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## Rhetorical Roundhouse Kicks: Tae Kwon Do *Pumsae* Practice and Non-Western Embodied *Topoi*

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Rhetorical Roundhouse Kicks:

Tae Kwon Do *Pumsae* Practice and Non-Western Embodied *Topoi*

by

Spencer Todd Bennington

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy in Rhetoric and Composition  
Department of English  
College of Arts and Sciences  
University of South Florida

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pedagogy

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## Dedication

To Mike and Susie Bennington and the memory of Betty J. Todd.

Mom, Dad, Mama--if it weren't for you, I wouldn't be here today; I wouldn't be writing a dissertation at all. And, if by some miracle I did make it to this point all by myself, I would have quit a long time ago without your support.

I love you.  
Thank you.  
Forever.

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## Abstract

This study examines Tae Kwon Do practitioner manuals as sites for better understanding the way diverse rhetorics can become embodied through technique. This dissertation understands martial arts in a Foucauldian sense as rhetorical institutions which discipline practitioners both physically and ideologically. A theory of “embodied topoi,” a term coined here to describe the process by which cultural commonplaces are incorporated into a material, carnal, or performed identity is presented alongside a review of how athletic or martial bodies have been previously studied. Seven popular Tae Kwon Do technical manuals are analyzed for moments when 1. Commonplaces are described, 2. “Daoist topoi” are linked to specific techniques, 3. These “embodied *topoi*” are connected to inter/intrapersonal skill development. Results demonstrate that Tae Kwon Do *pumsae* were rhetorically invented to respond to various audience expectations about martial arts more broadly as well as political or social exigencies. Nearly all manuals featured explicit descriptions of underlying philosophical concepts to be embodied and a majority attempt to pinpoint these ideas manifesting in specific martial techniques. Pedagogical tools for helping first-year students (as well as writing instructors and administrators) develop those habits are presented in the conclusion alongside future research projects surrounding rhetorics of violence and the ethics of cultivating martial bodies.

## Chapter One

### An Introduction to Martial Rhetorics

#### Overview of Chapter One

The following chapter begins with an auto-ethnographic account introducing a discussion of the ways in which martial arts operate as both rhetorical practices and rhetorical institutions. Rhetorical practices can be described as purposive performances engaging with an external audience for a specific exigency. Rhetorical institutions, as conceived by Foucault, operate by discursively disciplining internal audiences as a means of control. My project offers one specific martial art, Tae Kwon Do, as an example of both. The chapter concludes by discussing how one artifact from Tae Kwon Do's rhetorical history, the *taegeuk pumsae* set, constitutes a viable object of study for rhetoricians, martial artists, writing teachers, and technical/professional communicators. In order to better understand this object of study and its relevance to the field of Rhetoric and Composition, I ask the following research questions in this dissertation:

1. What rhetorical frameworks underpin the practice of Tae Kwon Do's *taegeuk pumsae*?
2. How do Tae Kwon Do manuals describe the process of embodying these rhetorical frameworks through athletic habit-practices and in what ways do these texts link such training to the cultivation of inter/intrapersonal skills?

3. How can teachers of writing adapt this process of inter/intrapersonal skills cultivation to more successfully employ contemplative pedagogy through embodied technique in higher education classrooms?

### **My Favorite Suit**

In the past few years, as part of an effort to professionalize more fully, I purchased two suits, one navy and one charcoal, one for weddings, one for funerals--both for work. As a graduate student, this was a big purchase, despite my suit guy, Louis, saying I didn't just get a deal, "I got a *steal*." With a receipt in my new pants pocket documenting a purchase of over twelve-*hundred* dollars, though, it felt like someone else was doing the stealing. To Louis's credit, however, I did look good...damn good. But here's the thing--neither one of those suits are my favorite. Louis picked out three or four shirt and tie combos complete with pocket squares, new shoes, and a shiny belt to help diversify my wardrobe, to compliment the jacket he painstakingly tailored and pressed to fit my frame, but even when the look was complete with the most stylish accessories and lavish accents of a man who can afford to impress, it still wasn't enough to compare to my favorite suit--one that only cost me about fifty bucks.

I have many *doboks*, Korean for "uniform," that I wear when practicing Tae Kwon Do. They're all slightly different, marked with various insignia and logos from the many martial arts schools I've trained at or worked for over the past fourteen years, but they're all similar in a number of important ways. They're all white with black trim (a privilege for black belts), they all, except one, feature a tunic-style top with a large v-neck (a style

indicative of the World Tae Kwon Do Federation [WT]), and they all make me feel more powerful, more beautiful, than any other garment I've ever worn.

So why do I never wear it in public? Why do I put on a windbreaker every day before driving to the *dojang* (Korean for Tae Kwon Do gym) even in the humid heat of Florida summer? It's certainly not because of shame or embarrassment, at least, not for myself. As a martial artist, an adult who willingly participates in violent recreational activities, I've become well-attuned to the many misconceptions and cultural assumptions associated with East Asian martial arts in the West. Instead, I feel embarrassed for the big-truck country boys back home, the ones who wanted to pick fights with the "Karate Kid" stopping at Food Lion to get milk for Mom on nights after training—they'd mock him with poorly executed crane kicks in the parking lot, mouths filled with racist Bruce Lee onomatopoeic utterances, all because he didn't have a spare hoodie in the car to cover up his identity. I feel embarrassed for the many academics and intellectuals, who continue to perpetuate the notion of martial arts practice as a pathology, as a mental illness, one that indicates either sadism or paranoia and nothing in between (Bowman 2016). Above all, I feel a kind of painful empathy because I can remember a time when I too viewed the unfamiliar or unknown with suspicion or even ridicule—a time before I became enculturated into the world of martial arts. And so, even though my training has, at times, put me at odds with the conservative mindset prevalent in my Southern hometown or even the more traditional notions of what constitutes appropriate scholarship, that same training has helped me hone a receptiveness, confidence, and flexibility which enable me to view these disconnects as opportunities for intervention, moments where I can facilitate a coming

together of disparate ideologies. It's the marginality of martial arts and combat sports that's brought me here, to investigate the many ways the West has appropriated, dismissed, or misunderstood martial traditions, but it's the way Tae Kwon Do itself has transformed me to become a more mindful and considerate scholar that allows me to offer a new way of understanding these traditions as rhetorical practices, ones with far-reaching political and educational implications.

So while I still practice a type of modesty when wearing my favorite suit, my *dobok*, in public (partly out of respect for the uniform and partly out of a concern for preventing any sort of undue attention), I've resolved to wear it proudly in the form of my scholarship. Not as any kind of bellicose regalia, not to prepare myself defensively against an onslaught of misunderstandings, but as a way to start a conversation—a way to help people see a bit further beyond the margins. As such, I hope this dissertation invites many thoughtful questions about the role embodied rhetorics, martial arts, and mindfulness pedagogy can play in higher education and works toward bridging what have, for too long, been topics far removed from one another in the humanities.

### **Misconceptions and Revisions**

One of the more common misunderstandings is that martial arts, combat sports, or really any sport, are purely physical practices. This belief comes from a larger, more pervasive notion that the “body” is somehow separate from the “mind” and that something can, in fact, be *purely* physical; a belief that precipitates the “Cartesian anxiety” commonly underpinning Western thought (Bernstein 2011). The phrase “martial arts” in the United States, therefore, usually conjures generic images of kicking and punching, breaking wooden boards with your forehead, or some form of a

respectful bow--all physical practices. Beyond that, martial arts are usually placed into the same category as other types of after-school enrichment for children alongside band, ballet, and boy scouts, as the kind of activity (again, simply conceived as something for children to *do*) designed to foster a well-rounded child by way of a traditional humanities model of education. My project will argue, however, that the physical is always already inscribed with the discursive, frequently a rhetorical action, and can be intertwined with complex ways of knowing and feeling, ontologically, epistemologically, axiologically, etc. So, no matter the audience, martial arts training can have profound effects on bodily knowing as well as ways of interacting and communicating with the world.

This belief in bodily ways of knowing and the intersection of the athletic with the rhetorical was central to the teaching of rhetoric present in Ancient Greece as Debra Hawhee (2004) describes in her analysis of physical education in gymnasia like the *Lyceum*. Young men, citizens in training, would frequently learn the arts of boxing and wrestling in the same space that they would listen to Sophists discuss the five canons or uses of various commonplace arguments. It's no surprise, then, that common rhetorical concepts became understood through physical practices—like *kairos* as illustrated by the opportune timing to initiate a wrestling takedown (66). Additionally, bodies themselves and the way they performed in public, rhetorical situations also came to represent the overall cultural virtue of a person and, therefore, their propensity for being ethically persuasive. This is best understood in the transformative narrative often associated with the famous orator Demosthenes, a man who once suffered from a debilitating speech impediment and was ridiculed as a speaker. Over time and through

grueling elocution routines, he trained himself to physically overcome his stutter and secure a position as one of the most renowned rhetors in Greece (135). This kind of story indicates that there is a well-defined, reciprocal relationship between bodily training and rhetorical prowess, one that was seemingly taken as a given in the ancient world.

So why then, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, is it so strange to consider martial arts training as a component of rhetorical education, one that can help produce more socially and emotionally balanced citizens better prepared to engage in civic life? Part of this question has to do with the body/mind split resulting from beliefs about the corporeal and the cognitive popularized in the Enlightenment period, ones that, for a long time, dominated the scientific revolution in the modern era. It's worth noting, however, that this philosophy took greater hold in the Western consciousness because of its alignment with the Judeo-Christian belief in a body and soul—in most Asian cultures, the body/mind split is less pronounced because of the Daoist understanding of the many parts constituting one whole. It's in this way that Ancient Greek notions about the body are synonymous in many ways with modern beliefs in martial arts communities.

No, there's another issue at play here that, at first blush, makes martial arts training sound incommensurable with rhetorical education. The ancient Greeks not only believed in a more intelligent and rhetorical body, they also educated these bodies through athletic practices of their own cultural design. Boxing, wrestling, and pankration were all arts that the Greeks created for themselves (this is not to say they were the first civilization to do so, but, rather, that they did not import these activities wholesale from another society). When considering the kinds of activities that typically fall under the

umbrella of “martial arts” in popular usage, however, most people imagine Asian fighting systems, usually designed for unarmed combat. Because these arts have been thoroughly Orientalized, Othered, and ridiculed in pop culture for the better part of a century, it’s easy to see why they might not comport well with the more Occidental understanding of rhetoric, one that has only recently, by comparison, opened up to include traditions from non-western cultures.

As such, when asked to consider specific martial disciplines like Tae Kwon Do, for example, even the most well-intending friends seem to slip into a dreamy haze, one populated with vague shadows of Bruce Lee, Ninja Turtles, or Mr. Miyagi and his well-groomed bonsai trees. As Bowman (2015) explains, this is only natural given the amount martial arts traditions owe their growth, development, and rise to popularity in the West to media representations in film, music, video games, literature, etc. since the 1970’s. As he and other scholars of Martial Arts Studies advocate, one cannot begin to understand the cultural significance of martial arts without taking their media representations seriously as generative, recursive, and meaningful sources of discourse. And, make no mistake, “media” doesn’t simply mean the digital or the latest Tarantino flick, print media in the form of martial arts training manuals have a profound effect on public understanding. As Bowman (2015) describes in his discussion of *qi* and the belief that Kung Fu can facilitate the cultivation of internal energy, “even after bogus manuals have been exposed as complete fakes...The fantasies about the superhuman abilities of Shaolin monks caught on within China and never went away” (47-8). This is because distinct martial disciplines carry with them a host of cultural baggage, multiple ontologies, and various ideologies depending on the individual practitioner and the



history of the art and, sometimes, the narratives shaped or produced by media representations align more accurately with those factors at any given cultural moment than a more exact historical account would. Pop culture representations, no matter how frivolous (songs like “Everybody was Kung Fu Fighting” or the cartoon *Hong Kong Phooey*) make arguments surrounding martial arts in the West, how they should be perceived, what their aims are, who does and does not participate in these practices, etc. So, in my examination of Tae Kwon Do manuals, I understand them to be technical documents designed to help students refine their martial technique, but I also see them as rhetorically constructed for a particular audience for purposes beyond those purely pedagogical. It’s the rhetorical construction of these documents that then, in their own right, reshape the martial art itself.

An examination of how bodily techniques are presented within these written training manuals yields a clearer understanding of how discrete martial disciplines, like Tae Kwon Do, operate rhetorically in at least two ways:

1. **Martial arts operate as rhetorical performances impacting external audiences in different ways depending on the exigency.** Examples of Tae Kwon Do operating as a rhetorical performance for external audiences will be further discussed in this chapter in order to situate it firmly in rhetorical scholarship.
2. **Martial arts styles constitute rhetorical institutions disciplining practitioners through the use of internal rhetorics documented in**

**manuals and embodied in training.** Examples of the internal rhetorics present in Modern Tae Kwon Do endorsed the WT will be further theorized in Chapter Two and examples of handbooks operating as artifacts preserving these internal, practitioner-facing rhetorics will be thoroughly analyzed in Chapters Three and Four.

The main work of my project is to develop a nuanced understanding of how the technical writing present in Tae Kwon Do manuals instructs practitioners to embody philosophical values through physical practice, how these manuals help constitute the genre of “martial arts textbook” aimed at the holistic development of the student, and how, through specific generic features, they reflect the rhetorical aims of Tae Kwon Do as a larger institution. Exploring these questions will yield a broader conception of ways in which higher education pedagogy can continue to give attention to incorporating mindfulness strategies and forms of embodied knowing for students and faculty in a variety of disciplines. In addition, investigating the ways Tae Kwon Do functions as a disciplinary institution can provide critical literacy tools useful for martial artists themselves so that they might better navigate the ways individual *dojangs* persuade them (or others) to change, train, behave, or react--a particularly useful skill when many martial arts institutions forward hateful propaganda, racist or sexist attitudes, or encourage political violence (Zidan 2018).

In order to build towards this understanding of Taekwondo as a rhetorical institution, however, it is first important to understand the history of rhetorical performances which invented Tae Kwon Do as a discipline. This series of sociopolitical

contexts and exigencies all gave rise to multiple arguments ultimately defining and refining what we now know as one of the world's most popular martial arts. Examining these many points of argument in a brief rhetorical history of Tae Kwon Do will help exemplify how martial arts operate as persuasive performances for outside audiences, situate a discussion of Tae Kwon Do within the scholarship of rhetorical theory, and allow for a more in-depth discussion of Tae Kwon Do's practitioner facing rhetorics in Chapter Two.

### **A Rhetorical History of Tae Kwon Do**

In the West, the thought of the 1950's might conjure up images of Elvis Presley, Marilyn Monroe, or even some "Leave it to Beaver" style suburban aesthetic. But, the 50's were also marked by Red Scare, Mccarthyism, and the Cold War. It was a time of conspiracy, unrest, and distrust. In other parts of the world, the 1950's was still a decade of violence and desolation. This was true for the newly designated nation of South Korea, a country that had already been subjected to bloodshed, genocide, and colonialism for generations. Beginning with its annexation by the Japanese government at the turn of the 20th century, Korea bore witness to decades of radical political transformations culminating in its own fracturing at the end of the Second World War. In the years that followed, North and South Korea became bloody arenas where the conflict between Communist and Democratic ideals would rage on--a conflict that would lead to nearly 1.2 million documented casualties and countless missing persons (Lacina and Gleditsch 2005). By the time of an armistice in 1953, the war-ravaged South Korea was one of the poorest nations in the developed world (Moenig 2015). But, it was less

than two years later that South Korean hope and national pride would become embodied by a newly uttered phrase--Tae Kwon Do.

It was 1955 when the martial art of Tae Kwon Do was first named and honored as a distinctly “Korean” cultural heritage, a martial art designed to reflect the integrity, perseverance, and indomitable spirit of its people (Moenig 2015). But where exactly did this name and, for that matter, this system of fighting, come from? This process of naming was, itself, an act of rhetorical invention and, one of the first major ways Tae Kwon Do functioned as a rhetorical practice for external audiences.

Two years prior to a council of Korean martial arts masters recommending the moniker Tae Kwon Do, South Korean President Syngman Rhee watched a dazzling military performance presented by General Choi Hong Hi. General Choi described his company’s fighting art as one that was instrumental in countless skirmishes against Japanese forces in World War Two as well as the communists in the Korean War. What president Rhee saw, however, was an opportunity to bolster the strength of his new nation. Rhee told Choi that the kicking techniques reminded him of the *Taekgyeon* he remembered playing in his youth, a Korean folk-game composed of techniques useful in a stand-up leg wrestling contest, and that he was happy to see its resurgence. The problem was, in reality, Choi’s art was nothing like *Taekgyeon* at all, partly because it was designed to be used in combat instead of contest, and partly because it was in no way native to Korea.

The truth was, General Choi, like almost every other original Korean Tae Kwon Do master, completed his education in Japan where he studied *Shotokan Karate*, a style he brought back with him upon his return to Korea (Capener 2016, Moenig 2015).

But because of the political climate after WWII and the Korean War, this truth was not important. What was important to President Rhee was that the various martial arts *kwans* (schools) and their masters agree on a name for their art (which had several at the time) for the purpose of national standardization. In this way, Rhee's aims exemplified the kind of rhetorical work Anderson describes in *Imagined Communities* (1983). As Anderson described, the rise of a more modern, globalized society demanded that national identity began to rely less on arbitrary (and often shifting) geographical borders and more on cultural cohesion, shared traditions, and social connections. For example, I am American more for my love of apple pie and baseball than my residence in the continental US. To this end, President Rhee sought to create rhetorical linkages between his people, to invent new ways for South Koreans to see themselves as a cohesive, national community. Just as South Korea had new political borders which constituted a new sovereign state, it now also had a dividing line which, for the first time since the reign of the Goryeo dynasty in 918 CE, separated the homogenous Korean ethnic group (Nahm 1988, Seth 2016). This created an exigency for some kind of unifying symbol, something which would build up the national identity of South Korea while separating that national identity from the communists of the North. Choi's martial art could be this symbol of commonality, but not one of "common strength" if it retained the name of a long-forgotten Korean game to which it bore little resemblance, a name which would only belie the true combative power Tae Kwon Do inherited from *Karate*.

After much debate and many long nights at the *gisaeng* (Korean Geisha house), the original *kwan* leaders decided (or were strong-armed by General Choi) on the name

Tae Kwon Do for their fighting art. Contemporary practitioners will tell you that the name is comprised of three constituent parts: “*Tae*” which means “to jump or kick with the foot,” “*Kwon*” which means “to punch or strike with the hand or fist,” and “*Do*” which means “a way of life.” This definition is, in fact, correct in spirit, but as Moenig (2015) points out, it’s not exactly linguistically precise. Unlike *Taekgyeon*, Tae Kwon Do is not a purely Korean name--instead, its three parts are all derived from Chinese characters. While “kwon” and “do” were popular enough in other martial arts naming conventions (*quanfa*, *kwon-bop*, *judo*, *karate-do*, *aikido*, etc.), “Tae” was an outlier. In fact, the Chinese character “Tae” means something closer to “step on,” “trample,” or “stamp down” and is not related to the action of jumping or kicking at all. According to Moenig (2015), the “closeness in pronunciation between *Taekgyeon* and *Tae Kwon Do* was more important than its actual meaning for the founders” (49). This is, of course, because of the importance of political arguments being made through a kind of “invented tradition” instead (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983). Rather than suggesting Tae Kwon Do was a watered down version of a Japanese art or some imitation of Chinese culture, this naming convention allowed for the construction of a narrative history for Tae Kwon Do, one which would position it as the evolution of ancient Korean martial arts like *Taekgyeon*, *Subakdo*, and *Ssireum*, and thus, the continuation of a longstanding lineage of indigenous Korean martial prowess. This etiological myth would slowly become the accepted origin story for most practitioners and it’s been continually offered up as the official history of Tae Kwon Do by various publications and organizations like the WT as recently as 2013 (Moenig 2015, p. 29) In this way, Tae Kwon Do became the master symbol of “Korean-ness,” to borrow from Frank (2007),

and contributed to the strengthening of the South Korean national ethos by leveraging a narrative history of power.

The following are the most commonly reproduced images used to argue that modern Tae Kwon Do has millennia old roots in indigenous Korean martial traditions. First, the oldest of these and clearly features two combatants posing in some sort of physical contest. While this is legitimate evidence that there were forms of ritualized or athletic combat in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE, there is nothing tying this image to any kind of lineage connected to modern Tae Kwon Do technique.

Similarly, the second shows a stone relief dated around the 7<sup>th</sup> century CE featuring what appear to be two Korean warriors posing in a type of blocking position similar to what one might find in a modern Tae Kwon Do form. Because it's easy to see the resemblance in the technique, many authors of Tae Kwon Do manuals as well as Korean government agencies have used this image as official, historical evidence for Tae Kwon Do's indigenous nature. Similar to Bowman's (2015) point about Shaolin monks and superhuman martial abilities fueled by Qi energy, despite this archaeological "evidence" being thoroughly and repeatedly debunked, high ranking Tae Kwon Do officials continue to perpetuate the myth. The reasoning is simple: the narrative history of Tae Kwon Do developing as an indigenous art form, one that would eventually be practiced in secret in preparation for an anti-Japanese uprising is an attractive myth.

Finally, the last presents another highly appropriated image from a 1785 painting and its 1845 reprint. This painting is titled *Taek'wae-do* and, because of its phonetic similarity to Tae Kwon Do, its easy to imagine that the figures in the center are performing some early version of the modern art. In actuality, as Moenig (2015)

explains, Tae Kwon Do was named in such a way to sound similar to the indigenous folk game of Taekgyeon. Tae Kwon Do is derived from three Chinese characters whereas Taekgyeon is a word from the Korean language—the same is true for the name of the painting. This painting serves as visual evidence to back up the argument that President Syngman Rhee and General Choi tried to sell with their auditory camouflage in the 1955 naming of Tae Kwon Do.

Unlike Anderson's (1983) traditional, discursive methods by which imagined communities are unified (usually print, radio, and televised media), Tae Kwon Do served as a physical practice which was thought to exemplify some deeper connecting force, something more primordially entrenched in the Korean identity: indomitable spirit. This phrase would be codified in General Choi's first English Tae Kwon Do handbook in 1965 as one of the five tenets of Tae Kwon Do and represents something beyond simple perseverance (another of the five tenets) or the refusal to quit. Instead, "indomitable spirit" means something more akin to the inability to be defeated, a kind of immortality of strength which certainly would have appealed to Koreans after nearly five decades of violent occupation and Japanese colonialism ultimately culminating in the fracturing of their country.



In this way, Tae Kwon Do functioned as a rhetorical practice of “identification” in the Burkean sense, constitutive of a people joined not by arbitrary political lines or merely an ethnic background, but an inexhaustible spiritual energy which could transcend time, space, and national borders. It was this message that served as the subtext for Choi’s series of international Tae Kwon Do demonstrations beginning in 1959 and it’s still firmly habituated in the training practices of contemporary martial artists as evidenced by Graham’s “There is no ‘Try’ in Taekwondo” (2013). In short, this first era of Tae Kwon Do’s rhetorical invention and development served as an argument for Korean and foreign spectators alike that the South Korean nation-state was made up of a historically and inherently resilient people--one that can withstand the hardships of international and civil war as well as break concrete with their fists.

The first section of Tae Kwon Do’s rhetorical history focuses primarily on its invention and demonstrates a way of understanding martial arts as devices for nation-(re)building, “invented traditions” designed to create a stronger narrative/mythological history for a group, and rhetorical practices which communicate these “invented traditions” to outsiders through physical demonstrations. In order to maintain the integrity of this “imagined community,” however, Tae Kwon Do had to become institutionalized by the state so that it could effectively discipline practitioners through internal rhetorical strategies. My main argument in this project is to suggest that the *pumsae* operate as much more than just physical choreographies; instead, this type of training is a method by which institutions can ensure the bodily uptake of specific cultural arguments and, therefore, a means of controlling (at least in part) the physical,

emotional, and mental development of practitioners as rhetorical agents. If Tae Kwon Do failed to become a centralized institution, it ran the risk of remaining a fractured system of individual styles, one where martial arts students identified their practice as belonging to specific masters, lineages, or physical regions and, therefore, created rhetorical distance from other Tae Kwon Do practitioners, or worse, other South Koreans. Such was the fate of the many hundred Chinese styles of martial arts, ones which were constantly depicted as being in competition with one another, until, according to legend, Huo Yuan Jia founded the Ching Woo Athletic Association (an interdisciplinary gym hosting multiple martial arts schools) in 1910 (Judkins and Nielson, 2015 132). The South Korean government would have been well aware (as was the entire developed world) of China's 19th century reputation as the "sick man of Asia," and likely made organizational choices to avoid a similar image--one of these would be to create a nationally sponsored Tae Kwon Do association as soon as possible for the standardization of the art and the spread of Korean culture around the world.

It was in 1961 that the first of these organizations, the Korean Tae Kwon Do Association (KTA) would emerge to instantiate the art as a state-run institution, one with the power to physically and politically discipline its members<sup>1</sup>. The primary goal was to continue unifying the various *kwans* across the country by requiring that they all submit to the same accreditation standards. Tae Kwon Do, like many other martial arts, is based in a belt system, one which is designed to imitate progression through military ranks. Before the formation of the KTA, belt promotions would have been handled

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<sup>1</sup> Some sources say this was founded in 1959. It's also worth noting that in the early years of the KTA's formation, the organization was, for a short while, named the Korean Tang Soo Do Association, a sign that the adoption of Choi's name was not complete.

exclusively by the highest ranking “officer” in the individual *kwan*. This could result in a wide discrepancy of fundamental techniques being taught and tested, so much so that it threatened the cohesion of the would-be singular art. To solve this, the KTA required that all *dan* (black belt rank) promotions must be approved by their central command (Gillis 2009). This form of curriculum standardization was something that all later Tae Kwon Do institutions would adopt and, in most cases, these organizations focused on regulating one practice specifically: the performance of *pumsae* (forms or patterns).

*Pumsae* (also referred to in this earlier period as *hyeung* or *teul*) are choreographed combinations of individual striking or blocking techniques which emphasize specific stances, footwork, rhythm, power, and balance. These forms can be practiced alone and are similar in many ways to the concept of “shadow boxing” as the practitioner is to imagine facing off against an invisible opponent. While *pumsae* is a Korean word, forms practice is yet another method of training adapted from *Shotokan*, and, as such, it was something all of the original *kwan* leaders had been exposed to. As Moenig (2015) illustrates, many of these early leaders were teaching the Japanese *Karate* patterns to their Tae Kwon Do students in the 1950’s and 60’s until General Choi began creating his own. By the time General Choi broke from the KTA to form his International Tae Kwon Do Federation (ITF) in 1966, another set of forms (the *palgwe* set) were adopted by the KTA. By 1971 these were institutionally abandoned and replaced by the new *taegeuk pumsae* as the official forms for the newly founded WT. As one can imagine, were it not for the role of these governing bodies to designate which of these 50 plus forms were legitimized, no two Tae Kwon Do students could reliably recognize each other’s practice as belonging to the same art. But, why is it that of all the

many training aspects and individual techniques inherent in Tae Kwon Do practice, *pumsae* should be so strictly regulated? To help shed light on this question, it's necessary to examine how the two major sets of forms (those designed by General Choi and those designed collaboratively by the KTA/WT) function to mold practitioners toward different institutional aims for different rhetorical purposes.

General Choi began developing *pumsae* specific to Tae Kwon Do shortly after its rhetorical invention and, eventually, designed 24 forms (supposedly symbolizing the hours in a day, perhaps as a reference to Tae Kwon Do becoming a way of life instead of a hobby/isolated practice). These forms are all said to represent or symbolize an important moment or person in Korean history and, thus, offer something for practitioners to meditate on while rehearsing. President Syngman Rhee employed a similar rhetorical appeal when advocating for Tae Kwon Do's narrative history because it implies that the martial art has a connective tissue of "indomitable spirit" that can be realized through technical practice as well as leveraged to align practitioners more closely with a Korean ancestry of strength. Focusing attention physically on a bodily technique to facilitate critical reflection is not unlike utilizing a totem or prop during other meditative or religious rituals—consider the rosary as an example. Differently sized beads in a string pattern correspond to the types of prayers a practitioner is to recite and, thus, guides their spiritual reflection. Much in the same way, different combinations of strikes, blocks, and stances in formal patterns can be said to represent any number of important intellectual, historical, or emotional concepts. This belief in an active meditative state has its corollary in Eastern traditions as well. Consider the story of the butcher in the *Zhuangzi*, a peasant who, through the habitual and ordinary ritual of

carving ox carcasses, becomes one with the Dao. In this allegory, a perfect state of harmony is achieved not through the ritual power of symbolic objects like rosary beads, but from what we might call a state of “flow” during the repeated execution of a technically mastered bodily technique (Csikszentmihalyi 1975). Again, it’s clear that Choi’s forms are designed to promote a strong sense of national identity and to offer an entry point for practitioners to access the immaterial (spiritual energy, pride, nationalism) through the corporeal (regimented, repeated, physical practice of *pumsae*).

The *palgwe* and *taegeuk pumsae* sponsored and propagated by the KTA and WT operate in much the same way in terms of offering a method by which the physical body can cultivate the spiritual, mental, and emotional self, but they contrast greatly in terms of the philosophical content they represent. Instead of featuring 24 forms, the *palgwe* and *taegeuk* set include only 8 each. Again, though, this number is symbolic of balance and lifelong commitment (a symbol that will be further discussed in Chapter Two), but, these *pumsae* were not tied to Korean legendary heroes or historical periods. They were aligned, instead, with the eight principles of harmony derived from the Daoist cosmology found in the Chinese classic *I-Ching*, principles that, if realized and internalized through flesh, would lead to enlightenment.

Where Choi’s forms were designed with an older exigence in mind (unifying South Koreans), the forms adopted by the KTA and WT served a new rhetorical purpose for a different audience: international markets. Tae Kwon Do’s rhetorical history can be imagined as four distinct eras, each marked by various rhetorical practices aimed at specific external audiences for particular purposes as well as many institutional rhetorics aimed at disciplining practitioners inside the art.

As such, forms like Choi's would have been seen as having little appeal to non-Korean practitioners. By contrast, the *taegeuk pumsae* were positioned to become wildly popular in the West due to the sustained interest in Eastern philosophy brought on by the countercultural movements of the 50's and 60's as well as the more recent "Kung Fu Craze" directly resulting from Bruce Lee's 1973 blockbuster *Enter the Dragon* (Polly 2018, Bowman 2015). As a result, Tae Kwon Do received international popularity because of these forms, its contribution of high-flying kicks to popular visual media, and its radical restructuring of how martial arts functioned as combat sports--so much so that Tae Kwon Do sparring was accepted as a medal sport for the 2000 Sydney Olympics.

Importantly, while sparring changed dramatically in the period of 1973-2000 (Moenig 2015), the *taegeuk pumsae* have actually developed very little since that time and still remain as the official curricular standard by which Tae Kwon Do practitioners around the world are judged in order to achieve their first *dan* (official black belt rank). It is because of the stability of this form set, its importance in promoting the institutional values of Tae Kwon Do, and its preservation in various technical documents (practitioner manuals) over time that I have selected the *taegeuk pumsae* as my object of study to pursue a deeper understanding of how martial arts facilitate the cultivation of embodied rhetorical knowledge as well as inter/intrapersonal skills development in students of all ages and backgrounds.

### **Tae Kwon Do *Pumsae* in Relation to Rhetorical Scholarship**

I hope the value of and applications for this kind of embodied form of learning and adopting institutional values is self-evident, but it may still yet be unclear as to how

this kind of procedure aligns with existing scholarship in the field of Rhetoric and Composition or Technical and Professional Communication. Additionally, the exact process of how a body incorporates new rhetorical perspectives, fosters greater mental acuity, or develops a greater range of non-cognitive skills through regimented physical practice still needs further explaining. The remainder of this chapter will argue that Tae Kwon Do's rhetorical history extends from Chinese communicative traditions, particularly those espoused by Daoist ideology and illustrates a fairly common pattern of how martial arts institutions embody rhetorical arguments in the modern age. This will reveal a similarity between Tae Kwon Do and the athletic practices Hawhee (2004) describes, despite the two existing in different times, societies, media landscapes, as well as serving as conduits of rhetorical training from different cultural lineages.

The following literature review positions the analysis of Tae Kwon Do *pumsae* within the critical conversations surrounding non-western rhetorical traditions, embodied rhetorics, Martial Arts Studies, as well as various writing pedagogies.

The majority of scholarship in the study of Ancient Rhetoric focuses heavily on the Greco-Roman tradition and the democratic cultures which constitute a legacy for these civilizations. The issue with this, of course, is that there isn't one *singular* rhetorical tradition. The many voices within the history of rhetoric have often been categorized as alternative narratives to refigure the "disciplinary landscape" of ancient rhetoric (Royster, 2003). Some scholars are tilling new soil and pruning overgrown sections of the discipline's familiar and well-trodden garden (to extend Royster's metaphor), while other researchers are working to prove the worth of neighboring fields, plots of land long assumed fallow, even barren, by those content to remain on cultivated

ground. Lipson and Binkley's (2004, 2009) edited collections, for example, invite scholarship analyzing ancient Egyptian, Japanese, Aztec or other "non-Greek" rhetorics in an attempt to broaden Western academics conservative notion of "what counts" as part of the discipline. These neighboring plots can be found all over the ancient world, both before and beyond the Greeks, and their cultivation has become a crucial concern in recent conferences and publications sponsored by The American Society for the History of Rhetorics (ASHR), The Rhetoric Society of America (RSA), and the International Society for the History of Rhetoric (ISHR). As Xing Lu reminds us, "the study of *human rhetoric* is not complete if it does not include the rhetorical traditions of non-Western Cultures" (1998, p. 1).

More than just a latent effect of the critical-cultural turn in higher education or some type of obligatory revision of the canonical texts in our field, the investigations of various non-Western rhetorics in recent scholarship facilitates new kinds of research questions and promotes exciting interdisciplinary opportunities. My analysis of Tae Kwon Do *pumsae*, for example, draws connections between Classical Greek Rhetoric and its counterparts in the Ancient Chinese schools of thought permeating the Spring/Autumn and Warring States Period (roughly 722-221 BCE); specifically concepts which would become intertwined with various 19th and 20th century martial arts. While I hope these subject areas don't presently seem incommensurable given the recent surge in comparative scholarship, it was only a couple short decades ago that the mere concept of a "Chinese rhetorical tradition" needed to be defended against racialized and bigoted criticisms. Much of Lu's (1998) foundational monograph on Chinese Rhetoric from the 5th-3rd Century BCE, for example, is situated defensively in order to react



against a long history of Western scholarship that attacks the Chinese language for being “linguistically inferior” or “unsystematic or disorderly” (16). These linguistic critiques (Becker 1986, Bernal 1987, Northrop 1946) all culminate in the Western perception as espoused by Murphy (1983) that “neither Africa nor Asia to this day has produced a rhetoric” (17). In response, Lu systematically outlines five major schools of Chinese thought (Mingjia, Confucianism, Daoism, Mohism, and Legalism) in one of the first comprehensive overviews of a Chinese rhetorical tradition. This tradition is one that existed independently of dominant Western thought and one that reveals a great deal about the different societal contexts of Ancient China and Ancient Greece by contrast.

Comparing and contrasting Ancient Greek theories of language and persuasion with Chinese concepts can be a treacherous line of inquiry, however, as it can lead to reductionist conclusions. Moreover, scholars like those to whom Lu (1998) was responding were totally unaware of how their Orientalist mindset rendered them unable to see a rhetorical tradition that did not fit the Greco-Roman mold. In other words, rather than seeing something as different and worthy of investigation, these critics operated under colonial assumptions unchecked by the work of theorists such as Edward Said (1979) and, as a result, dismissed a cultural rhetoric they didn’t fully take the time to understand. Since the advent of post-colonial theory and critical anthropology, however, scholars have taken more care to closely observe cultural practices and discourses, thus leading to a shift from traditional “comparative” rhetorics to the growing interest in “cultural” or “non-western” rhetorics. Researchers like Goldin (2005), for example, build on the work of Gilbert Ryle and Clifford Geertz by advocating for a line of inquiry devoted to “thick description” in place of direct comparison, a tactic that served useful in

better understanding some of the nuances of Confucian rhetoric. I'll discuss the ramifications of this approach more in my methodology chapter but, for now, it's worth mentioning that the early 2000's featured many studies advocating for this kind of reading, one that Carol Lipson (2009) promoted in the introduction to *Ancient Non-Greek Rhetorics* as a healthy alternative to traditional comparative work.

A good example of this thick description method that informs my reading of Tae Kwon Do manuals is Combs's (2006) investigation into Daoist rhetoric. Combs focuses on the writings of Lao Tzu, Zhuangzi, and Sun Tzu, and takes great care to illustrate the sociopolitical contexts which made their writing so influential. Furthermore, when analyzing the rhetorical features of Daoist texts, Combs intentionally aims to build up what he describes as an understudied research area from the foundation instead of trying to connect it to more familiar Greco-Roman ideas. My dissertation will similarly construct a theory of Tae Kwon Do as a rhetorical system through its own terms, though, *not without* the help of some more familiar rhetorical concepts.

While I respect and agree with the many arguments about the pitfalls to traditional comparative scholarship (cultural appropriations, inaccurate translations, and narrow interpretations etc.), I don't fundamentally resist exploring connections between different cultures and their respective theories of language. This project, for example, will employ terms like *topoi*, *endoxa*, and *hexis* from Aristotle to bridge knowledge gaps between East and West and, most importantly, to use a familiar vocabulary for a predominantly Western disciplinary audience. These comparisons, when employed, should be thought of more as touchstones of recognition than any kind of direct parallel,

and they are certainly not some kind of attempt to validate less familiar concepts by likening them to more institutionalized terms.

What is worth comparing in more direct ways, however, is how the physical cultures of Ancient Greece, Ancient China, and various martial arts communities all intertwine language, the body, and the performance and/or embodiment of rhetoric. When discussing rhetoric in this project, I'll lean on Booth's (2004) definition of rhetoric as "the entire range of resources that human beings share for producing effects on one another." This description doesn't just allow for rhetoric to be more easily detectable in new places (like China, India, or Japan) but in new spaces or practices like prayer, meditation, or martial arts (Lyon 2009, Wolfe 2009). Importantly, Booth's definition of rhetoric does not restrict itself to public forums, democratic spaces, or speech acts. It is from this definition that I will theorize more fully in Chapter Two how *topoi* from Ancient Chinese schools of thought are embodied through various Eastern athletic or physical systems.

While this concept of rhetorical embodiment has yet to be fully explored from an Eastern lens, an exemplary model of this type of scholarship exists for the Western canon and serves as an excellent reference point for the major work of my dissertation. Debra Hawhee's (2004) *Bodily Arts* examines how Ancient Greek culture often treated the education of the body as synonymous with the education of the mind. This synthesis stems from the belief that physical prowess as well as mental capability were definitive signs of cultural virtue or, *arete*. If training in the rhetorical arts was a means to produce a valuable member of the polis, it was not simply limited to a training in speaking well. Instead, a holistic approach to education was employed as a means to produce a

virtuous and just person. As Hawhee points out, a citizen of the polis must exhibit a type of “bodily intelligence” that extends and adapts to a variety of new situations (11-2, 57-8). She combines the terms *metis* (usually translated as “wily intelligence,” derived from the name of Zeus’s first wife, a shapeshifter) and *hexis* (typically meaning a stable “state” or “disposition” maintained by a series of habits) to describe the Greek notion of developing a bodily habit-practice of mental and rhetorical flexibility, adaptability, and cunning (64). In this way we can see how concepts from rhetorical training become adopted by the body in practical ways, but the reverse was also true. Hawhee also describes how the conjunction of martial arts like pankration or boxing and philosophy lectures were reciprocally responsible for a development of rhetorical concepts like *kairos* (84). According to Hawhee, the Ancient Greeks viewed the kairotic body as one that, through training, was just as adept at countering a punch as they would be an argument. In other words, the Ancient Greek tethering of rhetorical theory and athleticism is, in many ways, a chicken and egg relationship. That is to say, one might ask which came first: the shoulder throw or the syllogism, the counterpoint or the counter punch?

The trajectory by which these concepts travelled is less relevant than the simple fact of their permeability between what might, today, be seen as entirely different learning environments. Ultimately these blended ideas of rhetorical and athletic training coincide in a theory of what Hawhee describes as *phusiopoiesis*, loosely translated as the “art of becoming” or the “production of one’s body” (151). This concept is what connects the ideas of *metis hexis* (a habit-practice of wiliness or bodily cunning) and developing a *kairotic* body (one conditioned to be reactive or timely) and it is the bridge

to the kind of self-improvement rhetoric inherent in Eastern martial arts training, one that I will continually return to in my examination of Tae Kwon Do *pumsae*.

The aim of this dissertation is to extend Hawhee's argument into Ancient Eastern rhetorical lineages and their symbiotic relationship with physical practices to reveal a similar means of cultural virtue production and holistic bodily/mind cultivation through martial arts. Several other rhetoricians have already expanded Hawhee's core concepts into areas of investigation more concerned with space/place, rhetoric *in situ*, or the role of embodiment in rhetorical education (Atwill 2006, Fredal 2006, Poulakos 2006), but none of these venture outside of Ancient Greek models. To engage more fully with theories of embodiment and performance, specifically in Non-Western traditions, I turn to scholarship in the field of Martial Arts Studies.

Composed of an interdisciplinary group of researchers ranging from anthropologists to philosophers to historians, the Field of Martial Arts Studies provides some of the most well-developed treatments of physical bodies and their interaction with various cultural epistemologies. My project is designed to connect these investigations of martial bodies to analyses of the rhetorical frameworks shaping their production. For example, while there are a handful of critical studies with Tae Kwon Do at their core, none of these focus on the cultural rhetorics influencing the technical writing found in *pumsae* manuals. Stuart Anslow's (2013) explanation of the ITF patterns is an admirable start to this kind of inquiry, but the text is riddled with folklore and nationalist mythologies much in the same way General Choi's original manuals were. This is not a critique of Anslow's research, rather, it is a means of reiterating the kinds of differences between the rhetorical aims of these older forms as compared with the *taegeuk* system I

discussed earlier in this chapter. Graham (2014) similarly analyzes ITF forms, but comes closer to a discussion of a rhetoric of “indomitable spirit” than a plain analysis of each individual pattern. In this way, her work is useful for better understanding the process by which the physical body adopts attitudes through technique. Despite their belonging under the umbrella term of Tae Kwon Do, these works are only somewhat useful as reference points because they are focused on entirely different objects of study from my own investigation. Moenig (2015) is one of the few authors to focus specifically on the development of the *taegeuk poomse*, but this discussion is ancillary to his larger argument pertaining to Tae Kwon Do’s development into a modern combat sport. In a more recently published article, however, Moenig (2019) revisits this discussion with more in-depth analysis of the political exigencies leading to the construction of this form set. Ultimately, however, even though this updated research corroborates some of my claims regarding the *taegeuk pumsae* operating as a rejection of Japanese influence, the main argument still focuses on the disconnect between forms training and sparring practice from a sports science perspective. Similarly, Martinez-Guirao (2018) discusses the philosophical and religious underpinnings of Tae Kwon Do and their material markers, but does not analyze technical documents or the ways in which practitioners actually strive to become the material transmitters of such belief systems.

In short, while there is an active community dedicated to Tae Kwon Do research in this field, there are no available discussions of the art as a rhetorical system. True, some scholars have explored the ways in which Tae Kwon Do has been marketed for intimidation or tourism (Gillis 2009) for diplomacy between North and South Korea

(Johnson and Vitale 2018, Kim 2018) or for grander ideals of world peace (Kim, Kim, and Kim 2018), but not the ways in which the institution of Tae Kwon Do operationalizes messages to its own practitioners about the well-being of their body, mind, and spirit. Therefore, my project will attempt to tread new terrain in the middle ground between Martial Arts Studies and Rhetoric, a space that has already started to become more explored in various scholarly circles researching Writing Studies and Pedagogy.

In the past ten years, higher education in general and Writing Studies in particular have come to adopt curricular aims similar to those found in martial arts education or other such contemplative practices. One of the clearest examples of this is the Council of Writing Program Administrators (CWPA) joint document, *A Framework for Success in Post-Secondary Writing* (2011) which identifies “eight habits of mind” necessary for all college students. These include “curiosity, openness, engagement, creativity, persistence, responsibility, flexibility, and metacognition.” Unlike skills students might be expected to acquire like “information literacy” or “critical thinking,” these habits of mind suggest more about a way of *being* than a method of *doing*. Therefore, the CWPA agrees that the holistic development and cultivation of students as human beings is at the core of teaching any kind of higher-level thinking or problem solving. This notion aligns with the “writing construct” as theorized in White, Elliot, and Peckham’s *Very Like a Whale* (2015) as it describes writing in terms of the cognitive as well as non-cognitive domains, featuring attention to inter/intrapersonal skills or attitude development.

This being the case, it should be no surprise, then, that various researchers in the field of Composition have drawn their own connections between martial arts or other

Eastern contemplative practices to their writing classrooms. For example, Barry Kroll, a long-time Aikido practitioner, applies lessons learned from his martial arts training to works like *Arguing Differently* (2005) and *The Open Hand: Arguing as an Art of Peace* (2013). Kroll uses metaphorical connections between Aikido and teaching writing to explain how the philosophies of both overlap in interesting ways. By simply using the language and physical examples of Aikido, Kroll manages to visualize concepts like empathy for his writing students that have real effects on their work (2008). Similarly, Wenger (2015) discusses the importance of understanding Composition students as “writing bodies” instead of just minds to be molded and how her practice of Iyengar Yoga influences her teaching. By recognizing the expectations students have regarding their college education, Wenger develops a writing process model in her class that includes breathing exercises, intention setting, critical reflection, and the practice of the CWPA’s eight habits of mind (2011) for the purpose of addressing academic, physical, emotional, and intra/interpersonal student needs. By taking this more holistic, contemplative approach to teaching, Wenger reports similar examples of freshman writers drafting much more thoughtful work than she had come to expect in the past.

My dissertation will build on this kind of work by offering real pedagogical implications for fostering inter/intrapersonal skill cultivation of writing students as well as instructors. These applications can not only be utilized by students in the way that Kroll (2008) and Wenger (2015) describe, but can help faculty develop more sustainable, contemplative habit-practices to improve their own teaching. It is here that my project will diverge from some of the previous scholarship focused only on student success and primarily in the field of First Year Writing. By investigating more closely some of the



scholarship on genre theory in the field of Technical and Professional Writing, a review I will detail further in my Methodology chapter, my dissertation will also help these scholars and practitioners see more clearly the need for a more refined attention to embodiment when conceiving of instructional materials, both inside and outside the classroom.

### **Aims for this Project and Chapter Overview**

While one project can't solve all the problems in all of the fields, it can certainly bring a variety of diverse disciplinary voices together for new conversation. It's my hope that this project will begin that work by connecting rhetoricians, martial artists, teachers of writing, and technical/professional communicators for the purpose of better understanding the body's role in their respective communities. This chapter has outlined how Tae Kwon Do, like all martial arts, has a rhetorical history, one that can be analyzed via a close reading of specific artifacts. My focus, specifically, is on the *taegeuk* pumsae and how they serve as a reaction to earlier nationalistic or foreign influences. In addition, I have introduced how these *pumsae* can be codified as performances of specific cultural or philosophical values, ones that have interesting connections to contemporary concerns in higher education. Because of this, the remainder of my study will explore this connections in greater detail.

Chapter Two will build the theoretical basis for my analysis by framing this project in terms of classical rhetoric, embodiment, non-Western rhetorical theory and Tae Kwon Do's commonplaces of argument which I develop as a theory of "embodied *topoi*." These embodied *topoi* are to be understood as cultural arguments incorporated into a material, carnal, or performed identity, which engages in a recursive relationship

between the individual, group, and/or community. Chapter Two serves as a way to bridge the theoretical landscape of Ancient Greece and the way Aristotle's concept of *topoi* has been interpreted at different points in history to an understanding of the body as understood through martial arts practice with its many non-Western rhetorical influences.

Once I've theorized the concept of embodied *topois* by synthesizing Eastern and Western notions of the body and its role in rhetorical education, I'll further explain in Chapter 3 my methodology for analyzing Tae Kwon Do manuals. This chapter will explain the rationale behind the manuals I've selected for examination as well as my method of data collection and interpretive analysis. I will explain how the process of data collection for this study is necessarily recursive and why I will take a grounded theory approach to how I choose to code the selected manuals. Furthermore, when discussing my method of interpretation, I'll explain how this work, on a larger scale, would help future scholars better understand the genre of the martial arts manual in general, especially those written for English-speaking audiences. Chapter Three will further discuss my plan for exploring these questions through auto-ethnographic data, a strategic sampling of Tae Kwon Do *pumsae* manuals, coding schemes for rhetorical features, and a grounded theory approach to data collection

Chapter 4 will report my findings by demonstrating how certain discussions of the *taegeuk pumsae* persist or evolve over time in the selected manuals. I will organize the collected data in such a way as to cogently represent the distinct *topoi* I find most prevalent throughout the study as well as the context in which they appear. This chapter will offer a preliminary discussion of general trends among the sample.

Finally, Chapter 5 will discuss the implications of my research, particularly as it has to do with the rhetorical and inter/intrapersonal training of students in higher education. With a focus on writing classrooms, I aim to extract some useful data from the way the *taegeuk pumsae* are presented to aid in producing classrooms that are driven by mindfulness as well as embodied or experiential learning techniques. Chapter Five will discuss in greater detail how these questions lead students and teachers of writing toward a more nuanced understanding of the body's role in the classroom, scholars of martial arts more toward a rhetorical understanding of physical practices, and technical/professional communicators toward a renewed sense of corporeal centrality in the genre of instruction writing.

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## Chapter Two

### Advancing a Theory of *Embodied Topoi* in Tae Kwon Do

#### Chapter Two Overview

The following chapter advances a theory of *embodied topoi*, a term I've coined to describe the process by which a body actively internalizes rhetorical features through physical exercises like Tae Kwon Do *pumsae* practice. Specifically defined, *embodied topoi* are cultural arguments incorporated into a material, carnal, or performed identity, which engages in a recursive relationship between the individual, group, and/or community. This chapter begins with an autoethnographic vignette revealing some of the ways such *topoi* are constituted in contemporary martial settings. This anecdote is followed by an analysis of relevant literature in the historical understanding of *topoi* and embodied rhetorics to better position the concept of *embodied topoi* in rhetorical theory. Finally, this chapter theorizes how, through the power of technique, habit-practices can lead to the transubstantiation of the discursive (in this case Daoist *topoi*) into something physical (the rhetorical, practitioner body).

#### **I'm not Street I'm Drug Free and Education is the Key!**

Technically, I started practicing Tae Kwon Do when I was about seven years old, but, in truth, I don't remember much about my training from that time. What I do recall is this: the *dojang* (Tae Kwon Do gym) existed above a Subway sandwich shop so it



always smelled like fresh-baked pizza. We had to wear uniforms with tops that wrapped around your body like a towel, ones that were only held together by a belt that was really hard to tie. I remember not liking how easily the top came undone because I was fatter than most of the other kids and ashamed of my body--I only took my shirt off in the stalls of the locker room. Instructors barked commands and all the other children seemed to move in unison whereas I was unaware of when to punch, what to say in response, and why everyone seemed to yell at random intervals. As one might expect, I lost interest quickly and didn't train there for very long.

Unfortunately for my own health, I never took interest in other sports or physical activities. By the time I was thirteen, a doctor told me that my triglyceride level was somewhere in the 230's, an extremely high number for an otherwise healthy kid. The overabundance of this particular lipid can signify the early onset of diabetes as well as indicate a higher likelihood of arterial hardening resulting in heart disease or stroke--all of which run in my family. My Dad, someone who has first-hand knowledge of these kinds of medical consequences, became determined to find some kind of activity that would help me lose weight and develop a healthier lifestyle. After nearly a year of trying various sports and exercises, he finally asked me one day, on the drive home from horseback riding, or canoeing, or archery practice..."what's something that *you* think you'd like to do?" And even though I was a little embarrassed to say it, I could sum up my desires in one word: "*fight.*"

As a surprise to no one, the overweight teenager had some emotional insecurities that often manifested as anger. The thing was, I rarely exhibited aggression towards others, especially not physically. Instead, I was always much more comfortable

taking out my frustrations in more self-destructive ways. But all that changed when Dad brought me back, full-circle, seven years later, to a different Tae Kwon Do school. This one wasn't located in a strip mall on Riverside Drive, it was Downtown in an area my Mom didn't feel safe driving in alone. This school wasn't filled with rows of neatly organized students moving in unison, it was packed with the chaos of full-contact sparring and the clamor of feet crashing into chest-guards. This was the *dojang* that fourteen-year-old me needed more than anything else.

Looking back, I see that Master Miller's Olympic Tae Kwon Do Academy was an important beginning not just for my physical/mental health or my journey to become a black belt, but in my development as a man, a socially responsible community member, and a rhetorical citizen--and I wasn't the only one. Adorning the walls of the studio were T-shirts with the slogan "I'm not street, I'm Drug Free and Education is the Key!" ones that many of the students and instructors owned and wore. In many ways, this was the personal mission for Master Miller's Tae Kwon Do school when he first started teaching at no charge in the basement of a local church. Despite my being young, white, and not fully a member of the same Danville communities Master Miller and many of his students were, I could still comprehend, at least on some level, the fate his training was attempting to protect us from. Given that the *dojang* stood adjacent to Section 8 housing and across the street from a plasma donation center, material markers and physical reminders of what happens when you walk a "bad path" were never hard to find. As a rhetorical response to these kinds of pervasive arguments in the lower-income pockets of our city, Master Miller cultivated young men and women to act as counterpoints, embodiments of alternative ways of performing identity in multiple contexts. In other

words, he taught his students to adopt and adapt to the kinds of commonplace arguments various stakeholders would engage in about their bodies: where they should reside, how they should move or become restrained, the limitations or affordances of their political and civil rights, etc.

This would be my first experience learning how to use my body as a means of altering my mind or emotional state--it was my first exposure to the process of embodying *topoi*. In this way, training with Master Miller starkly contrasted with my martial arts experience as a seven year old. The clarity with which I could see a larger rhetorical context to Master Miller's Tae Kwon Do provided me (and other students) with a clear purpose, audience, and exigency for training.

Despite it not always being rooted in a regimented habit-practice like the *taegeuk pumsae*, Master Miller's maxim certainly exemplifies the definition of *embodied topois* as a cultural argument incorporated into a material, carnal, or performed identity by engaging with a stereotype as enthymeme. "I'm not street" as a message on a t-shirt plainly refers to the body of the wearer, a body that may be visibly associated with any number of elitist or racist assumptions. Because of this, the term "street" as an adjective, needs not be defined. The slogan engages with a commonplace argument present in much of America, but especially pertinent in my southern-fried hometown: the classification of black bodies. "I'm not street" disputes geographical, epistemological, and constitutional classifications of such bodies:

1. **Spatially**, by rejecting “the streets” as a place of dwelling, activity, or employment, suggesting alternatives to ideas about where black bodies belong or originate
2. **Philosophically**, by rejecting “street smarts” as the exclusive way of knowing and suggesting “education” as an alternative method
3. **Ontologically**, by rejecting a “street body” as weak, chemically dependent, or damaged by narcotic abuse and, therefore, challenging the assumption that black bodies/minds are especially prone to such addiction

While my own path was not one walked by a black body, I felt the importance of this slogan and its application in my own life outside of Tae Kwon Do. Master Miller always told me to “fight smart” when sparring, a phrase that meant to wait for opportune timing, conserve energy, and to strategize more effectively than my opponent. In this way, he pushed all of his students to pursue that kind of “education” present in his slogan, particularly when in stressful or potentially violent situations. For me specifically, this process let me become a different kind of “drug free” by slowly ridding myself of the rage I harbored, and by teaching me to use my intelligence and develop self-control for the purpose of transforming destructive anger into a productive intensity.

The true work of my dissertation, therefore, is to further investigate the process by which slogans like Master Miller’s and their refutation of specific, localized, cultural arguments make their way from the t-shirt or the words shouted during a sparring match to the bodies of students themselves. How can a physical body enact, reflect, and

perform the same kind of message and engage in the same rhetorical situations as discourse or text? Furthermore, how can the actions, positions, and performances of such bodies function to facilitate a “recursive relationship” between the individual, group, and community members all connected by the same commonplace argument?

To answer these questions, I will first review some of the major descriptions and applications of *topoi* and “embodiment” in rhetorical history and theory. The remainder of this chapter will juxtapose the training regimen of the *taegeuk pumsae* set and its associated philosophical content with the literature on embodied rhetorics in order to theorize how these eight Tae Kwon Do forms can be understood as representing distinct *topoi* as well as facilitating their physical uptake.

### **Topos: Not Tiny Spanish Plates?**

To understand the concept of “embodied *topoi*” I propose in this chapter, it’s important to examine the widely used and appropriated word *topos/topoi* in rhetorical context. Aristotle described the concept at length, but failed to actually provide a clear definition of what exactly constitutes a *topos*, a fact that is particularly troubling given that the word can translate to mean “topic,” “theme,” or “commonplace.” Thomas Conley states that there “is a good deal of scholarly disagreement about just what a *topos* is and how it functions” (1994, 15). Nevertheless, the terms *topos* and *topoi* continue to be employed and debated in a variety of academic arenas.

What we can infer from Aristotle is that *topoi* are fundamental ways of forming logical inquiry, questions that can aid in the construction of a dialectic, or a type of reasoning “from opinions that are generally accepted” (Aristotle, *Topics*, 1.1). This notion of public opinion or commonly held cultural belief, a concept Aristotle would

name *endoxa*, is an important component for the understanding of *topoi* and how they function. In contrast to Plato and his belief that *doxa* (individual opinion) was the starting point for Truth, Aristotle saw the social connections between people's commonly held beliefs as more important places to leverage arguments (Hoffe and Salazar 2003, p, 35-42). In other words, the points upon which members of a community agree and disagree are more fundamentally responsible for constituting a social "truth" than any one idea held by an individual, no matter how virtuous, scientifically sound, or reasonable. This aligns with White's notion of rhetoric as "constitutive," a force which facilitates argument by allowing participants to see the ways in which they're dis/connected from one another (Sloane 2001, 616). Therefore, Aristotle's 28 lines of argument, his original list of *topoi*, function as "headings" which group together enthymemes shared by communities and are, according to D'Angelo's (2017) reading "the 'elements' out of which enthymemes are constructed" (202). *Topoi* can produce salient arguments because they operate as a base upon which a cultural superstructure of belief can take shape.

Other scholars similarly highlight the importance of *endoxa* when considering the role of *topoi* as Aristotle conceived them. Perhaps one of the cleanest definitions of this kind comes from Donovan Ochs who describes the formal topics simply as "relationships" (1969). Considering the example of Aristotle's formal topic of "opposites," Ochs describes how the *topos* functions not only to form a line of reasoning, but to establish a connective tissue between *endoxa* and argument.

The above example works to create an argument by providing the opposite of each claim's component parts and applying that scheme to a new topic. More

importantly, however, each premise reveals a culturally accepted truth or an enthymeme as unstated, agreed upon premise (temperance being aligned with goodness). Cicero's *Topica*, a later interpretation of Aristotle's *Topics*, offers a similar focus on the *topos* as a type of "container" one which collects a "reasoning process" or "a topical relationship" (Ochs 1982 p. 106-7). In this way, again, a *topos* demarcates what is shared between members of a particular community in terms of belief and, therefore, argument. According to D'Angelo (2017), Boethius is one of the first to state this idea explicitly in *Differentiis Topicis* by relating these "lines of reasoning" to maximal propositions (202). In philosophy, a "proposition" is any statement regarding truth or falsity. A "maximal" proposition, then, is one such statement of the utmost truth or falsity. These statements often look and sound like platitudes.

In the above progression, Boethius demonstrates how one might ask a question in such a way as to engage with the cultural beliefs about a *topos*, in this case "justice." He then provides a logical syllogism fueled by cultural beliefs (not all societies would agree that justice is a virtue for example) which leads to a general statement of belief, his maximal proposition. While it's hard to disagree with the proposition that the "species" will contain similar traits to the genus, it's important to note that this proposition was derived from more highly debatable premises and evidence. What this means is that if different cultures employ different *topoi*, or have different values regarding similar *topoi* (like justice) then other maximal propositions, other highly regarded truth statements, are likely to appear. Take, for example, the kind of Eastern koans or other cryptic statements that encourage meditation, even the ones featured in popular media like the 1970's hit television series *Kung Fu*. In the pilot episode, Caine

(David Carradine) asks his Master Kan (Philip Ahn) about whether or not he should ever “seek victory in contention.” By Western standards, victory could very well be seen as virtuous in the way Boethius describes justice. Therefore, it wouldn’t be hard to imagine a syllogism suggesting that victory is advantageous no matter the route. But Master Kan does not answer from this cultural perspective. Instead he replies “We know that where there is no contention, there is neither defeat nor victory. The supple willow does not contend against the storm, yet it survives” (Kung Fu). Master Kan’s answer illustrates a different *topos*, that of “survival” in place of victory. It’s not hard to see that his cultural beliefs align victory and contention with excessive force, ill-intentions, and certainly not virtue whereas survival through harmonious balance is something laudable. This example merely serves to show how cultural beliefs or *endoxa* shape not only the way people think about *topoi* but dictate the *topoi* that they commonly select in making arguments. Similarly, if these *topoi* change, the kinds of propositions or truth statements derived from them will change dramatically as well. This concept of shared propositions, either implicitly held or explicitly stated, figures greatly into my own understanding and employment of the term *topois* for this project and will be revisited when I further discuss the specific commonplaces in Tae Kwon Do manuals.

While the concept of *topoi* is stable after the Classical period, the theory surrounding it changed dramatically in the 20th and 21st century. D’Angelo (2017) ends his discussion of *topoi* as they filtered into the writing education models of British and American classrooms in the 18th and 19th centuries as ways to begin paragraphs (topic sentences) and organize the logical progression of ideas therein. While this might follow closely to the kind of functionality Aristotle imagined, scholars like Carolyn Miller (2008)



and Ralph Cintron (2010) seek to complicate this rather straightforward definition. Miller, for instance, questions the role of *topoi* in rhetorical invention, something my analysis will also consider when discussing the *taegeuk pumsae* as starting points for active meditation. She claims that *topoi* “aid in pattern recognition” and, according to Olson (2010), help “ground visions for the future on images of the past” (303). This indicates that *topoi* work to provide a kind of argumentative foundation for rhetoricians and, in my own study, martial artists, who seek new knowledge by first exploring well-trodden paths, exemplifying what Miller refers to as the “generative power of the familiar” (2008, 134). Tae Kwon Do forms ask practitioners to generate these new ideas from the physical familiar, the ritual performance. In this sense, *pumsae* can be understood more in terms of Cintron’s *topoi* as “storehouses of social energy” (2010). This phrase connects back, to Aristotle’s definition of *energia* as lively, physical force, a concept that Cintron argues is necessary in understanding the ability of *topoi* to “actualize” things or make them “appear to be engaged in activity” (101). If this is the case, then *topois* work not only to establish relationships (as Aristotle and Cicero demonstrated), to make explicitly visible maximal propositions or cultural enthymemes (as Boethius showed), or even to offer new ways of generating ideas and arguments (like Miller contests), but to offer a palpable, living, moving, dynamic proof that cultural arguments and their underlying premises constitute embodied realities and material consequences. This is to say that Cintron’s theory allows for a discussion of “streetness,” to use my earlier example, as a *topos*, not simply in discourse, but from the embodied reality of the martial artist wearing one of Master Miller’s t-shirts. The liveliness of such an argument is carried in and out of various rhetorical situations and shared with multiple audiences,

highlighting explicitly by means of a text as garment what is always bubbling up under the surface. But there exist other, less overt ways of granting *topoi* more dynamic energy without the use of such a prop or wardrobe, other ways of understanding *topoi* as “embodiable.”

My analysis of Tae Kwon Do manuals and their recurring *topoi* as associated with physical training will reveal the ways in which such material consequences might manifest in the development of one’s own body as a rhetorical citizen. I’m using this term loosely here to describe rhetorical citizenship as more than just government participation, something that extends to all facets of socially-conscious community interaction. The process by which this transformation or cultivation of an individual identity occurs is the disciplining that I refer to as *embodied topoi*, the action of absorbing certain rhetorical enthymemes as a component of institutional indoctrination. *Topoi* can be “embodiable” in other, perhaps more temporary ways as Olson (2010) describes in a study of “Strategic Indigeneity” in Ecuadorian politics. For Olson, a *topos* can be embodied when a speaker or writer claims to be a corporeal representation of the underlying cultural argument (in this case, writers identifying as indigenous Ecuadorians) for the purpose of adding rhetorical force to an argument and, quite literally, giving life to dialectic in terms of Cintron’s reading of *energia*. Olson’s study examines ways in which writers can perform an identity through text, but, in this case, the identity in question also happened to be an important commonplace argument: who counts as a native and what should become of them? Of course, writing from the perspective of an indigenous person and giving a life, a sense of energy, and a body to such a *topos* provides the speaker with credibility, but this identity performance

represents more than just an effective appeal. Olson describes such performances in terms of Diana Taylor's definition, suggesting they serve to "transmit 'social knowledge, memory, and a sense of identity through reiterated ... behavior,'" (Taylor 2003, quoted in Olson 2010). This "reiterated behavior" connects Miller's (2008) belief that *topoi* are inventive and "familiar" as well as Cintron's (2010) understanding of their "social energy" by describing the physical ways in which such performances can generate new knowledge. Understanding *topoi* as having the potential for this kind of performance leads me to share with Olson the claim "that commonplaces can be activated within bodies" (p. 303). To that I would add that, when activated, these *topoi* no longer exclusively connect premises and enthymemes, but individuals to groups and larger communities with shared systems of belief.

In the example I gave to start this chapter, Master Miller's Tae Kwon Do students trained to embody a particular *topos* or commonplace argument about their societal role and expectations. Engaging in training as a performance of reiterated behavior allowed these students to refine their own individual identity while simultaneously connecting them to a group of practitioners, ones that subverted cultural stereotypes rooted in enthymeme by the ways they conditioned their bodies to behave, move, and communicate in the outside world. As such, to incorporate the mantra of "I'm not street" into habit-practices inside and outside of the *dojang* is to complicate the implicit maximal proposition that "the way you look is connected to the way you think, feel, or behave" in such a way as to enliven arguments about positionality, privilege, and power in this country. While learned or trained habit-practices, those adopted from martial arts institutions, churches, military organizations or any other ideological community cannot

actually change the way people see race or ethnicity, they can alter what people might view as physical markers of class, education, and/or temperament. In this way, a casual observer might not consciously view one of Master Miller's students as a refutation of commonly held racist beliefs, but, instead, as a body presenting outlier data, physical evidence to the contrary of such entrenched beliefs. Furthermore, these students exemplify what it means to change their bodily performance to negotiate multiple rhetorical situations, a concept that has deep roots in the study of rhetoric. The next section will discuss a history of such rhetorical shapeshifting before returning to how contemporary martial arts operates as a transformative institution.

### **Let the Bodies Hit the Floor: A Rhetorical History of Flesh**

Rhetorical theory has a long history of considering the body's role in communication, argument, politics, and society. Again, looking back to Aristotle, the notion of *hexis* provides some particularly useful ways of considering the means by which *topoi* could become incorporated into the body. Like *topoi*, however, Aristotle did not provide a tidy definition of how he understood the concept of *hexis*, so generations of scholars since have theorized what all it could/should entail. Aristotle's usage, however, describes *hexis* as a non-temporary state of the body, one produced by habit, training, or prolonged experience. This is an important starting point for my study of rhetorical bodies because it implies that the body has achieved such a state over time and, thus, has transformed from whatever it may have been before. *Hexis* can be defined as a "possession" (Klein 1998), "state" (Rackman 1926), or even "active condition" (Sachs 1995). These three terms, and the many others that have been used (disposition, habit, a having, etc) all deserve specific attention as they each connote

different meanings. Klein's (1965) definition refers to Aristotle's explanation that *hexis* refers to the quality of having or possessing something intangible like knowledge, for example. *Hexis*, in this way, cannot be thought of as the thing possessed or the owner, but, instead, it is itself the "having" of a quality. This puts Rackman's and Sachs's translations into conversation nicely as the former's use of the word "state" reads as much more static than the latter's dynamic description of an "active condition." In other words, Rackman's use of "state" to describe *hexis* suggests that the "having" is some fickle binary of have/have not whereas Sachs forwards the idea of a process of obtaining/having/accreting/losing/not having. This process of obtaining, maintaining, acquiring, through "habituation" (Liddell and Scott 2009), is what most interests me about Aristotle's definition, however, because it suggests that one can improve not only their intelligence, but their moral character, through sustained, repeated, deliberative training. So, for the purposes of my study, I will begin with an understanding of *hexis* as a bodily state conditioned, maintained, or altered by repeated habit practices. This bodily state is not to be understood as simply physical (like muscle mass or a healthy constitution) but as something more entwined with the intellectual and emotional. While Sachs's (1995) definition lends itself to this concept nicely, it's Debra Hawhee (2004) who best describes the process by which a person transitions from one *hexis* to another.

It's this process of becoming something or someone new through physical training that lies at the heart of martial arts and athletics as rhetorical practices. Debra Hawhee (2004) describes this process with the term *phusiopoiesis*, "the art of becoming" or of "changing one's nature," a word derived from a Democritus fragment

(93). Likening this process to that of shaping iron in a forge, a metaphor borrowed from the unknown author of *Regimen*, Hawhee explains how Ancient Greeks viewed the body as malleable, something to be manipulated and fortified through agonistic trials, through cycles of physical pleasure entwined with exertion or even pain. In environments like the *Lyceum*, men trained their bodies and minds simultaneously as the architectural layout of the facility did not create arbitrary divisions<sup>2</sup> between the philosophers and wrestlers, the Sophists and Pankrationists, but, instead, constituted a space of gathering where athletic and discursive habit-practices could be linked--if not conscientiously, bodily (127-8). In this way, the corporeal training of rhetoric led to an institutionalized production of a *metis hexis* (57-8), a bodily intelligence marked by the ability to physically adapt or respond to changing situations. The term *metis* comes from the Greek goddess and first wife of Zeus who was the embodiment of wisdom and prudence, a shapeshifter. Her name has since been associated with a type of cunning or wiliness and attributed to great heroes like Odysseus, particularly when he tricks his adversaries by means of camouflage or disguise. To change one's nature toward acquiring a *metis hexis*, then, is to work towards obtaining the active condition of cunning, adaptability, and situational awareness. This process is rooted in an understanding of *kairos*, or timeliness, as a rhetorical imperative and the practice of crafting one's body to respond to opportune moments.

This institutional or authorized training in contexts like the *Lyceum* exemplifies how martial arts practices (in this case wrestling, boxing, and pankration) can become

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<sup>2</sup> The subsequent divisions of these multiple learning activities would be later opposed by Cicero and lamented by scholars like Richard Lanham and Bruno Latour who considers such disciplinary boundaries a crime of modernity (2000).

infused with rhetorical theory. Hawhee goes so far as to suggest that the combination of Sophistic learning and athletic training became a part of the *habitus* of ancient Greek citizens in training (13, 128). *Habitus* is used here in reference to Pierre Bourdieu's (2015) theory of the ways individuals form habits as responses to societal structures but, it's worth noting that *habitus* is also the Latin translation of the Greek *hexis*. In fact, Bourdieu's theory complicates *hexis* by suggesting that the habits individuals possess are comprised of bodily, mental, and emotional tendencies and that all of these take shape under the gravity of social structures. For Hawhee to make this claim, then, is to suggest more than just the nature of physical or educational habit-practices belonging to Athenian citizens, but to reveal some of the driving political, social, and cultural forces which forged these habits. Foucault, in *Discipline and Punish*, might call these forces, collectively, an "institution" in the same way I used the term to describe martial arts institutions in Chapter 1 (Foucault 2010). In the case of Hawhee's study, it's important to understand the *Lyceum* as an institution, not simply as a physical place or structure, but as a set of beliefs which allowed such a structure to exist in the way it did. Just as the institution of the "imprisonment" existed long before the modern physical prisons (and the new type of punishment they facilitated) in Foucault's example because "procedures were being elaborated for distributing individuals; fixing them in space, classifying them, training their bodies, coding their continuous behavior" we can understand the institution of holistic bodily education as predating the construction of such Ancient Greek gymnasia (Foucault 214). The *Lyceum* as an institution allows for the *Lyceum* as a facility to feature open spaces where teachers and students gathered, mingled, and shared ideas through physical performance. These repeated and codified performances

(wrestling, Sophistry, etc) with their “methods which made possible the net control of the operations of the body” might well be thought of as disciplines as Foucault defines them given their shared vision of bodies as “relations of docility-utility” (181). “Docility” is Foucault’s way of describing a body that is willing to be molded or shaped and relates to the malleability Hawhee describes from *Regimen*. Additionally, the “docile body” is one that is able to be transformed for the benefit of the State or for the institution in charge of shaping it. In the case of the *Lyceum*, the institution promoted the education of future citizens, men who would hold sway in political affairs. Foucault describes prisons as institutions designed to recast “delinquents” as rehabilitated members of society and armies as institutions designed to discipline men to be soldiers to protect the State. Understanding the purpose of institutions and their means of training is important in evaluating the virtue in the kinds of bodies they aim to produce. This is not only true for armies and prisons, but for any and all educational systems as well. The next section will examine this question as famously posed by Quintilian regarding the purpose of a rhetorical education from an ethical and moral point of view and compare this question to the aims of an education in a martial arts institution.

While Plato may have been the forefather of questioning the virtues (or lack thereof) of rhetoric, Quintilian is one of the first to give serious critical attention to the aims and ethics of rhetorical education as an institution by questioning what virtues or faults such an institution might engender in its students. In other words, Quintilian encourages us to consider whether or not it is desirable or just to produce a *metis hexis* in our students or if, perhaps, their education should shape them toward a different disposition. Quintilian added to the work of Cicero and other rhetor predecessors by



codifying their work into something more akin to modern day lesson plans designed to teach the art of communication in multiple contexts. Underlying this rhetorical syllabus, however, was a belief that rhetoric's chief aim should be to produce a "good man speaking well," one who persuades effectively because their communicative ability highlights and bolsters their trained virtue. Lanham (1993) responds to this by discussing whether or not a "good orator" must be a "good man" in contemporary humanities education models (155). Essentially, Lanham reminds readers that much of the history of rhetoric is filled with a "weak defense" to this claim underscored by a belief in an *a priori* Truth that communication can be in dis/service of (160). Instead, a "strong defense" sees rhetoric as generative in itself and truth as more relative, socially agreed upon, and changing in response to the "social drama" (187-9). With this in mind, it's useful to reconfigure Quintilian's question about rhetoric specifically and (of institutions generally) as less of one about their nature as good or bad and more of a question of what/who these institutions seek to *produce*. My analysis of the *taegeuk pumsae*, then, will engage in a discussion of why these forms are a "means of correct training" in service to the institution of Tae Kwon Do as well as what these regimented habit-practices produce in the docile bodies of practitioners and if that is something which could be judged in comparison with other authorized/institutionalized educational values, particularly those found in writing pedagogy. Of course, this production of one's self in a disciplinary context and the accretion of "virtue" or approved institutional values is, according to Aristotle, useless without attention to action or the *energeia* that Cintron (2010) invokes. This means that such learned behaviors, education, or moral virtues must be put into practice and shared socially in order to obtain meaning. Therefore, in

the next section, I will demonstrate how martial arts training not only facilitates the *phusiopoiesis* that Hawhee (2004) describes, a process of transforming one's *hexis*, but how this process is realized publicly and socially in terms of Bourdieu's notion of *habitus*.

It's important to remember that *topoi* are inherently connective and dialogical, so the embodiment of them through disciplinary training is not something which simply changes the *hexis* of an individual, but the way that individual interacts, communicates, and engages with larger groups and communities. In this way, the embodiment of *topoi* fundamentally alters their rhetorical *habitus* as Bourdieu describes it.

This process of a changing *habitus* is something discussed at great length in the critical study of martial arts institutions. Sanchez-Garcia and Spencer's (2014) *Fighting Scholars: Habitus and Ethnographies of Martial Arts and Combat Sports*, is an edited collection devoted to this specific line of inquiry. As a whole, the book focuses on the theory of "carnal sociology" as advanced by Wacquant (2018), a methodology designed to explore *habitus* or the social world more "from" the body as he did in ethnographies from a south side Chicago boxing gym. Graham (2013), following this lead, describes the ways adult Tae Kwon Do students change their communication and behavioral habits inside and outside of the *dojang* as a result of incorporating specific martial arts mantras coupled with reflexive body techniques (RBTs). One of the repeated phrases she focuses on in her study is the often repeated "there is no try in Tae Kwon Do." To Graham, this insists that to "try" is to think, to premeditate action and, instead, Tae Kwon Do insists the training of more "natural" or automatic responses to stressful situations (72), a rhetorical feature that I will examine further in my own analysis of the

*pumsae* manuals. This concept is trained and embodied through exercises which operate as RBTs designed for the purpose of changing a person over time through repetitions and, therefore, creating a more reflexive sense of self (Graham 2013, Crossley 2005, Spencer 2009).

As a martial artist engages in cycles of experience, reflection, generalization, and application or educational *praxis* as described by Freire (2018) or Kolb and Fry (1974), they not only refine their physical ability, but their technique. In this way, I understand “technique” in the way Spatz (2015) describes it as “knowledge that structures practice” (16). Spatz further explains that “technique,” when discussed in this way, is knowledge embedded in practice and practice which creates new knowledge. Technique is recursive, dynamic, and iterative. It is also different from *habitus* because it is more epistemologically centered and less affected by socio-cultural forces. The method of tying a belt in Tae Kwon Do, for example, may vary from region to region, but, once learned, the practitioner's technique is not likely subject to change, despite a change in social setting. The body has both learned from and taught itself how to tie the belt and this knowledge will not be changed or taken so easily. In the case of Graham's (2013) example, technique is at work every time a student practices a training exercise like sparring drills. As Graham describes, more novice students become physically aware of their tendency to “try” as they are thinking more consciously about hitting and evading instead of re/acting bodily (71). When these students perceive their bodies as “slow” they are actually taking note of a lack of “body mind synthesis” as Alexias and Dimitropoulou (2011) describe it. Similarly, while still at a point in their training where the body and mind are not working together, the low-skill practitioner cannot achieve a

“knowing without knowing” as Crossley (2001, p. 122) calls it. But, through repeated conditioning and *praxis*, the refining of technique, and the formation of a martial *habitus*, students can eventually become master “technicians,” a term Graham’s instructor uses to refer to someone who embodies the intertwining of body and mind in Tae Kwon Do (74).

This “technician” does not just apply the principles learned from RBTs on the mat, however. Just like in the anecdote I began this chapter with, Graham relates how fellow Tae Kwon Do students frequently discussed moments where their body acted first, without hesitation or premeditation, in their own personal lives. These stories ranged from walking down the street with less fear to verbally confronting disrespectful neighbors in service of the community, but they all exemplify the learned behavior of trusting the body to act responsibly without over-planning. Additionally, these stories exemplify the same kind of concept Master Miller’s slogan and his mission in teaching it do: to embody Tae Kwon Do principles is to perform an identity in the world as antithetical to the “street” ethos. In other words, through technique coupled with institutional *topoi*, practitioners reflect rhetorical values of Tae Kwon Do as an organization in their own communities.

But what exactly are these rhetorical aims and institutional values for Tae Kwon Do? And where do they come from? As I discussed in Chapter 1, Tae Kwon Do as a Southeast Asian martial art exists firmly in a rhetorical tradition different from the traditionally canonized Greco-Roman history. Because of this, it’s important to look more closely at some particular features indicative of Eastern rhetorics before studying how these manifest through Tae Kwon Do *pumsae* practice.

## Eastern Rhetorical Traditions

If Ancient Greece serves as the de facto cradle of rhetoric in the Western world, one might well consider Ancient China as the wellspring of rhetorics in the East. Because of Xing Lu's (1998) landmark treatment of ancient Chinese rhetorics, contemporary theorists have a broader view of not only "what counts" but how different cultural traditions view language, communication, and persuasion. Although Lu describes in great detail five major schools of rhetoric in the Warring States period, my analysis of martial arts manuals leans very heavily on only two of these: Confucian and Daoist rhetorics. Because Tae Kwon Do is a Korean martial art, it is less likely to feature some of the discursive tendency of the other three schools Xing Lu describes--Mingjia, Legalist, or Mohist--as these would be more indicative to ancient Chinese texts. However, Korea traditionally had a very close relationship with China as a favored tributary state and, therefore, modeled much of its government, economy, and cultural traditions after the seat of the empire (Pratt 2013, Seth 2006). It is important to remember, as Steven Combs (2006) remarks, that Daoism specifically (though I would argue Confucianism as well) is a philosophy which pervades much of the Asian consciousness much in the same way that Judeo-Christian morality is ubiquitous in Western thought. Similarly, these philosophies no more *belong* to China than Christianity belongs to the Ancient Near East, not in our contemporary globalized culture anyway. With this in mind and with an understanding of the massive influence Confucian and Daoist philosophy had in most of Asia after their spread, it's plausible to assume that these ideological structures impacted the writing of Tae Kwon Do manuals and the transmission of embodied technique.

For the purposes of my analysis in Chapter Four, my investigation of Confucian rhetorics will be more limited compared to those stemming from Daoism. While Tae Kwon Do manuals owe a heavy genre debt to Confucian philosophical traditions, most of the passages which clearly exemplify these specific features are not directly tied to technical descriptions of the *Taegeuk pumsae*. Instead, many manuals feature codes of conduct, lists of acceptable behaviors, procedures for showing respect to others, as well as lists of rituals to follow during practice as separate sections of the text. These all are clearly tied together by a central Confucian beliefs in hierarchical systems of power, appeals to historical or genealogical authority, or in reverence of heritage and all demand rhetorical behaviors which evince such beliefs (bowing, abstinence from drinking, methods of speaking to elders, etc). Because these sections are, in most cases, far-removed from the descriptions of forms, however, any discussion of them will be limited to especially relevant examples. While I will not rule out a discussion of Confucian rhetorics in this dissertation, I will greatly stress the discussion of Daoist rhetorical features instead.

Daoism emerged in Ancient China by a conservative estimate around the 4th century BCE during the height of the Naturalist or YinYang school and perhaps as early as the 6th century BCE during the life of Lao Tzu, author of the *Dao de Jing* (Creel 1970). As a response to the brutal and omnipresent violence of the Warring States period, *Daoism* serves to put life and death in perspective as natural counterparts in a fatalistic philosophy to assuage many who, at the time, likely felt like they lived in an apocalyptic era. Instead of focusing on an afterlife or a mode of rebirth like other religions, Daoism describes an eternal harmony and continuum of life, one that is not

interrupted by death, but supported by it. As such, this system of thinking employs paradoxical language to subvert and often deconstruct dominant ideologies and offers what many view as a more mystical path (Lu 1998, Combs 2006). In contrast to Confucianism's attention to strict rules, hierarchies, and observance of tradition, Daoism advocates for the "natural" attunement to the universal pulse, for action without intention or non-action (*wuwei*), and for balance in all things.

Importantly, *Daoism* extends this understanding of balance to the human body as well in its ontology of a "one-world" system as Combs (2006) describes it. Essentially, a one-world system does not perceive reality as a set of binaries like the two-world ontology prevalent in a Judeo-Christian system, for example (life/afterlife, body/mind, good/evil, etc); instead, Daoism understands the world as a set of relationships. When discussing theories of embodiment, it's important to note that most of the Western world abandoned a view of an intelligent body as described by the Ancient Greeks after the Enlightenment period and Descartes' famous assertion of *cogito ergo sum*. Much of the Eastern world, however, still understood the body and mind to operate in tandem, one influencing the other in important ways. Of course, this is simply a means of explaining why bodily practices rooted in Daoist tradition are prime objects of study for rhetorical embodiment, not an attempt to Orientalize or, for that matter, Occidentalize. Scholars in the Eastern and Western traditions found themselves on either side of the body/mind split at different periods, despite major cultural forces working against them. Voltaire, for example, famously opposed Descartes (as did many critics) and there are multiple examples of East Asian philosophers who subscribed to some form of mind/body dualism (Lu 2017, Sockham forthcoming).

Nevertheless, as understood through primary texts like the *Dao de Jing* a collection of paradoxical poems, and the *Zhuangzi*, a series of allegorical parables, often satirical, designed to communicate model forms of behavior, action, and communication, Daoism advocates for synthesis, unity, and harmony of body and mind as well as other concepts Westerners might identify as polar opposites. Both of these texts borrow heavily from the cosmological treatise, the *I-Ching*, one of the Ancient Chinese Classics describing the universe in terms of natural principles derived from *Yin* and *Yang*. It is these fundamental principles from the *I-Ching* that appear in each of the *Taegeuk pumsae* manuals analyzed in Chapter 4. The instructions for embodying them are, as one might expect, rife with Daoist rhetorical features.

To better understand such features, one must have a basic grasp on the kinds of principles explained in the *I-Ching*. Originally used as a tool for divination, much in the same way as tea leaves or casting bones, the *I-Ching* functions from a numerical system featuring what's known as sixty-four hexagrams. These hexagrams are groups of six lines (broken or unbroken) and are formed by combining two of the eight trigrams (known in Chinese culture as the *bagua* and later in Korean as the *palgwe*). These *palgwe* (literally eight laws or commands according to Chun 1982) are consistently featured in Tae Kwon Do textbook descriptions of *pumsae* (and are even featured prominently on the South Korean flag). Each trigram represents a fundamental principle/force of natural energy. These eight trigrams are combinations of the symbols for Yin (the ultimate receptive force represented by a broken line) and Yang (the ultimate creative force represented by an unbroken line) and when all are combined they represent the supreme-ultimate (*Taji* in Chinese, *Taegeuk* in Korean or simply Yin-



Yang in popular parlance). The *Taji/Taegeuk* is represented as a complete circle, and demonstrates how the principles extending from it manifest in *Yin, Yang*, greater/lesser *Yin/Yang* (also known as the *sixiang* or “four symbols” usually related to the four seasons or four mythical beasts sometimes connoting virtues of union, discipline, harmony, and truth), and the *bagua/palgwe*. Any combination of two of these eight trigrams creates one of the 64 hexagrams used in the *I-Ching*. The eight principles of *palgwe* all have their own distinct name and identity and have come to be associated with particular symbols, attitudes, fortunes, behaviors, actions, and forms of speech in multiple Asian cultures. Trigrams are often visualized in Korean culture, especially in the practice of Tae Kwon Do. These trigrams and their corresponding metaphysical principles (Keon, Tae, Ri, etc.) are described in the earliest authorized English manuals as concepts to be embodied through *pumsae* practice. For example, the first form a practitioner learns corresponds with the first trigram, the unbroken lines representing the harmony and purity of heaven as understood through the *keon* principle. Through practicing this first form and meditating on the creative energy it is said to embody, a practitioner reflects on the basic techniques which serve as building blocks for the rest of their Tae Kwon Do training as well as the creative/constructive energy they harbor within themselves, the energy to recreate their own identity, for instance. My research examines the language used in such Tae Kwon Do manuals to describe this process of embodiment LeMesurier (2016) would refer to as a type of “genre uptake.” That is, in using learned body techniques as a method of incorporating new knowledge from experience, the martial artist is creating inclinations toward “rhetorical pathways” that they will, over time, favor over others (292). Theoretically, embodying all eight principles

leads the practitioner to a state of balance, or *oneness* represented by the totality of these principles in the symbol of harmony, the *taegeuk*. I'd argue that, more practically, attunement to these eight principles in one's body aligns the martial artist rhetorically with new communities because of shared *topoi*.

Each of the eight *taegeuk pumsae* has a correlating principle of *palgwe* associated with that form, the visual symbol associated with the principle, and what I label as the *topos* inherent in a discussion of such a philosophy (in this case primarily Daoism), and finally a small snippet of textual description from Grandmaster Richard Chun's (1982) Tae Kwon Do manual for context. Each of these principles is designed to encourage meditation on a specific way of being and acting in the world. In this way, Tae Kwon Do is a method of embodying these cultural *topoi*, allowing practitioners to enact arguments about what is "natural," harmonious, or in balance socially, politically, ideologically, or personally. As mentioned in Chapter 1, Tae Kwon Do schools officially sanctioned by the WT are required to test students on each of the eight Taegeuk *poomsae* before a student can apply for a black belt. As such, the eight Taegeuk forms usually correspond with a lower belt rank (typically designated by a specific color system). Most schools teach these *pumsae* as analogous to stages of development (life cycle of a tree, the rising and setting sun) which must be mastered and internalized as a prerequisite for black belt testing.

In other words, the eight *taegeuk pumsae* are not just individual trials to be endured, but rather, incremental steps toward a transformed self, a concept Foucault referred to as the process of "stone-cutting," or, accreting new knowledge through

technique bit by bit (184). This process is what allows for a student to slowly transform from the bullied Daniel Larusso at the beginning of *Karate Kid* to the two-time winner of the All Valley Karate Championship, and it's what allows the white belt struggling through the "thinking" about forms as Graham (2013) describes it to being able to be perform all eight on command.

Because of this pedagogy of accretion, Tae Kwon Do allows for complex cultural arguments to be adopted slowly and almost imperceptibly into the practitioner's *habitus* over time. As Bourdieu explains, *habitus* is a set of dispositions inculcated through practice over a lifetime, a belief shared by martial arts communities utilizing the "do" suffix to indicate an adopted way of life. To better understand how the incorporation of these *palgwe* principles relate to Daoist traditions, it's important to view them in comparison with some of the major features of foundational Daoist texts as scholars like Lu (1998) and Combs (2006) describe them. These major Daoist rhetorical features to be explored in a deeper analysis of Tae Kwon Do manuals and allows for a clearer understanding of some of the epistemological and rhetorical traditions from which the authors of these manuals are writing. Similarly, when connected to the *palgwe* principles attributed to the *I-Ching*, this lends perspective to the kinds of transformations taking place in the bodies of practitioners.

These various rhetorical appeals and *topoi* have been explored as they exist in a variety of embodied practices ranging from music (Bolles and Hunter 2012) to traditional transformations of military combatives to martial arts like Kendo (Tuckett 2016), to the contemporary manifestations of martial arts like Tai Chi (Wile 2007) and Aikido (Siapno 2012), or even the ways the enactment of such philosophies in combat sports (Back

2009) and the Composition classroom (Kroll 2008). My analysis in Chapter 4 will not only explore these Daoist rhetorical features in different spaces (the technical writing of Tae Kwon Do manuals) and practices (the *taegeuk pumsae*) but with a different theoretical lens as I describe the ways in which these features function as *topoi*, commonplaces of cultural argument fostering connections between groups and giving life to rhetorical interactions. Furthermore, I will discuss the process by which the *taegeuk pumsae* function as a disciplinary tool for the institution of Tae Kwon Do, conditioning and training the docile bodies of practitioners to adopt particular ideological stances through a series of reflexive physical techniques. Chapter 5 will then discuss the implications of this kind of *phusiopoietic* process in the world of Tae Kwon Do and other combat sports, addressing to the best of its ability the “Q Question” as Lanham (1993) articulates it. Finally, this discussion will lead into some applications for this research both in terms of higher education as well as for future research focused on embodiment in various instructional scenarios.

Before conducting this analysis and discussion however, I will, in the next chapter, outline my methodology by which I examine my sample of eight Tae Kwon Do manuals. This next chapter will explore the process of sampling and data collection, a grounded theory of coding for Daoist rhetorical features, a discussion of genre analysis across multiple scholarly landscapes, and a plan for visualizing textual data for discussion.

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## Chapter Three

### A Methodology for Analyzing Martial Arts Manuals

#### Chapter Three Overview

The following chapter outlines a methodological approach for analyzing martial arts manuals, their rhetorical features, and the generic conventions they help substantiate. Because of the scope of this study, however, the objects of study, sampling plan, data collection methods, and interpretive analysis offered in this chapter are limited to the parameters of my three research questions. As such, any discussion of larger theoretical concepts, like genre, will only be employed to serve the needs of these questions as they pertain to martial artists in specific Tae Kwon Do discourse communities.

#### Research Questions

My project is organized by the following three research questions:

1. *What rhetorical frameworks underpin the practice of Tae Kwon Do's taegeuk pumsae?*

This question interrogates how something so seemingly physical, like a choreographed set of fighting techniques, could be designed and constructed as a result of particular ideologies, political arguments, or cultural beliefs. As discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, it's clear that Tae Kwon Do's *taegeuk pumsae* were born from these kinds of social tensions and serve as artifacts of particular rhetorical exigencies. These exigencies

include, but are not limited to, the increasing nationalism in South Korea (and anti-Japanese sentiment), the political tensions between various Tae Kwon Do factions (specifically the KTA and WT's attempt to distance themselves from General Choi's ITF and his potential communist sympathizers), as well as the growing Western fascination for Eastern mysticism and the occult. In order to further understand exactly how these exigencies created a lasting imprint on the martial art, I will collect a sample of the technical documentation detailing how to perform the *taegeuk pumsae* present in seven Tae Kwon Do manuals. By closely reading these sections across various publication dates, I hope to find some commonalities that begin to concretize the genre of the WT Tae Kwon Do manual specifically, as well as the Daoist martial arts manual generally, as presented to English-speaking, often Western, audiences. This investigation into genre will not only reveal some of the formal elements which connect such manuals, but their similarities in purpose, audience, design, and the kinds of social actions that they promote or discourage.

2. How do Tae Kwon Do manuals describe the process of embodying these rhetorical frameworks through athletic habit-practices and in what ways is this training said to facilitate the cultivation of inter/intrapersonal skills?

This question is at the heart of my study because martial arts, in general, exist in an Orientalized world of myth, one that supports the belief that through rigorous training and meditation, a practitioner can fully transform. This belief is presented, reiterated, and celebrated in various sections of the Tae Kwon Do manuals in my study even, at times, intermingled with action-oriented, technical writing. Because of this, my analysis of these texts will compare the process by which martial artists cultivate

inter/intrapersonal skills (confidence, creativity, adaptability, etc.) to the processes outlined in mindfulness literature and other pedagogical theory in the fields of technical and professional writing, rhetoric, and composition. At the very least, this comparison will help to better understand if there are different methods being utilized in martial arts training as opposed to any other athletic practice (like dance or yoga for example) or other educational contexts for the purpose of developing so-called “soft” skills.

3. How can teachers of writing adapt this process of inter/intrapersonal skills cultivation to more successfully employ contemplative pedagogy through embodied technique in higher education classrooms?

This question is the driving force behind my study. Put more simply, I’m asking whether or not Tae Kwon Do (or, at least, how it’s presented and preserved in manuals) has any valuable pedagogical insight applicable to writing classrooms. Chapter 5 will discuss in greater detail the kinds of embodied learning practices already present in the field of writing studies, as well as techniques and tactics currently employed in higher education to facilitate the development of social and emotional skills. After a detailed analysis of this literature alongside my own sample of Tae Kwon Do handbooks, I’ll be able to describe how martial arts institutions discipline practitioners to conceive of their bodies differently and how this belief may lead to different results in terms of inter/intrapersonal skills cultivation. If there is a difference in approach, teachers of writing may be able to help their students conceive of their own writing bodies differently, thus changing what they originally thought of as possible in terms of skills acquisition.

## **Objects of Study**

The data necessary to answer these three research questions is found in a sample of Tae Kwon Do textbooks. These manuals are ideal for this study because they offer a fixed statement of belief and presentation of values concerning the *taegeuk pumsae*, data that provides invaluable insight into how Tae Kwon Do as a rhetorical institution wanted these forms to be thought of, practiced, and preserved in specific time periods. Alongside various Korean masters who immigrated to Europe and the United States after the 1953 armistice, these textbooks served as the chief authority for Tae Kwon Do technique and still do, to an extent. Despite the availability of information free online, many martial arts masters keep these manuals in their *dojang*, and many more new students are being taught to perform their first *pumsae* directly or indirectly by such documents. The difficulty in utilizing textbooks for this study, however, is trying to construct a reasonable sample size that will provide a quality set of data. By this I mean that it's important to seek out a collection of manuals that are not purely derivative of the first English-language manual for the *taegeuk pumsae* produced by the WT (1975). On the other hand, while it's important to look for outliers within the community, I must make sure that any manual I examine would have been treated with the same level of credibility within the community.

## **Sampling Plan**

In the time period of 1975-2017, approximately 375 texts were published and tagged with the authorized Library of Congress subject marker "Tae Kwon Do." Initially, this study's scope only wished to include Tae Kwon Do texts with the authorized tag of "handbook," "textbook," or "manual," but that total population is only around 30 texts.

While the low number is not of great importance for a non-probabilistic convenience sampling method, the fact that many of the most widely-recommended and popular Tae Kwon Do texts did not appear in this grouping of 30 was a troubling issue. Therefore, my sampling plan to whittle down the 375 publications incorporated other limitations. By referring to a 2011 poll conducted by *Totally Tae Kwon Do* magazine, I was able to better understand which texts were rated most highly by members of the discourse community. The polls selected the top 30 textbooks for Tae Kwon Do practitioners who identified as members of the World Tae Kwon Do Federation (WT) as well as the top 30 for those in the International Tae Kwon Do Federation (ITF). The magazine also listed seven separate texts endorsed by each international organization. By cross-referencing these lists with sales data from publishers and merchants like Amazon.com, I was able to select seven texts representative of the timeline and most likely to be points of reference for practitioners.

The number of seven texts allows for fair representation across a roughly forty year timeline as it can demonstrate trends as they develop over the evolution of the genre. Further decision criteria regarding which texts to focus on are as follows:

1. Does the manual focus on the *Taegeuk pumsae system*?
2. Do these texts specifically provide commentary on *how* to perform *pumsae* or do they simply describe/illustrate the motions and techniques?
3. Does the manual provide some kind of commentary connecting the performance of *pumsae* to metaphysical, cultural, sociopolitical, or other rhetorical frameworks?

The only texts considered which did not meet all of these criteria were some of those officially endorsed by the World Tae Kwon Do Federation. The reasoning behind this is that the absence of certain Eastern *topoi* in newer manuals may indicate a rhetorical paradigm shift worth acknowledging in the community (one that began to prioritize competitive sparring over individual *pumsae* practice).

### **The Sample**

The seven manuals serving as objects of study for my dissertation include:

- *1975 Taekwondo (Poomse)*

This is the first English-language Tae Kwon Do manual authorized by the WT. It was printed for and distributed at the second annual international Tae Kwon Do sparring tournament held in South Korea, one of the first major events to introduce Tae Kwon Do sparring as a sport to foreign nations. This text serves as the foundation to my study because so many of the other English language publications describing the *taegeuk pumsae* clearly utilize this as an ur-text. Despite this, this manual does not have impressive sales data (because it was the first of many authorized editions) nor does it appear on the list in *Totally Tae Kwon Do Magazine* (because the most current version was listed instead).

- *1982 Advancing in Tae Kwon Do*

This manual is one of the cornerstones of the genre and collects the thoughts and expertise of Grandmaster Richard Chun, Ph.D. Grandmaster Chun was one of the key figures responsible for the growth of Tae Kwon Do on the east coast of the United States and his detailed ruminations on the philosophy of Tae Kwon Do are matched by none. This manual has the third highest number of positive reviews on Amazon.com of

any instructional text pertaining to the *taegeuk pumsae*. This text was ranked 6<sup>th</sup> in the *Totally Taekwondo Magazine* reader poll of the top 30 Taekwondo books.

- 1996 *Tae Kwon Do: Techniques and Training*

Grandmaster Kyong Myong Lee served as Deputy Secretary General of the WT from 1991-99 and has also written extensively on Tae Kwon Do philosophy as well as sparring. Despite having one of the lowest ranks on Amazon in this sample, this text was ranked as #17 in *Totally Taekwondo Magazine's* poll listing the top 30 Taekwondo books.

- 1999 *Modern Taekwondo*

This text represents a pivotal moment in Tae Kwon Do history as it was released the year before the official debut of sparring as an Olympic sport. As such Grandmaster Soon Man Lee and Master Gaetene Ricke represent the combination of more traditional philosophical knowledge as well as the expertise of Tae Kwon Do as an ever-changing combat sport. This manual has the second highest number of positive reviews on Amazon.com of any instructional text pertaining to the *taegeuk pumsae*. This text is also officially endorsed by the WT.

- 2003: *Taekwondo: Traditions, Philosophy, Technique*

Marc Tedeschi's manuals are praised as representing the finest photographic detail in the genre of martial arts manuals. This text is no different with its hundreds of pages of beautiful full-page photos and illustrations. Of interest for this study, however, is the meticulous detail with which he discusses the philosophy underpinning *pumsae*. This manual was ranked 25<sup>th</sup> in *Totally Taekwondo Magazine's* poll of the top 30 Taekwondo



texts and features the 5<sup>th</sup> highest number of positive reviews from buyers on Amazon.com.

- 2007: *Complete Taekwondo Poomsae*

Kyu Hung Lee and Sang H. Kim present this manual which has become one of the most popular in recent years because of its detailed descriptions of the *palgwe*, *taegeuk* and black belt form sets. This manual has the highest number of positive reviews on Amazon.com of any instructional text pertaining to the *taegeuk* pumsae. This text was ranked as the #5 top rated book by readers of *Totally Taekwondo Magazine*. Note: all books rated 1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> were not technical manuals.

- 2016: *Kukkiwon Tae Kwon Do Textbook*

This final book in the study is similar to the first in that it was authorized and produced by the Kukkiwon, the official headquarters of WT Tae Kwon Do. The 2016 version is the most recent edition produced in English and represents the contemporary description of the *taegeuk pumsae*. Because it is printed in South Korea, the price of this manual is prohibitive and keeps it from being ranked on Amazon. That said, it is the most definitive print reference for the *taegeuk pumsae*.

## **Data Collection Methods**

I understand my data collection methods to be guided by a grounded theory approach. According to the SAGE Research Methods Handbook, grounded theory “builds systematic theoretical statements inductively from the coding and analysis of observational data, and the subsequent development and refinement of conceptual categories which are tested and re-tested in further data collection” (Bryant and Charmaz 2007). It is in this way, by constantly collecting and reassessing data, that I

built theory about how the typical Tae Kwon Do textbook communicates beliefs about the body and its potential to adopt new ideological, philosophical, and rhetorical stances through the habituation of technique.

Because the objects of study in this dissertation are primarily written by Korean authors for (or then translated for) English speaking audiences, they are rich rhetorical sites for investigating how Eastern rhetorics about the body are communicated to Western readers. In order to fully understand the various rhetorical strategies employed, I compiled a working list of the major Eastern rhetorical concepts (specifically those relevant to the Daoist tradition) discussed in the available scholarship (Jensen 1987, Mao 2007, Mao 2010, You 2006, Xiang 2016, Wang 2004, Jiang 2018, Xu 2009, Wei and Yong-Kang 2017, Chen 2005, Chuang and Chen 2003).

This body of literature can only partially populate a heuristic useful for fully understanding these manuals. This is, in part, because the handbooks so effectively synthesize rhetorical moves familiar to the Western canon with those which might seem less ordinary. Though there exists an abundance of scholarship pertaining to Ancient and contemporary Chinese rhetorical traditions, there are fewer sources on specifically Korean ones, and even fewer still discussing how Chinese (or modern Japanese) rhetorics influenced Korean discourse. Most importantly, however, is the issue of genre. Because Tae Kwon Do textbooks are often part technical document, part philosophical treatise, part exercise manual, and part lifestyle guide, they have their own distinct rhetorical features that may not appear frequently in other types of East Asian texts.

Because of these reasons, after the initial framework for data collection was established, I began a preliminary analysis of the Tae Kwon Do manuals by taking an

inductive approach. This is to say, I allowed the manuals to also populate the heuristic of Eastern rhetorical analysis as they present communicative strategies not yet covered in the scholarship. This follows in accordance with Goldin's (2005) "thick description" of Confucian rhetoric, a method of investigating cultures that are not necessarily those of the researcher. This approach to Comparative rhetorics (one first named by Gilbert Ryle and popularized by Geertz in his seminal 1973 work) is situated in scholarly conversation pertaining to the role of Western scholars in the study or presentation of Non-Western rhetorics, a major theme in Lipson and Binkley's (2009) introduction. Both Goldin and the authors featured in Lipson and Binkley's collection agree that it is often better for outside observers to simply report and describe as much as they can objectively to avoid pursuing individual interpretations informed by a singular worldview. With this in mind, I could only know what data to extract from these manuals for analysis by hand coding the most descriptive examples from the sample for distinct rhetorical features. These features helped to complete the data collection heuristic guiding my search in the remainder of the sample. In turn, the ways the other manuals align with or deviate from the initial heuristic helped to establish a working model of what the Tae Kwon Do textbook genre looks like.

After a preliminary coding of Chun (1982) it became clear that I may not need to look for all of the features I had collated. For example, it seemed unlikely that I would find a direct move to discuss the inherent problems of language or to "glorify the ugly/handicapped" that Combs describes as typical of Daoist rhetorics (2006). What I did notice however, is that each manual presented a different way of discussing the following three features:

1. Daoist philosophy (particularly the principles of *palgwe*)
2. Connections from that philosophy to particular martial techniques
3. Discussions of how that philosophy and technique is responsible for a type of moral, social, or inter/intrapersonal transformation in practitioners.

As such, I designed a way to record the extent to which these moves were explicitly stated (E), implicitly described (I), or not featured at all (N).

What is most important when considering this coding scheme is the simple binary of yes/no. Does the manual describe the principle of *palgwe*, does it connect this principle to specific techniques, and does it suggest in some way how the practice of such a form can impact the way a student of martial arts interacts with the world? But, in many cases, it was difficult to answer these questions in a simple yes/no fashion. For example, many manuals mention specific techniques in the forms as having some importance, but fail to fully explain why. For example, the front kicks are emphasized in form 1 and 2 but not always connected to the *topoi* of “creativity” or “joyfulness.” In these cases, I had to make a judgment call as to whether or not I could reasonably assume that the authors intended to make some kind of a connection. For example, some sources suggest that the high stances and front kicks in form one serve to embody the sky/heavens because the body is elevated throughout. If this seems like a reasonable explanation for why these techniques were emphasized in the description, I likely indicated that the connection to technique feature was “implicitly described.” Similarly, in the case of the front kicks in form 2, because of the position in the text where they were mentioned, it seemed reasonable that some authors may have been drawing a connection between high kicks and the kind of joy associated with kicking—

therefore, I described the connection to technique feature as “implicitly described.” In short, this code exists to remind readers that there is much grey area and room for interpretation when it comes to the analysis of these manuals and their instructional intent.

### **Interpretive Method**

While my preliminary approach to interpreting the data I collect is close reading followed by rhetorical analysis, this sample lent itself to some amount of genre analysis as well. The major differences between these three readings can be summed up as follows: a close reading aims to note particular details about style, tone, literary devices, and other unique textual features in a vacuum. The close reading considers the formal characteristics of the text itself. A rhetorical analysis begins to consider the text as part of a more dynamic network including a speaker/writer addressing a primary audience (with secondary and tertiary audiences conceived of) to achieve a particular purpose. This type of analysis pays more attention to some of the stylistic features noted in the close reading, but only in terms of how well they account for audience needs or achieve the author’s purpose. Genre analysis considers these rhetorical and stylistic features, but only inasmuch as they appear to be a commonality across various texts and authors that can be understood as related in some way. The texts I investigated are related quite specifically and can help better elucidate some of the common stylistic and rhetorical features of Tae Kwon Do manuals but, they also, despite being a small sample, reveal some larger similarities that may be true of the martial arts manual genre more generally as a type of Daoist rhetorical text.

The term “genre” can mean a lot of things to different scholarly communities, but what it means for this study is fairly straightforward: through an understanding what kind of rhetorical features exist in a Tae Kwon Do manual, I am now able to better understand which of these features are necessary, expected, or even inappropriate for the category of Tae Kwon Do manuals as a genre. This is important because it allowed me to establish which manuals are more derivative and which are more innovative, which operate as outliers and which are hailed as more authoritative texts. Of course, my sample size is small and purposive, so I don’t make any major claims about all Tae Kwon Do manuals stylistically or in terms of the social action they invite/facilitate--rather, I try to give insight into how martial arts manuals, specifically those following a Daoist rhetorical tradition, generally differ from other types of technical documentation or genres of user manuals.

One of the major differences stems from a philosophical belief about how knowledge is created. In the West, knowledge construction has become synonymous with research, looking outside of one’s self or individual experience for the purpose of determining a more empirically grounded truth. This is a cultural, social action, one that, in part, led to the typified genre of the technical manual, a text designed to teach a skill to a user. As Miller (1984) describes it, genres are regularized responses to repeated social exigencies that “serve as keys to understanding how to participate in the actions of a community“(165). In this way, the Western technical manual is the storehouse of knowledge, the reader performs the action of research in order to learn from the text, and the text itself resembles many other texts like it which fulfill similar purposes. The *Taekwondo* textbooks in my study operate as technical manuals in the Western sense

in that they provide information for practitioners who want to learn the physical movements associated with their martial art. Most blocks, strikes, and stances can be learned in this way. Additionally, various new terms of art, definitions, and cultural competencies can be learned in this way. For example, practitioners can read descriptions of the eight principles of *palgwe* in the *Taekwondo* manuals and develop a basic understanding of what these might mean philosophically. What becomes interesting, however, is when it becomes clear that the *Taekwondo* textbook operates differently from the technical manual genre familiar in the West. For example, because of the Daoist belief that knowledge can be produced internally through reflection and meditation, many *Taekwondo* textbooks suggest that the practitioner cannot truly learn about the principles of *palgwe* except through their own practice. This is to say that the true genre of the *Taekwondo* textbook is not only concerned with the technical instruction (teaching readers how to manipulate their hands and feet or providing them with a summary of Daoist cosmology), but with the facilitation of action (*pumsae*) which connects practice to a high-level cultural ideology (applying Daoist rhetorical principles in daily life) by means of critical reflection and meditation.

### **Limitations**

This study is limited in scope as I am only analyzing seven manuals for their generic features as pertaining to a fairly small percentage of their total content. Tae Kwon Do manuals are deeply rich textual artifacts with many facets, and I am simply looking at a single component of their overall constitution. Additionally, by declaring a small subset as representatives for the genre, I am removing quite a few interesting outliers from the discussion.

In addition, one might see my personal involvement with an organization like the WT as a conflict of interest, one that might prevent me from realizing an entirely critical stance with regards to my objects of study. To counter this, I argue that it's precisely *because* of my proximity to Tae Kwon Do and its affiliate professional organizations/authorized literature that I am able to analyze such objects with a critical eye, one able to discern the community mythos from the historical narratives. I see my researcher subject position as operating from within a community instead of trying to understand it from an external position.

Finally, my biggest limitation in embarking on this study is my inability to read or speak Chinese languages or Korean effectively. This severely limits my ability to engage with relevant scholarship published internationally pertaining to the development of Tae Kwon Do. To counteract this, I plan on working from translations and collaborating with native speakers if necessary. By design, this study focuses on English-language manuals written primarily by Korean authors to permit my access, but also because these are likely to be the richest composite of various cultural, linguistic, and rhetorical traditions.

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## Chapter Four

### Analysis of Tae Kwon Do Manuals

#### Chapter Overview

The following chapter opens with an anecdote regarding the role of symbol interpretation and reflection in Tae Kwon Do training. Next, I provide a brief analysis of the eight divination symbols (*bagua/palgwe*) originally described in the ancient Chinese classic, the *I-Ching*. After a discussion of how these symbols are frequently interpreted in Daoist philosophical terms, the analysis shifts to how these symbols have been applied to each of the eight *taegeuk pumsae*, the forms officially recognized by the World Tae Kwon Do Federation as prerequisites for black belt testing. This chapter offers a close reading of seven popular Tae Kwon Do textbooks from 1975-2016 by clustering each interpretation of the same form together. For example, all of the textbook descriptions of form one, *Taegeuk Il-Jang*, will be discussed together in order to provide a fuller picture of how the associated *keon* principle has been applied. Finally, this chapter will reveal the ways in which these Tae Kwon Do textbooks extrapolate lessons about self-cultivation and human development from these divination symbols and instruct students to embody these lessons in their martial arts practice as well as their daily life. It is here that the textbooks reveal themselves to be more than technical documents conveying martial techniques, but rhetorical manuals detailing proper behavior dictated by ancient Eastern cultural values, what I will call embodied Daoist *topoi*.

## Interpretation is Part of the Process

The year was 2007--I was a junior in high school and testing for my first degree black belt in Tae Kwon Do. This was a long, grueling test of not only physical stamina, strength, and technique, but of mental and emotional fortitude as well. I had to do things like break a cinder slab with my fist, perform four of the *Taegeuk pumsae* back-to-back, and spar two advanced opponents simultaneously. These tasks were challenging, but they don't fully encapsulate what it means to transition into the ranks of a black belt.

One of the tasks I remember especially well was a kind of oral presentation. I was asked to interpret the symbolism of the Korean flag for the audience of spectators present. I remember explaining the red and blue (*hong* and *chong*) parts of the center circle as representing the interconnection of opposing forces and how this symbol taught us to strive for balance in our lives. As examples of these forces I pointed out the four trigrams on the flag, symbols corresponding to heaven, earth, fire, and water. Finally, I explained that the white background was a symbol of purity that could only be achieved by the combination of all these many polarities, much like white light represents all the colors in the visible spectrum. When I finished, everyone nodded and clapped, and I felt like I had learned something about the world and the people in it through my years of practicing in that gym--not just the secrets of kicking a pad really, really hard.

After I passed my test and celebrated, my dad gave me a very special gift. At the time, of course, being 17 and all, I didn't realize how important it would become, but, that's life. He presented me with a book, a first edition copy of Richard Chun's *Tae Kwon Do* (1976). Dad explained to me that it was his Tae Kwon Do "training bible" in those lonely months out in California when he was a young man trying to find his way.

He told me that the book featured all the old *palgwe* forms and other valuable technical information and so much more. At the time, like an idiot, I remember thinking "well, that's great, but I can probably find all that on the internet if I want to..." I smiled, thanked him for what I assumed was mostly a ceremonial gift, admired the inscription he wrote on the dust jacket, and put the book away.

It wouldn't be until years later, a time when I needed some guidance to refocus on my individual martial arts path, that I actually had the bright idea to read the book. When I did, something amazing happened. I realized, for the first time in a long time, that there was SO MUCH I didn't know about Tae Kwon Do. This was exciting. Specifically, when I came across those funny looking trigram symbols again, the ones I had spoken so eloquently about during my 1st Dan test. It was because of Chun's manuals (1976, 1982) that I finally understood that there were eight of these symbols (not just the four on the flag) and each one of them corresponded to the forms I had learned. What's more, I came to understand that those forms and those symbols had philosophical lessons packed into them about how to better conceptualize my martial arts practice, how to better understand myself, how to behave in society, and how to make the world a better place.

If it weren't for Chun's books--if it weren't for my Dad--I may have lost touch with *Tae Kwon Do* forever.

But I didn't. Instead, for the past year or so, I've been doing extensive research trying to learn as much as I can about those trigrams, where they come from, how they became associated with Tae Kwon Do, and what it means to train one's body and mind to incorporate their philosophical meaning into everyday life. This kind of reflection is

important because it encourages students to constantly analyze and reflect critically on how the potentially violent techniques they learn through martial arts training apply to the way they view themselves, their interactions with others, and the world at large, thus instilling empathy and, perhaps counterintuitively, a type of peacefulness.

The following chapter provides an overview of the data I have extrapolated and analyzed from manuals like Chun's and puts this data in conversation with the Daoist rhetorical commonplaces I discussed in Chapter Two.

### **The *I-Ching* and Daosim in Korea**

As previously mentioned in Chapter Two, the primary lynchpin connecting Tae Kwon Do manuals to Daoist rhetorical commonplaces is the symbolism central to the Chinese classic *I-Ching*. This ancient text, originally a manual for divination purposes, became associated with Daoist cosmology around the 5th to 3rd century BCE when the works like the *Dao de Jing* and *Zhuangzi* were originally authored. The symbols and cosmology present in the *I-Ching* were foundational concepts informing many of the underlying concepts found in these works and continued to influence Daoist thought throughout its development. It would not be until the 7th and 8th century CE that Daoism officially made it to Korea courtesy of Emperor Gaozu, founder of the Tang Dynasty. Because of Buddhism's strong foothold in the Goguryeo and Bakjea kingdoms however, Daoism only truly flourished in the Silla kingdom due to the reception of the *Dao de Jing*. According to myth, the Daoist philosophy became a cornerstone of the famed *Hwarang* (flower knights) of Korean legend and laid the foundation for a type of masculinity defined by mental and physical self-cultivation. The principles of such self-improvement can, in many modern martial arts, be traced back to fundamental lessons

extending from the eight principles at the core of the *I-Ching*. This is to say that, for the purposes of this study, I identify the eight *bagua/palgwe* in the *I-Ching* as representing eight commonplaces of argument, eight *topoi*, that were eventually utilized heavily in the philosophical writings of the Daoist sages. These writings, along with other Confucian and Buddhist texts, went on to inspire the authors of Tae Kwon Do manuals to represent the *palgwe* as not simply commonplaces from which claims can be made but, rather, instructional tools that demonstrate proper moral, social, and inter/intrapersonal behaviors befitting of a martial scholar.

### ***Palgwe*: The Eight Divination Symbols**

The *I-Ching* is famous for its sixty-four hexagrams that are used for fortune-telling, but these hexagrams are just complex combinations of a type of binary code representing *Yin* and *Yang* (referred to as *Eum* and *Yang* in Korean culture). As explained in Chapter Two, *Yin* is represented by a broken line. This symbol exists as the purest representation of receptive energy and serves as the interdependent polarity to *Yang*, the pure creative energy. *Yang* is represented by an unbroken line. These two symbols serve as the base for all other cosmological symbols featured in the *I-Ching*, including the eight trigrams of *bagua/palgwe*.

The *bagua/palgwe* are simply groups of three broken or unbroken lines. Because there are two types of lines organized into groups of three, there are eight possible permutations. Each of these combinations has its own symbolic meaning derived from the combination of *Yin* and *Yang* energies. When these trigrams are combined in pairs, they form the hexagrams used in the *I-Ching*. Again, because there are six possible line positions in the hexagrams and two types of lines, there are 64 ( $2^6$ ) total combinations.



Each of these has an even more specific symbolic meaning which is why they can be easily interpreted to fit an individual's specific line of questioning or concern--much like the use of an astrological horoscope.

The bagua/*palgwe* are described in the Wilhelm/Baynes translation of the *I-Ching* as followed:

These eight trigrams were conceived as images of all that happens in heaven and on earth. At the same time, they were held to be in a state of continual transition, one changing into another, just as transition from one phenomenon to another is continually taking place in the physical world. Here we have the fundamental concept of the Book of Changes. The eight trigrams are symbols standing for changing transitional states; they are images that are constantly undergoing change. Attention centers not on things in their state of being -- as is chiefly the case in the Occident -- but upon their movements in change. The eight trigrams therefore are not representations of things as such but of their tendencies in movement (Introduction, 1990).

This description provides two very important pieces of information to keep in mind when analyzing the ways in which the *palgwe* are applied to *pumsae* practice. First, the translators emphasize that these eight symbols are meant to encompass all the natural phenomenon occurring "in heaven and on earth." This is to say that these symbols represent what the Ancient Chinese viewed as the totality of spiritual and physical states of being. This is important because it speaks to the overall learning outcome for practicing *pumsae* rooted in these principles--a type of balance and experience gained from attunement to the natural world. Remember, the eight trigrams serve as constituent parts of the Dao. Practicing eight corresponding *pumsae* as a means of

embodying these eight universal principles is, then, a method of exploring one's interconnectedness to all aspects of the cosmos. Additionally, ancient Chinese cosmology recognizes human beings as the lynchpin linking the energy of Heaven and Earth and Korean Daoism professes that human action is the way in which these principles are actualized.

Secondly, the Wilhelm/Baynes translation of the I-Ching emphasizes that the *bagua/palgwe* symbolize changing, transitional states. These principles are often described as having essences but, as Wilhelm/Baynes points out, this is not to say that they exist in any kind of fixed state. Instead, the *bagua/palgwe* are constantly changing, dynamic states with specific, though often paradoxical qualities. When considering how these principles are embodied through Tae Kwon Do practice, it is important to remember that *pumsae* are also dynamic combinations of fighting techniques and shifting stances, ones that correspond to the natural shifting qualities inherent in each of the eight divination signs. As discussed in the textual analyses in the next sections, many Tae Kwon Do master instructors comment specifically on how certain techniques are employed to mirror the physical representation of these natural dynamic actions. This philosophy is unlike other embodied Eastern practices (take, for example, certain styles of Yoga) that emphasize static poses. The difference can be ascribed to the rhetorical foundations of each practice: Tae Kwon Do is borrowing heavily from a Daoist perspective where enlightenment is found in a state of flow, in processes of motion with no resistance or friction--Yoga, by contrast, often prioritizes Buddhist beliefs in finding truth through silence, stillness, and the assimilation of the self into the universe.

Not only do the individual techniques in the *taegeuk pumsae* aesthetically mimic the natural symbols of their corresponding philosophical principle, but the proper execution of each form dictates that a practitioner actually traces the corresponding trigram symbol with their feet in a floor pattern as they move. In this way, a practitioner can be said to “compose” the trigram through motion and write a specific universal principle into being through action. This is accomplished by performing all the *taegeuk pumsae* in a general “I” pattern. Each individual line of the trigram is designated as broken or unbroken depending on the way the practitioner transitions between stances. If the martial artist performs a full turn by stepping forward or backward, the line is said to be unbroken. If the martial artist turns by simply pivoting the feet, the line is broken.

For example, if I were to follow the pattern above and transition from B to A, H to G, and F to E each with a full turn (instead of a pivot) I would be tracing the first of the eight trigrams (three unbroken lines). If I were to do this same exercise but transitioning with a pivot from point H to point G, I would have composed the second trigram (a broken line up top followed by two unbroken lines). Of course, any movement from C to D must be overlooked for these trigrams to take shape.

It is primarily through these two major components that the *taegeuk pumsae* operate as performances whereby a practitioner can be said to embody Daoist topoi. By focusing on the natural symbol associated with each of the eight principles and the commonplace for argument that those symbols represent, the practitioner can start to see their actions as aesthetically mirroring the behavior of fire, wind, or water for example. Not only this, but because of a carefully orchestrated movement pattern, the student performs a type of full-body calligraphy by tracing the corresponding trigram

lines as they complete the exercise. These two actions demonstrate the ways in which the eight topoi represented in the *palgwe* can be applied to action but, to be fully embodied, these actions must be accompanied by some sort of critically-reflexive process facilitated by an instructor, a descriptive manual or other interpretive text, or by the student's own meditation process. It's in this third step that the now symbol-laden movements can become connected to moral, social, or inter/intrapersonal action and thus become rhetorically embodied and projected into the world.

To some extent, Wilhelm/Baynes discuss how each of the *palgwe could be rhetorically embodied by providing the extended metaphor of familial relationships*. They explain that the eight signs “represented a family consisting of father, mother, three sons, and three daughters, not in the mythological sense in which the Greek gods peopled Olympus, but in what might be called an abstract sense, that is, they represented not objective entities but functions” (p. 42). Wilhelm/Baynes uses the word “functions” here to prioritize (inter)action instead of ontology. This is to say that the dynamic way in which these principles behave is significantly more important than what they fundamentally are or how they exist in the world. What's important to note here, however, is that even in its original state, the *I-Ching* always personified the principles of *palgwe* to some degree and ascribed these principles to a kind of appropriate social action or behavior by suggesting that each family member had their own set of social duties and obligations. This opens the door for institutions like Tae Kwon Do to eventually apply these same principles in the 20th century to models of behavior deemed fit for modern Korean culture. The trigrams for each of the eight principles, their corresponding natural symbol, and familial position are all organized.

## Tae Kwon Do Textbook Analysis by Trigram

The next section details the ways in which each of the *palgwe* symbols are described in the seven Tae Kwon Do textbooks comprising this study. I have organized this section by the eight principles so as to highlight the multiple differences in interpretation, language, and application used in my sample over time. This reveals a richer understanding of how specific Daoist rhetorical features in these texts contribute to a larger understanding of the *palgwe* as topoi to be embodied through martial practice. By grouping the analysis in this way, certain constants become evident and it is much easier to see a consensus among the master instructors and committees authoring these manuals regarding the ways in which Daoist principles are embodied through practice of Tae Kwon Do.

Before discussing the data in detail, however, it's worth understanding in a broader sense how the textbooks in my sample overlap, mimic one another, or differ. To accomplish this, each of the eight sections below are preceded by a table encapsulating the major rhetorical moves used in each manual. The main three features to be discussed from these tables in each section are:

1. The description of the corresponding principle of *palgwe*
2. The connections made between these principles and action/technique
3. The connections between symbol-laden technique and moral, social, or inter/intrapersonal action. (This may be obvious, but I'd appreciate a brief explanation of why these three features are included. This seems a place to reinforce the analytic connection between 1 and 2 and the final embodied topoi.)

These three features represent the process by which *topoi* becomes embodied and enacted in the world. The first understands the *topoi* in strictly discursive terms as commonplaces for argument about human nature, behavior, and morality. The second establishes links between these discursive features and specific physical actions, ones that are meant to be repeated and habituated in the bodies of practitioners. Such a connection between rhetorical concept and embodied knowledge is at the core of Spatz's (2015) definition of "technique" discussed in Chapter 2. The final feature marks the full transformation from *topoi* to embodied *topoi* by demonstrating how these habituated physical techniques and their associated epistemological and rhetorical knowledge shapes the way practitioners interact with others in the outside world.

These three features are coded as either explicitly written (E), implicitly described (I), or not mentioned (N). What is most important when considering this coding scheme is the simple binary of yes/no. Does the manual describe the principle of *palgwe*, does it connect this principle to specific techniques, and does it suggest in some way how the practice of such a form can impact the way a student of martial arts interacts with the world? But, in many cases, it was difficult to answer these questions in a simple yes/no fashion. For example, many manuals mention specific techniques in the forms as having some importance but fail to fully explain why. For example, the front kicks are emphasized in form 1 and 2 but not always connected to the *topoi* of "creativity" or "joyfulness." In these cases, I had to make a judgment call as to whether or not I could reasonably assume that the authors intended to make some kind of a connection. For example, some sources suggest that the high stances and front kicks in form one serve to embody the sky/heavens because the body is elevated throughout. If this seems like

a reasonable explanation for why these techniques were emphasized in the description, I likely indicated that the connection to technique feature was “implicitly described.” Similarly, in the case of the front kicks in form 2, because of the position in the text where they were mentioned, it seemed reasonable that some authors may have been drawing a connection between high kicks and the kind of joy associated with kicking—therefore, I described the connection to technique feature as “implicitly described.” In short, this code exists to remind readers that there is much grey area and room for interpretation when it comes to the analysis of these manuals and their instructional intent.

Major Daoist rhetorical features as listed include:

1. Nature: Appeals to nature, symbols from the natural world, or use of the word natural to describe motion or action.
2. Paradox: Use of paradox to emphasize the duality present in all things
3. Balance, Harmony: Any appeal to balance, harmony, a completed cycle, or a well-rounded approach
4. Wuwei, no-mind, or least struggle: A description of decision-making or action that is effortless, without resistance, or free from excessive thought.
5. Internal production of knowledge: Any suggestion that new knowledge can be produced internally through reflection, meditation, or consideration.

### **Form 1: Taegeuk Il-Jang and the *Keon* Principle**

Almost all of the manuals contain a fairly rich description of the *keon* principle before providing technical instructions for the *pumsae*. Additionally, since this is the first

form in the set, many manuals make broader claims about *pumsae* in general in these introductory descriptions.

Tedeschi (2000) describes the *keon* principle as “the creative” (614) and other texts elaborate on what this might mean. Two main natural metaphors are used to describe the *topos* of creativity/the constructive/the productive. The first is the image of “sunlight” accompanied by rain “which helps things grow,” a metaphor appearing first in *Poomse* (1975) and repeated in Lee (1996) as well as Lee and Ricke (1999). In this way, the natural symbol associated with *keon* (heaven, light, the skies) is interpreted as electromagnetic energy responsible for photosynthesis

The second metaphor often used is a little less directly related to the natural symbol of heaven/light. Beginning with Chun (1982) some later authors like Kim (2007) describe the *keon* principle as applied in form 1 as a “foundation” upon which students could construct themselves as a martial artist. While the premise of self-cultivation remains the same, the foundation metaphor misses out on the direct connection to any type of dynamic cycle, least of all one connected to the distant cosmos/heavens. To compensate for this, Chun (1982) incorporates two other connections to “light” and “heaven” not seen in any other manuals. First, rather oddly, he describes how *keon* once meant “dry” and since what’s dry is “light” it rises up to heaven. “*Keon* originally meant ‘dry’” he writes, “and since the dry is light, it floats up to heaven. Thus *keon* came to be identified with Heaven.” In some ways, this makes one wonder if Chun mistook the two meanings of the word “light” or if what he is saying is a legitimate historical development. The latter seems unlikely as there is no indication of the “dry” in the *I-Ching* or other Tae Kwon Do manuals of this sort. But, given Chun’s otherwise



impressive command of the English language (much more so than the authors of many of the other manuals), the mistaken use of a common word seems equally unlikely. Perhaps more interesting than this case of unlikely homograph is Chun's connection to the Genesis account of creation via God's iconic phrase "let there be light." Here, the text implicitly makes an argument about the interconnectedness of seemingly disparate cultures (a highly Daoist rhetorical feature remarking on the harmony of all things) while simultaneously offering a different take on the creative nature of light: its ability to reveal what was once concealed.

Therefore, the sample as a whole offers at least three different interpretations of how heaven/light can be understood as "the source of creation" (*Poomse*, 1975, 83) or the point from which "everything originates" (Kim, 2007, 108). Not only this, but many of the manuals remind readers implicitly about how to read the broken/unbroken line system of the trigrams by stating that *keon* is the "infinite concentration of Yang energy" (Chun 1982) or simply that the form represents 'Yang" (*Kukkiwon* 2016) thus reminding practitioners of the inherent Daoist connection. Finally, nearly all descriptions refer to creative energy in some capacity, usually in the context of a martial arts student beginning their journey of self-improvement and therefore re-creating their own identity.

The sample has significantly less detail explicitly connecting individual techniques in form 1 to the aspects of the *keon* principle discussed above. Instead, most make general statements about the collection of techniques featured. For example, Chun (1982) states that the form represents the "source of creation by presenting the most basic techniques," suggesting that all subsequent Tae Kwon Do training will develop from these. *Poomse* (1975) similarly groups multiple stances and

techniques together as “fit for beginners.” In other words, this form introduces techniques that will remain a part of the practitioner’s training routine well-beyond their preparation for a black belt rank--it will facilitate their growth. Kim (2007) makes a similar move by describing what he refers to as the “fundamental” techniques present in form 1 and explains that *Taegeuk Il-Jang* “helps the practitioner build a solid base for more complex techniques” (page). Lee and Ricke (1999) explain that various techniques are combined in *Taegeuk Il-Jang* so the “to help the student understand their [the technique’s] underlying philosophy.” In that last line, the authors have suggested that the actions themselves, the punches, kicks, and stances of form 1, have an “underlying philosophy” for the student to understand through physical practice, though they do not explicitly state what this is.

Other manuals in the sample use similarly general language but for the opposite effect: to distance the *keon* principle from the techniques. These usually take the form of subtle verb changes. For example, Lee (1996) describes *Taegeuk Il-Jang* as being “dedicated” to “the heavens and light” (48) whereas other manuals discuss how the form “applies” the *keon* principle to action. Even more clear, perhaps, is Tedeschi’s (2000) choice to use the word “associated” when describing the techniques in *pumsae* to the underlying Daoist principle. These words “dedicated” and “associated” imply that the techniques and principles have been categorized as related entities, but remove any possibility that the Daoist *topoi* could be embodied through performance. This reveals a lack of consensus regarding the importance of Daoist philosophy in understanding the significance of *pumsae* practice.

Only one text in this sample attempts to connect discrete techniques to the symbolism associated with the *keon* principle. In the last section describing form 1 in *Poomse* (1975), the authors explain that the two front kicks “characterize” the whole *pumsae*. This could indicate that these kicks serve as the physical embodiment of *keon* in this form, though this is not explicitly stated. Other martial artists have speculated that these high kicks coupled with the abundance of high, open stances in this form are aesthetically symbolic of the sky/heavens. If this is the case, this paragraph could be the first example of a sanctioned Tae Kwon Do manual instructing practitioners to embody a natural symbol correlating to these ancient Daoist philosophical principles.

The only other example worth noting here is that of all manuals sampled, Lee and Ricke (1999) are the only ones who implicitly describe the floor patterns and motion lines as tracing corresponding trigrams. This is accomplished through diagrams with no supporting text, but it’s more information connecting discrete movements and techniques to the principles of *palgwe* than most others.

Finally, form 1 offers the least amount of explicit connection between the *keon* principle and any kind of moral, social, or inter/intrapersonal action. The one avenue for embodiment here that recurs throughout the sample is a focus on creative energy as it can be applied to the self. For example, *Kukkiwon* (2016) succinctly connects the *keon* principle as “the beginning of creation” to form 1 as the beginning of “training in Taekwondo” thus, in its own terse way, connected the philosophy of *palgwe* to a practical lesson about self-cultivation and iteration for students. The intrapersonal action here, then, is closely aligned with what Hawhee (2004) identified as *phusiopoiesis*, the art of becoming or of shaping one’s own nature. Chun (1982) demonstrates through his

allusion to the biblical creation myth that this possibility for self-improvement extends to practitioners of all backgrounds and cultures, challenging students to see how the principles of *palgwe* can make sense in their own lives. In these ways, authors like Chun are appealing to the Daoist belief of the internal production of knowledge. While understated, this lesson of continual self-improvement through training is a foundational belief in Tae Kwon Do and may contribute to larger attitudinal shifts in students like humility, receptiveness to criticism, and personal responsibility.

### **Form 2: *Taegeuk Ee-Jang* and the *Tae* Principle**

The *Tae* principle is most often described as “meaning joyfulness” or “happiness” but manuals like *Poomse* (1975) complicate this understanding by suggesting that it’s also a “state in which one’s mind is kept firm and ostensibly [*sic*] appears gentle so that smile and virtue prevail.” Aside from the cuteness of that final phrase, this line is an important rhetorical move demonstrating one of the more prevalent Daoist commonplaces--arguing through paradox. Found primarily in texts like the *Dao de Jing*, the use of paradox as a rhetorical device reminds audiences that nothing exists in a pure or isolated state, everything is interconnected and operates within a harmony of opposites. Chun (1982) incorporates his own version of the paradox by stating that the *Tae* principle “represents the state of mind which is serene and gentle yet firm within” (page). The *Kukkiwon* (2016) description also repeats the paradox of “inner firmness and the outer softness” but does not explicitly connect this concept to specific techniques or behavior.

Most commonly, the *Tae* principle is aligned with the image of a lake, a body of water seemingly serene on its placid surface, but teeming with life deep below. Kim’s

(2007) description is the only one I've seen to use the image of the "river" as opposed to "lake" or another more still body of water. The rationale is the same in that the river supposedly "implies internal strength and external gentleness" but it's an outlier to be sure (118). Chun (1982) states that the *Tae* principle is symbolized by a "lake" and, curiously, that it is "not silent, but bubbling with joy." This "bubbling" quality seems out of place when thinking of lakes but perhaps aligns more with the image of a "marsh" which is listed in some descriptions of the *Tae* trigram. Importantly though, this effervescence is not just a textual oddity, but an image that connects the discrete techniques of form 2 to the concept of joyfulness.

While most of the manuals in this sample build on the paradox described above in general terms by suggesting that practitioners perform *Taegeuk Ee-Jang* "gently but forcefully" (*Poomse* 1975), or "softly yet firmly with control" (Chun 1982), Chun's manual describes most fully the discrete techniques which embody the "joyfulness" of the *Tae* principle. He notes that the shifts between lower and higher stances as well as the emphasis of the front kick allows the student to learn more freedom of movement in their lower body. Similarly, *Kukkiwon* (2016) does take note of the fact that "the *apchagi* (front kick) actions appear more frequently" than in form 1. This could be a reference back to Chun's description of these kicks allowing the practitioner to move more freely and/or to the concept of embodying joyfulness through actions that "bubble up" to the surface. Though not explicitly stated, I suspect that this emphasis on the successive high kicks in form 2 connect to the concept of joyfulness much in the same way as Bowman (2016) articulates in his explanation of why the iconic kicks of Tae Kwon Do are so much more fun than martial techniques of other varieties. In short, because

kicking high is such a novel practice, one that is at once challenging and awe-inspiring, the practitioner often can't help but feel a sense of happiness or accomplishment when performing one. Given this interpretation, individual techniques have become symbol-laden as the commonplace of joyfulness is described as embodyable through action.

Lee's (1996) description of the embodied paradox is a bit more detailed in that it extends beyond technique and into the realm of inter/intrapersonal relations. He writes, "a person who is filled with happiness is a person possessing inner strength as well as maintaining and conveying to others a sense of calmness and balance" (page). This explanation sounds much less contradictory than many of the other manuals and allows readers to better understand how to realistically embody a complex idea like the *Tae* principle in their daily lives. While other texts like *Poomse* (1975) attempt to make similar connections by saying that true joyfulness cannot be achieved without realizing or embodying this paradox of gentle/forceful action, they lack the clarity and depth of Lee (1996). Both of these descriptions reveal how the Daoist rhetorical features tracked through this sample often intertwine. For example, paradoxical images are most often presented for the purpose of reminding the practitioner to consider a metaphorical "balance" or to strive for a harmonious existence by acknowledging the connection and dynamism.

### **Form 3: *Taegeuk Sam-Jang* and the *Ri* Principle**

The *ri* principle is often symbolized with "fire and the sun" *Poomse* (1975, 93). This symbol is described as important because it reminds practitioners that man is separate from the animals because he knows "how to use fire." This knowledge provides physical "light and warmth" as well as "enthusiasm and hope." The *ri* principle is often aligned

with the concept of “variety” or “spontaneity” and Chun (1982) expands on the notion of “variety” by offering the image of the “flickering of a fire” (page). This image elucidates the constant dynamic nature of a symbol like fire and implies that, when fully realized, the *ri* principle facilitates “light-bringing” through liveliness and change.

Compared to other forms, many more manuals offer detailed analogies for how to apply the *Ri* principle to a *pumsae* performance. The description in *Poomse* (1975) segues seamlessly from one about literal fire to how this principle should be applied to the performance of form 3—with “variety and passion” (93). Chun (1982) is more explicit in the connection between how the cadence of this particular form is connected to the *ri* principle when he explains that form 3 is “filled with changing bursts of power connected with continuous flow of motion.” Additionally, Kim (2007) makes a subtle appeal to harmony/balance that relates back to this “flickering” image from Chun (1982) when describing the “ability to coordinate your body to create integral forces.” My best guess as to what these “integral forces” are is the dynamic defensive and offensive maneuvers presented in combination in this form that require the student to “use speed when defending and power in attacking.” In this way, Lee demonstrates that the concept of “variety” that other authors mention is, itself, an embodied combination of opposites (offense and defense). The *Kukkiwon* textbook (2016) also emphasizes the “counterattacks” utilizing combinations of blocks and punches as “characterizing” form three. Though it doesn’t connect it as explicitly, this is, again, an embodiment of that concept of “variety.”

The connections to social and inter/intrapersonal actions are varied throughout the sample but do appear fairly frequently. Some, however, seem to be fairly insular in

that they offer avenues for personal development within martial arts contexts. For example, Kim (2007) makes statements about where this form fits into the training sequence. He writes “at this stage, the more effort you put out, the more your enthusiasm burns.” The *Kukkiwon Textbook* (2016) explains that form 3 promotes, not enthusiasm, but a sense of “justice and ardor for training.” And Chun (1982) even suggests that the rhythm learned through the practice of this form is useful in developing “combinations” to be used in sparring. Regardless, the authors connect the symbolism of the form to some kind of larger effect the training will have on the mind of the student, even if it is only seemingly applied in future martial arts scenarios.

*Poomse* (1975) and Chun (1982) both fail to describe exactly how it should be accomplished, but they do offer the ultimate goal of attaining “briskness” as a learning outcome. Similarly, Lee and Ricke (1999) state that the techniques in this form “help the practitioner attain vigor” (63). This is similar to the “briskness” that others mention but is much more applicable to life outside of martial arts training. Instead of just developing speed or quickness in technique, Lee and Ricke (1999) suggest that this form will help the student develop a type of liveliness, one that I would argue transfers outside of the training hall.

Finally, Lee (1996) repeats the image of “fire” as well as the concepts of “warmth, light, and hope,” but he also includes an outlier paradox not featured in other manuals. Lee writes that fire also “awakens passion, fear, and panic” but does not include any additional information or ways to apply this interpretation. Perhaps he is describing what he understands as the totality of hot-bloodedness and cautioning the practitioner to be aware and reflect on these many facets, but this is just speculation.



#### **Form 4: *Taegeuk Sa-Jang* and the *Jin* Principle**

The *jin* principle is most commonly symbolized by thunder and connected to the dynamic event of a passing storm. For instance, Chun (1982) states that the *jin* principle “represents thunder, which, with lightning, evokes fear and trembling that reminds us that danger, like a thunderstorm, passes as suddenly as it comes, leaving blue sky [sic], sunshine, and rain-freshened air in its wake.” Lee (1996) also uses the thunder and lightning metaphor but does not develop it fully to the idea of a “passing storm.” Instead, he attempts a paradoxical interpretation by suggesting that while “thunder and lightning strike fear into people” thunder also “creates energy” (48). My guess is that this is to serve as a reminder to practitioners that emotions like fear also exist as a dynamic state and that this “energy” is the “calmness and courage” necessary to react appropriately in stressful situations. Kim (2007) describes the *jin* principle as representing “thunder, undeniable power, and dignity” (140). He then echoes Lee (1996) by suggesting that this power comes from “concentrated energy” and, as such, the movements must be “dynamic and focused.” The word “focused” here likely means some combination of quick and precise (like lightning). Additionally, the *Kukkiwon Textbook* (2016) reiterates Kim’s (2007) use of the word “dignity” and the focus on thunder being associated with “great power.”

The connection between the *jin* principle and the discrete techniques comprising form four is one that was most developed over time by multiple authors. For example, in *Poomse* (1975) the authors merely offer blanket cautionary statements like “Bakkat-Makki (outside block) is one of the difficult actions of Momtong-Makki (middle block); we must be careful in performing it.” Perhaps this statement and other bits of advice

describing how to “be careful” connect these difficult techniques to the concept of danger, fear, or “trembling” but this is not explicitly stated.

Chun’s (1982) attempts to make up for the 1975 manual’s lack of attention to connecting specific techniques to the symbolism of the *Jin* principle by reminding readers that the practice of *pumsae* should always be a type of meditation where one is constantly envisioning imaginary opponents attacking from all sides. What this does for the embodiment of the *Jin* principle specifically, is asks students to focus their concentration on the idea of countering real threats. In this way, the individual techniques of the form provide a mental simulation for the martial artist where they can envision themselves reacting calmly and bravely in times of stress.

Kim (2007) reiterates the complexity of these new techniques in the form (like *Poomse* 1975 and Chun 1982) and pays specific attention to the transitional movements between stances to prepare the student for “body shifting and coordination.” Beyond this, Kim makes another interesting connection between the bodily techniques and the symbolism of the *jin* principle when he states that the form should be “performed in a seamlessly successive manner just as thunder follows lightning.” This line lends credence to the theory that these forms were developed, in some ways, to mimic the natural state of the associated trigram symbols. Lee (1996) attempts a similar connection between the symbols of thunder and lightning to the techniques of the form by describing *Taegeuk Sa-Jang’s* “powerful and focused (quick) movements” but this is less explicit than Kim’s (2007) correlation.

The description of form 4 is one of the first to be so uniformly direct in naming the transferable lesson to be gleaned from focusing on the *Jin* principle. This trend begins

with *Poomse* (1975) as they describe the form as symbolized by “thunder and lightning” the *jin* principle “suggests that we should act calmly and bravely even in the face of danger and fear” (100). The authors extend this “weathering the storm” metaphor to illustrate that such dangers are only temporary states and that “blue sky and bright sunlight will appear again.” This emphasis on the temporary threat connects back to Baynes’ description of the *palgwe* as dynamic states and reminds Tae Kwon Do practitioners that even fear is interconnected with safety, contentment, etc.

Chun (1982) also connects the practice of the form to the idea that a student can learn to act calmly in the face of dangers “real or imagined” knowing that they are only temporary. The phrase “real or imagined” is an important addition that can easily be overlooked--Chun is suggesting that this form can not only help practitioners behave more calmly in dangerous physical situations, like a fight, but also during times of stress, anxiety, or emotional strife. Lee and Ricke (1999) as well as Kim (2007) also mention the necessity to “develop a calm mind that can stand strong in the face of danger” (246) but do not explicitly mention the kinds of “imagined” anxieties, fears, or dangers that Chun (1982) highlights. Instead, works like Kim (2007) and the *Kukkiwon Textbook* (2016) again connect the embodiment of the *jin* principle to a kind of preparation for sparring. As stated previously when these connections were made to form 3 and the *ri* principle, while sparring is an insular activity that stays inside the martial arts community to which the practitioner already belongs, it is, nonetheless, a social activity that offers a dynamic space for real enactment of these Daoist principles.

### **Form 5: *Taegeuk O-Jang* and the *Seon* Principle**

Form 5 is one of the starkest examples of where Daoist commonplaces can fail to translate well into Western understanding. The form is described as symbolizing wind. The image of wind is treated in *Poomse* (1975) as a paradox, something that can often be “horrible” like a “typhoon” or “tornado,” but something with a “true nature” that is “gentle” (106). Chun’s (1982) description repeats this paradox about and explicitly states that this idea “expresses the duality implicit in all the *Palgwe* forms.” To try and explain this duality, the 1975 manual offers an image of contrast in one of my favorite lines from the whole data set: “Spring breeze caresses weeping willow” (106). While this image is evocative, the authors do little to connect it to any subsequent lines or ideas. One particularly interesting thing Chun’s description does is further develop this line by adding “but the willow does not stop the wind, rather it bends willingly in its path.” Admittedly, the first time I read this line, I focused on the action of the willow itself and thought that this was perhaps an image of *wuwei*, the ancient Chinese rhetorical concept of “non-action” or “no mind” used to describe the kind of non-resistance and mutability prized in Daoist philosophy. Upon further examination, however, I realize that Chun is attempting to clarify the 1975 manual’s description by describing wind as “gentle but penetrating.” In other words, the wind follows its path and gets to where it needs to go with what both texts describe as “humility and good-natured actions” despite its potential energy of violence and destruction.

Lee’s (1996) description repeats the concept of wind having two natures, but instead of setting up the dichotomy of violent/gentle, he describes how wind can have the “power to build” by “dispersing seeds” and “scattering dark clouds” (48). This description omits the image of the willow and any direct mention of “good natured

actions” in favor of a more constructive/creative view of wind. The *Kukkiwon Textbook* (2016) only provides one line attempting to describe the duality of the *seon* principle by describing wind as “both mighty force and calmness according to its strength and weakness.”

The only attempt made by *Poomse* (1975) to connect these ideas to the physical techniques in the form is the line “Actions proceed sometimes gently and monotonously as breeze but sometimes as forcefully as storms” followed by a brief mention of two strikes unique to form five. Chun (1982) more successfully connects his interpretation directly to the techniques of the form when he states that *Taegeuk O-Jang*’s “techniques sweep through the air pushing away resistance, then penetrating like the wind.” He then goes on to describe some of these penetrating techniques like the “hammer fist and elbow strike” mentioned in the 1975 manual. His last section provides a very good interpretation of the combination of wide-arcing and direct, linear attacks in form five to help the practitioner understand how they can embody the paradox of wind’s gentle and violent natures. This is another clear example of the aesthetic connection between *pumsae* technique and trigram nature symbol.

While Kim (2007) does not explain how specific techniques or combinations in the form connect to the wind symbol, he does state that the practitioner should be mindful to focus on a specific target area when practicing strikes like the elbow attacks in this form. This could indicate a way of reflecting on the concept of “penetrating” by way of training for accuracy/precision.

The authors of the 1975 manual explain that “Wind symbolizes humble state of mind” and that “It expresses repetitive good-natured actions.” Chun (1982) echoes the

sentiment of “good-natured actions” but neither text explicitly states how this form connects to that kind of behavior. Kim (2007) comes closest when reiterating the dual nature of wind as violent/gentle and applying this directly to the practitioner by saying “human power can also be used either way” (152). According to Kim, form five is “designed to develop the inner energy and kinetic force of the body” to apply these opposite forces.

What’s important about these descriptions is how they are in many ways similar to the interpretation of the *tae* principle from form two. Like *tae*, *seon* is gentle and soft. However, it’s important to note the major distinction. *Tae* is described as having a gentle, kind appearance accompanied by firmness of mind and inner strength. *Seon*, on the other hand, is about recognizing one’s true nature as gentle and choosing to behave in this way despite containing the potential for violence and destruction. This lesson is especially important at this point in the practitioner's training as they have likely developed some skill with dangerous techniques. So, to embody the *seon* principle is to maintain a sense of humility and choose to caress the willow in your path rather than uproot it.

### **Form 6: *Taegeuk Yook-Jang* and the *Gam* Principle**

The *gam* principle is symbolized by water. The authors of the 1975 manual describe water as “liquid and formless,” yet something that “never loses its nature,” because water “always flows downward” (113). Chun (1982) adds to the ideas of water being “liquid and formless” by saying “water never loses its nature though it may conform to the vessel in which it finds itself.” This helps round out the paradox of water being formless yet consistent. Additionally, Chun’s phrase “conform to the vessel” may be in

response to the growing fandom surrounding Bruce Lee and his famous explanation of the Daoist symbol.

Form 6 is unique among the *taegeuk pumsae* because it is the only form of the eight that feature a transition between movement lines via a kicking technique at a 45 degree angle. Visually, it makes the practitioner seem as if they are moving along a curved line instead of a straight one. The “round kick” between lines provides a “flow” between discrete movements and the unique 45 degree movement angles add a fluidity not seen in other forms. The 1975 manual as well as Chun’s (1982) explicitly remark on these techniques as requiring “great balance and coordination to remain fluid, like water.” In this way, the Daoist rhetorical feature of an appeal to balance/harmony takes on a literal embodied sense. Unlike the kind of metaphorical balance or meditation on harmony seen in paradoxical descriptions like form 2, form 6 states plainly that it contains movements specifically designed to test and train the physical balance and body control of the practitioner.

The combination of traits like “flexibility,” “persistence,” and remaining true to one’s nature repeated throughout this sample indicate that “this principle teaches the lesson that we can overcome difficulties and hardships if we go forward with self-confidence.” Chun provides a natural example of the kind of “persistence” and “self-confidence” water can represent by stating that “in time, [water] can wear away the hardest granite.” In other words, like water, practitioners must not lose sight of their true nature—instead, they must proceed through life fully attuned to who they are as an individual, always ready to adapt in order to follow their true path. This form, more than any other, aligns with the concept of *wuwei* mentioned in the analysis of form 5 as Chun describes water

as “easy to bend but not to break.” This concept of flexibility and adaptability embodies the commonplace of *wuwei* by demonstrating how a person can be focused on a particular goal but simultaneously follow the path of least resistance to achieve it. Kim (2007) is the first to describe water as a symbol of “flexibility” explicitly and connects the practice of this form to both a physical and mental flexibility necessary to truly practice *wuwei*.

### **Form 7: *Taegeuk Chil-Jang* and the *Gan* Principle**

The *gan* principle is represented by the “mountain” or what many manuals refers to as “top-stop” (*Poomse*, 1975, 120). Chun (1982) builds on this interpretation by describing the mountain as “taciturn and steady,” whereas Kim (2007) calls it a symbol of “firmness and strength.” Lee (1996) describes the *gan* principle as meaning the “highest point or summit of the mountain” (48). This emphasis on the highest peak is an important one when considering the moral lessons extrapolated from this form, especially those extending from Lee’s metaphor about achieving new heights. Tedeschi’s (2000) description of the *gan* principle is important here as it refocuses on the original meaning from the *I-Ching*. He names the *gan* principle “Keeping Still,” and describes its primary attribute as “resting” (614). The concept of knowing when to “rest” is an important distinction between knowing when to “stop” and is only emphasized in a few of the other manuals discussed below.

Only three manuals from the sample attempt to connect the meaning of the *gan* principle to the discrete techniques in form 7, and they all do so differently. First, *Poomse* (1975) describe the new “*beomseogi*” (cat stance) as being included to emphasize the transition between moving “freely” and standing still. This connects back to the moving/resting dichotomy Tedeschi (2000) described and emphasizes that



“stillness” is itself, a quality to train. Next, Chun (1982) describe techniques that are “designed to stop an opponent’s motion without being rocked--like the unwavering power of a mountain” and then various “spurts of rapid motion.” Chun’s description focuses on the idea that the *gan* principle teaches commitment and decisiveness that translates to embodied knowledge as no wasted motion and no hesitation. Finally, and with the least development, The *Kukkiwon Textbook* (2016) includes the line “Smooth connection of movement is important for training” rather enigmatically, implying, like the others, that the focus of this form is transitioning from moments of stillness to sequences of rapid, unwavering motion.

When applied to human activity form 7 reminds us that “we should stop when we should and we must go forward when we must; moving and stopping should match with time in order to achieve things” (*Poomse*, 1975, 120). Again, this description presents a duality of motion/stillness for the practitioner to focus on and embody. Though this form is represented by the mountain and the kind of “stability” this sort of natural symbol possesses, it more accurately teaches the student to focus on “where and when to stop.” In other words, the form is not designed to teach an unyielding rigidity but, rather, a critical awareness of when to move quickly and when to halt. Chun (1982) insists that the “form teaches the student to move only when it is necessary to move--and then to move rapidly--and to stop suddenly and solidly, standing like a rock. He describes this concept as a kind of “commitment to motion and immobility” to once again highlight the duality of *palgwe*.

Lee (1996) reiterates the motion/stillness duality and states that “both are necessary when we want to achieve something.” Though it’s subtle, Lee’s description

presents the metaphor of achieving new heights (summits) by dedication to “moving forward and staying still” (48). Kim (2007) illustrates more fully what these accomplishments might look like by explaining that “dedication to training starts firmly rooting in the heart” at this stage and that “The meaning of self-improvement through Taekwondo becomes deeper daily.” Kim insists that this is the stage of development where the practitioner must review all previous training to make sure “the foundation of skills is strongly secured.” Here, Kim connects the “stability” mentioned in other manuals to the foundational training the student has already undergone. Though the techniques mentioned do not directly connect to the mountain symbolism, the idea of Taekwondo becoming part of the practitioner's daily life suggests that this form is a transitional point where the student's outside identity and martial arts identity begin to merge into one persona. Kim's description also uses the phrase “majestic strength and immovable spirit.” This “immovable” spirit may connect to the concept of “indomitable spirit” previously discussed and provide a corporeal way for how this concept can be realized. Perhaps the merging of the martial arts and daily persona is the way in which such a spirit is cultivated.

Finally, worth noting is how Lee and Ricke (1999) seem to emphasize the idea of “stop[ing] when one first could” and “go[ing] forward when one must.” This could be a different way of conceptualizing *wuwei* in emphasizing how a practitioner must pay careful attention to the contextual forces surrounding them to know when their earliest opportunities to stop and latest opportunities for movement arise.

### **Form 8: *Taegeuk Pal-Jang* and the *Gon* Principle**

The authors of *Poomse* (1975) describe the *gon* principle as being symbolized by “the earth” and stating that the “earth is the source of life” (129). Importantly, this principle serves as the counterpart to the *keon* principle as the authors remind students that “the earth is where the creative force of heaven is embodied.” Strangely though, they don’t offer much specific description about the symbol of the earth beyond it being “wordless” and stating that it “hugs and grows everything.” Chun (1982) further describes the *gon* principle as representing “receptivity” along with being “gentle and nurturing.” Tedeschi (2000) furthers this interpretation as he names the trigram corresponding to the *gon* principle “the Receptive” and describes its primary attribute as “yielding” with the natural symbol being the earth. The word “yielding” is worth considering here as it could mean “submissive” in terms of *Yin/Eum* energy, or it could mean a “yield” as in an output. The secondary use could make sense given the amount of stress most manuals place on the “mother earth” archetype (crop “yield”) and the idea that all life comes from the earth. Kim (2007) repeats the idea that all life comes from the earth but adds “and [it is] the place to which all life returns” (194), thus reiterating the duality Chun (1982) states is inherent in all the forms. The *Kukkiwon Textbook* (2016) reinforces this notion by referring to the *gon* principle as representing “Yin’ and earth, meaning the root and settlement and also the beginning and the end.”

Despite most manuals paying careful attention to describe the *gon* principle itself and the way the *topos* of receptivity is to be embodied through social action, few point to specific elements of *Taegeuk Pal-Jang* which demonstrate this application. If specific techniques are mentioned at all, they are described as a collection of fundamentals or an accumulation of the students training. For example, *Poomse* (1975) does not

mention new techniques present in form 8 but, rather, suggests that this is the time to “brush up [sic] fundamental actions and review them.” Chun (1982) builds on this by saying form 8 “contains all the basic elements of Tae Kwon Do, serving both as a review of the beginning forms and as a foundation for the first black belt form.” In this way, it could be said that *Taegeuk Pal-Jang* represents its own paradox of beginning/ending and stresses that the martial arts journey of self-improvement is a lifelong path.

After describing the earth as the place from which all life emerges, Chun (1982) suggests that acknowledging and reflecting on this life-giving energy “within ourselves” will teach students “to respect life in all forms.” In this way, form 8 could be said to teach a type of empathy. Additionally, this form marks the completion of one cycle and the start of another. This process of cycles is a distinctly Daoist worldview, one that defies clear distinctions between beginnings and endings. This is to say that, according to Combs (2006), the Daoist worldview sees all of existence as one interrelated whole--beginnings, endings, all that is alive and all that is now dead is still one and not separate. This is, perhaps, one of the most fundamental concepts employed in Daoist rhetorics and one of the most difficult for Western readers to fully comprehend because it presents a grammar of “and/both” as opposed to the binary logic of “either/or” stemming from the European Enlightenment period. More than an ontology, however, this “one-world system” as Combs calls it, is often equated with a type of humility. Kim (2007) stresses the concept of the “new beginning” by stating that “pride, confidence, and dignity” may be the product of the student’s current training, but “honesty and humbleness are prerequisites” for the black belt stage. In other words, the kind of

“receptivity” that Chun (1982) describes is one that allows the advanced student to keep their mind open to new ideas, new beginnings, despite their budding confidence and ability. Kim explicitly uses the language of a “new cycle” when he describes the *palgwe* version of form 8 to emphasize this connection (298).

### **Overview of Embodied Daoist *Topoi* and Common Rhetorical Features**

While it’s plain to see from the data in this sample that a variety of Tae Kwon Do technical manuals employ various Daoist rhetorical features, it is still unclear how effective these are in the process of facilitating the embodiment of what I’m calling Daoist *topoi*. In fact, Tedeschi (2000), one of the manual authors in this sample remarks that “many practitioners ignore all this [the *palgwe* symbolism or *taegeuk* philosophy] when practicing these forms, since they find it irrelevant” (614). This statement helps keep this study grounded because he is, in many ways, absolutely right. In my own experience, most Tae Kwon Do martial artists either know nothing about these symbolic meanings, have a confused or limited understanding of the *palgwe*, or disregard such philosophy entirely as something unnecessary to their physical training. With that in mind, it’s important to note that my study is simply appraising the analyzed manuals for their rhetorical effectiveness in instructing a practitioner audience on the ways in which they can utilize the *taegeuk pumsae* for more than just martial technique. Whether or not those practitioners choose to “ignore” this instruction is up to them and truly more of a question of adoption. For the purposes of my evaluation in the final section of this chapter, I will assume that a martial artist reading these texts does see the relevance and possess the desire to train their body, mind, and emotional self simultaneously for the purpose of becoming a better citizen instead of just a better athlete. The following

section will synthesize the data presented to provide an overview of whether or not my sample effectively facilitates the process of embodying Daoist *topoi*.

Partly due to the selection criteria I employed when sampling these manuals, most all of the analyzed textbooks explicitly detail the principle of *palgwe* corresponding to the *pumsae* in question. In fact, only 12.5% of the *pumsae* descriptions contained implicit reference to the principles of *palgwe* and zero neglected to mention them in some capacity. This data suggests that my initial impression, that multiple manuals over a span of four decades contain a relevant amount of philosophical rationale behind *pumsae* practice, was correct.

This data was much more interesting to analyze because there were so many discrepancies even within individual manuals. For example, *Poomse* (1975) made explicit connections between *topoi* and technique in three of the descriptions, implicit connections in four, and absolutely no connection in one. Most of the manuals lacked real consistency in this category and seemed to only make connections to technique when they could either paraphrase from an earlier manual or make some vague generalization about the cadence, rhythm, or intensity to be adhered to. While 42.8% of the descriptions sampled made no connection between *topoi* and technique, 28.5% made implicit connections and an additional 28.5% made explicit connections. While the explicit connections were certainly much more helpful in allowing students to see the aesthetic connections between their physical actions and the corresponding natural symbol (wind, water, and fire worked well here), it's important to note that nearly half of all the descriptions at least attempted to demonstrate how the *pumsae* embodied a philosophical concept.

It may come as a surprise to know that this final category outscored the number of connections in the second. While a significant number of descriptions sampled (32%) still made no connection between the Daoist *topoi* described and any kind of specific self-cultivation, 28.5% made an implicit connection and 39% made an explicit connection. What this means in practice is that, despite not making explicit the reasoning why certain actions or techniques represent certain principles, the authors of these manuals at least provide some context for how to act on the principles in daily life. Form 8 is a good example of this in that only Chun (1982) made some implicit connection between the *gon* principle and the techniques in *Taegeuk Pal-Jang*, but five of the seven descriptions made some connection between *gon* and the act of being receptive, humble, and open to new learning experiences.

In addition to assessing each manual description for the ways in which the authors attempted to describe a process of embodying the principles of *palgwe* through *pumsae* practice, this study also analyzed the use of some popular Daoist rhetorical features. Not surprisingly, 96% of the manuals incorporated some nature image or appeal to the natural world when describing the underlying Daoist philosophy. This is to be expected given that the *palgwe* all have a corresponding natural symbol from which most authors extrapolate connections to technique and/or lessons in self-cultivation. Also of little surprise is the low number of descriptions (only 14%) that make some reference to *wuwei*, no-mind, non-action, or least resistance. This is likely the most foreign concept for international readers and one that's extremely difficult to map onto a set of predetermined actions.

More interesting, perhaps, is the significant number of times an author utilized paradox for rhetorical effect (nearly 34%). I find this interesting because many of these concepts are already difficult for Western readers to fully understand and paradoxes, by definition, intentionally blur epistemological lines. Ultimately, I think these choices correlate with the 53.5% of descriptions that make some appeal to harmony or balance. In other words, the use of paradox operates stylistically to underpin what Chun (1982) refers to as “the duality implicit in all the *Palgwe* forms.” By utilizing paradox and appeals to harmony, the authors of these manuals encourage a kind of deep reflection on the part of the student to consider how what their learning, doing, or feeling is connected to what they might consider the opposite concept, action, or emotion. This deep reflection paired with repetitive action is the recipe for a habit-practice promoting the accretion of wisdom, patience, and empathy. While this is not often explicitly stated, at least 25% of these descriptions make some reference to the idea that this kind of new knowledge or understanding can be produced internally through meditation, reflection, and conscientious practice. Thus, these three features together can especially be considered integral components to the practitioner’s successful embodiment of Daoist *topoi*.

### **Embodied *Topoi*: From theory to practice**

The data presented in this chapter reveals a few things very clearly. First, it’s apparent that the bagua/palgwe cosmology, symbols borrowed from the *I-Ching* and popularized by Daoism, are an important component of Tae Kwon Do *pumsae*. Second, while most instructional manuals describe that the eight principles of *palgwe* are important, few of them adequately reveal how discrete physical techniques in the forms



correlate to these symbols and their meanings. Finally, despite this, most manuals make a clear and explicit connection between the principles of *palgwe* and ways to comport oneself in the world. In this way, it can be said that the *taegeuk pumsae* offer a way to actively practice these eight principles and incorporate them not just cognitively, but on a bodily level.

If this is the case, might we consider these eight principles to carry the same rhetorical weight as what Aristotle would call *topoi*? In Chapter Two, I described how Aristotle believed that *topoi* were constituted by what he would call *endoxa*, shared cultural belief. These eight principles of *palgwe* are not only representative of shared belief systems in various martial arts schools across the globe, they exist as powerful symbolic markers in various discourse communities with Daoist underpinnings. In this way, they certainly seem to connect enough disparate populations to warrant some amount of rhetorical gravity. Furthermore, these eight principles can be used to form the same kinds of syllogisms and maximal propositions Cicero and Boethius employed (Ochs 1982, De'Angelo 2017). This was illustrated in Chapter Two by the Philip Ahn's character from the 1970's hit TV show *Kung Fu*. Master Khan (Ahn) deconstructs a question of his pupil and reveals how the *seon* principle of *palgwe* can condition one to think less of concepts like victory/defeat and more of terms like survival. This is a perfect example of how the ancient Chinese concept of *wuwei*, often translated as non-action or no-mind, can be applied as a *topos* arguing for an alternate way of thinking. *Wuwei* is just one example of a rhetorical concept indicative of Ancient Chinese thought and popularly used by the Daoist sages, but many more, like strategic paradoxes, appeals to harmony, and comparisons to nature, all evident in my sample, exist and

persist as well (Lu 1998, Combs 2006). This means that these eight principles exist in a clearly defined rhetorical tradition, are constituted by shared cultural beliefs, and can be used as starting points for arguments about the familiar. In many ways, this indicates that these concepts could be understood as functioning in the same way that *topoi* were classically thought to function. But what about the modern theory on the subject?

The eight Daoist *topoi* of my study share many qualities with formal *topoi* of the classical age, but they are much less rigid and defined. In this way, they offer more of “the generative power of the familiar” that Miller (2008) invokes. This is because these Daoist *topoi* present familiar but open-ended concepts and demand the practitioner to concretize them through practice. I mean this rhetorically and physically. First, rhetorically, when a speaker reflects on a concept like “receptiveness,” they must actualize it by mentally conjuring a specific example of what it means, what it looks like, what it feels like to be “receptive.” Practitioners imagine the concept as it would be enacted in rhetorical situations familiar to them, but they may be able to imagine novel or non-traditional enactments through practice. This might mean that, with enough reflection on the subject of receptiveness, the practitioner realizes new ways they can perform receptivity in familiar situations, or they can understand the performance of receptivity totally differently if faced with an unfamiliar rhetorical situation.

Similarly, physically, when practicing the eight *taegeuk pumsae*, a practitioner may cognitively understand the concept of receptiveness, but it is their body that actualizes this concept through the physical performance of martial techniques. In this way these Daoist *topoi* certainly reflect the kind of “social energy” Cintron (2010) describes. Not only because these *topoi* have been connected to various athletic

techniques, a phenomenon I'll discuss in more detail momentarily, but because they actually contain a shared knowledge about human behavior and actions. For example, the *keon* principle invokes "creativity" which is something that can only be understood in action or ex post facto by examining a product of creation. The same is true of the more dynamic states of "joyfulness," "spontaneity," "confidence," etc. These *topoi* are less defined by their adherence to formal logical structures and more by the ways they collect the energy of agential (inter)actions. In this way, they would appear to operate as *topoi* not only in a traditional sense, but in a broader, more contemporary understanding as well.

So, if these Daoist *topoi* function similarly as many of the rhetorical concepts Hawhee (2004) discussed in her examination of ancient Greek athletics, can these Daoist *topoi* become similarly embodied through athletic practice? I think the data in this chapter provides a comprehensive case for why we might answer this question with a resounding yes. Just as it was true for Ancient Greek athletics, athletic traditions extending from non-Western cultures also contain, exemplify, and reflect native rhetorical concepts. For example, Hawhee (2004) uses the example of boxing to describe how the term *kairos* and an embodied sense of timeliness developed the rhetorical concept we know today both in the symposium as well as the gymnasium. To slip a jab in boxing is to embody *kairos*, but this comes as a result of conditioning, the long road of habituating an athletic body through rigorous training to recognize and react to opportune moments for evasion. Similarly, to escape a grab or take down an opponent in a circular motion, a technique familiar to practitioners of many Southeast

Asian martial arts, embodies the concept of harmony, *wuwei*, and the constant balancing of opposing forces.

These kinds of bodily techniques, taught in martial arts communities like Tae Kwon Do, help provide a liveliness to the Daoist rhetorical traditions underpinning them, and they are believed to contribute to a kind of transformation of the practitioner. Again, this is very similar to Hahwee's (2004) description of *phusiopoiesis*, or the "art of becoming" (151) in that a person is subjecting their body to ritualized athletic regimens with the hopes that they will not only improve their physique, but their *self*.

Organizations like the World Taekwondo Federation (WT) subscribe to these kinds of beliefs as well and, in accordance with them, make efforts to ensure that each student understands the cultural values they should aspire to and reflect through their practice before becoming a black belt. This is done by assigning the eight Daoist principles to eight *pumsae*, forms that must be memorized and mastered before testing. Olson's (2010) work demonstrates how these Daoist *topoi* might be considered "embodiable," that is, a practitioner could very well take an argumentative stance and identify as a "martial artist." This is useful for understanding the ways these concepts can be given shape and used strategically, but it doesn't fully illustrate the kind of long-term transformational power various Tae Kwon Do Grandmasters and high-ranking officials ascribe to them. This study does not collect enough data or even the right kind of data to answer questions concerning the duration of such transformations, but it does make clear that the instructional manuals I reviewed maintained the belief that the principles of *palgwe* could become incorporated into the body of the practitioner. There is an underlying assumption that this is a life-long process of habituation, however, as

indicated by the “*Do*” suffix popular in so many Japanese martial arts naming conventions. With that in mind, it seems reasonable to conclude that those within the Tae Kwon Do discourse community might consider the routinely training body, the one that consistently reviews technical and ritual practices like the *taegeuk pomsae*, to be the one most likely to reflect and perform the principles of *palgwe* in their daily lives, through ordinary social practice, and rhetorically.

Not only are the eight principles of *palgwe* functionally similar to Classical and contemporary definitions of *topoi*, they possess the same qualities which enable them to be understood through cultural athletic practices (as Hawhee 2004 does), they allow for a positional identity, one that is strategically “embodiable” in rhetorical contexts (as Olson 2010 describes), and they make explicit use of specific techniques (as understood through Spatz’s 2015 definition) symbolic vehicles toward actualization. Whether or not we can understand the *taegeuk pumsae* as a practice leading to a full-scale transformation in the sense of *phusiopoiesis* is debatable, especially if we consider a transformation to be an irreversible move. Instead, it may be more fruitful to imagine the performance of *pumsae* a kind of rhetorical exercises, one that allows the body to actively meditate on concepts that kind help activate new communicative pathways. So, while a person may never achieve a full transformation by embodying these *topoi* once and for all, the continued practice of such athletic performances allows for the body to maintain a relatively stable-for-now *habitus* constructed partly through non-Western philosophy. In this way, I understand the eight Daoist concepts derived from the *I-Ching* and represented through the *bagua/palgwe* to be embodied *topoi*.

With this in mind, I'll examine more closely in Chapter 5 just how this concept of routine rhetorical exercise can influence the ways writing instructors develop classroom assignments and activities for further embodiment of learning outcomes or disciplinary values. In addition, I consider the broader ramifications of teaching social, rhetorical, and interpersonal values in martial contexts and what these might mean for future studies.

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## **Chapter Five**

### **Implications for Future Research and Intervention**

#### **Chapter Five Overview**

The following chapter discusses the ways in which this dissertation might serve the interests of a variety of audiences including scholars of rhetoric, teachers in higher education, writing program administrators, martial arts practitioners, and future students of martial arts. The chapter opens anecdotally by illustrating why a concept like embodied topoi might matter in application. The chapter then lists various implications organized by impacted audience.

#### **Why Do We Bow?**

This dissertation has endeavored to argue that rhetoric can be embodied in a number of ways, including athletic habit practices representing specific cultural values or commonplace arguments. This is one of the ways that Hawhee (2004) illustrated rhetoric as an embodied practice in Ancient Greece (through Western martial practices like boxing and wrestling) and, I hope that my analysis of Tae Kwon Do *pumsae* manuals demonstrates how this theory can be applied to the martial arts more conventionally associated with Eastern cultural traditions. Indeed, Chapter Four reveals how various technical manuals instruct Tae Kwon Do practitioners to manipulate their bodies in ways that emulate eight symbol-laden concepts, the eight principles of *palgwe* so omnipresent in the parts of the world touched by Daoist philosophy. Not only do these manuals instruct practitioners how to move their body and what the corresponding



principle of *palgwe* is supposed to teach them, but, in many cases, these texts suggest that through the routine and habitual practice of the forms, a martial artist will transform over time. This transformation through critically reflexive habit practice, through the “moving meditation” Chun (1982) describes, is akin to the concept of *phusiopoiesis* (the art of becoming) so important to Hawhee’s (2004) understanding of Ancient Greek embodied rhetorics. And it is this idea, the notion that a person can fundamentally alter their disposition, their epistemological or axiological stance--their worldview entirely--through sustained martial practice, that lies at the heart of why my study has serious implications for future research.

Why does a concept like "embodied topoi" matter? Why is it important to recognize that martial arts operate as Foucauldian "institutions," (as I discussed in Chapter One) regulatory agencies of control that teach students how to enact and perform various rhetorical concepts? Why does it matter that martial arts, generally, teach students how to "behave" instead of simply how to fight or compete in a sport?

When I think about these questions, I think about a fairly common practice at most Tae Kwon Do schools I've been a part of. When it comes time to test for a new belt, students are often asked to demonstrate their knowledge of the martial art, Korean culture, or Tae Kwon Do terminology. These tasks can range from counting to 10 in Korean to listing the five tenets of Tae Kwon Do etc. Most of the time, these are simple memorization tasks. But, that does not make them insignificant. In fact, the questions that I think about most often are asked to every student at Pil Seung Taekwondo in Blacksburg, VA before they can become a white belt--that is, before they can even be a full member of the class.

1. Why do we bow?
2. Why do we shake hands after sparring?

These questions are really important to me because they demand that students think critically about what they are doing with their bodies and why they are being asked to do it.

The answer to question one is "to show respect." This means that the very first thing a student learns how to do when they train at Pil Seung is perform a fully embodied sign of respect to their teachers, their elders, their parents, and their classmates. Not only that, but they are tested on their knowledge of what that sign (the bow) represents.

Question two is similar--we shake hands to show "good sportsmanship." Again, the student is asked to reflect on the action that many people might simply do out of habit or expectation. Students become acculturated to being respectful always, as well as understanding a different set of civic conduct procedures during sparring. Again though, the action is brought to the forefront and interrogated as something that has symbolic meaning and social implications.

I think about these two questions quite frequently because they exhibit rather succinctly what it means to embody rhetorical concepts in a critically reflexive way. This means that that student not only performs the embodied sign of respect (the bow) or sportsmanship (the handshake) but also thinks critically about what each means (both to them personally and to their audience contextually). Finally, the reflexive part means that students can not only cognitively interpret the action, but that the action can summon associated thoughts or emotions. This is to say that a student can focus on the idea of respect in response to the action of the bow (if it has been fully habituated). That

is the fully recursive relationship established between the bodily technique and rhetorical concept--one can always find the other.

So why is that important? If a martial arts school can associate one particular action with a specific line of thinking or feeling, then it means there is a serious ethical dimension to how martial arts are being taught and by whom. Imagine if the answer to "why do we bow" was "to show *reverence*" instead of "to show respect." Suddenly, the same bow can be used to create a power dynamic placing certain instructors and masters in an even more elevated position, one that might be more reminiscent of a martial cult. This might sound like a silly example, but these are the major tactics used by radical political militant groups to brainwash and train potential recruits according to reports of "fascist fight clubs" (Zidan 2018).

Even if a concept like "reverence" is not taken to this extreme, it can still be a way to strip agency from the student. Here's a real-life example to illustrate what I mean. Recently, a Facebook friend of mine posted that he does not break boards or bricks with his head because "the founder" (referring to General Choi Hong Hi) did not teach head strike techniques. General Choi is quoted as saying that the brain is a martial artist's most vital organ and it should be protected, according to this Facebook friend. Therefore, this practitioner stated that he would "honor the wishes of the founder" and not break with his head. This might seem like a sensible enough decision--breaking wooden boards or concrete slabs with one's forehead is a dangerous activity with little to no benefit for the practitioner. But, what's worth noting here is the *reason* or the evidence this martial artist used to justify such a decision. The practitioner did not come to this conclusion on their own or present evidence for why they thought these

techniques were harmful or unimportant--instead, they rested their argument solely on the *ethos* of their highest instructor. And no, this was not the status update of some young, impressionable teenager, quite the contrary actually. This person is an Assistant Professor who holds multiple master rank degrees in various martial arts and contributes to scholarship on the matter.

Of course, a concept having potentially extreme consequences and one possessing implications for multiple audiences are very different things. The goal of this chapter is to reveal the many ways my dissertation might be important to fellow researchers, educators, administrators, martial artists, and potential students. The following sections will aim to do just that. Importantly, however, regardless of audience, it's important to remember that the concept of embodying rhetoric, especially in the highly controlled environments of rhetorical institutions, presents ethical concerns worth serious consideration. I will try to address these in each of the next sections more specifically.

### **Embodied Non-Western Rhetorics**

The biggest reason my research should matter to academics in the field of Rhetoric and Composition is that it opens the door to explore some of the ways Debra Hawhee (2004) understood rhetoric as embodied and performed through athletics in environments disconnected from the Greco-Roman tradition. This means that there are countless other ways Non-Western rhetorics have been embodied historically or preserved through athletic practices yet to be explored--my project focuses primarily on Ancient Chinese rhetorics (specifically those from the Daoist school of thought) as they apply to the modern Tae Kwon Do *taegeuk pumsae*. What this means is I have

demonstrated a way to extend Xing Lu's (1998) in-depth analysis of ancient Chinese rhetorics as well as Combs's (2006) study of Daoist rhetorics into the realm of embodiment studies and that other researchers can perform similarly scholarly moves.

Even in the scope of just Martial Arts Studies, there are countless martial systems and related practices from various cultures and eras that preserve and perform rhetorical ideologies separate from those originating in Ancient Greece. These might include rhetorics of the African diaspora preserved in martial arts like *Capoeira* (Griffith 2016) or various Caribbean or South American stick fighting practices (Desch-Obi 2008), modern communist Chinese rhetorics at play in the policing of various Tai Chi practices (Frank 2006), or perhaps even the kind of ontology responsible for the *parkour* and now "tricking" phenomenon originating in France (Gilchrist and Wheaton 2016). Researching these can only add a layer of understanding to how various athletic practices reflect associated communicative or discursive practices. A lot of this work (understanding martial arts discursively) is being done already in the *Martial Arts Studies Journal*, but it's being done by researchers whose academic homes are not in English, Rhetoric, or Technical Communication departments. This is all to say that much of the information is already out there in separate camps and my project serves as a kind of tutorial for how future scholars in our field might connect some of these dots. Given the recent push by groups like ASHR (the American Society for the History of Rhetoric) to diversify the teaching of rhetorical history, these studies could be an attractive option. In fact, as part of the organization's 2018 "Diversifying the History of Rhetoric Project," scholars like Xing Lu have offered up resources for how to teach subjects like Ancient Chinese rhetorics. Similarly, scholars have already offered

resources on teaching various African, Arabic, and gendered rhetorics throughout history that could combine nicely with questions of how these discourses may have been embodied through various martial practices for a rich teaching experience.

### **Pedagogical Applications for the Writing Classroom**

My research is, at its core, interested in how concepts become ingrained in the body, become habituated, become automatic

This process is not just something important to martial arts communities, but for any classroom environment. Last year at the Conference on College Composition and Communication (4Cs), I demonstrated how the eight philosophical qualities embodied in the *taegeuk pumsae* align almost flawlessly with the eight "habits of mind" necessary for student success in college as described by the Council of Writing Program Administrators in 2011. Importantly, the CWPA Framework indicates that these habits are necessary for any working position in higher education and beyond and that these inter/intrapersonal skills must be attended to before a student can fully engage in critical thinking, rhetorical awareness, or technological literacy..

What I find interesting is how similar these habits of mind are to the ways the eight principles of *palgwe* are presented in Tae Kwon Do manuals. For example, some habits like creativity, openness, and flexibility have direct 1:1 comparisons in the *keon*, *gon*, and *gam* principles, respectively. The other five principles can be interpreted to fit rather nicely as well. Clearly, some parallels are more dramatic than others, but, what's important to see here is how higher education in general and Writing Studies in particular have come to adopt similar aims found in the rhetoric of martial arts education.

This indicates that there are other ways of teaching things like "creativity" or "adaptability" that many writing instructors haven't necessarily explored. Certain folks in Composition have started to investigate more mindfulness and contemplative educational techniques, even those embodied through Eastern or martial practices. For example, Wenger (2015) discusses the practical applications of certain yoga exercises in her writing classroom for teaching students to embody such inter/intrapersonal skills. Kroll (2008) does something similar for how to conceive of different argumentative moves using physical analogues from Aikido. And the larger martial arts special interest group at 4C's presents similar research every year. Ultimately, a sub-group of researchers has demonstrated that certain useful skills, ones transferable from the college classroom to the business world and even to personal lives are best taught through the process of bodily habituation.

The way I interpreted the concept of "rhetorical exercise" that I discussed in Chapter Four for the writing classroom is fairly straightforward. Much like students of martial arts, students in the writing classroom can benefit from regimented, repeated exercises that clearly align with some larger student learning objective or programmatic outcome. These could be short and simple writing prompts that are done routinely throughout a semester as ways to offer that same "generative power of the familiar" Miller (2008) discusses in reference to genre to novice writers working through difficult or unfamiliar processes. While these aren't perfect or especially unique, the eight writing exercises exemplify what these kinds of rhetorical exercises might look like. Note: these are designed for a first-year writing classroom and explicitly support the eight habits of mind framework.

If these rhetorical exercises were to work in a PTC classroom or other writing environments for different types of students, they would need to be refocused or built from other kinds of learning objectives. With that said, here is an example of the ways students might start to embody these eight habits of mind through writing practice. These exercises share one primary goal: assist students in developing habit-practices related to the kinds of, transferable, inter/intrapersonal skills that will contribute to success in the writing classroom as well as throughout their college career. Some of these also achieve secondary goals important specifically for writing instruction. For example, the first exercise simply asks students to imagine an unnecessarily convoluted process for accomplishing an extremely simple task. If done routinely, this kind of exercise might take on a fun game-like quality, but its focus should remain clear: students are to practice imagining new responses to old stimuli. Exercises like the fourth one in the list above are similar in that they don't necessarily teach writing skills, but they do use writing as a way to materialize and perform self-affirmations needed to complete long, taxing projects.

Exercises like number five and number eight on the list above do actually have students practice skills more readily applicable to the writing classroom. The former asks students to consider the different paths to take during the revision process by summarizing each paragraph in their draft in two words (usually a subject and an action). This helps them create a reverse outline from their draft and offers them a useful way to consider what elements to revise while simultaneously exposing them to the sometimes difficult concepts of *wuwei*, non-action, or even metacognition. Students are forced to confront their draft as it exists on the page as compared to the draft they



conceived of in the invention process and make decisions from that point. Similarly, while the eighth exercise listed above asks students to compare their assumptions or memory to research, it also asks them to consider their own recalcitrance in accepting new information. So while this exercise is a good way to habituate students to the practical skill of academic research, it's also, at its core, a way for students to critically reflect on their own attitudes, dispositions, and epistemologies.

Of course, there is still much more work to do here. It's not enough for individual instructors to realize the potential usefulness for classroom rhetorical exercises designed to facilitate the growth of academic habit-practices. Rather, as I discussed at the Association for Teachers of Technical Writing (ATTW) conference last year, this is an important concept for writing program administrators (WPAs) to understand as well. Writing programs need to be better designed to help professionalize their instructors and this is one key concept for WPAs to understand in order to accomplish that. The thesis of my presentation was fairly simple: it's important to offer our instructors, especially contingent faculty, techniques that can help them become not only a more thoughtful pedagogue, but a more balanced and critically reflexive human being. Just as the "eight habits of mind" are vital for student success in college, they are imperative for a successful professional life as well. WPAs then should help instructors by offering ways to embody these concepts through professional habit practices (like guided lesson planning, templated classroom exercises, or professional development workshops) in order to improve the overall quality of teaching and learning.

Consider an example of how to possibly expose this concept to writing instructors and faculty. These were instructions given to PTC instructors at a recent spring

orientation session dedicated to improving pedagogical habits inside and outside the classroom. The instructors were presented with a version of the eight habits of mind and then asked to consider how they might apply to their own practice as a teacher.

Instructors responded positively to this kind of exercise and shared many of the responses listed. While these do not represent an exhaustive list, it does demonstrate that this line of inquiry can be helpful for instructors in rethinking their own embodiment and rhetorical performance in educational spaces.

What this orientation exercise shows me is that there is a desire among instructors to learn more about how to incorporate mindfulness education into their classroom, as well as a hunger to develop professionally as a teacher. The next step is ensuring that writing program administrators at all levels are properly equipped to help accommodate their instructors. Developing templates and applications like the ones listed above are, I think, important work in these beginning stages toward a more embodied mindfulness in writing education.

Next steps might include developing longitudinal, programmatic studies that track students who move through a degree program and are assessed in terms of the habits of mind listed above or similar “soft skills” authorized as important educational components of their discipline. Data from such assessments over time might indicate the efficacy of such rhetorical exercises (if thoroughly embedded into a program’s structure) in various writing contexts as well as the changes in student performance when not routinely exposed to such habit practices. This kind of research would help administrators better understand on a granular level the kinds of rhetorical exercises

that help students embody and transfer disciplinary knowledge outside of the classroom.

### **Future Quantitative Research in Violence Prevention**

Right now I can only anecdotally say that a martial arts education helps students become more emotionally stable and less likely to commit violent acts. I believe it, but I don't have any actual hard evidence. There are some studies out there that start to gather some data one way or the other, but they are few and far between. Back (2009) for example, discusses various data sets and studies indicating that participants in "traditional" martial arts were more likely to have "good moral character" as measure by the MMPI (Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Index), JPI (Jackson Personality Inventory), or criminal records. These results were in contrast to serious combat sports participants or other collegiate athletes who, on average, revealed that there was a correlation to high level competitive sport and "bad moral character" (227-8). The question, then, is what is so different about "traditional" martial arts instruction and the more competitive or combat sports oriented instruction that leads to such a difference in student behavior outside of the *dojo*?

One thing that makes these training facilities different is the kinds of rhetorical concepts they teach students to embody. The *Karate Kid* movies come to mind here as an example. Mr. Miyagi famously taught Daniel-san blocking techniques in the form of household chores (wax on/wax off, paint the fence, sand the floor) as his introduction to *Karate*. In this way, Miyagi's *Karate* was about defending one's own body in the same way you protect or preserve other objects like fences and cars. Daniel-san learned martial arts as a constructive activity, one that creates and builds new life in the world.

Johnny Lawrence, on the other hand, is introduced to *Karate* with the now infamous maxim "strike first, strike hard, no mercy." Right off the bat, the Kobra Kai school of *Karate* is dedicated to the attack, the opportunity to destroy without hesitation or remorse. As the film and franchise progresses, these two characters transport these ideologies into different facets of their lives, intersecting with other people, often violently. While both character's learned the same physical techniques, the *Karate-do* (the application of the martial arts to a personal way of life) they embodied was distinctly different because of the rhetorical underpinnings.

Yes, *Karate Kid* is a fictional film, but it's also an illustration of a longstanding cultural belief about how athletic training can change the social behavior of a person. The data Bäck (2009) presents indicates that this belief may be rooted in actuality. Future research could help codify which martial arts institutions (the more "traditional" schools as Bäck labels them) more frequently provide that kind of critically reflexive education in order to understand if these curricula can actually promote non-violence in students. Additional research could help us understand if martial arts education could help populations who are at a higher risk of being involved in a violent crime avoid such an instance. If so, this data would be especially persuasive in securing grant funding for future philanthropic missions, like those proposed by the Rhetorical Roundhouse Network, ones designed to help provide opportunities and education for students from lower-income communities.

Additionally, there may be possible connections between this avenue of research and the kind of writing studies work mentioned in the previous section. If writing instructors can provide evidence that specific rhetorical exercises contribute to a lasting,

embodiable, and transferable soft skills that contribute to college or career success, might they not also be able to draw correlation between such rhetorical exercises and other types of patterned behavior? For example, if the eight principles of *palgwe* can be adequately embodied through the practice of *pumsae*, perhaps they can be just as effectively practiced through writing. If that's the case, and if this kind of writing leads the practitioner through the same sort of transformation toward a more mindful, contemplative, and empathetic person, then maybe this could be used to develop educational programs in secondary schools, prisons, or other rehabilitative environments. In other words, this research should not simply stop short at helping students who are already in college classrooms become more proficient with writing; instead, it should be used to help transform the lives of more vulnerable populations so that they too might enjoy a college education or career success instead of cyclical poverty, segregated communities, incarceration, or premature death.

## **Conclusion**

A kick is never *just* a kick. In the world of martial arts generally, and Tae Kwon Do specifically, a kick can be the embodiment of something historical, political, and/or rhetorical all at once. My project has presented a rhetorical history of Tae Kwon Do to help make this claim apparent and developed the theoretical concept of “embodied *topoi*” to help identify additional iterations of how cultural commonplaces are performed through athletic habit practices like those found in various martial arts traditions. By offering a specific analysis of these ways this concept manifests in Tae Kwon Do *pumsae* manuals, I hope that the recursive relationship between ideology, bodily technique, and individual worldviews have become apparent. Furthermore, I hope this

final chapter has made it clear why this relationship is so important--not just because of the research avenues it opens up for further scholarship in rhetoric and writing pedagogy, but for the very real consequences such rhetorical training in martial arts environments can have in terms of public safety. Martial arts training is a way to give power back to the powerless--ensuring that such training is grounded in an ethical, responsible, and critically reflexive rhetorical foundation is a way to ensure that such power is used constructively for the betterment of society. My future research and teaching (both in the university classroom and Tae Kwon Do *dojang*) will work toward this end. I thank and applaud those who will join me in this fight the way we always thank our instructor after each Tae Kwon Do class...

*Kamsahamnida!*

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