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# Eastern Martial Arts and the Cultivation of Persuasive Power

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EASTERN MARTIAL ARTS AND  
THE CULTIVATION OF PERSUASIVE POWER

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Clemson University

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of the Requirements for the Degree  
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by  
Kevin Randall Cantey  
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## **Abstract**

Martial arts, which incorporate Eastern philosophical and cultural perspectives, enhance rhetorical skill along with self-defense mastery. Furthermore, Western styled rhetorical movements within workplaces can benefit from the integration of Eastern self-cultivation approaches, specifically Taoism and Zen. Eastern martial arts training grounded in Zen and Taoist precepts, such as the interdependence of seeming opposites, the persuasive power of restraint and humility, and the benefit of applying pathos as a primary rhetorical movement, increases self-knowledge. Through dedicated practice grounded in mutual respect and an openness to challenge physical and mental limitations, the life artist emerges by simultaneously obtaining self-defense ability and virtuous wisdom. Re-energized with persuasive energies that transcend conventional Western communicative means, the artist lessens their need to fight, argue, or dominate. Additionally, by cultivating traits such as patience, compassion, steadiness and self-control during group martial arts classes, the student continues to apply the lessons of the training studio to daily life, armed with a clear and focused mind and equipped to overcome communication challenges in the workplace peacefully.

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## **Chapter One: Eastern Martial Arts and Rhetorical Artistry**

### **Communicative Adversity**

In daily life, constraints and opportunities are in constant flux. We cannot freeze time and rationally confront most problems; rather our responses depend on instinctual intuitive adaptation to others' physical and mental activities, the random forces of nature, and the effects of machine technology. Countless influential movements take place beyond rational explanation and classification, so why not cultivate abstract ways of interpretation and expression. By realizing that approaches to the challenges of daily life are infinite and by dedicating time and energy to integrating ways of expression less common to customary Western standards, we can grow as influential communicators and socially conscious beings to become "life artists" (Hall, 1976; McPhail, 1996; Morgan, 1992, p. 25-6).

All we have to do is look at some miserable faces in a busy public square to realize that our strategies are failing us. Many of our fellow citizens are suffering because they bury their internal energy and cannot alter their depressed circumstances by external means. Often persons, disconnected by a high sense of incompleteness and confusion, cannot discover a logical pathway to transcend these feelings. Their anguish that remains within the cracks of an illusionary "good life" hinders society, even as we push the problem out of our conscious minds (Waterfield, 1994, p. 92). However, whether conscious of it or not, we are influenced by our encounters, and that includes our interactions within close-knit groups, as well as forces that engage us more subtly. Occidental preoccupation with putting things in their proper classification and standing

outside and pointing our fingers at problems that are “not our fault” is a byproduct of too much speculation and too little self-cultivation. Especially in workplaces, strict conventions often accentuate feelings of hopelessness and powerlessness (Hall, 1976).

Professional and personal pursuits are mutually dependent. The individual wants to feel significant and assert their individuality, but to achieve rank and notoriety they squeeze themselves into a misshapen mold. Moreover, personal instinct intersects with the deflecting and approving forces within an organization. Deflecting forces include discourteous or harsh treatment from associates, rejection of innovative ideas for improving productivity from managers, or a general negative attitude from associates concerning integrating personal style into the organizational ethos. A kind of dance emerges as interwoven forces act upon the shuffling communicator. Unable to scrutinize every proper reactionary measure to these influences, the person has to manage their energy.

Managing life’s rhetorical challenges is life artistry. It requires a sense of flowing and calm adaptation. Furthermore, life artistry harnesses the power of pathos, or emotional appeal, as the ability to influence others cannot stand solely on having an intimidating reputation or a strong technical background. Without pathos as a composed rhetorical energy, an over-stimulated nervous system overloads and begins to break down. In addition, although convoluted work environments can be virtually impossible to navigate within the haze of personal and organizational needs, they are often harshly regulated (Debs, 1993; Miller, 1989; Pearsol, 1987). It is no wonder that so many people crave something more.

## **Taoist and Zen Alternatives**

Organizational communities can benefit by integrating Eastern epistemological approaches with cross-culturally developed martial arts traditions that promote self-cultivation and social accountability. This includes engaging in physical and mental training as a path to acquiring self-knowledge and exploring non-dualistic philosophies integrated within Eastern self-defense traditions. Particularly, through Taoist and Zen perspectives that dissolve the limits of logic and reify the immense power of emptiness, simplicity, and nothingness, persons can cultivate inner calm and confidence. In the vein of life artistry, the religious connotations of Taoism and Zen are not included in the following chapters. However, these philosophies when viewed as ways of navigating daily life, afford key tenets that ground martial artistry as training for life artistry (Fischer, 1984; Little, 1996; McPhail, 1996).

Corresponding to the principle found within Zen and Taoism, yin-yang, an ancient Eastern principle holding that contradictory objects and ideas are paradoxically interdependent, and that perception is grounded equally between what something appears to be and what something appears not to be; there is a reciprocal relationship between Eastern and Western communication styles (Shanahan & Wang, 1996). In seeing them as interdependent parts of an undivided whole, innovative ways to engage audiences are uncovered. Correspondingly, communicators can resolve difficult problems by enacting unconventional applications of humor and mysteriousness to disarm and empower.

Bruce Lee stated, “There are good points in Oriental culture; there are good points in Occidental culture...Oriental culture and Occidental cultures are not mutually

exclusive, but mutually dependent, neither would be remarkable without the other” (qtd. by Little, 1996, p. xxvii). Before his premature death, Lee would combine elements of Eastern and Western communication, including Zen and Taoism, with martial arts to create a new martial arts’ pedagogy for unmasking the illusion of rhetorical boundaries. Lee studied Eastern and Western philosophy intensely as a student at Washington University and was not only a skilled communicator but also a talented writer and illustrator. His incorporation of Zen and Taoists principles helped Eastern martial arts gain a solid foothold in America (Lee, 1975; Little 1996).

Taoism follows the *tao*, “the path” and maintains an interdependence of nature and humankind. Zen, or “meditation”, requires that everything flow as an expression of the whole person and that people accept the challenge of continually improving themselves through a transcendence of traditional conventions. Zen and Taoism embrace relativism as essential to calmly doing, not doing, thinking, not thinking, and cultivating life artistry through steady cultivation of wisdom (Shanahan & Wang, 1996, pp.182-3, 252-4). Furthermore, in Zen and Taoism, personal satisfaction cannot come from societal approval. Societal approval is a byproduct of the power of self-cultivating, socially conscious, rhetorically proficient life artists drawing others toward them (Suzuki, 1964).

Zen and Taoism share another obscure concept, *mushin* (Japanese for no-mindedness). *Mushin* requires an emptying of preoccupations and fears that can stifle creativity and spontaneous adjustment to people and environments. It does not mean that a martial artists or workplace professional does not use their emotional and rational faculties; rather, it is a striving for effortless adaptation that avoids being centered on

winning, dominating, or satisfying neurotic fears concerning failure (Little, 1996; McPhail, 1996).

Another Taoists term, *wu wei* (Chinese for not doing), requires people to find harmony and balance within the natural world and to avoid extreme behaviors that cause unnecessary suffering. The paradox of doing by avoiding action unites the rhetorical benefits of achieving martial arts mastery in order to avoid causing injury, a mastery of will to ensure virtuous behavior when interacting with people and non-human elements. *Wu wei* requires ethical judgment and cultivates energies that allow unforced wisdom to govern the movements and non-movements of life artists in order to unleash the unifying energies of compassion (pathos) and mutual respect (Oliver, 1961; Shanahan & Wang, 1996).

Zen and Taoism provide a path to liberation from the limitations of predictable conformity and point to other ways of managing people. Taoism and Zen's unconventional approaches can assist workplace managers to include physical and mental cultivation as part of standard company policy. Furthermore, organizations can apply them to help accommodate the infinite forms of expression that their members use to navigate the challenges a workplace demands. Eastern philosophical applications for broadening Western communication styles are boundless. Also, the earliest Eastern martial arts were heavily grounded in Zen and Taoism, and later offshoots such as Karate, Kung-fu, Ju-jitsu, Tai chi, and many others adopted the core tenets of taming the ego, respecting nature, avoiding unnecessary aggression, and appreciating benefits of respectful rhetorical exchanges. Thus, Eastern philosophies guiding martial arts as rhetorical artistic alternatives are centered on Taoism and Zen for the purpose of

supporting the implementation of new strategies for the developing rhetorical artist (Kauz, 2005).

Esoteric Eastern martial arts and associated philosophies can be significant sources of inspiration to what many people find to be an exhausted, logic-weary West. Since ancient times, war adversaries poised against Western territorial armies, goods traders, and mystics from the East have influenced Westerners by combining astounding awareness, respect for nature, and a meditative approach to challenging situations. These paths are still available to us, but it requires some effort to access them. Specifically, martial arts training based on Eastern ways of knowing provide cultivating forces that enhance our ability to interact with others and boost our tolerance for uncomfortable situations (Lee, 1975; Kauz, 2005).

For any sincere martial artists, characteristics such as intuitiveness, gentleness, abundant energy, emotional and physical flexibility, plus steadiness, are cultivated. These noble traits likewise enhance communicative approaches to rhetorical challenges outside the *dojo* (Japanese for martial arts training facility) (Little, 1996 ; Perkins, 1999). Furthermore, overcoming obstacles in our daily lives goes beyond navigating the workplace paradigm. This paradigm is the accepted practices and thinking standards that govern how people conduct themselves on the job and how associates and managers counter react to these movements. It processes mentally and physically somewhere in between the official rules of an employee handbook and the actual ways of conducting personal and public business within day-to-day operations. The challenges of organizational paradigms, suppressing threats of bodily harm, and confronting verbal and nonverbal psychological attacks, all require a clear mind, focused methodology, mental

discipline, physical self-control, and the ability to exhibit a confident and humble demeanor concomitantly (Kauz, 2005; Tomio, 1994).

### **Energizing Persuasive Power**

Through martial arts grounded in Eastern philosophy that stresses the interdependence of humans to each other and nature, and the belief that by acquiring great skill in fighting, enhancing endurance, and developing a high level of tolerance for inconvenience or turmoil, the opposite of what most people assume occurs. The martial artist trains diligently to avoid violence and unnecessary aggression. Thus, incidences of conflict, dissatisfaction, and violence diminish. Furthermore, as a dynamic social practice, martial arts classes foster an empowered group dynamic based on empathy and encouragement, thus, persons' feelings of powerlessness potentially dissolve into a trail of inconsequential vapor (Morgan, 1992; Tomio, 1994).

Today, in the interconnected world driven by the whims of economic expedience, persuasive movement or "rhetoric" often possesses an unconstructive connotation, as its users supposedly attack and defend without regard for harmful consequences. In other instances, rhetoric is associated with a lack of clear thought or direction by persons attempting to influence stakeholders (Carpenter, 1999, p.7). However, ethically grounded rhetoric, a force for unification, is a serious endeavor that requires a range of skill sets that combine subjective experience and objective reasoning. To develop more fully the unifying aspects of rhetoric, communicators need to nurture esoteric persuasive abilities that transcend conventional analysis, such as intuition, spontaneity, humor, confidence, silence, humility, and wisdom (Combs, 2005; Glenn, 2004; Miller, 1989).

Competing and complementary forces such as reason and discovery, creative artistry and poetry, or passiveness and aggressiveness have shaped civilizations globally. Eastern or Western communicative influences can be destructive weapons just as hands and feet can pummel another person into submission. However, communicative events, even formless or neutral movements, such as not speaking or not moving, can be conduits that allow opportunities to apply wisdom to thoughts and actions in order to enhance relationships and foster social responsibility (Glenn, 2004).

Verbal wrangling and defensive posturing have been associated with human communicative interaction since prehistoric times. Since the days of the cave dweller, humankind strove to overcome physical and mental hardships within social clusters. Communication development is a byproduct of these yearnings. Remnants of transcendent movements that guided human development exist as artifacts handed down to us in fragmented orally transmitted myths and fables and fashioned works of art. In addition, tangible objects, weapons, tools, bones, provide mysterious links to human behaviors that likewise are oftentimes unexplainable in contemporary terms based on logic and scientific reason. Within the mysteriousness, it seems that humankind has always sought to harmonize spiritual and physical requirements (Wilkins, 1994; Walford, 2002).

Facing astounding influences of nature, such as the calming effects of singing birds and insects, amazing star-filled nights, and disquieting influences such as deadly floods and wildfires, humans linked survival to their emotional states. By seeking a remedy to problems like hunger or cold, they became the first scientists. Likewise, born poetically inclined, and seeking to understand their existence within the perils and pains

of primitive living, they identified with the beautiful and dangerous forces of the natural world. So-called primitives, or savages, sought understanding from the mysterious forces dynamically altering their lives from states of calm to panic or fear. Ancients did what came naturally; they expressed themselves through a unification of mind and body. Artistic expression and persuasive communication were once indistinguishable, united forces (Wilkins,1994; Walford, 2002).

Hall (1976) conveys a sense of loss and sadness when contemplating Western societal effects on inhibiting creativity in communication. He insists, “Western man uses only a fraction of his mental capacities; there are many different and legitimate ways of thinking; we in the West value one of the ways above all others – the one we call “logic,” a linear system that has been with us since Socrates” (Hall, 1976, p. 9). Hall further considers looking for new strategies for resolving “aggressive situations” with “situational needs” which are regulated through civil norms (Hall, 1976, p. 119). Martial arts can bring Western communicators new innovative strategies to reclaim our cross-cultural origins. When grounded in Eastern philosophy that stresses the interdependence of humans to each other and nature, martial arts become vitalizing life arts. Acquiring skill in self-defense requires enhancing bodily and mental endurance not just for combat, but also, more importantly, for peaceful interaction (Carridine, 1991).

Bitzer (1968) focuses on discourse as a method of intentionally asserting individual expression to influence other parties through traditional oral communication. His logic-based interpretation of “rhetorical situations” should be expanded to include what he calls non-rhetorical “...ethical, dangerous, or embarrassing situations” (Bitzer, 1968, p. 300). Bitzer (1968) used a traditionally Western oriented description to explain

the influential nature of verifiable persuasive action. However, by viewing virtually any social interaction as a momentous communicative event, we can understand that Bitzer's definition of his "rhetorical situation" is insufficient, due to its dependence upon observable evidence and a measuring process (1968, p. 301). Situations often comprise non-conventional, even illogical persuasive movements. In this light, many postmodern and dialogically oriented Western thinkers have reaffirmed the Eastern notion that relativity is a fundamental element of communication within social spheres (Bizzell, 1986).

McPhail links the liberating nature of Eastern Zen to communicative freedom. He points this out with Foucault's words, "When language arrives at its own edge, what it finds is not the positivity that contradicts it, but the void that will efface it" (McPhail, 1996, p. 111). Burke alludes to the possible benefits of looking eastward for "transcending the common weighted thinking style" and finding inspiration by observing animals in the wild (Burke, 1984, p. 201). Burke considers "terministic screens" which correlate to narrow-minded mental processes that contribute to rigid ways of learning, behaving, and performing on the job (Bizzell & Herzog, 2001, p. 1343). By stepping outside conventional paradigms that strictly classify rhetorically based discourses, progressive rhetoric can parallel esoteric Eastern epistemologies of self-defense and spiritual cultivation through a willingness to question constricting vocational and pedagogical traditions.

*"It is absurd to hold that a man ought to be ashamed of being unable to defend himself with his limbs, but not of being unable to defend himself with speech and*

*reason...The art of rhetoric is the faculty of discovering in any particular case all available means of persuasion” (Aristotle, 2001, p. 181).*

During the fifth century BC, Plato, Aristotle, and Gorgias of ancient Greece and their contemporaries of the ancient East, Confucius, Buddha, and Lao Tzu, realized that motivating human beings through discourses could benefit or damage societies. Investigating their works, we can realize that there are many ways to cultivate practical knowledge alongside health and wisdom. Although the ancient Greeks laid out the foundational, rational view of the universe, they also touted intrinsic knowledge as a cultivating force for growth and discovery. Their spiritual, political, and sporting pursuits were inseparable, thus, we find correspondence to Eastern philosophy and the paradoxical linkages of fighting skill to negotiation prowess. Aristotle, who systematized persuasion as a discipline understood the value of intellectual exercise along with honing the body. Taking inspiration from the ancient masters like Aristotle, and applying martial arts training as preparation for rhetorical practice in daily living and working, we can expand accessible inventive ways of expression and persuasion. Westerners have the opportunity, no matter what age or athletic inclination, to reawaken the essence of their true natures (Aristotle, 1991; Hall, 1976; Hawhee 2002).

Martial arts are more than an expression of aggressive physical strength, quickness, flexibility or the illusion of superhuman abilities. Participation allows an individual to uncover physical and mental blocks that restrain a person from self-realization. How individuals express themselves through martial arts is a personal approach to the challenge of honorably interacting with others while overcoming physical

and psychological constraints. Similarly, in daily life individuals manage and adapt to complex communicative problems. In a workplace, classroom, gym or other environment, individuals reveal their personal approaches to accomplishing goals by overcoming obstacles and forming relationships (Katz S., 1992; Little, 1996; Ralston, 1989).

Martial arts styles as well as corporate paradigms should encourage the expression of persons' individuality. With Taoists and Zen grounding, all persons can progress as creative life artists, rather than growing stale by mirroring the accomplishments of those who pass on fixed knowledge (Morgan, 1992). Subsequently, audiences are more likely to interpret discourses and actions as honest expressions of persons' intentions. For example, if an individual responds to stress unpredictably and without a relaxed and clear attitude, uncertainty paralyzes them, not knowing when, or how to react, and constantly second guessing themselves. Alternatively, they may overreact and worsen their situation (Durbin, 2001; Lee, 1975).

In workplace scenarios, negative expressions such as “cut throat”, “getting the axe”, “beaten up”, “going postal”, and “lashing out” are used to describe merciless interactions, so it is not surprising that jobs are often compared to fighting and injury. Surprisingly, martial arts are well suited to helping foster a more cooperative and diplomatic workplace environment. By learning to use lethal, defensive force through repetitive training methods, a martial artist hones their spirit by linking mind and body and strives to cultivate patience along with a nonviolent temperament. The pursuit of self-defense mastery through discipline and determination builds self-knowledge as the student discovers their physical and mental limitations by learning to overcome them; and

the physical and mental interaction with fellow students and instructors enhances relationship development skills, which transmit to other aspects of life, especially work (Morgan, 1992; Morris, 1998).

Like many alternative ways of knowing throughout history, Easterners melded martial arts philosophies through innovation and progression. Buddidharma, who left his Indian homeland to spread his philosophy, integrated Buddhism with Chinese Taoists principles and believed in a transcendental approach to living. He taught his Chinese students to seek self-understanding and social harmony through meditation, but he also insisted on his students' mastery of physical coordination through rigorous daily exercise (Durbin, 2001). Unifying deep meditation with challenging physical movements continues to provide remarkable results for Westerners willing to transcend the traditional forms of self-cultivation. Similarly, individuals in confrontational workplace situations using this model as an opportunity for unification can achieve remarkable breakthroughs (Combs, 2005).

Combining martial art study with cross-cultural philosophical expansion enriches personal and professional lives. Through an analysis of the inter-dependent nature of seemingly opposing or disconnected approaches to transcending obstacles, in particular, workplace communicative challenges, we can be inspired to follow a similar path. In the following chapters, threads of integration bind martial power and creative power. And by examining these "powers" as honest manifestations of the artists' spirit, whether beginner, journeyman or master, we apply abstract and adventurous movements to rhetorical scenarios to subsequently support Eastern martial arts edification. Furthermore, these pursuits contribute to the field of professional communication by demonstrating the

importance of looking beyond the familiar for creative inspiration and communicative versatility (Carridine, 1991).

## **Chapter Two: Classic Greek Perspectives on Artful Movement**

### **Sophistic Flexing of the Forms**

*“Forgive me my dear friend (Phaedrus). You see, I (Socrates) am fond of learning. Now the country and the trees won’t teach me anything and the people in the city do” (Plato, 2001, p. 142).*

Between the fifth and fourth centuries B.C., Ancient Greece became an exceptional environment for the open exchange of ideas and opinions. Preferred meanings, structures and methodologies for staging influential discourses, particularly speaking and speech writing, underwent intense fluctuation, and gradually three ideologies emerged as the dominant forms of systematized discourse for Greeks, Platonic idealism, Aristotelian structure, and the sophistic relativism. Plato and Aristotle believed there were specific ways to go about obtaining and transferring knowledge. However, the sophists questioned universally grounded paradigms such as Platonism (Bizzell and Herzberg, 2001). They believed it vital to progress continually, the methods and styles for communicating with other people and experiencing the world. The sophists integrated physical training and rhetorical training as they realized that individuals and audiences benefited by drawing parallels to self-cultivation through sport and rhetorical engagement (Hawhee, 2004).

Plato believed that one everlasting supreme reality existed outside the control of people, and those who cultivated subjective learning to assist them in navigating their daily interactions and experiences were ignorant. For Plato, human suffering was a product of humankind's unwillingness to admit its static and limited intellect. Furthermore, Plato believed philosophical laziness caused needless argument and combat, since for him; societal ills were byproducts of delusionary approaches to self-cultivation. However, Aristotle, who systematized rhetoric as a discipline, believed that ignorance is not fated if the learner had adequate mental faculties, and the teacher applied ethical manipulation strategies based on logical thinking. His correct ways to determine when and how persuasive movements could be applied judiciously and ethically, although not as confining as Plato's unreachable perfection, were still too limiting for the sophists. For the sophists, persuasion was boundless and to confine it to the conventions of tradition was foolish (Poulakos & Poulakos, 1999).

The sophists in many ways paralleled Eastern practitioners of esoteric martial arts, especially the Samurai warriors of feudal Japan. Sophists were confident in their ways of living and communicating, they did not fear failure, and they, like the Samurai, were skilled with various persuasive weapons. The Samurai were expert fighters who like the Sophists, were hired to do a job and do it with conviction. Sophists and Samurai implemented communication systems that questioned the status quo, and stretched the definition of artful living and acceptable, normal expression. In addition, the both groups realized the value of combining movement with stillness. They would often use abstract methods to expand the limits of language. They continually remolded standard

conventions of physical and mental engagement to address audiences and adversaries (Poulakos, J., 1983; Morris, 1998).

It seems fitting to compare the words of Lao Tzu to the rhetorical approach of the sophists and Samurai:

*“It blunts the sharpest edges*

*Unties the knots*

*Softens the glare” (Lao Tzu, 1972, ch. 3)*

J. Poulakos penned his own definition describing the sophists’ philosophy toward persuasion in his essay “Toward a Sophistic Definition of Rhetoric”: “Rhetoric is the art which seeks to capture in opportune moments that which is appropriate and attempts to suggest that which is possible” (J. Poulakos, 1983, p. 36). Poulakos goes on to describe how the sophists used great insight in determining what to say, or *prepon* (the appropriate), that is speaking the correct words at the correct moment and when to say it or *kairos* (an opportune moment). Like a Samurai applying unforced seamless execution, a capable sophist used language expertise combined with intuitive talent to influence stakeholders (J. Poulakos, 1983). Gorgias, Isocrates, and other sophists were not the careless revolutionaries that many modern historians, basing their evidence on criticisms of foundational philosophers, depicted them; rather, they were multi-talented intellectuals and pioneers of artful, instinctive persuasion (J. & T. Poulakos 1999, Bizzell, 1986).

To realize how influential their unique communicative talents were, we can compare them to another movement, the Japanese Samurai, a warrior class immersed in

the esoteric philosophy of Zen Buddhism (a cross-cultural derivative of Chinese Taoism and Indian Buddhism). The Samurai had interesting similarities to the sophists. The multi-talented, intellectually inclined Japanese Samurai often used diplomacy to avoid conflict. A Samurai often settled disputes through artful persuasion. Their calm detached attitude combined with their combat abilities settled many conflicts before any violence was needed. A Samurai could unleash deadly force in the blink of an eye, but amazingly, they disarmed numerous adversaries indirectly with their calm detached mindset. This attitude was cultivated daily through intense physical training and mastery of the classic arts. For instance, composing exquisite poetry and playing complex music were customary artistic pursuits of a Samurai (Morgan,1992; Suino,1996).

Munenori a legend among Samurai never advocated mindless violence or unnecessary killing. Immersed in Zen, he wrote, “notice situations and act accordingly...the art of war is to kill evil, not people “( Cleary, 2005, p. 65- 8). For Munenori, you should not completely forget about a conscious approach, but the right behavior should flow naturally from extreme calm combined with alertness. However, sometimes combat was inevitable, and like sophistic rhetorical tactics against idealism and formal logic, the art of fighting required creativity. If threatened, a Samurai could unleash deadly force in the blink of an eye but they often used diplomacy to avoid fighting. Since a duel was a deadly event, a Samurai often settled disputes through artful persuasion. Similar to sophistry, artful persuasion could the subtle air of calm detached, yet impenetrable confidence. In addition, at times adversaries were disarmed by the uncanny ability of a fierce Samurai to draw, recite exquisite poetry or play lovely music (Suino, 1996).



(Figure 1) Miyamoto Musashi, *Self-portrait*, (from <http://www.answers.com>).  
Musashi's work conveys a sense of calm combined with assertiveness.



(Figure 2) *Kingfisher Perched on a Withered Branch*, by Musashi) Source:  
from <http://www.answers.com>). Musashi was a multi-talented artist who  
admired natural environments and the animals that inhabited them.

For example, the most legendary of all Samaria duelists, Musashi, would use mind tricks to best many of his enemies. Musashi, not always the more powerful or skilled fighter, expanded his tools to include mental manipulation. He often manipulated emotions to anger opponents, distracting their focus in a fight to the death. His ways, although unconventional, became teaching tools for future martial artists. In one tale, facing a tenacious, stronger rival, Musashi bragged that he could trounce this opponent with only a rotting piece of lumber, even if his foe used two razor sharp steel swords (Morgan, 1992).

At the suggestion of Musashi, he and his duelist departed in separate small watercraft to a tiny island to fight without distraction from bystanders. On the journey, Musashi let his spongy weapon become sodden by holding it below the water's surface. In addition, Musashi was purposely not on time for the duel, thus, angering his opponent immensely. When the duel began, he dodged his enraged attacker's unbalanced overly aggressive slashes, and defeated his enemy with a mighty blow from his waterlogged bat (Morgan, 1992)

The sophists, much like the Samurai, believed they needed to be better educated and uniquely equipped to influence society well beyond the ability of average people. Sophists possessed uncanny ability to influence how knowledge and facts should be interpreted and in certain instances manipulated. In the case of manipulation, the sophists used an ability to analyze their audience and chose specific words, gestures, and analogies to alter a previously conceived notion or truth, or ultimately reverse a view entirely. They persuaded through logical argument and artful speaking, or from abstract

means. Like Musashi and his fellow Samurai, their methods and tactics were continually evolving (J. & T. Poulakos, 1999, Bizzell & Herzberg, 2001).

Generally, traditionally oriented scholars have determined that applications of influential words at the right time are observable occasions, identified and addressed by the speaker as conditional responses adjust continually during the course of dialectic debate or lecture (J. Poulakos, 1983). Nevertheless, since rhetoric can also involve physical disengagement and neutrality, we can apply the interactions of martial arts grounded in Eastern epistemologies to expand J. Poulakos' definition even further.

We compare the expertise in combining the *prepon* with *kairos* to a martial artist honing their timing and judgment in the dojo and applying self-control, open-mindedness, and confidence. A communicator can free an audience from a state of constrained opinion and push them beyond what they have preconditioned themselves to think is correct or just. Effective martial arts are always dependent of the ability to sense, or time the moves of opponents. In addition, the rhythm of the body is synchronized with the mind. The ultimate goal is gaining abilities to sense, without conscious pause, the moves and thinking of others. The best fighters integrate themselves within their opponents and the most influential communicators follow suite (Lee, 1975).

The sophistic work, *Dissoi Logoi*, presents an interdependence of contrary perspectives. The relativity of any given term or idea when approached from different contexts becomes unavoidable, since every person can only see an issue from a unique, situational frame. The *Dissoi Logoi* conveys that standpoints are mere words and human inventions, subject to further human innovation or detraction. In addition, the work shows how energetic debate within a non-static framework for making or deflecting claims is a

chance to be artful, even if it challenges some established pedagogies (Bizzell & Herzberg, 2001). As the Eastern movements of Taoism and Zen claim that the interdependence of opposites are unavoidable. Likewise, thoughtful responses to events are culturally bound; however, if you are aware of these confines, you can actively break from the restrictions of terminologies by not allowing “words” to dictate your daily life. For the sophists, the martial artists and other communicators, virtually anything you can imagine is potentially influential (Lee, 1975).

For the martial artists or rhetor, anything you can imagine can affect growth or decay of human relationships (Dao, 1999). With martial arts, we can also find new creative avenues to overcome problems. Depending on individual views concerning ethics, morals, and definitions of subjects, the *Dissoi Logoi* provides situational comparisons and contrasting explanations establishing that language and its interpretation are in constant flux. Furthermore, logical arguments combined with well-timed and skilled language combine rhythmically to influence decision-making on many levels of the conscience (Bizzell & Herzberg, 2001, Hawhee, 2002).

The *Dissoi Logoi* conveys the sophistic sense—that reality, truth and justice are words, so by their nature are human inventions subject to further innovation. Furthermore, society benefits from competitive debate and a non-static framework for making or deflecting claims. Sophists questioned societal rules and felt their ideals could inspire others to become innovative problem solvers (Poulakos & Poulakos, 1999). Martial arts can have the same effect. With *Dissoi Logoi*, the sophistic power of intertwining non-rational and rational applications with social processes of government and civics frees the spirits of the people, and thus, like the Eastern movements of Taoism

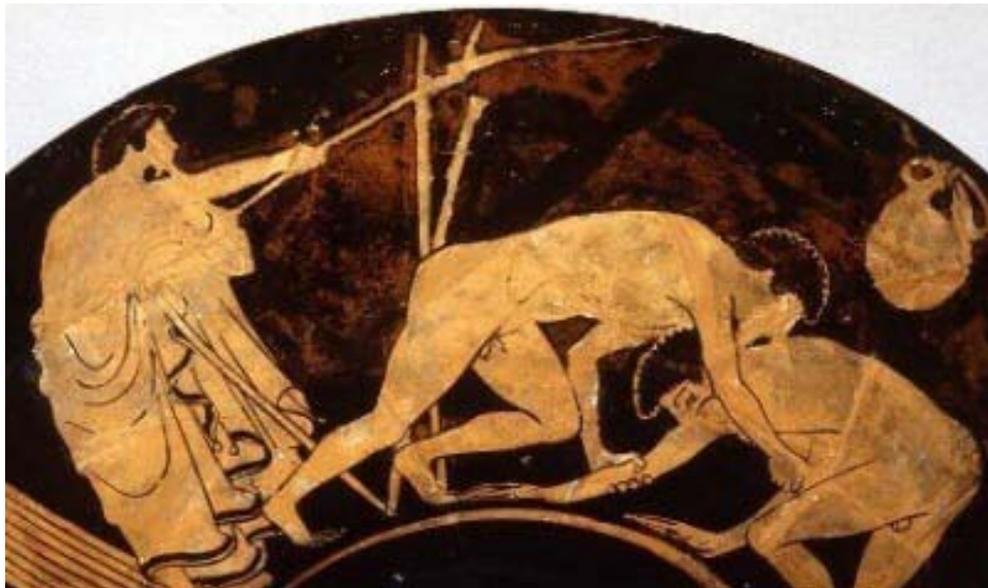
and Buddhism, it cultivates a natural, calm, less regimented, detached approach to daily life. Hence, like the Eastern martial artists' esoteric approach to life's challenges, sophists sought to seek a form of enlightenment within their own minds, one that did not require approval of their approaches to conflict from their rivals. Furthermore, the sophists were not always in a position of strength when beginning a rhetorical competition, but they were often able to achieve amazing results through creativity (Bizzell & Herzberg, 2001; Poulakos & Poulakos, 1999).

*“The softest things in the world overcome the hardest things in the world. Through this I know the advantage of taking no action” (Lao Tzu, 1972).*

The sophists often took unorthodox stances in their spirited arguments. Unlike Plato and Aristotle, they did not tend to focus on violations of codes or measure the normalcy of human conduct. Like esoteric martial artists, the sophists realized the weak could overcome the strong and the soft could outlast the rigid. In addition, interestingly, progressive approaches and innovations for cultivation of the body and mind together were based on intuitive knowledge combined with *kairos* (Bizzell & Herzberg, 2001, Hawhee, 2002; 2004). Like the Japanese dojo, the Greek's exercise and sports training facilities held tremendous significance for cultural development. Within these buildings, Sophists had access to thousands of impressionable minds. Sophists used great communication aptitude to interweave lessons on sport and competition to the trials of

daily life. They regularly mixed sport, competition, discipline, and artistic expression into their pedagogies (Hawhee, 2002; 2004).

Academic and athletic characteristics of mental sharpness and physical presence gave the young Grecian student a firm yet flexible grounding to empower possibilities. Likewise, today students and teachers can realize that appropriate behavior in classrooms requires intuitive wisdom. Pedagogies should not be officiated by dehumanizing standards that often provide narrow outlets for students to voice opinions and assert individuality. Athletes and martial arts students should be recognized for their unique perspectives and encouraged to relay their experiences to coworkers and classmates. Explanations endorsing the cultivation of timing, fortitude, and concentration might encourage others to pursue similar pursuits that balance the movements of the aspiring life artist (Hawhee, 2002; 2004).



(Figure 3) Ancient Greek Wrestlers (<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu>). It is evident that a judge or teacher is guiding the movements of the athletes.

*“When people see beauty, they think, “That’s beautiful”.*

*Thinking of something as beautiful makes you think other things are ugly.*

*Calling something “good” forces you to call some other things “evil.”*

*(Tsu, 1972, ch. 2).*

In *Encomium of Helen*, Gorgias instills a sense of mystery concerning the intentions of Helen of Troy. He creates new ways of approaching the loss of Helen that may not have previously occurred to his audiences by reviewing probable reasons to forgive her. Gorgias, “defender” of Helen, asks his audience to expand their definition of reality. Like a martial arts practitioner, Gorgias maneuvers his audience in a fashion that suits his solution, however the audience believes it has made-up its own mind independent of direct coercion (J. Poulakos, 1983). Similarly, the Taoists movement, *wu-wei*, goes undetected by audiences and provides opportunity for engaging similar strategies in the future (Oliver, 1961).

*“A leader is best when people barely know he exists,*

*when his work is done, his aim fulfilled,*

*they will say we did it ourselves” (Tsu, 1972, ch. 4).*

J. and T. Poulakos consider Gorgias’ belief in the transformative energetic capacity of persuasive discourse with his words, “ ‘speech is a powerful lord, which by means of the finest and most invisible body, effects the divinest works: it can stop fear

and banish grief and create joy and nurture pity' ” (Poulakos & Poulakos, 1999, p. 97). If available to him, Gorgias might have sought esoteric applications of Eastern Zen and Taoism to affect his audiences. Like many martial arts innovators, sophists used a moving discourse. Just as what we may perceive as troublesome situations are based too highly on the illusion that other people should act in accord with our system of values, thinking our choices are limited to Western conventions of competitiveness is similarly, a fantasy (Hall, 1976).

Gorgias honed negotiating talents as a foreign diplomat, and then cultivated professional oratory and speech writing expertise in Athens. Like his counterparts in the East, he connected mystical ideas with practical statements to move his audiences (Freeman, 2005). According to Gorgias, “ ‘ Sacred incantations sung with words are bearers of pleasure and banishers of pain, for, merging with opinion in the soul, the power of incantation is wont to beguile it and alter it by witchcraft’ ” (quoted in Poulakos & Poulakos, 1999, p. 97). As with speech or writing, attitude and intent gives the symbolic rhetor, martial artist, and life artist a vehicle to move the emotions of those they encounter (Burke, 1984; Morgan, 1992). Buddidharma told his students, “transcend the ordinary and experience sagehood...Enlightenment is instantaneous, why wait for white hair” (Huang, 1991, p.120). The multi-skilled sophists, masters of debate, became the voices of poetic power; however, they were also serious, active professionals deeply involved in politics (Bizzell and Herzberg, 2001).

Gorgias and other sophists made no apologies for choosing an unconventional “paid” career path. Their esoteric approach to language did not win approval from the idealists like Plato and Socrates; however, by exploring language arts as living arts they

influenced Greek society profoundly (McPhail, 1996). Similarly, students compensate martial arts instructors for their time and dedication to transferring knowledge. Bruce Lee made as much as \$300 dollars for individual martial arts lessons. Traditionalists chastised Lee for teaching secret wisdom to potential enemies and labeled him a traitor. Furthermore, there was little enthusiasm from his compatriots of China and Hong Kong after he decided to invent his own progressive martial art, *Jeet Kune-do*, based on various fighting styles, including American boxing (Lee, 1975; Little, 1996).

### **Counterbalancing the Forms**

Plato stated in *Gorgias*: “Rhetoric is not an art but a knack,” “a branch of flattery,” “the counterpart of cookery”; “there is no need for rhetoric to know the facts at all, for it has hit upon the same means of persuasion that enables to appear, in the eyes of the ignorant, to know more than those who really know” (Plato, 2001, p. 98). Plato’s quote separates dialectic movements toward truth and justice, from what he felt is sophistry’s associations to nonsense and carelessness. However, Eastern wisdom, like sophistry, helps free dependence on established truths from the confines of words. Today, we should look beyond organized language to supply us with inspirational models. (J. & T. Poulakos, 1999).

Aristotle, Plato, Socrates, and many of the most important Sophists trained in physical arts and military arts under sophisticated Greek pedagogies. Interestingly, Plato was an Olympic wrestler and Socrates served as a soldier (Levine, 1989). Therefore, understanding martial arts importance without doing them is challenging, But equally important to doing them, is encountering the philosophy behind them. To experience

martial arts in its best form, competition is diminished in the view of cooperation (Tomio, 1994). The “art” of martial arts is not about winning at competition; also, it is not just a diversion, although it helps to clear the mind from anxiety (Levine, 1989).

Like Eastern thinkers, the Greeks sorted out the elements of human interaction, and unpacked the limits of speaking and writing. In the days of Plato, Socrates, and Gorgias, law, athletics, academics, and body imagery were directly connected to divine power (the gods) in every aspect of Greek society. Plato grappled with the seeable with his inability as a mortal to know everything and he had some inter-cultural metaphysical and cosmological training through interactions with Babylonians, Hebrew, Persian and Egyptian thinkers (Katz, R. C., 1986; Levine, 1989). He concluded that a void would always exist between human and divine knowledge. He wanted to leave this void to the gods, but the sophists saw the void as an avenue for influential communication. When language fell short, Plato asserted that human beings could not grasp some concepts, thus he based rules on moral judgments of gifted thinkers like himself (Poulakos & Poulakos, 1999).

### **Harmony of Boundaries**

Plato was a paradox. He condemned the use of pathetic appeal on moving audiences, while being himself emotionally driven by grief and sadness after the execution of his mentor, Socrates, by his fellow Athenians. His complex legacy comes mostly from historical writing, a practice he criticized for its inability to express reality (Waterfield, 2002). In *Gorgias*, Plato ingeniously inserts his deceased *sifu* (Chinese for teacher), Socrates, as the central character to defend the value of dialectic argument and

accurate speaking. Socrates questions the ethical, moral effects of practical uses of rhetoric, and frustrates the fabricated character, Gorgias, by forcing him to consider sophistry's effects toward societal decay. It is interesting that the fostering of improper influence was the reason organized sophistic guilds executed Socrates. Plato accuses Gorgias of fostering injustice by teaching manipulative rhetoric to the unjust and unwise. To him, rhetoric as practiced by the sophists is a tainted immoral abuse of communicative skill; however as the dialogue unfolds Plato, unable to disengage himself from his interdependence to his opponent, cannot avoid using strategic rhetoric to buttress his points (Poulakos & Poulakos 1999).



(Figure 4) Ancient Greek Boxers, source: (<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu>). This figure is indicative of the popularity of boxing and the presence of trainers or judges guiding the movements.

In *Gorgias*, Plato compares the pedagogy of sophistry to pedagogies of boxing, since both transmit knowledge that may be used maliciously to injure others (Poulakos & Poulakos, 1999). In *Gorgias* Plato states, ““You (Gorgias) said that communities shouldn’t hold trainers responsible and banish them for what a boxer does with his boxing—that is, for any wrongs he commits—and by that same token it isn’t the teacher who should be blamed or banned if a rhetorician uses his rhetoric for immoral purposes, but the person who is actually using rhetoric wrongly or incorrectly”” (Gorgias, 1994, p. 26). He links the concept of proper living, proper instruction and the taming of emotion or ego for the student and teacher of physical and language skills.

Poulakos & Poulakos cite another sophist, Antiphon, to emphasize the interdependence of apparent opposites such as Plato and Gorgias, ““by nature we have the same constitution in all particulars, barbarians and Greeks. We have only the things which are natural and necessary to all mankind’ ” (Poulakos & Poulakos, 1999, p. 124). Contemporary audiences can understand that like rhetorical situations in Plato’s *Gorgias*, contextual discourse becomes symbolic, timeless alternative weapons against the struggles of the human spirit. These alternatives emerge materialize if we train hard and study rigorously the words of poets, the forms of artists, and the transcendent nature of inner cultivation to become masters of our behavior, which includes how we speak, write and move every single day.

We have to move outside *Gorgias* to understand more about Plato’s complex intellect. So we might say Plato and his followers were equally fettered by the confines of normal every day social rules, they just had different paths to finding transcendence than the sophists. In *Phaedrus*, Plato acknowledges that certain communications may involve

artful influence, but it should seek transcendence beyond selfish motives. He stressed responsibility and moral integrity as guiding instruments to move attitudes and actions toward genuineness (J. & T. Poulakos, 1999, Bizzell & Herzberg, 2001).

In the dialogue, Plato's character Socrates educates the youthful Phaedrus about the nature of goodness and proclaims it is the duty of a noble philosopher to guide the less knowledgeable and vulnerable. These views are shown in the *Phaedrus* when Socrates tells the character Phaedrus, "Every soul is immortal. For that which is ever moving is immortal; but that which moves something else or is moved by something else, when it ceases to move, ceases to live" (Plato, 2001, p. 148). Plato weaves together nature and music (landscapes and singing insects), mythology (horses sailing through the sky), and imagery of black and white (yin and yang). These mirror the esoteric martial artist's interest in the mind's ability to move beyond obvious linear alternatives. By linking the human struggle for understanding to human expression of physical and verbal natures, he, like Easterners and his sophistic rivals of his time, interconnected everything imaginable through poetic appeal (Bizzell & Herzberg, 2001).

Comparable ideologies of freethinking sophists and Plato's idealism simulate the nonexistence of opposites in Taoism and the non-logical path to transcendence of Zen. On the surface, they seem so different but without the others, they lose their essence. So too, Plato would not be as significant to inter-cultural communication studies without the sophist, the sophists without their critics, or Aristotle without being able to investigate the infinite overlapping gaps between idealism and relativism (Waterfield, 1994; Combs, 2005).

## **Aristotle's Method of Gauging Movement**

Aristotle integrated pieces from the views of the sophists and Plato with his personal innovations to form a unique blend of rhetorical philosophy. His model for effective persuasion is explained through his definition of rhetoric,

*“Rhetoric is the art of discovering in the particular case the available means of persuasion...It has to do with the things about which we commonly deliberate...things for which we have no special art or science; and either the sort of hearers who cannot grasp many points in a single view, or follow a long chain of reasoning” (Aristotle, 2001, p. 181).*

Aristotle suggests that in order to persuade others, we skillfully combine dialectic and rhetoric to test an apparent claim of truth or better define a measurable standard of understanding. Eastern martial arts adds another way to bring knowledge through experience, because complicated threads of logic or established authoritative instruction combined with rhetoric is not enough to reach our full potential. Aristotle, like the sophists, did see the weakness in man's comprehension of knowledge and its instruction. Moreover, like Plato, he understood the importance of standards and rules to preserve a society based on peaceful exchanges. He realized the inherent faults of man and was willing to adapt the apparent idealism of Plato to real world problems (Aristotle, 2001; Poulakos & Poulakos, 1999).

As exemplified in *Rhetoric*, he asserts that knowledge alone is not always enough to persuade audiences. He acknowledged this by saying that: “before some audiences not

even the possession of the exactest knowledge will make it easy for what we say to produce conviction. For argument based on knowledge implies instruction, and there are some people who one cannot instruct. Here then we must use our modes of persuasion and argument, notions possessed by everybody” (Aristotle, 2001, p. 180). Today, through the application of new pedagogies grounded in the boundless exploration of the Sophists, Buddhists, Taoists, and others, we should expand Aristotle’s *techne* to empower the less privileged and less educated. On physical, mental and spiritual levels, Eastern martial arts can unite the unhealthy with the vigorous, the tired with the invigorated, the hard with the soft, and the masculine with the feminine.

In *Rhetoric*, Aristotle bridges philosophy and sophistry by developing a technical approach to analyzing audiences and methodically implementing persuasive strategies. Aristotle was aware of the influential nature of physical strength and militaristic power in the practical daily lives of all Greek citizens. He did not separate the power of discourse from physical arts and mental arts; physical strength was associated with beauty and influence (Levine, 1989). Like ancient innovators of martial arts pedagogies, Aristotle appreciated a cultivation of right conduct through the routines of daily life. Aristotle realized that these high standards could be cultivated in pursuits like music and sport (Hawhee, 2002). Taking inspiration from Plato, Aristotle and the Sophists, aspiring rhetorical artists can keep moving, investigating and applying cross-cultural ideals and methods such as martial arts training as cultivation for rhetorical practice in daily living and working. In addition, following the example of the ancient Persians who preserved the insightful works of the ancient Greeks such as Aristotle, Plato, and contemporary life artists transcend static means. Without their openness to embrace other ways of knowing,

the Greek classics would have vanished under oppressive religious and political ideologies during Western civilization's Dark Ages (Freeman, 2005).



(Figure 5) Ancient Persian portrayal of Aristotle, source: <http://en.wikipedia.org>  
This artifact indicates the cross-cultural exchanges between the ancient Greeks and Persians.

### **Chapter Three: Transforming Workplace Communication**

#### **Uprooting**

*“It is man’s powerlessness in the face of culture and the limitations placed on the development of self that result in aggression. Paradoxically, the only way that man can escape the hidden constraints of covert culture is to involve himself actively and quite consciously in those parts of his life that he takes most for granted” (Hall, 1976, p. 7).*

Hall considers the challenges of balancing “cultural literacy” (1976, p. 7). If citizens and organizations are to discover how Eastern martial arts cultivate harmony and balance, they have to readjust their mindsets. Culture today has to incorporate cross-cultural elements. To live within a bubble of isolation is neither practical nor enlightening. Our neighbors and co-workers, especially in America, come from all over the globe, so realizing that culture exists within mutually dependent human situations, relentlessly providing opportunities for self-cultivation and enhancement of rhetorical skills, is vital. Culture implies how human beings interact with other human beings. Furthermore, just as importantly, culture portrays how people treat their natural surroundings. Cultures intersect in order to form free moving pedagogies that help people to become “cultured” (Hall, 1976; Perkins, 1999).

Esoteric Eastern martial arts beyond the easy and familiar and engaging life’s setbacks enthusiastically, rather than floating about and letting difficulties pile up until we become overwhelmed, requires effort. Moreover, effort can be enjoyable, especially if individuals can find ways to channel stress through a transformation of the concept of success, and understand that persuasive artistry co-constructs jointly through pleasant and unpleasant interactions. If social interactions were always agreeable, how could we learn anything new about ourselves (Tomio, 1994)?

Since most people spend at least a third of their lives at work, it makes good sense to use this time to enrich ourselves rather than enlisting in paid misery. Let struggle become a teacher of wisdom; it is necessary in order to strengthen our ability to handle further conflict. Since mental and physical forces combine to create unbalanced states of

existence, martial arts' training stabilizes through a process of constant readjustment, for example gauging proper distance in sparring, yielding or advancing, pushing or pulling partners, stopping or starting, doing or not doing (Lee, 1975; Ralston, 1989).

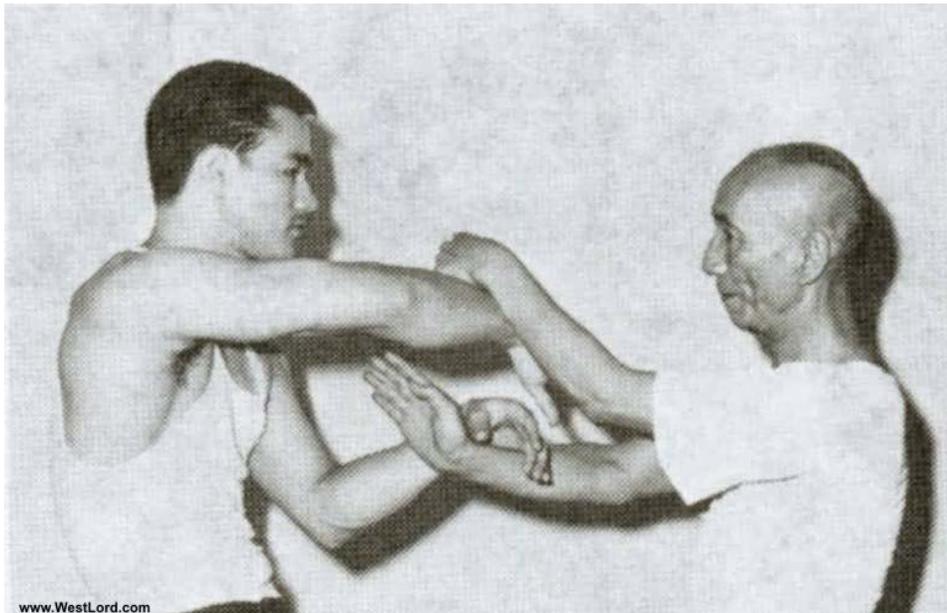
With steady practice, these adjustments become almost effortless as intuition flows naturally. In time, when students are able to let go of harshly judging their own progress as good or poor, they break from the bounds of failure in other areas of their lives as well. As long as they keep moving, and keep trying, failure reveals its illusionary face, because without stoppage, fear of failure never becomes a hindrance. Martial artists look at failure as an imaginary point within the force of yin and yang, it passes as quickly as it comes, and if not dwelled upon there is no power behind it. And, they never give up on themselves or their fellow beings (Lee, 1975, Morgan, 1992).

New standpoints on success and failure require more than a casual mixing of Eastern words to enhance Western styled self-cultivation systems. For example, today, due to the popularity of conditioning the core of the body (the abdomen, groin, waist and lower back muscles), the West cultivates the *dan tien*, a region of energy below the navel. However, Western physical fitness systems continually use means-to-ends techniques to cultivate outer muscular power, rather than inner, chi force. Similarly, our workplaces are slow to understand the importance of cultivating inner power on the job and focus too much on the extrinsic production of goods and services. Looking at the outer and forgetting the inner follows an unbalanced strategy, so erratic results are manifested (Morris,1998; Little, 1996).

Orienting the missions of organizations to unleash the boundless creative energy of its membership requires regaining a legacy of simplicity and equilibrium. To regain

this legacy, Taoism and Zen perspectives can guide people to combat fear: misunderstanding, resentment, and anxiousness. Furthermore, by limiting fear's tendency to stifle growth, we reignite creative passions (Carridine, 1991; Morgan, 1992).

One of the very first lessons of *dojo* is the importance of relaxing. Interestingly, martial artist harness significant physical and mental energy by relaxing. This paradox of power through stillness is difficult to grasp for lay audiences or novices. However, without relaxation the body and mind have to overcome rigid self-created forces. These forces stem from nervousness, muscle stiffness, and uncertainty. The effort applied just to achieve a starting point for executing kicks and punches quickly tires out the participant. By learning to relax, even a novice martial artist avoids the self-imposed constrictions of misapplied mental and physical energy. Through relaxation, previously untapped natural abilities begin to emerge (Ralston, 1989).



(Figure 6) Bruce Lee performing sticky hands (an awareness and relaxation enhancing drill) with his martial arts instructor, Master Yip

Man. The soft intuitive yin energies had to be mastered equally with the harder yang punches and kicks. (source: [http:// en.wikipedia.org/wiki/](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/)).

Following the example of a martial arts instructor teaching the importance of maintaining a relaxed state, organizational leaders can follow suit by placing more trust in the instincts of people and conducting their leadership roles in a calm manner. A framework to reorient organizational missions toward a more relaxed environment requires a similar framework that grounds two traditional Eastern martial arts styles, Karate and Kung fu. These two related Oriental systems developed within the esoteric ideals of Zen Buddhism and Taoism and the cross-cultural movements of Indian, Chinese, Japanese, and Okinowian peoples. Most other styles evolved from these two highly respected systems so generalizing certain claims concerning their benefits is appropriate (Kauz, 2005).

Eastern martial arts provide a bridge to understanding the power of unforced movement. Japanese Samurai Munenori wrote, “If you are conscious of writing your pen will be unsteady” (Munenori & Cleary, 2005, p. 81). Here we find Zen, the philosophy of the Samurai, which shows that human beings are sole owners of our thoughts and bodies. Stoppage, a constant reevaluation of motives, creates a distorted, jagged copy of natural movement. This habitual behavior becomes its own self-pedagogy suited for cultivating dissatisfaction and discontent (Suzuki, 1964). Painful mental sensations are often habitual internalized movements directed against the spirit because it has accepted the outer rules of society as “the” way to succeed.

Incorporating Taoism and Zen into Western thinking styles elevated in importance when Oriental martial arts teachers such as Bruce Lee addressed the needs of

American students. The teachers needed to convey unifying benefits of combative physical engagement within self-defense training and the importance of conditioning the mind along with the body; otherwise, the fixed mindsets would hold back the student's progress. For example, Bruce Lee (1996) wanted to bring esoteric martial arts to the West. He admired American adventurism and desired transcendence from his traditional Chinese martial arts pedagogies that revered tradition.

At Washington University, he immersed himself in undergraduate philosophy studies and became interested in combining elements of Eastern and Western attitudes to his own martial arts practices. He believed individual perspectives were more important than any system so he provided his students more freedom to adapt and modify classic techniques. Accommodating individual strengths, physical attributes, and mental idiosyncrasies of his students inspired Lee's self-created martial art, *Jeet Kune-do* (Lee, 1975, Little, 1996). Similarly, it is possible for organizations to create unique environments geared toward allowing people to do what comes naturally, expressing themselves honestly and completely.

A shift away from controlling and homogenizing employees' creates a need for martial arts innovators to become workplace heroes. Lee was a capable communicator and he proved that having a broad set of cross-cultural communication skills drew audiences toward him. For example, Bruce Lee integrated Taoism in his school logo. He drew Chinese characters around a yin yang symbol to signify "using no way as way; having no limitation as limitation" (Little, 1996, p. 35). Organizations can follow Lee's example to free their workers from many repressive controls, particularly within the confines of workplace communication.



(Figure 7) Bruce Lee's school logo for *Jeet Kune-do* (the way of the intercepting fist). On the left side it reads having no method as method and on the right side, it reads using no form as form. Source: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jeet\\_Kune\\_Do](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jeet_Kune_Do)

### **Reseeding**

*“Our problems in education are exacerbated in educational systems and philosophies that stress verbal facility at the expense of other important parts of man's mind, which are either ignored or downgraded” (Hall 1976, p. 170).*

Workplace consultants have consistently questioned the limits of traditional communication management models. To expand the choices of organizations, the ancient

pedagogies that cultivated Eastern martial arts are a *tao*, a way, to gain a new foothold. Consultant Lee Clark Johns, uses the terms “ineffective dinosaurs” (1989, p. 155) as a metaphor for outdated, obsolete workplace communications practices. Interestingly, Lee (1975, p. 9) uses “dinosaur drills” to describe outdated martial arts systems that he felt were limiting for contemporary martial artist. Johns calls for companies to let workplace communication specialists transcend corporate writing standards to develop more expressive, socially connective discourses (1989). Uniting Johns with Lee, workplace communication models benefit martial arts’ styles, since neither should merit imitation. Without the ancient knowledge, Lee had nothing to build upon. Similarly, although traditional workplace communication styles may seem outdated in many cases, they provide professional consultants such as Johns a place to begin a rejuvenated journey.

Lee’s breaking out of his traditional paradigm inspires communication consultants to offer companies alternative means to clients. However, the consultant may have to adjust their own mindsets by learning about Taoism and Zen and investigating martial arts. This exercising of open-minded rhetorical skill provides an active model, a movement, to convince the executives of organizations to initiate change (1989). They might ask corporate leaders to apply Taoism’s *wu-wei* and *wu-shin* to their management styles, or follow Zen ways of avoiding mimicking others for the sake of expediency. Consultants can explain how adhering to old systems mirrors the martial arts student who is only concerned with earning a higher belt rank. With Johns’ perspective, “Whatever the source, these writers turn to what’s been done before to produce an adequate document efficiently, get it approved, and move on to the next task” ( Johns, 1989, p.

154), and thus the importance of striving for self-knowledge collides with need for organizational approval.

Communication policies that enable a company to thrive require a redefining of the boundaries; otherwise, the need for approval can stifle innovation. Martial artist view their belt rank as a starting point for discovering new possibilities for self-cultivation, whether black, white or any color (Kauz, 2005). Likewise, employees should view their job title as a starting point. Executives, mid-managers, clerks, janitors are by their nature, dynamic communication artists, a metaphor for martial artists. Together they join in a quest for self-knowledge. This also includes consultants that join in the journey to excellence. With professional guidance and backing starting at the executive level, improvements to workplace communication are attainable, but there has to be a start, a movement. However, starting can be quite challenging as Johns indicates, “Even when a consultant is hired to improve the communication system, the resistance to change is enormous” (Johns, 1989, p. 180).

Refocusing workplace management practices necessitates reevaluating how Western schools operate. The academic and corporate communities should appreciate that workplace interactions are complex and difficulties are an integral part of growth. Diverse personal experiences can unify coworkers by generating new perspectives. If people train to expect challenges and channel their energies to solve problems as a martial artist enthusiastically solves them, then frustration should diminish. Changing priorities obliges academia to implement new courses that actually train students for business communication problem solving. Taoism and Zen allow the solving process an exhilarating flexibility.

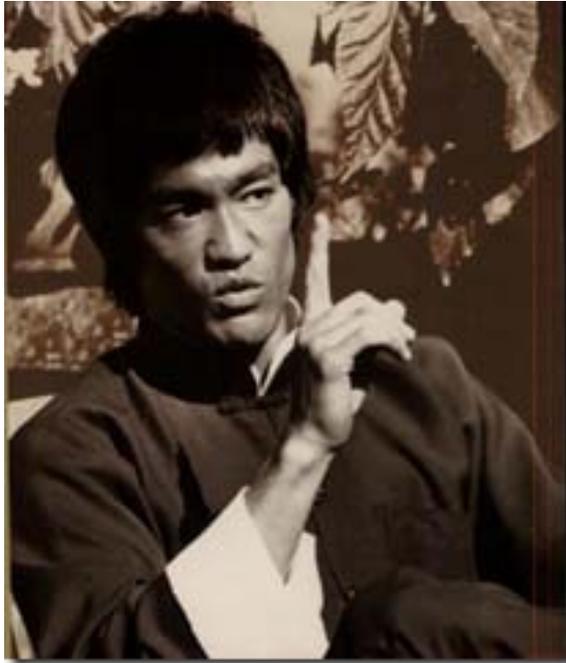
With Eastern perspectives supplementing Western traditional and progressive attitudes, students discover how subjective self-knowledge helps maintain a sense of worth and fulfillment. Without these considerations, the illusion that other students and coworkers should fit easily into a conflict-free universe leads to a grim existence. Humanities grounded schools should be leading the way by promoting relationship artistry through well-rounded curricula that include courses that value stillness as much as utility. Through reorientation, we can free ourselves from learning to be industrial servants (Hall, 1996; Miller, 1989, Burke, 1984).

Currently there are movements toward integrating the power of stillness and tranquility as well the energies of toning physical well-being. For example, *Yoga at Work* helps workplaces implement stretching and meditation exercises during workplace hours and on workplace property. Since yoga was instrumental in helping to combine elements of stillness and movement in the earliest martial arts of ancient India, it is a wonderful way for people to energize themselves through an Eastern grounded pedagogy. Jeffrey M. Miller consults and trains organizations in how to avoid violence through a combining of mental and physical training. He focuses on helping trainees realize how they can control their approaches to fear and uncertainty. Miller and *Yoga at Work* exemplify that stress and violence have finally become so detrimental to workplace productivity and job satisfaction, that looking eastward for liberation is a sensible alternative (Workplace Violence Training, 2010; Integral Yoga Institute, 2008).

Consider Plato's associations with cooking in his dialogue *Gorgias*. He describes it as a casual unsophisticated leisure pursuit (Plato, 1998). Today, many people all over the world believe that cooking is a complex, yet beautiful art form. Comparable to martial

arts in its applications of mental concentration combined with gracefulness, cooking has become a source of fascination worldwide. The popular Food Network's master chefs influence their audiences by asking them to join them in their workplace. Like martial artists, the chefs move gracefully, chopping and dicing, rolling and forming with precision and joyful energy. They appear completely immersed in their art. What makes their cooking so interesting is the chefs' love for their craft, and their communicative talents that allow their audience to share in their exhilaration.

Therefore, cookery is as potentially artful and unifying as learning Eastern martial arts, studying rhetoric in graduate school, or writing a poem. This points toward Johns and Lee's "dinosaurs" mentioned previously. To cultivate self-knowledge it makes little sense to waste an opportunity for self-growth by taking the predictable easy way. Rather, consistently welcoming challenging opportunities to move others and ourselves to a more joyful states cultivates esoteric persuasive energy, or *chi*. This openness to embracing challenges establishes a disciplined path for unifying the joy of daily living and working; Eastern martial arts can help individuals stay on this path. In the *dojo* the garbage collector, the English student and teacher, the chef, and the house cleaner are all potentially sharing in artful living. The key is remaining the master of the movement at hand, rather than remaining a slave to conformity (Combs, 2005).



(Figure 8) Bruce Lee expounding on his personal cross-cultural philosophies during an interview (from <http://sourcesofinsight.com>).

## **Chapter Four: Power to Suppose**

### **Animal Intuition**

*“In the absence of knowledge concerning the nature and the form of an organism, it is impossible to properly develop that organism to its greatest potential. This rule applies to animals, man, or one of man’s greatest extensions (Hall, 1976, p. 190).*

Reducing unnecessary conflict and reckless aggression by finding space for Eastern martial artistry in workplaces and classrooms encourages an investigation of the past. Rhetorical artifacts are not only ancient bones and tools, or even the first evidences

of writing. Traces of human interaction also reside in paintings, carvings, even footprints from millions of former human occupants of the planet. These messages, concrete or abstract, or somewhere between these poles can help to recharge negatively oriented self-reflective natures. Historical artifacts provide connections to adventure, child-like wonder, and transcendence from self-created and socially influenced restraints. By blending the myriad of life lessons from cultures of the past, people realize that cultural borders and ideologies do not have to bind the human condition (Fischer, 1984; Pearsol, 1987). Additionally, since it is often difficult to break from habitual attitudes guiding daily living, Westerners need assistance in gaining a new foothold. Unbinding the human situation is the purpose of Eastern martial arts (Lee, 1975).

The story of human communication as poetic expression tightly intertwines with animal life. The oldest musical instrument was made from the bone of a vulture about 35,000 years ago and the oldest cave paintings, which are dominated by animal images, are dated to be at least 30,000 years old (Waford, 2002). By considering these artifacts (shown below), it appears that an awesome struggle to endure prehistoric life led humankind beyond the limited ego, and nature became a great teacher such that animal life, in a sense, may have been more wholly expressive than humans. Early humans looked to animals for clues on how to interact with nature.



(Figure 9) Aurochs on a cave painting in Lascaux, France.

Source: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cave\\_painting](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cave_painting)



(Figure 10) “A 35,000-year-old flute made of vulture bone found in a cave in southwestern Germany is the world’s oldest known musical instrument” Source: <http://blogs.discovermagazine.com>

Eastern martial arts grounded in Taoist and Zen philosophies admire animals and mimic their movements. The originators of esoteric Eastern martial arts believed people’s

dualistic preoccupation with their egos and material rewards kept them from experiencing nature as the animal does. However, they saw this as something that could be overcome through rigorous mental and physical training; hence, martial arts participation became a daily necessity. Today, luckily there are remnants of the inspirational influences that the first martial artists harnessed to build their defenses against negative thinking styles.

Wild animals appear to be united with the natural world. Insects, birds, squirrels, and others are free from the duality that makes humans second-guess themselves and repeatedly become frustrated because they feel they are missing material gain. The animal seldom over strives, wastes energy, or second-guesses itself. The woodpecker pecks away at a tree trunk penetrating the bark through steady unforced movements and similarly the spider weaves a beautiful web made of silk, a substance stronger and lighter than many manmade materials. Moreover, even the domesticated animal shows man a model of patience and ease. Dao and Lee had a fondness for using the cat as a metaphor for effortless living. The cat does not impose its will on their environment they blend with it. If it jumps from a high position, it lands gracefully. The cat can effortlessly strike at a lizard with lightning speed or remain sleeping in the sunlight or shade oblivious of the turning of clocks or the groaning of people and machinery (Dao, 1993, Little, 1996).



(Figure 11) An adult cat relaxing on a deck in China

source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cat>

The 2010 oil spill by British Petroleum Corporation is an example of the disregard for the inter-dependence of science and nature. Nature took millions of years to store up vast reserves of oil far below the sea. Industrialists violated the Taoist principle of *wu-wei*, unforced action, and pierced the earth with little regard for terrible consequences once the cosmic forces were unleashed. Now, the earth is pushing its way back to the center. Existing disconnected to humankind's relentless clock: nature is patient, and thus, environmental catastrophe will eventually bring it back in balance. Tragically, the rebalancing results in great damage to human and animal bionetworks. The grip of economic means has brought people away from the essence of what makes it so astonishing to be alive, allowing human expression to emerge intuitively from the influences of animals and other mysterious forces of nature.



(Figure 12) BP Deepwater Horizon oil platform burning out of control after explosion. Source: <http://wallstcheatsheet.com/breaking-news/>



(Figure 13) Rotting carcass of dolphin body filled with oil from BP disaster. Queen Bess Island, Gulf of Mexico. Source: <http://www.nydailynews.com/news/>

Martial artistry requires cross “disciplinary” applications of physical and mental energies. Words, symbols, actions, and emotions join forces in a search for something more to inspire people to look “inside” themselves in order to get “outside” the madness of an obsessively industrialized world. Furthermore, the unifying Eastern notions that ground the tenets of learning martial arts enhance persuasive capabilities. However, rhetorical power resides primarily in the martial artists’ pathos, as the empathetic mastery of kindness or mercy shown to others serves as a transcendent energy. The focusing of energy is a problem of avoiding excessiveness, a choosing of life over death (Combs, 2005).

Energetically approaching solutions to discontent is an ancient art form, “a way,” “a path,” “a tao,” which gives anticipation that tomorrow will bring new experiences and more learning. Learning areas are boundless, and lie within emotional and logical poles such as excitement and boredom, rest and work, answers and questions, or sadness and joy. Holding a centered purpose based on living sincerely and optimistically in any giving moment is the goal of the martial artists as life artist (Bizzell, 1986; McPhail, 1996). Clues concerning human nature and the social problems brought on through the over valuing of logically induced knowledge reside partly in the myths and fables of early civilizations. Within these mysteries is a gradual complex construction of forms: forms of learning, contemplation, and forms of tolerance.

### **Perception through Introspection**

The history of martial arts is mysterious. It is not vital to know exactly when they began, or if any one culture should get credit for their creation. However, emotional and

spiritual linkages illustrate the immense intercultural connections of the human race that were likely a continuation of connections of ancient animals to nature. With contextual knowledge, progressive movements inspired by ancients help adapt the abstract ways of the ancients to problem solving in contemporary times (Tomio, 1994, Walford 2002).

Consider ancient Mesopotamia, where over a period of several thousand years religious and mythical activity collided with emerging scientific approaches to life and death. Perhaps the oldest pedagogy, a 4500-year Babylonian poem, *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, is a search for worth in existence (Wilkins, 1994). Linking the story to the value of esoteric martial arts is important, since its timeless lessons help readers realize the interconnection of ancient physical competition and mental struggle to present day communication problems.

The work describes exploits of two beings, King Gilgamesh, a physical marvel and superb fighter - who is part god, and his associate, Enkidu, who is part beast and given to Gilgamesh by gods to provide friendship and exercise. Enkidu, also a formidable fighter, also distracts Gilgamesh from physically dominating his weaker subjects. They engage in routine play fighting (sparring) and become close comrades. The story has a series of verbal and physical fights with supernatural monsters and interventions from deities who incessantly demand that Gilgamesh deal with his mortality. In the course of the tale, Gilgamesh confronts lust, death, grief, loneliness and isolation (Fischer, 1984).

Through Gilgamesh, the audience examines the consequences of egotism plus verbal and physical aggression. Exhausted by his yang methods of overcoming problems, Gilgamesh comes to believe that his greatest achievements are outer manifestations such as the massive structures he commissions. However, the audience, through the emotional

cycles of the characters, can arrive at subjective conclusions regarding how immortality, perhaps as a legacy of artful living might be achieved (Fischer, 1984).



(Figure 14) Gilgamesh in hand-to-hand combat, stone relief from about 1000 B.C. from <http://webquests.rcoe.appstate.edu/>

Audiences can insert themselves into this poignant tale’s “rational and irrational paradigms” through the unfurling of a “narrative paradigm” (Fischer, 1984, p. 2). Babylonians, the probable inventors of the first organized systems of mathematics, cosmography, and astronomy, may have also systematized the first martial arts, due to the epic’s frequent references to ritualistic combat. Babylonian knowledge united spiritual yearning with rigorous scientific investigation. Their conjoined physical and mental modes provided foundations for future modes of approaching problems, especially in

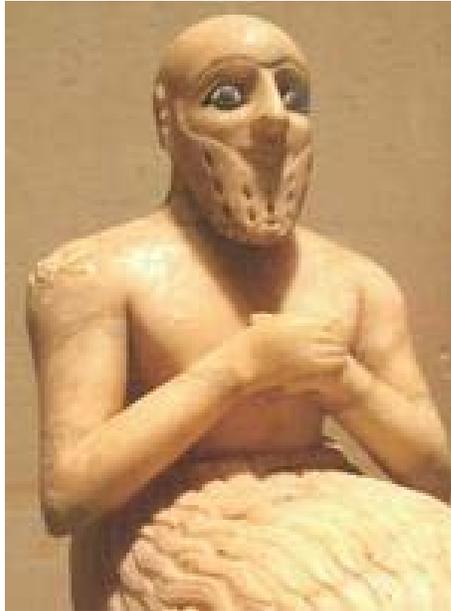
later Western bastions of rationalism and philosophical reasoning, and the rhetorical responses to these ideologies (Walford, 2002).

Ancient Babylon is also renowned for excessive cruelty and the brutal enslavement of masses of people, particularly the early Hebrews. Their legacy is complex; however, their unification of science and art is an example for the contemporary life artist. At the end of the story, the main character mentally and physically drained, realizes that it does not make sense to waste energy worry about dying or losing loved ones (Enkidu died in a brutal fight with a demon). Gilgamesh has an epiphany and realizes that if beings can build complex structures such as temples and military fortifications, those material works were a valid legacy, a form of eternal existence (Fisher, 1984).

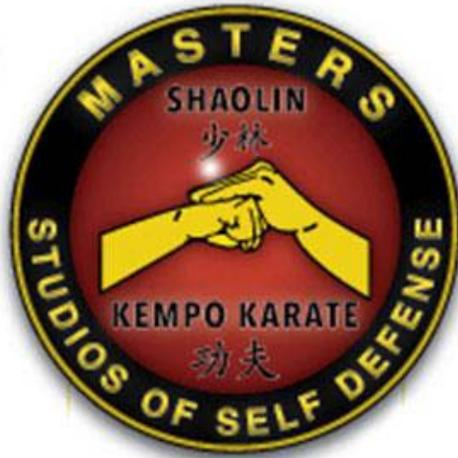
The epic can have an alternative lesson for contemporary audiences. Perhaps Gilgamesh's narrative gives audiences a legacy of friendship and tolerance even though he ultimately remained strongly tied to his material illusionary world. Gilgamesh, an aspiring ancient martial artist and life artist, learned to love his fighting partner, he learned to stop opposing the forces of nature, and he learned he was a flawed and vulnerable being. These lessons are arguably considerably more powerful than contributions to building extraordinary edifices. Eventually time and nature will grind away physical monuments; however, the art of living expressed through dignified conduct can have enduring benefits for societies.

The great structures that he commissioned were certainly amazing feats of ingenuity and sustained effort; however, he could not build them by himself. Likewise, he could not learn the lessons of mortality alone. The epic provides important lessons for

martial arts practitioners as well as lay audiences. It is not the teachable techniques or the conditioned physical strength that imparts true power: rather it is compassion, honest self-expression, restraint, caring, and respect for the natural environment that moves through the ages as a form, a way, and a tao of transcendence.



(Figure 15) Ancient figure showing humility and restraint, dated approx. 2600B.C. source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Mesopotamia>



(Figure 16) Official School Logo of Masters Studios of Self-defense  
source: [www.masterstudios.com](http://www.masterstudios.com) the left hand covers the fist as a  
sign of control emotions

### **Rearward or Forward to Simply Being**

*“Decrease and decrease again” (Ming Dao, 1996, p. 188).*

*“Education should be broad” (Ming Dao, 1996, p. 54).*

Through martial arts, communicators can realize an influential power in “not doing” and resisting compartmentalized knowledge. Paradoxically, the lessons of Eastern mysticism and the lessons of the dojo are enduring dynamic movements without starting and ending points. To ignore the linearity of knowledge systems is also an application of

science. The ancient Taoists and Zen Buddhists were often empirically motivated. Although they rejected many objective restrictions on behavior and thinking, they used forms of scientific inquiry to supplement their spiritual pursuits. Perhaps, they were some of the first dialogically oriented communication researches. In addition, Taoists and Zen Buddhists encouraged female participation. Their understanding of the interdependence of male and female, yin and yang, and the respect for compassionate approaches to daily life welcomed female participation (Tomio 1994).

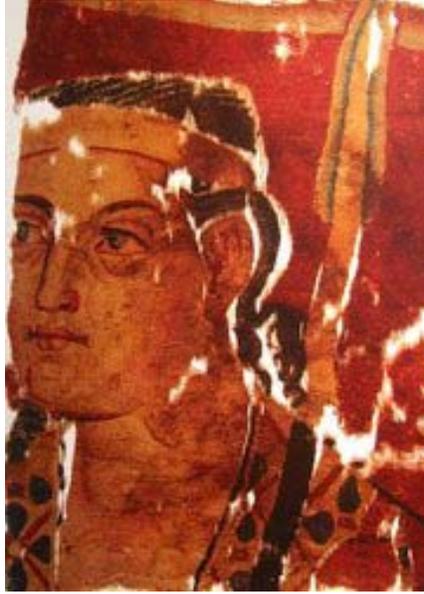
Learning to use lethal force through repetitive training methods is equally an unlearning process, a rewiring of reactionary impulses. Eastern martial arts cultivate patience along with a nonviolent temperament and men and women participate equally. The pursuit of self-defense mastery through discipline and determination builds self-knowledge as the student discovers their physical and mental limitations by learning to overcome them. Physical and mental interaction with fellow students and instructors strengthens relationships development skills, which transmit to other aspects of life (Morgan, 1992; Morris, 1998). Like work life, workouts are sometimes frustrating. Sometimes egotism and impatience irritates fellow students and instructors, however, without the negatives there would be little progress toward character development.

*“Everything flows, nothing stands still. No man can cross the same river twice, because neither the man nor the river are the same” (Heraclitus is quoted by Freeman, 2005, p. 12)*

A century before Plato and the Sophists dueled and discoursed, the Greek nonconformist, Heraclitus, like some of his Taoists and Zen Buddhists neighbors from

the East, sought enlightenment from materialism and the pressures of societal conformity. For Heraclitus, humankind could not determine anything because nothing ever stood still. Heraclitus can inspire contemporary audiences to allow an open exchange of ideas and opinions in order to stay energized and enthusiastic about overcoming the difficulties of interacting with other people (Freeman, 2005).

The tenets of Taoism show correspondence to Heraclitus's views. The *Tao Te Ching* explains that physical certainty is an illusion so mental certainty is equally constrained by objective rules. Since reality cannot be classified, it does not make sense to pursue the impossible to a point of discontent. Interestingly, Greek explorers, theorists, and warriors were known to exchange with Easterners, and were influenced by the esoteric nature of their approaches to science and communication. Artifacts also provide evidence that Greek soldiers traveled as far as China as well as Buddhists (inventors of Zen) influences on Greek approaches to life artistry. The impacts intertwined the practical elements of warfare and culturally influenced aspects of artistic interpretation (Freeman, 2005).



(Figure 17) Probable Greek soldier, painted on Chinese wool tapestry, 3rd-2nd century B.C., Sampul, Urumqi Xinjiang Museum. Source: <http://www.mlahanas.de/Greeks/History/GrecoBactrianKingdom>



(Figure 18.) The Buddha, in Greco-Buddhist style, 1st-2nd century CE, Gandhara (Modern Pakistan). (Standing Buddha (Tokyo National Museum)). Source: <http://www.Buddhism>

Westerners must realize that our problem-solving repertoire has a cross-cultural legacy. The Greeks relied tremendously on the discoveries of their Eastern neighbors to advance astronomy and mathematics. Without the Easterners who interacted with them, the Greeks may not have become the model for future Western cultures, thus, it is important to realize mutually dependent heritages. If Eastern martial arts are going to have an impact beyond physical exchanges, it is imperative to study the cross-culturally developed philosophies that ground them. Moreover, by overcoming the fear of running out of peaceful options in times of difficulty, we can cultivate transcendent avenues interlinked in meditation and movement. This is the true power of martial arts when integrated in workplaces and classrooms. The individual holds a contextual handbook for navigating their lives, and the technical and artistic accessories accrue through teachers, friends, family, and other shared exchanges (Suino,1996, Tomio, 1994).

## **Chapter Five: Unfolding Logic**

### **Rhythm and Rhetorical Arrangement**

*The man asked, let us have some expedient means, a direct approach that does not abandon us worldly types? Tun responded, what path? There is no path that can be cultivated. This is enlightenment. Detached from self and other you practice all practices at once” ... you are free. When the mind finds the inner truth, objects and knowledge are not two. The mind that differentiates is born*

*from error. The mind that does not differentiate is born of wisdom (Huang, 1991, p.103).*

Analogous to the ancient Zen dialogue revealed in the above passage, communicators can apply applications of informal structure to foster wisdom. Such insight is located within experiencing present situations calmly and appreciating the freedom of having infinite options to live by. Abstract rhetorical movement requires minds open to joining adversaries and realizing that there must be common ground. Moreover, applying Zen communicative perspectives as a counterpart to martial arts practice allows students to move beyond the dichotomy of being both opponent and partner to other students. They are neither of these; they are both of these. What are they? It is up to the communicator, teacher or student to determine this between the extremes of subjective and objective knowledge, (Lee, 1975; Huang, 1991; McPhail, 1996).

Martial arts can free the mind from cages of singular viewpoints. Consider peoples' inability to see beyond their own constructs. In a sense, obsession with the self stems from rigid ways of using comparisons to gauge social worth. With Eastern martial arts, persons can help expand characterizations of noble living when they apply the lessons of the *dojo* to workplace activities. Obtaining job fulfillment and progressing as a martial artist should flow together. Moreover, people benefit from practicing challenging encounters with coworkers and fellow students under physically and mentally demanding exercises. A moving framework for future rhetorical judgments or reactions takes root in the person and in time, there is nothing that cannot be accomplished, because "no thing" has to be accomplished. If it "must" be done, then effortless flow is stalled and the

unbalanced mind is vulnerable to negative feedback and can result in the careless treatment of others. Thus, holding two or more things against one another to find differences and determine why one is better or bigger than the other(s) quickly fatigues and what is left is confusion, despair, or a delusional sense of superiority (Burke, 1984; McPhail, 1996; Tomio, 1994).

Some people stand firmly inside traditional communication paradigms based primarily on explaining differences and arguing for universal truths. Others transport themselves into new areas of borderless exploration. In contemporary times, the rhetoric of music, painting, sculpting and other artistic pursuits have allowed more inter-cultural creative freedom and cross-cultural interaction to occur. However, artistic expression has a history of containment. Refitting workplaces as locations that encourage honorable conduct and unending self-cultivation, instead of places for boring productivity measurement is vital to igniting the amazing power of the creative person. Almost anyone can practice forms of martial artistry without joining a *dojo* by applying wisdom to any activity including how they treat the natural environment and how amicably he or she treats others regardless of their social standing. Intrinsic growth becomes a model for the creative person balancing both personal and organizational ethos. Nevertheless, unless people actually engage in martial art exercises that incorporate wisdom along with physical conditioning and reaction training they cannot receive the full practical benefits (Debs, 1993, Miller, 1989).

Consider music as a cross-culturally unifying force. Like martial arts, music is a creative practice in which virtually anyone can participate, whether as listener, creator, or player. The Taoist's principle of *wu-shin*, emptiness, also ties to the musical objects

through which people communicate. Ancient and modern instruments harness power from emptiness or hollowness to create sounds. The drum and the flute cannot work without the movement of air inside an empty space. Furthermore, without the silence between the notes, there is no rhythm to unite players and listeners. Music can transcend genres and language. For example, many Asian people adore American and British rock music. They generally do not understand the English words, but it does not matter to them. The rhythms and the melodies touch something inside them and feelings of optimism and joy resonate (Little, 1996; Ming Dao, 1990).

The interpretation of musically transmitted communicative expression juxtaposes to the artistic expression of a martial artist who cultivates healthy interactions between the body, the mind, and society. When Bruce Lee first brought his amazing martial arts moves to television, Western audiences loved him. The unfolding of his martial artistry manifested as a deeply personal poetic voice, cultivated through many years of hard and often painful work. Western audiences saw Lee as an inspirational human being, not Lee the Chinese man. Likewise, when some students and admirers looked deeper into the lifestyle and Eastern philosophical grounding of Lee, something new, a realization of chi, the unseen life force, awaked inside them. However, it may have been lying dormant inside them, walled up within the rules and mannerisms of Western ideology, but waiting to be energized by the rhetoric of Lee's *gung-fu*, which under the Cantonese translation means performing any activity exceptionally well (Lee, 1975, Little, 1996).

Like Lee, many artists who came before and after him, were often considered uncultured and unsophisticated, thus, they were strongly coerced to reproduce the norms of their cultures. Unfortunately, this continues today in various parts of the world

(Walford, 2002, Miller, 1989). However, courageous warriors like Lee, continue to fight bravely to change the constructs of racism and elitism in order to move social and professional paradigms into a more unified and balanced form. For example, in the United States, Jackie Robinson broke the race barrier of Major League Baseball in 1948. Like a master martial artist, Robinson needed mental strength even more than physical ability to overcome the extreme forces of hate and cruelty. Similarly, American musicians such Louis Armstrong and Jack Teagarden were capable fighters against bigotry and social injustice.



(Figure 19.) American jazz musicians Louis Armstrong and Jack Teagarden entertaining an audience. Both men were master horn players and engaging singers. As close friends, they combined their energies to combat racism in late 1940's. (Source: <http://images.search.yahoo.com/images/>).

Musicians, writers, professors, and other professionals can mirror competent martial artists. It is their conduct exhibited within the spaces of actually performing observable workplace duties (performing music, writing a book chapter, or teaching a class) that elevate their work beyond being a producer of admirable products. Academics may win awards, writers may create a best seller, a musician may sell a million recordings and a martial artist may achieve the rank of master. Professional achievement and martial art belt level are not only concerned with *techne*, or displaying skillful reproduction of physical movements during class sessions. More importantly, consistent exercising of virtuous judgment (*phronesis*) and carrying oneself in a peaceful dignified manner points toward an enlightened mind (Miller, 1989, Morgan, 1996).

### **Situational Spontaneity**

*“A work is rhetorical because it is a response to situations of a certain kind”*  
(Bitzer, 1968, p. 3).

*“Rhetorical situations exhibit structures which are simple or complex, and more or less organized (Bitzer, 1968, p. 11).*

Rhetorical proficiency is expanded when martial art combined with Eastern philosophy is cultivated. Because without cultivating additional flexibility by testing the limits of Western oriented communicative influence and redefining what interaction entails, the martial artist is simply a hobbyist. Furthermore, without motivation to better the community, the art is lost in egotism and shallow reward. Bitzer (1968) supports a

traditional rhetorical definition with two historic figures, former US Presidents Kennedy and Lincoln, who he claims effectively engaged their audiences with public oratory. However, the accomplished rhetorical ability of these men was likely influenced by athletic competition. For example, Kennedy developed his personality under highly competitive traditions of an athletic Irish family and Lincoln successfully competed for money as a wrestler in his early adult life. The audience unification process gained by skillfully addressing attentive audiences through public oratory inspired elements of *pathos* such as forgiveness, tolerance, and patience that were learned through physical engagement with competitors and teammates. In addition, rhetorical power had likely been enhanced by the former Presidents “knocking heads” with formidable opponents in the wrestling matches and ballgames (Jamieson, 1988; Morris, 1998).

Bitzer explains that rhetorical situations come and go, sometimes ignored and sometimes engaged, but he does not consider naturalness, non-action or limited engagements that are nonverbal as rhetorically relevant. Within his non-rhetorical “ethical, dangerous, or embarrassing situations,” Bitzer claims that words are not called for by a communicator to alter circumstances: thus for him, there is no rhetoric at hand (Bitzer, 1968, p. 1). He acknowledges the inner and outer controls of other human agents, environmental factors such as societal norms, prevailing opinions, and influences that the rhetor cannot quickly alter with persuasive vocalized action; however, he assumes these controls to be logically perceivable (Bitzer, 1968).

Esoteric Eastern martial arts address rhetorical scenarios left out by Western thinkers like Bitzer. They are broad fortifications for any influence; especially those missed by the conscious mind. The great mystery of their influence lies between the

extremes of identifying a problem and being able to apply an effective yet unnamable movement. These middles of extremes are where Eastern martial arts bring enlightening power, a power to move through minimum effort and minimum suffering on the part of the signifiers and the signified (Ralston 1989, Morris, 1998, Little, 1996).

Bitzer's rhetoric is not calling for a unification of mind and body to harness honest expression; rather it is a verbal actualization of human intent, arrived at objectively. Like martial arts activities, Bitzer's "rhetorical situations", calls to verbal arms, cannot perfectly alter the views or actions of others to the satisfaction of a rhetor (Bitzer, 1968, p. 1). However, unlike the unifying qualities of martial arts, Bitzer alludes to a separation of the speaker from the situation indicating a sense of disquiet that must be harmonized. Eastern symbols such as the bending bamboo branch withstanding intense winds, the centipede that never worries about how each of its many legs can move or it would forget how to move, and the baby who is not anxious because it has never known failure, help to dispel Bitzer's belief that listeners' ways of thinking could be quantified (Bitzer, 1968, Little, 1996, McPhail, 1996).

Esoteric martial arts cultivate unifying energy that enables a practitioner to remain in the moment, so it does not matter if events appear beyond or within a person's perceptible control. Rhetors, through martial art training, can habitually behave in a dignified manner and train themselves to react responsibly and mercifully through clear thinking and unbiased motivations. Martial arts as a metaphor for workplace challenges show that people are often not conscious of a line of attack or able to utilize premeditated persuasive strikes against moving targets. Decisions and actions of others shape by consistently engaging detected or undetected exigencies noiselessly and calmly through

daily commitments to high standards of conduct (Bitzer, 1968, Miller, 1989, Morgan, 1992).

*“to talk little is natural” (Lao Tsu, 1972, 23, qtd. by Ishii & Bruneau 1994)*

*“silence is golden” (ancient proverb by unknown author)*

Interestingly, Oriental cultures value quiet significantly more than Westerners do, not out of laziness or lack of focus, but out of respect for the subjective nature of every moment. According to Ishii & Bruneau (1994), “Different forms of appropriate communicative behavior exists, and a variety of intercultural misunderstanding can occur if one does not know when, where, and how to remain silent” (p. 249). We find this also within the Eastern grounded martial art schools located in the West. Generally, they are quiet places, except for the instructors and the students intermittently talking and the *kiais* (Japanese for energetic shouts) during training. *Kiais* harness powerful bursts of energy by exerting the voice while exhaling explosively. They distract and deflect opponents’ counter energies and they add additional power to the blocks and strikes of the practitioners. Furthermore, the silence between active shouts allows moments of readjustment for martial artists as their rhetorical artistry transcends simply seeing and listening (Glenn, 2004; Knutsen, 2004).



(Figure 20.) Karate side thrust kick is parried by fellow practitioner  
source: <http://www.multifight.com.br/>

In Eastern martial arts, we often find silence as the soft element that can overcome the hard, and yielding as a tactic to turn aggression against itself. Nevertheless, without the noise, the yang, or direct utterance, the yin counter effect is muted. Bitzer's oratory rhetoric is a form of reactive punching or kicking, requiring a constant management of energies. His persuasive energy can apply the hard and fast to overcome the complacent and the uncaring or apply the soft and the empathetic to overcome outrage and anxiety. Extremes of voice like other forms of expression can often be a waste of energy, and we look to Eastern martial arts for new ways of avoiding them. Hence, supplementing movements of language with physical interaction through martial arts study helps to reclaim the original poetic forms of human nature. The Taoists precept, without action, or *wu wei*, unites communication warriors from all occupations

and belief systems. People can learn how not to clash or bicker. Avoiding punching, not speaking, and forgetting fear are valid tools of rhetorical artist and martial artists (Little, 1996; Morris, 1998; Combs, 2005; Glenn, 2004).

### **The Winners' Circle**

*“We are perhaps most comfortable when we can derive our concepts of duty from contingencies alone, as when we open a window because the air is stuffy, or write a letter because it requires an answer. Doubtless, for this reason people seem most contented in simple social structures whether the demands are regular and few, and wherein one assists the general prosperity by wholeheartedly meeting those demands. One must go in search of authoritative tests that lie deeper. One must seek definitions of human purpose whereby the whole ailing world of contingent demands can be appraised. Otherwise, one is trapped in a circle of self-perpetuating judgments” (Burke, 1984, p. 223).*

The traditional Western idea that persuasion should be logical denies the complexities of subjective innovation that dynamically intersects with other bodies and minds who are also continually remaking themselves within a fluctuating social planet (Olson, 2000). Esoteric martial arts remind persons to be careful not to take an excessive approach to releasing people from one form of veil by exchanging it for another type of control. Since rhetorical competition rivals the intensity and dangers of physical fighting,

it is important to avoid dismissing challengers as unworthy of consideration (Jamieson, 1988; Combs, 2005).

Body movements and language express peoples' longing to sort out confusion, but perfection is not the goal. In life, there are always mistakes of understated and overstated kinds, whether at work or in the *dojo*. People sometimes lose their temper or act childishly out of frustration when another student embarrasses them. They may sulk after a student performs a technique on them without adequate restraint. In addition, at work they may openly express resentment after being verbally insulted. The discovery process lets the person reflect and realize there is more work to do on themselves. One or two acts of questionable behavior do not define a person. There is room for forgiveness and room for reengaging the misapplied techniques. Performing the correct action at the correct time is a constant struggle, but martial arts help people forgive their mistakes as long as they keep trying to improve themselves. Likewise, the same tolerance for themselves should transfer to others.

Suitable action can also incorporate doing nothing, even if peers and admirers of organizational leaders push for aggressive reaction. Had Martin Luther King and Mahatma Gandhi promoted violent uprisings, perhaps thousands would have been killed in the national self-defense exercise of martial law in India and the United States. In addition, violence tends to foster a feeding process of more and more cruelty. King and Gandhi loved their adversaries and they never gave up their faith in the better part of human nature winning over evil. Esoteric martial art training surprisingly coincides with peace seeking religious cultivation, as both include elements of meditation to realize the power of stillness and sympathy. King and Gandhi followed religiously motivated ideals

that mirror the tenets of responsible use of conflict resolution techniques by passionately urging their followers to sympathize with their enemies and repressors.

Through deep introspective cultivation and an understanding of the interflow of the good and bad elements of human beings, King and Gandhi amazed the world with their enlightened approaches. To their followers, especially in the case of the Western followers of King, to find unity within the racists and bigots seemed outlandish at first. However, King and Gandhi, determined and steadfast never wavered from their strategy to outdo their foes. They were akin to the Zen warrior who did not over think their strategy to overcome conflict, and a Taoist sage who followed the way of water and used patience, determination, and softness, to overcome extreme ideology and absorb the fuel of cyclic violent backlash.

The leadership of Gandhi and King show the importance of cultivating some of the same qualities judicial martial artists possess. Often the better way to resolve problems is to do the opposite of what traditional logic calls for under the standard aggressive conventions of Western fighting mentalities. Through the yin of civil disobedience the attackers were forced to confront their excessive yang nature, thus it revealed to the aggressor that they would eventually destroy themselves by continuing to fight and intimidate people who disagreed with them ideologically but (Jamieson, 1988, McPhail, 1996, Jamieson, 1988).

Unfortunately, people who held no regard for diversity and the values of life artistry assassinated both Dr. King and Minister Gandhi. These courageous men were struck down physically, but their spiritual legacies transcend the power of bullets or the whims of lunatics. After Dr. King's murder, Senator Robert Kennedy reacted in the vein

of a life artists, understanding that counter violence to avenge King's death would not only go against the ideals of his deceased comrade, but also violent reprisal would likely lead to more suffering. Kennedy stated,

*“This is a time of shame and sorrow. It is not a day for politics. I have saved this one opportunity ... to speak briefly to you about the mindless menace of violence in America, which again stains our land and every one of our lives. It is not the concern of any one race. The victims of the violence are black and white, rich and poor, young and old, famous and unknown. They are, most important of all, human beings whom other human beings loved and needed. No one - no matter where he lives or what he does - can be certain who will suffer from some senseless act of bloodshed. And yet it goes on and on and on in this country of ours (Robert Kennedy qtd. in Care2, 2010).*

Americans can remember to the words of Robert Kennedy and commit to ending the cycle of senseless violence. Kennedy too, was murdered by an assassin's bullet soon after he spoke these words. Life is fragile and the will to protect it requires a refocusing of rhetorical energies to the power of pathos. Even Bruce Lee understood that his techniques could not repel gunfire, but he grasped the potential for martial arts to transform relationships and individual mindsets toward a unified movement to change the nature of communication. The renewed sense of spiritual energy that Americans desired after struggling with the Vietnam War and the merciless killings of Gandhi, King, and the Kennedy helped open the door for Lee's mental and physical transformative approach to

martial arts training as a form of life artistry. Life artistry, enhanced through a different form of rhetorical art gained by combining the learning of the dojo with the wisdom of daily life (Lee, 1975).

## **Chapter Six: Transforming the Limits of Communication**

*“Calm is simply the state of being that is when nothing is “done” with the activity of interpretation to create uncalm. It is the same with relaxing, unity, grounding, centering, and so on. This “undoing” of the habit, though, is quite a practice and so founds this “way” of being. It is the uncovering of what is already so”*  
*(Ralston, 1989, p. 120).*

Eastern martial arts grounded in Taoist and Zen principles allow students to discover the immense persuasive power of self-control gained through acquiring higher levels of self-knowledge. Armed with increased self-understanding, the martial artist as life artist refrains from aggressively overreacting verbally or physically when situations become emotionally or physically difficult. Another vital benefit is the honing of emotional centeredness, a place where harsh words and cold stares do not intimidate or bring anger. The ancient Taoists and Zen Buddhists who helped shape martial arts were dealing with similar problems as Western people are today. They wanted to cultivate themselves mentally and physically while simultaneously finding a meaningful existence as integral members of society. Today, their legacy is threaded into hundreds of martial arts systems and many of these incorporate aspects of Western boxing and wrestling that

the Ancient Greeks refined long ago. Through martial arts engagement and cultivating the power of restraint, pedagogies for combating the fear of injury and failure teach students to manage difficult situations calmly and peacefully (Morris, 1998).

Esoteric Eastern martial arts and associated philosophies, which began as nontraditional ways of expression thousands of years ago, persist as extraordinary outlets for artistic expression and persuasive power. Through mental and physical engagement performed inside a disciplined respectful *dojo*, students cultivate a heightened sense of self-worth, empathy for others, and a calm approach to challenging situations. They also build physical endurance, increase coordination, and raise energy levels. These kinds of personal characteristics are essential in dealing effectively with stressful workplace environments (Kauz, 2005)

Within the contemporary workplace, the strict rules of engagement to deal with conflict are devastating to many lives. Re-engaging situations from the position of a martial artist as a life artist empowers individuals to find alternative ways to cultivate inner power; thus, outer manifestations such as being able to generate enough marketable goods and services under the watchful eyes of management are not overwhelming. Eastern martial arts can play a significant role in a peaceful, yet stimulating progression toward unifying attitudes and expanding rhetorical choice. Human expression transcends verbalization and writing, whether in the form of a Karate kick mimicking a crane's movement, a Kung-fu hand strike inspired by the praying mantis insect, or a calm executive attentively "listening" to his employees' ideas. In addition, since the social interactions of martial arts challenge the senses beyond the limits of most everyday

experiences, society can achieve wonderful benefits if more people could dedicate time to cultivating these capacities (Tomio, 1994, Burke, 2001).

Professional communicators who help organizations create and clarify information disseminated to fellow employees and other stakeholders have a unique opportunity to realize the workplace applications of martial arts. These specialized professionals train rigorously to unite disciplines and address diverse audiences by combining technical prowess, language skill, and personal wisdom. Those who find Eastern pedagogies based on principles of physical and mental development should inform their co-workers about it. Furthermore, they can ask managers and executives to consider implementing changes that encourage creativity possibly through martial arts and meditation classes during the workday, or offering benefits that provide stipends for self-defense or meditative physical arts. By example, they can apply invention and wisdom to their own workplace pursuits to improve the creative atmosphere of the workplace (Miller, 1989, Debs, 1993).

Martial artists usually practice the art of living alongside other important pursuits, such as doctors, lawyers, painters, postal clerks, and English professors. Hence, scientific, artistic and corporate paradigms already coexist and codetermine acceptable forms of expression and learning (Thralls & Blyler, 1993). The legacy of poetic expression stems from combined Eastern and Western heritages. Westerners who consult the wisdom of Zen and Taoism are simply reawaking part of their spirits that lay dormant in societies' constructs. Likewise, Westerners who participate in Eastern martial arts are reacquainting their consciences with the life enhancing energies of the past, rather than life ending hostilities. However, martial arts are not a panacea for the world's problems; the ability to

increase self-knowledge or to unify relationships depends on individual fortitude and patience to realize that rhetorical influence is often undetectable within the confines of objective reasoning (Kauz, 2005; Ralston, 1989).

Many organizations currently evaluate their potential and existing memberships in the vein of lab rat studies. Lack of adequate health insurance, invasive drug screens, and stratified personality hiring tests, are examples of organizations devaluing individuality. Looking to martial arts grounded in ethical conduct provides new models. The individuals augment the martial art just as the employees uplift the organization, but only if people can actually relax and energize their creative instincts. To disconnect people and train them to be machines goes against the Eastern principle of balance and harmony. Intersecting sincere martial arts participation grounded in Eastern philosophies with communication and professional conduct is a natural progression to regain a balanced universe to guide daily living and working. Obtaining self-knowledge requires a strong sense of personal awareness balanced with an understanding that even people who are unpleasant and difficult to interact with are interconnected to everything and everyone. Since the multicultural world is complex and often discouraging, obtaining paths to transcend the confines of emotional disappointment and threats of verbal and bodily kinds is a practical solution to engaging problems. Whether sources of suffering are either infinitely taxing or defeatable is ultimately up to the artist.

Martial arts, through the repetition and exploration of individual energies joined with, rather than against that of other people, becomes a source of stillness for aggressive tendencies and a source of vitality to gain new footholds in tolerating diversity. The practitioner in the *dojo* and the professional in the workplace cannot grow without the

energies of others impacting them. The artist practices *phronesis* by calmly following up a co-workers confrontational email request, or simply getting to work on time with a positive attitude. Likewise, they help their fellow martial arts student learn a complex fighting stance, apologize for an overly aggressive kick to the ribs, and congratulate another student for being a impressive competitor in a sparring exercise.

Martial artists strive to master self-control. It is a challenging, ongoing process and the conditioning continues outside of the *dojo*. The person who prides themselves on exercising skill, control and enthusiasm during martial arts classes in not accomplishing anything meaningful, if they are not applying similar approaches in their workplace. The achievement resides in mastering compassion and forgetting aggression in all aspects of daily life, thus, becoming a life artist. Since the Western mindset has trained people since childhood to stand up and fight when they feel threatened or disrespected, Americans especially, can benefit enormously through the interactions of martial arts simulated self-defense and fighting exercises. The element of self-control guides the process wholly. Without respect and control, the art mimics a dirty street fight or unethical workplace activities.

Due to the rhetorical challenges of daily life people confront influences pulling them away from honorable core values. The key is to uncover a way to rejuvenate qualities such as compassion, patience, tolerance, and virtue that have been gradually eroded by obsession for material and egotistical gain. Martial arts values and workplace values are reciprocal; together they provide a fortress of tolerance grounded in values that are flexible yet firm. This paradox is appreciated through dedicated training of the mind

and body in order to transcend the fear of losing face or being judged by angry mobs as weak or passive.

Redefining what it means to defend yourself and fight back against misunderstood, unfair or dangerous forces calls for a new way of conditioning minds and bodies in order to cultivate new models of highly regarded people. The rhetorical power of pathos should be recentered within a state of inner calm and unpretentious confidence. The power of pathos is paradoxically cultivated in the exercises of martial arts. The amazing reuniting energies exchanged from student interactions, plus individual emotional and physical breakthroughs that are accomplished by transcending limited mindsets, allows the life artist to emerge.

*“ When I look around, I always learn something, and that is, to always be yourself and to express yourself. To have faith in yourself” (Lee qtd. by Little, 1996, p. 127).*

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