be inspirations for further generations of students within and outside their particular martial arts styles. The same can be said of other scholarly texts that remove the author's theoretical interpretations, including a very rare collection of female TMA practitioners' stories in Wiley's (1992) *Women in the Martial Arts* and her later pedagogically focused *Martial Arts Teachers on Teaching* (1995).

More academically, Lantz (2002) phenomenologically investigated how martial arts may assist family development. Using grounded theory, Lantz (2002) supports his statements with interview data with a large sample of nine couples and twenty three families practising the popular styles of Aikido, Karate and Taekwondo. Overall, the training was seen as facilitating family development for children and their parents, being a suitable complement or even an alternative to more contemporary family therapy. Yet Lantz did not use the TCMA's in this study, which means that the transformations of self-defence, self-confidence, physical vitality, concentration, respect, friendship, moral development, spirit, training for life, grades, respect for life and the importance of a good instructor remain unclear for my chosen styles. Also, by

using such a sample, Lantz (2002) did not communicate detailed individual life histories or transformations of experienced martial artists, as the participants only had to have at least four months of training. Additionally, his findings are likely to differ to mine, as I will only be studying experienced adult practitioners rather than focusing on children. Nevertheless, it is important to consider how their practice might influence their daily relationships and family life of this type of practitioner.

Another American-based study is relevant to mine as it focused specifically on the modern student-instructor relationship. Following extensive interviewing with various Taekwondo instructors and student instructors, Czarnecka (2001) determined that the “student-instructor relationship is one fraught with tension and conflict” (p. 19). She describes a common path of becoming an instructor:

You become groomed for the role since the day a student junior to you appears in the class. You learn to teach by observing your instructor, and any student less experienced than you is your guinea pig. Later, you begin to lead warm ups and supervise certain drills. Suddenly, you are teaching full classes. What you have learned and seen in the dojang [Korean term for training hall] are usually only tools for learning to be a teacher.

(Czarnecka, 2001, p. 20)

However, not all students were happy about this arrangement. There had been many disputes about matters over power and agency within a school or network of schools, often leading to the student-instructor leaving to set up his/her own school and effectively excommunicating their old instructor. Czarnecka (2001) suggests that this may be due to traditional Eastern pedagogical principles being imposed upon Westerners. This research raises questions over whether these issues important in TCMAAs. The process of becoming an advanced practitioner is bound to include issues of instructor-student relationships and the progress of teaching careers that can be explored in some detail via the life story interview strategy.

3.2.2. Autoethnography

A recent article by Luckenchuk (2006) followed a phenomenological and autoethnographical perspective to discuss her personal TMA experience. For her, martial arts helped self-confidence whilst also helping the unification of mind and body, which are so easily separated in the dominant Cartesian culture of modern Western society, particularly in the academic institution in which she worked. The school she

joined became, in her own words, “my dwelling place, and its people developed into my surrogate family” (Luckenchuk, 2006, p. 424). Within this ‘family,’ the teacher is highly respected by all martial artists. Their title is “the result of a long and strenuous practice and an ultimate devotion to martial arts” (Luckenchuk, 2006, p. 431). For her, the teacher should be not only an experienced and knowledgeable exponent, but also a reflective practitioner always learning and assessing how knowledge can be made relevant to all types of students. This relates to some of the questions posed in this study. For example, will a TCMA Sifu have a similar responsibility and social standing? How might they assist in the transforming practices of their students?

The interaction rituals identified earlier by Brown (2005) were also a major feature of Luckenchuk’s (2006) TMA training and reinforced the mutual respect between fellow practitioners who were accepted as equals despite being from very different backgrounds. For her, the social composition of martial arts associations are egalitarian, with practitioners hailing from a variety of ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Within this mix of different people are also practitioners of different ages. She tells the remarkable story of an elderly practitioner: “Our oldest student was in his sixties when he began *kajunkenbo* practice. In about five years, he gained a black belt, conquered his polio and became one of the head instructors in our school. Now in his seventies, he continues to teach (and learn)” (Luckenchuk, 2006, p. 432). This age range is an interesting finding, and will be considered in my selection of participants outlined in chapter four.

Finally, two further important and interrelated aspects of TMAs are raised by Luckenchuk (2006), that of lifelong learning and endless self-discovery, rather than competition with others as in many competitive and team sports. These activities often contrast in focus to the TMAs, which are commonly followed as lifelong disciplines with the aim on continuous improvement despite the ageing process. Firstly, through years of vigorous training, the practitioner learns more and more about his/her own body, and how to come to terms with its vulnerability, and how to improve it. Secondly, within the positive cultural climate: “Instead of competing with one another, martial artists were teaching, supporting and learning from each other” (p. 424). This raises the question of what is the dominant learning culture in the TCMAAs explored in this study? Moreover, if such a dominant learning culture exists in these, then does this connect to certain kinds of stories being told?

Overall, Luckenchuk (2006) has provided a powerful example of practitioner research that has tended to be lacking throughout the existing research, despite many authors also being practitioner-researchers. According to her, it is part of the transformative process: “The value of action and practitioner researcher, as I see it, lies within the power of self-reflective thinking, which is embodied into transformative practice” (p. 425).

Elsewhere, two highly reflexive, confessional texts of research into the British practice of the Brazilian martial art of *Capoeira* have emerged, following recent trends in qualitative inquiry (Delamont, 2005; Stephens & Delamont, 2006a). Delamont’s (2005) perspective as a sedentary observer explored issues of locality, noise, uncertainty and bodily contact in fieldwork, and claims this may have many implications for sociology outside this particular art: Gender; pedagogy; embodiment; culture; reflexivity and research skills. This reflexive text is uncommon, and as such, this text is a timely reminder of the importance of more self-analytical research on TMAs by considering the issues of bodily and mental competence in the art alongside age and gender. Yet also, like with other TMAs, the instructors expect “both instant obedience and a high level of discipline and loyalty” (p. 316). This brings me to question my own physicality for this study: Will the learning environments of Wing Chun and Taijiquan possess similar ageing narratives requiring a young, fit and musically inclined participant?

Although highly relevant for a methodological discussion, Delamont (2005) classes this as educational sociological research as, like Brown (2005), it explores the transmission of embodied knowledge through teaching, learning, assessment and evaluation. Consequently, Delamont (2005) does not focus on *Capoeira* as a transforming practice. Instead, she states: “I have reflected on what studying an energetic physical activity has taught me about fieldwork, rather than present any findings on capoeira” (p. 307). Also, Delamont focused on the unique Brazilian martial culture through observation, it is likely that her findings will be very different to my own, particularly as I am an ‘insider’ in TCMA’s culture. Considering this, will my physical skills, age and abilities be influential in gaining interesting stories?

In a further article, Stephens and Delamont (2006a) created a dual confessional tale: One, a complete observer, and the other, an active, experienced *Capoeirista*. This is an innovative approach identifying many different perspectives that a single author would be unlikely to accommodate. It takes an embodied, reflexive, sociological perspective,

taking into account gender, age, physical capabilities and skill through reference to interview data and field notes. The empirical focus is on how non-Brazilians are attracted to this art, how it is taught to them, and how the classes and social events are enacted and understood. For them, this martial art is a very physical activity in which words and writing mean very little in the learning process.

My research would benefit from such a reflexive approach, acknowledging my position as an active and experienced practitioner. This process will be put into practice by the development of extensive evidence from my field notes diary and reflexive journal, which will be explored later in the methodology section. It has hoped that through these strategies, the research questions and reflexivity will aid me in ‘stepping away’ from active practice, by occasionally becoming a detached sedentary observer in order to consider what is seen, heard alongside what I already feel.

3.3. Ethnography

Put simply, an ethnography is essentially a written representation of a culture via prolonged fieldwork using various data collection methods (Krane & Baird, 2005). Several ethnographies investigated the practice of TMAs in the West (Bar-On Cohen, 2006; De Welde, 2003; Delamont, 2005, 2006; J. M. Goodger, 1982; James & Jones, 1982; Jennings, 2005, 2006; Jennings *et al.*, Forthcoming 2011; N. Stephens & Delamont, 2006b), their native country (Alter, 1992; Frank, 2003; Zarrilli, 1998), and cross culturally (Delamont & Stephens, 2008; Dykhuizen, 2000a; Dykhuizen, 2000b; Joseph, 2008; Kohn, 2004; Samudra, 2008), which aim to understand what practice effectively means for practitioners themselves by researchers taking an ‘insider’ perspective whilst the members of a subculture go about their daily lives (Emerson et al., 1995).

3.3.1. The ‘West’

To begin, I have previously conducted an ethnography of the Wing Chun school regularly attended from 2002-2009 and have reported this through undergraduate and masters dissertations (Jennings, 2005, 2006) and emerging conference and journal papers (discussed in the conclusions, chapter twelve). The first of these was ‘*Wing*

Chun Wins All: An Ethnographic of a Wing Chun Kung Fu School Exploring the Themes of Subculture, Class and Identity. As a complete participant within 'Bridge's Wing Chun Academy' (Jennings, 2005), I explored these issues through prolonged fieldwork. Firstly, I found that as a subculture, the school to possess its own norms and values distinct from society beyond the doors of the *kwoon* (school), which were effectively embodied through regular, dedicated training. Secondly, although a predominantly working class group, people from all social backgrounds like myself (coming from a mainly middle-class background) were accepted as members, but were expected to act appropriately according to these norms and values. These practitioners, particularly beginners, would be stigmatised if they did not. Thirdly, there was an obvious hierarchy based on skill, rank and dedication to the art, which dictated interactions between practitioners and power within the group. Through the focused training, a skilful Wing Chun 'habitus' is created, based primarily around realistic street combat, being the focus on the classes. This skill consequently created a specific Wing Chun identity tied closely to the school and its members. However, this identity was inherently unstable, as the value of this habitus was not easily translated outside the school context and subculture, body and the school.

This was an original study, as there have been very few ethnographies of TCMA schools. It began to highlight current issues in the practice of Wing Chun in Britain and combines the use of participant quotes as realist tales with long extracts of my own personal experiences as impressionist tales. Yet it had several limitations. Firstly, as a pilot study, it neglected Wing Chun's transformative potential, being overly focused on the subcultural nature of the school. Secondly, the scope of the study as an undergraduate dissertation limited the use of interviews to further explore personal experiences. Thirdly, it only used complete participation for data collection, so many events and details were observed which were not recorded immediately.

These issues were considered when conducting my second dissertation *'It Can be a Religion if you Want it to be: An Ethnographic Investigation Into Wing Chun Kung Fu's Potential as a Body-Self Transforming Practice'* (Jennings, 2006), which focused upon Wing Chun's potential as a transforming practice via the body-self-society relationship. Given this, it is arguably the most relevant study within this literature review, and deserves particular attention, as it has strongly influenced the design and core focus of this current study. Here, prolonged participant observation (eight months as both

complete participant and complete observer) was combined with life story interviews with two senior instructors in *Bridge's Wing Chun Academy*. The study had five major findings: 1) Wing Chun may act as a secular religion for practitioners 2) The group was likened to a 'family' led by charismatic figures 3) The pursuit and maintenance of martial skill is the major focus on the group, and is tied to the self- and social identities of practitioners 4) The ageing narratives are largely more positive than in many Western competitive sports, with Wing Chun being accessible to the elderly and unfit 5) Reflexive modernisation (see next chapter) appears to affect Wing Chun through the removal of a spiritual and philosophical focus, replaced by a reality combat focus. This study will further explore these findings by interviewing a range of participants within the Academy and in various other schools alongside alternative forms of representation.

Elsewhere, anthropologist and martial arts instructor Bar-On Cohen (2006) has investigated the somatic codes (verbal expressions for physical movements) in Japanese martial arts as practised in Israel. Rather than impose theory upon her findings, Bar-On Cohen 'shows' the somatic culture through a lengthy impressionist tale rather than 'tell' the reader how to fully interpret each aspect of it. This innovative approach to representing ethnography may be useful in my own investigation, where a strong theoretical voice may limit the reader's own impressions of the written culture. This is because Bar-On argues that we can only "know" this somatic culture through the body.

More recently, Bar-On Cohen (2009) turned her attention to the Israeli self-defence movement of *Survival*, used by the country's military in an era of political and civil unrest. Here, her focus changed to nationalism and masculinity in this male-dominated organisation. Central to her argument is that practitioners of *Survival* are transformed into efficient fighting machines for the nation through an anti-emotional and anti-intellectual pedagogy concerned with passing on nationalist ideologies. Although a very different to my own, Bar-On Cohen's study further articulates research investigating the connections between embodied practice and larger cultural movements and political ideologies (see Alter, 1992; see Carruthers, 1998), which may influence TCMA's in different ways.

Although not strictly an ethnography, Masciotra, Arkermann and Roth's (2004) study explored the art of distancing in *Karate-Do* in both experts and novices through space, time and rhythm. For them, a key issue is the art of relating and communicating within

constructed space-time intervals in and through which people interact. This concept, known as '*maai*', is taught, mastered and conceptualised within the pedagogy, developing to the level of pre-reflexive consciousness. Firstly, *maai* is a concept of constant spatiotemporal change or a 'dance' between two people. The accomplished expert will be able to gauge distance automatically without thought. Within this, there is a simultaneous concept of time and rhythm. Secondly, they acknowledge the different levels of human cultivation:

Mastery of space and time, and knowledge about space, time and mastery are always and simultaneously constructed at personal, social and cultural levels. The way in which people and cultures evolve is related to their adaptive relations to the here and now and to their attunement with each other.

(Masciotra et al., 2004, p. 119)

Furthermore, this social attunement (a concept examined in the next chapter) is concerned with being in the here and now, a common philosophy in TMAs and spirituality (e.g. Tolle, 1999). Thirdly, the authors frame this using a structuration-like perspective by drawing upon the phenomenologist Heidegger's (1978) concept of '*being in the world*':

Considering a person as a being in the world means that studies of human development should take into account transformations occurring in its three inseparable components: "being," "world," and the relation of the two signified by the connective "in."

(Masciotra et al., 2001, p. 119)

Finally, the authors stress that this long-term process of shared development is not focused towards "the mastery of the discipline but the route itself, which leads towards the achievement of self-perfection and increasing harmony with others and things" (p. 121). They even suggest that this is reflected in the practitioners' everyday lives: "*Maai* then becomes a way of being, that is, of relating to the world. Bed-making is no longer a chore, nor doing the garden, growing vegetables, cooking, or writing research articles" (p. 131). Such an approach echoes writings of contemporary Zen philosophers such as Suzuki (1972) and spiritual writers such as Tolle (1999). Although religion and spirituality were not explicitly mentioned in Masciotra *et al.*'s (2004) study, this relationship may be worth exploring should my data suggest it. Moreover, this raises the question for this study as whether profound transformations occur from long-term TCMA training? The ideas of a dynamic *maai* are very useful here, as they incorporate time and rhythm to distance and are therefore compatible with my phenomenologically-inspired perspective, which examines the experiences of myself and other practitioners

as the centre of their bodily existence (further explained in chapter 3). This is particularly of relevance as Wing Chun and Taijiquan are typically performed at closer range than Karate, where any idea of a personal ‘bubble’ is now a shortened ‘*living space*’ (Heidegger, 1978). These are all key issues central to TCMA, particularly with partner training.

Several older martial arts ethnographies in the UK have also investigated transformations in the training culture and practitioners (Goodger, 1982; James & Jones, 1982). Despite being theoretically well informed and discussing two topics very pertinent to my research, these papers did not employ field notes or interviews to provide evidence of their claims. Instead, they were limited to a discussion around notions such as a *Judo* school as a Gnostic sect and possibly even a modern religion and charisma amongst leaders in a school (Goodger, 1982) to values and ideology in contemporary Karate (James & Jones, 1982), which really need empirical data to illustrate and explain their theoretically rich points. Consequently, my study will use empirical data whenever possible to illustrate the main themes rather than ‘prove’ the usefulness of theory. Hence theory will be used to illuminate the data and not the other way round.

From a different perspective, neuro-anthropologist Downey’s work (2005, 2006, 2007b, 2008) provides new insights into how martial artists teach and learn across cultures. In this regard, Downey has chiefly focused his attention to Capoeira, an art that has received considerable attention from researchers in recent years. However, he focuses on learning it in Brazil, its country of origin, and provides rich data and articulate descriptions of embodied learning e.g. through music. This is particularly true for his book *Learning Capoeira* (Downey, 2005) as such accessible and evocative writings make use of all the senses and consider phenomenology as key to such an analysis. As learning and transformation often go hand-in-hand, I will consider Downey’s data driven approach when undertaking my own fieldwork.

Finally, a recent ethnography of an MMA group in Canada (Spencer, 2009) has offered some interesting theoretical and methodological perspectives on embodiment. Empirically, Spencer (2009) focuses on core practitioners’ embodiment of the key skills in MMA through constant repetition in various contexts e.g. air, bag and sparring drills in order to make the skill subconscious. He regards this as the development of a specific

MMA ‘habitus’ (a concept explored in the next chapter) unique to each individual’s martial background and abilities. These practitioners were made aware of their strengths and weaknesses, and were encouraged to develop area of weakness even by travelling to Brazil or Thailand, where they could develop their ‘ground game’ or ‘stand up’ respectively. Combining the idea of habitus with reflexivity, Spencer suggests practitioners can reflect, act and change their social and biological conditions through ‘reflexive body techniques’ and changing bodily sensations interpreted by phenomenology (see next chapter). Beyond these data and theory, his methods are also of interest to this study as he combines long-term observations, detailed interviews and some reflexive writing, although life histories are not explicitly employed. Some of these issues are certainly worth considering as I am looking at how people experience transformation, be this through technique, pain tolerance and body conditioning (his focus in regards to fighting-orientated practitioners), or cultural and spiritual interpretations for other kinds of practitioners.

3.3.2. The East

In China, Frank’s (2003) PhD thesis gave an anthropological account as an American practitioner of Taijiquan in a large Shanghai organisation often operating in public parks. As an experienced practitioner of the art, Frank provides a critical insight into the practice of the art in China, and provides a considerable focus on its pedagogy and lineage issues connecting to authority and succession. In addition, he also vividly describes the partner training exercises in Taijiquan, which have hitherto been unexplored, and interviews several instructors during evenings of training in their homes, which is a useful alternative approach to collecting qualitative data. Overall, he focuses on how the long-term practice of Taijiquan ritualises race and ethnicity to create the imaginary of the ‘little old Chinese man’ that many Western, and Chinese people for that matter, visualise when they hear the name of this style. Instead, he argues that this art is international and available for all different types of people of both genders, various ages and across ethnicities. His particularly keen focus on age is an important sociological factor that I will certainly consider in this study considering Wing Chun and Taijiquan’s general accessibility by the elderly.

Zarrilli's (1998) monograph examines the practice of an Indian TMA, *Kalaripayattu*, in its native region. Although Kalaripayattu hold different historical, religious, philosophical and technical foundations to TCMA's, Zarrilli focuses on how practitioners are effectively transformed through years of dedicated practice and how Kalaripayattu is a mode of cultural practice through which bodies, knowledge, power, agency, selves and identities are constantly repositioned in relation to a rapidly changing Indian society. It also explores how experience and meaning of the art are repositioned through this practice by practitioners, teacher and cultural consumers. In this manner, Zarrilli's (1998) ethnography has paved the way for many later studies on TMAs. It is perhaps the most detailed sociological study of a single martial art, as it is based on twenty years of fieldwork and practice in India supported by various forms of evidence such as photographs, interview transcripts, field notes, detailed description of techniques and media articles. The use of extensive interviews, fieldwork and personal engagement in long-term training will be useful methods for this investigation.

Firstly, he argued that the training in Kalaripayattu over many years may lead to the attainment of a "transformative 'fury'" (Zarrilli, 1998, p. 202) creating the ability to defend oneself with the maximum efficiency and relentlessness without conscious thought. Through this transformative fury, practice, self, identity and discourses are effectively repositioned in comparison with their former selves and social relations as TMAs are effectively "techniques of bodily practice which allow an individual to gain agency and power, and to act *within certain specific contexts, in very certain ways*" (Zarrilli, 1998, p. 6, original emphasis) particularly in terms of a self-defence situation.

Secondly, the daily, seasonal and calendared rituals give practical 'access' to 'powers' for practice by simultaneously protecting and empowering the body, effectively circumscribing every activity in the place of training: "Kalaripayattu training is traditionally understood as an ongoing discipline of practice in which the student will gradually be 'transformed'; therefore, traditional training itself is a ritual process" (Zarrilli, 1998, p. 82).

Thirdly, the art is typically taught within such a traditional setting (*kerala*) linked to the ancient regional 'traditions' and contains many rituals and religious concepts, such as deities and shrines. With this traditional (albeit progressive) patriarchy, the learning process is very slow whilst the 'inner secrets' are taught only to advanced students.

Fourthly, due to India's rapidly developing economy, urbanisation and the continuing Westernisation of culture, many institutions have modified Kalaripayattu to emphasise the fighting/self-defence aspects over the traditional and spiritual components in order to match the practice of other TMAs. Kalaripayattu is now practised in many different contexts within a consumer capitalist economy, as cosmopolitanism and street self-defence replace images of warriors and kingship in ancient India. It will be interesting to examine different approaches to TCMA practice in Britain, a very diverse and capitalist society.

Adopting an anthropological perspective in the same country, Alter (1992) had earlier examined North Indian wrestling in several outdoor gymnasiums or *akharas*. He used an extensive methodology as a practitioner-researcher of the art, including participant observation in one particular akhara, 35 detailed interviews with wrestlers, informal interviews, an analysis of the popular wrestling literature and photographs. These social settings are dedicated spaces for the full time study of the art under the guidance of a dutiful guru, who, alongside his students (all male), maintains a feeling of religiosity and secular family that offer alternative perspectives on social relations. Through highly disciplined training involving a rather Spartan lifestyle and diet, including sexual abstinence and a stringent moral code, the wrestlers are subscribing to an Indian nationalist discourse connected to a larger political ideology of pureness, masculinity and pride. The wrestlers, through this full time means of socialisation, are therefore training their bodies for an Indian nationalist utopia and way of life, as Alter (1992) summarises: "The ethic of training and psychophysical preparation is more important than the wrestling bout itself" (p. 5).

Perhaps the TCMA's, practised in the leisure time of the vast majority of everyday practitioners, will give rise to different perspectives? Despite such a different cultural context, this research is certainly concerned with the same question: How are people transformed through long-term practice of an art? Alter (1992) suggests several powerful transformations in both the wrestlers' bodies and characters, including self-confidence, enhanced body awareness, the development of a charismatic social force and even personal experiences likened to enlightenment.

3.3.3. Cross-cultural

For this study a recent and timely paper by Samudra (2008) offers empirical insights and methodological suggestions for ethnographers of body movement cultures. In her case as an anthropologist, she studied the Chinese-Indonesian TMA White Crane Silat in its native Indonesia, in France and the USA, all within the boundaries of a specific international institution. Empirically, Samudra (2008) examined the experiences of long-term practitioners of the art, and found that they experience episodes of unconscious action in self-defence and emergency situations. Yet this didn't stay in a pre-reflexive stage, as many of the practitioners were able to articulate these experiences in further interviews, and reflect on training scenarios when there was no time to 'think.' Essentially, her argument is that as martial arts practitioners we develop 'memory in our body' that can be used instinctively, even when we cease training for a while. This embodied memory, for her, is a part of their identity that shapes their intellectual understandings of the art, which are often restrained by a very somatic rather than reflective ethos of physical training over intellectualisation. Methodologically, her focus is on translating embodied experience (as an experienced practitioner-researcher) to field notes, despite the anti intellectual climate of these pedagogies. How can a researcher 'capture' lived movement and communicate it in a written text? This issue of ethnographic methods will be explored in further details in chapter four. Overall, this recent paper is highly topical for my investigation because of my positioning as an active practitioner of Wing Chun Kung Fu having conducted an ethnography of a body culture, and having recently re-entered the social world of Taijiquan.

Three studies have focused on the transformative potential of Aikido (Dykhuisen, 2000a; Kohn, 2004). Firstly, Kohn's (2004) study uses extensive interview and field note data to support her examination on self-discovery and pedagogy. Written by an active practitioner from an embodied, reflexive perspective, this study raises three issues that are highly relevant to this study: group identity, individual transformations and unique aspects of this TMA that warrant elaborations below.

Within Aikido, a group identity is created via the local and worldwide community sharing a particular focus on embodiment. Hence group and self-identities are being framed in terms of the non-sporting qualities of their practice, much like in many TMAs. Kohn (2004) claims that although it is now been institutionalised, hundreds of

thousands of practitioners are ‘healing’ together as a community. Healing is used here to describe the transformations from a state of mental anxiety and trauma to a confident and more stable sense of self. This powerful metaphor is interesting, as has been suggested previously that Aikido can help in the healing process of a traumatic life through allowing diversity within such a fragmented society. Is there a sense of community spirit in Wing Chun and Taijiquan? If so, does it help ‘heal’ certain participants by altering their life stories? However, Kohn (2004) is careful to note that just because there is a worldwide community, this does not guarantee a universal agreement on principles in practice, as many Aikido schools now emphasise competition over what can be seen as the spiritual component.

Kohn (2004) calls for narratives of various practitioners to be heard. In addition, she suggests that researchers should have direct experience of the martial arts they are investigating, as it is an embodied experience. As I am an active practitioner, I would hope that this would give me an advantage via a greater understanding of the actual physical practice and experiences, although it might also have some methodological disadvantages. Yet what is unique about Aikido? Kohn (2004) suggests that as a non-competitive art that emphasises ‘correct feeling,’ it is suitable for the weak and frail. Earlier it was suggested that Taijiquan is a highly pertinent activity for such a population, particularly the elderly. Is this also the case for Wing Chun?

More recently, Kohn (2008) has explored the social construction of discipline in Aikido schools. She challenges society’s commonly held notions of TMAs as centring around imposed discipline by the hierarchy and a militaristic Japanese patriarchy, by offering alternative views of the discipline in TMAs in modern society that considers the role of the practitioner in their own self-discipline. This not only helps them in their Aikido training, but also enhances a sense of self-connected to such self-control. Her work may prove particularly useful when looking at the notions of discipline, control and agency in TCMA, and how these connect to one another.

Dykhuizen’s (2000a) two-year cross-cultural investigation combines qualitative and quantitative data. Although focusing on Aikido, Dykhuizen (2000a) makes some astute generalisations regarding practitioner transformation in other TMAs. The study was aimed at comparing two distinct training cultures (USA and Japan), and how they may influence adult practitioners’ perceptions of Aikido, *ki*, and martial arts. This approach

led him to focus on several aspects highly relevant to this study: 1) The training environment (pedagogy) 2) How this may change individuals 3) What is specific to Aikido and other TMAs?

The training cultures and environments differed greatly between American and Japanese schools. In America, it was often used to harmonize ‘aggression,’ whereas in Japan, there was already an understanding of concepts such as *ki* through exposure to martial arts in schools and the fact that TMAs form an integral part of Japanese culture. American practitioners often regarded these concepts as ‘foreign’. Yet in both training environments, Dykhuizen (2000a) found a definite change in the perception of other TMAs, which often involved more complex understandings than the need for ‘self-defence’ and violence or aggression, such as concepts of artistry. Yet more importantly, training in Aikido profoundly influenced how practitioners came to perceive and interpret the larger environment. For instance, it was identified that it may help lower aggression, therefore facilitating personal development, and a deeper understanding of oneself. However, we should consider that the transformations from Aikido depend on the cultural context it is practised in. These benefits such as changed perceptions of the world may hold true for TCMA as, like Aikido, training is continuous and lifelong: “There is never a point at which we are finished” (p. 29). Such a philosophy towards continuous self-improvement is certainly worth investigating beyond Aikido in my chosen styles.

Two recent papers on Capoeira (Delamont & Stephens, 2008; Joseph, 2008) provide useful interpretations on the global practice of diasporic martial arts. Firstly, Joseph (2008) examined the practice of Capoeira in Canada as a case of transnational and corporeal movements through specific *body techniques* (borrowing Marcel Mauss’ well known concept). Here, transmission to Canada derives from different forms of movements between there and Brazil which were identified as: Real (international), imagined (virtual/emotional) and corporeal (embodied). The latter is particularly interesting as although the practitioners had often never been to Brazil, they reproduced Brazilian culture and felt like being in Brazil every time they practised. This feeling was embodied and learned through notions of race and ethnicity i.e. learning to ‘move black.’ Consequently, practitioners developed alternative body identities around cultures vastly different to their own and gained interests in broader movement cultures. Interestingly, one research participant “distinguishes between ‘somebody who is a

capoeirista,' following a strict regime to ameliorate his or her game and become part of the broader community and 'somebody who practises capoeira'" (p. 207). Do core TCMA practitioners form similar distinctions?

The real travel was necessary as the vast majority of instructors are Brazilian, due to the recent movement of this art to North America and Europe. Joseph (2008) highlights this key issues through the conceptualisation of '*kinaesthetic citizenship*' and an imagined homeland: "The movement of their bodies, taught to them by their Brazilian *mestre* (teacher) or his disciples, keep them linked to another nation and 'living across borders'" (p. 197). She also refers to this as a kinaesthetic ancestry, a link in the chain of bodily transmission and transformation: "All *capoeiristas* within a group are connected through their bodies to an ancestral line of *mestres* who teach their students how to move" (p. 205). This was an embodied link through what Bourdieu may call schemes of perception, as Joseph highlights: "So much that familiarity with the genealogy of the art made me able to recognise which group a *capoeirista* is from, simply through watching his or her body move" (p. 205). These issues of intercontinental identities and genealogies are certainly something worth examining should the ideas of body lineage and institutional approaches to the art come up.

Also key to Capoeira's dissemination and growth are the industrious masters who must travel and train arduously in order to economical rewards. There are strong connections between schools, and within them, practitioners frequently draw upon a family metaphor e.g. training partners as 'brothers', which break down ethnic and social backgrounds. The instructors frequently emphasise: "The physical, transformative aspects of Capoeira and the freedom their participation offers from dominant movement stereotypes" (Joseph, 2008, p. 203). What are the physical transformations that the participants and instructors hold so dearly in TCMA's? What forms of movement allow for transformations and transmissions? Is there a connection to Chinese culture, despite most instructors being British? How do practitioners see their kinaesthetic citizenship? These issues are key to understand TCMA's in Britain. This may be quite different as Joseph (2008) notes that movement practices "transform in style, context and meaning in their new environments" (p. 209).

Delamont and Stephens (2008) examined Capoeira as a form of diaspora through globalisation. The Brazilian teachers in Britain routinely contrast its practice between its

native Brazil and its new cultural context in order to maintain a sense of authenticity. The authors draw upon Bourdieu's notion of habitus being collectively orchestrated and learned through pedagogies. Here, the teachers develop an *institutional habitus* that is embodied and *individualised* by students. Therefore, a student of Capoeira will have the dispositions of their school, which can be identified by practitioners like Joseph (2008), but simultaneously within the school they have individual roles and differences such as degrees of musical ability, performance skills and social activity. The authors explain:

A capoeira discipulo is acquiring a state of mind and a state of bodily being. The way he or she plays Capoeira is shaped by the group the student belongs to and by their individual biology and biography.

(Delamont & Stevens, 2008, p. 70)

Overall, the institutional habitus is technical (skills), cultural (language, dance and musical knowledge) and behavioural (loyalty and fidelity to a school and master). All of these are examined using the formal belt system seen in EMAs. The issue of loyalty, often seen in TCMA lineages, ensures that the art remains explicitly Brazilian and prevents *glocalisation* (see next chapter). As all arts are emergent, it is an important research issue for embodiment and habitus. Considering this, how do TCMA instructors transmit an institutional habitus? Does this remain 'Chinese' through language, music and other forms of cultural knowledge? How do students individualise this? This is key to understand shared and individual transformations.

A recent article (de Campos Rosario *et al.*, 2010) follows up from this paper, and centres on the life history of the mestre of the association, Achilles. Following long-term field notes and a combination of complete observation and participation, sociologists Delamont and Stephens collaborated with Achilles to develop a paper based around his aims for teaching the group, which are based on understandings that adult embodiment is not set in stone, but is open to change through a tertiary (post school) pedagogy. Here, Achilles' own life history informs his unique approach to teaching the art as his embodiment of Brazilian culture, fluid body motions and love for the art are passed on to the next generation of practitioners. All of these dispositions are attempted to be passed down through his four main aims: 1) To develop social cohesion 2) To appreciate Brazilian culture 3) Play good Capoeira 4) To move their bodies acrobatically, flexibly and beautifully. Such a study was important as there are few accounts of teachers' life histories in ethnographic studies of martial arts groups, and it connects to my previous approach (Jennings, 2006), and the one taken for this study.

Therefore, following my earlier postulate research questions, the instructors' aims for implicit and explicit teaching will be explored alongside their attempts at cultural transmission.

3.4. Socio-historical Research

TMAAs don't exist in a social vacuum. Instead, many social forces operating in modern times influence them. Since the early paper by Back and Kim (1984), which examined the current issues in EMAs at the time such as *sportification* and the potential loss of spirituality and Asian culture, there have been numerous investigations of the historical development of TMA practice in the West and East, and there has been a continuing trend to consider these issues of modernization, loss of tradition and embedding of Western sporting philosophies. In this manner, numerous studies (Assunciao, 2005; Back & Kim, 1984; Brown *et al.*, in press 2010; Carr, 1993; Chan, 2000; Goodger & Goodger, 1977; Saeki, 1994; Tan, 2004; Theeboom & De Knop, 1997; Villamon *et al.*, 2004) have investigated the changing nature of martial systems over time, and how they are being challenged today, and these will be useful in situation TMAAs in the context of the modern world.

3.4.1. Chinese Styles

Sinology, the study of Chinese people, has been well established since the times of the dominant Orientalist and Imperialist perspectives outlined in the introduction. Yet the TCMAAs have received vague or often misunderstood attention from various Western scholars in imperial times and more recent history (Dudgeon, 1885; Holcombe, 1990), which either serve to romanticise the arts or diminish them according to such Imperialist senses of superiority or Orientalist notions of these arts being full of Eastern wisdom.

Nevertheless, in the popular and pseudo-scholarly literature, the TCMAAs have received some more attention from writers such as Smith in his *Martial Musings* (R. W. Smith, 1999b) and *Chinese Boxing: Masters and Methods* (R. W. Smith, 1974). However, more recently, academics have begun to examine the historical development in more critical fashions through the thorough research. Most noticeably, American TCMAAs historian and Taijiquan practitioner Henning has extensively investigated the Chinese

styles in their country of origin (Henning, 1981). His work has critiqued commonly held perceptions of Kung Fu's origins in the Shaolin Temple through the Indian monk *Bodhidharma* and Taijiquan's founder the Daoist hermit Zhang Sanfeng. Furthermore, he dismisses the commonly held belief that the TCMA's are strongly connected to (and resulting from) religion and spirituality/self-cultivation practices. Such a focus on martial-religion relations is even reproduced by Holcombe (1990), one of the few historians to publish work on the TCMA's in an international, peer-reviewed journal. Instead, Henning (1981) argued that TCMA's are part of a long tradition in Chinese history, being the product of continuous military and civil development. Such myths, he claims, may result from certain newer styles wishing to claim more authenticity, such as the Yang Taijiquan style's development of the Daoist sage myth in contrast to Shaolin martial arts' authority based on the lineage back to the Buddhist Bodhidharma. Overall, by debunking such myths, as a sociologist might, Henning allows us to reflect on the stories, creeds and 'traditions' taken for granted in the martial arts, which may give meaning behind modern day practitioners' lives.

On the other hand, the idea of 'myth' often creates the idea of falsehoods and a dichotomy between a martial art steeped in religion and one devoid of it. I have contributed to a recent paper (Brown et al., Forthcoming 2010) that offers some critical understandings of the relationships between TCMA's and traditionalist Asian martial arts more generally. Drawing upon Hobsbawm and Ranger's (1992) idea of *invented traditions*, we argue that the relationship between a given martial art and religion is not necessarily a stable one, and can be later enhanced to provide a sense of authenticity, spirituality and 'tradition' associated with Far Eastern culture. The cases of the Chinese styles and Aikido are provided to argue that religious concepts (e.g. yin-yang), rather than religions themselves, are regularly drawn upon in modern practice and actively derive from the long-term influence of Asian religions in their cultures. For instance, in the TCMA's, the religions of Buddhism, Confucianism and Daoism may be indirectly influencing modern practice through concepts like no-thought (focusing on the present action) and non-action (striving to avoid extra effort) rather than full adopting Buddhism as an officially followed religion in itself, although as some points this may be the case for some practitioners. This is not to say that concepts are the only connection between religion and practice as other aspects of the practitioners' lives may give a sense of philosophy, spirituality and religiosity.

Other studies have acknowledged the importance of Chinese cultural influences. Theeboom and DeKnop (1997) have provided a broad analysis of Chinese Wushu, the generic term for Chinese martial arts today. They argue that TCMAAs have evolved with the cultures and political infrastructures alongside influence from other nations and sporting cultures. From warfare the TCMAAs formed into many different branches based around local identities and individual practitioners. Before and during the *Civil War* (1927-1949) they were used by many warlords and for nationalistic sympathising. With the *Cultural Revolution* (c. 1966-1976), these arts were unified and modified into visually beautiful sports for public demonstrations, which lessened the emphasis on self-defence. This has resulted in various terms being used in different regimes and socio-historical contexts, such as *Kuoshu* and *Gong-Fu*, although Kung Fu remains a well known term in the West, with Wushu being the modern term for MAs in the People's Republic of China (PRC). Looking towards to a more global future, Theeboom and DeKnop (1997) suggest that Wushu may now move towards the position of an Olympic sport, although that has yet to be accepted by the International Olympic Committee (IOC).

Taking these broad historical perspectives to the more specific case of British Taijiquan, Ryan (2008) examined the developed of the art since its early roots in the UK during the 1950s. She maps the spread of the style to different centres of excellence and institutions from the 80s onwards, whilst arguing that few schools maintain all five key aspects of the 'complete' martial art (qigong, neigong, san shao, push hands and weapons), although they may claim to be the original systems. In fact, she identifies only combat-orientated two schools that have all five in their syllabuses, and these both involve rituals and disciple initiations in order for such hidden techniques to be taught. So how to modern TCMA schools maintain authority and a sense of authenticity? Do they cling to myths or adopt modernising perspectives? The work on the Japanese martial arts (JMAs) helps us consider these socially fluid notions of legitimacy in a different context.

3.4.2. Other Styles

Interestingly, many of these studies on social change have focused specifically on JMAs (Carr, 1993; Chan, 2000; Goodger & Goodger, 1977; Krug, 2001; Saeki, 1994; Tan, 2004; Villamon et al., 2004), possibly because these systems have undergone rapid and

very noticeable change in the 20th century. The essay by S. Chan (2000) criticises this viewpoint by examining both Western and Eastern perceptions of the ‘traditional’ JMAs as practised in the West today. He takes a viewpoint combining Orientalism and *Occidentalism*, pointing to the social construction of the ideas of martial tradition to argue JMAs have been constructed as artefacts or relics, almost timeless objects, instead of recently developed social phenomena. For instance, kata and drills are identified as being quite new innovation, rather than an antique practice as many people think. In fact, many of the popular ‘traditional’ arts have near 20th century origins, although few practitioners appear to be aware of this. This is often due to Orientalist and romantic notions of EMAs so that relatively recent innovations are regarded as antique. This links to the recent paper by Brown *et al.* (2010), which considers the ideas of ‘traditions’ invented more recently than commonly perceived, which raises some questions for this study of martial arts from a different cultural origin.

Chan (2000) argues that the highly structured nature of JMAs actually reflects the highly codified society they originate from. Some JMAs, including Aikido, are identified as retaining an ageless, spiritual content. These arts have also helped retain Japan’s cultural heritage, such as religious and spiritual beliefs, and the ideal of *Budo* (martial way) practice. Using a philosophy similar to the notion of conservationism that I briefly explained in chapter one, Chan (2000) claims that the actual content and ideas behind a *kata* (solo sequences) or drill are far more important than the form itself. Similar ideas have been shared by Cox (2003) who conducted anthropological research on two ‘Zen’ arts in Japan: The martial art of *Shorinji Kempo* and the *tea ceremony*. Combining ethnography with history, Cox argues that until quite recently, these arts weren’t connected to Zen philosophy, as Shorinji Kempo’s origins lie in warfare. Modern practitioners (re)construct a sense of tradition and spirituality through rituals such as the tea ceremony, and they seem to be exported abroad by some reflexive practitioners as ‘authentic’ cultural artefacts, as Chan (2000) has claimed.

Judo holds particular sociological attention because of its worldwide popularity as an international sport (Carr, 1993; Goodger & Goodger, 1977; Saeki, 1994; Villamon *et al.*, 2004). Carr’s (1993) socio-historical essay traces Judo’s development from its ancestral origins of *Jujitsu* to the modern day sport. Although his focus is not sociological, some concepts are used to explain Judo’s current state. This essay concentrates on how one of Judo’s main goals, self-cultivation, is now less emphasised

than winning and competition. Carr (1993) claims: “In the last century, it has metamorphosed from a relatively small scale, rather esoteric ‘martial art’ to a large scale, modern, Westernised, and international sport” (p. 168). This important issue of self-cultivation, key to TMAs, is tied to transformation and the pedagogy. This also raises the question of what makes a ‘martial art’, or perhaps more importantly, a TMA? Such a key question will need to be considered throughout this study as it is a very broad term like Kung Fu, and will need a definition for any conclusion to be made.

A useful element of this article is the critically aware argument raising the possibility of social change/resistance against the current trend in martial arts. According to Carr (1993), Judo retains a number of pre-modern elements, like the emphasis on pre-arranged forms (*kata*), an adherence to old Japanese concepts of courtesy and etiquette; and often a reference to the early philosophy of TMAs. Therefore, a martial art may have both traditional and modern components as any process of change is never one-way. Yet it is also important to stress that Judo was never ‘traditional’ so to speak, as Carr (1993) criticises the view consistently held by practitioners, onlookers and academics: “It is ironic that Judo, a creation meant to represent modernised, forward thinking ideas of physical and martial culture, is constantly criticised as being too antiquated and bound up in tradition” (p. 181). Nevertheless, modern Judo players may be compared to the warriors of old, as Carr (1993) stresses that the emphasis on self-development only came about when TMAs were no longer needed in modern warfare.

Although dated, Goodger and Goodger’s (1977) sociological analysis remains useful in examining Judo’s social change in British since 1945. Their focus is on organizational changes, authority and training culture. According to these authors, Judo’s transformation to a large scale, Westernised, modern, international sport has affected its: Organization, legitimation/authority and training culture. Effectively, this social change has occurred in increased: 1) Organisational scale and complexity 2) International orientation 3) Rationalization and codification of rules and competition 4) Transition from a ‘charismatic’ form of authority to a more ‘routinised form’ with ‘rational legal’ characteristics.

Yet Goodger and Goodger (1977) acknowledge the possibility of social change and/or resistance such as in many Judo players wishing to return to the old standards and goals of Judo i.e. moral and physical education. They also claim that peripheral Judo cultures,

particularly those away from large cities, are likely to vary in the extent of following modernization. As TCMAs are yet to be controlled by a single governing body, are they still pursued for self-cultivation instead of medals and prestige? This is a useful reference that introduces the ideas of legitimization of authority and training culture to the area of social change research. Furthermore, it highlights the need for further research using various research methods strategies.

In a further study on Judo, Saeki (1994) investigated the conflict between tradition and modernization through a focused examination of Judo's organizational structure. According to him, Judo originally was practised within a voluntary organisation, being focused on physical exercise and moral development. This organization was strongly linked to traditional Japanese patriarchal values alongside a highly personal relationship between teacher and student. Is there such a patriarchy in TCMAs?

However, in modern Judo, a completely different organisation exists. The focus is not on personal development, but on competition and elite performance. Because of this, training is more systemized and calculated by external disciplines such as sports science. The organisation has more of an international character, with the hegemony (power structures) being decentralised. Yet this may have its benefits of it being an international art with more locally determined power structures and cultural interpretations. Consequently, because of this modernization, Judo and other martial arts may be practised internationally. How will the changing of a martial art's organizational structure affect its potential participant transformations? According to Saeki (1994), due to the emphasis on winning and competition, there is less of a focus on physical, mental and spiritual development. Hence some traditional values may be lost. Considering this, what are the 'traditional' values in TCMAs? How are they being drawn upon by British practitioners in today's society?

A more recent investigation by Villamon *et al.* (2004), following the sociology of Giddens (1991), argues that the social process of *reflexive modernization* is impacting on the practice and institution of Judo. This has resulted in the *disembedding* i.e. 'lifting out' of traditional elements from the practice. The main mechanisms behind this are identified as: 1) Internationalization 2) Institutionalization 3) Commodification, simultaneously transforming Judo from a Budo practice into an attractive international sport mediated to a wide range of audiences.

Yet what seemingly valuable ‘traditional’ aspects of Judo are being disembedded? According to Villamon *et al.* (2004), these are: 1) Charismatic authority 2) Spiritual and moral philosophy 3) Traditional self-defence techniques, such as strangleholds and groundwork 4) Emphasis on practice rather than competition. However, Judo, like all martial arts, has a non-linear development open to change. In fact, according to Villamon *et al.* (2004), many of the top exponents of today are calling for a return to the traditional Judo values.

Tan’s (2004) recent paper takes another critical sociohistorical stance towards Karate’s development. Supported by strong historical evidence, he effectively creates a critical, historically grounded analysis of Karate’s technical evolution and ideological foundations to effectively reconstruct its historical and sociocultural trajectories. Like most research, Tan (2004) emphasises the need for a multistranded and critical approach to understand the possible future of TMAs “that can never be apprehended through a rigid and linear understanding of the process of history making or any narrow claims to essentialized notions of culture” (p. 187). Although he doesn’t identify how this approach can be used empirically, by examining the ever-changing nature of TMAs, it will give researchers a better understanding for their future possibilities and challenges. Essential to his argument is the influence by a great number of different cultures, discourses and narratives over time creating “a complex matrix of historical and social-cultural interests and events rather than one that its popular image often asserts” (p. 187). This article, like others already discussed, therefore critiques the idea of ‘tradition,’ claiming that TMAs are constantly being reconstructed. Like Judo, Western culture, discourse and narratives, operating on a large scale, have heavily influenced Karate. All of these ideas are highly relevant for TCMAAs, which as we have seen, are undergoing various changes in both China and the West.

Likewise, Krug (2001) specifically examined the recent changes in Karate since WWII with its passage to the West. He argues that a rapid increase in the Western popularity and understanding of TMAs and Eastern medicine has led to a lessening need for attachments to the people and culture of Okinawa, where Karate originally developed. Karate’s pragmatic and spiritual characteristics have therefore been repositioned from a marker of Asian culture to a myth or origins, and finally, a set of historical and semi

scientific practices. It is highly possible that this will be the course that many TCMA practitioners, institutions and arts take, for better or worse.

Finally, another study on Capoeira (Assunciao, 2005) used a historical grounding for analysis to identify a major social trend worldwide: Asians are adopting Western sports whilst Westerners are simultaneously turning towards the EMAs. Perhaps this is a sign of Orientalism and Occidentalism occurring simultaneously? Capoeira is an example, having spread across the world at an incredibly rapid rate as through the process of globalisation, many groups have become truly international, with growing numbers outside the art's native Brazil. It is now performed within a wider range of social contexts, from fitness centres to film centres whilst still remaining a martial art. Is this the case of Wing Chun and Taijiquan? The theory of Structuration, which acknowledges the multidirectional nature of globalisation, may help us shed light on this. This is explored in the next chapter.

To conclude, within a century, the TMAs have been rapidly transformed from local esoteric practices to increasingly popular international practices, entirely changing in technical, philosophical and pedagogical nature. Of course, these arts have always changed over time, as the notion of 'tradition' is essentially always dynamic. However, these changes have never been quite so radical and widespread. Because of globalisation, several 'traditional' elements of TMAs, particularly certain beneficial transforming potentials, are at threat. No empirical research has explored TCMA in this fashion. Although not my main focus, this ties closely to issues of transformation and transmission.

3.5. Summary

3.5.1. Previous Research

Discipline wise, following Wilber's (2000) framework, Taijiquan and TMAs in general have received considerable academic attention in recent years, mainly through a quantitative, biomedical perspective towards the idea of a body-self as 'it' via physiological, biomechanical and psychological investigations. Therefore, the sociological (potentially the 'I', 'we' and 'they') aspects of these popular and important practices have been largely ignored. If their potential value in today's society is to be recognised in its entirety (physiological, biomechanical, psychological and sociological), then sociological research is definitely justified. Overall, the extensive quantitative research on Taijiquan has regarded the art as an exercise intervention or a rehabilitation method for the elderly and frail. This has therefore neglected the art's potential as a complete transforming practice and lifestyle for people of all ages and physical abilities. This focus on the body, rather than body-selves of non-martial participants is quite limited in its understanding of Taijiquan's broader potential as a transforming practice and self-defence art. Elsewhere, the quantitative research on other TMAs has also followed a biomedical model in which they are regarded as methods of enhancing physical and mental health. This has neglected the social outcomes of training, which are strongly linked to these more tangible benefits. Although useful psychological research has effectively identified patterns and social trends, it has led the reader to only understand the whats, rather than the whys of social life. Put simply, this form of research has yet to explain why people start TMAs, keep on training and the meanings, behaviours and identities resulting from this practice. Qualitative research can be useful in examining this. Detailed qualitative research can explore the various personal and shared transformations claimed to be experienced by long-term practice, which may include overlooked issues such as: The various meanings practitioners give to their long-term practice; their training environment and social networks resulting from this.

Methodologically, it is clear that socio-cultural literature on TMAs as a whole still needs expanding. So far, the research has concentrated in three main areas: 1) Life histories and self-narratives 2) Ethnography 3) Socio-historical contextualization. Within this limited qualitative material, there is a distinct lack of *reflexive* research done

by active practitioners, as authors consistently adopt a detached voice preventing them from enlightening readers with their own embodied experiences. Moreover, by focusing on one of these aspects, current research has not explicitly examined the connections between individuals ('I'), fellow practitioners and institutions ('we') and broader social, cultural and historical issues ('they').

Finally, on the levels of art and culture, the JMAs have been studied extensively (Carr, 1993; Chan, 2000; Goodger & Goodger, 1977; Kohn, 2004; Krug, 2001; Levine, 1991; Luckenchuk, 2006; Saeki, 1994; Tan, 2004; Villamon et al., 2004), as have martial arts from India (Alter, 1992; Zarrilli, 1998) and Brazil (Assunciao, 2005; Delamont, 2005; Downey, 2005; Joseph, 2008; Stephens & Delamont, 2006a). Yet there is also a widespread practice of TCMA's in the West, particularly the styles of Wing Chun and Taijiquan. Considering the obvious biomedical benefits of these arts, it would be pertinent for thorough qualitative, sociological research to be conducted in the West. Yet until recently, few studies have attempted this, being my own two ethnographies of my Wing Chun school (Jennings, 2005, 2006), McFarlane's earlier paper (1989), Ryan's (2008) contextualisation paper and Frank's (2003) ethnography of a Taijiquan organization in Shanghai. This study continues this work, and should hopefully form the foundation for further research on these and other TCMA's in the West.

3.5.2. Research Questions

Noticing the discrepancy in sociological research on TCMA's, I have decided to investigate how Wing Chun and Taijiquan can be used as case studies to answer the major guiding research question: "*How do long-term practitioners experience transformation?*" This will be approached through the following questions:

- 1) Why do people *begin* these arts?
- 2) What *transformations* result from long-term practice?
- 3) What implicit and explicit strategies *underpin* these transformations?
- 4) How does the *transmission* of physical culture influence these transformations?
- 5) How do these transformations relate to their *daily lives*?

The issue of transformation was originally raised by Brown and Leledaki (2005). Since then, other studies have attempted to separately address questions similar to those listed above, although they have investigated TMAs hailing from different cultural origins. Where possible, I might draw upon some of these socio-cultural studies, which might help guide my investigation in order to address all five guiding research questions outlined above. Overall then, this core research question, “how do long-term (Western) TCMA practitioners experience transformation?” has been overlooked, until now.

3.5.3. Study Outline

This chapter has enabled me to assess the literature related to long-term TMA training and has also helped shape three main considerations. A first consideration is on the topic of TCMA. ‘Martial arts,’ even ‘traditional’ styles, are often categorized under one umbrella term that can be as far reaching as ‘sport’ or even ‘physical culture’ considering the connections to other practices such as medicine, meditation and healing. There is also a need to recognise Wing Chun and Taijiquan as two different arts and consider the variations between practitioners and institutions. I will endeavour to remain culturally sensitive and reflexive of my own martial arts background, as this will influence my research findings. Connected to this, I will stress that these two TCMA are practised in a British context and will therefore be influenced by a range of cultural discourses and narratives.

A second consideration is on my methodological strategy. I will focus on the practitioner transformations from a socio-cultural perspective using three main qualitative methods. Ethnography will allow me to examine institutions and institutional change along with practitioner interactions. Through life history interviews, participants will be given opportunity to express their feelings, reflections and experiences of Taijiquan and Wing Chun. Furthermore, as a committed practitioner-researcher, I will also reflect upon my own experiences through confessional tales and autobiographical vignettes. This allows me to bring multiple voices and perspectives on the transformations resulting from sustained Taijiquan and Wing Chun practice. A more detailed account of this is found in chapter four.

A final consideration is the participants. I will examine the transforming practices of *experienced* practitioners with at least four years of regular, dedicated training. These exponents will include instructors, who may be classified as *advanced* practitioners with a great deal of influence over other practitioners, institutions and the art itself. I will gain access to these individuals via *purposive/theoretical* sampling, focusing on individual and cultural differences, such as gender, age, ethnicity, occupation and education. This should provide me with a range of interesting data that will illustrate not only the role of the styles in the practitioners' lives but also the role of the practitioners in the continuation of the arts. Considering this, I will employ a structurationist perspective acknowledging the dynamic relationship between individual practitioners and social structures such as the schools and arts they train in. In the next chapter, I will explain how this can be achieved by drawing upon the works of various sociological and philosophical sensitising concepts.

4. Theoretical Overview of Perspectives

In this chapter, an emerging theoretical framework is developed to help aid the understanding of practitioner transformation through Taijiquan and Wing Chun, following detailed data analysis. As this is the first qualitative socio-cultural study on this particular topic, I approach the theoretical implications of the research question through various sensitising concepts from diverse traditions within the social sciences, which include: Structurationist sociology, narrative, phenomenologically-inspired concepts and contemporary Japanese mind-body philosophies. I first turn to the general idea of *structuration*, which serves as a useful overarching framework for this investigation and due to the way it encompasses *macro*, *meso* and *micro* levels of social understanding. It also provides a framework for linking together the further three theoretical perspectives mentioned above.

Why would one wish to connect sociology with aspects of Eastern philosophy, and narrative with phenomenologically-inspired perspectives? Considering that these are Chinese arts practised in the West, I felt that from data analysis such perspectives would be useful. However, these are rarely combined in social science research as to do so requires a suitable framework that considers the larger social and cultural processes alongside individual experience. Structuration, originally devised by British sociologist Anthony Giddens (1984) can provide such flexibility as it focuses on the two-way relationship between individual and society, between a person's thoughts and actions and cultural processes and change. Broad in scope and well established for over a quarter of a century, structuration in the general sense does not give a privileged focus on larger, often measurable social issues such as class or tradition (as with much historical research), nor do it exclusively focus on the subjective experiences of certain individuals (as with phenomenology). In fact, Giddens (1984) originally formulated structurationism around themes from structuralism, functionalism, hermeneutics and interpretive sociology and in that sense links some of the theoretical elements outlined in this chapter. Hence it can link long-term societal change with culture and individual experience, and therefore connects the 'I', 'we' and 'they' quadrants of Wilber's (2000) framework outlined in the previous chapter. Unsurprisingly, Giddens is selected as a key theorist as he has provided many useful concepts to be employed in a structurationist way. His contemporary, Bourdieu, is also interpreted as a

structurationist for his examination of the relationship between social structures (fields) and the embodied experiences of individuals. Although Bourdieu may never have regarded himself as a structurationist, his concepts can certainly be employed in this manner.

4.1. Giddens: Structuration as Framework

Rather than a theory designed to be strictly followed, structuration is a set of *sensitising concepts* to help view society. Giddens' (1984) Structuration Theory derives its name from the symbiotic relationship between *social structures* such as institutions and *agency/agents* i.e. human beings and their ability to utilise rules and resources within such structures. Giddens' approach is a middle path between the extremes views of *determinism*, where structures completely dominate, and *voluntarism*, where agents have total choice and social power (agency). On a simplified level, we can understand Structuration to be the dynamic movement from the different ends of the continuum outlined below:

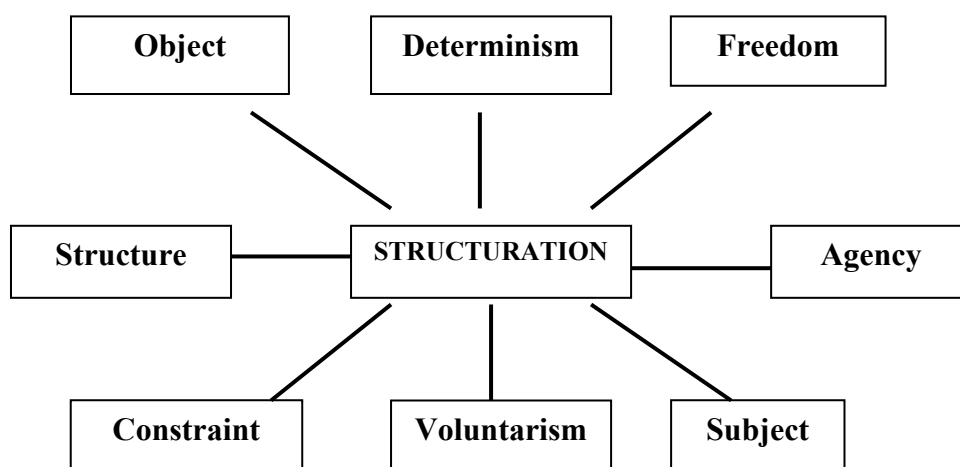


Figure 4.1 Representing Giddens' (1984) Structurationist framework

Hence Structuration is never static or controlled, but a constant shift in balance between the two extremities. This links to a long-term sociological debate regarding structure and agencies, as postulated by structuralist and voluntarist theories, which take opposing sides on this complex topic.

Bryant and Jary (2001) explain this theoretical synthesis in the table overleaf.

	Structuralist Theories	Voluntarist Theories	Structuration Theories
<i>Characterisation of structure</i>	Structures and cultures determine, shape or heavily constrain	Structures are the revisable products of free agents	Structure is the medium and outcome of the conduct it recursively organizes
<i>Characterisation of agents/actors</i>	Actors' choices are illusionary, marginal and/or trivial. Actors are cultural dopes, the victims of circumstances or instruments of history	Actors make real choices. Actors determine.	Actors are knowledgeable and competent agents who reflexively monitor their action

(Source: Bryant & Jary, 2001, p. 12)

Table 4.1 Structuralist, Voluntarist and Structurationist Theories

For Giddens (1984), structures are in people and people are in structures. They are not two separate entities or a dualism, but the same thing, hence his development of the term *duality of structure*:

The constitution of agents and structures are not two independently given sets of phenomena, a dualism, but represent a duality. According to the notion of the duality of structure, the structural properties of social systems are both medium and outcome of the practices they recursively organize. Structure is not 'external' to individuals...structure is not to be equated with constraint but is always constraining and enabling.

(Giddens, 1984, p. 25)

According to this view, structuration is best understood as a process in which individuals have an influence on society and their fellow individuals, and society has an influence over individuals. As I am interested in the relationships between practitioner transformation and cultural transmission, this study will employ a structurationist perspective to view cultivation and transformation in both social action (the action of

individual or groups of individuals) and structure (institutions and cultures). Society's structures, such as laws and education, can be enabling for some people at certain times, and constraining elsewhere. More specifically, it also helps orientate the study of TCMA social structures and processes. In Wing Chun and Taijiquan, the pedagogic structure may initially be constraining in terms of individual freedom, yet they may later enable practitioners to develop their own style or teaching methods. This Structuration is depicted in the diagram below:

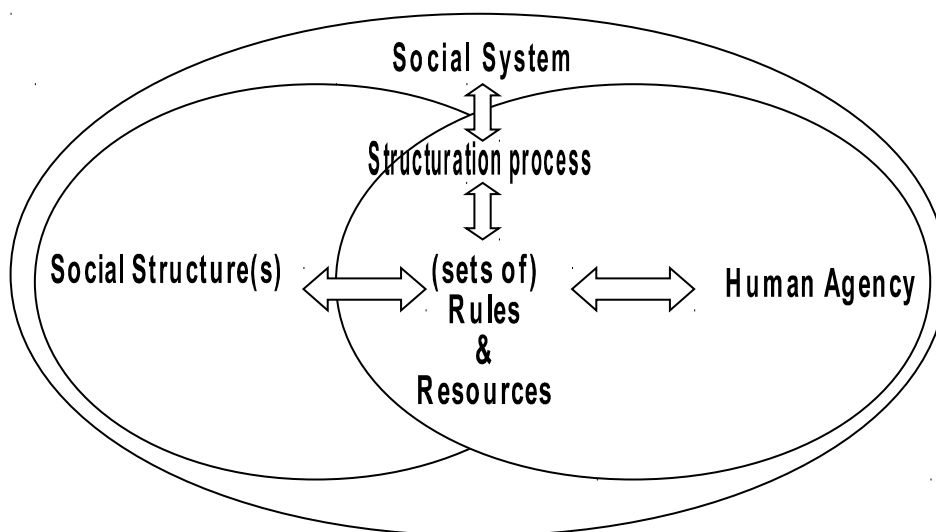


Figure 4.2 Model of Structuration Theory

From a Structurationist perspective, all people undertake *social action*, which normally results in the reproduction of the status quo. For instance, a martial artist following a ritual or form over many years is likely to contribute to its reproduction. Giddens (1991) claims this is because of the basic human desire for *ontological security*, where routines make us feel safe and secure, giving us a stable identity and sense of self. However, changes can still be made to the structure from social action and hence I will examine both the reproductive and transformative elements of social action as they exist together in many different circumstances. This approach leads me to ask several key questions: What elements of Taijiquan and Wing Chun are reproduced through long-term practice? Which ones are transformed? How is change occurring at both the individual and structural levels through this process of structuration? How does this sustained practice enable and constrain these individuals' involvement in structurationist processes over the long-term?

For Giddens, human beings are never cultural dopes, but rather “knowledgeable and capable agents who reflexively monitor their action” (Bryant & Jary, 2001, p. 12). They consciously know what they are doing, and are therefore capable of changing their behaviour and the social system they operate within. From this perspective, the majority of people have some degree of *social power* enabled through sufficient *knowledge* of the *rules and resources* within a given social system e.g. specific or general knowledge, opportunities and skills. Clearly, certain individuals will hold more power than others, as power, according to Giddens (1984), is networked, diffused and results in the emergent property of the possession and use of these rules and resources. This raises an important question for this study: How does the acquisition of rules and resources specific to Taijiquan and Wing Chun enable and empower practitioners to transform themselves, each other and the art? For example, the choice of regularly attending classes and deciding what and how much to practise outside of formal classes are all common, reflexive decisions, as is a practitioner’s choice to pursue the art as a self-cultivation practice. Yet excessive thinking within the actual training process might be counterproductive as practitioners need to focus on their given physical motions in an attempt to master them to the level of unconscious action. Yet without reflective thought, training and development would never be understood and transmitted within pedagogies as there is sometimes a need for intellectualisation, reflection and oral and written transmission of embodied knowledge.

Another key sensitivity of Giddens’ (1984) original Structuration Theory is that all forms of social action have *intended* and *unintended consequences*. My choice to join a TCMA club may have the intended outcome of increased self-confidence and perceived self-defence capabilities. However, some subtle developments in fitness and health may also occur alongside this. Yet there may be some unintended consequences of my decision due to daily practicalities of work, family and social life. A martial artist may spend less time at home, which might have unexpected implications on their relationship, depending on the intensity of their practice. All of these practicalities should be considered if we are to situate Taijiquan and Wing Chun practice within a real life world of a practitioner in modern UK society. Yet unintended consequences are not necessarily ‘negative’ as unexpected changes such as a practitioner’s growing spiritual self-development may occur from long-term practice of a martial art that he or she initially pursued for self-defence.

Alongside the theorising of everyday decisions, Giddens' structurationist discussions of *globalization* are particularly useful for contextualising worldwide TCMA practice. For Giddens (1999), the process of globalization is making previously more isolated societies interconnected, thereby forging links between individuals in different continents:

Globalization can be defined as the intensification of world-wide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa. This is a dialectical process because such local happenings may move in an obverse direction from the very distanced relations that shape them. Local transformation is as much a part of globalization as the lateral extension of social connections across time and space.

(Giddens, 1999, p. 64)

This is clearly seen in the production of sports clothing and equipment in developing countries mainly for people in developed ones. Here, individual social action can have global consequences for individuals and structures worldwide. The idea of *globalisation* is useful in understanding the spread of the major sports across the globe. In Taijiquan and Wing Chun how does individual practice influence the global martial arts culture and other global institutions? Many martial art lineages formerly existed on the micro scale, which meant they were practised in geographically, culturally and ethnically restricted communities, yet through the globalisation of the 20th century, many lineages are global, with practitioners training worldwide, with some becoming household names like Yang style Taijiquan. Structuration is in evidence here, as an individual's conscious choice to practise this style will contribute to its popularity and reproduction, this becoming empathetic should they choose to teach the art and help junior students. In this way the individual is also both contributing to the structure through their social power, as well as being transformed by it through the institution (their school).

Another concept here is the multidimensional and decentred nature of globalisation. TCMA's are not just travelling to Britain, but are being transformed and returned to China through seminars from British masters, and perhaps more extensive, videos on You-Tube (www.youtube.com) and other Internet sites, which may influence practitioners in China. The duality of structure is therefore seen in martial practice on the global scale. However, the vast differences between many styles of the same art e.g. Wing Chun have made TCMA's an interesting case of globalisation in an increasingly standardised and universalised world of sport, in that it illustrates the idea of *glocalisation*, the transmission of local customs and practices to other global contexts

(see for instance Guilanotti & Robertson, 2006). In Giddens' (1999) words, "globalization is the reason for the revival of local cultural identities in different parts of the world" (p. 13).

A final key concept strongly interrelated to the above issues of globalization and glocalization is Giddens' (1991a) notion of *reflexive modernisation*. Following reflexive, conscious action, individual agents and groups of agents can make changes to institutions and cultural practices through the *disembedding* of traditional elements and *re-embedding* newer elements, often through science and technological innovations in training equipment and communication or teaching methods. He later explained this: "Disembedding mechanisms depend on two conditions: the evacuation of the traditional or customary contexts of action, and the reorganizing of social relations across time space bonds" (Giddens, 1994, p. 85). In other words, this is the "'lifting out' of social relations from local contexts of interaction and their restructuring across indefinite spans of time-space" (Giddens, 1991, p. 21). Such a process is unsurprisingly often associated with the loss of tradition or *de-traditionalization*, although Beck, Giddens and Lash (1994) explain its development, rather than removal: "To speak of detraditionalization, however, is not to talk of a society without traditions – far from it. Rather, the concept refers to a social order in which tradition changes its status" (p. vi).

We can therefore understand reflexive modernization to be a complex process of apparent development of new social processes and the alteration of previous ones. For instance, some TCMA teachers may disembody some of the more esoteric movements and philosophies, and alter them by appealing to *expert systems* such as Western scientific or pseudo-scientific principles drawing upon some concepts from physics and biomechanics (albeit with no experimental work), with intended and unintended consequences that might need more careful exploration. At the same time, other martial arts schools may actively promote themselves as 'traditional' and authentic in order to create a sense of authority based in a fast changing world that is seemingly losing its traditions. In that manner, embodied rituals may play an important role as "ritual firmly connects the continual reconstruction of the past with practical enactment" (Giddens, 1994, p. 64). This leads me to ask questions relevant to Wing Chun and Taijiquan: What forms of reflexive modernisation are currently occurring? What impact does this have on individuals' experiences of transformation?

Overall, for Giddens, structuration is a process with both intended and unintended consequences. The deliberate, reflexive action of setting out to TCMA classes might be for self-defence. However, other unintended consequences may occur over the long-term for the individual and those around them such as the reproduction of a health philosophy or experiences of meditation. One of Giddens' contemporaries, Bourdieu, offered a slightly contrasting, yet complementary perspective on the dynamic relationship between people and social structures. Here there is greater emphasis on the unconscious levels of socialisation, social action and change.

4.2. Bourdieu: Reflexive Sociology and the Transformative Habitus

Bourdieu's focus differs from Giddens' in that he was more concerned on cultures and cultural products rather than organisations and institutions. However, like Giddens, Bourdieu (1990) divides his work into a set of clear, interrelated structurationist concepts whereby individuals and structures are continually influencing one another to create a *logic of practice*: *Fields*, *habitus* and *capital*. These are interconnected, and are continually competing for legitimacy, as illustrated by the model below:

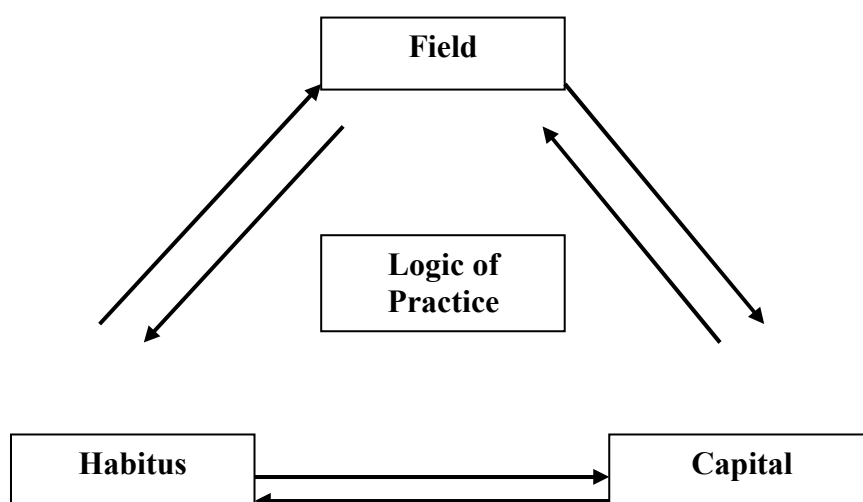


Figure 4.3 Bourdieu's (1990) field-habitus-capital relationship

Firstly, Bourdieu refers to social structures as *fields*, including science, education, law, commerce, sport and arts which can be defined as “a network, or a configuration, of objective relations between positions” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992 p. 97). Borrowing the Marxist theory of supply and demand (Marx, 1867), Bourdieu (1977) originally

claimed that fields are created, maintained and legitimised through a balance of supply and demand, although social change can occur through individual and collective individual action or if there is an imbalance between these two. Yet fields are also sites of resistance and change “between the newcomer who tries to break through the entry barrier and the dominant agent who will try to defend the monopoly and keep out competition” (Bourdieu, 1993, p. 72). Some fields encompass others and are very broad in scope with various *sub-fields*, whilst others are limited to certain social contexts and are even relatively autonomous. He articulates this below:

In highly differential societies, the social cosmos is made up of a number of such relatively autonomous social microcosms i.e. spaces of objective relations that are the site of a logic and a necessity that are specific and irreducible to those that regulate other fields
(Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 97)

In this sense, a TCMA school can be thought of a field on a small scale, and is subject to larger, more established fields through issues such as laws on weaponry, new scientific findings, a recession in the national economy and resulting practitioners’ unemployment. Yet a school can also possess its own norms and values that are quite different from conventional British fields such as education in schools and universities. The TCMA schools are therefore strongly connected to other aspects in society, and may even be changed through the individuals that occupy them. The concept of *habitus* can help us understand this.

Habitus is one of sociology’s most widely used concepts, due to its universal application in many cultural settings, including martial arts studies (Brown & Johnson, 2000; Delamont & Stephens, 2008; Spencer, 2009). Essentially, according to Bourdieu (1990), *habitus* is the set of dispositions developed through one’s prolonged immersion and practice/repetition of certain actions within a culture. A person’s *habitus* is their daily embodied and socialized way of living in the world, his/her schemes of perception transferable to other domains and fields of social life. Overall, it is slowly conditioned through involvement in social, and more specifically cultural life and can eventually operate on an unconscious level through both individuals and groups of people:

The conditionings associated with a particular class of conditions of existence produce *habitus*, systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures...objectively ‘regulated’ and ‘regular’ without being in any way the product of obedience to rules, they can be collectively orchestrated without being the product of the organizing action of a conductor.

(Bourdieu, 1990, p 53)

Yet the habitus is not universal. Instead, it is specific to particular fields or historically and socially situated conditions such as social class:

Being the product of a particular class of objective regularities, the habitus tends to generate all the 'reasonable', 'common sense' behaviours (and only these) which are possible within the limits of these regularities, and which are likely to be positively sanctioned because they are objectively adjusted to the logic characteristics of a particular field, whose objective future they anticipate

(Bourdieu, 1990, pp. 55-56)

In Taijiquan and Wing Chun, will a specific martial habitus be embodied through continuous repetition in a school to develop certain durable dispositions such as accuracy, confidence, cultural knowledge, reaction time and speed unique to each art? These are characteristics claimed by many of the organizations outlined in the introduction. How might these embodied dispositions be transferred to their daily lives? Brown and Johnson (2000) have postulated that dispositions of embodied sensitivity, reactions and body awareness would form part of a specific Wing Chun habitus that would be useful in educational settings as they offer new or enhanced schemes of perception for students. Furthermore, my colleagues and I (Brown *et al.*, 2008) applied the idea of habitus to the performing male body in Asian martial arts films, and found that these embodied dispositions varied in different ideal typical ways from the digitised, computer enhanced bodies to the charismatic or authentic ones that display genuinely embodied skills and abilities. Such dispositions are open to change over time and are also mixed in reality as practitioners normally embody various dispositions to create a complex and dynamic habitus. It is not the place to go into further detail, but the notion of ideal types will be explored shortly through the works of Weber and Frank.

Even within other schools of TCMA, a practitioner's habitus may not be recognised because of the specific, institutional habitus of that school. The idea of *institutional habitus* helps us understand the very specific nature of dispositions in each branch of style, in which there is scope for an *individual habitus* based on one's biography and biology. Looking at a different martial art culture, Delamont and Stephens (2008) drew upon this to explore the diasporic Capoeira habitus in Britain through the example of one institution led by an athletic Brazilian instructor, Achilles, whose dispositions are both individual and institutional. This formed the basis of their larger research project, and they provide a good explanation of habitus:

The habitus is both a state of mind and a bodily state of being. At the individual level, a person's biology, and biography, gives him or her a unique habitus. Simultaneously, however, that person is also shaped by the collective history of any group(s) to which he or she belongs. Thus, education and occupational socialization contribute to the individual habitus.

(Delamont & Stephens, 2008, p. 59)

Habitus is therefore the cultivated set of transformations achieved through dedicated, long-term practice. Understanding these will assist us in an overall analysis of cultivation and transformations, and the symbolic recognition it receives. In a guide to Bourdieu's concepts, Webb *et al.* (2004) explain that *capital* is this recognised value given to a habitus or certain dispositions within a habitus in various forms: *Physical, economic, cultural* and *social*, all of which can become *symbolic capital* (recognised as having a value) within a given social field through the schemes of perception of the habitus. Firstly, physical capital is the value given to an individual's body and its abilities, such as the worth of the physical skills in TCMA. If it is recognised within a particular field, it has become symbolic capital, and can be converted into one or more of the other forms of capital. Economic capital is the monetary value given to a quality, such as paying for a private lesson with a distinguished master. Cultural capital is the knowledge of arts and culture, as reflected in formal qualifications such as a black belt in Wing Chun or the ability to distinguish between certain styles of Taijiquan. Social capital is the range of social contacts gained from a person's dispositions, such as an array of students from different walks of life and martial arts celebrity contacts. It is also how we can utilise these contacts, such as drawing upon their individual abilities to help a martial arts school e.g. technical support or advertising. Overall, an experienced TCMA practitioner will have invested a great deal of economic and physical capital in order to gain the habitus, which should gain symbolic capital within certain fields, and be able to convert this to the other forms of capital. However, in other fields such as football, many of these dispositions will be unrecognised if players do not embody the *schemes of perception* to identify with this.

Despite the apparent applicability of his concepts, Bourdieu has been widely criticised for being overly deterministic in terms of the embodied ways people engage in their social class and cultural context, which is quite different to the adult pedagogies of many martial arts groups (see Spencer, 2009). Yet Bourdieu (1999, 2005) has insisted this is not the case, as he claimed that one's habitus is not set in stone, but is open to modification and fluidity via a *tertiary pedagogy* i.e. Post school learning following

earlier socialisation in childhood and schooling until adulthood. Those following his sociological concepts have also made explicit use of this idea of a dynamic habitus open to pedagogic change. De Campos *et al.* (2010) provide a recent empirical example of this through the story of the Capoeira *mestre* Achilles and his students' developing abilities, whilst Shilling's (2003) theoretical critique of Bourdieu acknowledged the potential for physical capital to elevate people's social class and change their wider social status in education or other social fields. Finally, a forthcoming paper by my colleagues and I, which results from this study (Jennings, Brown and Sparkes, in Press 2011), has made use of the changing habitus in a Wing Chun Kung Fu Association that forms the backdrop for much of this PhD study. Bourdieu's sociology was useful for exploring the core practitioners' daily training, interactions and life histories in terms of the art acting as a secular religion through the sacralisation of the institutional habitus. It will be interesting to see if this analogy of religion emerges for some other practitioners in different institutions and branches of the art and also those in Taijiquan.

Moreover, thinking across theories, habitus is not overly deterministic as it may be *transformative* in nature through using Giddens' (1991) notion of reflexive social action (argued elsewhere by martial arts anthropologist Samudra, 2008). In this sense for the TCMAAs, practitioners are actively setting out to gain the martial habitus of their particular art and school. Over long periods of time, the habitus is continually being developed rather than being fixed and unchanging. The fact that Wing Chun and Taijiquan are often started in later age illustrates the potential for transformation in one's habitus and therefore ways of daily being. Hence I will often refer to the transformative habitus as the continually cultivated habitus of the frequently reflexive practitioner. However, as Bourdieu (1990) suggests, this habitus largely acts on an unconscious level due to the physical nature of high skill achievements in martial arts, where movements can be done without conscious effort. Furthermore, Bourdieu (1990) acknowledged agency through the idea of free thought and action within certain social structures: "As an acquired system of generative schemes, the habitus makes possible the free production of all the thoughts, perceptions and actions inherent in the particular conditionings of its production – and only these" (p. 55).

Overall, Bourdieu's three concepts of field, habitus and capital, forming the *logic of practice* (1990) allow us to understand the long-term socialisation in a culture in which

sets of dispositions are given value, and may be converted to various forms of capital. Following articulation it can be further depicted below:

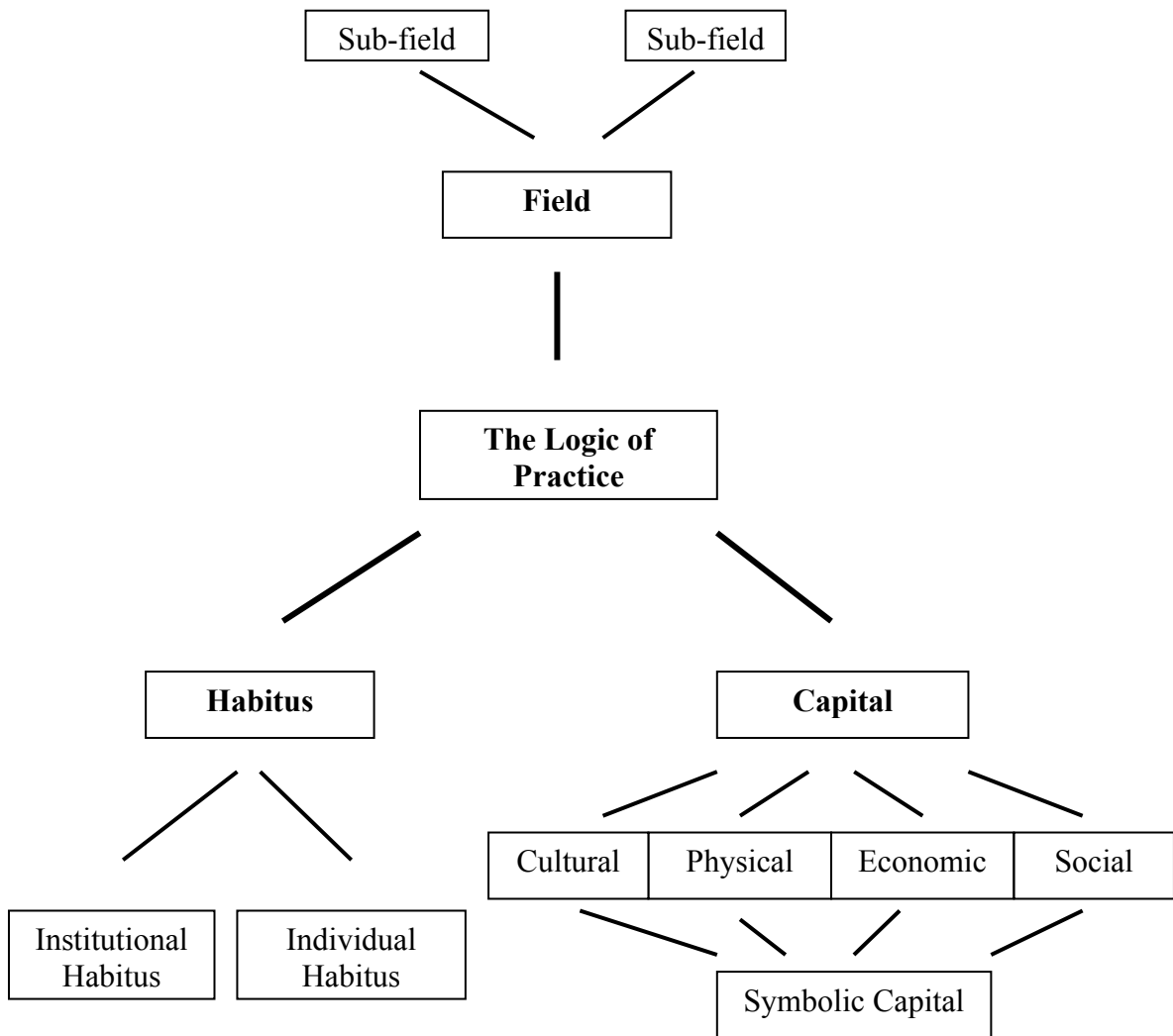


Figure 4.4 Elaboration of the field-habitus-capital relationship

These concepts can be seen from a structurationist perspective as Bourdieu's theory "refuses to establish the sharp demarcations between the external and the internal, the conscious and the unconscious, the bodily and the discursive" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 19). Fields, in this sense, can actually be altered by the individuals that are shaped within in them as a form of feedback loop that goes beyond a structuralist or hierarchical perspective. In summary then, from a structurationist perspective, a practitioner may have a martial habitus of such a magnitude to actually strongly influence the field of TCMA's itself through competitions, books and videos and seminars. Transformation can then occur on the individual, interactive, subcultural and even cultural levels. The recent understandings through individual and institutional habitus (Delamont & Stephens, 2008) and transformative habitus (Brown et al., 2008;

Jennings et al., forthcoming) can help us understand this dynamic relationship between transformations on the four levels. It is the institutional habitus that is more relevant to the next section, which deals with recognised ideal forms of leadership and resulting cultural legitimisation.

4.3. Weber: Ideal Types, Leadership and Legitimation

Weber was one of the first sociologists to develop a systematic theory of society, which noticeably influenced Giddens and Bourdieu. As many scholars such as Collins (1986) have noted, amongst his concepts that formed the beginning of sociological framework is the notion of *ideal types*, or ideal typical forms of social behaviour. Although criticised by numerous scholars such as Schutz (1967) for its overly objective perspective on society, which can lead to a tendency to overlook the subjective nature of social life, ideal types remain useful as sensitising concepts when certain strong trends emerge in legitimising individual action, disciplines and institutions. The criticisms and suggested combination with a more subjective and individual outlook is explained in detail later in this chapter via the phenomenologically-inspired concepts of Merleau-Ponty and Weber's major critic, Schutz.

Through a broad analysis of various forms of leadership, Weber (in Gerth & Wright-Mills, 1991) identified three clear tendencies for organisations to be run and legitimized: *Bureaucratic (legal-rational)*, *charismatic* and *traditional*. These allow for the continuation, development and possibly even the destruction of institutions seen from a broad perspective (from a well established social order to a recently developed individualistic philosophy). Although leaders can actually be a combination of all three, he suggested most people seemed to have a dominant aspect that formed a recognised form of legitimate practice in a culture. These three ideal types are explained in a table overleaf from an article based on such conceptions in the martial arts (Brown *et al.*, 2008).

Ideal Type	Definition
<i>Traditional Authority</i>	‘Obey me because this is what people have always done.’
	‘Resting on an established belief in the sanctity of immemorial traditions and the legitimacy of the status of those exercising authority under them.’
<i>Charismatic Authority</i>	‘Obey me because I can transform your life.’
	‘Resting on devotion to the specific and exceptional sanctity, heroism or exemplary character of an individual person, and of the normative patterns or order revealed or ordained by him (<i>sic</i>).’
<i>Legal-rational Authority</i>	‘Obey me because I am your lawfully appointed superior.’
	‘Resting on the belief in the legality of patterns of normative rules and the right of those elevated to authority under such rules to issue commands.’

(Source: Brown *et al.*, 2008, p. 175)

Table 4.2 Weber’s ideal types of leadership

Weber (in Parkin, 1982) explained that the *bureaucratic* leader runs an organisation through the (re)construction of rules and resources that are taught to be officially followed. Their leadership ethos might be understood as: “You follow me because the rules say so.” For example, if a school is part of a large TMA organisation, it is likely that the students will have to follow their teacher as the local representative of this. The teacher is the local representation of a larger authority, and this may appeal to the conventional Western schemes of perception that recognise a need for organised sports governing bodies such as the Football Association (FA). This leads me to ask several questions of such Taijiquan and Wing Chun institutions: How do they abide by well-established rules such as those set by governing bodies? How does this enable or constrain them to continue the art and for practitioners to experience transformations? How do they pass down knowledge to the next generation of students? In this light, the codification and development of a syllabus may be a form of bureaucracy, as might the

writing of a book scientifically explaining the techniques and principles, which removes a charismatic leader's individualistic authority.

Quite distinctly, the *charismatic leader* is an unstable form of leadership as it relies on the leader's ability to maintain an air of charisma, where the people follow him/her as they believe they can be transformed by this incredible individual. It is therefore quite different to the other forms of leadership as it rests on an individual's performance rather than longstanding frameworks of authority. Their leadership philosophy might be: "You follow me as I can transform you." Weber (in Parkin, 1982) cites several historical examples of the charismatic leader in warfare, where the ability to prove their warrior abilities were paramount for the survival of both the leader and the group itself. If the leader can no longer prove to his followers that they can be transformed, their following will diminish and may even be lost entirely. As TCMA's are historically associated with charismatic gurus, and are mainly concerned with practitioner transformation, how may this be a key concept for this investigation? How exactly do leaders employ this charisma? How might they draw upon their life experiences of fighting to create an aura of combat ability and readiness? Performativity is a key issue here, as there is a constant demand to demonstrate one's cultivated abilities to others. This can be seen from Asian martial arts films, where authenticity is displayed through the continuously performing body (Brown *et al.*, 2008).

Finally, the *traditional* leader runs an organisation as if it is the traditional or authentic way. Their motto might be: "You follow me because this is the traditional way." In TCMA's, this social construction of traditions and reinvented traditions may enable leaders to maintain authority. Their followers may believe that this is the authentic and original ways of doing things. Any form of overt modernisation such as sportification and Westernisation will weaken this form of leadership. After all, students will be cultivating the perceived traditional qualities of Kung Fu. An example of this would be a teacher who also practises the healing arts of *dit dar massage*, a 'tradition' often accompanying many Kung Fu schools. However, he or she may have learned this healing art from another master outside of their main martial arts body lineage in order to reconstruct their personal lineage as more 'traditional' or culturally authentic. So how do such leaders and practitioners create a sense of tradition and authenticity? Thinking back to Hobsbawm and Ranger's (1992) ideas, which were used by my colleagues and I

(Brown *et al.*, in Press) to explore the relationships between TMAs and Asian religions, how might some of these ‘traditions’ be more recently invented?

To conclude, many scholars such as Collins (1986) that claimed that Weber’s classical concept of ideal types is still useful for modern sociological investigation. Moreover for this investigation, it can fit into a structurationist perspective that simultaneously examines the individual and institution as each ideal type of leadership and legitimation is a form of social action with the intended consequences of social reconstruction and the unintended consequences of instability and inflexibility. Perhaps the ‘ideal’ TCMA school is run using a combination of all three? After all, as Frank (1995) later suggested, we are never just one aspect, but a mixture of different aspects that make a complex and dynamic human being that employs them alone or in combination, depending on the circumstances: “Actual body-selves represent distinctive mixtures of ideal types” (p. 29). At certain times in TCMA practice, a leader’s bureaucratic, charismatic and traditional aspects may be drawn upon in order for the overall art to be effectively transmitted. Do TCMA *Sifus* (teachers) change from one dominant aspect to another e.g. from a charismatic, fighting orientated approach to a scientific, bureaucratic one? After all, Weber (in Gerth & Wright-Mills, 1991) suggested that charisma can give way to more bureaucratic and traditional modes of legitimation. What are the intended and unintended consequences of such action? Yet what about everyday practitioners? To understand this, we now turn to Frank’s contemporary work, which expanded Weber’s ideal types and Bourdieu’s habitus using an embodied narrative perspective.

4.4. Arthur Frank: Ideal Typical Embodiment

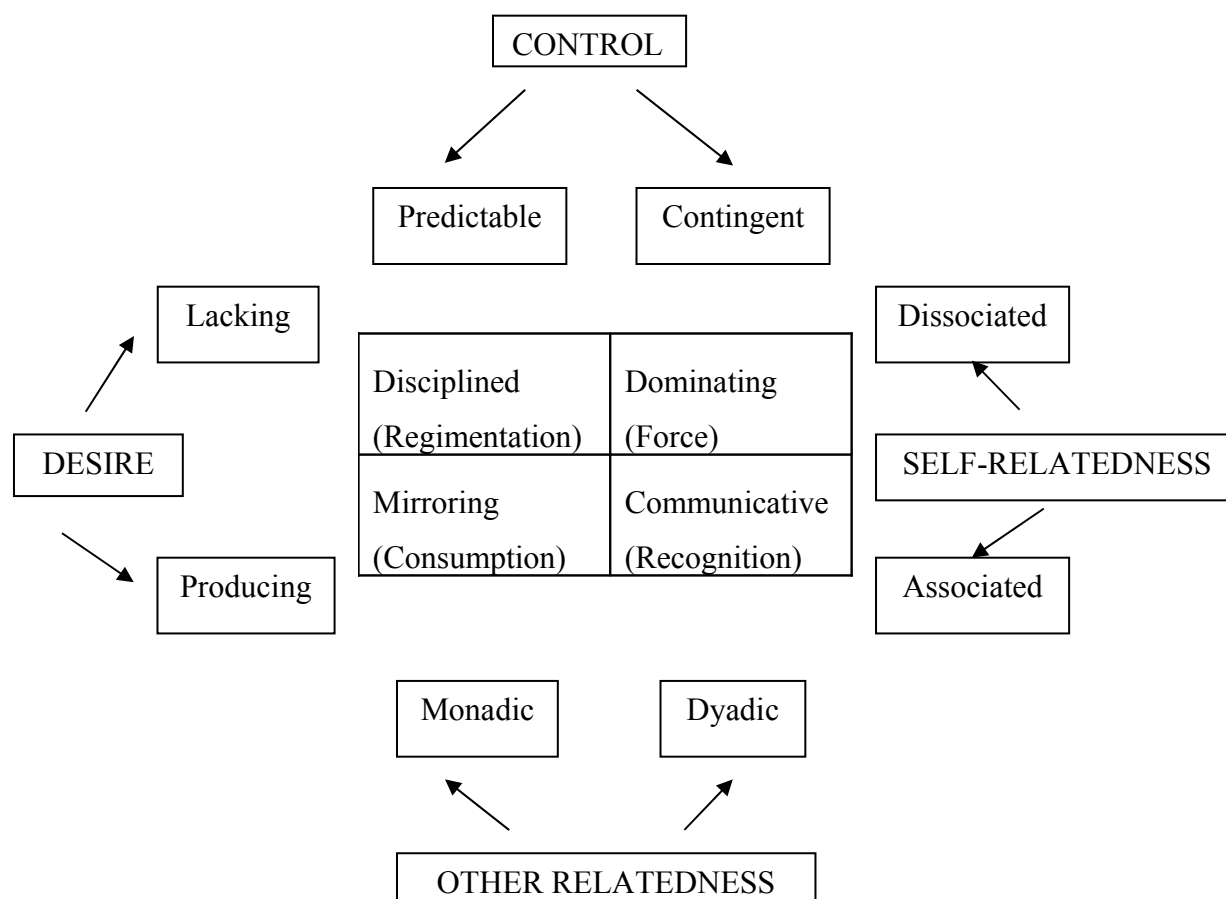
Frank (1991, 1995) has provided a more embodied perspective on ideal types, which is particularly useful for this study as it deals with an embodied art form. He explains the importance of such a somatic perspective:

The point of a sociology of the body is not to theorize institutions prior to bodies, but to theorize institutions from the body up. Rather than postulate on the nature of institutions now, it is preferable to let them emerge from the action of bodies

(Frank, 1991, p. 49).

Following this premise, his first key point is that we all have a body (as embodied beings), and therefore encounter body problems that result in the loss of control of this

body-self. Although his focus was on *body problems* through illness experiences rather than transformation or cultivation, the concepts of *ideal body types* are nonetheless extremely useful in positioning practitioner transformation and raising questions of how any embodied transformations are made sense of. The key body problem in the martial arts might be to defend the body-self and those around us as summarised by the old adage: “As long as there have been humans, there has been fighting. As long as there has been fighting, there have been ways to fight.” For Frank (1991), body types are the different ways human beings relate to their own bodies and those of others through four key questions of *control* (the predictability of performances), *desire* (whether the body is lacking or producing desires), the body’s *other relatedness* (monadic or dyadic approaches) and the *self-relatedness* of the body (whether the body feels associated or dissociated with itself). This is depicted in the matrix below.



(Source: Frank, 1991, p. 54)

Figure 4.5 Frank's (1991) embodiment matrix

This matrix of ideas is focused at the individual and relational levels, and may accompany Weber's organisational focus to help us understand TCMA practice on

individual, interactive, subcultural and cultural levels. This is possible as Frank is more concerned with individual and interactive embodied relations whilst Weber was more concerned with broader institutional and cultural levels of authority. We can see that for Frank's (1991) embodiment matrix, there are four ideal body types: *Disciplined*, *mirroring*, *dominating* and *communicating*. Like Weber, he acknowledges that we are never a 'pure' type, but embody all four elements to different degrees, which are displayed at different times: "Empirical bodies will not stay long with one style of usage; again, the truth is a mess. But the objective is to develop heuristic guides through which to order empirical behaviours and understand something of their flips and relations" (Frank, 1991, p. 51).

Furthermore, each type is a certain way to see one's body and relate to others, and there are tendencies for these aspects to emerge through specific actions or media:

Each ideal type of body usage resolves these problems in its respective medium of activity, which is in its mode of action. For the disciplined body, the medium is the *regimentation*, the model of which is the rationalisation of monastic order. For the mirroring body, the medium is *consumption*, the model of which is the department store. For the dominating body, the medium is *force*, the model for which is warfare. From the communicative body, the medium is what can loosely be called *recognition*, models of which may be shared narratives, dance, caring for the young, the old, and the ill, and communal ritual.

(Frank, 1991, pp. 53-54)

Firstly, the *disciplined body* concerns itself with routine and hard work to create a predictability of performance. In TCMA's, this is probably the most obvious aspect of a person during training as in order to cultivate Kung Fu, he/she must sustain hard work over a lifetime of practice. A disciplined relationship to one's own body is key to mastering it, and therefore Kung Fu. However, this body type is typically monadic and insular, and doesn't relate itself to other people, as a practitioner will need to do in partner training. In a different manner, this particular concept has been employed by Stephens and Delamont (2006b), who investigated the difference in disciplined bodies between Capoeira instructors and students, with the highly disciplined and ever performing body of the mestre [teacher] being the subject of desire for the students in sense of possessing these skills. Yet Stephens and Delamont (2006) did not employ the other ideal types as Frank (1991) originally intended, as chose to emphasise one aspect over all others, although the mirroring body was also articulated in the sense of mimicking the mestre's movements.

In this manner, the *mirroring body* concerns itself with its external image as seen through a mirror or other people. It therefore aims to reflect those around them and the culture they occupy through strict control of its appearance. In TCMA, training alone in front of a mirror uses this aspect of a person, as does replicating the motions of one's teacher during class, where the external movements are attempted to be duplicated. This links to the desire of the Capoeira students in Stephens and Delamont's (2006b) study as the martial skill is the act of cultural consumption, rather than the shopping arcade, which Frank (1991) suggests this body type to associate itself with.

On the other hand, the *dominating body* concerns itself with aggressively and monadically issuing force over others through itself (often conceived as a weapon). Its desires are therefore for control over others and winning rather than learning together. It matches many of the cultural stereotypes of martial arts concerning aggression, yet it is very useful in understanding fighting in reality, where a practitioner will employ his/her martial dispositions in a ferocious manner. Yet perhaps there is a more dyadic approach to one's own body and those of others? The last body type provides an alternative perspective on this.

Finally, the *communicating body* concerns itself with telling and receiving stories, and is Frank's (1991) ethical ideal for a person, as for him, storytelling has a moral implication. It is highly associated with both itself and others, and focuses less on control and desire than its counterparts. The communicative body is following the philosophy that if we tell alternative stories, we offer the listener an alternative way living through stories. In TCMA, this may be seen through an instructor's tales of his/her experiences during a very personal discussion or publicly to their students, which might act as resources for their own transformations.

Considering these four contrasting, yet mutually supporting ideal types, which elements of a human being are drawn upon during the process of cultivation through Taijiquan and Wing Chun? How do they interact with each other? Do they work alongside Weber's ideal forms of leadership and legitimation? Are there alternative ideal types more relevant to understanding long-term TCMA practice? These questions will be seriously considered in this investigation, particularly as this framework has been useful in conjunction with Weber and Bourdieu in exploring the ideal typical movements of male martial arts bodies in a recent study (Brown *et al.*, 2008).

For Frank (1995), each ideal type has a tendency to tell a different kind of story when encountering body problems such as illness and injury. As these body problems are not my focus, I will stick to a broader idea of stories coming from and into bodies. Borrowing Bourdieu's *habitus*, Frank later proposed that human beings possess a *narrative habitus*, or a socialised and embodied tendency to tell certain stories due to interaction with our social environment. Explaining this in a recent interview (Eldershaw *et al.*, 2007), he identified two components of the narrative habitus: "First of all, each of us has acquired through our lives a repertoire of stories – and there are a whole load of stories we don't know – and these stories direct us to have a certain sense of the world and our possibilities and constraints of action in the social world" (p. 128). Secondly, "our narrative habitus involves a sense of how to tell the story" (p. 128) i.e. the way we use the story, who we tell it to and in which context. Thus this narrative habitus can also be understood as the stories we actively choose to reject, much like the tendency for a person to choose a sport and reject others through Bourdieu's (1993) concept of taste. Hence for Frank, it is equally important to examine what people say as what they do not. In terms of Wing Chun and Taijiquan, a practitioner's socialised, embodied set of narratives (which are both personalised and reproduced) make up this narrative habitus, as does their tendency to reject and even oppose alternative ones. Is this narrative habitus constantly developed through social interaction and access to wider stories through media such as films and books? Perhaps with the body problem of potential violence in the TCMA's, which often results in a paradoxical peaceful lifestyle and philosophical outlook (according to scholars such as Back & Kim, 1982), may reproduce different types of stories?

4.5. Narrative Perspectives: Connecting Individuals and Society

There is no universally agreed definition of what constitutes narratives. 'Narrative' approaches, in terms of theory, storytelling and story analysis is now a widespread field of inquiry in the social sciences, with an abundance of studies in the realm of sport (Carless & Douglas, 2008; Partington *et al.*, 2005; Smith & Sparkes, 2005b), although martial arts have received little attention from researchers. From the ontological and epistemological perspective of the philosopher MacIntyre (1977), we can understand human beings as storytelling animals that make sense of the world through stories.

Furthermore, according to the more recent work of Smith and Sparkes (2009), a narrative can be understood by several core characteristics that make narratives the framework of such stories. Firstly, there is a clear *plot*, with a beginning, middle, ending and storyline relatable to listeners. Connected to this is a *temporal dimension*: A narrative is normally told in chronological order. There are typically *characters* to this tale, making the story relational and social. Yet there is also a point: A story should be told for a reason and for a certain audience. Overall, as Bochner and Ellis (2002) contend, telling different kinds of stories help make our experiences meaningful to ourselves and others, and are therefore a way of communicating social life to other people. Therefore, the more stories we tell, the more possible ways of understanding our social realities we have to use at different points in our lives.

How can narratives be seen from a structurationist perspective? Smith and Sparkes (2009) contend that a narrative is both *personal* and *social*, looking at the individual, the collective and wider cultures. Narratives might be constructed and reproduced by individuals and/or social groups, and these narratives become part of wider society, where they are accessible to other people. Individuals have a degree of agency in which to slightly modify the narrative according to their individual life story and experiences, yet the core narrative remains. All of these characteristics make narrative a pertinent perspective within the larger theoretical framework and the larger philosophical assumptions can be summarised below:

Philosophical Assumption	Narrative Definition
<i>Ontology</i>	Humans are storytelling animals. It is how we construct our reality
<i>Epistemology</i>	Narratives are ways of experiencing and knowing about the social world
<i>Rhetoric</i>	Narratives are means to communicate to others via stories
<i>Methodology</i>	Narratives can act as theoretical framework for analysis

Table 4.3 Narrative Theory in Philosophical Perspective

Somers (1994) has provided a theoretical narrative framework that fits well with this structurationist perspective. For her, narrative can be understood to have three interconnected levels: The cultural or *metanarratives* (wider society), *subcultural* (the immediate lived culture of the individual) and personal or *ontological* narratives (the

individual). How might this be the case for Wing Chun and Taijiquan? How do they story self- and shared development, and how do they tell this in terms of their particular school and wider society? Following structurationism, we can see that this relationship is not one way, but continually changing both ways. Therefore I will consider that practitioners may slightly alter stories and use these either intentionally or unintentionally, to change the narrative framework for students. Hence there is social action through storytelling.

As we have seen, Taijiquan and Wing Chun are now widely practised in Britain. Yet as they are culturally transmitted EMFs, it is likely that they hold the metanarratives of China, East Asia, Britain and the general Western world. Perhaps *hybrid* narratives will be told? What kinds of individuals will tell certain kinds of stories? On the more subcultural level, it is likely that within the broad range of schools possibly available (from the very fighting orientated to the more spiritual), a spectrum of stories could be told. Likewise, on the ontological level, individuals will be influenced by their narrative habitus, and will combine the narratives from their earlier Western upbringing with this culturally hybrid art. These stories may also be influenced by those reproduced by other popular EMFs, such as yoga, forming a hybrid EMF set of narratives. Narratives common in Western sports and education are likely to combine with more established ones embedded in martial practice. Overall, TCMA offer a new, unexplored ground for researching narratives in a complex cultural environment.

More generally, narratives help us provide stories for our experiences, which are often very hard to describe using words. They are resources for life stories and daily interactions, and may therefore be very prominent in TCMA training and teaching. Although there are dominant narratives in every culture, such as the *restitution* narrative in sport and medicine (Smith & Sparkes, 2004), which are two social fields with few alternative stories (see Sparkes, 2004 for an example analysis), there is room for alternative narratives to be formed, reproduced and embodied. Those that provide alternative, often-contrasting stories to live our lives by are known as *counter narratives*. Bamberg and Andrews' (2004) book explains these as counter positions to hegemonic (dominant) social relations through the guise of storytelling. Yet they stress that counter narratives are only meaningful in contrast to what they are countering, and the dominant stories therefore need a careful examination rather than just privileging certain kinds of stories. At the same time, these counter narratives can provide

alternative ways of understanding the social world for the people who adopt them. Hence, if disseminated appropriately, my use of narratives can later be used by real life TCMA practitioners to frame their own experiences and make sense of their art and practice. Such considerations are further explored in chapter twelve.

According to narrative theory, in order for people to tell alternative stories, they must have sufficient access to them. A narrative can help a person understand and voice their experiences, and by listening to new stories, alternative narratives can be formed. This is the social action element of narrative, in which individuals can be transformed by alternative stories. As Frank (2002) and Bochner (2002) have stated, we all have a moral implication to tell the stories in order to offer alternative ways of living. Perhaps this study may offer alternative stories for practitioners should they be given access to this? Will previously silent voices reveal the *hidden narratives*? Such hidden narratives can be understood to be those narratives that rarely emerge in certain cultures or social situations, from those of ageing (Gullette, 2003) to 'race' (Cohen, 1992). How might this be beneficial for cultivation through TCMA's? What stories are being reproduced by the participants? Are there alternative stories to live by? What stories do practitioners tell and actively reject? How do they tell them? This investigation will consider these questions by including a narrative perspective under the larger structurationist framework that acknowledges the dialectical relationship between people's individual stories and those in wider society via the narrative habitus that they embody through exposure to various narratives. This continues Frank's (1995) earlier work by linking it to a broader range of narrative principles that he has greatly contributed towards. From the recent perspective of Smith (2008, 2010), such principles have helped researchers gain a greater understanding of people's experiences in sport, and this emphasis on understanding the other's perspective with working with their embodied stories has a moral component, although there is common agreement among scholars that we cannot possibly know everything. It is now necessary to turn to another discipline concerned with human experience: Concepts deriving from phenomenology.

4.6. Phenomenologically-inspired concepts

Phenomenology is a branch of modern (largely continental European) philosophy following the premise that direct, immediate, perceptual experience forms the basis of

all consciousness to “capture life as it is lived” (Moran, 1999, p. 5). Columbus and Rice (1991) suggested that phenomenology has some stylistic parallels with Oriental thinking in terms of living in the moment and focusing on embodied experience, so may offer us an understanding of TMAs. However, since then, few phenomenological studies have been produced on the subject. Some, such as Raingruber and Robinson (2007), have examined Taijiquan along with a number of medical ‘interventions’ (rather than long-term self-cultivating practices). Here I am not adopting phenomenology as a major theoretical perspective per se, but drawing upon a number of the main concepts that were useful in exploring and interpreting the qualitative data arising from this study.

Phenomenology as a historical movement is exemplified by a diverse range of thinkers and approaches with no single strand (Spiegelberg & Schuhmann, 1982), which is complicated by the common overlapping of its branches. Allen Collinson (2009) neatly outlined the four main branches that can be briefly summarise here: *Realist*, *transcendental*, *hermeneutic* and *existential*. The *realist* perspective will not be adopted in this study as it tends to neglect culture, society, history and issues of subjectivity. The original ideas of Husserl’s (1999) *transcendental* phenomenology attempt to see things how they are without any theoretical or cultural lens. I would argue, like Allen Collinson (2009), that this is a very difficult, if not impossible venture although the idea of ‘letting go’ of preconceptions or *epoche* as Husserl termed it, will be potentially useful in the early stages of analysis. Likewise, the *hermeneutical* focus on (mainly written) language is not my focus with this particular use of phenomenologically-inspired concepts, which instead stresses the lived body experiences of long-term Wing Chun and Taijiquan practitioners, although it might be useful in future studies. Overall then, I am adopting an *existentialist* phenomenology orientated approach that focuses on the *lifeworlds* of people as they experience them in relation to the environment, other people and culture (to put it phenomenologically, as *beings-in-the world*). As they share similar notions of embodied connections between groups of individuals, I have followed Merleau-Ponty and Schutz, who have proven useful in previous phenomenological investigations of sport (see Hockey & Allen Collinson, 2007).

4.6.1. Merleau-Ponty: Phenomenology and Embodiment

According to Duesend (2007), phenomenology questions the objectification of the body by emphasising the existential nature of human bodily experience, and Merleau-Ponty's work is no exception. His phenomenology was drawn upon by Bourdieu and Frank and has received considerable attention from sociologists of sport in recent years (Allen Collinson, 2009; Hockey & Allen Collinson, 2007), which in itself provides a rationale for my interest. Merleau-Ponty gave an account of the phenomenal body's symbiotic relationship between perception and the environment of the perceiver is the core focus in *The Phenomenology of Perception* (1962) and for much of his career, as depicted in useful introductions such as *The World of Perception* (2004). For him, it is the body, not consciousness, which is the location for subjectivity and we can never be detached from our bodies, as O'Neill (1974) explains: "My body is the vantage point from which I perceive all possible objects. It is my body which is the vehicle of my perception and movement in the world" (p. xvi). From this perspective, knowledge is lived through the body, or more specifically, the *phenomenal body*. The researcher or philosopher is therefore an embodied consciousness "open to objects through the same light and shadow cast by his own body" (O'Neill, 1974, p. xxix). For Merleau-Ponty (1962), subjectivity in the world occurs only due to the body, where phenomena are classed as *objects of perception*. Here, a situation such as a football field is a field of forces, vectors and openings in which a player knows where the goal is in a manner that is lived and felt rather than known. What is the field of TCMA's like, such as with partner training? How do practitioners 'live' within this?

Becker (1992) outlines this post Cartesian perspective on *mind-body unity* that contrasts considerably to much of earlier Western philosophy: "Merleau-Ponty argued that people's minds and bodies are always interrelated. At any given moment, people's lives are both mental and physical. To be human is to be simultaneously mind and body" (p. 16). From this viewpoint, bodies are always thoughtful bodies (our intentional selves) and minds are always embodied minds. Merleau-Ponty (1962) thus explains his approach to perception and consciousness through embodiment, which has several core characteristics.

The first characteristic of embodiment is the actual *shape* and innate *characteristics* of the human body e.g. being of a certain size and possessing particular abilities. Training with people with varying degrees of embodiment will be crucial for the overall development of a TCMA practitioner, as essential as it is for a surfer to be able to ride

different waves (Ford & Brown, 2005). This body learns certain skills through practice to become a *habitual body*, much like skill acquisition in sport (see Dreyfus, 1996, for numerous examples). Here are strong connections between Merleau-Ponty and Bourdieu's habitus, as "movement is experienced as a steady flow of skilful activity in response to one's sense of the situation" (Duesend, 2007, p. 82). This sense will of course be honed like Bourdieu's depiction schemes of perception, which were considerably influenced by Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology.

The body also inhabits *space* and *time*. Merleau-Ponty (1962) examined the body through its position in movement, distance and lived space, including depth, horizontal and vertical plains. All of these issues are critical in TCMA training, particularly partner work (see Gee et al., 2004). Likewise, he examined the role of the senses, describing the object of several senses as an '*intersensory object*' in which we feel with the entire body. This is another important body philosophy stressed in Taijiquan and Wing Chun partner training, where practitioners may simultaneously see, feel and hear their partner's movements. Following Merleau-Ponty's principle of *circularity*, the body is both subject and object not only in relation to others, but also in relation to itself.

However, like many thinkers of his time who aimed for a general philosophy on humanity, Merleau-Ponty (1962) sought to extrapolate these ideas and focus on the typical, rather than exemplary human perception. Also, he primarily placed an emphasis on individual consciousness, perception and nature (rather than society) although he acknowledged the importance of the latter through the embodied perspective on *intercorporeality* i.e. the perception field between two or more embodied beings and the dynamic relationship within this (Bannan, 1967). Because of this, it is the focus on intersubjectivity and society that we turn to next through Schutz.

4.6.2. Schutz: Intersubjectivity

As Duesend (2007) highlights, “the body is always a social body. The world we live in influences our bodily existence” (p. 81). Schutz played close attention to this in *The Phenomenology of the Social World* (1967) to form a sociological framework based on phenomenological considerations on spatial and temporal relations. Having reviewed Weber’s sociology, Schutz concluded that the notion of ideal types does not provide an individual perspective on subjective human reality as they are intended to gain objectiveness on the social world. Yet according to Schutz (1967), “the personal ideal type is itself always determined by the interpreter’s point of view” (p. 190). Likewise, ideal types are continually developed during everyday life “on the basis of the observer’s experience, whether the latter is direct or indirect” (p. 193). Considering these potential amendments, I have continued to use Weber’s concept of ideal types for understanding people whilst identifying my martial contemporaries for sampling, as Schutz suggests, and after in depth analysis of their stories. Overall, Frank’s (1991, 1995) embodied adoption of Weber’s much earlier concept has provided me with a link between institutions, bodies and subjectivity that may help explore such structure-agency relationships in Wing Chun and Taijiquan. In short, although the overly objective nature of ideal types has been heavily critiqued, it certainly provides a more flexible framework when considering an individual’s embodied and subjective nature.

Schutz (1967) identified *intersubjectivity* i.e. shared subjectivity between people in various situations, as a precondition of all immediate human experience in the lifeworld. By this he intended to understand human beings through *face-to-face encounters*, in interpersonal relationships and dialogue. These would seem to be key in TCMA practice, yet according to Schutz (1967), this is taken for granted in the same way as the natural world. He identified several forms of *social action*, being degrees of relation between people from observation to total interaction. It is the social action where two or more people deliberately affect each other that I am concerned with here due to these two TCMA’s focusing on regular partner work. Action, for Schutz, is defined by meaning, so any action in TCMA’s must have a meaning behind it. Within this action is a ‘*face to face situation*’ a ‘*Thou-*’ or ‘*We-relationship*’ in which other people, known as ‘*consociates*’ directly affect us through our streams of consciousness. Here, partners are mutually sensitive to each other’s responses and are constantly revising and enlarging their knowledge of each other. Of course, within this we-relationship, “we may

experience our fellow man[sic] with greater or lesser directness, intimacy or intensity” (p. 176). In TCMAs, close contact and constant touch are deemed essential in many partner exercises. Schutz (1967) describes such closeness through direct intersubjectivity as a unique moment of experience where both people are experiencing each other’s flow of consciousness in intimate mutual possession.

Therefore, like Merleau-Ponty, he provides an embodied understanding of this, as Natason (1972) summarises:

The body of a fellow man is experienced as part of a psycho-physical unity, and this means that coeval with the recognition of the body is the awareness and appreciation of the ego who possesses, in addition to a body, a world of cognitive and conative awareness similar in general to mine. This ego is indeed an alter ego, a being for whom there is a world.

(Natason, 1972, p. xxii)

Although Schutz’s social phenomenology is extremely useful for looking at the everyday social life and embodiment through the psycho-physical unity and intersubjectivity, it does not take Merleau-Ponty’s degree of embodiment, which is why I have combined them to adopt a broader sociological perspective on the body in action, one which has been argued by several scholars (Loland, 2006; Ozawa-De Silva, 2000). So far, it is clear that phenomenological concepts of human embodied consciousness in time and space has much to do with TCMAs. Yet there is another body of knowledge that has connected phenomenology, particularly that of Merleau-Ponty, with an older set of philosophies from the culture where many Asian martial arts are often connected. This lies in two contemporary Japanese scholars concerned with mind-body relationships, ‘self-cultivation’ and self-cultivation practices such as martial arts and meditation. Yet since Ozawa-de Silva’s (2000) earlier suggestion, there has been little empirical or theoretical use of their potentially very useful concepts for the sociology of the body.

4.7. Modern Japanese Mind-Body Theories

Merleau-Ponty and Schutz focused on everyday actions and perception, rather than highly accomplished skills and intersubjective experiences gained by exemplary individuals in TCMAs. Alternatively, Yuasa and Nagatomo are two contemporary Japanese philosophers concerned with long-term self-cultivation. According to Nagatomo (1992), this cultivation is the conscious development of the mind-body

connection beyond normality to a level of supra normality that has not normally been the subject of interest in phenomenology. Taijiquan and Wing Chun masters and experienced practitioners may experience such altered mind-body relationships, so these philosophical concepts are certainly worth exploring.

4.7.1. Yuasa: Self-Cultivation and the Changing Body Scheme

Yuasa's two influential books centring around the body, *The Body: Towards an Eastern Mind-Body Theory* (1987) and *The Body, Self-Cultivation and Ki Energy* (1993) took an interdisciplinary perspective, borrowing concepts from phenomenology, depth psychology, psychoanalysis, parapsychology and neuroscience. He held a particular interest in the existentialist phenomenology of the skilful, trained human being experiencing mastery and how they can develop a high degree of mind-body unity. This philosophy has a dual purpose: 1) To illuminate the ideas of personal cultivation in Eastern religious practices 2) To re-evaluate traditional Eastern mind-body theories from a contemporary perspective.

According to Ozawa-de Silva (2000), Yuasa's theories are highly relevant to any sociology of the body that seeks to depart from notions of a mind-centred, purely rational human being. Yuasa (1987) examined changing mind-body relationships through dedicated and sustained following of *self-cultivating practices* like TMAs, frequently referred to as forms of *meditation-in-motion*. Here, the mind-body relationship is not fixed or made up of two separate entities, but continually developed along a continuum from near disharmony to complete integration, 'molting' or 'oneness' to a *bodymind*. For Yuasa (1987), this self-cultivation results in changes to the whole person through a moral philosophy or spirituality, which is an aim of these practices, as McCarthy explains: "*Self-cultivation transforms the body so that it provides a place to ground ethics* – a micro state, we might say, for moral practice" (McCarthy, 2007, p. 205, emphasis added). This contrasts to many competitive sports, which are often overly concerned with competition and winning and less focused on the ethical or personal development of the participants (although this is not the case in many organisations, which may intentionally focus on personality development over winning). Instead, Yuasa (1987) claims that self-cultivation is an ethical practice that is designed to develop the practitioner's personality. However, he doesn't explicitly state how this goes about, or the social consequences of such cultivation.

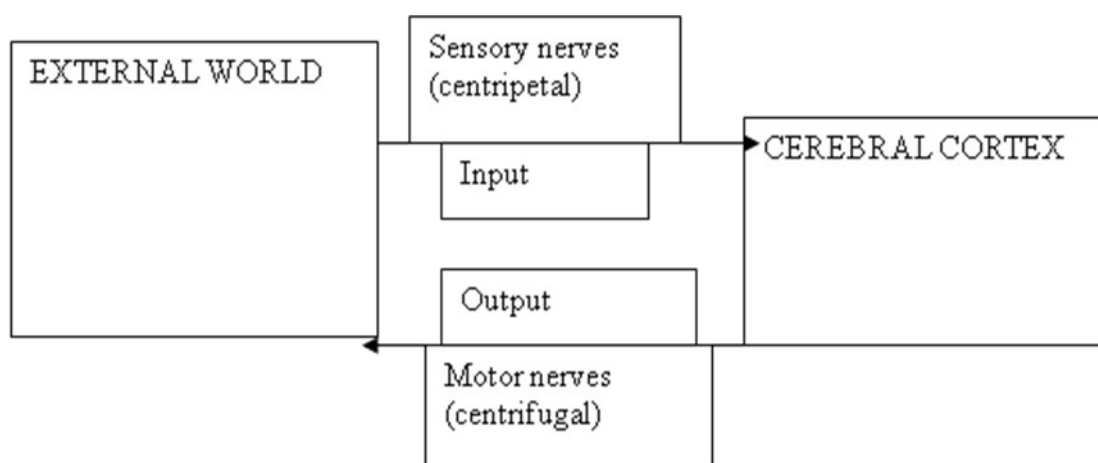
Another key concept is '*bright*' and '*dark*' *consciousness*, which McCarthy (2007) summarises:

Yuasa sees consciousness as dual – having a layer of “bright” consciousness, akin to Descartes’ *cogito*, capable of self-awareness, and having a layer of “dark” consciousness, somewhat akin to the unconscious of psychoanalysis but not exactly the same thing...the self-cultivation prevalent in Eastern meditative practice that leads to enlightenment allows for free movement between these two layers of consciousness.

(McCarthy, 2007, p. 202)

This leads me to raise some questions in relation to this study. Firstly, what do practitioners claim to be cultivating? How do they understand this cultivation process? What role does meditation play in their regular training? What experiences of alternative states of consciousness have they experienced whilst practising their chosen art? Are such ideas of mind-body unity promoted in TCMA schools? All of these issues connect the personal to the social, and thereby maintain a structurationist perspective.

Another issue central to Yuasa’s later philosophy (1993) is the *changing body scheme*, developing over years of training through four *body circuits* based around the mind-body connections along an overlapping continuum. Essentially, as one develops the bodymind, it operates at a more unconscious level due to neurological, psychological, meridian and experiential changes. These schemes are systematically depicted below:



(Source: Yuasa, 1993)

Figure 4.6 Yuasa’s (1993) body circuit 1 - The external sensory-motor circuit

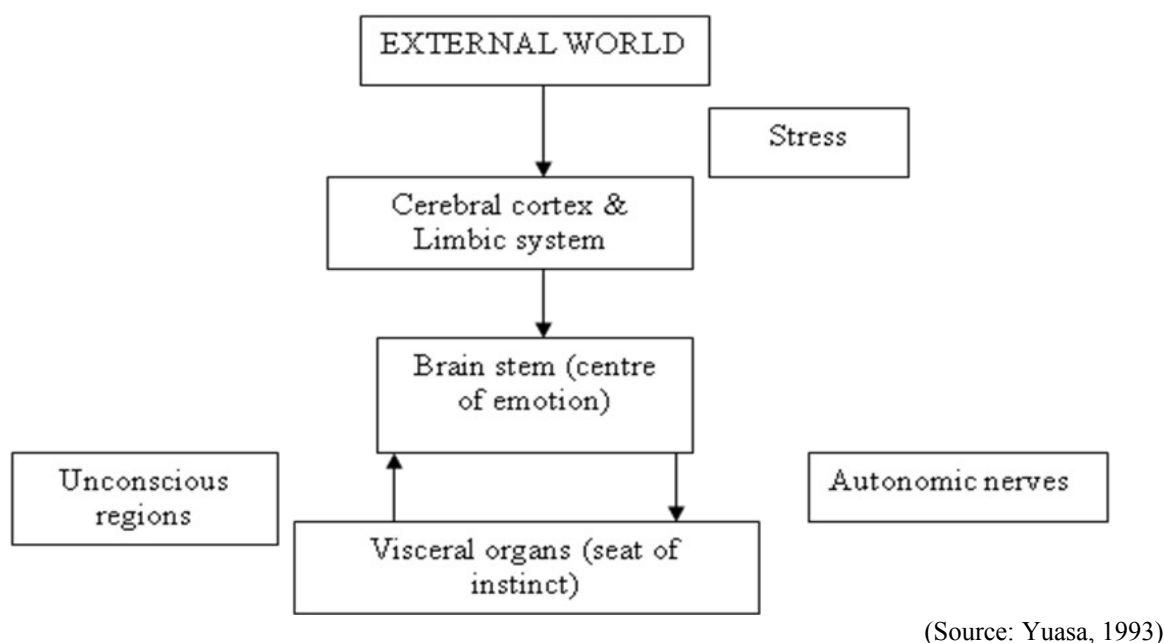


Figure 4.7: Yuasa's (1993) body circuit 2 - The circuit of coenthesisis

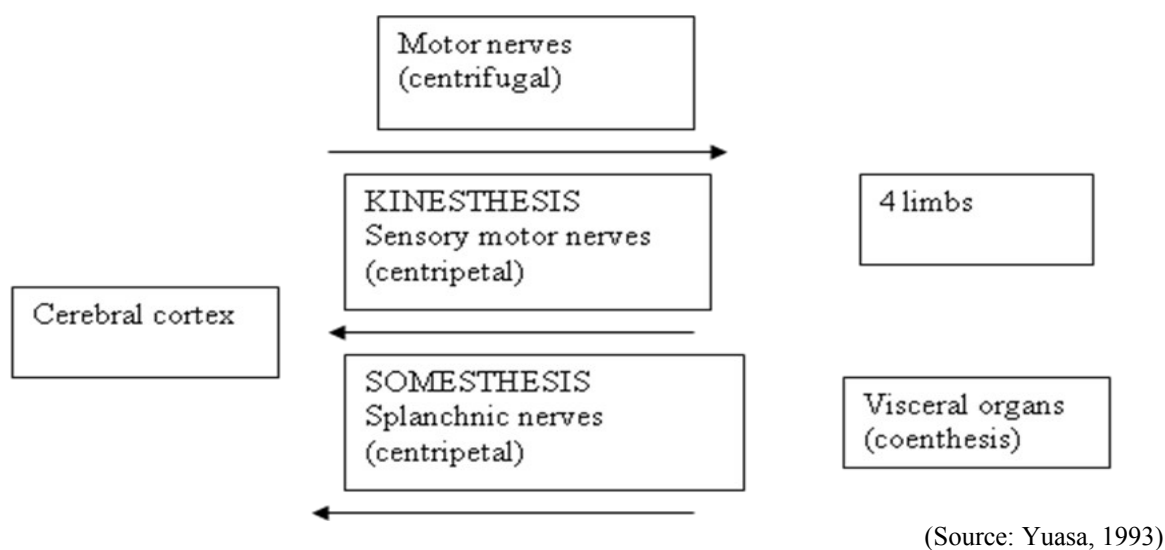


Figure 4.8: Yuasa's (1993) body circuit 3 - The emotion-instinct circuit

At the first level, we perceive the outside world. At the second, we examine our internal movement via the organs. At the third, it is thought that we move a more unconscious understanding of our emotions through a forging of body and mind. At the final level, the *unconscious quasi-body*, we can unconsciously move, store and issue *ki energy (qi)* through the meridian circuits known through *acupuncture*. This *ki* can act as a medium between people, and this is where Yuasa began to consider intersubjectivity. Again,

Yuasa contrasts this to Western sports, claiming that these never develop the fourth information circuit of internal sensitivity.

At this point it is important to point out my own theoretical positioning in relation to Yuasa's realist tendencies. Unlike Yuasa (1993), who suggested that these energies actually exist through citing many scientific studies, I am interested in how these ideas are being socially (re)constructed or even disputed by British practitioners of arts from a culture where some of these ideas are well saturated i.e. China. I have already mentioned qi's importance in acupuncture, and it is a term being increasingly employed in British society through practice of TCMFs, healing practices and medicine via a holistic approach to the body that is quite different to the mechanical view of the mind-body complex in the West. The concept of qi and internal awareness is also commonly reproduced in TCMA's, and is evident in the popular literature, particularly on the internal martial arts (e.g. Frantzis, 1998). Such literature tends to suggest that it is consciously cultivated in order to unconsciously utilise it in combat or for long-term health. However, how is qi socialised? Yuasa (1993) doesn't consider this, which amongst other social issues such as pedagogy and narrative, leads me to raise a few sociological questions after the next section.

Yuasa's (1987, 1993) theories are useful to this investigation as it can help us understand the profound personal changes that TCMA practitioners experience through a contemporary approach to Eastern mind-body theory. This is particularly relevant as Yuasa (1993) called for a *teleological turn* towards unique human experiences, which matches my use of life history interviewing, ethnographic fieldwork and autobiography, which can offer alternative perspectives to the conventional preoccupation with repeat tests in Western science. Many of these ideas have been mentioned by other EMF scholars (Brown & Johnson, 2000) in relation to broader cultivation practices. This idea of cultivation, which has been central to Yuasa's philosophy, was expanded by Yuasa's student Nagatomo through his notion of attunement. I assess this next.

4.7.2. Nagatomo: Attunement Through the Body

Nगतomo (1992) suggests that through long-term self-cultivation, we *attune through our bodies*, rather than our minds. For him, his teacher Yuasa incorporates a *transformative potential* through self-cultivation of a higher unity "with an exhaustingly

transparent awareness through the process of *transforming everyday consciousness*” (p. xviii, emphasis added). According to Nagatomo, our bodies are like musical instruments that can be fine tuned over many years to develop a bodymind. This is the constantly negotiated *attunement (engagement)* through the body between oneself and another object or person e.g. a wooden dummy or sparring partner in Wing Chun. The process of developing this attunement, like skill acquisition, is referred to as *sedimentation*. For Nagatomo, this develops a form of somatic knowledge, cultivated responses and a higher level of consciousness.

Furthermore, Nagatomo (1992) provides case studies of distinguished masters as examples of the body in meditation and physical spirituality/spiritual physicality. Here, ki energy and breathing exercises exist as psychophysical entities, forging the bridge between body and mind. Of course, most of the participants in this study will not be at the degree of mind-body unity that Yuasa and Nagatomo assess, but it is this level of mastery that many practitioners and arts claim to strive towards. Importantly, Nagatomo considers that one can only do this through actual physical practice rather than intellectual philosophical speculation. Considering the physical nature of TCMA pedagogies, it is quite likely that this thesis will provide empirical accounts of attunement through practice. In a sentiment similar to Bourdieu’s habitus and Merleau-Ponty’s habitual body, Nagatomo (1992) provides a conclusion of this theory of cultivated feeling-judgement through the example of TMAs:

‘Natural response’ with respect to spontaneity and immediacy has its ground in the adaptive capacity of the personal body, while ‘cultivated response’ is a refinement and enlargement of the natural response. For example, when one practices Karate, assuming a certain form of a block is spontaneous and immediate in proportion to the degree to which one has mastered the art of Karate. In this case, the feeling that one has mastered the art of assuming the form of a block is correlative with judging that one has assumed a ‘right’ form of a block.

(Nagatomo, 1992, pp. 214-215)

4.7.3. Extending the Theories of Cultivation and Attunement

Although Yuasa’s and Nagatomo’s theories are useful for assessing individuals, they do not focus on their *pedagogic* and *social* nature such as how people learn, develop alongside others or how arts are transmitted or change over time (a form of cultural cultivation in itself). In the social world, TCMAs are learned in a structured, intersubjective environment under the guidance of an instructor, senior students and even students of the same skill level. Perhaps, as Brown (2005) has suggested, these

settings are more socially interactive than the meditation cases these scholars cite? Without anyone else, we would never learn TCMA's and the arts would die out. In this sense, effective transmission of a martial arts system may never occur if the teacher has not effectively learned the art by embodied practice. Self-cultivation cannot occur without a pedagogy and transmission, and vice versa: The two are inseparable. Furthermore, if the cultivation results in a culturally valued moral/ethical transformation in personality as Yuasa (1987) claimed, surely the resulting benefits [or actions within to any society] are worth exploring? In this particular case, how does the 'oneness' translate into everyday life in British society? Considering these claims, I will stress the social transformations through the life histories of accomplished individuals.

Also, despite Yuasa and Nagatomo providing case studies of self-cultivation from meditation and qigong masters (often historical rather than contemporary figures), they mainly use a scientific, quantitative approach, taking away any subjective meaning. They do not acknowledge the potential contribution of qualitative research, despite their focus on practical, lived (rather than objectively measured) experience, and, ironically, the uniqueness of this human experience. However, there are probably a good number of reasons why these authors didn't incorporate such considerations in their work, such as qualitative research being relatively new in many disciplines. Now, in 21st century Britain, a qualitative approach would be useful to accompany this examination of highly skilful accomplishments.

Besides these methodological concerns is the issue of cultural context. Earlier in the introduction I outlined several key concepts relating to the West's growing interest in EMFs as a whole. The notions of Orientalism, Occidentalism, commercialisation and globalisation have all been identified by Brown and Leledaki (2010) as potential mechanisms for change in the way EMFs are taught, practised and interpreted. These can also be considered in relation to applying Yuasa and Nagatomo's theories as the ideas, characteristics and values given to cultivation and attunement may have substantially changed with the transmission of Wing Chun and Taijiquan to the West. Are they still religious disciplines, or they ever were (considering Henning's 1981 concerns)? Yuasa focused on these rather than today's commercialised, modern arts. Likewise, with qi – do modern practitioners reproduce this theory, and perceive subjective experience this way? It is likely, as Brown and Leledaki (2010) suggest, that

EMFs will change considerably with this reflexive modernisation, and along with them, will be altered claims and experiences of transformation.

Consequently, I will expand this by providing a subjective, pedagogic and sociological focus to examine cultivation on an individual, collective and cultural level through the idea of *social* or *shared cultivation*. This will also consider more subjective and specific transformations including health benefits, spiritual subjectivities, enhanced cultural understandings and self-defence skills important to people living in modern Britain. Yet central to all of these ideas is a temporary rephrasing basic initial research question, to ‘how does sustained TCMA training result in transformations in thought, behaviour and social action?’ The contemporary theory of metaphor takes a very embodied and cultural perspective on how humans think, and might be useful in this study.

4.8. The Contemporary Theory of Metaphor: Body, Culture and Language

Throughout Western history, metaphors were commonly regarded as only tools for language or poetry. However, in recent decades, metaphors have been acknowledged by numerous researchers as ways of thinking and living in the world. According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980), the way we think, what we experience, and what we do everyday is very much a matter of metaphor. They argue that most of our everyday conceptual system is in fact metaphorical in nature, and this all operates on a largely unconscious level. Metaphors may therefore be used to explore culture: “The most fundamental values in a culture will be coherent with the metaphorical structure of the most fundamental concepts in our culture” (p. 108). Likewise, culture, alongside life stories, play determining roles in our interpretation of metaphors. However, as the TCMA practitioners live in Britain, will their conceptual systems be so different?

These metaphors, according to the authors, shape the way we perceive the world, much like the schemes of perception discussed earlier: “Changes in our conceptual system do change what is real for us and affect how we perceive the world and act upon these perceptions” (p. 111). They therefore create social realities to experience the world. According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980), metaphors are also used to describe much of our lives, but particularly for intangible, personal issues, like “feelings, aesthetic experiences, moral practices, and spiritual awareness” (p. 114).

Later, Lakoff (1993) proposed a *contemporary theory of metaphor* to argue that the locus of metaphor is not in language, but the way we conceptualise one mental domain in terms of another. A metaphor is therefore a cross-domain *mapping* in the *conceptual system*. For example, love is often regarded as a journey e.g. ‘We’ve got a long way to go.’ Because of this ontological connection, new and imaginative uses of the mapping can be understood instantly by other people in a similar or even different culture.

More recently, Lakoff and Johnson (1999) connected this theory to *the body*. According to them, “metaphor allows conventional mental imagery from sensorimotor domains to be used for domains of the subjective experience” (p. 45). They use the example of ‘it’s gone over my head’ to explain when people don’t understand something. Bodily motions and senses are drawn upon to describe something purely cognitive i.e. not understanding something. Perhaps touching and feeling through intersubjectivity provide the sensorimotor experience for creating metaphors? The authors articulate the importance of embodied experience:

Metaphors provide subjective experience with extremely rich inferential structure, imagery, and qualitative ‘feel’, when the networks for subjective experience and the sensorimotor networks neurally connected to them are activated. They also allow a great many of the words of sensorimotor experience to be used to name aspects of metaphorically conceptualised subjective experience.

(Lakoff & Johnson, 1999, p. 59)

Metaphors are therefore largely *embodied*. This theory is shared by Yu (1998), who extended this contemporary theory through the perspective of Chinese language. While he does not claim that all metaphors are embodied, he explains that many do arise from bodily interaction in the world: “Since human beings all share a basic body structure, and have many common bodily experiences, it follows that different languages should have parallel conceptual metaphors across their boundaries” (p. 387). Considering that TCMA’s originate in China, it is quite likely that there remains an influence of Chinese metaphorical language that might not be so distinct from that of English.

Later, Yu (2007) explained the connection between *metaphor*, *body* and *culture*:

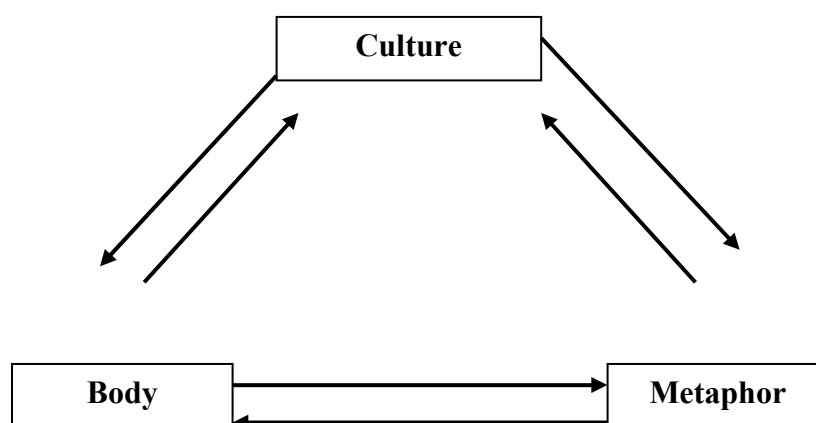
Conceptual metaphors are usually grounded in bodily experiences; cultural models, however, filter bodily experiences for specific target domains of conceptual metaphors; and cultural models themselves are very often structured by conceptual metaphors.

(Yu, 2007, p. 387)

Culture, by interpreting bodily experiences, affects the formation of conceptual metaphors; body, by grounding metaphorical mappings, affects cultural understanding; and metaphor, by structuring cultural modes, affects the understanding of bodily experience.

(Yu, 2007, p. 389)

There is therefore thought to be a triangular relationship between metaphor, the body and culture, much like a structurationist perspective acknowledging the dynamic relationship between agents and structures or Bourdieu's (1993) field-habitus-capital relationship. Any one constraining the next one will influence the one following that:



(Source: Yu, 2007)

Figure 4.9 Yu's (2007) relationship between body, culture & metaphor

Considering this contemporary theory, Lakoff (1995) stresses that social science researchers should take a careful look at metaphors as conceptual systems that have been largely ignored. This is particularly important as cultures, and differences within cultures, affect the way we use and understand metaphors (Lakoff, 2006). For Carpenter (2008), "metaphors have the potential to deepen understanding of phenomena, generating new insights and challenging old perceptions" (p. 281). More critically, Koro-Ljungberg (2004) urges qualitative researchers to acknowledge the range of ways to interpret a metaphor, by highlighting the influence of theory on methods. For her, as different readers interpret metaphors, the concepts within a metaphor change. I will therefore remain reflexive in my approach by highlighting my theoretical approach and also my position within the TCMA subculture through confessional and autobiographical writings. This follows Schmitt's (2005) concerns about using metaphor theory in qualitative research: "Metaphor analysis cannot work without previous socialisation in the language and environment in general and, in particular,

without field experience gained prior to or during the course of research” (p. 383). It is this qualitative research that needs defining next. However, I first summarise the main concepts outlined in this review and unite them through a structurationist perspective.

4.9. Summary of Conceptual Framework

This chapter aimed to outline the theoretical perspectives through a coherent framework of structuration. Because of the numerous possible perspectives that could be taken towards this new topic of long-term TCMA practitioner transformation, I adopted the idea of sensitising concepts from various branches of social science and philosophy. Overall, this framework seeks to link broader social structures such as martial arts institutions and the arts themselves with individual agency and practice by taking a holistic approach towards the larger sociological structure-agency debate. In doing so, I used Giddens’ (1984) Structuration Theory as an overarching framework to explore both daily practice and long-term changes in practitioners and the arts they engage with. Although not officially recognised as structuration, Bourdieu’s reflexive sociology was also examined as a potentially key contributor to my understanding as his field-habitus-capital complex offers an embodied and cultural perspective in the sense of the dynamic interplay between individual embodied action and the cultural fields composed of these individuals and actions.

Alongside these two structuration theorists the notion of ideal types was assessed in relation to Weber’s ideas of how they contribute to certain forms of leadership, authenticity and authority within institutions and cultures, and Frank’s body centred approach to daily ways to engage with our bodies and those of others. By combining these two concepts I can examine embodiment and ideal typical behaviour through the interplay of individual action and collective legitimation of practices. Frank has also provided a connection to narrative theory, a growing tradition in the social sciences that examines the personal and social in terms of the stories reproduced in society that are embodied and (re)constructed by individuals. This can be seen from meta, meso and micro levels, as structuration sociology should operate to avoid the potential dualisms of structure and agency.

Following the later ideas of Bourdieu and Frank that drew upon embodied concepts of phenomenology I returned to the existentialist phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty, which

focuses on embodied experiences in time, space and in relation to others that are often taken for granted. This idea of intercorporeality has been expanded by Schutz, who's development of Weber's ideal types considered the subjective and shifting nature of social reality introduced by the idea of intersubjectivity. When combined, these two phenomenologically-inspired set of concepts offer perspectives on embodiment, consciousness, interconnectedness and relationships that may form the basis of much regular practice of Wing Chun and Taijiquan.

Also connecting to phenomenology are the mind-body philosophies of contemporary Japanese theorists Yuasa and Nagatomo, who provide an understanding of long-term striving towards excellence in an art and mind-body holism through the idea of self-cultivation. Their concepts of altered consciousness, attunement and changing body schemes provide a useful framework for examining long-term experiences of body-self transformations, although their lack of consideration of culture and pedagogy limits a consideration of structure-agency dynamics. Hence I will combine these concepts with a structurationist sociological set of ideas in order to consider cultivation and transformation in both an embodied and social sense.

Finally, considering the lack of linguistic analysis in the previous concepts, the connections between culture, body and metaphor were explored through the contemporary theory of metaphor. Again, strong links to structuration can be made as according to this theory, an individual embodies metaphors from wider society and uses these to communicate with others and make conscious and unconscious decisions about language. Like the phenomenologically-orientated concepts explored earlier, this might also be a form of analysis should my findings offer a range of metaphors, and this leads me to the next chapter, the methodology, in an effort to assess the design, undertaking, analysis and writing up of this thesis.

5. Methodology

In this chapter I discuss the methodological strategy employed for this study. In what follows, I explain why I selected certain methods and how I used them for approaching the research questions, analysing the data, verifying this with the participants and representing all the various forms of data. However, in the first instance, it is necessary to turn to the underlying philosophies of social science informing all methods selected.

5.1. Adopting Interpretivism: The Paradigms Debate

All academic disciplines are built upon philosophical foundations. These philosophical foundations are known as *paradigms*, which Patton (1990) explains as essentially a commonly held worldview used to break down the complexity of the ‘real’ world. In the natural sciences and often in the social sciences, a frequently unquestioned paradigm of *positivism* is followed, which underpins quantitative research. Such a perspective is focused on notions of objectivity and ‘truth’ and large generalisations across the subjects in question. Although this approach is extremely useful in the natural sciences with its laws and factual accounts of the natural world, it is rather more limited in dealing with the complex, ever changing and subjective nature of the social world, which is why I have selected to follow the *interpretive paradigm*. In order to judge good research and improve it, it is necessary to first study this as otherwise, an unfair judgement and understanding will be made (Sparkes, 1992).

According to Sparkes (1992), a paradigm may be understood in terms of *ontology* (the nature of reality), *epistemology* (the nature of knowledge), *rhetoric* (researcher’s voice) and *methodology* (the working of the methods). *The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy* (Blackburn, 2005) can offers a definition of these terms. Firstly, *ontology* is the nature of reality and a “branch of metaphysics that concerns itself with what exists” (p. 261). *Epistemology* is the nature of theory of knowledge, which is key to human experience and meaning. *Rhetoric* is how the researcher influences the issue in question via writing or language and is therefore “the art of using language as to persuade or influence others” (p. 318). Finally, *methodology* is the study of methods by which to reach an argument or more simply, “the general study of method in particular fields of enquiry” (p. 233). The table below developed by Sparkes (1992) summarises some core

philosophical issues in interpretivism by contrasting it to positivism and another paradigm, the *critical* perspective:

Assumptions	Positivist	Interpretive	Critical
<i>Ontology</i>	External-realist	Internal-idealist, relativist	External-realist or internal-idealist
<i>Epistemology</i>	Objectivist, dualist	Subjectivist, interactive	Subjectivist, interactive
<i>Methodology</i>	Nomothetic, experimental, manipulative	Ideographic, hermeneutical, dialectical	Ideographic, participative, transformative
<i>Interests</i>	Prediction and control (technical)	Understanding and interpretation (practical)	Emancipation (criticism and liberation)

(Source: Sparkes, 1992, p. 21)

Table 5.1 Philosophical assumptions behind paradigms

Ontologically, then, there are multiple realities in interpretivism, which can be relative (i.e. relativist) to each person as we have slightly different realities of the social world. For example, one martial artist might have a different perspective towards the same style than another practitioner. Epistemologically, knowledge is regarded as subjective and multiple (rather than a true/false dualism) due to these slight individual differences that can change over time. Therefore, in Taijiquan or Wing Chun, each person will have his or her own opinions and experiences, which are recognised as personal (yet also cultural and institutional) forms of knowledge. Rhetorically in qualitative research, the author's voice is typically present and personal in order to show his/her part in the research process, as opposed to a position of complete objectiveness. We also acknowledge the reactivity of the researcher-participant relationship in that the researcher will influence the data merging from the interaction from the participant. One researcher will produce a different interview with the same participant to another researcher, as qualitative research is not perfectly replicable. Methodologically, the researcher is effectively the instrument, rather than any objective form of measurement. My identity as a martial artist will influence my interactions and data analysis, and I can therefore not be removed from any of the research process. These experiences and the actual data collection methods I have selected to address the research question are explored shortly.

5.2. Going Qualitative: A Rationale

I have just briefly assessed the interpretive paradigm, which forms the philosophical grounding for much qualitative research. There is no single definition of qualitative research, as Van Maanen (1983) comments:

The label qualitative methods has no precise meaning in any of the social sciences. It is at best an umbrella term covering an array of interpretive techniques which seeks to describe, decode, translate, and otherwise come to terms with the meaning, not the frequency, of certain more or less naturally occurring phenomena in the social world.

(Van Maanen, 1983, p. 9)

One obvious characteristic of qualitative research is that it uses words as data rather than numbers i.e. it is *ideographic* rather than nomothetic (Schwandt, 2001). Where quantitative research attempts to generalise to the wider population, qualitative methods looks at the specific. Where quantitative uses large samples to achieve this, qualitative uses small, focused samples using a specific social group. In writing, the quantitative researcher attempts to remain absent, unlike the qualitative researcher, who acknowledges his/her presence throughout the research process and may even write about his or her own experiences.

The strengths of the qualitative approach is in the way that it facilitates the exploration of people's subjective experiences, their opinions, thought, reflections and life stories. Essentially, researchers tend to go qualitative when they are interested in a human or social problem (Cresswell, 1998) and more specifically, how people make sense of the world and experience events (Willig, 2001). As my research focuses on martial artists' life experiences and personal/shared histories, I chose to select only qualitative research. I have acknowledged the important contribution quantitative research has made to TMAs in chapter two, but decided to focus mainly on the qualitative aspects as this has been largely overlooked. In the disciplines surrounding sport and exercise, qualitative research is experiencing increasing popularity (for diverse examples, see Brown, 1999; Donnelly & Young, 2001; Mennesson, 2000), with the emergence of dedicated journals such as *Qualitative Research in Sport and Exercise*. However, as I have mentioned above in TMAs, there is still a major discrepancy between the numerous publications using quantitative methods and those of qualitative. I wanted to contribute to

investigations in a previously neglected area, the TCMAAs. A pilot qualitative research project drawing upon an emergent research design would be ideal for this.

5.3. Emergent Research Design

Unlike quantitative research, qualitative research design is *emergent*, rather than fixed or deductive, as with new findings come changes in approach as data analysis informs collection (Esterberg, 2002). Rather than being a theory led investigation (theory driving the methods), I used theory to help me understand the data that derived from the methods. For instance, if fresh data came out that theory couldn't explain, I used new sensitising concepts from a relevant social science theory, which is a strategy Giddens (2001) suggests over forcing one sociological theory onto all social phenomena. Likewise, if previously planned theory was not effective in illuminating the data, I disbanded the idea of using it. This followed Flick (2002), who suggests: "The researcher develops a clear idea of his or her research, but remains open to new and perhaps surprising results" (p. 46).

I chose Maxwell's (1996) qualitative research design model as a guide for my initial investigations as I have previously drawn upon it in an ethnography of a Wing Chun school (Jennings, 2005, 2006). Essentially, this is composed of four elements: 1) Research purpose 2) Theoretical framework/conceptual content 3) Research questions 4) Methods selected. These are represented in Figure 5.1, seen shortly. Firstly, my *purpose* was to find out more about how people experience transformation through long-term practice of TCMAAs. Their widespread popularity and importance in our society justified the investigation, along with the lack of existing investigations and my own personal passion and curiosity for them. With increasing light of *reflexivity* in qualitative TMA research (Luckenchuck, 2006; Stephens & Delamont, 2006), I have also remained aware of my own biography, which has influenced my passion for the project. As Esterberg (2002) notes, qualitative researchers often "look at their own lives to see if they find anything interesting to study, an unusual angle or puzzling event or phenomenon" (p. 26). In my case, I am interested in how people change due to their long-term involvement, as the martial arts have made a strong impact on my own life. The *theories* and *concepts* selected in the previous chapter gradually emerged, as they were based on the data rather than a pre-established format. However, my appreciation

for Structuration theory, cultural sociology and sociology of the body from previous studies (Jennings 2005, 2006) gave me a flexible framework with which to incorporate previously unfamiliar concepts to me, such as those inspired by phenomenology. In addition to this, my assumptions, expectations and personal beliefs about TCMA's will have undoubtedly influenced the wide range of theoretical concepts I drew upon and those that I ignored.

The *research questions* listed in the literature reviews were also subject to change due to the emergent data and the inductive nature of qualitative research. Although the core focus of the five objectives remained largely the same, changes in the wording made a difference in how I approached the data. These questions were broad and open ended, following the conventions of qualitative research (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994), as this allowed for detailed, inquisitive answers rather than 'yes' or 'no', statistically supported conclusions. Essentially, as Marshall and Rossman (2005) suggest, the research questions should be general enough to permit exploration but also focused enough to delimit the study.

According to Maxwell (1996), *the methods* selected can fall into *four components*: 1) The research relationship established 2) Sampling strategies 3) Data collection methods 4) Data analysis. All these important considerations are discussed in some of the sections that follow, including other issues such as ethics. However, considering the emergent nature of qualitative research, the original plan (see Appendix 4.1) was considerably altered over the two years of data collection to a final model seen overleaf (figure 5.1).

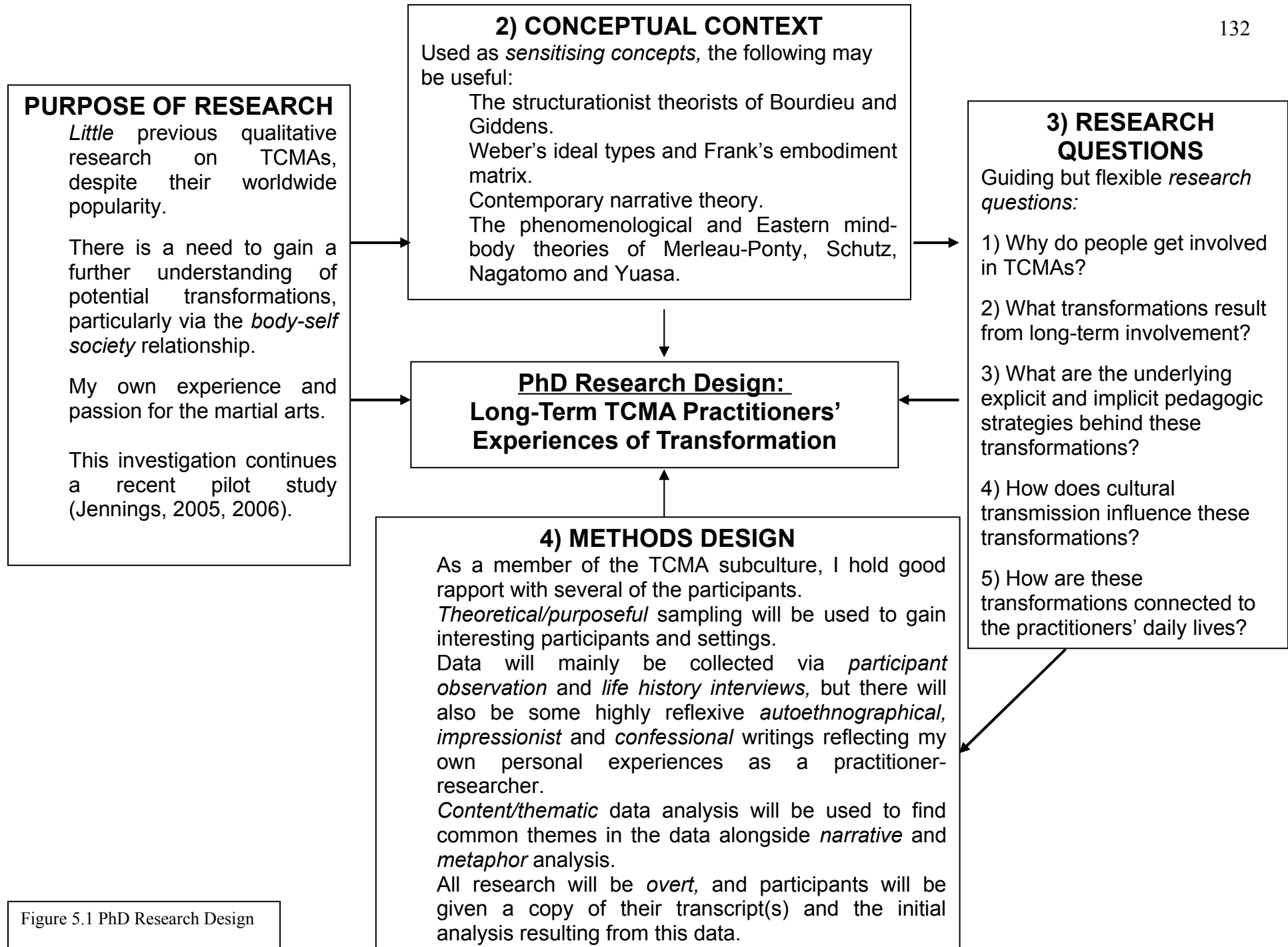


Figure 5.1 PhD Research Design

Now that the research design has been outlined, it is necessary to explain the methods in full detail; including how and why I sampled certain participants, schools and literature.

5.4. Sampling 1: The Research Settings

Long ago Lofland (1971) suggested that a qualitative research *setting* is commonly understood to be a location where a researcher can gain access to participants are in their ‘natural’ or more importantly social environment. This access is crucially important as how the researcher knows a setting may have major implications for data collection and analysis. In this respect I took heed of Marshall and Rossman (2005), who suggest an ideal site is one where: 1) Entry is possible 2) There is a high probability that processes, people, interactions etc. of interest are present 3) The researcher may build trusting relationships with the participants in the study 4) Data quality and credibility of the study are reasonably assured. Each of these are discussed together in the below paragraphs.

As a member of the TCMA subculture with previous experience conducting research in this area as a student, I felt both schools (which I will refer to as *Bridge’s Wing Chun Academy* and *Taiji World*) were ideal places to not only find interviewees but also act as settings themselves. Entry was relatively simple as I was already a member of *Bridge’s Wing Chun Academy* as was local to the particular class for *Taiji World*, where many other postgraduate students regularly attend. Both had a good variety of people to speak to and evidence of interesting interactions that enabled me to develop trusting professional relationships. Due to the long-term field notes and use of other forms of data collection, the data was extensive and rich in order to provide excellent articulations of practitioner transformations in these two social settings.

The settings for sampling other interview participants were largely their regular TCMA schools in Britain, where access is open to newcomers and beginners. As a relative beginner in Taijiquan, I entered several schools and took part in a session and spoke to the most experienced practitioners who displayed an interest in my research (field notes can be found in the Appendix 4.2). Based on the ideal TCMA school types that I will demonstrate in the next chapter, the participants were more formally approached after periods of participant observation in the pedagogic setting. Yet before the key

individuals were directly approached, an initial online search of ideal TCMA schools was undertaken. The message and focus of the school websites gave an indication of the training environment and ethos of the school in action, and the people that occupy it, and this helped support my initial ideas before the interview and observation data emerged. The instructor profile, group history and more general information all helped make the decision to visit. Therefore, a school's *website* can give an idea of the instructor, approach of the class and the lineage, and can even provide data for documentary analysis (a detailed example is shown in the Appendix 4.3 in relation to *Taiji World* and the *School of Life Exercise*, which were my two main choices for Taijiquan fieldwork). More specifically, it can provide the following information about certain ideal typical approaches to practising and transmitting the art as seen from:

- Instructor profiles
- Lineage and family tree
- The focus of the training
- Class structure i.e. lesson plan
- Key cultural terms
- Metaphors and use of language
- Photographs of class and facilities
- Videos of training and demonstrations
- Articles by students
- Suggested reading material (the latter two reflects the intellectualisation of the art)
- Links to related institutions

The core features of each of the 3 ideal typical schools will be seen in how they describe/claim:

- 1) The art itself
- 2) How people transform from long-term practice
- 3) What they are trying to pass on

Combat- orientated school websites may contain:

- A focus on the fighting abilities of certain practitioners

- Fighting or aggressive images and videos with strong rock or rap music
- Information on the fighting background of the lead instructor
- Consistent mention of self-defence
- A competition record (particularly full-contact)
- A focus on *self-defence* and *applications*
- War-like language
- Key terms such as: Combat, fighting, reality, self-defence, street fighting, survival

Technical- orientated school websites may contain:

- A focus on the art itself rather than any practitioners
- Images promoting ideas of tradition or modernisation
- Highly technical videos with Chinese music
- Information on grandmasters and travel to their schools
- Claiming heritage of the ‘full’ or ‘complete’ system
- Focus on lineage and history of the art
- *Pushing hands* and *chi sau* focus
- Key terms such as: Authenticity, lineage, non classical pure, skill, tradition, undiluted

Health/spirituality- orientated school websites might contain:

- A focus on the health and subjective transformations
- Images of nature and meditation postures
- Videos of peaceful training in open spaces, with tranquil music
- Information on retreats in open spaces
- Many academic/scholarly articles
- Focus on the *form* and solo practice, rather than practical applications
- Poetic language and philosophical statements
- Key terms: Energy, meditation, mind and body, philosophy, qi, religion

Considering the above, my strategy was to:

- 1) Find classes matching these three ideal school types within 50 miles

- 2) Attend class as a participant and talk to the instructor and core practitioners
- 3) Conduct 1-2 interviews per week with appropriate practitioners
- 4) Conduct 1-3 interviews per person to gain a detailed life history for each person

The leaders of each school were approached before observation by a *formal email* providing important information about the research (see Appendix 4.4). Access to the research setting was then granted, and informed written consent was given by all teachers, which was followed by detailed verbal explanation of the procedures. Following Marshall and Rossman (2005), I developed good rapport with the teachers, and made connections with the experienced members of the schools through purposeful sampling. However, due to the transient nature of martial arts classes, not everyone could be approached about the research project. Some potentially useful collaborators left during the research project, while others came along offering their services when I informed them of it, or heard about it through their martial colleagues, which in a sense may be described as indirect *snowball sampling* i.e. practitioners being accessed via other practitioners. The specific sampling strategies for the participants will be explained shortly.

After visiting numerous TCMA schools, I selected *Bridge's Wing Chun Academy* and *Taiji World* as my case studies of ideal typical combat and health/spirituality orientated schools effectively. They appeared to have the qualities listed above as evident in a typical training session, informal conversations with the instructors, assessing their websites and core documents, and research into the history and background of the institutions. They, along with the other organisations visited, provided excellent informants for the interviewing stage of the study. My method of recruitment is described next.

5.5. Sampling 2: The Collaborators and Interviewees

Samples in qualitative research are usually much smaller than in quantitative research as it aims to illuminate the lives of a few well-chosen individuals (Sears, 1992). As this is *information rich sampling*, I followed Spradley's (1979) suggestion that "in general, an informant should have at least a year of full time involvement in a cultural scene" (p. 48). In order to categorise the participants as long-term TCMA practitioners, they must

have had at least three continuous and hard years training in either Wing Chun or Taijiquan. This was discerned through informal conversations with instructors and senior students in each school, which were also useful in gaining an insight into their interests, character and articulation.

Qualitative researchers are not overly concerned with generalisability, but instead are interested in information rich cases (Plummer, 2001). I already knew several experienced Taijiquan and Wing Chun practitioners who have taught and practised their chosen art for many years at a high intensity, belong to different ideal TCMA practitioner typologies, are interesting, insightful and elaborate in their explanations, but also hold great rapport with them which should help fuel productive interviewing. This would not just be *convenience sampling*, but be *purposeful/theoretical sampling* as I had immediate access to interesting life stories from martial artists belonging to a range of ideal practitioner types. In this sense, sampling is theoretically grounded whilst illustrating a feature in which I am interested (ideal types) as Silverman (2000) explains: “Purposive sampling allows us to choose a case because it illustrates some feature or process in which we are interested” (p. 104). However, it sometimes difficult to categorise them into ideal types, as human beings are more complex than any social model. In the discussion section, I will go into further detail in how this was achieved through a focus on the practitioner continuum, which is the dynamic approach to teaching, learning and transforming through a TCMA through ideal types.

Convenience sampling is using a group of participants that the researcher already has good access to, both geographically and socially, which may be beneficial through well-established relationships and rapport. However, this has the disadvantage of too much rapport as Maxwell (1996) contends: “People may be very open about personal matters to strangers whom they never expect to see again but may not be willing to engage in any critical reflection on this material” (p. 66). Considering this, and my confessional writings, I coupled the collaboration with Bridge’s Academy with members of other associations.

Following the extensive periods of participant observation, the interview participants, or ‘collaborators’ as many researchers such as Munhall (2007) often refer to them, were selected according to the following criteria:

- An acceptance and interest in my research
- Interest in articulating about their experiences
- High position in pedagogy e.g. assistant instructor
- Matching one of the ideal types
- Sufficient embodied, technical and cultural knowledge
- At least four years of regular training experience
- Good level of skill attainment
- Age (a range)
- Gender (both males and females)

Sampling ceased once a sufficient amount of data was yielded from the interviews and field notes. From the interviews alone, two large folders were full with data, and this reaches the stage of saturation for the ideal types, “when newly collected data is redundant with previously collected data” (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994, p. 62). Much of this supplementary data is used for further articulate points made in the data chapters, and is available in the appendix.

5.6. The Three Data Collection Strategies

As this socio-cultural investigation was the first of its kind on two TCMAAs, several qualitative methods were selected in order to approach these subjects from both personal and sub cultural and literary angles. They can be understood in three interweaving strategies: *Life history interviews*, *participant observation* and *autobiographical/researcher reflections*. An important complement to these approaches was the use of various diaries and journals. For each strategy, thoughts, idea and findings were recorded. For field notes, a detailed and regular *field notes diary* was kept (see appendix 5.5 for sample field notes), whilst for more evocative descriptions, a separate *reflexive journal* was employed for drafts leading up to the impressionist tales (see guidelines in appendix 5.6). A smaller ideas notebook was kept on my person at all times, and any ideas were jotted down immediately, following a long tradition in sociological research of using a reflective journal (Wright-Mills, 1959). Overall, the field notes diary was used to record what was seen, heard, felt and understood. It was also for jotting down any ideas that came to my head during the project, and all of these

extracts were typed up as soon as possible for data protection and further elaboration when I wasn't hot, tired and intellectually puzzled from a TCMA workout.

The interviews were used to develop case study stories of change and transmission, and as there were 16 interviewees, they make up the majority of the data in this study. The observations accompanied this interviewing, through the commonly practised approach of *triangulation* (Esterberg, 2002) in which interviews allowed for detailed exploration of what has been observed and experienced, and participant observation to see this in practice in their social context. The idea of triangulation was approached in order to develop more detailed accurate accounts of the research topic. However, it should be noted that given the interpretive epistemology being adopted in the study there is no sense that a well triangulated methods can lay any greater claim to 'validity' in positivistic sense, as this is how the term is sometimes used.

Much of the observation was undertaken in *Bridge's Wing Chun Academy*, the site of an ongoing ethnography. Hence the study not only looked at individual, personal stories, but also looked at case study pedagogies and shared stories in order to examine the dialectical relationship between social structures and agents. All of these strategies are explored in more below, beginning with my long-term ethnographic explorations, which have attempted to make use of all the sensual experiences in both *Bridge's Wing Chun Academy* and *Taiji World* via *sensual ethnography*.

5.7. Ethnography

An ethnography, according to scholars such as Erikson (1973), is a written representation of a culture designed to make the familiar strange and the strange familiar, although new forms of artistic and virtual representation are emerging beyond the written text (Pink, 2006; Sparkes, 2002b). Ethnography is a major tool in social and cultural *anthropology*, which seeks to understand human beings in their cultural environments (e.g. Alter, 1992), but is also a popular form of investigation in many strands of social science. Ethnography therefore involves the process of *enculturation*, which is the natural process of learning a particular culture (Spradley, 1979), where the researcher becomes a part of a particular subculture to effectively 'go native' through intense and prolonged *fieldwork* (although not to the extent that I was unable to

effectively analyse the data from an outsider's perspective). The end result of an ethnography should be a written account that would allow a reader to recognise this social setting if they visited, and be able to blend in far more effectively.

5.7.1. Sensual Ethnography

A key consideration here is a recent trend of sensual ethnography, following Stoller's (1997) sensuous scholarship, which calls for an academic attention to all the senses used within a culture beyond the visual and audio. As Sparkes (2009) has commented, the world of sport and exercise provides a fertile ground for exploring all the senses in embodiment, particularly touch, taste and smell, and this is precisely what I have attempted to do in the impressionist tales. Hitherto much ethnography, and ethnography of martial arts for that matter, has focused on what is seen and heard (sight and vision being the dominant senses in Western culture) rather than all of these together. Considering these calls, I have aimed to vividly describe what I saw, heard, smelt, tasted and touched from the outset of martial arts training to its ending rather than short bursts of mainly visual description. This is particularly important as Taijiquan and Wing Chun both focus on felt body sensitivity and kinaesthetic awareness, two senses rarely focused upon in ethnographies or sociology more generally.

In the case of Taijiquan, this process of enculturation was quite straightforward, as I had no experience in the *Taiji World* organisation and therefore entered the setting with as a beginner to the *24-step form*. However, I had experience in the more martially orientated Chen style Taijiquan, and have read much about the style and have accumulated lots of cultural, historical and technical knowledge to both select it as a relevant case study and assist my later analysis. This, combined with my background as a martial artist, is likely to influence my perspectives and shape my embodied experiences in the school I approached the instructor Joe, and took the position of complete participation as a beginner in this popular class in a commercial setting. Here, my relationships with my fellow students was quite distant and impersonal due to the focus on solo form training and qigong, which required little partner interaction or discussion. Following ethnographic convention, I left the field following the period of participant observation, and maintained contact through a few sporadic emails. This relatively short period of participant observation might not merit the term ethnography,

but it certainly made the strange (*simplified Yang Taijiquan* in a new setting) seem familiar and the familiar (my preconceived notions of Taijiquan) seem strange.

However, *Bridge's Wing Chun Academy*, where I had begun training as an 18-year-old undergraduate student, was quite another matter. My own Wing Chun school remained a useful source of ethnographic data and insight into transformation and transmission. This began in October 2004 with my undergraduate dissertation, and remained an ongoing project based on a minimum of twice weekly participant observation sessions as a student and assistant teacher until July 2009. My positioning within this group began as a shy student new to the region of Dontshire (pseudonym), and later developed into a first time qualitative researcher conducting his dissertation on the Wing Chun subculture. After several years, I am now an early career qualitative researcher and instructor in the organisation and at the time of writing, I am now living away from the region and therefore maintain my membership of the group through the Internet (Facebook and email), as the ethnography has altered to complete observation of the communications between members following recent conventions in media for sociology (e.g. Fox & Roberts, 2008). This five year long (and in some sense ongoing) ethnography has provided many interested participants for interviews, but has also provided informal interviews before, during and after the training sessions. Short extracts are used in the following chapters based on this. Also, as the school has experienced a high drop out in student over the years, I occasionally and quite coincidentally bumped into former students, who provided useful reflections on the school, which I wish to explore in future writings. Here, power is constantly being negotiated beyond conventional notions of researcher-participant relationships.

As an established *practitioner-researcher* in the school, access was already granted, and in fact warmly welcomed due to rapport, “the harmonious relationship between ethnographer and informant” (Spradley, 1979, p. 78) being well established. However, this came with some drawbacks. Firstly, upon arranging times and dates for interviews, I encountered difficulty in fixing these as the participants often cancelled. They saw me as a friend and training partner rather than a professional researcher. Secondly, during interviews, although rapport was very useful in providing a friendly and relaxed atmosphere for interviews, it became a double-edged sword. On many occasions, the participants refused to disclose information they might normally grant to a stranger they would never see again. My close position to them prevented them from opening up.

Thirdly, there are important power considerations. As I moved up the ranks in *Bridge's Wing Chun Academy*, my influence in the group magnified, and I was soon seen as a role model for students in the school in terms of skill and conformity to ideal behaviour such as attending every lesson possible. When interviewing junior students, I remained aware that these issues may influence their responses and willingness to help with the study. Considering this, I reminded them that they could withdraw at any time, and didn't have to answer anything they felt uncomfortable with. On the other side of this, my seniors were often less considerate of my time and position as a researcher. Perhaps for them I saw still George, the young black belt? For instance, I turned up to Terry's house for an interview, yet to be excused by his embarrassed partner as he had completely forgotten about it. Would he do this to a stranger who formally introduced him/herself as a professional martial arts researcher? These issues of *practitioner-researcher positioning* require further attention.

5.7.2. Thick Participation

The interviews, which are discussed in the next section, were preceded and informed by extensive periods of *participant observation*. This is essentially taking part in the everyday activities of a given subculture, and in this case being a regular member of the two schools from the warm up to class closure, taking in every step, punch and drain of sweat. This observation helped forge new interview questions and ideas, yet at the same time clarified much of what was said in the interviews. I therefore found combining the two a very useful experience, and they formed my two most important data collection methods. However, the borders between interview and observation are shifting in practice, as lengthy informal conversations can easily become conversations with a purpose of research.

According to Lofland (1971), participant observation runs along a continuum from the position of a *complete observer* to a *complete participant*. I selected the latter in order to make sense of how it is to live and move in both arts in the form of *sensuous scholarship* (Stoller, 1997) that portrays the embodied (rather than observed) experience in the two arts. Participation observation as a complete participant allowed me to explore the social world of Taijiquan through embodied experience. This was particularly assisted by my physically active, relatively young, healthy and moderately

skilful performing body, much like many researchers in martial arts (e.g. Frank, 2003; Joseph, 2008; Zarrilli, 1998), an issue which has recently been raised by Stephens and Delamont (2006) on their collaborative work. I gained good rapport with many of the practitioners along with an insight into styles that I only ever read about. Detailed field notes were based on detailed guidelines (see appendix 4.6), following Sparkes' (2009) notion of *sensual ethnography* raised earlier.

Samudra's (2008) study, previously mentioned, has provided an excellent framework for ethnographies of martial arts and other physical practices. She raised the issue that through *thick participation* (becoming practitioners in a given art) the body is used to acquire shared cultural knowledge, which is then translated into words. Samudra (2008) suggests three strategies that I have adopted in my own research: 1) Encoding kinaesthetic details 2) Describing new sensations 3) Narrating physical training episodes. Firstly, I attempted to describe the typical kinaesthetic motions of both TCMA's in order to portray what many interviewees didn't describe in detail, and this was often the case for the seemingly mundane or obvious motions. These are briefly summarised in the glossary, and were assisted by my assistance in the development of a new syllabus for *Bridge's Wing Chun Academy*. Secondly, I drew upon all of my senses in order to paint a vivid picture of training in the two schools. Finally, I provided accounts of certain memorable sessions in which neither the technical or sensual elements are overemphasised. All three of these aspects later collated as impressionist tales to illustrate what a typical class is like in both schools (in Appendix 1.1). She suggests that this thick participation can be compared with observation data and life histories with consultant practitioners, which I have undertaken with sixteen TCMA exponents (explored in Parts 1 and 2).

However, there are some drawbacks with this approach of thick participation. Firstly, being a complete participant throughout the class means that I was often unable to write detailed notes during or immediately after an interesting event. Such behaviour would disturb the regular activities of the class, and could lead to a marginalized identity if it continued. Hence Lofland's (1971) continuum, although potentially fluid in practice, can lead to a stable position from the perspective of the participants. I had to wait until after the class, when I may have forgotten some very important information, particularly after a journey home or during socials, where I may no access to my field notes diary. Yet according to Emerson *et al.* (1995), *field notes* should be written up as soon as

possible after being in the field to ensure that they are fresh, vivid and relatively ‘accurate.’ I followed this advice, and ensured that the written notes were word processed when I returned home for data protection and a further draft. A combination of both complete observation and complete participation could be used in the future, although this partially occurred thanks to my supervisor, a practitioner within a different Wing Chun school and a former member of a satellite group of Bridge’s Academy (see Stephens & Delamont, 2006, for a useful resource on this collaboration). Here, he acted as a *critical friend* (Faulkner & Sparkes, 1999) who listened, provided criticism and alternative perspectives on my findings from both an insider and outsider of the TCMA subcultures I was investigating.

Throughout the research process, I kept a *reflexive journal* and *field notes diary*. The former was employed as a reflexive log of the research process, and led to the development of several detailed impressionist tales (see later section on representation). The field notes diary was used to record what was seen, heard, felt and understood. It was also for jotting down any ideas that came to my head during the project, and all of these extracts were typed up as soon as possible for data protection and further elaboration when I wasn’t hot, tired and intellectually puzzled from a TCMA workout.

5.8. Life History Interviews

Esterberg (2002) sums up the value of interviews: “Interviews are good research techniques when you want to know what people think or feel about something” (p. 36). There are various forms of interviews in qualitative research, but a popular approach is to examine people’s biographies through *life history interviews*. Life histories are useful cultural resources as the individual can be used to illustrate wider cultural phenomena as our lives move persistently through structure and history (Plummer, 2001). This often confused with *life stories*, which Atkinson (1998) distinguishes as being the stories that participants provide in interviews whilst the life histories are the academic representation of this. In this sense, life histories explain the past, present and possible future in an oral fashion in the teller’s own words (although many of the phases and metaphors will have been culturally learned). In the case of TCMA research, the stories explain martial practice as part of the larger social lives of the participants. This is an

important method consistent with the idea of Structuration (Giddens, 1984), the symbiotic link between society and the individual.

As an interview is a form of relationship between the researcher and participant concerned with the production of talk (Esterberg, 2002), I adopted several strategies to maintain a lengthy life story from each person. Firstly, as I took a semi structured interview guide (see Appendices 4.7 for a generic guide and 4.8 for Joe) and used broad, open ended questions whilst remaining focused to the larger issues in research (see Holloway, 1997 on the various types of interview). Essentially this involved asking ‘what’ and ‘why’ questions in everyday terms, whilst avoiding academic jargon where possible (see Kvale, 1996). Some were generic, beginning with the life story question: “Please tell me about your life and how you got into martial arts” or more simply put, “tell me about your life.” However, others were specific to each individual, based on observations and research into their school and lineage. However, *interview guides* merely help shape a direction in the conversation, as it was also the participants’ answers that guided the interview questions, as many unexpected issues were highlighted. Rapley (2004) confirms this flexibility:

You don’t have to use any of the questions that you initially prepared. The point is to follow the interviewee’s talk, to follow up on and to work with them and not delimit the talk to your predetermined agenda.

(Rapley, 2004, p. 18)

A *follow up interview* was conducted if the respondent gave insightful answers or if more answers were required of them following an initial analysis of the first interview. This second interview was composed of more specific questions based on the respondents’ previous answers, and was often used to gain further clarification or in seek of examples. Again, following good interviewing practice, the questions were open ended (see Appendix 4.9 for an example of Joe).

Secondly, I allowed the participant to select a quiet *setting* they would be comfortable with. This varied tremendously – from their own homes to a beach, and was often followed by a general chat about life and martial arts. Furthermore, I developed a flexible lifestyle to fit around the most convenient time for them to “avoid placing the interviewer under a time constraint” (R. L. Miller, 2000, p. 86). Connected to this, I revealed information about my own experiences and motives, and with some of the Wing Chun practitioners, we ended up playing some sticking hands – sometimes to

illustrate something that could not be explained verbally, but at other times to get a ‘feel’ for each other as fellow practitioners and gain an insight into the other person’s degree of embodiment. This returns us to the ideas of *deep experience* and *thick participation* outlined by Samudra (2008), who gave examples of this social interaction in her research, where practitioners used physical expressions to articulate techniques.

Thirdly, alongside using open-ended questions to yield lengthy and vivid responses I employed various types of *probes*, from those to gain clarification to those aiming for elaboration (see Patton, 1990). My use of *body language* such as nodding and smiling also appeared to assist the continual flow of this conversation with a purpose in an attempt to maintain the important level of rapport (Rapley, 2004). Overall, all of these strategies allowed me to become what Crossley (2000) describes as an empathetic and encouraging guide, which is particularly important as “the story you tell about yourself will be crucially affected by the person who is serving as the listener” (p. 68). After all, the interviewee is a collaborator in the development of storytelling (Miller, 2000).

Nevertheless, even when these procedures were followed, there are concerns that can emerge during interviews. By being aware of what Miller (2000) warned, I maintained a *good rapport* throughout the interview:

Skeletons in closets, real or imagined, do exist and people may not come to reveal these to a stranger, even if that stranger has wrapped himself/herself in a cloak of academic neutrality. (If the potential respondent and interviewer already are known to each other the problem is only exacerbated).

(Miller, 2000, p. 81)

Issues like this are discussed shortly in the ethics section. It is a norm in qualitative research to *record* the interviews due to the fact that we can never totally recollect everything said (Silverman, 2000). I chose to use cassettes as this was the data collection equipment I am most familiar with, and following common practice in qualitative research, I ensured that I took a spare tape recorder and tapes, along with batteries should anything go wrong with the equipment. This followed my first interview, a valuable learning experience, where this practice wasn’t followed (see confessional tales, Appendix 1.2).

As soon as possible after the interview, the tapes were *fully transcribed* by myself via a transcription machine and a word processing package. Once this was completed, the tape was listened to again for spelling and grammar checks, along with clarification. This was a valuable process, as many mistakes were corrected, and previously misunderstood phrases were fully understood. It also allowed me to begin my analysis as Lapadat and Lindsay (1999) suggests that analysis begins with transcription as we begin to think about what our research participants have told us. On occasions, the tapes were played whilst I was doing activities of daily living alone at home, so that the stories were analysed in an *audio* fashion. A copy of Joe's interview transcripts is in Appendix 4.10 as an example of this practice.

However, this well established method of working with tapes did have its drawbacks. Firstly, it was a time consuming and tiresome process. The 16 interviewees made a huge task of transcription, which may have been assisted by taking a digital perspective through modern equipment. Furthermore, my analysis, which will be explored shortly, could have benefited from a *digital* approach, which has the advantages of efficiency and economy of effort (Brown, 2002). Nevertheless, as previously stated, by doing all the transcription process myself I had opportunity to begin analysis, as the two are inseparable (Tilley, 2003).

My relationship didn't stop with the end of an interview. A copy of each interview transcript was given to the participants for their records, along with *clarification*. Several asked for further changes to be made, including their manner of speech, details to remain the same, and those to be taken out due to personal reasons. All these requests were undertaken as part of my ethical research process. Interestingly, many of the participants thoroughly enjoyed the interview process, and gained new insights into reading their transcripts. I received thanks and praise for my representation of their stories through transcripts, and some reflected on how enjoyable and useful it was to share their story, which reinforces the commonly held notion of interviews being potentially enjoyable or even acting as therapy (for instance, see Overcash, 2004).

5.9. Autobiographical Vignettes

Chapter two demonstrated my own experiences through an *autobiography*. Such an approach is commonly referred to as an *autoethnography* or *narrative of the self*, which provides an evocative and highly personal form of writing to produce highly provocative and revealing texts in which authors tell stories about their own lived experiences within a subculture (Sparkes, 2002b). As I am an experienced practitioner-teacher of Wing Chun, I combined the stories of my peers with that of my own in the appendix. Following the principles of Structuration Theory (Giddens, 1984), my story is not just a personal reflection, but is socially constructed by my place in the TCMA subculture and society at large. Hence the individual reflects larger social themes and vice versa. With this underpinning philosophy in mind, autoethnographies are becoming increasingly popular in the social sciences investigating sport and physical activity, with stories highlighting a range of issues from sporting injury and the loss of athletic identity (Sparkes, 1999) to chronic depression and its impact on a researcher's life (Smith, 1999a). However, there have been few in the TCMA, which is one of the reasons I have offered my own story here, besides it offering a reflective introduction to the thesis itself. More importantly, I used an autobiography as a reflexive exercise to examine my own prejudgements and experiences of TCMA that will have informed the planning, data collection, analysis and representation of this study. By reading this, one should be able to gain an insight into the events that led me to undertake this study and also read a detailed case study of a practitioner-researcher in the TCMA.

According to Bochner and Ellis (2002), there are two main forms of autoethnography: *Evocative* and *analytical*. I chose to draw upon both approaches as it allowed the story to breathe, enabling the reader to interpret it and gain insight for themselves whilst displaying insights from my theoretical perspectives that emerged further in chapter four. This acts as a supplement to the thesis, a detailed personal account adding to the 16 practitioners who offered their stories in the following chapters. This also follows recent trends in qualitative inquiry to adopt a reflexive perspective to assess one's experiences, assumptions, values and background, all of which influence the entire research process (see Pillow, 2003 for a review). Nevertheless, this evocative writing could later incorporate analytical insight should the audience require a guide for interpretation.

I was greatly assisted by using an *autobiographical journal*, which allowed me to plan and write drafts of each section, and this was also informed by the field notes and reflexive journals. However, unlike ethnographic field notes, this was not based on recent or current events, but rather those that occurred before the thesis i.e. the ‘chapters’ of my life that led up to this research. Representing my autobiography through *vignettes* enabled certain important chapters of my life in the TCMAAs to be accounted in detail, rather than trying to compile everything in one narrative. Such vignettes aim to be dramatic, memorable and vivid so that the reader is left with an impact (Humphreys, 2005). This increasingly popular data representation method will be discussed in the next section.

However, autobiography does raise some serious ethical issues, alongside those of ‘validity.’ Delamont (2009) claims that the idea of an autoethnography is completely unethical as it names people and places throughout the researcher’s life that may not be able to give their consent. Furthermore, she has questioned its overuse by some researchers as part of an ‘interview culture.’ I overcame this firstly by protecting the identities of all people, places and events, as a revelation of any of these could lead to other identities being traced. Secondly, I combined my own story with 16 other people, plus long-term field work in two schools to provide a detailed account of transformation through the TCMAAs. Additionally, rather than being a purely individual story full of narcissism and ‘navel gazing’ (see Allen Collinson & Hockey, 2005), I have used this as a reflexive introduction and as a case study of transformation in myself and as an account of my martial life before the research project. Nevertheless, as it is an example of a life in transition used in conjunction with various accounts of social life, I think it was a worthwhile exercise that can add to the study as a whole.

5.10. Data Analysis: Content and Structure

Schwant (2001) provides an excellent introduction to qualitative data analysis:

Broadly conceived, this is the activity of making sense of, interpreting, or theorising data. It is both art and science, and is undertaken by means of a variety of procedures that facilitate working back and forth between data and ideas. Analysis begins with the process of organising, reducing, and describing the data and continues through the activity of drawing conclusions or interpretations from the data and warranting those interpretations. If data could speak for themselves, analysis would not be necessary.

(Schwant, 2001, p. 6)

There are various forms of data analysis available in qualitative research, depending on the aim of the study and its objectives (Smith & Sparkes, 2005a). Some studies look at how conversations are structured using structural analysis, whilst others look at the interaction between the researcher and the participants, which is often called conversational analysis or more recently, dialogical narrative analysis (see Frank, 2002). As this is a relatively new research area, I firstly selected *thematic/content analysis*, which Patton (1990) effectively defines: “Content analysis is the process of identifying, coding and categorising the primary patterns in the data. This means analysing the content of interviews and observations” (p. 381). This focuses on the content rather than the structure or discourse of a conversation or encounter. The ‘*whats*’, (what they say) rather than the ‘*hows*’ (how they say it) are selected, as Smith and Sparkes (2005) suggest.

However, any idea of removing our preconceptions is limited, as following the ontology of interpretivism, human beings all have slightly different realities and forms of knowledge that may unintentionally influence analysis. At best we can acknowledge our own theoretical background and attempt to approach the data with an open mind. Furthermore, content analysis is often associated with *realism*, an approach to qualitative research derived from the attempt to parallel positivism (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Clearly, to claim that an interpretation is the truth is problematic considering the philosophical assumptions of qualitative research that I outlined earlier.

Nevertheless, at a later point, several distinctive narratives emerged, and this required more of a *structural narrative* approach. This entailed looking at the temporal dimensions of the participants’ narratives. As we have seen earlier, narratives have a plot, and by examining the plot, we have more of an understanding of the narratives themselves. This was accompanied by an assessment of each narrative’s *tone* e.g. a positive story of ageing contrasted with a more negative one. Overall, By examining the ‘whats’ and ‘hows’, my involvement with narrative analysis followed Crossley’s (2000) approach of identifying: 1) Dominant themes 2) Imagery 3) Narrative tone. Firstly, the themes of the content of the story were explored through thematic analysis i.e. identifying trends in the narratives drawn upon. The analysis of *imagery* then provided an opportunity to examine metaphors used extensively in life stories. Furthermore, the tone of each story was assessed by considering the comparisons between past and

present, and this led to some very positive, but also negative narratives. Although these were obvious from participant observation, their prevalence was highlighted during narrative analysis, where several powerful *metaphors* were encountered, which were critically analysed for their apparent importance in the interviewees' stories (see Koro-Ljungberg, 2004). These were also highlighted, first in pencil, and then in marker pen for easy identification. Within large metaphors came smaller derivatives, and these were placed under the larger categories e.g. 'family' and 'religion,' which linked the imagery to the themes.

Regardless of the approach taken, data analysis in qualitative research is a long and challenging process that requires the utmost attention of the researcher. Unlike in quantitative research, data analysis begins as soon as data is collected, and finishes only when the project is completed (see Crossley, 2000). For example, whilst *transcribing* the interviews I engaged in an indirect form of analysis by listening and writing (Tilley, 2003). The *second transcription* provided a further opportunity for analysis as I could concentrate more on the content of what they were saying rather than the structure. The same can be said of field notes: Once they were being written, I already had in mind certain theories and approaches with which to understand what was happening in the research setting.

The initial stage of further analysis began with the common position of *indwelling*, which Maykut and Morehouse (1994) advocate as sitting down with the large chunks of data and reading them through several times before trying to make sense of them. This began a common procedure with the life history and participation observation data, and although time consuming, it was assisted by examining one interview or extract at a time.

The next period of analysis involved *classifying* the data. The first stage of coding began with pencil and focused on the themes. It was therefore the beginning of content analysis in which the major events e.g. beginning martial arts, joining a school were written in the left hand margin of the page. After several readings, theoretical concepts were added in the right hand margin of each page. This allowed alterations to be easily made. Key terms that were repeated by the participants were circled for easier identification.

Finally, after reflecting on the data, the rest of the transcript or field notes extract was *colour coded* according to appropriate *theory*, based on the following guidelines: Red for structuration theory; blue for narratives; green for phenomenologically-orientated concepts and Eastern mind-body philosophy and black for other themes that could not easily fit within a theoretical framework. I found this to be very useful as related pieces of data from different transcripts could easily be connected.

Before this was completed, I attempted to link all data to the *research questions*. The numbers 1-5 (in relation to each guiding research question) were listed in the right hand column next to the theoretical concepts when a certain extract of data led to a further understanding of this. For example, when someone explained why they started and kept up TCMA practice, I wrote “1” on the side in thick black ink. Once all data was analysed, this helped me compare and contrast each person’s story, and get an overall picture of the thesis questions. This also helped me write the conclusion chapter, which addresses the research questions outlined previously.

As my main form of analysis was content/thematic, I chiefly focused on *what* was said. However, as Frank (2002) suggests, what the participants didn’t say (through narrative silence) is just as important as what they did. With this in mind, I based my follow up interviews and observations around what I felt had not told and seen as well as what the participants had already spoken about. This brought to light new issues that I would have previously overlooked. With all data documents, new questions were written next to under explored areas, and were typed into documents for each person, forming follow up interview guides.

The second stage involved a closer look at the stories for their *structure*, which followed the discovery of several narratives that will be discussed in the next chapters. The structural/temporal components were highlighted in a square or rectangle. Alongside this, a certain amount of *discourse analysis* was used on the practitioners’ embodied descriptions (particularly on partner training) as it emerged during the process of transcription that the participants find it extremely hard to talk about embodied practice and experiences. Verbalisation of somatic experience is hard even for teachers of TCMA, who have to do it on a regular basis. I found this an important aspect of the study as the stories they told were limited by language and used this as an illustration in a later empirical chapter.

Once all data had been collected, I realised that the earlier sets of data needed further exploration as I hadn't seen less obvious themes that were evident in later interviews. For example, the theory of intersubjectivity came to light midway through data collection. I had not used this concept on the earlier data, so returned to them again, and yielded greater understanding from them. Hence new data helped me understand old, and vice versa.

With all the data having undergone this process of examination, a *summary sheet* for each participant was constructed according to content analysis. Hence the main themes in their life stories were listed, allowing for a quick comparison with others. Much like life histories (Sparkes & Templin, 1992), the themes from stories were then reconstructed in a linear (chronological) order as a summary story for each person (Appendix 4.11 with the example of Joe). Alongside this, a metaphorical analysis summary was written for each participant, and for each category of metaphor, from embodied description to abstract descriptions of martial arts and life. This helped construct the final research chapter on metaphors.

A very important process occurred before anything was written: The involvement of what Faulkner and Sparkes (1999) call a *critical friend*. In this case, my supervisor Dr. David Brown played an essential role in the interpretation of the findings, particularly as he brought further theoretical perspectives alongside his personal experiences elsewhere in TCMAAs, which were drawn in comparison to these case studies. This process ranged from informal chats in the School of Sport & Health Sciences corridors or kitchen to officially booked meetings in his office in which I brought detailed notes from the analysis and initial writings or described key observations and narrative structures. Through emails, tutorials and research seminars, David provided alternative forms of analysis and ideas for the representation of the research until after raising as many different interpretations as possible, we agreed upon a final version of each chapter. This was assisted by David's greater distance from both *Bridge's Wing Chun Academy* and *Taiji World*, which he has briefly attended at different periods to me. As a practitioner of Wing Chun in a different school and a long-term follower of several other martial arts styles, David provided an excellent perspective as a practitioner-researcher, which was assisted by discussing some ideas with his colleagues such as

Professor Andrew Sparkes (my second supervisor), who does not practise martial arts, but in former years has had some experience of *Lau Gar Kung Fu* and Taijiquan.

The final stage before chapter writing was collating all the connected information within a particular *theme*. For example, with data on chi sau, I gathered the transcripts together, and looked for the bold writing ‘chi sau’ in the left hand margin. The colour coding also helped this as it was normally in green for phenomenologically-inspired description. A new document entitled ‘chi sau’ was created, and all relevant data was copied and pasted into this. Unsurprisingly, there was overlap in content, as the same data was placed in several documents according to theory and perspective. This led to the development of a summary sheet for each theme (Appendix 5.12 with the example of ‘metaphors’), allowing for my interpretation to combine with theory. These large documents of data later made up the research chapters that follows. Perhaps in the future, I will again consider Brown’s (2002) suggestions of the benefits of *digital analysis*, which removes the physical strain of the last task, although this newer method has its own disadvantage of removing the analysis process during automatic data sorting. .

Overall, the two main forms of analysis employed (content and structural narrative) both have their strengths and weakness. The words of Smith and Sparkes (2005) neatly sum up the importance of various forms of analysis for one set of data:

Life stories need to be subjected to multiple forms of analysis. If lives, stories, bodies, identities and selves in sport and physical activity are multidimensional, constructed, complex, and changing in time and with context, then researchers might seek forms of analyses that are sensitive to, and respectful of, this complexity and multiplicity.

(Smith & Sparkes, 2005)

5.11. Ethical Considerations

Ethics are particularly important in qualitative research as we are dealing with people’s lives and often entire communities (in the case of an ethnography). As it is a social science investigation into TCMAAs, a notoriously micro-political social field, it may impact on the subcultures studied, and the people occupying them through a revelation of the practitioner/schools’ true identities. This study had already received ethical clearance from the School of Sport & Health Sciences’ ethics committee, where it was

determined that there were no particular concerns for the people being studied. However, I took heed of Plummer's (2001) detailed list of seven procedures, which I have summarised in the table overleaf.

Issue	Practice
<i>1. Intellectual property</i>	The life stories will remain the participants' own property, and will be used with their permission.
<i>2. Informed consent</i>	Participants were asked to read and sign an informed consent form prior to data collection.
<i>3. Right to withdraw</i>	The participants can withdraw from the study at any time during the study.
<i>4. Unintended deception</i>	This will be avoided by explaining the purpose and nature of the study in explicit written and oral detail.
<i>5. Accuracy of portrayal</i>	Participants will be consulted with the interview transcript for its honesty and accuracy to their life story experiences.
<i>6. Confidentiality</i>	All participants, people, institutions, places, events and other proper nouns will be given a pseudonym to protect their identities.
<i>7. Financial gain</i>	No part of their stories will be used for purposeful financial gain without explicit consultation with the participants.

Table 5.2 Ethical considerations based on Plummer's (2001) guidelines

With this in mind, I took firstly an established ethical position through *informed consent* with all the participants. An *informed consent form* (Appendix 5.13) and *information sheet* (Appendix 5.14) was given to all leaders of each group visited, and to every interviewee. This written notification was also accompanied by a detailed *verbal explanation* before and after signing the form on the level required for each individual. At the outset of the interviews, I reminded the interviewees of their rights, and checked that they were clear with the form and with the nature of the study. As the consent form/information sheet was brief, I explained it further in layman's terms in order to prepare them for the interview. However, due to the transient nature of martial arts groups, several non-regular members of *Bridge's Wing Chun Academy* and *Taiji World* may have not received consent or information about the research. As none of these participants were in anyway experienced practitioners, so were irrelevant to my study.

Secondly, as TCMA subcultures are usually small, and elite members well known to each other, I gave all participants, schools and the people and places named *pseudonyms*, except for notable, deceased martial arts figures such as Yip Man and *Zheng Manqing* (the latter at Taijiquan practitioner Roger's insistence due to his lineage pride). Additionally, I never mentioned talking to any individuals to other participants in case disputes between practitioners would arise. If this was not done, any reading of the thesis or publications resulting from it could lead to quarrels within and between schools due to the political issues between and within styles. In short, all participants were treated with the greatest confidence, respect and thankfulness. However, a few were eager for their real names to be kept as they were very happy for their lives to be shared even for commercial purposes, and I have left Joe's name as it is because of this request.

After transcription was complete, a copy of each transcript was given to the interviewees, along with a *pseudonym guideline* should they want to further change the names of the people, places, institutions and events. On occasions I was asked to change details and delete certain sensitive discourse about their personal lives. Also, some felt uncomfortable with their manner of speech due to the fact that I initially transcribed *ab verbatim*. I changed this in order for their stories to flow more i.e. took out the ‘ums’ and ‘ers’ as I wasn’t conducting discourse or conversational analysis (although this is a possibility in the future as life histories can be analysed from a range of perspectives, as we have seen) and therefore these elements did not constitute a change in meaning. Some individuals also requested a copy of the thesis and research papers resulting from it, mainly due to their strong interest in the subject of TCMAs, which I will happily provide considering their kind efforts. However, I did not offer to provide drafts of any empirical chapters, as I was concerned that they might not understand my detailed and often critical theoretical interpretations. As Sparkes (1998b) warns, *member checking* is useful to verify understanding of data, but rarely will participants be able to shed light on theory. In fact, they might actively reject any seemingly foreign template being put onto their stories. Furthermore, as a sociologist I follow Wright Mills’ (1959) idea of the *sociological imagination* in which individuals’ lives are used to look at a larger social picture, which they themselves may rarely consider.

As an institution bound to the Data Protection Act (1998), the University of Exeter (and its employees) must ensure all data is kept securely, and this is particularly true of sensitive data found in social science research. The interview and field notes data was kept in a *locked safe* in my home, which was kept out of site from anyone. In addition, the real identities of the participants were kept on a separate computer from the interview files. The files themselves were all protected by different *passwords* for extra security.

Besides all these standard procedures, I ensured that each participant was treated as an individual human being. As Frank (2002) suggests, I asked them, “What would you like me to do with your story?” This determined how much of each person’s story I used, and for what purpose, which is particularly important as it the stories are their intellectual property. Some were very happy for it to be used for anything, whereas a few seemed a little concerned but immediately felt comforted when I told them their stories would be merged with others alongside my prose. If I were to create a book

based on each person's story I would contact each participant to gain their explicit permission and provide information on the purpose and nature of this text.

Another issue outside Plummer's (2001) guideline is that of the impact of telling one's story to others. As we have seen, an interview can be like therapy, with the telling of tales a release from pent up emotions and issues. For others, a story can be harmful by bringing untold events into speech (Frank, 2002). I took this into account from the onset, and never pushed any participant in telling me something they didn't feel comfortable with. I listened carefully, giving the person the gift of listening, and coaxed the story along with prompts rather than forcing other questions onto the participant. They were therefore telling their tale rather than answering a barrage of questions.

A final consideration is the impact of the research on the TCMA community. We have already looked at pseudonyms and anonymity, which is linked to the potential applications of the research. Do TCMA practitioners in Britain need to change? Do I need to 'intervene' in the scene? Initially I had the idea that this might be the case as I still harboured some empiricist tendencies (see Bochner, 2002), but now I realise that they must make their own decisions in how to lead their lives. At best on the practical level, my research is a small contribution to the knowledge on TCMA's that can be used as a resource should any practitioners come across it. This is the indirect and subtle impact that qualitative research can have.

5.12. Representing Embodiment, Communicating Stories

There are an increasing number of ways to represent qualitative research, including *poetry* and *ethnographic fiction*, depending on the researcher's purpose, message and audience (Sparkes, 2002), and the intense debate over these new possibilities has been termed by Richardson (2000) as '*the crisis of representation*.' Essentially, as researchers and writers we are able to publicize stories that may have otherwise been unheard (Frank, 2002). We can now effectively disseminate research findings to a wide range of people who would not be able to gain as much meaning and coherence from the *scientific tales* common in the natural sciences (Sparkes, 2002). Alongside this, *multiple forms of representation*, once read again by the participants, allows them to story their own lives like they would never had before. We as researchers effectively

provide them with new linguistic resources with which to explain their own transformation.

With this thesis, the purpose is to increase the world's knowledge of TCMA from a sociological perspective. The message is varied and complex but can be understood via the different chapters' systematic progression. The audience is initially academic, but can later be martial artists of all levels and lay people unfamiliar with these practices. All of these issues call for a range of representation methods i.e. a mixed genre production (Richardson, 2000). The ones I selected were modified realist tales, impressionist tales, confessional tales and autoethnographic vignettes, which I explain individually below.

Realist tales are possibly the most established and popular genre of writing in the social sciences, and have been employed extensively in TMA research (e.g. Frank, 2003; Guthrie, 1995; Lantz, 2002). Van Maanen (1988) notes that they focus on the theoretical interpretation of data using a distant, often third person voice providing a sense of experiential authority and detachment. Furthermore, as the researcher controls the data in how it is interpreted and represented, there is also an attempt at *interpretive omnipotence*. *Modified realist tales* are instead suggested by Sparkes (2002) as a way to bring the previously absent author's voice into the forefront of the writing. The focus here is still on the research participants, but the researcher reflexively acknowledges their power relation to the participants, their own social positioning and the context in which they gained their data. The first person is therefore used throughout in an attempt to acknowledge the subjective nature of the research. The bulk of the data in this thesis is in the form of modified realist tales, particularly interview and participant observation data. However, at times, my voice might be absent in order to allow the participants' voices to flow. My reflexive position is therefore more evident in the impressionist tales, confessional tales and autobiography.

Impressionist tales, as the name suggests, tend to focus in depth on a particular aspect of a setting and draw upon lived experience in order to give an impression of the subculture (e.g. Cohen, 2006). In this case, I created impressionist tales of several of the TCMA schools I visited from detailed field notes. Rather than an account of one complete session, this shares characteristics of highly accessible *ethnographic fiction* or perhaps more appropriately, *creative non-fiction*, where a fictional lesson is constructed

from events possibly months apart. A piece of ethnographic fiction is an ethical approach to writing up detailed and lengthy field notes as the setting is made out to be fictitious, although based on real people, interactions and events (Sparkes, 2002a). These impressionist tales make up the next chapter, and following normal impressionist convention, leave out the author's analysing voice, and instead let the reader immerse themselves in the world of the practitioners. According to Van Maanen (1988), an impressionist tale is typically written in the present tense to be provocative and dramatic, and must be vivid and detailed by using a certain degree of artistic nerve. Fortunately I have had experience of this through my undergraduate dissertation (Jennings, 2005), which employed two shorter impressionist tales forming the foundation of that of *Bridge's Wing Chun Academy*. Yet at the same time, these tales are generally more accessible for the general reader as they are implicit, rather than overly explicit, in their use of academic theory and jargon.

Impressionist tales, first identified by Van Maanen (1988), are a form of alternative representation in qualitative research, and in particular, ethnography. Used strategically, they are typically used alongside realist tales (see Geelan, 2004), aiming to provoke strong feelings in the reader, much like an impressionist painting. However, unlike realist tales, they are not drawn from certain moments in time, but are a combination of several memorable, unique events. They are therefore detailed accounts of the process of fieldwork, where the researcher is a key character. Here, cultural knowledge is gradually slipped into the story, as the narrative "displays the learning process used to acquire knowledge of the culture and people" (Goodhall, 2000, p. 72). The aim is therefore to describe the social setting in such a detail to "make the reader feel, hear, see, smell and taste what the storyteller describes" (Bryan & Tippins, 2005, p. 4). According to Sparkes (1995), the author therefore creates striking stories to startle the audience by drawing upon the senses to provoke multiple interpretations among a variety of different readers.

The author's voice is therefore highly personal, as they take a strong character in the first-person account (Cooper *et al.*, 1998). In this manner, impressionist tales contain an element of what Van Maanen (1988) terms confessional tales, where research issues in the setting are highlighted through a personalised voice. This voice is often written in the present tense, in order to give a 'you are there' feeling. As Bryan and Tippins (2005) suggest, such evocative language "that reveals and represents the writer's deepest

feeling about the topic is a central character of impressionist tales” (p. 4). In order to this to be achieved, “their medium is that of words, metaphors, phrasing, and imagery coupled with an expansive recall of fieldwork experience” (Sparkes, 1995, p. 17).

Confessional tales are more to do with methodology experience than the data itself as they are critical accounts of the research process as a learning experience from start to finish, and the researcher’s voice is ever present and reflexive (Van Maanen, 1988). The work of Delamont (2005) and Stephens and Delamont (2006) are good examples of this in martial arts research, and they are further illustrations of confessional tales accompanying realist tales published elsewhere. How the data was collected, sampling ideas, new modes of analysis, lessons learned and feedback from participants are all typical topics for impressionist tales. They are personal and evocative, and are designed to be resources for future researchers, often in areas of sensitive research (e.g. Brackenridge, 1999) or where the identities of the researcher and participant offer interesting reflections (such as Sparkes, 1994). Due to word restrictions and the core, empirical focus of the study, these can be found in the Appendix (1.2). My own experiences of the interview process may be useful for other researchers wishing to investigate the TCMA or embodied practices through similar methods and for other qualitative researchers interested in accounts involving various trials and tribulations. Similar confessions were earlier introduced in the autobiography that aimed to introduce readers to my own martial background, which had a massive influence on the field notes and interview data yielded, as well as my interpretations.

Finally, *autobiographical vignettes* were chosen instead of a full-blown, ‘stand alone’ autoethnography. Vignettes are short excerpts of data designed to be evocative and memorable. They are becoming increasingly common in narrative research (Humphreys, 2005; Parker, 2005), and I came across this method of writing while assisting teaching in a narrative research module at Exeter. However, this method has yet to be extensively employed in martial arts research. Certain important events in my own life were used as examples of moments of transformation and cultural transmission, such as key learning experiences in chi sau and memorable teaching episodes. All of these are written in the present tense to provide the reader a sense of being there in order to get a grasp of the multisensorial nature of a typical class (see Humphreys, 2005). It is hoped that the reader unfamiliar with TCMA becomes more

accustomed to it through these short passages. For the more experienced practitioner, my own story can be used as a resource to narrate their own change.

Future publications and research might utilise the other forms of representation available, such as *ethnographic fiction* and *poetic transcription*. However, due to my current writing skills, such genres are yet to be approached although I will certainly consider them in the future. There is a serious risk of poor writing and dissemination should the researcher not be skilled in a chosen genre (Sparkes, 2002). It is how to judge such writing that I turn to next.

5.13. Judgement Criteria and 'Validity'

As Marshall and Rossman (1995) note, “clearly, a criteria of goodness for qualitative research differ from the criteria developed for experimental and positivist research” (p. 146). So how can we judge qualitative research? Like the forms of representation, there are various established positions on judging qualitative research. Some try to make equivalents of quantitative research’s ‘*holy trinity*’ of generalisability, repeatability and validity (see Coryn, 2007), although this is probably inadequate because as we have already seen, qualitative research holds different philosophical assumptions. We do not aim to generalise to the entire human population (as we could with cellular biology) or have our work repeated to yield exactly the same results. For instance, as stories are often being worked on by the teller, how can we repeat the interview like a natural science experiment? It is obvious that appropriate criteria need to be understood.

One of the approaches to the issue of validity is the ‘*letting go*’ perspective (see Sparkes, 2001), which I have advocated. This suggests letting go of any parallels to quantitative research judgements, such as generalisation and validity, and instead looking at each form of representation as unique in itself, with its own characteristics worthy of individual consideration. This follows Richardson’s (2000) argument that there is no single right way to stage a text. Also, the branches of a form of representation should also be considered. Is my autobiography taking a feminist perspective? If not, feminist criteria may play less important than the essence of *heartful or evocative autoethnography* (Ellis & Bochner, 1996) that I have attempted. I have therefore discussed each genre separately below.

Modified realist tales should display the author's reflexive self-awareness to acknowledge a typically absent, disembodied author (Sparkes, 1995) in line with new forms of representation. Therefore, appropriate criteria may include: Did I explain my relationships to the participants? Did I draw upon my own embodied experiences? Did I reveal my own thoughts and feelings? If this is done alongside the conventional use of field notes and interview excerpts, then this may be a successful modified realist tale. Finally, Sparkes (2002) reminds us that a good realist tale should be a well-informed guide to the scenes of social worlds that is recognised by the participants.

Impressionist tales, as the name may suggest, are intended to create a rich and detailed impression of a social scene. Rather than being disembodied and theoretical, they should be lively, dramatic and emotionally stimulating. Judgement criteria for this form of representation will therefore be through those of literature, rather than conventional social science. Does this excite and startle? Does it paint a picture of the martial arts schools? Do readers feel drawn into them? All of these literary criteria are useful considerations when examining impressionist tales, and further illustrate the risks taken to undertake them in terms of writing skills. So in order to create a lasting impression of the research setting, it should be vivid and evocative, relying on metaphors and imagery in its description. It will therefore rely on what Van Maanen (1988) terms dramatic recall. It should therefore have clear characters with names, faces and lines. The plot should be exciting and unpredictable, and read like a good novel. He identified three possible judgement criteria for impressionist tales: 1) Interest (is the reader gripped by this?) 2) Coherence (does it hang together?) 3) Fidelity (is it believable?). These are clearly based on the criteria from literature and literary criticism, rather than science, as Sparkes (1995) suggests.

Clearly, this requires artistic nerve from the author, as Van Maanen (1988) warns, by drawing upon sufficient literary skills, particularly stylised rhetoric. Because of this, they take time to tell and are quite lengthy, which may put off some readers. I have therefore undertaken this difficult task by creating an entire chapter around two impressionist tales, yet it is hoped that the reader gains a further insight into the practice of the arts of Taijiquan and Wing Chun in their pedagogic settings. In fact, one of the purposes of impressionist tales is to challenge the reader's understanding of social

reality and meaning, and make us ponder about ourselves, our interactions and language (Adler & Adler, 2008).

Confessional tales should do what they say – confess the author’s exploration of the social setting and research process. As Sparkes (2002) notes, they should also reflect on the author’s relationships with the people studied and offer a resource on ethics and methods for future researchers in this or even in different areas. A good confessional tale should be revealing, honest and open and offer something on the struggle of research for novice researchers. However, at the same time, it should not go to the extreme of bad autoethnographies by being narcissistic and self-pitying.

Likewise, autoethnography has been commonly criticised as being self-indulgent rather than self-knowing, self-respectful, self-sacrificing, or self-luminous (see Sparkes, 2002). As long as researchers attempt to illustrate themselves as an example in a culture, as a self-ethnography, then they are creating a good autoethnography. A successful autoethnography challenges disembodied ways of knowing by bringing the author’s embodied experiences to the forefront of writing as Sparkes (2002) contends: “We are taken into the intimate, embodied world of the other in a way that stimulates us to reflect on our own lives in relation to them” (p. 100). Furthermore, he argues that: “Autoethnographies and narratives of the self seek to meet literary criteria of coherence, verisimilitude, and interest” (p. 194). If it is interesting, connects to others and offers them a reflection of their own, then an autoethnography has worked well.

A common attempt for validity in all forms of qualitative research is *member checking*. This is essentially a provision of the data to the research participants in order for them to make sense of it and give feedback on its ‘accurateness.’ In terms of ‘accurateness’, I mean: “Does this make sense to you? Does this communicate your views? Is this a way you would like to be represented?” It is therefore an ethical procedure useful in order to clarify uncertain things such as subculture terminology and spelling. This was attained before, after and during interviews, and during informal conversations within the research settings, such as, “What do you mean by this term? Was I right in thinking you meant this?” However, as Sparkes (1998b) notes, research participants are rarely academics or even citizens familiar with the theories we employ. Consequently, they will not be able to effectively member check entire research chapters and cannot accurately interpret an interpretation using theory of their own story.

5.14. Summary

In this chapter I have discussed in detail the methods undertaken during the research process from the initial research design to the final forms of representation. It has included an explanation of the philosophy underpinning social science research, which informs debate on how this thesis might be judged. I have also briefly outlined my initial ideas of a practitioner and school continuum, the latter which I turn to next through my autobiographical vignettes that demonstrate my own experiences of such transformation through an embodied description of practice within distinct pedagogic settings. Hopefully from reading this, you will be left with an impression of what it is like to be a practitioner in such schools and how my perspectives and analysis were shaped by such experiences. As we have just seen, that is the aim of an academic autobiography.

Analysis Part 1: Ideal Types & The Embodied Continuum

Part 1 of the Analysis is divided into three chapters: Fighters, martial artists and thinkers, after the ideal typical approaches to cultivation identified from participant observation, analysis and non theoretical member checking. These three ideal types offer alternative ways of (re)constructing the subjective meaning of practice along a dynamic continuum through which an individual can experience transition in various directions. The ideal types of Weber (in Gerth & Wright-Mills, 1991) and Frank (1991) are continuously drawn upon alongside recent understandings of Bourdieu's habitus and contemporary narrative theory in order to highlight individual stories of embodiment, socialisation, self- and other relations, institutional transformation and transmission of the art itself.

From interview analysis and participant observation, it appears that certain practitioners gravitate towards and develop within specific kinds of ideal-typical schools. Key to understanding such ideal practitioner types are four issues of cultivation beyond Yuasa's (1987) focus on the body-self/mind-body connections: Individually, how they are socialised and develop a particular habitus; interpersonally, how they develop together; subculturally, how they lead and legitimate; and culturally, how they (re)produce certain narratives and contribute to society. In each chapter, I follow a *cultivation framework* on these *four levels*: 1) Individual 2) Relational 3) Institutional 4) Art.

The participants are categorised into ideal types to assist analysis and theoretical illustration of these durable dispositions to (re)construct subjective meaning through practice. Like Frank (1991), I am using the ideal types as guiding posts for understanding how people relate to themselves and others through stories.

However, no person is just one ideal type. Instead, these 'divisions' are used as a heuristic device to illustrate how these people are experiencing transition from one 'beginning' type to a more holistic or hybrid ideal approach to practise. I readily acknowledge them having other aspects of their character that will be used in TCMA training and in wider society.

From this section, we can see the broad and flexible range of positions that a practitioner can adopt. For example, a street brawler and former gang member may come across a TCMA and cultivate a more balanced body type through years of training as was found in Western boxing by Wacquant's (2004) well known ethnography. This will of course also coincide with an ongoing process of maturation and changing life circumstances. Likewise, an intellectual may approach TCMA's for skill and self-defence training, undergoing a transformation to incorporate a more fighting component.

I explore the practitioners' social backgrounds, their reasons behind starting Taijiquan or Wing Chun training, the transformations occurring from this, the underlying mechanisms causing such transformations, current aims for cultivation, perspectives on cultural transmission and views of other ideal types or schools of thought. Often their voices stand alone as case studies, but they are sometimes combined when discussing broader issues. Overall, they are represented through modified realist tales to provide room for their voices and our emerging relationships. I begin with the fighters currently standing on one extreme of this continuum towards an almost total (re)construction of self-defence or violent meaning for practice.

6. The Fighters

One obvious aspect of TMAs is their potential use in real fighting or self-defence scenarios. This is seen from the ‘martial’ component of the term ‘martial art’ which, as I will demonstrate, has different meanings to various practitioners. In this chapter, I examine the stories of four practitioners who have been classified as fighters due to their current focus on cultivating their self-defence and combat capabilities. One clear theme coming from the participants is that the ideal type of a fighter can be understood in two subtypes, which tend to have different backgrounds, lifestyles and aims for cultivation: ‘Natural’ fighters and trained fighters. I first begin with the ‘natural’ fighters, Terry and Ted, who enhanced their existing fighting skills through long-term TCMA training, and focused on life experiences to understand the importance, and limitations of a TMA in today’s society. I then move to the stories of Emma and Nick, two trained fighters who came into TCMA from an inexperienced fighting background to adopt a focus on self-defence and realism within fighting orientated schools and through training alongside such fighters.

6.1. The ‘Natural’ Fighters

Terry MacIntyre

Terry, 39, is John’s top student and assistant instructor through 20 hard years training in the Academy. He is in a long-term relationship, and has a two-year-old son with his partner (who he is already teaching to fight) and acts as a stepfather to her two other children. Terry has been unemployed since he moved to Rigmouth in 1985, has little formal education, and has done a few temporary jobs, and has been trained as an aromatherapist and holistic therapist, and he is currently providing private massage treatments and lessons in Wing Chun. Rather conveniently he lives just two minutes walk from *Bridge’s Wing Chun Academy*, and often pops in to speak to John even when the classes aren’t on, or to train when it normally closed as he has access with a key. Originating from a tough working class background in Grimthorpe, a large city in Northern England, Terry has had countless street fights throughout his youth and adulthood. This, along with a background in various TMAs, helped develop his pronounced street fighter typology. Terry began Wing Chun to improve his fighting

capabilities, as it matched his very direct style of fighting gained from these earlier experiences.

Along the way, he discovered that the discipline of Wing Chun assisted him cutting down the abuse of his body through the rave scene. Terry is now an accomplished martial artist, having competed in full contact British TCMA competitions, although he dislikes these for their lack of reality compared with actual street fighting. From his passion for Wing Chun, Terry has more recently developed an interest in holistic therapies, and practises this alongside private Kung Fu tuition. I chose Terry for his ideal type fighting typology and life experiences of fighting giving him a streetwise, practical approach to Wing Chun.

Our relationship as fellow instructors has an interesting influence on the research process. Due to Terry's readily admitted unreliability and disorganised schedule we agreed to meet when I was in the Academy for a private lesson with John. However, on two occasions he forgot about the interview, and once was called to an emergency. Eventually we managed to conduct two very insightful interviews; one in his home with his dog and young son present, who proudly showed me his Wing Chun guard at his dad's request, and the other at a trusted friend's house who lived around the corner. He has since shown an interest in the research, and has provided some interesting comments on the transcript and the findings in general.

Ted James

Ted, 69, is Sifu Bridge's eldest student, and a role model for the group due to his sustained training at a relatively advanced age, which he hopes to continue till the day he dies. He lives near Rigmouth and is married, with two adult children who live away from home. A former Royal Marine from London, Ted slowly moved into bank management after a serious leg injury ended his military career. He is officially retired, although he continues to advise small businesses on their finances and accounts. He is a close friend and student of John, although he tries to avoid giving him business advice in order to keep the close relationship.

Coming from Korean kicking based TMA Tang So Do, Ted found Wing Chun to be less straining on his body damaged through Royal Marines training. He enhanced his fighting skills for many years under a renowned Wing Chun fighting lineage and is now one of Sifu's regular private students and confidants, as they have regular discussion about life, martial arts and philosophy. He no longer trains in the main class due to the physical exhaustion often resulting from this. Nevertheless, Ted is a skilful and powerful martial artist still able to defend himself effectively.

I met Ted several years ago during one of my private lessons, where I experienced some excellent chi sau from him. I selected his for a life history as he is the oldest practitioner I have trained with, but is also used as a cultural resource within the school to reinforce the alternative ageing narrative. Ted is an ideal natural fighter because of his original fighting and military background, although later modified to that of a serious martial artist who interested in philosophy. The two interviews were conducted in a seaside café and bar during the midday, when he has time between going to the gym and sorting out work related issues. He was very generous with beverages despite my offering, which I have found with some of my seniors, who rarely accept drinks or offers and prefer to share with me.

6.1.1. Individual Cultivation

Class Habitus

Rather than just examine one pure type, we can understand the idea of a fighter to be dynamic, with multiples possibilities or subtypes. Reflecting on his own long-term, durable dispositions, Terry speaks about the range of fighters in wider society, which may simply be seen as either 'naturals' or trained exponents:

Some people can just fight. They don't know how. They don't know what they're doing, or why they're doing it. They just do it. Other people haven't got a clue, and have to be taught everything. Like I say, if I got rugby tackled, I'd immediately go to the mount, or the guard underneath. I'd immediately try to roll them off me...so, usually I'd try to bury me head. So usually, I'd try to bury me head into their jaw, and use it as a lever to push their head back to help me roll them off, and get on top of them. Now for me, that's an automatic reaction, I just know that. That's a small basic in grappling. To teach that to someone, and get it to them so that it's automatic takes time...I didn't need to be taught that. It just happens naturally. And there's people like that from all styles of fighting. Some blokes can just throw their hands brilliantly. Yeah, some people are just natural fighters. I don't know

where it comes from. They don't know where it comes from. Some of it might go down to what they've been taught by their parents, their uncle or their brother.

(Terry, interview 1, 12/02/08)

His seemingly 'natural' fighter habitus is very useful within the realm of street fighting, yet, like all forms of dispositions, reaches its limits in other artistic fields, such as music and drawing, as Terry admitted (see Appendix 6.1). Despite claiming that he is a 'natural' fighter, Terry points to a very obvious social learning through his father's transmitted fighting skills. Here, in a male dominated, working class environment, he forged his raw fighting skills for later enhancement through Wing Chun as a cultivating practice. His long-term training acted as a further cultivation of such abilities, although these weren't put to the test as much as when he was in this very violent, unstable environment. Yet this fighter habitus, with its instinctive reactions to violent situations, served to keep him healthy and alive, and matched the requirements of the working class social conditions that many street brawlers grow up in. From Bourdieu's (1990) perspective, the unconscious nature and long-term acquisition of the working class habitus has made Terry consider it as natural, rather than socialised and slowly embodied. Perhaps the division between natural and trained fighters is more of an issue of early socialisation than genetics? I shall continue to consider the social construction of these ideal types throughout Part 1.

Like many boys in tough, male dominated environments, Terry was quickly taught brutal fighting techniques in order to survive within inner city deprivation. This fighter habitus matched the requirement of the environment, and helped reconstruct it. As part of an informal body lineage, Terry has embodied the fighting schools reproduced from his working class forefathers by directly training with his father, a pragmatic martial arts teacher:

It's from what my Dad taught me: You're either fighting, or you're not fighting. If you are fighting, you're fighting. You're not talking about it. You're not shouting your mouth off. You're dropping the fucker as quick as you can. Cos he'll generally have mates with him, and they can get you to the floor, then they'll kick you to death. So, that's what put me off other martial arts, because there was too much standing up, backing away, and giving each other too much room. Being short of stature, I'm not massively small, I'm 5 foot 10. I have to get inside people quickly, because they're always bigger than me for some reason. So I can't stand up and give other people the reach, I can't stand up. My arms aren't long enough. So I learnt through my teenage years to get in sharpish and get in there and finish it. And when I saw this Gary fella, I thought, 'Fuck it. I like that. He's fighting like me. He's doing what I do.'

(Terry, interview 1, 12/02/08)

His father, a seasoned martial artist himself, had a major influence here. He taught Terry aggressive street fighting skills, and got him into various styles of martial arts, where Terry learned realistic body techniques for real life combat. Terry later immersed himself in various systems, including the grappling ones, in which he excelled. However, he never stuck to a particular style due to the gang lifestyle he led. As a member of a local youth gang and later a criminal, Terry felt the need to fight for survival, and later drew upon his bodily capital to earn a living as a bodyguard much like many bouncers in modern night time economies (K. O'Brien *et al.*, 2008). Terry's average build, as part of the biological component of his habitus, appears to have led him to develop a highly individual habitus based on both this and his previous fighting experiences. When he saw Wing Chun in action for the first time (Appendix 6.2), his schemes of perceptions allowed him to have taste for this art, particularly with its focus on triangulated body structures (see Rawcliffe, 2003) and close range fighting which take away the advantage of longer limbed opponents. These schemes of perception were developed early on rather than in a tertiary pedagogy like many non-fighters. He later elaborated on this embodied, masculine (in a white working class sense) set of dispositions that were socially learned from an early age, as Bourdieu suggests, which leads us to question the degree of 'natural' fighting skills:

Like I say, you learn your basic fighting skills off whoever, from your dad, your brother, your uncle, the guy next door. When you're kid, the first bloke who teaches you to put your hands up. And that'll always be your core fighting, if that makes sense? If you're taught a core of boxing as a child. Your dad puts his hands up, and says, "Hit them, this is how you punch," that'll be your core of fighting as you grow older. But the initial reaction when you actually fight someone is to raise your hands like a boxer. Whereas I was taught...go straight in with these. As I said, making a 'v' to the Adam's apple. So my initial response has always been hands up, like a triangle, straight in, muller! And typically it works (laughs). And it just so happens that that suited me to Wing Chun.

(Terry, interview 1, 12/02/08)

Interestingly, Terry is now subtly training his young son in grappling skills, having learned not to teach him brutality too early. Perhaps this is due to the consequences this had on his violent youth? He aims to provide him with unconscious, immediate reactions for survival rather than any elaborate and fancy motions. He refers to meeting Gary, a Wing Chun practitioner who's fighting skills matched Terry's schemes of perception developed since his childhood. He acquired a taste for such direct combat techniques, recognised their effectiveness, and immediately sought out Gary to train with him alongside a group of male friends. In a different way to the capoeiristas in Delamont and Stephen's (2008) study, this helped Terry overcome the biographical

limitations of his individual fighting habitus through the embodiment of Wing Chun's directness and efficiency. Yet through this embodiment of a fighting philosophy, it could be argued that in doing so, he contributed to the working class relation to violence, reproducing class inequalities and social behaviour (see Appendix 6.3).

It was this reproduction of the violent social culture that led Terry out of the city of Grimthorpe and into Rigmouth, where he found his current TCMA's club. Here, a more disciplined self-relation was required in order to be admitted into the evening classes, and he utilised his agency through rational, reflexive action (Giddens, 1991) to overcome this socialised behaviour of heavy drinking and drugs through a more disciplined body-self typology (Frank, 1991) as opposed to the purely dominated body he previously held. When he began Wing Chun, he was into the rave scene, and was regularly taking illegal drugs. According to Terry's salvation-like story, his teacher forced him to be sober for the evening, and a new routine of discipline set in, forming the Kung Fu lifestyle that many other practitioners have followed.

Although he wasn't trained as explicitly and as early on as Terry, Ted embodies the seemingly natural aggressive characteristics of a fighter, which were enhanced through long-term TCMA training and time spent in the Royal Marines, where he developed a highly disciplined and dominating body-self that he has retained to this day (see Appendix 6.4). He recalls an incident that instantly sparked a violent reaction that seemed natural or instinctive:

A few years ago, when I had my operation on my ankle, I was on crutches and plaster. This when I was still upcountry, working in the bank. This was 1990, eighteen years ago. We went out one Sunday afternoon as we used to, and my wife and I went to Pedderton. In the car, my wife drove. Parking the car, she parked the car. As I got out of the car, another car was reversing. You know when cars are reversing really fast, my wife said, "Be careful!" And I had to step aside for the car. And my wife shouted to the driver, who wound his window down. She said, "You could have hurt my husband!" And I said, "Why don't you fuck off, you bastard!" And he drove off. And when he drove off, I suddenly realised that I'd done a *back fist* to his back wing, and honestly I'd put his back wing in. What I'd done is, I'd done that (performs movement). As the car was coming towards me, I went pang! It really was. It was a Vauxhall Cavalier, it really was pushed right in. I didn't think about it. It was coming near me and I reacted. It's a silly example. I back fisted. That guy has driven off, it was quite a nice Cavalier. And he's got three hundred pounds of damage on his back wing. So that really serves him right.

(Ted, interview 1, 20/05/08)

From years of TCMA's training via what Yuasa (1987) may regard as his bright, rational consciousness, Ted developed an instinctive fighter habitus ready to explode when threatened via his dark consciousness. Ted explains his approach to competition and

aggressiveness embodied through a dominating body since an early age. This rather monadic self- and other relation predisposed him to Wing Chun.

So far in the discussion, we can see that the two natural fighters, Terry and Ted, possess the qualities necessary for street survival and success in combat. They gained these from different forms of socialisation, developing embodied schemes of dispositions that act unconsciously against others when under threat. Quite frequently, Terry reminds students of the nasty nature of fighting, and the importance of self-protection over morals. Much of this has come from his own experience and his upbringing, as he often tells students (to some people's horror) to stamp on opponents when they're down. Other principles of Wing Chun are often told from his embodied viewpoint of winning fights using the art's array of techniques and concepts. Yet he occasionally reveals his vulnerability by sharing stories of losing fights, which broke Wing Chun principles such as not going down to the floor: "I knocked this lad down, and immediately went to *the mount*. I was pummelling him when I got a kick in the head from one of his mates. I woke up the next morning with a foot mark on my face (laughs)." (Field notes, 22/05/08). With this and other incidents Terry admitted his limitations, such as a time when he came across a huge man in a fight: "I gave him my hardest shot ever. Heel off the floor and everything. I smashed his nose. It was all over his face, but just smiled at me. He just smiled at me. I fucking legged it straight away! When you come across someone like that, leg it! (Laughs)" (Field notes, 14/03/08).

Ted's fighting background is less explicit than Terry's, and he doesn't frequently draw upon it to gain authority in the group during seminars or events. Although Ted doesn't teach within the Academy, like Terry, he passes on his fighting experience and knowledge to his son, as offered by a recent situation:

My son, he does a bit of Tang So Do with me, and did a bit of Wing Chun, but he got bored with it. Bit of rugby. But he's a big case: Six foot two, eighteen, seventeen stone. His attitude is probably softer than me. But then again, if it has to be, then it has to be. And um...you know, I always say to him because the other day he confronted some yobs where he lives. And I said to him, "I hope you remembered to put your back to the wall and grab something." Nothing came of it in the end in that scenario

(Ted, interview 1, 20/05/08)

So far I have outlined the men's previous experiences and development of a specific kind of fighting habitus. As they have experienced transitions in life, including a family of their own, it is quite possible that their subjective perceptions towards Wing Chun

may also change. In light of this, I next explore the motives for cultivation through TCMAAs.

Martial Identity

For Terry, like many of the core members of Bridge's Academy, Wing Chun is a way of life that guides his everyday existence. The discipline and investment of physical and economic capital to develop such a specific martial habitus has led him to sacrifice other things in life, such as music and other cultural art forms:

It's just part of me. It is what I am. Like I was saying, how's your job? I was that involved with it in me life, it's just what I do. I don't know, it's like...I don't listen to music, I don't go to the pub, I don't do other things that other people do. I do Wing Chun, so when I get the chance, I'll do me Wing Chun, rather than spending two hours listening to a new LP.

(Terry, interview 2, 08/06/08)

Such a disciplined lifestyle solely devoted to martial skill gives rise to an athletic identity that is currently functioning as Terry's Hercules' muscle (see Sparkes, 1998a) by being admired by others in this subculture through recognised or symbolic capital or the mirroring body aspects. In a similar fashion, Ted's identity is very much connected to his former athletic identity, which he maintains through Wing Chun and regular fitness training in a local leisure centre: "I go to the gym twice a week. I used to swim, but now I go on the treadmill. Nothing extreme. Twenty, twenty five minutes. I do weights. Not particularly heavy weights, but I know what to do with weights." (Ted, interview 1, 20/05/08). This maintenance of an athletic identity at an older age draws parallels to recent research on active older people (Phoenix & Sparkes, 2009), which goes beyond the focus on this study but is important to explore further in relation to martial arts training.

Subjectivities

There are many different perspectives one can take on TCMAAs over the course of one's lifetime, such as a sporting, technical or spiritual practice. Nevertheless, transitions occur throughout our lives, such as having children and moving home, and these may partially transform our worldviews. Although he has experienced much transition in his daily life, and no longer illegally his fighting skills for money, Terry still holds a

fighter's view of the role of TCMA's in society (see Appendix 6.6), and continues his cultivation for the ontological security in the working class area he lives in:

GJ: So what do you understand martial arts to be now?

TM: An efficient way of fighting

GJ: An efficient way of fighting? So it's not a way of spiritual enlightenment?

TM: No. It's to stop the head mist. It's as simple as that. I want it to be if someone wants to get through that door [refers to front door of house], they have to go through me, and I want to make it that that won't be easy. I want to be able to walk through town, and not have to stress. With the kids, I have town rules. When we're coming out on a Friday night, and we've been to the pictures, then we have to walk through a bit of the town centre to get home. And everyone stays by me. If anything happens at all, I tell them to get behind me. That applies to the kids. That applies to her indoors. "Just leave me to do it. Just get behind me and let me fight." That's what my training's for, that's why I do it. The same as when I first started. I knew how to fight anyway. That's not why I started Wing Chun anyway. It was to tidy up what I already had. To get better

(Terry, interview 1, 12/02/08)

Terry therefore buys into the story of continued learning and improvement whilst providing a more relational, defensive rationale for his personal cultivation. This contrasts to the highly disciplined approaches to training advocated in martial sports such as boxing (Wacquant, 1995) and Indian wrestling (Alter, 1992) as can be seen in Appendix 6.5. Likewise, although Ted partially acknowledges other aspects of TCMA's, such as the bodymind unity Yuasa (1987) emphasized, he also stresses the importance of street self-defence skills above everything else:

I would say for me, the purpose of a martial art is to be able to look after yourself in a fight situation. You talk about discipline of the mind and body and all that kind of stuff. Getting the benefit, blah, blah, blah, but to me, in the end of the day it should be that in a fighting situation, A, you should be able to avoid that situation. And if you can't, you have to stand and fight, not run, then it stands you with a far better chance. I mentioned this to John a few weeks ago, after I had the interview with you, I mentioned I had rambled on a bit, and wasn't sure if I should have said that in a fight situation, I would pick up a chair. He said, "There's nothing wrong with that. That's strategy." I felt that was a good answer to that situation. If you have something at hand, then use it. He [Sifu Bridge] said, "No, that's right. It's quite proper."

(Ted, interview 2, 04/06/08)

Interestingly, Ted began to reflect on his previous action and future possibilities after the interview, and sought Sifu Bridge for advice. This not only indicates the potential usefulness of interviews, but also the strength of the relationship between Sifu and student. On a more martial level, this realistic, street wise approach that is derived from real fighting experience has lead Ted to have some doubts about the use of Wing Chun in real street fights. It is this relationship between experience, subjective meaning (re)construction and violence that I explore next.

6.1.2. Relational Cultivation

Partners

Perfection is a key issue for many of the practitioners, who appear to buy into a cultural narrative whereby mastery will be achieved through long-term, diligent practice. This would follow a highly disciplined lifestyle using the disciplined and mirroring aspects of oneself (Frank, 1991) in a more relational environment. Terry stresses the need to work with perfect techniques in the atmosphere of the fighting school if these dispositions are to transfer to the field of real fighting:

In the safety of the gym, you get the practice without the danger. You get to act without a reaction. You get to practise without getting a busted lip. Obviously, we get some accidents, but it's a safe environment. Whereas in the fighting environment, you haven't got time to think about what you're doing. You haven't got time to feel anything. So, the different between the two is. I have a phrase I use: "In the gym, you want to give 100 percent." Because it's the only place you'll get perfection. When you actually go, the adrenaline's up, the fear, the circumstances, the fact that the guy's actually going your way, will all, all bubble together, and will all cut down how efficient you are, how correct you are with your technique. You'll never be 100 percent in a fight. That's why you've gotta try to achieve it in the gym. If you lose it when the real fight happens, then you're left with 50 percent. Whereas when you only train at 50 percent...well half of 50 percent is 25 percent. So I'll be fighting as good as a quarter of what I could be. So the better I try in the gym, the more I practise, the harder I get, the better people I have fighting in the gym, the more I have to fight people outside the cash point.

(Terry, interview 1, 12/02/08)

Here, he emphasised the importance of shared development through partner training, adding a relational element to mastery. Quite possibly a circle of cultivation would be created whereby students of all skill levels are developing each other. As all TCMA practitioners want to continually improve, this focus on mastery and perfection may be discussed in later chapters. In the beginning of his Wing Chun training, Terry was busy working, so he didn't have the time or physical capital to train all day. He therefore made the use of every opportunity to train, even to the extent of when he made a cup of tea. He still has certain habits picked up from those years, such as opening doors with a bong sau! This accompanied years of devoted training under John and extensive travel, including trips to America to train with Yi.

Teacher-Students

In Bridge's Academy, the senior students enjoy a strong camaraderie and rapport with the head instructor Sifu John Bridge. Rather than a relationship structured by power relations, their time together often involves discussions about politics, philosophy and life. Similarly, by having highly skilled students around him, John may also be learning and developing through intersubjective (Schultz, 1967) or more specifically, intercorporeal training or sparring. Terry reflects on the different teacher-students relationships in the TCMA's:

We stuck to it, because it didn't rely on deference. Like Chen [a Wing Chun Sifu that John and Terry used to learn from]. No one touches Chen, because he's training with all his students, and they're deferring to him. Like a lot of martial arts, you see them training with the teacher, and they won't try to hit the teacher. But when I'm sparring with John, I'm trying to hit John. And he's trying to hit me. It's controlled, but I'm still trying to hit him. Whereas as other martial arts, they won't try to hit the teacher. Behave!

(Terry, interview 1, 12/02/08)

I asked him if this deferential relationship was a traditional aspect of Chinese culture:

No, just generally. To be honest, I think the old style teachers did want you to try to hit them. Because you can't make your own art better without them being able to push you. You need your students to be as good as you. Or otherwise, you will never grow.

(Terry, interview 2, 12/02/08)

This shared development of skill offers a different perspective on pedagogy and learning in many cultures, and it will be examined with other practitioners later on.

Dominating Other-Relations

How do these natural fighters relate to others? Considering this street survival habitus, Terry describes his earlier, undisciplined self as an 'animal' who was on the brink of self-destruction through what may be interpreted as a highly dominating aspect. The metaphor of an animal naturalises the taught, socialised set of dispositions that a fighter has acquired over long-term practice. Terry spoke of his unconscious rage that commonly consumed him during fights as a youth, which he attributed to his 'natural' fighting instincts:

I used to lose the plot in fighting, because I used to snap on people. I didn't like losing the plot on people. I've come to into a couple of compromising situations, which haven't been pleasant. I'm like, 'Hang on, have I just done that?' I bust one my best mate's noses back in Grimthorpe, before I left. And I can't remember doing it. I was battering some lad, and even though me mate was saying, "Come on Terry, he's had enough. Leave him alone." But I wouldn't stop. I don't remember doing it. It was the animal in his box. He was doing it. So when someone's trying to pull me off by wrapping his arm round my neck, I've just turned round and elbowed him in the face. It was one of my best mates, with a busted nose (laughs). I've had a couple of moments like that, which are quite unpleasant. So my main aim was to stop that from happening. If I could keep more control over what I was doing. Then maybe me head would be more controlled. I've had a couple of moments where I did know what I was doing, and it helped.

(Terry, interview 1, 12/02/08)

This self-destructive, unconsciously acting 'animal' was an aspect of Terry's self that he dissociated with, and he reflexively sought out a way to control this, and Wing Chun became a reflexively conscious part of this disciplining regime, providing that this highly dominating aspect could be released when necessary:

I always dissociated myself from the act. It was never be doing it. That's why I think I blacked out. Because I couldn't accept that I had my thumb that far into someone's eye (laughs). It's not a pleasant thing to look at. Whereas, now, over the years, it's took years for me to rationalise it. But I accept now that there's a little Scouse animal out there, and he's a nasty bastard. So I can't let him be out in the general world, because the civilisation we live in has rules, and I'll go to jail if I do that in the general world. So what I do now is I lock him up in his box in me head. He's quite happy in his box. But I let him out sometimes. And because he knows he can come out sometimes, I can put him away. I suppose it's like having a vicious dog. If you train a vicious dog, and let it understand that occasionally you let it destroy things, it'll be happy with that. And while it's not being a vicious dog, destroying things, it'll be a happy dog. If it can go rip things to bits.

(Terry, interview 1, 12/02/08)

From this extract we can see the potential downsides of a pure fighter ideal type that unconsciously issues force over others through a dominating body type, and the need for a more disciplined, Kung Fu lifestyle to control this and enhance other aspects of one's self. After all, the laws of today will act to constrain such behaviour in order to prevent its reproduction. We next examine the more disciplined focus within the pedagogic environment that enabled Terry's self-control, as seen in the transformations in his behaviour in Appendix 6.7

6.1.3. Institutional Cultivation

Charismatic Leadership

As Frantzis (2003) notes, many middle class people have had little contact with violence in their lives, so don't know how to fight effectively. In this sense, many of the Academy's practitioners don't possess the 'natural' fighter habitus of Terry or Ted, often due to their vastly different social class conditioning. Instead, they have to be taught fighting skills and instincts within a fighting orientated school, where, the fighters play an important role in the pedagogy to transform them like the charismatic leaders in Weber's writings. In Terry's class, he frequently draws upon his life story in order to educate these students about the reality of violence in an effort to help them alter their schemes of perception of violence and morals:

As I say, if you want to moralise over it, do it when you're safe. That's what I get across to people. In the gym, this is safe. Blah, blah, blah. Put your left foot here, and your right foot there. Get your elbows pointing to the floor, and all this general stuff. But then I'm also, I mean, reiterate the size of, "Come on, it's not ballet." You know what I mean? A lot of what we teach, when you look at it, is really nasty. I mean, we're not just teaching people to punch someone in the head. The basic strike techniques...and grapple techniques that we use, break things, smash things. Our basic punch to the Adam's apple. When you tell most people, they gasp: "What, you actually tell people to punch people in the Adam's apple?!" "Course I fucking do, I want them to win!" I try to get across the reality of it, to try to prepare them. Some people take it, some people don't. You can teach people the art of fighting, but you can't teach them the heart of fighting. You can't give someone the heart of a fighter. They'll either do it or they won't. You can build up their confidence, so that they can make their own mind about it, or you can tell them the reality of life, so they can slowly change their view of the world. And I've seen that happen more than once. Yeah, so the psychology, I try to get more across more than the actual...I know it's not, but I try to get across that Wing Chun's easy. I've been doing it that long, that's easy. But the learning stage takes so long to overcome. The mental stage will come if you keep at it. I mean, we've got people in our gym that when they first came, they wouldn't say boo to a goose. Whereas...over Christmas, Clive shoved someone through a stall in a market. He wouldn't have done that when he first came. Whereas now, if someone approached him and put their hands on him, Clive had thrown him through a market stall. To me, that means my job has worked. Not just have I made the mechanical motions, but I have understood how my head works. And that's the hard bit. To me, that's a success story.

(Terry, interview 1, 12/02/08)

Here, Terry spoke of enabling students to change their views on violence, and highlighted a success story of effective fighting spirit cultivation. Although this might contrast to Yuasa's (1987) perspective of the cultivation of moral character, this does have its place in some emergency self-defence situations through what Zarrilli (1998) refers to as 'transformative fury.' Ethics and morals may still be developed for everyday life, although these are not explicitly stressed. In the case above, Clive, a man in his fifties from a middle class and non-violent background, bought into Terry's combat-orientated approach and reacted instinctively, through his own trained fighter element, in a threatening situation. For Terry, effective cultural transmission had occurred through the communication of stories emphasising a fighting psychology alongside the pursuit of perfect technical skills, and this is still ongoing for many students in his class.

He uses technical analogies to assist the learning process of the students, taking into account each individual. He simultaneously draws upon his fighting experience to teach us about the psychology of violence alongside the more technical aspects, which he also excels in due to his excellent knowledge of physics. Following Frank (1991), we may regard this as using the communicative body aspect, incorporating a relational element of the practitioner.

Legitimation

Following Weber (in Gerth & Wright-Mills, 1991), we might ask how to these practitioners legitimate their practice? Terry continues to explain his opinion on the more spiritually orientated practitioners who often regard TCMA as a form of religious cultivation like Yuasa (1987) suggests:

I think they're up their own arse. I do. It's their own issue they've brought to it. Cos if you go back to the beginning, it's just about fighting. It's just about fighting. You know, it's not about sitting with your legs crossed, going "Omm," and trying to become a better person. It's about surviving. This was made five or four hundred years ago. From a place in China. It was a feudal existence. Everywhere you went, you were tooled up. Because if you weren't tooled up, people would take things off you. You just go to a shop back then, and people would try to rob you. But they wouldn't just beat you up and rob you. They would kill you and rob you and not get caught. So the actual martial art back then was not spiritual at all. It was survival. I think some people took the aspects of martial arts, and turned it spiritual. I don't think that's how any of them started.

(Terry, interview 1, 12/02/08)

There are various changing relationships between martial arts and religion, which are commonly perceived (often as invented traditions) as being culturally connected, and offer various spiritual subjectivities (Brown *et al.*, in Press). Terry suggests that such practitioners have added connections to actual religions following the development of the martial arts following experiences of what is commonly understood as flow (Sparkes & Partington, 2003) or no-mind (Yuasa, 1987), where actions are performed with no conscious thought.

Here, Terry disputes the connection between the religions of China and TCMA, which are often claimed in popular texts (Ip & Tse, 1998; Wong, 1996) and disputed by historians (Henning, 1981; Holcome, 1990). Instead, he (re)constructs an idea that TCMA are just about fighting, and were later mixed with philosophy and spirituality much like with the Japanese styles following the *Meiji Restoration* (1868) and the

influences of social structures such as laws and surveillance. Yuasa's (1987) writings on Zen Buddhism follow the philosophies of this later period, and may not have been largely reproduced within feudal China. Interestingly, Terry reverses the mind-body dualism often reproduced in the West by claiming that TCMA's are purely physical practices with little or no mental involvement (see Appendix 6.6). It is not the place of this study to state which one perspective is correct, as I am examining the social reconstruction of certain perspectives on martial arts through individuals' practice. Terry criticises the alternative approach of technically orientated martial artists neglecting the teaching of realism and fighting psychology:

TM: Like you say, if someone is in the technical aspects, you have to get technical. But I know that I have to get this psychological aspect in. I have to turn people into punching animals, then modify the punching animal into something a little bit more subtle. Initially though, I want everyone on the same level to begin with. That is: If it moves, hit it. Then once we are all at that level, that's a good starting point. Then we can progress to more of the art, rather than just the brutality. But until you've got the brutal level, there's no point teaching someone to be a martial artist if they can't fight. Whereas a lot of martial artists have got it wrong.

GJ: Yeah. They try to create a martial artist first

TM: You know, technically good martial artists. For me, that's all well and good, but that won't stop you getting knifed at the cash point. If you haven't got the, the mental side of controlled aggression, and the willingness to use it. That's the difference. You've got to be actually willing to use it. A lot of people know lots of martial arts, but don't want to hurt no one.

(Terry, interview 1, 12/02/08)

He again drew upon the metaphor of an animal to illustrate our natural fighting instincts that are lost in many people. At the same time, he avoided drawing upon the popular notion of the higher levels of martial arts about being able to defend oneself without hurting one's opponent, as in the often spiritual art of Aikido (see Brecher, 2000).

Within a purely combat-orientated school or body lineage, there may be limitations in what can be culturally transmitted, such as philosophy and other traditional practices. For many years, Ted trained the Korean art of Tang So Do, and got to a high level of skill. However, considering his military socialisation, he found this to be ineffective for real combat, and came across the street orientated art of Wing Chun through a student's father, who was an instructor. This Sifu took a very competitive and dominating rather than cooperative and communicative approach to teaching and training, which hampered his students' development, thereby breaking any possible shared cultivation through intercorporeal training:

Again, we are made from our experiences. He [the Sifu] had some fairly traumatic times through his life, one way or the other. He had a bit of a chip on his shoulder, and it seemed to me that he would take it out on his students. He had to prove that he was better than anybody else in his art. Which in my mind showed a lot of lack of confidence in himself. He ran the club. He'd been doing it for fifteen odd years, if not more. While he was trying to prove to everybody there that he was better than them. Which I thought for a man who was in his forties, fifties, should have got over that. If you did plant a blow on him should I say, he would obviously have to return it with a harder blow. He wouldn't say, "Oh well done", or whatever. He'd have to have the last laugh so to speak. It's really sad.

(Ted, interview 2, 04/06/08)

Goffman's (1969) dramaturgical model is a useful way to understand such deliberate acting in martial arts, where the school is a stage for contrived performance. Yet this performance was not one of charismatic leadership, but one of bullying in a self-created performativity culture. Ted expanded upon the impact of this on a school with no clear successor and no capable senior students able to help the beginners:

TJ: I think anybody with a brain could see this guy [the Sifu] had an ego problem. Which would mean lots of students will come and go. They didn't like his attitude. An also, because of his attitude, it affected people's ability to learn. They lost their confidence to develop themselves. I don't think he was actually too interested in seeing the students learn, actually. He obviously wanted numbers, to pay the bills and all that sort of stuff. But he wasn't really interested in whether people were good at Wing Chun or not.

GJ: So you don't think he wanted a successor?

TJ: No, he used the club as a stage on which he could perform. And in fact, he had one good student. Quite a nice chap, who was as hard as him. That was the only one that he actually mentored. And saw this person as a mirror image of himself.

(Ted, interview 2, 04/06/08)

From this extract we can see that the students' desires to learn were not met. Any circle of cultivation, being linked development that could even help the teacher, was not achieved. In TCMA's, continuous learning is one of the joys for practitioners, often acting as a motivator for training continuation. Perhaps this is linked to the strong story of mastery? At the same time this links to transmission, as the art would not be properly passed down to students for continued development and transmission. Such a dominating approach could eventually end this individual's body lineage as no successor would be appointed, or, if a successor was appointed, he may become a mirror image of this instructor as Ted partially suggested.

Fighting Lineage

Terry's views on body lineage may contrast to some traditionalist schools as it is focused on raw fighting ability rather than family relations or traditional hierarchies and

ideas of *generations* from Yip Man. Body lineage is often used to create a sense of authenticity for the school or teacher, based on embodied connections to past masters or founders of an art (soon explored in Brown & Jennings, in Process). Here, we spoke about our Kung Fu great grandfather, Long Wang Bing, a known challenge fighter and charismatic master who later led his own body lineage:

It's important to know where you come from. But it isn't the be all and end all. The fact that he learned from Yip Man means no more than anyone else...the difference is that most people in Yip Man's class were ten years younger than him. So, who would you teach to fight? He took the challenges for Yip Man. So, if you're going to rely upon this man for your business, for your name, for your living, you're going to make him good, aren't you? (Laughs). You're going to pick the best fighter, and make him better. So that's why lineage is important. But, as people are harping on about, "My teacher has been with Yip Man for this long." I don't care. I don't care how long for, who your teacher is, what his relation is. Is his Wing Chun any good? That's more important to me. And as Long Wang Bing took the challenges with Yip Man, he was the best Kung Fu man in his class obviously...And Yi took the challenges for Long Wang Bing. Because he was obviously the best fighter in his school. So to me, that's more important than who's your teacher.

(Terry, interview 1, 12/02/08)

Traditionally in TCMA, certain fighters were selected to fight for their respective schools. A master may have around a dozen fighters who took challenges for him, and upheld the combative reputation of the school. Terry's views of TCMA as just for fighting may clash with some of the participants seen later in this study. However, from this extract, we can see how important the fighters were in the history of TCMA. Without them, schools may have to be closed due to lost challenge matches, and Wing Chun may never have been so popular as it is today. Without such dedicated practitioners who transmit the whole art, with all its applications, the art would die with them (Shilling, 2003). Fighters like Terry may still have an important role to play despite there being far fewer challenge matches in contemporary times. Perhaps this is to do with the reproduction of the fighting orientated approach that is needed alongside other understandings of an art.

6.1.4. Art Cultivation

Combat Narratives

The reasons people start and continue training may help us understand the subjective meanings (re)constructed within the arts. In the case of the fighters, it is unsurprisingly concerned with fighting. Although a seasoned street fighter, Terry came across Wing

Chun through an associate who had transferred his hard earned physical capital of size, martial skill and local reputation through door work (see Hobbs *et al.*, 2002 for a sociological study of bouncers), and this brief glimpse of Wing Chun's effectiveness matched his schemes of perception of effective. After years of dedicated practice, Terry now embodied such skill, and this seems natural to him, much like his earlier abilities were regarded as such. Although he has now moved from the deprived working class area he grew up in, Terry provides a rationale for his continued, conscious cultivation of further fighting skills. It seems that he requires a continually improving set of abilities for his ontological security in today's seemingly violent culture that has often been termed a risk society (Beck, 1992) in which martial arts may offer a regular routine for comfort (Brown & Johnson, 2000). Yet he also highlights a changing lifestyle through his transition in the life course via ageing, maturing and moving to Rigmouth:

Oh, I still need it. Just because this isn't as bad as where I grew up, doesn't mean I don't need to fight. Where I was growing up, I had to fight at least once a week. Sometimes once a day. Round here, I don't have to. Is that because round here isn't as violent, or because I'm older and out of the violence that I was in? I don't know. Is it because I know how easy it is to damage people, and I don't want to do it as much anymore? And again, is that because I'm getting older? I don't know. I think a lot of it is growing up. You realize that you don't always have to resort to violence as often. When I was in Grimthorpe, I'd be ready to hit them, because I'd expect them to mug me, or something. If someone asked me, "Have you got the time mate?" And the reason I don't wear a watch, in case I look at my watch. Because if someone asks me the time, I say, "No mate. I don't." "Have you got a light?" "No." "Can you change this 50 pence piece for me?" "No." Because when I was a kid, that would usually lead to me getting a smack in the gob for putting your hand in your pocket. It's just their words tricking you to distracting your attention. So, but I still need it because (talks to son)...I still need to be able to look after myself. I still need to be able to look after my family. There's still a lot of nutters out there, just not as many as when I was a kid. It still happens. We've had around here, especially in the last few years, we've had teenage gang violence, where we've had packs of thirty, forty kids attacking blokes my age.

(Terry, interview 1, 12/02/08)

Terry has therefore provided a rationale of self-defence and more importantly, defending the family, for his continued cultivation of fighting skills, rather than for attack and daily survival that was necessary in his previous life. As matured and experienced transition as a TCMA teacher and father of three, Terry no longer transfers his physical capital into economic through employment as a minder and criminal, but uses his knowledge of martial arts and skills in holistic massage for legal clients. He has incorporated issues of cultural capital and has developed a rounded, balanced character that may be seen to incorporate aspects of what me may later see as a thinker.

Elsewhere, Ted, with his experience in witnessing many fights, adds caution to the over confidence often gained through long-term TCMA training. According to him, an

individual's body size, composing an important aspect of their individual habitus, can place a big determinant on success in street fighting, despite embodied skill:

In a fight situation, I still honestly believe the big hulk. I still think it's going to be difficult to put the big hulk down. If they're really big. That's reality. Because the big hulk, unless you can hit him in the right places, he'll take far more punches than the small guy. Than the small guy can afford to give. So if the big guy is eighteen stone shall I say, I know I've got far more of a problem than with the guy who is seven stone. That's for sure. And I remember, I think you asked the question, you said you hoped your Wing Chun helped you. That is true, to an extent. But I do think if you're not intelligent enough, you'll get your black belt, and you'll think you're the bee's knees, and you'll go into a pub, and you'll think, 'I'll sort all these people out,' and you'll be surprised you can't. Cos he's a big hulk. You've got a better chance of learning a martial art and realizing the limitations. That's what you do. I'd pick up the chair

(Ted, interview 2, 04/06/08)

Ted possesses seemingly natural fighting instincts picked up through his military training and martial arts that he communicates freely. He sees street fighting tactics as a way to overcome a large biological difference as part through his individual fighter habitus, which maintains to Wing Chun's focus on direct fighting techniques. For him, and others, the black belt is just the beginning in learning a TCMA, and is never a marker of complete competence or mastery in fighting, which is always being strived towards. Moreover, with fighting experience and long-term training, Ted has understood the importance of actual bodily capacity rather than the skill aspect of physical capital.

Modernizing Body Techniques

How might these individuals be developing Wing Chun through their practice, story telling and teaching? Are they concerned with reproducing traditions or are they open to social change through reflexive modernisation? Terry takes a middle path between these extreme approaches to cultural transmission:

Yi says it should adapt. And I accept that. I'll have that. That's a natural progression. What I don't like is forced evolution. Why make a change for no reason? You see what I mean? It's like, *Wong Shun Leung* [a well known and undefeated Wing Chun challenge fighter] reckons that no one made him make a bong sau in a fight. So he didn't really teach it. He was like "so why should I teach you?" What's the point? Cos we're not fighting the old style martial arts. You gotta remember, four hundred years ago, Wing Chun was designed to beat what was around it...a lot of what was around it was aiming to the body, not towards the head. A lot of what was around it was weaponry. Which was again aimed towards the body, because it was a bigger target. I mean, you try to aim a spear towards someone's head, rather than the body. It's not easy. The head's a smaller target. Whereas a body is a lot easier. So if someone's going to stab you in the body with a spear, and bong sau is a wonderful thing. It will stop that spear hitting you. Whereas, no one carries a spear around now. No one's going to try to stab me with a spear. They'll try to punch me in the head. So

the evolution of society has led to the evolution of technique. It has to. We're not fighting people who do Kung Fu anymore. We're fighting head-hunters. People who think they can box. So, it will change. But, it doesn't need to be forced.

(Terry, interview 1, 12/02/08)

Here, Terry draws upon two Wing Chun masters and former challenge fighters who modified their art to suit the modern fighting environment through scientific principles. This philosophy is evident in his teaching methods, which rely on physics and kinesiology, alongside a realistic approach to defending British street fighters' preferred head punches (rather than the often exclusive focus on body shots). Such an approach has developed from his own transformations and greater intellectualisation of the art, like his Sifu:

The evolution has been in the learning, which has led to the evolution in teaching...his teaching wasn't as good as it is now. Simply because his level of understanding wasn't as good as it is now. He [Sifu Bridge] understands now. The better you teach, if you don't have a full grasp yourself, it's difficult to teach.

(Terry, interview 1, 12/02/08)

Community

Considering the perceived danger of physical attack in Britain's risk society, what role do the fighters have to play in the local community? Terry is very keen to pass on all his knowledge to anyone who is dedicated enough to learn how to fight, and expressed an interest in teaching women self-defence, which he and his Sifu had done on previous occasions. He continuously cited examples of men being attacked by gangs of youths in the local area, which further legitimised his personal practice and leadership style as he is offering himself and others ways of ontologically coping with such perceived risk. Due to this emergent theme in the PhD research, I did not ask them about their potential help in wider society, and this is certainly worth exploring in the future. Due to its later importance in this study, this will be revisited in the conclusion.

6.1.5. Other Aspects

Terry has matured as a human being over the years, and the various life transitions such as ageing, a new family, a stable relationship, training in healing practices such as massage and a different peer group are likely to have contributed to his altered approach to violence. It is therefore hard to determine what exactly causes changes such as a

lessened desire to fight or prove one's abilities, although this is often mentioned in classes and in school literature such as a syllabus and codes of conduct. However, the confidence gained from long-term Wing Chun practice enabled Terry to face off a potential challenge recently, which emerged when a young man approached him aggressively in a bar over the ownership of a pound above a pool table:

And...ten, fifteen years ago, I would probably have knocked him out before he got to the point where he wanted to launch at me, where he had built up his adrenaline enough. I would have got in there before him and finished him off. Whereas this time, I just laughed at him. I just laughed at him. I got a pound out of my pocket, and said, "If you want to argue about a pound mate, here it is, have it. I just want to have a game of pool. If you want to fight with me over a game of pool, then you're stupid. But if you want to fight with me, I'll tell you now, I'll kill you where you stand. I will drop you where you stand. And If your mate wants to join in, I'll drop him too". And I think the confidence of just saying that just backed him off. In the back of his brain, he's thinking, 'hang on, who is this guy?!' Do you know what I mean? (We laugh). This isn't what normally happens. Normally, people will be hyping themselves up back, or would be bottling out, if you know what I mean? I think just the confidence of the smile calmed him down, if you know what I mean? I prefer that... rather than hospitalising him, I prefer that (laughs).

(Terry, interview 2, 08/02/08)

Terry's heightened schemes of perception easily picked up the signs of a man wanting to fight, and he managed to control his fighting instincts to diffuse the situation. This is a sign of changed ethical principles that remain unexplained. On the other hand, Ted regards his natural aggression as being filtered through the discipline of the bodymind (Yuasa, 1987) through training:

I'm sort of interested in how to defend myself, I suppose. But what I could see, I could see the real meaning of using martial arts to benefit your life in the sense that as I'm a very aggressive person, both physically and verbally, I lose my temper a lot, my wife will tell you. It's not violent, but I come up and blow down. I can tell that the martial arts calmed me in the sense that, especially in my work life, it helped me hugely as a bank manager. Lot of stress, lot of stress. I worked in Templeton, which is a really dodgy place to work in terms of dealing with Greek, Turkish, all that sort of stuff. And a lot confrontation. Not physical, but I could see the martial arts helped me control my temper. And I heard, "Oh, you're so nice, you're so compassionate." "Well I am, but there's a sting to the tail." So I really learned that in martial arts (continues in Appendix 6.7).

(Ted, interview 1, 20/05/08)

This mind-body discipline transferred from the very specific field of Wing Chun training to Ted's former job as a bank manager, illustrating the wider social nature of martial transformations. Here, the technical and philosophical aspects of the art were embodied for everyday living, showing, which suggests some form of cultivation is occurring. Ted also reflected on the lessons on violence he's learned from TCMA training as instead of finding challenges through fights, he actively avoids them through

an awareness of the working class environment in which they commonly occur (see Appendix 6.8).

As Ted did not socialise in such a masculine, working class environment as Terry did, he takes on other reasons to practise Wing Chun, and even considers Asian philosophies and traditions. Here, he possesses elements of a thinker, and even recommended that I read Joe Hyam's (1979) *Zen in the Martial Arts*, a popular text amongst martial artists worldwide that adopts a rather Orientalist approach to exploring the potential philosophies to understand daily practice and life. This illustrates the broader nature of practitioners who do not just take a pure approach to their training and lives in general. Ted has actively read and embodied some of these philosophies, and this has led him to take a philosophical view on life, particularly during his interactions with others on a daily basis:

Well I do think I look at things in a deeper sense, whichever they might be than perhaps I wouldn't have done if I hadn't done martial arts. Why does somebody do this? Why did I do that? Why did I say that? I think the martial arts helped me to become a deeper thinking person. I always, it's almost like the what ifs. Understanding people...I think the martial arts have also made me more interested in people, in what they think and why they do that.

(Ted, interview 2, 04/06/08)

So far we have seen the long-term development of dispositions very useful in street fighting scenarios. These seemingly natural traits were consciously developed and enhanced through TCMA training, and offer a rationale and a way of understanding practice. We have seen how TCMA can enhance a fighter's current abilities and skills. As they get older, and more experienced, there is less need to fight, possibly due to new social environments and more self-control. For Terry and Ted, TCMA is for survival and self-protection rather than philosophy, moral and self-development, and should be passed down with a fighting psychology within in a cooperative, supportive environment in order for them to be learned. We next explore the stories of two practitioners who did not encounter violence prior to martial arts training, and primarily experience and give meaning to their practice through the idea that they can now defend themselves.

6.2. The Trained Fighters

Emma Simpson

Emma is 34, is white British and lives in a small village in Rothshire. She has trained in Wing Chun for 14 years in several different institutions and is the only female practitioner of a small satellite group of *Close Quarters Wing Chun*, an organization developed by Sifu Johnny Fox that focuses on effective combat skills in a semi-contact environment. She is currently single and has no children, after two serious relationships with male Wing Chun practitioners, one of whom remains in the school as her senior and close friend. Emma has worked with women who has suffered domestic violence, and has sadly experienced this in her first Wing Chun relationship.

For her, Wing Chun is a way of efficient fighting, and she has successfully tested her skills in free flow scenarios with practitioners of various styles alongside a real life domestic encounter. With the martial aspects, she has a clear interest in lineage, but only as far as it relates to the effectiveness of technique. Being female has meant that she has experienced differential treatment by many male training partners, something that she has strived to overcome over many years. Training in this combat-orientated school involves much physical conditioning, which actually helped offset the pain caused by a chronic back condition, which has recently led her to be unable to regularly participate in the classes. Instead, she maintains her skills at home, and hopes to make a return. I chose Emma as she was a highly experienced female practitioner practicing for both self-defence and general health.

I met Emma in her home, which was very conveniently near where I was staying with my family on holiday in Rothshire. Like with many other practitioners, the interview was conducted outside. We sat in Emma's garden, as it was a warm summer's day and after the interview, we engaged in some chi sau and basic drills, and watched each other perform the empty hand forms. It was an interesting experience to watch and feel different energies and interpretations on the art of Wing Chun, which have been accounted for in a confessional tale, and raise important methodological questions that I address in the conclusion. I haven't seen her since, but we have communicated via email, and Emma is very interested in reading the final thesis.

Nick Robinson

Nick, 38, is a senior student in *Bridge's Wing Chun Academy*, and plays a key role in teaching beginners and newcomers to the group. He is also white British and is engaged and he and his partner currently have no children. He lives with his girlfriend in a quiet rural area of Rigmouth and runs his own photography shop in a nearby town, Dantonleigh. As his knowledge and skills in photography are recognised, he is the Academy's official photographer for events such as seminars and gradings. This reflects the family-like nature of the Gym, in which each member plays an important role. Besides martial arts, he is a keen runner and walker, and has run in half-marathons and regularly enjoyed the Dontshire countryside.

As a Rigmouth local, Nick originally sought out Wing Chun as a practical martial art that could help him defend himself should an emergency situation arise. He met Terry in a party and since then, has been a diligent and steady student for 8 years, taking regular private lessons from Sifu Bridge. Alongside Wing Chun, he practises and teaches Shaolin weapons at the Academy, and regularly demonstrates these skills publicly throughout the county. Although he has a subjective sense of spirituality through books like *The Power of Now* (Tolle, 1999) and has travelled to India to pursue this, Nick still regards Wing Chun as a practical, no-nonsense approach to fighting, and teaches the technique without any deliberate philosophical or spiritual connections. Nick strongly buys into a story of combat, which have continued to provide him with the subjective meaning of self-defence.

As fellow members of the Academy, Nick and I hold great rapport through our shared role as assistant instructors. He has also expressed an interest in my research. Before the interview, we met in the Academy on a Sunday morning, when Terry, Nick and a man I had never met were playing some gor sau. I enjoyed a free flow session (see confessional tale) before the interview, which was the only one recorded in motion as we walked around a country park near his home after a lunch outside in the sun.

6.2.1. Individual Cultivation

Transformative Habitus

In contrast to the 'natural' fighters, Nick and Emma didn't have an early socialisation into violence or TMAs, nor were they taught certain body techniques within a working

class, predominantly male family body lineage, so they consciously set out to cultivate fighting skills in their adulthood. Nick explains his reasons for beginning Wing Chun, highlighting the need to fight as a priority during his youth, when violence was common in his working class town:

I would say before learning the Wing Chun system, I didn't really know how to fight. I certainly didn't have it in any degree of 'Yeah, this is how I would do something. This is the outcome of it.' That was before Wing Chun. I always would stand up for myself. And one of the reasons I chose the Wing Chun system was because it does teach you that, it taught me how to fight and...if I had the initiative to stand up for myself and stand my ground, then I thought I must really know how to fight (continuous in Appendix 6.9).

(Nick, interview, 04/05/08)

Wing Chun matched his early schemes of perceptions and tastes acquired through avid film watching. Like many participants in the study, who appear to be connoisseurs of the Asian martial arts genre, Nick highlighted the role of martial arts films in inspiring real life practice. Here, films displaying performing, charismatic bodies that continuously prove their abilities in an aesthetically pleasing manner (Brown *et al.*, 2008) provided a pre socialisation for later entry into the arts. He reflects on his previous lack of fighting dispositions and experience, which became more apparent during his transition into adulthood in Appendix 6.10. Nick has provided a clear and reflexive rationale for his initial training, which was for self-defence, rather than attack. Yet in order to develop the fighter habitus, these people have to train hard within fighting orientated schools such as *Bridge's Wing Chun Academy*.

Any change in fighting capacity is bound to include transformations in the ability to control one's emotions, and this may be understood as a transformation through the third circuit of Yuasa's (1993) changing body scheme: The emotional-instinct circuit, in which instincts are heightened with more control over the emotions. Nick has experiences several transformations through his Wing Chun training, including altered perceptions of time and space within close intersubjective environments, as well as better control of his fears through a transformative emotional habitus:

It's taught me a lot about that you've actually got more time in a fight situation. You've got more time to assess things than you think you have. And you've got a lot more arsenal to apply than you thought you had. So when you applied in your head in a manner in a couple of seconds, your sort of structures and techniques, which was needed, it just gives you the confidence to say, "Yep, I know what to do in this situation." Because of the way the training goes, even though it goes on for a number of years, when you condense it, it's actually quite short. But you get used to having hands in your face. You get used to punches, you get used to levels of...adrenaline and stuff like that. I think that's another thing. When your adrenaline actually kicks in. What to do with it. It's the flight or fight thing. Because sometimes...I think in the past, when I had that adrenaline kick in, I would still stand my

ground. But I would just feel quite awful. There's a sickly sort of feeling, that kind of nauseous kind of, 'Right, what am I doing?' But now, when you know how to handle yourself and how to look after yourself, it's a lot easier, definitely.

(Nick, interview 1, 04/05/08)

This confidence with intersubjective situations as close distance, now incorporated into Nick's individual habitus, had a positive impact on his daily schemes of perception: "Nowadays, I'm much more happier about my environment. Knowing that I've got Wing Chun behind me, or with me so to speak." (Nick, interview 1, 04/05/08).

Identities

Both Emma and Nick are very proud of their social identities as members of their schools, and take an active involvement in events such as demonstrations and publicity through photos (in Nick's case as a photographer). Nevertheless, their perspective differ in that Nick is currently training regularly in the Academy yet is wary of making it a way of life:

As much as Wing Chun is part of my life, I try to make other things part of my life. I don't want to be completely overrun by martial arts. Cos I want life to offer my other things as well. Not just to be able to kick someone's arse. I've been balancing it, I guess. I think, yeah, to get a balance for me was quite important so I could do other sorts of things.

(Nick, interview 1, 04/05/08)

Here, Nick is cautious not to make Wing Chun the only basis for his identity as he has other interests and hobbies. Emma, on the other hand, has suffered a fragile body-self (Sparkes, 1996) through her long-term back problems, which has prevented her from maintaining her athletic martial identity within her school as training on the carpet hampers this. Instead, she adopts a monadic strategy to train at home to maintain a highly disciplined body-self:

It's not just a physical back problem. It affects me mentally as well. I can get quite depressed, and if I have long periods. I suppose over the winter is the worst for me. My back feels so stiff, I don't want to really move in that way, but recently, I've been thinking, I really need to do chain punches. That's the most important. If I do nothing else, even if I don't do the forms. *Chain punching*. That's the main thing for me, training on my own, forms, doing chain punching and doing...I don't know if it's called conditioning, but keeping myself fit. So sit ups, press ups, and squats. Just keeping myself fit and getting healthy.

(Emma, interview 1, 26/07/08)

Subjectivities

So what is a martial art to these individuals? Is it more spiritual or still just a combat form? I was aware that Nick took a strong personal interest in spirituality through reading popular books such as *The Power of Now* (Tolle, 1999), which advocate an everyday awareness of the present moment through what Yuasa (1987) might describe as moving meditation. Nick has travelled extensively through India, and has incorporated a spiritual aspect within his identity. However, as a fighter, he tries to keep this a separate part of his individual habitus, denying that it is part of the institution of the Academy or the art itself:

In the beginning, I thought there might be something a bit spiritual about it as well. But I don't believe there is. I think the spirit is outside of that. If you want to build a spiritual thing about life, then that's purely to do with yourself, and not to do with the teaching as such. Obviously, as a religious study, you can be taught a religious study and then build a spiritual thing. A religious thing in itself doesn't mean that it's spiritual; it's whether people are finding it within themselves. Wing Chun, it's part of my everyday life. There's something or many things in a day that I will put to my mind, saying 'That's Wing Chun. I'm doing Wing Chun,' or I'm thinking about Wing Chun most days, I wouldn't say everyday. But for the spiritual side, I don't believe it is as such. I think that just comes from the person, if it's what they're looking for. I do have a spiritual side of me, but it's not whether the Wing Chun has helped.

(Nick, interview 1, 04/05/08)

This demonstrates the spiritual subjectivities that each person can take. Some practitioners may separate their own spiritual development from TCMA's, whilst others will actively integrate them. Although he has a sense of spirituality, Nick still regards Wing Chun as a practical, no-nonsense approach to fighting, and teaches the technique without any deliberate philosophical or spiritual connections. He doesn't want his spiritual side to interfere with the Wing Chun, and doesn't believe that Wing Chun has developed this aspect of his character. Likewise, there are degrees of devotion to Wing Chun. Although Nick enjoys teaching within the group, he doesn't have any major aims to run his own school. Instead, he enjoys seeing others develop thanks to his help, but sees Wing Chun as just one aspect of his life, not the be all and end all. However, like Terry, he'd love to pass on his knowledge to his future children.

6.2.2. Relational Cultivation

Intersubjectivity

Emma, as we have seen, has suffered from a long-term back problem, has used Wing Chun's aggressive principles to deal with her emotional and physical pain, and over the long-term, this may have forged part of her individual emotional habitus. Practitioners' untested abilities are a common concern, even with fighting orientated schools, as Emma articulates her emotional transformation through realistic, full contact, intercorporeal partner training that altered her phenomenological perceptions of time, space and the senses in a relational environment (see Appendix 6.10).

The gradual limb conditioning is common in many Wing Chun schools, where the aim is to develop hard, yet sensitive antenna for defending the torso. This is a form of deliberate self- and shared cultivation as specific exercises are available for solo and partner practice. Through her dominating body aspect, Emma has occasionally released her pent up aggression about her failing body onto others (see Appendix 6.11). For her Wing Chun is a form of emotional escape from her back pain, providing progressive, semi contact conditioning. Emma has therefore developed her dominating aspect during regular training, and has been accustomed to both taking and delivering painful blows, which is another important part of this highly specific martial habitus. This transformation in pain tolerance is most evident when she partners up with less conditioned practitioners and uses her dominating aspect:

But if I'm doing Wing Chun with other people and they're not as well conditioned as I am, you can see the pain in their face, but it's not hurting you. For some reason, I get a kick out of that (laughs). I don't know what it is. I suppose it's a bit like power, almost. Yeah. Because you don't have to deal with that part, but they are, so it takes your mind off what's going on.

(Emma, interview 1, 26/07/08)

Initially, like many female practitioners, she was put off by the painful and obvious bruises resulting from such conditioning work as this could result in social stigma when in contact with others. Bruises and scratches are an integral part of a dedicated Wing Chun practitioner's identity as they are frequently gained and are readily visible to themselves and others in daily life. However, from seeing the results of sustained training at effective defence techniques, her attitude to pain was transformed into altered schemes of perception: "But this is where it changed for me. You can't train realistically

without getting hurt sometimes. But that's the respect part as well. I don't like hurting people. But I'm learning something that is really hurtful (laughs)." (Emma, interview 1, 26/07/08)

Yet as a slightly built female, Emma is seemingly at a disadvantage compared with her male training partners. However, her teacher, through heightened schemes of perception, offered alternatives based on her biological factors. Here, he enabled a transformative, individual fighter habitus overcoming the limitations of biology within a close quarters environment, which Emma suggests as providing a feeling of empowerment:

First of all, I felt really ineffectual. They could just walk all over me. Then after I started getting better, the feeling was really, really good. As you say, there's a couple of bigger guys who normally I would feel scared of. Bald heads, big, meaty guys. Fortunately I knew them as friends. But you still don't know people, and you're putting yourself in a risky situation if someone's throwing a punch at you and you don't block it, you get hit, don't you? It's quite risky. So yeah, I was scared first of all, but once you're confidence grows and the techniques get better, it's brilliant (laughs). That's basically what I loved most about it: Being able to hold my own against someone who's much stronger and larger. And finding that the techniques that do actually work. When they don't work, then my teacher would show me something else. He would go, "Because of your size, because of his size, what you want to do is adjust." It was just fantastic. He would teach us to think about what we're doing. Not just apply techniques, but actually think about what you're facing. And your own personal power, and developing it. So, "You're small, so what you need to develop is more *whip power*. Because you're faster, and you can do that better than a big guy who is more muscle bound." So it's drawing on your strengths really. Which is quite strange. If you think you're little, and you don't have so much muscle or power as someone else, you're immediately at a disadvantage. But actually, there's advantages that you have because of that.

(Emma, interview 1, 26/07/08)

Emma's teacher, through heightened schemes of perception, developed fighting strategies suiting her physique, which enabled the development of an individual habitus that varied from that of the majority of heavily built male students. This individual habitus, much like that highlighted by Delamont and Stephens (2008), draws upon a person's strengths to overcome their weaknesses.

Teacher-Student

As we have seen, TCMA teachers, through advanced schemes of perception, are able to recognise their students' individual strengths and weaknesses. Yet ontological

insecurities related to students' combat capabilities might be overcome through specific pedagogy strategies in full contact partner training:

I sometimes worry that I would freeze and not know what to do. I've spoken about it with my teacher...and so he gets one person padded up, and basically, they're the ones who are going to get hurt. But they're throwing punches. So you'll get it in a particular street style, so he'll go, "This is a pissed person. This is how they're going to hit you." It's sort of *hay bailers* and big old advertising punches. So they'll come in at you, and you have to get in there quickly and apply your stuff, which is why they're padded up. So they're not trying to hurt you. Yeah, the person with the pads is the one who's going to get hurt, because the person who's not padded up and is defending themselves is going for it. So he's done that with me a few times. So I've been rail-roaded, and my senses have been overwhelmed. It's a really good exercise, really good. Because first of all, in Wing Chun, you have to deal with things going in at you really fast. You have to keep your eyes open. I find that quite difficult. But yeah, when I'm not coping very well, what I used to do I turn my head in a protected sort of thing. But then I'm useless really, because I can't see what's going on. And eventually, I'll turn my back and run away (laughs). He would get me to sort of stay there and kind of practice...again, it's a trust thing. He will know how far to push you. So he would push you as far as to challenge you. 'I don't know if I can take much more of this.' But then you do take it, and you go, "Actually, that was OK." And it builds your confidence again.

(Emma, interview 1, 26/07/08)

The development of the senses, particularly touch and kinaesthesia, are very important in TCMA's, forming a vital part of the overall martial habitus as Brown and Johnson (2000) have previously discussed in a theoretical paper, and these will be explored in later data chapters.

Other-Relations

In the previous section of the thesis, we saw how Wing Chun is often trained in a male dominated environment. As the only female fighting orientated practitioner, Emma reflects on the empowerment gained from Wing Chun training realised during a domestic violence incident. For her, Wing Chun's rapidly developed self-defence capabilities enabled a more confident and bold sense of self in everyday life:

I was in a domestically violent relationship at the time that I got into Wing Chun. It was never really physically violent, but there were occasions where I was held by the throat or something. Kind of hit in the heat of the moment, accidental kind of thing rather than regular...there's different types of domestic violence. It was a bit mental as well. So he [her boyfriend at the time] had quite a bit of power over me, I think, at that time. So the Wing Chun for me, I suppose it put me on a level where it's like, 'I don't have to take shit. I can actually do something about it.' I ended up having a fight with him. It wasn't very nice. We didn't really hurt each other. I'd only learned Wing Chun for a few weeks or something. Very, very green. But even then, I was able to defend myself. It was horrible, this thing that happened, honestly, between me and my partner. I can't remember why it was, but I used to get so angry with him. We just ended up throwing a punch. I think it was because we had done Wing Chun and trained, it turned into this kind of, 'Actually we're doing a bit of Wing

Chun, but I'm actually really pissed off with you and would like to hurt you!' And that was kind of the end of the relationship to be honest. I think the Wing Chun did help me. I just felt like I had the power, and I can do something. Rather than, 'I don't know what to do.' It wasn't very nice fighting with him, I must say.

(Emma, interview 1, 26/07/08)

From conscious hard work and training, Emma reflexively utilised her agency (Giddens, 1984) to move from a dominated victim to a potentially dominating and assertive defender. Sadly, and quite ironically, it was also the Wing Chun that formally united them that acted as a catalyst for her moving out of the relationship. Along with her newfound fighting habitus, Emma's disciplined body, which has been used through rigorous fitness training, enabled her to feel better about herself through an enhanced sense of self that transcended the field of Wing Chun. Such transformations occurred through training in specific institutions that supported self and shared transformations.

6.2.3. Institutional Cultivation

Bureaucratic Leadership

At the current time of writing, neither Emma or Nick run their own schools, although they play an important role in their respective pedagogies by guiding more junior students in intercorporeal partner training and leading collective drills and rituals common in Wing Chun. Nick, for instance, tries to pass on the art as it was taught to him, and avoids putting his charisma or personality into things: "For myself, I try to not put too much personality into what I'm doing. Because when fighting is fighting, I don't think it's about personality. It's more or less about getting a job done. A dirty job which no one likes to do (laughs)." (Nick, interview 1, 04/05/08).

Emma's wishes to lead her own school as part of the larger Johnny Fox *Close Quarters Wing Chun Association* is limited by the highly bureaucratic limitations of this organisation, which require her to regularly attend *gradings* in a city approximately 300 miles away: "It feels like we're a really satellite little group. If we want to do our gradings, we have to go to Pitsgrove [the UK headquarters]. I find the travel difficult. I just don't want a belt that much (laughs)." (Emma, interview 1, 26/07/08). This bureaucratic form of leadership further hampers Emma's development as it does not consider her back problems or take into account her extensive experience and high skill level so evident through an intersubjective encounter that I have experienced after her

interview. Perhaps due to these structural restrictions, she will adopt a different leadership perspective? This remains to be seen.

Legitimizing Combat

The institutional habitus of the fighting orientated school was gradually embodied by Nick, who now possesses the attributes of controlled aggression, direct fighting tactics and explosive techniques. Within his school, Nick (re)produces the ethics and moral philosophies reinforced by Terry and John, which may contrast to Yuasa's (1987) ideals of cultivated ethics and character development. Here, the dominating aspects of oneself are quickly released through the long-term cultivation of a fighting attitude:

For myself, I try to not put too much personality into what I'm doing. Because when fighting is fighting, I don't think it's about personality. It's more or less about getting a job done. A dirty job which no one likes to do (laughs). I think that's one of the things about Wing Chun that I also quite like. It has expelled a little bit for myself...where there's moral issues about hurting people and stuff, you can tell yourself: 'Right, I didn't start on anybody. I'm not coming in at anybody. I didn't want to manipulate anyone. Someone's doing this to you.' And the answer to that, which has been said by John and Terry, which I totally understand of course, is, "How dare you?!" And make them pay, in a way. And it's not really meant be sort of, 'Oh, I'm big and clever.' It's the realisation that you can use a martial art to actually devastate a person who's actually trying to really minimise you as a person as well. And I think that does come into it. It opens the door to say that moralistically, you're free, slightly. OK, you can feel the freedom to say that person did deserve this.

(Nick, interview 1, 04/05/08)

Nick felt empowered and enabled by this socially reproduced set of ethics, allowing him to fight without feeling guilt or worry. A whole different set of dispositions have been embodied via long-term practice, creating a potentially more dominating person. Within another fighting orientated school that doesn't stress morals, Emma's male counterparts have even used Wing Chun for attack in order to test their skills (see appendix 6.13). Although this is not widely encouraged in TCMA schools, it is tempting for many practitioners to test out their skills, which are learned in a mainly safe and controlled environment, in a real scenario. By training with such aggressive and dominating men, Emma may have developed such dispositions, causing a transformation in her martial habitus. Perhaps training in a 'traditional' school that incorporates Eastern philosophy will develop a less aggressive set of students? Some well cited social psychological research on younger people suggests this to be the case (Nosanchuk, 1981; Trulson, 1986).

Individual/Institutional Lineage

For many practitioners, the lineage is a key aspect of legitimisation for one's practice. Since our initial email communications and informal conversations, Emma repeatedly mentioned Johnny Fox, the leader of her particular body lineage and an internationally recognised master. Yet the importance of this remained unclear, and only when I probed the issue did Emma explain its importance:

I think it's important to choose your teacher carefully. Having had a few different ones, lineage is...I supposed it's not guaranteed by any means, but it's an indication. So, I mean...Johnny Fox's lineage means nothing to me until I've read about who his teachers are. What they taught him. Why he took on board what he took on board. Which is really interesting really, and it helps inform your own training. Cos every teacher teaches something different. They get something different out of it. They present it slightly differently. And some are better than others, definitely, at teaching. And I like this style because it's the most realistic one I've come across. I don't want to train something that isn't going to be practically useful. Cos it's all very well being physically fit and enjoying the training, but if at the end of the day, it's going to be useless out there...why train yourself to be crap? (Laughs). That's my idea, my way of thinking behind it. And his style is hard/soft, it's semi contact. Unless you decide you want a bit more. And again, it makes sense, it makes common sense. Yeah. Because you could train Taiji, but they don't train you to fight, but it is a fighting system.

(Emma, interview 1, 26/07/08)

Hence for Emma, and this particular Association, body lineage or the kinaesthetic chain (see Joseph, 2008) is an illustration of dispositions passed down by certain teachers, all of which with their different styles of fighting, teaching and thinking. Again, the individual habitus is key here, and this actually creates an institutional habitus based on such differences. This is a clear marker of how cultural transmission occurs.

6.2.4. Art Cultivation

Narratives

So far in this chapter, it appears that the fighters adopt an ontological and cultural narrative that focuses on combat ability rather than spirituality or tradition. Yet what other kinds of narratives are being reproduced in the pedagogies and with outside intersubjective encounters e.g. daily conversations? Like many others in this study, Emma was excited about the prospect of training till old age due to Wing Chun's flexible approach to the individual habitus. Such a philosophy has given rise to a dominant cultural ageing narrative:

I don't see any reason why I can't continue till old age. Definitely. Because there is the hard and soft aspect of it. I think the more skill that you attain, the more that you train and the more years you have behind you, the more sneaky you can be. You don't have to use power or energy. Not energy, you don't have to use lots of movement. Take our teacher for example. He can walk all over us, and you can't really tell what he's doing sometimes. You say, "can you do that again, and slow it down? What are you doing?" (Laughs). Because he's so skilled at it, he doesn't need to exert himself. It seems like he's effortlessly beating you. And that's the skill that he'd attained. As I say, you need a certain amount of physical fitness to continue till old age. It's always a good thing, isn't it. But you don't need to be physically fit and strong to do Wing Chun. You really don't. Because you've got the technique and you've got the learning of the body and its power. I think that's one of those things I most enjoy: Creating power out of my body. And realising how powerful it can be (laughs). I find it amazing. It's exciting to know how powerful you can be, without having to do hundreds of press-ups and weights and stuff.

(Emma, interview 1, 26/07/08)

This focus on the charismatic teacher and his influence on the students' ontological stories via specific cultural narratives will be further explored in chapters 6 and 7.

TCMAs

How might the process of cultural transmission influence the TCMAs themselves? Considering the highly individualistic approach adopted by these Wing Chun practitioners and masters creating their own body lineages, it is possible that the Wing Chun of Emma and Nick may be very different to those of their fellow students. If Emma was to set up a school in the future, as she strongly wishes, she may teach softer, fluid techniques that are based on her individual habitus. This may or may not be gendered as 'women's techniques' as in other TMAs (for instance, see Samudra's 2008 experiences as a female practitioner). The restricting structures of Johnny Fox's Association are not allowing her to start an official Wing Chun school due to the grading structure and practicalities, and she is considering forming a women's self-defence group, which might possibly follow her own agentic resistance to experiences of domestic violence and her work with victims of this who lacked the knowledge of rules and resources to deal with it.

Gender & Society

Confidence in their abilities was a major transformation for all of the fighters. There is a socially reproduced story stating that without confidence and faith in their abilities, those of their teacher and the Wing Chun system itself, the techniques may not be

applied effectively in real combat (see Jennings *et al.*, forthcoming 2011). As one of the rare women to stick with the art for a long period, Emma reflects on the possible gendered transformations that Wing Chun practitioners undergo via realistic training:

I suppose it's helped me to have a bit more courage, take a few more risks. Yeah. Try something. Because you don't know actually how good you're going to be unless you try it. So again, it's like going against way more physical opponents, who if you saw them on the street, you'd think, 'Oh no, I wouldn't want to be mugged by you!' And just looking at them differently. Actually learning about people as well, and about the male ego, and what it looks like (laughs). And often that it's just bravado, and that people are as scared as you are. There are nutters out there, but generally, the guys out on the street can't fight for toffee (laughs). And being female possibly, it's been different to what a bloke might take from it. Cos men tend to fight more. Just by being the nature of a man, a man on the street would pick on you for, I don't know, like the colour of your hair or something, or the way that you are sitting. Whereas women aren't really like that. No (we laugh). So we don't get into those situations. So I don't know if men can say if it's changed their lives possibly more. I don't know whether it's made me...I've always been a risk taker. It's a passion I suppose. It's one of my passions that I can't talk about at home. It's impossible

(Emma, interview 1, 26/07/08)

Emma has therefore experienced a noticeable change in her own schemes of perception, which has raised her self-confidence. As a man in a society where physical attacks on males are common, Nick has experienced a noticeable raise in his own confidence or ontological security, particularly in fields where his fighting habitus would previously have been insufficient to deal with a situation (see Appendix 6.14). This gradual increase in self-confidence and belief or faith in one's ability appears to have positive benefits in their daily lives through the removal of fighting specific insecurities and the provision of a feeling of ontological security. We have already seen how these transformations might be gendered, yet could be considered as empowering? We examine this next.

6.2.5. Other Aspects

Despite possessing a strong fighter habitus, these practitioners all embody some degree of the other ideal types, and seem to be consciously aware of this. For instance, Emma belongs to a combat-orientated school with traditionalist elements reinforcing the Chinese medicine derived ideas of qi energy using qigong exercises that Yuasa (1993) regards as a self-cultivating practice. Within Wing Chun's first form, which is commonly regarded as a slow moving form of meditation, they socially reproduce the belief that they are cultivating qi whilst training alone through the changing relationship

between mental intention and physical action or more simply, the mind-body connection:

When you're doing your form, you're doing the qi breathing. When you do the *tan sau*, you're obviously focusing on the outside of your *tan*, where you're going to be using that block. And *wu sau*. That's where you're focusing your qi when you're breathing that out. And *fok sau*, it would be here (refers to part of forearm). *Bong sau*, it would be here (refers to part of forearm). Again, it's a good way of using repetition and to make it become natural. So when you're in a situation, actually, you're brain and body are used to sending energy to those parts. That's what I like about it. It's this firmness. It's not muscle power. It is intention. That's where my hand's going. And that's where I'm blocking it.

(Emma, interview 1, 26/07/08)

As a fighter, Emma aims to cultivate this qi energy through her bright consciousness in order to assist her martial techniques, which would be performed through dark consciousness. Here, qi is cultivated for fighting rather than for health, which is often how qi is claimed to transform someone through one of many competing discourses (Frank, 2000). Nevertheless, the health benefits of this may still be acknowledged and sought after. We will return to these issues in the following chapters, where more philosophical and spiritual practitioners discuss their own ongoing cultivation. From this short section we have seen that Emma and Nick both possess some degree of spiritual subjectivity both within and outside their training. Their lives are not just devoted to techniques for fighting, but draw upon Eastern constructions of energies and meditation.

To conclude, according to Emma and Nick, TCMA's can make you more self-assured, and enable you to realise your true combat potential. Practitioners may transform in confidence and self-awareness as well as in a new fighting philosophy incorporating adjusted morals. Although TCMA's are very male dominated, they can empower women to make them able to defend themselves against much stronger men. Conditioning is key here in order to sustain training and defend oneself in reality. Real, effective styles that allow for the development of an individual habitus and subjectivities should be practised and transmitted.

6.3. Conclusions

This chapter illuminated the life stories of four practitioners currently embodying the qualities of the fighter ideal type. Their case studies illustrate these ideal typical tendencies towards cultivation, practice and transmission on the four levels of

individual, relational, subcultural and cultural. The two main subtypes, the ‘natural’ and trained fighters, were explored through issues of presocialization, initial rationales for training, reasons for continuing cultivation, transformations from long-term training, views on other subjective meaning (re)constructions and approaches to pedagogic transmission as demonstrated below in the matrices depicting the four levels of cultivation (individual, relational, institutional and cultural):

<i>Individual</i>	<i>Relational</i>
Individual	Dominating
Habitus	Body
<i>Institutional</i>	<i>Art</i>
Charismatic	Combat-orientated
Legitimation	Art

Figure 6.1 Matrix of the ‘Natural’ Fighters

<i>Individual</i>	<i>Relational</i>
Institutional	Dominating
Habitus	Body
<i>Institutional</i>	<i>Art</i>
Bureaucratic	Combat-orientated
Legitimation	Art

Figure 6.2 Matrix of the ‘Trained’ Fighters

Overall, there was a strong rationale for defending oneself and others in today’s uncertain risk society through training in a realistic fighting orientated school. The fighter holds a typically aggressive and direct approach to the art and he/she is attracted to the style for reasons of self-defence and the enhancement of fighting skills. All drills and forms are linked to a self-defence application, and other interpretations, such as spirituality, are looked upon with disdain. Hence for them, a TCMA is an efficient way of fighting. Yet in order to deserve the title of a fighter, and have this as part of their self- and social identity, the practitioner must have real fighting experience outside the safe realm of the school. From this, he/she will draw upon this embodied experience of fighting in order to create meaning on their practice. They don’t necessarily have to be

looking for fights, but will have been able to use the techniques and principles in a devastating manner.

The fighter typically tells the story of combat that may be understood as: 'Before I was a competent fighter, now I am even better, in the future my skills will be improved.' The fighter will draw upon this in order to illustrate the need to train for realism and to provide a rationale and meaning for their long-term practice and may understand their change through improved fighting abilities, shared realistic drills and sparring. His/her own combat experiences, anecdotal accounts and second hand stories might be frequently used in teaching.

Transformations ranged from a general increase in confidence to feelings of empowerment beyond contemporary Western society's gender norms. Other pure approaches, such as spiritual ones were not encouraged within fighting schools, although some individuals embodied certain aspects for their own personal practice or individual habitus. Overall, these individuals have a tendency to tell stories of combat through their narrative habitus, which also includes stories of continuous learning and eventual mastery extending into old age. Other stories, such as spirituality or health, were largely overlooked because of this. The fighter habitus appears to be developed through highly dominating, but also disciplined body aspects, centred on a charismatic and performing leader who can 'prove' their abilities at any given point. Morals and ethics were not actively cultivated as the focus on realistic, brutal fighting techniques rather than overall character development. In short, fighters develop an individual habitus for real fighting, take a largely dominating approach to others, rely on charismatic leadership based on their abilities, and tell stories of combat. We have just seen that these self-defence orientated individuals also consider alternative subjective understandings of the art of Wing Chun, including the technical, philosophical and spiritual. Some of these socially (re)constructed subjectivities are examined next through the ideal type of a martial artist.

7. The Martial Artists

This chapter explores stories of practitioners categorized as ‘martial artists’. Although all Taijiquan and Wing Chun practitioners are effectively martial artists (being exponents of a martial art), what separates the seven individuals from their counterparts is their particular focus on mastery and transmission operating in two ideal typical approaches: 1) The *modernizers*, taking an individual approach to cultivation and modernization 2) The *traditionalists*, embodying an institutional and conservationist/preservationist approach leading to the arts being transmitted in their ‘traditional’ form. We first examine the experiences of the three modernizers, who, despite their different backgrounds, share a passion for the further development of TCMAAs based on individuals.

7.1. The Modernizers

The TCMAAs, being well established in Britain, have unsurprisingly experienced change such as competitions, gradings and instructor training programmes (see Ryan, 2008) that have followed organisational changes in China much like the reflexive modernisation seen in their Japanese counterparts (Villamon *et al.*, 2004). Understandings of technique and teaching methodologies may even alter as a new generation of instructors emerges. Yet how do arts change? What can individuals contribute to styles? How can styles be tailored for individuals? How can one mix different arts? These questions are key concerns for John, Kelly and Will, who share their experiences below.

John Bridge

Sifu John Bridge, 43, is leader of a prestigious full time *Bridge’s Wing Chun Academy*, which has been his profession for well over a decade. He is divorced, and has just finished a serious relationship, and has two sons, one of whom lives with him and the other he sadly never sees due to his ex-wife’s legislation. He holds a doctorate in Theology from an American Free Church organisation, although he holds no religious beliefs and is actually critical of religion’s dogmas. John is white British, and being one

of the first few non-Chinese practitioners to be able to experience the art in Britain, he has been practicing Wing Chun for almost thirty years and has travelled internationally to study under numerous top masters. Originally from a working class area of a large city in England, where he was first exposed to Wing Chun via his uncle, he developed a fighting typology through gang fights during his youth. Yet since becoming a professional TCMA instructor, John now teaches a variety of people, and is aware of Wing Chun's philosophical and spiritual connections. He has taught hundreds of people, and has a number of experienced students in Europe, where they continue to transmit his knowledge internationally. Many of his students have been interviewed for this study, representing different ideal types attracted to and developed in his Academy.

John is an ideal modernizer martial artist with a vested interest in the continual development of Wing Chun for each individual using a progressive methodology. He still retains a realistic focus on training and teaching that is based mainly on Western science rather than Eastern discourses, although he still maintains some 'traditions' such as the Codes of Conduct and teaches other traditional practices such as the lion dance. Any techniques that might not work in reality are not taught in his school. However, over seven years of being his student, I have seen him shift towards a more martial artist and thinker typology. This long-term observation has been useful in seeing how transformation works in an individual and institution based around such a charismatic figure. I chose John as he was a key figure in my previous ethnography, and I know him as an extremely articulate and knowledgeable individual who has frequently stated an interest in Wing Chun research.

John has previously helped with my MSc dissertation with an interesting life history interview, and I wanted to follow this up and investigate more recent changes in the Academy. The interview was conducted in his kitchen after a Mexican meal with my girlfriend and his son. Instead of meeting at a mutually convenient place like most participants, the power relationship and rapport led John to dictate the time and place of the interview instead of my suggestion of an interview in place of a private lesson in the daytime. This interesting power switch in interviews is certainly worth examining in future work.

Kelly Stuart

Kelly, 24, is a student of a hybrid Kung Fu system centred on Wing Chun, which she has been practicing for the last seven years. She is a white Zimbabwean and is in a relationship, has no children and is currently a full time undergraduate student. Kelly came across Wing Chun through a friend, Jim, who took her on as his protégé as he wanted a regular training partner, and recognised her athletic ability. Coming from a high level, competitive sports background, Kelly rapidly developed in martial skill, and eventually became senior student and assistant instructor in her school in Tentershire. This school was heavily focused upon technique, and has little Chinese influence following several generations of Western teachers, although Kelly made a contribution to the intellectual understanding through her background in sports sciences. Upon leaving the area for university, Kelly found herself unable to train with a partner, which was so important to her. She now trains home alone, and occasionally manages to meet up with Jim for partner training. She hopes to return to the area to get up to black sash level, and transmit her knowledge back in Adderton, especially to women, who she feels are massively underrepresented in Wing Chun. Also being a sports scientist, Kelly has conducted biomechanical research on Wing Chun, and hopes to continue this with a doctorate, thereby increasing the world's knowledge on this under researched martial art.

I decided to interview Kelly because she was of the few longstanding female Wing Chun practitioners I knew that holds a serious scientific and progressive approach to the art. Kelly is an ideal modernizer emphasizing the teaching and practice of technique based on scientific understanding and readily understood principles. In fact, she is one of an emerging number of martial artists undertaking sport and exercise science courses from a passion and interest in the underpinning mechanisms behind their art, much like myself.

The first interview was conducted in a University café she frequented, and was a good location as it was a quiet and relaxing environment. As I approached her for a second interview, Kelly was very busy, and we ended up having the interview in a biomechanics laboratory in her University, where she had just finished some work. It was interesting conducting social science research in such a clinical setting but it

reflected her desire to make Kung Fu taught in a scientific way for a new generation of British practitioners.

Will Davis

Will, 27, is in a serious relationship has no children and works for the NHS as a stop smoking advisor. Will is a keen advocate of several TCMAAs: Chen style Taijiquan, Bagua, *Yi-Quan*, *Shaolin Longfist* and *Preying Mantis*, and regards himself as a mixed martial artist taking strengths from each style to create a rounded and fluid approach to combat that can be applied in competition or for self-defence. Although he has only been practising for around five years, he attained a high degree of skill and knowledge through his intense lifestyle dedicated to TCMAAs as seen through titles at several national pushing hands and free sparring (San Sau) competitions.

As another sport science graduate Will is constantly striving towards a scientific understanding of the TCMAAs for British students. He is an instructor of Chen style Taijiquan within a very traditionalist organisation, the *Dontshire School of Chen Taijiquan*, which he often critiques for its unclear and rather implicit pedagogy and is using his sports science knowledge to help structure people's learning on a more explicit level. He is also training in another organisation, *Tiger Fist School*, which mixes TCMAAs and competes in San Sau and pushing hands tournaments. As society has evolved, Will sees the value of TCMAAs beyond self-defence and fighting, and strives to make a contribution to the local community through training publicly in parks and offering accessible classes to all. Will has ambitions to become a professional instructor once he feels he has reached sufficient skill levels for his particular physical abilities, and hopes to focus on Taijiquan and the 'internal' styles, although he continues to cross train.

Although I had already heard of Will's TCMA reputation amongst the sport science community I only came across him by chance when attending his Taijiquan teacher Chris' class (see Appendix 7.1). Will approached me with interest when overhearing me speak to Chris about the research and we exchanged contact details. The two interviews were conducted in his home and by the second interview such as great deal of trust had been established that he invited me to have a shower in his home when I told him that I'd been locked out of my bathroom! He and his housemate were planning to go to the

shops, which would have left me home alone. I didn't take up the offer as I had to rush back but the relationship further strengthened as I attended a demonstration of TCMA's that he was attending in Bridenleigh, a town known for its culture and 'hippy feel' (see Appendix 7.2) and we went out for an Indian meal with our partners. Needless to say the conversations were mainly about martial arts and our partners got a little bored!

7.1.1. Individual Cultivation

Individual Habitus

Like all practitioners, these individuals developed their martial habitus through a highly disciplined body, and often-monadic Kung Fu lifestyle, essentially involving hard work (the meaning of Kung Fu) and sacrifice of life's other pleasures that many people take for granted. Below, John recollects when he developed his Wing Chun skill during his early twenties whilst living at home with his parents, before having children and turning professional:

My garage became my shrine. That's where I was training. Solitary training by the way, just by myself. Well, I put it this way: I used to get home from work, at 5 o'clock, and I used to come out of the garage at about nine o'clock. The only time I used to come out of that garage was when I needed the toilet, or make a cup of tea. Because that was my tippie, a cup of tea. I would do at least an hour of meditation, that's deep meditation, every night. I'd physically train my techniques in front of the mirror over and over again. I had all my dummy in there, my bags in there, and I worked, and I worked, and I worked. On top of going in teaching, and on top of going in learning. And, I used to have a couple of mates come round and train with me a couple of nights a week. I used to go out for a run every night. It wasn't martial arts, but it was part of my physical routine. It helped put me into the zone...to get me ready for my physical training. As well as the meditation, which always came at the end. As I said, my Dad's mate was there, and he took him round, proud as any father, and he said, "Come see what my lad does." I wasn't there, and he took him down the gym, saying he does this, and he does that. We've got all this equipment. He's done all this. It's called Wing Chun. Dad said, "He comes down here after he's had his tea. Most nights, he's not in till half nine, if not later." And the man says, "Yeah. I bet he hasn't got a girlfriend." "No, he ain't." "No, he couldn't have, could he? He wouldn't have time for anything else." And that's the sacrifice of Wing Chun. To become good, I had to sacrifice many other things. Financially, I could have earned a lot, lot more working in the city. But I chose not to. I chose Wing Chun. I could have gone out partying and all that, but I chose not to. I could have done all the things everybody else was doing, but I chose Wing Chun.

(John, interview 2, 01/03/08)

This dedication became a way of life, being almost like a religion for his everyday being, as I have discussed elsewhere (Jennings *et al.*, forthcoming 2011). John's training was chiefly solitary and focused on himself as an individual, adding other EMFs such as meditation to his daily regime. It is interesting to note the religious terminology, such as 'shrine' and 'sacrifice' to his recollection, which could be

interpreted as secular religious development in the sense that Wing Chun is not a religion per se, but possesses the same structures, rituals and functions. Likewise, in recent years, Will has shared this obsession with achieving martial perfection and has taken a similar approach to his path to becoming a professional. He remembers his student years, which allowed him to train extensively in preparation for his lessons from Sifu Andrew, the head of the *Tiger Fist School* (see Appendix 7.3):

When I did forms...if you were in Fairview Park when I was at Uni, I was there every single day...Always out there doing forms, doing stretching, just keeping into it. And I think that comes from because I'm used to going to the gym, I would go to the gym with my friends, but I would never really...a few times I would go as a spotter or someone to push you, but that was always very individual. I think I've got that about myself. I'm happy and content being on my own. I don't have that big need that I need people around me, I need to be the centre of attention. I need this and that. At certain times it's nice to have other people. But, if there's no one there, I don't care. I'll get on and do my thing. If I'm confident in what I'm doing, like I've learned the kicks and I get the idea, I get what I'm trying to do, now I just need to get on and do it. It's good. When you're training internally at an early stage especially, there's so much to do, so much to learn, just from standing still, let alone moving or having another person working with you. You can spend hours and hours and hours, weeks, months, even years, on your own, just developing that side of your skill, and then you can start to have other people sort of coming into it. So it's a huge part. It's really important, I think, to spend time with yourself.

(Will, interview 1, 20/08/08)

Yet like John, he also maintained the importance of training with others for feedback, and therefore avoids being completely monadic. Without them, glass mirrors played a key role for solo observation through what Frank (1991) might regard as the mirroring aspect of the individual. Kelly took a similar perspective through long and intense sessions alongside her teacher Jim. Yet this disciplined lifestyle as a regime did not stop with physical training. Below, in almost an echo of Alter's (1992) account of Indian wrestlers, she explains the degree of control over her diet:

I really dedicated myself to it. I mean, like becoming tee-total in Australia, just for my training. To lose body mass. And eating more healthily, eating more regularly. So my whole nutritional aspect changed to try to improve my Kung Fu. By taking on board more protein to help develop my muscles. To fight better, to punch harder. All that kind of stuff. It was all focused, solely on Kung Fu, and on affecting how I perform...The idea of corrupting your body by putting alcohol, or something like that into your body...that all stopped when I started.

(Kelly, interview 1, 13/03/08)

This is a great illustration of the disciplined, health orientated Kung Fu lifestyle that these practitioners seem to adopt, and quite interestingly, diet is the ideal medium for the disciplined body as explained by Frank (1991). Kelly rigorously monitored her diet and altered everyday activities such as brushing her teeth to make the most of every reflexive action (see Appendix 7.4). As a result of this lifestyle, a martial habitus was

rapidly developed, and was seen as a major transformation in her other passion, hockey, in which he unconsciously turned her head from a ball, saving serious facial damage (see Appendix 7.5). As Bourdieu (1990) suggests, this habitus is a set of durable and transferable dispositions that transfers to other social and sporting fields. Will and his friend (see Appendix 7.6) put this martial habitus to test in the different environment of grappling:

The submissions, locks and holds aren't actually things we do specifically in Kung Fu, on the floor. We do them stood up. But I found training in Brazilian Jujitsu ...I found myself applying all that I found in Mantis, and taken that into the classroom. So all the body positions. Even the so called weaker position where you're on top and they've their legs around you, people still couldn't beat me, cos I was using my body properly...And I think you can do that. If you can master one art...

(Will, interview 1, 20/08/08)

Could this habitus transfer between social fields more readily than some scholars claim? Is this habitus enabling Will to develop skills based on his individual biology, as Delamont and Stephens (2008) have claimed? Will stresses the importance of an individual, transformative perspective for TCMA's, explaining mastery from an individual perspective:

I will always be restricted by my body and myself. But within that, I can just be the best that I can and follow my teaching the best that I can. For me, it's just doing that. Perfection for me, it's listening to what I'm being told, absorbing it, and trying to let it radiate from within me. If perfection, in inverted commas is the beautiful Taiji form, twenty minutes long, fully relaxed, but if I don't know the form or if I can't relax properly, I can still be as perfect as I can be. I may never be as perfect as top masters, but it's an individual thing. Everyone, if you're putting the effort in, then you're getting as far as you can get. That is your own personal perfection. And that's all you can hope for.

(Will, interview 2, 13/09/08)

This perspective might also be understood through Giddens' (1991) notion of reflexive action, and is shared by John, who reflects on the difference between him and his teacher: "I'd rather be a first class me than a second class someone else. And we can all be that. I can never be my teacher. He has his own greatness. I can't ever be that. I can only fulfil my own destiny, be great for myself." (John interview 2, 01/03/08). From these comments we might understand their perspectives on cultivation as very individual rather than deterministic in a manner based around a particular teacher or school.

Hybrid Identities

In Britain there is a wide range of martial arts available, and it is common for practitioners to cross train. As MMAs are becoming increasingly popular, some modernizers chose to cross train amongst traditional styles rather than remain under one school or lineage for the rest of their lives. Will reflects on his ever-changing identity, which he acknowledges as being a mixed martial artist:

I train five different arts, but I can take the best bits from all of them, and I can take the bits I can understand and that I can embody from all of them, and then apply them. Then if I fight with someone, I've got five different things I can decide to do in any given situation, rather than being bogged down, 'Right, I need to do it this way.' Which is important. I think internally, all the arts, they follow the same idea, relax, be soft, and it's what you do externally, is the difference.

(Will, interview 1, 20/08/08)

Such martial dispositions (see Appendices 7.6 & 7.7) will eventually form a hybrid individual martial habitus based around Will's biological and biographical habitus:

Everyone can find their own style because you're tailoring it towards your own body and what your body needs to do. And is able to do. What works for one might not necessarily work for another. If you're dictated by one style, that can lead to quite a lot of confusion and tension. You're fighting against yourself too much.

(Will, interview 2, 13/09/08)

Instead, the idea of internal martial arts is the founding principle behind all his training. The concepts of alignments and body mechanics bring all the styles together through a highly scientific understanding. This contrasts to the stories of the traditionalists who adopt a highly institutionalised habitus based on their teacher's habitus, and also the fighters who maintain it is more about fighting spirit and experience.

Subjectivities

The idea of what a martial art is differs greatly between ideal types, and may help us understand their subjective nature. Below, Will lists several aspects to explain what a martial art is to him:

It is exercise, it's health, it's weight control, it's good fun. It's making me flexible, it's making me stronger. It's got all that. It's competition as well. I've given up all other sports. I used to play football four, six times a week. I don't play football anymore. So it's my sort of outlet in that regard as well. It's a channel for any anger or any sort of emotions as well. You hit a pad, you just release it all into it. It's perfect. It's socialising as well. Ninety

percent of my good friends come from Kung Fu classes. Cos they're the people who I spend all that time with and get to know well. This will sound like *The Matrix*, but you don't know someone truly until you fight them (we laugh). That's a great line...And it's like a hobby. It's what I do with my spare time. It's an interest. I think it's got so much scope to it. It's an investment in my long-term health and well-being. It's got career prospects as well, when I start teaching, full time as well. And crossing lots of different boundaries there. It all ties into one whole.

(Will, interview 1, 20/08/08)

It is interesting to note that Will doesn't cite fighting or self-defence as an explanation of martial arts. It appears that he regards them to be healthful lifestyle activities that enable physical, mental and social benefits that have been overlooked by previous martial arts research particularly in Taijiquan. As a devoted practitioner and NHS worker, he buys into the popular scientific perspective on Taijiquan as a health giving practice and intervention, providing a subjective interpretation of this. When questioned about self-defence, which remains a popular activity amongst women and a focus for many researchers (Brecklin, 2004; Brecklin & Ullman, 2005; De Welde, 2003; McCaughey, 1998), Kelly reinforces this point about martial arts as a lifestyle:

Self-defence is just being able to react to a situation once it occurs. Martial arts is a whole different state of mind. It's a whole change in lifestyle. It's dedication, it's commitment to what you're doing...that commitment towards constantly achieving. Whereas in self-defence, you learn: "Oh, if someone grabs you from behind, this is what you do." And that's that. That's the whole story. Whereas martial arts, there's just a whole different aspect that you're just constantly learning. You think you get to the end of one style, and you can go onto another one, or learn another aspect of that style. It's just never ending. It's brilliant.

(Kelly, interview 1, 20/02/08)

Kelly later stated that Kung Fu had been instrumental in changing who she was, from an unhappy teenager in a new country to a dedicated, hard working student:

Yeah, I just think, personally Kung Fu's been instrumental in changing who I am. Actually developing me as a person. Because coming from Zimbabwe, having to leave my home, leave everything, it's like...I left when I was eighteen, and got here. It was like my life stopped at eighteen because I resented everything about moving, and leaving my home, and everything, leaving my home, and leaving my friends. I didn't fit into the society. The English society. I didn't want to...and, for three years, I couldn't be arsed really. Didn't care about hockey, didn't care about work, didn't care about anything. I just wanted to go back home. That was my sole objective, to finish education, and get back home. I started Kung Fu, and again, that was something to focus on. I started to actually enjoy staying here. I started to make more friends. Got a best friend in Jim. And it completely changed the way I view life. I stopped being an eighteen year old, where I'd been stuck since then. From the time I moved from Zimbabwe. And I started...progressing. Developing mentally, physically, and emotionally. I think, definitely, Kung Fu was the main part that helped me move on.

(Kelly, interview 1, 20/02/08)

This very powerful and subjective personal account highlighted how TCMA's are more than just principles and techniques for some advocates as they can be a way of

transforming a person's life much like a salvation narrative might i.e. 'before I was in trouble, then I met Kung Fu, now I'm better again.' Yet these perspectives aren't just personal as they only arise through interaction with others such as partner training and everyday interaction, both of which are examined next.

7.1.2. Relational Cultivation

Intersubjectivity

The connections between Asian martial arts and religions are multiple and complex (see Brown *et al.*, in Press), and they have been debated by historians (Henning, 1981; Holcombe, 1990) and scholars of religion (McFarlane, 1989). Although this relationship is often contentious, even as an admittedly non traditionalist, John explains the process of shared cultivation through the perspectives of the three major Chinese religions:

And the way I explained it in the English sense was: Well, when you learn to drive a car, you need an instructor. But once you reach a certain level and take a competency test, you go out there, and you start driving. It doesn't make you the world's best driver, but you're not being instructed anymore. But you're not a competent driver. You're in the middle. But once you have been driving for many years, you become a competent driver. Now, I try to translate that across. Wing Chun, at first, you're totally dependent on the teacher. As soon as you get to the stage where you aren't dependent on the instructor – you've learned the technique – you can start applying it. You become independent. But if anyone believes that they're truly independent, then they're wrong. We're interdependent on one another. You can practise Wing Chun on your own. You can practise certain parts of it. But to fulfil it, you need to have other people around who can also apply it. So therefore, the three levels of dependency, independency and inter-dependency. Very crucial. Now I believe that when someone reaches that idea of interdependency, hence we get back to a social order. And that social order starts to tell us: "Well, if we're going to have interdependency, the last person who goes through the door is as important as the person who's been here the longest. Because it's the only way it's ever going to keep on going.

(John, interview 2, 01/03/08)

This is a very different perspective on cultivation to Yuasa (1987), who tends to explain it in terms of individuals alone. Furthermore, the connections between partners as embodied vessels of knowledge and body lineage as a conduit of such vessels is becoming much clearer. If what John stated is the case for many other practitioners, then the idea of independency is a fallacy or illusion. Partner training with competent and often better practitioners is key for him and other practitioners like Will, who highlights the importance of learning over competition and winning:

For my personal cultivation, progression, development, yeah, I do want to push against people who are better than me. I love getting beaten. I used to be so competitive and have this real, beastly, winning mentality...I've beaten that out of myself. I don't care about

whether I win or lose. I care more about the competition and just learning new stuff. If someone can beat me every time, it will frustrate the hell out of me, but it will also show me that I need to keep working, I need to keep training. I've always found with my school here, the amount of tournaments I've done that I've got so many first places in things, it's like, 'that's good, but where do I go from there? What can I do to progress from that?' I want people to beat me. I want to find these really, really good fighters who will knock me down so that I can get back up and go, 'right, OK, I'll train myself more for that. And I'll develop myself more for that.'

(Will, interview 1, 20/08/08)

As a former competitive sportsman, Will initially found this cooperative approach difficult. His previously embodied dominating aspects (Frank, 1991) had to adjust to a more communicative perspective in which losing can actually mean winning in terms of learning. It is as Rawcliffe (2003) notes in terms of Wing Chun's chi sau, the winner is the one who has learned the most. Here we may understand cultivation as relational and shared rather than purely individualistic and selfish, although some practitioners suggest a personal approach to it.

Teacher-student

If partner training is so important for shared cultivation, how do modernizing teachers and students relate? Will reflects on a time when he may have been without a master for extensive periods, due to a move to a rural area, which would have greatly hampered his cultivation:

If I would have done that...that would have really restricted me in that I would be sort of out of a limb there. There aren't many Chen teachers from my tradition. There aren't any Kung Fu masters. There's Shipton [a town about one hour's drive away]. My master's master trains there. But I wouldn't want to go there that often. I could have gone to North Dorsetshire, I could have started teaching a lot of classes and trained on my own, which would be fine for a bit, it would be alright, but your progression would really slow down. I think that's one of those things with Chris. He's out here in Dagmouth. He goes to see Master Pong Yang [Chris' teacher] as soon as possible, but it's not having that regular enough contact to keep you going, to keep you progressing, to iron out those fine, little details. If you get something wrong, you practise for a month on your own practising something that one thing that is wrong. To get rid of that thing, that's so much more effort. You got a master who just tweaks your body a tiny little bit, there you go, or just explains something slightly different to you so you become aware of it, and can iron that out, then that is really important. I think that goes no matter what level you're at, I think that does help.

(Will, interview 1, 20/08/08)

From this, even for a modernizer, we may understand the importance of close, continuous and kinaesthetic contact with a TCMA master of a particular body lineage in order for mastery to occur. Without their advanced schemes of perception (as part of

their martial habitus), gained through years of vigorous training, the student would not receive accurate feedback, and could slip into bad habits that take a long time to consciously remove.

As an instructor, John wishes for his students to develop to a level so they can challenge him. It is only through this that he can truly be pushed to develop in skill and understanding:

Because if they reach a certain level, and no one is challenging them, or is challenging their skill level, then you have nothing. I have to make my students so good that they can at least challenge me. Challenge me structure, challenge me thinking and everything. Actually, once I've got my students to that level, then I've done my job I think. I can actually train with a person, on an equal footing, rather than just teaching them all the time. Cos I believe I'm still learning. I'm learning through my students (continues in Appendix 7.8).

(John, interview 2, 01/03/08)

So for John, teaching is eventually a mutually benefiting activity, forming what we might regard as a circle of cultivation. This contrasts strongly to a common understanding of what a teacher is in Western sports: Who rarely learns how to become a better practitioner from his/her students. A cyclical, rather than linear model of learning is therefore made, as all TCMA instructors are also practitioners with room for technical improvement despite ageing bodies.

Relationships

In previous years, Will devoted himself to TCMA training, with up to five hours per day alongside a fulltime job and personal relationships. Now that his relationship with his girlfriend is becoming more serious, he is struggling to maintain this monastic and highly monadic lifestyle:

I think the problem with it is I work eight hours a day, and then I have to train after I've done my work, there's another four, five hours added onto my day's work that is training. Yeah, that's like fourteen, fifteen hours of being up and doing stuff. Then I get home at like ten o'clock and I have to wash and eat and sort everything else that I have to do with my life. And with my girlfriend as well. If I see her after I've been training, then I'm up for another four, five hours as well. It is literally just about the time factor. Then I have to go to bed and sleep and get up the next day and be at work for 9 o'clock. It's like, 'OK, I can do that, for a bit of time.' But after a while, it just knackers me. Earlier on this year, it was great. I was fine, without a girlfriend. I was training shit loads and getting up every morning, bright and breezy, loads of energy, doing it. But, then you get a girlfriend. They're a little demanding for time, aren't they?

(Will, interview 2, 13/09/08)

Such a lifestyle had major impacts on his work and home life. Instead of actively enhancing his everyday life, such intensity actually led him to being less efficient and energetic, almost like burnout described by other scholars (see for instance Coakley, 1992, for a sociological interpretation):

My life would be a lot easier without it (laughs) because I spend so much time training and teaching that my girlfriend nags me for time, all of my domestic sort of stuff just takes a back seat. If I've got things to do, it's training, then it's anything else. So I'm sure I'll be a lot more organized, a lot more efficient with my time (laughs), and probably quite a bit more productive outside of training. Literally, because I'll train till I'll pass out, then the next day, if I'm not functioning at work, then it's just the way it goes (laughs). It's about the training.

(Will, interview 2, 13/09/08)

This drastic and rather paradoxical approach surprised me as Will mentioned health benefits throughout both interviews, and focuses on this in the marketing for his Taijiquan classes (not uncommon considering its stereotype as a health exercise). Such over training seems to be counterproductive for the health and vitality that he aims to cultivate in terms of physical, mental and social well-being (Üstün & Jakob, 2005). The idea of Kung Fu appears to be taken too literally here, as there is too much hard work, not considering that he has a lifetime to achieve his goals. However, it is important to note that this is a life in transition, with a full time career and serious relationship in which Will was living with his girlfriend for a short time, which will naturally bring up the subject of time, which he had a great deal more of as a single University student.

7.1.3. Institutional Cultivation

Charismatic-Bureaucratic Leadership

For modernizers, the performing body is a key issue much in its representations in cinema (see Brown *et al.*, 2008). The skills are on show as an example of how techniques should be performed and as an exemplar of martial skill of a particular lineage. A teacher must constantly perform skills and demonstrate their abilities much like a charismatic leader would throughout history, as Weber (in Parkin, 1982) reminds us: "He must always be ready to demonstrate his gifts by awe-inspiring acts or risk forfeiting the faith of his disciples. Like the modern sporting hero, his performance is kept under perpetual review by his adulators" (p. 84)

Will explains the importance of this for his classes, where his habitus acts an inspiration for students much like his own teacher are to him:

I'm teaching, so I don't want to look like I'm falling to bits while I'm doing my Taiji (laughs). I want to portray and to be good. To show to my students what Taiji is and what it should look like, and what they want to attain. I look at Andrew and I look at Chris. Chris' energy release [explosiveness] is fantastic. And Andrew's posture work, his body, his intensity is amazing, and I want to be looked up to when I'm teaching, otherwise why do they want to learn from me? So I'm looking for positive benefits for myself. I'm looking to become better, but yeah, I think if you are teaching it as well, you have to have that level of mastery or else the student...it's not respect, but the students will appreciate what you're doing, and then they will want to learn (continues in Appendix 7.9).

(Will, interview 1, 20/08/08)

From this extract it seems Will relies on a charismatic leadership that legitimates theory through ready demonstration often through the visual senses for audiences. Each generation of this body lineage acts as an inspiration for further generations to achieve the martial habitus, and therefore mastery of the art. Is there such a performative culture in other schools? John explains his reflexive modernisation based on the commercialisation process:

Once I became commercial, I had to rethink about two things really. One, Wing Chun's for everybody, and to make it for everybody, I had to make a level playing field. So therefore, as I said, hence the way I grade, the way I choose to be around people, will explain how I would see that person. For instance, the way I approached different personalities changed, I suppose. If someone walked through the door, and wanted Wing Chun for fighting, I'd sell them Wing Chun as a fighting art. Because that's what it is: A combat orientated martial art. People come through the door, looking for spirituality. So I then had to put my spirituality hat on. They're going to get exactly the same product as the person looking for the fighting. Then I get someone looking for a fitness routine. Well OK, Wing Chun's going to make you fit. So I put on the fitness instructor. So all of a sudden, I'm having to tailor the martial art to fit the needs of the person coming in through the door. Rather than fitting my needs on the person. So all of a sudden, I become the employee. No longer the person I was before.

(John, interview 2, 01/03/08)

This commercialisation process is suggested by Brown and Leledaki (2010) to be a major force behind reflexive modernisation of EMFs worldwide as the arts increasingly become commodities for the masses. John's story expand this by linking the ideas of charismatic leadership and legitimation to what Goffman (1969) might phrase as the self-presentation in which identity management is constantly being negotiated in social encounters. As he got older and became professional through a process of commercialisation, John had to open the full time school, and therefore his way of teaching to a more performative method based on student needs. This opened opportunities for a wider range of individuals of various ideal types, linking to the point raised earlier about the individualised art. Yet this identity based around a performing

body is highly unstable and prone to upsets such as injury, as John reflects on his fragile body-self:

Cos I had a physical disability over the last year, that had an effect on how I was thinking psychologically. I wasn't able to train. I had to rely more and more on other people, and I hurt me leg. My school's personality led. That's another thing you'll find in Wing Chun: It's personality led. If people want to come and train with me, and they don't train with me, then that affects them. So it's my job to enthuse people. And I can't enthuse other people if I'm not enthused. Six months on, I had an operation on me knee. It's holding steady. I turned over a new leaf this year, I had to get out of the rut I'm in. I've become more enthusiastic towards what I am teaching. Now I can see light at the end of the tunnel. In effect, it's rubbing off on my students. My students are becoming enthused. It's great that my students are coming away from the class saying: "It's a really good lesson. I really enjoyed that." I've had students text me, saying how much they're enjoying the classes once again. So therefore, my actual physical and mental being is improved out of the group's (continues in Appendix 7.10).

(John, interview 2, 01/03/08)

As leader of his group and body lineage, John's ability to perform is central to the maintenance of legitimacy of the system. If he can't prove the workings of the system, the general atmosphere and motivations decline. As he recovered from the body problem, he regained his sense of charisma and leadership, and is now enjoying a successful period of public demonstrations. Yet such a performance and charismatic leadership is accompanied by a certain degree of rationalisation and bureaucracy through Western science for intellectual interpretation of physical technique particularly through the expert system of science.

Scientific Legitimation

The technical aspects of martial arts may be understood from various intellectual perspectives. A popular approach in TCMAs employs Western science to interpret the principles and techniques, and this has given rise to 'scientific schools' that adopt a factual, systematic and methodological approach, as opposed to a 'traditional' approach offering little explanation but expecting maximum compliance. Will is an example of a reflexive modernizer who criticizes the popular perceptions of China, which may take an Orientalist perspective lacking critical perspectives towards Chinese practices (see Appendix 7.11). He advocates an explicit scientific explanation for everything, and a structured training programme for a new generation of instructors. This would train teachers' schemes of perceptions in order to help students develop progressively. He

recalls his short course within a traditionalist Taijiquan organization, which took an experiential approach to teaching:

When I did my instructor training, I felt it was all very wishy-washy. It was like: “Can you do the form? Yep, great, carry on.” OK, there was no passing down of any real teaching. They didn’t check not only that you could do it, but that you could teach somebody else how to do it and show them how to do it. If somebody’s moving into a posture, what’s the most important thing? Is it the alignment? Some people just can’t get aligned. They’re that stiff. What do you do first? Do you straighten their backs? Do you check their knees are good? Do you check their breathing’s OK? Do you keep their head up? How do you break it down? What is the formula behind what we are doing? All these kind of questions I looked back on the course and I think, ‘Ahh, it was rubbish!’ And that’s why I’m quite interested to learn to teach with Andrew because he’s got a year long instructor training course, which in a year, I think you, could learn quite a lot.

(Will, interview 2, 13/09/08)

Here, Will refers to the current use of implicit pedagogic strategies, which is very common in martial arts. Many martial arts schools don’t offer official teacher training courses, and the students, as Czarnecka (2001) found, learn to teach through early partner training experiences with their juniors. Recently, I came across a poster for Will’s class, and it took a very structured and scientific perspective, listing the scientifically proven (and measurable) benefits of Taijiquan, along with a quote: “Learn this ancient Chinese martial art that is taught systematically with intelligent progression.” (Field notes, 15/05/09). From this, it appears that Will’s teacher habitus has developed further since the time of interview and has enabled him to develop a way of teaching more suitable for many Western students. Returning to his interviews, it seems his lineage in Andrew’s *Tiger Fist School* provides such an approach matching his previous scientific knowledge:

Training internally, standing for an hour, standing still...what is it that it does? How? Why? What changes in your body? What am I doing? And until Western science has actually properly studied it and given us an explanation that we can understand and comprehend, then we have to use a metaphor to describe the ideals behind it a little bit, I think. They’re kind of getting it now. There are some fabulous interpretations of what we are doing. Have you heard of Ed Miller? Look him up on the Internet. He’s got a website, and he’s got some articles he’s written about standing, and what happens while you’re standing. Why you do it. The biomechanics behind it, the physiology behind it. And that’s really interesting. He’s Chen Style, he does *Yi-Quan* as well. He’s Andrew’s master’s master...That guy, he’s cool, he’s put the understanding in a way that we can understand it in the West.

(Will, interview 1, 20/08/08)

Will also called for more scientific research on TCMAAs that could be useful for today’s teachers that may effectively be re-embedded in place of the disembedded Eastern philosophical explanations. From this extract, we can see the importance of body lineage for teaching style and school focus. As a member of two often contrasting yet

possibly complimentary lineages and schools, Will's story continues to be useful in the next section.

John continues to explain this using the examples of gradings, which, although are often perceived as a 'tradition' in Japanese martial arts (S. Chan, 2000), are a recent addition to many Wing Chun schools:

We do base it on the individual, so we're not basing it on who's the best fighter, who's the best technician. We're looking at other factors, such as who's helpful, who puts time in, who puts effort in, who's helpful to other people in the group. Manners. And basically, what the individual can achieve. If someone has got a disadvantage, a physical advantage, then they're not going to not get their grade because of that disadvantage. And let's be honest, not everyone is intelligent. You don't have to be intelligent to learn Wing Chun. You can learn it in a physical sense. So I'm not going to penalise someone who is a brawler just because they can't intellectualise the art. That in itself allows for individualism.

(John, interview 2, 01/03/08)

Such an individualist approach enables people with all abilities to train in his Academy (see Appendix 7.12). Some could be fighters, others established martial artists, and some complete neophytes with little physical ability through their biological habitus. Hence this school can help develop people across the embodied continuum in the direction they choose. Bourdieu's (1993) writings support this conceptually, as he suggests that pedagogies can transform an individual's habitus, which has been employed in recent mainstream educational research (Mills, 2008a, 2008b).

Body lineage

Like the two distinct perspectives on technique, there appear to be two schools of thought regarding body lineage, kinaesthetic citizenship (Joseph, 2008) and the institutional habitus of a particular branch of TCMAs. One, the traditionalists, tends to conserve or preserve the art for the next generation of students. The other, the modernizers, often change the system so it is altered for the next generation of the body lineage. As a member of both schools, Will provides a concise summary of this rather complex situation:

There's two arguments for it. One is that it doesn't mean a thing. Each individual is an individual, and it's not what you've learned, it's about how you take it and how you treat it. Then there's the other argument that if you're following a particular family or a particular style, then to be taught from the source. That's it: You have to have it from the source to continue the tradition and to continue and perfect it, working with perfection if you like.

I've got Chris saying that about Taiji, and I've got Andrew saying, "Ahh! I don't really care!"

(Will, interview 2, 13/09/08)

In a traditionalist Taijiquan school, Will is learning the whole system taught within a particular lineage. In the modern scientific school with Sifu Andrew, he is mixing several styles to suit his own body and abilities. With new understanding come changes in the teaching and system itself. John explains this using the example of his own lineage, which experienced progression in a different cultural context:

Yi's Wing Chun is completely different to Long Wang Bing's. Yi's had moved on, dramatically. Because he had questions when he went to America. The culture being different in America. Questions were asked. Them questions were not asked back in the Chinese culture. They knew their place. You did something because you were told. You didn't know why. When Yi went to America, he had to give explanation. And he had to modify certain methods to give an explanation. And also, he modified it because he found something was more there. And obviously, I've done the same. I've moved the system on by the way I teach it, and what I teach, and my explanation of it. The Wing Chun has changed physically, but the transmission of it has changed orally I suppose (continues in Appendix 7.13).

(John, interview 2, 01/03/08)

He reflected on his hopes for the future of his own lineage, which is open to agentic change or modernization from various students (see Appendix 7.14). In this example, both Yi and John altered techniques, explanations, training and teaching methodologies for students with a different cultural background and understanding. This is seen as a positive, progressive and necessary move for the art to survive as a concern for lineage is essentially not only a concern for transmission of skill and knowledge, but also for the continued existence of a cultural practice. As he stated, the transmission only occurs when teacher and student work hard together to cultivate Kung Fu. Yet as anthropologist Frank (2003) noted, in relation to Wu Style Taijiquan, lineage is complex and potentially misleading as the family tree genealogies are not as simple as they appear as a practitioner will often have taught by numerous instructors before finding the most suitable for them. However he did not consider how senior students play a massive role in the transmission of the art, although they are rarely placed in lineage charts, nor are practitioners of the same skill, who also have an important role to play in partner training and general feedback. A final consideration is the amount of knowledge and skill transmitted. A teacher may have not transmitted all their knowledge, yet a student may have cross-trained with other practitioners in order to get a more rounded level of skill. This may be the case more these modernizers who are often more open to exchanges of knowledge outside a particular lineage. These considerations are needed in

order to properly understand cultural transmission and examine the seemingly clean lineage charts that are made for public understanding and authority.

7.1.4. Art Cultivation

Learning Narratives

We have already seen different perspectives on TCMA: Modernist and traditionalist. Although at this stage it may be unclear as to whether they are narratives, some other stories are also being told by these seven martial artists. The most apparent narrative was mastery, as seen through Luckenchuk's (2006) paper on Karate, which stressed the lifelong striving for continued development in skill and understanding, even with a few simple techniques. Kelly provides her perspective on this and its extension into everyday schemes of perception:

Anything you learn at *white belt*, everything can be progressed. Refined, and fine-tuned. You're never there, so to speak. Once you've perfected something, you can maybe perfect it that bit more. To make it more effective. Or it can be changed to utilise it in a different area. So you are constantly learning. I've never found once that I've been stuck or bored because if you are bored, you shouldn't be doing it, I reckon. Because there are always different ways of looking at something, applying it...so just doing straight centreline punch. If it gets really, really boring, then you can be like, "Hang on. If I just do a centreline punch, and I just drop to the left, and turn my hips, or punch a bit lower, punch a bit higher, then you can always get a different perspective on a single aspect of the martial art. That's the way I see it, constantly learning. It's absolutely essential. Because if you understand that you're constantly learning in your sport, then you can apply it to life. Sometimes you think, "This is the worst job ever." Blah, blah, blah. Just because you are looking at life through that one-track frame of mind. But in martial arts, you learn to expand your views. To look at something in different ways. And you adapt it to your life. You find something, and actually adapt it and think, "OK, it's not such a boring job, if I do this."

(Kelly, interview 2, 13/03/08)

As a potentially lifelong activity, a TCMA can give rise to alternative understandings of ageing and a long-term healthy lifestyle beyond the negative stories often reproduced by young athletic people (see Phoenix & Sparkes, 2006). Will remembers seeing a little old Chinese man on the television, reinforcing the stereotypes of age and ethnicity discussed by Frank (2003). For him, the man's continued activity and learning was a true inspiration:

There was a 105 year old bloke on the TV who had a heart attack when he was eighty, then took up Taiji, and at 105, was jogging round his local park, getting onto the basketball post, and you stick your whole body forwards horizontally. He was doing that at 105 years old. And he put that all down to Taiji and keeping fit, keeping active. And that's what it's about. It's about keeping myself well. Working with sports. Got a sports and exercise degree, been going to the gym for years. You look at the guys who are seventy, eighty, who have been going to the gym all that time, what have they got, really? They're never going to be as good as when they were in their twenties, thirties. They go through their peak and then they die off. Chinese

martial arts, it just seems that you keep going up. It's a big upward trend. And the older you get, the better you get. I mean, with the Chinese culture, the more respect you get as you get older as well. It's like, 'OK, that's a bit more like the way I want my life to be. I want to be fit and well when I'm old, if I get that far, you know (laughs).'

(Will, interview 1, 20/08/08)

Later, I asked him how this made him feel. Again, he referred to the little old men:

It puts a smile on my face to know that you can use it for that, to get those sorts of benefits. You hear a lot about Chinese martial arts and Taiji, and little old men. Those little tiny guys chucking around all these big people. And things like that are an inspiration because they help you think beyond our Western culture of age equals decrepitness, decay (laughs). If you can get older and you can be stronger and you can have more energy as you get older, then yeah, fantastic. Bring it on (laughs)

(Will, interview 2, 13/09/08)

For him, this tale provides a counternarrative to the predominant Western negative ageing narrative, where age equals declines in skill and competency. This story is also equated with increased sedentary behaviours and a lack of learning or experiences of mastery, and could be graphically represented by a downward curve as opposed to the upward curve seen here (see Eichberg, 1998 on various graphical representations in different cultures). Whether this is a story seen only in the TCMAAs remains to be seen. Overall though, these media depictions of Taijiquan through 'little old men' (and sometimes women), and the narratives that follow and precede them, offer new cultural resources for both TCMA practitioners and societies in general.

Modernizing TCMAAs

As we have already seen, Western science is a major force in modern TCMA schools, which can be understood through Giddens' (1991) concept of reflexive modernization through which science may disembed more 'traditional' forms of knowledge. As a budding scientist, Kelly is keen to apply her physiological knowledge for further investigation of embodied experiences. She is particularly passionate about researching qi energy, a rather elusive subject in academia, as she reflects on the difficulties in discussing and researching this topic:

So that's why I'm interested in the science part of it. To try to explain what qi is. I know most martial arts teachers would not agree with this. Because they like to believe in the whole spiritual, inner strength side of it, as opposed to everything being explained by science.

(Kelly, interview 1, 20/02/08)

Here, she mentioned the two different schools of thought I discussed earlier: Scientific and traditionalist discourse, which attempt to explain technical and physical sensations

in often contrasting manners. She later elaborated on this, suggesting some studies similar to those cited by Yuasa (1993) in which measurements are used to explore the conscious cultivation and movement of qi (see Appendix 7.15). Such research, when published, could help others understand their experiences of cultivating qi energy if it is ever successful in measuring or identifying this often mystified substance that has competing discourses attached to it from martial to medical. Another aspect of science that Kelly would like to see being implemented in practical exercise physiology, particularly with targeted stretching to avoid injury. As a form of functional fitness in the sense of working on the body's functional movement for injury prevention, this could be incorporated into any school of martial arts, helping many practitioners with muscle imbalances (see Appendix 7.16). She summarizes her approach to TCMA's, and the contribution she hopes to make as an individual making the most of her scientific habitus and agency:

I would like to include a lot more of the scientific method. Because I think in teaching these days, there's a lot of sheep method...The teacher says it, and you do it. Without understanding how, or why it works, or what's going to be useful in what situation, and all the rest. So my general teaching style, whether it's hockey, rowing or whatever, is to explain exactly what you're doing...and its uses.

(Kelly, interview 1, 20/02/08)

She again contrasts this with the traditionalist or 'sheep' discourse of continued teaching methods and explanations where everything is preserved and nothing is altered. However, these approaches are not necessarily mutually exclusive as it is possible for a traditional pedagogy to welcome scientific thought. This is particularly the case as many traditional pedagogies do not intellectualise on technique until a later point, as Samudra (2008) found with White Crane Silat. Will provides a closing statement on this need for change as a self-admitting modernizer:

Arts progress and things in life progress. It's the idea of change that comes through again. Things have to change. What was relevant 400 years ago when Chen style was developed maybe is not quite as relevant now. Maybe people have figured out what you're doing, so you have to roll with that and change it a bit.

(Will, interview, 20/08/08)

'Western' Society

We have just seen how some modernizers wish for their experience, knowledge and skills to be used to alter TCMA's and institutions themselves. Now we examine some of their ambitions for wider cultural contributions, essentially addressing the question:

‘How can martial arts help communities?’ Mirroring some of the research addressing potentials for TMAs in education for young people in the ‘West’ (Brown & Johnson, 2000; Levine, 1991; Sparkes, 1985), Will provides his perspective:

I want the martial arts to be used in the West to their full potential. And I want people to benefit from them in the way that I have. And that’s not in a violent capacity, that’s not in a particularly self-defence capacity either. I think you should learn martial arts, particularly internal arts. As a child, to develop the skills of being at one with yourself, being rooted, being relaxed and just being more secure in yourself and have that more positive outlook on life that it gives you. It’s not about having power and exerting power over others; it’s just about empowering yourself and being strong within yourself and therefore not needing to try to beat other people. So you understand the power, you have control over the power. And you use it applicably. It comes into more of the hippy ideals that I have like one love and that sort of perspective that a world where we all relate with each other rather than fighting against each other. Martial arts for me isn’t about fighting. That’s just the medium through which you train. But it’s so much more than that, and hopefully I can pass that on a little bit to the people that I train with. Ideally, I train in the park. I want people to see it. I want these little kids to see the art. It’s public. It increases awareness. They may take the piss, they may not understand it, but in ten, fifteen years time, they might see Taiji and they might go, ‘Oh, there’s that guy in the park.’ They might make that link and may go and try it. That’s something I’m just hoping for. I train my class out on the park, and you get people coming over and ask to join in and have a go. And it’s good to be like that, I think. That’s positive. That’s feeding it back out into society. And I think it would sort out a lot of problems in society (laughs). Not at least obesity and the mindless violence that we have going on (laughs). But maybe bring in a slightly open minded attitude as well. That would be good throughout the whole world (continues in Appendix 7.17).

(Will, interview 1, 20/08/08)

From this quote, we can see Will’s opinion on TCMAs as providing multiple benefits for society, particularly in terms of health: Physical well-being, relaxation, lifestyle changes and outlook, all beyond the mere fighting aspects. This adds to our understanding on what a martial art can be for different types of people. Will’s own personal training is made public through training in a park like many practitioners, and the cultural stereotype of the little old Chinese man is replaced by the twenty something, 6’4” Englishman, possibly acting as an inspiration for younger people. His charismatic and performative leadership style and communicative body type are on display for others to marvel and copy if they wish.

In many communities, such as the working class area that *Bridge’s Wing Chun Academy* occupies, TCMAs can bring people together from different social class and education backgrounds, as I previously discussed (Jennings 2005). John reflects on these social health benefits:

A Wing Chun club generally offers something that is lacking the parts that are missing in our society. It gives people something social to do away from alcohol. And away from other things. Getting away from the square eyes, sitting in front of the telly all the time. People who don’t get out of the house. Between work and home life, people need other releases. Some people find it through other sports. I think Wing Chun can offer so much more. Lasting friendships for instance. You get to know people from different backgrounds. It’s

not just about the different physical things that we are learning. You start to find out: “Hey, that guy’s not so different to me. He’s led a different lifestyle.” But when you really start to talk to people, we’re all the same really. People start to understand. We become more tolerant of people.

(John, interview 2, 01/03/08)

As we saw in Chapter 2, such qualitatively understood social health benefits have been largely overlooked in favour of the more quantifiable, physical benefits. More research is necessary to better understand what TCMA’s and other arts can offer cultures and society in general and such research would go beyond the technical aspects of each style and start to examine transformation in a more subjective and even spiritual light. Some of these subjectivities are discussed in the final section the modernizers, who also possess an intellectual approach to their chosen art.

7.1.5. Other aspects

All ideal types possess other elements composing a rounded human being. For the modernizers, there seems to be an interest in the self-defence aspects through highly realistic training, although the need to defend themselves isn’t a major motivation for continued practice. A fascination and embodiment of the traditions still occurs in modern scientific schools, as such institutions are also never pure types. So what is the role of the traditions of China for such teachers? John recognises the value of the Wing Chun Codes of Conduct (see Rawcliffe, 2003) alongside the three Chinese religions for continued transmission (see Appendix 7.18). Such culturally transmitted Maxims were cited by Brown *et al.* (in Press) as examples of idealised transformations as a form of secular religion framework. They highlight expected conduct within and outside the training environment, hoping to help the person cultivate what Yuasa (1987) might describe as a more balanced personality. On the level of subjective physical training, John explains how Wing Chun’s first form can act as a form of slow moving meditation through being in the present moment and attuned through the body:

I believe the hardest thing about is for the person to realise that there’s nothing else that’s important at that time. As they realise that, they don’t have to race. Go slower, take your time. Concentrate on what you’re doing. Don’t have other thoughts fill your mind. Your structure...are you in the right position? Are you moving slowly as slow as you can, but continuously moving? All these things are important. And being fulfilled at that moment in time by doing that. That’s what’s important. That’s what’s hard about it. Because when you talk to people, they’ll always have other thoughts come into their mind. And they’ll have other distractions. What you’ll be thinking is: “Do I feel any tension in my body? Can I feel any blockages in energy?” These things are what I consider make it meditative. Remember: Different people have different ideas on what the word meditation means. I purely go by the word meditation means to concentrate on. That’s its definition in the English dictionary. That’s what I do. I concentrate on what I’m doing. And if we learn to apply that in

everything we do, we could spend our lives in a meditative state. I think that's again, what we're trying to achieve.

(John, interview 2, 01/03/08)

Such spiritual subjectivities are the focus of the next chapter on the thinkers. Before this is examined, we turn to the experiences of traditionalists, who, although taking a similar focus on mastery and learning, tend to focus on conservation or preservation of TCMA's.

7.2. The Traditionalists

What traditions shall be maintained, and how shall these be transmitted? How can the art be preserved for future generations? These are core questions for the four traditionalists in this section. Although often from the same school as some of the other ideal types, these individuals take a perspective on TCMA's as living traditions to be transmitted, embodied and retransmitted. Again, the ideas of habitus, narratives, ideal types and school types are continued here, with the addition of Hobsbawm and Ranger's (1992) concept of invented traditions, which stipulates that certain parts of cultures are claimed to be traditional when they are actually fairly modern, such as the Scottish Highland kilts. This idea can be seen in sociohistorical research on TMA's such as the Japanese styles, where belts are still seen as an Eastern tradition (see Chan, 2000).

Dave Roberts

Dave, 34, is married with a young son, and lives in Adderton, where he first began Wing Chun. He explained that he is from a white working class background from the South East of England, and came to the region for University to study photography. He is currently working for a local newspaper, where he uses his design and IT skills for advertising. Dave is the webmaster of the *Bridge's Academy* website, which has been unregulated for quite some time, and is making some considerable contributions to the marketing of the school, which was also lacking. In recognition for his efforts, Sifu Bridge has provided Dave with free private lessons on a regular basis, which is something he couldn't otherwise afford.

Dave is an intermediate student in *Bridge's Wing Chun Academy*, having practised the art for five years. He found Wing Chun by chance, but was attracted to the martial arts from Kung Fu films, and from seeing a live demonstration of skill by his brother-in-law. He was a regular student in the Adderton class until its unexpected closure. This had a big impact on Dave's life, leading him into depression as he was unable to train due to lack of money to attend the Rigmouth classes. However, he persevered and continued to train at home every day, sticking to practising the skills as they were taught by his Sifu Steve [the former instructor in the Adderton branch of Bridge's Academy]. Due to changed personal circumstances, Dave now travels with myself and others to Rigmouth, and has rapidly recovered his skill. He is enthusiastic about the upcoming Adderton class, where he will act as senior student and assistant instructor. Alongside Wing Chun, Dave practises yoga and meditation as part of his "one big thing" or personal spirituality, and although he has a strong interest in such potentially spiritual practices, he believes primarily that Wing Chun is a martial art. Any spiritual connections are purely his personal interpretation. Wing Chun has also have positive spin offs for Dave in terms of health, as he is now more physically active through his martial training, running and swimming, having previously lived a sedentary and drug fuelled life. I asked Dave to take part in the study as he is an example of a practitioner who experienced an interrupted body project through injury and the closure of the Adderton school. For the above reasons, and for his dedication to one school and style, I have categorised Dave as a traditionalist.

The two interviews were both conducted in his home when it was convenient for him and his family. Dave was wearing a cartoon Kung Fu t-shirt in the first interview, and it followed from his interests in my research and an email conversation that led to a catch up drink in a mutually convenient pub. After the first interview we began regularly training in his kitchen, with some boiling green tea at hand, as we felt in the mood for some Chinese Kung Fu. Some of our training preceded the second interview, and quite interestingly, Dave found these fresh experiences difficult to articulate.

Edward Chan

Edward, 55, is a Chinese-British man originally from Hong Kong. He is a nuclear engineer by day, and emigrated to Britain in the eighties, where he met his wife from

Malaysia. They have two children, and the eldest is my best friend, Tim. As a young man, Edward was immersed the 70s Kung Fu craze, but did not take up martial arts till middle age, where began Taijiquan under the Yang lineage after a serious back pain led him to search for alternative treatments. Physiotherapy wasn't working, although Chinese *tuina* massage seemed to help. A colleague suggested he began Taiji, which he quickly took up seriously, and eventually formed a small class at work, which slowly consisted of just participants of Chinese origin.

Today, as a practitioner of 12 years Edward buys into Taijiquan's predominant health narrative, and has had the privilege of training under the Grandmaster of his esoteric lineage. He was a student of his fellow Chinese-British colleague until the latter's departure to America. Edward now primarily trains alone at home, but also transmits his knowledge and the "national heritage" of Taijiquan to his work colleagues. Edward practises Taijiquan as a martial art, and hopes to develop his skills so that he can use them in a self-defence scenario. As Edward is the father of my best friend from childhood, rapport was already strong as I had spent many evenings at his home. On the other hand, we had never had a one-on-one conversation in such depth as there was always a level of formality when I visited his house. I thought a Chinese-British practitioner might shed a different light on the cultural practice of Taijiquan, particularly as he has direct access to a grandmaster of a particularly martial lineage. Edward is an ideal traditionalist who practises Taijiquan first and foremost as a martial art.

The two interviews were conducted in his home. The first involved an evening discussion with some tea, which had to be transcribed some days later as I was leaving the country for holiday. As the topics drifted to pushing hands, Edward moved through a few motions in the air in order to visually aid his struggling English explanations, which he found difficult to describe. Although we didn't actually do any physical training together, Edward was interested in my previous experience in Chen Style Taijiquan, and I showed him some basic motions in the living room as he stood nodding in fascination at the differences between this and his style. He then rushed upstairs to get his book on Taiji, which has black and white photos of the masters in his lineage, pointing out some of the techniques he was trying to articulate in the interview. The second was a short follow up during a busier time in his schedule, with family and friends in the next room, and was immediately transcribed when I returned home.

Roger Hall

Roger, 35, is a Taijiquan practitioner with seven years experience. He is in a long-term relationship and has a stepdaughter, and is an accommodation and bar manager in Adderton. Although he no longer learns in a formal school, he trains regularly by himself in the art, which he became fascinated in following an interest in spirituality and a strong belief in healthy living. He claimed that if it wasn't for Taiji, he might be involved in witchcraft or other esoteric activities.

Roger didn't choose the class for a particular lineage, but it eventually became a very important thing to his identity. He worked hard in a very technical school of the Zheng Manqing lineage, until his instructor left the area of Adderton. Feeling patriotic to his lineage, and wary of other approaches to the art, Roger sought out an instructor who taught this particular style in the *School of Life Exercise*, and stuck with it until a serious road accident that left him with head injuries. As his level of balance was hampered, Roger now chooses to train alone without the class and partner contact. His own approach to training is very disciplined and precise, being more technical than martial or philosophical. Roger is quite different from other members of the two schools, who he found to be much older and of a hippy disposition. He is happy to stick to the fundamentals and keep moving "in a Taiji way."

I asked Roger to be a participant after several informal discussions on Taiji in our leisure time, where I learned that he was practicing the art after this serious accident, which led him to think of Taijiquan as a potential form of therapy. He expressed a strong interest in my research, and sent me several articles and books following our two meetings. Overall, Roger is an ideal traditionalist. He reads extensively around Taijiquan and other martial arts but at the same time holds a strong interest in lineage and practising the art with the martial elements in mind.

Zack Thompson

Zack, 33, is in a long-term relationship with his girlfriend, whom he lives with in a small town in Rothshire, a very rural county with little access to martial arts academies. They currently have no children, although they are planning a family. He has recently

changed careers from being a chef to a builder, due to frustrations with the money and hours, which is a decision he claims was helped by Wing Chun's enhancement of his confidence and self-awareness.

Zack is an intermediate student at Bridge's Wing Chun Academy who is rapidly developing in skill and understanding through diligent training and commitment to the class. As Zack lives far from Rigmouth, in the other side of the neighbouring county Rothshire, he and his two friends travel a 200-mile round journey each training evening. Coming from a background in Karate, Zack sought out Wing Chun as an efficient fighting system for someone of his biologically slight frame. After travelling across the region in search of the 'original system,' and practising under a number of different instructors who often combine Wing Chun with Taijiquan or Jeet Kune Do (JKD), he came across the Academy, and has remained there for the last three years. He now solely practises Wing Chun, and transmits his knowledge to his friends in Rothshire during informal sessions, where hopes to "develop a circle of decent Wing Chun practitioners" in a county lacking knowledgeable instructors of the art. Zack's dedication to the art is reflected in twice-weekly visits to Rigmouth and four weekly training sessions with his friends alongside short periods of home training. I selected Zack as one of my participants due to his dedication to training and enthusiasm to teach. Considering these issues, Zack can be seen as an ideal traditionalist. He has a background in various martial arts, and has travelled the region in search of the entire Wing Chun system, which was missing in his area. He trains for perfect technique, and wishes to pass the entire system down to anyone who wants to learn. Since the time of interviewing he established his own branch of the Academy in Rothshire, and is transmitting the art as he was taught it.

The two interviews were conducted in his home, and were broken into two parts as we also did some basic drill and chi sau training in his garden and a beautiful hill overlooking a large Celtic stone cross, farmland and the sea. I had noticed this when driving to his home, and found this a tranquil place to train, with the strong wind and sun beating down on us, and some perplexed onlookers. Zack had recently begun to practise outside here in the mornings, and this was to set the day perfectly. These periods of training were very useful as a break from sitting down, and provided plenty of ideas to talk about for the second section. Very thoughtfully, Zack also provided

some home cooked food and drink for the period after the training, which reflects his knowledge of nutrition and care for the health of his fellow practitioners.

7.2.1. Individual Cultivation

Institutional Habitus

The development of a particular style's dispositions is a key concern for the traditionalists, and helps us understand them in relation to the modernizers. Zack previously indulged in MMAs in Rothshire, but felt there was something missing as he was not being taught a 'complete' system of 'traditional' Wing Chun. His tiring journey is an example of the dedicated Kung Fu lifestyle involving sacrifice and denial necessary to invest sufficient physical and economic capital for the martial habitus development (see Appendix 7.19). Through this sacrifice and investment of capital through regular training in a school, the traditionalists eventually develop the institutional habitus of a particular style, in this case Bridge's Wing Chun, which attempts to distinguish itself from other branches of the art. Dave offers comments on the development of this habitus, which at first seemed alien, yet eventually appeared to be 'natural':

There's no one on this Earth that it just comes naturally, that it just works. All these things that come naturally to you in a while are so alien when you start. Are so bizarre that people have to just physically grab your hands and arms and just manoeuvre you to the right position, and you kind of think, 'Well, that's strange. That's an odd place for my arm to be.' It's only after repetition and practice, and demonstration, that these things happened naturally. And it's once this has happened, that you realize how natural they are.

(Dave, interview 1, 11/11/07)

Such continuous repetition and practice as a lifestyle can forge this habitus, and develop it to the level of no-minded mastery or memory in the body as Samudra (2008) puts it. The levels of conscious action change gradually over time, and eventually all actions may become completely unconscious and seemingly natural to observers. These comments reinforce what Bourdieu (1990) has written about the apparent naturalness of habitus. However, as these individuals actively set out to develop these skills, they will have consciously through about and strived towards such skill. This contrasts to Bourdieu's frequent examples of social class (Bourdieu, 1978, 1984), where people are born into a caste like system, and commonly reproduce it without conscious thought. According to this perspective, rarely do people seek out and develop a very different

habitus to which they were born with, although they can do this via the transfer of physical capital.

Zack provides an example of the martial habitus in unconscious, immediate action outside the school whilst cross training with a martial arts instructor:

I've trained with him six or seven times, a couple of years that I've trained with him, I couldn't do anything against him, because he's really good at the controls and locks. But last year when I went back, I only trained a couple of times. He didn't have responses to what I'd been learning in Rigmouth. They pak sau down rather than forward. They don't have a response to the *inside whip*. They don't have a response for the *lut sau side step*. Yeah, the application of the one-two. They don't have a response for that. He did actually say, "I know you're really good at striking. Let's get off striking. Let's get into controlling moves and stuff." So he showed me different locks and stuff like that. But, I couldn't stop striking at times, because it's programmed into me. He did get very, very frustrated. I punched him in the eye by mistake. Once. With the lut sau side step and the punch. Because you're moving in, I didn't actually mean to do it, but he was alright about it.

(Zack, interview 2, 26/04/08)

This martial habitus creates many transformations outside TCMA's, and may create a feeling of faith in this cultivation. For Zack, his rapid reaction on the building site were seen as a result of the Wing Chun training, and in particular the embodied sensitivity he gained from this:

I've jumped off a scaffold before, and landed on a metal spike with just trainers on. I'm sure it's to do with again, the sensitivity. It's happened twice. It happened last weekend. I landed on a metal spike, and the metal spike went right through the sole of my metal trainer. And I felt it, and I just took my foot straight off it. As I was jumping, I retracted my foot off it again. And I thought it had gone through my foot. I took off my sock and trainer...it had gone right through my trainer, and they were only pumps, so it would have gone right through my flesh. And, it had just marked the skin, but didn't break the skin. And I'm sure that as soon as I got more awareness from different parts of my body, as soon as I felt that pain. I just released that pressure, and put all my weight in the other leg. It stopped it from going into my foot. And the same thing happened last weekend when Mike was fitting my front door. I didn't jump on it. I stood on a screw, it was a big brass screw. The same thing happened again. It went right through my pumps, and I jumped. It didn't even break the skin. I wasn't even thinking. I just transferred weight, and took my foot off the area that it was in. Yeah, that's happened twice. I do think that it's stopped me impaling my foot. Most definitely.

(Zack, interview 1, 15/03/08)

Such potentially lifesaving, instantaneous reactions were believed to be from the training that reproduced faith in the system, which further enhanced dedication to the art. This reinforces the examples of reactions raised by others in earlier sections, and offers empirical examples of dark consciousness in action due to long-term investment of capital and bright consciousness. Here, Bourdieu and Yuasa may offer complimentary perspectives on social transformation.

Lineage Identity

We have already seen how some traditionalists actively develop an institutional habitus, which in turn becomes ‘natural.’ Yet how do they identify themselves as martial artists and members of a school? For Dave, a marker of his Wing Chun identity is the body signs of bruises, skin burns and cuts from intense partner training (see Appendix 7.20). This adds to the impressionist tale in Appendix 1.1, where Terry happily showed me his injuries from training and fighting outside the gym. Recently, Dave has often worn his Academy t-shirt in public to raise awareness of the group, including a photo shoot for a charity run. Such social identities and solidarities have been explored quite extensively in sport (e.g. Donnelly & Young, 2001), yet have not been examined in martial arts in particular depth.

Dave is an example of a student dedicated to one institution, as he has never trained in another school, and hopes to belong to the group indefinitely. Below, he reflects on the time of his serious hand injury, which kept him away from training, despite others’ suggestions to cross train:

It’s to not make you think that once you’ve done a small bit of one martial art, you can run away and do a small bit of another. If you’re just picking at things, you’re never really going to become good at anything. A jack of all trades, master of none, is very pertinent. That’s one of the reasons why I still want to do Wing Chun. Even though I’ve not been practising it as far as the class goes for a little while. When people say to me: “Why don’t you do something different?” There’s that exact reason – I don’t want to do that again start something and start from the beginning and you know, maybe in a year or two, I can’t do that. I want to excel at something, not just know a bit of it.

(Dave, interview 1, 11/11/07)

Quite dramatically, Roger explains his focus on only one Taijiquan style over other ‘denominations’ in terms of a religion:

To actually change your form, it’s like a changing your religion (laughs)...I suppose you could think Taiji like Christianity. Then you’ve got branches like Catholic, and then Protestant, like the Chen and the Yang styles. Then you’ve got smaller parts of the Protestant, which are the Methodists. That could be like your *Yang Long* form, and then you’ve got your Baptists, which is like the Zheng Manqing short form. And it’s all part of the same umbrella, but you seem to be very fanatical towards your own little bit.

(Roger, interview 2, 27/11/07)

Such secular identities surrounding an institutional habitus have given rise to political disputes in TCMA’s surrounding the art’s legitimacy, and this will be discussed shortly. This perspective of one style being practised for life was reinforced by all the

traditionalists, although Zack suggested mixing styles could be done by an individual when they get to a certain level of mastery (see Appendix 7.21). Here, the individual habitus and identity of the modernizers contrasts with these traditionalists as with the latter, the whole system, including the weapons and advanced concepts, is aimed to be mastered as what Frank (2003) explains Taijiquan as a progressive, complete kinaesthetic system. If any component is missing, the others are incomplete, leaving the practitioner less well rounded.

Subjectivities

What is a martial art for traditionalists? Is it more than technique, principles and fighting? Zack provides his perspectives on the value of martial training in his life:

Well, it's just changed everything really. It's given me a lot more focus in my day-to-day life. It's given me a lot of positive spin offs in other areas of my life. Such as motivation. Awareness. I've become very aware of what I want to achieve. What I'm capable of. It cancelled a lot of negativity out of my life. It's given me a good focus. Plus it's the physical attributes, extra coordination, energy levels, fitness...just clarity of mind in a lot of things, has really helped.

(Zack, interview 1, 15/03/08)

We might understand this as the transferable sets of dispositions, both character and physical, transferring to Zack's everyday life. This offers a moment of reflection on very complex and dynamic transformations that Zack nevertheless articulates very well. This contrasts to how Bourdieu's writings are commonly misrepresented as largely on the level of unconsciousness as Zack is able to consciously articulate the transformations. This is certainly something worth addressing at a later point in the thesis as such examples are great illustrations of a fluid habitus open to reflexivity.

Dave, however, stresses the importance of the martial aspects over any character development, which is seen as a personal choice (see Appendix 7.22). This lack of a spiritual subjectivity surprised me somewhat as I knew Dave had been involved in various self-cultivating practices including yoga and meditation. Dave continues to explain the definition of a martial art that he was taught once he entered his school in Adderton:

So this is a martial art as taught by a person who knows this martial art. This is the core of it. I'm not asking you to believe anything, I'm just asking you to accept that this is someone who knows what he's talking about. What you bring to it is up to you. It's a fighting skill.

There's no pretence that it's anything but a fighting skill. The philosophy is there, if you want it. Only if you want it. You're not expected to buy into something. It's just...this is a martial art. It works, and that's that.

(Dave, interview 2, 13/02/08)

From this last extract, we can see the importance of the pedagogy in forging martial subjectivities and reconstructing meaning. Yet where do such stories come from? Are they offered by powerful members of the group, such as Sifu Bridge, who previously taught Wing Chun only for a fighting skill? The role of others for these traditionalists' experience is explored next.

7.2.2. Relational Cultivation

Shared Cultivation

As part of a 'complete' or 'authentic' system, a TCMA must include partner training for overall cultivation of a practitioner. This is particularly true when senior students help juniors, as Zack explains:

It runs between honing what you've been doing and going up a little notch. It's with a more advanced person. It takes you up a game, up a step. It just shows you so much. Even stuff you think you've got. You might have the basic movement, but there's a lot more to it. With somebody of less experience, you wouldn't get to that level. You wouldn't get to that depth of it. It would just stay more external. You're doing movement rather than just the finer points. It's the finer points, the little things that add up to the big ones.

(Zack, interview 2, 26/04/08)

Through advanced schemes of perception, senior students can guide less experienced partners to further develop. 'Internal' aspects such as sensitivity and body structure are all monitored in this manner, both reflexively and through partners, whilst the 'external' movements, those being the more visible motions, are not examined as much due to the heightened sensitivity and kinaesthetic awareness developed through partner training. Zack reflects on the difficulty in assessing one's own progression as development is both relational but constantly changing:

I think it's a never-ending thing. Before I started going to Sifu, the level that I'm at now, I'd be happy to have got to. But now that I'm at the level that I'm at now, now I want to get to the level you're at. Once I'm at the level you're at, then I'll want to get to the level...but then you'll be further again. You don't see yourself getting better so much. But I think other people do. I think it's also hard to judge in the class that you're getting better because everybody's getting better at their own, they're picking their game up. And their adding to their game, the same time you're adding to your game. It's a constant evolving thing.

(Zack, interview 1, 15/03/08)

Yet what if he had no teacher? All the traditionalists have experienced periods of isolation from senior students who could monitor their actions, either through injury or changed distance from their school. Zack recalls a time before regular partner training, which was: “Very experimental. A different world compared to having somebody there. Who knows the does and don’ts, in the flesh” (Zack, interview 1, 15/03/08, see Appendix 7.23). This reinforces Brown’s (2005) comments on the limitations of DVDs and other media for learning a martial art as although popular amongst the fitness industry in hybrid EMFs such as modern yoga, where they are seen as complete courses, instructional DVDs are usually only regarded as complimentary to a regular teacher and supervised partner training ‘in the flesh.’ This brings us to the relationships between student and teacher, often taking a master-disciple power structure, and returns our attention to what Wacquant (2004) and others have termed a carnal sociology, which is a return to the everyday, lived body.

Master-Disciple

In certain TCMA lineages, master-disciple relationships still exist, acting as apprenticeships for a lifelong trade of teaching a particular style. Much like some of the Japanese cultural ‘traditions’ (see Cox, 2003), these involve a substantial amount of ritual, along with the display of character development through a long-term assessment of the prospective student. Although no traditionalists in this study have directly experienced this, they often referred to disciples as examples of the old masters who they revere. Edward’s instructor is a *disciple* of a Yang Taijiquan grandmaster, and he explained that this is very different socialisation process to the modern Western coach-student relationship through the involvement of substantial rituals including an essay and *kowtowing*, along with a long-term assessment of the prospective student’s character (see Appendix 7.24). The master would only teach a handful of disciples or ‘*indoor students*’ all that they know, based on the display of a balanced character. The disciple is expected to stay loyal to that master, learn only from them, and eventually pass on the entire art. Unlike Yuasa’s (1987) understanding of self-cultivation, which is meant to develop the character, the master-disciple relationship assesses the existing personality and morals before training begins:

I suppose it is to prevent the martial art aspect going into the wrong hands, if you like. By having a long period of contact, then the master can assess whether his pupil is of a good character or not. Involved in some other illegal or immoral activities. Then the master can establish that he can bring the pupils to a high level.

(Edward, interview 2, 17/04/08)

Such a focus on morals and long-term, reflexively monitored relationships brings us to relationships outside the realm of TCMAAs, where some of these values seem to be transferred. As a teacher, Zack aims to transmit values that will be seen in everyday actions and relationships. When I questioned him on his teaching, he explained this further:

I hope honesty, tolerance...nobody can be perfect, but trying to be the best that you can. In yourself. In all areas of your life. Using Wing Chun as the first step to achieve that. Because you're trying to achieve perfection in your technique. So hopefully that quest for perfection, that will go into other areas of your life. Whether it be your relationship. With family. Or work relationships. Or just in dealing with people I think.

(Zack, interview 1, 15/03/08)

Here, he mentions perfection as being the key issue in everyday life: Perfection as dispositional quality in technique transfers to perfection in relationships, in a seemingly different field.

7.2.3. Institutional Cultivation

Traditional Leadership

According to Weber, traditional leadership requires leaders to establish authority based on tradition or authenticity (Parkin, 1992). In TCMAAs this can be a link to particular masters or close connections to China. Such a leadership style involves the reproduction of teaching methodologies that would rarely change for individuals. Dave recalls his first experiences of teaching, where he reproduced the experiences he had as a beginner:

I enjoyed the aspect of showing these little things. And in almost parrot-fashion, repeat the things that were told to me when I started. That amazed me so much, like I said, about the triangle thing. When people asked me what this was for, what their guard was for, what their *jong sau* was for. It was like being shown a magic trick, I thought. This impressed me when I first saw it. "Do that...put your hands out in front of you like that. Don't move them, or move them forward." You punch them and you hit them, and instead of hitting them, you say, "I am trying to hit you by the way. I am doing it. I'm not doing this as a joke or to over emphasize what I'm doing." That is making my arm do that. That's how effective it is. And seeing that same kind of realization dawn on them that dawned on me at the time as well.

(Dave, interview 1, 11/11/07)

His transition into an intermediate student enabled him to reproduce pedagogic strategies for the development of martial skill and learning epiphanies (Berger, 2008 for a structurationist perspective on the latter). He was no longer just receiving the transmission, but actively passing it on through the kinaesthetic chain. A key issue to such traditional leadership is the lack of technical or scientific explanation as the learner is given an experiential framework with which to explore Wing Chun in their own way. Unsurprisingly, many epiphanies happen in this physical, fleshy and non-intellectual pedagogy that form major learning experiences much like those in other TMAs (e.g. Samudra, 2008). Within a short space of time, Dave's habitus developed to a more unconscious level, yet he felt empathy for the students who have to think about every action. Yet as a potential teacher, what does he want to pass down? He explains this in relation to his subjective interpretation of TCMAAs examined earlier:

I think technique is the best thing to share. If you can be pure like that, and just share technique, everything else is picked up. You embody what you want to learn, what you want people to learn. You don't just say it. You don't impart that sort of thing. If you teach technique in a very pure manner, then people will learn from you what they will learn from you. If you are a very pure person, if you're placid, and if you're a calm sort of individual, then they'll pick that up during the teaching. It's while you're teaching the basic stuff, they'll just pick up what you embody. So, hopefully the more I do it, hopefully the better the person I become. I'll embody better qualities, and hopefully people will pick them up.

(Dave, interview 2, 13/02/08)

Therefore, for Dave, the transmission of technique can involve transmission of character development, being highly relational and taught, rather than a solo journey as Yuasa (1987) explains. Yet how do such practitioners legitimate actions in relation to other subjective interpretations? Edward and Roger offer some light on this focus on lineage and traditions.

Legitimizing Tradition

Traditional schools establish links to certain body lineages and distinguished masters, and rarely change anything as the mantra, following Weber's traditional form of leadership, can be understood as: 'This is how things are traditionally done.' Roger explain the two major approaches in Taijiquan today, the accessible health schools and the strict traditionalist schools:

You can teach it two certain ways. You can teach it in a very certain way that is accessible to lots of people, where you can have many people in your class, and teachers do teach an

accessible form of Taiji just so lots of students come to their class every week. Then there's some teachers, who (laughs), I have had, where the drop out rate was high, because of the very structured way that you'd move, and there was no room for flights of fancy when you're moving around. It all had to be a certain way. And after maybe five, six, seven months, there was no obvious development either.

(Roger, interview 1, 06/11/07)

Here, the uncertain transformation and unclear path of cultivation contrasts with most people's understandings of progress, where development is externally measurable or subjectively noticeable. In such strict traditionalist schools, the students move as a collective to mirror the motions of the instructor in an attempt to replicate the art's institutional habitus. This requires very precise communal practice or shared moving meditation likened to religious rituals:

If we were doing the form, he leads the form, and, let's focus upon the body, so the mind's gotta be thinking in a certain way. He'd give you certain points...the middle finger in line with the seams of your trousers. So when you're doing the form, there's gravity about it. So, you'll be able to leave the form, so sometimes he'd just be mentioning, and keeping everyone together in movements, and say "step" "release" and then say the name of a particular posture. Other times, he'd just leave it. I think the gravity of the hall was how he kept the class disciplined at the time. Doing the form would be akin to taking communal at the Church. It's something you don't mess about with. Also, if we were going to exercise, and look at something in the form, we would take a small part of the form and work with it. We wouldn't incorporate an exercise apart from the form. We would do the form in a certain way. We wouldn't do it quickly. We'd do it in a similar pace.

(Roger, interview 2, 27/11/07)

Such communal practice may serve to produce strong group identities through what Durkheim termed *collective effervescence* (Shilling & Mellor, 1998). Rather than a martial practice with art aspects, Taijiquan is often seen as an art with some martial aspects akin to mindful fitness (see Markula, 2004), so for in order to keep its following, a traditionalist pedagogy must reinforce a sense of superiority over other approaches. As a subculture, Roger's school attempted to justify its methods in comparison with neighbouring classes, particularly those more spiritually inclined, who are effectively 'othered': "Things would come out: 'If you want to learn Taiji in a touchy, feely way, maybe you should go to this class' (laughs)." (Roger, interview 2, 27/11/07). Here, Roger's instructor contrasted such an accessible approach with seemingly traditional methods where there is no room for individual approaches. Instead, the class collectively move together to develop the same institutional habitus. From an early stage, he and his classmates were taught that this was essentially special compared with popular Taijiquan, and were encouraged to read up on this (see Appendix 7.25). Although Roger's readings of martial arts and Chinese philosophical texts is quite extensive, he retains a key passion for the Zheng Manqing lineage and

methods, and recently spoke to me about his interest in the martial applications, which weren't stressed in this particular school (which instead focused on the postures of the form and pushing hands). It is this focus on lineage for legitimation and reinforcement of 'tradition' in traditionalists schools that I turn to text.

Narrating Lineage

For traditionalists, body lineage was paramount not only for establishment and maintenance of legitimacy but for major meanings behind practice itself, and practitioners tended to continuously mention their particular lineage during interviews and in more informal conversations. Such lineages were meant to represent direct transmission of the institutional habitus through a close kinaesthetic citizenship. Edward, normally a man of few words, spoke extensively about his lineage, surprising me somewhat with his factual account of the passing down of the 'traditional' Yang Style to his particular Grandmaster, who represents the style in living form:

The style I learned is called Yang Yeung Sing, in Cantonese. It's the surname of the Grandmaster. So actually, he learned from another place in China. Around 1800. A place called Chung Gar Kun. That's the name of the place in Cantonese. So that clan, *Cheng*. So the great, great, great grandmaster, who started this style, Yang...*Yeung Long Sing*, in Cantonese. So he went to that place, I think a couple of times in the span of ten or twenty years. And then, when we went back to Beijing or Peking...I think he taught his two sons, and was teaching the aristocracy and the Imperial family. He was hired. One of his sons got a very high post in the Imperial army. His son would be the second generation. And then the third generation...two sons...I can't remember the detail. But the younger son came to the Southern part, or was invited to the Southern part of China to teach Taiji. My colleague's master's master learned from Yeung Ching Po. His name is Chang Yung Pa. He's a scholar as well. He had his first degree from King's University, in Law. And then he went over to Germany, and did his PhD in Law. And when he went back into China, he was in the Government. And he hired Yeung Ching Po, the third generation of Yeung's family, to come down to Southern China to teach. He was his last disciple. And his name is Dr. Jang. Jang Yu Pa. And...the Yeung third generation master made him swear that he would not teach anybody else. I think the reason is that the Yeung family, they rely on teaching the martial arts to make a living. But he is a scholar. If he taught others, then he would take their livelihood away. That's what my colleague's master taught me...but then my colleague's master is called Ng Kim Hoi. He was interested in martial arts since he was young. He'd done something else before he started Taiji. He was interested in Taiji, although he didn't know his master, Dr. Jung, before. According to him, one day, he looked up the telephone directory when he was in Hong Kong, and rang Dr. Jung...and then Dr. Jung explained to him that he couldn't teach him. But he persevered. Dr. Jung introduced Ng Kim Hoi to one of the guys who would teach, and then after some lessons, Ng Kim Hoi would contact Dr. Jung, and went over, and showed him what he had learned. To his horror, the style, the postures, were out of shape. And after a period of time of getting to know Ng Kim Hoi better, and he broke his vow, and took him in as a disciple. Dr Jung, he passed away in his 90s, in 1980 something.

(Edward, interview 1, 18/03/08)

In fact, this story was far more elaborate than his own life story, which tended to be based on very direct and not particularly articulate answers. Such a lineage account was taught to him by his own instructor, and reinforced by his precious book on Taijiquan, which displayed a picture of each master along the lineage on every page, which Edward excitedly showed me this after the interview, providing evidence of his link to the masters beyond this oral history. Such masters acted as the leaders of each ‘generation’ of practitioners, even if there was little difference in age between master and student. This is common in many TMAs, where instructors often advertise themselves as being in a certain generation, but rare in modern Taijiquan schools, which often have little record of the body lineage, and appear to rely on a bureaucratic form of legitimation. Yet what this linear family tree does not explain is the complex and dynamic relationships between senior and junior students, who from we have seen, play a vital role in the pedagogy.

Such oral histories are common in many TMAs, and often consist of folklore and legends rather than established facts. Dave reflects on the importance of lineage in context of the legends and realities:

I think there's a certain amount of authenticity involved in martial arts, whereby you can trace your family back in a metaphorical way...with Wing Chun, you can trace it back to Yip Man, and, if you believe in the family tree is made, you can trace it back to Ng Mui. You can trace it back to the person who walked out of the Shaolin Temple, and invented it. If you genuinely believe in the legends of she taught Wing Chun, and Wing Chun taught her husband, and he named it Wing Chun after her and blah, blah, blah. So and so taught so and so. When you go back that far, it's almost biblical. It's like Adam and Eve, Gail and Abel. And, you don't know how much to believe in the truth, what is solid fact. But you know from Yip Man how much is solid fact, you know that he taught Long Wang Bing, Long Wang Bing taught Sebastian Yi, Sebastian Yi taught Sifu. You know, that's only four generations back to the grandmaster. Four generations from me. It's like great, great, great grandfather. Or whatever. It's the foreseeable past. And you know from that one nucleus, everyone who does Wing Chun in the world, can trace themselves back along one branch or another to that one place. Yeah, it was something that's just fascinating about that really (continues in Appendix 7.26).

(Dave, interview 1, 11/11/07)

Dave has explained his direct lineage back to the late Grandmaster Yip Man, the first to teach Wing Chun openly beyond a ‘closed door’ group of disciples, and is now seen as the figurehead of the largest Wing Chun lineage, including probably two million practitioners in hundreds of countries (Chu *et al.*, 1998). This recent lineage has undergone significant development since Yip Man's death as his students developed their own styles based on their individual habitus, which has resulted in political disputes (see for instance some disputes over lineage on certain online forums e.g.

<http://forum.kungfumagazine.com>). Dave's kinaesthetic citizenship is even shared with Bruce Lee, an early influence of his as a youngster, and this gives him a sense of pride as a practitioner.

From this subsection we have seen how importance body lineage is for legitimacy and as a framework for individual subjective meaning. Both of these centre around the ideal subculture of a family, where moral behaviour is expected. The other traditionalists, Roger and Zack chose their current schools because of the particular lineages they belong to in order to develop the institutional habitus of the masters they revere. In Roger's case, he wanted to continue developing this habitus, having found other styles strange via his socialised schemes of perception. He reflected that although a direct lineage doesn't guarantee a good school, "It is nice to think that maybe part of Zheng Manqing has transcended into me." (Roger, interview 1, 06/11/07). In Zack's story, he explained his search for the 'complete' Wing Chun system with the 'original' syllabus, highlighting his faith in this lineage as a preserved tradition, even though some of the drills and sequences, such as the eight stances and eight punches uncommon to many Wing Chun systems, were added quite recently (see Appendix 7.27). Here the concept of invented tradition (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1992) is key to understanding the meaning behind these men's cultivation in that apparent antique training methods and forms were invented in recent decades, and often with Western students in mind.

7.2.4. Art Cultivation

Mastery Narratives

Beyond the prevalent story of continuity and reproduction of perceived traditions, the traditionalists shared with modernizers a passion for continuous mastery and learning into old age, and these stories seem to reproduce openly in wider contexts. Dave explained his early motivations to cultivate a high level of mastery in relation to his peers in the school:

Personal achievement's got a lot to do with it. You want to get good at it, and I had it in my head that I wanted to go as far as I could go with it, to be as good as I could be, whatever that may mean. I felt a black belt, black sash and things like that, an instructor one day. I wanted to take it to that kind of level and get good...at the beginning, there's a steep learning curve where you go from nothing to in a couple of months to knowing quite a lot and you don't realize it until a beginner comes along, and you recognise what you were like

and how much you've learned in that time, because things have become so natural to you. You realize how quickly you've progressed. And then it kind of plateaus (continues in Appendix 7.28).

(Dave, interview 1, 11/11/07)

Dave's story provides a mountain metaphor with mastery being depicted as a continuous journey upwards with several plateaus to overcome, which acts as a challenge. Although the common event of participant dropout is not focused in this study, it is interesting to note Dave's dismissive reaction to core practitioners leaving the school, who seemed to have rejected the cultural norm of continued practice, sharing knowledge and Kung Fu lifestyle:

It must take an awful lot of dedication. Why would that dedication suddenly stop? Unless it's just goal orientated. Unless it's a case of: "Once I've done that, once I've got my black belt, then that's alright." So once you've got your black belt, then you go home. Surely along the way, I'd imagine that you'd get to the point that you don't want to stop. I haven't got to that stage yet, but I don't imagine myself to getting to the black belt stage and thinking: "Once I've got to that stage, then that's it." To put a different kind of spin on it, it's almost like someone saying once "Once I've got a certain sense of self-awareness, I'll give up meditation. I'm not quite bothered about the enlightenment thing. Just as long as I feel good." It's just futile really. To go so far down a route, and then just stop.

(Dave, interview 2, 13/02/08)

Here, Dave uses the analogy of meditation, his complimentary cultivation practice, to explain the lifelong quest toward personal mastery. He, like many TCMA practitioners, combines his martial training with other EMFs. Are these traditions being upheld or modernized? I explore this next.

Preserving TCMA's

How are these practitioners involved in the transmission of TCMA's and related traditions? Being Chinese, Edward regards Taijiquan as a national heritage passed through the generations in Chinese culture. So rather than seeing it as a diasporic, hybrid art, Edward gains meaning from it as what Chan (2000) refers to as a cultural artefact, in this case exported and globalised in Britain to gain new layers of meaning. He had no plans to make any changes to the system, although his personal teaching was apparently not as strict as his Grandmaster's, and feared he might be lessening the system's standards through this. However, he was against any modern, seemingly more objective alterations to the system such as gradings and belts for codification, as seen in various other styles:

It's difficult to transform it into something like other martial arts, with grading systems and belts. I suppose you could do that to a certain extent. Like if you finished your traditional form, you can have an orange belt. When you finish your sword, you can have a blue belt. But then in terms of sparring, it would be difficult. You could do pushing hands, but in terms of real application and sparring, because the philosophy is the minimum force and the most economical effort, most of the moves would disable or kill your opponent. Which are not suited for sparring.

(Edward, interview 1, 18/03/08)

Nevertheless, other traditionalists were open to the idea of modernization in some respects. Although not prolific teachers, these individuals offered some suggestions for the progression of their art in modern society and in relation to other martial arts fields. Roger felt a form of bureaucracy was needed in order to form a unifying body for all Taijiquan schools, which as he said earlier, are much like competing denominations of the same faith:

I think Taiji would really benefit if it had a sort of unity. There are many different factions. If it all comes through one encompassing umbrella, where people from other sides could identify it, and where people within it could actually understand other people in it. That would be very beneficial. Because even though I practise Taiji, I don't really know much about the Chen form, or how they practise, or even the lineage. If I didn't practise Taiji, and was looking at Taiji, it would just look really difficult to understand.

(Roger, interview 2, 27/11/07)

Therefore for Roger, some form of bureaucratic leadership is necessary to overcome the barriers to outside schemes of perceptions when judging Taijiquan. Although he may not consider this, the emphasis on body lineage identity may lessen if such measures codified and unified various factions of Taijiquan.

International communities

How might a traditionalist approach benefit society? Zack hopes that by bringing the 'complete' Wing Chun system to Rothshire, he will contribute to the local community of martial artists tired of instructors with little pedigree in regards to a rounded approach and knowledge (see Appendix 7.29). He explained that his main goal was to pass on the complete system to good students in this rather economically deprived rural area, where established masters have rarely considered visiting. In recent months Zack established his school, and is successfully training many martial artists from other systems via Sifu Bridge's recently formed (although seemingly traditional) syllabus. Much like the accounts of Western capoeiristas in (Joseph 2008), he reflected on this transmission of the diasporic habitus:

I'm happy and privileged to learn the system. To have the opportunity. Especially as Sifu's had to travel so extensively to get the knowledge. He wouldn't have got that staying in England, or possibly staying in one of the European countries. Asia and America, they are quite far from here. Yeah, to have the ability to be able teach it, is something I'm still striving for. I'm very excited about the prospect of it all. But I'm just concerned about doing it correctly. That's what I'm very concerned about. Because I take seriously and it's a big part of my life, I don't want to sell it short, basically.

(Zack, interview 2, 26/04/08)

This concern for properly transmitting TCMA's was shared by other practitioners, including Dave. For him, the continuity of the living kinaesthetic chain was a top priority, which involved passing on knowledge from senior at the top of the chain to junior students lower down:

The sort of person that wants to teach is the sort of person that wants to other people to learn, that wants other people to have those skills. That feels enough gratitude for their own teachers in order to, to pass that knowledge on. There's got to be that kind of reverence. Maybe gratitude to the art. You're thankful to the art, so you're grateful to other people for the art. It's all about sharing in the Kung Fu. Without the teaching, the art would sort of die out. Without those sort of people who wanted to teach it and wanted to share it, it wouldn't exist. You wouldn't know it. You've got to keep it alive. It would be great if most of the world knew it. It would probably be fewer violent people in the world. If everyone trained in a martial art.

(Dave, interview 2, 13/02/08)

Such a kinaesthetic chain was regarded as a living entity by many of the practitioners in that this living art must be properly passed onto the next generation for it to survive as a cultural art form. As we have seen earlier, by drawing upon the work of Shilling (2003) on physical capital, without the sharing orientated pedagogy, the art would die out completely and end the living body lineage. At the same time, this art may have benefits for wider society through the paradox of the martial arts, where increased training leads to a lessened desire for fighting (Back & Kim, 1982).

7.2.5. Other Aspects

What is ever apparent is that all individuals have other interests and hold multiple meanings in terms of martial arts practice and cultivation in general. Whilst Dave and I discussed Wing Chun's famous politics on the authentic or traditional way of doing things, he critiqued the idea of an authentic way of weight distribution:

The way that your body works, the way that you feel comfortable with things. Some people like the bendy, moving around (laughs), sort of shifting their weight around. An almost cat-like approach. And some people like the very solid, centred, grounded thing. It just depends on what you feel better with (see also Appendix 7.30).

(Dave, interview 1, 11/11/07)

Such a perspective acknowledges the importance of the biological and biographical components of individual habitus. Even as a traditionalist, Dave recognizes the value of the individual alongside the institutional habitus, and in this manner regards Wing Chun as a connection to established spiritual practices:

In my philosophy, everything is related. It is part of one thing. Just if there's something worthwhile in the one big thing, and Kung Fu was part of that. So it has so many of the same qualities as meditation itself. Just the first form, going through Siu Lim Tao is a meditation. You're channelling particular energies as well. So by doing it, you are meditating in a way, in a sense. You're allowing it to fit in with the other aspect of your spiritual practice if you like. It's a meditation.

(Dave, interview 2, 13/02/08)

7.3. Conclusions

In this chapter I focused on seven martial artists characterised as modernizers and traditionalists. Although these take different subjective positions on cultivation, from a scientific perspective thriving on reflexive modernization to a conservationist/preservationist one based on invented traditions, they share a concern for the mastery and transmission of their chosen styles. Following the previous chapter, we may conceptualise their transformations as in the following matrixes (based on the four levels of cultivation):

<i>Individual</i> Individual Habitus	<i>Relational</i> Communicative Body
<i>Institutional</i> Charismatic - Bureaucratic Legitimation	<i>Art</i> Modernization Art

Figure 7.1 Matrix of the Modernizers

<i>Individual</i> Institutional Habitus	<i>Relational</i> Mirroring Body
<i>Institutional</i> Traditional	<i>Art</i> Traditionalist

Leadership	Art
------------	-----

Figure 7.2 Matrix of the Traditionalists

The modernizers develop an individual martial habitus based on the biological habitus, and often hold multiple identities and subjective interpretations of TCMAAs through cross training. They adopt a charismatic form of leadership and legitimation based on their performing selves, which inspires the collective effervescence of a school. As modernizers, they regards body lineage as progressive and open to individual interpretation and reflexive modernization. As the arts are not commonly used in combat, these individuals regards them as benefiting society in terms of health and discipline.

The traditionalists develop an institutional habitus based on a particular body lineage, and hold a strong group identity around this. Their knowledge of other styles and body lineages is limited, and they develop long-term, almost apprentice like relationships with one particular master. The arts are preserved or conserved so that they are transmitted in a pure or completely unadulterated form for the next generation of the kinaesthetic chain, and they are socially constructed as the traditional or authentic style, even though such traditions may have been recently invented.

It is at this point following Dave's spiritual comments that we turn to the stories of thinkers taking a philosophical and spiritual subjective approach to cultivation.

8. The Thinkers

In this chapter I examine the transformative experiences of five individuals classified as ‘thinkers’ who currently adopt a perspective of health, meditation, philosophy and spirituality as central to their practice. Although the consistent themes of hard work, sacrifice, pursuit of mastery/perfection and shared development continue, the thinkers appear to take different angles on the same cultivation practice despite the term ‘thinker’ suggesting de-emphasis of the embodied nature of martial practice.

I also identified two subtypes: The *healers* focus on healing practices and holistic health whilst the *meditators* focus on meditation and spirituality. Of course, all thinkers share both aspects to some degree, but for the sake of analysis and interpretation, I have divided this chapter into two parts to illustrate trends in cultivation and transformation. We begin first with the healers.

8.1. The Healers

Chris Armstrong

Chris, 44, is a Chen style Taijiquan instructor based in Dagmouth in Dontshire, with over 12 years experience in the art. He is divorced, and has an 18-year-old daughter who lives with her mother. He currently lives alone, although his daughter often stays with him during weekends. He is white British of mixed Jewish and German heritage, and is a carpenter by trade, although he has ambitions to become a professional Taijiquan instructor. Chris is originally from London, but moved to another large city in England to attend university. There, he studied engineering at University, where he came across a demonstration of Taijiquan that changed his life forever.

He moved to Dontshire around 8 years ago and is a regional representative and *standard-bearer*, having close connections with some of the hierarchy of Chen’s family lineage. However, Chris’ emphasis is on Taijiquan as a healing art for today’s sedentary and stressed society. He shares a passion in tuina massage, which is based on traditional Chinese medicine (TCM), and sees this entwined with Taiji’s principles. Although he is interested in developing the martial aspects, when I recently met him on the street, he

told me about his involvement in Buddhist chanting and meditation under his spiritually orientated Taiji master, who he reveres (see Appendix 8.1). I selected him after witnessing a public demonstration and being involved in his class as a participant observer.

The interview was conducted in his home, and followed several emails that were not answered. Thinking that he was no longer interested in the study, I was surprised to receive a call in the evening requesting an interview the following morning. During the interview Chris appeared very tranquil and serene, with some soothing Chinese instrumental music playing as we drank specialist Chinese tea, which he frequently topped up. After the interview Chris kindly gave me a copy of a Chen Style book to take home, which he had written a section on the relationships between tuina massage and the martial arts aspect. We have since been in touch by text and phone, and Chris is interested in meeting up to talk about recent events in his life, which has involved an emerging spiritual development through Buddhist chanting.

Joe Salmon

Joe, in his mid thirties, is a professional Taijiquan instructor in a large commercial organisation, *Taiji World*. He is married with a young daughter, and lives a good two hours from his other family as he moved to the region around 10 years ago. He holds a degree in (mainly Western) philosophy from a British university, and maintains a strong interest in the riddles and embodied perspective Daoist philosophy rather than Western academic approaches to wisdom, although he demonstrated a tentative interest in doing a PhD one day. Joe is a strict vegan, a practice shared by his entire household, which has sprung from a long-term interest in environmentalism including work for non-profit organisations.

Joe began Taijiquan when looking for a form of moving meditation as a student. He turned professional several years ago, and teaches in various contexts, including corporate events, schools and hospitals, where he transmits Taijiquan as a meditative and healing art in an accessible way. He is currently exploring the more internal, martial aspects of the art within the Zheng Manqing lineage after a more meditative and health focus of the 24-step and 48-step forms. Interestingly, this is with the well-respected first

teacher of Roger, who maintains high standards and low numbers. I chose him after attending his class and looking at his group's health/meditation focused website.

The two interviews immediately followed classes run by Joe in a gym that was very conveniently near my flat. Being a vegan, Joe refused any tea with milk, so we settled for some camomile tea as we ran through two very useful interviews. At points my academic theoretical position of mind-body unity clashed with his Daoist and holistic perspective on the body, although we agreed on many points (see Appendix 4.10). After the interview we chatted about martial arts and films as he examined my ever expanding martial arts DVD collection.

Sarah Jones

Sarah, 33, is an intermediate Wing Chun student. She was in a long-term relationship during the time of interview, although that ended shortly afterwards. She currently has no children, and is a part time administrator and a part time tuina massage therapist, which she hopes to become a professional in following further training and a growing clientele. She has diplomas in massage and anatomy, and is developing knowledge on Chinese medicine and nutrition through extensive reading. As her father was in the military, she was often moving around, and stayed in Adderton for around 7 years. Since the time of interview she has moved to larger city in the region in order to be closer to her clients, her Wing Chun class and her Capoeira group.

Like me, she was drawn to Wing Chun following a reading of Bruce Lee's biography *Fighting Spirit* by Bruce Thomas (1994). She was one of *Bridge's Wing Chun Academy's* most devoted students, training in all classes available, plus private lessons. She had a notable role in the transmission of knowledge in both the Rigmouth and Adderton schools, until a personal disagreement with Sifu Bridge led her to join another school in the area to continue her development. From her passion for Wing Chun came a strong interest in massage, holistic therapy, and traditional Chinese medicine (TCM). In addition, she took up Capoeira for fitness and fun, highlighting her enjoyment of physical movement and cultivation over fighting skill. To attend the evening classes, she travels a two hour round trip alone. I chose to talk to Sarah as I knew she possesses

immense knowledge and experience of the system, and often talks of its gendered nature.

Both interviews were conducted in the designated treatment room where she gives massages in her home. Immediately after both interviews Sarah suggested we did some chi sau. I was initially hesitant about this as I wanted to write up some notes and avoid any issues between our different styles, but I was pleased that we did train. Over four sessions (spanning several months) since she has left Bridge's Academy, I felt Sarah develop a new institutional approach to Wing Chun that eventually merged well with her approach to combat. After the interviews and training in her home I had time to admire her expansive book collection on martial arts, nutrition, massage and philosophy. She has a banner for her current Wing Chun Association, which with its Chinese calligraphy, gave the room a feeling of authority in a traditional sense.

8.1.1. Individual cultivation

Individual Habitus

Sarah is a dedicated Wing Chun student who devotes every weekend to practise. This investment in physical and economic capital coincides with her aim to become a full time tuina massage therapist. She explains her Kung Fu lifestyle:

I travel up to Grogan-on-Sea, which takes an hour, on the Friday. I do a Capoeira class for an hour and a half. And then I go straight to a Wing Chun class for two hours, and then travel back, and don't get in till about ten o'clock, half past ten in the evening. Then Saturday afternoon, I do another Capoeira class and then have a rest. And then Sunday, I'm not working, but I'm doing my massage treatments. And then Sunday night I do another class of Wing Chun, and then on the Monday, I go up to Grogan-on-Sea for the massage in the day, and then another Wing Chun class on the Monday night (laughs).

(Sarah, interview 1, 27/08/08)

Here, like many thinkers, Sarah invests in various identities: Wing Chun practitioner, capoeirista, and massage therapist. Recently she moved up to Grogan-on-Sea to be closer to her martial arts classes and massage clients, completely adopting these identities over her office job. We have seen other accounts of this dedicated lifestyle, but what personal transformations result from this? Chris offers some reflections on Taijiquan's inner experiences:

My understanding of internal energy, obviously over the years has changed and developed. It's at both an intellectual understanding of what energy is, qi energy, as it moves through the body. And also my practical physical experiences. So when I started out, it was just like an explosion of heat, internal heat, rising up through the body. Waves of heat just rolling through the body. I certainly get that, still now, but on a more subtle level. But I also know that with the mind, you can use the power of the mind to guide the flow of internal energy through the body as well. So that's on a more deep level as I've gone through the years of practising Taiji. And I understand the difference between the intention of the mind and the action of the body. It's linked through the flow of energy. So energy activates. The mind's your trigger. The energy follows the direction of your mind. The body follows the direction of the energy.

(Chris, interview 1, 20/09/08)

These kinds of accounts are missing in martial arts sociology, which tends to favour theory over the more phenomenological understanding of the performing body (see Downey, 2006 and Frank, 2000 for notable exceptions). These inner experiences of energy and heat are rarely recorded accounts that may help further understand EMFs through subjective knowledge and would blend well with the emerging phenomenological understandings as seen in the work of Leledaki (2007), who examined these experiences in modern yoga and meditation in advanced practitioners. Almost like paraphrasing Yuasa's (1987) writings on self-cultivation through the unconscious fourth circuit of ki energy, Chris explains his transformations through the mind-body relationship, which he experiences through the notion of qi energy. Rather than trying to rationalise qi using scientific discourses, Chris is very comfortable reflecting on the actual physical experiences he has cultivated. His Taiji habitus has enabled him to do amazing things with his body, thereby acting in a transformative manner:

I'm amazed. I started at 34, I never thought I could move with such grace and power and control. Never. But I can now. And that's an art form. So I love that aspect of Taiji. I use my body as a visible embodiment of an art form. And I love that. I think that's fantastic. And I never thought I could do that. Cos I was never good at that sport. I was OK, but I wasn't a natural. Some people, they go into sport and pick it up quickly and are fit, instantly fit. And I really work hard. I have to train hard to maintain my levels of fitness (continues in Appendix 8.2).

(Chris, interview 1, 20/09/08)

Here we see a reflection of body art, which is constantly being transformed by the individual, overcoming the limitations of biological habitus. This hard work is the meaning of Kung Fu, which is a moving, living art form like dance. Interestingly, performances of both martial arts and dance are integral for their survival, and Chris' public demonstrations are not only an enjoyable way to display his performative self, but are needed to draw in new students.

Dual Identities

The healers share an interest in the healing arts often associated with the martial arts, such as Kaliripayattu (Zarrilli, 1998) and wrestling (Alter, 1992). All three healers cite Daoism as one of the reasons behind this major change in schemes of perception, which connects to the dynamic and longstanding relationships that my colleagues and I outlined previously (Brown *et al.*, in Press). The nature inspired religion of Daoism has major influences on the TCMAs, and its derived practices such as tuina massage are often practised by Kung Fu and Taijiquan exponents in the modern Western era which as Clarke (2000) has noted, has involved an intense interest in Daoism. Chris reflects on this relationship not in terms of history or religion but through living, physical movements involved in the performance of both arts:

So the two compliment each other. Some of the movements that you do in the tuina massage, some of them are kind of like this kind of movement (performs physical jerking movement). So if someone's got tennis elbow, then you snap the arm out, twist it, which is like Taiji. Exactly the same thing. And so the correlation between the two is just fantastic. So when I do a tuina massage, I use my posture, I relax, I use my breath, energy flow, to help the client to heal faster. It makes a huge difference. There's a full connection between me and the client. So the tuina techniques are massively improved by using your body in a Taiji manner. Relaxed, flowing, soft, but deep and vigorous at the same time. Which is Taiji.

(Chris, interview 1, 20/09/08)

The martial dispositions of Chen Taijiquan, which are hallmarked by sudden explosive movements (Yue, 2005), are transferred to the healing art of tuina. The healer's habitus is therefore transferable from each practice, as has been explored in the popular Taijiquan literature (see for example Taylor, 2005). Yet massage is an integral part of Taijiquan training as classes often involve self-massage during the warm up, as seen in Appendix 1.1, in Joe's class.

Spiritual Subjectivities

Considering their interest in healing practices and Eastern religions, we might expect a different understanding of TCMA. As Taijiquan is one of the three so-called internal arts that focus on the cultivation of internal energies (O'Brien, 2007), Chris reflects on this definition, which is essentially about the inner experiences accounted earlier:

Internal is fundamentally about energy work. Using the mind to guide energy to either protect the body or move in a way that you can defend yourself. Whereas external martial arts use physical force to either attack or protect. Internal martial arts, you do use your physical body to protect yourself. But underlying that, there is the movement of qi energy to form a protective barrier through the bones, through the marrow, through the whole body. To create awareness of situations, other people's energies, what they're going to do, and how you channel your energy to protect yourself. Whereas the external martial arts, the Kung Fu, all the Chinese Kung Fu, they rely on set movements, set responses to set situations to defend themselves or to attack. That's the key. It's internal energy, the internal mind.

(Chris, interview 1, 20/09/08)

Amongst the burgeoning literature on internal TCMAAs, it is not my intention to attempt a definition of these and external styles. What I am interested in is the inner body experiences of Taijiquan that make Chris and others forge alternative identities in contrast to the majority of martial artists who they label 'external' and possibly inferior, creating a subculture from this physical difference. These qualitative inner experiences require further study as much of the sociology and philosophy of the body is concerned with the outer, visible body rather than the feelings of internal organs and vessels, which Westerners may rarely consider. Perhaps this offers a different cultural opposition to Frank's (1991) mirroring body, which concerns itself with the exterior such as commercial images of bodies? However, this analysis comes with its own difficulties as it is extremely hard if not impossible to understand qi from reading about it as we need to experience what these practitioners are talking about. The written text has severe limitations, which has been discussed elsewhere (Samudra, 2009; Sparkes, 2009), and is something I am experimenting in teaching students and communicating my findings elsewhere (discussed in chapter 12). Overall, I have used partner sensitivity exercises and qigong to communicate an initial feeling of what it is like to focus one's attention in such an embodied manner, although this is impossible to set up without guidance from a knowledgeable instructor, and is therefore limited in its communication scope.

8.1.2. Relational Cultivation

Partner Communication

How do these healers transform through intersubjective experiences? Sarah communicates her experience of physical interaction without verbal language:

You almost become one with the person you are doing chi sau with somebody. For example, if I'm doing a defence to an attack, where I'm defending, they're attacking, you basically just mould into their arms. And join into their energies and become one. That, depending on how you look at it, is quite a spiritual experience. Depending on what your thought process is when you're doing it. I think you can sense the person you are chi sauing with as well. Whether they are on that level as well...it's almost that you can tell very much what a person's personality is like, in terms of what their rolling skills are like. And it's another way of identifying what another person is like without having to speak to them deeply.

(Sarah, interview 1, 02/07/08)

In this way, the haptic sense forms the medium for bodily communication as opposed to conventional verbal/ocular communication. Through specific cultivated and embodied schemes of perception, Sarah feels she assess people's character, almost removing the need for oral language. Nevertheless, as one of the few female practitioners, she also experiences difficulties with males due to them holding back in partner exercises such as chi sau in comparison to their treatment of each other. From an outsider's perspective this may seem like good gentlemanly conduct, but for Sarah, like Emma previously, this does not provide her the physical challenge to train her martial habitus for a real self-defence situation:

Because I know they're wary of me being a female, so they don't want to hurt me, so sometimes they hold back to a certain degree. I know some do, certainly in the new place. That is a little bit frustrating to me, because I know if I am faced with someone who is prepared to attack, that certainly puts my skills at risk essentially, because I'm not being faced with a full potential of that. I hope that my skill level, my sensitivity will get me out of the predicament.

(Sarah, interview 1, 02/07/08)

Although Joe takes a health and meditative perspective on Taijiquan, and does not identify himself as a 'martial artist', he nevertheless stresses the importance of partner training for overall development:

I think to become a really well rounded Taiji practitioner, to get a full understanding of the art, you do need to do it. From a martial point of view, you can do the form your whole life, and will think you're getting it right, but only when you're being tested by someone pushing you, you'll actually start to understand what's going on. So there's layers within layers.

(Joe, interview 1, 18/05/08)

Teacher-student

As an instructor, Chris adopts a charismatic/traditional approach to leadership that is not supported by bureaucracy or science. Instead, his performing body and human character

is publicised for students to mirror and replicate should they wish, and he strives for mastery for this purpose:

A lot of it is to uphold the traditions of honour, integrity, honesty, those types of values, which are good strong values to communicate to people anyway. Never to do wrong to anybody or to steal...all those sorts of things. In terms of the Taiji itself, this is why I train as much as I can, it's to accurately portray Chen style Taiji, the movement and the detail and the form of what authentic Chen style Taiji is. So I train as hard as I can to duplicate that. So when I teach my students, they get the highest level of instruction that's possible for this area.

(Chris, interview 1, 20/09/08)

Here the personal character aspects of cultivation are emphasised, which were noticeably absent in previous chapters. These qualities of honesty and integrity are commonly reproduced in martial arts codes of conduct, and are set down as examples by the teacher who exudes them. Whether this is the case for other martial arts or education methods remains to be seen, and is worthy of consideration in the conclusions. At the same time, Chris' socialised sense of class and distinction appear altered through his openness and access to people from different socio-economic backgrounds to his working class beginnings:

It's very difficult, but I try not to judge people too much. I think that's a great skill. Not to be too judgemental of other people. I'm not sure if that's a Daoist philosophy. I think it is. It's being more accepting of others, in whatever way, however they look, whatever their situation is, or their condition, or their job, whatever it is. We tend to put up barriers. He's a such and such, therefore I can't talk to him. He's a doctor, I'm not a doctor, so therefore he's a greater person than I. But we are all human beings. I think the philosophy helps me to understand people from a very open platform, without judgement.

(Chris, interview 1, 20/09/08)

This is definitely a point I'd like to ask Chris about, as the one interview didn't provide me with an opportunity to follow up on the theme of changing philosophical outlook. He provided a recent example of his Taijiquan student who possesses more cultural and social capital in the fields of business and education, yet aspired to be like Chris in Taiji, who possesses the symbolic capital of skill and knowledge:

I've got a guy who is the director of a very successful legal law firm. He's actually passionate about Chen style Taiji. And academically, I'm not a patch on him, but when it comes to Taiji, I'm his master. How interesting is that? I don't set that up, but he's very respectful towards me.

(Chris, interview 1, 20/09/08)

In what follows I examine these subcultural levels of transformation in more detail, continuing with the theme of the performing charismatic leader.

8.1.3. Institutional Cultivation

Charismatic-Traditional Leadership

The healers tended to draw upon (and be attracted to) charismatic leaders performing their skills of fighting and healing. Chris' teacher, Pong Yang, is a noted Taijiquan and qigong master who regularly demonstrates his skills to the British public as a living embodiment of the explosive Chen system. Chris remembers the first time he saw his teacher in action, when he knew nothing of TCMA's or Chinese culture:

All of a sudden there were almighty smashes and cracks of energy coming from his body, like a pistol shot. 'How can you move so fast?' I was absolutely blown away. I just couldn't believe what's going on in front of me. It seemed inhuman to move so fast. It was absolutely extraordinary. I thought, 'Wow, this is just amazing.' Something happened. It was like an epiphany, like a eureka moment. And in his doing that demonstration, both the slow form and the faster form, for me personally, I felt as though I was opened up, connected to the gods. I thought, 'Yes, this is it. This is made a powerful connection right inside my heart, my soul.' I felt that I was connected to the Universe.

(Chris, interview 1, 20/09/08)

This poetic reaction to Pong Yang's abilities interested me, and I asked for further elaboration:

One of the amazing things as a master, is that he will put you in the Taiji postures, the fixed positions, and he will adjust your posture. When he's adjusted your posture so your vertical alignment is as perfect as you can get, given your physical stature and build. You just get this amazing explosion of energy going through your body. It's like a mushroom cloud of energy just billowing up through your body. It's just fantastic, absolutely, 'Wow, what's that?!' You start sweating, but you're not really moving anywhere, you're not going anywhere. It's this internal movement of energy. Fantastic. So you stay with him.

(Chris, interview 1, 20/09/08)

Chris continues to follow his teacher as he experiences forms of transformations that are lived through the under researched areas of inner body and inner movement. An interesting question to pose sociologically is: Where did he learn to speak like this? Was this socialised in the group? Regardless of these issues, from following Weber (e.g. Parkin, 1982), it appears that Master Pong Yang takes a highly charismatic form of leadership through short demonstrations offering a glimpse of his immense abilities, which inspired Chris to follow him in belief that he will also be transformed (see also Appendix 8.3). Chris experienced an epiphany, where his life totally changed, and he began to experience Taijiquan spiritually:

Historical Legitimation

We have seen how charismatic leaders maintain their following and avoid controlling students through a complex bureaucracy. Yet how do these healers legitimate their leadership and schools? Joe provides a rationale behind the diminishing martial emphasis in Taijiquan, which is now commonly regarded by many scholars (e.g. Ryan, 2008) as mainly a moving meditation sequence for health and relaxation in contemporary society:

To an extent, all martial arts became obsolete with the advent of modern weaponry. You go back as far as the *Boxer Rebellion*, all the people believed their qi would protect them, were still getting gunned down. Some of them were apparently really hard to kill, like five shots instead of one, but they still died. But the supremacy of the gun, which someone can use with very little training over someone who's spent a lifetime training. It took the emphasis away from the martial arts. I think the Chinese wanted to keep that aspect of the martial arts. They wanted to keep that aspect of Chinese culture. They saw how people could benefit from it, and that's how it turned into a health exercise.

(Joe, interview 2, 16/07/08)

These well established historical events provide practitioners like Joe with the legitimation for a health philosophy, as do issues of Orientalism, commodification and reflexive modernisation, all of which have shaped Taiji into its contemporary form as adopted by *Taiji World*. The school does not shun martial versions, but retains a core focus on self-healing through the slow moving, accessible Yang short form. Such an approach is easily learned by the masses much like contemporary qigong (see Palmer, 2007):

That's our emphasis with the Taiji. I will not say that Taiji is just a health art, because it's not. But what we teach is for health and well-being. Our emphasis is not on teaching them how to fight. Although if they want to learn that stuff, we learn workshops on it and that kind of thing. But our primary interest, largely due to our own interests and the groups of people that we work with...what's appropriate here is Taiji and health. Taiji and the benefits it can bring for the health improvement, balance improvement, the physical coordination, and you can say that it's not just fighting.

(Joe, interview 1, 18/05/08)

Nevertheless, Joe and his teacher Peter are personally interested in the martial aspects of Taijiquan, and are currently learning from the same instructor as Roger's first teacher, who taught Taijiquan in a highly 'authentic' manner. This indicates how practitioners can move along the dynamic continuum of embodiment.

Historical Lineage

Yet what is the importance of body lineage for these individuals, who hail from different schools? In the previous chapter we saw two different arguments about it: One for conservation in terms of traditionalists and one in terms of change in terms of modernizers. For Joe, it appears that lineage is not especially important because of the complexities such as length of time training and actually acquired skill level:

Lineage is important in showing that you are teaching a genuine form of Taiji. But any student can take it and change it and pass it on. So the whole question of authenticity becomes very complicated. What I've done as Yang Style, simplified Yang style, is not what Yang Cheng-fu would teach or what Yang Luchan would teach. But it's still Taiji. Some people though... "My teacher trained with this person, that makes me really good." No, it doesn't. If you've been taken on by a teacher, then you have a pedigree, you have a right to teach Taiji. But I know of people who've trained with a teacher for two years and have set up their own schools, and are acting the guru. Whereas I know other people who have been training with the same teacher for twenty-two years. So, they're still in the same lineage, but the level of knowledge is going to be so different. So it depends how much the student has connected with the lineage holder and how much they've got out of that.

(Joe, interview 2, 16/07/08)

Joe does not stress lineage or make his students aware of their kinaesthetic citizenship unless they specifically ask about it. Instead, he gains his legitimation through Taijiquan's contemporary popularity as a healing and health giving art, which has experienced major technical and theoretical shifts since its founding as a martial orientated practice. Chris, however, takes a very traditionalist perspective on lineage as an officially recognised standard-bearer for Chen style Taijiquan in the region, possessing strong links to the Chen village, where his style originates and still flourishes. He links this to his identity as a tuina therapist through historical legitimation:

Historically, from my understanding, quite often the very best fighters also had the best healing skills. Because they had to. Either for their comrades or for themselves. If they had injuries, they would learn techniques to heal themselves to get back to fighting as quickly as possible. If you think back to real wild days of China, before gunpowder shall we say, if you fought with a sword, you're either going to die or not. So your skill is everything, isn't it? And if you do get wounded, you have to find the quickest way through herbs or acupuncture or whatever, or massage, to get through that trauma and to heal. So the best fighters are the best healers as well. And that excites me (laughs).

(Chris, interview 1, 20/09/08)

Here, unlike Joe, Chris identifies with ancient China before firearms, positioning his practice with the masters of antiquity as seen in popular and scholarly literature identifying martial arts with healing (e.g. Holcombe, 1990) alongside films such as

Once Upon a Time in China (1991), based on the legendary Kung Fu master and herbalist *Wong Fei Hung*. From these comments, it seems that the healers have important roles to play in the body lineage, albeit for different reasons than feudal China as modern practitioners rarely have to fight. In this manner, they provide a balance to the violent aspects of martial arts, which are often portrayed by some scholars such as Zarrilli (1998) as existing both to heal and to harm. Perhaps this has something to do with a Daoist and modern development of the Taijiquan philosophy as with Aikido, which can be seen in the founder's well-known book *The Art of Peace* (Ueshiba, 2002)?

8.1.4. Art Cultivation

Ageing Narratives

Throughout this investigation there have been accounts promoting the philosophy of lifelong practice towards mastery countering the predominant ageing narrative in Western society. Yet with a range of Taijiquan philosophies available, from performance to health orientated, there come various technical approaches that may influence continued practice in old age. Joe explains this below:

It's something you don't stop. The idea of Taiji is that something you can do when you're twenty, you should still be able to do when you're eighty. And that's another reason why the athleticism of the Wushu forms, it's not necessarily good Taiji because it's not holding to the principles of Taiji, why people do it. I respect the people who do it. I can't do it. But then the people who do it knacker their knees up. And then the Chinese government changes Taiji quite a lot of try to get it into the Olympics for example. It has three fast movements for every four. To the extent that the coaches are having athletes breaking their knees trying to do these fancy movements and stuff. Trying to make it an observer sport. It's not really Taiji. You can see people doing really good, external forms, but with no internal stuff whatsoever. You see people doing brilliant internal forms, but Taiji that's rubbish. But then you push that person and they're not going anywhere. It's a very, very interesting subject.

(Joe, interview 1, 18/05/08)

Here, Joe refers to the internal and external aspects, with the external being the highly visible and aesthetic orientated styles and the internal being the subtle approach focusing on inner body experiences. These schools of practice are emerging as Wushu develops as a sport for audiences rather than as a practice for internal transformations, much like Judo as Villamon *et al.* (2004) found (for a discussion of Wushu, see Theeboom & DeKnop, 1997). This sportification process gives authority to practitioners based on a highly bureaucratic connection to the Chinese Wushu Association or the BCCMA as opposed to authority based on the embodied connection

to an individual in a given space and time, which of course, has little scope for audience participation. As TMAs diversify along a continuum of their own, in quite an uncertain course as Back and Kim (1984) suggested, it is quite likely that ageing narratives may differ between schools. Nevertheless, Chris believes Taijiquan as a whole is not just highly suitable for the elderly, but also provides a counter narrative against the story of decay and inactivity for them to live by:

When you see them [elderly people in a nearby residential home], they're walking up there. They can hardly walk, like this. It screams, there's never been any reason to be like that. There really isn't. And if you pay attention to your health. A lot of people seem to have a default belief that their health is going to deteriorate, and that's it. End of story. And then they go with it, and therefore their health does deteriorate, and they do end up very sick. They fulfil their own kind of wish, if you like. But Taiji is the opposite. If you see people who have been practising Taiji for long, it keeps them alive and alert, and happier and healthier much longer into their life. Again, that's a role Taiji plays in society.

(Chris, interview 1, 20/09/08)

Where does this story come from? How does it impact on the elderly practitioners of Taijiquan? What stories do they tell? These questions are useful starting points for an examination of ageing narratives in the art, particularly as it is being practised by people of various ages e.g. the case of Will. So far, it seems that young bodies taken on stories carried by older bodies, and use these as they eventually become older bodies, and are hence, life narrative resources in a phenomenological sense. This idea of ageing as a lifelong opportunity to develop is shared by Joe, who sees the importance of continued learning through subtle understandings over the continuous learning of new movements: "You can do four movements, and can spend your whole life just doing those four movements. If you go deeper in, you'll get a whole lot more out." (Joe, interview 1, 18/05/08). This perspective might be understood as: More is less, less is more, and this has been discussed by participants in this study in their quest for perfection, which creates a counter narrative to the Western desire for new or material things.

TCMAs Culture

As a healer, Sarah not only uses her tuina massage skills for helping people with stress, illness and discomfort, but also enhances Wing Chun performance through her knowledge of the vital points that Zarrilli (1998) articulated in Kalaripayattu as either to heal or to harm (and potentially kill). In this manner, the dispositions have readily

transferred from the field of private massage to the public domain of martial arts classes. She explains her fellow students' confusions, as they don't possess the healing schemes of perception through TCM's philosophy:

They always say the tuina is good for the martial arts, and I can see exactly now why that is. And I can use it on myself, and also, other people in the class. People get a bit freaked out when I start pressing points, thinking, 'Sarah, what are you doing?!' They don't quite understand it. Because I understand it and have demonstrated it on myself, I know it works. I'm quite chuffed about that.

(Sarah, interview 2, 27/08/08)

Although all the healers delve into TCM and related healing practices, they do not fully embody all aspects of Chinese culture. Joe prefers to take concepts and elements such as qigong and acupuncture for his own practice and teaching, and is hesitant to adopt a naive Orientalist perspective by regarding Taijiquan as purely Chinese:

I don't see it as a purely Chinese art. I see it as an art of Chinese origin. Strongly influenced, but it doesn't have to be a pure transmission of Chinese culture. Anymore than say Karate has to be a pure transmission of Japanese culture. Although many practitioners would like it to be. The bowing and that kind of stuff. That doesn't make it a good art.

(Joe, interview 2, 16/07/08)

His comments on Karate are well supported by the growing literature on the Japanese arts as modernizing practices (Chan, 2000; Saeki, 2004; Villamon et al., 2004). As Taijiquan has been practised in Britain for several decades in a variety of contexts and philosophical outlooks (see Ryan, 2008), it has adapted for students from this cultural background. The diasporic habitus of Taijiquan might reembody aspects of British cultural knowledge, such as science and commercialisation, and disembody some older aspects such as the martial philosophy and Chinese cultural knowledge. Joe explains *Taiji World's* commercialisation:

We also sell merchandise and stuff. Eco-friendly, Taiji t-shirts. Because if you look at yoga wear, there's loads of really funky yoga wear. Taiji, you get silk pyjamas or whatever. Not everyone's into that. I'm not into that, the culture of the uniform and that kind of thing. You should just dress comfortably. Paul's developed some very nice Taiji t-shirts. You try to make a living out of it, and it's very difficult to make a living out of it by teaching only. The more strings on it, the better.

(Joe, interview 1, 18/05/08)

I saw some of these beautiful t-shirts, which display an instantly recognisable Taijiquan silhouette in a recent TCMA's festival in Bridenleigh, a small market town known for its hippie culture and interest in EMFs. There I saw other instructors selling merchandise to enable them to remain professionals in a world where their martial skill does not receive sufficient economic capital alone. More broadly speaking, Joe reflects on the

need for commercialisation and modernization in order for the art itself to survive in the modern world, again drawing comparisons to yoga (in Appendix 8.4). In fact, during a recent train journey I spotted *Taiji World's* advertisement in a national newspaper, which advertised their retreats, weekends and merchandise as a lifestyle product. Here, Frank's (2003) little old Chinese man cliché is replaced by rapid capitalist adaptation alongside attempted preservation of what Joe regards as beneficial aspects, such as Daoist nature philosophy. It is concepts, rather than actual practices, that are being taken up by the burgeoning interest in EMFs, which counteract the earlier romantic Orientalist perspectives.

Healing Society

The three healers are primarily interested in transmitting their art as an accessible, self-healing practice for the masses, forming alternatives to the symptomatic approach of conventional Western medicine. *Taiji World's* mission statement is indicative of this, as Joe provided me with a very rehearsed answer:

We are trying to pass on Taiji as a healing, meditative art to as many people as possible in an accessible way. So as many people can benefit from it. That's our core principle: To millions of people. We do that through lessons, retreats, merchandise.

(Joe, interview 1, 18/05/08)

Chris explains this self-healing approach through the examples of his students experiencing major transformations in physical, mental and social health which, when combined, are seen as very powerful:

When people go to an evening class, any evening class, whether it's Taiji, painting, whatever it is, they're interacting with other people. They're making friendships. Obviously you don't know their personal circumstances, but if they don't go out, they don't interact with people exact perhaps at work, they're losing out. I think life is massively enhanced by integrating with other people. And that's very healing, that's very, very powerful. So on a fundamental level, that's another reason why I teach Taiji. Because it brings people together. And they talk, and they communicate, and that's very, very powerful in an increasingly divisive society that we live in. So I think it's so powerful. So that's one level. On the other level, is the very direct health improvements that my Taiji students say are happening to them all the time. Last week, on Thursday, so this is only three days ago...one of my students came rushing up to me, she said, "Thank you Chris. I've only been back for two weeks and back is 100% better." (We laugh). Just two weeks. And then another lady, she's retired, and she said to me, "You know what, it's only been three weeks, and my back feels hugely improved already." (Continues in Appendix 8.5).

(Chris, interview 1, 20/09/08)

Such a sense of community appears to be established through physical contact with fellow practitioners. Such sensual solidarities have been linked to fighting, tradition and

now human communication. Chris continues to explain these health transformations through the perspective of TCM, which connects emotions and stress to the body's internal health, much like Yuasa's (1993) conception of the changing body scheme:

Long-term physical condition, it starts from nothing and then it just builds up. Then all of a sudden, something will happen in their lives where maybe they lose their job or their relationship breaks up, then their whole body health kind of disintegrates. They think it's happened over night, but actually, there's been a very gradual build up. So Taiji can help to reverse that. And it also stimulate and revitalises the internal organs. In the Western world, we're fixated on how we look on the outside, the outer body, is more important than the inner body. So Taiji addresses...it flushes through the internal organs with energy. It energizes it. And that makes you smile inside. So it's a win-win situation every time. I've has so many different stories of people telling me how their health is improved. I don't ask. They just tell me. It's just amazing. It's amazing every time. I feel really humbled that I'm able to be a facilitator for them. It's not me that's doing it, cos they stand in the lessons. They do the work, but I'm guiding them in the right direction, posture and everything. You've got to have good posture. But they're doing the work. So they're doing it for themselves. And that's very empowering as well. It's not like they're coming to me and I'm giving them a pill. The pill has fixed them. It's not that it's not doing any good, but they're not making any changes for themselves, are they? They're there, they're doing the work. They're doing the changes, with guidance. So I feel very humbled by that. It's just like, wow! I'm not particularly wealthy, but it's like being a multi billionaire. You're helping people's health, and health is everything. It's an obvious statement, but without good health, nothing happens. On all levels (Continues in Appendix 8.6).

(Chris, interview 1, 20/09/08)

Here, Chris focuses on the inner body, which he contrasts to the West's fixation on the visible outer body, much like Frank's (1991) conception of the mirroring body. He also stresses the importance of self-help via agentic action rather than reliance on external systems via doctors and hospitals, a view reinforced by many of the thinkers in this chapter. His role is a guide for students as they train through hard work to transform themselves. It is interesting to note Chris' final comments on these health transformations as potentially spiritual (Appendix 8.6). Where there is not room here to explore this extensively, it seems that the holistic approach to health, where the bodymind connection is the fundamental philosophy linking tuina with Taijiquan. Chris contrasts this perspective to the very bureaucratic approach of Western organizations, which use policies rather than practices to deal with stress:

Taiji does definitely help with the modern disease, which is stress. It really helps people to come up with a practical, physical strategy in dealing with stress. So I know that in a lot of businesses, stress is a big thing, because they don't want to be sued for causing stress and so on. Sue culture. So what they do is they come out with these stress management strategies. These are bits of paper which people read, if I've got a problem, see the line manager, and so on and so forth. But actually, stress is taken in and goes into the body. A piece of paper doesn't deal with the body. Do you see the implications I'm making? So that's at one level. And Taiji helps the person deal with stress on a physical, a physiological level. Cos stress does come into the body. The fight or flight state, or anxious state, it's very hard to dissipate or get rid of that state. Which is not very good, it's quite unhealthy if you stay there for a long time. High levels of stress, really, really do a lot of damage to the body. So Taiji relaxes the body, calms you down, gets you to breath deeply, so it helps to deal with stress. It's fantastic for that.

(Chris, interview 1, 20/09/08)

Taijiquan's ability for stress relief has been well documented in quantitative studies (see the review by Sandlund & Norlander, 2000), yet qualitative accounts of actual experiences are lacking in the social sciences, and require further study considering the seriousness of stress in modern society, as Chris suggests. If what he says is true, Taijiquan and possibly other EMFs may have a major contribution to society's well-being. As he said to me recently, the Dao is in the body, and stress is worked on from there: "It's not written down to be passed down through text, but to be experienced." (Field notes, 22/06/09).

8.1.5. Other Aspects

Despite his spiritual and healing orientation, Chris believes he needs to develop martial (fighter aspects) of Taijiquan to become a balanced person in terms of the principles of yin and yang. Here, Taijiquan and the Daoist philosophy that excites him are embodied through his actions and deliberate cultivation rather than mere intellectualisation through book reading and philosophical speculation:

I think it's really important to have a good balance in your life of all of the emotions and all of your experiences. All humans are a mixture of the quieter aspects of human nature, the passive, and the outgoing active aspects. This is the yin/yang balance. If you allow yourself to go too far down the yin way, too passive, too receptive, then you're not experiencing life to the full, to the maximum. It's not that I want to go out fighting people. I never would do. I've never been an aggressive person. I'm not aggressive. But I think I need to develop the controlled potential for aggression. That's an aspect of myself that I want to explore more. It's not pure aggression, but I think I need to be more yang in my life. Just that aspect of who I am. So fighting, developing fighting skills in Chinese martial arts helps you to fulfil that condition, or create that condition.

(Chris, interview 1, 20/09/08)

Is this condition the well-rounded personality that Yuasa (1987) suggested self-cultivation practices develop? More research investigating the stories of such practitioners is necessary to further understand this. Of course, qualitative research will not be able to 'prove' these transformations, but it will help communicate and interpret stories of experiences. Nevertheless, despite this interest, there is a core spiritual component for these healers through the practice of moving meditation. Chris recalls moments of spiritual transformation in both his Taijiquan and massage practice through heightened sensory experience and awareness of the inner body:

I've had moments where I've had outer body experiences where I've had a standing posture. Where all of a sudden, I could see my whole body, but without flesh and skin and stuff like that. I could see bones and vessels and stuff like that. Not many. Sometimes, quite often if I go outdoors and practise Taiji...when you fully relax into the postures and you go into the flow with the movement of the body, then you perceive the world, all the colours seem sharper and seem brighter. Your hearing seems to be more acute. Everything seems much more...the world seems to flow through you, a much more powerful connection to it. So you get those situations...And also, on occasions, I kind of wish it would happen more often, but sometimes when I've been practising Taiji, I feel like my whole body is breathing. It's not that my body is breathing, but it's that the Universe is breathing my body.

(Chris, interview 1, 20/09/08)

Such experiences are very rare in martial arts, as the participants have stressed throughout this study. Epiphanies like these help raise the question of usefulness of short-term controlled studies, which are unlikely to detect such personal events. Of course social scientists cannot prove these issues - but a pertinent guiding question is what are the psycho-socio-cultural impacts upon the identities and behaviours of practitioners who have had such experiences? This connection to the Universe and nature through embodied experiences brings us to the next section on the meditators, who differentiate from the healers through their focus on the cultivation of both internal energies and connection or affinity to the outside natural environment, which might seem initially paradoxical. Joe possesses this disposition, and recalls a few occasions when he felt attuned to nature:

It does give that great feeling of connectedness to the outside. You get all kind of things that could be classed as mystical experiences. You get animals watching you. One place I used to practise in, I used to get loads of butterflies land on me. Which is amazing. Admittedly there were loads of butterflies there and I was moving very slowly, so I was probably quite easy to land on (we laugh). I used to practise on a beach, and the seals used to come and watch. The female seals liked it, but the male seals didn't like it all, and were quite threatened by it. God knows what that means! (We laugh). Birds watch it; birds of prey have landed and watched me practice. Yeah, that quietness and stillness. You just blend in. To be able to let go of everything and just be there, be in nature. It's a very amazing feeling that we miss in our society. We're surrounded by walls, TV screens...we don't just wander around the forest like a hunter gatherer. Taiji is a really good way of accessing that.

(Joe, interview 2, 16/07/08)

Do TCMAAs connect us to nature in a way that we don't access in modern society? It seems that Joe suggests this, and from examining *Taiji World's* website, this appears to be a cultural narrative of humans being reconnected to nature through the art, which only happens via the body operating in a certain time (slow motion) and in space (open air practice). Such social, narrative and phenomenologically orientated issues are certainly worth investigating in the future considering the widespread use of Taiji in holistic retreats and the contemporary interest in outdoor sports and activities that can bring people very close to nature. This research is slowly emerging, and I have

contributed to it via a conference paper (Jennings & Brown, 2009), which is soon to be expanded via a forthcoming journal article. Considering such claims, do they allow us to enter alternative states of consciousness to that found in everyday urban environments such as working in a city? The stories of Ben and Tony explored below also suggest this to be so.

8.2. The Meditators

Ben Carpenter

Ben, 50, is a white British man who is married with a grown up son and daughter and one child. Although Ben officially resides in Rothshire, where he is originally from, he stays with his daughter from Monday to Friday in Adderton. This is because Ben is a prison guard based in Adderton, and would otherwise have to travel two hours to get to work each day. He has lived in the region all his life, has a school level education and has a strong sense of belonging to the rural areas of Dontshire and Rothshire, which has been strengthened by his practice of Taijiquan often practised by a river.

Ben is a junior instructor in the *School of Life Exercise*, a large group that specialises in Zhang Manqing style Taijiquan, qigong and ‘life exercises’ involving whole body awareness and moving meditation. He has a keen interest in Eastern philosophy, holding numerous books on the subject, and reads a verse of the *Dao De Jing* every night before bed. He is also passionate about walking in natural environments, and alongside his slowly developing Taiji classes, he plans to set up a retreat for people in the beautiful coastal region where he grew up. As a peaceful man interested in moving meditation as a life philosophy, Ben is an ideal meditator.

I met Ben whilst visiting his class during a period of participant observation among numerous Taijiquan schools, and our mutual admiration for the skills of Zheng Manqing helped establish rapport. He kindly agreed to meet for an interview over a pint of local ale, and we again met in the bar of the modern theatre where his Taijiquan classes are held. This was useful as we were able to discuss his fresh memories and thoughts on the advanced class, which involved pushing hands and partner work. After a pint of ale and a very productive interview Ben went off for a Chinese takeaway, and expressed an interest in me attending his class, which was sadly low in numbers. Perhaps I should

have taken him up on this offer, but due to the training commitments in *Bridge's Wing Chun Academy* and *Taiji World*, I felt two styles was enough to be experienced through my body. This was made more difficult as I began to run my own branch of Bridge's Academy in Adderton on the same evening.

Tony Smith

Tony, 42, is currently single and is originally from a working class mixed Irish-Hungarian background in Rigmouth. He lived a life of crime before serving a jail sentence where he came across yoga and meditation, and developed a strict, disciplined lifestyle around these practices. Alongside this, he trained in holistic therapies, including massage, which has given him extensive knowledge of healing. At the moment he is spending most of the year as a shaman's apprentice, and earns his money in the summer months as a boat ticket salesman in Rigmouth harbour, which allows him to return to Bridge's Academy for an intensive revision of his knowledge.

Six years ago, upon returning to his hometown, he found Wing Chun after a friend demonstrated its effectiveness in combat, and he regularly attended classes in *Bridge's Wing Chun Academy* until his departure to Bolivia to become a shaman's apprentice. There, he taught a friend in the art of Wing Chun in order to maintain his skills and develop his teaching methods. Upon returning from South America, Tony has seen Wing Chun in an increasingly spiritual light. He hopes to continue learning whenever he is in the UK, and open a school in his adopted country. Having known him for several years, I chose Tony because he is a definite meditator, which is quite rare in Wing Chun schools.

The two interviews were conducted in very interesting locations. In fact, the first interview was split into three parts: A coffee shop, a tranquil gardens and a Celtic monument on a hill. All of these were selected by Tony, who met me in the well-known spiritual town of Balmsbury, where Tony told me he was organising a sacred woodland dance that he has learned in Bolivia and rather proudly, engaging in tantric sex with his co-organiser! He is a very interesting and charismatic character, and the interview also involved him demonstrating martial arts movements and qigong in the gardens and embracing a complete stranger outside the Celtic monument, who he exchanged contact

details to meet up in Rigmouth. He also stopped for short conversations with people about the energy of the place and how it rated against other spiritually labelled towns. Our second interview involved us doing some chi sau as Tony felt we needed to do it rather than just sit and talk about it (see confessional tale). It was interesting that he selected outdoors areas for the interviews. It was the summer period, but from the analysis and long-term observations of Tony, I feel that nature and the outdoors are certainly connected to his identity.

8.2.1. Individual Cultivation

What brings Ben and Tony together is their deliberate cultivation of meditative experiences and esoteric body energies. Here we explore some of their experiences of individual transformation through the potentially spiritual Kung Fu lifestyle.

Habitus

Tony's life is dedicated to EMFs and Wing Chun is just part of a broader cultivation process. From when he wakes up in the morning to when he goes to bed at night, he is constantly working towards perfection in his various arts of qigong, *reiki*, sitting meditation, Wing Chun and yoga. Below, he explains how these practices work together in daily life, morning rituals and schemes of perception:

When I get up in the morning, I always do at least something. Even if I just do ten minutes of stretching. When I have a bit longer...like if I have an hour before I go to work, I start with the stretching, and then I will do some forms, the first and second forms, some punches, and then finish it off with a bit of yoga. And maybe five minutes of meditation. And then I'm in the shower and I'm off. So it just gives my morning practice another element. I won't say that I do it everyday, but maybe two or three times a week, I will do a little extra bit, just to keep my hand in and maybe practice. Also, sometimes when I'm at work...I sell boat tickets at the moment, down the seafront. I'm on my feet, so if there's nobody around, I'll be doing it. So Friday morning after the Thursday session, I might have a little practice. God, I remember that, and then try to do it. It's on my mind when it passes. You kind of dream about it and everything. It's really strong in that way.

(Tony, interview 1, 22/06/08)

For Ben, qi energy is the key concept for successful Taijiquan. He consciously attempts to cultivate this for health and martial capabilities in a manner that Yuasa (1993) might describe as being through the unconscious quasi-body:

The qi energy is everything. It's the blood, the lymph, the bone, the sinew, the muscle, it's everything working in tandem with each other. And the energy you gather in Taiji, the energy is gathered in the dantien. Which is about two inches below the navel. Which the Chinese call the dantien, which is the energy source of Taiji. As far as the delivery goes, and martial aspect of Taiji, the energy will go deep within the ground. So you're connected deep into the ground, the energy delivered from the foot, up the leg and into the spine. Everything is coordinated. You train from the spine, through the hands...and then a split-second energy. That's what gives you the energy, the force to move...with an ancient, classic saying in Taiji is: 'The force of four ounces to repel the force of a thousand pounds.' It's through not just through your energy, but obviously through neutralising their energy. Neutralising, then deliver. That's where it comes from. The energy is coming deep into the ground, through the foot, through the waist and the spine, delivered through the waist.

(Ben, interview 1, 26/08/08)

Although this cultivation of qi is initially conscious, both Ben and Tony strive to make it a natural part of their lives. This involves completely attuning through their bodies to feel the inner sensations and transformations, focusing on areas often neglected such as the foot-ground connection. Ben quoted Yang Taijiquan's famous phrases emphasising yielding (Wile, 1992). Throughout the interview he used such phrases to interpret his personal transformations. In Appendix 8.7, he explains the feelings of meditation in motion and 'losing himself' gained from completely attuning through the body and a focus of perfection in subtle parts of a technique. As this becomes more frequent, it might take over their daily schemes of perception as the martial habitus forges around living in the moment or 'the Now' (see Tolle, 1999 for a popular explanation). Here, such a focus might be on certain body parts and attunement to the outside world, and we will examine this shortly.

Warrior Identity

From what we have seen, the moving meditation is a key aspect of Ben and Tony's lives as they are performing techniques in public with no concern for other's opinions. This might seem far removed from cultural images of martial arts being tied to war and fighting, which have considerable historical support (Henning, 1981). For Tony, this cultivation through Wing Chun is essentially about one's warrior aspect that blends with his other identities of healer and apprentice shaman, where fighting and spirituality are entwined:

The warrior is a part of ourselves which is the courage to do things. The courage to face the difficulties of life. It's not easy. So the warrior is a part of yourself, and it's also a way of living with honour and respect to the world, to the planet. And having the ability to act for the good of the planet at the right moment. Sometimes you might have to use force to let

that happen. If someone's doing the wrong thing, and are out of control, then maybe you should stop them.

(Tony, interview 1, 22/06/08)

Such an ethical approach echoes Frank's (1991) communicative body, which acts for others in a caring manner. Yet this identity is culturally complex and not necessarily tied to a certain narrative. Later, he explained why he is involved with so many practices that hail from different cultural origins (being Bolivian, Chinese, Indian and hybrid spiritual practices) beyond a particular school or body lineage:

Because I want to be totally self-realised and know all the secrets of the Universe. And anything that is going to help me, I am up for it and dedicated. So that's why I go away to Ashburn and Balmsbury [two ancient British towns known for spirituality and hippie culture], to expand my consciousness. I'm also a healer. I work with massage and Reiki, reflexology, I do many different practices. It's good to have a bit of everything. I used to do this one thing. Now I do many things together, because it's more interesting, it's more fun.

(Tony, interview 1, 22/06/08)

Perhaps the warrior is something humans have always possessed? We will examine the role of the warrior aspect of human beings later in regards to its role for wider humanity.

Spiritual Subjectivities

In this thesis we have seen a range of perspectives on the question 'what is a martial art?' Tony explained his definition in relation to his development as a warrior:

Well, it's definitely hard work, that's what it is. But it's also fun. It's fun and hard work, and it's beneficial. And it works with the warrior. And I need that. I need to work with my warrior. Because I'm a warrior. I'm a warrior of light. But also, to know about the light, you also need to know about the darkness. If you don't know about the darkness, then you don't know the whole story. You only know half of it. So, you have to be not who you are to be who you are. First of all, you have to learn what you don't want. So in my younger years, I did a lot of things where I made mistakes, but now I know what I don't want. I know what I want, and that is peace, enlightenment. I want to help people, I want to be of service, I want to be a good healer. I want to be really good at Wing Chun, and maybe one day, I will have to use to save somebody, or save myself.

(Tony, interview 1, 22/06/08)

Echoing Chris, he explained the need to have the dark and light aspects of human nature to be a more balanced individual, and perhaps a balance of thinker and fighter aspects, which on their own, may be quite extreme perspectives on life. Again, the idea of hard work emerge, yet it is related to wider society, which will be explored later. However, Tony later emphasised the importance of fighting skills when defining martial arts (in

Appendix 8.8). Jimmy, the man described in this statement, was a feared black sash instructor in *Bridge's Wing Chun Academy* with a reputation for street fighting, organised crime and ability to apply Wing Chun in combat (see Jennings *et al.*, forthcoming). Although Tony never saw Jimmy fight, or applied Wing Chun himself, he developed faith in the system and Jimmy, who he seems to revere. These are not necessary mutually exclusive understandings of martial arts as fighting skills can be beneficially used for society. Yet from this, we may understand people's perspectives on martial arts as complex, multiple and shifting, and I can only report on what is provided during the interview or during participant observation. As Tony has returned to Bolivia at the time of writing, it is possible that he is developing new understandings of what martial arts are to him.

Earlier Chris created a separate identity surrounding the internal martial arts. Ben takes a similar position on Taijiquan as being focused on the inner body as opposed to the more physical/external martial arts, which focus on the 'external' tissues of muscle:

The internal arts are here [refers to the stomach]. They're internal, they're in the stomach and the energy comes outwards. Whereas the external martial arts are more working from here [refers to fists]. It's all working from here, and it's all to do with aggression. Whereas in Taiji, internal martial arts are all inside-out, or inward-out. And as you get into it more and more, the more energy is permeated within the bone, and generates out. Whereas a hard martial art is always going to be in muscle. It's never going to come from within. It's always going to come from the muscle.

(Ben, interview 1, 26/08/08)

This definition may seem perplexing to outsiders as Taijiquan, like everything, requires the use of muscles to stabilise the skeleton system. So what does Ben mean by this? The qualitative accounts of internal martial artists have yet to be explored beyond scholarly interest (see O'Brien, 2007), and these fascinating insights into an alternative philosophy of the body warrant further current accounts focus on the body for others beyond cultural stereotypes, such as in bodybuilding emphasising the social meaning of muscle (Brown, 1999).

8.2.2. Relational Cultivation

Partners & Energy

What do meditators aim to collectively cultivate through partner training? Both Ben and Tony are very concerned with energy development for health, spirituality and self-defence. This is enabled by using the mirroring body aspect, where they reflect the actions and energies issues by their training partners. However, in many Taijquan schools, partner training and pushing hands is not emphasised. Ben expresses his concerns for this:

At the end of the day, Taiji is a martial art, and just to feel the energy...pushing hands, the form comes out in pushing hands. To actually get the flow, the feel, the force, you've got the do pushing hands, to get the yield, to get the push. Where that energy's coming from, where you're taking it, the energy's gone, and when you come back, you can push. A lot of schools don't do the physical contact. To take your form forward, you definitely need the contact. They're still getting a benefit not doing it, but no way near as much from not doing pushing hands. I don't know if they shy away from it because of the female/male issue [fear of hurting female partners].

(Ben, interview 2, 09/09/08)

From such training, Ben embodies the philosophy of Yang Taijiquan, stressing the importance of relaxation and yielding to an opponent's force (see Wile, 1992). Such martial maxims have not been explored through documentary analysis, and further research may understand how these principles are transmitted and embodied by real life practitioners. Again, gender arises as a possible barrier for effective cultivation, which requires further investigation considering the actual gender disparity in TCMAs. Below, Tony explains the importance of partner training:

You cannot really practise Wing Chun...you've got the wooden dummy obviously, to practise, but it's not the same as practising with somebody else. To have that energy to play back and forth. Somebody tells you, helping you, saying, "You're pushing down man." And getting range, from practising techniques, tan sau. Somebody punching in, and you go in and you practise the range, energies and contact and conditions. This is really important.

(Tony, interview 1, 22/06/08)

This is particularly true when Tony trains with higher grades possessing the advanced schemes of perception to spot mistakes that he would have developed whilst training alone or with his student in Bolivia. He offers some final thoughts on this: "Now, to get to the next level, after a few weeks of training I can jump a level, because all of a sudden, everything is a lot sharper, it's a lot crisper. I'm closer to perfection." (Tony, interview 1, 22/06/08). It seems what unites all ideal types is the pursuit of perfection in

physical technique. Whether they can reach this state of perfection is unlikely due to the nature of human imperfection, but it is the process of striving that I am investigating. Such accounts of continually practising throughout one's lifetime in the pursuit of perfection are relatively rare outside the realm of sport, which itself is normally bound by a notion of career and retirement. Perhaps this is a distinguishing feature of these martial arts? Investigations of TCMA's within physical culture undoubtedly would benefit from this study of martial 'career' and lifelong learning, which can challenge views of ageing and the life course.

Outside Intersubjectivity

As early stage teachers, Ben and Tony strive to establish good relationships with their students, who they nurture to a skill level where they can be challenged. Through intense, long-term partner training, Tony's student Pedro developed rapidly to the extent he began to challenge Tony, hence beginning the circle of cultivation, as Tony reflected: "Maybe he could get better, and when I go back, maybe I'm better, and I can help get him better." (Tony, interview 1, 22/06/08)

Outside TCMA's, their martial habitus has transferred to day-to-day interactions. As a prison warden, Ben encounters aggression and intimidation regularly, and believes Taiji has helped him remain calm through awareness of body energies:

By coming down into the dantien and staying grounded. Staying grounded, is what I try to do. I feel occasionally the energy coming up. But, in an ideal world, I try to bring my energy down into the dantien, and it helps no end. It works quite often, but not all the time. Bearing the nature of the people I work with.

(Ben, interview 1, 26/08/08)

He appears to adopt a neo-Daoist perspective on embodiment and stress, where mental control of energy can bring about calmness and self-control, which is a major transformation not only in working life but also with family, as he admits he now 'yields' in arguments rather than gets angry. Furthermore, in a society increasingly developing around desks and computer screens, Ben's Taiji habitus, trained through the focus on body alignment and physical postures, makes him very aware of this, and he often can't help correct people:

Some people sit there and stand there. Some people stand with all the weight on one leg. They're not in alignment. They put so much pressure on the joints. Another quick one is sitting down. Straighten the spine. So it's changed me in that way.

In this way, Ben, like Roger before him, found himself observing, monitoring and correcting people's posture after a long period of cultivating good deportment in themselves. This is quite similar to the ideas of holistic or functional fitness of Pilates and contemporary yoga, as categorised by scholars such as Markula (2004). Of course, considering the *School of Life Exercise's* focus on principles of movement this may be due to an institutional approach to cultivation.

8.2.3. Institutional Cultivation

Charismatic Leadership

As Ben and Tony are just beginning teaching, they have yet to take a lead role in an organization. However, they are developing teaching skills based on their individual habitus and charismatic authority. Tony is fully aware that a school is based around the embodied abilities of a teacher and their core students. Reflecting on John's injury, he interprets this as a blockage of energy in the class:

It's always been a good atmosphere, because of the people and Terry, and the regulars and the black belts. But Sifu, he had a knee injury and he wasn't happy because he couldn't train the way he wanted to. And that held back the class a bit. Like the spirit of the class. But now that he's training at full capacity, and it's bloody good training, the best training I've ever had, the energy in the class is really high.

(Tony, interview 2, 02/08/08)

The physical injury displaying John's martial identity to be an Achilles heel thankfully recovered, and Tony enjoyed his period of training back in the Academy through a regained sense of what Durkheim may call collective effervescence (see Shilling & Mellor, 1998, for a contemporary interpretation of this). Yet it wasn't just Tony who was affected by this unexpected body problem. Many students became concerned for both Sifu's health and their own potential injuries should they over train a certain joint, and this was increased by certain students such as Terry and Sarah developing knowledge of anatomy and holistic healing practices, which reflexively reorganised the school's warm up to include back exercises and more scientifically rigorous stretching. Over the months of his injury, I noticed a significant drop out in both the Rigmouth and Adderton branches of the school, particularly as Steve [the then head of the branch] having a shoulder injury from work. In this sense Tony and the others were made aware

of the fragility of athletic identity and institutions based around performing bodies, which Sparkes (1998a) noted can be a Hercules' muscle or Achilles heel.

Legitimizing Health

As a modern school incorporating a new age philosophy on body movement, the *School of Life Exercise* draws upon a range of discourses for legitimization of its practice. These contrast with the conventional Western approach to health, which involves on reliance on others (through a restitution narrative as Frank, 1995 might explain) rather than oneself in prevention of illness. First and foremost, the school's philosophy is based around moving meditation rather than self-defence, where some of the Eastern philosophies and Taiji concepts work together in embodiment:

Enjoy life really. Just having better awareness, focus, balance, being in the moment, and staying grounded. I think there's a philosophy that comes out of it, and just awareness of yourself, your body, your mind, your spirit. And taking that out to the world, not only in Taiji, as you get into it. Yielding is a great philosophy wherever you are really.

(Ben, interview 2, 09/09/08)

Although the school uses elements of Chinese philosophy, they are not stressed explicitly to the students. Instead, serious practitioners like Ben are left to investigate philosophy for themselves, taking their own perspective and fitting it around their individual habitus as long as they stick to the principles such as 'yielding' and 'grounding'. In this way, the body lineage is progressive within each generation, and Ben is gradually making his own mark on Taijiquan, which is constantly in flux. Such changes are not based on the martial effectiveness of technique but subjective feelings of energy, and a new style may eventually form based on these slight kinaesthetic alterations.

Lineage & Ancestry

Although the institutional habitus is taught to the students, Ben strives to create his teaching approach, whilst having an affinity for the Yang style masters of the past, many of whom died before he was born:

They're people who I aspire to, I suppose. Although I've never met them, I know so much about them, and I've studied them, I've studied their form. They've made a big difference in my life. Yeah, I suppose they have in a strange way. And the whole Yang family as well,

I suppose. I was on a train last night, and looked last night at the *Yang family treatise*. I was reading that. Just pick out those bits. It's so complex, but there are bits that stick in your mind. But that makes a big difference to me. I've been there, sitting on the train, reading it, and not knowingly (laughs), look at his *single whip* and I'm there. Got into the position of single whip. Suddenly you get these people looking (we laugh). So yeah, they've made a big difference in my life. If it wasn't for these people then it wouldn't be what it is now.

(Ben, interview 1, 26/08/08)

Ben's fascination with the Yang family and his embodied connection via kinaesthetic ancestry led him to unconsciously delve into technique whilst on public transport. This is understandable considering that without their sacrifice and hard work, the art would never have transmitted to him. Considering the value of such literature in philosophy and martial arts, future studies may benefit for documental analysis to investigate how these stories are framed in pedagogies and larger institutions, particularly as body lineages often have the same documents for branches across nations and continents. This wider cultural contribution to martial arts and beyond is explored next.

8.2.4. Art Cultivation

Spiritual Narratives

Considering the dominant story of ageing and mastery emerging in this study, we might ask: How is this connected to the cultivation of energies and spirituality? Tony articulates the relationships between living in the moment, working towards perfection and these issues:

Wing Chun, it teaches me how to be in the moment. And train for perfection. Because the path to enlightenment is the main path anyway, in training to perfection. In your life, you live perfection. You eat perfection, you sleep perfection, you do everything in perfection. This is Wing Chun. We train for perfection. So we're training ourselves for what we need to do in life as well. We're learning something which if we apply in our own lives, we'll be closer to perfection. There are some very useful things in Wing Chun that are used on my path through self-realisation, I used principles which I picked up from the club. Like economy of energy, is another example. In your life...know that sometimes a warrior needs to rest. It's like you don't fight everyday. In between you rest, you prepare, and now and again, you have high moments of your life where you can excel and achieve something amazing. Because you've rested and you've trained, and then you can go for it (clicks fingers) sometimes as a warrior would go into battle. And then you can achieve those higher levels of enlightenment, self-realisation, achievements in the physical world.

(Tony, interview 2, 02/02/08)

For Tony, a master is someone who knows perfection in whatever they do. This striving for perfection is seen as a lifelong body project with no definite end point, unlike our conventional idea of projects. According to Tony, practitioners get closer to perfection as years progress: "And you're not restricted by age so much. You can practise Wing

Chun when you're eighty. If you're reasonably fit, you can keep going and even get better. Until you die, you can keep on improving pretty much." (Tony, interview 1, 22/06/08). From what we have seen throughout Part 1, this story appears to be shared by all the practitioners, although Ben has some reservations due to the stereotypes of what Frank (2003) has termed the little old Chinese man: "That's how people have approached it: 'Oh look, there's old people in the park.' In the Western world, a lot of people, including the young, have started to take it up as well. I'm sure it's not just old people and Chinese." (Ben, interview 1, 26/08/08). Perhaps the stories of young practitioners, such as Will, would be useful as a counter narrative of this often stigmatising view as Taiji only for the old? More specifically for the thinkers, how does this narrative become spiritual? Is it the lack of endpoint for the body project that makes it so ontologically appealing?

TCMAs Transmission

Tony has already begun transmitting Bridge's institutional habitus to his friend in Bolivia, and dreams of contributing to the larger field of TCMAs in South America, which in TCMA terms is an underdeveloped continent in comparison with many other world regions. Here, he would actively transmit the institutional habitus of Bridge's Wing Chun across continents, creating a diasporic habitus and complex intercontinental identities (a Chinese art taught by a British man to Bolivian people):

I'm trying to give them a way that they can work with their warrior spirit. They can practise a martial art. Have discipline. Work with energy. And be effective, should there be any trouble. And also have a brotherhood of Wing Chun brothers like we do here. It's also social. You go to the club, and you meet the guys. Everyone chats a little bit. It's also social. Like I get a lift home off people, and we talk then. Like now. We've met up in Balmsbury. It's an amazing, beautiful, magical place. Because we've built up some rapport in the class. So...me and Nick, we lived together for a year. We've trained together. Because of Wing Chun. In that way, you can meet people, and train with them, and do other things. Go out sometimes. Discuss things about spirituality and energy. Talk about life.

(Tony, interview 1, 22/06/08)

Such ethnically and culturally complex body lineages have yet to be explored by researchers, who have instead focused on the important cultural transmission between the first generation teachers from the martial art's country of origin and students from more economically developed countries e.g. Brazilian Capoeira mestres in Britain (Delamont & Stephens, 2008) and Canada (Joseph, 2008). The social benefits of group martial arts training have also been overlooked by researchers, and further work is

needed to gain more rounded understandings of martial arts and social health in terms of issues such as social solidarities and development of subjective spiritualities.

Communities & Nature

In terms of health and well-being, for many Taijiquan schools there are frequent opportunities to attend retreats over weekends or even longer periods. These are often held in rural or coastal locations, in areas of outstanding natural beauty, where mind, body and nature are connected, as Ben contends:

There's a great connection really, between Taiji and walking. Especially as Taiji has a very close connection with nature. In Taiji, you've worked on the elements, but also nature. The story is of an ancient, master sage watching a crane and a snake yielding each other, and to be able to get out into the coast with all the elements of the sea, earth, air, to be able to go out, walk, do a bit of Taiji as you're walking, just connect with nature and the Earth.

(Ben, interview 1, 26/08/08)

Here, Ben draws upon the stories of martial arts legends reinforcing the image of the little old Chinese man being attuned with nature. Yet perhaps the public buy into this story? The ecological aspects of Taijiquan have yet to be sufficiently explored in research, and further work is required to see how the art links human beings to nature, which we are increasingly forgetting in our urbanised society where stress is taken for granted and there is limited intimate contact with nature. This is particularly relevant as websites throughout Britain advertise such weekends and longer retreats in isolated beach, woodland and mountain settings (see for example www.taichiretreat.co.uk). However, some of these are in rather exotic locations and being expensive, may only be accessible for the wealthy that have the necessary leisure time and economic capital. Yet what kinds of experiences does he want to offer these people? What are they missing in their daily lives that the retreats enable? He explains the philosophy of living in the moment through moving meditation:

It's a life thing; it's about living in the moment I suppose, living for the moment rather in the past or the future. Just living in the moment and looking to do what you can now, not living in the past, or worrying about the future, but actually in the moment. That's what Taiji's all about. Taiji is classed as meditation in movement. It's just being in the now, in the present. And that's what I try to do at the moment, just to give people that sense of meditation. So when you're there, you're in the moment.

(Ben, interview 1, 26/08/08)

This moving meditation, being concerned with living in the moment can also be gained from qigong and walking, which are activities historically connected to Daoism through their focus on natural accessible movement, with Daoism being chiefly concerned with

following nature's order or the *Dao* (Miller, 2003). Yuasa's (1987) meditation in movement and *samadhi* (enlightenment) through walking are useful here as the mind-body connection is strengthened through complete attunement with the body (Nagatomo 1992) in relaxing, tranquil surroundings. This is a stark contrast to how some writers depict modern society as being overly rational thought, where people's thoughts are commonly not on their present actions, but in the future or past. An example of this dominant narrative and an alternative form of metanarrative is offered in contemporary spiritual books such as *The Power of Now* (Tolle, 1999) and *The Miracle of Mindfulness* (Hahn, 1991) amongst more Daoist interpretations of Western texts, such as the *Tao of Pooh* (Hoff, 2003), which is read in an annual woodland retreat with *Taiji World*. Such a Daoist perspective is also set in contrast to modern society's materialism and intellectualism, as in an extreme form would encourage practitioners to release cultural baggage and engage in the physical space of nature over a prolonged period of time.

8.2.5. Other Aspects

Tony's engagement with TCMA's may seem paradoxical as he focuses on peace and enlightenment. However, he claims Wing Chun helps him rid feelings of fear blocking the path to self-realisation:

I needed to be able to defend myself. I didn't want to walk around in fear. If you want enlightenment and self-realisation, you have to let go of fear. So I thought, if I become lethal. If I can handle myself. Not that I'm going to go round hurting people, because I'm a healer, but just to know that I could do something in the situation. And maybe even save somebody else. If a woman is getting beaten up, I'll have more confidence to go and help her. If I wasn't confident in fighting, then I might walk away scared, and think, 'Man, you should have done something.' But if you've trained, you can act in those situations better. Because practising a martial art brings you so into the moment. And we strive for perfection. We train always for perfection, to be perfectly in the moment. And only then can we know the truth. And in that way, Wing Chun, it's like a form of moving meditation.

(Tony, interview 1, 22/06/08)

His comments on the warrior releasing fear for spiritual fulfilment are supported by the literature on warrior cultures throughout history, such as the Japanese samurai and Chinese (e.g. Fields, 1991), who Tony particularly admires. His identities as a healer, shaman, martial artist and warrior are therefore strongly linked, although without such elaboration and theoretical consideration they may create this sense of paradox. Likewise, Ben is aiming to cultivate the martial aspects of Taijiquan, as he reflects on his position along this flexible and often circular continuum:

Where I am at the moment? I suppose I'm more into the spiritual. I would like to get more involved in the martial aspect of it, and that's the way I want to go. But without losing the spiritual side of it. I think initially you need to get into the spiritual, softer side of Taiji before you go...It's going back to this seven years of yielding [refers to Yang family treatise], before you actually get into the physical side of it. If you get into the physical side of it too soon, the health and the spiritual aspect of it can be lost. The body-mind-self side of it can be lost. Cos you're concentrating too much on martial arts.

(Ben, interview 1, 26/08/08)

He expressed an interest in learning Baguazhang, another 'internal' art, to compliment Taijiquan. Again, he drew on the social constructs of hard and soft martial arts alongside the Yang proverb of 'seven years of yielding before even thinking about pushing' (see Wile, 1992).

8.3. Conclusions

This chapter focused on the life histories of healers and meditators embodying interests in healing and spiritual perspectives respectively. The healers have a passion for related healing practices such as tuina massage, and aim to cultivate Kung Fu in these and TCMAAs. They hold multiple identities through long-term commitment to these practices, and take a dyadic approach to others through this healing. Within their pedagogies, the ideals of health are promoted as dominant discourses whilst lineage receives little interest. They lead through charisma, based on the abilities of the performing (and healing) bodies, yet also promote ideas of tradition through their historical connections between martial artists and healing practices. More broadly, their contributions are through health-orientated, accessible martial arts that can benefit local communities, particularly getting them in touch with nature and meditation, which strongly links them to meditators.

The meditators aim to cultivate spirituality through mind-body unification. Although they acknowledge the violent potential of the TCMAAs, their emphasis is on the meditative aspects and subjective spirituality. Nevertheless, they acknowledge the importance of partner training and teacher-student shared development, and interact with others using the philosophical principles connected to TCMAAs. At the subcultural level, they acknowledge the unstable, performative nature of TCMAAs, and retain an interest in the continuously changing body lineage. Such charismatic leadership is accompanied by a respect for Chinese and esoteric traditions seemingly far removed from the modern day urban society, which provides authority for their practice. Furthermore, their quest for perfection is stressed in their stories of mastery, and their

contribution to martial arts is based on their individual habitus. Finally, for society, their spiritual and meditative emphasis is communicated and experienced via retreats in natural environments away from urban stress.

To end Part 1, both ideal types are summarised with the help of the two matrixes below:

<i>Individual</i>	<i>Relational</i>
Individual	Communicative
Habitus	Body
<i>Institutional</i>	<i>Art</i>
Charismatic-	Health-orientated
Traditional	Art
Leadership	

Figure 8.1 Matrix of the Healers

<i>Individual</i>	<i>Relational</i>
Individual	Communicative
Habitus	Body
<i>Institutional</i>	<i>Art</i>
Charismatic-Traditional	Spiritual-orientated
Leadership	Art

Figure 8.2 Matrix of the Meditators

Overall, this analysis of the fighters, martial artists and thinkers has provided a complex illustration of ideal types shifting with reflexive knowledge and action. The healers and meditators share many qualities, and their charismatic approaches currently connect to ideas of ‘tradition’ although these may possibly be more recent than anticipated. Despite the neat boundaries between ideal types there are some things that unite all three, which are analysed in Part 2 of the discussion. It is the shared element of cultivation that I turn to first via intersubjective partner training.

Analysis Part 2: Shared Cultivation Across Ideal Types

Part 2 of the analysis unites the life stories of all three ideal types practising in the different ideal-typical schools and in both TCMA's. It is an account of the two similar experiences that they all articulated in their stories: 1) The importance of regular partner training 2) The communication of long-term transformation through metaphor. So whether it is a fighter training in a combat-orientated school or a thinker teaching in a health-orientated school, partner training (through the idea of intersubjectivity) and metaphors are both key to the idea of shared cultivation. Overall then, Part 2 offers a unification of the stories experiences and institutional approaches of these ideal types that might normally never be communicated together. It continues to highlight differences between ideal types in how they actually engage with partner training and draw upon certain metaphors whilst illustrating their similar striving for shared cultivation.

9. Shared Cultivation Through Intercorporeality

As these fighters, martial artists and thinkers are continuously interacting, what happens when they train together over long periods? How does this influence transformation and cultural transmission? In this chapter, we explore this shared nature of cultivation in TCMAAs, which is a major force underpinning both transformation and transmission on four clear, yet interrelated levels: The individual, relational, institutional and the art itself.

I begin with a general description of individual's phenomenologically orientated experiences, which are vividly described using what appears to be a set of technical and narrative resources for voicing such physical sensations. Then I examine the extent of transformation, including examples of shared experiences of altered states of consciousness and meditation. I then move to examine the role these forms of training play in pedagogies. Following that, I look at the importance of these shared experiences and transformations for the continuation of the art itself. Finally, having considered all these issues, I examine the impact of training alone over the long-term on certain practitioner's lives.

Continuing with the ideal types and martial habitus, this chapter extensively draws upon certain concepts from phenomenology and contemporary Eastern mind-body theory to focus on actual experiences of embodied consciousness in dynamic spheres of time and space through intercorporeality. Therefore, I will employ, combine and expand upon these concepts including Merleau-Ponty's (1962) habitual and phenomenal body, Schutz's (1967) intersubjectivity, face-to-face situations, and social action, Yuasa's self-cultivation (1987) and changing body scheme (1993) and Nagatomo's (1992) attunement.

Before we explore these experiences, a table outlining their common characteristics, which mark the often similar and sometimes contrasting principles of both systems. This is drawn from long-term participation in Wing Chun and extensive analysis of written and video documents on both pushing and sticking hands.

	Pushing hands	Sticking hands
<i>Shapes of techniques</i>	Circles/spheres	Triangles/pyramids
<i>Focus</i>	Pushing and grappling	Striking and anti grappling
<i>Typical format</i>	One handed	Two hands
<i>Contact point</i>	The hands, wrists or elbows	The wrists and forearms
<i>Footwork</i>	Usually stationary	Usually in motion
<i>Competition</i>	Well established	Slowly emerging
<i>Role in schools</i>	Often absent	Normally essential

Table 9.1 A comparison between pushing and sticking hands

Despite these contrasted features, there are many similarities between the two exercises that allow for a shared analysis of how they underpin cultivation. They are both:

- Key components of the systems
- The bridge between forms and combat
- Developing embodied sensitivity
- Focusing on the angle of limbs and degree of force issued and received
- Aiming to remain in constant contact
- Stressing skill over physical strength or athleticism
- Concerning themselves with range and structure (self- and other)
- Slow and rhythmic in the beginning
- Containing set and free flow drills
- Performed blindfolded at higher levels
- A way to judge a good practitioner

These features of the exercises reflect similar principles of combat and human body mechanics, including:

- Sticking and sensitivity
- Relaxation rather than muscular strength
- Yielding
- Yin/yang
- Simultaneous attack and defence

9.1. Individual Phenomenological Experiences

The exercises have already been described within the impressionist tales, where it was seen that it played a particularly big part in training focus and class time in Wing Chun. But what are they like for Taijiquan practitioners? I have had little experience of this myself, so rely on the stories of the practitioners to accurately portray transformation through the actual experience of embodied practice. Will, an avid practitioner of pushing hands, vividly and extensively introduces this elaborate exercise using examples from the versions he experienced over the years in his various systems:

Pushing hands is a game. And the idea behind it is two people...competing with each other, or you could say playing with each other. And the idea is to uproot your opponent. In the competitive style, it is anyway. In Taiji there's a non-competitive style of pushing hands where you literally have a set movement, a horizontal circling pattern. So you push towards your opponent's, or partner's chest, and you learn to yield whilst drawing your force away, and then returning. You do the same. So you're mirroring each other's movements. And in that style of pushing hands, you're learning the sensitivity. You're learning about manipulating the force from your partner, and staying soft, learning how to stay relaxed while there's a little pressure against yourself. But the idea is softness. There's no force. The contact is as light as you can possibly make it. And there's a series in Chen style especially, of different movements that you can do. So you go from the basic single hand, then you can push in, and the defendant pulls you down, and then you do this vertical figure of eight. Then you've got double-handed styles, where you can circle in and out. There's an absolutely crazy one where you're got crossed arms, and touching each other's elbows and you circle round, and then there's this weird sort of change where you come up on the inside and come back the other way, and sort of chop and change, and change directions, and sort of rolling around. When you do that one, you're very up close. So you're getting used to bursting your own bubble, and getting into another person and just having confidence in yourself to being that close to other people. Having that strong connection to another person. But also, working on your root as well, working on your balance. You've still got to be aligned, because if you're not careful, someone will just shove you over. And that style of pushing hands, where you've got the circling, then you can start walking forwards and backwards, and there's a big, elaborate, triple circle, step, step, scoop in, step back, circle round, forwards and backwards. And then that can turn itself into a very freestyle form of just training. It is competition training. Because if your opponent wasn't rooted, you would be able to knock them off balance. But in all pushing hands, it's about yourself, and being aware of your own body. And not over extending yourself. You've got your bubble, you've got your lines. You're never locking your joints. You're keeping yourself soft and centred. (Continues in Appendix 9.1).

(Will, interview 1, 20/08/08)

A key question following this discussion is where did he and others like him learn to talk like this? What socio-linguistic resources exist in TCMA schools and literature? Here, Will not only refers to forces and vectors (Merleau-Ponty, 1962) as the source of exchange through mirroring bodies (Frank, 1991), but expresses this using terminology learned within a Taijiquan pedagogy e.g. 'root.' Here, he also embodies Chinese philosophies such as Bagua (from the *Yi Jing*) in order to accomplish high levels of self-defence capability in a number of styles sharing the use of pushing hands. He transcends the boundaries between institutional habitus, and is actively forming his own

hybrid, individual habitus. Key to being successful is continuously moving in a relaxed fashion whilst being aware of the bubble or what Masciotra *et al.* (2004) term *maai*. These exercises are considered the bridge between forms and fighting or a form of controlled, free flowing sparring at close range. Chris, ordinarily very spiritual, gave a martial interpretation of pushing hand's place in Taijiquan in the Appendix 9.2. He later elaborated on the inner body experiences:

The push hands training is really aimed at your body movement, but maintaining your roots, being upright and powerful throughout all of the movements you do in push hands, in combat really. Being centred and strong and stable, and rooted all the time. Not being uprooted. So push hands training is aimed at that. Through the training, it breaks down any resistance you've had in your body. Any tension. So if you need to change direction of your body, you can just change naturally, without a second thought. You react to all situations naturally.

(Chris, interview 1, 20/09/08)

Chris drew upon his martial artist aspect to explain the applications of this exercise. The elegant forms are embodied, and the motions and principles behind them are performed in a non-choreographed manner. At higher levels, the whole body develops embodied sensitivity to be able to deal with forces coming from any direction, as Edward briefly concluded (see Appendix 9.3).

We have now seen the place of these exercises in the systems. Yet how important are these to the practitioners and their schools? We assess this next.

9.2. Intersubjective Partner Training

Partner training was regarded as an essential element of one's training by all the practitioners, in order for overall development and for the future continuation of the art. Fighters, martial artists and thinkers all emphasised this, although they told it in different ways. Below, some very different practitioners describe how important it is in their lives. First, Tony reflects on the importance of range, contact and energies:

You cannot really practise Wing Chun...you've got the wooden dummy obviously, to practise, but it's not the same as practising with somebody else. To have that energy to play back and forth. Somebody tells you, helping you, saying, "you're pushing down man." And getting range, from practising techniques, *tan sau*. Somebody punching in, and you go in and you practise the range, energies and contact and conditions. This is really important.

(Tony, interview 1, 22/06/08)

Tony mentioned some key issues in TCMA cultivation that may be interpreted from a phenomenologically-inspired perspective: Range (as a dynamic, intersubjective, spatiotemporal situation or *maai*), energies (forces issued by the practitioners in certain directions) and physical contact (touch and sensitivity). Here, partner training make the principles from the forms more alive and intersubjective, as Zack reiterated (see Appendix 9.4). Terry, drawing upon his fighter habitus, stresses the need for different partners who will provide variation in these aspects for overall combat ability:

You need partners. And partners, not just one partner. Cos familiarity breeds content. You get used to each other. You need as many different people as possible. Not only for the different mental side of it, but for the different body side of it. Like you, you're roughly my size. And so we roughly match each other in certain techniques. Whereas someone who's a lot smaller than me, their approach is different because their body is different. I have to adapt to what I'm doing for that. And likewise, for someone who's taller than me. Bigger people think they can push through you. Little people are more sensitive and soft. And I have to be able to deal with both. And through training with both, I learn to deal with both. Because I'm not going to be fighting the same kind of people every time I fight. It would be nice if you were to know who you're going to be fighting, but you're not. The world's full of people, different attitudes, different sizes, and depending on the situation at the time, you might be fighting a six foot tall, enormous monster, or you could be fighting a five foot two small bloke with small man syndrome. And you've got to know how to deal with each. And that's what partners do for you.

(Terry, interview 2, 08/06/08)

Therefore, for him, partner training is purely for the ability to fight different kinds of people. Zack mentioned the need for training with higher skill levels to avoid just pure 'external' training (see appendix 9.4). By this he meant the techniques would become mere movements with no causation from a partner's energy. They would be 'empty techniques' with no meaning. Although Wing Chun is commonly considered an 'external style', its focus on sensitivity and energies share qualities with many of the internal styles (see O'Brien for an accessible introduction to these arts). From these three perspectives of Terry, Zack and Tony (coming from three ideal types within one school), it is evident that partner training is essential in order to become proficient in Wing Chun and Taijiquan (see Ben in Appendix 9.5). Issues of variety, sizes, build, energies and sensitivity have been mentioned, and these will be examined individually, although they always overlap in practice.

Bodies: Planes, Vectors and Energies

As a range of people practise these arts, there is an opportunity for unique bodily interactions not seen in competitive combat sports such as boxing, which are normally weight restricted. Earlier, Terry spoke about the importance of partners of different shapes and sizes. These will obviously provide different force dimensions along different planes and vectors (Merleau-Ponty, 1962). Sarah, a petite female, finds this particularly beneficial:

It's really important. I always try to find the biggest guy there, Matthew. He's yay big (refers to height). Because my Sifu emphasises on getting into the person, break down the structure, by breaking their elbows, breaking their balance by their elbows, so dropping my weight onto their elbow in order to bring them down. And get to the side of them and boot the back of their knee, and get their ankles. So it continuously breaks their structure, which can ultimately lead to getting them on the floor, essentially. So it's important to have different shapes and sizes as well. And not only different sizes, but get different kinds of energies.

(Sarah, interview 2, 27/08/08)

Emma shares this perspective, and speaks of her gradual transformation in fighting ability within this combat-focused school:

First of all, I felt really ineffectual. They [her classmates] could just walk all over me. Then after I started getting better, the feeling was really, really good. As you say, there's a couple of bigger guys who normally I would feel scared of. Bald heads, big, meaty guys. Fortunately I knew them as friends. But you still don't know people, and you're putting yourself in a risky situation if someone's throwing a punch at you and you don't block it, you get hit, don't you? It's quite risky. So yeah, I was scared first of all, but once you're confidence grows and the techniques get better, it's brilliant (laughs). That's basically what I loved most about it: Being able to hold my own against someone who's much stronger and larger. And finding that the techniques that do actually work. When they don't work, then my teacher would show me something else. He would go, "Because of your size, because of his size, what you want to do is adjust." It was just fantastic. He would teach us to think about what we're doing. Not just apply techniques, but actually think about what you're facing. And your own personal power, and developing it. So, "You're small, so what you need to develop is more whip power. Because you're faster, and you can do that better than a big guy who is more muscle bound." So it's drawing on your strengths really. Which is quite strange. If you think you're little, and you don't have so much muscle or power as someone else, you're immediately at a disadvantage. But actually, there's advantages that you have because of that. So that's great, isn't it?

(Emma, interview 1, 26/07/08)

Hence there is a gradual transformation in the schemes of perception from the dominant sense of sight to those of touch and kinaesthesia where it doesn't how big or scary you look, but what you can physically do with that. This application of one's biological resources is often referred to as 'energy.' This leads us to the question: What is the difference between energies and strength? Wing Chun instructor Rawcliffe (2003) explains that whereas once strength can only operate in one direction, energy can

change direction if required. In both arts, there is normally talk of eight energies (dynamic directions of force possible by the limbs) that a good practitioner must cultivate. Zack articulates this in the Appendices 9.6 and 9.7, and explains the need to match energies in order to flow in chi sau with John:

What I mean by elbow energy is when you link arms in the chi sau roll, his forward energy coming from his elbows straight into your centre basically, pushing you out of your stance. When you roll with him, there's such a firm roll from his elbows. If you just slip a little bit on either of your arms, you just get pushed out. He just pushes through you. But not physically pushing you, but a firm, steady pressure that sends you back. A steady, firm, even pressure. It's not one sided. This is just the roll, the *poon sau*. He's not doing any actual techniques. It's a roll, it's just so forward and even. You can't, there's nowhere to go. You can't escape the pressure. You can't go around. All you can do is try to match it. But if you let that slip a little bit, your arms get pushed away and you pushed out of your stance (we laugh).

(Zack, interview 2, 26/04/08)

This energy is not from John's genetics, or purely biological aspect of his habitus, but a skill acquired through extended training with top masters worldwide. Ben interprets all of pushing hands from an 'energy' perspective, which is an essential follow up from the form:

Even in the solo form, you need to know where the energy is. And the only way you're going to do that is through pushing hands. 'OK, it's there, but is it there? I'm putting the energy there, but is it there?' If you're doing pushing hands, then you know it's there. Same with the push, the push is there. You've got the energy when you're doing the solo form, but you don't know where the energy's going. And where the yield is going after that push. You push and then you yield.

(Ben, interview 1, 26/08/08)

Within a school, a range of individuals will possess varying degrees of the eight energies based not only on their individual biological habitus aspect, but more importantly, their cultivation of this through forms and partner training. The remainder of this chapter will assist us in interpreting this word 'energy', but for now, we can surmise that these people are referring to the intensity and direction of force issued by the opponent. It is also clear from these comments that this is a vital conceptual and cultural consideration for training in order for overall transformation and for the whole art to transmit.

Time, Space and Moving Meditation

The continuous exchange of techniques between partners often works in a highly rhythmic action allowing for a feeling of flow and relaxation, and at higher levels, may act as a form of moving meditation. Roger explains his experiences of the gentle rhythm of pushing hands through a wave metaphor:

With the teachers, it does flow more like a wave. I think that's an important concept. It's like a wave. It goes up and down, up and down. Where you get your Chinese martial arts are based on yin and yang, many martial arts say life is like yin and yang. It can be one moment absolutely brilliantly, you've bought a new car, then the next moment your girlfriend's left you, and then...you don't want your life like that. You want it in the middle, going up and down slightly. Now that's still yin and yang. It's, it's flowing like that, that's what you want.

(Roger, interview 2, 27/11/07)

Here, Roger contrasts the highly attuned body of a teacher to that of a novice, whose mind and body are not yet fully integrated. This exercise's core principles of yin (yielding) and yang (pressing) even go as far as shaping his daily schemes of perception as a being in the world. Roger links this rhythm to a musical note with what Masciotra *et al.* (2004) term *maai* (Japanese term for time-space as one concept), the constantly changing spatiotemporal relationship between two partners often likened to a bubble:

It's the feeling of extending your whole consciousness out, so you're encompassing the person so there's a closed feeling, you're in a bubble, and you're anticipating what they are doing, but you're moving in a posture which is rooted to the ground, and you're drawing from the ground, so your arms are moving and you're drawing from the ground, and there's a flow. But you're not to overspill. So you're drawing up and flowing out, but you can't overspill as that would give them an advantage. So it's like a musical note that comes up, and then collapses right down and goes up, and collapses back down. You never ever extend yourself. You do encompass another person in a certain way.

(Roger, interview 2, 27/11/07)

So far the practitioners have indicated that there is a clear difference in bodymind integration between novices and advanced practitioners. At high levels of skill and experience, both practitioners can reach altered states of consciousness that beginners never would. This affects the experience of lived inner time, which is vastly different to the real (chronological) time through moving meditation and the development of no-mind (Yuasa, 1987). John reflects on this, using an example from a recent experience with one of his advanced students:

(Begins in appendix 9.8). The other thing is...time...time's another factor in Wing Chun and chi sau. When you're fulfilled in what you're thinking, to a level to what becomes meditative, time goes out of the window. So you might be there, and you're chi saung, and

you're concentrating on what you're doing, your fulfilling yourself while you're doing it. Obviously your partner is...and you look at the clock and you think, 'God, where's that time gone?' It feels like five minutes, and you've been stood there an hour. That can happen quite regularly to people. But there's another answer. It's shared. Now, I've just realised: It's a shared meditation. You're both in the same zone. You're both in the same...now that can't happened...if one person isn't, then you can't achieve that. If you're actually teaching chi sau to a person who has not reached a level of energy feel or competence, then you won't be in that zone, you won't be in a meditative state. It's only when people reach a certain area in their training where you can both train equally, you can feel that meditative state...yeah, I suppose really, psychologically somewhere, it must be a hell of a turn on, mustn't it? For you to be stood there hours on end, doing it, and really enjoying it. You know? In a non-sexual term (laughs). You know what I'm saying? To be fulfilling for myself.

(John, interview 2, 01/03/08)

Several interesting themes emerged here. First was the idea of shared moving meditation, which neither of us had thought about before. In fact, John called me the next day, saying he'd had a eureka moment during this discussion, which moves beyond the idea of interview as therapy. This, amongst other methodological issues, will be explored in the conclusions. More conceptually, John referred to being the moment, in a state of no-mind often referred to in Asian philosophy (Yuasa, 1987). Having extensive reading in Eastern philosophy may have allowed him to interpret it this way through the thinker aspect. Do these experiences qualify as a form of spirituality? This remains to be investigated. On a more sociological sense the theme of sensual solidarity again emerges as the connections between practitioners is heightened through these embodied, spontaneous experiences, which in return can reproduce the importance of the arts for the people's identities. Practitioners frequently stressed that these experiences only happen with a partner of equally high skill level who is sharing the exchange in a non-competitive environment. See Kelly's account for another experience of this in Appendix. 9.9

We have already seen that training partner is more than just a tool for one's own physical development. Yet as this cultivation process intends to develop the whole person, as Yuasa (1987) contends, how will it develop the actual character of training partners? The communicative aspects of people are stressed here through dyadic other relations. In order to learn, two people must cooperate within a relaxed, non-competitive, close contact environment. Zack reiterates these qualities:

Obviously good temper. Good temper and patience. And working hard to get something. To stick at it until they get it. Even if it takes a couple of sessions. Again, the competitiveness, a little bit of it's OK at the time, at the right time. If me and Pete were really competitive with each other, we probably wouldn't be training now. We've been coming on for three years, or whatever it is, together. No problems, not once. Not once ever. Because we're not trying to get one up on each other. If you get something on me in the chi sau, then touché. I

take my hat off if you're getting the technique right. I don't get mad with it and come back and try to get my own back. It's a two-way thing

(Zack, interview 2, 26/04/08)

However, sometimes partner training becomes competitive and egoistic, as Will recalls some occasions with his friend:

When we train together, we do it nice and soft and playful for a bit, but then we both get a bit silly with each other. And you get a bit pushy. Someone gets a little bit of a lock on. You've got to wriggle out of it, and it builds up, and builds up and builds up, until eventually it's quite hectic. So you haven't got that experimental, playful thing. It becomes more of a competition. It's more of a fight than anything else (laughs). Still very friendly, still very relaxed, very nice, but I always find too much tension builds up because you've lost that softness. You've lost the sort of flow with it. And we trained once. We hired a canoe from down by the river. And paddled down by the river, and we were like, "Right, let's do push hands!" We were stood up in this canoe, and we managed about thirty seconds of nice, soft, sensible pushing, then it got a little bit silly, and we fell in the water (laughs).

(Will, interview 1, 20/08/08)

From reading this, it might be interpreted that it is better to train with a partner who is how does not take a dominating body approach to training. Then both can cultivate their human characters beyond the technical levels of skill. It is as Rawcliffe (2003) suggests, the one who learns the most is the winner, rather than the one who dominates and bullies. However, Will seemed very happy with his regular training partner, as the fun and competition suited his sporting dispositions and heightened his already strong enthusiasm for TCMA's both outside and inside official training within a pedagogy.

9.3. Partner Training in the Pedagogy

Training with Different Skill Levels

Along with the importance of different physical forces within unique spatiotemporal conditions, there is a need to train under the watchful supervision of senior students who possess a more advanced habitus, and therefore stronger schemes of perception. Zack explains his experience of this:

It runs between honing what you've been doing and going up a little notch. It's with a more advanced person. It takes you up a game, up a step. It just shows you so much. Even stuff you think you've got. You might have the basic movement, but there's a lot more to it. With somebody of less experience, you wouldn't get to that level. You wouldn't get to that depth of it. It would just stay more external. You're doing movement rather than just the finer points.

(Zack, interview 2, 26/04/08)

Therefore, small, conscious alterations are repeated until they reform the habitus. His links to the learning and mastery narratives seemingly so dominant in TCMAs. In the appendix, Zack expanded upon this importance by referring to the mirroring aspect of human beings (Frank, 1991). Nevertheless, although the schemes of perception of most senior grades are sufficient enough to discern bad practice from a distance, it is necessary to actually get into direct physical contact with others students in order to give them accurate guidance. This is the importance of physical contact on a pedagogic level, and also the importance of senior students within such a partner based pedagogy, as without experienced partners to guide the training exercises the teacher would be unable to feel and give feedback for each student in order to facilitate learning. This may differ to some other martial arts that focus on the external appearance of forms or ritualised line work with little partner interaction, which may offer a more familiar teacher-student division. A final point is that whilst the juniors are benefiting from this interactive feedback, the art is being transmitted from body to body through a somatic pedagogy. John provides an excellent understanding of this circle of transformation: “You can develop their chi sau so they don’t just defend, but actually start attacking you too. You used to just defend, but now you’re attacking me lots. In order for you to get better, you need to make your students able to attack you, to put you under pressure.” (Field notes, 14/05/08).

Each partner training session is unique as it provides different intersubjective (or more specifically, intercorporeal) experiences in time and space through a We-relationship (Schutz, 1967). Here, there is a deliberate cultivation of the martial habitus through shared states of bright consciousness (Yuasa, 1987). In light of this, Terry recalls a time geared towards his chi sau development with three lower grades:

I invited all three to the gym, and, I would just burn them out, one by one. I would take one, start practising with him, and when he was exhausted, I’d move onto the next one. When he was exhausted, I would move onto the next one. It did my training the world of good, but it also did their training the world of good. Because they got regular practice with someone who was at a higher level than them. And in bringing my level up, they brought their level up.

(Terry, interview 2, 08/06/08)

Here, Terry reinforced the importance of training with higher grades with more experience and an advanced Wing Chun habitus. At the same time, this relationship is like a circle: As the beginners get better, they in turn assist the teacher in his/her development. Therefore, cultivation is shared and continuous. This is a key characteristic

of TCMA pedagogies. Along with this, he demonstrates the commitment through investment of time and physical capital into partner training outside the class environment. Zack is going through a similar circle of mentoring and shared development in his life (see Appendix 9.10). This reinforces the apparent importance of home training as part of the disciplined Kung Fu lifestyle, unsurprisingly drawing on the disciplined body element (Frank, 1991). It also seems that partner training has technical and knowledge benefits for both the people involved only if it practised in a cooperative, non-competitive environment. Therefore, in training, the dominant body aspect is rarely drawn upon. It is as John once said, “I allow myself to be weak so that others can be strong” (Field notes, 20/05/09).

Experiences with Masters

Chris, like many practitioners, reveres his master’s overwhelming skill and knowledge. For him, pushing hands is a clear demonstration of their relative levels of cultivation:

He’s certainly shown me a lot of techniques, or he’s used his techniques to throw me around like a rag doll really. To the outside observer, it looks as though you’re not trying to fight him or to put any resistance up. But he used his skill and his technique and mobility to such a high degree that your body has no choice but to follow his intention, his direction. So he throws you around like you’re not there. Like you’re just not there, to be honest. And you can feel...there’s an expression when people talk about internal martial arts. It’s an expression that the bones are like steel, but they’re wrapped in cotton wool. And that’s how it feels when you try to fight or push with him. You know he’s human, you know he’s a human being, but you push into him, and there’s a steel like resistance to his, to his body. And so you try to fight that and you’re overpowered very, very quickly.

(Chris, interview 1, 20/09/08)

He contrasted the experiences of an outside observer unfamiliar with this kind of training, who would not understand the yielding aspect, in comparison to the actual physical experience. Zack recalls the first time he stuck hands with John. For him, this was a turning point in his broken and sporadic training with various teachers, as from that experience he had found his teacher for life:

As soon as we stuck hands, I realised there was nothing I could do. I couldn’t put a hand on him. I couldn’t do anything. He started talking to me about the different energies of chi sau, which I had no idea what he was talking about at the time. “Do you know the eight energies of chi sau?” Which I had to proclaim I didn’t. He said, “Right. This is the first energy.” Then he went to the second energy. Not being able to unlink my arms, not being able to step around, not being able to disconnect. Just being backed from one side of the hall right against the wall. I just managed to step around. It was just unbelievable. Unbelievable...he smiled and winked, and said I had a lot of work to do, but it wasn’t bad...Yeah, after that, I was pretty much smitten, pretty much...I could see that Sifu’s skill was better than anyone’s

skill I had ever experienced in any of the schools that I'd been to. Regardless of style or regardless to the length of time the teachers had been training and teaching for. It's something I hadn't encountered...yeah, so pretty much from there, I realised I had found correct Sifu.

(Zack, interview 1, 15/03/08)

In order to discern John's skill, Zack had to actually link arms with him and feel these invisible energies through embodied schemes of perception. In this sense such an account reproduces the idea that we cannot see good Wing Chun, only feel it. It is clear that the master plays a vital role in the transformations of the students. However, it is important to consider that each student shapes their own development of an individual habitus, and this includes the degree to which partner training plays a part in their lives.

Earlier we saw how important lineage is for many practitioners as their kinaesthetic citizenship. In Roger's school, the close links to the late Taijiquan master Zheng Manqing are frequently drawn upon. Zheng was famous for his mastery of the '*five excellences*' of Taijiquan, poetry, calligraphy, painting, and Chinese medicine (see Mason, 2008), which are expected to effectively cultivate a well-rounded individual with a balanced character. Roger reveres Zheng's renowned skill in pushing hands, which help us understand the cultural reproduction of values based on skill (see Appendix 9.11). Roger is therefore judging Zheng through his institutional schemes of perception and embodied sensitivity, effectively distinguishing the soft, subtle skill of pushing hands from Karate public demonstrations. To the outsider, the board breaking may be far more impressive, as they would judge from the sense of sight. They would only be able to effectively judge the skill of pushing hands through martial experience. Therefore, the martial habitus is embodied through years of experience in order to discern the incredible from the mundane. However, the degree to which this is possible is often determined by the ethos of the school and the individuals within it who gravitate to certain areas of the practitioner continuum.

The Continuum and Partner Training

However, in many Taijiquan schools, pushing hands or partner training is not emphasised. Instead, the solo form is suggested as more beneficial, which is reflected in the quantitative research cited previously. In the impressionist tale, it was clear that

training in Joe's class was centred on the solo form and the health-orientation. Joe admits his embodied limitations within this health-orientated school:

Partner exercises are very important to develop a full understanding of Taiji. But not a lot of people are interested in that though. I don't teach the pushing hands in my classes, but I run workshops on it. Again, my understanding is not phenomenal, but I have a reasonable grasp of it. I can teach people on a very basic level. A lot of people are interested and they don't go to the classes to learn it. It's a health orientated, middle way. We will teach people to push hands in the workshops for push hands. But they don't come there to learn it in the end of the day. But when I do introduce them, you will find that a lot of people are actually interested in it.

(Joe, interview 1, 18/05/08)

He links this to the idea of the 'broad church' or continuum:

Pushing hands, again, is a broad church with lots of different movements. On one side it's just a sensitivity building exercise, on another it's a form of full-on combat. Or modified combat, to allow people to compete.

(Joe, interview 1, 18/05/08)

Practitioners can only transmit what they themselves have embodied beyond the level of intellectual understanding. For Joe, this approach to pushing hands reflects a philosophy between the extremes of pure combat training and new age spirituality. Yet partner training may also have numerous benefits to health, although this isn't stressed in the media. The school a practitioner is in, and their current position on the continuum, play major roles in their cultivation through partner training and fostering a sense of community through shared experience as it is through other practitioners that TCMA exponents can truly develop a well-rounded approach. Perhaps training with people from a range of schools and practitioner types would be a beneficial strategy for a more complete habitus? We analyse this next

Intersubjective Experiences Outside Schools

According to some traditionalist thinking, there was little mixing of Kung Fu styles during the TCMA's development and spread throughout pre-Revolution China. In fact, it would often be heretical to train with non-members of the body lineage, especially those from rival schools. Like in Capoeira (Delamont & Stephens, 2008), loyalty and fidelity to one school, teacher and institution is seen as paramount. This is still the case for many schools wishing to preserve their techniques, training methods and philosophies. However, during most practitioners' development, there came a time when the

opportunity arose for interactive training with followers of other styles, which acted as a key learning experience for all, where techniques and principles were tested in a new, 'free flow' environment with people hailing from different spectrums of the practitioner continuum. Emma recalls her moment of inspiration from a successful cross training session with practitioners from different TCMA schools:

We were doing a bit of free flow. We started off doing a bit of lap sau and chi sau, and then went into free flow using our different styles. Basically, I found I could hold my own and beat the other Wing Chun guy. Cos his footwork wasn't there. And he was quite soft. Yeah. I was more full on than he was. I think it puzzled him, and I think he didn't quite know how to deal with it. He didn't say very much, but what was going on in my head was, 'I can beat you!' (Laughs). And that's another Wing Chun guy who's been training for a long time. And other people totally got the better with me. Sometimes I'd been fighting with them, and they'd get one in, and I'd get one in, then they'd get one in. Sometimes it would be quite scary. We would look at each other and go...(gasps) "That was close!" It was amazingly good fun. Completely knackered. I've never been so knackered in my life. Because we were constantly swapping partners and really going for it, it was really difficult. A very hot day as well. A turning point for me was, I can make what I do work. Yeah. And if I can't, well, it's because I'm not good enough. I hadn't trained it, or they had overpowered me, for whatever reason. Their style overcame mine. There's so much going on again. I just felt I could hold my own, so it was a big turning point for me. Also, I had to really go for it. Whereas before, in my training, it was, 'Yeah, let's apply these techniques. I'm doing this.' But I never really got this, I can only call it a spirit...to go for it. And that's what I did there. And it worked for me, and I suddenly thought, 'That's what it's all about.' And I stepped up my training, I stepped up a gear and got a lot of confidence out of that.

(Emma, interview 1, 26/07/08)

Therefore for Emma, a eureka moment or epiphany (Berger, 2008) occurred to develop a new found self-belief and reassurance where she knew that she had successfully cultivated fighting skills within a realistic environment. This established her self- and social identity as a fighting orientated practitioner. Likewise, Will found that he could hold his own against different Taijiquan practitioners whilst discovering the vast differences between styles. He once organized an open push hands session in which people could develop their skills with people of different styles and energies:

We'd get people from different ages and experiences, different styles coming together, which is really good, because you got to experience different types of pushing. And I met some really funny people. There was one guy who did Yang style. He was so soft, so roly, it looked amazing, soft and supple. He was good. You push against him, he knew a lot, but, the only problem with him was he pushed me, he got me into a bit of a tricky situation, so I pushed through him and cos he was so soft, he literally spun round in the air and landed on the floor. That was his response to the force that I put at him. It was like... 'OK, you've got the soft bit. You've got the yin, where's the yang?' You shouldn't just fall on the floor if you're fighting. If you're fighting, you've got to have that level of strength within your posture as well. So it was a shocking thing. I moved quickly as well. Bang! "Sorry!" (We laugh). It was just interesting how different people interpret the art in different ways. Different styles especially. Another guy, who I used push against, very, very weedy, very thin, but so soft, so flexible as well. You think you've got him, you've got him, you've got him, but the guy could sink both feet flat on the floor. He could sit on his heels, basically. 'What are you doing down there?' (Laughs). It's great to see how different bodies work and how they relate to pushing. I'm from a Western sporting background, so I know I've got a

lot of strength, and I'll put a lot of force into things, which I'm trying to work against and change a little bit. But you know, I've got that. Then you see other guys who've got this soft and yieldy sort of approach. I can give them this force, and then they can absorb it. They can't necessarily push me over, but I can't get them either. So you get this really nice interplay between the different styles.

(Will, interview 1, 20/08/08)

From this, it seems that different styles of the same art transmit the principles differently to the degree that practitioners move, feel and act in remarkably distinct ways that may be identified by the habitus of a connoisseur. As we have seen in Part 1, different practitioner types will individualise the art's institutional habitus. There are different characters with various roles within each pedagogy, as Delamont and Stephens (2008) found in Capoeira. This is also very clear from the above extracts, which suggest the importance of the individual over the style in combat. A well-rounded martial artist should be able to fight all different types of opponents, much like a complete surfer must be able to ride all kinds of waves (Ford & Brown, 2005).

9.4. Sensual Transformation and Wider Society

Physical Contact in Combat

It is clear that pushing hands is an enjoyable and beneficial form of human interaction. Several participants suggested that this was one of TCMA's most important contributions to society through the offering of social and physical contact, much like a therapy. Interestingly, different practitioners explained the importance of actual physical contact with other human beings. This ranges from a necessity for fighting training to a more basic, almost spiritual, human need. Ted explains using a fighter perspective:

It's a good thing to have the physical contact with somebody. I mean, in Tang So Do...I was aware that there was no physical contact. It is a non contact sport. You never actually touch anybody. Well, you would if you hit them. But you would never actually touch anybody. Whereas in Wing Chun, you touch and you grapple, and that's what happens in a real life situation. If you're not used to someone grabbing you, then you don't know how to react. You panic. But if you train with somebody, then your body is attuned to dealing with the grab. And I think that's absolutely essential.

(Ted, interview 2, 04/06/08)

Here, Ted spoke of attuning to other people's physical contact as a form of long-term cultivation. He explained this in terms of real combat ability. Terry expresses his views on the altered mind-body relationship:

(Begins in Appendix 9.12). That's what sensitivity does for you. It teaches you to read the situation fast. You look like you're miles ahead, but you're actually not that much faster than anyone else. It's just that your cognition skills, your reflexes are faster than everyone else. Attuned better than other people. It's like a poker player – he knows when you're lying. Cos he looks for little things that tell him you're lying. Whereas a Wing Chun practitioner is looking for your arms to tell your lies, by feeling. It also stops, as you know, any blags working. You can't be, you can't be fooled by someone. The classic one when you do the sooty in the nude. If someone puts their hand up like that this, it's not going to work, is it? You're going to be so zoned in on hitting them, rather than watching the hand move to the side. Like with the sensitivity drill. If you feel someone pushing out...

(Terry, interview 1, 12/02/08)

Therefore, through repetitive drilling with a competent partner, Wing Chun practitioners develop embodied sensitivity as part of their martial habitus. This is through the development of reflexes through what Yuasa (1993) describes as the second circuit of coenesthesia where one checks the body's status. However, unlike that seen in Yuasa's (1993) changing body scheme, this is eventually developed to an unconscious level that doesn't seem to require qi or the emotions (at least as far as the practitioners' accounts have explained). Nevertheless, there is bodymind unification, and this is evident in contrast to a beginner, as Terry explained above. This is clearly a form of an acquired, embodied habitus, as Kelly reflects on her own gradual development of this no-mind (Yuasa, 1987) within blindfolded training in the Appendix.

Nevertheless, this is not to say that the sense of sight wouldn't be used in a combat situation, as Ben warns: "You say the sense of touch, but it isn't really that. It's everything together. It's sight, touch, body, listening. Yes, it's listening up here [refers to the head]. If I was just to use the sense of touch, I'd fall over!" (Field notes, 09/09/08). Therefore, in chi sau and pushing hands, the body is used in its entirety, with no sense left isolated. These senses are developed through training with various partners of different experiences, somatotypes and strategies.

Senses and Culture

In our everyday world, we commonly rely on our vision to survive. It is seen as the dominant sense that forms the top of a socio-cultural hierarchy of senses (Classen, 1993). However, TCMA's regard the senses of touch and kinaesthesia as just as important, if not more. In fact, sight can even be used to trick the opponent, whereas touch always provides information about the objects of perception. There is a deliberate cultivation of embodied sensitivity that Brown and Johnson (2000) referred to. Chris, a

spiritual individual, believes human contact is essential for all, regardless of the fighting context:

I think anyone doing martial arts or perhaps even doing massage, people generally speaking, we're not used to close contact. Either having a sexual innuendo, or I suppose the opposite side of that would be a fight. But there's nothing in between. To make contact with people, in the very first instance, it's quite weird, isn't it? You're in someone else's space, but you're not there to take something from them or give to them. You're sharing that space. That's quite an unusual situation, isn't it? I suppose dancers, pairs of dancers, they experience it. But generally speaking, people aren't used to being close to each other (we laugh). And in China, the Chinese men are much more comfortable with touching each other in a friendly way that would be seen as almost homosexual activity in a Western culture. But maybe America...maybe not South and Latin America, but mainstream America. Chinese men, if they sitting next to each other, and having a meal, a Chinese guy will just rest his hand [refers to thigh]. There's no sexual...but we'd think, 'Who's this weirdo? What is he doing? Why's he touching me?' Fundamentally, it's a very human thing to do. And I like that, I really like it. We are touchy feely people, but we put barriers up.

(Chris, interview 1, 20/09/08)

Chris takes a firmly communicative position (Frank, 1991) in order to break down the barriers socialised and embodied through our Western European culture which he contrasts to Latin cultures such as Latin America, which have an ambience or interaction order (Goffman, 1970) of hugging and cheek kissing upon regular meetings. Such modes of interaction are offered in transmitted arts such as Capoeira, as Delamont (2006) found in a British school of the art. In the appendix, Roger holds a similar position, suggesting that this helped him outside TCMA's. Therefore, his habitus acted as a transferable set of dispositions useful for everyday encounters. It is through long-term training in an environment centred around physical contact that the practitioners' sensory awareness are heightened and altered in various ways. One of the most outstanding features of a TCMA habitus is the claimed ability to react unconsciously to any attack from contact. This is due to embodied sensitivity.

Embodied Transmission of the Art

From the discussion so far, it is clear that partner training is a deliberate cultivation method within TCMA's. What may be less obvious is its role in the continued transmission of the art. Zack and I reflected on this:

GJ: Wing Chun is a living art because of all the energies. The only way it can survive is through living people, through practicing and living those experiences that we were just doing on the hill. I mean, do you want to add anything on how that is?

ZT: I think maybe Taiji people will get it, with the push hands. But I don't think the other martial arts get that so much. There are obviously other systems that do, but it's more of the

Filipino stuff [*Escrima*], as they've got lots of sensitivity drills and stuff like that. So it's living, it's fluid. If everyone was wiped out in the world, apart from a book on Wing Chun. There's no one who knows Wing Chun. Those people could find that book and read it, but they would never, ever find what Wing Chun is because there was no one to give to them, to show them or pass it.

(Zack, interview 2, 26/04/08)

It seems that the practitioners strongly feel partner training is essential for both their own and the art's continued development as Wing Chun is centered around the development monitoring and understanding of energies rather than concepts more readily understood in British society, such as winning and losing. In fact, partner training may be the major underpinning mechanism behind cultural transmission, as Zack stressed it is the principles, not the techniques or drills, that make Wing Chun the martial art it is (see Appendix 9.13). Hence the art itself may be cultivated through the practitioner's own intersubjective experience of the principles. This reinforces Brown's (2005) point, which emphasized the nature of these somatic pedagogies, and placed limitations on books and videos as teaching tools. John highlighted the connection between the teacher, their students and the art through the medium of *chi sau*:

You've got to keep it alive. And I believe it is a living art. That the physical energies that we feel, the feeling sensations have to be passed on from person to person, to keep it alive. The feeling within the group. For instance, if I have someone who is teaching in a school, and he has fifteen students. By sticking hands with the instructor of that group, I can feel what the rest of the group are learning. For instance, if that instructor is a very aggressive person, that's what he'll pass on. If he's not, and he's a passive person, then they'll learn a very passive form of Wing Chun

(John, interview 2, 01/03/08)

These living energies form a kinaesthetic citizenship (Joseph, 2008) connecting generations of Wing Chun practitioners within certain lineages, ensuring the correct transmission of the art. Yet what happens when individual practitioners can no longer train in an intersubjective environment? In the final section, some practitioners provide an example of this impact on their lives.

9.5. Training Without a Partner

Due to life's practicalities, there were times when many of the practitioners couldn't regularly commit to training. Dave's hand injury and the closure of his local class meant he couldn't train for a partner for over a year due to lack of economic capital to go elsewhere. He reflects on this time of contrast:

It's incredibly different. Because Wing Chun, because martial arts are very reactive, you can only work on what you're given. The exercises in sensitivity such like the chi sau exercises, is such a fundamental part of Wing Chun, it's taught. That's what it's all about. Not exclusively, but that's what it's all about. That's the big thing that you need to develop, your sensitivity, your ability to react to what's being thrown at you and to use that for your benefit. You can't do that on your own. It's impossible, I don't know, unless you're some kind of genius and you build this huge robot (we laugh) there's no way around it. You can go through some of the motions, some of the drills that you know, but most of the most helpful drills are two manned [sic]. That's what you need.

(Dave, interview 1, 11/11/07)

For him as a traditionalist, partner training is primarily for skill development rather than for spirituality. Like others, he highlights the embodied sensitivity that the deliberate, shared cultivation of the Wing Chun habitus develops. Tony, who spent a long time away in South America suggested (see Appendix 9.14). Again, he missed the advanced, embodied schemes of perception of his seniors, as Zack reflected from his own long-term solo training in Rothshire (Appendix 9.15). However, he trained up a friend so that he could maintain some partner work. In fact, training alone and without a class in the long-term greatly diminished the motivation and commitment of Dave, Kelly, Edward and Roger. Interestingly, since the time of interviewing, Dave has now returned to class with avid enthusiasm and rapid skill development. It is clear then that we need various different partners not just of different shapes and sizes, but also of higher or equal skill levels in order to progress.

9.6. Conclusions

Not only is it motivational and pleasant to train with other people, it is necessary for the cultivation of TCMA habitus and the art's continued transmission. Connecting this to the findings examined earlier, these shared embodied experiences have four major functions for cultivation: 1) The practitioner's transformation (individual level) 2) Partners (relational level) 3) The school (institutional level) 4) The martial culture itself (art level). The first two are primarily concerned with practitioner transformation, whereas the other two focus on cultural transmission. Much of this cultivation occurs within the practitioners' schools, but it often exists during more informal training between members and even between students of different schools. Even at the more informal level, transformation and transmission are undertaken as shared development of practitioners is ensured. This might be termed '*the circle of cultivation*', or more simply, *shared cultivation*, where the cultivation of individuals, partners, the school and the art itself all interlink. This is a key finding that connects many previous concepts,

and directly links to the research question of understanding long-term practitioners' experiences of transformation.

Firstly, partner training allows for the solo training to gain a dynamic and interactive focus where the individual's TCMA habitus can be further honed beyond external movements with no apparent meaning. This goes beyond the monadic, hermit-like solo training at home. They can become a complete martial artist capable of fighting people from all shapes, sizes, energies, continuum positions and styles due to an embodied sensitivity slowly developed in the whole body (see also Brown & Johnson, 2000). Secondly, on a relational level, both partners develop together through cooperative, non-competitive partner training even to a stage of shared meditation. This is done by highlighting the disciplined, mirroring and communicative aspects over the dominating body type. Eventually junior students will develop sufficient skill to challenge the seniors who helped them get to that level. Thirdly, on a subcultural level, the institutional habitus of the school is reproduced through embodied partner training with various practitioners with their own individual approach. Fourthly, on a global scale, pushing and sticking hands are core aspects of the system necessary for the transmission of the martial aspects of the system. Without partner training, the art would not be passed down correctly in order for new generations of students to learn. It would effectively 'die out' from its 'living' existence.

Linking the study's findings so far, we can suggest that between transformation and cultural transmission there is intersubjectivity through both the shared embodied experiences and the socially reproduced narratives. These shared experiences create change (transformation) and reproduce the training culture and transmit embodied knowledge (cultural transmission) far beyond that possible from cultural reproduction via the media such as instructional DVDs. Without intersubjectivity, embodied transformation and cultural transmission would never occur. Chi sau and pushing hands are key examples of this. They involve embodied and oral intersubjectivity between various practitioner types. Although the forms are important, they play a lesser role to these practitioners than they are often claimed in the popular literature. Hence there is need for more investigations of partner work, shared interactions and the social nature of TMAs. How do they cultivate certain qualities in the practitioners in other styles?

Theoretically, we can see this as the deliberate, shared cultivation of the institutional

martial habitus of that particular school through very direct face-to-face situations not normally encountered in our daily lives. These close quarter situations are socialised until they are experienced as ‘natural’, and thereby compose a vital part of this habitus. Here, ideal types, acting in a dyadic manner, are experiencing subjectivity through a range of senses acting both internally and externally from their body e.g. kinaesthesia and touch. Therefore, individuals may develop an individual habitus within schools based on their current trajectory along the continuum, as well as biological considerations such as size and strength. These senses are trained over long-term social action in order to act unconsciously in dynamic spatiotemporal conditions of *maai* (cultivated intersubjective time-space relations), which are known in Cantonese as *lut* (which develop a series of *lut sau* drills in Wing Chun). Therefore, through bright consciousness, partners cultivate their own, and each other’s embodied sensitivity for use in combat and for the transmission of the system. They become attuned in new and exciting ways through their bodies, which give rise to highly subjective and socialised meanings. Seen from a structurationist perspective, all of this entails deliberately structuring each other’s future actions through current agentic behaviour, structured by the rules and resources of the group. Of course, these resources include the major narratives told in TCMAs, particularly mastery, which concerns itself with achieving perfection through fine-tuning and continuous practice. Considering the links between narratives and actual embodied experience, is hoped that I have provided an adequate introduction to these exercises. However, we can never reproduce unique intersubjective experiences in an interview as the written body is the inadequate, ‘spoken about body’ that requires metaphors (Duesend, 2007). It is the contemporary theory of metaphors, the body and culture that we turn to next through the way it is used to both describe the cultivation process and is a form of transformation itself.

10. Martial Metaphors: Voicing Transformation or Transformation in Thought?

This chapter provides a further insight into the meaning TCMA's have in these practitioners' lives and just how difficult it is to describe the often subtle long-term transformations they are experiencing. The core message is that practitioners, along with undergoing somatic changes, experience transformations in thinking, schemes of perception and language through *metaphorical linguistic expressions (MLEs)*. Metaphors are an important part of this transformation in which the TCMA's and beyond is shaped and given meaning through language. In effect, metaphors are inscribed into bodies. In this light, I chose to use the contemporary theory of metaphor (that being the writings based on Lakoff & Johnson's 1980 conceptions) in conjunction with the notions of habitus, body types, narrative and phenomenologically-inspired concepts outlined in previous sections following the perspective that metaphors are delivered from a socialised, embodied habitus that has different aspects, all of which are inclined to tell different types of tales. To help storytelling, metaphors are very useful tools, and therefore help us further understand major narratives in TCMA's.

Before I move onto the analysis, an important point should be made. Metaphors are different to analogies as conceptual metaphors, as the name suggests, as based on complex concepts that have many MLEs that can be readily understood with little need for explanation e.g. *love-as-a-journey*. Analogies, on the other hand, lack numerous MLEs, and are not conceptual e.g. the Wing Chun guard is like a pyramid.

From detailed analysis of interviews and field notes, it was clear that powerful, closely connected metaphors were being used by the practitioners to describe numerous things, from general transformation to individual changes and understandings. The four most popular and profound metaphors (journey, discovery, religion and family) illustrated the vital importance of TCMA's in the practitioners' lives. Before we look at the more concrete, individual descriptions of change, we begin by examining the place that TCMA's play in practitioners' lives and how they see life itself: As a journey.

10.1. Journey

The *life-as-a-journey* metaphor is extremely universal between cultures as it allows for discussions of goals, direction and progress (Reisfield & Wilson, 2004) particularly by drawing upon notions of travelling through time and space – the key issue in embodied practice. It is also very important as the journey metaphor embraces both individual and shared change (Milne *et al.*, 2005), and therefore transformation within pedagogies. If life can be a journey, it then has different paths to tread, different ways of mobility and barriers to success. Unsurprisingly, Tony employed this life metaphor one evening after training through a very spiritual perspective on his summer job:

I've really enjoyed it this year. It's been a journey. It's been a major part of my journey of life. I've learned so much from it mate. It's a good test of character and it really develops your communication skills. You can make anything spiritual. It can be your job or whatever. You can even make washing the dishes spiritual. If you stay in the moment and don't rush it, that can be meditation.

(Tony, field notes, 15/09/08)

Tony was referring to meditation in movement (Yuasa, 1987) involving altered states of embodied consciousness. However, Sarah, a martial artist with an emerging spirituality, was hesitant to add any spiritual interpretations on her life journey into martial arts (see Appendix 10.1). Sarah was speaking of an epiphany, or turning point in her life, when she gained interest in martial arts and sharing this with others by coming across Bruce Lee's biography (much like myself, in fact). Along this larger journey of life, all the practitioners eventually discovered TCMA's, and became immersed in their culture and practice for different reasons. This might be described as taking different paths to the same point.

Sarah continues to explain how her path led her to Wing Chun, which eventually following a very different walk of life from her previous indulgence in drugs and alcohol through a disciplined body-self (in Appendix 10.2). The path away from vices such as drinking and bodily abuse was a common theme for many of the participants who later adopted their art as a disciplined way of life. From this quote, it appears that the martial arts are spoken in a directional manner through the journey metaphor. In fact, for many, TCMA's are journeys themselves.

Considering this, we might conceptualise life as follows: We start at different points and travel in different ways in various possible directions to numerous destinations that

might be understood as ways of life. We also encounter ups and downs with the joys and challenges in our lives. Much of this is dictated by social structures such as economics and education, but there is also much room for the reflexive exercising of agency, such as the choice to enter a TCMA's gym. For most practitioners, both life and TCMA's training are described as personal and shared journeys within the pedagogies involving ups and downs, walls, plateaus and viewpoints as we see next.

TCMA's-as-a-lifelong journey

The metaphor of journey was a popular for explaining the continuous development and learning process in TCMA's, both individual and shared. Sarah clarifies the degree to which Wing Chun forms part of her journey (see Appendix 10.3), which goes back to the idea of moving meditation outlined in the previous chapter. Sarah continues to explain that it is a gradual journey with no time limits, which is an encouraging story for different types of learners of all ages:

Generally, I think with my whole Wing Chun now, I'm a lot more at ease with it. I'm not trying as hard, and it's paying off. I think I was really, really trying too hard. But now I'm just going in, doing my class, thinking about it then and leaving it there. Well, to a certain degree. I do practise a lot of things and doing it as I walk and all those kinds of things. But not over analysing it. And it's paying dividends I think. Because ultimately, it's a journey. You're not going to get it done in two years time (laughs). That kind of helps as well. Not having the frustration of trying to get to be a certain level. You just do it day by day.

(Sarah, interview 1, 02/07/08)

Joe, with his background in philosophy, provides a few poetic analogies for the journey through Taiji (in Appendix 10.4). From this, Joe implies that we cannot express transformation directly, so we must rely on metaphors. However, he warned me that there are many different paths to take, and Taijiquan can actually lead people into a destructive lifestyle if they take too much of a fighter perspective: "If you're doing Taiji, that doesn't make you necessarily a better person. Hopefully it would. You're on a pathway, and are hopefully on the right direction" (Joe, interview 1, 18/05/08). From this statement, he suggested a balanced approach, drawing from all aspects of the continuum, is much better in order to develop fully as a person with a broader sense of self. Thinking metaphorically, a fighter, martial artist and thinker may be taking different paths, but they meet along the crossroads and eventually learn and follow one another to gain an overall experience of TCMA's.

Having strong connections to some very positive ageing narratives in which practice is lifelong and progressive despite an ageing body, the journey is commonly regarded as lifelong by all the practitioners. Ben explains this, comparing his approach to older and younger generations whilst revering his lineage patriarch Zheng Manqing:

BC: For me, it's a lifelong journey. It's something that I want to learn more about. Zheng Manqing was likening it to...It was the five elements. The *five Chinese elements*. I think he likened his Taiji to just coming to the end of the third element in his progression. So he had two elements together. And he was far better than I've ever known or ever watched before...so that's the journey. So if I can get through the first element, then I'll be happy. And it's something that you never get to the end of. And I think that's what keeps me going. That's what keeps me interested. If it was something that you can do, achieve...some of these kids are on these video games, and they've done them, and that's it. There's nowhere to go

GJ: Yeah, they get the next one (laughs)

BC: That's it. It's lifelong journey. It keeps me going and excites me, I suppose. But you do get these blocks, and that is part and parcel of the journey. My journey, my class' journey is exactly the same as mine, but at a different time. Basically, they are just following me along my journey and then I can help them through theirs.

(Ben, interview 1, 26/08/08)

Ben is therefore enthused by this notion of a lifelong, shared journey, which acts as a motivator for his practice, which is essentially practised for practice's sake much like in Luckenchuk's (2006) account of her classes. These major narratives entwine to their stories, and draw upon common metaphors to illustrate this.

Again, Sarah reminded me that martial artists shouldn't place barriers or time frames on skill development as it is a gradual journey: "If you can come to terms with that, and not expect to be at a certain skill level by a certain time, then you're probably on the road to getting somewhere better" (Sarah, interview 2, 27/08/08). Hence, the journey is not without its blockages, plateaus or walls as the practitioners' lives, bodies, and the general process of learning an art all pose barriers to the smooth progression in skill and understanding through daily practicalities and the nature of human learning. Will reminded me of the very gradual and often difficult development process, which he likens to an upward trail (in Appendix 10.5).

Blockages in training-as-blockages-in-journey

In a similar manner to Will, Sarah provides an analogy of a hill, with ups and downs, and roses and thorns are potential barriers or rewards:

I'd say now...I'm probably on top of the hill, and I'm just about to go down. Cos I talked about before that I'd been working really, really hard, not just in the martial arts, but in my private life to get somewhere. To be able to work where I want to work so I can train when I want to train and have my own place to be able to train and do all that as well. I worked extremely hard to be able to get to that place, but now things are falling into place. I got a reduction time at work, my business is picking up and I know I will do well because I know that I am driven enough to be able to pick up clients or patients. So I know it's going to go well and I will work hard at that. Yeah, so it's pretty...it's looking rosy (laughs). The path is looking rosy and it's looking all downhill from here. But maybe a few thorns with roses, because you don't quite know what's going to happen.

(Sarah, interview 2, 27/08/08)

Therefore, on the road to mastery and learning, we encounter certain blockages. Dave illustrates these issues of ups and downs in progressive learning through the analogy of slopes and plateaux whilst highlighting the shared nature of the journey:

Personal achievement's got a lot to do with it, I think. You want to get good at it, and I kind of had it in my head that I wanted to go as far as I could go with it, to be as good as I could be, whatever that may mean. I felt a black belt, black sash and things like that, an instructor one day, that kind of thing. I wanted to take it to that kind of level and get good. At the beginning, there's a kind of steep learning curve where you go from nothing to in a couple of months to knowing quite a lot and you don't realize it until a beginner comes along, and you recognise what you were like and how much you've learned in that time, because things have become so natural to you. You realize how quickly you've progressed. And then it kind of plateaus. After a little while, there's a very steep learning curve, and then it plateaus, and at that point I think you have to work quite a lot harder at it. And at that point it's where an awful lot of people tend to drop out.

(Dave, interview 1, 11/11/07)

From this, Dave explains the relational element of TCMA's in which the journey towards mastery is progressive and comparative with others. Similarly, Ben provides a wall metaphor to convey his feeling of non-progression, common in experienced students after several years, where they often drop out (in Appendix 10.6). This is an encouraging perspective as it suggests that the body project of TCMA's is forever ongoing. This challenges mainstream assumptions of ageing. Of course, there is a need for a highly knowledgeable teacher to guide the way. Terry explains how important Master Yi was in his own journey, which was previously unclear (see Appendix 10.7). Therefore Master Yi's direct explanations matched Terry's fighter schemes of perception. As we have seen, each person's journey is extremely personal and unique, and is influenced by their changing position along the continuum. Below, some of the practitioners articulate the solo journey issue.

Personal Journey

All journeys described hitherto are both highly individual and shared. They are individual in that each person brings their own life story into the interpretation and living practice of the art. Chris reflects on his spiritual journey in Taijiquan and tuina massage, which has been a difficult work-life balance constrained by economic capital:

I think if you have a belief system [Buddhism] that allows for the fact that you come back in a different form or a different person, I think the actions that you make, some people believe that the actions that you take through the current life that you're living have an impact on perhaps your next life, or even within your own lifetime now. You're on that path, so the more good you do, the more good comes into your life. I think that's a pathway that's quite difficult to tread. Because most of our lives these days, you have to work. You spend so much of your life actually just having to work, just to survive, to bring in money just to survive and live. It's difficult to find enough payment for just doing good things for people. It's not something like a job, that pays you a regular income. That's quite a hard pathway to tread, where you're helping people, and getting the balance between helping and financial remuneration. Getting your money back. And I think also, on a personal level, it's an exploration of yourself, an expansion of your physical skills, your spiritual experiences. The more you do it, the more you find out about yourself. Through meditation and martial arts training. You just find out, you expand in ways that aren't necessarily obvious to other people, but only to yourself perhaps. You do change, you do transform all the time. It's a never ending journey. And it's exciting (continues in Appendix 10.8).

(Chris, interview 1, 20/09/08)

Chris was referring not only to the daily practicality of economic capital and time, which prevented him from living as a healer, but also the contrasted schemes of perception between him and the non TCMA community. However, he claimed that practitioners were continually being transformed on a highly personal level only perceived by themselves, particularly if they take such a spiritual orientation. Likewise, Ben speaks of the Taijiquan form as a personal journey in itself (in Appendix 10.9) and later explained how pushing hands acted as a checkpoint for his journey:

Yes, it's one continuous path. James [his instructor] was picking me up on something tonight. I know now that my path's been going a slightly different direction. I've got to change what I've been doing, and readjust. It's something very small that has made a big difference through Taiji, my personal Taiji

(Ben, interview 2, 09/09/08)

Therefore, intercorporeality through chi sau and pushing hands are vital checkpoints along the practitioners' journeys in order for them to assess their progress to mastery and perfection. The sharing aspect of TCMA remains strong here.

Some of thinkers such as Tony, tend to place a spiritual perspective on the journey as a whole: “It’s more of a spiritual path. It’s more of a path where I get energy from. And fulfilment.” (Tony, interview 1, 22/06/08). He explained the importance of fighting skills for this spiritual journey, which reflects the circle mentioned in a previous chapter (in Appendix 10.10). Therefore for Tony, the spiritual path is at the same time a warrior path where the aspects of healer, spiritualist and fighter all role into one, much like in some historical accounts (e.g. Fields, 1991). So combat and spirituality are entwined. This is the role Wing Chun plays in his life, which he compares with the warriors in history:

The warrior path is about...ever since ancient times, when we first became humans on this earth, we would live in tribes, small tribes. Probably not more than a hundred and fifty, ever. And we’d go out, and the men would go hunting and the women would take care of the food and everything else, the babies, and all this kind of stuff. It’s the natural roles for men and women to play. So it’s in us. To use bow and arrows, and spears and swords, and basic weapons to fight and fight other guys. We have a few drinks. Even back then, there was some kind of festival and people celebrated with alcohol normally. So, the guys would want to fight each other, so from those early days, when we were grunting at each other, the warrior was recognised. And then through the ages, certain high level, evolved species of being, like the Chinese...they would develop these arts of fighting where the warrior. The way of the warrior.

(Tony, interview 2, 02/08/08)

It is interesting to note that this issue of gender positioning still exists, albeit on a less extreme scale as there are a small number of international female instructors and martial arts movie stars, although many of the latter are actors-as-martial artists rather than martial artists-as-actors (see Brown *et al.*, 2008). There are very few top female Taijiquan and Wing Chun practitioners (as reflected in the sample of three practitioners), and few at the grassroots level in Britain, which reflects a similar trend in the USA as compared to self-defence courses (Angleman *et al.*, 2008; Wiley, 1992). This evident gender disparity is needed to be explored in terms of history, potential policy implications and training culture, and this is certainly something I will examine in future investigations.

As we have seen, for many practitioners, the journey is a profoundly individual one. However, all acknowledge other people’s journeys and the relations between different paths through the pedagogy and cultural transmission.

Shared Journey

The narrative of sharing ties into issues of intersubjectivity and the pedagogy through the collective striving towards transformation and transmission. I asked Sarah about the importance of her class seniors as role models in her early days of training, which might be regarded as the beginning of her martial journey:

Yeah, they were a really important part of my journey. They really influenced me by watching their skill levels essentially, and thinking, 'That's fantastic. You can see how much of their time they've dedicated to what they do. You can see their personal enjoyment.' Yeah, it's quite influential in terms of it was something that I wanted to achieve.

(Sarah, interview 1, 02/07/08)

Likewise, Joe draws comparison to others further along their journeys that helped him along his way: "As I say, Taiji is a journey with people further along the path. You get to a point where you think, 'OK, I'm quite good at Taiji now.' And then you meet someone who's better." (Joe, interview 1, 18/05/08). Similarly, for teachers themselves, the journey is shared with the students, which illustrates the two way learning process between teachers and pupils in that each are influencing each other along the road to martial excellence. Joe describes this relationship:

We're all on a journey, which is another metaphor. What he [his teacher] knows about Taiji will change and develop, just as what I know about Taiji will change and develop. When I train with people who know more than me, I will develop, and will be able to pass that onto my students.

(Joe, interview 2, 16/07/08)

The pedagogy is key to all these people's journeys. Ben adds to this explanation by highlighting how the students adjust the teacher's journey (in Appendix 10.11). Yet along the way, the teacher acts as a guide for the students' transformations when they are lost or confused, as Zack articulates: "Well I think they're like a guide. They stop you getting lost in your own understanding. I think it stops you losing yourself. Sometimes you can't see the wood through the trees" (Zack, interview 1, 26/04/08). Joe further reinforces this notion of a teacher as a guide by using an Eastern mountain metaphor, which he may have learned from his first teacher, a neo-Daoist philosopher who took a highly Orientalist perspective to Taijiquan as a source of cultural wisdom:

It's a traditional way to look at it really. A pathway. The Daoist definition of a teacher is someone who's a bit further along a path to show you the way. But not everyone wants to go up a mountain. Some people just want to stop halfway and enjoy the view. You can get carried away with these metaphors, I like them (laughs).

(Joe, interview 1, 18/05/08)

Joe's dominant thinker habitus and philosophical education provide him with these cultural-linguistic resources to talk about his journey and those of others. But what about people who don't have a discipline like Taijiquan?

People not on a path/journey

So far we have seen how important TCMA's are as part of the larger journey of life for these dedicated practitioners. However, what do these people think of others who are not following a discipline, and are literally wandering in no particular direction? Sarah expresses her feelings on this rejection of her disciplined lifestyle:

I feel sad sometimes that the people around me, because I'm on a path and others aren't. As I've discovered it, on another path towards self-realisation, I can see people still drinking on a very regular basis. As I've learned what it does and how it affects you and suchlike, I can't, I won't sit there and lecture them about it, because ultimately you can't change them. It's up to themselves. You can't change a person. They have to wake up and change themselves. So I find it kind of sad really that I don't see people...you see people slightly lost. It's almost knowing that...from my treatments and experience, and just general attitudes and feelings, how people would...maybe it's an assumption, but maybe how people will feel better by being able to do a martial art, or having something to focus on. Not just a martial art, but something physical. Because I know it's important to do the physical-mental thing. It's sad to see that they don't have the focus. It's sad to see them a little bit lost (continues in Appendix 10.12).

(Sarah, interview 1, 02/07/08)

She therefore sees a mind-body discipline or body project as being central to good overall health. This was a perspective shared by other practitioners. Nevertheless, Chris often feels envious of those people who live life without a focused path:

So that's that path. The path way is quite difficult at times. It's challenging. Sometimes I wish I could be like other people who don't seem to think much. They live in this little... they get up, go to work, come home, sit down, have their meal...I wish I could be dumb as they are. As simple as that. It's not like that. Once you open out...there's new horizons all the time. There's no answers. We like comfort and we like answers all the time, don't we? There are no comfort zones and there are no answers to it. There's only your own experience, which is reality. It's quite hard to understand

(Chris, interview 1, 20/09/08)

His ideal healing path is blocked by the social structures of work and economics, which don't provide him with the resources to actualise this. It is interesting to note that people will only understand this path through direct, embodied experience, which will provide them with new schemes of perception and possibly new uses for metaphors.

In summary, the ‘life-as-a-journey’ metaphor is widespread amongst cultures, and this most probably involves Chinese culture as Yu (1998) suggests. Therefore, it is highly unlikely that the TCMAAs made the practitioners conceptualise life in that manner. However, the life-as-a-journey metaphor helped them make sense of their personal and shared transformation, and all the events surrounding this. The ageing narratives, learning and mastery are key here, as it is a journey for life, aimed towards the ideal perfection of mastery. At the same time, it is a shared development within a somatic pedagogy. Using conceptual mapping from the contemporary theory of metaphor (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), we can interpret this as:

- The martial artists are travellers
- Their martial development is a journey
- Progress through the journey is transformation
- This is part of the larger journey of life
- Their focus in training is the direction of travel
- Their aims are the final destination
- The potential pedagogic strategies to get there are paths
- The opportunities to change strategies are crossroads

Along the journeys of life and martial learning, there will be moments of discovery, often known as epiphanies or eureka moments (Berger, 2008) where important lessons are learned, and key people act as guides to find the way. This effectively gives meaning and direction for a person’s life. This notion of discovery was key for several practitioners, as Joe ponders over the issues of discovery and journey to show how closely entwined they are (in Appendix 10.13).

10.2. Discovery

Self-discovery

As we have seen, for many practitioners, TCMAAs were far more than forms of fighting. They were methods of self-cultivation or ‘vessels’ in which people could discover more about their abilities. Zack spoke of the importance of an honourable teacher who would guide his/her students through life in contrast to a violent, irresponsible teacher he once encountered:

He [the teacher] was advocating sticking a knife into someone if you had one. It was just ridiculous. I couldn't wait to get out. I sighed a breath or relief when I walked out that door. Now saying that to young men, who are sixteen to thirty-five, I just think it's highly irresponsible. It's not what Wing Chun is. And why are you saying that to people? Where is your integrity, basically? You're meant to be trying to help people's path through life, to discover themselves. Which I think martial arts in general is, whatever you practise, is a vessel to discover who you are.

(Zack, interview 1, 15/03/08)

Therefore, for Zack, martial arts are more than just forms of fighting. They are vessels within which practitioners can discover themselves. Later, I member checked this comment in order to further understand this seemingly grand statement:

I think it acts as a mirror to observe yourself. Cos you put yourself into this activity, and this activity is something different to anything you do in the rest of your life. So, because you're discovering yourself, and finding out about yourself, it's teaching things about yourself, you're seeing that from an outside view...Because the rest of the time when you're not training, you're thinking about it, and you're living your everyday life. So it's giving you time out from your normal life, to experience and let yourself see who you are, without all the bullshit of money, going to work, a partner, you know, all these stresses of life. I've gotta be there, I've gotta do that. When you practise, it goes out of the window. Because you're practicing. It's an environment different from the norm for you to observe yourself in.

(Zack, interview 2, 26/04/08)

Zack therefore feels liberated from the restrictions that society places on us all through a self-mirroring body aspect in the present moment. Wing Chun has taken over his way of thinking, and this may partially be through metaphors, as Lakoff and Johnson (1980) suggest.

Yet this discovery can vary from person to person. Ted, a veteran in the martial arts, found Wing Chun to be a constant journey of self-discovery even at 69 (in Appendix 10.14). This links to the strong alternative ageing narratives previously mentioned, in which learning and development continue despite increased chronological age. For Roger, a previously non sporty individual, the discovery was more about what his body can now do through this form of meditation in motion in relation to his past body-self relation (in Appendix 10.15).

However, like the journey, this discovery was not just on the individual level. As part of a school, these practitioners ended up discovering a range of people from various social backgrounds, and even began to understand more about human beings in general. The teacher again remains a guide for learning and mastery, using their advanced schemes of perception. This is particularly true for teachers, as Will articulates on his role in

transmission: “That’s my role. I’m just a vessel to spread it out. I’m just passing the good word.” (Will, interview 1, 20/08/08)

Discovering Others & Arts

We have already seen how the journey through TCMAs is shared within an intersubjective pedagogy. Chris was excited when discussing the interaction between different sorts of people in Taijiquan:

It has thrown me onto this path, this path of discovery, self-discovery. And that’s fantastic. I don’t know what’s round the corner, I don’t know who’s round the corner, who I’m going to meet. That’s the discovery part of yourself. Who comes into my life through Taiji. Or other things related to that. That’s wonderful. (Continues in Appendix 10.16).

(Chris, interview 1, 20/09/08)

The communicative body aspect of Chris relates to this part of his life in TCMAs through sharing experiences and stories. Alongside meeting new people, practitioners are finding more about others in general through the close contact, intersubjective training such as chi sau. I member checked this idea of understanding people better with Zack:

Because you do discover so much about people practicing. There’s nowhere to hide about somebody’s character. If they’re selfish, or if they’re jealous, or if they’re competitive. Like in chi sau. All that will come out. Of course, characteristics come out in chi sau. It’s crazy, it’s crazy. But it’s true, I think. There’s no hiding place, I think. You have to be an open book. Whether you want to be or not.

(Zack, interview 2, 26/04/08)

Within this metaphor of discovery, several MLEs were made to describe the process of constant learning and understanding. One such MLE is TCMAs-as-a-gateway or doorway. Along this passage of discovery, related disciplines and traditions were encountered by several practitioners, including Eastern philosophy. The arts have therefore been termed ‘doorways’ by several practitioners, including Sarah:

Maybe I say that in a hesitant way in that it’s a more spiritual...it is obviously fighting and stuff, but I enjoy it equally so it doesn’t feel like fighting, as I enjoy it in that way. I think it’s...yeah, other than a few others, there aren’t a lot of people who look at it any way other than fighting. I don’t know whether it’s a male, let’s not show the emotions issue. I say issues. It is and it isn’t. Some people just say Wing Chun’s a fighting method. But I think it’s just a doorway, can be used as a doorway to open yourself up to different interactions and refinements.

(Sarah, interview 1, 02/07/08)

It is interesting to note that she used the continuum and gender to suggest a difference in martial perspective. I later asked her to clarify this as I was beginning to realize how important metaphors were as resources for understanding change, as it appears to have led to a transformation in reading and an altered habitus through the development of a previously dormant thinker aspect. At a later point, she continued to use this metaphor without any prompts, illustrating its importance in her story: “What is Wing Chun to me? Life changing. I’m trying to think of words. Quite life changing and...it has just opened so many doors...it’s definitely continually honing in and refining your skills” (Sarah, interview 1, 02/07/08).

To conclude, the discovery metaphor is closely linked to the learning narrative. Both express shared feelings of progression, learning and mastery through improved embodied skill in an intersubjective environment. Discovery is the directional link to the journey metaphor, and may be conceptualised as follows:

- Learning is discovery
- TCMAAs are vessels for discovery
- The learning process is a voyage
- This voyage is part of transformation
- The teacher is a guide for the voyage
- Practitioners are mirrors to see themselves
- Opportunities are doors

From this short discussion, it appears that TCMAAs are ways of life for the practitioners, may even act as ‘doorways’ for the pursuit of Eastern philosophy and Chinese religion. They guide in everyday life as actual religions would. Interestingly, some of the most dedicated practitioners felt their TCMA was a religion for them. It is this issue of martial arts-as-religions that I turn to next by drawing upon the notion of secular religion.

10.3. Religion

An akhara as a whole may be considered to be a *religious environment* where exercise and wrestling are acts of *devotion to a way of life*. This is not meant in some abstract sense, for a literal parallel is drawn between the rote recitation of prayer and the repetitive exercise routines performed everyday by wrestlers. Both require the same mindset and concentration.

The very act of wrestling is charged with religious significance. As the institutionalised icons of formal religion, temples and shrines on akhara grounds serve to enhance a general feeling of commitment to an *idealised way of life*. All wrestlers are responsible for the akhara's *environment of religiosity*, and they affect this as much through exercise as through washing the temple steps or lighting a votive lamp in the niche of the shrine

(Alter, 1992, p. 35, emphasis added).

The above extract illustrates the religious way of life for Indian wrestlers in an akhara (gymnasium). Similarly, probably the most powerful metaphor to describe the importance of TCMA's in these people's lives was religion. It is so profound as it still remains a very powerful metaphor for any activity, despite sports such as football being increasingly regarded as a religion (Percy & Taylor, 1997). Considering the potential for martial arts to act as secular religions (Jennings et al., forthcoming, 2011), Wing Chun was seen as a way of life guiding practitioners in their everyday encounters, whilst giving meaning and structure to their existence.

How might we define religion? We could regard it as a commonly held belief system that is structured and organised, with a clear hierarchy. TCMA's, with their claims of transformation also possess a definitive structure within pedagogies and larger organisations. Faith in God is replaced by faith in the teacher and the system. Martial arts, like religions, also have many branches and degrees of interpretation of the 'truth,' which may begin as sects, and eventually become recognised denominations. Religions and martial arts also have many rituals learned through socialisation, which may seem bizarre to an outsider.

In this section, I examine how religious terminology such as 'church' and 'denomination' are used to explain everyday martial activities and settings whilst drawing comparisons to actual religion and their branches through the development of a secular, moral community based around the belief in a set of martial principles. Following Durkheim (2001), I suggest that the *profane* (everyday embodied martial arts activities) has been regarded as *sacred* (a spiritual pathway linked to journey and discovery).

TCMA-as-a-religion

For the majority of practitioners, conventional, organized religion has no regular or particularly meaningful place in their lives, much like many Britons today (Davie,

1994). Instead, TCMA's have replaced these belief systems through a belief in a scientific method of fighting and a way of life devoted to its development. Zack compares Wing Chun to the major religions of the world:

I follow Wing Chun like other people follow Christianity or Islam. Maybe not as fanatically, but maybe somebody sitting here who doesn't practise Wing Chun would hear me and would be like, "Pull the other one!" To the layman, it is fanatical. And it's fanatical as any religion. As obsessive, and as frequent as any religion. Going to church, praying, confession and all that stuff.

(Zack, interview 2, 26/04/08)

Zack referred to the obsessive enthusiasm that allowed him to develop skills good enough to teach. He also mentioned the embodied rituals in religion that TCMA's extensively reproduce. This behaviour would not be understood by someone outside of this TCMA subculture with different schemes of perception. He also mentioned the rituals and regularity involved in this training. This simultaneously reinforced and reinforces (structures and is structured by, like *habitus*) a collective faith in the system and its philosophies.

A religion is commonly defined by 'faith' or 'belief' in something that cannot be proved. Hanegraaf (1999) provides a more detailed academic definition that I am adopting in this argument: "Any symbolic system, embodied in a social institution, which influences human action by providing possibilities for ritually maintaining contact between the everyday world and a more general meta-empirical framework of meaning (p. 147). Yet are Taijiquan and Wing Chun actual religions or secular religions? If the latter is understood not actual religions, but having characteristics of them, this might be the case. By connecting the ideas of ritual, institutions and meaning Hanegraaf's (1999) definition is a useful understanding of religion. Yet the issue of faith is still important. In TCMA's, a specific kind of faith is encouraged and reproduced: Faith in the teacher, school and system as a whole. As a more martially orientated style, Wing Chun is an excellent example of this.

Embodied Faith

From observing Terry's teaching one evening, it was evident that faith in Bridge's Wing Chun as a secular religion is reinforced in two main ways: 1) In the technique: Through demonstration, embodied experience and mantras. Like Bourdieu's (1990) *illusio*, a

sense of how the game is played. 2) In each other: Through the gradual and long-term build up of intensity in training with a specific partner especially evident during practice of deadly techniques such as neck throws. This is enforced by the pedagogy and the collective morals of the group. The following field notes extract captures a moment of epiphany in which a new student began to convert to the Wing Chun way of geometrical thinking (see Rawcliffe, 2003), whilst my faith in the system further reproduced. Hence transformation and transmission occurred together:

I successfully 'converted' the entrant Alan by demonstration of the triangle principle in training last night. Being experienced in various martial arts, Alan tried out a few guard positions against my simple Wing Chun defence. Instead of reacting to the position of his limbs, I blasted straight forwards with my triangle. I got through every time, exposing the holes in his shape. Alan looked surprised and bewildered. He must have been thinking: 'How could such a simple thing do that to my techniques?' I know at that moment he had an epiphany: He was being converted to a Wing Chun frame of mind, just like I had many years ago.

Terry strolled past before closing the class. "I'm just going forwards with the triangle." I explained to Alan.

"All you have to do is have faith in the triangle, and all will be well." Explained Terry on his way past, chuckling.

"It's like a religion, Wing Chun. You start to worship the power of the triangle. You could have pictures of triangles in your room to wonder over." Terry, Alan and I all laughed. However, I wasn't joking, but was deadly serious in regards to Wing Chun being a religion and the triangle being a central marker of faith.

(Field notes, 21/04/08)

For this faith to develop, embodied experience is required, guided by a senior student who adds the cultural perspective, including the metaphor of religion. A major developer of this faith is the set of rituals that accompanies both martial arts that develop the TCMA habitus and logic of practice. Like actual religions, TCMA contains extensive rituals that would seem strange or even absurd to the outsider. Most research on Taijiquan has examined the physiological benefits of the main ritual sequence, the solo form, and Durkheim's (2001) anthropological approach to ritual would be particularly useful here. Roger again provides a comparison of the form to Christian communion:

Doing the form would be akin to taking communion at the Church. It's something you don't mess about with. Also, if we were going to exercise, and look at something in the form, we would take a small part of the form and work with it. We wouldn't incorporate an exercise apart from the form. We would do the form in a certain way. We wouldn't do it quickly. We'd do it in a similar pace.

(Roger, interview 2, 27/11/07)

The form is therefore performed simultaneously as a group, as a form of collective effervescence. Dave reflected back to his early days of training in which the ritual-like first form, Siu Lim Tao, seemed so foreign to him:

Little movements, that seem so natural to me now, weren't at the time that I'd watch other people and not be able to do them. It was really strange. It didn't take long to learn that and pick that up. Just watching people go through their form and just being really confused with what they were doing. It looked like a really intricate ritual that lasted forever. Now I know it isn't. There are only a few basic movements in it, but at the time, they seemed so complicated.

(Dave, interview 1, 11/11/07)

Bourdieu's habitus again plays a useful role here through schemes of perception. Dave embodied the Wing Chun habitus, and found the seemingly sacred ritual to eventually become an everyday sequence for martial skill development and relaxation. This was only possible through direct embodied experience guided by a teacher and senior students who could do such rituals. At the same time, however, this sequence was understood to be essential in his life as a martial artist, and helped structure his everyday much like prayer might for Christians. This is unsurprising, as in the introduction I have already established the strong historical links between TCMA's and religion.

Taijiquan and Wing Chun, like all TMAs, have some complicated rituals that are eventually learned and passed down by practitioners through embodied lineages (Brown, 2005). For some, they are readily compared to religious texts, as Nick states (in Appendix 10.17). So rather than a written text, oral creeds or intellectualisation, ritual in TCMA's is specifically embodied. The martial culture is therefore learned, and repeated until it forms part of their habitus (see Brown, 2005).

Styles-as-denominations

Returning to the organized social structures of religion outlined earlier, we can begin to see how TCMA's may be compared to established social structures such as conventional religion. John criticizes the hierarchies of Wing Chun to draw a comparison:

You remember how we said for some people, Wing Chun is a religion? Well it is really. It has the structure of a religion. There's a hierarchy, an established order that creates a system in order to maintain itself and its founders. If things are suddenly questioned, such as the lop sau drill [refers to pulling backwards rather than pushing forwards], people will start to go, 'Hang on, what have we been learning for the last twenty years?!' That will upset the order, and destroy the establishment designed to protect the founders. So therefore, in religion,

things don't change. That's why they're not progressive. Otherwise the hierarchy will be destroyed. What's the point of building something that you're part of, if only to be left with nothing?

(John, Field notes, 29/08/08)

With structure and organisation comes power and politics. TCMA's are renowned for issues of politics and bickering over issues of truth and transmission. This has led to the development of several schools of branches, which might compare to the establishment of denominations of conventional religions, as Roger highlights:

I think entering a competition or changing your form, is a very, very personal thing, so once you've done Taiji for a while, it becomes very personal to you, so you don't mind trying something different as part of an exercise to develop your own form. To actually change your form, it's like a changing your religion (laughs), or...I suppose you could think Taiji like Christianity. Then you've got branches like Catholic, and then Protestant, like the Chen and the Yang styles. Then you've got smaller parts of the Protestant, which are the Methodists. That could be like your *Yang Long Form*, and then you've got your Baptists which is like the Zheng Manqing *Short Form*. And it's all part of the same umbrella, but you seem to be very fanatical towards your own little bit.

(Roger, interview 2, 26/04/08)

This pronounced sectarianism has led to issues of politics between styles, much like actual religions. In this secular religion of TCMA's, arguments over the truth are replaced by arguments of the complete transmission and superior principles and techniques. A quick look at the comments of Wing Chun videos on the YouTube website (www.youtube.com) reveals the new way of martial communication, as TCMA's enter the cyber age (see also Gee *et al.*, 2004, on the internet phase of Wing Chun 'development'). An example of disputes between Wing Chun practitioners and MMA practitioners was raised in a lengthy discussion with Dave on this popular video of a Wing Chun master demonstrating defensive skills and the economy of motion (see Appendix 10.18). As a further illustration, here are a few comments from recent YouTube posting this video entitles 'superior blocking', which illustrate technical disputes between 'traditional' Wing Chun and modernizing JKD practitioners:

- [BHDUndeadSolider](#) hgamer u talk lot of sh!T and its not superior dumbass fat boyz 1 day ago
- [hgamer @BHDUndeadSolider](#) and yet, i'm right... 1 day ago
- [krazymanrebirth](#) what are you talking about, we do sticky hand drills all the time, blindfolds even sometimes... do i need to explain what sticky hand drills are? I dont know why i have to prove myself to you, probably because i dont have videos to show you... Im trying to get at something deeper than proving ones self to another though and trying to talk about the form. 1 week ago

- [hgamer @krazymanrebirth](#) i've seen your sticky hands from the founder bruce lee... and if that's where and what you think sticky hands is like, you guys are totally clueless 6 days ago
- [krazymanrebirth](#) I practise Jeet Kun Do, The Way of the Intercepting Fists, Id say he obviously knows what hes doing, he could probably knock you 5 feet back. outstretched short attacks = follow through and body behind hands... You look like you have heavy hands don't kid yourself, it was just practice :) 1 week ago
- [hgamer @krazymanrebirth](#) jkd = i have no clue what sticky hands is at all 1 week ago
- Most Recent Comments [see all](#)
- [BHDUndeadSolider @hgamer](#) jkd does sticky hands 2 so stfu 41 minutes ago
- [BHDUndeadSolider](#) jkd would destroy traditional wing chun cause 42 minutes ago
- [imwaterasusaid](#) very nice chi sao , i hope i'll be that good in the future! 2 hours ago

(Source: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=232DNU8_TI&feature=Playlist&p=6D68C812D21C47D1&playnext_from=PL&index=0&playnext=1)

School-as-a-church

A distinct analogy of 'church' describes martial arts from the disciplines in general and certain schools on a more micro scale, illustrating the importance of TCMA as secular religions. Joe repeatedly used the term 'broad church' to describe the great range of people and philosophies towards Taijiquan practice much like the ideal types I have identified (see also Appendix 10.19):

Most people do just do it for a bit of exercise, because they enjoy it. They see people under the trees, by the lake, it's beautiful...and that's what it feels, it's relaxation. They don't want to know how to use it. But some people do. It's a broad church. I tend to categorise them. I know I shouldn't. You have the really airy, fairly hippy type of Taiji. You have the really serious, hard-core martial art Taiji. We're kind of in the middle. I like my students to have an awareness of the martial side, and also I like them to relax and enjoy it and gain the benefits of Taiji. Again, you can really only pass on what you know.

(Joe, interview 1, 18/05/08)

Bridge's Wing Chun Academy was often referred to as a church with a range of practitioners from different backgrounds. This was particularly apparent during a break between lessons one evening (in Appendix 10.20). The issues of gender are again obvious, and require an investigation in their own right. During his interview, I asked him to explain what he meant by this church:

Any church has a broad family and when I say church, you've got a lot of people that I'd define by belief. I define as being no proof needed. That's what belief is. You actually

blindly follow something because you have a belief in it. So Wing Chun isn't a belief in that sense, because you don't need to. Because it's scientific, and everything's explained. So you believe in science, you believe in logic. So, because you look at the logic of Wing Chun, it can be appealing to everyone, regardless of their belief. It might be contradictory, even that. But yeah, I want to broaden it, again, to make it more accessible to more people who haven't had the chance of experiencing it.

(John, interview 2, 01/03/08)

This issue of embodied faith therefore brings practitioners under one roof: The church. The practitioners' schemes of perception are based on Western science rather than Eastern esoteric interpretations, although this is still an issue of a belief system based on ideas of truth and metaphysical reality. This will probably match the socialised habitus on new Western students who may eventually join this church.

To conclude, the religion metaphor helps TCMA practitioners conceptualise their art as a way of life. It is a major, guiding part of their journey of discovery, providing it with a purpose. It may be conceptually mapped as follows:

- The TCMA is a religion
- The leaders are a clergy
- The practitioner is a religious devotee
- Joining the school is conversion to religion
- The school is a church
- The range of different members are a broad church
- Forms are chapters of the Bible
- Forms are like taking communion
- Styles are religious denominations

From the last quote, it seems that the ideas of church and family are inextricably linked. In one hall, a range of very different people hailing from various social strata are united in ritualistic practice under one banner. The issues of lineage and transmission are often debated by various '*families*.' This family metaphor, much like the church one explore earlier, ranges from entire lineages across several countries to just individual clubs in Britain. It is this idea of a martial family that I explore next.

10.4. Family

In Chinese culture, family terms are often used to develop a hierarchy within subcultures that denotes skill and knowledge, and these terms have been passed down to the TCMAs as Wing Chun Master Augustine Fong (1982) explains:

In Chinese martial arts society, the ranking system follows the traditional family system. Classification of higher or lower level students is not based on one's skill or actual age, but is decided by who joins first. For example, your teacher (male or female) is your father within the system. You should greet him as "SI-FU" (meaning teaching father) to show respect. Your older brother, regardless of age, would be addressed as "SI-HING."

(Fong, 1982, p. 11).

It is interesting to note the male translation of the terms despite the gender of the practitioner, which illustrates the larger embedding of gender in martial arts language. In TCMAs, the idea of a patriarchal family, much like a religion, also describes the group of dedicated individuals with shared beliefs reproduced by embodied rituals and activity. These individuals, as we have seen, come from various sectors of society, but train in close quarters under one roof, in an intense intersubjective environment. This environment would be as intimate as one's own family, and this might contribute to the local sense of family connecting to a wider body lineage or kinaesthetic chain, which we explore first.

Social Solidarity

Zack and I discussed the idea of our group as a family with members from all over the world:

Yeah, I do feel that to be honest. Especially for us, we're coming up, we're not being funny, but we're interacting from people from all over the country. London, Grimthorpe. You're from Muccleshire, before the Midlands. We're interacting, we've pretty much gone right out of our pond, and it's Wing Chun that has brought all the people together in the school. Your girlfriend, and Fernando. They're from Mexico. So you do meet people through it. It's common ground, isn't it, between people?

(Zack, interview 2, 26/04/08)

In an intersubjective, highly personal environment, there are opportunities for cross continental and cross-cultural relations and identities (see also Joseph, 2008). Therefore, for certain core practitioners, the Wing Chun school unifies typically separated strata of society, from international University students to manual labourers in rural Britain. As

each TCMA class typically has a fixed venue, the hall or gym eventually becomes like a home for the core members. This has been used to describe the sense of allegiance and belonging by such individuals, including Kelly who is currently without a regular club:

GJ: When you went to our class [Bridge's Academy], and saw the training environment, what was that like?

JS: Ooh! I wanted so badly to just walk over and start training. It was crazy. To just pick up a weapon, and pick up a stick, and throw the stick around. Just even to see the space, with the punch bags, and focus mitts, and weapons. *Mats*, the whole environment...it was like coming home. It was a whole different experience

(Kelly, interview 1, 20/02/08)

This notion of 'home' provides a setting for the family's daily operations. After a new intake of eager students, John felt he was building a new family in the struggling gym. After an extensive period of observing this term being used in the school, I asked him what he meant by it:

JB: And all of a sudden, it's giving me direction back in my life. I think again, that's what was lacking. I couldn't see anything at the end of the tunnel. I was questioning what I was doing with my life. I'm back on track now. I can start to see where it's going to go. It's like someone said to me, I've got to think about a new family again. That's what it seems. A new family. Yeah, I'm enthusiastic, very enthusiastic. More so now than what I have been in a long while.

GJ: That's great. You mentioned about the family, and I remember we've spoken about that before. Can you explain why you see it as a family?

JB: Yeah. OK, I don't believe that to learn Wing Chun, I think you have to know a person to teach them. You've really got to know them. You get some people who've been here for years and they remain on the periphery. They come into the class. They make a few friendships. The ones who turn up early, and they talk to other students, talk to me, you get to know them a bit more. You get to find out what's going on in their lives. If someone had a bad day at work, might tell you a joke or two, you start to find out their personalities. The deeper you understand a person, the easier it is to teach them. You start to understand how they tick. You start to find out what makes them feel good. What winds them up and all. You find out about that. So what I'm saying is, the ones who actually become near to you... you're talking about a church thing again, and then the barriers come down. And when the barriers come down, that's when friendships through Wing Chun can become much, much more. And I'll tell you another thing why I talk about it in that sense. Is because as we grow up from children, if you stay in the same area you were growing up...I never, and it's a big difference...as children grow up, and the friends you do have, you take for granted. However, as you come somewhere new, such as Wing Chun, and anything you do, you can't take people for granted anymore. So the development of people into relationships are as you present yourself. You quickly learn through Wing Chun that if you just be yourself and present yourself, they'll like you as you are, or they won't accept you. The ones who don't accept you, you don't need anyway. So I think that the interaction and the personality is really, really important. You start to see how people really, really are. It's an ongoing process (continues in Appendix 10.21).

(John, interview 2, 01/03/08)

Therefore for John, like Zack, the close intersubjective environment and informal pedagogic structures allowed a close relationship to develop between teacher and student. We can therefore discover more about ourselves and others, as we have seen

with the discovery metaphor. In an extensive discussion, Dave explains that he felt this family feeling despite the fact Wing Chun uses family terminology in its titles:

GJ: Where did this idea of the family come from? Did it come from your head? Was it from the Kung Fu?

DR: I think it's a little bit of both really. I know that the Kung Fu's got the kinda family analogy quite a lot, the Sifu as father, and your kind of *Dai Sihing*, the older brother, isn't it? You've got your older brothers, and your younger brothers. But just because it had that, doesn't mean that I'd actually see it like that. So the fact that I did see it like I think is separate from whether Kung Fu has those titles. I know that it does, but I see it like that anyway.

GJ: It's like you looked at him [Steve, his first instructor] like an older brother?

DR: I think that everybody that I considered to be at a more advanced stage than me, I considered to be an older brother. Like Sifu as a father figure. And everyone at a younger stage, or a less developed stage than me as a younger brother. (Continues in Appendix 10.22).

(Dave, interview 2, 13/02/08)

This is a form of cultural transmission of language and personalisation of the family metaphor. For Dave, the way he perceived the school was as a family with well-established roles that carried on after training in forms of power structures.

Brotherhood

Within the family, there is a definite hierarchy based on martial skill, knowledge, experience and grade (depending on the school). These key positions range from the father figure (Sifu/teacher) to senior students (Sihing/elder brothers). Although grades are useful to distinguish skills, the real determinant is in sticking and pushing hands. A discussion on martial, explicitly male siblings with Dave provides an excellent illustration of this chain of knowledge:

(Begins in Appendix 10.23). The class had just a family feeling about it really. A sibling kind of feeling. You had the big brother teaching the class, and slightly older brothers helping, and a few younger brothers just starting. It had that kind of feel. So you felt that you were being helped along. You helped others like you were helped along at the time. So I never got to the stage that that I thought, 'I'm the teacher, and I'm helping everyone out.' It would always be, 'I'm at the stage along the chain, and I'm helping others, and hopefully they're helping people below them.'

(Dave, interview 2, 13/02/08)

Therefore, TCMA's are continually transmitted along an embodied chain of knowledge. Dave continued to speak of his first teacher, Steve, who was commonly regarded as a big brother figure (in Appendix 10.24). Unsurprisingly, some of the male practitioners such as Tony regarded this social set up as a brotherhood (see Appendix 10.25). This

again clearly marks the gendered nature of TCMAAs, which is something in need of further exploration. This spiritual interpretation interested me as his thinker aspect extended to metaphors and I later asked him to elaborate on what he meant by a ‘brother’:

You’re training really dangerous stuff, being able to kill people, strikes to the throat, and you’re trusting each other, and you’re training to touch. Not to hurt the person, because he is your brother. It’s like you don’t hurt the person who’s helping you on your path and to do your training. We don’t try to hurt each other at all. The art is not to hurt your brother. But do the techniques so you are actually practising it real. You need to touch. There’s no point in practising two inches away. Cos if you have a fight, you might fucking miss by two inches.

(Tony, interview 2, 02/08/08)

Emma, one of the few female participants, preferred to add a more military bearing to the metaphor, which connected her fighter typology to others (in Appendix 10.26). The issue of shared experience is key for Emma, which is something she doesn’t have with groups of men outside training. TCMAAs therefore provide opportunity for different forms of interactions between genders beyond a conventional relationship. The function of this collaborative partner training is not just collective transformation, but also continued transmission of the art. Without developing trust and allowing junior students to develop, seniors wouldn’t be challenged, and therefore wouldn’t develop. It is as John said, “I allow myself to be weak to let others be strong” (field notes, 20/05/09).

Global Lineage-as-Distant Family

The process of globalisation has forged new possibilities for cultural identities and interconnections between people on different continents (Giddens, 1999), and this process has already been noted in Taijiquan (Ryan, 2008). Yet what about Wing Chun? In the introduction, we saw how TCMAAs have spread rapidly across the world in recent decades as a form of globalisation. Intercontinental identities can form from this (Joseph, 2008) with connections to practitioners from all over the world. As Sifu and Sihing are literally translated from Cantonese as ‘father’ and ‘elder brother,’ I was intrigued to the degree to which traditional Chinese culture was influencing the language they used. Dave reflected on the link between the Wing Chun family and religious family set ups:

(Begins in Appendix 10.27). There’s a sense of belonging, and there’s a sense that anyone who does this art is a distant cousin in some, some sense in that you can all trace it back to

this great grandfather figure. And there's also that, that little adolescent thing in that you can trace it back to Bruce Lee. We're part of the same family. He's a distant cousin of mine. In that event there's a sort of, in that manner of speaking, which is nice. Not everyone can say that. You get someone who does Taekwondo, you wouldn't get them saying "My teacher's, teacher's, teacher taught Bruce Lee." "Well mine did!" (Laughs). It's that kind of, yeah, it appeals to that little adolescent part of me. You go yeah, that's cool!

(Dave, interview 1, 11/11/07)

He later elaborated on this kinaesthetic chain or ancestry:

I see it in the same way that I see things like Buddhist monks and stuff like that. They see themselves like a family. They have a master, and their master has a master, and their master has a master. And it goes back hundreds and hundreds of years. Even the enlightened beings have masters who they revere, and those masters have masters have masters who they revere. And it just goes on in a long chain through history. It feels like you're part of something big. (Continues in Appendix 10.28).

(Dave, interview 2, 13/02/08)

Leaving the Secular Family

Despite the supportive environment of the family, not all practitioners had a smooth journey along their practice, to borrow the earlier metaphor. Some people's economic capital didn't enable them to continue the Kung Fu lifestyle as they hoped, as family man Dave reflects during a time without a club due to the closure of his local class: "The only way I can describe it is that's almost akin to being dumped. Or being jilted. Being left at the alter or something" (Dave, interview 1, 11/11/07).

I was interested how this affected his self-identity as a member of the group:

GJ: Although you're not training regularly, do you still regard yourself as part of the family?
DR: Yeah. It's impossible not to be now I think. Because I've done it. I have been taught not everything, obviously, but, because I have been sort of accepted into that family, in a way, then, yeah, I am still part of it. And one day, I hope to go back to it (laughs). A little reunion (laughs). But yeah, I don't think it's something you cannot be apart of and not, once you've got to that level. If I only turned up for a week or two, I wouldn't consider myself a family member. But because, but because I've done it for a few years, and was recognised by people in the class, and Sifu knew who I was by name, when I turned up, then, that's it, I'm a part of the group then. At no point during that period was I made to feel that I wasn't, so just because at the moment for forced reasons, I couldn't go, doesn't necessarily mean that I'm not a part of it anymore.

(Dave, interview, 11/11/07)

Overall, these data suggest it is clear that notions of family and religion are closely related, as are journey and discovery. In fact, all four connect in different ways. The family metaphor particularly illustrates the sharing narrative, and helps us understand the intersubjective environment and cultural transmission through lineages that provide

translations of family terminology found in TCMA pedagogies. It may be conceptually mapped below:

- The TCMA school is a family
- Lineage is a family tree
- Practitioners worldwide are a global family
- The founder of a lineage is a godfather
- The teacher is a father
- Fellow practitioners are brothers (and sometimes sisters)
- Senior students as older siblings
- Junior students as younger siblings
- The predominantly male group is a brotherhood
- Students of other schools in the lineage are cousins
- Students in different lineages are distant cousins

10.5. On metaphors

Considering the range of practitioners identified earlier along the embodied continuum, it is evident that they are drawing upon certain metaphors to understand their own practice and long-term transformations. Here I conclude by examining why certain people use metaphors, and how this might form a transformation in itself.

Thinker aspects

Undoubtedly, many metaphors are drawn from our range of metaphors used in daily life. Some of the more experienced and articulate martial artists tend to draw upon more than others. Ted is an example of a fighter with a strong thinker component, who has read many books on martial arts and their underlying philosophies. It is apparent that these philosophies and core texts play an important role in shaping his metaphorical arsenal (in Appendix 10.29).

As TCMA comes from Chinese culture and tradition, a number of practitioners have retained and embodied martial metaphors with Eastern origins. Emma is particularly fond of the poetic way the Chinese explain things, and belongs to a martial orientated

school reproducing them (in Appendix 10.30). Likewise, Joe insists that most of these metaphors originate from translated Chinese language. Interestingly, he believes they were deliberate teaching methods for mainly uneducated people:

The Dao that which can be written is not the true Dao (we laugh). It's because one, it's a traditional Chinese way of communicating. I don't know, just a way of understanding it really. It's maybe just what they're called. You can take meanings from the names. A lot of them are quite poetic. You'll have to ask a Chinese person what they're called in the first place. And also, they're translated differently in this kind of thing. So *string the loop* is play the guitar or different things. *Grasping the bird's tail* is grabbing some rope, because that's what it looks like. And also apparently, when the Chinese were training, most of them were illiterate, they would do it through songs. So, they would have the song of thirteen postures and this kind of thing. Also, the Chinese are quite a poetic people. So maybe it's related to that. It's cultural

(Joe, interview 1, 18/05/08)

Joe refers to the cultural origin of these terms, which reflects Chinese thinking, and even quotes the first line of the Dao De Jing (the Dao that can be written/spoken cannot be the true Dao). This is a form of cultural transmission through the thinkers, who often intellectualise and spread the philosophies connected to the art. However, I asked Joe if he could recall any metaphors, but like most people, he experienced difficulty reciting any offhand:

One of my favourite sayings that Bob Norris had on his wall was: "A teacher opens the door, the student walks through it." I like that one. My first teacher was really into the *Kung Fu TV series*, and he used to quote verbatim from that and illustrate the Taiji points from that. There's quite a lot of Chinese philosophy in that. It's quite dated, but it makes a valid point. Although it's a bit cheesy. You've got the classic, the river, being like water, bending like a tree, bending like grass in the wind, when a big tree gets blown over. All kind of metaphors. I suppose there are probably categories you can put them into. Maybe nature metaphors, rivers, mountains, sea...off the top of my head, I don't know.

(Joe, interview 2, 16/07/08)

This illustrates two key issues that Lakoff and Johnson (1980) suggest. Firstly, that metaphors work largely on an unconscious level. It is extremely hard to recall our most common metaphors on the spot. Secondly, the relationship between metaphors and geography. In China, there is such vast topography that many mountain, river and water metaphors are used that may seem overly poetic for Westerners. Metaphors, according to Lakoff and Johnson (1980) are strongly influenced by the geography of the area where a culture exists.

Fighter Aspects

Although Terry acknowledges the Eastern origins of many metaphors, he refrains from using them due to his dominant fighter habitus. However, despite embodying a very different TCMA approach to Joe, his outlook on the origin of metaphors is very similar:

GJ: Have you read into any Eastern philosophy?

TM: I've had a look at it. But I think most of it's...without being rude, it's for uneducated people. Cos if you look back, when you see when all this philosophy started, people were uneducated. So a lot of what they describe as their philosophy energy [qi] as...is metaphors. And, they can't be taken at face value, because they are metaphors. They're there to make people understand who can't read, they didn't have a scientific background. They couldn't understand the principles of what we look at today. The kinetics of energy moving around the body, through the transfer of the muscle and tendons or whatever (continues in Appendix 10.31).

(Terry, interview 2, 08/06/08)

Will is another modern practitioner who wishes for a more scientific approach to the arts. He believes metaphors will be used until everything can be explained by science:

Well, I think as you discussed earlier, that's a Chinese tradition, isn't it? I think we use a lot of metaphors in everyday life, don't we, really? And I think I think it's just a way of creating analogies that make things more accessible. If you talk to people about Taiji, I mean, I've had Taiji described to me as a cult. Other people think it's a big spiritual practice. Other people think it's almost extraterrestrial. It's not of this planet, and they think it's this more mystical thing. So I think if you want to make it accessible and understandable, you have to use a metaphor, because people won't always get it otherwise (continues in Appendix 10.32).

(Will, interview 1, 20/08/08)

However, how likely is it that metaphors will cease to exist? As the form part of our everyday thinking, as he admits, this is something science will struggle to overcome. However, not all metaphors employed are Eastern poetic phrases and riddles. Many practitioners strive to use everyday analogies, particular mechanical ones in order to approach the arts in a Western scientific manner. Terry is a classical example of someone who draws upon every analogies to convey understanding for students:

TM: You have to, to get an idea across. If I have an idea in my brain, I might verbalise it in one way. You will understand it, but the guy stood next to you won't. So I'll have to try to put forwards a way to get through to his understanding...the best way I've found is to use metaphors and things like that. To try to make people understand. The same as the walking upstairs one. "Don't tense up!" "Well I have to be tense to stop him coming in." [Refers to stopping an opponent in his/her tracks]. "No, you don't have to be tense." The walking upstairs one, I use that quite a lot, that seems to work quite well with people. And you get the one where I try to explain the repetition of technique where you get body memory...you have no conscious thought. Your body does it rather than the brain. People sometimes don't understand that, so for that I use driving metaphors.

GJ: A lot of people use that

TM: Because most people drive. And a lot of people forgot how it was to learn how to drive. Because it's so easy for them now. They've been driving for ten years, they don't think when they drive round the corner, looking at three mirrors at the same time. It was ridiculously harder than they first think. "How am I supposed to be expected to do four things at once?" Whilst they're driving the car. Whereas now, they're just doing it. It's the same in any mechanical body function. You do it often enough, you don't have to think about it. It may be ridiculously hard to begin with, but to do it enough times, it becomes simple.

(Terry, interview 2, 08/06/08)

Although these men reject the Eastern esoteric approach, they are paradoxically embodying a scientific way of thinking and perceiving the world through more technical metaphors. This again illustrates the rounded nature of TCMA practitioners: Having a fighter, martial artist and thinker component.

10.6. Conclusions

Metaphors are not just poetic resources, but ways of thinking and perceiving the world and ways of expressing feelings and experiences within it. Firstly, metaphors help practitioners articulate both transformation and transmission as they provide vivid and memorable narrative resources within life stories and everyday language (for teaching, learning and publicizing stories). Secondly, and more importantly, they are forms of transformation and transmission in themselves through altered schemes of perception, modes of thinking and communicating at the unconscious habitus level. They are reproduced through pedagogies, and are modified for the cultural context TCMA's are practised in.

However, are these metaphors so common in our everyday life that they are 'dead'? Lakoff (1987) warns us that if metaphors aren't novel or poetic, they might be characterised this way. However, as we have seen, metaphors can take on new meanings and importance according to our perspective, interests and needs (see also Radman, 1997). They help convey meaning to beginners, reinforce understanding experience in experienced practitioners and verbally explain the art from a variety of epistemological perspectives. Epiphanies, the sudden changes that occur within reflexive practice, may even be spurred on by a metaphor. Considering this, the four key metaphors of journey, discovery, religion, and family are structured and structure by each other and the core ageing narratives, learning, mastery and sharing. Other metaphors were used in both life

stories and pedagogic practice, but they were not universal among practitioners, so were not included here.

Interestingly, certain types of practitioners and schools, telling specific narratives, seem to draw upon certain metaphors. For instance, a fighter like Terry will draw upon metaphors of machines and cars to describe both technical and developmental processes. A thinker, often attracted to the poetic language of Taijiquan, will utilise more Chinese nature metaphors to continually transmit the art. Like narratives, we understand people through the metaphors they do and do not use as the practitioners drew upon a range of metaphors within their narrative framework at an unconscious level. When asked where they got the metaphors from, they couldn't answer, and instead claimed it was from their own experience. Yet members of the same group were drawing upon the same metaphors without even realising it, as part of what might be regarded as their narrative habitus. This clearly illustrates how important metaphors are in everyday language, particularly with abstract and complex issues such as learning and self-development. Nevertheless, metaphors were used alongside analogies for strategic pedagogic purposes i.e. cultural transmission. Hence they are pedagogic resources designed to effectively pass down the arts to the next 'generation' of 'the family.'

Considering the contemporary theory of metaphor's cognitive focus, I endeavoured to retain links between body, culture and metaphor, following Yu's (2007) circular triangle theory. Adopting a structurationist perspective, we can see a duality of structure between the three components. The issues of body and culture were therefore influential to and influenced by the four key metaphors. Let's take the example of a TCMA-as-a-religion. The feelings of religiosity are enhanced through meditation-in-motion and body rituals (shared and solo), and through TCMA subcultures, religious metaphors are created. Furthermore, all metaphors are created within a personal, intersubjective environment in the pedagogy (body culture). Yet this body culture provides the range of religion metaphors, which are further enhanced through individual training. With the family metaphor, such perception of TCMA is only possible through long-term, close contact with people. This is further assisted by the Chinese terminology and culture of Kung Fu brothers etc., which in turn reinforces the physical practice and use of family metaphors.

To conclude, all the metaphors illustrate long-term progress through TCMAAs. This may be like a journey of discovery or a way of life much like a religion. This shared way of life, through common schemes of perception, is like a family. All are ways of perceiving the self- and shared development within a somatic pedagogy/subculture and are tied to the main stories reproduced within this. Throughout this chapter, the issues of the continuum, ideal types, habitus, intersubjectivity, metaphors and narratives are seen as inseparable. At this point I would like to create a discussion based on the themes emerging from this investigation.

11. Discussion: Practitioner Reflections

This chapter offers a reflection of the empirical findings from each of the five data chapters, through focusing on the member checking of themes, rather than theoretical analysis (following Sparkes, 2001) highlighted during interviews with the practitioners. These comments serve to illuminate the issues from their perspectives, and it offers a final point for their stories to be heard before the conclusions to this study.

This project investigated how long-term TCMA practitioners experience transformation. A starting point for our understanding is that the aim for many of the practitioners is the lifelong and shared cultivation of certain qualities and attributes in a social environment. This idea of shared cultivation is different, although closely connected to transformation as cultivation is the practitioner's conscious aim through their agency (following Giddens, 1984) or bright consciousness (Yuasa, 1987), whereas transformation is the collective changes incorporating this, both intended and non intended, and is therefore often unconscious like Bourdieu's (1990) typical conception of habitus and Yuasa's (1993) dark consciousness. The original aim of martial skill and the potential for any transformative fury (see Zarrilli, 1998) also involved transformations in everyday life, as Zack's testaments suggest:

I've jumped off a scaffold before, and landed on a metal spike with just trainers on. I'm sure it's to do with again, the sensitivity. It's happened twice. It happened last weekend. I landed on a metal spike, and the metal spike went right through the sole of my metal trainer. And I felt it, and I just took my foot straight off it. As I was jumping, I retracted my foot off it again. And I thought it had gone through my foot. I took off my sock and trainer...it had gone right through my trainer, and they were only pumps, so it would have gone right through my flesh. And, it had just marked the skin, but didn't break the skin. And I'm sure that as soon as I got more awareness from different parts of my body, as soon as I felt that pain. I just released that pressure, and put all my weight in the other leg. It stopped it from going into my foot. And the same thing happened last weekend when Mike was fitting my front door. I didn't jump on it. I stood on a screw, it was a big brass screw. The same thing happened again. It went right through my pumps, and I jumped. It didn't even break the skin. I wasn't even thinking. I just transferred weight, and took my foot off the area that it was in. Yeah, that's happened twice. I do think that it's stopped me impaling my foot. Most definitely.

(Zack, interview 1, 15/03/08)

From a linguistic viewpoint, the terms self-cultivation and body-self transformation may appear to be selfish as they do not offer any indication of social relations and shared experience. However, both are integrated to cultural transmission of the art and body lineage, which results due to the intersubjectivity and interdependence at later stages of

training. Shared cultivation is the key underlying mechanism behind the various transformations at personal, cultural and social levels. Practitioners report setting out to aim to cultivate qualities and skills such as self-defence capabilities, health and fitness, and mastery of the art to various degrees throughout their martial training, and they also seem to encounter and (re)produce specific cultural and ontological narratives that help support this ‘journey’ towards shared cultivation. Cultivation of the person reflects the term ‘martial art’ as it entails individual discovery and expression alongside a more cultural component involving specific tastes or schemes of perception. Taijiquan and Wing Chun can therefore be a medium for human and societal development, as John commented on Wing Chun’s potential enhancement of people, schools, the art and wider communities:

I want them to have the courage to follow through what I have begun, and continue their own personal development. And suppose, maybe develop what I’ve taught them, and not keep it the same. I want them to develop their own personal skills at their own level, and find new methods, and new ways of teaching. As I said, it’s like reinventing the wheel. New perspectives, not change the technique, but change the perspective of the technique, and find new ways of socially interacting through Wing Chun to better them people. At the end of the day. To better their lives, to enrich their lives...and people around them and all.

(John, interview 2, 01/03/08)

Through long-term practice of TCMA within different explicit approaches to pedagogy (fighting, technical and spiritual/health orientated schools), many transformations may occur, from self-defence and confidence to new interests in Eastern philosophy. The major transformation can be understood as a specific TCMA habitus through its different strands of fighter, martial artist and thinker, which play different roles in the transformation of the practitioner and the transmission of the art. However, despite drawing upon specific narratives through their narrative habitus (Frank, in Eldershaw *et al.*, 2007), they all share the key narratives of ageing, learning, mastery and sharing, which combine to produce a perspective that martial arts are lifelong learning activities that can develop the individual to their very best whilst contributing to the next generation of students at the same time. As a final example of the ageing narrative, Tony neatly sums up the perspective on lifelong practice as a lifestyle:

You have to practise over years and years and years. And then you get closer to perfection as those years go by. And you’re not restricted by age so much. You can practise Wing Chun when you’re eighty. If you’re reasonably fit, you can keep going and even get better. Until you die, you can keep on improving pretty much.

(Tony, interview 1, 22/06/08)

So far in this discussion I have reflected on common issues in transformation across all ideal types. With regards to the more individual changes, there are a number of tendencies that might be expressed in relation to the ideal types utilised in the study. Fighters tend to develop more aggressive aspects of the individual, and reproduce a combat narrative whilst simultaneously maintaining realistic fighting aspects of this TCMA. The martial artist appears to develop skill and technical knowledge aspect, while reproducing the whole system through a focus on mastery and sharing. The thinker, on the other hand, seems to develop the intellectual and spiritual aspects through spirituality and health-orientated narratives, and transmits these elements of the TCMA. These elements of a practitioner are constantly evolving along a dynamic continuum within schools that are also changing, and might be seen as stages people go through, or even a circle/cycle. Another way of looking at this is a spiral, to borrow the concept from Chen style Taijiquan (Yue, 2005). This provides a visual aid to recognise that as practitioners are moving around the circle, they never return to the same point. Rather than a linear continuum, this illustrates the potentially ever-changing nature of Taijiquan and Wing Chun practice. As Giddens (1991) has noted, human beings have the potential to transform their self- and social identities. In ten years time, a practitioner might move around to the point of a thinker, but with a completely different perspective due to his/her experimentation as a fighter. When I asked him about this, Terry explained these as stages that all practitioners move through:

Like you say, you've got your thinkers, who want to sit down and discuss the ins and outs of everything, which is a stage most of us go through in our training. You've got your traditionalists who just want to teach the art as the art. Which again, most of us go through in some point in our training. And then you've got the fighter inside you, which tries to bring the other two points to the real world. And mixes it all together, to show the whole, if you know what I mean? You can't just pass on parts. The whole is more than some of the parts, isn't it? So, that's what I want to get across in me head

(Terry, interview 2, 08/06/08)

It is interesting to see the influence of the changing school makeup on the transformation of the practitioner. With new students come new life stories, perspectives, energies and narratives. A very pure fighter type can therefore slowly transform into a thinker if he/she trains with these individuals in an intersubjective environment and is made aware of the narratives that accompany this practitioner type. At the same time that he/she is getting fighting skills, they are gaining health, learning new skills, mastering an art, and practising something that can be for life. Therefore, all the narratives, or themes are present to a certain degree in all body types. All individual practitioners have these three aspects to varying degrees at any given time. The term

‘ideal types’ is therefore rather ironic, as an imbalanced approach to practise is never going to produce ideal transformation with the three core benefits of self-defence, health and self-development (represented through combat, health and spirituality). The ideal is therefore a balance of all three aspects. If one aims to cultivate all three aspects, they will become an ‘ideal’ practitioner, although this is a very utopian perspective that is very unrealistic simply in terms of time to cultivate all aspects. As Bolelli (2008) notes, a school that claims to develop self-defence and spirituality whilst being great for competition and having a strong philosophical side is rarely going to be achieved in a regular lesson, mainly due to time restrictions. In regard to different instructors’ approaches, Joe offers his personal reflections on his journey along this continuum:

I do find that if people train in different things, their energy [in pushing hands] is quite different. People who just train to fight, their energy tends to be very heavy and very focused. Whereas people who are just into the spiritual side of it tend to be very floaty and not grounded. So I think we have to have an awareness of these different aspects. Someone’s interest will naturally take them in different directions. Personally, I got into it because of my health, and I was interested in meditation, and a bit interested in the martial arts. And my first teacher was not really interested in the martial aspect of it at all. You know, he could do the thing where he could stand on one leg, and people would push him and not really move him. He could do that crowd stuff. But his emphasis was on health and pure spirituality. And it was quite interesting. As I got more into push hands, I actually got into joining hands, pushing and learning it that way.

(Joe, interview 1, 18/05/08)

Yet he also emphasised the need for balance between the extremes, which he explains on a contrasting scale of happiness and martial capabilities:

I have the idea of Taiji as a broad church. I am prepared to accept people practising Taiji anywhere along that spectrum. So you do have people who think Taiji is just waving your arms around. They’ll just float through the form. They won’t have any martial stuff. They won’t even be grounded. But when they do movement, it will have an effect. I’ve known people who’ve done Taiji for ten years, and their form is appalling, from a technical point of view, but their energy, their enjoyment they get out of it is fantastic. I know people who are real hard-core martial artists, their form’s perfect, they can apply everything, but they are as miserable as sin (we laugh). Because that is their focus. So you need to have a balanced focus. All away along, everyone has to be somewhere on that continuum we’ve mentioned. It may be that people will be at different stages of the continuum at different phases of their path. Someone may start off interested in the spiritual side and may end up being a hard-core martial artist. Someone who is miserable as sin as a martial artist may think, ‘Actually, let’s lighten up, and listen to these people and see what happens.’ So I think it’s a way of explaining the types of Taiji.

(Joe, interview 2, 16/07/08)

Will, on the other hand, regards this as more of a circle than a linear continuum, as following Terry, he sees practitioners as embodying elements of all ideal types:

As I think as times change and this awareness increases...the funny thing is, the more martial that you train, the more energy releases that you put into your training, the more

power you can develop, the more internal energy. That's going to give you more health. You're going to get more well being. So it is a continuum, but it's more of a circle, because you train more martially and you get more health. You get healthier and your body works better, so you can be more martial. So from a yin/yang, there's probably an axis somewhere (we laugh). So yeah, I wouldn't say it's a continuum, I'd say it's two different perspectives, but of the same thing.

(Will, interview 1, 20/08/08)

The key four narratives (ageing/learning/mastery/sharing) are told by all the practitioners, and are strongly connected. The ageing narrative concerns itself with providing a positive story of ageing in which transformation continues in old age, and this is another example of a counternarrative to the predominantly negative perspectives on ageing (see Phoenix & Sparkes, 2009 for a further example). The lifelong learning narrative is concerned with the continual learning of new skills and discovering aspects about oneself. Likewise, the mastery narrative focuses on mastering old and new skills through working with perfection, and this might be compared to Shilling's (2003) concept of a *body project*, a long-term project towards the development of the body-self. All of these three are shared through stories within the pedagogy and through intersubjective training, which make use of the communicative aspects of the practitioners (Frank, 1991). The art and the stories are therefore passed down through this notion of sharing and paradox of non-violence (see Back & Kim, 1982), as Dave contends in regard to the continuation of his particular body lineage:

To keep that chain alive. Otherwise, "OK it ends with me. No one else is going to know it." Now that's a selfish attitude, when you think you know enough. Like "I know enough to handle myself now. Now I know enough to defend myself. Now I know enough to beat up the bouncers in that club or something" (laughs). Maybe they've got that kind of attitude. "Now that I know enough for me." The sort of person that wants to teach is the sort of person that wants to other people to learn, that wants other people to have those skills. That feels enough gratitude for their own teachers in order to pass that knowledge on. There's got to be that kind of reverence. Maybe gratitude to the art. You're thankful to the art, so you're grateful to other people for the art. It's all about sharing in the Kung Fu. Without the teaching, the art would sort of die out. There wouldn't be...without those sort of people who wanted to teach it and wanted to share it, it wouldn't exist. You wouldn't know it. You've got to keep it alive. It would be great if most of the world knew it. It would probably be fewer violent people in the world. If everyone trained in a martial art.

(Dave, interview 2, 13/02/08)

These four core narratives all play a role in developing the specified three types of stories that certain ideal types are drawn towards (the continuum narratives of combat, health and spirituality) by acting as structural components for each of them. For example, a fighter drawing heavily upon the combat continuum narrative might occasionally reflect on the health and spirituality narratives, but will generally always include aspects of sharing, ageing, learning and mastery core narratives. The teller of

the tale, like all people, is an ageing body-self, and they will tell a tale to give them hope for the future. The story of combat focuses on learning fighting skills and therefore mastering an art and eventually oneself (through cultivation). Combat skills will be developed in an intersubjective environment, and will be passed down through a somatic pedagogy. At the same time, the continuum narratives, such as combat, actively influence the major narratives through their own perspectives on ageing, learning, mastery and sharing. Combat will provide a different lens on these to spirituality. Also, the key continuum narrative will continue to influence the other narratives. For instance, a strong combat narrative might acknowledge the possible side effects of health and spirituality, but won't allow them to become an aim for cultivation, as Terry's strong opinions show us:

GJ: So what do you think of the people who teach Wing Chun in a very spiritual manner? Because there's different ways of Wing Chun...

TM: I think they're up their own arse (we laugh). I do. It's their own issue they've brought to it. Cos if you go back to the beginning, it's just about fighting. It's just about fighting. You know, it's not about sitting with your legs crossed, going 'om' [meditation mantra] and trying to become a better person. It's about surviving. This was made five or four hundred years old. From a place in China. It was a feudal existence. Everywhere you went, you were tooled up. Because if you weren't tooled up, people would take things off you, you know what I mean? You just go to a shop back then, and people would try to rob you. But they wouldn't just beat you up and rob you. They would kill you and rob you and not get caught. So the actual martial art back then was not spiritual at all. It was survival. You know what I mean? (Laughs). I think some people took the aspects of martial arts, and turned it spiritual. I don't think that's how any of them started.

(Terry, interview 1, 12/02/08)

Intersubjectivity itself is the bridge between the somatic pedagogy, cultural transmission and individual transformation. It allows the reproduction of the art through the medium of human bodies of varying typologies, whilst developing unique forms of intersubjective awareness such as sensitivity, body awareness and automatic reactions. These all form part of a unique TCMA habitus that is constantly evolving. For overall habitus development, there is a need to train and somatically interact with as many partners as possible, from various habitus strands, somatypes and energy, much like a surfer much ride different waves in order to become a complete surfer (Ford & Brown, 2005). In the end however, there is a feeling of social solidarity much like a family:

The class had just a family feeling about it really. A sibling kind of feeling. You had the big brother teaching the class, and slightly older brothers helping, and a few younger brothers just starting. It had that kind of feel. So you felt that you were being helped along. You helped others like you were helped along at the time. So I never got to the stage that that I thought "I'm the teacher, and I'm helping everyone out." It would always be "I'm at the stage along the chain, and I'm helping others, and hopefully they're helping people below them."

(Dave, interview 2, 13/02/08)

Metaphors seem to help shape the narratives that predominate in certain schools. They not only provide a linguistic resource for explaining transformation and transmission, and therefore teaching, but can also be seen a form of transformation through a change in language, and therefore, ways of perceiving the world (schemes of perception) as Lakoff & Johnson (1980) proposed, albeit in non-sociological terms. Chris provides an alternative perspective on health to the one in conventional British society:

We have a culture where if anything goes wrong with you, generally speaking, you're brainwashed...the outcome is that the NHS will serve your purpose. Nothing else will do, just the NHS. Of course, it's free, most people don't want to spend money on themselves, so it's free. But it doesn't work. It does, it has its place, but there are other things that work. So that's that path. The path way is quite difficult at times. It's challenging. Sometimes I wish I could be like other people who don't seem to think much. They live in this little... they get up, go to work, come home, sit down, have their meal...I wish I could be dumb as they are. As simple as that. It's not like that. Once you open out...there's new horizons all the time. There's no answers. We like comfort and we like answers all the time, don't we? There are no comfort zones and there are no answers to it. There's only your own experience which is reality. It's quite hard to...yeah, to understand.

(Chris, interview 1, 20/09/08)

This perspective is based on lived, phenomenological embodied experience as subjective reality over the rationale, positivistic perspective that conventional health authorities take. His and other practitioners' focus on embodiment provides a strong rationale for a continued phenomenological consideration of TCMA's practice in future research as I began in Appendix 1.1 with the impressionist tales.

To conclude, TCMA practitioners, and the arts themselves, are continually evolving along a dynamic continuum from a very fighting centred view to a more spiritual, intellectual approach, which are constantly influencing each other. Accompanying this is a range of narratives and metaphors to draw upon to understand these changes, and reproduce the art. The exercises of sticking and pushing hands work together in order for different practitioner types to directly experience a new intersubjective/intercorporeal environment and to develop the total TCMA habitus for further transmission. The transformation process is a lifelong journey towards mastery and learning, shared with others further on and behind their own paths. It takes different directions according to the art chosen, the school type and the person's life story. It cultivates not only those qualities often claimed by martial arts schools, but also the person as a whole, as Yuasa (1987) suggests. This is seen in the accounts of their everyday actions, which they claim to be transformed by TCMA training as through a specific, socialised and embodied martial habitus. They are arguably more important

than changes useful only in martial environments and can therefore feed back to society, as Kelly concludes:

If you could get these kids off the streets. Cos they're bored. They've got nothing to do. Get them off the streets. Teach them the discipline, respect aspects. I know there's the idea that if you teach them to fight, because it actually could get worse. If you teach them properly, if you teach the lifestyle side of it, and all the values attached to it, I reckon it would make such a difference. Such a difference. People as well. Housewives. Anybody can do it, if they want to. They've just got to be shown the way really. I think that's definitely a way forward, to help society.

(Kelly, interview 2, 13/03/08)

This chapter has provided a discussion that examines practitioners' reflections on some of the key research themes, ranging from embodied dispositions to the dynamic continuum. Having considered these, we now turn to the more theoretically based conclusions to this study, linking it to previous research and existing social theory.

12. Conclusions

In this last chapter I aim to provide a critical and detailed summary of the entire thesis and offer considerations of how the study can be disseminated and continued. It is divided into several clear sections in order to achieve these two aims. I first return to the guiding research questions by offering theoretical perspectives based around the empirical findings, and in a sense attempt to answer them whilst raising new questions for further studies. This leads to an overview of my matrix of ideal typical shared cultivation, which is the main theory developed in the thesis. Following that I consider how such findings contribute to theory, methods and empirical topics in sociology, qualitative research and martial arts respectively. Consequently I then offer avenues for the dissemination of the PhD and identify key guiding questions for both academic and applied work. Such dissemination requires a brief consideration of the limitations of this research project in terms of gender and methods. With this in mind I then turn to two main options for the continuation of this project, which is part of a larger socio-cultural study on EMFs as practised in the West. As a final section I offer my personal reflections on the research process that provide a brief account of my thoughts and feelings that can be better understood by visiting the appendices such as my confessional tales.

12.1. Addressing the Research Questions

In the introduction, I outlined several guiding (yet flexible) research questions for this investigation, which I readdress here:

- 1) Why do people *begin* these arts?
- 2) What *transformations* result from long-term practice?
- 3) What implicit and explicit strategies *underpin* these transformations?
- 4) How does the *transmission* of physical culture influence these transformations?
- 5) How do these transformations relate to their *daily lives*?

All five questions are interconnected, and through the previous analysis chapters it is clear that the answers are emerging and require a complex theoretical framework. These

questions framed my data collection and analysis, and may be briefly concluded as follows in connection with the empirical findings and theory:

1) *Why do people begin TCMA's?*

As scholars such as Brown and Leledaki (2010) have demonstrated, there are a variety of complex reasons behind Westerner's interest in EMFs. These Taijiquan and Wing Chun practitioners are interested in these practices for a wide spectrum of motivations from a desire to gain more fighting skills to a growing interest in spiritual practices, and such reasons are subject to fluid interchange along a continuum of embodiment (from fighters to thinkers). Despite the various and apparently individual reasons for initial participation, what is key to them taking up an art in a Bourdieusian sense is an affinity with their schemes of perception of individual habitus developed within their earlier lives and socialisation. During their years of training, their motives for continued participation are seen to change toward more specific (self- and social) cultivation aims, such as the desire for mastery and to continue the art through teaching, which are continually strived towards through regular practice. These findings draw parallel to Looser's (2006) and Jones *et al.*'s studies (2006), which identified different motives for beginning and continuing TMA training, and more theoretically, Arthur Frank's (1991) ideal approaches to embodiment in a martial context. Hence, following Weber's early theorisations, I suggest that any ideally typical rationale (for these practitioners at least) is open to revision or reproduction through their agency and engagement with other ideal types in a social and phenomenologically-orientated sense. Overall, to briefly summarise the initial reasons that the practitioners provided for training I have developed table 12.1 below:

Ideal Sub-type	Initial Training Rationale
'Natural' fighters	To improve existing fighting skills
Trained fighters	To gain fighting skills
Modernizers	To learn a systematic martial art
Traditionalists	To learn a traditional martial art
Healers	To be involved in a healthful activity
Meditators	To learn a moving form of meditation

Table 12.1 Ideal types and initial rationale for training

2) *What transformations result from long-term practice?*

Beyond Yuasa's (1987) claim to mind-body unification, these practitioners deliberately cultivate extensive and often unique qualities such as self-defence skills, embodied sensitivity, health, spiritual experiences, and knowledge of Chinese culture. However, some happen unconsciously i.e. without deliberate conscious effort for cultivation, and are by-products of highly dedicated and disciplined lifestyles based around a committed contingent of agentic individuals who aim to develop a specific martial habitus. The result of this, to borrow Giddens' (1984) theorisation of social action, are intended and unintended consequences that can be both positive and negative, and will emerge at different periods of their lives. Firstly, the main forms of transformation are the development of a specific TCMA habitus through dynamic practitioner types (fighters, martial artists and thinkers, each with their own subtypes), which enable constant change ranging from self-defence to spirituality. Different ideal typical practitioners tend to draw upon and reproduce different kinds of narratives and take a particular emphasis in training, which could be understood as a narrative habitus (Frank, in Eldershaw et al., 2007). Secondly, these practitioners develop this specific TCMA martial habitus capable of acting without conscious thought or no-mind (Yuasa, 1987) when in physical contact with other people. Thirdly, there is a change in thinking and language through conceptual metaphors (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999) that also help them articulate the long-term dedication to such arts.

The dynamic practitioner continuum, which has been mentioned extensively here and in the previous chapter, might initially be understood in a linear fashion in the below figure 12.1, based on the two extreme approaches to practise through a socially constructed mind-body dualism, with the anti intellectual approach of fighters at one extreme and the pro-intellectual approach of a thinker on the other:



Figure 12.1 A linear representation of the practitioner continuum

However, practitioners can move from any position at any time, based on a complex set of socio-cultural and intertwined phenomenological experiences, with these movements being better understood as below in figure 12.2 (with their subtypes, which reflect this diversity):

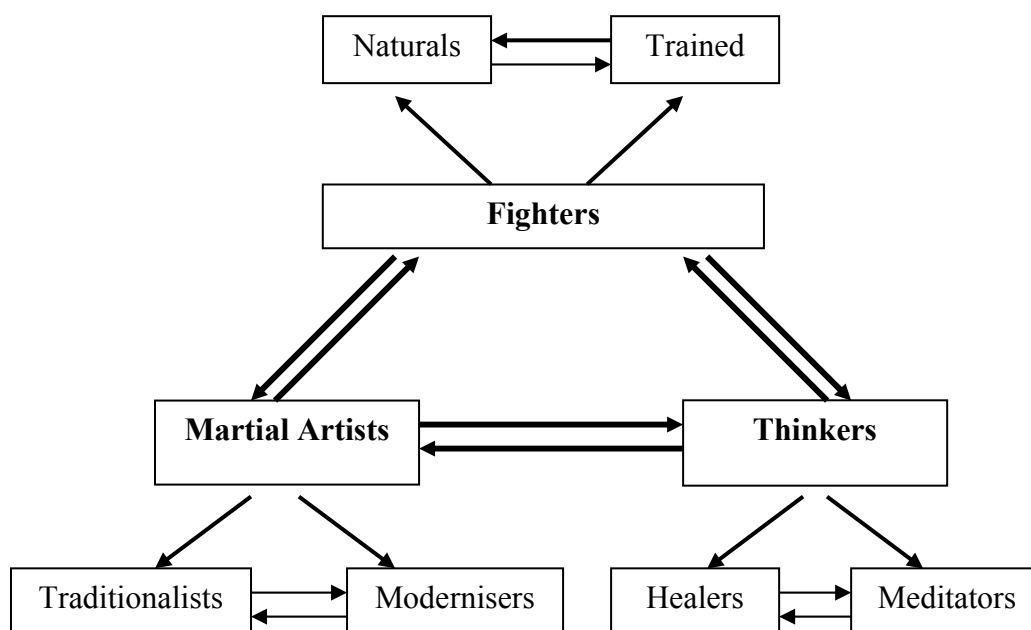


Figure 12.2 Ideal types and subtypes in the TCMA

3) *What implicit and explicit strategies underpin these transformations?*

TCMA pedagogies contain both explicit and implicit pedagogic strategies to develop this martial habitus outlined under the previous question, and I first begin with the more open or explicit approaches. These data suggest that all transformations illustrated are a result of long-term, dedicated practice within a pedagogy consisting of cooperative individuals who compose a subculture with specific norms and values that range from combat orientated schools to health and spirituality orientated schools (which are ideal type institutions in themselves). Without these people, particularly the teacher, transformation would be extremely limited to that enabled through books and video (see Brown, 2005) as there would be no kinaesthetic connection across time and space in the form of what Joseph (2008) terms kinaesthetic ancestry and citizenship. The practitioner types develop through sustained intersubjective (particularly intercorporeal) experiences with other practitioners with different skill levels, sizes and energies. More specifically the martial habitus is phenomenologically developed mainly through intercorporeal partner training of basic drills, sticking and pushing hands, which can develop embodied sensitivity for self-defence (Brown & Johnson, 2000) and body awareness (McFarlane, 1989).

On a more implicit level, these practitioners listen to, embody and (re)produce specific narratives of practice ranging from core issues of mastery, ageing and learning to more

ideal type specific ideas of combat, tradition, modernisation, health and spirituality. Connected to language and storytelling, the conceptual metaphors are mainly unconsciously created through long-term immersion in a subculture, which helps them make sense of the transformations, but are also a form of transformation in thinking, to follow Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) earlier theory. This can tentatively be understood as a metaphor habitus, a term drawn from the contemporary theory of metaphor (Lakoff, 1993) and Bourdieu's (1993) reflexive sociology. This embodied approach to metaphor as recently articulated by Yu (2007) is depicted overleaf in context of the TCMA's:

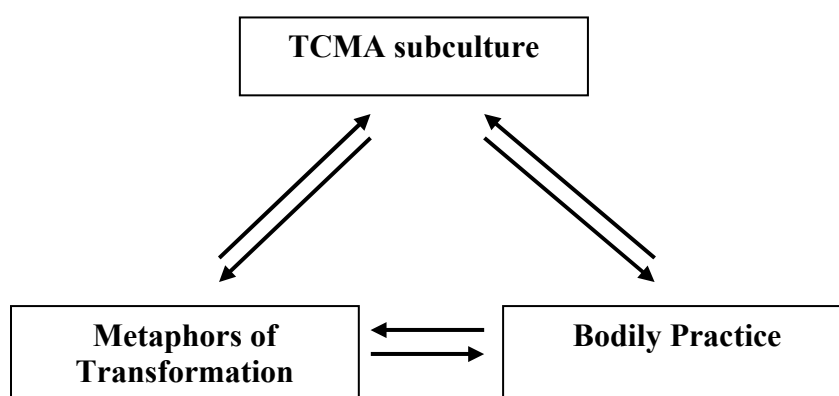


Figure 12.3 Adaptation of Yu's (2007) body, metaphor and culture model

4) How does the transmission of physical culture influence these transformations?

In order for the arts to survive, and for transformations to occur, pedagogies must continually reproduce the arts through a reflexive relationship between the individual and the art itself. This follows Shilling's (2003) idea that when a person dies, their physical capital dies with them, unless it is transmitted to another body through a pedagogy. This connects to Joseph's (2008) notion of kinaesthetic ancestry and Delamont and Stephen's (2008) demonstration of transmission in Capoeira. In this sense, transmission through a pedagogy is never a pure or guaranteed type of social reproduction and thus deserves a significant concern. In this study each teacher and their dedicated students all have their own embodied perspectives on the art (individual habitus), which they reproduce in their own unique way. Certain core practitioners and teachers may develop an institution around their individual habitus in the sense of *Bridge's Wing Chun Academy*, which differs considerably to other technical and intellectual perspectives on the art. Transmission is achieved through direct teaching

and learning, intersubjective experiences with other practitioners and oral transmission via stories (particularly narratives). However, two main perspectives appear to exist: Traditionalists and modernisers, who take contrasting views on the often recently invented histories and traditions (see Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1992) and potential future of their arts through reflexive modernisation (Giddens, 1991). These two ideal approaches, although flexible within each school, may lead to the TCMAAs being practised on a wide continuum offering very different philosophies and experiences of transformation.

The two processes of practitioner transformation and cultural transmission occur simultaneously, and couldn't exist without each other. Whilst an art is being passed down within a lineage, and more specifically, a pedagogy, it enables the cultivation of the practitioners, which will eventually result in certain transformations. At the same time, as shared cultivation practices, these arts must be passed down to the next generation of students in order for continued transformation and for the cultural practice to survive. This follows the principles of Structuration (Giddens, 1984), in which individual action can reproduce or change the social structures that they occupy whilst the structures, as Bourdieu (1990) would explain, are structuring the individuals in the sense of a habitus. This is reflexivity in action.

More simply on a local scale, the circle of cultivation (a socio-cultural adaptation of Yuasa's 1987 term) eventually turns revolves so that the teacher can benefit in skill from his/her students' improvements, unlike a line of cultivation following an overly simplistic and purely structuralist perspective as seen overleaf:

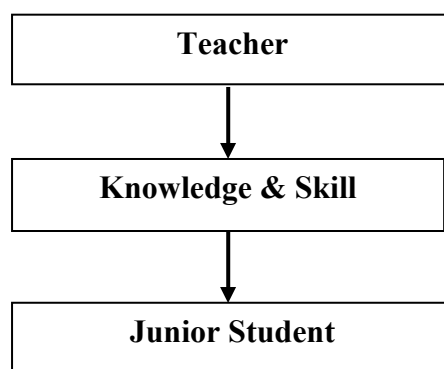


Figure 12.4 A linear representation of TCMA transmission

On the other hand, a structurationist perspective acknowledges a student's agentic capacity to eventually bring about changes to the social system through access to rules (martial knowledge) and resources (the pedagogy and the school's equipment), and to those with greater social power in the form of knowledge and martial skill:

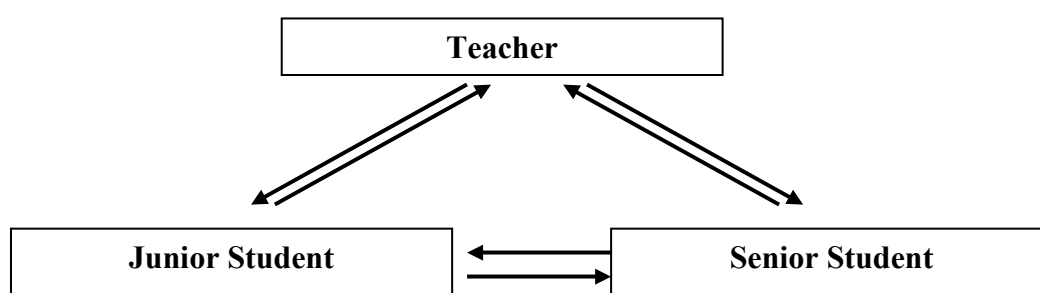


Figure 12.5 A dynamic representation of TCMA transmission

Such a theorisation has added a sociological and pedagogic consideration to Yuasa's (1987, 1993) earlier monadic focus on self-cultivation, which I argue is impossible without pedagogy, peers and a new 'generation' of students to challenge practitioners and keep the art 'alive'. This model offers alternative perspectives to many conventional teaching and learning systems worldwide, such as physical education, as I will discuss shortly.

5) *How do these transformations relate to their daily lives?*

The martial habitus, being the set of embodied dispositions socialised through TCMA training, has a massive impact on the practitioners' daily lives through altered ways of thinking and interacting with the social/natural environment i.e. schemes of perception. Yet martial training does not occur in a vacuum. As TCMA practitioners have multiple and shifting self- and social identities, all practitioners have some form of work and/or family obligations, along with other issues in life that sometimes clash with or benefit from TCMA training in the way of intended and unintended consequences from a structurationist perspective. Some practitioners have made claims of transformations such as stronger family relationships, conflict management and rapid reactions in their day-to-day lives. Others mentioned relationship problems due to time issues, over training and injuries. Many of these are seen as positive, but weren't sought out or consciously cultivated whilst other seemingly negative issues emerged from highly disciplined, monadic bodies (Frank, 1991) or unstable athletic identities (Sparkes, 1998). In this sense, transformations often result without any intention of being socially cultivated whilst others may never be achieved due to issues of time and space and what Frank (1995) termed body problems e.g. the inability to travel to a class on certain evenings and even at all due to injury. Additionally, the great deal of dedication through time and effort often impact on their daily lives, as such behaviour is not readily understood outside the subculture. Bourdieu's (1990) notions of field, habitus and capital are useful for understanding this as TCMA create unique fields with their own norms and values and help forge a specific way of looking at the world that may not gain symbolic capital elsewhere. The figure 12.6 overleaf, based on Bourdieu's (1990) logic of practice, illustrates this, which could examine the cultural reproduction and recognition of qualities such as embodied sensitivity:

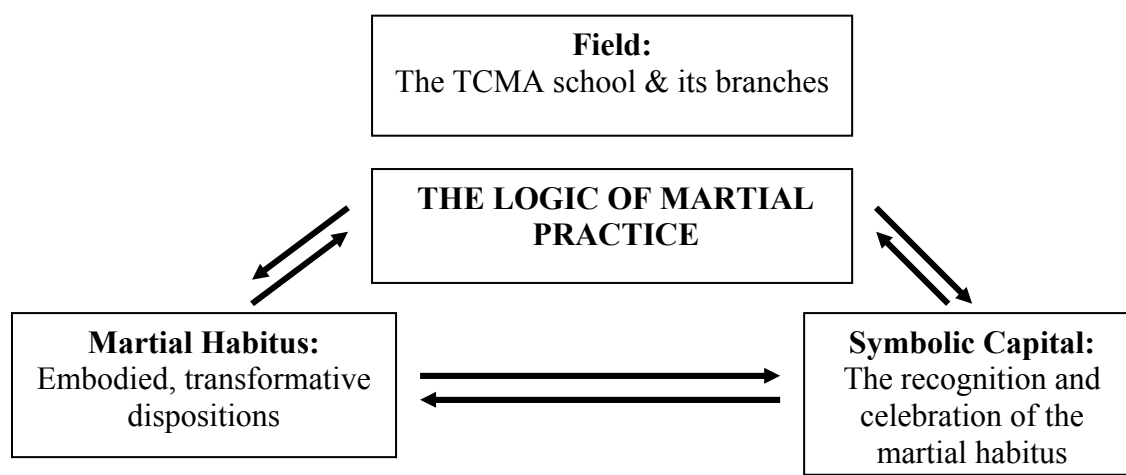


Figure 12.6 Field-habitus-capital relationship in TCMA

12.2. Thesis Philosophy: A Social Theory of Shared Cultivation

The core message of this thesis is through long-term dedication to a TCMA, practitioners can collectively and consciously cultivate themselves and each other within cooperative pedagogies in order to transform on the levels of individual, relational, institutional and art. This challenges Yuasa's (1987) notion of 'self' cultivation by offering a socio-cultural perspective on the pedagogic, interactive and social aspects of martial arts experience. Shared cultivation has intended and unintended transformations that can considerably influence people and those around them. Furthermore, cultivation is a broad topic that goes far beyond mind-body unity, as it involves the deliberate development of health and self-defence, in some cases. This by no means is restricted to the world of TMAs, as any long-term (ideally lifelong) practice that integrates the mind and body can do this, as Yuasa (1987) has previously suggested. What I have therefore added to this philosophy is a personal (individual), relational (shared), institutional (pedagogies) and art (cultural transmission) emphasis in order to go beyond the mind-body connection. This revolves around the following questions postulated in the matrix overleaf:

<i>Individual</i>	<i>Relational</i>
-------------------	-------------------

What dispositions do they develop? How do they identify themselves? How do they define a 'martial art'?	How do they train with others? How do they relate their teacher? How do they relate to people outside?
<i>Institutional</i> How do they lead in the school? How do they legitimise the school? How do they influence body lineage?	<i>Art</i> What narratives do they share? How do they contribute to TCMA's? How do they help communities?

Figure 12.7 Ideal Type Framework as Questions

These questions assisted my analysis of life histories and observations of martial practice, where three main ideal typical approaches to TCMA's were identified on the basis of: 1) Body-self relations. This drew upon the work of Bourdieu (1990, 1993, 1999) in the sense of individual habitus development and embodied experience 2) Other-relations. This drew upon the work of Frank (1991, 1995) via the disciplined, dominating, mirroring and communicative ideal types and phenomenology concepts for explorations of intersubjectivity 3) Institutional authority and legitimation, which drew upon Weber's ideal types of charisma, tradition and bureaucracy and Bourdieu's idea of institutional modes of habitus (as explained through Delamont and Stephens, 2008) 4) Narrative and societal relations, which expanded upon contemporary ideas of narratives and cultural transmission. When combined, this matrix allows us to explore the reflexive relationship between an individual's social action and the social relations and structures ranging from everyday interactions to the continuation of a particular institutional version of an art.

From the analysis it was therefore apparent that cultivation (and thereby transformation) is developed on four interconnected, simultaneously structuring levels: Individual, relational, institutional and art. One could not occur without the other, although I have emphasised the shared nature of the practices in order to show the process of structuration between the individual and art. I will briefly examine each based on the diagram overleaf:

<i>Individual</i>	<i>Relational</i>
Individual Habitus	Partners
Identity	Teacher-Student
Subjectivities	Other Relations
<i>Institutional</i>	<i>Art</i>
Leadership	Narratives
Legitimation	TCMAs
Lineage	Community

Figure 12.8 Matrix of Ideal Type Generic Structure

1) *Individual (body-self)*

From Giddens' (1991) work on identity, we might understand practitioners' involvement in TCMAs as a search for some form of ontological security, be it self-defence, spirituality or a regular routine. However, they are soon socialised into these subcultures, and cultivate the particular institutional habitus that the school reveres. They may be transformed alongside others within a shared, interpersonal environment and will experience different body-self relations through disciplined, dominating, mirroring and communicative aspects. In this ontological sense, the art can form a core part of their self- and social identities, which can contrast and challenge each other at certain points in life, particularly when new social relationships emerge. Such ideal typical approaches to the art may form in the sense of subjectivities ranging from the art as a pure form of fighting to moving meditation.

2) *Relational (intersubjective)*

Although they may maintain their individual approach within their school (through an individual habitus), none of their cultivation would have been possible without the cultivation of other people. Partner training is a key example here as if one just strives to beat others through a very monadic and dominating relationship, he/she will never truly develop. They must allow others to cultivate their own skills in order to get the challenge sufficient enough to be transformed. This is the deliberate (explicit) pedagogic strategy of TCMAs.

Shared cultivation is therefore a key concept for this thesis as it differs to many philosophical accounts of meditation practices without a pedagogy or partners. Within pedagogies, all students are working together for a certain kind of cultivation, be it overall health, mind-body unification, self-defence or spiritual awakening. Yet this is a particular institution's approach to the art, which is taught, embodied and (re)produced as an institutional habitus. Any transformation requires shared, and more specifically, phenomenological experiences. One cannot learn a TCMA from a book or video. They must engage in intersubjective experiences with practitioners with a range of experiences, skill levels and body forces and vectors in a Merleau-Pontian (1962) sense. This must of course be in direct we-relationships i.e. face to face embodied contact as Schutz (1967) might explain. In this manner, Teachers and students might experience a changing relationship as the years go by, as issues of power, skill and knowledge is transformed so that the teacher may even be challenged or directly transformed by the student through a cyclical perspective on teaching and learning. Practitioners, teachers and other students effectively forge their TCMA habitus together through various dyadic and monadic relations, although the communicative body aspect (Frank, 1991, 1995) is particularly important in partner training. This has a profound impact on the school and even the art itself, yet is also influences the practitioners' relationships in other social fields such as family and work, either in positive ways or sometimes negative ways in the case of very monadic approaches to training. Regardless of being positive or negative, these are certainly both intended and unintended consequences of cultivation.

3) Institutional (pedagogical)

The school is a social setting where practitioners can develop together through partner training, embodied rituals and reproduction of specific kinaesthetic skills. A school may even develop its own unique approach to the art, leading to an institutional habitus that individual students embody in different ways.

After a sustained period of training, an individual can reflexively engage with the institution through leadership or continuation of particular ideal types of authority and authenticity as identified by Weber (in Gerth & Wright-Mills, 1991): Bureaucratic, traditional and charismatic. Like all ideal types, these are never fixed and can give way

to one another much like the embodied ideal types of Frank (1991, 1995). In this sense they can offer several combinations such as charismatic-traditional and traditional-bureaucratic, although the idea of a charismatic performing body is key to real life practice as it is in film representations of martial arts (see Brown *et al.*, 2008). However, not all practitioners end up leading an institution, and may instead play a role in the assisting of teaching as senior students, which is a key feature of TCMA pedagogies. They help continue the institutional approach to the art, and might add their own individual aspect of the habitus, which can range from technical differences to teaching styles. All of these issues result from an individual's changing bodily relations, intersubjective experiences and changing biographies, which are interconnected with their other identities and interests. Furthermore, any school requires new students to enrol and develop in order for it to survive, as it is a kinaesthetic chain or body lineage. Without continued investment and transfer (via a pedagogy) of physical capital, a particular institutional habitus may die out.

4) Art (TCMA)

Cultural transmission is a key matter for all martial arts schools. In order for it to survive, the art must be properly transmitted to a new generation of students. However, there is never pure transmission in which everything remains the same for the next generation. Within any given school, students are undergoing transformations through shared cultivation in which the art itself is altered. Each individual has their own perspective and philosophy towards the given art, and will modify it accordingly either consciously or unconsciously. Hence cultural transmission is a form of cultivation itself: The art is cultivated.

On a narrative level, certain core stories seem to be transmitted by TCMA practitioners, which can be made available to the wider public. These are those promoting the continued practice towards mastery or perfection for the rest of one's lifetime, which can challenge or even counter conventional ageing and learning narratives. Within Taijiquan and Wing Chun, a long-term practitioner may have a lasting influence on the art such as technical changes, modes of training and even new forms of knowledge such as this PhD, which, when disseminated, may influence the lives and practices of practitioners I have never even met (more of a thou-relationship to borrow Schutz's

1967 terminology). As with body lineage, this again might be through ideas of (invented) tradition or more overt reflexive modernisation in which the art is consciously altered to suit modern society and the current cultural context of Britain. On this societal level, the TCMA institutions as fields have relations to other subfields such as education, schools and sports, and practitioners can influence this through public practice, communication and reflexive engagement with expert systems such as science.

So far it is clear that individual transformation and cultural transmission are tied together in a reflexive relationship illustrating what Giddens (1984) described as the duality of structure. The four sets of themes and theories forming ideal types can be used to explore a range of socio-cultural practices, and are summarised in the final matrix, which demonstrates the simultaneous process of transformation and transmission:

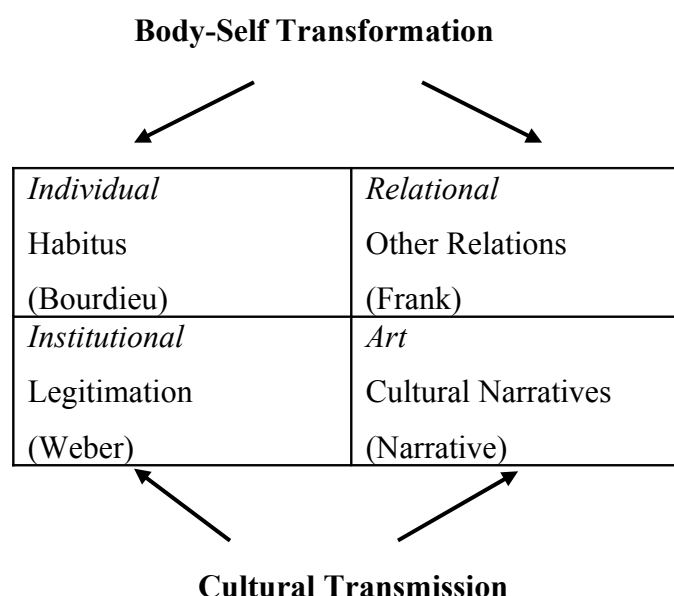


Figure 12.9 Matrix of Transformation and Transmission

12.3. Theoretical, Methodological & Empirical Contributions to Knowledge

As considerably popular and widespread activities in both British and Western society, TCMA have received little qualitative or socio-cultural interest from researchers. This study provides new theoretical, methodological and empirical contributions to our understanding of these embodied arts, which can be briefly summarised as follows: 1) *Theoretically*, I have combined sensitising concepts to produced a flexible framework

for future research in TMAs and other cultivation practices 2) *Methodologically*, as an experienced practitioner-researcher and more recently a Wing Chun teacher, I offered some hitherto unexplored perspectives on practitioner-research, particularly in relation to ethnography and interviews 3) *Empirically*, new data extensively illustrates subjective human experiences and offers indications of a wide variety of themes that other researchers may find interesting to explore. Starting with theory, I examine each of the three contributions in turn, and offer return to some of the core questions that emerged in the discussion chapters.

12.3.1. Theoretical Contributions

Theoretically, I have taken a seemingly unconventional approach of combining structurationist sociology with phenomenologically-inspired concepts and contemporary narrative theory. This might be unconventional in name, but not in principle as I maintained the issues of structure-agency, reflexivity and intended and unintended consequences, among other issues that are key to Giddens' (1984) initial formulation of Structuration and those of other structurationist theorists such as Stones (2005). These three main theoretical lenses allowed themes surrounding the issue of cultivation to be seen on four levels: Individual, relational, subcultural and cultural, all with their own breakdown of three elements (in Figure 12.7) that can be the subject of studies in their own right. These were represented through a matrix (Figures 12.8 & 12.9) that may be useful for other researchers investigating social practices of cultivation for groups of individuals, schools/institutions and on the level of an art or cultural practice itself. This matrix may also provide social scientists with a framework to look at other practices and social phenomena from a more integral (albeit qualitative and socio-cultural) lens. Overall, I have developed a flexible theoretical framework supported by abundant qualitative data to understand the social and shared experience of cultivating practices. This adds to the established quantitative literature examining short-term transformations and the emerging qualitative research looking at cultivation along certain levels of this framework, and may bring such different fields of research together to understand cultivation from various perspectives. Overall, some of the main theoretical issues are represented in the below table:

Theory	Key question
Structuration	<i>Q. How can we understand body lineage through a structurationist</i>

	<p><i>framework?</i></p> <p>Ideas of lineage can be seen on the meta, meso and micro scale, and these merge through the idea of reflexivity i.e. practitioners embodying lineage and reproducing/altering it according to their own dispositions. This would also provide a case study illustration of structuration, which has been criticised as being vague and lacking empirical support (e.g. Marshall, 1998).</p>
Bourdieu	<p><i>Q. In what ways can pedagogies transform both individual and institutional habitus?</i></p> <p>The concepts of habitus is often criticised as being deterministic and lacking any accounts for change. My research offers illuminations of individuals developing and transforming a habitus, which in turn can change the institutional habitus they embody</p>
Weber	<p><i>Q. How do ideal types of leadership work together in certain TCMA institutions?</i></p> <p>Weber's (in Gerth & Wright-Mills, 1991) examples of charisma, bureaucracy and tradition are still useful for examining the relationship between leaders and the dynamic modern institutions based around a social practice such as martial arts.</p>
Frank	<p><i>Q. How do practitioners embody the disciplined, dominating, mirroring and communicative aspects as part of a martial habitus?</i></p> <p>A martial habitus is a complex set of embodied dispositions that develops certain relationships with practitioners' own bodies and with those of their peers. This would be a useful framework for exploring modes of training and engaging with the body whilst considering the contingencies and body problems that accompany it.</p>
Yuasa	<p><i>Q. What can a socio-cultural perspective offer the mind-body philosophy of Yuasa?</i></p> <p>Yuasa's (1987, 1993) mind-body philosophy is highly relevant alongside phenomenological-orientated approaches to the body, although it lacks a social, cultural or historical analysis. By combining Yuasa with these aspects, researchers might be able to understand the changing mind-body relationship from a social science perspective.</p>
Eclectic	<p><i>Q. How have I used various theories within a structurationist framework to understand experiences of transformation?</i></p> <p>In chapter 3 I provided a set of sensitising concepts that can fit into a structurationist perspective. Other researchers may find this</p>

	framework or some of these useful for exploring the body, culture, institutions, leadership and metaphor should this be relevant to their topic of study. It can also act as a future guide for my continued research.
--	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Table 12.2 Theoretical contributions of the PhD

12.3.2. Methodological Contributions

Methodologically I have taken quite an unusual position as a prolonged ethnographer in a school that I have not officially left following data collection and analysis, although I am now geographically distant from the other members. Rather than follow convention and departing from the social setting after data collection (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995), I have remained in the field as a regular practitioner-researcher for over five years, and have collected detailed field notes, particularly through the use of sensual ethnography (Sparkes, 2009) and thick participation (Samudra, 2008), thanks to my established status as a core member of the subculture. This complex relationship continues as I have maintained contact with core members of *Bridge's Wing Chun Academy* (e.g. Appendix 12.1), and have visited the group on several occasions, which has enabled me to examine change from more of an outsider's perspective, particularly through the senses (see Appendix 12.2). Overall, my position as a long-term practitioner may have greatly helped or hindered the gathering of extensive data, particularly with life stories, as the rapport and bond between myself and the participants was seen to be a sharper double-edged sword than previously explored in methodological discussions (e.g. Rapley, 2001). My experiences of partner training with many of the interviewees within interview settings have also raised some unanticipated issues surrounding complimentary data, embodiment and ethics in qualitative research. Overall, some of the main contributions and questions arising from my methods are depicted in the table below:

Topic	Question & Detail
Long-term ethnography	<p><i>Q. What transitions occur as a long-term practitioner-researcher?</i></p> <p>As a regular member of Bridge's Academy for 7 years I experienced several transitions in order to become the</p>

	distant member and full time academic I am now. Throughout this period I have observed immense transformation in the Academy itself in terms of ethos, members and social relations.
Doing ethnography as a member	<p><i>Q. How does conducting ethnography as an established member have an impact on the fieldwork?</i></p> <p>As an established practitioner I have had the benefit of excellent access to participants and social interaction, with the opportunity to monitor long-term change in the institution. However, it has several disadvantages in terms of identity, practicalities and analysis.</p>
Sensual ethnography	<p><i>Q. How can impressionist tales be used to communicate sight, sound, taste, touch, smell and body awareness?</i></p> <p>Through sensual ethnography, a broad range of common experiences can be communicated in order to provide an evocative, detailed and interesting account of TCMA social life.</p>
Embodied interviews	<p><i>Q. In what ways has training before, during and after interviews influenced the stories told?</i></p> <p>As a Wing Chun practitioner I have done chi sau with others before, during and after interviews, which has resulted in rich data, interesting articulations and also dilemmas as the boundary between researcher and interviewee are broken down</p>
Representing research	<p><i>Q. How can the senses of touch and kinaesthesia be represented?</i></p> <p>Conferences, workshops and teaching offer different embodied experiences to journal articles as basic martial arts exercises can be shared in order to provide an introduction to the themes, principles and practices outlined in the study.</p>
Combining methods	<p><i>Q. How can the meta, meso and micro levels of social relations be researched from a structurationist perspective?</i></p> <p>Interviews, observations and autoethnography are useful strategies for exploring embodied and social experience on the micro and meso scales. By employing historical and</p>

	documental analysis any case study could incorporate an analysis of meta social forces in order to provide a rounded structurationist approach (see Brown & Leledaki, 2010).
--	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Table 12.3 Methodological contributions of the PhD

12.3.3. Empirical Contributions

Empirically, there were three major themes emerging from the data, which helped structure the thesis discussion into three parts (chapters 5-10). Firstly, despite differing or ideal typical institutions, Taijiquan and Wing Chun were regarded by the practitioners as lifelong practices for continual learning and mastery through the striving towards perfection. Secondly, the subjective meaning of a martial art can and does differ greatly from practitioner to practitioner, who will embody this through their daily practice on what can be seen as a practitioner continuum from the fighting orientated approach to a spiritual one. Finally, the cultivation process of mastery is never solo as commonly perceived (see Yuasa, 1987) as it is a social, pedagogic and shared activity throughout all levels of a school's hierarchy. Yet the analysis led to the emergence of several other interconnected themes that have yet to be explored in detail by other researchers in martial arts and physical culture. The table below helps unify some of the empirical findings with the theoretical issues outlined in the beginning of this section:

Issue	Data Findings
<i>Ideal typical institutions</i>	Appendix 1.1 offered impressionist tales of two ideal typical schools: One a health-orientated Taiji school and the other a combat-orientated Wing Chun school. These used different forms of language, metaphor, training principles, embodied experiences and were held in very different physical, cultural and geographical settings. Despite these differences, the schools demonstrate a commitment to overt narratives of continued learning and mastery despite the issue of ageing/contingent bodies and eventual death of every practitioner. Furthermore, each institution had its own habitus, which was being embodied by core practitioners and reinforced by the pedagogy.
<i>Ideal typical</i>	Following Weber (in Gerth & Wright-Mills, 1991) and Frank (1991,

<i>practitioners</i>	1995), I have discovered three main ideal types in the TCMA's: Fighters, martial artists and thinkers. There are also subtypes within such ideal types, and there is evidence from life histories and long-term observations of transition along this practitioner continuum. Each ideal type displayed interesting self and other relations, and also expressed a specific philosophy towards the development and continuation of the art and its connection to wider society.
<i>Pedagogic Strategies</i>	All the institutions in question offer explicit pedagogic strategies of organised lessons and specific training principles such as partner training. Through articulate interview accounts I was able to explore teachers' and practitioners' accounts of cultural transmission that aimed for the shared cultivation and continuation of the arts. Also, via embodied practice and autoethnographical reflections I have demonstrated my own experiences of training in such schools, which help to attract, maintain and transform certain ideal types. The implicit issues of metaphors and specific narratives of combat, health and spirituality were also identified as being linked to the above ideal typical schools and practitioners.

Table 12.4 Empirical contributions of the PhD

From the extensive amount of data collected and analysed, several important topics emerged that did not form part of the final thesis. This is primarily because they deserve a focus in their own right and because they slightly deter from the eventual thesis focus on shared cultivation through the transformative habitus. Nevertheless, I hope that in future I will be able to expand on these themes through publications and conference presentations, which may later be disseminated in various forms as I suggest later in this chapter. Rather than give definitive answers to each topic I have left them with two guiding questions, which might allow consideration of the data on the meta, meso and

micro levels of social life. These are summarised in the table below:

Topic	Core Questions
<i>Religion</i>	How can TCMAAs act as secular religions? What relationships exist between TCMAAs and religions?
<i>Family/Lineage</i>	How do practitioners experience feelings of secular family? How do body lineages act as secular families?
<i>Mastery/Learning</i>	How can the TCMAAs offer society a different perspective on practice and learning? How can teachers learn from their students?
<i>Ageing</i>	Which key ageing narratives are reproduced in the TCMAAs? How does this physical culture enable such an alternative narrative?
<i>The body</i>	How do TCMA practitioners experience and communicate their 'inner bodies'? What role do the senses play in shared transformation?
<i>Nature</i>	How can TCMAAs offer alternative ways of living with nature? How are TCMAAs methods of moving meditation?

Table 12.5 Empirical questions emerging from the PhD

In summary, we can view the potential contribution of this thesis as threefold:

- 1) It offers a theoretical understanding on the social nature of MA practitioners, and how they can collectively develop themselves, each other, their institutions and the cultural practices in question.
- 2) It provides many practitioner-researcher reflections and confessions that might be useful for other researchers involved in a sport or activity.
- 3) My findings add to the body of knowledge on TMAs in general. The stories and interpretations may actually compliment the studies cited in the literature review if seen from an integral perspective (Wilber, 2000). It also provides life stories as potential resources for TCMA practitioners or people in general to help guide their journeys through life and training.

As we have seen previously, there have been many quantitative investigations on the TCMAAs. It is hoped that this qualitative project provides more knowledge on how these long-term, often lifelong practices can help human beings and a society as a whole. This point is a pertinent opportunity to consider the dissemination of the PhD theory, methods and empirical findings.

12.4. Possibilities for PhD Dissemination

So far I have raised possibilities for the dissemination of the thesis beyond its current state as a very large, and possibly inaccessible document for many people outside the field of sociology. In recent years my work is steadily being communicated through a variety of methods, including journal articles and conference presentations, which are summarised in the Appendix (12.3). In this section I consider the main ways that these theoretical, methodological and empirical topics can be further articulated and explored.

In chapter 4 I demonstrated that there are now various ways that social science (particularly qualitative research) can be represented beyond the conventional realist tale that takes up the bulk of the main thesis (albeit in a modified form, following Sparkes, 2002). In essence, the chosen form of representation depends on the audience in question, the aim of the representation and its core message, which might vary from a complex academic paper for a theoretically informed audience to a workshop with martial arts instructors with little knowledge of sociology. Considering these complex issues, I have split the possible dissemination points into 2 categories:

12.4.1. Academic Dissemination

Considering the important issues raised above, the representation will be more complex, critical and supported by the typical amount of theory and references expected in the academic community. This may be through journal articles, conferences, lectures, seminars and possibly book chapters and even an entire book, depending on opportunities and funding. I explore each of these in turn below.

This relatively new area has received considerable academic interest in anthropology and sociology, with other researchers publishing in top quality, peer reviewed journals

such as *Body & Society*, *Cultural Sociology*, *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, *Sport, Education & Society* and *American Anthropologist*. Such a breadth of journals illustrates the appeal and versatility of martial arts in terms of body, pedagogy, culture, education, and nationalism. Much of my research findings tie strongly to some of these topics, and from what I have described above, some new theoretical, methodological and empirical issues might also be of interest in relevant journals. Theoretically, some of my models and approaches to socio-cultural theory might be welcomed in mainstream sociology and sociology of sport journals. In terms of methods, some papers may appear in journals dedicated to qualitative research, ethnography and social science research methods. Finally, the various empirical findings, which are always tied to strong theory and methods, may be focused in any of the above, but also special issues of journals devoted to subjects such as sport and religion and sport and the environment.

The *Journal of Asian Martial Arts* is a publication devoted to the study of the world's martial arts in a scholarly sense. Although not necessarily the most rigorous journal in terms of academia (which is why I have tended to avoid citing articles from it), it is a very useful bridge between the often-inaccessible world of academia and that of martial arts. The readership and authors tend to be practitioners of many different styles, and Taijiquan has received particular attention in recent years. I have communicated to the Editor on previous occasions, and there is a strong possibility that articles will be submitted here in order to get it to an interested and appropriate audience.

Alongside journal articles there are many possibilities for conferences, which, from looking at the list, have already begun in the field of qualitative research, sociology of sport and ethnography. Theoretical issues can be explored alongside the data whilst empirical and methods based presentations can make use of an enthusiastic audience that can take part in embodied activities. The latter has already been developed in some of my lectures as a sociologist, and is going to be presented in a forthcoming contemporary ethnography conference in November.

As I have just mentioned, such exercises have also been employed in some of my lectures that draw upon my PhD research. In order for me to communicate to sport science students with little knowledge or experience of martial arts I have devised partner and solo exercises for them to 'feel' via the senses of touch and kinaesthesia. More conventionally, I have given lectures on topics ranging from phenomenology to

Bourdieu, which were well illustrated by my data and videos of the arts in practice. I have also been fortunate to have conducted research seminars for my academic colleagues, which has been an excellent practice for conferences and has also raised some important questions for future written dissemination. Following normal practice in academia, I typically develop conference presentations and seminars in the aim of writing about it in journal articles. This is certainly the case for the senses and family, which are the two most recent topics I have had the pleasure of speaking about. Overall, the current dissemination of my work can be found in Appendix 12.3.

After several publications there may be opportunities for the development of books. The ethnography of *Bridge's Wing Chun Academy* has provided a wealth of data alongside interesting methodological and theoretical insights that deserve a focused attention as a case study monograph. It is quite likely that I will observe and record many changes as I maintain contact with key participants such as Sifu Bridge. A book devoted to this ever changing institution would be a good contribution to the few academic books on martial arts, which tend to be based on anthropological fieldwork in their country of origin rather than the West (e.g. Alter, 1992; Zarrilli, 1998). At a later point in my career, with more data collection using various methods the art of Taijiquan may be the focus of a book. At the moment I would be hesitant to focus on it in comparison to Wing Chun, which I have studied and researched for a longer period.

12.4.2. Popular dissemination

The representation will aim to be interesting, informative but accessible to a range of readers and audiences such as through impressionist tales, create (non)fiction, vignettes and possibly event poetry, for which I need to develop specific writing skills. The message will be simple enough so that people with little sociological knowledge can understand the key issues whilst the format will lack both academic jargon and the conventional writing style. In this case the audience might be TCMA instructors or experienced martial artists and quite possibly governing bodies and large institutions.

The leaders of the martial institutions *Taiji World* and *Bridge's Academy* have taken an interest in my research, and some of the findings may be disseminated on their websites, newsletters or for marketing purposes. It might help inform their public communication and assist individual practitioners find their place within a complex social world of martial arts. Certain life histories might be reproduced for other practitioners to read,

which could act as resources for their own training or sources of motivation in difficult periods of their lives. Overall, this would be in the form of knowledge transfer, an increasingly recognised area of academia in which research can be used to inform the participants and possibly help them facilitate change. In this manner it is quite like reflexivity in which new forms of knowledge and inquiry alter the subject matter in question (see Giddens, 1991a).

With official permission from each of the research participants (following Plummer 2001), and possibly more interviews, I might be able to develop a book with life histories of various kinds of TCMA practitioners. This book could be produced with a martial arts or mainstream publisher and would aim to provide edited versions of the stories that are accessible, interesting and potentially useful for other exponents of martial arts or people interested in beginning a style. It would contribute to books such as O'Brien (2007) and Wiley (1992, 1995), all three of which are published by *Blue Snake Books* (a martial arts orientated branch of North Atlantic Books).

The more popular forms of martial arts press are also a possibility. As mentioned in chapter 1, there are numerous mainstream and specialist magazines popular amongst practitioners that offer a platform for guest or regular articles on topics such as schools in transition and the practitioner continuum, which might receive an interest from people experiencing these issues. It might also receive useful feedback for me to develop new approaches and gain new participants and research settings for future studies through snowball or purposeful sampling.

Beyond the written press the Internet raises numerous dissemination possibilities. I could become involved in martial arts forums and online magazines such as Wing Chun Magazine, which is requesting contributions from practitioners of the art. *Facebook* (www.facebook.com) and YouTube (www.youtube.com) also provide interesting platforms for multidimensional debate, although much of this useful video material is sadly resulting in childish comments and petty one dimensional arguments about which style is 'better' rather than the experiences of long-term practitioners in any social or critical sense. This illustrates the possible intended and unintended consequences of the Internet: A vast array of people available that can potentially change people's perspectives on TCMA's but with issues of censorship and juvenility, as we saw in chapter 10 and from what Dave mentioned in his second interview.

So far I have highlighted key theoretical, methodological and empirical areas that deserve further attention and wider dissemination. Such dissemination was assessed through various academic and martial arts mediums, which offer a great deal of opportunities for communicating various aspects of the thesis. Yet what questions remain unclear? Are there some issues that I overlooked during the study? The next section considers these issues and provides a good introduction to future research ideas.

12.5. Study Limitations - Issue for Consideration

Several issues may have deserved greater attention, and these will be explored in my future studies. First, there is gender: Why didn't this take a particular focus? This is mainly because the three women interviewed for this study did not place an emphasis on gender as a determinant of their experiences. Instead, they felt liberated by their practice and well supported by their male peers in the schools. However, considering the patriarchal control and male dominance in TCMA participation, particularly in Wing Chun, further research is needed into the reasons why few women begin and stick to certain form of martial arts. Furthermore, why do women rarely become instructors or leaders of body lineages? This would add to the literature on women's self-defence movements (Guthrie 1995; Searles & Berger, 1987; de Welde, 2003) and scholarly accounts of female practitioners' life stories (Wiley, 1992), as there is a paucity of academic work on female TMA or even EMF practitioners.

Another issue is pedagogy and cultural transmission. Due to my emphasis on practitioners' experiences of transformation, I didn't sufficiently expand upon my accounts of how the arts are taught or passed down beyond the regular classes. Doing this would risk the PhD becoming too broad, and wouldn't allow for articulation of life stories. Although woven into this study, cultural transmission is a wide-ranging subject, particularly in the TCMA as it includes oral, embodied, and written forms of transmission. Hence the use of documents such as instructor guides, student syllabuses, school websites, core texts and online forums may be very useful in order to explore the multiples methods of cultural knowledge dissemination. As I have already mentioned, the use of documental analysis alongside participant observation and life histories/autoethnography will enable a structurationist approach to investigate the meta,

meso and micro levels of social life. This could also benefit from an analysis of the art's historical development, important documents, and its current political status, which are two important issues underpinning embodied practice. Such an approach has already been outlined by my colleagues (see Brown & Leledaki, 2010), and I am undertaking it with publications in process.

Finally, although the mixed methods design was extremely valuable in gaining extensive rich qualitative data, unfortunately I was unable to utilise them to their full potential. For instance, because of the extensive use of life history data, the autoethnographic and confessional writings remain in the Appendix rather than in the main body, where these forms of representation could have merged with others. I will certainly make use of some of these excerpts in future writings on the subject, as my reflexive positioning is key to understand the research process from start to finish.

12.6. Future Research: Continuing the Project

During the final period of writing the thesis I came across a scholarly text on martial arts by Bolelli (2008), himself a practitioner of several TCMA's among other styles. Within this book Bolelli has provided a very useful model of the vast array of martial arts in today's world, which is divided into 5 main categories:

1. Performance arts
2. Internal arts
3. Weapons arts
4. Self-defence arts
5. Combat sports (striking, grappling and combined)

Briefly put, *performance arts* focus on the appearance of the techniques and entertainment for an audience, and are less interested in self-defence. They tend to attract young and athletic people who can perform these often large and complex physical manoeuvres. *Internal arts* are practised for health, spirituality and longevity, and typically attract older and spiritually inclined individuals that might be categorised as thinkers. *Weapons arts* are those that exclusively focus on the training of weapons, either for ceremony and tradition or occasionally self-defence. They might attract

people interested in performance arts or those wishing to compliment their current unarmed system. *Self-defence arts* focus on realistic self-defence through partner training and tend to attract people who want to learn to defend themselves in today's potentially violent world. Finally, *combat sports* focus their training on sporting competitions, and tend to attract young and competitive individuals.

As with all models, Bolelli's (2008) is flexible and is designed to create a little order out of what can sometimes seem very complex or even chaotic to both martial artists and laypeople. In reality, there will usually be crossovers between arts and within schools e.g. Wing Chun containing internal aspects and its practitioners sometimes competing in San Sau competitions. Hence "most styles may belong to several categories at once, but in most cases tend to place their emphasis mainly on one of these five aspects" (p. 119). He also reminds us of the importance of individuals within any system as individuals will gravitate to arts that suit their needs and can also change the arts to suit them. In almost ideal typical terminology he concludes:

One more consideration to keep in mind is that martial arts are taught and learned by real flesh and blood people. A particular style may have certain defining characteristics, but the individual teachers and students can heighten or lessen them. For example, although Aikido is not known for its emphasis on self-defence, there are practitioners who train for realistic self-defence with very decent results. In the same way, Western Boxing may not be what people consider a deep philosophical art, but a particular instructor may be able to give to his or her class a philosophical edge that surpasses the stereotypical preaching of the teachers of more "spiritual" arts. Depending on the teacher, classes in an art like Tai Chi may focus on health maintenance (as most Tai Chi classes do), performance (if trained to look good in Wushu-style competitions), self-defense (if the instructor is one of the few stressing combat effectiveness), or competition (if training is primarily in push-hands style competition).

(Bolelli, 2008, pp. 138-139)

Overall, by drawing upon this model, which mentions some Chinese styles among many global systems, and by considering wider physical culture (TCMFs), I have been able to categorise most practices into one area:

Category	Examples
Performance TCMFs	Modern Wushu; lion dance; dragon dance; <i>tumbling & acrobatics</i>
Internal TCMFs	Taijiquan; Baguazhang; Xingyiquan; Yi Quan; Qigong; Dao Yin; various forms of meditation
Weapons based TCMFs	Shaolin Weapons, Choy Lay Fut; Wushu weapons teams
Self-defence TCMFs	Wing Chun; <i>San Soo</i> ; Southern Mantis; Hung Gar
Competition TCMFs	San Sau; <i>Kuoshu</i> ; <i>Chinese wrestling</i> ; MMA using Chinese styles

Table 12.6 Adaptation of Bolelli's (2008) MAs model for TCMFs

From looking at this we can see that I have selected a self-defence MA and an internal MA, which tend to attract three ideal types. Perhaps the wider set of arts in the above table may develop other ideal practitioner types and contribute to different ideal school types such as those centred around performance or competition? Perhaps practitioners may move across arts, practices and schools as indicated by my data? In order to broadly consider TCMA in Britain and TCMFs as a whole, it is necessary to continue this project by drawing upon the themes, theories and methods that I have used here and considering other approaches that can offer a variety of sociological perspectives on their practice.

At this point in the conclusions I am able to reflect on the last three and a half years and consider what kind of researcher and sociologist I am. Theoretically I certainly think through a structurationist perspective, with an embodied and cultural association via phenomenologically-orientated concepts and narrative. Methodologically I enjoy using a range of strategies from life histories to documental analysis, although I have a particular affinity for ethnography, which suits my interest in the intricacies of social life and the senses. In my career I aim to be recognised as a sociologist of physical culture who investigates TCMFs as practised in Britain (such as Kung Fu, Taijiquan, Qigong, Lion dancing, Dao Yin, Daoist meditation and Chinese kickboxing to address 2 questions: 1) How do long-term practitioners experience transformation? 2) How are these arts transmitted through pedagogies? For the sake of illustration and future planning I have split my interests into TCMFs and TCMA, although these work together in many institutional cases:

12.6.1. TCMFs

I first address traditionalist Chinese movement forms as I am also interested in related physical disciplines that derive from the same culture. As anthropological and sociological research on TCMA is growing steadily in recent years I have noticed a lack of attention of other elements connecting to these art as practised in the West such as lion dancing and qigong. I have had the good fortune of practising some of these arts at a low level, and from this limited experience and superficial documental analysis I have observed many interesting themes from cultural transmission, ritual and ideas of inner and outer bodies. The qualitative strategies I intend to employ may help me structure a

plan following Maxwell's (1996) model outlined earlier (purpose, questions, concepts, methods). The purpose of this is particularly pertinent as several participants in my study practised complimentary TCMFs, and they are widespread in many Wing Chun and Taijiquan schools, including *Bridge's Wing Chun Academy* and *Taiji World*. The questions will be the two main ones raised above, with the concepts being drawn from the theoretical framework found in chapter 3. With regards to methodological strategies, I am very interested in exploring these arts through documental analysis, participant observation and life histories in order to explore the meta, meso and micro levels of their social practice. I set out this future methodological strategy below.

Firstly, numerous documents are available in the field of martial arts, from YouTube and websites to instructional DVDs and documentaries. Such documents offer various topics of information, from how the arts are promoted to how they are taught both in small organisations and international institutions. Certain forms of media such as books and Kung Fu films might offer rich insights into the promotion of the arts and various ideal typical bodies in action, as my colleagues and I have discovered (Brown *et al.*, 2008). Hence this approach is useful for a meta-level analysis.

Secondly, the use of an ethnographic strategy could employ both complete participation and complete observation as these have their own advantages and disadvantages. By becoming a member of a regular group and observing demonstrations and retreats with other groups I may be able to experience and observe different aspects of social life that would be unavailable if I were to stick to one position along Lofland's (1971) observation-participation continuum. Detailed field notes could then be developed by drawing upon all the senses and various data collection, analysis and representational strategies that were outlined in chapter 4.

Finally, by using a life history strategy I may be able to gain interesting accounts of long-term transformation and cultural transmission. Considering this, I would continue to look at the experiences of practitioners with at least 4 years experience, including instructors, assistant instructors and former senior students who might be able to offer an informed view of the institutions in question.

12.6.2. TCMAs

Returning to the more specific topic of TCMAs, I am also interested in continuing to explore other Chinese martial arts across my adaption of Bolelli's (2008) model. In this sense I can examine performance arts such as Wushu, weapons based arts such as Choy Lay Fut and competition arts such as San Sau. Interestingly, some institutions such as *Bridge's Wing Chun Academy* offer performance arts, weapons arts, self-defence arts and competition arts. Ethnographic research into such diverse schools would be very useful in order to explore cross training between styles in one cultural setting, as would visits to various specialist institutions and interviews with core practitioners throughout Britain. These settings and participants may be sampled according to the ideal types that I have developed in this thesis, which has methodological as well as theoretical implications.

I am still very interested in the internal and self-defence martial arts, which have many connections. I wish to continue to explore the experiences of long-term practitioners of Wing Chun and Taijiquan in different institutions and geographical contexts. Again, such practitioners would be chosen based on the practitioner continuum and ideal school types, and would help me to sustain my theoretical investigation of ideal types and transitions between such positions. These stories may also be useful for the potential life history book, which would be produced with each person's informed consent and ethical procedures outlined earlier via Plummer's guidelines (2001). Like with TCMFs, I am also interested in using media/documentary analysis alongside the strategies of participant observation and interviewing that are more familiar to me, and I have already begun to develop some skills with this from an initial analysis on Taijiquan institutions, and a less formal observation of Wing Chun websites based in one city where I currently reside, London (www.londonwingchun.com).

Overall, these future research possibilities will therefore provide insights into other aspects of TCMF culture and may use the theoretical models and practitioner continuum. By exploring other practices, institutions, practitioners and documents I will have a well-rounded research project that contributes to a larger structurationist investigation of EMFs including yoga, meditation and various martial arts of different cultural origins. This will take many years, and no doubt decades, but this is what I want from my research career.

12.7. Final Reflections

To borrow an earlier metaphor, this has PhD been an amazing journey full of new discoveries along unexpected paths. I had developed into a researcher from a student, a scholar from a postgraduate, mainly thanks to my supervisor David Brown, who has acted as a mentor in a different form of lineage: Academia. As a qualitative study, this PhD developed as the rich and insightful data emerged and new research slowly came from various corners of the world. The sociological study of the martial arts is steadily gaining recognition, and I look forward to contributing to its new potential directions amongst a new wave of qualitative researchers, many of whom have influenced me through their various writings and presentations. In this way, this theses ends how it started: With a great big thank you to all those who helped it in various different ways, but in particular, the participants who have shared their lives and offered intriguing insights into a social world I thought I understood. I eagerly look forward to disseminating these findings in various formats and continuing my investigation of the social practice of the traditional martial arts in Britain and perhaps even in their country of origin. The journey looks unpredictable and exciting, and I look forward to discovering my own pathway and helping others along theirs either through direct interaction or through my research.

Web References

www.wingchun.org Accessed 06/03/10

www.wcinternational.ning.com Accessed 06/03/10

www.vingtsun.org.hk Accessed 06/03/10

www.bccma.com Accessed 06/03/10

www.londonwingchun.com Accessed 06/03/10

www.woodendummies.co.uk Accessed 06/03/10

www.wingchunmagazine.com Accessed 06/03/10

www.alanorg.com Accessed 06/03/10

www.kamonwingchun.com Accessed 06/03/10

www.atcm.co.uk Accessed 07/03/10

www.taoist.org.uk Accessed 07/03/10

www.taiunion.com Accessed 07/03/10

www.taichifinder.co.uk Accessed 07/03/10

www.davidlloyd.co.uk Accessed 07/03/10

www.primarytaichi.com Accessed 07/03/10

www.youtube.com Accessed 18/04/10

www.taichiretreat.co.uk Accessed 31/03/10

www.facebook.com Accessed 18/04/10

www.londonwingchun.com Accessed 06/03/10

References

- Adler, P. A., & Adler, P. (2008). On rhetoric and representation: The four faces of ethnography. *The Sociological Quarterly*, **49**, 1-30.
- Allen Collinson, J. (2009). Sporting embodiment: Sports studies and the (continuing) promise of phenomenology. *Qualitative Research in Sport and Exercise*, **1**(3), 279-296.
- Allen Collinson, J., & Hockey, J. (2005). Autoethnography: Self-indulgence or rigorous methodology? In McNamee (Ed.), *Philosophy and the sciences of exercise, health and sport: Critical perspectives on research methods* (pp. 187-202). London: Routledge.
- Alter, J. (1992). *The wrestler's body: Identity and ideology in North India*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Angleman, A. J., Shinzato, Y., Van Hassett, V. B., & Russo, S. A. (2008). Traditional martial arts versus modern self-defence training for women: Some comments. *Aggression and Violent Behaviour*, **14**(2), 89-93.
- Assunciao, M. A. (2005). *Capoeira: The history of an Afro-Brazilian martial art*. London: Routledge.
- Atkinson, R. (1998). *The life story interview*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Back, A., & Kim, D. (1982). Pacifism and the Eastern martial arts. *Philosophy East and West*, **32**(2), 177-186.
- Back, A., & Kim, D. (1984). The future course of the Eastern martial arts. *Quest*, **36**, 7-14.
- Bamberg, M., & Andrews, M. (2004). *Considering counter narratives: Narrating, resisting, making sense*. Amsterdam, NL: John Benjamins.
- Bannan, J. F. (1967). *The philosophy of Merleau-Ponty*. New York: Hardcourt, Brace & World Inc.

Bar On Cohen, E. (2006). Kime and the moving body: Somatic codes in Japanese martial arts. *Body & Society*, **12**(4), 73-93.

Bar-On Cohen, E. (2009). Survival, an Israeli Ju Jutsu school of martial arts: Violence, body, practice and the national. *Ethnography*, **10**(2), 153-183.

Beck, U. (1992). *Risk society: Towards a new modernity*. London: Sage.

Beck, U. (1994). The reinvention of politics: Towards a theory of reflexive modernization. In U. Beck, A. Giddens & S. Lash (Eds.), *Reflexive modernization: Politics, traditions and aesthetics in the modern social order* (pp. 1-55). Cambridge: Polity Press.

Beck, U., Giddens, A., & Lash, S. (Eds.). (1994). *Reflexive modernization: Politics, traditions and aesthetics of modern social order*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Becker, C. (1992). *Living and relating: An introduction to phenomenology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Berger, R. J. (2008). Agency, structure and the transition to disability: A case study with implications for life history research. *The Sociological Quarterly*, **49**, 309-333.

Blackburn, S. (2005). *The Oxford dictionary of philosophy* (2nd ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bochner, A. P. (2002). Perspective on inquiry iii: The moral of stories. In M. L. Knapp & J. A. Daly (Eds.), *Handbook of interpersonal communication* (pp. 73-101). London: Sage.

Bochner, A. P., & Ellis, C. (Eds.). (2002). *Ethnographically speaking: Autoethnography, literature and aesthetics*. Oxford: Altamira Press.

Bolelli, D. (2008). *On the warrior's path: Philosophy, fighting and martial arts mythology* (2nd ed.). Berkeley, CA: Blue Snake Books.

- Bourdieu, P. (1977). *Outline of a theory of practice*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (1978). Sport and social class. *Social Science Information*, **17**, 819-840.
- Bourdieu, P. (1984). *Distinction: A social critique of the judgement of taste*. London: Routledge.
- Bourdieu, P. (1990). *The logic of practice*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (1993). *Sociology in question*. London: Sage Publications.
- Bourdieu, P. (1999). Scattered remarks. *European Journal of Social Theory*, **2**(3), 334-340.
- Bourdieu, P. (2005). Habitus. In J. Hillier & E. Rooksby (Eds.), *Habitus: A sense of place* (2nd ed., pp. 43-52). Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited.
- Bourdieu, P., & Wacquant, L. J. D. (1992). *An invitation to reflexive sociology*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Brackenridge, C. (1999). Managing myself: Investigator survival in sensitive research. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, **34**(4), 399-410.
- Brecher, P. (2000). *The way of the spiritual warrior* (2nd ed.). New Alresford, Hants: Godsfield.
- Brecklin, L. R. (2004). Self-defense/assertiveness training, women's victimization history, and psychological characteristics. *Violence Against Women*, **10**(5), 479-497.
- Brecklin, L. R., & Ullman, S. E. (2005). Self-defense or assertiveness training and women's responses to sexual attacks. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, **20**(6), 738-762.
- Brown, D. (1999). Male bodybuilders and the social meaning of muscle. *Auto/Biography*, **7**(1&2), 83-90.

Brown, D. (2002). Going digital and staying qualitative: Some alternative strategies for digitising qualitative research. *Qualitative Research Forum*, **3**(2), Article 12.

Brown, D. (2005, March). *The body, culture and transmission in physical activity: Considering the example of the traditional martial arts.*, Palencia, Spain.

Brown, D. & Jennings, G. (In process). Body lineage: The cultural transmission of traditionalist martial arts. *Journal of Asian Martial Arts*

Brown, D., Jennings, G. B., & Leledaki, A. (2008). The changing charismatic status of the performing male body in Asian martial arts films. *Sport in Society*, **11**(2&3), 174-194.

Brown, D., Jennings, G. B., & Molle, A. (Forthcoming 2010). Faith in the martial arts: Exploring relationships between Asian martial arts and religion. *Stadion*.

Brown, D., & Johnson, A. (2000). The social practice of self-defense martial arts: Applications for physical education. *Quest*, **52**, 246-259.

Brown, D., & Leledaki, A. (2005). *Fitness, health, self-defence, spirituality and therapy: Situating Eastern movement forms as body-self transforming practices in the west.*, Lisbon, Portugal.

Brown, D., & Leledaki, A. (2010). Eastern movement forms as body-self transforming cultural practices in the west: Towards a sociological perspective. *Cultural Sociology*, **4**(1), 123 - 154.

Bryan, L., & Tippins, D. J. (2005). The Monets, van Goghs and Renoirs of science education: Writing impressionist tales as a strategy for facilitating prospective teachers' reflections on science experiences. *Journal of Science Teacher Education*, **16**(3), 227-239.

Bryant, C. G. A., & Jary, D. (Eds.). (2001). *The contemporary Giddens: Social theory in a globalising age*. London: Palgrave.

- Burks, J. B., & Satterfield, K. (1998). Foot and ankle injuries among martial artists. *Journal of the American Podiatric Medical Association*, **88**(6), 268-278.
- Buse, G. J. (2006). No holds barred sport fighting: A 10 year review of mixed martial arts competition. *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, **42**, 169-172.
- Carless, D., & Douglas, K. (2008). Narrative identity and mental health: How men with serious illness re-story their lives through sport and exercise. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, **9**(5), 576-594.
- Carpenter, J. (2008). Metaphors in qualitative research: Shedding light or casting shadows? *Research in Nursing and Health*, **31**(3), 274-282.
- Carr, K. G. (1993). Making way: War, philosophy and sport in Japanese Judo. *Journal of Sport History*, **20**(2), 167-188.
- Carruthers, A. (1998). Kung fu fighting: The cultural pedagogy of the body in the Vovinam Vietnamese martial arts school. *Australian Journal of Anthropology*, **9**(1), 45-57.
- Chan, S. (2000). The construction and export of culture as artefact: The case of Japanese martial arts. *Body & Society*, **6**(1), 69-74.
- Chan, S. P., Luk, T. C., & Hong, Y. (2003). Kinematic and electromyographic analysis of the push movement in Tai Chi. *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, **37**, 339-344.
- Choi, J. H., Moon, J.-S., & Song, R. (2005). Effectiveness of Sun-style Tai Chi exercise on physical fitness and fall prevention in fall-prone adults. *Issues and innovations in nursing practice*, **51**(2), 150-157.
- Chu, R., Ritchie, R., & Wu, Y. (1998). *Complete Wing Chun*. North Clarendon, VT: Tuttle.
- Chui, Y.-Y., Donoghue, J., & Chenoweth, L. (2005). Responses to advanced cancer: Chinese-Australians. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, **52**(5), 498-507.

Clarke, J. J. (1997). *Oriental enlightenment: The encounter between Asian and Eastern thought*. London: Routledge.

Clarke, J. J. (2000). *The Tao of the West: Western transformations of Taoist thought*. London: Routledge.

Classen, C. (1993). *Worlds of sense: Exploring the senses in history and across cultures*. London: Routledge.

Coakley, J. (1992). Burnout among adolescent athletes: A personal failure or social problem? *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 9(3), 271-285.

Cohen, P. (1992). It's racism what dunnit: Hidden narratives in theories of racism. In J. Donald & A. Rattansi (Eds.), *Race, culture and difference* (pp. 62-103). London: Sage.

Collins, R. (1986). *Weberian social theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Columbus, P. J., & Rice, D. L. (1991). Psychological research on the martial arts: An addendum to Fuller's review. *British Journal of Medical Psychology*, 64(2), 127-135.

Cooper, J. E., Branden, P. R., & Lindberg, M. A. (1998). Evaluators' use of peer debriefing: Three impressionist tales. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 4(2), 265-279.

Coryn, C. C. S. (2007). The holy trinity of methodological rigour: A sceptical review. *Journal of Multidisciplinary Evaluation*, 4(7), 26-31.

Cox, J. C. (1993). Traditional Asian martial arts training: A review. *Quest*, 45, 366-388.

Cox, R. A. (2003). *The Zen arts: An anthropological study of the culture of aesthetic form in Japan*. London: Routledge.

Cresswell, J. (1998). *Qualitative inquiry and research design*. London: Sage.

Crossley, M. (2000). *Introducing narrative psychology*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Crudelli, C. (2008). *The way of the warrior: Martial arts and fighting skills from around the world*. London: Dorling Kindersley.

Czarnecka, M. A. (2001). The saga of the modern martial arts student-instructor relationship in North American schools. *Journal of Asian Martial Arts*, **10**(2).

Davie, G. (1994). *Religion in Britain since 1945: Believing without belonging*. Oxford: Blackwell.

De Campos Rosario, C., Delamont, S., & Stephens, N. (2010). 'I'm your teacher! I'm Brazilian!' authenticity and authority in European Capoeira. *Sport, Education & Society*, **15**(1), 103-120.

De Welde, K. (2003). Getting physical: Subverting gender through self-defence. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, **32**(3), 247-278.

Delamont, S. (2005). No place for women among them? Reflections on the axe of fieldwork. *Sport, Education & Society*, **10**(3), 305-320.

Delamont, S. (2006). The smell of sweat and rum: Teacher authority in Capoeira classes. *Ethnography and Education*, **1**(2), 161-175.

Delamont, S. (2009). The only honest thing: Autoethnography, reflexivity and small crises in fieldwork. *Ethnography and Education*, **4**(1), 51-63.

Delamont, S., & Stephens, N. (2008). Up on the roof: The embodied habitus of diasporic Capoeira. *Cultural Sociology*, **2**, 57-74.

Descartes, R. (1968). *Discourse on method and the meditations* (F. E. Sutcliffe, Trans.). London: Penguin books.

Deshmukh, N. V., & Shah, M. S. (2003). Bilateral radial head fractures in a martial arts athlete. *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, **37**, 270-271.

Donnelly, P., & Young, K. (Eds.). (2001). *Rock climbers and rugby players: Identity construction and conformation*. London: Routledge.

Donner, R. (Writer) (1995). *Assasins*. USA: Warner Bros.

Downey, G. (2005). *Learning Capoeira: Lessons in cunning from an Afro-Brazilian martial art*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Downey, G. (2006). Listening to Capoeira: Phenomenology, embodiment and the materiality of music. *Ethnomusicology*, **46**(3), 487-509.

Downey, G. (2007a). Producing pain: Techniques of the body in fighting in no-holds-barred fighting. *Social Studies of Science*, **37**(2), 201-226.

Downey, G. (2007b). Seeing with a sideways glance: Visuomotor 'knowing' and the plasticity of perception. In M. Harris (Ed.), *Ways of knowing: Anthropological approaches of crafting experience and knowledge* (pp. 222-244). Oxford: Berghahn.

Downey, G. (2008). Scaffold imitation in Capoeira: Physical education and enculturation in an Afro-Brazilian art. *American Anthropologist*, **110**(2), 204-213.

Dreyfus, H. L. (1996). The current relevance of Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of embodiment. *The Electronic Journal of Analytic Philosophy*, **4** (Spring 1996).

Dudgeon, J. (1885). *Kung fu, or Taoist medical gymnastics*. Tientsin: Tientsin Press.

Duesend, L. (2007). Who is moving my body when I am moving? A phenomenology of adapted physical activity. *Sobama Journal*, **12**(1), 80-87.

Durkheim, E. (2001). *The elementary forms of religious life*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Dykhuizen, C. F. (2000a). Culture, training and perception of the martial arts: Aikido's example. *Journal of Asian Martial Arts*, **9**(3), 18-30.

Dykhuizen, C. F. (2000b). Training in culture: The case of Aikido education and meaning making outcomes in Japan and the United States. *International Journal of International Relations*, **24**, 741-761.

Eichberg, H. (1998). *Body cultures: Essays on sport, space and identity*. London: Routledge.

Eldershaw, L. P., Mayan, M., & Winkler, A. (2007). Through a painted window: On narrative, medicine and method. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, **6**(3), 121-139.

Ellis, C., & Bochner, A. P. (Eds.). (1996). *Composing ethnography: Alternative forms of qualitative writing*. Oxford: AltraMira Press.

Emerson, R. M., Fretz, R. I., & Shaw, L. L. (1995). *Writing ethnographic fieldnotes*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Erickson. (1973). What makes school ethnography "ethnographic"? *Council on Anthropology and Education Newsletter*, **4**(2), 10-19.

Esterberg, K. (2002). *Qualitative methods in social research*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Fahlberg, L., & Fahlberg, L. (1997). Health, freedom and movement in the postmodern era. In J. M. Fernandez-Balboa (Ed.), *Critical postmodernism in human movement* (pp. 65-86). Albany, NY: SUNY Press.

Faulkner, G. & Sparkes, A. C. (1999). Exercise as therapy for schizophrenia: An ethnographic study. *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, **21**, 52-69.

Fields, R. (1991). *The code of the warrior, in history, myth and everyday life*. New York: Harper Collins.

Flick, U. (2002). *An introduction to qualitative research* (3rd ed.). London: Sage.

- Fong, A. (1982). *Fong's Wing Chun Kuen* (Vol. 1). Tuscon, Arizona: Fong's Wing Chun Federation.
- Ford, N. J., & Brown, D. (2005). *Surfing and social theory: Experience, embodiment and narrative of the dream glide*. London: Routledge.
- Fox, N., & Roberts, C. (2008). Gps in cyberspace: The sociology of a 'virtual community'. *Sociological Review*, **47**(4), 643-671.
- Frank, A. D. (2000). Experiencing qi. *Text, Practice, Performance*, **2**, 13-31.
- Frank, A. D. (2003). *Taijiquan and the search for little old Chinese men: Ritualizing race through martial arts*. Unpublished PhD thesis, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas.
- Frank, A. W. (1991). For a sociology of the body: An analytical review. In M. Featherstone, M. Hepworth & B. Turner (Eds.), *The body: Social process and cultural theory* (pp. 36-102). London: Sage.
- Frank, A. W. (1995). *The wounded storyteller: Body, illness and ethics*. London: University of Chicago Press.
- Frank, A. W. (2002). Why study people's stories? The dialogical ethics of people's stories. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, **1**(1), Article 6.
- Frantzis, B. (1998). *The power of internal martial arts and chi: Combat secrets of Bagua, Tai Chi and Hsing-i*. Berkeley, CA: Blue Snake Books.
- Frantzis, B. (2003). *The big book of Tai Chi*. London: Thorsons.
- Fuller, J. (1988). Martial arts and psychological health. *British Journal of Medical Psychology*, **61**, 317-328.
- G., R. (Writer) (2009). *Sherlock Holmes*. USA: Warner Bros. Pictures.

Gee, G., Meng, B., & Lowenheiger, R. (2004). *Mastering kung fu: Featuring Shaolin Wing Chun*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

Geelan, D. (2004). *Weaving narrative nets to capture classrooms: Multimethod qualitative approaches for educational research*. New York: Springer.

Gerth, H. H., & Wright-Mills, C. (1991). *From Max Weber: Essays on sociology* (Second ed.). London: Routledge.

Giddens, A. (1984). *The constitution of society*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Giddens, A. (1991a). *The consequences of modernity*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Giddens, A. (1991b). *Modernity and self-identity: Self and society in the late modern age*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Giddens, A. (1994). Living in a post-traditional society. In U. Beck, A. Giddens & S. Lash (Eds.), *Reflexive modernisation: Politics, tradition and aesthetics in the modern social order* (pp. 56-109). Cambridge: Polity Press.

Giddens, A. (1999). *Runaway world: How globalisation is reshaping our lives*. London: Profile Books.

Giddens, A. (2001). *Sociology* (4th ed.). Cambridge: Polity Press.

Goffman, E. (1969). *The presentation of self in everyday life*. London: Allen Lane.

Goffman, E. (1970). *Strategic interaction*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Goodger, B. C., & Goodger, J. M. (1977). Judo in the light of theory and sociological research. *International Review of Sport Sociology*, 2(12), 5-34.

Goodger, J. M. (1982). Judo players as a gnostic sect. *Religion*, 12, 333-344.

- Goodhall, H. L. (2000). *Writing the new ethnography*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Goodman, F. (2000). *Practical handbook: Kung fu*. New York: Lorenz.
- Guba, E. C., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). Competing paradigms in qualitative research. In E. C. Guba & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 105-117). London: Sage.
- Guilanotti, R., & Robertson, R. (2006). Glocalization, globalization and migration: The case of Scottish football supporters in North America. *International Sociology*, **21**(2), 171-198.
- Gullette, M. (2003). What to do when being aged by culture: Hidden narratives from the twentieth century hormone debacle. *Generations*, **27**(3), 71-76.
- Hahn, T. N. (1991). *The miracle of mindfulness*. London: Random House.
- Hanegraaf, W. J. (1999). New age spiritualities as secular religion: A historian's perspective. *Social Compass*, **46**(2), 145-160.
- Heidegger, M. (1978). *Being and time* (J. Macquarrie & E. Robinson, Trans. New Edition ed.). London: WileyBlackwell.
- Henning, S. E. (1981). The Chinese martial arts in historical perspective. *Military Affairs*, December, 173-178.
- Hernandez-Reif, M., Field, T. M., & Thimas, E. (2001). Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder: Benefits from Tai Chi. *Journal of Bodywork and Movement Therapies*, **5**(2), 120-123.
- Hill, K., Choi, W., Smith, R., & Condrón, J. (2005). Tai Chi in Australia: Acceptable and effective to improve balance and mobility in older people? *Australian Journal of Ageing*, **24**(1), 9-13.

- Hobbs, D., Hadfield, P., Lister, S., & Winlow, S. (2002). 'door lore': The art of economics of intimidation. *British Journal of Criminology*, **42**, 352-370.
- Hobsbawm, E. J., & Ranger, T. O. (1992). *The invention of tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hockey, J., & Allen Collinson, J. (2007). Grasping the phenomenology of sporting bodies. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, **42**(2), 115-131.
- Hoff, B. (2003). *The Tao of Pooh*. London: Egmont Children's Books.
- Holcombe, C. (1990). Theater of combat: A critical look at the Chinese martial arts. *Historian*, **52**(3), 411-431.
- Holloway, I. (1997). *Basic concepts for qualitative research*. Oxford: Blackwells.
- Hong, Y., Li, J. X., & Robinson, P. D. (2005). Balance, control, flexibility, and cardiorespiratory fitness among older Tai Chi practitioners. *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, **34**, 29-34.
- Humphreys, M. (2005). Getting personal: Reflexivity and autoethnographic vignettes. *Qualitative Inquiry*, **11**(6), 840-860.
- Hung, S. (Writer) (1978). *Warriors two*. Hong Kong: Golden Harvest Films.
- Hung, S. (Writer) (1982). *The prodigal son*. Hong Kong: Golden Harvest Films.
- Husserl, E. (1999). *Cartesian meditations: An introduction to phenomenology* (12th ed.). The Hague, NL: Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Hyams, J. (1979). *Zen in the martial arts*. New York: Bantam Books.
- Ip, C., & Heimburger, R. (2001). *Ip Man: Portrait of a kung fu master* (E. Li, Trans.). Springville, UT: Cedar Fort.
- Ip, C., & Tse, M. (1998). *Wing Chun: Traditional Chinese kung-fu for self-defence and health*. London: Piatkus.

James, A., & Jones, R. (1982). The social world of Karate-do. *Leisure Studies*, **1**, 337-354.

Jancewicz, A. (2001). Tai Chi Chuan's role in maintaining independence in ageing people with chronic disease. *Journal of Bodywork and Movement Therapies*, **5**(1), 70-77.

Jeng, C., Chu, F.-L. T., & Tsao, L.-I. (2002). Empowering: The experiences of exercise among heart transplantation patients in Taiwan. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, **40**(5), 560-567.

Jennings, G. B. (2005). *Wing Chun wins all: An ethnographic study of a Wing Chun kung fu school focusing on the themes of subculture, social class and identity*. Unpublished Undergraduate, University of Exeter, Exeter, UK.

Jennings, G. B. (2006). *"It can be a religion for you if you want it to be": An ethnographic investigation into Wing Chun kung fu's potential as a body-self transforming practice*. Unpublished Masters, The University of Exeter, Exeter, UK.

Jennings, G. B., & Brown, D. (2009). Mind, body and nature: The social practice of Taijiquan in British open spaces, *BSA Sport Study Group Postgraduate Forum*. University of Brighton, Eastbourne, UK.

Jennings, G. B., Brown, D., & Sparkes, A. C. (Forthcoming 2011). It can be a religion if you want: Exploring Wing Chun kung fu as a secular religion. *Ethnography*.

Jones, G. W., Mackay, K. S., & Peters, D. M. (2006). Participation motivation in martial artists in the West Midlands region of England. *Journal Of Sports Science And Medicine*, **5**, 28-34.

Joseph, J. (2008). 'Going to Brazil': Transnational and corporeal movements of a Canadian-Brazilian martial arts community. *Global Networks*, **8**(2), 194-213.

Judge, J. O. (2003). Balance training to maintain mobility and prevent disability. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, **25**, 150-156.

Kauz, H. (1977). *The martial spirit*. New York: The Overlook Press.

Kochhar, T., Back, D. L., Mann, B., & Skinner, J. (2005). Risk of cervical injuries in mixed martial arts. *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, **39**, 444-447.

Kohn, T. (Ed.). (2004). *The Aikido body: Expressions of group identities and self-discovery in martial arts training*. Oxford: Berg.

Koro-Ljungberg, M. (2004). Displacing metaphorical analysis: Reading with and against metaphors. *Qualitative Research*, **4**(3), 339-360.

Krane, V., & Baird, S. M. (2005). Using ethnography in applied sport psychology. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, **17**(2), 87-107.

Krug, G. J. (2001). At the feet of the master: Three stages in the appropriation of Okinawan Karate and Anglo-American culture. *Cultural Studies*, **1**(4), 395-410.

Kvale, S. (1996). *Interviews*. London: Sage.

Lakoff, G. (1987). The death of dead metaphor. *Metaphor and Symbol*, **2**(2), 143-147.

Lakoff, G. (1993). The contemporary theory of metaphor. In A. Ortony (Ed.), *Metaphor and thought* (pp. 202-252). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lakoff, G. (1995). Metaphor, morality and politics or, why conservatives have left the liberals in the dust. *Social Research*, **62**(2).

Lakoff, G. (2006). Conceptual metaphor: The contemporary theory of metaphor. In D. Geeraerts (Ed.), *Cognitive linguistics: Basic readings* (pp. 185-238). New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

- Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1980). *Metaphors we live by*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1999). *Philosophy in the flesh: The embodied mind and its challenge to Western thought*. New York: Basic Books.
- Lan, C., Lai, J. S., & Chen, S. Y. (2002). Tai Chi Chuan: An ancient wisdom on exercise and health promotion. *Sports Medicine*, **32**, 217-224.
- Lantz, J. (2002). Family development and the martial arts: A phenomenological study. *Contemporary Family Therapy*, **24**(4), 565-580.
- Lapadat, J. C., & Lindsay, A. C. (1999). Transcription in research and practice: From standardization of technique to interpretive positionings. *Qualitative Inquiry*, **5**(1), 64-86.
- Lee, B. (1975). *Tao of Jeet Kune Do*. Valencia, CA: Ohara.
- Leledaki, A. (2007). *Inner and outer journeys: A qualitative life history of modern yoga and meditation as body-self transforming pedagogies*, Unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Exeter, UK, Exeter.
- Levine, D. N. (Ed.). (1991). *Martial arts as a resource for liberal education: The case of Aikido*. London: Sage.
- Lewis, D. E. (2000). Tai Chi Ch'uan. *Contemporary Therapies in Nursing and Midwifery*, **6**, 204-206.
- Li, F., Fisher, J., Harmer, P., Irbe, D., Tearse, R. G., & Weimer, C. (2004). Tai chi and self-related quality of sleep and daytime sleepiness in older adults: A randomised controlled trial. *Journal of The American Geriatrics Society*, **52**, 892-900.
- Li, J. X., Hong, Y., & Chan, K. M. (2001). Tai Chi: Physiological characteristics and beneficial effects on health. *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, **35**, 148-156.

- Little, J. (Ed.). (1997a). *Bruce lee: The Tao of gung fu*. North Clarendon: Tuttle.
- Little, J. (Ed.). (1997b). *Jeet KuneDo*. North Clarendon, VT: Tuttle.
- Lofland, J. (1971). *Analysing social settings: A guide to qualitative observation and analysis*. Belmont (CA): Hadsworth.
- Loland, S. (2006). Three approaches to the study of pain in sport. In S. Loland, B. Skirstud & I. Waddington (Eds.), *Pain and injury in sport: Social and ethical analysis* (pp. 49-62). London: Routledge.
- Looser, D. (2006). The 'risk society' and martial arts training in New Zealand. *Journal of Asian Martial Arts*, **15**(1), 8-23.
- Luckenchuk, A. (2006). Traversing the chiasms of lived experiences: Phenomenological illuminations for practical research. *Educational Action Research*, **14**(3), 423-435.
- Macan, J., Bundalo-Vrbanac, D., & Romic, G. (2006). Effects of the new karate rules on the incidence and distribution of injuries. *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, **40**, 326-330.
- MacInyre, A. (1977). Epistemological crises, dramatic narrative, and the philosophy of science. *The Monist*, **60**, 453-472.
- Markula, P. (2004). Embodied movement knowledge in fitness and exercise education. In L. Bresler (Ed.), *Knowing bodies, moving minds* (pp. 61-76). Netherlands: Kluwer.
- Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. B. (2005). *Designing qualitative research* (2nd ed.). London: Sage.
- Marshall, G. (1998). *Oxford dictionary of sociology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Marx, K. (1867). *Das kapital*. Hamburg: Verlag von Otto Meissner.

- Masciotra, D., Arkerman, E., & Roth, W.-M. (2004). "Maai": The art of distancing in Karate-do mutual attunement in close encounters. *Journal of Adult Development*, **8**(2), 119-132.
- Mason, R. (2008). Zheng Manqing: The memorial hall and legacy of the master of five excellences in Taiwan. *Journal of Asian Martial Arts*, **17**(3), 22-39.
- Maxwell, J. A. (1996). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach*. London: Sage.
- Maykut, P., & Morehouse, R. (1994). *Beginning qualitative research: A philosophic and practical guide*. London: The Falmer Press.
- McCarthy, E. (2007). Yuasa Yasuo (1925-2005): A retrospective of his life and work. *Religious Studies Review*, **33**(3), 201-208.
- McCaughey, M. (1998). The fighting spirit: Women's self-defense training and the discourses of sexed embodiment. *Gender & Society*, **12**(3), 277-300.
- McFarlane, S. (1989). Bodily awareness in the Wing-Chun-system. *Religion*, **19**(3), 241-253.
- Melhim, A. F. (2001). Aerobic and anaerobic power responses to the practice of Taekwon-do. *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, **35**, 231-235.
- Mennesson, C. (2000). 'Hard' women and 'soft' women: The social construction of identities among female boxers. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, **35** (1), 21-33.
- Merleau-Ponty, M. (1962). *The phenomenology of perception* (C. Smith, Trans.). London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Merleau-Ponty, M. (2004). *The world of perception* (O. Davis, Trans.). London: Routledge.

- Miller, J. (2003). *Daoism: A short introduction*. Oxford: Oneworld Publications.
- Miller, R. L. (2000). *Researching life stories and family histories*. London: Sage.
- Mills, C. (2008a). Opportunities and resignation within marginalised students: Towards a theorisation of the reproduction and transformative habitus. *Critical Studies in Education*, **49**(2), 143-155.
- Mills, C. (2008b). Reproduction and transformation of inequalities in schooling: The transformative potential of the theoretical constructs of Bourdieu. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, **29**(1), 79-89.
- Milne, M. J., Kearins, K., & Walton, S. (2005). Creating adventures in wonderland: The journey metaphor and environmental sustainability. *Organization*, **13**(6), 801-839.
- Montaigne. (2000). *Tai Chi: The Chinese art of healing and self-defence*. London: Seven Oaks.
- Moran, D. (1999). *Introduction to phenomenology*. London: Routledge.
- Munhall, P. (2007). A phenomenological method. In P. L. Munhall (Ed.), *Nursing research: A qualitative perspective* (4th ed., pp. 145-200). London: Jones and Bartlett Publishers.
- Mythen, G. (2004). *Ulrich Beck: A critical introduction to the risk society*. London: Pluto Press.
- Nagatomo, S. (1992). *Attunement through the body*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Natanson, M. A. (1972). Introduction. In M. A. Natanson & H. L. Van Breda (Eds.), *Alfred Schutz: Collected papers - the problem of social reality* (pp. xxv-xlvii). New York: Springer.

Nosanchuk, T. A. (1981). The way of the warrior: The effects of traditional martial arts on aggressiveness. *Human Relations*, **34**(6), 435-444.

O'Brien, J. (Ed.). (2007). *Nei Jia Quan - internal martial arts: Teachers of TaiJji Quan, Xing Yi Quan and Ba Gua Zhang* (2nd ed.). Berkeley, California: Blue Snake Books.

O'Brien, K., Hobbs, D., & Westmarland, L. (2008). Negotiating violence and gender: Security and the night time economy in the UK. In S. Body-Gendrot (Ed.) *Violence in Europe* (pp. 161-173). New York: Springer.

O'Neill, J. D. (Ed.). (1974). *Phenomenology, language and sociology: Selected essays of Merleau-Ponty*. London: Heinemann.

Overcash, J. A. (2004). Using narrative research to understand the quality of life of older women with breast cancer. *Oncology Nursing Forum*, **31**(6), 1153-1159.

Ozawa-De Silva, C. (2000). Beyond the body/mind? Japanese contemporary thinkers on alternative sociologies of the body. *Body & Society*, **8**(2), 21-38.

Palmer, D. A. (2007). *Qigong fever: Body, science and utopia in China*. Irvington, NY: Columbia University Press.

Parker, I. (2005). *Qualitative psychology: Introducing radical research*. Berkshire: Open University Press.

Parkin, F. (1982). *Max Weber*. London: Tavistock Publications.

Partington, E., Partington, S., Fishwick, L., & Allen, L. (2005). Mid-life nuances and negotiations: Narrative maps and the social construction of mid-life in sport and physical activity. *Sport, Education & Society*, **10**(1), 85-99.

Patton, M. Q. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods* (2nd ed.). London: Sage.

- Payne, P. (1981). *Martial arts: The spiritual dimension*. London: Thames and Hudson Ltd.
- Percy, M., & Taylor, R. (1997). Something for the weekend, sir? Leisure, ecstasy and identity in football and contemporary religion. *Leisure Studies*, **16**(1), 37-49.
- Phoenix, C., & Sparkes, A. C. (2006). Young athletic bodies and narrative maps of ageing. *Journal of Aging Studies*, **20**(2), 107-121.
- Phoenix, C., & Sparkes, A. C. (2009). Being Fred: Big stories, small stories and the accomplishment of a positive ageing identity. *Qualitative Research*, **9**(2), 219-236.
- Pillow, W. (2003). Confession, catharsis or cure? Rethinking the uses of reflexivity as methodological power in qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, **16**(2), 175-196.
- Pink, S. (2006). *Doing visual ethnography: Images, media and representation in research*. London: Sage.
- Plummer, K. (2001). *Documents of life 2: An invitation to a critical humanism*. London: Sage.
- Powell, G. (2006). *Waking dragons: A martial artist faces his ultimate test*. Chichester: Summerdale.
- Radman, Z. (1997). Difficulties with diagnosing the death of a metaphor. *Metaphor and Symbol*, **12**(2), 149-157.
- Raingruber, B., & Robinson, C. (2007). The effectiveness of Tai Chi, yoga, meditation and reiki healing in promoting health and enhancing problem solving abilities of registered nurses. *Issues in Mental Nursing*, **28**(10), 1141-1155.
- Rapley, T. (2004). *Interviews*. London: Sage.

Rawcliffe, S. (2003). *Simply...Wing Chun*. Marlborough, Wiltshire: The Crowood Press Ltd.

Reisfield, G. M., & Wilson, G. R. (2004). Use of metaphor in the discourse on cancer. *Journal of Clinical Oncology*, **22**(19), 4024-4027.

Richardson, L. (2000). New writing practices in qualitative research. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, **17**, 5-20.

Ryan, A. (2008). Globalisation and the 'inner alchemy' of Chinese martial arts: The transmission of Taijiquan to Britain. *East Asian Science, Technology and Society: An International Journal*, **2**(4), 525-543.

Saeki, T. (1994). The conflict between tradition and modernization in a sport organization: A sociological study of issues surrounding the organizational reform of the All Japan Judo Federation. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, **29**(3), 301-315.

Said, E. W. (2003). *Orientalism*. London: Penguin.

Samudra, J. K. (2008). Memory in our body: Thick participation and the translation of kinesthetic experience. *American Ethnologist*, **35**(4), 665-681.

Sandlund, E. S., & Norlander, T. (2000). The effects of Tai Chi Chuan relaxation and exercise on stress response and well-being: An overview of research. *International Journal of Stress Management*, **7**(2), 139-149.

Sattin, R. Q., Easley, K. A., Wolf, S. L., Chen, Y., & Kutner, M. H. (2005). Reduction in fear of falling through intense Tai Chi exercise training in older, transitionally frail adults. *Journal of The American Geriatrics Society*, **53**, 1168-1178.

Schmitt, R. (2005). Systematic metaphor analysis as a method of qualitative research. *The Qualitative Report*, **10**(2), 358-394.

Schutz, A. (1967). *The phenomenology of the social world* (1st ed.). Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.

Schwandt, T. A. (2001). *Qualitative inquiry: A dictionary of terms* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Sears, J. T. (1992). Researching the other/searching for self: Qualitative research on (homo)sexuality in education. *Theory into Practice*, **31**(2), 147-156.

Shilling, C. (2003). *The body and social theory* (Second ed.). London: Sage.

Shilling, C., & Mellor, P. A. (1998). Durkheim, morality and modernity: Collective effervescence, homo duplex and the sources of moral act. *The British Journal of Sociology*, **49**(2), 193-209.

Silverman, D. (2000). *Doing qualitative research: A practical handbook*. London: Sage.

Smith, B. (1999a). The abyss: Exploring depression through a narrative of the self. *Qualitative Inquiry*, **5**(2), 264-279.

Smith, B. (2008). Imagine being disabled through playing sport: The body and alterity as limits to imagining others' lives. *Sport, Ethics and Philosophy*, **2**(2), 142-157.

Smith, B. (2010). Narrative inquiry: Ongoing conversations and questions for sport psychology research. *International Review of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, **3**(1), 87-107.

Smith, B., & Sparkes, A. C. (2004). Men, sport and spinal cord injury: An analysis of metaphors and narrative types. *Disability & Society*, **19**(6), 613-626.

Smith, B., & Sparkes, A. C. (2005a). Analyzing talk in qualitative inquiry: Exploring possibilities, problems and tensions. *Quest*, **57**, 213-242.

Smith, B., & Sparkes, A. C. (2005b). Men, sport, spinal cord injury, and narratives of hope. *Social Science and Medicine*, **61**, 1095-1105.

- Smith, B., & Sparkes, A. C. (2009). Narrative inquiry in sport and exercise psychology: What can it mean, and why might we do it? *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, **10**(1), 1-11.
- Smith, R. W. (1974). *Chinese boxing: Masters and methods*. Tokyo: Kodansha International.
- Smith, R. W. (1999b). *Martial musings: A portrayal of martial arts in the 20th century*. Erie, PA: Via Media.
- Somers, M. R. (1994). The narrative construction of identity: A relational and network approach. *Theory and Society*, **23**(5), 605-649.
- Sorensen, H., Zacho, M., Simonsen, E. B., Dyhre-Poulsen, P., & Klausen, K. (1996). Dynamics of the martial arts high front kick. *Journal of Sports Sciences*, **14**(6), 483-495.
- Sparkes, A. C. (1985). Martial movement sequences. *Bulletin of Physical Education*, **21**(1), 40-43.
- Sparkes, A. C. (1992). The paradigms debate: An extended review and a celebration of difference. In A. C. Sparkes (Ed.), *Research in physical education and sport: Exploring alternate visions* (pp. 9-60). London: Falmer.
- Sparkes, A. C. (1994). Life histories and the issue of voice: Reflections on an emerging relationship. *Qualitative Studies in Education*, **7**(2), 165-183.
- Sparkes, A. C. (1995). Writing people: Reflections on the dual crisis of representation and legitimation in qualitative inquiry. *Quest*, **47**, 158-195.
- Sparkes, A. C. (1998a). Athletic identity: An Achilles' heel to the survival of self. *Qualitative Health Research*, **8**, 644-664.

Sparkes, A. C. (1998b). Validity in qualitative inquiry and the problem of criteria: Implications for sport psychology. *The Sport Psychologist*, **12**, 363-386.

Sparkes, A. C. (1999). The fragile body-self. In A. C. Sparkes & S. Silvennoinen (Eds.), *Talking bodies: Men's narratives of the body and sport* (pp. 51-74). Jyväskylä, Finland: SoPhi.

Sparkes, A. C. (2001). Myth 94: Qualitative health researchers will agree about validity. *Qualitative Health Research*, **11**(4), 538-552.

Sparkes, A. C. (2002a). Fictional representations: On difference, choice and risk. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, **19**, 1-24.

Sparkes, A. C. (2002b). *Telling tales in sport and physical activity: A qualitative journey*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

Sparkes, A. C. (2004). Bodies, narratives, selves and autobiography. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, **28**(4), 397-428.

Sparkes, A. C. (2009). Ethnography and the senses: Challenges and possibilities. *Qualitative Research in Sport and Exercise*, **1**(1), 21-35.

Sparkes, A. C., & Partington, S. (2003). Narrative practice and its potential contribution to sport psychology: The example of flow. *The Sport Psychologist*, **17**(3), 292-317.

Sparkes, A. C., & Templin, T. J. (Eds.). (1992). *Life histories and physical education teachers: Exploring the meanings of marginality*. London: Falmer.

Spencer, D. C. (2009). Habit(us), body techniques and body callusing: An ethnography of mixed martial arts. *Body & Society*, **15**(4), 119-143.

Spiegelberg, H., & Schuhmann, K. (1982). *The phenomenological movement*. New York: Springer.

Spradley, J. P. (1979). *The ethnographic interview*. Orlando, FL: Harcourt Bruce Jovanovich College Publishers.

- Stephens, N., & Delamont, S. (2006a). Balancing the berimbau: Embodied ethnographic understanding. *Qualitative Inquiry*, **12**(2), 316-339.
- Stephens, N., & Delamont, S. (2006b). Samba no mar: Bodies, movement and idiom in Capoeira. In D. Waskul & P. Vannini (Eds.), *Body/embodiment: Symbolic interaction and the sociology of the body* (pp. 109-122). Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited.
- Stoller, P. (1997). *Sensuous scholarship*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Stones, R. (2005). *Structuration theory*. London: Palgrave.
- Suzuki, D. T. (1972). *Living by Zen* (2nd ed.). London: Rider & Company.
- Tan, K. S. Y. (2004). Constructing a martial tradition: Rethinking a popular history of Karate-dou. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, **28**(2), 169-192.
- Taylor-Piliae, R. E., & Froelicher, E. S. (2004). Measurement properties of Tai Chi exercise self-efficacy among ethnic Chinese with coronary heart disease risk factors: A pilot study. *European Journal of Cardiovascular Nursing*, **3**, 287-294.
- Taylor-Piliae, R. E., Haskell, W. L., Waters, C. M., & Froelicher, E. S. (2006). Change in perceived psychological status following a 12-week Tai Chi exercise programme. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, **54**(3), 313-329.
- Taylor, N. (2005). Tui na Chinese massage and Chen style Taijiquan. In Z. Chen & L. Yue (Eds.), *Tai Chi for health* (pp. 122-126). Manchester: Chen Style Tai Chi Centre.
- Theeboom, M., & De Knop, P. (1997). An analysis of the development of Wushu. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, **32**, 267-282.
- Thomas, B. (1994). *Bruce lee: Fighting spirit*. London: Pan Books.
- Thomas, G. N., Hong, A. W. L., Tomlinson, B., Lau, E., Lams, C. W. K., Sanderson, J. E., et al. (2005). Effects of Tai Chi and resistance training on cardiovascular risk factors

in elderly Chinese subjects: A 12-month longitudinal, randomised, controlled intervention study. *Clinical Endocrinology*, **63**, 663-669.

Tilley, S. A. (2003). "Challenging" research practices: Turning a critical lens on the work of transcription. *Qualitative Inquiry*, **9**(5), 750-773.

Tolle, E. (1999). *The power of now: A guide to spiritual enlightenment*. Novato, CA: New World Library.

Trulson, M. E. (1986). Martial arts training: A novel "cure" for juvenile delinquency. *Human Relations*, **39**(12), 1131-1140.

Tsui, H. (Writer) (1991). *Once upon a time in China*. Hong Kong: Golden Harvest.

Twigger, R. (1997). *Angry white pyjamas*. London: Phoenix.

Ueshiba, M. (2002). *The art of peace* (J. Stevens, Trans.). Boston, M.A.: Shambhala.

Üstün, B., & Jakob, R. (2005). Calling a spade a spade: Meaningful definitions of health conditions. *Bulletin of the World Health Organization*, **83**(802).

Van Maanen, J. (1983). *Qualitative methodology*. London: Sage.

Van Maanen, J. (1988). *Tales of the field: On writing ethnography*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Villamon, M., Brown, D., Espartero, J., & Gutierrez, C. (2004). Reflexive modernization and the disembedding of Judo from 1946 to the 2000 Sydney Olympics. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, **39**(12), 139-156.

Wacquant, L. J. D. (1995). Pugs at work: Bodily capital and bodily labour among professional boxers. *Body & Society*, **1**(1), 65-93.

Wacquant, L. J. D. (2004). *Body & soul: Notebooks of an apprentice boxer*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Wallsten, S. M., Bintrim, K., Denman, D. W., Parrish, J. M., & Hughes, G. (2006). The effect of Tai Chi Chuan on confidence and lower extremity strength and balance in residents living independently at a continuing care retirement community. *The Journal of Applied Gerontology*, **25**(1), 82-95.

Wang, J.-S., Lan, C., Chen, S.-Y., & Wong, M.-Y. (2002). Tai Chi Chuan is associated with enhanced endothelium-dependent dilation in skin vasculature of healthy older men. *Journal of The American Geriatrics Society*, **50**, 1024-1030.

Webb, J., Schirato, T., & Danaher, G. (2004). *Understanding Bourdieu*. London: Sage.

Wilber, K. (2000). *A theory of everything*. Boston, MA: Shambhala.

Wile, D. (1992). *The lost T'ai-Chi classics from the late Ch'ing dynasty*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Wiley, C. (1992). *Women in the martial arts*. Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books.

Wiley, C. (1995). *Martial arts teachers on teaching*. Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books.

Willig, C. (2001). *Introducing qualitative research in psychology: Adventures in theory and method*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Wolf, S. L., Barnhart, H. X., Kutner, N. G., McNeely, E., Coogler, C., Xu, T., et al. (2003). Selected as the best paper of the 1990s: Reducing frailty and falls in older persons: An investigation of tai chi and computerized balance training. *Journal of The American Geriatrics Society*, **51**, 1794-1803.

Wong, K. K. (1996). *The complete book of Tai Chi Chuan: A comprehensive guide to the principles and practice*. Shaftsbury: Element.

Worth, D., & DiSalle, M. (Writer) (1989). *Kickboxer*. USA: Prism Leisure Corporation.

- Wright-Mills, C. (1959). *The sociological imagination*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Wu, G., Liu, W., Hitt, J., & Millon, D. (2004). Spatial, temporal and muscle action patterns of Tai Chi gait. *Journal of Electromyography and Kinesiology*, **14**, 343-354.
- Xu, D., Hong, Y., Li, J., & Chan, K. (2004). Effect of Tai Chi exercise on proprioception of ankle and knee joints in old people. *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, **38**, 50-54.
- Yip, W.-S. (Writer) (2008). *Ip Man*. Hong Kong: Mandarin Films Distribution Ltd.
- Yu, N. (1998). *The contemporary theory of metaphor: A perspective from Chinese*. Amsterdam, Netherlands: John Benjamins.
- Yu, N. (2007). The relationship between metaphor, body and culture. In T. Ziemke, J. Zlater & R. M. Frank (Eds.), *Body, language and mind* (pp. 387-408). Amsterdam, NL: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Yuasa, Y. (1987). *The body: Towards an eastern mind-body theory*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.
- Yuasa, Y. (1993). *The body, self-cultivation, and ki energy*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.
- Yue, L. (2005). *Tai Chi for health*. Manchester: Chen Style Tai Chi Centre.
- Yuen, W.-P. (Writer) (1993). *Tai Chi master*. Hong Kong: Cine Asia.
- Yuen, W.-P. (Writer) (1994). *Wing Chun*. Hong Kong: Peace Film Production Co.
- Zarrilli, P. B. (1998). *When the body becomes all eyes: Paradigms, discourses and practices of power in Kalarippayattu, a South Indian martial art*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Zarrilli, P. B. (2002). The metaphysical studio. *The Drama Review*, **46**(2), 157-170.

Zazryn, T. R., Finch, C. F., & McCroy, P. (2003). A 16 year study of injuries to professional kickboxers in the state of Victoria, Australia. *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, **37**, 448-451.

Glossary of Terms

The following are brief definitions of some mainly martial terms. The Wing Chun terms are from Cantonese whilst Taiji terms are derived from Mandarin, as they are the most popular approaches for both dialects. These are generally accepted descriptions, although due to politic issues, some practitioners will undoubtedly contest these and provide different explanations

Acupuncture – A Chinese form of medicine that focuses on the meridians of energy channels to detect and cure illnesses, and involves the use of needles or laser to stimulate these. It is one of the few forms of TCM that is gaining recognition in the Western medical community, and it is well known in Britain.

Aikido – A popular Japanese martial art focusing on fluidity, joint locking and circular throws. Literally translating as ‘the way of harmony’, it typically advocates a peaceful resolution to conflict in self-defence and life. It is often referred to as an internal martial art.

Akhara – A North Indian wrestling term for a training place or hall, often seen in spiritual terms. Its Chinese equivalent would be the kwoon.

Baguazhang – A Chinese internal martial art concerned with the practice of circular walking and deception. It is based on the Yi-Jing, a classic concept in Ancient Chinese philosophy emphasizing constant change. Commonly referred to as Bagua.

Benches – An unusual Kung Fu weapon that makes use of a short and fortunately light wooden bench for fighting and evasion skills.

Biu jee – Literally translates as ‘darting fingers.’ The third empty hand form in Wing Chun normally taught only to advanced students who have gained the instructor’s trust. It involved emergency techniques and powerful attacks that could kill or maim a person, and involved a diversion from the usual linear movements to circular ones.

Biu ma – Translates as ‘darting stance.’ The basic forwards movement step in Wing Chun used to intercept or chase an opponent over a considerable distance.

Biu sau – Translates as ‘darting hand’, this is used as a ‘high gate’ or head level technique to defend against straight punches or escape from a trap.

Black belt – A mark of accomplishment for advanced students. It is common in many martial arts today, and often signifies the ability to teach

Black sash – Like a black belt, this is a modern component of many Kung Fu styles, designed to show a practitioner’s mastery of the basics of an art, and ability to teach. It is normally made of silk or silk equivalent rather than the tough cotton of black belts seen in Japanese and Korean styles.

Blindfolded training – At higher levels of skill in Wing Chun and Taijiquan, practitioners can practise sticking based exercises with their eyes closed or blindfolded in order to heighten their awareness of touch and kinaesthesia.

Blue two – An intermediate grade in Bridge’s Academy, being half way through the blue belt or chum kiu level.

Bodhidharma (unknown dates) – A legendary Indian Chan Buddhist monk commonly hailed as the founder of Chinese martial arts. Martial arts folklore claims that Bodhidharma (Da Mo in Chinese) developed the martial arts for the Shaolin monks so that they could defend themselves and overcome the long rigours of sitting meditation.

Bong – A Cantonese term for the Wing Chun technique of ‘wing arm’ used to defend the lower and mid levels of the torso. It is normally used if physical pressure leads to a guard switching positions or in response to a surprise attack.

Bouncing – An advanced Wing Chun concept in which the practitioner springs off the opponent’s limb as soon as contact is made, in order to make a counter attack.

Boxer Rebellion (1900) – An attempted revolt against Western imperialism in China that involved numerous triad and TCMA organisations. Many Kung Fu practitioners or

‘boxers’ attempted to fight against well-trained soldiers with guns, to their demise, as the Rebellion was short lived.

Brazilian Jujitsu – A modern grappling based martial art popular in mixed martial arts tournaments. It specialises in ground fighting and subtle submissions. Some Wing Chun practitioners supplement their training with this art. Commonly referred to as BJJ.

Broadsword – A Chinese weapon with a circular blade and normally a sash hanging from the end.

Bruce Lee (1940-1973) – Possibly the most famous and influential martial artists of all time, Bruce Lee first studied Wing Chun in Hong Kong under Yip Man and later developed his own martial arts formulation, Jeet Kune Do, in America. He gained international popularity and recognition from his motion pictures.

Buddhism – A religion and ethical philosophy originating from India and now practised in many countries in Asia, as well as the West. In China, a branch known as Chan Buddhism (Japanese: Zen) accompanied and influenced the development of the TCMAs.

Budo – ‘Martial way’ in Japanese. This describes the nationalistic approach to martial arts following the Meiji Restoration in which the arts were codified and were modified from an emphasis on self-defence to one of self-cultivation. Arts such as Aikido, Judo and Karate-do are such examples (all with the suffice ‘do’).

Bujitsu – The precursor to Budo, this is the combat-orientated approach to Japanese martial arts found with styles with the suffice ‘ryu.’

Cantonese – The local language of the Canton (Guangdong) region of China and small provinces in that vicinity, including Hong Kong. Most Wing Chun terms are spoken in that language because of the art’s origins in the region.

Capoeira – An Afro-Brazilian martial art with roots in slavery. It is well known for its athleticism, evasiveness and connections to musical and samba activities. The art has

become very popular in Britain, Western Europe and North America thanks to various intercontinental connections.

Capoeirista – A practitioner of Capoeira.

Centreline – There are various centrelines according to conventional Wing Chun theory. Firstly, there is the motherline, the line running from the crown of the head through to the floor between the legs in a standing position. The self-centre is the body's central point running from the middle of the nose. In Wing Chun, this is protected at all times and is attacked whenever possible. There is also the shared centreline, which is the relationship between the self-centres of each practitioner and is attacked and defended continuously in training.

Chakras – According to Japanese Reiki, these are the invisible energy channels of the body, known by the Chinese as meridians. The martial arts are said to develop the bottom three chakras.

Challenge match – A traditional Chinese way of maintaining a school's reputation, this was an organised bout between two top fighters from rival schools. These matches would gauge the effectiveness of a particular system, and could lead to a closure of the losing school. Known as Beimo in Cantonese.

Chan – Chinese term for Zen Buddhism.

Chang – Cantonese term for a Taijiquan technique.

Cheng – Cantonese pronunciation of Chen.

Chen style – One of the least known styles of Taijiquan in the West, it is generally accepted as one of the earliest forms of the art. It typically has a more martial focus than the more popular Yang style, with more explosive movements and wider stances, which require athleticism of the practitioner.

Chen Village – The centre for training in Chen style Taijiquan. It is the historical centre of the Chen clan, who have maintained a reputation for martial arts skills. In recent

years, with PRC's opening doors policy, the Chen Village has become a martial arts tourist attraction much like the Shaolin Temple.

Chi gung – Another way to say and spell qigong

Chi kung – As above

Chin na – Mandarin term for a joint locking, breaking and manipulation in the Chinese martial arts. Known as kum na sar in Cantonese.

Chi sau – Literally 'sticking hands', this well known Wing Chun partner exercise acts as a bridge between forms and fighting. It involved the development of specific sensitivity in the arms, and close quarter fighting techniques.

Chi gerk – Literally 'sticky leg', this is a development of the chi sau concepts for the lower limbs involving kicks, sweeps and leg blocks. It is normally taught after a good foundation in the art, and is later incorporated into chi sau.

Chinese harp – A common Chinese instrument known for its tranquil sounds. Harp music often accompanies Taijiquan lessons, demonstrations and solo practice, and is sometimes sold by commercial Taijiquan organisations.

Chinese wrestling – Having Mongolian origins, this is a modern combat sport that offers a range of throwing, takedowns and leverage techniques, mainly against an opponent's body rather than clothing (as competitors wear lighter jackets than Judo). It is commonly referred to as Shuai Chiao.

Choi - Cantonese term for a Taijiquan technique used in pushing hands (chi in Mandarin). It is used to press away from one's body normally with the outside hand or forearm.

Choer kuen – The basic straight or 'pulling punch' in Wing Chun. It uses a vertical fist (thumb facing up, using the last three knuckles) rather than a horizontal fist (thumb facing down, using the first two knuckles). As one fist punches out, the other pulls back to a central guard position, hence the name.

Chor ma – The basic ‘turning stance’ used in Wing Chun to pivot on the heels in order to deliver power to techniques and rotate with an opponent’s force. Also known as *juen ma* in some Wing Chun schools.

Choy Lay Fut – Another popular form of Chinese Kung Fu that combines techniques from Northern and Southern schools. It is noted for its extensive use of weapons and large swinging hand techniques.

Chum kiu – Literally ‘seeking’ or ‘sinking the bridge’, this is the second empty hand form of Wing Chun that teaches the practitioner footwork and kicking techniques.

Chuen – A Cantonese term for attention and respect sometimes used to signal the beginning and end of a class where practitioners simultaneously bow to the instructor.

Codes of conduct – A school’s formal, written code of expected behaviour within and outside a class, which often accompanies claims of transformation. Wing Chun has a core code of conduct and a poetic mantra for each of the empty hand forms.

Combat magazine – A popular and longstanding martial arts magazine in the UK which appeals to a wide range of practitioners.

Confucianism – A Chinese branch of philosophy based on the teaching of Confucius and his followers such as Mencius. It is often categorised as a religion and has had major influences of the way of governing people and family interactions in the Far East.

Crane stance – A one-legged stance used in some TCMAs and Karate systems that is based on the movements of a crane.

Dai Sihing – Literally ‘eldest brother,’ this is the Cantonese term for the most senior student in a TCMA school.

Dan – Japanese term used to denote black belt grades normally from 1 to 10. It has been adopted by some TCMA organisations, including the Chinese Wushu Association, which awards Duan Wei grades.

Dan chi sau – A single arm exercise used in Wing Chun to build sensitivity and correct positioning with hand techniques. It can progress to incorporate footwork.

Dantien – The centre of qi circulation, according to Daoism and other belief systems. It also corresponds to the body's centre of gravity an inch or so below the navel.

Dao De Jing – A classic Chinese philosophical work. Written in poetic and metaphorical terms, it is often associated with the famous philosopher Lao Tzu, although this is a matter of historical debate. Also known as Tao Te Ching.

Daoism – An ancient Chinese religion based on following nature and non-resistance. It is strongly linked with Taijiquan.

Daoist meditation – Specific forms of sitting and moving meditation based on the Chinese religion and philosophy of Daoism. It is sometimes practised by TCMA practitioners in addition to their chosen art.

Dao Yin – A Chinese equivalent to Indian yoga but based on Daoism rather than Hinduism. It involves gentle stretching, static postures and breathing, and is also known as Daoist yoga. It is sometimes incorporated into Taijiquan and Kung Fu classes.

Disciple – 'Indoor students' who are learning the entire system and/or those who live with a master in order to learn the art full time. Traditionally, these students would have had to perform a tea ceremony to begin their apprenticeship with a master after demonstrating long-term moral conduct.

Discipline – A long-term approach to achieving a means, such as self-defence. Discipline can also refer to a style of martial art.

Dit dar massage – A Chinese treatment of injuries involving the massage of a specialist oil to heal bone and tendon injuries and bruising. It is based on traditional Chinese medicine and is a popular practice for Kung Fu practitioners, who sometimes provide treatments within their schools or in specialised clinics.

Divination – An approach to predicting the future based on symbols e.g. the Yi Jing.

Dragon dance – Often practised alongside the lion dance, this is an ordered procession of around a dozen practitioners holding the head and body of a representation of a Chinese dragon. Routines vary between schools, and as with lion dancing, offer numerous avenues for creativity and athleticism. It is common to see in Chinese New Year celebrations, and is practised in some traditionalist Kung Fu schools.

Dummy – Also known as the wooden dummy or wooden man, this is a wooden (or plastic) representation of the human body with which to practise Wing Chun techniques. Practitioners normally just refer to it as a dummy, but its Cantonese term is Mok Yan Jong.

Economy of motion – A Wing Chun principle, also present in other martial arts, that refers to moving with the utmost efficiency by minimising effort and taking away any unnecessary movements. It involves the continual refinement of every technique, and can contribute to sustained practice of the art.

Eight triagrams – Eight symbols that are based on the Yi-Jing book of divination. There are integral to Daoist philosophy, although their meanings are often misunderstood in martial arts communities.

Eighteen pieces of silk – A modern set of warm up exercises common in Taijiquan classes. They derive from a mixture of different qigong systems that are accessible and easy to learn.

Elbow lock – A joint lock on the elbow used by extending the arm to its fullest possible range, which could eventually lead to a break.

Escrima – A generic term for Filipino martial arts system that focuses on realistic weapons training, particularly through partner training. Some Wing Chun schools incorporate it into their training due to similar principles and techniques. It is also known as Kali.

Energy – A broad term used in many Eastern movement forms. In the TCMAs, and Wing Chun in particular, the term is used to refer to the intensity and direction of force

through technique. It can also be used in more esoteric ways in the sense of a psycho-physical energy like qi.

External arts – The majority of martial arts are classified in this bracket for their focus on developing external power through muscular force and often ‘harder’ techniques. A more historical understanding is associated with Buddhism as it is an ‘external’ religion from India as opposed to the ‘internal’ martial arts connected to Chinese Daoism.

Fajing – Also known as Fa Ging, this is the explosive release of energy or gung lik (energy build up) as seen in Chen style Taijiquan and Wing Chun.

Falun Gong – A self-cultivation organisation based around several qigong exercises and humanistic philosophies. It became popular in Chinese before being banned by the Communist government, and has since spread to the West, including Britain. Also known as Falun Dafa.

Family tree – Using the major metaphor of family, this refers to the lines of transmission of a martial art from teacher to student. It can be depicted much like a bloodline family tree, and shows the connections between certain branches.

Five animal qigong – Another popular form of qigong that mimics the movements of several animals seen in the Chinese astrological calendar.

Five element qigong – A set of qigong sequences based on the Chinese five elements of earth, water, fire, wood and stone. It is incorporated into the *Taiji World* syllabus.

Focus pads/mitts: Hand held target pads for developing accuracy and speed of techniques used in a variety of martial arts and boxing.

Fok sau – Also known as fuk sau, this translates from Cantonese as ‘subduing hand,’ and is a conceptual technique used in Wing Chun to control the centreline from the outside using a low elbow position.

Forms – Solo sequences of movement in the TCMAs, known in Japanese martial arts as ‘kata.’ Each form is designed to teach the student a different concept, and is also a

catalogue of techniques. In modern Taijiquan, the form is the now the main focus rather than the concept and applications.

Generation – The level of a body lineage made different by a teacher-student relationship and beginning from the founder. So if the art has passed through 10 teachers the next will be an 11th generation teacher/practitioner.

Gor sau – Literally ‘exchanging hand’, this is Wing Chun’s form of sparring in which two practitioners spontaneously exchange techniques.

Grading – A relatively modern and formal assessment of a student’s development in skill, understanding and character by their teacher or a powerful member of their organisation. This is usually measured by a coloured belt or sash system, which varies tremendously from school to school

Grandmaster – A term normally used to describe to someone who has attained a high level of mastery in their chosen art. They are normally the undisputed leaders of a particular lineage or denomination of a style

Grappling – A martial arts approach of fighting on the floor, usually using chokes, locks and holds. The TCMA’s don’t tend to focus on this, instead tending to specialise in ‘stand up’ fighting.

Grasping the bird’s beak – A well known Taijiquan technique in which one hand resembles a bird’s beak and the other is raised to a guard hand.

Grounding – The principle of being sunk in one’s stance, which lowers the centre of gravity increases striking power and limits one’s malleability against an opponent. In non-martial terms is equates to the idea of being connected to the earth and being aware of the surface beneath one’s feet.

Gung Fu – A Cantonese way of saying Kung Fu

Hard – The forceful, muscular way of expressing technique as opposed to ‘soft’ approaches that minimise effort

Hatha yoga – The world's most popular and commercialised form of yoga, known for its physical postures for strength, flexibility and posture.

Heavy bag – A common piece of equipment in boxing, this has been adopted by many TMAs for power development. It can either hang from the ceiling or be connected to the ground as a water-based bag.

Holding the ball – A standing meditation position in Taijiquan in which the practitioner typically focuses on three important points: The dantien and the lao gung of both palms. It is designed to develop the stance, focus and relaxation, as well as chi flow.

Holding a grain of rice – A qigong warm up involving torso rotations whilst keeping the palm upright as if holding a grain of rice. It is a good preparation for a Taijiquan class.

Holistic body practices – Also known as mind-body practices or mindful fitness practices, these fitness trends tend to focus on moving meditation and changing mind-body relations. Examples include yoga, 24-step Taijiquan and pilates.

Hung Gar – A popular style of Southern Chinese Kung Fu known for its lower stances and adaption of the five animal forms (tiger, crane, leopard, snake and dragon). As a flamboyant Cantonese style it is often used in Hong Kong Kung Fu movies.

Hsing-I – Another way of spelling the martial art Xing-Yi

Hybrid system – A martial art composed of two or more other styles. It is usually personalised by one individual master and often named after them

I-Chuan – Another way of spelling Yi-Quan

Indoor students – Those students or disciples of a master or teacher who learn all that they know about the art. It is a term usually used in China where traditional secrecy remains widespread. In the UK, this term is typically obsolete apart from a few very traditionalist schools.

Inside facing stance – A concept involving the movement away from an opponent whilst facing them, often involving leaving a punch on the shared centre.

Inside whip – A punch used when the arm is pushed downwards. It circles inwards to create a whip-like punch, and therefore uses the opponent's force against them.

Internal martial arts – A broad category of martial arts including Taijiquan and Bagua, which employ so called 'soft techniques.' These often claim to aim to cultivate qi and tendon/ligament strength rather than muscular power. They are also closely associated with Daoism, which historians have suggested formed the 'internal' category as Daoism formed in China. The term emerged in recent history when well-known Kung Fu master Sun Lutan mixed Taijiquan with Bagua and Xingyi, which he thought were complimentary due to similar principles.

Jeet Kune Do (JKD) – Literally 'way of the intercepting fist.' Bruce Lee's philosophy of the martial arts advocating free expression over tradition. It is a forerunner of the recent mixed martial arts movement, and is practised either as a philosophy or as a style in itself, which has led to two contrasting JKD camps.

Jet Li (1963-) – International Chinese martial arts movie star famed for his period movies such as *Fearless* and *Once Upon a Time in China*. Li's athleticism, grace and sense of philosophical traditions have provided him with a certain charisma on film.

Jow – Cantonese term for a Taijiquan elbow technique used in pushing hands. Literally to strike or push with the elbow.

Judo – A modern Japanese combat sport that focuses on throwing, strangulation and joint locking techniques. It is an official IOC sport.

Jujitsu – Precursor to Judo and Aikido, this 'gentle art' involves strikes, throws, locks and weapons training. It is a broad term for many Japanese styles of martial art.

Kajunkenbo – A modern form of Karate-do not widely practised in Britain.

Kalarippayattu – A South Indian martial art native to the region of Kerala. It incorporates other practices such as massage and Indian medicine, making it a broader set of physical culture practices.

Karate – An Okinawa martial art popular worldwide. It has been influenced by Japanese culture and Chinese martial arts, and is known for its powerful strikes.

Karate-do – A modern development of karate day based around Zen Buddhist notions of a way of life rather than the earlier ryu (self-defence) orientated approaches.

Karate reverse punch – The basic punch in Karate and also Taekwondo, in which the punch moves from the hip and twists in motion. It is a horizontal punch using the first two knuckles.

Kau - Cantonese term for a Taijiquan shoulder bump technique used in pushing hands.

Kendo – A Japanese weapons martial art that focuses on the development of sword fighting skills via wooden representations of a sort. It literally translates as ‘way of the sword’ and is a modern combat sport that combines aspects of Zen Buddhism.

Kerala – The equivalent to a Kwoon in the Indian martial art of Kalarippayattu.

Ki – A Japanese equivalent to qi.

Kowtow – A deep bow whilst kneeling on the ground. In a disciple ceremony it would involve a long bow with a cup of tea raised to the master.

Kuen – A Cantonese term for fist or style. In Chinese martial arts, most family style are followed by this suffix e.g. Hung Gar being referred to as Hung Gar Kuen.

Kung Fu – A Chinese term for hard work, skill or more specifically, accomplishment through effort over time. It is now synonymous for the Chinese martial arts, although in China its use is much broader.

Kung Fu brother – Common term for TCMA male colleagues. It is very rare to hear ‘Kung Fu sister.’

Kung Fu TV Series – A 1970s US series based around the master-disciple relationship of a Kung Fu student and teacher. It developed around the ‘Kung Fu craze’ of the 70s, and adopted an Orientalist perspective on the art as full of Eastern wisdom, even though a Caucasian actor was recruited to play a Chinese due to the racism in Hollywood at the time.

Kuoshu – Another term for competitive San Sau, but with slightly different rules. This was also once used as a generic term for Chinese martial arts, which is now either Kung Fu or Wushu.

Kwoon – Cantonese term for training hall. It literally means ‘place of worship’, and is the equivalent to the better known Japanese term dojo or the Korean dojang.

Lao gung – According to traditional Chinese medicine, this is an important acupuncture point in the middle of the palm of the hand. In some Taijiquan schools, this is focused on, along with the dantien

Lau Gar – A Southern Chinese form of Kung Fu often connected with kickboxing and competitions. It used the five animals (tiger, crane, leopard, snake and dragon) and is popular in Britain due to the efforts of Grandmaster Jeremy Yau.

Lineage – The genealogy of a martial art’s transmission from teacher to teacher. This is a typical characteristic of TCMA, and is often seen as an indicator of the authenticity of a teacher. It is often linked to the ‘family tree.’

Lion dancing – A physical discipline involving two performers who work as a pair to create an evocative portrayal of a lion. Although lions are not indigenous to China, the lion dance is a symbolic representation of Chinese history and mythology, and is often practised within Kung Fu schools. There are regional variations in the appearance of the lion head, and it involves music from a variety of instruments and has two main strands: Traditional ceremony and competition on high stakes or sticks.

Longfist – A term for martial arts styles that use a horizontal punch using the first two knuckles for impact, unlike short fist styles like Wing Chun. Shaolin Longfist is such an example of this.

Long form – Taijiquan form with a typically full range of techniques.

Lop sau – Also known as lap sau or lup sau. This translates literally as ‘holding hand,’ and is used to control the opponent’s attacking or defending arm. Depending on the style of Wing Chun, it either pulls or pushes.

Lui - Cantonese term for a Taijiquan technique (in Mandarin, Lu). It is a ‘roll back’ manoeuvre to yield to the opponent’s energy.

Lut sau side step – Part of the lut sau or ‘distance hand’ training, this actually involves two side steps in order to move at 90 degrees from an opponent in order to attack them from the side and trap their arms through using Wing Chun hand techniques.

Maai – A Japanese concept of space and time in one. It is used in Japanese martial arts to understand the interpersonal distance within partner training and fighting. In Cantonese this is known as lut.

Mandarin – The official language of the People’s Republic of China. This is normally the language used in Taijiquan terminology due to the art’s continued development on the continent, although Wing Chun typically uses Cantonese terminology.

Mantis Kung Fu – A form of Chinese Kung Fu based on the movements of the (normally female) praying mantis. It is divided into Northern and Southern schools, although practitioners debate the connection between these. The Southern branch is better known for its focus on self-defence.

Master – A contested word, but is a generally accepted term for someone who has accomplished a state of mastery over an entire system in how they can perform all the movements with no conscious thought.

Matrix – A popular Hollywood movie involving martial arts fight scenes.

Mats – Safety mats for grappling and takedowns. These are common in grappling based martial arts such as Judo and BJJ, although TCMA's are using them, particularly in full time gyms.

Meditation – A very broad term, but in its simplest form it means concentrating on one single thing for an extensive amount of time. Hence meditation can be in motion, like in the martial arts, or sitting/standing like in yoga and Taijiquan respectively. EMFs like these are typically associated with altered levels of consciousness through meditation.

Mestre – A Portuguese term for teacher used in the Brazilian martial art of Capoeira. Unlike conventional ideas of a teacher or coach, it relates to long-term fidelity to a particular teacher and institution.

Mitts – Light gloves used for sparring, close range drills and bag work.

Mixed martial arts (MMA) – A modern approach to the martial arts in which techniques and principles from various styles are mixed together to form a dynamic and hybrid fighting system usually incorporating kicking, punching, grappling and in-fighting. It is now a popular sport worldwide, particularly among spectators, as it is exceeding boxing in pay-per-views.

Mok lok – The intense 'stare' developed through solo form practice and partner work designed to both focus attention and intimidate the opponent whilst maintaining peripheral vision.

Ne - Cantonese term for a Taijiquan technique

Nei Jia Kung Fu – A category for the 'internal' Chinese martial arts of Taijiquan, Baguazhang and Xingyiquan. It is quite a recent term that emerged from observations by Sun Lutian of the similar principles behind the three styles.

Neigong – Literally 'inner work.' Some TCMA practitioners used this interchangeably with qigong, whilst some such as Ryan (2008) maintain that this is a specific approach to conditioning the body to take blows through correct breathing and inner healing. This is normally only taught to disciples who go through an initiation.

Ng Mui – Legendary founder of Wing Chun Kung Fu. According to folklore, Ng Mui escaped the burning of the Southern Shaolin Temple and formed a new fighting system based on simple principles after watching a fight between a snake and a crane. She is then reputed to have passed the art on to a young girl, Yim Wing Chun, which was named after her.

Outside facing stance – A concept of moving away from the opponent with a step, and facing away from them, usually accompanied by leaving a punch on the shared centre.

Pak sau – A Wing Chun defensive and attacking technique used to slap the opponent's hand slightly off centre so that a counter attack can be made. Translates as slapping hand.

Parkour – Literally 'obstacle course' in French, this is also known as French freerunning. It is a new, mainly urban movement designed to develop freedom of physical expression in otherwise contained environments such as busy cities. The founders David Belle and Sebastian Foucan had considerable training in the martial arts.

Pong - Cantonese term for a Taijiquan technique. Known as Peng in Mandarin, this translates as 'ward off' in English and is an upwards circular motion.

Preying Mantis – A well-known style of TCMA that mimics the motions of the female preying mantis. There are various styles, although these can be divided between Northern and Southern Mantis. The Southern is better known for its focus on self-defence.

Push hands – Another term for pushing hands

Pushing hands – Translates to Mandarin as tui shou. The sensitivity exercise, drill and fighting foundation of Chinese internal martial arts, most notably Taijiquan. It develops embodied sensitivity, reactions, understanding of distance and grappling skills.

Pyramid stance – The basic Wing Chun stance or Yee Gee Kim Yung Ma. It adopts the Wing Chun principle of triangulation in three dimensions.

Qi – The Chinese word for life energy or force. It is an ambiguous term with different interpretations, but is a major part of their belief systems, traditional medicine and language, much like the Japanese with ki. Also spelt ‘chi.’ Some scholars such as Frank (2000) have suggested is used as a verb as well as a noun.

Qigong – Literally ‘energy work’ or ‘energy arts.’ A TCMF designed to increase the body’s flow of qi. It is mainly practised slowly for health and moving meditation, but can have martial applications as well. Throughout the world, there are possibly thousands of forms of qigong many of which are taught within Kung Fu schools. Also written qi gong or chi gong and chi kung.

Red sash – A basic grade in Kung Fu. It is often the only sash worn within a Kung Fu class, although coloured indicators of grade are emerging.

Reiki – A spiritual healing practice originating from Japan designed to cultivate life energy. It is slowly growing in the West.

Roll – Common term used to describe poon sau or rolling hands, the foundation of Wing Chun’s chi sau.

Rolling – The beginning stages of Wing Chun’s chi sau in which both partners’ arms are joined midway in a semi circle roll between positions. At the highest level of skill, no one break out of a roll as they would be hit due to the heightened sensitivity and reflexes of the other.

Root/rooted – the concept of forming a firm stance to resist raising the centre of gravity and be unstable. It is often used as a metaphor for rooting to the ground like a tree

San sau – Literally ‘free hand’ or ‘unbound hand’, it is a general term for intense partner training using certain degrees of contact. It more commonly refers to a full contact form of Chinese kickboxing, normally allowing punches, kicks, knees, elbows, sweeps, brief clinches and takedowns. Also known as San Shou in Mandarin.

San Soo – A self-defence orientated Chinese martial art popular in America due to the efforts of its modern developer Grandmaster Jimmy Woo. It isn’t particularly well

known in Britain. Also known as Tsoi Li Ho Fut Hung, this draws upon the idea of non-sporting san sau to emphasize spontaneous or ‘free hand’ partner training as opposed to more traditional form and solo training.

Sau – Cantonese word for ‘hand.’ It is used as a suffix for many Wing Chun hand techniques and concepts.

Seminar – A large gathering of students in one or more schools, led by a particular teacher or master. These are special events that typically focus on a specific topic such as self-defence in an extensive lesson format.

Sensitivity – A limb’s degree of reactivity to a force in any direction. In TCMA, specific sensitivity exercises are used to develop this to a reflexive level

Shamanism – An ancient cross-cultural spiritual belief based practice centred around ancestor worship and spirits. It still survives in certain tribes and areas in the world, such as in South America. Some scholars have suggested that Daoism derives from shamanism.

Shaolin Longfist – A popular TCMA that uses elaborate motions and long range techniques, with some historical links to the Shaolin Temple. Its horizontal punch gives its name of ‘long fist’ as opposed to ‘short fist’ systems such as Wing Chun.

Shaolin Temple – Legendary ‘birthplace’ of the Chinese martial arts located in the Henan Province, PRC. Historians have debated the importance of the Temple on the development of the arts, although it remains a tourist attraction for martial artists worldwide.

Shaolin weapons – A set of numerous (mainly medieval) weapons that are often incorporated into Kung Fu schools. There are approximately 18 weapons, including those rarely found outside TCMA such as the monk spade bench and halberd.

Shield – A piece of training equipment that requires one partner to hold it whilst the other uses a variety of kicks, strikes and shoulder barges.

Short form – A simplified version of a more complicated and repetitive form in order to make it more accessible and easy to learn. In Taijiquan this is connected to the Communist 24-step form and the Zheng Manqing 37-step short form.

Shorinji Kempo – A modern form of Japanese martial art known for its dual focus on self-defence and self-development underpinned by a peaceful, Zen inspired philosophy.

Shotokan – A popular form of modern Karate developed by Ginchin Funakoshi. It developed in Japan and is known for its focus on power.

Sifu – A Cantonese term (Mandarin: Shifu) for a teacher or someone skilled in a profession. In TCMAs, a teacher's official title is usually Sifu, followed by their surname e.g. Sifu Bridge. In general Chinese terms it is used as a sign of respect or to a close family friend. It can also be understood as one's father.

Sigung – A Cantonese term for one's teacher's teacher as a 'grandfather'.

Sihing – A Cantonese term for 'older brother', or someone more experienced in a practice. It is used within most Wing Chun schools worldwide.

Silk Chinese suit – A modern development of Chinese mandarin suits usually worn by labourers. A cotton version of this is often referred to as a Kung Fu suit. The silk version is common in PRC Wushu performances because of its attractive appearance, which reflects the aesthetic aspects of the art.

Silk reeling – A Chen style Taijiquan exercise and martial application designed to develop qi energy in a spiral motion, with martial applications such as defending against two punches or releasing from a lapel grab.

Simplified Taijiquan – The People's Republic of China's official 24-posture Taijiquan form, the most widely practised style in the world due to its accessibility and China's huge population. Also known as 24-step Taijiquan.

Single whip – A well-known Taijiquan position that involves making a beak-like shape with all the fingers of one hand touching and the other hand forming a guard position. It can be a strike to certain nerve points, and is also reputed to aid circulation in the hands.

Siu Lim Tao – The first solo form of Wing Chun, literally ‘little idea form’. This trains the stance and introduces the hand positions and is designed to rid the practitioner of prior ideas. It is often done very slowly in a meditative state.

Slow attacks – A sequence of rapid counter attacks to a straight punch that involve the principles of simultaneous attack and defence. These normally learned slowly, hence the term ‘slow attacks.’

Soft – The opposite of ‘hard’ techniques and styles. It is a concept of yielding or borrowing an opponent’s energy rather than resisting it with force.

Spanglish – Slang for a combination of Spanish and English typically used by Chicanos (second generation Mexican-Americans).

Sparring – The practice of techniques in a free flowing, non-choreographed way to develop reactions, timing, distancing and an element of realism, usually with safety equipment worn. In many TCMA schools, this practice doesn’t exist due to focus on form, rather than application.

Spear – A common weapon in the TCMA. It usually has a red fur-like material before the blade itself.

Splitting of the guard – The separation of the hands from a unified ‘triangle’ guard position.

Stance(s) – The standing posture(s) of a martial art, translated as ‘ma’ in Cantonese. Each normally has a basic stance with which to train the legs and overall body posture. This is a platform to move onto dynamic motions such as kicking.

Standard bearer – A person who upholds the standards of technique and etiquette of a particular martial arts system for the next generation. This might be for a region of a country or even for the system itself.

Stick – The constant state of touch by two or more limbs in a training environment designed to develop sensitivity and correct positioning

Sticking hands – An English translation of chi sau

Straight sword – One of the weapons used in Taijiquan. This resembles a sabre, and is used in a linear, stabbing fashion.

String the loop – See *strumming the loop*.

Structure – The biomechanical positioning of the limbs in any martial position. A martial artist with good structure has positions that are hard to collapse or exploit

Strumming the loop – One translation of a Yang style Taijiquan posture in which a guard is presented with most of the weight on the back leg. It is so called due to the appearance of playing the guitar, but is also a guard position and has numerous applications.

Style – A personalised approach to a certain martial art, or often just term for a martial art. For example, in Wing Chun, a style of one grandmaster's lineage may be different to another's such as Yip Man and Hung Fa Yi. However, among martial arts circles, Wing Chun may be referred to as a singular style.

Sunk – Sinking the centre of gravity by sitting low in a stance. This limits the risk of being pushed over, and develops greater power in techniques. It is connected to the idea of 'grounding' and 'rooting.'

Survival – A modern hybrid self-defence system that borrows techniques from several TMAs. It developed in Israel and is practised within the armed forces, as is Krav Maga, another self-defence orientated art.

System – The generic word for a martial art, with its techniques, philosophies and principles.

Taekwondo – Literally ‘the way of the foot and the hand.’ A Korean sport and martial art known for its extensive kicking techniques and methods of long range fighting. It is an official IOC sport.

Tai Chi – The popular term for Taijiquan, which removes the martial focus i.e. quan or ‘fist’ element.

Tai Chi Chuan/Chu’an – As above

Taiji Classics – Classical writings on the art and philosophy of Taijiquan. Written in a poetic and metaphorical way, it is an important resource for many instructors today

Taiji – A shorter way of writing and saying Taijiquan. It is a common way of expressing the art, particularly as the ‘quan’ suffix means fist

Taijiquan – Literally ‘grand ultimate fist.’ A popular form of Chinese martial art known for its graceful movements and meditational qualities. Although well known for its health maintenance and spiritual qualities, each move has a martial application.

Taiji sword – There are two types of sword in Taijiquan: Straight and broadsword, which are taught after learning the solo form. Today they are used more for ceremony and performance than for practical fighting.

Tang So Do – A Korean equivalent to Karate. Like Taekwondo, it is well known for its kicking techniques and methods of long range fighting

Taoism – Another way to spell Daoism.

Tea ceremony – A modern Japanese ceremony involving two or more people in which tea is ritualistically poured for another person. It is meant to be a form of moving meditation and self-development.

Thai Boxing – Also known as Muay Thai, this is Thailand's national sport known for its full contact strikes, kicks, knees and elbows. It is one of the most dangerous combat sports, and it often integrated into MMA training.

Triangle – The key geometric principle in Wing Chun of which all techniques follow. It is most obvious in the thrusting guard, which acts as a wedge against oncoming blows.

Tuina – A Chinese massage practice derived from the principles of TCM. It is quite similar to the better-known Japanese shiatsu and involves gentle movements complimented by intense pressure. It is sometimes practised by TCMA practitioners and instructors as a supplement to their art.

Tumbling – A Chinese form of acrobatics involving spiral movements in the air. It often accompanied Peking Opera performances, and was learned by stars such as Jackie Chan. It is often incorporated into modern Wushu performances.

Wada Ryu – A popular Okinawan style of Karate developed by Hinonori Ohtsuka, which incorporates grappling techniques.

Wall bag – A canvas bag attached to a wall that is filled with material such as sand or gravel. It is used in Wing Chun to develop the basic striking power and correct wrist alignment, and also helps to condition the hands. In some Wing Chun systems there is a sand bag sequence to learn and practise alone.

White belt – The beginning grade in many martial arts that is sometimes used in TCMA's. The coloured belt system was originally developed by Judo's founder Jiguro Kano to develop a structure to the progression of students.

Wing Chun Kung Fu – Literally translates as 'beautiful springtime', Wing Chun is a popular style of Chinese martial arts known for its close quarters fighting approach and direct set of principles that are generally understood via the economy of motion.

Wing Chun Maxims – The core principles of the system written down by the late Grandmaster Yip Man, which are meant to be recited and embodied. Also known as the Kuen Kuit.

Wong Fei Hung (1847-1924) – A grandmaster of Hung Gar Kung Fu also well versed in Chinese lion dancing. Little is actually known about this Cantonese folk hero, although there are many films and even TV series based on his supposed anti-Western, nationalist campaigns.

Wong Shun Leung (1935-1997) – Late Wing Chun grandmaster famed for his unbeaten challenge match record and aggressive style of combat. His lineage has spread worldwide.

Wooden dummy – A representation of a human body using solid oak, or sometimes even dense plastic. It has two upper arms, a third lower arm and a leg, which offer the Wing Chun practitioner room for experimentation and solo practice. It helps develop the proper distance and impact needed for techniques.

Wudang – A well-known region of China known for its popular associations with the internal martial arts, and is also the name of a branch of Taijiquan. Wudang Taijiquan is known for its combat focus and is a minority style in PRC, but is popular in the UK due to the efforts of modern teachers such as Dan Doherty.

Wu sau – A defensive position in Wing Chun used to support the front hand or acts as a spring to a powerful attack. Translates as martial hand

Wushu – A generic term for the Chinese martial arts that is used in China today. It literally means ‘martial way’ and is more of an appropriate term than ‘Kung Fu.’ In the PRC it is used to describe the official Communist hybrid martial art that is now being globalised. It has less to do with self-defence and longevity than competitive performances for an audience, and involves a vast array of often-spectacular weapons sequences.

Wushu teams – As a modern performance and combat sport Wushu has been organised into teams within the PRC and worldwide. Judgement is usually made on how it looks rather than its practicality.

Xingyiquan – A Chinese internal martial art that focuses on direct strikes and linear attacks, as well as extensive animal movements. It is the lesser well-known system of

the three most popular Chinese internal martial arts (Taijiquan and Baguazhang being the others). Commonly known as Xingyi or Hsing-I.

Yang – The other half of the Taiji symbol according to Daoist belief, is represents masculinity, hardness and firmness. This is also the same way to spell the name of the most popular branch of Taijiquan, named after founder Yang Luchan.

Yang Chengfu (1883-1936) – Founder of the modern approach to Taijiquan as a health and healing art for the masses. The Yang Long Form is usually derived from his approach to the art.

Yang family treatise – A textbook written to explicitly transmit the martial principles and history of Yang style Taijiquan. It is often drawn upon by practitioners for reference to techniques and can also form a sense of social solidarity amongst members.

Yang Luchan (1799-1872) – The founder of Yang style Taijiquan. Yang was known as ‘Yang the invincible’ for his undefeated record as a fighter, and later taught the art to the Chinese imperial family. His Taijiquan was very martial, although the Yang style has subsequently been altered, particularly by his grandson Yang Cheng Fu.

Yang style – The world’s most popular style of Taijiquan, named after its founder, Grandmaster Yang Luchan. Today it is mainly practised by people of all ages for health and relaxation due its gentle motions despite its martial origins.

Yee Gee Kim Yung Ma – The foundational stance of Wing Chun, of which all movements originate. It is also a leg strengthening exercise.

Yeung Long Sing – Cantonese equivalent of Yang Luchan.

Yeung style – Cantonese term for the more commonly known Mandarin word for the Yang family system.

Yielding – A Taijiquan principle of yielding or giving way to an opponent’s force rather than resisting it i.e. using the principle of yin against yang.

Yi Jing – An ancient and influential Daoist text famous worldwide. It is known for its predictive properties much like Western astrology. Also spelt I Ching.

Yin – The feminine, passive side of the Tai Chi symbol according to Daoist belief.

Yin/Yang – The well-known concept of complimentary opposites required to create a balanced universe e.g. hard and soft and light and dark. Together they form the Tai Chi, or ‘grand ultimate.’

Yip Ching (1936 -) – The youngest son of Yip Man, well known for his more attack based approach to Wing Chun. Also known as Ip Ching.

Yip Chun (1924 -) – The eldest son of Yip Man well known for his defensive approach to the art. Also known as Ip Chun.

Yip Man (1893-1972) – Famous Wing Chun grandmaster and teacher of various masters, including Bruce Lee. Master Yip brought Wing Chun to Hong Kong from mainland China, and was the first to teach the art publicly, which later resulted in its transmission throughout the world. Most Wing Chun practitioners today can trace their lineage back to Yip Man, although there are 7 other main branches of the art. Also known as Ip Man.

Yi-Quan – Literally ‘mind fist’ or ‘mind boxing’, this is a modern Chinese internal martial derived from various systems such as Xingyiquan, Baguazhang and Taijiquan. It focuses on standing meditation and sudden explosive motions, and avoids the use of forms and concepts of qi in favour of understanding the relationship between mind and body.

Yoga – Literally ‘to yoke’ or ‘to unite,’ which is commonly interpreted as the unification of mind and body. A popular EMF originating from India. It is now a worldwide phenomena and is practised mainly for flexibility, strength, posture and sometimes moving and sitting meditation

Zen – A Japanese denomination of Chan Buddhism known for its focus on sitting meditation and reflection on riddles known as koans, which require absence of rational thought

Zhang Fang Zheng (unknown dates) – Also spelt Chang Fan Seng. Zhang is commonly attributed to have founded the art of Taijiquan after watching a fight between a snake and a crane. Historians have debated over his existence and the reasons behind the possibly recent developments of the legend.

Zheng Manqing (1902-1975) – One of the foremost important Taijiquan figures in the twentieth century. Cheng brought the art to the USA and Malaysia, among other countries, and is the founder of one of the most popular styles of Taijiquan. Also spelt Cheng Man Ching.

24-step Taijiquan – The official PRC form involving 24 steps. This is a combination of various styles of Taijiquan that was devised to provide an easy-to-learn form for the masses. It is used to promote health and relaxation, and has spread to most countries of the world. Along with the Yang style, which is its main influence, it is the most popular form of Taijiquan in the world.

37-step Taijiquan – A common term for the Zheng Manqing short form, popular worldwide.

48-step Taijiquan – Another official form of the PRC. This is also known as the 48-step combined form, and is a combination of various Taijiquan styles to form a more complex and dynamic sequence for more advanced practitioners.

5 elements – Chinese elements of water, earth, fire, wood and stone. Similar to many shamanistic and pre modern notions of the four elements.

50/50 – An equal weight distribution in stances used in a minority of Wing Chun branches. Advocates argue that this provides greater stability and balance.

70/30 – An uneven weight distribution in stances, favouring the back leg, used in the majority of Wing Chun branches. Advocates argue that this allows them to kick easier.

List of Appendices

Appendix 1.1 Impressionist tales

Appendix 1.2 Confessional tales

Appendix 5.1 Original research design

Appendix 5.2 Field notes from sampled Taijiquan schools

Appendix 5.3 Documentary analysis of school websites

Appendix 5.4 Formal email to TCMA instructors

Appendix 5.5 Sample field notes

Appendix 5.6 Foundations of impressionist tales

Appendix 5.7 Life history generic interview guide

Appendix 5.8 Sample interview guide (Joe)

Appendix 5.9 Sample follow-up interview guide (Joe)

Appendix 5.10 Sample interview transcripts (Joe)

Appendix 5.11 Sample topic summary analysis (Joe)

Appendix 5.12 Sample topic analysis of metaphors

Appendix 5.13 Informed consent form

Appendix 5.14 Information sheet

Appendix 6 The fighters chapter extra data

Appendix 7 The martial artists chapter extra data

Appendix 8 The thinkers chapter extra data

Appendix 9 Intersubjectivity chapter extra data

Appendix 10 Metaphors chapter extra data

Appendix 12.1 Field notes – Meeting with Steve

Appendix 12.2 Field notes – Recent visit to Bridge's Academy

Appendix 1.2.3 Current PhD dissemination

Appendix 1.1 Impressionist Tales

The first section of the Appendix offers two impressionist tales that both reflect the diversity of many TCMA institutions, and the common differences between Taijiquan and Wing Chun in contemporary Britain. As two sections is theoretically informed by participant observation as a complete participant, an analysis of each institution's documents, and the five analysis chapters in Parts 1 and 2, which focused on practitioners' experiences as articulated in their life histories. Theoretical and empirical aspects such as rituals, language, metaphor, narrative, partner training, pedagogy, ideal-typical practitioners, embodiment and the senses are all subtly illustrated in accounts of 'typical lessons' in *Bridge's Wing Chun Academy* and *Taiji World*. However, this is by no means an actual account of one particular lesson. Instead, it is a combination of prolonged fieldwork, and many events, characters, conversations and topics that arose at different periods of the fieldwork and are neatly presented here in a coherent story. Furthermore, these impressionist tales reflect the current state of these institutions, which are continuously open to transformation themselves, as I explained in earlier chapters. Overall then, these impressionist tales aim to provide a vivid and sensual account of a typical lesson in a health-orientated school, *Taiji Word*, and a combat-orientated school *Bridge's Wing Chun Academy*. I begin with Bridge's Academy, which has been the source of fieldwork since 2004 and has undergone significant changes since my earlier work (Jennings, 2005, 2006).

Bridge's Wing Chun Academy: A Combat-Orientated School

Bridge's Wing Chun Academy (commonly referred to as The Gym) is a full time martial arts centre in the heart of Rigmouth, a bustling working class seaside town in Dontshire. Established in 1997, it is the oldest martial arts gym in the region, and offers a range of Chinese martial arts activities and extensive equipment not normally found in evening classes in many other Wing Chun classes, which are typically held in hired halls. It is led by the charismatic Sifu John Bridge, a practitioner of Wing Chun since 1979 and one of the first generation of white British people to learn the art, which was previously only taught within Chinese immigrant communities. The Academy also offers lessons in Chinese kickboxing (San Sau), Shaolin Weapons and lion and dragon dancing, although Wing Chun is the core focus of this institution, which is based

around the performing body of Sifu Bridge and his main instructors, who possess significant street fighting experience and skills. Bridge has travelled internationally to train with some of Wing Chun's foremost practitioners, and embodied significant skill and recognition in the local, national and some international TCMA communities. Unlike a global, bureaucratic institution, the Academy rarely advertises or is featured in the martial arts press, but instead attracts a crowd of martial artists who have heard of its excellent local reputation. Furthermore it has very few documents for such a long-standing establishment and takes more of an anti intellectual approach to training that focuses on physical hard work and repetition rather than discussion. It has two local branch schools, one in Adderton, a nearby town, and a more recent school in the neighbouring county of Rothshire both of which are led by senior students, although Sifu Bridge has overseen the classes in order to ensure his approach to Wing Chun is being transmitted. All of these features make Bridge's Wing Chun Academy an ideal charismatically led combat-orientated school and the following impressionist tale provides an insight into a typical lesson in the art in its Rigmouth headquarters.

It is a cold December in the late afternoon, at around 5:45pm. I have already quickly devoured a cottage pie, which I selected from the downstairs canteen, as it is both nutritious and easy to eat. The evening is soon to begin, so I eagerly prepare my bag in anticipation for tonight's training: Spare t-shirt, sweat towel, training diary, field notes diary and flask. The designated Wing Chun training bag already contains protective equipment in the rare event that they are needed. With an increased heart beat of anticipation, I rush to put my uniform on, grab my wallet and keys and quickly glance at myself in the mirror: All dressed in the black and red uniform bearing the unique logo of *Bridge's Martial Arts Academy*, with a silk black sash hanging down my right leg. Being a martial artist is a key part of my identity as both a researcher and devotee and I proud to wear this distinctive uniform. Right, I'm ready to go! Fernando will be here any minute. I can't wait for the lesson tonight. The Wing Chun classes are always a major highlight of my week, a guiding point in my life.

The doorbell rings. It must be Fernando. I eagerly open the door. "Hola Fernando! How's it going?" I greet him in *Spanglish* as he enters the hallway. I notice he is already in uniform too, with his *red sash* hanging by the side, keen and ready to go.

"Good, yourself?" He replies with a smile and a warm handshake. "¿Cómo estás?" He asks Eri, my girlfriend, who is now ready to join us. Funnily enough, Eri is the only girl in the very male dominated Kung Fu group at the moment, and recently told me

she'd only go as I'm a member, as she feels uncomfortable being the only female amongst so many men. Both Eri and Fernando are from Mexico, and make up the group from all different walks of life in a nearby town, Rigmouth.

Eri, Fernando and I briskly trot down the old oak stairs of the house I reside in, into the dull light of the outside. I feel unified in our collective efforts to travel twice a week to the Rigmouth Gym, all clad in the striking uniform. It's a cold one tonight. I'm glad I'm wearing a spare vest! I've also brought my hat for after the warm up. The icy cool air still manages to cut through the four layers I am currently wearing: Vest, t-shirt, hoodie, hat, gloves and thick coat. We should be able to wear hats in training this evening as its so freezing, as long as it is dark to match the uniform, although I've noticed some senior students getting away with brighter colours.

Before we get to the gym, we have to pick up our classmate Dave from his place. I negotiate us through some heavy traffic as it is rush hour in this busy commuter town, which is exacerbated in these conditions. I forgot how bad it is this way! I'll have to take the other route next time! The journey to the Rigmouth gym should only take 45 minutes, but in this traffic it can take an hour. 'How lucky are the Rigmouth residents who can just stroll into the Gym whenever they like. Look what we have to contend with! We are a dedicated bunch, I'll give us that!' I think to myself. After some bad luck with the traffic lights, we reach Dave's modern apartment by the beautiful docklands. Eri jumps out and rings the bell, and goes back to the car to keep warm. She still hasn't got used to the cold in this country's winter!

"Hi Dave!" I call as Dave jogs to the car, wearing a warm hat and padded jacket.

"Hi guys. Hello Fernando – didn't know you'd be making it today." He says in a gentle South East accent, taking off his hat to reveal a recently shaved head, a common sight in our martial arts school. My long blonde locks certainly make me stand out from the crowd.

"Yeah, I'm going on Thursdays until the term ends. Then I'll cut back to just Mondays." Explains Fernando, who also practises *Kendo* amongst other activities in his diverse lifestyle as a PhD student.

Dave, a busy father of two young boys, nods in understanding. He too only goes once a week, but on the Thursday class, as this is taught by the charismatic John Bridge, the principal instructor of *Bridge's Martial Arts Academy*.

"How was your weekend?" I ask inquisitively.

"It was really good thanks. I went for a run by the river, and did another one last night. It's going pretty well." Dave replies, reminding me of his regular fitness regime

of jogging and swimming that accompanies his Wing Chun training. Previously he had been quite inactive, despite his interest in meditation, as he claims Wing Chun had rapidly altered his approach to health and fitness.

“What do you think we’ll cover today?” I ask, trying to answer the question in my head.

“I’m not sure.” Replies Dave, in thought. “We’ve been doing *lop sau* for the last few weeks now, so it’ll probably be an extension of that.”

“Yeah.” I nod, remembering the tough session we had last week, rubbing my right forearm, which was still bruised and sore to touch, let alone strike. Recently, Sifu had been leading the warm ups, and this had greatly improved the learning and training environment as we see him training and sweating alongside us. “It’s been really good at the moment. Sifu’s being very enthusiastic.”

“It’s been great!” Says Dave in agreement in his usual direct approach.

We are travelling out of Adderton, and I spot the bright green signs for Rigmouth. Right, let’s get out of this traffic! I think to myself. Once on the dual carriageway, we move along at high speed, passing through some outstandingly beautiful areas with forest and folding hills that are currently hidden under this shroud of darkness. In the daytime, I sometimes pass these magnificent views whilst on my way to have a private lesson with our teacher, Sifu John Bridge. Inside the car, we are safe from the cold elements, and I start to feel a little too warm. Yet I can’t take my coat off, as I’m the driver!

We now turn up a hill, passing a yellow road works notice informing us that this road will be closed for two weeks. Oh great – I’ll have to take the longer route now! Having travelled through a narrow, meandering country lane, which acts a useful shortcut, we arrive in Rigmouth, a well-known working class seaside settlement. Although bustling and thriving in the summer, it is a different place altogether in the winter with little employment or leisure opportunities, and many of the members come and go with the jobs. Having travelled here hundreds of times, I move through the route to the gym in a rather deprived neighbourhood where the tourists rarely stray. I park the car on the steep hill, reversing between the usual van and a local car. There is no designated parking for the gym, so I have to resort to this residential area.

The time is now 6:55pm – we’d better rush! Now it’s time for Kung Fu, when all other thoughts go out of the window. I’m no longer a University student, but a diligent martial arts practitioner although I will return to the former position in the break, when I have time to jot down some field notes. We jump out of the car, all clad in the black

uniform, and journey down the road leading to the dark, dirty and graffiti ridden alley. We must be frightening sight on this dark evening!

“Watch out for the poo!” I call as I pass some scattered dog droppings and approach the gym, which is situated on top of a garage. Fortunately this is closed at the moment so we are not disturbed by the racket of the mechanics. The gym and garage used to form a small church, and it is still maintains a chapel-like appearance.

At the end of the alley, some children and parents are leaving the gym. We wait for some to pass, and walk up the steps. Before entering, I notice the Chinese temple design surrounding the entrance, also bearing the English words ‘*Bridge’s Martial Arts Academy*’ along with some elegant Chinese calligraphy in black set against the red background with a small yin/yang design. A heavy metal security gate is raised as classes are still going on. We enter the foyer, passing some professionally produced leaflets and enter a room full of a mixture of exciting martial arts memorabilia. A clear timetable displays the great variety of classes from Monday to Saturday: Wing Chun, *San Sau kickboxing*, *Shaolin weapons* and *lion and dragon dancing*. Several large photographs are framed, many of these are records of seminars in the past. Others are student and teacher disciple photos of Sifu and his own teacher, the renowned Master Yi. In the glass cabinet to my left are rare books by Yi, along with his home made *dit dar* (bruise remedies) for sale.

Some of our fellow Wing Chun practitioners wait patiently here for our class as the remaining kids leave the gym after their kickboxing class. One lad, Ryan gives me a cheeky jag to the stomach as I wince a little in shock. He’s got to know me over the years, so isn’t afraid to act up.

“Didn’t see that coming, did you?” He laughs, running out of the door, followed by his dad, who gives me a friendly nod. “Hiya.” He says in a Welsh accent not uncommon in this working class town where people have migrated to from all over the country in search of a better life. I shake my head, smiling.

Another parent leaves with his dog, a spaniel, which playfully leaps up to Eri for a pat. His owner pulls him away with a laugh, in a rush to catch up with his son. Te Gym certainly has a strong community spirit!

Having finished the kids’ kickboxing class, Sifu John Bridge now enters the foyer, and all eyes are on him. He is a cleanly shaven white man dressed in a button top t-shirt with red Chinese characters meaning ‘Wing Chun Kung Fu.’ Beneath that we can see his thick gold chain and the beginning of some blue Chinese tattoos on his sternum. He has a shaven head, and a large scar running across his neck, giving him an imposing

appearance of someone who has a history of street fighting. Although he is fairly short, and slightly built, what he has is mainly muscle purely for the martial arts. His face is far more youthful than his forty-four years, with hardly any lines. His blue eyes have a sincerity and intensity that give him an instant presence when he addresses us. Yet it isn't just his appearance that draws our attention. There is something else. Something in his manner and gravity.

"Hi Sifu, you OK?" I ask.

"Tryin' to be fella." He says in an instantly recognisable cockney accent, with a smile. He goes behind the counter and puts the kettle on for his usual tea. Above him is a shelf containing various martial arts goods for sale including *wall bags* and *focus mitts*. Sifu also runs a small equipment and uniform service for his various students.

"Number 4, Sifu." I tell him my number that illustrates my time spent in the Gym so far as the lower the number, the longer you've spent there. Dave, Eri and Fernando follow suit, recalling their personal membership numbers. Overall, there are around fifteen regular Wing Chun practitioners, and several travel a considerable way to be in this secret centre for the Chinese martial arts that relies on its excellent local and subcultural reputation rather than a great deal of advertising. We produce our monthly fees as it is the first lesson of the month. The gym relies on these regular payments to continue in times of economic uncertainty rather than a pay-as-you-go basis of many other organisations.

I hear people behind us. It's Nick and Alex. Nick is a fellow black sash and assistant instructor, being Sifu's number two man. He takes the Wednesday class in the Shaolin weapons, and is the group's official photographer. He wears his red coat to keep warm on his way to the gym. Although he is in his late thirties, he looks far younger than this, particularly as he is clean-shaven today, having shed his recent brown beard. "Hi mate." He says in a soft, local accent. Alex is a longhaired sixteen-year old with a talent for gymnastics and weapons. He's often an asset during our public demonstrations! Although he only lives a few blocks away, he seems quite cold as he vigorously rubs his hands together. As usual, he forgets to bring a coat!

Terry, Sifu's right hand man, and our *Dai Sihing* (eldest brother), marches into the foyer, carrying a pint of milk to the fridge. He wears a dark blue beanie, but doesn't feel the need for a coat in this cold weather. "They just had two pints John." He explained about the milk in his hard, working class, Scouse accent as Sifu prepares some tea for them both. He takes off the beanie, rubbing his head, displaying his shaven head, which reveals a long, mysterious scar, no doubt from one of his many street fights as a youth.

Unlike Sifu, he is dark skinned, with deep brown eyes and six o'clock shadow. He also possesses a strong military bearing about him, much like a sergeant major, despite never serving in the forces.

I'm bursting for the toilet following the journey, and I notice it's free, so I pop inside this unheated room and breath out some smoke from my lungs. After relieving myself, I take a quick look around. There are banners hanging down the walls with slightly cheesy and not necessarily authentic Chinese philosophical sayings on moral issues such as 'patience', 'love', and 'joy'. I am always taken in by the beautifully coloured picture of the Great Wall of China, along misty mountains hanging on the other wall. I'd love to visit it one day! Passing to wash my hands, I notice the large, action packed poster of a past demonstration by the Shaolin monks and a Taiji organisation. The school performed in it one year before I joined, although it didn't particularly benefit from student numbers. Alongside this are various newspaper cuttings of past demonstrations for the community. I turn round, noticing the locked cupboard where Sifu stashes away some of the uniforms and other equipment he sells. There is a set of lockers by the door, one labelled Terry M, where Terry's immaculate black gym shoes are kept, along with his other equipment. Terry only lives two minutes from the gym, so he keeps his things in the locker for convenience as he reminded us recently: "I keep me shoes in there are they don't wear like me other ones. I had the same brand for only two months, and it's worn to fuck from walking around outside!" Yet this locker is also a marker of his identity as a longstanding core member. Right next to the door is a very dated Chinese astrological calendar from Spain. Sifu must collect these interesting cultural artefacts wherever he goes! As I re-enter the foyer, I glance round the seminar photos. Terry's face is instantly recognisable against the sea of strangers I see in these records of old classes. So many trained here, yet so few stayed.

"Right, if everyone's out from my last class, you guys can go in." Says Sifu. Dave stays to let Sifu know about his recent developments on the website as he was helping the Gym by updating it and developing a member's section after years of having no official site.

Upon entry to this large and fanciful room, we bow with our left palm wrapped around the right fist and pass The Gym's *Code of Conduct* fixed to the wall, which outlines expected behaviour in this room and during the course of our lives outside the gym such as 'no chewing of gum' (in the Gym) and 'protect the young and very weak' (outside it). Hearing the heavy rock music left on from the kids' sparring session, I place my bag in the usual spot by the large mirrors, and turn to face the gym. Opposite

me is the beautiful shrine of gold and red, the central focus of the gym, mounted by several small Chinese clay figures. Above this are three framed pictures. At the top, there is an oil painting of the late Grandmaster Yip Man, the founder of the most popular branch of Wing Chun in the world. Below are two black and white photographs. One of Grand Master Long Wang Bing, one of Yip Man's most accomplished students, and Master Yi, his top student and our Sifu's own teacher. This firmly establishes our lineage or family tree, a very important thing in Chinese Kung Fu. On either side of this shrine are two huge banners. One is a painting of an eagle, while another is a painting of a fierce tiger, a famous creature often drawn upon in the Chinese martial arts. Adjacent to these are racks of Chinese weapons, many seen in the Kung Fu films! In the corners are two wooden dummies imported from China, designed to replicate the human body for practising Wing Chun techniques. Next to the most popular one are two black *benches* with red Chinese characters. These aren't for sitting on though, but for fighting! On my right are large, red and blue water based *heavy bags* neatly tucked away to the side, which are taken out for power training due to their hefty weight. On the wall to my left are fixed wall bags filled with sand and small stones for hand conditioning and strike development. Below these are several large *shields* for kicking and shoulder barge practice. On the shelves above these are various sorts of focus mitts and other kick shields. In the corner between these and one of the weapons racks are mats for grappling and floor work. On the wooden floor, there is a wonderful (yet slightly worn out) yin-yang symbol, surrounded by the *eight triagrams*. I don't think any of us fully understand these symbols, but they make a wonderful design for the floor! Finally, right behind me is the huge set of mirrors, which make up the wall opposite the shrine. In the corner are a large drum and some other musical equipment that are used in conjunction with the three lion heads tucked up above the mirrors. One is a very old, and is stored for decorative purposes only, whilst the other two are in active use (one, the larger, older and hence smellier, and the other a fluffy new one for children). These are used for the lion dance classes on Saturday mornings, and are increasingly on show for charitable events in the community. The dragon dance equipment hangs from the ceiling in the other corner, being tucked away for use in larger weekend events. Overall, this gym is a combination of medieval China and 21st century Britain! I feel completely at home here, having spent two evenings a week for the last six years here as a regular member going 2-3 times a week.

At this time of year, the gym is cold, as there is no central heating or even hot water for this spacious, former church. The ceiling is very high, and I spot some very large

cobwebs above! I better not tell Eri as she's afraid of spiders! Along the large wooden beams are flags and banners of various countries and martial arts organisations respectively. I exhale, and I find I'm breathing out smoke like a real dragon! Others are too, having fun in seeing the smoke rise up into the air. We take a sip of water, and Terry strides in confidently, turning on the gas heater. Instantly, blue flames emerge with a roar, and its immediacy is filled with warmth. Terry crouches low, in front of this, his hands outstretched to gain some heat. Already after a few seconds, the strong and rather worrying smell of gas lurks around the room. I guess it must have been cold carrying that milk from the shop! Others, including Tony, a very interesting, spiritual man in his early forties, gather round the heat. He wears only a black vest over his well-muscled torso, displaying the red logo of our gym, and is doing some stretches and loosening exercises, probably from *Hatha yoga* as I am aware he has practised this for many years along with other spiritual practices such as *Reiki*. He has recently shed his long dark locks that went well with his exotic looks and tan.

It's now just gone 7pm, and it's time for the lesson! Sifu walks to the shrine to face the class, looking stern as he stands in attention position. We line up in our usual order, from the most senior (Terry) at the back right to the most junior at the front left. I am left of Nick, as I am currently the third most senior student. It has taken me many years of hard training and numerous dropouts from my seniors to get to the back row. If most of them were still in the regular class, I'd be in the middle row! Sifu eyes the class slowly, checking everyone is paying attention. We all wear the black hoodies, black trousers with a thick red stripe down each outside leg, and our silk sashes, tied across our right hip. The only variation in dress is in choice of hat and footwear and the instructor tops with Chinese characters that are donned by Sifu and Terry. "Attention. *Cheun*." He commands with the usual Cantonese term that is never explained, bowing with his right fist covered by his left open hand, tilting slightly from the waist. "George, can you take the warm up fella? I've got a few business things to sort out." I nod in agreement, pleased at his recognition of my usual duties. As Sifu strolls back into the foyer, I start jogging on the spot in front of the shrine, facing the dozen students opposite me. Sifu puts on his homemade CD, an eclectic mix of Chinese instrumental, African drumming and Native American music. These soothing, familiar tracks spur me on to train hard, although it is a little too loud, meaning I have to shout my instructions. Depending on his mood, Sifu might bang out some heavy metal tunes instead! After a minute of just bouncing on the ground, I feel invigorated and awake. The hour-long journey was tiring in the dark, and I didn't get much sleep last night, but now I feel fully

awake. The group unity helps this immensely as it inspires me on to provide a thorough warm up.

“Let’s warm up the shoulders with some loose punches. No power, just speed. Otherwise you’ll blow your elbows. Thirty punches each way...go!” I call as we spring into action with flurries of rapid punches for which Wing Chun is renowned in the martial arts world. We do thirty in front of us, fifteen to each side, twisting from the torso, and thirty above our heads. I feel a little sore as I keep my head up to the ceiling, and notice the oak beams and dusty fans, which are out of use in the winter season. We repeat this twice.

The door alarm goes, sensing people outside, and in come the lads from Rothshire, who travel two hours to get to this hidden gem of the Chinese martial arts. They are understandably slightly late, as they have to travel through some treacherous back lanes in the dark. Zack, the most experienced student of the three, gives me a nod. “Alright!” He says in a very distinctive rural accent and with a bright grin. He is bearing a bright blue beanie, and joins in the warm up. Pete and Luke, his fellow travellers, soon join him after stopping to speak to Sifu.

“First exercise...ten press ups!” I command, feeling a sense of military authority as we slam to the floor with our palms and push out a good ten. I look around to make sure everyone’s doing it right. The wooden beams shake slightly as we go down and spring back up. My arms feel slightly pumped as we return to the jogging position, but I’m glad we’re now using the green foam mats for the workout, as the wooden floor is quite dirty. I lead several other exercises as a circuit, including squats, sit-ups and squat thrusts. Overall, these prepare the various muscle groups of the body needed for Wing Chun.

We return to a stationary standing position. My breathing is rapid, and I notice other people’s chests heaving from all the hard work, releasing the steam high into the room. “Let’s do a few stretches.” I suggest, leading them through a combination of dynamic and static postures. I check my position in the mirror opposite me, looking for any imbalances between sides. The general warm up is now over, and I signal to Nick, my elder *Kung Fu brother*, so he can lead us through the form and punches. Nick nods with a smile. “Take on water if you need it!” I call, briskly walking to my bag, first offering the flask to Eri and then sipping rapidly myself. I rush back to my position in the back row.

As I exchange my lead role with Nick, I ask myself some questions. How would the School survive without its senior students? This is an important question to ask as these

individuals' importance is often overlooked. Last Monday, I took the class when Terry and Nick were absent, for a funeral and a birthday respectively. Although I hadn't prepared for this, and was given no direction in which to focus, the lesson went very well. At the end, a few students approached me and shook my hand, saying that I'd done a great job. Clive, a friendly student and landlord in his fifties remarked: "You've got the job mate. That was a really good lesson."

"*Yee gee, kim yung ma. Siu Lim Tao.*" Orders Nick in Cantonese, as we set up the basic stance automatically, knowing exactly what he means. We sink low, tucking our hips forwards, knees forwards and towards the point of the triangle set by the feet, which are pointing at forty five degrees inwards. I sink into my stance, gripping the floor with my toes. Our heads are pulled upright, as if we were puppets. Nick doesn't tell us this though; it has already been drilled into us through constant repetition. We run through the first solo form of Wing Chun that acts as the foundation for the system. Nick provides a few reminders of the basic tenants: "Keep the wrist on the centreline. Move from the elbow. Don't collapse your structure." I am constantly checking my body position, not through sight, but through the sense of kinaesthesia. This is particularly true for the first section, which is performed extremely slowly, which allows for a close self-examination. Normally at home, this would last twenty minutes, yet in the class we rarely exceed five. However, I gain tremendous mental clarity from this, feeling ready for the class. We now move onto the second section, which has an explosive, *fajing* element. We snap out and in through different direction: Down and to the side, down and behind, down and forwards, to the side, inwards, backwards and down, up and forwards. My entire body feels like a coiled spring just ready to be released. During some of the motions, I feel the power vibrate the floor below me, and the weapons rack and heater shake from our collective power. This feels great, as my body has cultivated such power! This sequence is followed by the third section, a combination of more technical motions, again in an explosive manner as I feel my arms release like a coiled spring. "And close." Commands Nick softly, as we rise out of our stances and our ritualistic meditation that for many marks an important part of nearly everyday.

Nick quickly pops his head round the foyer and asks Sifu and Terry what to do next. Due to the noise of the heater, I can only vaguely hear Sifu's response. Nick returns to the head to the class, forming his stance as a signal for us to follow. "*Chor ma, choer kuen.*" He says, again in the Cantonese terms we are all familiar with. Nick counts first from one to ten, followed by me and then along the lines based on rank and experience.

I hear Terry's careful footsteps behind us, checking that we doing it correctly. I see him correcting Phil, a nervous red sash, who seems surprised, loudly responding "Oh... right!" I laugh to myself, this Gym is full of characters! Having Terry's scrutinising gaze makes me work even harder to make everything perfect.

"Make sure you're not over turning!" Bellows Terry to us all. "Do ten more each. This time with speed." He orders with his usual concern for perfection. He slowly patrols the room, examining how each of us are doing. His steps get louder and louder as he gets near me, and I begin to get a little nervous. He stops in front of me, his gaze unbroken. "Drive from your hips more." He suggests, nodding in approval. As he turns, I feel relaxed, yet intent on getting this right. It seems that each grade has something different to work on.

"Remember, what is Wing Chun known for?" He looks around for an answer. "Fast hands! Wing Chun's got the fastest hands in Kung Fu. We practise what we preach in this gym. Make every punch count." Terry repeats one of his major mantras that contribute to his focus on Wing Chun's more aggressive and attacking elements.

Sifu then comes in, adding to the scrutinising our motions. I sense his presence behind me, and become nervous. When all the counting has been done, he says, "Thank you Nick." Nick gives a short bow and returns to the ranks.

"Now Terry's going to take you through a few pad drills to get you into some technique. Then we'll continue what we've been doing over the last few weeks." Explains Sifu, leaving to the foyer for a short period.

"Right! One pad for each pair!" Bellows Terry, his voice flooding the room. I am with Brian, a tough, heavily built and bearded veteran of the group who has recently returned. I go first to hold the pads. As usual, their smell is disgusting, like rotten meat! I need to buy some latex gloves like Clive, who take hygiene very seriously in training.

"High grades with low grades." Orders Terry, reminding us of our usual class structure.

I pair up with Tony, who is always keen to train with a more experienced student. As Nick and I work with the less experienced students, I am reminded again of just how important we were as higher grades. We really do hold the class together. Without us, Terry would struggle to supervise the new entrants, or find a suitable assistant for demonstrations. Yet we enjoy teaching as it helps us learn and develop, along with helping the student, our beloved school and on a small scale, even the art of Wing Chun itself.

“Reaction training.” Shouts Terry, looking round the room for eye contact. His intense look of concentration captures our attention, as does his bold, characteristic voice that fills the room. Again, I am reminded how he would make an excellent sergeant major in the army! With a nod, he pairs up with Nick, his usual assistant, to demonstrate.

“Set up your positions. The pad man moves the pad from side on to face you. When you see it move, explode as fast as you can!” Stresses Terry. “It’s speed, not power. Most of us are men in this room, and we’ve all got egos, but try to forget about hitting things hard. This is for accuracy.” He focuses straight into the small white circle in the middle of the black target, and launches two punches in a flurry. I can barely see it, but I hear the thud, and can see Nick rock back slightly, grimacing. He continues and nods, signalling us to try it out. I then think: Why are there so few women in this school? If Wing Chun was invented by a woman, as is so popularly believed, why don’t many stay to complete the system?

Brian and I exchange warm smiles. Brian sets up, looking at the pad with fierce intent. He is a seasoned street fighter in Rigmouth who has recently returned to the group following a few years of absence, and I have felt his power before during chi sau. His large frame waits patiently to explode, and I brace myself for the impact of his two punches. I turn the pad, and he instantly bangs out two rapid strikes, which shove the pad back into my shoulder. Brian then steps back to set up his guard.

After a few repetitions, Terry calls us to stop. “For most of you, there’s still a one-two.” He illustrates by creating a pause between his punches on Nick’s focus mitt, making two separate thuds. “That’s what I hear. I don’t need to see that you’re doing it wrong as I hear it when I’m walking around. What I want to hear is this”...his two strikes torpedo together, blurring into one motion to make one definite thud on the pad as Nick is rocked back. “Bring both hands together to make the triangle. This is designed to stop the fella in his tracks. If that doesn’t do the job, you either follow up or use your chi sau skills if he’s got his hands up” Terry explains with his usual fighting orientated approach. We return to train for a few more minutes.

“Remember, you don’t have to be massive to use this effectively. It’s applied kinesiology.” Terry explains, drawing upon his extensive knowledge of the human body as learned through his massage courses. “I’ll give you an example, right. Recently in this area there was a man in his 70s, who had defeated a teenage thug who had ripped off his chain, which was a gift from his late son. He was so infuriated that he managed to batter this thug in this 20s. One of Sifu’s private students, Ted, is 68 years old. He’s so

up for it. His knees are gone from doing *Tang So Do*, a Korean martial art known for its kicking techniques, but his hands are great! He's just waiting for someone to pounce on him when he comes out of the Post Office with his pension. He'll be walking out with his wallet hanging out of his pocket 'come and get it!'" Chuckles Terry loudly, demonstrating with his hands. We all join in laughing, united in the belief in the system and the values of family.

My previous training in chi sau with 68-year-old Ted made me realize just how effective Wing Chun can be as a fighting system for life. His hands were rapid and powerful, and I struggled against his relentless attacks, which always kept me on the defence. Although he was out of breath after our brief exchange, I gained a newfound respect for this veteran of the martial arts. Ted had previously indulged in Tang So Do, but this had resulted in the gradual 'wearing down' of his knees. He sought out Wing Chun as something to do "till I'm dead." He seemed very serious when he told me this and this core message of continued participation provides inspiration for my practice.

Terry explains the use of senses in Wing Chun: "Before contact, if I think I can blast through him, I will. If I'm bigger than him, I'll use a more direct approach. But you can't see strength. You can't. I've worked on a building site for six weeks. There was one bloke – A right skinny fucker. But he could lift three times as much as me, and work three times faster. So if I come across people like that, I will use my sensitivity training to employ technique rather than power." With this in mind, we continue to train on the focus mitts for a few more minutes.

To conclude this lecture, Terry explains the practical nature of what we're learning. "Effectively, we are learning to fight to defend ourselves on the street. Most people, or 'muppets' as I call them, don't know how to fight. They hold their hands, wide or low, allowing an opening for our famous entry technique, the double punch to the throat." He smiles with delight. "I teach you all to be punching animals. It's Sifu's job to make you into well rounded Wing Chun practitioners."

According to Terry, anyone who can fight will have their hands up to defend the body and head. Some were 'naturals' who could fight automatically without learning. Others would have learned to fight from their older brothers, fathers and uncles. These were the individuals who are harder to defeat. We were therefore training at a higher level because of these fighters. I am interested that Terry didn't mention sisters, aunts and mothers in his usual male perspective on fighting.

As Terry strolls over to the front of the class to address us, he comments on the need to train at home: "Now I don't call this training. Some people do, but I don't. I come

here to learn. It's at home where I do my training. You come here to learn, and you go home and train." I was amazed at this as I had always referred to the evening classes as training and most of my friends know I am busy on 'training nights' (Mondays and Thursdays).

He continues to explain his long-term skill development: "Now I don't expect everyone to be as diligent as me. I have a spare hour in the day. I'm lucky, as I do this for a living...amongst other things. Remember that every time we perform a technique, we're strengthening 'muscle memory.' We need to constantly practice perfectly at home, because it is at home where the muscles really learn the movement. In the class, one student can only be corrected so many times." After a brief pause, he explains his early 'training' years: "When I was first learning Wing Chun, I was training everywhere. When I was waiting for the kettle to boil, I was sitting in me stance" He quickly demonstrates the stance. "When I went to get some sugar, I'd *biu ma* across the kitchen" he adds as he performs a perfect stepping motion. "Me bird at the time thought I was mad!" We all laugh with him, understanding how hard it is for outsiders to understand our dedication. Some unhappy girlfriends for the predominantly male practitioners are known as 'Wing Chun widows.' I feel lucky in having a girlfriend who not only supports my obsessive enthusiasm for training, but actually joins in. Some other martial artists I've met have referred to their non-practitioner partners as 'widows', such as the Taiji and Kung Fu enthusiast Will, who I had recently met.

My thoughts return to the here and now as Sifu confidently strides into the room. "Right, we'll continue with how we left off: With *lop sau*. Work through all the changes we've done, and then mix it up to a free flow. Can I borrow you Terry?"

Terry dutifully obeys, linking arms with Sifu to illustrate the combination of movements. They look so at ease as they move from high attacks to low-middle counterattacks, changing sides rapidly. They work to a level where both partners are comfortable, and provide a motivating display for us to emulate. As we have been doing this for a while now, Sifu doesn't bother with a lecture.

"Right, let's have high grades with low grades." Reminds Sifu as we pair up.

Lop sau (literally holding hand) is a drill designed to develop the attacking motions of a simultaneous grab and strike and various angles and heights. Through learning these, the Wing Chun practitioner embodies the automatic defences for each movement as this dynamic drill develops both sensitivity and conditioning of the forearms, creating a well-rounded Wing Chun body, which can both sense attacks and effectively deliver them. In the beginning, it is done stationary, but like all Wing Chun drills, it progresses

to a free flowing exercise with footwork. As we have been working through the basic fixed sequences over the last few weeks, Sifu was keen to turn this to a form of sparring.

I turn round to see Tony beaming at me with his usual enthusiasm, and we link arms to train in this classical Wing Chun drill. It felt a bit rushed at first, but we soon remembered all the changes from the basic sequence.

“We haven’t done this in ages!” I exclaim, trying to remember when was the last time the group has touched *lop sau* before we resumed its practice two weeks ago.

“I know!” He replies in his gruff voice, “We’ve been working on other stuff. We now have gone back to this to tinker with this. When this is OK, we’ll move onto something else. We’re always tinkering and working towards perfection.”

“That’s what a lot of people are saying in the interviews. They’re tinkering for the perfection that they’ll never get.” Tony, an interview participant himself, nods in agreement as we continue to work from changes 1-8. Right, now it’s time to mix them up! We flow through the eight changes in no particular order, trying to perfect our respective weak points. I notice that Tony tends to attack with the same few strikes.

“New head on a stick!” Calls Sifu, suggesting a change of partner for each of us in his usual jovial manner. Dave and I face each other, extending our arms for the drill as naturally as outsiders would shake hands. He feels very soft and relaxed, which provides him with heightened sensitivity, although he lacks Tony’s raw power. Terry approaches Dave and I whilst we were working on the drills. “Is the sense of sight important in Wing Chun?” I ask, thinking how much this drill relied on sensitivity and kinaesthetic awareness.

“Oh...God, yes!” He replies dramatically. “In the beginning, you use your eyes a lot. We tell you not to trust them, and rely on the feel of the hands. But you’d be foolish to just use one of the senses you’ve got and only use one. Once you’ve got your head around your hands, you can use both together. Before impact you use your eyes. Upon impact you use both.” I immediately understand what he meant by this: Combine both senses. Don’t be limited by just one. Sensitivity is just one big part of the parcel with partner drills and *chi sau*.

Whilst we work hard together in this free flow environment, Sifu calls us to stop after coming to the subject of his approach to fighting and teaching. He had noticed a few people taking a very aggressive and competitive approach, and reminds us that this isn’t actual fighting, but *sparring*: “There are two main approaches to the martial arts: The first one are the traditional martial arts such as Karate, that never make contact, but

claim that they'll give that extra 'umph' in their strikes to devastate the opponent." As he explains this, he gives a quick physical demonstration of the classic Karate reverse punch, twisting from the hip. "The other ones are more combat orientated martial arts that are always concerned with full power contact, with technique of course. Now my approach is to meet the two methods halfway, in order to maximise the learning process."

As an example, Sifu mentions his friend Colin who teaches *Thai boxing* in another full time martial arts gym the local area: "I said to him, 'I hope to carry on doing Wing Chun till I'm well into my sixties. What are you going to do then? You won't be able to carry on with all this.' He said, 'Oh...I'll do Taiji then.' I was a bit annoyed by that as he spoke about Taiji like it was nothing. I'd be really pissed off if I was a Taiji guy, but I probably wouldn't say anything as I wouldn't be able to fight!" He smiles. We all laugh, remembering Sifu's disdain for a purely spiritual and intellectual approach to the martial arts so often seen in Taijiquan.

"Anyway, it's time for the break. We'll start again at twenty-to, so be quick if you're going for a smoke." We bow out and leave our ranks.

It is now time for a quick ten-minute break between the two lessons. We return to our bags and grab some water. I share some with Eri, and find it a great relief as the cool liquid goes down my parched throat. I close my eyes to savour the moment. Right, time for some quick note taking. This is divided into two separate notebooks: One for my own technical training and one for my detailed field notes. As I am now conducting in depth participant observation, I decide to leave my technique notes for home, and instead begin to jot down what I've experienced so far, taking into account the senses used and the language employed by various members of the pedagogy. As my arms are a little tired, my writing is even less legible than normal!

Hearing Zack talking about his private tuition with Sifu over in the foyer makes me realise that I haven't booked my private lesson for the month, so I get out my regular diary from the training bag. Entering the foyer, I wait for Sifu to finish booking another lesson with Zack, the senior student from Rothshire. "Alright mate." Zack smiles warmly as he taps my shoulder with his usual grin. I smile in return. It is a little chilly in here as the heater is not pointed into the foyer, and the door is regularly opened for the smokers to go outside and for a few others to pop up to the corner shop. What brave people – I'm staying inside! Although Sifu quite smoking a few years ago, he retains a tolerance for the smoking group, although they have to stay outside. Before the change in laws and Sifu's changed habits, it was common for the foyer to be thick in strong

smoke as they chatted for a good 15 minutes. Now only Terry smokes in the foyer on the Monday classes, when Sifu heads home early with his son. I wonder if Sifu would be happy to see this! Regardless of laws and regulations, many of the smokers such as Terry and Zack rarely ever speak about health or fitness. Instead they appear to focus on the perfection of technique and realistic self-defence. Non-smokers, such as Nick and Alex pursue fitness-orientated activities outside the gym, with long distance running and *parkour* as their respective activities.

Whilst we chat casually in the foyer, Sifu ponders over his electronic register displayed on the screen of his laptop. A sea of red squares marked the absences of his students. So many had joined, but almost as many had left. What made them leave? On the other side of this coin, what made the select few stay? Both parties may have a lot to say about themselves and the other and it might be beneficial for me to speak to both in order for me to understand the situation from a broader perspective.

Sifu looks up from his laptop. “Now I used to have a small church. Hard fighters, but there was only four or five of them. But I want a big church. So I changed my style of teaching. Wing Chun has something to offer everyone.” He says. Zack and I nod in agreement.

Sifu shows us different pictures he planned to advertise in the school. His screen now displayed a woman defending herself in what seems to be a sexual assault scene. “I’d like more women in here, I really do. The martial arts are perceived to be male dominated. They always have been though.” He solemnly reflects. Zack gives a thumb up for Sifu’s new ideas with his usual enthusiastic knowledge, heading into the main room. I remember that he is planning to open a branch of *Bridge’s Wing Chun Academy* in Rothshire.

“Sounds good to me Sifu. I’ll think we’ll attract a wide range of people this way. On a separate note, can a book a private for this month?” I ask excitedly, always eager to train one-on-one with him.

“You certainly can fella.” He replies, boiling the kettle for his usual cup of tea between lessons. We book it for a mutually convenient time, next Friday. Right, I’ve got until next Friday to work on what he’s taught me last time. This includes the dummy, so I rush to my favourite wooden training apparatus, which is fortunately available. Often I can’t train on this, as it is very popular with the senior and intermediate students who are learning it in their own private lessons. On the way back into the main training hall I pass Len, an intermediate student and volunteer driver of the Academy’s van during demonstrations. He gives me a quick nod as he heads over to

speak to Sifu. I walk pass Zack and his well-built friend Pete training some chi sau, with Zack, ever the patient teacher, is talking him through some of the motions. Next to them is Dave's focused training on the heavy bag. It thuds and thuds from his heavy hits, occasionally rocking in the air. I can see that he is pleased to be back from a long period of absence. Most students are making use of the Academy's extensive equipment while others are gathering round Sifu, chatting to him informally.

I approach the dummy and set up, careful to check the correct distance. I move around it in a flowing manner, linking each technique to the next. The dummy shakes on its frame as my strikes impact its body. This doesn't hurt as my hands are well conditioned, and I am striking with the palms rather than fists. Contrary to popular misconception, Wing Chun practitioners do not deliberately bash their arms for conditioning, but smoothly move around the dummy's limbs, only occasionally experiencing some direct impact. This is not to say that conditioning isn't seen favourably in this school, as the drill we did earlier, leaving a larger sore lump on my forearm, has shown me. Here, I focus on my weak point: The kicking combinations, which Sifu had corrected me on during my last private lesson. I try to make my weakness my strength, following an old Kung Fu proverb, by continuous hard work. However I'm still slightly off balance and feel stiff in the hips. Yet right at this point, time is up, for it is now 9:45pm: The second, 'accelerated learning' class has begun. I'll have to work on it at home in the air, which is unsurprisingly known as '*air dummy*.'

We return to the ranks, with our hands behind our backs, patiently waiting for instructions. Sifu steps into the room, finishing his still steaming tea and placing down the personalised mug labelled 'John' that only he's allowed to drink from. "Alright, let's work the *Chum Kiu*." He suggests, placing himself in front of the mirrors so we can better emulate his movements. Terry, Nick and I are right behind him so that the junior students can see what we're doing. He runs through this in detail, talking us through the motions and their names in Cantonese. It is a fast, snappy form concentrating on unifying the body in motion through turning, stepping and kicking in various directions. I notice that my kicks still need working on in order for them to become 'natural', remembering my problem on the dummy. Sifu's movements are crisp, precise and seemingly devastating. I can't help trying to emulate his immense skill. "Let's do it once more." Orders Sifu. This time we do the form with less instruction, and I find myself focusing on the explosive energies in different directions. Instead of looking at Sifu, I examine my positions in the mirror whenever I can. I notice that several students have slightly different shapes. Are they already developing an

individualised approach to Wing Chun? The only way to find this out is through partner training, and this is what we go onto next.

“Let’s put this into some chi sau.” Suggests Sifu, using Terry as his demonstration partner. They ‘roll’ from one position to the next, linking both forearms in a spiral, forward press to each other, forming the triangular positions of Wing Chun’s cornerstone techniques. “First we’ll roll for a few minutes to get warmed up. Remember to practise on both sides!” Reminds Sifu, as people have an overwhelming tendency to favour the right hand roll, where the usually dominant right hand leads the motion in order to skip the ‘dark’ left side.

I turn round to face Tony, who smiles back. “Alright bro.” He says, using his version of the Kung Fu family terminology of elder and younger brothers. We link arms, moving in a circular, yet primarily forward manner. I make sure that my wrists occupy my self-centre and I drive the roll from my elbows rather than hands. I notice that Tony is rolling quite heavily, relying on muscular strength from his toned physique. Yet I don’t say anything yet, as I allow us to settle into the flow. I lead the changes, trying to find weak points in his structure. “These are good energies man. You’ve developed a lot since you’ve been away. You really deserve your *black belt*.” Says Tony, seeming impressed as he grins intensely.

From the other side of the room, and probably just from the corner of his eye, Terry had managed to spot a mistake in my technique, without the need for physical contact. He came right up to me. “That flicking will be the bane of me with you.” He half-joked with a serious expression. I didn’t need much of an explanation, as he had recently mentioned this bad habit of flicking my forefinger on the *fuk sau*. I corrected it by forgetting about the hand position, and grinding my bone against Tony’s. This ensured both security and sensitivity needed to protect and defend against an attack as the ‘flick’ could be taken advantage of by an experienced and sensitive practitioner.

Sifu calls us to stop, and we quickly gather round in a circle, surrounding him and Terry. We watch in amazement as they flow from one technique to another whilst smiling and laughing. At their level of skill, it is play rather than work where each attack is automatically absorbed into a counterattack, as a constant physical game of chess. Len shakes his head in amazement and wonder.

“Now we can apply what we did earlier in *gor sau*. Remember, gor sau means the exchange of hands. It isn’t fighting.” Sifu explains whilst gracefully moving around Terry’s seemingly impregnable defences, landing a chop just millimetres from his throat. “Right, try it!” He orders with a smile enjoying the spectacle.

Chi sau is the cornerstone of the Wing Chun system, acting as its form of sparring. Here, all concepts may be trained and embodied with a cooperative partner in an eventual free flow, unpredictable environment. It is normally left to the end of each class, where some of the key aspects of the lesson may be implemented into this unique sensitivity exercise.

I turn round to see Zack. He is always a great person to train with, as he is hard working and skilful. His thin build and focus on technique, rather than power, meaning that he takes a very soft approach to Wing Chun. This is very different to the approach of Tony, and I find playing chi sau with him more fun and less competitive. His roll is light, yet firm enough to stop me getting through. His slender arms are bony enough to grind against mine, ensuring constant bone on bone contact. We flow through the lop sau techniques without any physical tension. There are few clashes or mistakes, one hitting my bruise, but we find ourselves being able to maintain a constant flow.

I remember the core principles from the *Wing Chun Maxims*: Relax. Move from the elbows. Push to their centreline. Match their energy. Keep the shoulders down. Sink in your stance. Don't lean forwards. Feel for any openings. Don't premeditate any attacks. I manage to detect a slight weakness in his structure, and extend my arm into a strike to his torso. He smiles, pleased to learn from his mistakes. In this playful rather than competitive environment, we develop together in harmony. In the corner of my eye I can see Brian dominating Clive, the gentle father of three in his fifties, and Terry slowly explaining things to Jim, the red sash who often gets confused. Considering these extremes, I'm lucky to find a training partner of a similar skill level!

"You're doing really well Zack. You're structures are definitely improving." I said, complimenting his improved technique shape, which was previously heavily influenced by long-term training in other Wing Chun schools. He nods with a smile, mouth slightly agape.

"Change of face! You must be sick of each other by now." Calls Sifu jokingly.

I walk around, trying to get eye contact with someone. Oh no, it's Terry! Others have avoided eye contact and have found a different partner. I always get nervous when I train with him due to his immense skill. As we roll, I instantly sense his powerful structures, which force me to increase the force I put into the roll. His eyes are set into me, using the *mok lok*, or 'stare' developed in the forms. Even before breaking into technique, I receive an unexpected strike, which I try to block. However, the block isn't successful, and I end up getting a slap in the face. It stings slightly, and I feel embarrassed. I hope no one else saw it!

We then link up into rolling again. He attacks a second time, and I want to maintain face in front of my Wing Chun brothers, some of whom have stopped to watch. This distracts me slightly, and gives Terry a split second's advantage. I feel a punch hit my jaw, and aw! I bit my tongue! I taste the bitterness of my own blood. Swallowing my pride, and pretending it doesn't hurt, I continue. No one seemed to notice my frustration. After all, they'd be in the same situation far quicker than I. Nevertheless, I am angry with myself. Why hadn't I defended his moves? Wasn't I getting better? What will the others think of me? What will Terry think of me? Do I deserve a black sash now? These thoughts invade my mind as we continue.

"Do you still get much of a challenge in the class training?" I ask him, wondering if we were useful as training partners.

"I learn a lot from teaching. All of us need to work on the basics. Even me. When I teach you I see the mistakes that I sometimes make. I get better that way. It makes you better, which will help the beginners get better. We all develop together." He concludes as we link arms again into a roll.

As Terry flows through an explosive attack, I almost break my finger in its defence. It is the middle right digit. As I try to *pak sau* Terry's punch during the basic training, I accidentally catch his forearm and the face of his strike, honed over twenty years of diligent training, bent it back. He stops immediately, recognising my pain and fear.

"Just give me a minute." I say, trying to look calm.

"You'll need more than a minute lad." He replies, walking into the foyer. "You want some *dit dar*?" He asks, holding a little bottle of the remedy.

"Yes please." I reply, following him to the store cupboard where the special bruise ointment was kept. I hadn't used this traditional Chinese lotion for quite some time, as we haven't been doing anything particularly damaging to the skeletal system. Terry generously sprays my middle finger and I vigorously massage it in. Meanwhile, he shows me his damaged digits: "Look at these two." He says, proudly pointing to some slightly bent fingers and scarred hands. "My finger was snapped so bad it touched the back of my hand. I had to be taken to hospital. Lucky it happened in training and not a real fight." He laughed. "The other one I got when I was fighting in a greenhouse with some kid." I am shocked by the sight of this. I look down at my left wrist, which was bleeding lightly from the hard bone on bone friction. During the previous session, the repetitive drilling had worn down my skin like sandpaper! The cut had opened up in this session and it stung sharply as I rubbed in the ointment. One thing was certain: Scars,

scratches and bruises are an integral part of any serious Wing Chun practitioner's identity.

After a short rest, I return to some *chi sau*. Dave smiles as he approaches me. We link arms and roll, feeling out for weaknesses and mistakes. As I move, my experience played dividends in my success in this exchange. Dave, whose sensitivity and reactions had been slowly drained from the long period of isolation, seems ill at ease with coordinating footwork with unrehearsed attacks.

"New head on a stick!" Sifu calls in his jovial manner as Dave and I bow.

Terry walks up to young Alex and I. Alex is rapidly improving, having overcome a long plateau in his training of stiffness and rather robotic movements. "Is *outside facing* stance just half an *inside facing* stance?" He asks Terry inquisitively.

"Yes, it is. You're starting to get it now. Things are starting to connect." Terry nods in approval.

"That's good Alex. Now you can pass on that knowledge to others." I suggest, pleased at his understanding.

"No!" Says Terry roughly, turning back to face us with a scowl. "You need those eureka moments for yourself. If you give everything to people, they'll never understand it. Those eureka moments might not happen here. They might happen at home. But when they do happen, they make everything make so much sense. You won't get that level of understanding from another person's experience." Recently I have started to see the connections between the core Wing Chun drills: *Find the line*, *dan chi sau* and *slow attacks*. Previously departmentalised drills now merge into one as my hands moved with grace and ease. Our two different skill levels reflect vastly separated levels of embodied memory and a different state of consciousness. Whereas Dave is clearly working in a conscious state of semi-competence, I am shuffling between consciousness, semi-consciousness and unconsciousness.

I don't have to concentrate on my typical flaws (such as the '*splitting of the guard*') as these had already been amended by conscious hard work in class. Now, whilst playing, I can finally see what Sifu once meant by "work hard now, play later." My hard work throughout the last eight years has now allowed me to work at the level of semi-consciousness.

Again, I notice in this lesson that different body types and personalities roll slightly differently. Zack, a definite martial artist concerned with technique and tradition is softer than the more direct and aggressive roll of Terry, a fighter. Terry's rolling also stands in contrast to that of the spiritualist Tony, who appears to lack a particular focus.

No one practitioner rolls the same. They bring their personality and body type into Wing Chun, and modify their technique accordingly.

“Right, time’s up.” Calls Sifu whilst standing still as a statue with his hands behind his back.

We line up in the ranks, hand behind our backs, attentive to Sifu’s every word during one of his lengthy comments: “There is Karate, and within that, stylisations. Then there is Kung Fu and its many styles. However, I’ve never seen anything like Wing Chun. The closest thing I’ve seen to it is Taiji. I had a friend who successfully mastered Wing Chun, Taijiquan and *Baguazhang*, and combined them to form his own style. Anyone heard of Peter Brown?” He receives a few nods as this man often features in martial arts magazines. “He holds over 40 black belts in various Japanese martial arts. You name a Japanese martial art, and he’s got a black belt in it, from *dans* 1-5. Now I’ve just been doing one martial art. One martial art for the last 28 and a half years, and I’m still learning! There are many martial artists around the country claiming to have mastered dozens of styles. This is impossible – a martial art is a lifetime practice. I do just one martial art. Fair enough, I’ve done a few weapons forms outside my system, but I do Wing Chun. If you put all your time and effort into one martial art, you’ll be good. I’d rather be really good at one thing than crap at loads of things. It’s like with cars (he nods to Len, who valets cars for a living), you can be a specialist mechanic in Japanese cars, or maybe even German cars. But you’re not also going to be a specialist in French and Italian too. You specialise in just one or two things. It’s ridiculous. How can you be an expert in everything? I just do one martial art. One martial art, and I’m still learning.” I feel very encouraged to hear this, as it is the continuous learning that keeps me going. Why do the rest of the class continue to train? What did they make of this comment? These are certainly issues worth exploring.

Sifu looks around, checking that we are paying attention. “*Cheun*. See you next week.” He says, as we give the Kung Fu bow.

“See you all when I see you all if I don’t see you before.” Laughs Terry as always, after his characteristic statement.

We can now fall out of rank, exchanging happy expressions. At the end of the lesson, we are all left exhilarated from the immense learning experiences and Sifu’s grand speeches. I rush to my technical journal to write down all the tips from Sifu and Terry, plus some of the dialogue in my field notes diary. Zack passes me, nodding with a grin of approval. He’s obviously had a great lesson too! Eri and I take some water, and she gives me a quick hug to show me how much she’s enjoying it too. We’ve got to rush

back to Adderton, but I'm aware that Dave and Fernando have to talk about the website. As people skilled in website design and computing, these two students often volunteer to work on projects in the weekend in order to help strengthen the group and its reputation. With my administrative and literary skills, I am designated as the writer of the newly developing syllabus, which has greatly helped my theoretical knowledge of the art.

It seems challenge matches and real Wing Chun fighters still exist today. This is based around their fighting pedigree and record. Luke, one of the dedicated Rothshire trio, tells Sifu about Sifu Steve Baldwin, one of his contemporaries and former classmates who has declared on his website that he'll fight anyone as long as they give him six weeks to get into shape.

"But I'd say what if someone comes up to him on the street? He can't ask them to give him six weeks." Replies Sifu with a grin. In this combat orientated school we are training ourselves to be prepared at anytime rather than developing a periodised training programme for competitive fighting.

Most of the students are keen to head to their warm homes. The lads from Rothshire are first to go. They've got a long drive back in the dark, which finishes at 1am on occasions! "Thanks Sifu. I've gotta be on a building site at 7am tomorrow." He explains his understandable rush to get home, which is over two hours away by car. We say bye to each other, but no doubt we'll see them in the garage later as I need to pick up some milk. Sifu seems very excited about the school's improving atmosphere, and seems keen to talk about his plans.

"Would it be OK for a lift bruv?" Asks Tony, now wrapped up in his South American poncho, which he picked up from his last adventure in his shaman retreat in Bolivia.

"Sure mate." I reply, always happy to chat to him about life and philosophy in the car.

As we leave for the dark alleyway, Sifu provides me with a top tip for teaching: "As you're with the others in Adderton, you can develop their chi sau so they don't just defend, but actually start attacking you too. You used to just defend, but now you're attacking me lots. In order for you to get better, you need to make your students able to attack you, to put you under pressure. Wherever you go, you should try to get seven really intellectual people and seven good fighters. Those fighters don't necessarily have to be good technicians. They just need to know how to fight. They would be your seven formers, or technicians and the seven fighters. Traditionally, that's what a master would

just teach: Those fourteen. That's all he ever needed." I nod, trying to understand what he means.

Sifu asks to speak to me in private as the others go outside. With a grim face he tells me: "If I lose one more student, I'm bust." He states that it's important to turn up on time and finish at the designated finish time. This would give a professional atmosphere. Sifu identifies a problem: Bad attitudes towards training by many students. He tells me: "There are a number of us, me, you, Terry, Nick, and Zack, who see Wing Chun as a way of life. However, others don't. They just see it as a hobby, as a pastime. They're hobbyists" I agree. For me, Wing Chun is almost like a religion, guiding my everyday life and action. I live and breathe Kung Fu.

As we leave The Gym and headed into the dark alleyway, Dave reminds Sifu of Sean, a former student in the school, who had now gone off to learn Baguazhang. He had bumped into him the other day in Adderton. Sifu explains that he knew this Bagua teacher. He is British, but is married to a Chinese woman, speaks the language fluently, understands its culture, and has a great deal of knowledge on his two chosen martial arts. "But can he fight?!" Laughs Sifu. "And I'll say it to Sean's and even to his [the instructor's] face. How can you learn from a man who's never had a fight? Now I'm not saying that you need to go out and look for fights, but it's good to know that what you do works. It's like if you want to learn how to swim. You'd want to learn from someone who's been in the water at least twice." Eri, Dave, Fernando and I concur.

Sifu finishes this fascinating discussion by drawing a comparison between the thinking and fighting approaches to the martial arts. "In China, they have the Academic Wushu Association. You can learn off some professor who's been at University for the last 25 years and has never been in a fight. But you want to learn how to fight? Go to the back streets behind the University. Go to Brooklyn or Mexico City." He nods to the two Mexican students. "Look at the desperate people fighting to survive. That's where you learn to fight."

I become slightly concerned about this depiction of the university professor. This was essentially a potential me in about 20 years time! However, Dave consoles me, "but you're learning from someone who can fight." I agree, feeling more content. So I belong to a fighting school? Will I embody characteristics of a fighter?

"Alright, I can see you guys are freezing there. See you next week! Be good, and if you can't be good, be funny!" He laughs as we part.

On the journey home, Dave admits to us that he had often felt an urge to fight in order to test if he could actually do it. Like me, he has never experienced a real street

fight: “In a way, I do want to try it out to see if I can, and in another way, I don’t at all. I’m really keen to try it out in sparring though. Please let me know if you get back into the mixed martial arts again.” He asks, referring to a time when I cross-trained with a number of friends and colleagues at University belonging to other styles of martial arts.

We move across various residential areas of the coastal town, marked by different architectural styles. Tony and I are discussing his job selling boat tickets that he does when he returns to his hometown: “I used to really look forward to it all ending. Now I feel really sad. I’ve really enjoyed it this year. It’s been a journey. It’s been a major part of my journey of life. I’ve learned so much from it mate. It’s a good test of character and it really develops your communication skills. You can make anything spiritual. It can be your job or whatever. You can even make washing the dishes spiritual. If you stay in the moment and don’t rush it, that can be meditation.” I nodded in agreement. I wonder what Dave thought about this, with his background in meditation. I’ll have to ask him about this at a further date, as I am aware that spirituality sits alongside his interest in combat as a healer and ‘warrior.’

I told Tony about my need to work the basic entry punches following Terry’s feedback. “No one’s perfect mate.” Says Tony, reassuringly. “If you were already perfect, you wouldn’t train every week. There’d be no point living. You’d already be there!” He chuckles. We now arrive at his parents’ place, where he staying until his return to the Bolivian jungle for his shaman training. He says goodbye with a firm handshake and a warm smile: “Thanks bro, I’ll see you next week!” It is now time to go back to Adderton.

We quickly stop off at the garage so I can pick up a few things and get some petrol. Fuel is one of the invisible costs of Wing Chun, adding a good £30 to my monthly fees. I wonder what it costs for the guys from Rothshire! As I fill the tank up and smell the strong petroleum, we see them coming out of the station, and give each other a warm wave. They are carrying some snacks for the cold journey home. “See you next week!” Zack calls in his strong regional accent. I enter the store, grab some milk and say hi to the usual assistant.

“Hi again. Have a good session?” She asks. Previously we have spoke about martial arts, as she used to do *Brazilian Jujitsu (BJJ)* in Rigmouth.

“It was really good thanks. You should come along some time.”

“But I’d be the only girl. I’d get by arse kicked!” She says, slightly worried.

“You wouldn’t at all. My girlfriend does it too, and she enjoys it.” I try to reassure her. Conscious that we need to get back, I say, “See you next week.” I get back into the

car, and we go back to Adderton. It's very dark already, and I turn on my full beams when they are no cars around in the secluded country lane. I thought to myself, it's shame so few females enter Wing Chun considering the legend behind it. Our conversation is lively, reflecting on what we've been learning recently.

"I definitely need to work on my kicks." Reflects Dave.

"Same here." I agree, "I'll be working on the second form at home." As I say this, I think up a plan to work on my weaknesses in order to prepare for next week's lessons. We had recently met up for Saturday morning training in Adderton near the river, but have stopped this in the cold weather! I'm aware that Zack and Pete from Rothshire meet up regularly to train the partner work so important to their shared development.

On the journey back from Rigmouth, Eri, Dave, Fernando and I discuss health and Wing Chun. Terry had suffered from bad health over the last few months, and I had put this down to his rather abusive lifestyle of drinking and smoking. We agreed that it wasn't uncommon to hear that great martial artists (or at least the fighters) regularly abuse their bodies. Is this because of their typical working class and gang backgrounds? Or perhaps more importantly, the fighters' instrumental relationships with their own bodies that allows little room for holistic or alternative body relationships? Was it that Wing Chun is not really for health, as Eri suggested? It does appear that Wing Chun is not overly concerned about general physical health, but instead focuses on technique transmission for effective self-defence, at least in our school.

I remember back to Sifu's interview, when he mentioned that if you have an addictive personality, Wing Chun will work for you. Dave and Eri concurred. I have another thought: How about perfectionism and Wing Chun? Surely they go together. Eri is a recent example of this, being insistent that she gets the entire dan chi sau sequence correct before moving off to another aspect of the system. Dave has another suggestion: "And also those people who are good at music. Sifu said the musical types pick up Wing Chun pretty quickly."

I agree, dropping Dave off. "I'll send you an email about the website." He tells me as we part as I remember he was going to set me up with an email address. Fernando is next to leave us as we enter the more student residential area. He gives me a warm handshake and hugs Eri. "Good night!" We call as he goes.

The evening is not over yet as we wearily get back to the flat to have a drink of milk to line our stomachs after the hard work this evening. We're both too tired to cook anything. As I taste the refreshing cold milk, I return to my field notes diary to make more detailed notes. But first I gently massage some Chinese bruise ointment on my

sore forearms and my aching finger. I could do with a massage on my shoulders too after Tony's unintentional pulling down during lop sau, which caused a muscular strain I've only just detected. I breathe in the smell of the cognac base as I think back to what I have experienced this evening...

Taiji World: A Health-Orientated School

Taiji World is a professional organisation dedicated to the dissemination of Taijiquan in an accessible and contemporary format via the 24-step and 48-step combined forms. It promotes the art as a health and healing art rather than for self-defence, and is run by five enthusiastic instructors who teach throughout Dontshire and large cities throughout the UK. It was originally known as the Dontshire School of Taiji since its inception in 1998, although the instructors changed its name to Taiji World in 2004 in order to emphasis Taiji's universal appeal across cultures. It is a growing organisation, and I attended a weekly class in a commercial fitness centre, led by Joe, a full time instructor and co-owner of the organisation. Taiji World is an ideal bureaucratic and health-orientated school as it is highly organised, commercial, modern and regulated by numerous documents and with links to several governing bodies such as the TCUGB. It has a substantial amount of literature and videos available on the Internet and is taking advantage of new communication developments through Facebook, YouTube, MySpace, Twitter and other Internet sites. Besides the regular classes it offers retreats and camps in areas of natural beauty and corporate work with businesses, schools and hospitals. Furthermore, it also sells instructional DVDs and organic cotton t-shirts, which reflect the organisation's eco-friendly philosophy. Overall, this institution focuses on the regular, organised events and information available, which make Taiji World possibly one of the most bureaucratic in the UK. The following impressionist tale is a typical one-hour class with Joe, who has worked with this organisation for the last 7 years.

It is 12:45pm on a hot summer's day, a time normally to soak up the sun and unwind for many people on their lunch break. I feel a little sluggish today. The stifling heat of my room is so unbearable that I have to open all the windows and walk around in just shorts and flip-flops. Even then, I feel hot and clammy. They should really sort something out with this building as the heating is still on! I also have a bit of hay fever, disturbing my breathing and concentration yet luckily not causing my eyes to itch as it

did when I was a child. Conscious of the time, I wolf down some rapidly prepared fresh pasta in my home, eager to get to the class on time. The cheese and tomato flavours are delicious and plentiful, yet I have no time to savour the meal as I normally would as it's time for Taiji. I quickly change into my tracksuit bottoms, a loose t-shirt and some comfortable martial arts style trainers in order to be decent for the class, which is held in an air-conditioned studio.

Instead, my thoughts are turning to the Taijiquan class starting in ten minutes at the local gym. What will I learn today? I've worked hard this weekend through my practice of the form sequence – will I learn any more? That low, wide stance is now becoming more comfortable, but what follows? These thoughts run through my head as I struggle to finish in time for the ten minute walk from my place. My stomach feels uncomfortable as I briskly walk away from the dining room and out into the fresh summer air. I pass a few sunbathers and young people playing with Frisbees. I hear their cries of joy as they pass it around, enjoying this bright and beautiful day.

Yes, this is it - A Wednesday lunchtime break with the art of Taiji! This will release any midweek, work related worries. I go through the short cut through a steep, sparsely wooded area, to see the huge brick building complex that is the local Adderton Sports Centre. The trees offer me a moment of cool shelter from the scorching sun. In the winter this route could be dangerous, but now all the mud has thankfully dried up. The treacherous walk is a warm up in itself as I feel my thigh muscles pulling me up the hill! I also detect the heat build up beneath my t-shirt, some sweat starting to form along my lower back as my heart rate increases. I am anxious to be on time, and glance at my watch. 12:56 - I better get a move on!

My legs drive me up the steep hill on the way to the gym and my stomach complains as the blood is moved to help my travel. I enter the reception, noticing the usual guy at the desk. He sits there in his dull blue uniform, with a marine haircut and a slightly pale appearance. I guess they are cooped up all day whilst I get to enjoy the sun! As always, in an impersonal manner, he asks me for my name. Surely he should know me by now! But then again, he probably sees hundreds of people everyday.

"George Jennings...I've come before, for the Taiji." I tell him, trying not to sound impatient as I notice it is already 1pm. Or is the clock wrong? Let's hope it is!

"That will be £4.50." He says bluntly, looking bored with his job.

"Thanks mate." I quickly give him the exact change, cross the barrier, and rush down the steps to the studio where the Taiji class is held. Prices have gone up though. Only a few weeks ago it was £4! On the way I pass a large sports hall where a netball training

session is being undertaken by an athletic group of young women. They shout for the ball, and I hear the squeaks of friction against the smooth playing surface. They're wearing blue and green bibs – it must be a practice match. Through the next few windows, I see several young men with heavy, muscular builds are pumping some impressive looking weights in the gym that is next door. Beyond that, I hear the vibrant sounds of a squash match, yet another activity going on in this popular recreation venue. This is a typical commercial setting where Taijiquan is held quite different to the more intimate church and village halls where the arts are more commonly practised. This is even further removed from the romanticised notion of practising in the open parks of China, for which Taijiquan is now famous.

I enter the small, sparse, yet brightly lit studio in time for the beginning of the class. I smile at Joe, the tall, well built instructor in his thirties, who smiles back. I've been a student of his for around three months now, and we've developed a good relationship in both the Taiji and research contexts. He is dressed in a white t-shirt with an artistic, red design with a figure seemingly doing Taiji, with bold Chinese characters besides the image, baggy cargo trousers and comfortable looking trainers. I want one of those t-shirts – they look cool! I'm aware that his organisation makes them, as they are a group of professionals trying to make a living out of the art through such commercial ventures. He is in his mid thirties and is a very relaxed, modern Taiji instructor with a short dark brown hair, a well-kept, thin beard and friendly appearance. He does not match the stereotype of the little old Chinese man in the park, but is one of many in the new generation of European instructors.

"Hi George." He greets me with his usual enthusiasm whilst slowly rotating at the waist, signalling the class to follow him.

I take off my shoes as I notice that the rest of the class have done so, and leave my receipt on the table where the CD player is, adding to Joe's pile for his records. Next to this is a martial arts film – Jet Li's *Fearless*. It must be mine as I'd lent it to my friend who has recently come along. He finally remembered to bring it back! I rush to the back of the class of around fifteen people of all different ages, shapes and sizes. Unlike the other kinds of mesomorphic bodies present in this large building, there are a variety of builds here. Some of the students are well into their fifties, while others appear to be students in their twenties. This is a very accessible, easygoing class in which many people come and go as the weeks go by. I haven't got to know any of them particularly well so far, but I hope to chat to a few later on. They wear loose, comfortable clothing of a variety of colours and designs, but a few wear jeans and smarter tops. Turning

round, I immediately notice the experienced Taijiquan female practitioner who is sporting a white *silk Chinese suit*. I find this quite amusing as for my nine years in the Chinese martial arts as I have never seen someone wear such a garment outside demonstrations or Kung Fu and almost laugh! I quickly compose myself to bring myself into the moment. Yet how can I remember all the things I see, hear and feel without thinking?! This is something that I have tried to overcome as a practitioner-researcher.

The ultra modern studio is painted in a calm blue, and is sparsely decorated with posters advertising commercial fitness classes and products, displaying pictures of yoga, aerobics and weight training. Some light, plastic dumbbells are stacked neatly away in a rack in the corner. They must be used for aerobic classes rather than the serious weight training I have just seen next door. A banner ahead of the shining, clean mirrors clearly states ‘spinning.’ This is certainly a multi purpose studio only used for Taijiquan for a short period. Some very tranquil *Chinese instrumental music* is being played, so often associated with the art of Taiji. Is it the *Chinese harp* above those wind instruments? I struggle to identify the lead instrument, but find it very soothing nonetheless. It gives a Chinese atmosphere in this very European, fitness industry setting, matching the graceful, artistic stereotypes of Taiji that I have encountered. Yet it is quiet enough to be forgotten, as Joe’s clear instructions punctuate above it. The faint humming of air conditioning can be heard as the room is cooled to a very comfortable temperature in contrast to the scorching heat of the midday sun. Feeling my skin cool and calm down with the slight airy breeze, I focus on breathing from my abdomen, forcing myself to leave my old habit of respiring through my mouth. Some hay fever makes this even worse!

I join the collective swinging of torsos from the waist, where the hands cross from one side of the body to the next and gently tap the kidneys. I relax into this, conscious that I am a little hot and flustered by clambering up that steep hill and attempt to match the shared rhythm of the group, from left to right. I imagine myself moving from my centre of gravity, which in Taiji is referred to as the *dantien*, the point of internal body focus in training. Joe gives little instruction here, as we follow his flowing movements. Now we do some dynamic stretches. I reach up high with my left hand, and as low as possible with my right, and we twist to our right side. I feel a relieving stretch in the torso, back and upper shoulders. This is definitely a good one after a hard morning’s work at the computer!

“Bring your hand to your neck, and start massaging downwards.” Says Joe. We do so immediately, and I instantly enjoy the relaxing benefits of squeezing and releasing

the muscles around my neck and shoulders. I will surely try this at home later. This self-massage continues all the way down to the fingers, which we give a shake. All of this prepares a relaxed body and mind, which are needed in order to effectively learn Taiji.

“Push down with both hands this time, and come onto your toes.” Joe commands. As I follow this instruction, I find myself off balance and slightly tilting forwards as I rise on my toes. The giddy feeling soon stops as we go back down to the more stable flat-footed position. “Raise your hands so they are stretches to the height of your shoulders, and go back on your toes again.” Again, the wobbly feeling returns. I hope no one notices me! I laugh to myself. As we run through this several times, I feel an opening of the chest, and I start to feel enlivened.

Joe begins the more technical part of the class with some standing meditation: “Stand with your feet beneath your hips, slightly bent. Relax and close your eyes. Imagine a golden thread lifting you up to the heavens.” As he says this, I think it quite a grand statement for just keeping your head upright! “Sink down to the feet. Feel connected to the earth.” In this bright and modern studio above the ground floor, it is hard to feel connected to nature, let alone the earth! “Feel the weight moving across your feet. Now pay attention to your ankles. What’s going on there? Now pay attention to the small of your back. Notice any sensations in that area. Move your attention to your back. Relax the muscles in the lower back. Tuck in the tailbone. Straighten the spine.” He pauses for a few seconds. “Now bring your focus to your stomach.” As he says this, my stomach starts to feel uncomfortable with the indigestion from the rushed eating and brisk climb up the hill. I wouldn’t be able to do this before a vigorous Wing Chun warm up, as I might be sick! I can taste the tomato sauce from the pasta, still lingering in my mouth, and probably my breath! Nevertheless, I sit into my stance, imagining a ball between my legs, and concentrate on what he’s saying.

“Now relax the shoulders. Try to find any areas of tension there and get rid of them.” After a minute of this, I forget all notions of work, deadlines and time. I am completely in the moment. I notice that much tension has mounted around my shoulders, particularly along my upper trapezius. No doubt from my time slouching over the computer earlier this week! I focus on this dull ache, and try to relax it by relaxing the surrounding muscles. “Now stretch down, and tap the outside of the legs. When you come up, tap the inside of the legs.” Directs Joe. I followed this, sensing a waking of my body, which was feeling sleepy after a heavy lunch.

“Let’s do a few of the traditional Chinese warming up exercises for Taiji known as the *eighteen pieces of silk*.” Joe quietly tells us, strategically implementing his

knowledge of Chinese culture, although I'm not sure how 'traditional' this set really is considering that this is a very modern version of Taijiquan. He guides us through some gentle loosening exercises for the shoulders. This is an area of typical tension for me, particular after long, straining hours by the computer, yet I quickly find it loosening through this slow, rhythmic exercise. I try to move in tandem with Joe and the rest of the class, as a form of synchronised dry swimming as we gently tap our kidneys as we continue to swing round. After a few repetitions, I am able to mirror them. As our torsos move round in a circle, I notice a few more commercial posters, one with a young woman in a Taiji pose similar to the one I've been working on. So this martial art is recognised as being good for health and fitness within the industry? I had seen a similar poster in the corridor following the reception.

"Now we can do an exercise known as '*holding a grain of rice.*'" Joe laughs. "Let's see how many people drop their rice." We are told to visualise a grain of rice in our palm, which must remain there as we rotate (from our waists) our upper bodies in a spiral motion, much like the *yin-yang symbol*. I find this a great stretch for my chest, which gives a relieving pain much like a workout. My shoulders are still stiff from years of Wing Chun training in an intensely anterior manner. This is a challenge, as I must constantly keep my palm upwards throughout the spiral. Joe faces the large mirrored wall so that he is looking the same direction as us, which allows us to replicate his movements, and, starting with the right hand, I am imagining a grain of rice being held in the middle of my palm. I rotate my hips and trunk to the left, to bring my right hand above my head and then twist the opposite way to bring it back, turning the hand so the fingers are now facing forwards. This is much easier, and reminds me of the *tan sau* position in Wing Chun. I follow the same pattern of body coordination till the hands are on the hips and we are ready to go to the other side. After doing it on the other side, Joe instructs us to try it on both sides, alternatively. I hear the in breath of the class in astonishment. They must be thinking: 'How can we do such a thing?!' Nevertheless, we persevere, and I find this a fun filled challenge, one to take home for daily practice. Our rhythm is no longer synchronised, and I close my eyes so that I only focus on what's necessary – my body motions. From right to left and left to right, this smooth, rhythmic warm up exercise prepares me for my Taiji class. After a few minutes, I get the hang of this, and try to follow the rest of the class, attempting to work as one unit. "Now who's dropped their rice?" Laughs Joe in his easy-going manner. I think I've dropped a bag full!

“Let’s move onto some qigong.” He suggests, forming his hands so they face each other. The palms move close to each other, and then away, at approximately shoulder distance. My fingers are slightly tense, so I allow them to bend a little and separate as I notice Joe does. Through my peripheral vision and by following the motions of my hands, I can see the others do this too. The CD gently changes track, and I am lost in the motion as I close my eyes. After a minute of this, I feel a warm, tingling sensation in the centre of my palms, which eventually moves to the tips of my fingers. I almost feel as if something is being projected out of the fingertips! Is this the mysterious qi that I keep reading about? I try not to conceptualise what this is, instead maintain focus on the present moment and more particularly, the centre of my palms, an energy point often referred to in the Taiji literature. “Pay attention to your hands. If you’re familiar with the exercise you can focus on your shoulders and your lungs” Joe informs us.

“Keep your hands in front of you as if they’re resting on a table, and slowly bring them up to shoulder height.” Joe demonstrates as he speaks. We follow, and I instantly recognise the classic qigong exercise that loosens up my stiff shoulders. My hands feel light and soft, and after a minute of this, my arms feel almost weightless!

Joe calmly lowers his arms to side and comes out of his sunken stance with a tranquil smile. “Now who wants do some Taiji?” ‘I do!’ I say to myself. He asks, beaming a smile. We return a smile in anticipation of formwork. I didn’t think of the time before, but by glancing up to the clock by the door, I can see that it is already 1:30pm! How time flies when you’re enjoying yourself in the embodied moment! The warm up was slow and rhythmic, involving mind-breath coordination and whole body integration so that I could delve into a state of meditation. At no point am I out of breath or in pain, unlike many more exhaustive martial arts warm ups. The slow tempo allows me to pay attention to my body sensations

Joe differentiates the group according to embodied knowledge: “For those who are new to the form, stay at the front. For those who know the form, or who think they know the form, go to the back.” There are a few beginners present, including my mate Paul, who seems to have enjoyed the qigong training, and is standing there patiently. As I’ve been going for a few weeks, I stand at the back, as my fellow students and I exchange nods and hellos. They are complete strangers to me, but we share a connection through this graceful form. Paul is wearing a grey sweat t-shirt, tracksuit bottoms and trainers. He is tall and very thin, almost gaunt, with long, lamp hair, which is probably the result of his strict vegan diet, which leaves him without much daily fat intake. Once you get to know him, you begin to see the philosopher in him! He listens intently to

Joe's clear and confident introduction to the art, and follows his motions in a structured manner: "We teach the *Yang Style 24 short form*, which is the official form of China. We also teach the *48-combined form*, but that's later on. Taiji is a martial art, and it can be a very effective in combat, although we teach it primarily as a health and healing art." Although he intends this talk of the art's roots only for beginners, his charismatic manner travels to the ends of the room and I enjoy listening to his introductory talks.

Meanwhile, our group is without a clear leader or instructions. After a few moments hesitation, the most experienced student says in a Germanic accent: "OK, let's start from the beginning." I am happy that someone has taken the initiative to begin. She is in her early thirties, with curly dark hair and a gentle manner. I noticed her earlier as I entered the room earlier as she is wearing a silk white Chinese suit, often seen in Taiji demonstrations. She is clearly an advocate of the art as such suits are probably quite expensive if they are of good quality, as hers seems to be.

I place myself to her left, by the back wall so that I can follow her and the others' movements. We begin by setting up the stance. I curl my toes into the ground, imagining that I am gripping the earth, forgetting that this is probably reinforced concrete! I sink my hips, and imagine a golden thread lifting my head up gently towards the heavens, and Joe often states. Tim, a nervous young student with gelled spiky hair, is in his usual position on my left, joking about how he's getting lost halfway.

With the gentle music in the background spurring me on, I move in unison with the group, which is like an orchestra conducted by this quietly spoken woman. We move from our waists, sinking deep into the stance that is constantly transferring weight from one leg to the next. I feel that my thighs are getting a good workout from this. Yet I am aware that much of my Wing Chun tendencies are following through here, such as the desire to straighten my arms whilst striking and remain in a more balanced stance. I consciously adjust this: 'We're doing Taiji now!' I scold myself. I hope no one else notices my large adjustments after each posture. Maybe this would be easier if we did some partner work? This doesn't seem to be touched upon in this class.

The seniors on my right, are leading us well, whispering basic guidelines to those on my side of the small group. I watch their graceful movements, which remind me of the flow of a ballet dancer. They don't seem to need to think about the sequence: They just do it. In fact, they seem to be in a serene level of meditation.

Joe has suddenly appeared after helping the beginners. He watches us patiently, and I feel his eyes on me. Trying not to feel scrutinised, I continue as I was, mindful of my earlier mistakes. He first addresses a blonde lady in a pink top who was behind me.

“Jean, your movements are a little too large. Try to make them more compact.” He provides a contrasted visual feedback, first an exaggeration of her motion, and then his own interpretation of the two movements. She nods, a little embarrassed. He then faces me, “George, this is good, but it’s *very* Wing Chun.”

“Really?!” I respond, shocked that he had noticed this so easily.

“Yes. You’re moving your hands too much.” He then turns to address the whole group. “How much movement comes from the arms in Taiji?”

“Some?” Suggests a nervous young man next to me.

“None.” Replies Joe assertively. “Or...ideally none. In Taiji, the movement comes from the waist.” He demonstrates, moving gracefully from his centre, flowing with the arms only after the torso has moved. His whole body is totally integrated. We watch in admiration for his achievement of mind-body unity.

“Now have a go at that.” He tells us with a smile.

“That’s very well done.” He comments on Laura, a very keen Taiji’s practitioner’s performance. Her diligence and hard work in the class and from outside had clearly paid off. I remember her saying that she had been practising during her lunch breaks.

“I’ve been looking at the form on You-Tube.” She explains in a strong South African accent with her usual big grin.

“I see. You-Tube can be a very useful resource.” He agrees.

“But there’s also a lot of politics on there.” I add, thinking of the comments I have seen on some Wing Chun videos.

“Oh...politics, don’t get me started!” Laughs Joe.

He then moves on to correct the girl: “Your hands and feet are good. Now you need to work on the waist. That’s made everything easier. Also be aware of looking backwards. If an opponent was in front of you, you don’t want to look backwards.”

“Do any of you think you know the martial application of this posture?” Asks Joe.

After an awkward moment’s silence, I asked hesitantly, “Is it a push?”

“It can be.” Joe replies simply. “I’ll use George to demonstrate. Some of you might find this interesting.” He smiles at me in acknowledgement of my martial fascinations. He wanted to demonstrate the martial application of the *peng* or ‘ward off’ motion. Perhaps he chose me as I am an experienced martial artist? Never mind, forget about that – just focus on his instructions. We stand opposite each other and Joe asks me to push into his position. I mirror his rounded ward off hand, and leaning forwards, I try to push him off balance. He stays still as a statue in the pressing position, and asks me to push against him even harder. ‘No problem!’ I think, believing I might do OK at this. I

press and press, but am unable to even budge him! I am surprised at the firmness behind this position, which looks like he's holding a very large ball under one arm. His forearm is soft, yet unbreakable. His stance looks relaxed yet feels like I'm pushing into a giant stone statue! My stance starts to shake a little.

"Now push a bit more." Commands Joe in a calm, easy go manner that exudes confidence.

I push harder, thinking I can beat him this time, and he quickly reacts to this by *yielding* to my motion, holding my pressing arm, and twisting at the waist so my arm is locked out. I try to use my stance and low centre of gravity. He doesn't budge one bit. I feel completely defeated and at his mercy. He could snap my locked arm at any time.

"If I let go, I can take advantage of his straightened arm." Explains Joe, as he releases his press and I slip forwards, held by his firm yet relaxed hands. I'm in an *elbow lock*! Joe brings his other hand on my elbow: "Of course, depending on the situation, I can use a lock or arm break. Which leads us into another martial application." He smiles to us all, letting my arm go. I am quite shocked by how easy it was for him to control me.

Joe approaches his most experienced student, Dave, a young, quietly confident man with a black t-shirt and closely cropped blond hair. He whispers in his ear, and they walk towards the group of beginners. "This is Dave. He's been learning Taiji from me for quite a few years now, and is going to help you through the form. Thanks Dave." He says, as he gently pats Dave's shoulder. Dave now begins to take over with the beginners, much like my role in my Wing Chun class. Joe quickly returns to us. "What part of the form are you all up to?" He asks inquisitively.

After a brief, uncomfortable pause, I demonstrate the motion I am having difficulty with, the low stance followed by a knee. Others follow me, showing him the parts they have reached to date. It seems none of us know the poetic phrases for these techniques! Tim, a nervous young man, stutters, "I've got to the weird part where you turn round and punch them!" We laugh with his eccentric explanation, which involves his elaborate double punch to an imaginary opponent.

"OK, let's work from that motion." Joe suggests as he moves down into the low stance, raises and knees all in one fluid motion. "Does anyone think they know the application of this one?" He asks, smiling. After some silence, he explains: "Although it's not the focus in our particular school, it's important to understand the martial applications. I'll use Marie this time, if you don't mind Marie."

Marie, the lady in the silk suit stands opposite, looking perplexed. So that's her name! I have struggled to get to know many of the people in the group due to its transient nature and lack of partner work. She, a petite lady at about five foot five, looks tiny and fragile compared with Joe, who stands around six foot two inches tall.

"If you step into me Marie." Asks Joe

Marie comes in with a punch that Joe easily parries with a hook hand, and sinks down into a low stance to cradle one of her legs in his arms. He then rises up into the second position, putting her arm behind his back for a throw by transferring all his weight from one leg to another. She is dangling upside down like a rag doll! I am very surprised to see the simplicity of such a throw. So this is the martial application of that very famous technique so often depicted in the media! After a moment of helplessness, Marie is gently put down by Joe, who towers above her. She is red in the face and giggles, much out of character from what I know of her! We all laugh in amazement.

"Many of the Chinese Wushu performers go really low when doing this technique (the hook), and some people even have their inner thigh hitting the ground. But if you look at the old masters like *Yang Chengfu* and *Zheng Manqing*, they have quite high stances, and that's for practical reasons." Joe demonstrates a more martially orientated movement. From what I've seen recently, he seems to becoming more interested in the fighting aspects of the art.

"This is one of the martial applications of the form." Explains Joe. "When Taiji first came to the West, it was mystified. One of the people who brought it to this country was a psychologist, and she added all psychotherapy to it. She learned the movements from an old man in a park. It wasn't there before. All of a sudden the form is thought of as a journey. From then on, Taiji taught as a psychological journey. To many people, each move is part of a journey. But if you go back a hundred years, it was none of that. People were practising their martial art. But to a certain extent, the form is a journey. You bring in a state of stillness and end in a state of stillness. Others added interpretations from ancient Chinese philosophy. Every movement corresponds to the *Yi Jing*, *divination*, and the *5 elements*. They claim each movement will do something to your life. I was in a school like this once but I don't understand it. I'm a bit dubious about that, as I haven't experienced such massive changes yet. But ask me again in 20 years." He laughs. "Anyway, let me see your forms so far."

We comply, moving together in unison, flowing through the motions in a relaxed, yet structurally accurate state. As I move along the sequence, I think of the martial

application I have just seen. How else can this move be used? I ask myself. Maybe a throw? I shut out these thoughts, aware that Joe is watching me.

“Right, OK. You’re all using your arms far too much. Now forget about the arms and just focus on the legs and waist.” Joe suggests, reiterating his comments made earlier.

We look at each other, confused at such a command.

“Practice the form with your hands by your sides. You’ll find it really helps your footwork.” Joe demonstrates easily whilst telling us this, as if it was second nature to talk and train! I saw the benefit of this...maybe it could be used in my Wing Chun too? He seems graceful and looks like he’s floating across the room.

Joe returns to the beginners in order to check how they’re getting along with the first few movements of the form. At our own pace this time, moving from the waist, we step in the same manner at the form. I imagine how my hands would integrate with this motion. I can now pay more attention to my waist, which I rarely think about in everyday life. I notice a slight loosening of my lower back, which has been playing up recently with long hours in front of the computer. More people should move like this in order to overcome the stresses and strains of modern day living! I will definitely try this with my Wing Chun. I step, land on my heel, slowly rotate on it, place the rest of my foot down, and curl my toes in order to ‘root’ into the ground. Then I transfer all my weight onto this foot, turn my waist, and step with the next. I focus on the sensations of my feet and ankles as my balance is continually moved from one foot to the next. Rarely in my life have I ever paid so much attention to the soles of my feet. The sensations are heightened as I move along the floor barefoot.

My fellow classmates seem to be enjoying this too. Jim, a shy biology teacher in his fifties, is smiling throughout, as if all his worries have gone. I match his friendly gaze and return a genuine smile of enjoyment. Others seem to be concentrating too much, perhaps a little embarrassed at this?

I am lost in the motion. The weeks of dedicated practice at home have enabled me to memorise the form sequence, which gets increasingly more difficult. Every morning, I have been practising the footwork as I wake up. This has helped me start the day in a fresh new way, although I didn’t go as far as to practise outside in a public park as many practitioners do. I lunge down into the low stance that Joe showed us earlier. A few weeks ago this had seemed awkward and slightly painful, but now I move with ease and comfort. My inner thighs no longer tell me to stop, but relax into this deep stance. Knowing the martial application from Joe’s dramatic demonstration gives me more

motivation to train this technique. I pause, taking in all my internal body sensations: Feet firmly on the ground, rooting through the gripping of my toes. Knees aligned correctly, never passing over the feet. Shoulder and hips square, by turning from the waist. Shoulders low and relaxed, never raised. Head upright and alert along with a lengthened spine, allowing for good posture. By forgetting about the hands, I come to realise how simple Taiji footwork really is.

“OK, time’s up. It’s time to close the class.” Joe calls loudly, waking me from my meditations. It’s 2pm already – I can’t believe it! This vast difference between lived and measured time happens every week.

We return to the line up, with Joe facing us. He tells us to stand in the basic stance, feet beneath the tips, toes pointing straight forward, hips tucked in. I find this very relaxing, although I have the tendency to bring the feet and knees inwards to make the Wing Chun *pyramid stance*! We close our eyes, and run through the very relaxing body awareness meditation done earlier, even going further by gently moving down the body with taps from our hands from the shoulders to outer ankles back up from the inner ankles to inner thighs. I forget about the form and its martial applications, and focus on my current state of serene relaxation.

“Now open your eyes, and take in all the sensations from the room.” Joe instructs us softly, looking placid and calm.

I open my eyelids, returning to the brightly lit room, surrounded by other surprised expressions. It seems we were all deeply relaxed. The CD has already stopped, and I hadn’t noticed this as I was focusing internally on my body positions, relaxation and breathing, rather than on external objects.

“Left hand palm, right hand fist. The traditional Taiji salute.” Joe demonstrates as we follow with a slight bow from the waist. The class is now closed, and people rush to get their shoes in a hurry to get back to their busy schedules. A few core practitioners dedicated to the group stick around to speak to Joe. Marie is first, eager to get more tuition from this full time Taijiquan professional.

“Do you teach the *Taiji sword*?” She asks shyly.

“I do. I can teach the *broadsword* and the *spear*, but only in private lessons. I can arrange to hire a hall so we can train the form together. I’m not cheap though.” He warns.

“How much will it cost?” She inquires, smiling.

“It will be £35 for the hour.” He replies.

“That would be great!” She seems very excited. “I’ll ring you this weekend then. Bye!” She calls to everyone and quickly departs, most probably to her day job. Meanwhile, Jim asks how things are going with my research: “How’s it all going George? It sounds like a very interesting PhD!” He inquires curiously.

“It’s going very well thanks Jim. I’ve pretty much done all the interviews, and I’m looking forward to reading them through again. Joe helped with the study too.” I reply.

“Yes, I know. I’m sure it will be very interesting to read when you’ve written it all up.” He smiles, and saying his regards to all, heading out of the room. What a nice bunch of people! They all seem very interested in research and reading around Taiji like a group of scholars or intellectuals.

Paul approaches Joe. “How are you finding it Paul?” Asks Joe inquisitively.

“I’m really enjoying it thanks. By the way, I went to a qigong and meditation retreat last weekend. It was amazing. Do you know the *Eternal Fire Group*?” Paul asks.

“Yeah, I do. I’ve done a few of their retreats. I’m going on a meditation retreat in the forests of Penbricksire this weekend, and I’m looking forward to that immensely.” Joe replies enthusiastically.

“Cool, man.” Replies Paul as he hands me the DVD.

“Thanks for the film Paul. Did you like it?” I interject, getting involved in the conversation whilst picking up my DVD of Jet Li’s *Fearless*.

“Yeah, it was good man.” He says slowly in his usual laid back manner with a slow nod. “There was some good philosophy in it.” He nods gently. “I have to go now dude. Thanks for the lesson.” Paul rushes off as he is due to coach tennis in the sports centre. As I don’t have to be anywhere, I approach Joe to thank him for the lesson.

“Thanks for that Joe. I really enjoyed that.” I say thankfully, still feeling the relaxation from the standing meditation.

“Glad you enjoyed it George. You seem to be doing well with the form, although it’s very Wing Chun.”

“How is that?” I ask, not knowing if that was good or bad.

“Yes, you can see that the hands play a more important role in Wing Chun than Taiji.” He demonstrates my over emphasis on elbow and wrist energy.

“Do you think I’ll be able to do both though? Will the Taiji help my Wing Chun or detract from it?” I ask, bringing up a concern that I’ve had for a few weeks now.

“I think it will benefit it. After all, I’ve known a few people who do both. Some of my friends combined them well. I knew one guy down in Rothshire and we would do a bit of pushing hands in the pub!” he comments, using a demonstration of the double

handed push with explosive energy and a sharp exhalation. “That Gary down the road, he does Chen style and Wing Chun, doesn’t he?”

“Yeah, he does.” I nod, reassured. I do think that the two arts work well together, but I doubt that I can sustain their joint practice once the busy term begins in the end of September. We say our goodbyes, and I walk through the corridor, past the reception and into the bright sunshine. The birds are singing, and I feel fully revived after the session. My walk is steady and flowing, and is not interrupted by any tensions as my body is invigorated and refreshed. The journey down the hill carries me back home, where my field notes diary awaits me. However, I bump into Tim on the way down. We exchange smiles as we approach each other.

“Hi Tim. How did you find today?”

“It was really good. It’s helping me a lot in my life, is the Taiji. A few months ago, I wouldn’t have been able to talk to you. I was close to ending my life.” He replied suddenly in a shockingly easygoing manner considering this confession. His hair is heavily gelled into spikes, and from a closer inspection, he looks a little worn out.

“Really?” I try to sound calm when I am very surprised not only at his openness, but the positive impact Taiji has had on his life.

“Yeah, I couldn’t go out of the house and talk to anyone. I’m getting better now. Surfing’s really helped too, but you need other people to go with you really. I haven’t been in ages.”

“I’ve got a friend who’s recently started, but he needs someone to go with. Maybe you guys could go together?” I suggest, sensing a possible remedy. I provide my friend Fernando’s contact details.

“Anyway, I’ve gotta go now. Bye!” Says Tim quickly.

“I’m glad it’s helping you mate. I’ll see you next week.” I reply, pleased to hear that Taiji was benefiting a person in need of help. He gives me a surprisingly strong handshake for such a skinny guy, and we part company until the next time.

I arrive home and prepare a Chinese green tea. This is typical of my routine in the afternoons, particularly after a martial arts session! I sip it gently, taking in the aroma and bitter taste. Although I didn’t feel thirsty during the lesson, I realise from my rapid gulping that I must be slightly dehydrated. Right, onto the field notes – I have lots to write down!

On my flat’s balcony, I write initially short notes about what I saw, felt, heard, smelt and thought during the hour’s session. This is based on my guidelines for embodied ethnography and adds to my weeks of detailed notes and has helped forge this trail. The

sun beams down upon me, soaking into my skin. My back is soft following the class, pressing against the deck chair that ordinarily leaves me feeling stiff. I curl my toes into the wooden surface as I did during the class, at one with my surroundings. My senses are highly invigorated after this workout and I hear every bird chirp and human laugh in perfect clarity alongside the bitter taste and aroma of the strong tea. I close my eyes and begin to recall my embodied experiences...

Appendix 1.2 Confessional Tales

The following confessional tales offer a short selection of memorable accounts of my journey throughout the research process including issues of data collection, rapport and my practitioner-researcher positioning. These accounts are mainly intended to be vivid and evocative in an attempt to share lessons learned and thoughts and concerns that I developed over the period of data collection and analysis. At other times however, they are shorter notes from my reflexive journal that were jotted down when ideas emerged outside the research setting. Hopefully by reading these, other researchers may learn from my mistakes and reflect on their own qualitative research practice.

A night to remember: My biggest blunder as an interviewer (6/11/07)

I had it all prepared, at least that's what I thought. Interview guide, specific questions for Roger, reflexive journal and lots of coloured pens to help make notes. But wait...I'd forgotten something. I instantly panicked...I couldn't find my spare tape recorder! I hadn't used it in at least a year. Why hadn't I prepared this?!

Thankfully, my girlfriend Erika had a hand held tape recorder that she let me borrow. We had to drive to our friend Fernando's place to pick it up as he has used it quite recently. I had no time to eat, and I still needed to print off the new questions that I had laboured on last night. I listened as Eri explained to me how to use it. There was just one problem...it was a Japanese tape recorder, which, unsurprisingly, had Japanese kanji characters all over it! However, this was just the beginning of my problems.

As I parked my car near the interview scene, I sat in the cold and quickly checked the tape recorder whilst Eri's advice was still in my head. 'OK, let's see if this works.' I said to myself, into the tape recorder. I wound it back, and it played back fine. 'That's great!' I thought. I was ready to begin.

Roger was waiting for me in the normally quiet bar that he works and was chatting to the barman. He already had a pint of bitter in hand, so I got a delightfully cold lager for myself and we settled into the comfy leather seats in the corner of the bar. After an informal chat about work and recent goings on in the area, and then a very much more official ethical clearance, we were ready to begin, or so I believed.

Being anxious to get the interview underway, I checked the tape recorder again. I wound it back, and, expecting to hear my voice again, yet I heard absolutely nothing. The tape was moving, but no sound was made. My heart skipped a beat for a second as I realised it wasn't working.

This was the moment when I panicked. What could I do? I didn't speak Japanese, was a bit of a technophobe, and was out of practice in interviewing, having not done any since my masters dissertation 18 months ago. What should I do? I asked myself again. Just then Ben and Ed, two fellow PhD students, and regulars in the bar, passed by and made a few jokes: "Georgie J, what are you up to?" Laughed Ben, a physiology PhD student. "Nothing, just trying to sort out this tape. It's in Japanese." I replied feebly.

They laughed and shook their heads in amusement as Ben commented: "You qualitative researchers."

This subtle joke towards qualitative research, often the bane of laughs in the physiology dominated sports science school made me feel extremely embarrassed and felt apologetic for wasting Roger's time. I couldn't count how many sorries I uttered that evening. I hoped they didn't spread the news to my other friends and colleagues at the University. My reputation as a good PhD student would go downhill then! To make matters worse, Ed was there, and he kindly acted as my partner in the qualitative research module where I conducted my first nervous interview.

After over 40 minutes of feeble attempts to sort the problem out, and several calls to Eri, I finally excused myself and drove off to Eri so that she could have a look at the tape recorder. After a few minutes of investigation, she reached a verdict: The batteries were running out. I felt so deflated, but overjoyed at the same time. I had wasted almost an hour of precious interviewing time, but simultaneously, I had learned a valuable lesson from this emotional evening: Always prepare well ahead of the interview and get to know the equipment like it was an extension of your body. You can never be too well prepared!

Fortunately on this occasion Roger was in an environment he felt very comfortable in as he could chat to a few colleagues at the bar, and get himself another pint whilst waiting for me patiently. When I returned rather frantically, I breathed a sigh of relief that he was still there, smiling calmly and serenely. I checked the tape once more, and it worked.

"Yes!" I exclaimed as Roger laughed happily a great example of a calm person embodying the Taiji principles of relaxation.

The interview began, and it was a very insightful and productive one that allowed me to shut out thoughts of the last hour's events. There I noticed how softly and slowly Roger spoke, almost as if the Taiji had reflected in his daily manners. Yet another issue emerged that came with this mutually convenient setting: The noise of a football match being played live. As we spoke I heard an almighty roar as a goal was scored by a team in the Champion's League. I has chosen the wrong day to meet with Roger as any other day would have been much more tranquil. Ricardo, my colourfully dressed and eccentric friend from Portugal, was ecstatic as Benfica has scored against their opposition, and he embraced his compatriot, a first year undergraduate student who had recently befriended. He turned and gave me a thumbs up and a huge smile. I returned to my cosy black leather seat and Roger and I laughed it off as we continued the interview, but I was looking forward to hearing this in the tape recording later on.

My Voice: Transcribing my First Interview (07/11/07)

Although I encountered such a tribulation before Roger's first interview, it was nevertheless a success and an enjoyable conversation with a purpose. Following conventional practice, I transcribed this as soon as possibly, and was pleased to hear a very interesting story. However, one thing was certain: I was speaking far too quickly and incoherently, which was exacerbated in comparison with Roger's slow and steady speech. Having removed the distractions of last night's events, I was able to close my eyes and listen, often with a grimace, at my garbled speech. It would take a long time to alter my way of talking, a reflection of my habitus, but it would be possible with lots of hard work.

My Achilles heel: My own Wing Chun school as the primary data source (09/11/07)

After a tutorial in his office, Dave Brown, my supervisor, said to me with a slightly concerned look, "Now I have to say this George as your supervisor." He paused for thought, "Are you sure you're OK using your own school and art for your data collection?" I assured him this was fine. After all, I was one of Sifu's most diligent and loyal students. What possibly could go wrong? We have a really good relationship.

Dave then said “I just feel that I have to say it as a supervisor. I have to ask you from an ethical perspective.” He was mainly referring to the instability of the group with numbers and the potential for me to upset Sifu by interviewing former students.

Yet a few weeks ago, the meaning of Dave’s official worry dawned on me. If the group closes down, I’ve lost a valuable data set, one that I’ve relied on for the last three years. Would the Wing Chun practitioners want to talk to me once we’ve all gone our separate ways? Would my status in the subculture prevent me from approaching other Wing Chun schools? Hitherto I had neglected the wider Wing Chun and Taijiquan communities as I was being rather self-indulgent in my own club’s subculture as the ethnography remained the main focus since my BSc dissertation. I have been missing out on meeting potentially invaluable interview collaborators. It’s time I looked further afield...

Codes of conduct and the ideal martial artist

Solo practice is meant to be a meditative experience that allows one to block out thoughts of work and issues of the past and future. Yet whilst performing the Siu Lim Tao in my studio flat, I had a typical distracting, but insightful thought: Why not investigate each martial art’s school’s code of conduct and handbook? This might give an indication of the martial arts leaders’ perceptions of the ideal martial artist. For instance, are the martial artists undergoing body-self transformation in the fashion outlined by these texts? Or are there issues within the pedagogy or the individuals’ wider circumstances that are preventing this?

I don’t know what I hadn’t thought of this earlier. This could be a great future study investigating a variety of martial arts styles and genres.

This moment was an important one as it was an indication that I was now thinking more as a researcher than as a practitioner. Ideas were always coming to mind about theories, methods and writing styles, which I had never experienced before. My identity was slowly moving along a continuum from complete practitioner to emerging qualitative researcher, and I wonder where it will end up.

Practitioner-Teacher-Researcher (06/02/08)

I sat back on my swivel chair in my studio flat, a sparse room provided by the University for my services as a resident tutor. It is here that most of my ideas form and are put to paper and computer as I find it hard to work in the bustling postgraduate computer suite. I sipped some sweet rooibos tea, a recent tippie of mine that I picked up from friends such as Nick from Kung Fu, who had put his recovery from flu down to the South African beverage. For the past three and a half years, I have existed as a practitioner-researcher. This position has greatly assisted my access to participants, my understanding of martial culture, provided me with embodied data collection, and enabled a personal account from a member of the studied subculture. In recent weeks, however, there has been talk of reopening the Adderton school, with me as the chief instructor. Now there is the serious responsibility of becoming a practitioner-teacher-researcher, which will have ethical implications due to the teacher-student power relationships. At the same time, this new responsibility comes many research possibilities such as accounts of beginning teaching but also the often contrasting roles of a practitioner trying to improve my Wing Chun, a teacher wishing to gain some experience and help the Kung Fu family re-establish itself in Adderton and a budding researcher wanting to offer a different perspective on martial pedagogies and the process of cultural transmission.

Some initial practitioner-teacher-researcher experiences (06/02/08)

Even though I have yet to begin the class in Adderton, I have an idea of the responsibilities and duties of a serious TCMA instructor. Finding a hall, sorting out insurance, advertising, marketing, getting people interested. These are just a few of the jobs a TCMA teacher must undertake in order to get started and pass the art to a new 'generation' of students. Then I will have to retain enough students in order to make the small business sustainable.

Why would I go to all this trouble? For me? For others? I think for both. For me, it would provide a sense of satisfaction, as I will be sharing my knowledge with others. For others, they will benefit from learning the martial art, which will hopefully help them grow as individuals. This would be one of the greatest gifts life can bestow.

An interview as fuel for an autoethnography (06/02/08)

Today I was given a great idea from my girlfriend: As an interviewee, I could listen to my own story to help me write my autoethnography. A life story interview will elicit important events or life chapters, which could be used as autoethnographic vignettes. An interview focusing on the martial arts would help me understand my own experiences in learning, practising and teaching. Perhaps other practitioner-researchers might find this useful?

Pre-interview conversations (06/02/08)

This evening Dave and I had a very interesting conversation in his kitchen before a quick Wing Chun training session. We had recently begun training together once a week to get some extra practice in outside the normal class, which I always found particularly beneficial. Whilst boiling the kettle for our usual green tea (a reflection of our Kung Fu identity), we discussed who was still about in the Wing Chun school. Dave, dressed in a 'Kung Fu dog' t-shirt (a joke garment that no doubt reflected his social identity that he was re-establishing through rejoining our group) asked me about Eric, and I told him that he had unfortunately left the school for no apparent reason. I also told him about Barry's mysterious disappearance, which was very strange to us as he had gained a black sash. Neither of us could understand it. As Dave remarked, "how could you train so hard in something, just to give it up like that? It's like in meditation. I think I'll stop when I feel more self-aware. Not when I'm enlightened."

This informal chat preceded a short training session, and helped fuel the conversation during a very productive interview that focused on Wing Chun as a lifelong practice towards self-mastery. This reinforced my understanding of the pre-interview context. Although it wasn't tape recorded, it can be a useful source of information via field notes, and I will be sure to make note of future conversations, both before and after the official interviews. This would help me remember key themes, assisting later analysis and future interview questions/topics.

Roger's feedback – Email (06/02/08)

Last night at home in my usual work chair I received a thankful email from Roger praising our second interview. Roger had told me: "I'm really pleased with the transcript. I just took a look at it and though 'wow'! There's nothing that I would like to change." He told me that we were talking out some very interesting things, and that he sounded like an expert. Additionally, he remarked "I must have felt very relaxed during the entire interview to tell a story like this."

I was so pleased to hear that some of my participants has enjoyed their interviews and had gained benefits from reading their transcripts. Only last night, Dave told me that the first interview had inspired him to train harder, and increased his thought process towards Wing Chun. It had given him many things to tell me, although he forgot all but one at the time! Perhaps a life story interview can act as an inspiration as well as a therapy, which other researchers have suggested.

Power issues in practitioner-teacher research (09/02/08)

As an experienced practitioner of Wing Chun, I hold a great deal of power within my particular school. This is especially true now that I will soon be running my own class in Adderton, which will extend my identity to an instructor. If I interview members of my particular gym, there will be obvious issues of power depending if they're my older or younger 'brothers', to borrow our family terminology.

Firstly, my teachers Sifu and Terry hold power over me within the hierarchy. They may want to know who said what in certain interviews, and could put me in an uncomfortable situation should they be displeased at my findings and interpretations. My position in the hierarchy might be threatened if I don't cooperate with them, and I could even be thrown out of the school!

Secondly, I hold power and authority over my junior Kung Fu brothers and sisters. They may feel obliged, rather than free, to help me as interviewees, which may result in less productive discussions than intended. If they actually wanted to withdraw from the study, the close and personal nature of Wing Chun may make them uncomfortable with this decision. Once I became a teacher leading a school of my own, the power I will hold over my students will be magnified tremendously. I would have a great sample with which to conduct research on beginners in particular. Yet will the students feel

comfortable? It is hard to say ‘no thanks’ to someone you have a great deal of respect and admiration for. Yet it is even harder to say no to someone who you call your Sifu.

Reflecting on this, I agree with my supervisor in that this group is my ‘Achilles heel’ – a great sample, but a risky one because of my position and investment in the school. In the future I believe I will investigate a group where I am an outsider, to get both perspectives as an ethnographer.

Audiotapes: A way of analysing my interview style (09/02/08)

Today at home, my bunker of research ideas, I came up with some strategies for data analysis. Firstly, from listening to the audiotape, and attempting to transcribe it, it is clear that I have a great deal to learn about interviewing. After shuddering upon listening to my voice, what is immediately obvious is that I still talk extremely quickly, which makes it difficult to transcribe in comparison to my usual slow and contemplative participants. This issue remains despite my identification of the problem during my first interview transcription.

Secondly, from reading the transcript, it is obvious that my use of ‘yeah’ is exhaustive, unnecessary, and quite frankly embarrassing considering my interests in gaining a wider vocabulary. There are better ways to encourage continued responses from my participants. Probes and body language could be more specific, and less invasive respectively. I will strive to remember these two key issues during my next interview on Tuesday.

A third idea came into my head: I could listen to audiotapes at home in order to reflect on the dialogue, conversation and rapport. Although this form of analysis wouldn’t be in the final thesis, it would be a useful tool for learning. Furthermore, by listening to their actual voices, I would be able to better identify their narrative tone, and recognise key quotes in the interview. Having benefited from it today, I can safely comment that it is certainly a method of analysis worth continuing to explore.

Rapport: A fine line (10/02/08)

During a clear skied evening Fernando and I eagerly entered Rigmouth on our way to the Academy. We had been discussing our respective PhDs, and after discussing several

methodological issues with my friend, we got onto the subject of rapport. I explained that power relations would play a major factor in determining the interviewee's behaviour in qualitative research. Fernando, himself a computer science student, suggested that being too close might have a big effect on the ability to answer personal questions. For instance, Terry, my most recent interviewee, may feel unable to answer certain questions or talk about emotional topics because of our well-established teacher-senior student relationship. As we see each other on a regular basis in semi-professional circumstances, it may be hard for him to interact with me as normal, especially if he 'loses face' as Goffman might say. I look forward to interviewing him to see how our relationship influences the conversation and rapport.

Wing Chun and Taijiquan: A discrepancy in knowledge? (10/02/08)

I sat back in my chair and contemplated. From my eight and a half years hard training in Wing Chun, I have had many embodied experiences and memories. I have also amassed a small library of books on the style and have borrowed many books from my fellow students over the years. It is therefore fair to say that I have an immense knowledge of this style of TCMA, which has both assisted and hindered my analysis. It has assisted me in the fact that I've been able to access all members of the subculture, and understand the people, places and customs they speak about. It has hindered me by the fact that I've had to attempt to suspend my thinking as a practitioner and learn to think as a researcher.

On the other hand, with Taijiquan, I only have a few months of properly led instruction from a different organisation, and a year or so of spontaneous, and often lethargic home practice. There is an obvious discrepancy in my embodied knowledge and 'experience' – precisely what my PhD is all about. Another key issue is my sampling. Being a member of the Wing Chun subculture, I have several good contacts for interviews. This makes it even easier to neglect Taijiquan. I shall remain aware of this, and will strive to read up on the Taijiquan system, and build up contacts in this fascinating style of TMCA. One thing is for certain: I will enter the world of Taijiquan with my eyes open and speak to practitioners with the sociological imagination.

Post-interview field notes: An opportunity for reflection (12/02/08)

Today I made brief notes after my excellent interview with Terry. My immediate thoughts were jotted down in a spider diagram, summarising the main themes of the interview. This should allow me to make sense of the key themes before analysis. In case I am too busy to transcribe, these notes will allow me to analyse the data in a quick, although superficial fashion. These initial notes can then be used for later transcription, analysis and in the early stages of writing up. By colour coding, I highlighted areas in need of further exploration. Alongside this, I can reflect upon methodological issues, such as my interviewing style. Perhaps this will be a form of initial analysis that I can follow with my other participants?

Sampling strategies (13/02/08)

Who shall I choose to interview next? I certainly need to move beyond my own small circle of Kung Fu brothers in *Bridge's Wing Chun Academy*. I also need to investigate Taijiquan in various different schools to find suitable interview participants. But where will I find these individuals? I should look at the websites/descriptions of the various ideal school types in order to determine which one to visit. Once I have familiarised myself with the class by means of participant observation, I will be able to select experienced practitioners who are likely to produce interesting stories.

- The four different 'schools' (combat, technical, health and spiritual)
- The three different body typologies (fighters, martial artists and thinkers)

Wing Chun and Taijiquan are likely to possess different types of body-selves, socialised into certain types of schools from the 'hard core' fighting orientated schools to the 'airy fairy' spiritual schools as many practitioner have bluntly put it. I will produce a rationale for each member of the subculture. Teachers and their assistants will be good to talk to, as they will tell tales of cultural transmission.

Member checking: A debatable strategy (13/02/08)

Although my participants can be very useful in verifying their particular interview transcript, it is debatable whether or not they should be able to help me with theory development. For instance, with my body typologies, each participant may not see themselves as fitting into any of prescribed categories, or telling a particular type of story, even though their story may say otherwise. They will especially not like to hear that I believe TCMAAs are cults! It is like Andrew Sparkes says, it is third order, rather than second order interpretation (and interpretation of an interpretation of reality).

Sampling strategy and ideal types (21/02/08)

Instead of interviewing 20 practitioners (10 in each style), I could choose to speak to 18 (9 in each style). The reason for this would be a deliberate (purposeful/theoretical) sample of three practitioners from each body type for both styles. It would be as follows per style:

- 3 fighters (hard to find with Taijiquan)
- 3 martial artists
- 3 thinkers

These are likely to be found in the four different schools (fighting, technical, spiritual and health). By complete observation, and reading each school's literature (including syllabuses, mission statements, and handbooks), it will be easy to determine which ideal category each school belongs to. Of course, within certain schools there will be a variety of body types. For instance, in a technical school, there will be some experienced practitioners who understand it as a fighting system, and others who construct meaning around their practice in the way of spirituality and health.

A rationale could be drawn up for each participant. Why did I choose to interview them? Why not other members of their school? Particularly interesting people to talk to would be:

- Female practitioners

- Those that travel far
- Those that teach regularly
- Those of a different social background (education, occupation, ethnicity)
- Those that devote most of their resources to their chosen practice
- Those who match the criteria of one or more of the ideal types (these need to be outlined)

Cross disciplinary martial arts research (21/02/08)

As the academic research on the martial arts is so lacking, it would be highly justifiable to undertake cross-disciplinary research in order to further understand these practices. Using the four aspects of sports science (physiology, biomechanics, psychology and qualitative), I could lead a Wing Chun Research Organization, helping conserve the arts principles, but modernise certain aspects through natural (but not forced) evolution.

Sampling problems: Visiting other schools (21/02/08)

As a dedicated practitioner of Wing Chun, I religiously attend two classes per week in Rigmouth. My commitment may soon be enhanced with a new class in Adderton, which I will lead. This poses a dual problem with sampling from other schools: 1) My commitment to my own group detracts from possibilities in visiting other practitioners 2) My position in the hierarchy and the political structure of Wing Chun may make it difficult to visit and gain a warm reception from other Wing Chun schools. These two reasons have prevented me from attending different Wing Chun (and even Taijiquan) classes. As Dave Brown said, this group is my Achilles heel: A great sample, but limiting in that I am obliged to go there, and risk my position as a member with my research. In order to make progress with my PhD, I must endeavour to visit other schools that meet all four of the ideal types of schools. I may also come across other types of schools that will expand my awareness of school and body types. Along with this, I may be aware of alternative narratives of long-term practice (how they construct and maintain meaning for and from their experiences).

The value of member checking (04/03/08)

During the break last night, I approached Terry about the interview whilst he was in the foyer making his usual half time cup of tea in his designated mug. “How are you finding the interview?” I asked, wondering if he was free and willing to do a follow up interview after reading through the transcript.

“It’s going well thanks. I haven’t quite finished though.” After a pause, he continued: “I think there’s some parts where you didn’t understand my accent though. I was thinking to myself ‘did I say that?’” He laughed in his loud, characteristic manner, which no doubt would be echoing across the other side of the gym.

We then went on to discuss the various habitual responses we all possess when responding to questions. Mine was ‘yeah’ and ‘does that make sense,’ whereas Terry’s was ‘do you know what I mean?’ as Terry admitted: “We scousers are renowned for it mate, we really are.”

Before I left the foyer, he added: “It made me realize just how forthright I am! I’m glad that all the names are changed, otherwise I might upset a few people! Do you remember what I said about all the people who get into the spirituality?”

“Yeah, you said ‘they’re up their own arses.’” I laughed as I walked back into the main room

“I better be careful, or I might offend somebody.” He replied with a grin.

This was an important exercise in member checking for clarification of content and verification of meaning, particularly as Terry and I have different accents and mannerisms that might make me mistake what he is saying. Perhaps I could also provide him with a copy of the tape alongside the transcript so he could check his voice against what was written, and return it to me with written corrections and suggestions. I’ll certainly be doing this when I get home.

On the journey home I was very pleased that Terry has taken the time to read through the transcript and had spotted some mistakes. I was even more excited that the transcript had allowed him to reflect on his often outspoken comments, which didn’t consider the subject nature of martial practice. Interview transcripts may therefore have a practical function in improving TCMA practice and teaching by making the practitioner/teachers aware of the stories they buy into and reproduce. As I returned home I had a thought: Perhaps by reading other people’s interview transcripts (with their permission), their access to other narratives may be enhanced?

Another positive reaction from member checking (07/03/08)

Just now I received a phone call from Sifu whilst I was at home relaxing. I was initially surprised by this, as he never really calls me unless there is something urgent to discuss or if he needs me to cover teaching. To my delight he wanted to talk about the interview we had recently conducted in his home after some Mexican food. Although he suggested a few name changes to protect anonymity, he was very pleased with the whole interview process. His enthusiasm resonated through the phone line. He went on to tell me how deep the conversation was, and how it made him realize very important issues. He suddenly came out with: “And I realized when we were talking about chi sau that it’s shared meditation, shared enlightenment. I think I became enlightened when we spoke during the interview. Yeah, I had a moment of enlightenment.” This surprised me greatly, as I rarely hear him talk about spiritual issues, which were only brought up in the two interviews I have conducted with him.

“I think it’s great what you’re doing George. You could write books out of it and all.” He said.

“Thanks Sifu. I’m hoping to interview Nick next as he’s such a longstanding and dedicated member of the group.”

He seemed excited at this prospect: “Nick’s a really intelligent guy. I’m sure he’ll give you a good interview. Nick’s my confidant. When I have problems, I always talk to him. He listens. And he listens well. Even if someone just listens to you, it really does help.”

Sifu continued to praise the interview, and expressed his strong desire to publish with me. He could see the benefits of these stories for other martial artists. His voice said it all: The interview has continued his inspired new methods of teaching have moved beyond common notions of ‘interview as therapy’ to ‘interview as inspiration.’ Obviously a book with his real name would bring up issues of identity, but we’ll cross that bridge when we come to it.

Observations as a fuel for sampling (08/03/08)

As Dave concluded in our recent tutorial, my observations of various martial artists will help me decide whether they are worth interviewing or not. As I already know several interesting and experienced TCMA practitioners in Bridge’s Academy, it would be

foolish to ignore their potential as interviewees. I already know that they have taught and practised their chosen art for many years at a high intensity, belong to different ideal TCMA body typologies, are interesting, insightful and elaborate in their explanations, but also hold great rapport with them which should help fuel productive interviewing. This would not just be convenience sampling, but be purposeful/theoretical sampling as I have immediate access to interesting life stories from martial artists belonging to a range of ideal body types.

Typical things to look out for when observing different TCMA practitioners in action might include:

- Their acceptance and interest in my research
- Position in pedagogy e.g. assistant instructor
- Teaching and training approach (fighting, health, spirituality, technical or philosophical)
- Embodied knowledge/schemes of perception
- Years of experience
- Level of experience/attainment
- My knowledge of their life story
- Ways of interacting with others
- Age
- Gender

Participants becoming our collaborators (09/03/08)

As an active member of the TCMA subculture many of my PhD interviewees are also my friends and training colleagues. Sifu is particularly interested in my research, as it may have useful implications for the school. He is keen to write a book with me – one very different to the two normal martial arts books (technical or historical) as it could be a life story book of everyday practitioners' experiences. Sifu would therefore act as a collaborator and co-worker.

'Roger' also commented that he has never seen books 'in the middle' of the technical books and the accounts of hermit-like grandmasters. What about the everyday martial artist? Aren't their stories to be told?

- Participants may act as collaborators, by pointing out or providing a contact point for (as gatekeepers) potential interviewees e.g. Sifu with Ted.
- My PhD will contribute to a new knowledge and could be edited to be accessible to a range of practitioners.
- Participants might act as collaborators through member checking interview transcripts and finished work, and possibly providing new ideas.

On embodied field notes (09/03/08)

I had intended to write up my embodied field notes immediately after training with Dave, but in my usual rush, had neglected to bring my field notes diary with me.

Would taking immediate field notes make them more vivid, detailed or more 'accurate'? Several ethnographers have argued the case for this, although they are usually referring to observation notes. As my arm might be tired, and my mind in a daze from the flow of training, it might actually be better to wait till home, when I can recollect my ideas. After all, you can never 'capture' lived experience, only try to convey its meaning in a comprehensible and thorough fashion.

Chi Sau before interviewing: Sunday morning in the gym

I arrived to Bridge's Academy at 11am as Nick and I had agreed to meet there and move on for the interview. Loud rock music erupted from the main room as I reached familiar steps up to the bold entrance. I heard several deep male voices, and was intrigued to find out who was there.

Inside the main hall was Terry and Nick, sweating heavily, alongside a tall, toned man in late thirties who I had never met before. As Terry and Nick engaged in some chi sau I went over to him and introduce myself. It turns out that he was Dean, and student who left the area before I joined yet had resumed training in a different Wing Chun club. We rolled to warm up, and I was surprised to be on the receiving end of some rapid attacks from this man. He hounded me with an aggressive onslaught of strikes and attempted trapping techniques as I backed off to gain more room. Dean then launched forwards for a powerful, yet obvious strike as I side stepped and pulled him off balance,

sending him staggering across the room and almost crashing into Terry and Nick, who were playing a more controlled game of chi sau.

Terry laughed loudly, filling the room with his deep voice: “George wants you to chase him.” He grinned as he continued with Nick, who seemed a little uncomfortable with his tremendous structure and energy.

We rotated partners as we were now even numbers, and despite the powerful fans above us, I felt beads of sweat dripping down my back. Nick was more focused and relaxed as he greeted me. “Alright fella.” Much like our Sifu would. His arms were more controlled and softer, although I felt tension in his shoulders as always. We managed to have a chat about the technique and he explained that not long ago he was at my level, where he was playing long bridge techniques rather than closing the gap.

“Right, that’s it Terry, you’re killing me!” Exclaimed Dean, panting and bending forwards to recover. Terry laughed again, heading for the kettle to boil a cup of tea. “You’re using too much energy lad. That’s why you’re so tired and I’m not.”

“You’re good mate.” I said to Dean as an icebreaker.

“He should be good.” Said Terry. “He was training with me for years. We used to do four to five hours every day when we all weren’t working.” He laughed again in his usual booming manner.

I was impressed by their dedication, and was fascinated by Dean’s different energy and approach to chi sau, which he had altered from learning in his new school in the Midlands. This session has refreshed me after a tiresome journey, and I felt awake and alert, interested to hear about Nick’s training experiences and his dedication on Sunday mornings. I certainly had a few more questions for Terry for his second interview as his former training lifestyle was something I hadn’t been aware of until now. Until this point I wasn’t aware of the close relationship between Nick and Terry, which emerged later in the interview. Thanks to this session I had new things to speak about in interviews and look for in field notes.

On the beach: Chi sau during an interview

Often practitioners find it hard to explain their embodied experiences, particularly in relation to chi sau. Tony was one such practitioner, as he had demonstrated some of the Siu Lim Tao motions during his first interview in a botanical gardens. We both enjoyed speaking in natural environments, and had chosen to walk to a secluded beach that only

locals really went to. The waves crashed around us as we chatted about Wing Chun, spirituality and eventually chi sau.

“Maybe we should do some.” Suggested Tony enthusiastically as we stood up from the steps to the beach and positioned ourselves on the platform just above the tape-recorded. We rolled for a minute as Tony spoke about his experiences: “I feel circles of energy. Small circles that also penetrate forwards.”

We proceeded to play some gor sau above the windy bay, and had a few exchanges and close strikes in a playful manner as Tony smiled in happiness as he almost pinned my arms against my chest. Luckily I managed to get out of it, and he nodded in approval.

“You’re getting better mate.” I remarked.

“Yeah, but I can tell you’re better. It’s all that.” He said as he demonstrated my covering position from his strike. “I’m not at that level yet.”

We then sat down next to the tape recorder and continued with the interview almost as if nothing has just happened. Tony couldn’t explain it verbally during gor sau due to the speed and intensity, and didn’t try to when we sat back down to catch our breath. Throughout the interview he often stood up and demonstrated a position, including yoga stretches as he continued to explain his intense physical lifestyle of Wing Chun, qigong, yoga and meditation. These visual demonstrations added to the feelings I had experienced moments ago, and complimented my prior understanding of his often monastic training.

Avoiding the flowerbed: Chi sau after a interview

Emma’s fascinating life story was now over, yet she was intrigued into the differences between our Wing Chun styles, which shared a common thread. After a playful chi sau roll with Eri, which seemed controlled and respectful (possibly because Eri was a beginner) I thought it would be a good idea to run through some forms to demonstrate our positions and sequences, and I led the Siu Lim Tao, which she then followed slightly differently, with the angle of her forearm being different, and energy releases more flicky. We also ran through chum kiu and biu jee and some of the dummy in the air, although Emma hadn’t got that far into the system.

“It’s similar, but it’s also really different.” She said. “The energy’s different.” I could definitely tell this just through the sense of sight, as he arms seemed to flick out, particularly at the fingers, but it would be interesting to feel this directly.

“How about some lop sau to warm up?” She suggested.

We linked arms, and I immediately noticed a snappy, aggressive energy that she exerted. “You’ll probably notice that I’m quick flicky.” She noted as he picked up the rhythm and started playing some attacks. One went low to my ribs, and was surprisingly quite a firm shot and I winced. She smiled as I recalled her stories of hitting hard in chi sau. I sunk into my balanced stance and noticed that her weight was on the back foot, leaving her a little off balance. With a more forceful lop sau I sent her backwards, and hard to hold and pull her back to avoid her sprawling into the colourful flowerbed behind her. She looked shocked and bewildered as we resumed training. Again, she tried a rapid attack, but I simply pushed forwards with my lop sau to upset her balance. I held onto her again for a second time as she edged even closer to the blue and purple flowers. We decided to stop at that point.

“You’re really good.” I nodded in approval of her subtle attacks and speed.

Emma just remained silent, with no reply, as she seemed to be in shock of what had happened. Eri and I had to head back home, which was several hours away, so we said our goodbyes. Emma seemed serious and quiet, much different to her candid interview just minutes earlier. This experience certainly taught me that chi sau after an interview can certainly allow for embodied exchanges and an understanding of the person’s individual approach to the art. I had maintained face and upheld the name of my style but at the same time has enjoyed out brief exchange. If it had gone on I’m sure she would attack aggressively as her chi sau demonstrated many charged emotions that she had spoken about in the interview.

Creating interview guides (11/03/08)

A blank screen faced me. What should I write? What questions are worth asking? I was about to compile Sarah’s interview, but was struggling for ideas. Although I had known Sarah for over five years, I was unable to craft questions appropriate for her life story.

Then an idea came into my head: Write down the interview topics before the questions. I quickly did this, and as I examined the short list of topics, a wide range of questions raced through my head. I typed frantically so that the ideas didn’t vanish. I

was left with 17 open ended, life story interview questions specific for this interesting martial artist.

- This links to the advice stated in much of the interview literature
- It is a strategy worth adopting for further interviews
- Sarah and Mr Chan's interview guides might be useful examples for the Appendix section

Usefulness of observations for sampling (04/04/08)

It struck me today just how important observation is as a tool for sampling potential interviewees. As my sampling is primarily based around ideal body types, complete observation and participant observation has allowed me to examine the behaviour, mannerisms, training approach and teaching styles of various people. From this, I am able to estimate the body types of the various MA practitioners.

How would I have approached Terry or Sifu if I had never trained with them or observed their normal activities? Would I instantly be able to categorise them into ideal types? Would I also be able to create specific interview questions for them, without prior knowledge of their biographies?

With TC practitioners, it is imperative that I spend several weeks observing several classes in order to decide who is best to speak to

Daily practicalities as a barrier to data collection (14/05/08)

I am becoming slightly concerned about the lack of interviewing done over the last few weeks. Since the start of term, only two interviews have been conducted so far (Zack and Nick). Whenever I have approached other WC practitioners, they are always 'too busy' at the present time. Only Ted, who is now retired, has enough time to give for an interview.

Today the situation worsened by Terry's unavailability (for the third time). On the first occasion, he had forgotten out appointment and was still asleep, the second was out of his control due to a medical emergency in his family, and this time he had a toothache after a dentist appointment the previous day, which would prevent him from

speaking in his normal evocative manner. Fortunately we had agreed to meet on days when I was having a private lesson with Sifu in Rigmouth, which saved me three unnecessary journeys. Would he have made more of an effort if I was a professional researcher in his eyes (rather than a junior in the school)? If he had never met me, perhaps he might have contacted me in advance about his unexpected situation? Or perhaps this is just the way Terry is, as he told me not to go out the way to travel to Rigmouth just for him. Instead of lamenting over what could have been, I will strive to work toward the completed project through reading, writing, interview planning and data analysis.

MA school websites as a sampling resource (05/06/08)

Today, whilst searching on the web for potential research sites, I realized just how invaluable the Internet is in today's research environment. A school's website can give an idea of the instructor, the general approach of the class and the lineage. More specifically, it can provide the following information:

- Instructor profiles
- Lineage and family tree
- The focus of the training
- Class structure i.e. lesson plan
- Key cultural terms
- Metaphors and analogies
- Photographs of class and facilities
- Articles by students
- Suggested reading material (the latter two reflects the intellectualisation of the art)

The core features of each of the 3 schools will be seen in how they describe:

- 1) The art itself
- 2) How people change
- 3) What they are trying to pass on

Fighting school websites might contain:

- Fighting language
- Consistent mention of self-defence
- Competition record
- Focus on *self-defence* and *applications*
- War-like language
- Key terms: Combat, fighting, self-defence, streetfighting

Martial arts school websites might contain:

- ‘Full’ system
- Focus on lineage and history
- *Pushing hands* and *chi sau* focus
- Key terms: Skill, tradition, lineage, authenticity

Health school websites might contain:

- Many academic/scholarly articles
- Focus in the *form*, rather than technique
- Poetic language
- Key terms: Philosophy, religion, chi, energy, meditation

Fighting school- Contains fighters

Martial arts school – Contains martial artists, fighters and thinkers

Health school – Contains thinkers

Strategy

- 1) Find classes matching these three ideal school types within 50 miles
- 2) Attend class and talk to the instructor
- 3) 1-2 interviews per week
- 4) 1-3 interviews per person

Practitioner-researcher reflections (09/07/08)

As a learner of Taijiquan, I have to give my full focus to listening to the guiding words of the instructor, watching his motions and that of the other students whilst remaining aware and in control of all the seemingly complicated movements various parts of my body are conducting.

Today, this was especially evident during the warm up. I was still thinking about what I would write down for field notes instead of using embodied meaning and giving my full focus to the present. It took me at least ten minutes to ‘turn off’ the researcher and ‘switch on’ the practitioner. Only then could I be in the present moment and love Taijiquan as it is meant to be: Without further intellectualisation. Yet at the same time I need to think about various things: What the instructor is saying; how different practitioners are interacting; how the senior students are assisting with the class; what kind of language is used; details of the setting; unexpected sensations and experiences in time and space. Being a full participant certainly has its strengths and weaknesses as I am finding in a relatively new school in contrast to my experience in Bridge’s Academy.

Practical research: In need of a problem (09/07/08)

After talking to my friend and colleague about his important research area, epidemiology of physical activity, I came to realise that my PhD thesis will have little direct impact on the world as there is no obvious problem to solve. No one is ill or injured. There are no ‘body problems’ as Arthur Frank would term them. Without a problem, there can be no solution. Instead, the thesis as it is taking shape can be used twofold:

- 1) Raise awareness of TCMAAs to academic audiences
- 2) Disseminate articles and presentations on certain themes e.g. long-term change to academic, lay and martial artists audiences

This seems to be the two fold implication of social science research, which results in a broader based of knowledge disseminated to a range of people that might not normally have access to more scientific accounts of the world.

My school: The immediate application (13/07/08)

I don't have my own school at the moment but I have an ambition to continue training and teaching the art of Wing Chun Kung Fu. Should I be lucky enough to run my own kwoon, it is quite possible that will directly benefit from or at least be influenced by my research. The understanding of different forms of change and transmission might allow a dynamic and innovative pedagogy that considers the different approaches emerging in the thesis. It will be a student centred school for all ideal types, incorporating methods from all ideal school types, making extensive use of partner interactions and employing powerful metaphors that are well explained – leaving out the confusion that typically accompanies the attempted interpretation of the TCMA's. It might include spiritual and health considerations along a sustained self-defence focus, with meditation coinciding with heavy bag work. The lineage would be important alongside the codes of conduct whilst being open to more scientific forms of knowledge. Or perhaps this is a utopia that is very difficult, if not impossible to achieve given the limits of time in an evening class and the range of people who would happily interact with each other? It is rare to see an extreme fighter train happily with an extreme thinker, and vice versa. Perhaps the different schools exist for this very purpose? Perhaps my own approach will change in years to come due to my transition along the embodied continuum?

A sampling error: A delay in follow up (19/08/08)

I had followed the typical procedures for sampling: I researched the settings; selected them as appropriate sources of informants; approached the teachers overtly and gained written permission to enter. I had even taken part in lessons, made notes and gained access for interviews. Furthermore, I had developed extensive interview guides specifically for two interviewees. However, I forgot a vital issue: To get back in contact as soon as possible to arrange an interview. Otherwise, they might think of me as unprofessional and unorganised. After several weeks away on holiday, I returned in eager anticipation of following up on these contacts. However, after several missed phone calls and unanswered emails, I realised that I had made the fatal error of leaving it too late. These potentially great interviewees were either away on holiday or were no longer interested. Next time I will remember this lesson and strive to act with the utmost efficiency by interviewing within two weeks of meeting practitioners.

A final reflection on confessional tales (19/08/08)

These collections of practitioner-researcher reflections have been a useful way to account the research process and the many issues that came with this position. By looking back at these short passages, I am reminded of many methodological issues that can be put in the methods chapter. Also, the lessons learned throughout the thesis can be relived through vivid and emotive stories. It is hoped that other researchers also find this useful. Publications based on my mistakes as lessons, rather than mistakes would be far more memorable than a bland methodological essay. By stirring the reader's emotions, it is hoped that they feel and remember the core issues.

Methods: Notes before field notes (08/09/08)

As I will soon be going to the annual Festival of Chinese Arts in Dontshire, I thought to pose some issue for my observations, reflections and for any questions for those I might meet. By preparing questions I will be able to look for certain things. It is something that would have been useful during the Taijiquan and Kung Fu demo last year. Things to look out for would be:

- What message are each school trying to give?
- What do they say about each other?
- What do they teach me about thinkers, martial artists or fighters?
- Pushing and sticking hands experiences (if applicable)
- Martial metaphors: Do certain people use specific kinds of metaphor?
- Mission statements and literature/documents sources
- How do they interact with each other?
- Embodied experience: Which senses were engaged by this and how?

These kinds of prompts might be useful for field notes in different social settings from socials with Bridge's Academy to TCMA demonstrations. Each setting will have its own opportunities to gain different forms of data as an observer and participant, and flexible prompts can certainly be useful in saving time looking for something to jot down. Of course, as they are flexible they can be modified or even ignored should a certain factor such as partner training be irrelevant on this occasion.

Methods: Pre training prompts (10/09/08)

- Explanations
- Justifications
- School mission
- Feelings and sensations
- Participants
- Interactions
- Martial aspects
- Health aspects
- Spiritual aspects
- Difference to qigong

Again, this is an application of the above idea of prompts for later field notes. Gaps could be left for each issue so that I can quickly jot down some ideas before typing up more elaborate field notes._

PURPOSE OF RESEARCH

Little, if any, previous qualitative research on TCMA's, despite their worldwide popularity I am an experienced practitioner myself, and have been fascinated by the concept of body-self transformation for many years now

This investigation continues a recent pilot study (Jennings, 2006)

As TCMA's are so popular, there is an need to gain a further understanding of potential changes, particularly via the *body-self society* relationship

Whilst remaining critically aware of potential negative consequences of practice, I wish to determine how TCMA's may benefit *individuals* and *society* as a whole

To determine what aspects of TCMA's need to be preserved or changed in order for these benefits to be maximised and for the dangers to be limited

2) CONCEPTUAL CONTEXT

Used as *sensitising concepts*, the following theories and concepts may be useful:

The structurationist theorists of Bourdieu, Giddens and Frank
The classical works of Durkheim and Weber
Foucault's genealogical approach
Goffman's interactionist approach
Berger's sociology of knowledge and religion
Goleman's emotional and social intelligence
Gender theorists, such as Messner and Connell
Eastern philosophy, religion, and mind-body theory e.g. Yuasa

3) RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Due to the *emergent* nature of qualitative research, these 'working' research questions will *alter* over time, particularly after beginning interviewing and drawing upon my own experiences in my autoethnography:

Why do people get involved in TCMA's?

How does one become an experienced practitioner?

What body-self transformations *result* from this intense involvement?

How does the *pedagogy* assist or hinder *both* processes of body-self transformation and transmission of physical culture?

How does *reflexive modernization* assist or hinder these processes?

What *daily practicalities* assist or hinder these processes?

Appendix 5.1 Original Research Design

4) METHODS DESIGN

As a member of the TCMA subculture, I will have a *close* relationship with the majority of the participants
Theoretical/purposeful sampling will be used to gain interesting life stories

Data will mainly be collected via *life story interviews*, but there will also be some highly reflexive *autoethnographical* and *confessional* writings reflecting my own personal experiences as a practitioner-researcher

Content/thematic data analysis will be used to find common themes in the life stories

All research will be *overt*, and participants will be given a copy of their transcript(s) and the initial analysis resulting from this data

Appendix 5.2 Field Notes from Taijiquan Schools

Making notes:

- Metaphors
- Visualisation
- Physical sensations
- What is seen?
- What is heard?
- What is felt? (within and outside the body)
- What is thought?
- What is said?
- What is smelt?
- What is understood?
- What remains unclear?
- What emotional state am I in?
- What are the other people doing?
- What am I doing?
- What are specific parts of my body doing? How do they feel?
- What is the sense of time?
- How is space perceived?
- How do I relate to others?

Phenomenologically-inspired concepts: Senses, space and time

Dontshire School of Chen Style Taijiquan (17/06/08)

I arrive slightly late. Upon entering the small Scout Hut, I instantly recognise the teacher, Chris, from last year's extravagant martial arts demonstration in Adderton. He isn't in a silk Chinese suit this time, as he is wearing a polo shirt with a yin/yang design and loose trousers. He stands opposite to a small group of male students, all in their 50s, save one powerful looking man in his 20s. Chris invites me to join in.

We begin with some wrist exercises. I am unfamiliar with this warm up, so I watch closely. Then some arm loosening movements are performed. This instantly brings me awareness to my tight shoulders, particularly my right one, which is providing a dull pain today.

Chris starts chatting to his students about Taijiquan related matters. He mentions a certain Master Chen, the head of their particular lineage: “All the indoor students are leaving for China to celebrate. There’s going to be a massive party. Unfortunately I won’t be able to make it, but I’m sending a red card with some money in it. I’ve never spent so much money on someone’s birthday, let alone some Chinese bloke!” We all laugh at his joke. However, I fixate on this comment: A great example of lineage and hierarchy in the TCMAs.

Some more contemporary warm up movements are made. I have a thought: Why not implement these into my Wing Chun warm up? I can always learn from other instructors!

We now move onto more qigong based exercises, slowly performed in unison. I recognise some of the spiralling movements from my brief stint in Taijiquan back home. I find the silk reeling motion fairly natural to perform, although Chris demonstrates this differently to my late instructor Bill. It is obviously quite an advanced class as little instruction or feedback is provided.

“Right, let’s move onto the form work.” Says Chris softly. He addresses me, saying something in Mandarin.

“Sorry?” I reply, perplexed.

He repeats the strange words.

“No, I don’t think I know this. I only know the fundamentals of Chen.”

We run through some of the ‘15’ movements, which seem a lot more than 15 as I struggle to keep up. It starts off slow and rhythmic, like the Taijiquan as the public know it. Then, out of nowhere, Chris flashes a strike to two imaginary opponents. I can feel his power in this small room, as he exhales with vigour. The other men follow, and feel powerless in comparison with them. I try to mimic this sudden release of energy, but in vain, as they now return to the far more gentle movements of the defence.

Chris then asks us to practise this alone. I struggle to keep up with the movements of these experienced practitioners. They seem to be running through the sequence without even thinking!

I notice one young man who stands out from the crowd: He is around thirty years younger, with long ginger dreadlocks and a muscular physique demonstrated through

a white vest. I am very impressed with his speed and power on the energy releases, and he seems like a formidable martial artist with a lot of presence in this small room.

I turn my attention back to my own movements as Chris approaches me, examining my feet.

“A little narrower.”

I adjust my feet accordingly.

“No, not that narrow. Move the right a little.”

Again, I adjust my foot position.

“That’s it. Feel better?”

I nod, feeling a relief in my aching legs.

Chris then calls us to end the class. We stand in the ‘holding the ball’ exercise for what seems an eternity. Chris then strolls around the room to inspect his students. He approaches me slowly.

“Straighten your fingers slightly.”

I follow his instructions.

“No, a bit less. Half yin and half yang.”

I adjust this accordingly.

“Now narrow your stance a little. No, not too much. That’s it. Now you have your hips, knees and toes aligned.” He smiles. “Now relax the shoulders.” He says encouragingly, gently touching my torso to check this. I try, but the dull pain in my right shoulder makes this difficult. Chris then adjusts my posture, and the muscular tension eases away. For the next few minutes I can focus on ‘holding the ball’ without any worries or tension. I relax, and totally focus on the position.

The class comes to a close, and we bow out, left hand open, right hand as a fist. The class falls out of formation, and I am greeted by a friendly student, who was the same young man with dreadlocks who impressed me with his impressive intensity and skills.

“I know you George.” He says with a smile.

“Really?” I reply, a little surprised.

“Yes, you gave us a careers talk once within sports science.”

I instantly remembered this talk, and made a connection to him as the student who was practising Taijiquan as a martial art. He introduces himself as Will, and we exchange contact information as he was very interested in my research.

“I did my dissertation on Chinese martial arts as well.” He tells me. “I had a look at yours and realised, ‘I can do something on Kung Fu!’” He laughs confidently.

“I’m glad to hear it was useful Will.” I reply, feeling happy that my BSc dissertation had been useful for someone. “You mentioned Kung Fu rather than Taiji?”

“Yeah, I do Kung Fu as well, with another organisation.” He explains. “So I just call it Kung Fu for short. I used to do a lot more training as I was doing four to five hours a day, but I’ve got a girlfriend now. She’s a Kung Fu widow as well.” Will, Chris and I laugh together, all understanding the commitments required in martial artists and the burdens this must place on our partners, particularly those who don’t train.

I notice that everyone else have left the class, but Chris and Will remain to say goodbye and leave in the same vehicle. It seemed that they had a special relationship that was forged by a passion for the art. I look forward to hearing their life stories after a successful evening of sampling.

- Martial artists-thinkers

Taiji World - Simplified Yang style (18/06/08)

I enter a spacious, modern studio room. A class has just started, so I say my apologies to the instructor, Joe, and join the back row. We run through a few basic stretches and mobility exercises, much of this found in any exercise class. The a few Taijiquan specific exercises are undertaken, quite similar to Chen’s *silk reeling*, but less extreme. We move slowly and gently as a smaller range of motion, focusing on the waist.

“Now stand with your eyes closed. Focus on your feet. Move backwards and forwards, and feel this change.” He commands softly. “Now move them side to side. Notice the change in your body.” This continued from feet to face, as we concentrate all our attention on a certain body area through standing meditation.

“Now open your eyes, and bring your attention to the present.”

At this point, I am instantly more aware of my surroundings. The sound of the air conditioning next door was particularly strong.

“In the *Taiji classics*, it is said that the energy starts at our feet, is transferred through the waist and manifests through the hands. So we should train the waist.” Said Joe in a calm and sage-like manner.

I am quite surprised to hear mention of this in such a commercial setting, and pay closer attention to what he says from now on.

“Now stretch down, and tap the outside of the legs. When you come up, tap the inside of the legs.” Directs Joe. I followed this, sensing a wakening of my body, which was feeling sleepy after a heavy lunch.

“Right. Who wants to do some Taiji?” Smiles Joe after looking after the clock. 15 minutes have passed during the warm up. It is now time for some ‘form work.’

“OK everyone, you know where to go.” Says Joe calmly.

I join two female students who had more experience than me. Joe runs through the beginning of the short form, without too much detail to confuse us. “Is that where we got to last time?” He questions us.

“We got to *strumming the loop*.” Says my partner from last week, who I haven’t spoken to yet.

“Right, I’ll teach you the next few moves.” Replies Joe.

We watch carefully as he gracefully slides across the floor with ease. I knew that my form wouldn’t be that smooth. I attempt to follow the girl next to me, who seems pretty knowledgeable. I wait till she just starts to move, and follow accordingly. This is more difficult than I imagine.

Later, Joe comes to inspect us. “That’s very well done.” He comments on my partner’s performance.

“I’ve been looking at the form on You-Tube.” She explains.

“I see. You-Tube can be a very useful resource.” He agrees.

“But there’s also a lot of politics on there.” I add, thinking of the Wing Chun debates going online rather than in person.

“Oh politics...don’t get me started.” Laughs Joe.

He then moves on to correct the girl: “Your hands and feet are good. Now you need to work on the waist. That’s made everything easier. Also be aware of looking backwards. If an opponent was in front of you, you don’t want to look backwards.” He then turns to me: “I can see that your Wing Chun stances are coming into it.”

“Really?” I reply, looking surprised as I thought I was following the motions in a Taiji way.

“Yep.” Laughs Joe, providing a visual demonstration of the correct position of the feet alignment and weight distribution. He then teaches us the next four moves, which are luckily repeated a few times. I get to see a comparison with Wing Chun: Important moves are practised three times.

I focus completely on the sequence, and begin to get the hand of it. Over time I rely less on my partner to lead me. Joe then quickly inspects, before turning round to check the time.

“Right, time’s up people. Let’s stand together.” He calls with a serene look.

We stand back in formation, closing our eyes and focusing on our bodies.

“And open your eyes. Left hand flat, right hand fist. And bow”

We bow the traditional Kung Fu bow. The class is over.

- Thinker-martial artists

Zheng Manqing Style (18/06/08)

I hadn’t planned on going to a Taiji class, but having neared the dance hall where a regular class was taken, I realise this fantastic opportunity to try out a new organisation for interview participants and possibly the source of an ethnography. This was the *School of Life Exercise’s* regular class in Adderton in an area known for its arts and crafts. After inquiring at reception, I walk into a large, clean and sparse studio ideal for Taijiquan practice. My girlfriend Erika accompanies me, but decides not to participate this time as she’s not really into Taiji, and would like to see what it’s about. Already there are quite a few students in the room. Most are middle aged, but there is one very thin girl in her early twenties with a tie-die top and sweat band, much like the image of a 60s hippie. I make my introductions to man who seems to be the instructor, identifying myself as a martial arts researcher interested in Taiji. He is probably in his mid forties, and is slim and well kempt in a eccentric pink t-shirt, and introduces himself as Peter with a firm handshake surprising for his slight build. He tells me we can speak after the class as he’s about to start.

“You won’t find too much of a martial element in this class. In the second class, there is more of an emphasis.” He explains in a calm and professional manner.

I nod with a smile, ready to being.

The warm up is a bizarre experience. The instructor Peter has us running around the room to fill up gaps that were left. I feel quite embarrassed doing this, as I haven’t done such a thing since primary school! He then turns on some slow instrumental music and the experience gets even more obscure.

“Try not to move with the music. I know it’s hard, but move in a rhythm that’s against the music.”

We follow his commands. I find it difficult as he said, as the rhythm from my years of Wing Chun make it hard. I look around me, noticing a few different warm up exercises, and follow them. I’ve never done something like this before!

Peter then calls us to stop. The next exercise looks more like Taijiquan: Moving forwards and backwards whilst swinging our arms in rhythmic motion so that they slap out thighs as we move backwards. I find this more comfortable, and sigh with relief as my tied shoulders and neck start to relax. The warm up becomes more conventional with waist and body swings with leg transfers. However, just as everything seemed normal, it goes back to the bizarre again!

Peter asks us to focus on our hands. We could move any other part of the body, but not our hands. Again, I look around to the others for guidance. They seem so in the moment with the exercise that they don’t notice my perplexed expression. I follow as best I can.

“Now for some partner work.” He calls.

I smile in eager anticipation for some martial exercise, but it doesn’t come. Instead, we are asked to help the other person ‘grow’ from being small. My partner, Ben, crouches down on the floor, slumped into his lap. He is probably in his fifties and is also tall and slim like many Taiji people I have met. In fact, I’ve never met a fat Taijiquan practitioner! I feel a little strange doing this exercise, as in Wing Chun we normally train to make people slump onto the floor through our strikes rather than bring the other way round! However, my years of training has made me familiar with touching and moving other people’s bodies, particularly the arms, which I start to move. I carefully manipulate his limbs and torso so that he gradually rises up to a standing position.

It’s now my turn. I become as small as possible, my face right onto the cold wooden beams. My partner Ben gently manipulates my arms, then switches to my legs with verbal feedback. I finally rise up, feeling relaxed and better attuned to my partner. This has broken down the barriers that I still have with the rest of the class.

I speak to Ben, my partner in the last exercise, and he tells me that he’ll be running the second session. After introducing myself as a practitioner-researcher, I ask him about this Taijiquan class.

“So you guys do this sort of thing quite a lot do you?” I ask hesitantly, trying not to sound offensive.

“We do a bit. This guy, Peter, likes to do the Life Exercise aspects. We teach the Zheng Manqing short form. There is a martial component, and we try to maintain it, but don’t overly stress it. We do pushing hands and sticking. Do you know sticking?” He asks with an inquisitive look.

“I think so. I do Wing Chun you see, so I know sticking hands.”

“Right...well, we do that too.” He explains.

“Do you teach the weapons?” I inquire, interested as many schools don’t.

“Only straight sword.” He answers.

“I’ve seen Zheng Manqing spar with the straight sword before, on You-Tube.”

“Oh, I’ve seen him doing his form there. It’s fantastic to watch, it really is. You’ve got to treat yourself.” He says, turning to face the eagerly anticipating class, who are growing in number.

It is the end of the lesson, and I join Eri for a break. She looks a little uncomfortable amongst this interesting mix of people. We won’t be talking about how strange this is till we get out of here!

The second class definitely resembles Taijiquan as I know it. We set up the classical shoulder width stance, raise our arms together, and then lower them. Whilst ‘rooted to the ground’, we form the ball in front of us, turning to our side. Ben guides verbally us throughout this slow sequence. I stand in between him and Peter, getting a good view of the more advanced practitioners who are lined up in the front for the rear two lines to follow. They move with grace and ease, paying special attention to the stance work. This is particularly challenging as we turn from one position to another, putting quite a lot of stress on the ankles.

We then come to a punching position. I follow, seeing the close resemblance with the Wing Chun vertical pulling punch. However, they don’t lock the elbow, so I try not to either, even though it goes against my years of training in the air and against pads and bags. Peter walks beside me, examining this technique. He physically manipulates my arm so that the elbow is wider. “Soften the elbow.” He instructs. What does he mean by this? I thought I was relaxed!

Peter calls us to start again, running through the next few motions. I am getting use to it now, although I am very confused between the three systems I have tried out this week! We continue to do this until Peter calls us to stop.

“Any questions?” he asks, to which no one replies.

“Can we learn the next moves?” Laughs a woman nervously. The rest of the class join in. They seem to find it hard to learn the sequences, and some move with a constant frown of concentration.

“Of course. Let’s see how you find it.” Peter nods to Ben, who seems to play the role of demonstrator in the class.

Ben demonstrates the next few motions, which involve quite a bit of turning and twisting. Quite interestingly, we finish in a position very similar to that in Wing Chun! I can see more similarities between the systems every time I practise: Body unity, simultaneous attack and defence, relaxation, non-reliance on strength and flow. The complete relaxation Ben and Peter possess are the result of years of hard training. All the rest of us have a look of intense concentration or confusion!

The lesson ends, and we line up again. However, in this class, there is no bow. I wait patiently whilst the student talk to the two teachers, and then approach them about the interviews. Peter still seems quite distant to me, but as he was the first teacher I approached him first.

“Hi Peter. Thanks for the lesson. Here’s some information on my research if you’re interested?”

“Yes, thanks.” He replied. “So you’ve done some Taiji?” He speculates.

“A little. I do Wing Chun too.”

“I see.” He pauses seeming a little annoyed. “Well, you’ll have to pay for the lesson. You did two classes, so that’ll be £12 please.”

I am a little surprised by his abruptness, but I pay the money and thank him and Ben, having taken their email addresses so I could send them a formal email. Perhaps I shouldn’t mention my Wing Chun background to the Taiji practitioners? I had done this before and it seemed to isolate me from several of my old classmates. Nevertheless, the physical connection that Ben and I had generated a great respect and rapport, and I’m sure I’ll be seeing him again.

Upon leaving, Peter asks me if I’ve spoken to their instructor James, who is away on holiday. They were taking the class in his absence as many loyal TCMA instructors do. I had heard of James’ Life Exercise approach, and had experienced it this evening. Although I had enjoyed the class, I think I am looking for a Taiji class rather than a Taiji concepts workshop, which this seems to be.

- Thinker-martial artists

A return to Joe's class: Further observations (09/07/08)

Sounds

- Tranquil Chinese music, mainly harp intermittent with silence for reflection
- A low volume so it doesn't distract us
- Gentle buzz of the air conditioning is pronounced during silent warm up
- All of this is brought to my full attention as I close my eyes

Talk

- Quiet and brief
- Social stigma for talking in class
- We use body communication in its stead

Smells and tastes

- The only unused senses
- Have a blocked nose today

Sight

- Joe practises with his eyes firmly closed
- He reminds us to pay attention to sounds, smells, body sensations and space:
How do we feel?
- The other two practitioners don't distract me at all
- Comfortable sports casual clothing
- Two girls are barefoot
- We move in unison to Joe's command

Space

- There is much more space this week with only 4 students
- However, I am paired up with Samantha, and find myself cramped in the corner to due my longer stance. I am concerned that I might bash into her
- There is more room to breath and move freely, although we don't utilise it

Feelings

- Right shoulder: A dull pain, subsides later as qigong loosens it up

- Feet: Trying to curl my toes with the large, impractical running trainers. Next time I'll go without shoes!
- Hands: Some sense of vibration and warmth later on
- Head: Held upright, like being pulled up by a string
- Elbows: Hardly move, like in WC
- Waist: Central deliverer of power

Speech

- Joe's commands are the central voice in the room
- Only questions are publicly brought to him
- There seems to be some stigma attached to verbal communication

Emotions

- Initial agitation after running in running in fear of being late
- Calmed by being on time
- Further relaxation and slight joy with warm up: The pain has been released

Time

- Although a clock is only the wall above the door, I do not look at it. Time has gone out of the window
- However, Joe seems more conscious of time
- 50/50 focus: Taiji to qigong

Understandings

- Through my martial artist body type, I can readily interpret the true meaning of the TC movements
- These are preferred to confusing and poetic metaphors
- Links to pushing hands and interviews
- However, my WC habitus led to some confusion due to my 50-50 weight distribution and feet position
- As a beginner, my normal focus on the elbows is taken away

Appendix 5.3 Documentary Analysis of School Websites

Taiji World – A health/spirituality-orientated school

- The website's images provide a gradual slideshow of outdoor and indoor practice
- The outdoor images are on a beach, with a rough sea and sun shining through dark clouds; a silhouette of a practitioner amongst bare winter trees; the main instructor Paul Smith is alone on a beach, very close to splashing waves; four practitioners performing a posture in an autumn woodland setting. Their eyes are averted as they seem to be attuned to their motions.
- The image of Paul is also used in their main adverts and flyers
- Only one picture is indoors

Overall, this is a seemingly deliberate connotation with nature and the environment as shown by their retreats and camps.

Transformation claims

- "Together, Taiji and Qigong offer a wealth of benefits much needed in today's hectic world. Where modern life is fast paced and stressful, Taiji and Qigong help us to slow down and rebalance ourselves. When we can't seem to switch off and our mind is spinning, both these arts can help us return to a calm, peaceful state from worry and anxiety."
- "Taiji is a dynamic form of moving meditation which helps to bring about calm and peace of mind whilst gently exercising the whole body. It stresses the principles of relaxation and yielding, and the cultivation of inner strength and harmony of both body and mind. The practice of this art brings us into balance with ourselves and those around us. It is a form of 'inner' martial art."
- "Introducing even the smallest amount of Taiji into your week can enhance your life greatly. It can help you feel more relaxed, grounded and better able to cope

with the hectic pace of modern life. In addition to the obvious benefits of slowing down for a while, Taiji can also become the beginning of a joyful journey of insight and personal development.”

- “Taiji has a huge amount to offer all of us and our energy is very much behind the growing movement of well-being, wisdom and balance.”

Overall, these claims signify a transformation in terms of relaxation and psycho-physical connection via a tranquil mind-body exercise for a society that is stressful and fast paced. The ideas of ‘worry’ are not so much about self-defence as about stress and ill health.

Weekends

- A black and white photo of Joe opening his hands to physically express something to a student; winter trees and ivy are visible in the vague background.
- Below this, 3 smaller photos summarise the retreats: The 5 instructors in a group hug photo in a forest; a set of barefeet on water; 3 participants upon a grassy meadow overlooking a hill and dense woodland.

Again, the connection to nature and the environment is very clear. It also shows social solidarity and enjoyment rather than an idea of Kung Fu or ‘hard work.’

Commodification

- T-shirts displaying silhouettes and Chinese writing, providing a sense of authenticity and Chineseness.
- It is a Ltd company
- There are numerous links to Facebook, MySpace, Twitter and YouTube pages for the company.
- Information on the instructors is difficult to find in this detailed website as the content’s focus appears to be on Taiji itself and the institution’s commodities.

“Taiji World offer Taiji classes, courses, weekends, Taiji and Qigong DVDs and Taiji clothing (t-shirts) made from Bamboo and organic cotton. We also offer free Taiji and Qigong videos on YouTube and Facebook and MySpace pages.”

Qi and metaphors

- “When Qi is not flowing, when Qi is stuck or stagnant, things begin to spiral downwards. A pure, flowing river supports life but when the water is blocked, things begin to stagnate and rot. In a similar way, when Qi becomes blocked and stagnant in the human body, illness and pain result.”
- “We think you’ll agree that Dontshire goes well with Taiji and Qigong – fresh air equals fresh Qi (energy) and fresh Qi equals health and vitality. Finding renewed energy and an enlivened approach to life is what our weekends can give you.”
- “In Taiji, the idea of ever-changing flux and change, which follows the principles of Yin and Yang, is used to enhance one’s understanding of oneself, one’s physical body, energy (Qi), environment and understanding of martial skill.”

The martial aspects are barely mentioned on the website as aspects of Daoist philosophy are drawn upon (rather than Daoist religion).

Joe

- “Joe has been practising Taiji and Qigong since the mid nineties and is one of our most popular teachers. With his vast experience of healing and meditation techniques, Joe adds a depth of understanding to our courses, weekends, camp and corporate work.”

Joe’s experience and connection to other EMFs gives him the authority to teach, rather than his martial skill.

School of Life Exercise – A health/spirituality-orientated school

Images

- The main image shows a silhouette of 7 practitioners in the same TC posture on a grassy hill, with a bright evening sunshine emerging low across the plain. Calm clouds and a calm evening sky are evident in the background.
- Other pictures rotate from collective form practice outside to reaching up exercises
- James Butcher, the founder of the institution, is hanging from a tree amongst some dense vegetation and some beautiful scenery in the background. He looks friendly, approachable and quite child-like as this is not what I expected for a man in his 50s.

Transformation claims

- “Ways of moving and being designed to lift your spirits, calm your mind and boost your energy”
- “An informative and thoroughly enjoyable body-mind workout for people of all ages.”

Core Philosophy

Rather than following a Daoist philosophy, the *School of Life Exercise* holds to 5 main principles that seem to have been developed by the founder:

- Freeing
- Aligning
- Focusing
- Sensing
- Being

Each of these is accompanied by a photo of nature or people in nature e.g. bubbles in a stream and a circle of people in standing meditation postures next to ancient stone circles.

- “The purpose of Life Exercise is to help you to be at your best, whoever you are and whatever you do.”

Commercialism/Commodification

- On the right hand side there are links to his DVDs based on movement for health and vitality
- Images of these DVDs show James in front of two students. All three have rolled up trousers, and are barefoot in the seemingly soft sand, which has submerged their feet. This gives the impression that they are actually part of the scenery and are ‘rooted’ to the earth.

This emphasises the solo aspects of Taiji and Qigong, and doesn’t explore the partner training and advanced aspects such as weapons training.

James

There is little mention of his associate instructors, but quite a lot on James:

- “As well as having a degree in Environmental Science and a PGCE in the same, the main vehicle for my journey has been tai chi and qigong, which I embarked upon in October 1981. I have also have significant and influential experience in the more ‘out there stuff’ with energy, healing, shamanic dance and ‘no-style movement.’”
- “I’m a rural person and have lived most of my life in the country, on the edge of Dontshire. I have a deep love and fierce sense of protection and respect for nature.”
- The two photos show his outside, with long dark, windswept hair. He squints in the sunlight on the left and holds still in a classic TC pose on the right amongst

rolling hills, large rocks and saturated clouds. Some of the classic TC elements are evident here.

This provides James with an authority based on years of experience and connection to scientific forms of knowledge, with a potentially charismatic and bureaucratic form of legitimation.

Appendix 5.4 Formal email to TCMA instructors

Hello,

I am a research student and martial artist at the University of Exeter investigating the practice of traditional Chinese martial arts such as Tai Chi. More specifically, I am looking at how people change over long periods of practice, and how they are involved in the passing down of traditional knowledge and culture. As part of my study, I often attend classes through observation and participation and conduct interviews. I came across your class on the Internet, and would be very interested in attending your (day) class at (time).

Is the class running this week? If so, perhaps we could meet before of after the lesson so that I can give you more information? By no means will my participant observation interfere with your normal lesson.

If you would like further information, please let me know.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards,

George Jennings

Appendix 5.5 PhD Field Notes

The following are a selection of field notes that include notes from TCMA classes, informal conversations and reflections on theory and applications of the PhD. These illustrate the varied nature of reflexive journals and field notes diaries, and were useful in forming the impressionist tales.

An illness prevents my training (15/02/07)

This morning I woke feeling terribly unwell. My nose was completely blocked, giving me a nasty headache. My body felt weak and tired. At once I knew I would be unable to make training this evening.

Not being able to train as usual got me down a little. I always look forwards to Wing Chun, especially the Thursday classes, when we are currently learning the fascinating Biu Jee form. As I couldn't make it to Rigmouth, neither could Jamie, as he relied on me for transport. As Jamie was soon to leave Adderton for a graduate job in London, I felt guilty about this, as he needs all the good Wing Chun lessons he can get before he makes his own way in life. Then he can make an informed decision about what martial art to follow.

I hope to do the Siu Lim Tao later this evening to help me relax and heal my body. I've slacked off training for the last few days, putting it off 'till tomorrow.' Of course, it is vital that the form is practised nearly everyday for health, structure and correct positioning.

It only takes a cold to make me realize how fragile my sense of self and identity is, and they are tied to my embodied practice of the martial arts. If I was suddenly ill or injured, there would be a discrepancy between my actual and perceived social identities. I would feel a loss of control and routine in my life.

- My fragile self- and social identity
- Daily practicalities including illness
- The need for constant practice as a body project
- The importance of yin/yang balance i.e. internal and external training

Private lesson with Sifu: Authenticity and legitimacy (23/02/07)

During a short break from chi sau, the issue of ethnicity was raised: “Now everyone thinks that if you’re Chinese, you’re the dog’s bollocks.” I asked him if he had trouble forming a sense of authenticity down here.

“No, not down here.” He replied, looking surprised. “They’d never seen in before. But it’s like when you go to a Chinese restaurant. Now if you turn up, and all the waiters are English, and the chef comes out and he’s English, you think...’hang on a minute, we’re being ripped off here. This isn’t authentic.’”

- A certain ethnicity creates a sense of authenticity
- Does this create the need to prove one’s authenticity?

Mind-body connection (08/03/07)

Interestingly, at the end of today’s session, Sifu was speaking of the mind-body connection during sparring. He stressed that we shouldn’t let our bodies control our minds. Instead, we should maintain mental control at all times. He used me as a demonstration assistant in order to illustrate this, stopping very short of my throat. He explained that if we have body controlled minds, we’ll end up freezing or tensing up. This surprise me greatly as I had always thought the mind should be disregarded in favour of the free movement of the body. Perhaps this was at a later point?

- WC is far more than a physical exercise. It requires substantial mental control
- Does this go against what Yuasa argues for the mind-body achievement, or is it just a simpler way to put it? This needs to be explored in interviews

The three different approaches to the martial arts (08/03/07)

After our sparring session during the second training session, Sifu came to the subject of his approach to fighting and teaching. He reminded us that this wasn’t actual fighting, but sparring. He explained this by outlining two main approaches to the martial arts: 1) The traditional martial arts such as Karate, that never make contact, but “claim that

they'll give that extra 'umph' in their strikes to devastate the opponent" (give a physical demonstration of the classic Karate reverse punch). 2) Combat orientated martial arts that are always concerned with full power contact, "with technique of course." Sifu said that his approach was to meet the two methods halfway, in order to maximise the learning process.

- A different pedagogy in Wing Chun
- Longevity enabled whilst still being effective for self-defence?
- Or is this a personalised, modernizing approach to the martial arts?

Loss of a Taijiquan body: Death of a Taijiquan body

Today I phoned Bill, my Taijiquan instructor back home. An unfamiliar voice answered. Who was this? It was his son. "Can I speak to Bill please?" I asked politely.

"Ah...I'm sorry, but he's passed away." He replied solemnly.

I was completely shocked by this, as Bill always seemed healthy and happy. However, he was very old, possibly around 80, so his death would have been inevitable soon anyway.

I passed on my condolences, saying how sorry I was to hear this, but happy that it was Bill who introduced me to Taijiquan. His son then told me that some of Bill's students would be continuing the classes, but times and dates were not known.

- Since then, I haven't returned to the class. I just feel it wouldn't be the same without the charismatic instructor. None of his students seemed to have his aura
- What happens in TCMA's when there is no clear successor?
- How is the martial body's knowledge transmitted after death?
- What is the impact of the death of the instructor on the students?

Narratives of ageing: The story of Ted (24/05/07)

Terry spoke of a man in his 70s, who had defeated a teenage thug who had ripped of his chain, which was a gift from his late son. He was very impressed by the story of this man's fury over his son's memory, and went on to speak of one of Sifu's students, who

is 66 years old: “He’s so up for it. His knees are gone from doing Tang So Do, a Korean martial art known for its kicking techniques, but his hands are great! He’s just waiting for someone to pounce on him when he comes out of the Post Office with his pension. He’ll be walking out with his wallet hanging out of his pocket ‘come and get it!’” Chuckled Terry loudly. We all joined in laughing, united in the belief in the system and the values of family.

- How do older and younger WC practitioners see the ageing process and its influence on their practice and self-defence capabilities?

Attending a Taijiquan demonstration (03/06/07)

At the end of the demonstration, I was surprise to see two advanced practitioners showing us the self-defence applications of Chen style Taijiquan. Although it started slow, the tempo quickly built up with defences against multiple wrist grabs, lapel grabs, one-two punches, and a tackle and headlock. The anti grappling and joint locking aspects were emphasised. I must admit that it looked beautiful! It was far more perfect for public demonstration than the sharp and discrete techniques of Wing Chun. My friend Phil agreed, saying “the Taiji applications were definitely the best bit. If I wasn’t doing Wing Chun, I’d definitely take up Taiji!” I concurred, concluding that Taijiquan would suit our more spiritual needs than the flamboyant and athletic Shaolin Kung Fu.

- Why do TCMA practitioners choose certain styles?
- What styles attract certain types of people?
- Does TC attract only those with an interest in spirituality?
- What is the demand among the TC community for realistic self-defence?

Pedagogy: The importance of the senior students (18/06/07)

How would the School survive without its senior students? This is an important question to ask as these individuals’ importance is often overlooked. Last Monday, I took the class when Terry and Nick were absent, for a funeral and a birthday respectively. Although I hadn’t prepared for this, and was given no direction in which to

focus, the lesson went very well. At the end, a few students approached me and shook my hand, saying that I'd done a great job. Barry remarked: "You've got the job mate. That was a really good lesson."

- This was recently recalled by an intermediate student discussing his favourite learning moments

Today's lesson left me with a few important questions that could be addressed in my PhD:

- What qualifies a person to teach a martial art? Is it skill and knowledge alone?
- What qualities make a good teacher? Communication and empathy with the students?
- Do the instructors treat their senior students with the respect they deserve?
- Are these senior students being pressured to teach because of the traditional hierarchical structure?
- When is someone fit to run their own school?
- What more could instructors provide to support their senior students' learning?

The two camps in the martial arts: Some further observations (18/06/07)

It seems that there are two camps in the martial arts:

- 1) Those that follow tradition and ritual without question, often not understanding the real meaning behind the movements
- 2) Those that disregard any tradition or 'forms,' and just train techniques and drills
e.g. Bruce Lee

However, according to Terry, forms act as useful reference points to understand these drills and techniques. Hence he and Sifu take the 'middle path'

- However, what exactly do they mean by the 'middle path'?
- What other MA schools visited in this investigation take this approach to 'forms'?

- What other forms of pedagogies are there? What sort of students do they suit?
- What would these pedagogies learn from each other?

Notes from a private lesson: Narratives of ageing (22/06/07)

Training in chi sau with 67 year old Ted made me realize just how effective Wing Chun can be as a fighting system for life (not just till middle age). His hands were rapid and powerful, and I struggled against his relentless attacks, which always kept me on the defence. Although he was out of breath after our brief exchange, I gained a new found respect for this veteran of the martial arts.

- Ted had previously indulged in Tang So Do, but this had resulted in the gradual ‘wearing down’ of his knees
- He sought out Wing Chun as something to do “till I’m dead.” He seemed very serious when he told me this

Terry’s teaching methods (03/07/07)

- Clear and concise speech
- Use of comedy and jokes (helps us remember through learning with an emotion)
- Surrounded by pupils in a semi circle
- Long and detailed demonstrations
- Use of visual, verbal and physical kinaesthetic feedback. Only the sense of smell isn’t used!
- He observes, rather than practices, in order to prioritise the safety of others over his own learning
- In demonstrations, he uses the most skilful student, or the one with the most appropriate body type

Neuroscience and martial arts instruction (16/07/07)

This evening Terry stressed that every time we perform a technique, we're strengthening 'muscle memory.' This is a layman's term for neuromuscular memory and reflex development. Terry emphasised the need to constantly practice perfectly at home, because it is at home where the muscles really learn the movement. In the class, one student can only be corrected so many times

- This is how the ideas of pedagogy and cultural transmission can be linked to neuroscience!

More on neuroscience and learning (22/08/07)

When a beginner first enters the class, he/she is asked what their dominant hand is. When this is determined, this will be the side of the body that all the new techniques will be learned from until competent enough to learn the 'other side.' Strangely enough, left handed people seem quite capable of learning from the right hand side unlike right handed people, who often regard the left side as the 'dark side.' As Sifu concluded, "it's hard enough learning it on your best side, let alone your other one!"

- It appears that WC teaching is rooted in the basics of neuromuscular learning

The importance of senior students (03/09/07)

As Nick and I worked with the new beginners, I was reminded just how important we were as higher grades. We really do hold the class together. Without us, Terry would struggle to supervise the new entrants, or find a suitable assistant for demonstrations.

Newcomer Jane was shocked that Nick 'missed out' on his lesson because he was teaching the Siu Lim Tao. To her, it seemed outrageous that he was getting no obvious reward from it. He, like me, was paying to teach!

- What sort of rewards do senior students get from helping them run the lesson?
- Does it motivate them to become teachers themselves? Or does it put them off?

- Is this one of the reasons why so many experienced students leave the School?

The role of the senior students:

- Used in emergencies e.g. illness of main teacher
- Used in demonstrating technique
- Takes the warm up
- Runs through the solo drills with the class
- 'Stands out' when there are odd numbers
- Responds to cues from the senior instructor, particularly in demonstrations
- Acts as a passive, docile assistant that allows the instructor's technique to happen
- Helps teach new entrants to the group
- Acts as a role model for the junior students

WC Body Typologies (10/09/07)

To conclude the lesson, Terry explained the practical nature of what we're learning. Effectively, we are learning to fight to defend ourselves on the street. Most people, or 'muppets' as he calls them, don't know how to fight. They hold their hands, wide or low, allowing an opening for our famous entry technique, the double punch.

According to Terry, anyone who can fight will have their hands up to defend the body and head. Some were 'naturals' who could fight automatically without learning. Others would have learned to fight from their older brothers, fathers and uncles. These were the individuals who are harder to defeat. We were training at a higher level because of these fighters.

- Issues of masculinity in normal society: Are women taught to fight? Or are they socialised away from such issues?
- A hierarchy of bodies in non TCMA fighters? This could be explained in a developmental model

The end of the family? (03/10/07)

Last Thursday was a disturbing time for me. I entered the training hall to find out only three students, including Nick. Although Sifu and Terry seemed cheerful enough in the foyer, I sense something was wrong.

Later in the lesson, Sifu called the other students into the foyer, one by one, for a ‘crisis meeting.’ The message was clear: We had to get new students into the School, or it was going to close. As Sifu dramatically put it, “if we don’t do something soon, we’ll be out by Christmas.”

I was shocked by this statement, as I had always imagined it to stand as a major part of the community for generations. I also thought that this was my school for life. What would I do if it went?! Where would I go?! What would happen to Sifu? As Len rightly put it, “I really did think I’d be coming here for the rest of my life.” Would my life ever be the same again?

The next morning I got a phone call from Sifu. I woke up, worried that I had overslept, and was late for my private lesson. He had to cancel my private lesson, as he had to go to the bank to sort out the finances. He promised to make up for next month.

- For me, this event (which is still infolding) reflects the importance of the WC family for experienced practitioners
- A crisis of identity and narratives of the future will result in the closing of the martial arts school
- This also clearly illustrates the instability of the martial arts as a profession in today’s society
- How would the learning and teaching differ if Sifu switched to part time teaching?

Pedagogy and authority (01/11/07)

Terry uses a higher grade student to demonstrate. Instead of the usual predictive “if he does this, then do Y,” Terry attacked me with unpredictable movements that I struggled to keep up with. His hands were not just too fast, but his mind was always one step ahead of mine. After just a few moves, he had got through my collapsing defences.

We then linked up into rolling again. He attacked a second time, and I wanted to maintain face in front of my Wing Chun brothers. This distracted me slightly, and gave Terry a split second's advantage. I felt a punch hit my jaw, and aw! I bit my tongue! Swallowing my pride, and pretending it didn't hurt, I continued. No one seemed to notice my frustration. After all, they'd be in the same situation far quicker than I. Nevertheless, I was angry with myself. Why hadn't I defended his moves? Wasn't I getting better? What will the others think of me? What will Paul think of me? Do I deserve a black sash now? These thoughts invaded my mind as we continued.

- Pedagogic authority: The teacher puts the student in his place by publicly demonstrating his superior skills
- Links to Delamont's recent paper on Capoeira teachers' authority construction and maintenance
- This is both a highly personal and shared experience, as the individual student is affected, but the remainder of the class learn from this
- My ego is still my worst enemy!

Wing Chun as a way of life (01/11/07)

At the end of the lesson, Sifu asked to speak to me in private. He told me: "If I lose one more student, I'm bust." He stated that it's important to turn up on time and finish at the designated finish time. This would give a professional atmosphere.

However, Sifu identified a problem: Bad attitudes towards training by many students. He told me: "There are a number of us, me, you, Terry, Nick, and maybe even Len, who see Wing Chun as a way of life. However, others don't. They just see it as a hobby, as a pastime."

- By regarding WC as a hobby, the progress of the group slows down as less effort is made in the training in class and at home. Body-self transformation and cultural transmission are therefore slowed
- I could select a few practitioners who just think WC is a hobby?
- Why don't these individuals take Wing Chun more seriously? Is there something else going on in their lives? At what point do dedicated practitioners see it as a way of life?

Scars, scratches and bruises: Markers of Wing Chun identity (15/11/07)

On Monday I almost broke my finger. It was the middle right digit. As I tried to pak sau Terry's punch during the basic training, I accidentally caught his forearm and the face of his strike, honed over fifteen years of diligent training, bent it back. He stopped immediately, recognising my pain and fear.

"Just give me a minute." I said, trying to look calm.

"You'll need more than a minute lad." He replied as walked into the foyer. "You want some dit dar?" He asked.

"Yes please." I replied, following him to the store cupboard where the special bruise ointment was kept. I hadn't used this traditional Chinese lotion for quite some time. It is very expensive (£15 for a small bottle) and we hadn't been doing anything particularly damaging to the skeletal system. Terry generously sprayed my middle finger and I massaged it in. Meanwhile, he showed me his digits: "Look at these two." He said, pointing to some slightly bent fingers. I was shocked by the sight of this. I then looked down at my left wrist, which was bleeding lightly. During the previous session, the repetitive drilling had worn down my skin like sandpaper! The cut had opened up in this session.

After today, one thing was certain: Scars, scratches and bruises are an integral part of any serious Wing Chun practitioner's identity.

- Do Wing Chun practitioners agree with me upon this?
- What role do scars, scratches and bruises play in the construction and confirmation of identity in TCMA practitioners?
- How does this help distinguish Wing Chun from popular Taijiquan?
- What part does the dit dar oil play in a Wing Chun exponent's everyday life?

The unspoken truth: The Wing Chun drop outs

It struck me today that transient and former members are rarely spoken of. If they are mentioned, it is when Sifu isn't present. The one's that recently left: Sarah, Dave and Johnny, are never spoken about, apart from a few jokes at their expense. Their past shared experiences are never brought up. Their memories are silenced.

The members that we haven't seen for a while, such as Steve, are also never spoke of. No effort is made in communication with Sifu, or vice versa. It is like he has never been there. Yet he helped forge my Wing Chun skill over the last five years I have been here. I will never forget him.

- Can my research help these silenced voices be heard?
- Can I open up avenues for communication?
- Or will this risk creating a conflict within schools?
- Is this an issue seen through the TCMAs?
- Why is there such a high attrition rate? Does it help teaching, learning and body-self transformation?
- Is this really a 'family' of WC practitioners, or is this metaphor just used in jest?

Wing Chun and Taijiquan: More similar than meets the eye? (23/11/07)

Something surprised me this afternoon during my private lesson. Sifu said that there is Karate, and within that, stylisations. Then there is Kung Fu and its many styles. "However, I've never seen anything like Wing Chun. The closest thing I've seen to it is Taiji." Sifu remarked. He then went on to describe a friend who successfully mastered Wing Chun, Taijiquan and Baguazhang, and combined them to form his own style. He accepted this, but didn't acknowledge the abilities of a well known martial artist, who will remain anonymous, who holds over 40 black belts in various Japanese martial arts. He continued: "Now I've just been doing one martial art. One martial art for the last 28 and a half years! There are many martial artists around the country claiming to have mastered dozens of styles. This is impossible – a martial art is a lifetime practice."

- Do WC and TC instructors/experiences students see the parallels between the two arts?
- What similarities are there between WC and TC?
- What role do sticking and pushing hands play here?
- What are the major differences between the two styles?

Wing Chun as the expression of one's personality (6/12/07)

Whilst rolling with Terry, I was on the retreat as usual. I then remarked: "If I was a boxer, I'd be a retreating boxer, like Muhammad Ali" as I shuffled back in a feeble attempt to emulate the Greatest of all time. "

"Yeah, you would." Nodded Terry in agreement

"So does your Wing Chun reflect your personality?" I asked, starting to think theoretically.

"Of course it does." Replied Terry with great surprise for asking such a question. "It's like driving. After you learn how to do it, you do it in your own way."

- Do people construct their habitus once they've understood the system?
- What do other TCMA instructors have to say about this?
- Does the TCMA pedagogy allow for individual approaches to the art whilst learning?
- How does this change when a practitioner runs his/her own class?

The Wing Chun 'Church' (28/02/08)

Whilst we chatted casually in the foyer, Sifu pondered over his electronic register displayed on the screen of his laptop. A sea of red squares marked the absences of his students. So many had joined, but almost as many had left. What made them leave? More importantly for my PhD story, what made the select few stay? It is these dedicated individuals that I am more interested in.

Sifu looked up from his laptop. "Now I used to have a small church. Hard fighters, but there was only four or five of them. But I want a big church. So I changed my style of teaching. Wing Chun has something to offer everyone." He said. Zack and I nodded in agreement.

Sifu then went on to show us different pictures he planned to advertise in the school. His screen now displayed a woman defending herself in a vivid sexual assault scene. "I'd like more women in here, I really do. The martial arts are perceived to be male dominated. They always have been though." He said solemnly.

- Issues of gender, masculinity and patriarchy

- Marketing appeals to different kinds of bodies e.g. vicious photos for fighters, weapons for philosophers, and Chinese writing for thinkers
- My own PhD project could provide marketing strategies for this and other groups

The mentality of an advanced practitioner (28/02/08)

Sifu beckoned Nick over to demonstrate a defence. As Nick stepped forwards into the punch, Sifu launched himself to meet him with his rapid hand techniques. What was strikingly different from everyone else's performance was his intention, which was evident in his deadly stare.

"You've got to get into a different mindset. You have to stare into their soul. Let them know that you're coming after them."

It was almost funny to hear the word 'soul' being used to refer to combat in this seemingly non spiritual training routine. However, I couldn't have a chuckle as Sifu seemed deadly serious. Later, he explained to me in private that many students, who had been here for years, were still training like beginners. Their technique might be working OK, but their mind set is that of a beginner. They don't have the 'heart of a fighter' as Terry would say.

Body types and fighting arts (28/02/08)

Art	Body type drawn in (1)	Body type developed (2)
Wing Chun	Fighter/martial artist/thinker	Fighter/martial artist/thinker
Taijiquan	Thinkers (particularly spiritualists)	Thinker/martial artist

The above framework could be developed and tested among a number of TMAs.

Two main issues to consider:

- 1) This is often determined by how the school sells itself through marketing and the core texts e.g. syllabuses.
- 2) This is mainly determined by the pedagogic structure, which will have a dominant body type developed around the instructor's

It would be rare to see a TC school, run by a frail old man, attracting, retaining and producing fighters. Likewise, it is unlikely to see a fighting school run by 'meatheads' i.e. powerhouse fighters, attract, retain and produce thinkers.

So how can a pedagogy attract, retain, and develop different kinds of students i.e. body types? Its pedagogic principles and narratives shared should consider the body type of each student walking through the door.

A fighter's stories as a resource for teaching (04/03/08)

I've noticed that whilst we are all training hard on the drills, Terry randomly brings up a story of his life. Rarely are they about anything apart from fighting. This evening it was about the distance between people around a cash point, and how recently he almost got into a fight with a small group of youths who rather unwisely decided to stand too close to him. This can be linked to Terry's life story interview, in which he stressed the need to train to defend oneself at the cash point. Observations have therefore been linked to interviewing.

Besides these often random tales, there are some deliberate storytelling used to accompany standard teaching methods. If Terry was teaching us a specific technique, he will either draw upon his own embodied experience of performing the technique in a real combat situation, or will recall an incident he witnessed. Normally, the witnessed event will be of two 'muppets' who didn't do it right. We are learning how to do it right, clinically and psychologically. Sometimes he may refer to excellent fighters, and how they used Wing Chun principles without even knowing it e.g. after watching a recent UFC fight.

- To me, this illustrates the nature of humans as storytelling animals
- The TCMA practitioner's life story is a resource for teaching and learning

- Other people's stories are gifts that help us understand and give meaning to our own ongoing participation
- Observations of different TCMA practitioner-teachers could reveal what kinds of embodied stories they produce, share and reproduce

Impressionist tale: Free-flow dan chi sau with Dave (09/03/08)

Earlier, we had been running through the static dan chi sau drill in Dave's kitchen. It gave us enough room for Wing Chun's short and subtle footwork manoeuvres which played an integral part of free flow dan chi sau.

As I moved, my experience played dividends in my success in this exchange. Dave, who's sensitivity and reactions had been slowly drained from the long period of isolation, seemed ill at ease with coordinating footwork with unrehearsed attacks.

I have started to see the connections between the core Wing Chun drills: Find the line, dan chi sau and slow attacks. Previously departmentalised drills now merge into one as my hands moved with grace and ease. Our two different skill levels reflected vastly separated levels of embodied memory and a different state of consciousness. Whereas Dave was clearly working in a conscious state of semi-competence, I was shuffling between consciousness, semi-consciousness and unconsciousness.

I didn't have to concentrate on my typical flaws (such as the 'splitting of the guard') as these had already been amended by conscious hard work in class. Now, whilst playing, I could finally see what Sifu meant by "work hard now, play later." My hard work throughout the last eight years has now allowed me to work at the level of semi-consciousness.

- Links to Yuasa's bright and dark consciousness

My development as a human being (11/03/08)

On the phone the other day, Sifu remarked on how long it has taken me to go to his house and socialise. The other weekend Erika and I had visited him and his son in their house. On that Sunday evening, we chatted, cooked some Mexican food, and grew to know each other better. This was followed by his fascinating life story interview.

Sifu reflected on this: “Just think how long it’s taken you to come round to mine and socialise. You’ve been here, what, six years?”

“Five and a half.” I replied.

“Right. Five and a half years.” He agreed. “In all that time, we have never really socialised. It’s taken until now for you to come round and have some food. When I first met you, you were very shy. You barely said a word. Now you’re a lot more confident, a lot bolder.”

I agreed with this, glad to hear that he recognised my newfound confidence and social skills. I definitely see Wing Chun having played a major part in my self-development beyond martial arts skill through important changes such as: Self-confidence; physical ability; social networks; social skills and self-awareness. From examining his amazing life story, I will continue to strive towards continued self-discovery and realization.

Martial arts as a way of altering everyday thinking (26/03/08)

It struck me yesterday that martial arts training alters one’s use of free time in such a manner that it can reach the extent to which all thinking is focused around martial development. This of course includes the choice of reading material, which will often centre around martial arts, their history and philosophy, and more general self-development.

For instance, when I went to Zack’s house, upon entering his sitting room, I was astonished by the huge collection of martial arts magazines, notably *Combat*. In his time without a consistent teacher, Zack has amassed a great collection.

Could the same be said of other martial artists? Did their martial arts training cause them to read, watch and listen to different things? What about later, when they were confident and secure with their lineage? Did they need material originating from another sect? As Terry one said, “Why should I bother reading them? I’ve been doing this for the last twenty years. Why would I want some random bloke telling me what to do?”

- Links to ‘sect’ and ‘denomination’
- This is not explicitly stated by the Sifus, but seems to come about from a feeling of contentment arising from sustained periods of hard training

- Books appear to be influential in the early days of training, possibly as a form of meditation
- Links to Steve's comment: "There's nothing you can't learn from someone else that you can't learn in your own gym."

The power of now: Meditation in motion (26/03/08)

The popular spiritual book '*The Power of Now*' was frequently drawn upon in my old TC school by its late instructor, Bill. He always reminded us to remain 'in the now.' Before approaching this profound text, I thought his comments to be rather bizarre, as if something coming from a 1960s hippy. Yet from studying the preface and the first chapter of this 'wonderful book', I came to realize what he meant: Concentrate on what you're doing, and on your immediate body sensations and surroundings. Don't be distracted by the mind's thoughts. Distance yourself from it, and instead, focus on the body.

This book could be a core text for understanding the experiences of body-self transformation of many TCMA practitioners, and could even help us understand cultural transmission, as such a text could be useful for those struggling to comprehend the changes they are undergoing.

- I could incorporate *The Power of Now* to my 'phenomenology-inspired concepts' section in the theoretical framework chapter.
- The data could even be used to illuminate the book's messages, rather than just vice versa

Illness abroad: Another reminder of my fragile identity (26/03/08)

I have been sick since the night before last. That evening, I was determined to get up early and do my back exercises, along with the first form, which I had been off putting for many days.

Unable to eat or hold down fluid, frustrated by my lack of bodily control, I soon came to realize just how 'at the will of the body,' to borrow the title of Arthur Frank's self-narrative of illness, I am.

This frustration, aided by a quick recovery due to several medicines and Eri's constant kindness, raised my awareness of the value of mental training. I have my training diary besides me, and will delve into it today in order to rehearse the techniques over in my mind. If I can't do it physically, I will develop my skill via mental rehearsal.

- Links to Dave's talk of mental rehearsal during the time of his and injury

Applications of the PhD (26/03/08)

Governing bodies/trusts

Grant applications for further research

Awareness of the possible benefits of MAs

Applied research e.g. education or coaching courses for TCMAAs

Public

Raising awareness of TMAs in general

Countering stigma and misconception

Martial artists

Providing the gift and resources of stories

Use of theory may help them understand things from another perspective

Explaining, through the use of stories, the long-term changes experienced through TMAs.

MA instructors

Stories as a resource to understand different body types, schools and the narratives from these

They will especially benefit from the focus on cultural transmission

TCMAAs and examples of TMAs: How my research may be generalised further

Common characteristics (in no particular order):

- Non-competitive ethos*
- Concerned with a notion of ‘tradition’*
- Rituals practices
- Focuses on character development and values*
- A focus on self-cultivation*
- Partner based drills (cooperative)
- Compliant demonstrations between teacher and student*
- Clear hierarchy, differentiation and rank
- Sects and denominations*
- A long-term discipline (potentially for life)*
- Drills, forms and sequences
- Major narratives e.g. those of ageing*
- Originate from East Asia
- Connected to Eastern religion and philosophy*
- Distinct pedagogic principles*
- Mind-body discipline
- A clear structure and order of learning
- A set syllabus and code of conduct
- Mantras and mottos
- Lineage and ‘family’*
- Different forms of schools
- Different body types attracted and produced
- Focus on respect and etiquette*
- Teaching is integral to training and self-development*
- Sometimes associated with chi or prana*
- Concerns itself with the passing down of knowledge and culture*
- Contains deliberate meditational elements*
- Reflects culture of origin
- Set (yet flexible) principles – Conservationist and preservationist*
- Involves weapons training*
- The pursuit of flow or no-mind

Essentially, this list will distinguish the TMAs from MMAs and sporting martial arts, although they will of course share some characteristics (these are the ones without an asterix).

Usefulness of observations for sampling (04/04/08)

It struck me today just how important observation is as a tool for sampling potential interviewees. As my sampling is primarily based around ideal body types, complete observation and participant observation has allowed me to examine the behaviour, mannerisms, training approach and teaching styles of various people. From this, I am able to estimate the body types of the various MA practitioners.

How would I have approached Terry or Sifu if I had never trained with them or observed their normal activities? Would I instantly be able to categorise them into ideal types? Would I also be able to create specific interview questions for them, without prior knowledge of their biographies?

With TC practitioners, it is imperative that I spend several weeks observing several classes in order to decide who is best to speak to

Metaphors as a teaching resource (04/04/08)

From my data analysis so far, it is clear that MA practitioners use metaphors quite extensively. They are used for primarily two reasons: 1) To help one understand one's own technique 2) To explain the technique and the body-self transformation process to learners. Metaphors are therefore cultural resources deliberately drawn upon to convey self- and other's understanding.

By making other martial artists aware of the range of metaphors available, they can pick and utilise the most appropriate phrase/word for the particular student or context.

- A book on martial metaphors would be a useful resource for MA instructors
- Perhaps even a website of metaphors – Would make the information more accessible
- Along with metaphors, other cultural/linguistic resources such as Chinese martial proverbs could be collated

Faith in Wing Chun: The system and other students (21/04/08)

From observing Terry's teaching this evening, it is evident that faith in Wing Chun as a secular religion is reinforced in two main ways:

- 1) In the technique: Through demonstration, embodied experience and mantras e.g. "have faith in the triangle and all will be well." (Terry).
- 2) In each other: Through the gradual and long-term build up of intensity in training with a specific partner. This is essentially trust in one another, and is especially evident during practice of deadly techniques such as neck throws. This is enforced by the pedagogy and the collective morals of the group

I successfully 'converted' the entrant Will by demonstration of the triangle principle in training last night. Being experienced in various martial arts, Will tried out a few guard positions against me simple Wing Chun defence. Instead of reacting to the position of his limbs, I blasted straight forwards with my triangle. I got through every time, exposing the holes in his shape. Will look surprised and bewildered. 'How could such a simple thing do that to my techniques?' He must have been thinking. I know at that moment he had an epiphany: He was being converted to a Wing Chun frame of mind, just like I had many years ago.

Terry strolled past before closing the class. "I'm just going forwards with the triangle." I explained to Will.

"All you have to do is have faith in the triangle, and all will be well." Explained Terry on his way past, chuckling.

"It's like a religion, Wing Chun. You start to worship the power of the triangle. You could have pictures of triangles in your room to wonder over." Terry, Will and I all laughed. However, I wasn't joking, but was deadly serious in regards to Wing Chun being a religion and the triangle being a central marker of faith.

Bridging concept: Intersubjectivity as a link between transmission and transformation (07/05/08)

Between body-self transformation and cultural transmission there is intersubjectivity:

- In the shared embodied experiences (which can be explored through phenomenologically-inspired concepts)
- Through the socially reproduces narratives (explored through narrative theory)
- Shared experiences create change (body-self transformation)
- They reproduce the training culture and transmit embodied knowledge (cultural transmission)
- Without intersubjectivity, 'proper' body-self transformation and cultural transmission would never occur

The shared embodied experiences and narratives have two major functions:

- 1) To produce certain types of bodies (transformation)
- 2) To reproduce the type of school

Chi sau and pushing hands are key examples of this. They involve embodied and oral intersubjectivity

Essentially this bridging concept will help me address question 5, that of the connections between change and pedagogy

Metaphors/analogies: Pedagogic strategies (07/05/08)

Are used as an attempt to most effectively convey the body experiences and pedagogic principles to learners. Perhaps they may even be part of the narrative web in TCMAAs. However, it must be clearly stated that language can never replace actual embodied, lived experience.

The three levels of narrative in TCMAAs (07/05/08)

Metanarrative: The major narratives in the TCMAAs, and the TMAAs more generally. These are likely to be heavily influenced by the narratives of the East

Cultural narrative: The narratives produced and reproduced within the school(s). These are likely to be shaped by the life stories of the hierarchy, particularly the head instructor

Ontological narrative: The person's 'individual' interpretation and shaping of the story. It is a combination of the above and the narratives encountered in the individual's life story

Taiji competitions: Degrading the martial art? (08/05/08)

During my private lesson yesterday, the topic of conversation came to Taiji competitions. Sifu just couldn't see how this could be done: "The form's taken a primary importance in Taiji. I don't see how they can regulate it. Everyone's different. We're all shapes and sizes."

What he meant by this is that all martial artists are different. There is no one way to perform the techniques. You can't have a set measured distance between the feet, or the elbow from the body. If it works for them, use it!

- At a later point, Sifu reflected that this is not just the case for Taiji. Wushu and Praying Mantis are also noticeable examples of solo demonstration based martial arts

Chi sau with Sifu: Some key describing words (07/05/08)

- Long bridge
- Short bridge
- Range of hitting
- Constant forwards pressure
- Loose hands
- A seemingly impenetrable barrier
- Subtle
- Minimal movement/exertion
- Intra- and inter-body awareness
- Embodied awareness of distance

Wing Chun and Taijiquan: Some similarities (09/05/08)

- 1) Focus on partner based training
- 2) Sense of touch emphasised
- 3) Gradually hone sensitivity
- 4) The specific exercises of sticking and pushing hands
- 5) Gentle on the body
- 6) Accessible to people of all ages
- 7) Little physical conditioning involved
- 8) No requirement of physical strength or athleticism
- 9) Fighting principles
- 10) Focus on practical self-defence
- 11) Small and precise movements
- 12) Compact systems with few forms of weapons sequences
- 13) Very popular and well known in the West

Terry's life story: Used to illustrate training and application principles (12/05/08)

As Terry strolled over to the front of the class to address is, he commented on the need to train at home: “Now I don’t call this training. Some people do, but I don’t. I come here to learn. It’s at home where I do my training. You come here to learn, and you go home and train.”

He continued to explain his habitus development: “Now I don’t expect everyone to be as diligent as me. I have a spare hour in the day. I’m lucky, as I do this for a living, amongst other things.”

After a brief pause, he went on to explain his early ‘training’ years: “When I was first learning Wing Chun, I was training everywhere. When I was waiting for the kettle to boil, I was sitting in my stance (performs stance). When I went to get some sugar, I’d biu ma across the kitchen (performs perfect stepping motion). My bird at the time thought I was mad.”

- There are different schemes of perception between Wing Chun practitioners and novices which make non-practitioners feel such behaviour is bizarre

- This links to Sifu's phrase 'Wing Chun widows' for the perplexed partners of diligent Wing Chun practitioners

Terry's life story is frequently drawn upon as a resource for training and application. This evening, Terry used the example of 'brother-in-law techniques' in circumstances when you don't want to hurt the person. Terry had actually head butted his own brother-in-law on his sister's wedding day! This was before the days of Wing Chun discipline and skill, which would have enabled him to restrain, rather than knock the groom unconscious. Terry remarked, "I wish I knew the stuff I do now!"

One glove fits all: A universal Wing Chun for beginners (14/05/08)

During my private lesson, Sifu explained that although he 'puts on different hats' for the different students entering the gym, when they first begin, it's a "one glove fits all policy. Everyone gets the same thing eventually."

- Different interpretations lead to the same path?
- Later on we individualise WC according to
- Marketing strategies (applications of the PhD) may attract different types of students, but eventually they realise the universal nature of WC
- Sifu's key quote on the different reasons people want to train is a flagship piece of data that may help introduce the different body types and narratives told and reconstructed by them

Another thing that struck a cord with me today was Sifu's recalling of his old student Thomas. This young man had been with him for several years, and got up to biu jee level. Thomas had told him: "I never bother remembering their names until they've been sticking around for a couple of years." To me, this proves yet again the unstable nature of the kwoon and the career of a martial arts instructor. Cultural transmission is completely obstructed by drop outs. Even Thomas left eventually for no apparent reason, although he practises alone at home.

Change and transmission: Chi sau as the medium between the two processes (14/05/08)

At the end of my private lesson, Sifu gave me a top tip for teaching: “As you’re with the others in Adderton, you can develop their chi sau so they don’t just defend, but actually start attacking you too. You used to just defend, but now you’re attacking me lots. In order for you to get better, you need to make your students able to attack you, to put you under pressure.”

- Body-self transformation and cultural transmission linked through chi sau
- Chi sau is the medium for shared improvement

Body types and fighting arts (15/05/08)

This evening Sifu was speaking of history of Taiji, and the origin of pushing hands. “But nowadays, no one who seriously want to fight goes to do Taiji. And no one who wants to compete will seek out Wing Chun.”

As we left the Gym and headed into the dark alleyway, Dave reminded Sifu of Sean, a former student in the school, who had now gone off to learn Baguazhang. Sifu explained that he knew this Bagua teacher. He was British, but is married to a Chinese woman, speaks the language fluently, understood its culture, and had a great deal of knowledge on his two chosen martial arts. “But can he fight?” Sniggered Sifu. “And I’ll say it to Sean’s, Dean’s and even to his face. How can you learn from a man who’s never had a fight? Now I’m not saying that you need to go out and look for fights, but it’s good to know that what you do works.” Eri, Dave and I concurred.

Sifu then finished this fascinating discussion by drawing a comparison between the thinking and fighting body typologies. “In China, they have the Academic Wushu Association. You can learn off some professor who’s been at University for the last 25 years and has never been in a fight. But you want to learn how to fight? Go to the backstreets behind the University. Go to Brooklyn or Mexico City. Look at the desperate people fighting to survive. That’s where you learn to fight.”

I became slightly concerned about this depiction of the university professor. This was essentially a potential me in 20 years time. However, Dave consoled me, “but

you're learning from someone who can fight." I agreed, feeling more content. So I belong to a fighting school? Will I embody characteristics of a fighter?

On the journey home, Dave admitted to us that he had often felt an urge to fight in order to test if he could actually do it. Like me, he had never experienced a real street fight: "In a way, I do want to try it out to see if I can, and in another way, I don't at all."

- Body typologies are drawn to certain MAs
- Fighting experience is needed in order to be labelled 'a fighter'

The WC school as an outlet for my research (15/05/08)

Today I handed Sifu my marketing ideas for the Adderton Wing Chun School. These ideas were based around the different body types and narrative predominant in the TCMA's

- The practical, applied component of my PhD
- If strategies here are successful, I may only apply them elsewhere

Embodied experiences as the root of body types (17/05/08)

I just had a thought: Embodied experiences are essential in order to be classified as a certain body type. For instance, to be labelled (by self or other) a fighter, fighting experience is essential. Likewise, to be called a spiritualist, some kind of spiritual experience must have been lived at least fairly regularly whilst practicing. To be known as a martial artist, one must flow through martial motions with great skill

- These embodied experiences require others (in cooperation or combat)
- Even if the individual experiences this on their own, they would never have got to that state without others developing their skill
- These experiences are commonly drawn upon for cultural transmission
- They will help forge meaning around practice

New body type: Hybrid body type embodying elements of all three.

A spectrum of body types (17/05/08)

Is it possible to skip the ‘middle’ body type of martial artist in order to get from a fighter to a thinker or vice versa?

- It makes sense to think that the martial artist body type can act as an intermediate phase
- Perhaps this body type should be sandwiched between the two others in the actual thesis write up?

Addiction, talent and perfectionism: Fuel for TCMA success (19/05/08)

On the journey back from Rigmouth, Eri, Dave and I were discussing health and Wing Chun. Terry had suffered from bad health over the last few months, and I had put this down to his rather abusive lifestyle of drinking and smoking. We agreed that it wasn’t uncommon to hear that great martial artists (or at least the fighters) regularly abuse their bodies. Is this because of their typical working class and gang backgrounds? Was it that Wing Chun is not really for health, as Eri suggested? It does appear that Wing Chun is not overly concerned about general physical health, but instead focuses on technique transmission for effective self-defence, at least in our school. Perhaps with Taiji we will see a different pattern emerging?

I remembered back to Sifu’s interview, when he mentioned that if you have an addictive personality, Wing Chun will work for you. Dave and Eri concurred. I then had another thought: How about perfectionism and Wing Chun? Surely they go together. Eri is a perfect example of this, being insistent that she gets the entire dan chi sau sequence correct before moving off. Dave then had another suggestion: “And also those people who are good at music. Sifu said the musical types pick up Wing Chun pretty quickly.”

- Transfer of habitus and personality to WC
- The health narrative is largely ignored in WC as few partake in any cardiovascular activity outside of training. In fact, the word ‘health’ is rarely used, besides when the topic of injury prevention is discussed

Embodied experiences as the root of body types (30/05/08)

I just had a thought: Embodied experiences are essential in order to be classified as a certain body type. For instance, to be labelled (by self- or other) a fighter, fighting experience really is essential. Likewise, to be called a spiritualist, some kind of spiritual experience must have been lived at least fairly regularly whilst practicing. To be known as a martial artist, one must flow through motions with great skill

- These experiences require others (in cooperation or combat)
- They will be used for cultural transmission
- They will help forge meaning around practice

More thoughts on body types

As the three major body types are theoretical, perhaps the ideal martial artist has all three elements? I increasingly see the three as a spectrum from fighter to thinker, with martial artists resting in the middle a possible intermediate stage. Is it possible to skip the 'middle' body type of martial artists in order to get from a fighter to a thinker? This seems unlikely when you observe, speak to and train alongside these body types.

Some other considerations for body types:

- Sub body types e.g. street fighter
- Arts attracted to
- Arts that produce them
- 'Opposing narratives' e.g. combat for spiritualists
- Potential generalisation to other arts
- Famous examples e.g. Wong Shun Leung

Body types and metaphors:

- Thinkers: Profound metaphors
- Martial artists: Technical, everyday metaphors
- Fighters: Aggressive/war-like metaphors

Could a proper matrix be produced, like with Frank's embodiment matrix? It is important to stress that these are narratives of transformation rather than actual body problems. What narratives might they tell when they are injured or ill?

Narratives of change:

- Before/beginning: What were they like before?
- During/middle: What are they like now?
- After/end: What do they become?

Example of the fighter body type:

- Beginning: Competent fighter wants to get better
- Middle: Develops skill and enhances abilities
- End: Wants to continue improvement and pass own knowledge to family

Example of martial artist body type:

- Beginning: Martial artist wants to change to a more appropriate style
- Middle: Develops skill and enhances abilities
- End: Constant striving for perfection. There is no end

Example of thinker body type:

- Beginning: Interested in the MAs as spiritual and philosophical practices
- Middle: Develops skill and ability whilst undergoing experiences he/she regards as spiritual
- End: Towards self-development and enlightenment

Which narratives are closely linked?

- Ageing and health
- Mastery and discovery
- Combat and mastery
- Performance and mastery

These six narratives in just two styles of the TCMA provide a wide spectrum of possibilities for personal and shared change and growth.

Sensitivity drills (22/05/08)

Terry explained to us the importance of the sensitivity drills: “Against someone who relies on the sense of sight, they’ve got no chance. It’s going too fast for them to see. You’ve got to feel. Feeling is the key. Don’t get into a rhythm with the drill. Feel.”

Characteristics of the three body types

Fighters

- Concern themselves with real fighting
- Train with this in mind
- Adjust the art to make it more realistic
- Teach in an aggressive and direct manner
- Life story of fighting used as a teaching resource
- See themselves as changed through skill in combat

Martial artists

- Concern themselves with technique
- Train for technical perfection (mastery)
- Adjust the art for superior technique/theory
- Teach in a technical and precise manner
- Life story of skill experience is used as a teaching resource
- See themselves as changed through fine martial skill

Thinkers

- Concern themselves with the intellectualisation of the art
- Train and then think/reflect
- Adjust the art according to new experiences
- Teach in an abstract and talkative manner
- Life story of experience used to describe body sensations and change e.g. chi sau
- See themselves as changed through intense intellectual realization or spiritual experiences

The role of each body type in cultural transmission (30/05/08)

As Dave Brown noted in a recent tutorial, all three body types are useful for cultural transmission to occur.

- The fighters are needed to pass on the street applications of the style and protect the school
- The martial artists are needed to pass on the fine skill
- The thinkers are needed to intellectualise and explain theories and principles

Even in modernity, all three body types have a role to play. Once certain body types are no longer attracted and produced, the art changes due to altered cultural transmission. For instance, TC no longer attracts or produces many fighters. Thinkers and some martial artists participate in this style, but they do not usually pass on the fighting applications.

- In a school dominated by just one body type, the art would be changed forever
- It just takes one generation of students to completely change the art

WC and body types in chi sau (30/05/08)

At the close of the lesson, Sifu mentioned that we would be focusing on the three types of chi sau: Hard, regular and soft. At once I thought of the three body types: Would each favour one of the three approaches?

- The fighter typically rolls 'hard,' reflecting his/her aggressive tendencies
- The martial artist would roll evenly, focusing on both attack and defence
- The thinker will roll very softly and defensively
- Is there a spectrum of focus from outward to inward?

Chi sau and ageing (30/05/08)

After our short chi sau session, Sifu explained the effect of ageing on softness: “Now when you’re younger, being hard with your Wing Chun is really, really good. You can apply it on the street and it works. But when you get older, you’ve got to be softer. The softer you are, the better you are.”

- Sifu as an illustration of the continuum of bodies
- Ageing is an unstoppable biological process that leads to self-reflexive action and agentic change of body type

Collective improvement and cultural transmission (03/06/08)

At the end of the second lesson Terry concluded with the importance of teaching: “I learn a lot from teaching. All of us need to work on the basics. Even me. When I teach you I see the mistakes that I sometimes make. I get better that way. It makes you better, which will help the beginners get better. We all develop together.”

- A collective body-self transformation through cultural transmission
- As one level of the school improves, their schemes of perception are enhanced so that they can spot mistakes
- Beginners learn by experience, not by being told what to do e.g. the case of pushing down in chi sau. If told, does the ego take over?

As teachers train less and teach more, they reach a plateau in their training. To continue improving, they must develop students good enough to challenge them. If senior students don’t get to this stage, the cycle would be broken.

Narratives of ageing in the TCMA's (05/06/08)

Yesterday, at the end of the interview, Ted said something that left me thinking all day: As one gets older, one gets more mellow, and less obsessive with the martial arts. This accompanies an ageing body which can’t sustain the same level of participation as

before. Maintenance and gradual improvement are seen in the later years of training. Alongside this, the practitioner is content with his/her chosen style and teacher, and relies little on external information e.g. from martial arts magazines or films. This ties closely to what many participants have already said in interviews and personal communications. So the major story of ageing may be seen as follows:

- In the beginning, lots of free time, energy and enthusiasm allow intensive physical and social participation in MA training. This is accompanied by a curiosity of the external knowledge, such as MA films. Form and solo practice are very important at this stage.
- At a later stage, once skill is achieved and lifestyle is more structured with work and family commitments, the practitioner continues to develop his/her skill in a more relaxed fashion. Partner training becomes increasingly important
- At an older age, the body cannot allow the extremities of previous training. Because of this, and an accompanying mellow attitude, the practitioner maintains his/her skill with the interaction with others.

Body types and energy in chi sau (19/06/08)

Again, I noticed in this lesson that different body types roll slightly differently. Zack, a definite martial artist is softer than the more direct and aggressive roll of Terry, a fighter. Terry's rolling also stands in contrast to that of the spiritualist Tony, who appears to lack a particular focus. No one practitioner rolls the same. They bring their personality and body type into Wing Chun, and modify their technique accordingly.

- Links to the key issue of intersubjectivity

Senses in Wing Chun (23/06/08)

Terry explained the use of senses in Wing Chun: "Before contact, if I think I can blast through him, I will. If I'm bigger than him, I'll use a more direct approach. But you can't see strength. You can't. I've worked on a building site for sixth months. There was one bloke – A right skinny fucker. But he could live three times as much as me and

work three times faster. So if I come across people like that, I will use my sensitivity training to employ technique rather than power, like the jong to tan sau example we're doing here."

Later in the lesson, Terry approached Phil and I whilst we were working on the drills. "Is the sense of sight important in Wing Chun?" I asked

"Oh yes." He replied. "In the beginning, you use your eyes a lot. We tell you not to trust them, and rely on the feel of the hands. But you'd be foolish to just use one of the senses you've got and only use one. Once you've got your head around your hands, you can use both together. Before impact you use your eyes. Upon impact you use both."

I immediately understood what he meant by this: Combine both senses. Don't be limited by just one. Sensitivity is just one big part of the parcel with chi sau.

METAPHOR: Tan sau as "a car's suspension", a "tyre" or "like a balloon."

Body types in the traditional pedagogy (03/07/08)

At the end of the lesson, whilst in the alleyway, Sifu spoke of the upcoming Adderton class: "Wherever you go, you should try to get seven really intellectual people and seven good fighters. Those fighters don't necessarily have to be good technicians. They just need to know how to fight. They would be your seven formers, or technicians and the seven fighters. Traditionally, that's what a master would just teach: Those fourteen. That's all he ever needed.

So are there only two real body types? Or do the thinkers and martial artists fit into the 'technician' category? Would this be needed in UK society? After all, challenge matches are few and far between.

Everyone wants to be the chief, no one wants to be the Indian (03/07/08)

Sifu was having problems with a rival school. One of the instructors had claimed on his website that he had trained under him. However, Sifu couldn't recollect this. He saw his rival as another wanabee master: Like I've said before, everyone wants to be the chief, no one wants to be the Indian."

He was therefore going to modify his website to explain the following:

- Who trained with who
- For how long each student trained
- What level did they get to?
- What line on the lineage are they?
- Were they remembered?
- Are they still 'active' practitioners/teachers?

Other issues from this fascinating discussion are as follows:

- Disciple/indoor student
- Instructor certificates
- Lineage
- Teacher's stamp
- Name of Association
- Tea ceremony with Master Yi: Being welcomed into the family

Epiphanies: Part of the learning process (03/07/08)

In the last lesson, Terry walked up to Alex and I. Alex was rapidly improving, having overcome a long plateau in his training. "Is outside facing stance just half an inside facing stance?" He asked Terry inquisitively.

"Yes, it is. You're starting to get it know. Things are starting to connect."

"That's good Alex. Now you can pass on that knowledge to others."

"No!" Said Terry roughly, turning back to face us. "You need those eureka moments for yourself. If you give everything to people, they'll never understand it. Those eureka moments might not happen here. They might happen at home. But when they do happen, they make everything make so much sense. You won't get that level of understanding from another person's experience."

I therefore understood: Eureka moments, or epiphanies, are necessary learning experiences for body-self transformation. They cannot be transmitted from body to body, but will come eventually from embodied experience and reflection.

Body-selves as human: A critical reflection (16/07/08)

During Joe's second interview, I came across a dilemma: The term body types is quite problematic as it takes away the human aspects of the participants. They don't want to be referred to as bodies, but people. Even body-selves may lead to taken either a greater importance to the body or the self. Are people more than a body-mind? The spiritualists are likely to argue so.

Sifu's fighter habitus (17/07/08)

Sifu was motivated and focused in today's session. He led the warm up of hundreds of punches, inspiring us with his enthusiasm and martial spirit. His eyes were fixated on the ends of his punches, hitting imaginary opponents as he suggested we do. He wore a black vest displaying his heavily tattooed arms, his eyes were fierce like a eagle's. I stepped my game up in an attempt to match his.

- Analogies of mechanics and warfare are used in this fighting school e.g. the turn like a turnstile and the chain punch with triangle step like a shotgun.

Thoughts of the practitioner continuum (18/07/08)

Where are they on the continuum?

Where have they been?

Where might they go?

Where do they want to go?

Where are their peers?

Where is the school?

Where is the instructor?

How are they shaping each other?

Life stories allow us to understand where practitioners have been, where they are, where they aim to be, and where they might end up in the future

- Due to the dynamic and culturally diverse nature of TCMAs, it is likely that the practitioners will draw upon a range of narratives
- Are there hidden narratives (Church) in certain schools e.g. combat in a health school? TC and WC like to draw contrasts between each other, despite their differences

The changing school-practitioner relationship (31/07/08)

This afternoon I bumped into Billy, a former instructor at the school. We were pleased to see each other again and engaged in hearty conversation

- Billy's MMA approach
- Embodied experience of *chin na* and locks
- Books and videos as an approach to learning in absence of a teacher
- Leaving Sifu
- Stories of the 'old school': Bruises and full contact training
- The 'softening' of other WC schools
- Patriotism towards Yi's style
- Training through injury
- The fighters' body and experiences
- Ageing: The limitation of a fighter approach
- Continuing identity of a teacher: Sharing his knowledge with me and others

The old school: "We used to really go for it. We had a bruising competition: Who's got the most bruises? Our arms would be black and blue."

"Sifu's broken my nose twice. He broke my nose the first time we did chi sau. It was my fault though. I went at it like a bull in a china shop. He was only matching my aggression."

"Sifu used to sponsor me. Didn't you know about that? He paid for me to enter competitions."

On chi sau: "I can do chi sau and all that. I'm all right with that. But what I'm really about is the applications. I'm into chin na now."

On soft schools: “I think that’s what happened to a lot of Wing Chun schools out there. They’ve gone too soft to keep up student numbers.”

“People think Wing Chun’s a soft martial art, but it’s not. It’s been changed into one.”

On the fighting school: “We used to have beginners leave quite a lot. They couldn’t take the hard training.”

- The ‘hard knock’ school Sifu referred to

Patriotism: “I’ve trained in three or four different forms of Wing Chun and Yi’s is definitely far superior. It really is. I’ve had students move away to other schools and tell me about the stuff they’ve been learning. Most of them don’t even lock their punches!”

“Chen’s Wing Chun is a load of shite. We’ve done that for a while. I’ll tell it to Chen’s face too. I’ve met him a couple of times. I’ve done four of five different types of Wing Chun, and Yi’s is far superior!”

“I would never do Chen’s Wing Chun, but I’d pop in and take a look. Apparently I’m not welcome there as I taught the instructor.”

Teacher habitus: This was highly evident when he demonstrated his newly found chin na abilities on me. The pain was excruciating, yet highly controlled. He easily spotted my mistakes. Despite his lack of a proper school, he continues his identity as a teacher through chin na

Fighter habitus: “I went to a MMA gym. I wasn’t there to learn mixed martial arts, but I was invited there to teach them a bit of Wing Chun. There was a guy there who said: ‘I’ve done a bit of Wing Chun. I don’t think it’s all that.’ I was like, here we go.’ So I asked him to punch me, and he did. I *bounced* off him with back and blasted my punches at him. He looked really shocked. I asked him, ‘who are you learning off?’ He said, ‘Simon Peters.’ Now, you don’t know Simon, but he was John’s helper, like Terry is now. He left the group and started his own school. But he never trained with Yi. He teaches more of a Chen approach.”

Chris stories his life in the past. He frequently refers to the old school, full contact approach and his previous successes. His current sense of self has been shattered through injury and the changed approach of the school.

Sifu, on the other hand, is a case study of a changing martial artist driving a dynamic school. Many of his fighter students did not adapt to the more technical approach to Wing Chun, and have left the group in order to pursue their own approach.

- Is his school too soft for fighters?
- How has Terry changed his approach accordingly?

Reflections on Sarah

Sarah is an example of a practitioner who has changed from a fighting orientated school to a more technical one. With that move, her habitus has changed to be more soft and passive in chi sau. Whereas her old approach was well known for its ferocious speed, excessive contact and verbal distractions, this time she was more patient and less ego orientated. Her rolling was softer, less forceful and incorporated fewer tricks or attacks

Cultural transmission issues (21/08/08)

How is the pedagogy of TCMAs different to that of Karate and TKD? What do WC and TC have in common? How are they passed down? Why is lineage so important? These are important issues when dealing with the term 'TCMA's.' If they are to be mentioned under this acronym umbrella term, they must be understood further.

- If generalisations to other TMAs are made, limitations with this should be accepted
- This is made difficult when experienced practitioners deny any connection between the two arts, and make jokes about each other

Sifu: Body-as-capital (29/08/08)

Sifu can't transfer his physical capital into economic capital; He can earn more doing a manual profession: "I've worked so hard for these skills. I've travelled the world, spending hours waiting at airports and things. Don't get me wrong, some of it was a holiday, but most of it wasn't. I've put a fortune into it, worked so hard at it, but at the end of the day, I can earn more putting a load of shit into the back of a truck than through this. Now that's the value of Wing Chun in today's society."

- Sifu Bridge is referring to a part time manual job he has been offered, which will earn him £70 per day. This is more than he will earn through teaching WC.
- Later, he said: "I've done some shitty jobs in my time George. I've worked in schools cleaning toilets, cleaning little kids' shit. But now I've got the job I enjoy."

WC as a religion: Hierarchy and non progressive structures (29/08/08)

"You remember how we said for some people, Wing Chun is a religion? Well it is really. It has the structure of a religion. There's a hierarchy, an established order that creates a system in order to maintain itself and its founders. If things are suddenly questioned, such as the lop sau drill [refers to pulling backwards rather than pushing forwards], people will start to go, 'hand on, what have we be learning for the last twenty years?!' That will upset the order, and destroy the establishment designed to protect the founders. So therefore, in religion, things don't change. That's why they're not progressive. Otherwise the hierarchy will be destroyed. What's the point of building something that you're part of, if only to be left with nothing?"

Notes from Joe's class: Pushing hands (03/09/08)

Joe asked me to come over as I was closest to him. He wanted to demonstrate the martial application of the ward off motion. Perhaps he chose me as I am an experienced martial artist? Never mind, forget about that – just focus on his instructions. We stood opposite each other and Joe asked me to push into his position. I mirror his rounded

ward off hand, and leaning forwards, I try to push him off balance. Yet he remains calm, and stays still like a statue. I can't move him!

“Push harder.” Requests Joe.

I comply, trying to use my stance and low centre of gravity. He doesn't budge one bit.

“If I let go, I can take advantage of his straightened arm.” Explained Joe, as he releases his press and I slip forwards, off balance. My right arm that was pressing in now dangling down, held by his firm but relaxed hands. I realise I'm in an arm lock.

“And I can lock it or break it if I want.” Says Joe, putting my pressure on my elbow, “which leads us into another martial application.”

I feel completely defeated and at his mercy. He could snap my locked arm at any time.

Qigong (03/09/08)

After some stretching, we lead into some qigong exercises. One complex one is ‘holding a grain of rice.’ This involves whole body coordination and the opening of the chest and shoulders.

Joe faces the large mirrored wall so that he is looking the same direction as us. We mirror his movements, starting with the right hand, imagining a grain of rice being held in the middle of my palm. I rotate my hips and trunk to the left, to bring my right hand above my head. I then twist the opposite way to bring it back, turning the hand so the fingers are now facing forwards. This is much easier, and reminds me of the tan sau position in Wing Chun. I follow the same patten of body coordination till the hands are on the hips and we are ready to go to the other side.

“Now lets try it on both sides. Don't worry, I won't ask you to do at the same time, but one after the other.” Joe reassures us.

From right to left and left to right, this smooth, rhythmic warm up exercise prepares me for my Taiji class. After a few minutes, I get the hang of this, and try to follow the rest of the class, attempting to work as one unit.

The setting (03/09/08)

A bright blue wall and floor in this ultra-modern studio. On the walls there are advertisements for other classes, displaying pictures of yoga, aerobics and weight training.

In the left hand corner to where I stand at the back, there are racked light dumbbells, ideal for aerobic classes. A banner ahead of the shining, clean mirrors clearly states 'spinning.' This is a typical commercial gym setting where people often learn Taiji.

WORDS: "Imagine a golden thread lifting you up to the heavens."

- A grand, poetic and very Chinese way of explaining something as simple as keeping your head upright

"Sink down to the feet. Feel connected to the earth." In this bright and modern studio above the ground floor, it is hard to feel connected to nature, let alone the earth!

Schemes of perception (08/09/08)

Sifu was worried about the state of martial arts in society. Were people really that naive and stupid to think that they can fight with Taiji? He asked the class, and we all agreed that most people don't get into Taiji for fighting. However, some start to see the fighting aspects, and believe that they can use it.

- Like Sifu once said, "It's dead!" and "They all say they're doing it for their health, but when they're all together in one room, they go, 'it's really powerful!' (whispering)."
- This illustrates Sifu's approach to non-martial practitioners
- The example of repulse the monkey: Trying to see deeper than is necessary e.g. raising the qi to the brain to repulse the monkey instinct. Yet Darwinism is a newer tradition than Taiji!
- Thinkers tend to over complicate things

Theory: Choice biography (08/09/08)

We can now practise MAs for more possible reasons than before: Self-defence, health, meditation, relaxation, leisure, fun, socialising and fitness. In feudal China the martial arts were for survival. The idea of 'health' would really equate to survival. A MA must work under those conditions or it would die out.

Now, however, due to choice biography, TCMAAs are changing, for better or worse, into commercialised forms of fitness and health activities

Schemes of perception (08/09/08)

How would a middle class person who'd never been in a fight be able to judge a MA's effectiveness? They could easily be taken in by an instructor's charisma and explanations (the system's plausibility structures). As Sifu advised me with the new Adderton intake: "First, don't ever let them see you sweat. Second, always have an answer. Unless there's an expert master who knows more than me, you'll be alright."

As Terry said, "They always have an answer ready. That's why I believed them."

As Rigmouth-based Len said at the end of a very small and informal class, "If someone goes to a kickboxing class and starts hitting the bags, and sees advanced students doing all the kicks, they think, 'Wow, this is it!' But if they come along here and watch us do this (refers to chi sau), they'll wonder what the hell we are doing. They just won't understand the point."

DISTINCTION: Instead of what social classes think is right, what do different MA schools teach and embody to be right?

Methods: Notes before fieldnotes (08/09/08)

As I will soon be going to the annual Festival of Chinese Arts, I thought to pose some questions for myself and for those I might meet. By preparing questions I will be able to

look for certain things. It is something that would have been useful during the TC and KF demo last year. Things to look out for would be:

- What message are each school trying to give?
- What do they say about each other?
- Thinkers, martial artists or fighters?
- Pushing and sticking hands experiences
- Martial metaphors
- Mission statements
- How do they interact with each other?
- Embodied experience

WC vs TC: Schemes of perception (08/09/08)

WC practitioners on TC players: “Airy-fairy” “it’s for old men” “Eastern bullshit” accompanied by physical demonstrations in a mocking style

TC players on ‘external’ MAs: “Brute force” “tense” “too much yang” “destructive”

There seems to be lots of misunderstanding between the two systems that rely on cultural and media stereotypes. Sifu recently said the following: “I haven’t got a problem if somebody’s doing TC for their health. I don’t think it’s a load of crap. It’s good to help you feel relaxed, but then so is Siu Lim Tao.”

- Faith in the martial-religion is set by a socialized habitus which provides a feeling of what is right
- TC as a secret society: Cult literature
- But to outsiders, WC probably looks like a secret society!

TC and age: A negative narrative (08/09/08)

Sifu spoke of his friend Colin who teaches Thai boxing: “I said to him, ‘I hope to carry on doing Wing Chun till I’m well into my sixties. What are you going to do then? You won’t be able to carry on with all this.’ He said, ‘Oh, I’ll do Taiji then.’ I was a bit

annoyed by that as he spoke about Taiji like it was nothing. I'd be really pissed off if I was a TC guy, but I probably wouldn't say anything as I wouldn't be able to fight." We all laughed

- So TC is commonly regarded as an old man's activity, a last resort for many serious martial artists
- Perhaps there is a continuum? From MMA to qigong...from the intense athleticism emphasising real fighting to relaxed, smooth motions with a spirituality and health focus

As all martial artists age, this continuum (although not formally established) is present in their schemes of perception at a subliminal level.

- Tim acknowledged in his interview that he wouldn't be able to do the Kung Fu stuff for much longer, even at 27
- Tony admitted that he couldn't do kickboxing for many years due to being 42

Fighter: Emin Botzepe (08/09/08)

"Now what he said, which I really respect him for...what he said was: 'Everything I do, I can apply.' He can't apply this (demonstrates classical Wing Chun footwork), so he uses something else."

Disembedding of WC (08/09/08)

If Wing Chun is modified to be more attractive to beginners with more bag work and kicks, how would this affect both body-self transformation and cultural transmission?

- Sensitivity and chi sau work might be sacrificed in order to make WC more attractive and understandable
- WC in the modern environment: Like other arts, the spiritual aspects may be emphasized

Taiji: Claims of body-self transformation (08/09/08)

“Nowadays most people don’t do Taiji for fighting anymore. They say they do it for their health, which is fine. Then they do it for their mind, so it’s for relaxation. I haven’t got a problem with someone doing it for their health or to relax, but now they’re taking it too far!” By this he was meaning spirituality.

PUSH HANDS: Good for grappling and self-defence/clinch work. Use of circle rather than triangle principle

Intro: Defining ‘art’ (08/09/08)

If a martial art is really an art, we need to define ‘art’ itself...

- A medium for self-expression
- A skill
- A long-term pursuit
- A method of self-cultivation

Martial is

- War
- Combat
- Military

Chi sau and pushing hands: A comparison

CHI SAU

- Works with triangles, pyramids and straight lines
- Focuses on striking
- Focuses on attack
- Usually practised with two hands
- Not a popular competition event
- Performed at close range
- Normally performed in motion

PUSHING HANDS

- Works with circles
- Focuses on pushing
- Focuses on yielding
- Usually practised with a single hand
- A popular and well known competition event
- Performed at arms length distance
- Normally performed stationary

SIMILARITIES

- Requires and develops embodied sensitivity
- Can be performed blindfolded
- Are the bridge between forms and combat
- Contain set and free flow drills
- Key aspects of the system
- A way to judge a good practitioner
- Skill is paramount over physical strength or athleticism
- Concern themselves with range and structure (self- and other)
- Concerned with angles and degree of force issued and received
- Aim to remain in constant contact
- Slow and rhythmic in the beginning

SIMILARITIES BETWEEN SYSTEMS

- Have meditative/qigong aspects
- Sticking and sensitivity
- Relaxation rather than muscular strength
- Yielding concept
- Yin/yang
- Simultaneous attack and defence
- Similar period of historical development

Future work: Working with advanced practitioners, I could explore sticky legs

Methods: Pre training prompts (10/09/08)

- Explanations
- Justifications
- School mission
- Feelings and sensations
- Participants
- Interactions
- Martial aspects
- Health aspects
- Spiritual aspects
- Difference to qigong

Notes from Joe's class (10/09/08)

HEALTH FOCUS

“Pay attention to your back. Relax the muscles in the lower back. Tuck in the tail bone.”

“Straighten the spine”

“Pay attention to your hands. If you're familiar with the exercise you can focus on your shoulders and your lungs”

- Markula: Functional fitness

SPIRITUAL SCHOOL

“Some schools link every movement of the form to the Yi-Jing and divination and the elements. They claim each movement will do something to your life. I'm a bit dubious about that as I haven't experienced it yet. But ask me again in 20 years.”

PSYCHOLOGICAL SCHOOL

“The first woman to bring it back to the West learned the movements from an old man in a park. She was a psychologist and so she added her psychology to it. From then on, Taiji taught as a psychological journey. To many people, each move is part of a journey. But if you go back a hundred years, it was none of that. People were practising their martial art. But to a certain extent, the form is a journey. You bring in a state of stillness and end in a state of stillness.”

- Journey metaphor
- Links to the 'monkey mind' extract

MARTIAL APPLICATIONS

Each new move of the 24 form was explained through the martial applications. Today I learned a throw and a simultaneous knee and hand strike. Some of the principles reminded me of it. Rather than add a spiritual or psychological twist to it, Joe explains using the martial applications, using different students for demonstration

THE THROW: The lady came in with a punch which Joe easily parried with a hook hand, and sunk down into a low stance to cradle one of her legs in his arms. He then rose up into the second position, putting her arm behind his back for a throw. She looked like a helpless doll unable to move

GOFFMAN: For different students, Joe gives different explanations

WUSHU: A PERFORMANCE STYLE

"Many of the Chinese Wushu performers go really low when doing this technique (the hook). Some people even have their inner thigh hitting the ground. But if you look at the old masters like Yang Cheng Fu and Zheng Manqing, they have quite high stances, and that's for practical reasons."

WARM UP: Slow and rhythmic, involving mind-breath coordination and whole body integration. At no point am I out of breath or in pain, unlike many MA warm ups. The slow tempo allows me to pay attention to my body sensations

WARM DOWN: A slow body scan from head to toes, inside and out

WOMEN IN THE MAS

How many women make it to the top? How many complete the system? Very few TC or WC female practitioners are prolific in the media. The masters and grandmasters are predominantly male. What stops these women developing further?

SENSES IN PUSHING HANDS

“You say the sense of touch, but it isn’t really that. It’s everything together. It’s sight, touch, body, listening. Yes, it’s listening up here (refers to the head). If I was just to use the sense of touch, I’d fall over!” (Ben, after 2nd interview)

Sifu on Mastery (08/09/08)

“Some people do lots of different martial arts. I do just one martial art. Fair enough, I’ve done a few weapons forms outside my system, but I do Wing Chun. If you put all your time and effort into one martial art, you’ll be good. I’d rather be really good at one thing than crap at loads of things. It’s like with cars, you can be a specialist mechanic in Japanese cars, or maybe even German cars. But you’re not also going to be a specialist in French and Italian too. You specialise in just one thing.”

“There’s this guy Peter Brown. Anyone ever heard of him?” I nodded. “Right, you have. You name a Japanese martial art, and he’s got a black belt in it, from dans 1-5. It’s ridiculous. How can you be an expert in everything? I just do one martial art. One martial art, and I’m still learning.”

- Learning/mastery narrative

This was much like when Tony commented on Will’s mixing of styles:

“So many styles! I’d rather get one thing really good and be able to use it.”
(Demonstrates straight blasts).

EXTERNAL MAS: A term seemingly devised by the so-called internal martial arts to differentiate themselves. According to Ben the former focus on attacking rather than yielding

Methods

- Pre-interview conversation as a resource for beginning the interview. After these issues have been discussed, I then turn to the interview guide

- Field notes are made on pre- and post-interview discussions and reflections
- Revealing my identity as a practitioner can be problematic
- Some questions/themes were written down during the process of the interview
- I was well aware of the discrepancy between TC and WC sampling. Long-term PO in a health orientated TC school helped compensate for this
- Two vivid and detailed impressionist tales

TC and self-defence (10/09/08)

Ben was convinced of TC's self-defence capabilities: "As it's focused on yielding, there's little risk of you getting hurt. You shouldn't get hit. And you won't hurt the other person either as you're not aiming towards destruction."

- Perhaps naive perspective on real life combat

Pedagogy: The transmission of knowledge (11/09/08)

Sifu was explaining why it was hard for us to understand this seemingly complex drill: "It's like with a professor. Everyone thinks he's mad, hence the mad professor...he knows so much in such great detail that the students can't understand him. That's why there's a teacher like we've got here (refers to me). The professor can teach the teacher, but he can't teach the students because they won't understand. So the teacher teaches the students."

- A chain of knowledge with the senior student as the medium

Modern fighters (11/09/08)

It seems challenge matches and real Wing Chun fighters still exist today. Sifu spoke of Sifu Steve Baldwin, who has declared on his website that he'll fight anyone as long as they give him six weeks to get into shape: "But I'd say what if someone comes up to him on the street? He can't ask them to give him six weeks."

- A crucial part of a fighter's identity is his fighting pedigree/history/record

Body-self transformation (12/09/08)

"And people will change. As they keep their Wing Chun up, their character will change. And they'll be getting older as well, so that will cause changes. Like you. When you first came here, you were young. You were only eighteen. You had all those eighteen year old problems that you didn't need to have. Now you're a grown man."

- Age is a major factor underpinning transformation

Certain types of training are useful for certain types of people

- For passive students, an aggressive method would be useful
- For fighters, that would be pointless as they already have that instinct

DROP OUT: "You'll have a big turnover of students. Do you know what I mean? With hundreds of people walking through the door, only five will stay with you to learn all of it."

CULTS/CLANS: Wing Chun, like all Chinese styles, would have been an important part of the community. The Sifu would be a figurehead in the neighbourhood. Yet today, their capital is barely recognised by non martial artists

Capital as resources (12/09/08)

Last night Sifu was clarifying his new approach to the system: "I want everyone who's wearing a blue belt to know all of the Siu Lim Tao and the applications. Everyone who's wearing a green belt should now the Chum Kiu. Now for those wearing a black belt, I want them to know all of the Biu Jee. We'll start introducing that earlier. I haven't mentioned the dummy as I think it's impossible for me to teach it in a class environment. I have to teach it privately. Unfortunately I can only do this for those who have free time and resources to do private lessons with me in the day."

- Money and time is a barrier to learning the whole system

YIP MAN: Must have taught the dummy privately to his students

The knives and pole were also restricted by money and time for private lessons. Now Sifu is seriously considering teaching the knives form in the second lesson on Thursday.

SENIOR/INTERMEDIATE STUDENTS: Often overshadowed in attention by the beginners. During more 'advanced' drills, the beginners will be focused on, not the students who have been turning up for years.

"A couple of senior students have said to me that I focus too much on the beginners. I spend my time and attention on them, and forget those who have been there for years. They're not progressing, whereas the beginners get all the attention and then drop out. One told me he wasn't thinking of quitting, but was quite disheartened by it."

TRANSFER OF SKILLS: Sifu benefits from a school of students with a range of skills: I am a researcher and writer, Eri is qualified in accountancy and finance, Fernando is skilled in programming and Dave is a printer and photographer. Our habitus (es) are transferred to the WC school's success.

Martial art or art martial? (15/09/08)

Are martial arts really martial arts or are they arts with martial components?

- Martial practices with art components OR
- Arts with martial components

Habitus maintenance: The case of Peter (12/09/08)

During my private lesson, Sifu and I spoke of Peter, a fellow black sash. He had left for Wales around eight years ago, before I joined the group. Although he didn't attend any regular classes, he had maintained his skills through monthly private lessons with Sifu.

“It’s amazing how he’s kept his skills.” I marvelled.

“It is. He didn’t go to another class. Unlike Tony. Have you met him?”

“Yes, I did some chi sau with him. He’s like a bull in a China shop!” I exclaimed.

“That’s right. Terry was saying how he was all over the place. If you go somewhere else, you’ll change your skills. It’s like driving...if you stop for a few years, you’ll soon pick it up. It might take Peter a few minutes, but he’ll soon get back into it.”

- WC as driving analogy/metaphor
- Different schools remove old dispositions and replace them with new ones

Taiji snobbery: Schemes of perception (12/09/08)

Roger is now working with me. I told him about Ben’s new beginners’ class, thinking that he might be interested in joining. He was shocked by this: “How long’s he been doing it then?!”

“About ten years, I think.” I replied, surprised at his tone.

“When I was there, Ben was doing an instructor course. There was Master James, and him and a few others. I think Ben’s a bit cocky starting his own class.”

I listened, entrapped by these comments, which seemed out of character.

“Master James is trying to expand his empire. He was the student of Grand Master Wong, a direct student of Zheng Manqing. So he’s a second generation. But Ben...he’s only third generation.” He said disapprovingly.

- Politics over lineage, generation and length or training for authenticity
- A similar thing is going on in Wing Chun

A few weeks before this, after our second interview, I told Ben that I really like Taiji and I was studying at the University with Joe. Ben was surprised by this: “Are you?! How long’s he been studying then?”

“About ten years.” I replied. “Do you know him?”

“I’ve heard of him.” He responded quietly.

“He does simplified Yang, but he also does Zheng Manqing with Mike Tomlinson, a student of Sean O’Keefe. Have you heard of them?” I inquired.

“The name rings a bell.” He replied. “Maybe James will have trained with them.” He seemed disappointed that I was learning from Joe. Perhaps he wanted to teach me?

Life as a journey (15/09/08)

Tony and I were travelling back from training to his home. We were discussing his summer job selling boat tickets: “I used to really look forward to it all ending. Now I feel really sad. I’ve really enjoyed it this year. It’s been a journey. It’s been a major part of my journey of life. I’ve learned so much from it mate. It’s a good test of character and it really develops your communication skills. You can make anything spiritual. It can be your job or whatever. You can even make washing the dishes spiritual. If you stay in the moment and don’t rush it, that can be meditation.”

Perfection/mastery (15/09/08)

On the way home, we were talking about our successes in life. I had forgotten to drop young Alex off first, so I turned round at the mini roundabout.

“No one’s perfect mate.” Said Tony, reassuringly. “If you were already perfect, you wouldn’t train every week. There’d be no point living. You’d already be there!”

- The pursuit of perfection in the TCMAs
- Links to an earlier conversation that evening about everyone’s different devotions to Wing Chun in the time that we have in our lives. Some people with no careers, such as Jimmy and Terry, have plenty of time to train their Wing Chun. Others, such as Nick and myself, find attending the two classes a week plenty.
- Nick’s ‘Kung Fu widow’ was the same as Dave’s and Will’s

Taiji and senior students

Today I noticed what Sifu’s students were saying. I had felt it in Wing Chun as a senior student and (non official) assistant instructor. It seems to be a character of the TCMAs. I was at the back with Tim, a fellow beginner whilst Joe instructed the new intakes. He spent a great deal of time running through their basics whilst the two experienced students lead the entire form for Tim and I to follow.

“Do you have any questions?” Asked the quietly spoken female student, today wearing a Chinese suit.

I explained my confusions, and she and the academic looking gentlemen showed us what to do.

- Senior students as the central resource of the pedagogy

QIGONG: Poetic names such as ‘holding the moon’ and ‘bouncing the ball’ are concerned with visualisation: ‘Imagine you were a puppet.’

Tinkering for perfection (25/09/08)

Tony and I were training lop sau. It felt a bit rushed at first, but we soon remembered all the changes.

“We haven’t done this in ages!” I exclaimed.

“I know.” He replied, “We’ve been working on other stuff. We now have gone back to this to tinker with this. What this is OK, we’ll move onto something else. We’re always tinkering.”

“That’s what a lot of people are saying in the interviews. They’re tinkering for the perfection that they’ll never get.” Tony nodded in agreement.

- Mastery narrative through the key issues of perfection and fine tuning

Appendix 5.6 Foundations of Impressionist Tales

The following are guidelines that assisted me in developing the impressionist tales found in Appendix 1.1. They are based on phenomenologically-inspired issues of time/space and the senses along with narrative issues of characters and plot.

The senses

- *Sight:* What colours are visible? Is there anything unusual? What markers of identity do practitioners and settings display? What is the focus of practitioners' vision? How is the sense of sight used to teach the art?
- *Sound:* How do people speak? Any particular accents? What kind of music is being played? How does actual training sound? How is the sense of sight used to teach the art?
- *Smell:* Are there any interesting smells? Where do these arise and why? How does this affect people's training? What do practitioners do to avoid certain smells?
- *Tastes:* Are there opportunities for tasting food and drink? How are bodily fluids such as sweat involved in training? Does TCMA training bring on certain urges?
- *Touch:* How do different practitioners 'feel'? How have they developed over time? What do certain pieces of equipment feel like? How can we describe this? How is the sense of touch used to teach the art?
- *Kinaesthesia:* How do I 'feel' through this sense? How do practitioners know what they are doing? How can we describe this? How is the sense of kinaesthesia used to teach the art?

Time and space

- *Time:* How do practitioners anticipate the session? How is time experienced throughout different periods of the session? What parts of training are experienced in the moment? How does this possibly differ between skill levels? What aspects seem to take a long time? How is the break used by different practitioners? How is time used to structure a lesson?
- *Space:* What areas of the training hall are used by certain practitioners? How does this mark seniority in the group? How is organisational space used for

teaching? How do ideas of personal space change in partner training? Where does the teacher move around?

Characters & Plot

- *Characters:* Who are the key characters to the tale? How do they relate to each other? What makes them experienced practitioners? Are they interesting forms of interactions? How do they form a key role in the transmission of the art? How are they involved in the institution?
- *Plot:* How is a typical lesson structured? How are past issues brought up? How do certain characters draw upon different kinds of stories, including their own? How is the present explained? In what ways in the future spoken about, in terms of transformation and the transmission of the art?

Appendix 5.7 Life History Interview Guide

Introductory Comments

Thanks for taking the time to talk to me, I know how busy you must be. This interview should take no more than two hours, but its duration really depends on how much you are willing to discuss.

This is a life history interview aimed at finding out how Wing Chun/Taijiquan has changed your life to make you the person you are today. Although the focus will be on your training years, the interview will also involve asking you about your childhood and other events outside martial arts. I hope you will be willing to talk about these, but please let me know if you are not comfortable discussing a particular topic.

Wherever possible, please provide vivid answers to my questions, including the important people, places and occurrences in the events of your life.

Interview Questions

1st Question: The Life History Question

In the next twenty minutes or half an hour, please tell me the story of your life by vividly recalling the events that have occurred to make you the person you are today. If it helps, try to break the story down into chapters of related occurrences, such as: early childhood; school days; adolescence; leaving school; finding martial arts etc.

Probes

If the participant only briefly mentions martial arts:

- 1) You mentioned earlier the importance of the martial arts in your life. Could you tell me more about this please?
- 2) It appears that Wing Chun/Taijiquan has had a major impact on your life. Could you explain to me how?
- 3) That sounds interesting. Tell me more.

If the participant is not discussing martial arts during the interview:

- 1) So far, you have told me a great deal about your life before Wing Chun/Taijiquan. Could you please tell about your life with Wing Chun/Taijiquan?
- 2) What happened when you started Wing Chun/Taijiquan? Did it change things in any way?
- 3) OK, that's been really helpful in framing your life before Wing Chun/Taijiquan. Could you please try to describe your new life with martial arts?

If the participant is taking too long in describing an event:

- 1) I think I understand now. Thanks for telling me this. What happened next?
- 2) I understand that this is difficult to discuss. We can go back to it later if you like?
- 3) So how did this affect you?

If I require clarification:

- 1) I'm sorry, but I don't quite understand? Could you explain a little further please?
- 2) So how did this event affect your life?
- 3) What impact, if any, did this have?
- 4) Why did this occur?
- 5) Is there anything else you can tell me about this event/place/time/person?

Wing Chun/Taijiquan Specific Questions

The following are examples of questions that may be used after the life story interview to articulate on martial arts specific experiences:

- 1) What drew you to Wing Chun/Taijiquan? Why did you choose it rather than another martial art?
- 2) How did you hear about the Wing Chun/Taijiquan school?
- 3) Can you remember your first Wing Chun/Taijiquan lesson? What was it like?
- 4) How did you deal with the new bodily experiences, such as bruising?
- 5) How did you find sparring/training with the senior students?
- 6) What did it feel like when you became a member of the group?
- 7) Over the years, how has your martial arts training changed you as an individual in and out of the class?
- 8) What does Wing Chun/Taijiquan have to offer that brings you back to class every week?
- 9) Why is Wing Chun/Taijiquan so important to you?
- 10) What do you think other people find in Wing Chun/Taijiquan? Do you think they have the same beliefs as you?
- 11) What is your aim with your Wing Chun/Taijiquan training? Will you continue for the rest of your life?
- 12) What feelings and emotions do you typically have when you train?
- 13) What are your favourite aspects of training? Why?
- 14) How do you structure your home training? What does it consist of?
- 15) Have you ever had to use this art in actual combat? What was the situation like?
- 16) Why is Wing Chun so violent and efficient when it is based on more peaceful Buddhist philosophies?
- 17) What occasionally prevents you from training regularly?
- 18) What do you think your life would have been if you had never begun Wing Chun/Taijiquan training?
- 19) Finally, what do you think your life would be like if you suddenly had to cease all training because of an illness or injury?

Closing Comments

Thanks very much for taking part in this interview. You've been extremely helpful, and I think we can end it for now. I hope we can chat about my findings sometime soon! It would be great if we could also meet up another time for a follow up interview, but that's totally up to you.

Appendix 5.8 Sample Interview Guide (Joe)

Health
Cultural transmission
TC and life
Spirituality

Health

- 1) Why does your school focus on the health aspect of TC rather than the martial element?
- 2) Why do you think this is so common nowadays?
- 3) How has TC helped your own health?
- 4) How do you see your long-term future in TC?

Cultural transmission

- 1) What made you decide to teach?
- 2) What made you decide to become a professional?
- 3) What's a teacher to you?
- 4) What are you trying to pass on through your lessons?
- 5) How do you teach TC to different populations?
- 6) What are the main principles and philosophies in your school? How do they differ from others?
- 7) Can you describe the different approaches of the various schools you have studied in?
- 8) What role does the website play here?
- 9) Can you tell me about your training with your instructor?
- 10) Why don't you teach the pushing hands?
- 11) Please describe some of your experiences with this i.e. partner interactions, getting to know people and breaking down the barriers
- 12) Why does TC have so many branches?
- 13) Why does it have so many politics?
- 14) Can you tell me more about the changes with every generation, and within generations?

TC and life

- 1) What is TC to you?
- 2) How does TC differ from other systems of MAs or EMFs?
- 3) What philosophies and principles have transferred to your daily life?
- 4) How does the lifestyle of a professional instructor impact on your daily training?

Spirituality

- 1) Have you had any spiritual experiences from TC?
- 2) What is qi to you?
- 3) Can you tell me more about your interest in Eastern philosophy and Daoism?
- 4) How is TC connected to both Eastern philosophy and Daoism?

Personal development

- 1) You said that you are a beginner compared to some of your peers. Can you tell me more about this?
- 2) What do you aim to achieve with your TC training?

Appendix 5.9 Follow up interview guide (Joe)

Other martial arts

- 1) Why didn't you like Karate?
- 2) What are 'internal' and 'external' to you?

Home training

- 1) Please tell me about your experiences of training alone...
- 2) Please describe a typical home training session...

Pedagogy and cultural transmission

- 1) What other metaphors have you used? Which other ones have you heard?
- 2) What martial aspects are incorporated in your teaching?
- 3) Have you got an apprentice of your own?
- 4) What's the difference between teaching part time and professionally?
- 5) What elements of Chinese culture are in it?
- 6) What's the importance of lineage to you?
- 7) What do you think the future course of TC is?

Health

- 1) Why is TC parcelled up as a health exercise?
- 2) How has TC influenced your diet and lifestyle?
- 3) How has TC influenced your approach to the environment?

Spirituality

- 1) What is qi to you?
- 2) What kind of meditative state does TC bring you into?
- 3) How do you incorporate Daoist philosophy in your teaching?

Body types

- 1) Can you tell me more about this continuum/model?
- 2) How have you moved along it?
- 3) Can you describe to me another memorable training session with a more martially orientated TC practitioner?

Appendix 5.10 Interview Transcript (Joe)

GJ: Right, OK Joe, let's begin. So to begin with, in the next twenty minutes of half an hour, I'd like you to tell me about your life, like you did earlier in the car (laughs), how you started Taiji and why you started Taiji, and how you got to where you are

JS: OK

GJ: I know it's hard to talk about your life in twenty minutes, but you can break it down to chapters if you like or just segments or elements of your life

JS: I'll just give you a run through. I was born in Tomlington. My parents were teachers. They always had an interest in Eastern philosophy. My Dad used to practise yoga, so I learned a bit of that. So I was in Tomlington till my early teens, then moved down to Rothshire. Spent a few years in Wales as a student and now I've been living in Adderton for the last ten years. My parents tried Taiji when I was younger. That's what really got my interest going, although I didn't take it up at that time. I was doing Karate. But I wasn't really suited to Karate, so I left that behind. I used to do battle enactment in English...I sort of enjoyed that. And I tried various sort of qigong, various types of meditation. Spiritual healing type of thing. And I have the opportunity to take up Taiji with a guy called Tom Reynolds, who teaches Zheng Manqing long form, which is a Yang style long form. He was based down in Perperleigh, and I trained with him for three or four years. Then moved to Adderton, and practised by myself for a couple of years, picked up a few bad habits. Then I got in touch with Paul Smith, who ran *Dontshire School of Taiji*, which is *Taiji World* now. And trained with him...the simplified Yang forms, eight, sixteen, Chinese twenty four, British Council of Chinese Martial Arts twenty four. Also the combined form, which is a combination of Yang, Chen, Wu and...Sun style. Also, I do Taiji sword. I also do qigong. Five element qigong. Over the years, I've probably done fifty different types of qigong (we laugh). I teach five element qigong, eighteen posture qigong, and dao yin, which is Chinese yoga. I teach in Adderton, in various places. I work as a professional instructor working for *Taiji World* and various freelance work. I teach in hospitals, universities, schools, general evening classes, old folks homes, corporate events. I do a lot of work at the moment with people with mental health issues...I'm teaching in two hospitals in Dontshire, and that's probably going to expand

GJ: That's great. Thanks for your concise story (coughs). I noticed that you said you do chi qigong as well. How do you see that tied to Taiji?

JS: Well, there's many different types of qigong. One friend has estimated about five thousand different types. The type I teach is quite closely related to Taiji, although they are separate arts. They're often taught together. Qigong tends to be more accessible. And you can do qigong and get a relatively quick benefit from it. So the first time you do it, you can feel it. Whereas Taiji, with its complicated postures, and the flowing movement. It takes a very long time to have a feel for it. You have to have a real interest. And I find that most of people coming to me are not really interested in the long form and learning lots of martial stuff. They want to know Taiji, but they also want to relax, for their health, they come because they enjoy it. Some people are really dedicated, but some people just want an hour's relaxation or meditation. I have to balance all those things. I tend to teach a few qigong exercises and dao yin. So I mix them together, but I let people know they are two separate arts. But they do compliment each other very well.

GJ: So most Taiji classes incorporate qigong now. Why do you think it has gone this way, from say a martial art to a qigong/health sort of focus?

JS: Well qigong can be martial as well, so there's always that aspect of qigong and Taiji as far as I know...some people will maintain that Taiji itself is a type of qigong. It can be that way, just as an energy method to build up. Other people can say it should be more martial. It should be in the middle. Or others say it should be a more spiritual approach. Some people would explain the origins of Taiji by taking the qigong fundamentals and applying them to the martial arts. Then also, you have the Shaolin qigong as well. So qigong is an umbrella term which came about, I think, in the 50s. It means energy work, energy arts. And it covers so many different things. Broadly speaking, there's Daoist, Buddhist, Confucian, health qigongs. The traditional Taiji exercises, you have eight pieces of silk, which are warming exercises. So, I think, the qigong's always been there. But I think the way the Taiji came into the West was that it was widely perceived as a health exercise. The Chinese government in the 50s parcelled it up as a health exercise, and it's not been practised particularly martially. You do the forms for the exercise, the relaxation, the spiritual aspects of meditation. If you want to practise it as a martial art, then the form is not enough. You have to concentrate on the pushing hands, lots of sensitivity building, sticking hands, various other things. I think the Taiji system in the West was for people's health because that's the emphasis that

came with it (coughs). And to learn it as a martial art is something very difficult. It's not like something like Wing Chun, where you learn something, you can use it. You know, Taiji, that doesn't work. You can learn something, but you won't understand it. You can go deeper and deeper. I say to my students, "it's not an exercise you can go along with. You can go deeper into it. You can learn one move, and that's all you've learned, but you can learn more from it."

GJ: So why do you think Taiji's different to Wing Chun and other martial arts in the sense that it takes longer to learn, to be applied?

JS: Um...that's a very interesting question really. I mean, Taiji is very, very internal. And you'll find all different types of Taiji around. Taiji is quite a broad church. So you will have the just moving around in this fashion kind of Taiji. And you'll have those who develop their bodies to relax and do things that you can't do. I mean, I've been doing Taiji for twelve years, and I'm still learning stuff. I train with people such as Mike Tomlinson...the classic example, you push hands with them, and they re-arrange their body very slightly, and you go flying. That's happened to me many times. I'm still working on it. I've got a long way to go. There are several things round here. My old teacher, he used to stand in the ward off position and we couldn't move him. This kind of rooting takes years and years of practice, but if you have a good teacher, you can get it in a relatively short time, let's say six years. But for a teacher who doesn't have that kind of knowledge, it can take you a lifetime. The thing with Taiji, you never know what a teacher knows. I'm always discovering things about Taiji. It's a lifelong journey. You think you know it, and then you move to another level, then another level. Some people don't have that deeper training, and some people think they do. But, the way I look at it, any type of Taiji, if people realise there's more to it, I like that to be as inclusive as possible. I'm happy to admit my limitations. Because I'm on a journey like anybody else. Sometimes you'll be surprised how little you actually know. But most people do just do it for a bit of exercise, because they enjoy it. They see people under the trees, by the lake, it's beautiful...and that's what it feels, it's relaxation. They don't want to know how to use it. But some people do. It's a broad church. I tend to categorise them. I know I shouldn't. You have the really airy, fairy hippy type of Taiji. You have the really serious, hard core martial art Taiji. We're kind of in the middle. I like my students to have an awareness of the martial side, and also I like them to relax and enjoy it and gain the benefits of Taiji. Again, you can really only pass on what you know

GJ: It's interesting you said it was a broad church. That's a metaphor that's come out from a lot of martial artists. Like in Wing Chun, my teacher calls the school a church. It's a Wing Chun community. Is that something you've come across in Taiji quite a lot? Or is it something you made up for yourself?

JS: What, the metaphor? It's a metaphor I've used a lot. I've not heard it used before. It's kind of generic term

GJ: And you said the journey as well. The journey along Taiji...

JS: Yeah. It's a traditional way to look at it really. A pathway. The Daoist definition of a teacher is someone who's a bit further along a path to show you the way. But not everyone wants to go up a mountain. Some people just want to stop halfway and enjoy the view. You can get carried away with these metaphors, I like them (laughs).

GJ: I am planning to have a metaphor chapter in my PhD

JS: Yeah

GJ: They seem to be used in martial arts all the time. They are used to describe how people change, but also to beginners and advanced people. The physical sensations, such as with pushing hands, are so hard to describe using language. So that's why you have to use metaphors

JS: Yeah

GJ: Could you try to explain using language, the pushing hands experience you've had?

JS: Well, it depends on which system of pushing hands you've used. My first teacher was not really into the pushing hands. Nor was my second teacher really. So I've kind of done bits and bobs of it. Then I used to go to pushing hands classes a lot. Where lots of schools train together. Chris Armstrong was there. There were people from Chen style, people with Bagua experience, Yang style, School of Taiji for Life, Zheng Manqing style. It was really good. Pushing hands, again, is a broad church with lots of different movements. On one side it's just a sensitivity building exercise, on another it's a form of full on combat. Or modified combat, to allow people to compete. Um...I've never been in a competition, but it can be quite good fun competing in that fashion. The thing that tends to happen is the subtle aspects disappear. I've heard it described as in a magazine as sumo wrestling for thin people (we laugh). But when you're doing push

hands, depending on the system you use, most people use a horizontal circle. My push hands is fairly basic really. You can have whole sequences based on the sequences of the form. It's not something I've really discovered. But it's something I'd quite like to explore a bit. Trying to talk about it, when normally I'd be talking about it and explaining it at the same time (laughs). But also, basically the idea of push hands, as I practise it, push hands is sensitivity building. Working on a horizontal circle to respond to a push and then push back. But there are different types of push hands like there are different types of Taiji. Back to Mike Tomlinson's system, they work on a vertical circle, so...the movements are very, very subtle. Each movement is an internal movement of the relaxation of muscle. Mike's system is based on Sean O'Keefe's, who was a student of Master Yin, who was a student of Zheng Manqing. Sean studied with him for twenty-two years, and they used a vertical system. So they put the weight in the back leg, and then relax. They also look at phases of muscle movement. Basic push hands, they just go round a circle. In their system, you start where you actually lift your body, lift the back foot and come up through the circle in the centre. But they don't consciously issue the body...the body acts as a spring. So they unconsciously do it. Sean O'Keefe talks about the five stages of muscle contraction. The first one is holding the muscle. But then they talk about contracting the muscle to move, and releasing the muscle, and also, as the body stretches and un stretches, to release an elastic force. From my understanding of the system, I don't understand the last two concepts very well. Taiji, as far as I'm aware, rather than working on the contracting phase of the muscle, works on the releasing phase of the muscle, to use the supple forces. Zheng Manqing talks about the energy coming from the tendons. So you don't use the large muscle groups when you push. It's a tremendously complicated thing to describe. And it's something I'm still learning. So to describe pushing hands, it's very difficult. Essentially, you're aiming for the ting ging, the listening energy. This is the sensitivity

GJ: Yeah, listening. We use that

JS: It's funny, because it doesn't mean listening, it means sensing. But that's how it's translated. So generally, you respond to incoming forces with your body by stacking your body and moving your waist, redirecting the force. The classic Taiji thing: "We don't use force against force, we yield and redirect and issue at the right point." You get some people, who's understanding is completely different. Some people are hard. Other people just comply with the body so the force goes through it. And really good teachers can do that. I've been bounced across the room just by pushing on them.

GJ: Can you give me an example maybe? Like a case study in this skill?

JS: Um...I can tell you a few people who can do it. Mike Tomlinson, and quite a few of his students. His students train to a very high level...there's a guy down in Town Y called Tim Rowlands. His Taiji school...he's very, very martial, specialising in staff form. I did a workshop with him. I'd done a bit of staff before, just basic stuff, and I was paired up with this old dear. He could see that I'd done a bit before, and he invited me to spar with him. It wasn't really sparring, it was just going through an exercise, two person pushing. Most people just intercepted and brought them to the ground, striking. He was like: "Push them down to the ground, grab them by the neck and stab them." I was thinking, 'I can't do this.' He stood there, in the basic stance, legs parallel, and asked me to push the staff into his dantien. I didn't want to hurt him (laughs). I pushed in, pushed in, pushed in, really pushed with all my body weight. And very slightly, through an inch of movement, he moved me (laughs). So really high level people can do this easily. It's all to do with aligning the body and relaxing it and moving force through the body in a certain way. It's something I am aware of and train occasionally

GJ: You mentioned earlier about a continuum. That's something I've found, with the thinkers and the fighters. To categorise people, I've found three ideal types of martial artists: Thinkers, the martial artists and the fighters. Of course, people are a combination of all three, but some people are really pure. Some are just train for fighting, other people are into spirituality. Maybe you can tell me about this continuum?

JS: This is going back to the broad church thing, isn't it, really? Um...I don't know. I'm not quite sure what you're asking

GJ: Can you explain a bit more about the continuum of people from the sort of hippy to the very pure martial artists? Cos I've found there's people along this continuum, and they move along to other areas. They might start off as a spiritual person, they might go to a martial element. They might revert back to the other element. So they have a choice of ways of looking at Taiji

JS: Yeah. That model, I've seen people move along all kinds of directions along that wave.

GJ: Yeah, it's not static

JS: I do find that if people train in different things, their energy is quite different. People who just train to fight, their energy tends to be very heavy and very focused. Whereas

people who are just into the spiritual side of it tend to very floaty and not grounded. So I think we have to have an awareness of these different aspects. Someone's interest will naturally take them in different directions. Personally, I got into it because of my health, and I was interested in meditation, and a bit interested in the martial arts. Um...and my first teacher was not really interested in the martial aspect of it at all. You know, he could do the thing where he could stand on one leg, and people would push him and not really move him. He could do that crowd stuff. But his emphasis was on health and pure spirituality. And it was quite interesting. As I got more into push hands, I actually got into joining hands, pushing and learning it that way. Taiji, it doesn't necessarily make you a nice person. It has a very kind of positive image in some ways. But it's not always a natural, not always a truthful image, because people are still people. If you're doing Taiji, that doesn't make you necessarily a better person. Hopefully it would. You're on a pathway, and are hopefully on the right direction. If someone just trains Taiji to fight, fight, fight, they have the grasp to what is perceived as a spiritual art. They won't have a grasp of the higher aspects of it. Then there are people, I know practitioners who just concentrate on the spiritual art, and grasp only that. So it's a bit out of balance. Master Jones was one of the first Westerners to introduce Taiji to this country. And she didn't believe it was a martial art till the end of her life. She was practising it till her eighties. Basically, she saw this Chinese guy practising in China when she was over there, and she asked him to teach her, which he did. The Yang Long form, I think it was. But as I understand it, she applied all kinds of psychological things to it. You get a lot of that, people trying to add all kind of things that weren't there. The form becomes a psychological journey. In the end, you deal with your inner shit. Whereas some people, it's not there at all. For others, you get someone and you break their arm. If you think all doorman in Shanghai in the 1920s did Taiji. It's a fighting art but it's also a spiritual art. The individual finds their place in that, according to their interest

GJ: That's really good.

JS: You get a lot of people with egos in it (laughs). As any martial art. It is a martial art. You get it in yoga. They have this element of competitiveness. Also, I know a lot of Taiji teachers who are deliberately non competitive. They will have their egos, but they will just deal with it. Someone sets up a class where you're teaching, then you're naturally going to bridle a little bit. You deal with that. It's not about not having the ego, it's about how you deal with it. Traditional answer to that situation, when a teacher

sets up, old teacher, new teacher, is to have a fight. Whoever wins becomes the teacher. We don't do that in this country, and rightly so. We don't practise Taiji as a martial art. We do it as a health giving art with martial aspects. For example, if I was teaching in a mental hospital, it's not appropriate for me to teach Taiji as a martial art, but it is appropriate for me to teach it as a health giving art. If I started to teach people neck locks and head locks and stuff like that, there's no place for it

GJ: Can you tell me how you adapt your Taiji for different populations? You said you've been to some elderly people's homes. You've been to places with people with mental health issues...

JS: I think you kind of react to every group that you've got really. I used to work for a conservation charity, working with unemployed people, teaching them how to plant trees, dry stone walling, that kind of thing. Both my parents are teachers, so I have that sort of teaching background. And you really have to look at it, and judge it. It's not easy to do. You might find in your group that you have somebody who had done it twenty years ago, and would love to go through the whole form, but everyone else haven't. If I'm working in the mental health groups, I tend to do a lot of qigong. And...very little form. And if I do, I just choose three or four movements and talk them through it, as a sequence and talk them through. And that works. But some people find that frustrating, as they want to learn more. And also, as your group develops, what you can teach them and what you can talk about changes as well. It's very hard to know where the basis... generally, I just base it on my experience on what I'm doing and how I relate with people. If you're teaching kids, they might like the dynamic movements. But you can never tell. With older people, I tend to do a lot of balance work. And coordination exercises. But one day, I did a one-legged balance exercise, with a group of sixteen year olds and a group of eighty year olds. None of the sixteen year olds could do it, but nearly all of the eighty year olds could. You've always got to be open. You've also got to respond to the needs of the group. With a lot of my groups, I've got a lot of people at different levels. Because I concentrate on form rather than pushing hands and that kind of thing, I often find myself different forms to different people, which puts quite a lot of...not stress...but a little bit of pressure that everyone gets something out of it. And also, as people get more experienced, you have to change it a bit: "You got some experience, so let's change that a little bit. Let's work on your position." You can give a lesson, and they should be able to get something out of it. A lot of beginners go through, and some people never go beyond this. I have one group in the Women's Institute who

only do the half eight posture form, but they love it. They can't do it without me guiding them, but they can follow me through it. If all my students were as dedicated, I'd be laughing.

GJ: What made you decide to turn professional?

JS: It just...I just went in that direction really. My first teacher used to do things. Cos teaching Taiji and the form is actually a really good way to get a better understanding, because you have to break it down and explain it. Really deep into it. And I...I don't know. When I was working with Paul, I was assisting him in his classes, there I did kind of an apprenticeship with him. And then he set up a formal teacher training qualification through the Wu Shan organisation, which is Roger Paul's organisation. That the teacher training qualification I've done for a couple of years. It just seemed right. And I've benefited so much from Taiji. I want to make it accessible to enough people as possible. You, get something out of it. Obviously, as a teacher, you've got to be detached as you're giving something to somebody, and they do what they like with it. It doesn't suit everybody. I've got friends who find it too slow, and would prefer Karate or something. Or they find it complicated. Everyone's different. At the end of the day...you just do what you can

GJ: You mentioned energy a few times. How do you see this energy? You can sense it through pushing hands and you developed it through the form

JS: Well energy, it's a broad word. It can mean so many things to so many different people. It's a kind of generic term. You can look at someone and say they have a certain type of energy, but they don't necessarily have a type of aura. You can be taking about that as well. If someone is angry, then they have an angry energy. It's just a sense of their being. You kind of look at that and see it. But you can also understand and see it in a physical sense. They're pushing you and are obviously giving you that kinetic energy. But I'm a great one for believing that energy is the underlying of everything. The whole Daoist thing, it relates to quantum physics. Energy is everything. Energy can be manipulated, it can move round you.

GJ: So do you employ physics in this through teaching principles? Through science...

JS: Um, I'm not really a gifted scientist, but I do use bits. Sean O'Keefe does, as he's a physicist. It's a spiritual reality. People will come to it with that aim. As I'm into meditation, I have a kind of spiritual understanding of energy. I'm a great believer in

chi, healing energy and all that kind of thing. But as far as my students are concerned, I...I was chatting to a Taiji practitioner the other day, and he was a mathematician. He sees Taiji as maths, and I couldn't get my head round what he was saying at all. The whole room kind of went a bit blank. But that's his interpretation, and that's valid for him. Musicians can relate to it

GJ: Yeah. Rhythm (laughs)

JS: Exactly. So people bring to it what you like. If you're a fighter, then you come into for it for fighting. If you're a meditator, you want meditation. I don't know if that answers the question?

GJ: Yeah. That's a good point. It seems that each teacher brings in their own what we call habitus, which are dispositions. It's a sociological term. Your teaching background from your family, you're bringing their dispositions into you, and you're putting it into that

JS: Definitely. I mean, you are yourself. If water flows through the pipe, the shape of that pipe shapes the way it comes out of it. That's another metaphor

GJ: Yeah (laughs). Why do you think Taiji is full of metaphorical and poetic terms for each technique?

JS: Uh...the Dao that which can be written is not the true Dao (we both laugh). It's because one, it's a traditional Chinese way of communicating. Um...I don't know, just a way of understanding it really. It's maybe just what they're called. You can take meanings from the names. A lot of them are quite poetic. You'll have to ask a Chinese person what they're called in the first place. And also, they're translated differently in this kind of thing. So string the loop is play the guitar or different things. Grasping the bird's tail is grabbing some rope, because that's what it looks like. And also apparently, when the Chinese were training, most of them were illiterate, they would do it through songs. So, you know, they would have the song of thirteen postures and this kind of thing. Also, the Chinese are quite a poetic people. So maybe it's related to that. It's cultural

GJ: That's true. How do you see Chinese culture being transported into the West? What you're teaching now, do you see any of it as Chinese?

JS: Um...well obviously it's an art that is Chinese in origin. But...I don't see it as a purely Chinese thing anymore. Obviously its roots are there. But it's kind of moved on beyond that. You know, it's a very interesting concept, the cross colonization of cultures. It's quite noticeable that the young Chinese people I've met are more into mobile phones, music and that kind of stuff. Are not interested in their kind of stuff at all. And a lot of young Westerners, are into Chinese spirituality. That's really interesting. It's kind of swaps over. I don't remember what the question was

GJ: Do you still see it as a Chinese thing in Western thing. We're in Town A now, obviously, not in China (laughs)

JS: I don't see it as a Chinese thing. I really don't. I know some very good practitioners who are Westerners. But...I mean, it's a worldwide phenomenon really. Not all of them are Chinese, but a lot of them are. Chinese have their culture, and part of their culture is the traditional secrecy and that kind of thing, so there may be aspects of the Taiji that are left out, but they seem to filter through. Although I'm very respectful to Chinese culture, I don't embrace all of it all. Yeah, it's Chinese, but I'm not. It's universal as far as I'm concerned. I think that Sean O'Keefe said that Wang Sheng said that it's a Chinese art, he recognised it as a Chinese art for the world. To paraphrase it.

GJ: And as you've done a degree in philosophy, how does Taiji fit into your philosophical perspective of the world?

JS: Oh well...my degree was mainly Western philosophy. I've always been interested in meditation and Eastern philosophy. Taiji is...I can't imagine my life without it really. It's a huge part of my life, my way of being, the way I understand myself, a way of helping other people with their problems. A way of dealing with my problems. It's just such a big part of me. I couldn't imagine my life without it. Did I answer your question?

GJ: Yeah. I remember last week you said a little about Daoism. Did you take much of an interest in Daoism from Taiji?

JS: Yeah, uh, yeah. My first teacher was very much into the philosophy of the Dao De Ching. And at the end of every Taiji lesson, we would read through it, pick a verse and talk about it. Um...but I've looked at a lot of philosophies and religions and I like Daoist attitudes. I'm not particularly religious. I mean, Daoist philosophy and Daoist religion, there's a lot of superstitious practices. I've got my whole part of it. Again, it's such a huge thing. I've got my part of it. It's like saying, "what do you think of

Christianity.” You know, it’s a massive subject. I like Daoist philosophy. I incorporate it

GJ: So, you have your back problems. How has Taiji helped you with that? You said it was one of the reasons you started.

JS: Yeah, I was quite into Taiji. Once I was into it, I was quite manic. I needed a form of meditation where I could move. Also, I have back problems myself, which got particularly bad in my mid twenties. It got to the stage where I had to go to the chiropractor. Taiji practice...it is hereditary. It’ll probably be there with me for life. Taiji helps me deal with it, helps control the pain, it loosens the muscles. I did get into it for health. It was really beneficial in my experience. I seem to be holding together alright.

GJ: How do you see your long-term future in Taiji, along this journey?

JS: I don’t really look at it that far

GJ: You look at it in the moment?

JS: Yeah. Yeah, I like to make a living out of it. I’m doing OK. I’d like to get Taiji to as many people as possible, and to enjoy it. I’d like to understand it deeper and develop my skills and understand it all, which will obviously never happen. So yeah, just go with the flow

GJ: Go with the flow, OK. Now we’re moving onto the teaching issues. What’s a teacher to you? What values, or what ways do you see this person? I mean, a master – what is a master?

JS: I mean, it’s interesting, because to me, there are as many types of teachers as there are types of Taiji. I sometimes look into quite a lot of what makes a good Taiji teacher. My first teacher, we got on very well. He was very informal. People would ask him, “are you a master?” And he would reply, “what makes a master?” Anyone can say you’re a master. Anyone can say: “I’m a Taiji master.” It’s an unregulated industry. You know, I know people who know nothing about Taiji who are teaching it in some commercial way. You see some schools who the teacher discovered Taiji last year, and are teaching it this year. They may know a bit of qigong and that. And there are a few unscrupulous people out there who set up organisations to give people certificates

GJ: Yeah, the same in Wing Chun (laughs)

JS: Before I started teaching full time, I had done Taiji for ten years. Under various teachers. Some world class teachers. But there are some people who will give you certificates for huge amounts of money. That's the same in China, that kind of thing. My first teacher was very laid back, very Daoist in his approach...just totally chilled out, into his Taiji. And he'd been a power lifter and a cyclist as well, he was a very strong bloke...took a very philosophical attitude. But at the time, I had done a degree in philosophy, and had enough of it. But it was still very interesting. I got quite well with him. In the sense that he...and then with Paul, I went from the position from knowing quite a lot of Taiji, being able to teach it at quite a basic level, and then another teacher who was teaching something similar. But I've been working with Paul for the last seven years now. He's kind of a friend, but he's also my teacher, but we're also in business together. It's a kind of multi faceted relationship. But again, I've seen his Taiji develop and change over the years as well. He does Taiji...it's better than mine in a lot of aspects. But there are certain things he learns from me as well, from my experience. So we have a very good...he gave me all his classes in Adderton, and we work together...he's a friend. Other teachers I've trained with, I've trained with Bob Norris, who's Paul's teacher... That's more of a formal relationship. He's world class, has done Taiji for over forty years, doing something very special. Very down to earth, he's really good. I've tried sessions with a few other teachers as well. Mike Tomlinson, I go back and train with now and again. Again, that's not a close relationship. Mike is very challenging because their type of Taiji is very pure. They're very proud of that (laughs). But they will walk the talk. They can do things that I can only just get my head round. There are lots of different types of Taiji. And you will find teachers who know the real aspects of Taiji, but won't teach them...the traditional Chinese secrecy, the teacher was preserving his livelihood.

GJ: And that's moved onto the West now, with the politics

JS: Politics. Oh, politics are everywhere. It's a very sad fact of the human condition really. "My master knows the true this, true that." In reality, there's a lot of different ways to do things. And you do occasionally find systems that are very strong on the internal stuff. You will find people in twenty or thirty years who have no true knowledge of what the internal stuff involves, but will have amazing philosophical aspects. As long as they're open minded. You know, there are people who compare Taiji to the Yi-Jing. To them, the deeper aspects of Taiji is the Yi-Jing. Trigrams and

stuff. Other people...but then you get people who's knowledge of Taiji is through the knowledge of every single muscle movement, and it will have no reference to chi or anything at all, yet who's push hands is absolutely fantastic. There's so much. You can't put it into one drawer, under the same bracket

GJ: So what principles and philosophies are in your own school, your and Paul's school? What are you guys trying to pass onto the world?

JS: We are trying to pass on Taiji as a healing, meditative art to as many people as possible in an accessible way. So as many people can benefit from it. That's our core principle: To millions of people. We do that through lessons, retreats, merchandise (we both laugh)

GJ: What role does the website play? You said it was a very popular website in the UK?

JS: Yeah. Um...I think it's the eighth most popular website. We have a lot...I mean *Taiji World* is national and international. There are a lot of people who come down for a retreat in London, that kind of thing. People from all round the country. Paul has got a very good grasp of the internal aspects. We get other teachers who come to train with us as well. We also send merchandise and stuff. Eco friendly, Taiji t-shirts. Because if you look at yoga wear, there's loads of really funky yoga wear. Taiji, you get silk pyjamas or whatever. Not everyone's into that. I'm not into that, the culture of the uniform and that kind of thing. Um...you should just dress comfortably. Paul's developed some very nice Taiji t-shirts. You try to make a living out of it, and it's very difficult to make a living out of it by teaching only. The more strings on it, the better. I personally feel the more teaching I do, the better really.

GJ: Do you remember last week, before you got to your car, you said your form changes everyday? Not just every generation, but there are changes within generations...can you tell me about that? How Taiji's altering each time...

JS: Well, the form is only ever a thing to practise. A lot of people think Taiji's the form, but it's not. Every time you do the form you have the ability to get it right and the ability to get it wrong. And if you are in a particular emotional state, the form will come out a certain way. You might have days where you're completely the same, but every time you do it, every movement you do, you always have the opportunity to do it. So you may want to look at a certain thing in your practice. You may look at a certain thing. You may decide to go into a different form of practice or a different style...for

example, as I mentioned, Mike's system of relaxing all the muscles in turn, sinking and releasing. The form is a training mechanism. It's not the Taiji itself. So yeah, that's how I do it, for a fresh experience. It's when people go onto auto pilot. Anyone can learn some movements along a thread and run through it. You might as well be doing dance and stuff. When you're doing Taiji, it's not about being floaty. It's nice, you can do that if you want. It's about getting awareness, being aware of the changes in the body. Having total awareness of the body. The sensations of the body. Being able to also, the higher levels of relaxation and control. You have to have these crisp, martial movements, because they have this control.

AT THIS POINT, SIDE A IS FINISHED, AND THE RECORDING BRIEFLY STOPS. RECORDING RESUMES ONCE THE TAPE HAS TURNED.

GJ: I've got a few more questions...What's Taiji to you, if you could describe it in a few words? What is this thing you teach and you practise everyday?

JS: To me, it's a huge art of my life. It's the integral part of my life. I'm not sure if my wife would be happy if I say that (we both laugh). It's her as well. But how do I define Taiji? (Long pause). It...again, it can be defined in all kinds of manners. I can say it's a Chinese martial art, or it's a spiritual pathway. Or it's a hobby that I have. It's the way I enjoy myself. It's the way I release tension. It's the way I keep myself healthy. And it's all those things. It's a great source of joy in my life, and occasionally a source of frustration, it depends. But it is also a source of overcoming that frustration where I can work through the emotional problems through Taiji. Because the quietness of it can bring out the psychological things. Some people can't do Taiji because they can't do things that quiet. The only time I couldn't do Taiji was when I lost a daughter quite a few years ago. And there was so much pain that the Taiji wouldn't work. That's the only time I didn't so it. But again, that comes back to how it works really. Yeah, it's just a huge, huge thing.

GJ: Yeah, yeah. You also study meditation alongside Taiji...

JS: Yeah, I do. I do. Various types of meditation since I was a kid. Starting with prayer and that, all sorts of Christian meditation, then moving towards more New Age stuff, Buddhist meditation, Daoist meditation and yogic meditation. All kinds

GJ: How do you see that tied to Taiji, if so?

JS: Well Taiji can be meditation. Obviously it's more than meditation. It's horses for courses really. Sometimes I can get a very deep sense of meditation, deep sense of connectedness. And I used to be very spiritual as a teenager, so I can also see that. There are times where Taiji is a more grounded energy, if you know what I mean? I can achieve a much deeper spiritual state that I would with other techniques. Like horses for courses really. But they do relate. How can I describe it? Doing some kinds of meditation, then doing some Taiji, then going back to meditation. It's like eating different courses together, you get a whole mix of flavours. So, I tend to keep them separate. If I want to do some meditation, I do it. If I want to do Taiji, I do Taiji. The Taiji gives you another meditation state to meditation

GJ: And also, if Taiji helps your health, as you said it helps your health...

JS: I use it. I've got a lot of allergies. I use it to keep it going. And the qigong. I also use some acupuncture, which I kind of learned through Taiji. Helps me with my back problems. I've done quite a bit of dry stone walling, and had a few back issues from that. Generally kinds of strengthens the body and keeps the energy in the body. As I say, I've done it for long, I don't know what I'd be like now if I had never learned it. Generally I find it quite relaxing, it keeps the stress out of the system. Also, it's relaxing, if you're spun out of work. It gives a focus. It rejuvenates you

GJ: Yeah, OK. Right...back to the professional thing. You said last time that it affected your own personal training. Because the teaching and the basic stuff, you weren't doing the stuff you had developed. You weren't learning

JS: Yeah. Teaching and practising aren't the same thing. When you're practising, you're doing it for yourself. Your energy and focus is there on what you're doing. When you're teaching, you are giving. When I teach, I still get the benefits of doing the Taiji, but if I'm on my own, I obviously get more out of the practice. And also, the level of the Taiji that I practise will be different. I'd be working on much more internal stuff. When I'm teaching, I'll be teaching at a relatively shallow level to what...to what I practise. But nevertheless, I will get benefit out of that. And to add to that, I will be looking at other people and interacting to see what they need. What they are doing. As a teacher, that will be that kind of mark. And obviously I do a lot of teaching, I do ten to fifteen hours a week. And sometimes I'm teaching whole weekends. It affects the amount of time I have for my own practice. The amount of time that I can be practising and teaching. I have other things at home. I have a family. So yeah, too much teaching

and not enough practising. It's that classic Taiji question. So I try to have a good routine to get some good practice in. What I started learning, I tried to get two or three hours of practice a day. No problem. But now, if I'm not teaching, I'm travelling to a class or sorting my life out generally (we laugh). So yeah, it's a hard balance. I find teaching very beneficial, but different.

GJ: Um...with your seniors, like Paul and so on, you said you were like a beginner sometimes. You felt like you were still learning...

JS: Yeah, I still am now. Without a doubt. It's levels of understanding. And also internal processes in the body. As I say, Taiji is a journey with people further along the path. You get to a point where you think, 'OK, I'm quite good at Taiji now.' And then you meet someone who's better. And you have to get used to it really. You know, the only way to progress, you have to be open minded and be aware that what you know now will change. It will be challenged. It will change. You'll have a whole new set of principles to it. A classic analogy I use is: Six people are practising Taiji side by side, doing the same movements, but will be looking at different things. The beginner will be looking at the hands and feet. The intermediate person might be looking at their elbows and knees. The person further on might be choosing to do a breathing meditation to the form. Another person might be concentrating on relaxing every single muscle and organ in the body with the sequence. And that's not obvious. It's a very subtle art. There's so much there. I've read a Chinese...I can't remember his name now, it was an article about a Chinese master, but he had been doing Taiji for over sixty years, but probably only new twenty percent of the art. It's a huge thing. There's so many styles. There's Yang style. I'd live to learn Chen style, a bit of Wu style. But you can only concentrate on so much. You can do loads and loads and loads of forms, different styles, but if you can't do them well, they're wasted. You can do four movements, and can spend your whole life just doing those four movements. If you go deeper in, you'll get a whole lot more out. You might run through fifty different forms in the day, and get very fit, a different kind of thing, but you won't grasp other stuff from the Taiji

GJ: Do you think Taiji can help fitness as well? Cos you say health...that's associated with more intense exercise

JS: Yeah. I think you need to have balance. The old Daoist masters, they did their walking and mountain climbing as well as doing the Taiji. So Taiji and aerobic fitness...it's not brilliant for that. But, at the same time, it does make your body strong

in a very subtle way. I'm into yoga. Some people do weight lifting. I don't, because in my experience, it tightens all the muscles up needed for the Taiji. But I know some people do. It depends where they want to have their balance. I think it definitely can compliment types of activities for health. I know lots of people who are very, very fit who are completely unhealthy because they train all the time...I had a friend at university who use to run ten miles every morning, he was fifteen stone of pure muscle, just keeled over, and had to lie down for six months. A phenomenally fit man, but he couldn't hack it.. But not healthy. Your body has a finite amount to give you. That can be trained up. I actually think Taiji can improve that increase in performance as it provides a balance to the hard training they do. A lot of footballers do Taiji, a lot of them do yoga as well. It's all about health. If practised in a certain way, it can make you really fit. Some of the hard styles, Chen styles, combined styles, if you go through them. Again, Taiji, Yang style, it's meant to be slow. You can do it slowly, you can do it fast, you'll get really fit. You won't stretch your muscles or anything like that, but...if you do the forty two posture combined form, is the one I practise. It's a really physical exercise. If I haven't practised that for a while, I go straight through, I'm um phew! It makes you sweat. You do that every day, and you'll get really fit. It's a different form of Taiji. You see the sort of Taiji in the wushu competitions of whatever, it's almost like gymnastics

GJ: Yeah, performance for others

JS: It's a performance art. So you have sort of gymnastic stances where every time you go down, the inner thigh has to touch the ground. And every time you kick, it has to be held at shoulder height for three seconds. You see the old guys, they hardly move. Yet their Taiji is much more phenomenal and lethal through their understanding. The athleticism and the performance...The old masters have the high stances...as I can understand it, traditionally, the large frame forms were taught to strengthen the body. And as you got it, the form gets smaller and smaller. As a complete art, I will say yes you can, it can improve your fitness. But the way it's practised, right or less, it can improve aerobic fitness. It will contribute to it

GJ: Right. Have you ever travelled to China or anywhere like that? I know a lot of people do as a kind of pilgrimage...

JS: It is. I'd be interested to go, but I have a few political issues with China to be honest

GJ: With the human rights issues?

JS: Yeah. That kind of stuff. But I would like to go to China. I've met a lot of people who've travelled to China, and you know, it's hit or miss what you find over there as well. There's some very good teachers in this country. And also, there's some very good teachers of Chinese origin, who aren't based in China. Because of the Chinese Diaspora, they spread round the world. Zheng Manqing, for example, associated with the Nationalists. He had to leave, but he was arguably the most influential Taiji teacher in the West. In China, till very recently at least, his name was mud. You didn't talk about him. You know. Different lineages, different things. It's interesting really because Zheng Manqing, Nationalist Taiji. Communists, simplified stuff, Communist Taiji

GJ: (Laughs). Last question...I've found that the pushing hands and the sticking hands are very important parts of the systems. So are the partner drills where we link hands. I don't know if you want to describe the importance of that in developing the Taiji in the person?

JS: Pushing hands?

GJ: Yeah, or any partner exercise you can think of...

JS: Partner exercises are very important to develop a full understanding of Taiji. But not a lot of people are interested in that though. I don't teach the pushing hands in my classes, but I run workshops on it. Again, my understanding is not phenomenal, but I have a reasonable grasp of it. I can teach people on a very basic level. A lot of people are interested and they don't go to the classes to learn it. It's a health orientated, middle way. We will teach people to push hands in the workshops for push hands. But they don't come there to learn it in the end of the day. But when I do introduce them, you will find that a lot of people are actually interested in it. But at the same time, a lot of people aren't. I think to become a really well rounded Taiji practitioner, to get a full understanding of the art, you do need to do it. From a martial point of view, you can do the form your whole life, and will think you're getting it right, but only when you're being tested by someone pushing you, you'll actually start to understand what's going on. So there's layers within layers

GJ: Do you think you get to know people through the interaction?

JS: Yeah

GJ: I don't know if there's much of a closeness in the class? Most Taiji classes, there isn't much talk going on, as they're mostly doing the form. Where if you did the pushing hands, there would be more interaction with people...

JS: Yeah, definitely. It's like an ice breaker game.

GJ: And you get to see personalities as well. The aggressive person, the softer person

JS: Yeah, you will. You learn a lot about the person through pushing hands. Again, you have to be sensitive to know...it's something I'd like to do more with Paul. Years ago, I used to do pushing hands with a mate of mine. It's good. It gives you a balance and makes the class more interesting

GJ: OK. Is there anything you'd like to add? Like how you've changed through Taiji, how it's helped you, or how you're involved in the teaching? Anything like that? (We both laugh). Feel free to say anything...

JS: As I say, Taiji's such an integral part of my life. I can't imagine life without it really. I can't imagine not wanting to do it. I'm really keen to develop it for myself, and also for other people I teach. I also feel I have obligations to my students to keep going with it as well.

GJ: One thing I notice is that Taiji is very accessible to the elderly. How do you see yourself when you're seventy?

JS: Oh...a very healthy old person still teaching Taiji.

GJ: It's lifelong learning, isn't it?

JS: It is. It's something you don't stop. The idea of Taiji is that something you can do when you're twenty, you should still be able to do when you're eighty. And that...that's another reason why the athleticism of the wushu forms, it's not necessarily good Taiji because it's not holding to the principles of Taiji, why people do it. I respect the people who do it. I can't do it. But then the people who do it knacker their knees up. And then the Chinese government changes Taiji quite a lot of try to get it into the Olympics for example. It has three fast movements for every four. To the extent that the coaches are having athletes breaking their knees trying to do these fancy movements and stuff. Trying to make it an observer sport. It's not really Taiji. You can see people doing really good, external forms, but with no internal stuff whatsoever. You see people doing

brilliant internal forms, but Taiji that's rubbish. But then you push that person and they're not going anywhere. It's a very, very interesting subject.

GJ: OK. Is there anything else?

JS: I'm sure I can think of something

GJ: Yeah. You'll probably think of something in the car (laughs)

JS: Um...no, I think that probably sums it up.

GJ: OK. Thanks a lot Joe. Are you willing to meet up again once I've had time to transcribe it all?

JS: Yeah, yeah. Drop me a line, drop me an email

END OF INTERVIEW. RECORDING CEASES

Interview 2 Transcript

GJ: I'd like to continue from where we were in our chat about the reading. I'm interested in how Taiji has influenced what you read and what you look at in your spare time...

JS: Well, I'm a sucker for second hand Taiji books. The main Taiji texts that I've read for my own practice, there is *Relax the Deep Mind* by Patrick Kelly and also related to the forms I teach is *Taijiquan* by Master Yingli in Beijing. Which is very good simplified Taiji, and also the 42 combined form. It also has a couple of interesting sword forms.

GJ: How do you find these books as a useful resource?

JS: Oh, it's always useful to read people's thoughts on Taiji. This can be through just finding a few new warming up exercises or seeing someone's take on the techniques you teach, or seeing someone's interpretations of the martial techniques. It's quite interesting. I mean, some books, you might find nothing interesting. Other books, you might find more for reference

GJ: OK. I'm just going to my guide...let's take you back to the beginning of your martial arts journey. You did a bit of Karate, and you said you didn't really like it

JS: No. I was a child when I did Karate. I was a child. It was alright, but I didn't really understand it. It was kicking and punching and getting told off by the sensei for stepping out of the line. I didn't stick at it for long, but I remember it being a lot of work, a lot of shouting, punching and a lot of kiais. But the guys doing it were very nice, and they were quite impressive. They used to do the old spear breaking, breaking arrows on their throat. That's probably enough to impress any twelve year old. I moved on from Karate and didn't really do any...well my brother did Karate and moved up a few belts, and at the same time I was practising Taiji. And it was always quite interesting to compare the two. His techniques...he's a very strong man, a very strong guy. But quite graceless in comparison with Taiji. Whereas he was physically much stronger...I was more graceful and more controlled, I think. Different types of movement. When we get together these days, we occasionally have a play fight, and the Taiji really holds its own really well. So yeah, that's quite interesting.

GJ: And how do you see the two arts as different? Because there's hard and soft martial arts: People tend to categorise them

JS: Yes

GJ: Is there a way you can explain those two terms?

JS: Well an external, or a hard martial art is basically cultivating the muscles to produce external forces. So you will use muscle tension. The classic definition of an internal or soft martial art is using the internal energies of the body. Some people think it's producing lots of chi. Other people say it's using the small muscles of the body, the strength of the tendons and ligaments, what Zheng Manqing called tenacious energy, the bones. To absorb and redirect force. So they are quite different. They do cross over in some arts. Wing Chun is one. And I'm sure if people do Karate for a very long time, their forms become a lot softer and relaxed. But you also see people in Taiji who do it as a very hard martial art, and maybe lose some of the internal aspects of it. And maybe don't even believe in the internal aspects of it.

GJ: OK. When you started the Taiji training...maybe you could describe the intensity of your training sessions, throughout the week, how much you had to put in to have what you have today...

JS: OK. When I started Taiji I was unemployed, so I had lots of time on my hands. My teacher was not martially orientated. He was very into the health side. I mean, his Taiji was very good. I couldn't push him over. He did the classic demonstrations, standing on one leg and we couldn't move him. He was good at that. And I trained with him for two or three years. We were generally doing an hour and a half, a warm up, some standing qigong and then some Yang Style long form. We started learning short form, then learned long form. He decided that everything we needed was in the long form. And we would sit and talk philosophy for the last half an hour. It was good. I would generally practise by myself for an hour. Sometimes more, sometimes less. I would go out onto the beaches of Rothshire. We did do some partner exercises, not pushing hands, but a lot of sticking and rooting, sensitivity building.

GJ: And you went to a retreat recently...what was the training environment like there?

JS: That actually wasn't a Taiji retreat. It was a meditation retreat. But I used the opportunity to go off into the woods and do some fairly good Taiji practice. Working on the internal aspects, spending a few hours in the morning. It was really good actually. It

gave me the opportunity to polish off the Taijhi I'm working on myself. Particularly the Zheng Manqing, internal aspects.

GJ: Now you're teaching, as well as training yourself, what's your training like for yourself on most days? Your own personal training

JS: My personal training is more sporadic. I teach between 10 and 15 hours a week. I do practise everyday. Maybe I'll just practise a few loosening exercises, but I may do a whole form. I'm also a parent of a five year old, so the days of getting up at half past five to practise are long gone. I do get a little bit of practice everyday. If I don't do the Taiji, I'll do a bit of meditation. I'll always do a Taiji orientated exercise everyday, whether it be breathing, it might be standing qigong, it might be a qigong set, it might just be a few movements. So yeah, sporadic and still ongoing

GJ: And now I'll move onto the more teaching aspects. We've talked about metaphors, such as the church and journey and things like that. I don't know if you can think of any others? I know it's hard to think on the spot of metaphors...

JS: You mean good...

GJ: Ones you've used or might have heard of. You may have seen them being used in seminars.

JS: I'm trying to think...I think of any. There's so many...climbing the mountain...

GJ: You can't really (laughs). It's unconscious

JS: One of my favourite sayings that Bob Norris had on his wall was 'a teacher opens the door, the student walks through it.' I like that one. My first teacher was really into the Kung Fu TV series, and he used to quote verbatim from that and illustrate the Taiji points from that. There's quite a lot of Chinese philosophy in that. It's quite dated, but it makes a valid point. Although it's a bit cheesy. You've got the classic, the river, being like water, bending like a tree, bending like grass in the wind, when a big tree gets blown over. All kind of metaphors. I suppose there are probably categories you can put them into

GJ: Yeah

JS: Maybe nature metaphors, rivers, mountains, sea...off the top of my head, I don't know.

GJ: You'll probably come up with answers later. You said you were more interested in the more martial aspects over time

JS: Yeah

GJ: What martial aspects do you put into your own training?

JS: Some teachers state that when you practise, you should always have a martial focus on the form. The form should never be empty. But I would say that you can practise the form without a martial emphasis. Because it depends what you want out of the form. If you want to get your energy moving, wake yourself up, to warm up, you don't need to visualise breaking someone's arm this way and that. But when I practise martially, I tend to practise the forms with a martial element, and also get together for push hands training. You know, over time, I like to develop the internal aspect, the softening, the yielding. And that's something I am developing. But then again, you need a competent partner to train with. So, when I get together with my teacher, we train it. The seven pushes, being pushed past the body, changing your to soften, without issuing or anything like that. Just absorbing. That's what I'm really working on at the moment. You have to keep the body relaxed. It really brings out areas of tension. I have areas of back tension that I have to work on. It's the thing I'm working on, to get the alignment. Particularly with my shoulder alignments in pushing hands

GJ: OK...What's a master to you? Because you mentioned masters. It's a term we use quite openly

JS: Um...a master is really...it's a term without meaning. Anyone can be a master. I mean, if you take the official Chinese doctrine, when you're recognised by so many people as being a master in an art, you are a master. Then the Chinese government will have this system of gradings. You will get this when you've done this and done this much for your country. You know, my first teacher was very against the idea of masters. For me, a master is someone who's mastered the art of Taiji to a great level. But what that level is, I don't know. There are probably a lot of people who call themselves masters who probably aren't. And they are a lot of people who don't call themselves masters who probably are.

GJ: Yeah (laughs)

JS: So it's a very arbitrary term, that's the word I was looking for before. I've trained with brilliant people, very high level teachers, who can do amazing things, but they

don't call themselves master. But then...it'd hard to know really. I don't really like the term really. It's not an appropriate term for a lot of people. I wouldn't consider myself a master by any means.

GJ: OK. Now you're a professional, what's the difference in your teaching methods between professional and part time, if any? Is there much of a difference?

JS: Well I think my teaching methods have just evolved. If you want to keep life in your teaching, you have to evolve. Of course, your students will grow and change. You will have people who stay with you for a long time. And they'll be people who come and go. You can't get overly attached to your students. You do get quite fond of those who have been there a long time. You do relate to them, and you can see what they have in their practice. My teaching methods tend to be quite informal, but I try to look at what other people need. It's very hard sometimes, when I'm teaching loads of beginners, just going over the same movements again and again and again. As a teacher, it's not that much fun. It's good exercise. And it keeps you fresh, because you have to keep them interested. Because if you're bored, they'll know you're bored. Um...but as people get more into it, you can give them less advice, which will help them more. A beginner must have every single bit of movement explained. You can't really explain it. You're generally explaining the broad bones, so you're getting the body, their hands and feet in the right place. Whereas with someone who's really advanced, you can just adjust the knee bone, relax the shoulders. And that can really help someone. So less is more in some ways. You're hopeful that when you have a good teacher-student relationship...I know teachers who are only capable of teaching beginners. I know teachers who will only teach advanced people. They don't have that aspect. There's a book by John Lash called *The Tai Chi Journey* saying in every hundred people who go to your class, maybe only one will take it all the way. It's an interesting thought for teaching. You have to give, but you have to be detached from what you're giving to. Sometimes I do. Sometimes they want you to be things that you're not. Sometimes they want you to be a guru. And I know Taiji people who will respond to that and get a really big ego. But, I think you have to be honest about what you know. What you can teach. You have to keep your own ego in check. And...I have to be aware that if you're practising with a mindfulness intent. For me, the students should get more out of it than I get out of it. Obviously I get something out of it. But then there's the classic balance of needs. If I enjoy it, then my students will enjoy it. If I don't enjoy it, and none of my students enjoy it, then there's no point in doing it.

GJ: How do you find teaching as part of your development as a martial artist? When you're teaching, do you find there's a relationship between your teaching and your personal development?

JS: Yeah, definitely. Because when you're explaining, especially when you start teaching, you have to really know what you're doing to explain it to someone else. And as they get a bit better, then they ask you other questions about it. And I still find it, even though I've done it thousands of times, I'll find myself thinking about it...my understanding of Taiji will change. Then I will have new people to pass it on. I've seen it with my Taiji teachers as well. With my own teacher that I've trained with for seven or eight years now, his Taiji has changed. I've seen him develop. He's got better. We're all on a journey, which is another metaphor. What he knows about Taiji will change and develop, just as what I know about Taiji will change and develop. When I train with people who know more than me, I will develop, and will be able to pass that onto my students.

GJ: You mentioned in a few conversations a few masters and lineages and things. What's the importance of lineage to you?

JS: Well, lineage is important in showing that you are teaching a genuine form of Taiji. But any student can take it and change it and pass it on. So the whole question of authenticity becomes very complicated. What I've done as Yang Style, simplified Yang style, is not what Yang Cheng-fu would teach or what Yang Luchan would teach. But it's still Taiji. Some people though..."my teacher trained with this person, my teacher trained with this person, that makes me really good." No, it doesn't. If you've been taken on by a teacher, then you have a pedigree, you have a right to teach Taiji. But I know people, I know of people who've trained with a teacher for two years and have set up their own schools, and are acting the guru. Whereas I know other people who have been training with the same teacher for twenty-two years. So, they're still in the same lineage, but the level of knowledge is going to be so different. So...it depends how the teacher, how much the student has connected with the lineage holder and how much they've got out of that. Again, you've got the whole problem of traditional Chinese secrecy as well. I expect it comes up in Wing Chun too. Who's got the whole transmission? "I've got the whole transmission!"

GJ: Yeah, yeah, transmission

JS: So I think...I've got a little certificate from Bob Norris saying I'm good enough to teach the simplified stuff. The most important thing in that for Chinese people is the stamp saying his teacher says, he can teach, is Yong Yi-Bu. That stamp says I'm good enough to do it. A bit of writing, that doesn't matter. You go to a Chinese person and show that little stamp as proof of that lineage. That would be the thing. Yeah, it's funny really. Having a good lineage doesn't mean you're a good teacher. It doesn't give you a good knowledge of Taiji. Everyone...I don't know really. It's a complicated question

GJ: (Laughs). A lot of my questions are like that (laughs)

JS: Well that's good

GJ: You said your Taiji changed within every generation. How have you changed the nature of your Taiji over time?

JS: Well I've tended to bring in more of the internal stuff I'm learning in the Zheng Manqing school into the simplified stuff. Because the simplified stuff, the internal stuff isn't that obvious. The internal can easily be applied to the simplified, which will make it better Taiji. I was chatting with a guy this morning who trains with me, and he'd done a bit of Taiji a few years ago. He learned the Zheng Manqing form, the simplified version. He did it for a term. Learned the sequence, got a certificate saying "you know Taiji." And it just doesn't work like that. You might know a sequence of movements, but you don't know Taiji. You might know some Taiji, but there's always more to learn. There's always more to learn.

GJ: Definitely. Is that something that encourages you to carry on, the learning? The continuous learning?

JS: Yeah, I just love it. With the Zheng Manqing stuff, I've been learning the internal stuff with Mike Tomlinson, Sean O'Keefe school, that has kind of got me back to the feeling that I had when I started doing Taiji which was awe struck by it. I'm going back to that stage. I was going back I suppose. You go back to the beginning. Everything else that I know in Taiji is because of what I know now. It's quite challenging. Again, it's the human ego thing. You go from being good enough to teach to "actually, I don't know very much. I need to learn a bit more." But when you go into a room full of people wanting to learn Taiji, you're capable of teaching them. You can only teach them at the level they're ready to learn. Um...that's why Mike doesn't teach beginners anymore. He's had enough of selling Taiji to people. If I can teach people the internal

aspects and get them to understand it, it makes it a much better experience for me than, “put the right hand here, put the left foot there.” I’ve forgotten what I was saying (laughs). I had another point...it slipped away...

GJ: OK...Another thing you said was the Chinese secrecy, which is a big thing in the Chinese styles. And we talked last time about what makes Taiji Chinese...we thought it was a universal martial art. But do you think other aspects of Chinese culture have slipped through and are being passed down without you even thinking about it? Apart from the secrecy?

JS: Well it’s going to have a Chinese flavour because it originated in China. But it’s not just for the Chinese now, although they brought it out. Whether they kept bits of it back, the internal secrets, I don’t know. Again, it’s a very broad generalisation to talk about the Chinese. There are different aspects, different people. And I’m pretty sure there are some very advanced practitioners in the West. As I say, I don’t see it as a purely Chinese art. I see it as an art of Chinese origin. Strongly influenced, but it doesn’t have to be a pure transmission of Chinese culture. Anymore than say Karate has to be a pure transmission of Japanese culture. Although many practitioners would like it to be. The bowing and that kind of stuff. That doesn’t make it a good art...

GJ: And last time we talked about your teaching, you said a bit about what you’re trying to pass down. You said that it’s a health and meditation art. You and Paul would like to pass down

JS: Well that’s our emphasis with the Taiji. I will not say that Taiji is just a health art, because it’s not. But what we teach is for health and well-being. Our emphasis is not on teaching them how to fight. Although if they want to learn that stuff, we learn workshops on it and that kind of thing. But our primary interest, largely due to our own interests and the groups of people that we work with...what’s appropriate here is Taiji and health. Taiji and the benefits it can bring for the health improvement, balance improvement, the physical coordination, and you can say that it’s not just fighting. Sean O’Keefe said eventually the martial aspects of Taiji are lost. While I know it’s a martial art, I’m quite happy to explore the martial aspects. If someone asks me if I’m a martial artist, I’ll say “probably not.” I’m practising Taiji. I can use it as a martial art, but I’m not practising it for that reason. I’m practising it because it makes me feel great. I get a lot out of it. It shapes my understanding of the world. It helps loads of other people. I can’t think of a better reason for doing it.

GJ: Yeah. That's good. Have you ever had to use it in self-defence?

JS: Never seriously. I've used it in play fights. It does really improve your reactions and stuff. For example, I have a small daughter. And when she was a toddler, she went to the parents' bed, as most kids do. I was fast asleep. And I heard her say "Daddy!" And I rolled over, and I caught her as she fell off the bed. Before her head hit the floor, and then I woke up. That was really quite surprising. And just messing around with people. My reactions have surprised me. The fluidity and that kind of stuff. And that can only come from Taiji training. But I've never had to use it for real. And if you're a good martial artist, you should never have to use it. You walk away from it, you diffuse it, empty it. In a way, if you've come to it, and are trading blows with someone, you've failed.

GJ: Yeah. And now onto the health aspects of Taiji...why do you think it's been parcelled up as a health exercise by the Chinese government, and now the West?

JS: Because it is a martial art. To an extent, all martial arts became obsolete with the advent of modern weaponry. You go back as far as the Boxer Rebellion, all the people believed their qi would protect them, were still getting gunned down. Some of them were apparently really hard to kill, like five shots instead of one, but they still died. But the supremacy of the gun, which someone can use with very little training over someone who's spent a lifetime training. It took the emphasis away from the martial arts. I think the Chinese wanted to keep that aspect of the martial arts. They wanted to keep that aspect of Chinese culture. They saw how people could benefit from it, and that's how it turned into a health exercise. But it's never been just a health exercise. Again, it's how you practise it. You can practise it as a martial art, you can practise it as a health exercise. If you practise it as a martial art, it will probably benefit your health if you have the right mental aspect. If you're just doing it to break people's arms, then you're not going to get much benefit. If you practise it just as a health exercise, with no martial aspect, you're not going to get much benefit. Um...what was the question again?

GJ: It was why was it parcelled up as a health exercise?

JS: Because it is good for people's health. The by-product of doing it is people lived for a long time, they were healthy. They say that and went, "let's give it to the people. Take it from the secret societies, the Imperial Guard, the families, let the people have it." I think also, the Western mystical view that anything from the East will be good for you...we have very rose tinted views about it.

GJ: Orientalism

JS: Yeah. People are interested in Kung Fu but they are also interested in the health aspects of Taiji. It's a mystic art. In reality it's how you practise it. You have to know the martial aspect in order to actually practise it.

GJ: From your own personal experience, how does it help your health?

JS: When I practise regularly, my health is a lot, lot better. I've always had a history of allergies and things like that. With the Taiji, I've stopped having back problems. Ten years ago, I'd be seeing a chiropractor every two months, I'd see a cranial sacral osteopath. Taiji helps me manage my health. I find boosting my spleen energy helps me work my allergies as well. Also, you're using acupressure points. But generally when I'm living sensibility, my health is really, really good.

GJ: And how's Taiji influenced your lifestyle and diet? I don't know if the vegan thing from Taiji...

JS: No. The vegan thing is actually bad from a Chinese medicine perspective. It's a balance. That's a personal, ethical and health orientated thing. Taiji influences my way of looking at life to the point of compact. In engaging actively in how to deal with problems and directing them in a clear headed way, instead of going, "oh my God, I'm so stressed!" It helps me to relax quite a lot if I'm stressed out. One Hindu guy puts it this way: Stress is praying for something to worry that will never happen. The more stressed you get, the worse it gets.

GJ: How does Taiji do that, help with stress?

JS: Well, one, it can bring you into a mentally calm state. Taiji is particularly good. Taiji is particularly good in my case, because it helps you to move and relax. So you can actually process stress. You can process stress with certain reactions in your body. Your body tires you with flight and fight. Taiji helps you relax and work in different emotional states as well. You're in a calm, clear space where you pass through the system without engaging. It's a state of altered consciousness if you like. It helps you process things like stress, anger and frustration. If you think of that stress...by moving the body in a certain way, the body remains soft, blood flows properly. The oxygen. As the Daoists say, the hardness is associated with death. Softness is associated with birth and life. So the harder and more rigid you get, the closer you are to death. If you stay soft and pliable...the life...

GJ: I know you are involved with Taiji eco friendly t-shirts and things. I don't know if Taiji's had an influence on how you look at the environment?

JS: I was brought up as an environmentalist really. I expect that kind of connection will influence the Taiji, to an extent. I know some people think it's a bit airy fairy, but if you practise Taiji outside, it's totally different. If you practise it on a beach, a field, a forest...it's good to practise that stuff. I say to my students, "if you practise somewhere nice, you'll feel good. But if you practise in your bedroom, that's fine. If you practise on the verge of the A38, then you're going to have a different feeling." The Chinese knew about organisational space, working with natural energies. That's true for pre-modern Western culture as well. It does give that great feeling of connectedness to the outside. You get all kind of things that could be classed as mystical experiences. You get animals watching you. One place I used to practise in, I used to get loads of butterflies land on me. Which is amazing. Admittedly there were loads of butterflies there and I was moving very slowly, so I was probably quite easy to land on (we both laugh). I used to practise on a beach, and the seals used to come and watch. The female seals liked it, but the male seals didn't like it all, and were quite threatened by it. God knows what that means! (We both laugh). Birds watch it, birds of prey have landed and watched me practice

GJ: They see you as an animal

JS: Yeah, that quietness and stillness. You just blend in. To be able to let go of everything and just be there, be in nature. It's a very amazing feeling that we miss in our society. We're surrounded by walls, TV screens...we don't just wander around the forest like a hunter gatherer. Taiji is a really good way of accessing that

GJ: And how's Taiji different to seating meditation? You do both

JS: I do. Both are very good, but depending on what you're doing you'll get different things. Meditation, you'll produce calmness, altered states of consciousness. Taiji, the strength of Taiji for me is the movement. I got into it Taiji during a hectic time in my life where I needed the movement because of the back problems that I had. Very painful to sit. Whereas Taiji, I can meditate and move. It's great. It's such a vast field. There are so many forms of sitting meditation, you've got your Buddhist, your Daoist and your Shamanistic meditations. The Christian, kneeling down and praying can be meditating in a way. So I can't really compare them all, but each one can produce a different state in the body. Different states of the body, different energies and different mental

awareness. You can focus your meditation on different things. For example, if you were meditating for breath. If you were doing say a Shamanic meditation, connecting to the elements around you, that's a massive, massive subject to get into. All the psychic realms as well. Again, balance can be a meditation. You move and balance. Shamanic trance. All aspects of achieving that difference. Awareness and consciousness really. You can have experiences of it. That's just a way of understanding the broader energies that are present in the world really

GJ: You can recall a recent meditative experience through Taiji?

JS: Um...every time I do it (we both laugh). Just getting that kind of calm feeling when you're just in the movement. Being relaxed and nice and calm. You have a sense of self, but also a sense of connection. It produces that mental clarification and all the endorphins flying around. That's got to be good, hasn't it? When I do Taiji, I meditate deeply. But if you meditate too deeply, then you will lose the focus from what you're teaching. When you're teaching, you can't go deeply into meditation. You have to concentrate. Sometimes when you are talking to people through a meditating, it's difficult to stay focused. So you go quite shallow. I remember one time I was actually quite tired and in meditation...I have a tendency to garble my speech anyway. I meant to say keep the tongue at the roof of the mouth, but I said, "put the palm of the hand at the roof of the mouth." Without realising I said it as I was tired and in meditation. After the class, one of my students said to me, "so Joe, does it fit in this way or that way?!" (Laughs).

GJ: Yeah

JS: You have to keep your focus when meditating. It's a different requirement. But if you're meditating on your own, then its alright

GJ: Now we can talk about some clarification of the findings from other people. Like the types of practitioners

JS: Yeah

GJ: Maybe you could talk more about the continuum you mentioned. From the hippy type to the hard core martial art. Can you explain a little further?

JS: Well...I have the idea of Taiji as a broad church. I am prepared to accept people practising Taiji anywhere along that spectrum. So you do have people who think Taiji is

just waving your arms around. They'll just float through the form. They won't have any martial stuff. They won't even be grounded. But when they do movement, it will have an effect. I've known people who've done Taiji for ten years, and their form is appalling, from a technical point of view, but their energy, their enjoyment they get out of it is fantastic. I know people who are real hard core martial artists, their form's perfect, they can apply everything, but they are as miserable as sin (we laugh). You know? Because that is their focus. So you need to have a balanced focus. All away along, everyone has to be somewhere on that continuum we've mentioned. It may be that people will be at different stages of the continuum at different phases of their path. Someone may start off interested in the spiritual side and may end up being a hard core martial artist. Someone who is miserable as sin as a martial artist may think, 'actually, let's lighten up, and listen to these people and see what happens.' So I think it's a way of explaining the types of Taiji.

GJ: When you say a continuum, how do you see yourself moving throughout it in your life?

JS: Oh, back and forth. Up and down. I can also see the continuum as an upright spiral. It can be a complete circle

GJ: That's from Chen style, that spiral

JS: Yes. Definitely. But, I mean when I started, I was interested in martial arts, but was mainly interested in the spiritual side. Now, my knowledge of martial arts is more interesting than the spiritual. It kind of fluctuates. I like to be firmly balanced

GJ: Do you think as the generations or bodies of practitioners are changing, do you think that schools are also in flux? Do you think the martial arts school, or Taiji school, are stable?

JS: Schools are always in flux. Always in flux. Most schools are based around a teacher who will change and develop over time, and what you teach is what you change and develop over time. Also, new things will come up. You might go to China and learn new things, and come back, and then will teach a bit more, and that's what they'll be all about. I know a teacher who goes to China and learns a bit, and goes back and teaches it...they will change their style. I mean, our style is changing, because we are moving from one part of Taiji to another. Our understanding of Taiji is changing. But what we're learning is not what we would teach to beginners because it would be too

complicated. So you would generally teach a simplified form of Taiji to beginners. If you want to keep them coming back or scare them away completely. Um...I've lost my flow. It's very bad for a Taiji practitioner (we laugh)

GJ: The flux in the school?

JS: Yeah. I've trained with teachers who are quite into the spiritual stuff. And others who are into the hard core martial aspects. And then there original students have left. So yeah, a friend of mine had that happen. I think if each school is just martial, then they'll have the full range of techniques and internal aspects, and they're a well developed teacher, and they'll be teaching for thirty years, then that school will be pretty stable. Fifteen years later on, that same teacher will still be on their journey. And also the classic thing of politics: That teachers said this about that school. That teacher said that about the other school. I've seen it in every single organisation in every martial art, probably any group in society. Which is a shame really. And then you have rival schools. It's not good

GJ: OK. With the body types...I've classified them as body types. We try to use the word body a lot in sociology. Because we are all looking at body in action

JS: You mean bodies as in groups of people

GJ: Yeah. Because you're a body, I'm a body. We have a connection through the body. So in pushing hands, there are two bodies in action, if you know what I mean?

JS: I prefer the term people.

GJ: People, yeah. They like to talk about the body because it's theoretical. Trying to bring back the body sensations

JS: Right. I don't regard a person as a body. I regard a person as more than a body. For me, two bodies, what does that mean? I'm not a body, I'm a person. When I'm dead I'm a body. A person is more than a body, a person is more than a mind, a person is more than a spirit. A person is a combination of all these aspects. If you just talk about this body does that, that body does that, that kind of misses the really human aspect. We're not objects, we're people. We have life, we have spirit, we have family. That relates to each other. The body is an object, and none of us are that. So the idea of two bodies pushing hands together is not true. In my understanding of the world. Because you

can't...understand a person by understanding that body, that organ, that vehicle, what your mind is doing. The whole idea of mind-body being separate...

GJ: I try to give more preference to the body because it's been neglected by academics. They think mainly of the mind

JS: Yeah, in the Western rational...the mind...the mind is always connected to the body. Body-mind, deep mind is another one. But...the body, I think we have the understanding of the body in our culture as just being a body. The mind-body. But they have to be together. It's a term that encompasses both. So person

GJ: I'm trying to explain...I agree with your point, but I'm using a simple word to explain what types of people are. The fighters, the martial artists and the thinkers. These are ideal types. But no one is just one ideal type. We're in a state of flux. There are combinations

JS: Yeah, definitely

GJ: Perhaps you could recall a session with certain types of strong bodies? Like a really strong fighter or a really strong thinker. Someone who's really into the spiritual aspect. And someone's who really into the fighting aspect. I don't know if you can recall one event when you've worked closely with one of those individuals, and what it was like...

JS: Everyone is more than one...

GJ: Definitely

JS: I've pushed hands with people who are very martial, very good. I've trained with people who also consider themselves to be quite spiritual as well. It's hard for them to stand out...if you meet someone who's really spiritual, then they might not stand out. If someone's throwing you round the room, ow, bang! (We both laugh). Yeah, I've trained a session with Tim Rowlands doing staff, which I mentioned below...he threw me across the room just by me pushing the staff into his dantien. That was quite good. Um...generally, the teachers I have trained with have shown aspects of themselves in the session. Bob Norris is a fascinating example, there's a movement in Chen style...I don't recall the movement, but they pound their fists by moving their hand and foot at the same time (stamps)...I can't remember the technical name for it...Bob Norris is talking about what he had taught to one group, and he was just chatting away about where the moves come from to one group of people in the room, and he did that

(stamps) movement, and the whole village hall shook (makes shaking noise). And everyone in the room stopped and looked at him. And he just carried on talking. He didn't even know he'd done it. It was just phenomenal. And also, when he does demonstrations of fajing, issuing forces...good Taiji practitioners can issue force from any part of their body. Again, I can remember him making the room shake when showing it as a display...

AT THIS POINT, THE TAPE STOPS AS SIDE A FINISHES. WE QUICKLY RESUME RECORDING ON THE OTHER SIDE.

JS: So if I'm training with someone who's obviously a fighter and stuff, I mean, they'll also have to have that spiritual aspect in their training. If I see someone who's just punching someone, breaking their arms and throwing them over, giving them neck locks and headlocks...I don't really relate to what they're saying. It might be interesting...I might go along and see him, but the chances are, I will have to pay quite a lot of money to go along and do a workshop. And if they haven't got what I want... The stuff that I read on the Internet, which claims Taiji is only a martial art, it's nothing else. And all that Taiji for health, should be done away with. I'm not going to go train with that person. Although it might be very interesting, but...I might learn more about the martial stuff, but I don't think it would actually enrich my knowledge of Taiji. It might enrich my martial technique...again, if someone said Taiji is just a martial art, it's just an exercise, I will be like, "well OK, that's not my knowledge, my experience, I won't train with them." Um...on the other end of the scale, with people who are just spiritually orientated...it can be very hard. A good Taiji person should be somewhere in the middle of those extremes. And I've met people who have trained with other schools. And their idea of a Taiji session is basically a version of psychotherapy. People who are signing up for that are not really getting Taiji. They're getting like an unqualified type of psychotherapy with a few Taiji movements and a bit of qigong. I've seen people from that style that have been teaching after only a year. They can't even balance on their own two feet. From what I've seen. So, that's one extreme. The school will be nameless

GJ: Yeah (laughs)

JS: But they know who I mean. I've met some very spiritual people in the past, and that's very interesting. You can usually tell with them, they have a kind of feeling. Taiji, you need to be aware of both spectrums.

GJ: Definitely, yeah. The same in Wing Chun. Perhaps it will go into your daily life as well, with more of a balance

JS: Definitely, definitely. Someone who's only interested in fighting. If I've done a lot of martial training, I find myself walking down the street, thinking, 'if people come towards me, I'll knock them that way. I'll knock them down that way.' It's just your brain doing that. Also, people who are airy fairy, who say they can bring this energy up there...that's no good either. I mean, it's very nice to know, and each to their own, but I don't think there will be a balance. I've seen a lot of people who train in a lot of styles. Often people in certain ages, I hate to say it, but are using Taiji as a refuge for psychological problems. They're not practising it properly, with the grounding, being connected

GJ: Yeah. I haven't got any other questions. I don't know if you've got anything to add, your own personal reflections of the body-selves. I think body-selves would be a better term to use. We use that a lot

JS: Yeah

GJ: Your self is connected to your body. It's inseparable.

JS: Yeah.

GJ: We've also got types of schools, and anything else you said

JS: The problem with me being a philosophy graduate, the idea of a body-self is still making a division between the body and the self. Again, is the self part of the body, or the body part of the self?

GJ: Together (laughs)

JS: Together, it would provide a fairly reasonable term. What's wrong with people, person?

GJ: But academics want to use a fancy term. I'm part of that system. If I say people, the examiners will say, "what are you talking about? People?" They want me to use some theory there. I'm stuck in that system

JS: (Laughs). And you're entitled to work in that system. I mean, as a way of understanding it, you obviously have to do what you have to do. It's an interesting discussion. The idea of body-self and body...but yeah, I appreciate the pressure. If you analyse the term...that's the problem with academia...you use ten thousand words to say what you can say in five. I mean, it's got its place. That's probably my point really. So, what else can I say about Taiji? Probably not a lot. The whole idea of the continuum is very interesting, but again, people will be in different places at different times. You can't take it as an absolute. We're all on a journey, and I'm part of that. Up the mountain, along the river. And it's really a way of understanding a state that can't be expressed. The Dao that is written as the true Dao cannot be the true Dao. A way of expressing the inexpressible, that's what we're looking for. But I do see it as a range of different aspects of the same art. And it may be in the future that they diverge so much that they become totally different arts. But at the moment, they have the common core, which is where it came from. It's really the emphasis of the practitioners of the future. As I say, I have pupils who aren't interested in the martial aspects of Taiji...other people are really interested in it. So I do like people to be aware of all the aspects at all. Other people who are interested in it. So I think it's good to be aware of all the aspects. And they've got to choose which direction to go. I mean, it's more than moving the arms. It's more than a martial art. It's more than a coordination. It's a combination of all these things. More emphasis...it's an art. In my experience...

GJ: That's good. You're seeing the future of the martial art

JS: Yeah

GJ: It's rapidly changing

JS: Yeah, I imagine it to be much more branded, a bit like yoga. Which is a shame, because we all have romantic ideas of the old guy in the mountain being one with the universe. But that's not going to work anymore in this society. We will take it and change it, and it will adapt to what it was really. The good thing is that it should at least keep some tradition. So the benefits should stay the same. I'll stop there

GJ: OK. Thank you very much.

END OF INTERVIEW. RECORDING CEASES.

Appendix 5.11 Topic summary analysis (Joe)

Interview 1 Analysis

Socialisation

- Parents were teachers
- Parents were into yoga, Eastern philosophy and Taiji
- Started Karate, but found it unsuitable

Qigong and TC

- Closely related
- Qigong is more accessible, less complicated and brings quicker benefits
- The two arts are closely related, but separate

Student motivations

- Health and relaxation
- Few are interested in the martial aspects

Different schools

- Internal vs. external focus
- Differ in historical opinion
- The 'middle' approach: Health with martial aspects
- Member checking of model
- From spirituality to martial
- Experiences along the continuum

Discovery narrative

- Always discovering
- Journey/path metaphor
- Mountain metaphor
- Teacher as a guide

Other metaphors

- TC and pushing hands as a broad church
- Water through a pipe
- A Chinese way of communicating

Pushing hands

- The importance of partner exercises
- A broad church
- From sensitivity building to full on combat
- Altered for competition: Ego vs. subtlety
- Vertical and horizontal circles
- Different schools, different approaches
- Yielding, redirecting and issuing forces
- Can sense the different bodies

Body continuum

- Has seen people move along it
- Takes a middle approach, with more emphasis on health and healing
- Depends largely on the knowledge of your teacher

Body type

- Primarily a thinker
- Concerned with health and meditation
- Obvious health and spirituality narrative
- Combining TC with qigong, meditation and dao yin

Eastern philosophy

- Elements of Daoism, although aware of its superstitious nature
- Daoist philosophy rather than religion
- Previous study of the Dao De Jing

The form

- It is not the system, despite what people think
- Different people, different approach
- Body awareness/different areas

Teaching

- Helps understanding
- Yet is different to practising
- Has gone through his apprenticeship
- Sharing narrative: Aims to make TC accessible to millions
- Hard teaching/training/life balance

Reflexive modernisation

- Uniform
- Commercialisation
- Wushu/performance TC

Narratives of Ageing

- Respect for old masters
- Aims to practise till old age
- Goes together with health narrative
- Smaller frame TC makes it more accessible

Health

- World's dominant narrative
- TC was introduced to the West in this form
- Compliments other exercises/sports

Interview 2 Analysis

Background

- Early experience of Karate
- Comparison with TC: Less graceful and controlled
- Play fights with stronger brother
- Raised as an environmentalist

Continuum of MAs

- Internal and external divisions
- Some crossovers occur e.g. WC
- Age and experience will change an external style to a more internal one
- Different cultivations e.g. muscle or qi
- Even TC can be practised as a very hard martial art

Schools in flux

- They are always changing
- Based around one teacher underlying transformation
- The case of Joe's first school, which switched from the short to the long form
- His current school is undergoing change to the more internal aspects
- This change will influence the transmission and numbers of students

Continuum in TC

- An acknowledgement of the continuum/spectrum
- Need for a balance: It is a combination of different things
- Need to be aware of all the aspects
- Depends on what you want
- Stages, not categories
- This will change over time, and affect the school
- A back and forth change
- A martial artist needs partners
- Martial artists/fighters are more obvious, especially when demonstrating

Cultural transmission

- Lineage gives you a pedigree, but doesn't make you a good practitioner or teacher
- The teacher's stamp is key
- It is better to stay in the lineage for longer
- Politics in TC over who has the whole transmission
- The problematic term of 'master'
- TC shouldn't be a full copy of Chinese culture
- Some teachers are only capable of instructing beginners
- Others choose to teach only advanced students
- Drop out: You can't be too attached to your students

Personal training

- Not a martial artist (self-identity)
- Current training is sporadic
- Is everyday, to some extent
- Affected by teaching and family life
- Had more time to train when he was unemployed
- Outside is best: One with nature
- Natural energies: Animals and connectedness
- TC gives a much needed state
- Needs to train with his seniors to improve and transmit this knowledge

Personal transformation

- From meditator to martial artist
- Evolving teaching methods

Fighter element

- Can use it as a MA
- Teaches workshops on the self-defence aspects of TC

Thinker element

- Daoist and Hindu philosophies mentioned
- Mind-body debate
- Background in philosophy
- Yet is against academia

Mind-body debate

- The body is simply an object
- We are more than a body, a mind or a spirit
- We are a combination of all these things

Habitus

- Schemes of perception: Other bodies/ who to learn from
- Martial aggressiveness
- Unconscious reactions e.g. catching daughter whilst asleep

Meditation

- Altered state of consciousness
- Provides a mentally calm state: Helps with stress
- The beauty of TC's movement
- Being in the movement
- A feeling of 'connectedness'
- Happens every time he practises TC
- A feeling lost in modern society
- When teaching, the meditative state must be shallower

Orientalism

- The common rose tinted views of the East
- Images of hermits on the mountain
- This must be adapted to modern Western society

Learning narrative

- He is constantly learning
- He has gone back to the beginning, returning to the awe struck stage
- Must overcome the ego at this point

Metaphors

- Continuation of metaphors e.g. church and journey
- The practitioner continuum as a circle or spiral
- The teacher opens the door, the student walks through it
- Describing the indescribable
- The Dao that can be described is not the true Dao
- Kung Fu TV series: Old teacher
- Books e.g. *The Tai Chi journey*

Overall analysis

Background

- Parents were teachers
- Parents were into yoga, Eastern philosophy and Taiji
- Started Karate, but found it unsuitable
- Early experience of Karate
- Comparison with TC: Less graceful and controlled
- Play fights with stronger brother
- Raised as an environmentalist

Habitus

- Schemes of perception: Other bodies/ who to learn from
- Martial aggressiveness
- Unconscious reactions e.g. catching daughter whilst asleep

Thinker element

Body type

- Primarily a thinker
- Not a martial artist (self-identity)
- Concerned with health and meditation
- Obvious health and spirituality narrative
- Combining TC with qigong, meditation and dao yin

Eastern philosophy: Philosopher

- Elements of Daoism, although aware of its superstitious nature
- Daoist philosophy rather than religion
- Previous study of the Dao De Jing
- Daoist and Hindu philosophies mentioned
- Mind-body debate
- Background in philosophy
- Yet is against academia

Mind-body debate

- The body is simply an object
- We are more than a body, a mind or a spirit
- We are a combination of all these things

Meditation: Spiritualist

- Altered state of consciousness
- Provides a mentally calm state: Helps with stress
- The beauty of TC's movement
- Being in the movement
- A feeling of 'connectedness'
- Happens every time he practises TC
- A feeling lost in modern society
- When teaching, the meditative state must be shallower

Martial element

Fighter element

- Can use it as a MA
- Teaches workshops on the self-defence aspects of TC

Continuum

Continuum of MAs

- Internal and external divisions
- Some crossovers occur e.g. WC
- Age and experience will change an external style to a more internal one
- Different cultivations e.g. muscle or chi
- Even TC can be practised as a very hard martial art

The form: A key example

- It is not the system, despite what people think
- Different people, different approach
- Body awareness/different areas

Body continuum

- Has seen people move along it
- Takes a middle approach, with more emphasis on health and healing
- Depends largely on the knowledge of your teacher

Personal transformation

- From meditator to martial artist
- Evolving teaching methods

Health

Health

- World's dominant narrative
- TC was introduced to the West in this form
- Compliments other exercises/sports

Qigong and TC

- Closely related
- Qigong is more accessible, less complicated and brings quicker benefits
- The two arts are closely related, but separate

Student motivations

- Health and relaxation
- Few are interested in the martial aspects

Discovery

- Always discovering
- Journey/path metaphor
- Mountain metaphor
- Teacher as a guide

Learning narrative

- He is constantly learning
- He has gone back to the beginning, returning to the awe struck stage
- Must overcome the ego at this point

Narratives of Ageing

- Respect for old masters
- Aims to practise till old age

- Goes together with health narrative
- Smaller frame TC makes it more accessible

Cultural transmission

Orientalism

- The common rose tinted views of the East
- Images of hermits on the mountain
- This must be adapted to modern Western society

Different schools

- Internal vs. external focus
- Differ in historical opinion
- The 'middle' approach: Health with martial aspects
- Member checking of model
- From spirituality to martial
- Experiences along the continuum

Schools in flux

- They are always changing
- Based around one teacher underlying transformation
- The case of Joe's first school, which switched from the short to the long form
- His current school is undergoing change to the more internal aspects
- This change will influence the transmission and numbers of students

Teaching

- Helps understanding
- Yet is different to practising
- Has gone through his apprenticeship
- Sharing narrative: Aims to make TC accessible to millions
- Hard teaching/training/life balance

Reflexive modernisation

- Uniform
- Commercialisation
- Wushu/performance TC

Pushing hands

- The importance of partner exercises
- A broad church
- From sensitivity building to full on combat
- Altered for competition: Ego vs. subtlety
- Vertical and horizontal circles

- Different schools, different approaches
- Yielding, redirecting and issuing forces
- Can sense the different bodies

Metaphors

- Always discovering
- Journey/path metaphor
- Mountain metaphor
- Teacher as a guide

Other metaphors

- TC and pushing hands as a broad church
- Water through a pipe
- A Chinese way of communicating

Metaphors

- Continuation of metaphors e.g. church and journey
- The practitioner continuum as a circle or spiral
- The teacher opens the door, the student walks through it
- Describing the indescribable
- The Dao that can be described is not the true Dao
- Kung Fu TV series: Old teacher
- Books e.g. *The Tai Chi journey*

Daily practicalities

- Current training is sporadic
- Is everyday, to some extent
- Affected by teaching and family life
- Had more time to train when he was unemployed
- Outside is best: One with nature
- Natural energies: Animals and connectedness
- TC gives a much needed state
- Needs to train with his seniors to improve and transmit this knowledge

Appendix 5.12 Metaphor Analysis

Metaphors, analogies and similes are all used frequently in the TCMAs as a means to understand body-self transformation and cultural transmission. Although these terms are divided by participant, they may also be categorised according to technique/philosophy/pedagogic principle

Metaphorical analysis by participant

Roger Hall

- Life/TC like yin and yang
- TC form as 'a piece of music'
- TC form 'like a musical note' that goes up and down
- Zheng Manqing 'transcended into me'
- The form as choreography
- TC footwork as 'floaty'
- TC form 'like taking communion at the church'
- Amateur TC (as a hobby) like 'watching the telly'
- Basics as 'building blocks'
- Pushing hands position 'like a bubble'
- Pushing hands as a language or two-way conversation
- Zheng Manqing's pushing hands 'like trying to find a ghost' or 'like a shadow to actually touch'
- Body-as-a-circuit and as an 'electrically run machine'
- Qi as 'the power supply to the body'
- TC body awareness like an Olympic long jumper's
- TC as a 'voyage of discovery'

Edward Chan

- TC weapons as 'an extension of your hand'

Zack Thompson

- MAs as 'a mirror to see oneself'
- MAs as a 'vessel to discover who you are'
- WC as a 'mirror to observe yourself to see who you really are'
- WC arm techniques 'like a carpenter with a hacksaw' or 'like a chef with kitchen knife'
- WC hand positions/eight energies like the eight compass points
- MA skill as the owner's gold
- Teaching approach: 'Don't break your back for them'
- WC skill as 'programmed'
- Individual differences are 'like a formula' or 'like a language/story'
- WC as a living art
- Rock/water analogy

- MMA fighters potentially 'jack of all trades, master of none'
- On using strength: 'Only a fool pushes through a locked door'
- WC as 'fanatical as any religion'
- Mixing with different people from various backgrounds as 'gone out of our pond'

Sifu John Bridge

- WC skill like a car – Needs to be learned in three stages and maintained
- Learning WC is 'like when you learn to drive a car'
- High skill level is like driving a car unconsciously
- A skilled WC practitioner with siu lim tao is like a mathematician with algebra
- WC as gendered with male and female aspects
- WC practitioners as 'anoraks'
- WC school as 'a church' or 'broad family' defined by belief
- Expanding the WC school as 'a new family'
- Preservationist WC is learned 'parrot fashion'
- Collecting many techniques is 'like stamp collecting'
- Grading system as 'a level playing field'
- Teaching WC overseas as 'spreading those seeds abroad'
- Body types attracted to certain types of martial arts as 'courses for horses'

Dave Roberts

- WC like a drug: 'Like heroin for them'
- Sifu as a deity/ball of energy
- Qi as 'a ball of energy'
- Demonstration of technique 'like being shown a magic trick'
- Lineage as a 'long chain'
- Family metaphor
- Different styles of WC being part of 'the same family'
- Sifu as a father figure
- Advanced students as 'older brothers'
- Younger stage students as 'younger brothers'
- Bruce Lee: 'He's a distant cousin of mine'
- WC as a 'living art'
- Mixing/switching MAs as 'shopping'
- Closure of WC 'akin to being dumped' like 'being left at the altar'

Terry Macintyre

- Terry as an 'animal' or 'scouse animal'
- Fighter's developments: 'Wouldn't say boo to a goose'
- WC learning as a 'motor mechanic operation' like learning to drive a car
- Use of physics and geometry in teaching, such as pyramids and triangles
- A WC fighter's reactions 'like a tennis player' and also 'like a poker player'
- WC skill: 'The proof of the pudding is in the eating'

Kelly Stuart

- Qi ball 'like a magnet' with connecting and attracting forces
- Preservationist pedagogies as 'sheep method'

Nick Robinson

- Energies as 'pushing' and 'directions'
- Using visual descriptions for learners e.g. 'like rolling a ball backwards'
- Counter to WC-as-a-religion: Spirituality is a very personal thing
- Metaphors/analogies are deliberately passed down as the terms match the actual technique

Ted James

- WC learning like learning to drive
- Siu Lim Tao as the Highway Code: After a while, you can discard it
- WC early training years as an 'apprenticeship'
- WC development as 'a never ending ladder'
- Beginners' movements 'like a robot' or 'using the book' i.e. textbook

Joe Salmon

- TC and pushing hands as a 'broad church'
- Metaphors are a traditional Chinese way of communicating
- They are a poetic people
- TC development as a 'journey' or 'pathway' or 'mountain': Daoist interpretation
- Teacher as someone further along the path
- The body acts as a spring
- Transmission of teaching dispositions as water flowing through a pipe: A key component of cultural transmission

Tony Smith

- The group as a brotherhood
- Other practitioners as 'brothers' regardless of lineage
- Training partners as 'mirrors' to learn off each other
- Energy like water flowing from the elbow
- Self-development as a path/spiritual path
- Development as a path/spiritual path
- Terry as a brother/partners as brothers: Trust and helping each other
- The path/warrior path

Sarah Taylor

- Life as a personal (yet relational) journey/path and WC as part of this
- This journey as a set path

- A path towards self-realisation
- WC as a doorway to other interests and disciplines: “To open yourself up to different interactions and refinements”
- Path/journey (WC part of a larger one): Personal yet relational
- Path/journey/road: Up the hill when she was working hard, going downhill when things are becoming easier
- Although there are roses, there are thorns that accompany them
- WC as a plant: Foundation to grow

Will Davis

- Need to create analogies
- Explaining the unexplained
- Typical in everyday life

Emma Simpson

- Clan/family feel: A hive/like being in the army
- The poetic Chinese way of thinking
- The yin/yang way of thinking: Can be used in daily life

Chris Armstrong

- Never ending journey
- Path: Helping other people. A difficult path to tread

Ben Carpenter

Metaphors

- Family metaphor
- The Yang Family: Different branches
- Journey: Lifelong, shared and with walls
- The lifelong journey as a motivational factor

Family

- Member check confirmative
- Strong connection between experienced practitioners
- Hugs all round

Path/journey

- A journey shared with his students
- Continuous path, forever adjusting
- Adjustment for the student
- Teacher highlights change in path: A directional analogy
- Wasn't fully committing
- Reflects in the form, but also in everyday life

Metaphorical Analysis by Subject

Martial Arts in general

- TC/WC as a journey/path towards spirituality/self-realisation
- TC/WC as part of the large path of life/warrior path with ups, downs and roses
- Lifelong journey that is forever adjusting: Directional analogy
- TC as a 'voyage of discovery'
- MAs as 'a mirror to see oneself'
- MAs as a 'vessel to discover who you are'
- WC as a 'mirror to observe yourself to see who you really are'
- WC as a doorway to other interests and disciplines
- WC as a living art
- WC as 'fanatical as any religion'
- WC as gendered with male and female aspects
- WC practitioners as 'anoraks'
- WC like a drug: 'Like heroin for them'
- Mixing/switching MAs as 'shopping'
- Amateur TC (as a hobby) like 'watching the telly'
- Individual differences are 'like a formula' or 'like a language/story'
- MMA fighters potentially 'jack of all trades, master of none'
- Collecting many techniques is 'like stamp collecting'

The learning process

- Basics as 'building blocks'
- WC skill as 'programmed'
- WC skill like a car – Needs to be learned in three stages and maintained
- Learning WC is 'like when you learn to drive a car'
- High skill level is like driving a car unconsciously
- A skilled WC practitioner with siu lim tao is like a mathematician with algebra
- Fighter's developments: 'Wouldn't say boo to a goose'
- WC learning as a 'motor mechanic operation' like learning to drive a car
- A WC fighter's reactions 'like a tennis player' and also 'like a poker player'
- WC skill: 'The proof of the pudding is in the eating'
- WC learning like learning to drive
- Siu Lim Tao as the Highway Code: After a while, you can discard it
- WC early training years as an 'apprenticeship'
- WC development as 'a never ending ladder'
- Beginners' movements 'like a robot' or 'using the book' i.e. textbook

Pedagogy/cultural transmission

- Zheng Manqing 'transcended into me'
- MA skill as the owner's gold
- Teaching approach: 'Don't break your back for them'
- WC school as 'a church' or 'broad family' defined by belief
- Expanding the WC school as 'a new family'
- Preservationist WC is learned 'parrot fashion'

- Grading system as ‘a level playing field’
- Teaching WC overseas as ‘spreading those seeds abroad’
- Demonstration of technique ‘like being shown a magic trick’
- Lineage as a ‘long chain’
- Use of physics and geometry in teaching, such as pyramids and triangles
- Family metaphor
- Clan/family feel: A hive/like being in the army
- Different styles of WC being part of ‘the same family’
- Sifu as a father figure
- The group as a brotherhood
- Other practitioners as ‘brothers’ regardless of lineage
- Advanced students as ‘older brothers’
- Younger stage students as ‘younger brothers’
- Bruce Lee: ‘He’s a distant cousin of mine’
- Preservationist pedagogies as ‘sheep method’
- Transmission of teaching dispositions as water flowing through a pipe: A key component of cultural transmission
- Teacher as someone further along the path

Pushing hands

- Pushing hands position ‘like a bubble’
- Pushing hands as a language or two-way conversation
- Zheng Manqing’s pushing hands ‘like trying to find a ghost’ or ‘like a shadow to actually touch’

Chi sau

- Chi sau as ‘shared meditation’

Intersubjectivity

- Training partners as ‘mirrors’ to learn off each other

The teacher

- Sifu as a deity/ball of energy

Forms

- TC weapons as ‘an extension of your hand’
- TC form as ‘a piece of music’ or ‘like a wave’
- TC form ‘like a musical note’ that goes up and down
- The form as choreography
- TC form ‘like taking communion at the church’

Techniques

- WC arm techniques 'like a carpenter with a hacksaw' or 'like a chef with kitchen knife'
- WC hand positions/eight energies like the eight compass points
- Rock/water analogy
- On using strength: 'Only a fool pushes through a locked door'
- Energies as 'pushing' and 'directions'
- Using visual descriptions for learners e.g. 'like rolling a ball backwards'
- Metaphors/analogies are deliberately passed down as the terms match the actual technique

The body

- Body-as-a-circuit and as an 'electrically run machine'
- Qi as 'the power supply to the body'
- TC body awareness like an Olympic long jumper's
- Body types attracted to certain types of martial arts as 'courses for horses'
- Terry as an 'animal' or 'scouse animal'
- The body acts as a spring

Body sensations

- TC footwork as 'floaty'
- Qi as 'a ball of energy'
- Qi ball 'like a magnet' with connecting and attracting forces
- Energy like water flowing from the elbow

Others

- Mixing with different people from various backgrounds as 'gone out of our pond'
- Closure of WC 'akin to being dumped' like 'being left at the altar'

Member checking

- Metaphors are a traditional Chinese way of communicating
- They are a poetic people
- Need to create analogies
- Explaining the unexplained
- Typical in everyday life

Appendix 5.13 Informed Consent Form

SCHOOL OF SPORT AND HEALTH SCIENCES Qualitative Research Unit

Research Project
Eastern Movement Forms and the Changing Body-Self-Society
Relationship

Participant Interview Consent Form

Name of participant (Upper case):.....

DOB:

Name of researcher (Upper case):.....

DOB:

This section to be completed by the participant:

Please circle as necessary

- Have you read the Participant Information Sheet?
Yes / No
- Have you had the opportunity to ask questions and discuss this study? Yes / No
- Have you received satisfactory answers to all your questions?
Yes / No
- Have you received enough information about the study?
Yes / No

This study has been explained to you by whom?.....

Do you understand that you are free to withdraw from the study:

- At any time Yes /
No
- Without having to give a reason for withdrawing
Yes / No

Do you understand that:

- The interviews will be recorded
- Extracts of the interviews transcripts may be used for publications
- Your identity will not be revealed at any time or in any publication
Yes / No

I agree that data from my interview transcripts can be used in future publications. Yes / No

Do you agree to take part in this study?

Yes / No

Signed (Participant):..... Date

Signed (Researcher):.....

Date



SCHOOL OF SPORT AND HEALTH SCIENCES
Qualitative Research Unit

Research Project
 Eastern Movement Forms and the Changing Body-Self-Society
 Relationship

OBSERVATION CONSENT FORM

Please read this section carefully.

Why we want to 'observe' you?

If you have been presented with this additional form, a member of the project team considers that the collection of information through observation might enhance and support information generated in the interview based part of the study. For example, recording a performance of an Eastern movement form in practice or an instruction of a practice can help the project researchers to understand better the body in movement, the meanings of these movements, and the place these activities occupy in individuals' lives.

What we mean by observation?

Observation means the researcher, following prior agreement, will watch and capture a series of written, audio, video, or photographic observations of classes, activity practice, meetings, workshops etc. This kind of observational information allows an analysis of use of language, verbal intonation, and non-verbal communication ('body language') as they take place in everyday settings.

What we do with the information collected?

For purposes of our analysis, short excerpts / image sequences of interaction are typically drawn from longer audio and/or video recordings made during periods of observation. These excerpts will then be digitised and analysed.

How we protect your identity?

As with interview data your individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from this study. In the event of the observational findings being presented in professional forums (seminars, conferences, etc.), software will be used to digitally alter the appearance/sound of participants in these short digitised clips thereby protecting identities and locations. All materials produced as a result of this work will remain the property of the research team and will be securely stored on our password-protected computers and in locked filing cabinets stored on the University premises.

This section to be completed by the participant.

Do you understand that:

Please circle as necessary

- You will be observed (at times overtly identified by the researcher)

Yes / No

- These observations will be recorded (in some agreed format) e.g. notes / audio / video or photographs
Yes / No
- Your identity will not be revealed at any time, in any subsequent use of this observational data
Yes / No
- Data from these observations will be used in future publications / presentations Yes / No

Do you agree to take part in the observational part of this study?

Yes / No

Signed (Participant):.....

Date

Signed (Researcher):.....

Date

Appendix 5.14 Information Sheet

SCHOOL OF SPORT AND HEALTH SCIENCES Qualitative Research Unit

Research Project

Eastern Movement Forms and the Changing Body-Self-Society Relationship

Participant information Sheet

In the past two decades Eastern movement forms, as both work and leisure activities, have dramatically grown in prominence in the UK as they have across the Western World. However, we know very little about this phenomenon and the meanings that practitioners in the West give to these

activities. For example, why do individuals start, stop or continue? What are the long-term impacts on these individuals and their lives following prolonged engagement in these activities? If life changes take place then what are the nature of these changes? This project aims to explore some of these questions through a qualitative study that will focus on the life experiences of a selection of practitioners of Eastern movement forms in the UK.

Project Director

Researchers

David Brown PhD
BSc
F

Project

Aspasia Leledaki

George Jennings MSc
Cecilia Phoenix PhD

Participant information Sheet (continued)

Your participation in the study

The information you provide is under your control and you are free to decline to answer any question. Should you feel uncomfortable about any issues that you or we raise, you are free to change the topic, interrupt the interview for a while, or terminate the interview altogether. Furthermore, you may decline to participate in the study at any time, without giving a reason and without incurring displeasure or penalty.

The life story interview

In order to carry out this project the researchers (hereafter 'we'), would like to conduct a series of interviews with you that focus on your life story. During these interviews, you will be invited to respond to some broad questions such as "Can you describe how you became involved in Taijiquan?" And, "What, if any impact has your involvement in Taijiquan had on your life?" It is important to remind you that since it is *your* life story that you are recounting, there are no 'right' or 'wrong' answers to any of the questions. The length of the interviews is negotiated with you but we have found in the past people normally feel comfortable with between 1-3 hours. The interviews are arranged at a time and place convenient to you.

What happens to the information (data) you give us?

The interviews will be audio taped and transcribed later by one of the project researchers or anonymously by a third party transcriber for the purposes of analysis. We will offer you the opportunity to read the transcriptions upon their completion, and to provide feedback on them. In line with the recent Data Protection Act, we will treat all data transcripts and all personal information as strictly confidential and we will not make any of this data publicly available. This data will be stored securely (on University premises) for a period of 15 years from the termination of the project, after which it will be destroyed. We will not permit additional access to these data transcripts unless this additional access is first granted by yourself. The information generated by the study will lead to dissemination via publication in leading journals and books. As a part of this ongoing process, extracts of interview data may be published in the future but no details about yourself

will be divulged from which you could be identified.

How can I get further information?

At the first interview, further details of the project will be made available and you will be invited to sign a consent form indicating that you agree to take part in the study. If you would like to discuss the project or the interview process before this point then please do not hesitate to contact Dr. David Brown or Mr George Jennings (see below for contact details).



SCHOOL OF SPORT AND HEALTH SCIENCES Qualitative Research Unit

Research Project

Eastern Movement Forms and the Changing Body-Self-Society
Relationship

Dear participant,

As a regular practitioner of Taijiquan/Wing Chun we are hoping that you will consider helping us with a research project we are conducting in the Qualitative Research Unit at the School of Sport and Health Sciences at Exeter University. As part of a larger study that seeks to better understand the rapid spread of Eastern movement and meditative forms in the West, we are very interested in exploring the life stories of experienced practitioners of Taijiquan/Wing Chun. These stories will allow us to better understand the long term impacts of practicing Taijiquan on the lives, identities and bodies of the practitioner. Collecting your life story would involve a series of interviews arranged at a time and place convenient to you, or a telephone or email interview should you wish. In the interviews we would simply like you to tell us, in your own way and at your own pace, about your life before, during and after your involvement in Taijiquan/Wing Chun. There are no 'right' or 'wrong' answers. It is your experiences and what you want to tell us about them that we wish to hear.

With your permission, the interviews will be tape-recorded and then transcribed for analysis. The contents of the interview will be confidential and no one beyond the research team here at Exeter will have access to them. The use of personal data conforms to the University of Exeter data protection guidelines and anonymity will be guaranteed throughout the process. For example, real names will not be used and place names will be changed. Should you wish, we would be happy to share the results of our study with you and discuss our findings. This project has received ethical approval from the University of Exeter. Most importantly, we hope that you will enjoy the interview process and see it as an opportunity to share your experiences with others so that they might learn and benefit from them. We also hope that our findings will assist developing the awareness and knowledge of sports, health and education professionals and the general public of the ways in which long term participation in Eastern movement forms influence the life of the individual.

Should you be willing to be interviewed then please fill in the information sheet attached and return it to us in the SAE provided. If you have any questions then please do not hesitate to contact either one of us directly. Thank you for your time and we hope you will consider helping us with our research.

Yours sincerely,

George Jennings

Appendix 6 Fighters Chapter Extra Data

Appendix 6.1

I can't play a musical instrument to save me life. I can't draw. If I draw something, you wouldn't know what it was, you know what I mean (laughs)? But if someone gets in me face, I'm quite happy to put my head in at them. I don't know how to explain it.

(Terry, interview 1, 12/02/08)

Appendix 6.2

I met this geezer. And the lads were telling me how amazing he was. And he was a big fella anyway, a big black fella from City B. He must have been six foot six, so quite big. Built like a shithouse, proper brick shithouse. He worked on the doors, and one of me mates, who himself is a big lad, said to me, "You gotta see this guy move. It's unbelievable to see him move." And when I met him, I thought, 'Look at the size of you!' And then the first night I met him, I saw it kicked off in his club, because he was the head doorman. A rugby club came in, and kicked off, and I was amazed because he was four steps up from this dance floor, and which each step he went down, another rugby player fell over. And I know now that he was just *chain punching* on the way down the stairs. But at the time, I had never seen it before, so it looked like something amazing. And I thought, 'Woah, I like the look of that!'

(Terry, interview 1, 12/02/08)

Appendix 6.3

And that matches well with my philosophy, which was partially given to me by me Dad, and the rest given to me by my own experience. You've gotta end it quickly. He explained to me that you've got a fight on the block. Now everyone else on the block is watching. So no matter who they are, if you beat them, beat them resoundly. Maim them. Make other people think 'I don't want that to happen to me.' Break his hands, break his nose. Stamp on him, kick his ribs. Make it so no one else wants a go, just in case they lose. That's what will happen to them. But then you realise that other people can do that to you. Which makes you double your efforts to not let that happen, and makes you more brutal when you're fighting. It's a vicious circle.

(Terry, interview 1, 12/02/08)

Appendix 6.4

Before I joined the Royal Marines, I joined a Judo club. I'd never been into team sports, I'm very much a loner. As much as I like people, I don't like team things. Although I signed up for nine and a half years in the Marines, after two and a half years, I had to get out, because I got over the buzz of the training, but you have to be a team person to be in the services. I'm the sort of guy who likes to climb a mountain, to do my own thing. But if you're in the Marines, if you're like that, you're a bit of an oddity. Before I joined the Marines, I joined a Judo club as I always liked one-to-one. I've always been quite aggressive, I like to think in a nice sort of way. Competitive I suppose could be a better expression, but it really is aggression. I quite enjoy it. I don't mind being hit. I don't mind hitting back. That may sound strange, but that's me.

(Ted, interview 1, 20/05/08)

Appendix 6.5

Didn't like it. I do not like competitions. They're not real, they're fixed. And Wing Chun's not fixed. So by definition, it doesn't work well in a fixed environment. All...ninety percent that I'm trying to do can't be applied in a competition, because of the rules. What tends to happen is you end up thinking is saying, "I can't do that" than just doing what you need to do. That's the thing with Wing Chun. After years and years of practising Wing Chun, you come to the point of just, 'Let it happen!' The better your Wing Chun becomes is because you're letting it happen. When you first learn, you think about everything, you're over analyse everything. The more you do it, the less you analyse things. The less you analyse things, the better it becomes. Again, we go back to letting your body do what's necessary. If I'm spending all my time to get my training to the autonomous level of memory, of body doing it for itself, then as soon as you think about what you can't do, then it breaks that whole system down. You can't allow the body to do what it wishes. It just stops me Wing Chun working as effectively as it should do. The point of me Wing Chun is that me body just does what it does. I think very little about what me body does. And that's why I don't like competitions...Because if you think about it, my Wing Chun training is not about stamina, it's not about fitness, it's about fighting in the real world. And in real world fighting, there's not a fight that's going to last more than five, ten seconds. If a fight lasts more than five or ten seconds, then it's either A, because people don't want to fight. Or B, you can't fight. If one of yous can't fight. It'll last longer if the other one of yous is picking on them. You're bullying them. To me, a fight, is done. As soon as you've done it, it's finished. Now, the body's such a frail thing, that it shouldn't last more than five or ten seconds. Two or three smacks in the throat, and thumb in the eye, that's it, game over. If you break someone's thumb, that's it, game over. No one's going to be able to fight on with a broken thumb while you're wiggling it around. So, that should be the end of that. Whereas if one of yous can't fight, and the other one can, if other one carries on fighting and beating and beating and beating, that's just bullying someone, that's not a proper fight. So to go into the full contact and tournaments and the rules, because of the time of the rounds and all that, I have to spend a lot of the time getting myself fitter. Bringing me stamina up, so I go on a three month training binge beforehand. I spend hours and hours hurting myself. Doing running and jogging and doing skipping and rounds and rounds on the bag. And rounds in sparring, to build up the stamina levels so I can keep going properly. And it hurts. I don't like it, I don't enjoy it (laughs).

(Terry, interview 2, 08/06/08)

Appendix 6.6

A while ago, I was out with me mate Sam actually, I was in a club in town. And I was setting up the pool table. And it was my turn to play pool, so I've gone to play pool, and then some lad's stood up, saying, "That's my turn on the pool table." 'Oh here we go', I thought. "No mate, that's my money. I'm next. You can be next if you want." Trying not to be confrontational, if you know what I mean? And he's got very confrontational with me, started getting big eyes, breathing out of his nose, on the balls of his feet, to make himself look bigger, puffing his chest out. All the natural things people do when they want to fight. To psyche themselves up. Cos they can't go from cold. They have to have the adrenaline coming in before they start. And ten, fifteen years ago, I would probably have knocked him out before he got to the point where he wanted to launch at me, where he had built up his adrenaline enough. I would have got in there before him and finished him off. Whereas this time, I just laughed at him. I just laughed at him. I got a pound out of my pocket, and said, "If you want to argue about a pound mate, here it is, have it. I just want to have a game of pool. If you want to fight with me over a game of pool, then you're stupid. But if you want to fight with me, I'll tell you now, I'll kill you where you stand. I will drop you where you stand. And If your mate wants to join in, I'll drop him too." And I think the confidence of just saying that just backed him off. In the back of his brain, he's thinking, 'Hang on, who is this guy?!' This isn't what normally happens. Normally, people will be hyping themselves up back, or would be bottling out. I think just the confidence of the smile calmed him down, if you know what I mean? I prefer that...rather than hospitalising him, I prefer that (laughs).

(Terry, interview 2, 08/06/08)

Appendix 6.7

They're imposing a mental aspect to a physical thing. The physical thing is staying alive. Now, if they have to go and do what they do, to make realize that they're not a bad a person as they think they are, because they're trying to kill people. Because that's what it boils down to, it's a martial art. Basically, you're training to kill people. Just now in our society you just don't get the chance to. Whereas, even the ones that I consider sport now, if you take them back to the place where they were invented, it was because it was a dangerous place to live. I mean, most of them come from war. And if not war, then they come from feudal systems, where there's no law. You look after you and your own, aren't you? And as the years have gone by, people try to impose spirituality on it in order to make themselves feel better about it, I suppose. In all honesty. I mean, I know, some of the Buddhists and all that believe that through practice, they are praying. I mean again, that's just putting a mental thing to a physical action. And they probably got there, because they probably reached that zone I was one about before without thinking. That was enlightenment for them, if that's what you want to call it. Where for me, it doesn't work like that. The fight comes first

(Terry, interview 1, 12/02/08)

Appendix 6.8

GJ: OK...could you give me an example?

TJ: Dealing with complaints. Customer coming in steaming, about a complaint, whatever it might be. But if I had to, I'd be, "Now come on, you're taking the piss!" In a nice way. It really, really has helped me...also in resolving problems. Whereas if I didn't have martial arts, I think I would go through the problem. Now I can go round it.

GJ: How do you think martial arts helped you in that way? What sort of training methods?

TJ: Well, because be it Wing Chun or Tang So Do, you're having to pull your punches, alright, so you're not having to deliver the punch. You're having to...if you teach, you're teaching people less able than you. So that teaches you humility. You're starting to realise that brute force will not be the best method. Softly, softly, a soft approach accomplishes a lot more. What else would I say? Discipline of mind and body I suppose.

(Ted, interview 1, 20/05/08)

Appendix 6.9

I think it made me realise that violence is the last resort. Violence is very often used by the weaker, the bully, the weaker person if you like. So it can be misused...but OK, the biggest thing is that you've got to be strong. If it helps you get strong in all manner of ways, in a physical sense...then you get through life. And so far, touch wood, I've come though unscathed. From my military background, I see life as a little hard, if you know what I mean? I know I live in nice Town A and have a banking background, but I know life can be very hard. And background comes into it. People live different lives. You know, dare I say it, unless you do rugby or something hard, you don't meet confrontation and violence. Some people live violence everyday of the week in their working class environment. If you go to Rigmouth or Adderton on a Saturday night, and go to the wrong pub it's a different ball game...I wouldn't go there. There's some nasty people there. But I wouldn't just do martial arts just for that

(Ted, interview 1, 20/05/08)

Appendix 6.10

Standing your ground is just bolitionous. At the same time, you must know how to fight if and when you need to. So I kind of said to myself 'I'll have a go at this.' Also, Kung Fu films, I love them. And why Kung Fu instead of Karate or something like that? I don't know. Kung Fu always sort of stuck to my head. It was something that worked on an aesthetical look, which is a bit bizarre (laughs). But it seemed to work in the films. I

thought, 'Right, OK, Kung Fu might be the one.' Karate seemed a little bit...drilled. A little bit too stationary.

(Nick, interview 1, 04/05/08)

Appendix 6.11

Yeah, I mean, back then, I kind of see the way I was. If people, when you're at school and stuff like that. People would stand up and say this and that about you. And you would say this and that about them. Just stupid kind of squaring off. And that would work to a degree. But I thought one day, when you get older, and you start squaring off to people, it ain't just going to be about exchanging a few words. You'll have to really know what you're doing. It's not just about launching a few punches. As you know, it's just scrapping. That just ain't gonna cut it. Somehow, a lot of people know in themselves that they aren't going to cut it. So I wanted to know how to fight. So yeah, that's where I am.

(Nick, interview 1, 04/05/08)

Appendix 6.12

I was in control enough, I saw the opening, and I got in with good technique. That's what it's all about. That makes you feel good. But I ended up really narrowly missing him. I did elbow him, but I suppose I was holding back, it wasn't as bad as it could have been. He was actually turning his face at the time, but at that point, I just thought, 'Oh my God, I could have really hurt you then!' And we both sort of went, 'Ooh, that was really close!' But I was still controlled. If he was someone I was fighting against, I reckon...it's possibly a little bit scary, the damage you can do. And in free flow, it can get a bit like that, for me (laughs). I can go for it, and if I end up hitting someone a bit hard say, getting dig in the body, I always have to check it out and say, "Oh sorry, is that alright?" And they'll say, "Yeah, that was alright." And if they say that, then I'll do it again, maybe a bit harder, and say, "Is that alright?" (We both laugh).

(Emma, interview 1, 26/07/08)

Appendix 6.13

The Wing Chun helped me get some of my angry feelings out about my pain. Cos on a day-to-day basis, I start feeling grumpy and sort of pissed off with it. And starting thinking that it's unfair, all that kind of resentment, it builds up into a bit of frustration and anger. I have been able to take that into Wing Chun and use it. It might sound bad, but I actually know that I am drawing on that angry energy sometimes, when I want to beat my opponent. Again, it's in a controlled way. It's not an outraged, uncontrolled...cos when you're training, sometimes I get angry with my partner if they're getting on top of me, if they keep doing something. If they can see something's annoying me, they'll do it a bit more. Some people. And I do get wound up, and kind of go for it. Then I start using strength and it's really interesting, because I'm always told not to use strength, because there's no point, I'm never going to win on that. And our teacher will get the larger guys thinking not to use their strength and use technique instead. So it's really interesting, sort of the emotions that can feel whilst training. And what you do with them. It's...usually not personal, unless someone does something to the breasts. Then I will let my anger out a little bit, and just go (laughs), "Stop doing it!"

(Emma, interview 1, 26/07/08)

Appendix 6.14

I've never had to use it, and I know there's some guys out there who go out there especially to pick fights so they can test themselves. I know and I've met some of these guys, and I don't think it's a very nice thing to do. Hopefully they're picking on the pissed twats who are up for fighting anyway. But it's not something I want to do. But I'm intrigued. I'd like to

find out what I'd like to be if I was presented with a situation I'd have to deal with. I sometimes worry that I would freeze and not know what to do.

(Emma, interview 1, 26/07/08)

Appendix 6.15

GJ: So how else has Wing Chun helped you in your life, apart from the ability to defend yourself?

NR: Well there are certain spin offs from you internalising something. When you start putting out certain images in your head and your mind, a lot of people are always talking in their heads about situations that they go into. They're going out with a drink with friends, and say, "This guy's being a bit strange. I think something can happen here." They're already projecting stuff. And maybe now, I don't look at it so much. Even if I was to walk into a place and say, "I'm happy in this environment." And just get on with it. And just get on with enjoying my day or evening or whatever. Yeah, I think that's where it has helped.

(Nick, interview 1, 04/05/08)

Appendix 7 The Martial Artists Chapter – Extra Data

Appendix 7.1

The class comes to a close, and we bow out, left hand open, right hand as a fist. The class falls out of formation, and I am greeted by a friendly student, who was the same young man with dreadlocks who impressed me with his impressive intensity and skills.

“I know you George.” He says with a smile.

“Really?” I reply, a little surprised.

“Yes, you gave us a careers talk once within sports science.”

I instantly remembered this talk, and made a connection to him as the student who was practising Taijiquan as a martial art. He introduces himself as Will, and we exchange contact information as he was very interested in my research.

“I did my dissertation on Chinese martial arts as well.” He tells me. “I had a look at yours and realised, ‘I can do something on Kung Fu!’” He laughs confidently.

“I’m glad to hear it was useful Will.” I reply, feeling happy that my BSc dissertation had been useful for someone. “You mentioned Kung Fu rather than Taiji?”

“Yeah, I do Kung Fu as well, with another organisation.” He explains. “So I just call it Kung Fu for short. I used to do a lot more training as I was doing four to five hours a day, but I’ve got a girlfriend now. She’s a Kung Fu widow as well.” Will, Chris and I laugh together, all understanding the commitments required in martial artists and the burdens this must place on our partners, particularly those who don’t train.

I notice that everyone else have left the class, but Chris and Will remain to say goodbye and leave in the same vehicle. It seemed that they had a special relationship that was forged by a passion for the art. I look forward to hearing their life stories after a successful evening of sampling.

(Field notes, 17/06/08).

Appendix 7.2

The Bridenleigh Festival for Chinese Arts is held annually in the town’s leisure centre, although this was the first time I had ever heard about it. Eri and I arrived in the afternoon after Will’s interesting second interview I had conducted in the morning. Will had got there earlier to prepare for his demonstration, and I look forward to seeing him in action.

We walked around the large sports hall to look at various stalls in operation. There was a Chinese calligraphy stall, where two ladies in their fifties were selling beautiful paintings with black calligraphy (with the classic Chinese stamp to show authority). I was very tempted to get one but having reached into my pocket I realised I had no change, and with Bridenleigh being a rural town, cash points were few and far between.

We continued to wander round, as there was still a break between the demonstrations of various martial arts groups. The rest of the stalls were mainly of Taijiquan schools. There were representatives of *Taiji World*, including Joe, and I said hi and introduced him to my partner. He wore the usual white Taiji World t-shirt, and walked around in a tranquil, almost floating manner. His business partner was selling the t-shirts to various people, and next to him was the stall of the *School of Life Exercise*, led by James Butcher (Ben’s instructor). He had long dark hair combed back, and was well groomed and had a calm presence. He was selling one of his books about Taiji, amongst some DVDs he had more recently produced. I had spotted Ben or Peter yet, but was keeping an eye out for them. It was great to see institutions working side by side in order to promote the TCMA in a non-aggressive environment. I had suggested to my own Sifu that we could represent Bridge’s Academy, but he was dismissive of the event: “They’re all a bunch of Taiji heads mate. There’s no point going there. They hate me. I’ve had some falling out with one of the organisers a few years back. Don’t think they don’t know who we are...hummm...” I wonder who’s got a Wing Chun school? A full lion and dragon troupe? A full set of Shaolin weapons and san sau? They’re doing it for their egos.” He had warned me.

As I turned I noticed Chris, the lead instructor in the *Dontshire Chen Style Taijiquan School*. I had enjoyed his class, but hadn’t heard anything back from him regarding an interview. He seemed surprised to see me, and apologised for not replying to my email.

"I'm sorry George. I'm just sorting out a few things at home at the moment. I'd be very happy to help with your study."

Chris was selling a copy of the Chen Taijiquan book that he had contributed to, and quite interestingly, was dressed in a bright purple silk Taijiquan suit, looking the part of a traditionalist practitioner.

It was now time for the demonstrations, and Eri and I moved to the end of a semi circle of keen onlookers to a range of fantastic display of martial skill. First off were representatives of Tiger Fist School doing a few forms, and Will came on to show the Mantis form in a very dynamic and explosive manner in his black Kung Fu suit. Will and his friend Darren then faced each other off for a duel: "Tiger vs. Mantis..." was dramatically announced by the spokesperson. I was looking forward to this as Will was much taller than the short and squat Darren, who was meant to be a tiger! It was quite a comical display as Will moved around with the mantis hands whilst Darren attacked like a wild beast with his claws out. He even made the occasional growling noise for extra display. As a Wing Chun practitioner I noticed how wide his movements were, and how open they were to a counterattack. Will managed to strike him and they briefly grappled on the floor before concluded. Will stood up in a composed manner whilst Darren jogged back to the microphone, panting... "And now, the Chinese Wushu Academy."

A group of children in silk suits marched to the centre of the hall and bowed to the crowd. Some were very small, and we smiled at how cute they looked. However, the cuteness soon subsided as they whirled into flamboyant motions in deep, wide stances and high jumps and tumbling. This was certainly a well-rehearsed and expert display. As they bowed out, the crowd erupted in applause, and the room filled with cheers.

Their lead instructor then came on. The spokesman Darren, who had now managed to regain his composure, announced that he had been training for 25 years, which certainly showed in his impressive kicks and explosiveness. Again, the crowd erupted in applause.

Next on was a pair from the Wu Style Taijiquan Association, with an unusual fan form. They were quite the opposite: Overweight and probably in their late forties. I found it harder to judge than the Wushu as it involved very slow movements and a weapon I had never seen outside the movies. The crowd were quieter and patiently waited for something to happen. It was a big contrast to the twirls and jumps of the more performative Wushu, but I respected their gracefulness and unity.

The final demonstrator was Chris, who showed the Chen straight sword. Unlike the Wu Style practitioners, this involved sudden explosive or fajing motions, including numerous stamps they could be felt along the wooden floorboards. Chris certainly embodied the characteristically explosive movements of Chen, and did so with a composed look across his calm face. As the closed off and bowed the crowd gave a good clap and people began to part company.

I approached the Wushu instructor, Andy and complimented his on his team's efforts today. We introduced ourselves, and he told me about his background.

"Who do you learn from?" Andy asked me.

"John Bridge, in Rigmouth. Do you know him?"

"I've...heard of him." He replied with a strange tone. Sifu had warned me about his reputation in the local TCMA community and I was beginning to see how his reality-based approach differed substantially to the internal and performative schools in the county.

"I've got a mate who does Wing Chun up in Lindonshire with Peter Yue." He told me.

"He does Chen Taiji as well, doesn't he?" I asked.

"That's right, yeah!" He seemed impressed with my knowledge. "I've sparred with my mate, but he told me 'you can't kick me!'" He laughed, insinuating that his friend was at a disadvantage. I also laughed, understanding that many practitioners weren't accustomed to sparring.

We had to head off to catch up with Will, so I thanked Andy for his time, and he said I was welcome to demonstrate in the next festival. I was pleased to hear this as I will soon be re establishing the Adderton branch of *Bridge's Wing Chun Academy*. However, Sif had warned me: "Do you think it will help the school at all George? Nah, it won't. They're just doing it for their egos."

Eri, Will, his girlfriend Debbie and I walked out together so he could put his kit away in his car. There we spotted Chris, who about to head back home.

"It's good to see you again Chris. I liked your demonstration. I went to tour Taiji and Kung Fu one last year in Adderton"

"Thanks. I used to do a demonstration in Yonmouth with the Shaolin monks. They were really good. They would stand like status along that big roundabout with leaflets in their hands. Then people could just take the leaflet as they drove by." He laughed. "Your teacher

John Bridge was also there for the demo. He did a lion dance for us. I hear his Wing Chun is very, very top...he does throw people round the room, doesn't he?"

I laughed and replied that Sifu was very good, but he doesn't throw us around too much, although he could easily do this.

We then parted with a handshake and agreed to meet again. Will, Debbie, Eri and then headed to Bridgenleigh town centre for a curry, where we passed several adverts for martial arts classes. This is certainly an interesting town with lots of characters and diversity for such a small place.

(Field notes, 13/09/08).

Appendix 7.3

I remember my first house in Adderton, I would be in my bedroom everyday, religiously. I'd practise the basic kicks, the front kick, side kick, round kick and the round kick from the back leg. So I'd do ten on each side and then start again. So I'd do 160 kicks or something a day. And I would do that everyday. I always did that because I knew I needed to develop. You look at Andrew kicking above my head as a little guy, I was thinking, 'I'm a big guy. I should be kicking higher than that.' So I push myself to do that.

(Will, interview 1, 20/08/08)

Appendix 7.4

Just constantly moving in order to improve what you're doing. Like elbows, standing on one leg. Trying to improve your balance and your awareness. Or, when you're doing normal fitness for hockey, I'd make everything specific to Kung Fu. So press ups. Instead of doing wide on press ups, where you develop back muscles, like wide back muscles, I'd do narrow press ups because I'd do the range of motion for your punch. So it's all that development of muscle. Everything you do centres around Kung Fu. So brushing your teeth, you stand on one foot.

(Kelly, interview 1, 13/03/08)

Appendix 7.5

Things like reactions as well. In seeing the punches, and knowing when they're coming, you know how to react a lot faster. I think one example of reaction that I'm convinced is down to martial arts was...a girl had hit a hockey ball from the sideline, and it came flying at my face. And I saw the ball coming, and managed to turn my head. So it obviously caught me on the back of the head, and split open. The fact that it didn't hit me in the face was a miracle (laughs). Which I put down to being able to react to martial arts punches. Because obviously you see the punch coming, and you immediately take steps to get away from it.

(Kelly, interview 1, 20/02/08)

Appendix 7.6

And I find that what I was learning already would transfer into the other arts. And that actually got proved so well by my friend Tommy, who entered the wrestling in the national championships a couple of years ago. Never done wrestling before. He'd only ever done Mantis style. And he beat one the Great British team in wrestling. And this guy was trying to pull him all the time. Tommy just had a solid posture, stood upright, and just wasn't letting this guy have any of it. He won the first round one-nil, and I think he won the second round one-nil as well. And he used all the principles from Mantis so well, and just reapplied them.

(Will, interview 1, 20/08/08)

Appendix 7.7

I also do the different arts and different styles because they all do different things for you as well. Taiji helps you relax, soften, get a nice tingle. Yi-Quan, you learn this cool boxing style, lots of energy releases that are applied very nicely. Bagua, the forms are sort of coily, sinewy feeling in your body is really good. You feel yourself tighten up and strengthen that way. And then, just the traditional Kung Fu, like Longfist, big, extraordinary, flamboyant kicks and long, wide, deep stances. And then Mantis style, just that: The characterisation of the little Mantis fist...It's just got so much for it. It's got the physical, got the mental.

(Will, interview 1, 20/08/08)

Appendix 7.8

I can learn off my student from where they can't do nothing, and are insecure, to where at every single opportunity, they look for a weakness. Which they would never have looked for four years ago in their training. They wouldn't even attempt to move outside of their structure, because as soon as they move outside of their structure, I would hit them. I would teach them, how to secure their own centre, secure their own structure, and then venture out. Now they have the courage to...now it's challenging me. Once it's challenging me, then I can start getting better.

(John, interview 2, 01/03/08)

Appendix 7.9

And that will infuse their learning a lot more. I don't want to teach for the money. I don't want to teach for any other reason but for the love of it and the benefits I'll be giving to other people. That's what I benefit from: It's the sharing of ideas. So, if I've got that level of mastery then that can be passed on. And you've got to learn it. If you're learning a style, a style has rules and it's sort of regulations. It has the way that each posture should look and the internal dynamics that you're working on. The alignments are all very, very important, and the transitions between them as well. So, you need to master them. You need to know them and understand them and know what it feels like to go through them. And also, you should go beyond that and understand what it was like for other people to do that.

(Will, interview 1, 20/08/08)

Appendix 7.10

Had they become more enthused about it, it's not: "Oh, um, I'm going to Wing Chun." It's: "Last night in Wing Chun, I was doing this, that and the other." So people perceive that they're getting somewhere from it. So therefore, their minds rub off on people around them. They'll become inquisitive. So therefore, it builds the group identity again. And I'm enthused. Because the group is starting to grow in numbers again, and the enthusiasm is growing, I bounce off of all that. I'm feeling good. I see my students feeling good. I see that they're appreciating what I'm teaching. I'm developing new guides, new ways, new methods, I'm thinking more about what I'm doing...therefore the students are benefiting more from that. It's starting to make people buzz again, and I feel really good about it. And all of a sudden, it's giving me direction back in my life. I think again, that's what was lacking. I couldn't see anything at the end of the tunnel. I was questioning what I was doing with my life. I'm back on track now. I can start to see where it's going to go. It's like someone said to me, I've got to think about a new family again. That's what it seems. A new family.

(John, interview 2, 01/03/08)

Appendix 7.11

A lot of Eastern explanations behind it aren't in depth enough. They're a little bit wishy washy. You know, "Feel the energy, feel that, feel this" is not quite touching or plugging the depths of what's really happening. And I think you should always question what you're being taught and why you're learning it. I don't think a lot of Chinese people especially...I don't think a lot of them do that. And a lot of Westerners are very happy to take what they say as gospel.

(Will, interview 2, 13/09/08)

Appendix 7.12

Now I do understand in martial arts. If you can't kick above your waist, to the head, then you won't get your black belt. Well that's ludicrous. If you start a martial art, and they say straight off, "If you can't kick to the head, standing up that is (laughs), you won't achieve the black belt." Maybe many people won't start that martial art in the first place, because it's giving them a physical handicap.

(John, interview 2, 01/03/08)

Appendix 7.13

Now for my own students, the succession, in my opinion, shouldn't be like a royal family. I've taught people who had trained with me, and have disappeared on me. They've stopped training. Now anything that stops developing, and stops, becomes a dead end. Maybe one or two people will carry on teaching. I'll be lucky to have that. With my own teacher, you might have lots of people who have gone and trained with him, and people like myself who travelled from different parts of the world...but how far does their lineage go, and how far does the original transmission goes with them? It's hard to say. I'd say with any of my students, the selection will be naturally selective through that person's dedication to Wing Chun, the lifestyle, and basically, where they want to go with it.

(John, interview 2, 01/03/08)

Appendix 7.14

I want them to have the courage to follow through what I have begun, and continue their own personal development. And maybe develop what I've taught them, and not keep it the same. I want them to develop their own personal skills at their own level, and find new methods, and new ways of teaching. It's like reinventing the wheel. New perspectives, not change the technique, but change the perspective of the technique, and find new ways of socially interacting through Wing Chun to better them people

(John, interview 2, 01/03/08)

Appendix 7.15

It's like a magnet. It's drawing...oh, how do you explain it? You can't actually pull your fingers apart, you can't push them together. If you push them together, then it's repelling forces. When you're pulling them apart, it's attracting forces. Master Zhang said that's one of the ways that you can experience it. The connecting forces. And with regards to moving it around your body, if you really concentrate on the end, and you can concentrate on all your energy on your breathing, and send it down to a certain part of your body. And it gets warm and tingly. So that's my experience so far...But, then again, who's to say that it's actually qi? It could be psychosomatic. Neurons firing from one hand to another. When you think about it, that's what happens. Your brain fires signals to the hand, but for nothing.

(Kelly, interview 1, 20/02/08)

I would go onto looking at EMGs, and any changes in electro-muscular activity in relation to qi. Getting qi masters sitting down. And asking them to send energy from their left hand to their right hand. To see if there's any response in energy as shown on the EMG. So you can actually see them directing it.

(Kelly, interview 1, 20/02/08)

Appendix 7.16

I've got really tight IT bands on the sides. And going just *crane stance* ...obviously, you're tighten your muscles quite a lot. You're dropping low into the stances. And that constant contraction just lowers your muscles. And I've got really weak *vascusmedialis*, so it pulls my knee across. I've had operations when I was sixteen, on both my knees. And I got, not very strong knees, so it brings quite a lot of pain. So that's not ideal. I think one thing that can be improved in our style is wider stretching. A lot of people still stick to the general: "Stretch your hamstrings, stretch your quads, stretch your calves." I'm just talking legs now. And you tend to neglect some of the finer muscles that you need to stretch in order to be able to function properly in everyday life. Like your IT bands. An integral part of movement. Everyday movement. But nobody stretches it, so they have so many knee problems. And in martial arts especially, a greater emphasis could be placed on wider stretching to know your body, getting to know your stretches. That could be linked to more education.

(Kelly, interview 1, 20/02/08)

Appendix 7.17

I mean, horses for courses. It's not a panacea, is it? But it can have a lot of benefits for a lot of people. I mean, even if it's just a bit of health for the ageing population...stress reduction in work settings. There's so much talk of it in the NHS that they want me to run lunch time Taiji classes because everyone's sat down all day on the computer. Half an hour, get them up, get them moving about, you've got stress reduction from that, you've actually got the physical side. It's going to help people loosen up their bodies and hopefully they'll get some benefits from that.

(Will, interview 1, 20/08/08)

Appendix 7.18

We have our traditional rules of conduct throughout Wing Chun. Some of them are obvious, some of them seem quite strange. Now as some people get to a point in their lives, they realize it's not that strange. The cultivation of energies, and stuff like that. I think Wing Chun, the martial art, the culture of it has different influences on it. Because it's Chinese, it's also going to have it's cultural background integrated into it. Wing Chun relies a lot on Chan Buddhist principles, Confucianism principles and Daoist. I don't think you need a great deal of knowledge to pass it on, but I do believe it helps. I think anybody who knows their subject well, and the more background they've got, is able to pass it on well.

(John, interview 2, 01/03/08).

Appendix 7.19

It goes back to giving up the negative aspects of your life. Such as drinking, going out. All these things that you do to quite an extreme level when you're younger I think. Everybody on different levels obviously. I think in order to keep the car on the road, and pay your fees, and have the petrol money to go up there, then you can't go out and blow a hundred quid on a night in the pub or clubs. You can't do it. It kind of clips your wings in that respect. Which is good. It makes you spend your money on something worthwhile, rather than something which is just fleeting for the evening.

(Zack, interview 1, 15/03/08)

Appendix 7.20

When you get little dots all along down the side of your forearm. Yeah, that's satisfying. And also, when things like skin is taken away...through repetitive slapping (we both laugh). I remember a seminar where it was all based on pak sau, and, that's three hours of someone slapping you on exactly the same point on your hand. You don't realise it at the time cos you're in to it, but you realize it until the next day as you've got skin taken off. And yeah, it's like it's been singed off, friction. Yeah, it's like being quite proud of your wounds.

(Dave, interview 1, 11/11/07)

Appendix 7.21

I think it's good to mix martial arts, and to practise different things, but only when you reach a certain level, in my opinion. I think you need a core foundation in what you're doing. Otherwise you just get lost. You just become a jack of all trades, master of none.

(Zack, interview 2, 26/04/08).

Appendix 7.22

I think a lot of people in the UK buy more into the philosophy and the spiritual practice, than they do with fact that it's a fighting style. And although that's fine, it might detract a little bit from the fact that it's a martial art, primarily. It's not a spiritual practice. It can be, if you choose it to be. That's not how it's set out. Maybe hundreds of years ago, it probably was, it was a big package, but now, it is for fighting. If you want to bring your spirituality, then that's great. But if you're just going to bring your spirituality into it, then you might as well take up yoga, or meditation, or something like that.

(Dave, interview 2, 13/02/08)

Appendix 7.23

GJ: So how was learning off a DVD, without a teacher? Teaching yourself?

ZT: Very experimental. A different world compared to having somebody there. Who knows the does and don'ts, in the flesh...so easy to make mistakes. You can't get the right feeling, or motion of the movements a lot of the time. You're looking at the movements or techniques as if you're going to be copying off the videos very externally. Just as external movements. And there's not much information, or understanding behind them. You're just learning empty patterns, because you haven't got the correct motions...because you're only seeing it in a two-dimensional or whatever way, on the TV. You can't get the full forms. So you end up learning a lot of mistakes, I've found these mistakes are already done from the other system I practised.

(Zack, interview 1, 15/03/08)

Appendix 7.24

This is a different system to the Western coach and instructor. Very different. Just take my colleague's master. My colleague's master was a teacher when he retired. And my ex colleague was one of his pupils. And my ex colleague, I think the family moved round quite a bit, around the world. And he taught just the traditional form before he went off to Argentina. Since then, whenever he went back to Hong Kong, he carried on and developed. I suppose until Master Ng was satisfied that my colleague has genuine interest in Taiji. He's keen on it. Then he took him in as his discipline. And there's some ritual to go through. You need to kowtow and some ritual. I haven't seen it properly, so I can't tell you about the ceremony. You need to write something down, an essay, and hand it in. There's a ceremony, a proper ceremony.

(Edward, interview 1, 18/03/08)

Appendix 7.25

My teacher, he pointed out that there was selected reading, and we were actually told, we realized what we did was quite special when compared to what other people do. And we were told about the good things. We were told about the good things and the things to steer away from. So anything that Zheng Manqing wrote. I read one of the recommended readings about his life, which contains nothing practical about Taiji. It's about his life and how he related to the students, but it was interesting reading.

(Roger, interview 1, 06/11/07)

Appendix 7.26

DR: That anyone who does that art can say that I was taught by so and so, who was taught by so and so, who was taught by so and so, who was taught by Yip Man.

GJ: There's a sense of belonging there?

DR: Yeah. There's a sense of belonging, and there's a sense that anyone who does this art is a distant cousin in some sense in that you can all trace it back to this great grandfather figure. And there's also that, that little adolescent thing in that you can trace it back to Bruce Lee. We're part of the same family. He's a distant cousin of mine. In that event there's a sort of, in that manner of speaking, which is nice. Not everyone can say that. You get someone who does Taekwondo, you wouldn't get them saying: "My teacher's, teacher's, teacher taught Bruce Lee." "Well mine did!" (Laughs). Yeah, it appeals to that little adolescent part of me. You go yeah, that's cool!

(Dave, interview 1, 11/11/07)

Appendix 7.27

In my previous system, I was only taught three punches. There was no talk of eight punches. So, a lot of those punches were new to me. There weren't eight stances before. I only knew three or four. There were no bracing steps in my previous system. There wasn't a lot of emphasis on punching.

(Zack, interview 1, 15/03/08)

Appendix 7.28

DR: After a little while, there's a very steep learning curve, and then it plateaus, and at that point I think you have to work quite a lot harder at it. And at that point it's where an awful lot of people tend to drop out.

GJ: The blue belt level. It's what they call 'the blue belt syndrome'

DR: Yeah. I think I can handle myself (laughs). And funnily enough, I still am one (laughs), for other reasons. Yeah, I think it gets to that level at upper red level or around the blue belt level when you think kinda, "Yeah, I know enough" and that's it. But for me, to keep on wanting to do it was...seeing people who were better than that, and realizing again that against them, that's just nothing when you train against an instructor, a black belt, green or whatever. And they don't even break a sweat (laughs) to tie you up in knots. When you think well, I've got to carry on really. I've got to get better than I am now" It's this personal challenge that makes you wanting to carrying on going. I think that's all there is to it. You either want to do it or you don't. You're either interested in it or you're not.

(Dave, interview 1, 11/11/07)

Appendix 7.29

I think there's a lot of martial artists who would love to do Wing Chun. And they'd go to a so called Wing Chun club or class down here, and not really learned from a proper Wing Chun teacher. They were probably a teacher of another system of Kung Fu, and found out some information on Wing Chun, and added that to their own system. They've all been impressed with Wing Chun, and then they have a negative feedback from that. I think without that negative feedback from it, if they saw it and tried it for real...

(Zack, interview 1, 15/03/08)

Appendix 7.30

You've either got a good teacher, or you're good. So it's not necessary that it's the best style. It's whether the individual is better than another. Obviously, some styles may be more effective than others. You've just mentioned that you've tried a different branch of the same style, and found that it didn't work for you as well. But then, I personally believe probably that it didn't work for you as well. Other people, they might find it more effective, they might not

(Dave, interview 1, 11/11/07)

Appendix 8 Thinkers Chapter – Extra Data

Appendix 8.1

On my way to the office I spotted a familiar face: It was Chris, the gentle Chen style Taijiquan instructor who had kindly helped me in my PhD. He was pleased to see me, and offered a firm handshake and a smile. His classes were doing well, and his aspirations to become a full time instructor were almost complete. However, he wasn't providing many massage therapies as he has put it to one side for a bit, to get back into later, "to be part of the one whole." After a quick catch up over the status of our respective martial arts schools, Chris invited me to a seminar with his teacher Pong Yang, who was down for the weekend. Unfortunately I couldn't attend as I would be going to the dragon dance class on the Saturday. However, qigong remained a fascinating area that I wish to explore in the future. I told Chris this, and he seemed very happy to talk about for an extensive period of time.

"Soon I'll go for my fifth Duan Wei, through the Chinese Wushu Association. They grade all forms of Taiji and Shaolin Kung Fu. They're also beginning to grade Lau Gar, and Master Tong Yu is doing the gradings."

"Ah yes, that's very popular in the UK too."

"Yes, the popular arts are being graded by the Chinese Wushu Association. So that they can be standardized. Master Pong Yang is a seventh Duan Wei, so maybe when I'm seventy five, I'll be able to go for that." He laughed, but I couldn't tell if he was joking or not as he is so in awe of this teacher.

Although Chris had seemed more interested in the martial aspects during the course of the interview, he told me about his recent spiritual experiences under Master Pong Yang, who is now the lineage holder of the Zhang Gong qigong practice. As usual, Chris was in awe of his master, who was selected as the sole inheritor of the art: "You know those people who just walk the earth with a spiritual air about them? They're closer to the spiritual world. I feel Master Pong Yang is one of them. Hundreds of guys have followed Grandmaster Yu, but he chose Master Pong Yang. How amazing is that? It must be because he feels Pong Yang has the spiritual levels that no one else has reached."

I thought that this also might be due to the fact that Pong Yang is now based in the UK, and his frequent visits to the qigong master will demonstrate a dedication to the lineage that probably few others could. This was the case of my own Sifu, who was the first practitioner to travel from overseas to train with Master Li, and for his dedication, he received the lineage following a tea ceremony. However, I remained silent in order to learn more about this lineage.

I asked him if lineage was also important in qigong, yet I think he misunderstood my question, and answered: "Yes, he's the sole inheritor of the Zhang Gong lineage." I didn't inquire any further, as he went on to a related subject.

He explained that in his training with Pong Yang they have been using Buddhist chanting methods in meditation for internal healing. When I asked him if this was all internal movement, he agreed, explaining that it was purely meditation and chanting. He then exclaimed about the impact on his daily life:

"I just wake up everyday, with a song in my heart. I know it sounds funny, but I really do."

"No, that's great." I reassured him. "As long as you're happy, that's the most important thing."

"I recently practised some of this in my room. When I opened my eyes, the whole room was shaking."

We also discussed the difficulties of talking about the benefits of such practices. Chris explained:

"You know in the Dao De Jing, they talk about the Dao or Tao. I think Lao Tzu used riddles to explain that we can't talk about it. In a recent lesson Master Pong Yang would ask us to talk about what Taiji means in our lives, and none of us could do it. We couldn't come up with an agreed definition. It's so hard to talk about."

After a pause, he added: "Once one person starts to open up, other people begin to talk about it. They don't worry about talking about spiritual matters anymore."

"Exactly. It's no longer stigma." I suggested.

"Stigma, right." Chris replied enthusiastically.

I nodded, reflecting on the paradox of writing about a very physical thing: The martial arts.

Chris then turned to the examples of his students:

“Two of my students have very stressful jobs. Not necessarily stressful, but challenging. They really go for it. One of them told me when is stressed at work, he just takes two minutes out to move and breath (makes Taiji motions), which really helps him.”

He contrasted this approach to that of Christianity: “There’s the Dao De Jing, and there’s another one called the Bible. Now they take a different approach, which (long pause) sets things in stone. You should do this, you shouldn’t do that. The Dao De Jing isn’t like that. And when my student told me about that, I thought, wow, the Dao De Jing!” He said excitedly.

“That’s right. Whereas the Bible provides an intellectual guideline, the Dao De Jing offers the Dao to be lived. It’s not written down to be passed down through text, but to be experienced. I have no problem with the idea of Jesus. If he existed...I’m sure he existed. I bet he was an amazing person, a fantastic prophet. But people today will only have the intellectual understanding as it’s handed down to them through a book.”

“Exactly. You could live the Dao everyday whilst walking.” I reflected.

Nick laughed, and gave a mock walk.

“Meditation in motion.” I concluded with a smile.

“I’ve recently started teaching these spiritual healing practices in Bidlington (a small rural town). It’s brilliant. I had fifteen people turn up last week.”

I suggested that this was often the case in small towns and villages, where there is no competition. I had experienced difficulties in securing a class in Adderton, as there are dozens of competitors.

“I better let you go. We could talk all day.” He laughed. Yet I nodded in agreement as I could really see him talking about his experiences to me in an open manner as I was such a person who buys into the martial arts and spirituality. Yet I was eager to get inside the office to write all these gems down, as well as seek shelter from the pollen, which was beginning to cause irritation in my right eye. We parted company, agreeing to meet over some Chinese green tea for a good chat, which no doubt will last a very long time!

(Field notes, 22/06/09)

Appendix 8.2

It’s not genetically in my blood line. I have to really work hard. But the rewards are great. I can do it. People say to me in a demonstration, it was a while back. And that’s fantastic. It’s a reflection of my dedication, if you like. I just plug away, quietly, all the time.

(Chris, interview 1, 20/09/08)

Appendix 8.3

When you do the martial arts and a little bit of application with him, you think, ‘Wow, this guy is simply awesome. Absolutely awesome.’ He never said, “Chris, you need to do this.” All the time I’ve known him, “You should do this or you should do that.” He leads by example, and if you choose to follow, you choose to follow. Which I’ve always done.

(Chris, interview 1, 20/09/08)

Appendix 8.4

I imagine it to be much more branded, a bit like yoga. Which is a shame, because we all have romantic ideas of the old guy in the mountain being one with the universe. But that’s not going to work anymore in this society. We will take it and change it, and it will adapt to what it was really. The good thing is that it should at least keep some tradition. So the benefits should stay the same.

(Joe, interview 2, 16/07/08)

Appendix 8.5

I had another retired lady who was 70, 69 when she started training with me, and she had some sort of problem with one of her feet. The foot and the ankle. She didn't tell the specifics of the problem, but after doing six months of doing Taiji with me, she said, "Do you know what? My foot is 100% better." She said, "Do you know what? My doctor said to me, 'There are only two options. One is to operate on you and do surgical intervention. And the other one is to give you powerful injections to kill the pain.' She said, "Those two make me sick to the heart. There was no way I was going to have those. But I don't need to worry about that. My foot's 100%. It's just normal now." But if she hadn't done Taiji, the only option would be that the foot and ankle combination would have got worse and worse and worse and worse, and she would have either been crippled or would have to have a really dodgy operation. How fantastic is that?

(Chris, interview 1, 20/09/08)

Appendix 8.6

And it's the same with the tuina massage. When you change people's health, when you heal them, that's amazing. And when people come to me with chronic conditions, they've got things like sleep patterns, they don't sleep throughout the night or they've got broken sleep, because their body is hurting, or aching, or stiff. You break these patterns, you get back to a more dynamic balance. The muscles are relaxed and their bodies reenergize. So they can sleep. In some cases, I'm sure their physical intimacy, their sexual relations break down with partners because they're ill. Their bodies can't deal with that. But when you break through all that, life goes back to normal. So that's a physical, that's an emotional, that's almost a spiritual level there.

(Chris, interview 1, 20/09/08)

Appendix 8.7

If I'm doing something in the kitchen, and I have time, such as boiling the kettle, then I will quite often find myself drifting off into Taiji. And I find that I always lose myself quite easily. Especially if it's something that I really need to look at. I find that the energy's not right, I find that I really can really lose myself. Just in the picture. It's not going through the form of qigong, but part of the form that I need to look at. I lose myself.

(Ben, interview 1, 26/08/08)

Appendix 8.8

A martial art is how to fight well, basically, in a nutshell. It's how to fight very, very well. Martial: That's like war, and combat. You train to do well. It's an art: It's creative. A martial art, it describes Kung Fu really. How to fight very, very well with very, very high level skills. But ninety percent of the people you come across, you won't have a chance in dealing with you. Only those skilled fighters would be able to give you a fight. The normal, average fighter wouldn't be able to give you trouble if you really train. Like with fifteen years of Wing Chun under your belt. Like hours of training everyday, like Jimmy. Someone like Jimmy, trained up with Wing Chun. Not many people will be able to deal with him (we laugh). I don't care how big they are.

(Tony, interview 2, 02/08/08)

Appendix 9 Intersubjectivity Extra Data

Appendix 9.1

So that's that kind. That's the sort of Chen training style that I've done a bit of and I just don't like it, because it is so repetitive. I find it's so easy to switch off and just go through the motions. And forget about what you're actually trying to achieve. There's another type of pushing hands that is unique to Chen, I believe, which is called the centreline push. Where you can start, both facing each other again. And you have your lead hand on your opponent's chest. And they have their hand on your chest. And one hand under each elbow. Again, the idea is to gentle push into each other, and allow your weight to drop and root yourself. And just gently building up the pressure, build up the pressure, build up the pressure. So you're just pushing into each other, and looking for your opponent's weak spot. You're trying to just change the angle slightly, and just give them a bit more of a shove, so you really develop on your root, and the ability to draw force down into the ground. And that is beautiful. It's really, really clever. And you've got your hands on the elbows, you also lock yourselves into each other. And the more you can relax and the softer you are, the better you are at it. People who tense up...as soon as there's tension, your back straightens up. When you're tense, you're very easy to push against. When it's soft, the force is just absorbed and it is pushed and drawn through the body. I think that is unique to Chen, so you go into a very wide, very low stance. And it's very practical for fighting as well. If someone's coming at you, you can just hold them (we laugh). It's perfect. So then there's three types of pushing. The other type that I do is the competitive pushing hands. This is my baby. It's the one that I love doing. We started doing this in Kung Fu actually. They're just single handed, so one hand behind your back, and just one hand circling around. There are different rules. Sometimes there's no grabbing, so you're just circling. And you can push your opponent, you can push their arm, you can push their body. We generally just use torso, so you're not allowed to touch the head, you're not allowed to touch the legs, so you're trying to find a bit of tension that you can manipulate. So little tricks. You give people a nudge. Getting them tensing in one direction, then push them the other direction. So they'll topple over. That's single handed. You can do double hands. You can also play with grabs as well. Cos I do Mantis Kung Fu, grabbing is quite natural to me. Grab hold, give them a little twist, joint lock if you feel like it (laughs). So that's good. When we do BCCMA tournament rules, they have grabs. So that makes it very easy to start. This competition style...it's more about rooting and your ability to stay in one place, and keep yourself grounded. When you've got the competitive element, you've got something's that's really, really more challenging. I prefer it to the fixed sort of circling because the force can come at any direction. If you come at two or three directions, depending on how good your opponent is, they can manipulate your arm, and push your arm in another way. You're constantly trying to draw yourself back into your centre. And it's so easy to project out of yourself and think into them. Think about them and pushing them and moving them, but if you do that, then you over extend, and that's it, you're weak. You have to keep the focus in yourself. Focus on your centre and your root all the time. And try to keep yourself in your centre, keep yourself aligned. But also, it's very, very soft as well, because you can do that, but if someone shoves you really hard, and their root is better than yours, you will go. So you have to be rooted, but you have to be able to roll and to yield, and then also to return force as well, when you need to. And the fixed step, you can then develop. I've never seen pushing heads, touching heads, but you can use legs as well, trying to push knees, trying to lock people down, just using your legs. The Chinese guys always do that, but I've never really trained it, so it could cause some considerable pain (laughs). But yeah, it's like fighting. You can trap a leg. Very, very useful. And then fixed step moves into moving step. So you're taking it beyond just standing still. You're walking around like you normally would in fixed step, and they can step out of the way...Then you have to use even more skill and get in close, and manipulate the body. Very challenging. I'm not very good at moving step. I've trained a lot of fixed step. But moving step's another ball game. Yeah, it's good. Because again, that's more how you should fight when you do internal arts. Especially Yi-Quan. The body positioning is all very similar. Yi-Quan, you want to be in close. And you want to use little manipulations and bits of shock power when you strike. And you can do that with pushing. A push one way, shock in one direction, and get the leg into the trip in the other direction. Yeah, it's about total body coordination. It's good,

because you're not going to get hit while you're doing it. So you have a little bit more freedom to sort of play around. You can. I've been pushed very, very hard, and been tripped at the same time. You can go flat on your arse before you even know it. So yeah, you have to be careful, but you learn a lot of things. You learn a lot about controlling yourself. I've got one mate who is fabulous at pushing, and you can have titanic battles against him. We've spent an hour of doing one round, without either of us getting moved. And if you're soft, and can play and experiment with different pressures, different energies, working around the body. Just keep yourself soft, keep moving, but keep the sensitivity, keep the connection to your opponent. Keep the feeling. Where they're coming, feel when it's a danger to you, and just learn how to change yourself just a tiny little change, how much that can affect the position that you're in. And whether that's physically or mentally, I think it translates into both fields. One minute you're going to get hit, and then, 'Oh no, it's all gone!' And it's all about opening balls. If someone's pushing against something solid, they'll keep pushing, and it will move eventually. If they push against something that they think is there, but then all of a sudden it disappears, then that's the ultimate idea of yielding, and the hard and the soft. It's all about the dynamic yin/yang balance within yourself. And that's a great thing that I do. A great concept to use. It's what Taiji's born from. So while you're pushing, if you can sort of imagine the yin/yang shape sort of moving through your body, having a yin/yang on the floor and keep on circling like that, it's so difficult to get any sort of strength against your body. When it's so dynamic and it's so changeable. And the Bagua philosophy of constant change. Change is the universal constant. So Bagua is always changing. You're never repeating the same thing. It's always in motion. It's always moving, always fluid. If you're applying that practically, then whether it's in pushing hands or if it's in actual combat, it works so well. Then beyond that, if you apply that in actual life as well, things are going to change. Life's going to change. And you want to roll with the changes. You want to keep yourself dynamic. Working in a certain way. So that's pushing hands. That's about it really.

(Will, interview 1, 20/08/08)

Appendix 9.2

Push hands training is the link between the form and actually fighting or defending yourself. If you do push hands training, which is person-to-person training to give you the sensitivity and the power and strength and speed and agility to react to a combat situation, to any situation. So it is that link. With the push hands, you're also developing knowledge of the applications to how you apply a wrist lock or an arm lock. All of the push hands sequences can end up in a lock or twist or an arm lock, wrist lock, or whatever. They'll just train you for the sensitivity. But at the end of it, everything twists in and locks. So that's the whole point of push hands. Training for sensitivity, but also at the end of comes the application, either the push or the punch, or a takedown. The application, the physical application. Or even a trip or something. Some of the push hands in training, you do a knee to knee, so you're hooking with your knees, hooking with the foot, every part of your body is linking, hopefully to throw someone, or whatever.

(Chris, interview 1, 20/09/08)

Appendix 9.3

There's one very important feature of this practice is that you don't use force against force. When your opponent is trying to push you, you just stick to it and follow the movement, and keep in contact, but not using brute force against the oncoming force. By being in contact, in theory, one should be able to sense your opponent's intentions. And then you react accordingly.

(Edward, interview 2, 17/04/08)

Appendix 9.4

You've got to learn the first system, which gives you movements, so you can begin to do the system of chi sau. So they both compliment each other. The forms and drills compliment the chi sau. And the chi sau stops the forms and drills becoming static.

(Zack, interview 1, 15/03/08).

Appendix 9.5

Partner training is a big part of Taiji. As I've said earlier on, it's that yielding aspect. To feel the yield, you've got to know where it's going. The only way you can really experience it is through pushing hands, dao lu, san shou, through the partner work

(Ben, interview 2, 09/09/08)

Appendix 9.6

GJ: So how do you see the sensitivity and touching as a way of understanding Wing Chun? The energies...

ZT: Well, fundamental. You have to have it. You have to have it. You can practise the movements and forms, but if you are actually doing the practice with someone who is of greater skill, in contact with their arms, with them guiding you, leading you, and showing you, you could never get it. You could never get it. You would never...it would just be an external form of movements...

(Zack, interview 1, 15/03/08)

Appendix 9.7

When I say energy, I mean energy in any of the eight directions. In front of you...I always think of it as like the compass points. The eight directions, right in front of you, a 3D compass right in front of you. The eight directions. You know, the eight directions your arms can go in. And then, try to have an appropriate response to where that energy goes.

(Zack, interview 1, 15/03/08).

Appendix 9.8

And again, you can work Wing Chun chi sau at a certain level, where you detach your mind from it. And that's a state of non-mind. That's the higher stage of Wing Chun if you like, where you're not attached. As I said, when you drive a car, you drive it. You don't think about 'Oh, I'll put it in gear. I'll do that.' Your brain listens to the sound of the rev in the engine. You instinctively know when to change gear. You automatically know when to change lane. When you need to indicate, when you need to do it. You don't have to have pre-automated thought to do it. That's what Wing Chun becomes. You live in the moment, and you adapt. You can be trapped. Sometimes you can be thinking of something. I might ask someone a question while I'm chi sauing them. If you start thinking about the question, then they attach to it. That attachment finds a weakness in their structure, and I attack. A psychological attack also, you know. So therefore, you learn that. As I said, yeah, we're taking Wing Chun, it can be a tactical thing you can do in the training itself. Sometimes you do, you do find when your technique breaks down, you are stalling, it's an attachment to what you're thinking about. If you free flow with the technique, and you free flow with the conversation, and don't attach to the conversation...the chi sau's still fluid. It's still fluid, but it's not fluid as soon as you attach. And sometimes you train in chi sau, and the explanation you asked for, or the conversation gets to a point where you break off from the training, and you both stop physically touching each other. You talk about it, and you go back to training again. Because the question or the conversation is more concerning than the actual chi sauing. So therefore, to concentrate on both is very hard. The longer you train, the less you need to break off, because you can continue the conversation...the conversation might be worthless, but the point is, the Wing Chun's still working. That's what's important. When you're driving a car, you're listening to a radio and you're daydreaming about something else. It's because you detach from the actual physical driving itself. And I'm sure many people have experienced the point where they've got in the car, took the

journey, parked the car, got out, and walked across the road, and can't remember the journey. It's quite frightening actually when it happens. Don't remember how you got to where you got, because your mind's been elsewhere. That's a weird experience, but that happens in Wing Chun and all.

(John, interview 2, 01/03/08)

Appendix 9.9

KS: Even now, when I go and train with Jim. We go to a park in Town E. We'll go down. And there's lots of people walking dogs and stuff. You're very aware of people looking over at you. You're in the middle of the park. Literally. And people just walk around you. You start off very aware of how they're watching. You're very conscious. You're very uptight, and you've got to do it right. Now Jim, he can zone out very quickly. Or zone in, which ever it is. And...he'll say: "Relax. Relax." And eventually you'll start to...you'll just relax and relax and relax. Once you've reached that completely relaxed point where you are concentrating on the feeling and the movement, and you are completely focused on what's going on. And nothing else matters. You can't even hear dogs bark...It's an amazing feeling. Absolutely love it. We do a lot of Filipino as well

GJ: OK. *Escrima*?

KS: Yeah. And that as well. When the sticks are flying, and it's going bang, bang, bang bang! And you're not even thinking of how to put the sticks anymore. That sound, this just draws you into what you're doing. Nothing else counts. It's...yeah. Incredible.

GJ: So sounds. What about sights? Were you completely focusing on what you were seeing?

KS: Yeah. The hand-to-hand combat. We try not to look at the hands. We try to eliminate that factor from the feel. So we either close our eyes, or look at each other. So you have just got the feel. So you're completely focused on what you're looking at, and nothing else. And nothing else counts. You don't see anything else.

(Kelly, interview 1, 20/02/08).

Appendix 9.10

I'm also teaching two other people on a Wednesday night, straight after that session. I'll usually finish work at half past four, turn up at Pete's for about half past five. Do an hour and a half, two hours with Pete. Finish there at half seven, quarter to eight. Be at my other friends' at eight o'clock, and do a few hours with them. Even though the last couple of hours aren't so harsh, because I'm instructing rather than participating so much. In the first two hours with Pete are more tiring because we're both working the techniques we've been shown in school in the previous lesson. Trying to mull over stuff we've been doing, just so we won't forget it, and so we're ready for the next lesson, which is of course on the next day

(Zack, interview 1, 15/03/08)

"Because in pushing hands, you relate better to people, I've been on lots of courses with people, I've been on a first aid course when you're actually holding someone's arm up, I was much closer to the people because of the lack of physical contact. And I think with the Taiji push hands, there was no fear of the contact."

(Roger, interview 2)

Appendix 9.11

RH: I think that a lot of popular media and things like that, that's try to popularise these things, talk about chi in a very martial sort of way, like striking people without actually trying to physically touch them. And all that type of thing. Whereas, Zheng Manqing...he could do that sort of thing, but his real skill lied in his, he was actually like a shadow to actually touch. No one could actually sort of like, which is not as impressive as hitting someone without actually having to touch them, as seen in the media. His actual power lied

in the ability to prevent anyone actually trying to touch him or push him in push hands and things like that. And his sticking quality, which is not really a hugely exciting thing in the whole media dynamics, and you know, dynamic kicks. And head butting through planks of wood. The sticking quality was his real skill, and the fact that he was very, very evasive. (Continues in appendix)

GJ: So once you got involved with the Taiji culture, did you sort of recognize these skills and qualities more?

RH: Yeah, I realized that these qualities were possibly, well, are more impressive than sort of Karate type qualities, which are like of blocks of wood

GJ: Why do you think they're more impressive?

RH: The very skills...it takes so much training, and...the very, very subtle, the whole subtlety of it, you can actually...it's a very, very subtle art, which, you know, can take years to actually learn. And when we're actually doing something, and breaking something, you're just doing action and not responding to an action, which could be anything. So I mean, it is a skill.

(Roger, interview 1, 06/11/07)

Appendix 9.12

When I feel it in a live situation, and for instance, someone does push me, I've done that thousands of times in my chi sau. I know what to do. If you're pushing across this way, I know how to use it. I only know that through repetition, the sensitivity comes from the repetition. When you first start Wing Chun, and someone says "If someone pushes across, then let go." You think, "Well how am I going to do that? How am I going to feel that, and react in time?" To hit the target. By the time it's all over, it's too late. They've moved. And for a beginner, that's right. That is right. But as your sensitivity improves through the practice, there are only a certain number of things that can happen. So you're only looking for a couple of things that are happening. Your reaction time is cut down, because you're not blindly waiting for something to happen. Only what could happen in this situation. That's cut down your response time by a time and a half. Like a tennis player. If he watches his opponent on video for hours and hours and hours. If he watches his opponent, he'll notice, 'Ah, he's serving when he throws the ball in a certain way.' That's when it comes to a certain point. If his ball is thrown another way, then his serve is going somewhere else. It makes you look like superhuman reflexes. As if you were there when he was serving the ball. But it's not. You're just reading the situation.

(Terry, interview 1, 12/02/08)

Appendix 9.13

"A set of movements, a set of principles. Anything is Wing Chun if it goes along the principles of Wing Chun. If it stays in those principles. If it goes against those certain principles of Wing Chun, it's not Wing Chun."

(Zack, interview 2, 26/04/08).

Appendix 9.14

But it's not the same as training in the class, where you've got people like yourself, black belts, John, Terry, correcting you, and telling you...doing a little bit of chi sau and telling you, "Oh, you need to this." And instantly you can change it and improve. Maybe I've just been maintaining what I had before, at *blue two*, you know?

(Tony, interview 1, 22/06/08)

Appendix 9.15

To pick me up on mistakes. I think the most important is to stop myself of having a false sense of how good I am (laughs). It's another thing, which I think you can get when you train by yourself, and practicing movements in the air. But it's so much different when you've got another person's arm on your arm...you become deluded to a certain extent.

(Zack, interview 2, 26/04/08)

Appendix 10 Metaphor Chapter – Extra Data

Appendix 10.1

I've read this as well...this is going to sound cheesy. Everyone's on a journey. Everyone has a set path really. The whole kind of being almost called into that bookshop. It all started from there. I don't know. Maybe that's a total exaggeration, or coincidence, or I don't know, but it's one thing has led to the other thing. It's a totally natural thing. Maybe it's due to my past life, self-improvement and helping out. I know ultimately, the best thing to do is to help others. That whole charitable thing. The more you do that, the more at ease you can be with yourself. I've definitely learned that

(Sarah, interview 1, 02/07/08)

Appendix 10.2

I got to the point in my life where I was tired of going out drinking and doing things like that, and I just wanted to do a bit more. And that path led me to Wing Chun, and, I didn't really look back. I really enjoyed the challenge. And the learning aspect.

(Sarah, interview 1, 02/07/08)

Appendix 10.3

I'd say it's part of my journey. I wouldn't say it's the be all and end all of my journey. Not at all. But it's certainly put me on the journey I think. I don't think anything else would have. Even doing another martial art like kickboxing and things like that, to a certain degree. Because it's such a thought process of what you have to think about, and the rolling aspects, and essentially, going back to Daoists. Essentially, you just be, basically. In chi sau, being able to achieve that will make you a better Wing Chun practitioner.

(Sarah, interview 1, 02/07/08)

Appendix 10.4

We're all on a journey, and I'm part of that. Up the mountain, along the river. And it's really a way of understanding a state that can't be expressed. The Dao that is written as the true Dao cannot be the true Dao. A way of expressing the inexpressible, that's what we're looking for.

(Joe, interview 2, 16/07/08)

Appendix 10.5

I mean, it is such a slow progression, isn't it? It's a long time, and you learn a lot as you go through, but you get stuck, you relearn stuff, so hopefully you're constantly on an upward trail

(Will, interview 1, 20/08/08)

Appendix 10.6

It's a martial art that you're going to learn nicely. It's a wall, then you have to step back to go forward. So it can be really frustrating, but the way you step through with such a big step and it's well worth it, but then beyond the line there's another wall. I used to get frustrated, but I've since learned, and take it in my stride now, because it's forever. It means there's progress, that the body's opening up, and you're more aware of what's going on within yourself.

(Ben, interview 1, 26/08/08)

Appendix 10.7

I might still have to have bits pointed out to me, but I found that most of the time in my training, it was pushing me in the right direction. There were crossroads where I'm not quite sure where I'm going, but then it makes loads of sense. That was the big change with Li. Because up until then, people just could give you an answer straight like that.

(Terry, interview 1, 12/02/08)

Appendix 10.8

Sometimes it quite hard because generally, most people won't have an idea of what you're talking about, so you can't really talk to lots of people about your experiences because they think you're absolutely off the wall or bonkers or something. So it's quite hard in that way because A, it's personal, and B, not many people have an understanding of it. So they'll think you're some sort of weirdo (we laugh).

(Chris, interview 1, 20/09/08)

Appendix 10.9

Because it's slow and rhythmical. Anybody can do it at their own pace. That's another thing about the journey. It doesn't have to be fast, you can do it at your own pace. And there is no rush.

(Ben, interview 1, 26/08/08)

Appendix 10.10

But, at the end of the day, if you're on the right path, nothing will harm you anyway. But with Wing Chun, it gives you just a bit of an edge that...if I'm not enlightened, then I might need the Wing Chun. If I'm slightly off my path, what if something happens then? It's just like an insurance in a way. It's something we all hope that we never have to use.

(Tony, interview 2, 02/08/08)

Appendix 10.11

I know it's forever adjusting. It's a continual adjustment. Through my class, I suppose, they come along, and you've got to adjust to teach the class as they progress, and that's a journey in itself.

(Ben, interview 2, 09/09/08)

Appendix 10.12

Not all people, obviously, but some people. You can help them to a certain degree, but you can't ram it down their throats. But it's down to the whole Western culture on how to look after yourself. You rely on doctors. It's quite a sad state of affairs really, but hopefully over time, complimentary therapies will prevail (laughs), but I don't know. Yeah, that's quite sad to see. But you can only do what you can by helping a certain amount of people.

(Sarah, interview 1, 02/07/08)

Appendix 10.13

"I'm always discovering things about Taiji. It's a lifelong journey. You think you know it, and then you move to another level, then another level."

(Joe, interview 1, 18/05/08)

Appendix 10.14

I found in Tang So Do, the classes, were very structured classes. Do this, do that, do it this way. Whereas in Wing Chun, it was self-discovery. The self-discovery. When you're doing chi sau with somebody, over a period of time, and I realise of course, it would take years, it's a never-ending ladder. Although I've been doing martial arts for twenty three years now, I can honestly say it's only in the last three, four, five years that I've actually become a lot softer with my Wing Chun. I was very, very, even for my age, very strong. Which is a bit of the Tang So Do mentality.

(Ted, interview 1, 20/05/08)

Appendix 10.15

I think it was a little voyage of discovery of what my body could do and couldn't do. And actually, body awareness, many things I would do, but not actually be aware of it, it's just a movement. Twenty minutes out of my life that I never realized. It made you more aware of your own body.

(Roger, interview 1, 06/11/07)

Appendix 10.16

GJ: Chris, you said discovery. Have you heard of narratives? I'm not sure if Pete told you about narratives. They're stories that we tell in society. Shared stories. So discovery would be a big one in martial arts. Discovering about ourselves. Discovering about others and discovering new things. So to use the journey metaphor, you turn round the corner and meet new students.

CA: Yeah, that's another thing that Taiji brings into my life. By setting up a class, I mean I don't run my classes through ego. It's really through a very open, welcoming way. People come into my life. I set the class up, but they come to me. But I get to know all these lovely people. Wow, that's brilliant! What a privilege! It's mutual, it's mutual. I think I'm a very reasonable guy. So that brings all these very wonderful people into their lives. And me into their lives as well. So that's the wonderful thing about the Taiji world, I suppose. Martial arts world, perhaps. It doesn't have to be Taiji. I suppose you have similar experiences through your avenue, through Wing Chun and so on. You meet brilliant people, don't you? From different walks of life. I've got a guy who is the director of a very successful legal law firm. He's actually passionate about Chen style Taiji. And academically, I'm not a patch on him, but when it comes to Taiji, I'm his master. How interesting is that? I don't set that up, but he's very respectful towards me. But he's a very, very top... It kind of brings all sorts, all sorts of people into your lives.

GJ: That's spiritual as well

CA: It is. It's a lovely human connection. And when you go on Taiji holidays, you meet other people who have similar experiences. I don't think you share Taiji. You do Taiji with them. But somehow you always make friends, and nice people come into your lives.

(Chris, interview 1, 20/09/08)

Appendix 10.17

You do the Siu Lim Tao, make sure everything's right. I find it's really settling, it's really good. It's quite a good focus. Breathing, and all that sort of business, obviously. Structurally, it's all there, and it's a good little chapter of the bible, so it were (laughs)

(Nick, interview 1, 04/05/08)

Appendix 10.18

DR: I think with the different schools there's something that I find interesting...that's what I wanted to talk about. It's probably ever so slightly irrelevant. Ever since the last interview, I've kind of been inspired a little bit to train a little more. I've been doing the Siu Lim Tao a little bit more. I try to make it more of my life a bit more. If I'm on the internet, I kind of get into YouTube. I type in 'Wing Chun' to see what sorts of videos there are, and there are hundreds (laughs). So many. Things on the wooden dummy, and things like that. There's a video of Sebastian Li doing chi sau with one of his students...very interesting to watch. Interesting to watch in that it looked like he wasn't doing anything. He barely moved at all. The guy he was teaching just looked a bit hand slappy. Li just made him look like he was doing useless moves. Li was barely moving, barely moving. And some of the comments were just really childish. It just really affected me. Everything that I could look at from then, I'd look at the comments. There were comments "that's not as good as my style." "That's not as good as my Sifu." It's kinda like "my Dad can beat up your dad." It was really ridiculous, really ridiculous (we both laugh). I've refrained so far from commenting on any of these childish outbursts. I've bitten my tongue a bit, thinking "who the bloody hell are you?!" This is probably a fourteen year old kid going "I could beat him up." Even if it's a style that I see, and think 'that's not my thing, that's not the way that I have been trained.' You get people that will comment on masters...well his wu sau is wrong. I don't like the way he does that. I mean this person knows more than you. That's why you're commenting on YouTube, and they're a master. There's a difference. It still doesn't stop people from saying "he's rubbish." And I think a lot about that. I wonder if that's something that is worldwide in the martial arts community.

GJ: Wing Chun is the worst of that in a way. Cos it is a small martial art that has branched out very quickly. And that there was no successor to Yip Man, everyone...as Sifu says, "everyone wants to be the chief. No one wants to be the Indian."

DR: Mmm

GJ: So everyone wants to be the top dog, their school is the best. It's politics and business together, entwined

DR: It's silly though, because you don't get that anywhere else. You probably do get it elsewhere, but you don't get that in other spiritual practices, say. You don't get the Dalai Lama going "that Maraishi" did you know that Maraishi died today? Maraishi Marihodi died today, ninety one. The guys that taught the Beatles yoga.

GJ: Oh right

DR: You don't get either of them going "he's rubbish. Don't talk to him, he's talking rubbish." You know, they recognise another practitioner, a different path, but they don't sort of go "you're not going to get enlightened that way mate" (laughs). You know, they acknowledge, give a respectful acknowledgement of other people's practices, knowing that if a person followed that person's practices, they'd still retain a kind of liberation and thereafter. There's none of that sort of...which you get in Wing Chun, and other martial arts as well. All across the board. "You're not going to get good that way" kind of thing

GJ: Do you think they're like cults, the different styles?

DR: Mmm.

GJ: In the way that they control knowledge

DR: It's not just Wing Chun specific. A lot of people who made comments were non Wing Chun practitioners. There's a lot of talk of MMA, mixed martial arts. I really do think that those people who say "an MMA practitioner would kick his ass" are really just fourteen year olds who sit there and watch it on telly. "These guys are good. These guys would beat up these guys." But they don't know anything. But there was something funny I did see on it though. I don't know what the style was, but there was a grandmaster. He was doing all these things, and his students were falling over without him touching them. And...so he bet hundreds of dollars that he could beat anyone in this mixed martial arts thing. And he absolutely got his arse completely kicked. And I'm not surprised, because he's been followed by sicko fans who just fell over all the time. I mean, he got battered. He couldn't do a thing...and...I found a bit of a naughty sort of glee watching it. I'm as guilty as those people going "he's rubbish." That was proof. That guy did get beat quite quickly. Whatever

he was doing, it wasn't realistic. There was no contact. These people were literally falling over from this magical energy. But yeah I thought I would sort of interject with that.

(Dave, interview 2, 06/02/08)

Appendix 10.19

Taiji is quite a broad church. So you will have the just moving around in this fashion kind of Taiji. And you'll have those who develop their bodies to relax and do things that you can't do.

(Joe, interview 1, 18/05/08)

Appendix 10.20

Sifu looked up from his laptop. "Now I used to have a small church. Hard fighters, but there was only four or five of them. But I want a big church. So I changed my style of teaching. Wing Chun has something to offer everyone." He said. Pete and I nodded in agreement.

(Field notes, 28/02/08)

Appendix 10.21

As I said before, I see changes in my students in their personalities, as they begin to grow. And their confidence becomes tenfold. You could even say there's a downside to it, you know...some of the downsides of it are that some people become so familiar with oneself, that some people can take liberties in that sense, etc. Not many, but you do get the occasional person who does take liberties and that. No, you learn so much more about yourself and other people. I think that's what's important at the end of the day, is to try to make sense of what we're all doing

(John, interview 2, 01/03/08)

Appendix 10.22

GJ: So the family metaphor seen in the traditional Chinese martial arts, there is sort of family system. Do you think that's in the Wing Chun system you're in?

DR: I think so. That's the way I saw it. I don't know if everyone who went to the class saw it that way how I saw it. I saw it in a very family orientated thing where everyone was either an older sibling or a younger sibling with a father figure at the top. I think that also might be the reason why certain relationships don't develop that much within the class, as people already have an idea of what your relationship is.

GJ: That's a possibility. It will be interesting to ask people the same type of questions, "Why didn't you get to close?" In a way, it like work colleagues or cousins. A cousin isn't as close as your brother, but they're cousins you see on events, isn't it?

DR: Yeah, yeah, that's it. That's it. Cos obviously when you're family, you'd be close. There'd be nothing that you wouldn't really talk about. Well, for most people. But with cousins, there's sort of like an element of small talk. It's not someone that you've grown up with everyday, not someone you've grown up with that you're that close to. But there is a family link, and that's the way that you see it.

(Dave, interview 2, 13/02/08)

Appendix 10.23

I know how I am now with people who aren't quite as advanced as me. Younger siblings, if you will. That's the way I am now, and the way I have been is...you have to remember the way it was for you when you started, or when you were at that particular stage. You just need to reassure people that the mistakes people make are necessary, for a start. So the

mistakes people make are necessary to go past them, to grow. You need to install some sort of confidence in people that what they are doing is progression, not “What you’re doing is wrong.” “What you’re doing is right. You’re doing it more and more right by the moment.” Yeah, it’s just the way I’ve been taught myself really.

(Dave, interview 2, 13/02/08)

Appendix 10.24

Even when he’s doing sort of one on one stuff, he’s easily managing to tie you up into knots, you’re laughing because how easy it is for him to do it, and how he’s doing it (laughs). It’s kind of like being beaten up by an older brother.

(Dave, interview 2, 13/02/08)

Appendix 10.25

GJ: You said brotherhood. Is that a metaphor you use quite a lot to understand Wing Chun? Some people use family quite a bit, the Wing Chun family.

TS: Well you know here, in Balmsbury, they use family a lot. If you drink giawoshka with somebody, they become part of your soul family. You connect on a really deep level. Wing Chun, it’s the same, in a different way. You’re connecting in a spiritual way. It is a spiritual path, even if you’re not aware of it. And even if you think maybe your teacher is not coming across in the most spiritual way.

(Tony, interview 1, 22/06/08)

Appendix 10.26

ES: What about me? I mean, there’s a clan feel. It’s a clan thing really

GJ: Clan’s a good word, yeah (laughs)

ES: Yeah. They are my Kung Fu brothers. And if we go out for an evening, I feel quite proud to be part of our group. I think they’re all really good guys, and I think they treat me exactly how I should be treated...And the other guys, I suppose, because they’re checking things out with you, “Are you alright? Do you need to rest sometime?” They’re being particularly nice. That kind of thing. You just feel cared about. And I think because you’re sharing an experience, that’s one of the main things, is the shared experience of what you’re doing. Yeah. You don’t get that experience outside. It’s a bond. It’s almost like being in the army or something. You know that comradely? Yeah. It’s doing something together

(Emma, interview 1, 26/07/08)

Appendix 10.27

DR: I think there’s a certain amount of authenticity involved in martial arts, whereby you can trace your family back in a metaphorical way with Wing Chun, you can trace it back to Yip Man, and, if you believe in the family tree is made, you can trace it back to Ng Mui . You can trace it back to the person who walked out of the Shaolin Temple. And invented it. If you genuinely believe in the legends of she taught Wing Chun, and Wing Chun [Yim Wing Chun] taught her husband, and he named it Wing Chun after her and blah, blah, blah. So and so taught so and so. When you go back that far, it’s almost biblical. It’s like Adam and Eve, Gail and Abel. And, you don’t know how much to believe in the truth, what is solid fact. But you know from Yip Man how much is solid fact, you know that he taught Long Wang Bing, Long Wang Bing taught Sebastian Yi, Sebastian Yi taught Sifu. That’s only four generations back to the grandmaster. Four generations from me. It’s like great, great, great grandfather. Or whatever. It’s the foreseeable past. And you know from that one nucleus, everyone who does Wing Chun in the world, can trace themselves back along one branch or another to that one place. Yeah, it was something that’s just fascinating about that really. That anyone who does that art can say that I was taught by so and so, who was taught by so and so, who was taught by so and so, who was taught by Yip Man.

GJ: There's a sense of belonging there?

DR: Yeah.

(Dave, interview 1, 11/11/07)

Appendix 10.28

GJ: Yeah, I remember from the interview, you mentioned that you could 'trace it back' four times. Your ancestry to Yip Man and people beyond

DR: Yeah. You can trace it back to Yim Wing Chun and Ng Mui. If you believe specifically that this was the way that it worked, that this is the lineage. I know that I can genuinely trace it back to Yip Man. Beyond that, it goes back to the dark ages a little bit (we both laugh). I mean, you're not too sure. Yeah, being able to trace it back to someone who is considered to be the godfather of Wing Chun is quite nice.

(Dave, interview 2, 13/02/08)

Appendix 10.29

GJ: You spoke of Wing Chun as a car. You're learning to drive. And you see the Highway Code as the Siu Lim Tao. You used that as a comparison. Where did they come from? Where did you learn these comparisons?

TJ: Well probably, it's over the years. You're talking to someone in their late sixties, who's travelled quite a path in life. And also, I think I'm quite a deep thinker, and bit of a philosopher. So you look for analogies all through your life. So yeah, that would be it. You learn to drive, you first look at *The Highway Code*

(Ted, interview 2, 04/06/08)

Appendix 10.30

I've always been interested in different cultures, I suppose. Yeah, definitely, it's opened my eyes to Chinese culture and how different they are. They think very differently. I like the poetic way that they describe things. So it's not just hard words, which is a very Western thing, the spoken word. Yeah, describe things. They use metaphors.

(Emma, interview 1, 26/07/08)

Appendix 10.31

Very much like if you look at the Western philosophies. I mean, the Bible's basically just metaphors. You're not actually supposed to believe that all these things in the Bible actually happened as said. They are metaphors to get an idea across. And it's the same for all the Eastern stuff if you ask me. Yeah. But on the other hand, I haven't gone too deeply into it, because that's not me. I'm not too much of a spiritual person myself. So I don't really take it onboard

(Terry, interview 2, 08/06/08)

GJ: Where do they come from, these metaphors?

TM: Experience

GJ: Just experience?

TM: And trying to explain things. And having blank expressions thrown back at me, which means they don't know quite what I'm trying to say. So I try another way of saying it. You still see the blank expressions, so you use another way of saying it. Eventually, you'll find something that you'll grab hold of. So over the years and years of practising and training and teaching, I've come up with some bizarre metaphors (laughs). To try to make people get their head round it. I mean, I've got like a public collection of a couple, that are me standard ones that people usually get their head round. But then you still get people who won't get it.

Try to use driving metaphors to someone who doesn't drive. You have to think of something else now, haven't you? Because they won't get it. I tend to use the cup of tea one then. Because when you make a cup of tea, and think of everything involved in making a cup of tea, from going to the cupboard to getting the cup out, yeah, to the sugar to the tea bags, to boiling the kettle, to putting water in the kettle first, then put the kettle on the...on the plug, the plug on the wall. Then make it boil, then make a cup of tea. It's a long, drawn out process. There's a lot going on in making a cup of tea. But we've all made a cup of tea that often that you can be doing something else whilst making a cup of tea. It's that engrained into your memory level. And that's what Wing Chun's got to become. That's what any fighting system has to become if you're gonna make it effective. This is why boxers do hours and hours of sparring. So it becomes automatic. Like no thought. Same thing.

(Terry, interview 2, 08/06/08)

Appendix 10.32

The Chinese talking about energy and qi and all that, it's like...not necessarily metaphorical, but it's a bit wishy washy. And I think it also shows that we don't actually understand what's going on. Training internally, standing for an hour, standing still...what is it that it does? How? Why? What changes in your body? What am I doing? And until Western science has actually properly studied it and given us an explanation that we can understand and comprehend, then we have to use a metaphor to describe the ideals behind it a little bit, I think. They're kind of getting it a bit now. There are some fabulous interpretations of what we are doing.

(Will, interview 1, 20/08/08)

Appendix 12.1 Field notes from meeting with Steve

Steve was the instructor of the Adderton branch of *Bridge's Wing Chun Academy*, which he had shut down due to declining student numbers and pressure from work. In the last few years Steve hadn't been in regular contact with Sifu, and became almost a former member of the group who vanished for no apparent reason. When he had heard on the grapevine that I was leaving Adderton to take up a lecturing position, he sent me a text message so we could meet up. I invited him round for some Mexican food with my girlfriend and I. Her friend Marta was also visiting to say goodbye to her, so it was an ideal moment for Steve and I to catch up and talk about Wing Chun, the Academy, films and his personal philosophy.

Steve arrived promptly with a bottle of red wine. He had a big smile on his face, and he greeted me warmly with a hug and a firm handshake. As always, he was dressed sharply for the weekend in his usual cheque white shirt with a big 70s style collar. How he belongs in that decade when Kung Fu was the craze of a generation!

As we entered the flat I introduced him to Erika, and we began to open the bottle of red wine and enjoyed a sip of the rich flavours. Steve has certainly splashed out for the occasion! As Eri and Marta were going to prepare the food, we kept out of the kitchen and sat in the living area, a spacious room I had inherited as a resident tutor. Now the students were home for the holidays it was very quiet, and a perfect opportunity to catch up.

"I do miss the gym quite a lot you know." Steve began. "I'd really like to get back there one day, if Sifu's still about, but at the moment I'm so busy with work. I've had to sacrifice it to start my own business." He explained.

"So what are you doing these days?" I asked.

"I'm running my own business that designs offices in people's homes, so I get to travel to all kinds of interesting places and meet people I would have never seen before. You get to see some wicked houses, you really do." He smiled. "So I'm normally recruited by the rich and wealthy, and help them develop a home office. It's a nice market as not many people do this kind of thing. I do get to see some brilliant places in the country, from the South coast to Wales."

"That sounds great. I understand how busy you must be." I replied reassuringly.

"I had been training quite a bit though. You can tell that to Sifu." He said intensely. "I've still been training with Billy [his former private student and friend], and we've got a mate who we've been training up, but he's a bit crap though (laughs). The problem is

though, Billy needs more than one person to train with. I can give him some crap energies and roll wrong, but he needs all sorts of partners. I keep on telling him that he should go to Rigmouth, but he's not having it." He explained.

I remembered how Billy was intensely loyal to Steve, and had weekly private lessons with him in Steve's home. Billy had experienced problems in Rigmouth when seniors corrected him on some personal developments he had picked up from Steve, and he had got confused. "It's great to hear that Billy's still doing it. He's very dedicated."

"Definitely." Replied Steve. "If Billy can't meet with me, he still trains on his own for an hour. An hour everyday...now that's really dedicated and really hard to do as well." He shook his head in amazement, and paused for a bit. "I might start the Adderton group again one day, once I've got my life back from work. I'd send a message round to all the former students."

"That would be really good Steve. The Adderton class was amazing, and I'm sure lots of other students missed it." I had found it hard to recruit new students and maintain numbers, and has shut it down in May.

He nodded in agreement. "Have you heard about the new *Ip Man* film?" He asked excitedly.

"No! I didn't know there was an Ip Man film!" I replied excitedly, eager to hear more.

"Yeah, some guy has put it all on You-Tube in about 12 parts, but you can see it from start to finish. It's wicked. You've got to see it mate, there's some great Wing Chun on there."

"What's it all about?" I asked.

"It's set in Foshan [a town where Wing Chun was refined and developed], when Yip Man was younger. There's going to be a sequel to, set in Hong Kong, so I can't wait for that to be out. Anyway, Yip Man is a young gentleman, and he seems like the real gentleman you read about, who is polite and well mannered. He doesn't go looking for trouble, but he's forced to fight on quite a few occasions. He fights this Northern Boxer who goes down to challenge all the Foshan Kung Fu people, and fair play, some of them give him a run for his money, but he beats everyone apart from Yip Man. There's also a Japanese guy, who wants Yip Man to teach the Japanese army Chinese martial arts." He explained. "The Japanese are painted as devils, there really are. I'm sure a lot of them were, but just seem so evil."

"Can they compare to *Prodigal Son* and *Warriors Two*?" I asked, interested to hear his verdict on the comparison with the cult Wing Chun films.

"I don't know...they are brilliant, brilliant films, so it's hard to compare them. But it's definitely up there with some of my favourites."

"I've helped write an article about martial arts films and how the actors' bodies have a certain charisma when they perform." I said, trying to connect the conversation to research.

"Yeah, they do. Without these films, without these people, you wouldn't want to do these arts. Without seeing these characters and reading about them in books, you wouldn't want to be like them. They were a massive inspiration for me when I was younger." He shook his head in wonder.

"Oh yeah, I went to a Kung Fu seminar the other week, and met that guy, Rob Norton. Do you know him?" I brought over a signed copy of his book.

"Oh right, yeah, that's him, isn't it?" He asked, looking at the author photo.

"Yeah, he's done quite a few styles of Kung Fu, and has created his own style. I turned the book to the page with his own creation.

Steve shook his head in disgust when he heard this. "You see, the problem with me is, I'm too much of a purist who likes to see things in their pure form. I mean, who are you to say that something needs to change? Who are you to alter an art that has been there for centuries? But anyway, that's me and my own problem." He shook his head again and handed the book back to me. I remembered how passionate Steve was about Wing Chun and its alleged superiority over other styles that he used to reinforced in the weekly Adderton class with terms such as "Wing Chun wins all."

Eri and Marta joined us, bringing some delicious food to go with the rich red wine. The conversation was interesting and varied, and then suddenly we mentioned martial arts. Marta didn't know we studied Kung Fu, and wanted a demonstration. I could have showed her something, but as Steve used to be one of my teachers, I offered the demonstration to him as a sign of respect.

"I don't know if I'd be able to do it." Said Marta, seeming concerned.

"You could, anyone can do it." Steve said in his charismatically intense manner. "If George punches me from a distance, I barely have to move in order to defend myself." He explained with wide eyes and nodded for me to punch him.

I aimed to strike him in the face, and launched forwards as fast as I could. He instantly defended with a *biu sau* technique, which veered me punch off away from his body. He has just demonstrated the Wing Chun principle of the economy of motion, and I felt vulnerable to a counter strike, which never happened.

“OK...so it took him three seconds to get to me, and I just had to move my arm slightly upwards.” He explained, using a visual demonstration. Steve was back: The confident, passionate and charismatic instructor ready to perform the art for anyone.

(Field notes, 20/07/09)

Appendix 12.2 Field notes from recent visit to Bridge's Academy

The following field notes offer an insight into the use of the major senses understood in our society as practised in Wing Chun: Sight, sound, kinaesthesia, smell, touch and taste. In reality, they often work as a unit, but for the sake of illustration and potential analysis, I have broken down each sense into notable chapters of my most recent lesson in Bridge's Wing Chun Academy.

Sight

As we entered the gym I was immediately struck by the vast spectrum of colours in the gym. The back row of new students, who I had never met before, were wearing bright yellow t-shirts on top of their black and red training trousers. This differed considerably to the more familiar sight of black-shirts in collective motion. These four newcomers were of different shapes and sizes, and I was interested in how their techniques would actually feel in partner training. The more experienced students in the front wore the usual black and greying t-shirts, marking their seniority. In the back corner stood a brand new lion, which was a beautiful bright blue with a hint of white. It sat alongside the golden children's lion, which looked as cute and soft as ever, and I felt like going over to stroke it. On the other side of the new lion stood the established adult lion, a colourful array of red, orange, white and gold. I marvelled at them for a second, as the sight brought me back to my days of the Saturday morning lion dance classes and demonstrations, where Eri and I have represented the gym. The sight of the beautiful Chinese dragon strengthened this memory, as its fearsome head and bright pink and yellow scales brought me back to my days of the lion head.

I continued to scan the room. To my surprise, in the far left corner stood a Christmas tree slightly messily decorated with sparkling tinsel and bright Christmas balls. It was an interesting sight in this Kung Fu gym, which immediately contrasted with the immense presence of the Chinese shrine. It gave a cosy and homely atmosphere to the gym I regard as a second home, and gave me a sense of belonging in a place I haven't set foot in for several months. Although I felt comfortable, the new sights both puzzled and intrigued me to find out more.

Sounds

As we left the toilet after changing, I heard the familiar sounds of counting following the warm up. We rushed to join the tidy rows of students and followed the count from one to ten on the basic straight punch. I tried to focus on the sound rather than on my own timing. As soon as I heard 'one', I snapped out a punch to match it, almost trying to beat the counter to the end of the word. However, my reactions weren't fast enough, and I was slightly too late.

Sifu led us through another set, sounding as serious as ever. The counting continued as Terry loudly commanded 1-10 in his usual authoritative presence. I felt like in a military drill camp under the watchful eye of the sergeant major. Then it was Nick's turn, and in his soft voice, he led us through some more punches. Now it was Zack's time to count. I tried to react as soon as possible to his rapid counting, which had recently taken more of an authoritative air since he had formed his own class down in Rothshire. Finally, Len gave his count as the last senior in the front row. His very relaxed, drawn out regional accent made the counting noticeably slower, which made me attune my focus to his sound and forget about comparing the rhythms of each person, which I would later attempt to do with my field notes.

As the count moved towards the back, I heard a few familiar, but also new voices of some timid and incoherent beginners. Eri's and Lara's were distinctive as the only females in room, with Mexican-Spanish and Canadian accents respectively, amongst a group of rather burly blokes with accents hailing from different regions of Britain. I realised that I was next, and despite my noticeably increased breathing rate, I managed to clearly magnify my voice to all corners of the room. Perhaps my spell as a lecturer has made me 'louder', as an academic colleague commented earlier on after my guest presentation in Adderton? Finally, the newcomer to the group stopped the flow of the counting as he didn't realise he needed to shout out the numbers.

Sifu paused for a moment. "It's your turn fella. You need to count to one to ten." He said with a smile in his cockney accent, still strong after over 20 years away from London, making a joke out of the situation. The young man then counted from one to ten in a much softer voice that I would have expected.

Kinaesthesia – The ‘Inner Body’

We had arrived 20 minutes late due to traffic difficulties, so had unfortunately missed the highly motivating and invigorating warm up. As I sunk into the highly familiar basic stance, Yee Gee Kim Yung Ma, I readied myself for the punches. As we went across the rows, I was alarmed by how many punches were being thrown in the air. My shoulders weren't prepared or warmed for all this strain as I felt them weary, and my elbows began to ache along one of the tendons. Normally I never had trouble with my joints as I prepare a good warm up through dynamic stretches and slow motion punching, but the hundreds of 'cold' punches made my focus my attention on my elbows, particularly the right one, which was making punching slower and more difficult. Instead of attuning to the count, I instead searched my elbows through the sense of kinaesthesia, and checked for where it hurt. From an outsider's perspective it might look like I was following the count, but I was instead focusing on my inner body.

Luckily, the air punching came to an end as Sifu called us to a close. It was now time for pad work, and I worked with Len, a fellow black sash and housemate of Sifu. As I struck the pad, I focused on speed and relaxation rather than power, and ensured I was close enough to hit the pad with a bent elbow. Too far away would mean I could damage the elbow, whilst too close would mean that I couldn't straighten the punch. At the same time, Len had to ensure that he pushed forwards with the pad to offer me some resistance as a real life opponent would. This soothed my elbow as it was working against an opposing force. Len was smacking the pad forwards much like a vertical palm strike, and I shuddered in my stance as the force reigned in on me. I sunk into the stance and 'rooted' to the ground to absorb the impact and provide a solid foundation for my own punching.

Smells

The air drilling had finished, and felt the distinctive running of sweat down my back under the tucked in t-shirt. As we neared the pads, I stayed clear of the white and black canvas pads. I noticed that Barry put on some latex gloves and gave a look of disgust as he smelt inside the mitts. These pieces of equipment have taken thousands, if not millions of punches from hundreds of practitioners, who have in turn put their sweaty hands into the mitts as they gave their partner a turn. These worn and torn mitts had

seen many people come and go from the gym, and had helped many of us get to the skill level we are now. As an experienced practitioner, I stayed clear of this to avoid any hand infection or nasty smell experience. The harder black and brown pads were less used due to the pain they produced when striking. Nevertheless, I choose these not for the impact conditioning they could provide my knuckles, but for the avoidance of bad smells. Before we left for London, Eri and I had purchased some brand new pads, and had brought them regularly to the class as we despised the stink of the pads, and had instead enjoyed the fresh smell of clean leather. Similar equipment has been described by Steve as 'the gloves of death' for his unwashed bag gloves whilst Barry had brought an aerosol anti fungal spray put down the focus mitts, which had filled the room with a chemically infested aroma. So although today wasn't as smell packed as always, it certainly brought back memories of older times.

Touch – Embodied Sensitivity

Sifu had asked us to run through the four slow attacks – tan, pak, bong and wu with a partner. After helping a returning student with his fairly familiar sequence, I moved on to Gavin, one of the gym's most dedicated students. Gavin's larger body size and strength added to the power of his techniques as we exchanged techniques on each side in order to train our amnidextriousity. As time passed, we intensified our training to make our attacked and defences more powerful, and I had already felt a familiar pain across my forearms.

As Gavin launched his attack, I thrust my triangle forwards and stepped forwards to intercept him, which interrupted his attack and turned him slightly. I felt the clash along my highly conditioned forearm, and continued with the bong sau slow attack in a smooth a rapid fashion. My chop to the through was controlled just millimetres from his throat, and he nodded in approval.

As I punched Gavin, he did the same, moving in with an intense state and powerful forearms that grinded against mine. This upset my body structure, and I felt of balance and at his mercy and his hands flew across my throat and face. His face as poised with focus at the task at hand.

I then stepped in to punch Gavin, this time really meaning it as we were taking the drill to another level of realism. However, I punched slightly higher than expected, and

was stepping in with full force, which increased my step slightly and broke the lut (gap) between us. To my surprise I had hit him in the mouth, and he stood stunned.

“Sorry mate, I didn’t mean it!” I quickly explained. “I’ve been out of practice with these slow attacks.”

“It’s alright mate, I know what you mean. It’s not the skills that’s lost first. That takes ages to go. It’s the control that’s the first to go.” He nodded whilst speaking his usual lecture-like tone as if I was his student.

At the end of the class, I rubbed my sore forearms and noticed a nasty bump on my right one, which had received a heavy bash from Gavin’s steel-like forearms. Although painful, it was a reminder of the senses experienced in Wing Chun that I have lacked in the last few months of training on my own. I’ll certainly be gingerly rubbing some dit dar on my aches and pains over the next few days!

Taste – An Often Overlooked Sense

I don’t normally think of taste or palatability in Wing Chun besides the welcomed gulping of water after a warm up, or Sifu’s typical cup of tea during a monthly private lesson. However, after this exciting comeback lesson Len asked if I fancied a curry round their place. I was delighted to hear this I had a long day of travelling, teaching and training, and was looking forward to eating a good meal.

“You’ve got to try our favourite curry. Len was telling me all about it, and now I’ve converted.” Suggested Sifu with a smile.

Although I didn’t know anything about this dish, after perusing the atypical British-Indian menu, I decided that this might be a good choice.

Still sitting in our uniforms, Eri and I patiently waited for the takeaway. I felt saliva building up whilst my stomach was rumbling. Fortunately this was broken as the doorbell rang for our home delivery. We anxiously gathered round the food like a pack of wolves, and sat around the main room to eat.

Len kindly offered us a cold beer, and I sipped the refreshing Budweizer, which soothed my parched throat. I hadn’t taken enough fluids today, and forgot to bring a drink for the 3 hour drive from London in the morning, so this was very much needed. I devoured my curry in quick succession, and mixed it with naan bread and chutnies. It was sweet and sour as Sifu had told us, with strong hints of coconut and pineapple, and I gulped it down whilst savouring the last few mouthfuls. Eri and I then had to go

through the heavy starter of homemade cheese and spinach, which wasn't quite what I expected as it was heavy and liquid rather than compact and crunchy as we had experienced from other restaurants. We sat back and relaxed after an evening of Kung Fu (hard work), which needs a reward. I glanced at Sifu and Len who sat back in the leather sofas in satisfaction, their stomachs bloated much like mine.

(Field notes, 12/12/09)

Appendix 12.3 Current PhD Dissemination

The following is a list of publications, conference presentations and seminars/lectures that stem from or connect to the PhD in terms of theory, methods and empirical findings.

Forthcoming Publications

Brown, D. & **Jennings, G.** (In Process). Charismatic gurus? Leadership and legitimisation in traditionalist martial arts schools. *Journal of Asian Martial Arts*

Brown, D. & **Jennings, G.** (In Process). Body lineage: The cultural transmission of traditionalist martial arts. *Journal of Asian Martial Arts*

Invited Publications

The following papers are in the early stages of writing following discussions with the Editors:

Jennings, G. & Brown, D. (In Process). Mind, body and nature: The social practice of Taijiquan in British open spaces. *Leisure Studies – Sport & the Politics of the Environment Special Issue*

Jennings, G. & Brown, D. (In Process). Shared cultivation: Habitus, partners and transformation in Chinese martial arts. *Qualitative Research in Sport and Exercise*

Publications

Jennings, G. & Brown, D. (In Press). “It can be a religion if you want”: Wing Chun Kung Fu as a secular religion. *Ethnography*

Brown, D., **Jennings, G.** & Molle, A. (In Press). Faith in the martial arts: Exploring relationships between traditional Asian martial arts and religion. *Stadion*

Brown, D., **Jennings, G.** & Leledaki, A. (2008). The changing charismatic status of the performing male body in Asian martial arts films. *Sport in Society*, 11(2/3), 174-194

Conference Presentations

Jennings, G. Brown, D. & Sparkes, A. C. (Forthcoming April 2011). Subcultures of Ageing in the Chinese Martial Arts: Narratives of British Practitioners. *Fiction and Cultural Mediation of Aging Conference (FCMAP)*. Brunel University, UK.

Jennings, G., Brown, D. & Sparkes, A. C. (Forthcoming November 2010). Embodiment and the Senses - Representations from a British Kung Fu Ethnography. *Contemporary Ethnography Across the Disciplines Conference*, University of Waikato, New Zealand.

Jennings, G., Brown, D. & Sparkes, A. C. (Forthcoming September 2010). Kung Fu brothers: Narratives of secular family in a British Wing Chun Association. *British Sociological Association Sport Study Postgraduate Forum*, Chelsea School, Loughborough University.

Jennings, G. & Brown, D. (2009). Mind, body and nature: The social practice of Taijiquan in British open spaces. *British Sociological Association Sport Study Postgraduate Forum*, Chelsea School, University of Brighton.

Jennings, G. & Brown, D. (2009). Cultivating a martial habitus through partner training: The examples of Tai Chi and Wing Chun Kung Fu. *3rd International Qualitative Conference in Sport and Exercise*, Roehampton, UK.

Jennings, G. & Brown, D. (2008). Narratives of practice in the traditionalist Chinese martial arts. *Postgraduate Conference*, School of Sport and Health Sciences, University of Exeter, Exeter, UK.

Jennings, G. & Brown, D. (2007). My research: Traditional Chinese movement forms as body-self transforming practices. *Postgraduate Conference, School of Sport and Health Sciences, University of Exeter, Exeter, UK.*

Invited Talks

Brown, D.H.K., & **Jennings, G.** (2009). Social perspectives of tradition martial arts practice. *Total Control! Martial Arts and Science. The Dana Centre, The Science Museum, London.* February 24th 2009. (Presented by David Brown).

Jennings, G. & Brown, D. (2008). Experiencing body-self transformation through the traditionalist Chinese martial arts. *National Science Week, University of Exeter, UK.* March 12th 2008.

Research Seminars

Jennings, G. (2010). Kung fu brothers: Narratives of secular family in a British Wing Chun Association. *Staff Research Seminar Series. School of Human Sciences, St. Mary's University College.* 3rd February 2010.

Jennings, G. (2009). Circles of cultivation?: Sociological perspectives on a Kung Fu pedagogy. *School of Education and Lifelong Learning, University of East Anglia.* 24th November 2009.

Jennings, G. & Brown, D. (2007). Exploring change in the traditional Chinese martial arts: An extension of Yuasa's body scheme. *QRU Seminar Series, University of Exeter, Exeter UK.* December 5th 2007.

Jennings, G. & Brown, D. (2006). Mind, body and spirit: Traditional Chinese movement forms as body-self transforming practices. *QRU Seminar Series, University of Exeter, Exeter UK.* February 2nd 2007.