

## Reflections on Training Alone: Martial Arts, Solo Practice, and Slow Flow. An essay written in the times of the COVID-19 pandemic (2021)

JANET O'SHEA\*

### Abstract

Bruce Lee famously said: "If you want to learn to swim, jump in the water."<sup>1</sup> Lee's dictum – that choreographed sequences of martial arts movements bear little resemblance to what we actually do in a fight – has been taken to mean a variety of things: that learning forms is useless, that traditional training has no merit, and even that martial arts "don't work." When taken in the context of Lee's other statements and of his lifelong practice of a range of martial arts, the statement most likely means that we don't know how to apply a skill from the rehearsal of its basic movements. Bruce Lee could focus on the application of skills in sparring because he had a luxury that most of us did not during the COVID-19 pandemic: training with other people. In the face of a pandemic and related shutdowns, martial artists were forced to rethink the fundamentals of their training: adapting drills designed for partners into actions that can be performed solo and figuring out how to turn high-contact sparring into a virtual experience. They have made numerous innovations to enable this, relying on technological resources, while also returning to traditional training methods: utilizing training dummies, practicing existing forms, and creating new ones.

In this essay, I reflect on these changes by returning to my earlier work (2019) on risk, vulnerability, failure, and play in martial arts training. In addition, I rely upon theorizations of the slow (Osaldiston 2013, Berg & Seeber 2016, Popan 2019), to reflect on the changes in martial arts training in this context and how adapting to these changes might allow us to rehearse healthier ways to live, even as we manage the evident losses that come with the absence of in-person training.

### Zusammenfassung:

#### Reflexionen zum Solo-Training: Kampfkunst, Einzelpraxis und langsamer Flow

Einer von Bruce Lees berühmten Aussprüchen geht in die Richtung: "Wenn du schwimmen lernen willst, spring ins Wasser." Lees Diktum – dass choreografierte Bewegungsabläufe in den Kampfkünsten wenig Ähnlichkeit mit dem haben, was wir tatsächlich in einem Kampf tun – wurde verschiedenartig aufgefasst, wobei die Spannbreite von ‚das Lernen von Formen ist nutzlos‘ über ‚traditionelles Training hat keinen Wert‘ bis hin zu ‚Kampfkünste funktionieren nicht‘ reicht. Im Kontext von Lees anderen Aussagen und seiner lebenslangen Praxis einer Reihe von Kampfkünsten bedeutet die Aussage natürlich nur, dass wir nicht wissen, wie man eine Fertigkeit aus dem Einüben ihrer Grundbewegungen heraus anwenden kann. Bruce Lee konnte sich auf die Anwendung von Fähigkeiten im Sparring konzentrieren, weil er einen Luxus hatte, den die meisten von uns derzeit nicht haben: das Training mit anderen Menschen.

Angesichts einer Pandemie und der damit verbundenen Ausfälle sind Kampfsportler gezwungen, die Grundlagen ihres Trainings zu überdenken: Sie müssen Übungen, die für Partner konzipiert wurden, in Aktionen umwandeln, die auch alleine ausgeführt werden können, und herausfinden,

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\*Janet O'Shea is a Professor at the Department of World Arts and Cultures/Dance faculty at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) (USA). As an author, scholar, and martial artist, O'Shea's research and teaching focuses on critical dance studies, performance, and martial arts studies grounded in social and political contexts. In 2020 she received the Gold Shield Faculty Prize. She is a practitioner of Jeet Kune Do, Filipino Martial Arts, Brazilian jiu jitsu, kickboxing and Empowerment Self-Defense.

<sup>1</sup>One of Lee's first students – Taky Kimura once wrote in his Foreword to John Little's edition of Bruce Lee's 'The Tao of Gung Fu' (see Little, 1997: 12, 16f.): "Bruce preached to us about the cold facts of life: for example, if you want to become a swimmer, you cannot do so on dry land, you must enter the water".

wie sie Sparring mit hohem Kontakt in eine virtuelle Erfahrung verwandeln können. Um dies zu ermöglichen, haben sie zahlreiche Innovationen vorgenommen und sich dabei auf technologische Ressourcen gestützt, während sie gleichzeitig zu traditionellen Trainingsmethoden zurückkehrten: die Verwendung von Trainingspuppen, das Üben bestehender Formen und die Entwicklung neuer Formen.

In diesem Aufsatz reflektiere ich diese Veränderungen, indem ich zu meiner früheren Arbeit (2019) über Risiko, Verletzlichkeit, Scheitern und Spiel im Kampfsporttraining zurückkehre. Darüber hinaus stütze ich mich auf Theorien der Langsamkeit (Osbaldiston 2013, Berg & Seeber 2016, Popan 2019), um über die Veränderungen im Kampfsporttraining in diesem Kontext zu reflektieren und wie die Anpassung an diese Veränderungen es uns ermöglichen könnte, gesünder zu leben, selbst wenn wir die offensichtlichen Verluste bewältigen, die mit der Abwesenheit von Präsenztraining einhergehen.

## REFLECTIONS ON TRAINING ALONE... AND TOGETHER: MARTIAL ARTS IN A TIME OF PANDEMIC

As a student of jeet kune do, the martial art created by Bruce Lee, my introduction to serious, sustained training came through contact sparring. Indeed, when first approached to contribute to this collection, I intended to write about the phenomenology of sparring and its relationship to experiences of phenomenological transcendence,<sup>2</sup> accomplishment, the flow state,<sup>3</sup> and, hence, potential empowerment. My goal was to revisit thoughts I had previously expressed (2019) regarding the potential for being in relation<sup>4</sup> that emerges from the teaching and learning-based experience (Schorn 2009) that constitutes consensual fighting.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, my goal had been to address such considerations through attention to high contact, high intensity sparring, looking at its risks alongside its potential benefits.

The COVID-19 pandemic, which started in 2020, changed that plan.<sup>6</sup> During COVID quarantines, I, like many martial artists, spent long stretches of time training alone, with the support only of remote instructors and classmates. Also similar to other practitioners, I sustained core elements of the training while sorely missing the components that make martial arts what they are: contact with other humans, contact that is collaborative, contestatory, and competitive, sometimes all at once. It seemed impossible to capture the raw immediacy of fighting when its practice was so distant to me.

In Los Angeles, where I write this, we began a return to normalcy in 2021 after close to fifteen months of quarantine, including a particularly devastating stretch when covid cases overwhelmed

<sup>2</sup>I use the term transcendence here in the phenomenological sense and as articulated in the work of Iris Marion Young (1980), Greg Downey (2005, 2010), and Vivian Sobchack (2005).

<sup>3</sup>I based my understanding of the flow state on Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi's (1990) theorization of the same.

<sup>4</sup>I draw the phrase being in relation from Foster (2019). My consideration of relationality derives from authors such as Erin Manning (2009, 2013) Derek McCormack (2013), and Anya Topolski (2015).

<sup>5</sup>Here I draw from Alex Channon and Christopher Matthews (see in: Carter et al., 2018: 2, 8, esp. 91ff.) in the distinction they draw between fighting and violence along the lines of consent. In doing so, I recognize that the phrase "consensual fighting" is redundant.

<sup>6</sup>[Editor's note]: The Corona pandemic/Covid-19 hit societies and humans worldwide and had serious effects on people's lives and/or with profound effects on the health of political and legal systems, public management, economies and societies (see: Dickinson et al. 2024; Grogan & Donald 2022). Different countries handled corona differently, with – for example – the United States – as home country of the author – where e.g. the Trump government with membership-withdrawal from the WHO and was mentioned a >chaos country< by some, whereby Germany – as the home country of the main editor – was seen as a >consensus country< by some, which organized in and with its *Länder* measures (see in: Grogan & Donald, 2022: 72ff., 289ff., 336ff.). The sector of sport (with the people organizing, providing or doing them on a small or big(er) – think, for example, of the Tokyo Olympic Games 2020/2021 –, on elite or personal level) – with martial arts/combat sports (s.a. in: Nauright & Zapp, 2020: 155f.) included – was also hit hard and challenged by the pandemic (see, for example, in: Bowman et al. 2021; Frawley & Schulenkorf 2023; Quintero et al. 2023).

our hospital system. Despite my re-entry into training with others, however, I found I couldn't simply write about sparring as though I hadn't spent over a year without it. Rather, this absence encouraged me to reflect on the benefits of contact-based martial arts training, alongside reflecting on what solo and virtual training offered and how we might carry forward from this point.

The martial arts sphere has, of course, seen multiple approaches to quarantine training, only some of which have the potential to teach equanimity. Some practitioners elected to keep training in person and in close contact with others to not lose their skills, risking serious illness and the possibility of spreading COVID to others. Conversely, others deemed it impossible to train through distanced martial arts training and have instead elected to practice training idioms that are not combat based in order to maintain their physical skills and attributes, such as the adoption of *ginastica natural* by Brazilian jiu jitsu practitioners. Some martial artists practiced drills in person but observed physical distance. Many martial artists availed themselves of virtual training to continue their regular classes and to participate in seminars that would have previously been hard to access. Some experimented with ways of retaining sparring skills through the virtual medium. Still others resorted to solo training through forms (stylized, structured movement), using training dummies, and adapting two-person drills to solo movement.

Having returned to contact-based training, it's worth reflecting on what solo training taught us, or had the potential to teach us. It's also worth reflecting on what contact-based training offers and what we missed when we trained without it. Putting these two lines of discussion together can raise questions regarding how to foster respectful, supportive training praxes. Here, I reflect on questions of being in relation, as expressed through live martial arts praxis, considering what martial arts shows us about how we interact with one another and how we could potentially be more mindful and more attentive to what we are living out in our interactions.

#### LEARNING TO SWIM BY JUMPING IN THE WATER: REFLECTIONS ON SPARRING

Bruce Lee famously said: "If you want to learn to swim, jump in the water." Lee's dictum – that choreographed sequences of martial arts movements bear little resemblance to what we do in a fight – has been taken to mean a variety of things: that learning forms is useless, that traditional training has no merit, and even that martial arts generally "don't work." When taken in the context of Lee's other reflections and of his lifelong practice of a range of martial arts, of course, this maxim suggests that we don't know how to apply a skill from the rehearsal of its basic movements. It yields the perfectly reasonable assumption that, if we want to fight effectively, we can only do so successfully by engaging in contestatory contact with the oppositional will of another human being. It suggests that fighting consists of more than movement vocabulary: timing, speed, strategy, tactics, an understanding of distance, and the ability to read an opponent's actions are all as important as kicks and strikes.

This aphorism appears in the context of Bruce Lee's history as a martial artist and a critic of existing martial training systems. It combines organically with Lee's other famous dictum – to take what is useful, leave what is useless, and make it [martial arts practice] your own – to suggest that sparring provides an opportunity to reflect on drills and other sequences of movement to figure out what we can make work, under particular circumstances, and what appears to have limited applicability. Indeed, Lee was famous for introducing full-contact sparring to arts that had previously foregone such practices. In doing so, he revolutionized martial arts training.

In addition, Lee's attention to the range of distances encountered in a fight led him to cross-training: training in different fight idioms and developing a multiplicity of skills, drawing from a range of systems to discover what works in sparring and deploying multiple skill sets to counter opponents with different capacities. This interest helped bring about a contemporary martial arts

world where practitioners' interests and abilities are eclectic rather than exclusive. Although some forms of hybrid training, such as vale tudo, predate Lee's intervention,<sup>7</sup> it is hard to imagine our current training milieu, where multi-modal fight gyms are normal, without Lee's influence.<sup>8</sup>

Lee took the opportunities of his historical moment: a time of accelerating global travel and an accompanying surge in the circulation of ideas and training methods; a rise in popularity of Asian martial arts in the Global North, especially in the US<sup>9</sup> and the visibility of highly technical approaches to combat sport such as that epitomized by boxer Muhammad Ali.<sup>10</sup> The restrictions,

<sup>7</sup>For an extended consideration of vale tudo, see Downey (2014) and Carius (2020).

<sup>8</sup>[Editor's note]: ,As for the modern MMA fighting as seen today in the US, it can be traced back to Brazil in the early 20th century and in particular the Gracie family. At the beginning of the 1900s, a judo master, Mitsuyo Maeda, went to Brazil in 1914 for further the work of the Japanese in the colony of Brazil. He met a Brazilian businessman, Gastao Gracie in Belem. In appreciation of the Brazilian businessman's help with business dealings, Maeda taught the skills of judo to his son, Carlos Gracie and his brother, Helio Gracie even though teaching judo to non-Japanese was forbidden at that time. Gracie brothers modified the judo, making it as practical as possible, and rely less on strength and more on leverage. At the beginning, it was hard for Helio to adopt those Judo techniques due to his small stature [...]. In 1920s, with Helio's continuous improvement on jiu-jitsu, Carlos attempted to promote Jiu-jitsu by offering a challenge allowing any man using any martial art request a fight. They named those matches as ,vale tudo', which means, ,anything goes' in Portuguese. Because of Helio's high winning rate in those ,no holds barred' matches, the Gracie brothers enjoyed a widespread reputation in Brazil [...].

Until 1950s, vale tudo became well known in Brazil due to a television show in Rio called ,Heroes of the Ring'. Gracie family was one of the founders and hosted the show. Fighters participated in the ,style-versus-style' bouts, including two members from Gracie family, Carlson Gracie and Carley Gracie. However, due to the rules of the vale tudo, one fighter did not submit even though he was caught by his opponent in an armbar, and his arm was broken. Therefore, the show was cancelled and replaced by a wrestling game show. From then on, vale tudo existed as a subculture in south and north region of Brazil [...].

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Bruce Lee developed jeet kune do in the US, which was a mixed martial art based on Chinese kung fu, boxing, muay thai, wrestling and other types of combats. Bruce Lee's philosophies on jeet kune do, emphasizing the importance of learning advantages from different types of martial arts, were considered as a significant influence on the modern MMA [...]. 'The best fighter is not a boxer, karate or judo man', Lee once said. 'The best fighter is someone who can adapt to any style. He kicks too good for a boxer, throws too good for a karate man, and punches too good for a judo man.' Lee's description ultimately became the sport of MMA. Dana White, the president of Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC), called Bruce Lee as 'the father of modern MMA' (Li & Nabors in: Nauright & Zipp, 2020: 128f.; [sic!]).

<sup>9</sup>The global circulation of Asian martial arts has a complex history. For instance, Maryam Aziz (2021) illustrates that the popularity of Asian martial arts among the Black Panther Party was a result of the efforts of Black servicemen stationed in East Asia, who trained with Asian martial arts practitioners.

[Editor's note]: The history of how (Chinese) martial arts in the US were used by or contributed to different groups is a complicated issue. In addition to O'Shea's example with regard to the group of Black Panther People, Zhang gives the following clarification for Chinese Americans, where martial arts or – more precisely – kungfu movie stars are mentioned: "In the current complex world, Chinese Americans have constructed their own cultural identity through syncretic practice of folklore. Chinese American folkloric identity is beyond the racial/ethnic categorization of 'Chinese' but is based on the shared folklore that is being continued by all who practice it. This is a new culture, but not a simple combination of 'Chinese' and 'American' cultures. The creativity and continuity of this third culture lies in the choice of the coming new generations [...]. The Chinese American folk group has undergone the stereotypes like gold miner, coolies, laundry men, railroad workers, restaurant owners, engineers and Chinatown/enclave and has been portrayed as China Maid, Fu Manchu and Charlie Chan. Nowadays, mixed images of kungfu movie stars (from Bruce Lee, to Jackie Chan, to Jet Li), athletic stars (from Yao Ming to Jeremy Lin) and score-driven Tiger Mom, along with political participants (e.g. Congressmen and Congresswomen), are reshaping the 'model minority' stereotype imposed upon the Chinese Americans. From everyday practices to the change of mentality, Chinese Americans have taken root and become integral to the American society and culture with their distinctive culture as a third culture" (Zhang in: Sahoo, 2023: 139).

<sup>10</sup>[Editor's note]: ,Ali not only fought some of the most memorable battles in the ring against Sonny Liston, Joe Frazier, and George Foreman; but took on the United States government as well. Ali contended that his Black Muslim religion forbid his participation in the Vietnam War, for which his title was revoked, as he fought only in the courts for nearly four years. Ali eventually won on both counts, forcing the government to honor his constitutional rights of freedom of speech and freedom of religion, and regaining his heavyweight championship in a series of international fights that made him a global icon for Muslims around the world and African nations engaged in their own struggles for independence. Ali's ascendance also marked the rise of not only black, but Hispanic and Asian boxers across all

shut downs, and gradual, uneven, and sometimes temporary re-openings of COVID quarantines – provided opportunities that were less exciting and dynamic and less based in risk taking and thrill generation. The potential source of information in the period of quarantine came from its ability to turn our attention away from the dynamic and the spectacular and toward the measured and sustained.

As valuable as creative, dynamic approaches to martial arts training can be, they have the potential to include within it traces of a capitalist and even neoliberal approaches to knowledge acquisition and sharing. There is a risk, in training of any kind, that knowledge can become a product rather than an ongoing process. Knowledge can be consumed passively, as in much conventional scholastic education, or it can create the desire for ever more stimulus and input, as is sometimes the case in martial arts training and other forms of risk play. There is always more: more drills, more techniques, more seminars, more training camps, and more training videos. It can be difficult to identify the difference between a thirst for knowledge and a dependency upon its accumulation. Risk play can come to seem like a value in its own right; because of its exhilarating nature it can seem like it accomplishes something in the world beyond itself. There may, then, be benefits to a more sustained approached to training, to approaches that focus on doing more with less. I lay out some thoughts on a less acquisitive approach to training in the next section.

## REFLECTIONS ON TRAINING ALONE

Bruce Lee was a far more accomplished martial artist than I will ever be.<sup>11</sup> I thus recognize that Lee's expertise in matters of physical accomplishment supersedes mine and it is with a degree of trepidation that I put forward these considerations. Nonetheless, I have one area of expertise that, to the extent of my knowledge, Lee did not have. Teaching swimming was my first job. Long before I pursued qualifications in self-defense and martial arts, getting qualified as a swim instructor and water safety instructor was a driving force in my life. From this, I learned something important: to swim effectively, we do, indeed, need to jump in the water. But we don't only learn swimming by jumping in the water. In fact, jumping in the water prematurely can be counterproductive. We can learn a fair amount of swimming by practicing first on dry land and then in shallow water.<sup>12</sup> We learn the basic arm movements, for instance, out of the water. If we're afraid, we overcome our fear by standing in the shallow end of the pool and dunking our faces in the water. We can hold onto the side of the pool to learn to kick effectively. We can use kickboards to emphasize our legwork and pull buoys to focus on arm strokes. Swimming in the relatively controlled conditions of a swimming pool can be training for the more unpredictable situation found in natural bodies of water.

Of course, the goal of this training isn't to stay in the shallow end of the pool and isn't to stand at its edge practicing the timing of our arm and head movement. The goal is to swim with confidence in the deep end or in a lake, river, or ocean with confidence. In this sense, Lee was absolutely correct.

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weight classes.'(Gems in: Nauright & Zipp, 2020: 123).

<sup>11</sup>[Editor's note]: Chiecko (in: Sahoo, 2023: 380ff, esp. 382) describes Bruce Lee in her chapter on 'Contemporary Film Culture and Convergence' as a 'legendary martial artist' or 'as a formative revolutionary diasporic/transnational cultural icon with appeal, impact, and engagement across racial communities' and refers to the work(s) of filmmaker Bao Nguyen in the context of #BlackLivesMatters & Covid, where she highlights the documentary *Be Water* (2020), among others.

<sup>12</sup>[Editor's note]: Karst & Zipp (in: Nauright & Zipp, 2020: 343ff., esp. 346) stating in their chapter on 'Swimming and diving' with regard to training that 'there have been numerous developments in stokes, kicks, techniques. Training includes arduous hours of pool time increasing lung capacity, muscle memory and endurance. Robots are now used to replicate a swimmer's techniques and help them refine movements. The last half of 1900s and the first decades the 2000s have seen advancements in nutrition, the development of recovery techniques through sleep and **dryland exercises** and techniques. The use of biometrics, injury prevention and coaching techniques have helped the sport' [emphasize added].

But, if we follow through on Lee's analogy, this also suggest we may have much to learn from non-contact training. That is, much of what constitutes solo practice – forms and isolated movement practice – aligns with the dry-land practice of Lee's analogy. What Lee critiqued about traditional training – an insufficient emphasis on the live, experimental conditions of sparring – does not override the benefits of other aspects of conventional training methods. There's a reason why traditional martial arts emphasize forms, and modern ones deploy shadow boxing. Solo training, for example, can clarify the execution of movement, making it far more precise than movement enacted in the heat of a live encounter. Solo training relies on imagination, training the mind's eye in preparation for training the physical eye. It allows us to compile potential responses without the fear of a first headed toward our face. Solo training can build attributes – speed, strength, flexibility, coordination – that we can then apply to live encounters.

Perhaps the insight here lies in another oft-quoted phrase of Bruce Lee's: 'knowing is not enough, we must apply.' On the one hand, this phrase aligns with his remark about jumping in the water: only by scrutinizing techniques through live training will we understand their effectiveness. On the other hand, it also extends to the long moment of quarantine that deprived us of live training. What did we learn from this situation that could be applied to martial arts training? What training habits did we developed that are helpful, even when we have the option to work with others?

One possibility may lie in the embrace of slow training. By slow, I refer not to a reduced pace of movement but rather to a more leisurely approach to knowledge acquisition. As theorizations of the slow have suggested (Osbaldiston 2013, Kunst 2015, Berg & Seeber 2016, Popan 2019) deliberate action operates in opposition to the capitalist need for expansion. An ethos of slowness can provide opportunities for inquiry and exploration. A slow process of knowledge acquisition doesn't necessarily demand sustained movement: it can support fast-paced and even aggressive action. But it can provide space for reflection, allowing, for instance, opportunities to manage the emotions that arise from hard-contact interaction and to reflect on potential strategies and tactics that could enhance effectiveness.

## REFLECTIONS ON RELATIONALITY AND MARTIAL ARTS

Forms of physical play such as martial arts can, if we're reflective, offer us models for ways to live beyond what we see in front of us. Physical practices can provide participants with opportunities to fail safely while recognizing that failure is inherently painful; they can teach us about our physical, emotional, and intellectual strengths, while also encouraging us to recognize our own vulnerability and that of others. Physical play can teach us to disagree with respect, to lose with dignity, and to win with grace.

Physical play does not do this automatically. Martial arts can encourage respect and kindness, or they encourage scrappers to try out their skills 'for real.' Team sports such as American football can develop camaraderie or they can foster disrespect and aggression, especially toward those beyond the team. International football (soccer) can be an opportunity for violence or a mode of conflict resolution.<sup>13</sup>

Martial arts can simply be a place for people to blow off steam. Worse, it can be used for hiding in plain sight violence. As we've seen, martial arts can become a site of neoliberal acquisitiveness. It can become a site where speed not of movement but of consumption and production accelerates. Or it can be a site where we slow down the pace of our lives, even as we learn to execute movement crisply.

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<sup>13</sup>[Editor's note]: On martial arts, team sports like American football or International/Association football (soccer) [as global(ized) sport(s)], s.a. in: Nauright & Zipp (2020: 5ff., esp. 7ff. & 18ff., 115ff., esp. 155ff.).

The crucial differences are structural; they lie within the training practices themselves. They pertain to how we move in relation to those we share space with. It pertains to when we move at speed and when we decelerate to give ourselves or a training partner time to synthesize what we're learning. It applies to when we strike with something resembling full force and when we move with less power but consistent intention to allow a training partner to grasp what needs to be learned. The difference also lies in how these practices are framed: what codes of respect are enacted, how is consent established, and what opportunities for reflection exist. These questions are, then, choreographic in a broad sense. (Foster 1995, 2010, 2019, DeFrantz & Rothfield 2016, Rothfield 2020). They pertain to the codes and conventions of the training space, how people move, with whom, and in what kinds of ways.

Martial arts, in short, can teach us about ways of relating to one another. They can teach us to treat an opponent as an enemy or they can teach us to disagree with respect. They can model how to be attentive to the skill and comfort level of another person or they can encourage us to overwhelm others with our will. They can provide means of communicating effectively and responsively or they can encourage us to make assumptions about what others agree to based on interpretations of their behavior. The differences between what martial arts can do – the ways in which martial arts can cultivate individual and social benefits – and the ways in which they fail to live out their beneficial potential arise from the specifics of the practice. Such considerations call out for the broadly choreographic analysis that critical dance studies scholars have applied to non-dance praxes.

Martial arts studios, like other sites of physical play, can contribute to individual, social, and collective healing. But if they do so depends on the circumstances of engagement. How they do so varies. They can be places of solace, sites where the old normal is unchanged. They can be places where participants vent frustrations. Or they can be places where we imagine new realities, in which respectful exchange, consent, reflection, and accomplishment without mastery over others can be lived out. They won't do so automatically. It is therefore worth reflecting on, and making explicit, what relationships we wish to build through martial arts praxis and the specifics of how we move in space, alongside and in interaction with one another.

Martial arts, as practices that manage and navigate tension, have a potential role to play in helping us not only readjust to ordinary life but also to imagine what we want that life to look like. Whether they do so successfully depends on the specifics of their practice: how training is organized, what, specifically, it consists of, and how we relate to each other, on that mat and off. Whether martial art practices help or hinder as we build a new normal is up to us.

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