

SPARRING WITH SAFETY, RISK, AND DIFFERENCE:
MORAL COMMUNITY INCLUSION
IN A GRASS-ROOTS FEMINIST ORGANIZATION

by

Corrine C. Bertram

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Psychology in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

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Abstract

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Adviser: Professor Michelle Fine

This study is a multi-method qualitative analysis of the practices of creating a community of moral inclusion at a Brooklyn-based grassroots anti-violence education organization. Drawing on ethnographic fieldnotes, semi-structured interviews, organizational materials, and a focus group, I analyzed data using content and discursive analytical frames. The analysis traces the practices of moral inclusion across three levels: the body work of the space (i.e., self-defense and Goju karate, particularly sparring), the intragroup practices that recognize difference and distribute its costs across community members, and beyond the organizational structure in a conflict over an anti-violence mural created by teen women from the organization and whitewashed by the corporate owner of the wall. I argue that women bring different embodied biographies to the physical work of the organization. Sparring creates a context in which women begin to negotiate pleasure, safety, and risk – all key aspects of community building. Next, difference work blossoms into the intragroup through practices that encourage participants to include everyone across difference and the creation of micro-spaces of segregation where groups that have been historically marginalized are given respite from privileged participants. The final analysis focuses on moving the community vision outside the organization into the local

neighborhood. A group of teen women from the organization created an anti-violence mural that highlighted tensions in the neighborhood about race, violence, and youth. The analysis across these levels occasions the development of a set of practices of moral inclusion that generalize to settings beyond the organization and Brooklyn – cultivating risk and safety together, creating micro-spaces of segregation, encouraging critical distance, extending moral community, understanding the impermanence of outcome.

Preface

Above a large store front on Fifth Avenue and 8th Street in Park Slope, Brooklyn, is the Center for Anti-Violence Education (CAE). It sits on the second floor sandwiched between a longtime discount store, Save on Fifth, and Brooklyn Arts Exchange, another non-profit organization. Fifth Avenue has been through significant changes in the seven years I have participated in CAE life. The Mexican Bakery, Lopez, across Eighth Street with delicious walnut raisin rolls, has relocated to Crown Heights. The Spanish American restaurant on Fourth Street with a business sign composed of hundreds of blue and silver reflective squares that shifted in the wind like birch leaves has become a French bistro. The most recent controversy in the neighborhood involves the location and wares of the Pink Pussycat, an “adult” novelty shop across the Avenue from a public school.

Over these same years the physical space of CAE remains largely unchanged. One buzzes the second floor at street level and an indecipherable voice on the intercom buzzes the woman, teen, or child into the building. One flight up is a nondescript grey door – the entrance. A small necked corridor is lined with hangers on the left. Students drop their shoes and hang their coats in that small space. During the summer months it sits mostly empty. And then the training floor, a brown matte linoleum patched with silver duct tape in a couple of places, takes over the space. On days when Annie, CAE’s Executive Director and head teacher, teaches bean sprouts (the class for four-year-olds) the floor feels gritty, covered with sand. The floor has blue and red tape to demarcate zones – to keep students from the mirrors and to create a walking corridor at the office end of the floor. The tin ceiling and white walls are a bit dingy, grimy from sweaty hands holding the

upper half of the body close to the wall while the lower half stretches calf muscles, hamstrings, or quadriceps, or supporting the upper body for modified arm work acknowledging that knuckle push-ups are not for everyone. Sometimes I have seen the wall used as a bulletin board or a chalk board. Once it seemed to illuminate an aspect of my dissertation: “CONFLICT,” in all caps and written in pink chalk.

The residue of bodies marks this space in many ways – it marks all spaces, but in this space with sweating bodies, small bodies that have not been schooled with “don’t touch white walls,” “don’t touch mirrors,” “line up your shoes,” bodies seem to predominate. CAE thrives on them.

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Table of Contents

Chapter One – Introduction	1
A Site of Feminist Educational Practice	1
Table 1 Summary of Theoretical Background and Research Questions	3
Individual Defense	4
Intra-Organizational Defense and Conflict	9
Feminist Organizations and Feminist Organizational Theory	10
The “Dilemma of Difference”	14
Organizational Defense and Community Conflict	20
Moral Communities of Social Psychology	21
Beyond the Borders of Feminist Organizations	24
Roadmap	26
 Chapter Two – Methods	 29
Site	30
Statement of Researcher Standpoint	31
Data Design and Collection	35
Table 2 Methods & Analysis Summary Chart	35
Telephone interviews	36
Oral History Interviews	37
Fieldnotes and Participant Observation	38
Interviews with Karate Students	38
Focus Group	39
Participants	40
Data Analysis Plan	40
Table 3 Participant Demographics and Participation in BWMA Programming ..	41
Open Coding	43
Focused Coding	44
Codes	45
 Chapter Three – Embodying Moral Community: Critical Distance in the Negotiation of	
Pleasure, Safety, and Risk	47
Definitions of Sparring	50
The Sparring Round	52
Pleasure	53
Safety	61
Safety in Structures	62
Safe without Rules	70
Resisting Feeling Safe for Others	72
Risk	73
White Girls/Women and Risk	76
The Risk of Fulfilling Expectations	80

Critical Distance	84
Chapter Four – Sustaining Moral Community: Working across Difference for Meaningful Inclusion On and Off the Training Floor	93
Scene One	94
Mentorship in Martial Arts Teaching	101
Scene 2	105
Chapter Five – Extending Moral Community: Enduring Impermanence	119
Mural Descriptions	120
Figure 1 Peace is Not a Dream in Storage	125
The Neighborhood and the Block	127
Denial of Violence	128
Children as Innocents	130
Whose Neighborhood?	133
The Meanings of Compromise	135
Understandings	137
Postscript	141
Chapter Six – Leaving Brooklyn (for Points Unknown, But Considered)	142
Challenges for Moral Inclusion	143
Cultivating Risk and Safety Together	144
Encouraging Critical Distance	144
Creating Micro-spaces of Segregation within Community	145
Extending Moral Community	145
Understanding the Impermanence of Outcome	146
Unfinished Understandings	147
Community as a Construct	147
Fantasies of Self-Defense	148
The Challenge of the Body	149
Landscaping Moral Inclusion: A Gesture toward Generalizability	150
Appendix A Chronology	157
Appendix B	164
Appendix C Individual Interview Protocol	167
Appendix D Background Questionnaire	168
Appendix E E-mail Recruitment Text	169
Appendix F List of Codes	170
Appendix G Brooklyn Women’s Martial Arts Sparring Information, Guidelines, and Rules	172
Appendix H Mural Chronology	177
Appendix I Local News Articles about Mural	179

References 180

List of Tables

1. Table 1 Summary of Theoretical Background and Research Questions.....3
2. Table 2 Methods & Analysis Summary Chart.....35
3. Table 3 Participant Demographics and Participation in BWMA Programming.....41

List of Figures

1. Figure 1 Peace is Not a Dream in Storage.....125

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Feminist organizations have a rich history of educating women in community, activism, and citizenship. Well documented over the last 30 years by academics, community activists, and those who straddle both groups, this history reflects the development of the second wave of the U.S. women's movement through its organizational offspring (Ferree & Martin, 1995). Although conflicts in general and the conflicts that arise when differences among women have been paid too much or not enough attention have been an overwhelming challenge for many feminist organizations, this dissertation is grounded in the context of a feminist organization that engages conflict and difference productively in everyday practices of organizational life.

A Site of Feminist Educational Practice

As I embark upon this dissertation work, I am grounded self-consciously (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998) in the practices of The Center for Anti-Violence Education (CAE). Its history, theory, and practice of social justice work have been an inspiration for my academic work and theory building. CAE is a non-profit community-based organization that teaches self-defense, martial arts, and conflict resolution to women and children of all ages. When CAE staff teaches these classes at other locations, courses are tailored to the needs of the particular community group, such as teen women in public high schools, people living with HIV/AIDS, gay men and lesbians dealing with street harassment and domestic violence, and New York City residents of Middle Eastern descent experiencing harassment after September 11th.

CAE, located in Brooklyn, NY, was co-founded in 1974 by two women who were active in several social movements of the 1960s, including the women's movement, education reform, the Civil Rights movement, and the anti-war movement. Undoubtedly attributable to these origins, CAE is an explicitly feminist, anti-racist, and lesbian-positive space. These political commitments, though not all in place at the outset, have become an explicit part of the organization's mission. For 30 years CAE, like other feminist organizations, has experienced significant conflicts across race and sexuality. But this organization has weathered these conflicts and become a stronger and more politically progressive community because of them, unlike other feminist organizations that have circumscribed their politics or disbanded through similar conflicts (Mueller, 1995; Red Apple Collective, 1977; Weston & Rofel, 1984). It is this history and practice that my dissertation will analyze.

Bridging the work of legal theorist Martha Minow (1990), social psychologist Susan Opatow (1990), feminist organizational literature, and my experience working with CAE, I have begun to explore the conditions under which meaningful and moral inclusion in communities of difference (Fine, Weis, & Powell, 1997) can take place. The sustenance of these communities is a process of maintaining the mission and beliefs of the community through daily practices. These practices are in effect a kind of defense even though an immediate threat to the goals of the space may not be present. The community defense that I am interested in, therefore, is one that is intentionally part of community life rather than a reaction to a threat to community. That defense builds from women working together, expands to the struggles of conflict within communities committed to honoring

differences, and moves beyond the group to local neighborhoods. In order to sustain moral communities of inclusion, steps need to be taken to defend communities and the groups within them. Taken together these perspectives point to a project that examines how a community creates conditions that may prompt self-defense on three different levels – individual, organizational, and neighborhood – that encourage forms of engagement explicitly political and meaningfully inclusive. The following sections outline my theoretical approaches to these three areas of defense. A summary of the background literature and research questions appears in Table 1.

Table 1.

Summary of Theoretical Background and Research Questions

Theoretical Background with Representative Citations

- Moral community literature (Fine, Weis, & Powell, 1997; Nagata, 1993; Opatow, 1990; 1993; 1994; 1996)
- Feminist organizational literature (Ferree & Martin, 1995; Leidner, 1991; Martin, 1990)
- Body literature (Frank, 1991; Grosz, 1994; Stam, 1998)

Research Questions

1. **Embodying moral communities: How do physical practices sustain moral communities?** – How do women who take classes and otherwise participate in CAE community life understand and narrate conflict and difference through and with their bodies? How do these same women understand the physical practice of self-defense?
2. **Sustaining moral communities: What are the critical elements of sustaining moral communities over time, across differences, and through intragroup conflicts?** – What do the everyday practices of the organization teach women with regard to self-defense? In what ways do staff and organizational culture encourage

Table 1 continued

particular social modes/practices that create “safer” and “just” space? What is the organizational approach to difference that is lived through the daily practices?

3. **Extending moral communities: What are the issues that emerge when a moral community extends its borders?** – How does conflict between groups change when one of the groups is not a formal organization like the government or a coalition member, but rather a group of city residents who have come together for a specific fleeting purpose? How does a conflict with the local community underscore and challenge CAE’s construction of self-defense and community?

Individual Defense

The sociology of the body understands embodiment not as a residual to social organization, but rather understands social organizations as being about the reproduction of embodiment. Embodiment is anything but a neutral constant in social life, representing instead the political principles of class and gender domination. On the questions of domination and appropriation hang much of the story of society. Feminism has taught us that story both begins and ends with bodies (Frank, 1991, p. 42).

The first section of my dissertation focuses on the metaphor of conflict and conflict resolution inherent in the physical practices of The Center for Anti-Violence Education.

In this space, in addition to karate¹, tai chi, and self-defense, some students in the

1

Karate and other martial arts in their current manifestation in the U.S. fall somewhere between an art and a sport, depending upon the particular individual and historical influences on the place where the person enrolls to learn the martial art and the goals that the martial arts student chooses to pursue. This liminality makes martial arts particularly susceptible to revision, resistance, and reproduction. Thus, there are places like CAE, outgrowths of the women’s martial arts movement that question the hierarchies of traditional martial arts training and advocate that students boldly take care of their bodies and selves if a move causes them pain, and there are also places such as Tiger Schulman that are corporate franchises spreading martial arts as a form of weight loss and

children's and women's karate programs engage in sparring. Sparring is a sport, not a fight, but it offers students the opportunity to engage in spontaneous, unscripted fight play that may illustrate for them the ways that they approach conflict in their daily lives and how conflict might be interrupted and disrupted. Through the physical work of bodies women become aware of their own styles of conflict and conflict resolution which may not be as apparent in abstract social relations and speech actions in the world. This is not to say that all women have the same experiences of body and have been socialized into their bodies in the same way. Of course race, gender expression, and class play a critical role in the ways that women experience their bodies. Nonetheless, physicality makes social situations and arrangements much more concrete and yet complicated. Learning self-defense and karate at CAE is about re-learning these patterns in a bodily way, not just verbally. The translation from body to thought, from muscles to mind is not an easy or inevitable one, but it is the one I will explore in this section.

Psychology has been largely disembodied, stripped of the lived experience of bodies or confined to a discussion of bodies, women's in particular, as the site of body images and eating disorders (Carney, 2000). Even the current threads of biological psychology in the mapping of the human genome do not really speak of the wholeness of the body and mind, but rather serve up the over-determined nature of bodies. What does it mean for a psychologist scholar to reintegrate the body into scholarship? When the

conditioning activity in addition to a mode of self-defense. This flexibility of meaning may also imply/belie the history of the martial arts in the U.S. Karate was brought to the U.S. by military veterans who learned martial arts while serving in Southeast Asian "conflicts."

body is taken up by psychology, is the body just an addition or does the body change what it means to “do” psychology? What is the relationship between the mind (brain) and the body, the mental and physical that is theorized by this new psychology of the body? All these questions plague and feed a potential psychology of the body. Ness, an anthropologist studying movement, describes the body and mind connection as the “dynamic mentality of one’s neuromusculature” (p. 4). “Anatomical bodies are constructed by systems of power and are entirely sensual, real, and consequential” (McCaughey, 1997, p. 38). Grosz (1994) calls for a feminism that eschews mind/body duality by employing “embodied subjectivity” or “physical corporeality.” Grosz breaks feminist theoretical approaches into three camps: egalitarian feminism, social constructionism, and sexual difference. The first approach treats the body as either positive or negative. The second argues that social practices shape the body. In the third, biology is not a given. There is no sex/gender distinction. In this approach “the body is neither—while also being both—the private or the public, self or other, natural or cultural, psychological or social, instinctive or learned, genetically or environmentally determined” (p. 23).

The physical feminism (McCaughey, 1997) or body work of CAE includes self-defense and martial arts classes, with sparring as part of the latter classes. For example, some women have the experience of being socialized to “make nice” during conflict (Bewley, 1996), but during sparring the expectation is that conflict will be engaged in and not avoided or smoothed over. Movement and particularly improvised techniques that compose a sparring match may provide students with self-knowledge to which they do not

have access in everyday interactions. Ness (1992) offers a similar view coming from the context of dance,

No one can acquire a choreographed movement skillfully, artfully, without keeping an open mind—literally, an ‘opening’ mind. Nobody, ‘no-body,’ can learn an unfamiliar neuromuscular pattern without being willing to acquire a new and perhaps startling insight into who it is they actually are—that is to say, a truly plural being or figure. (p. 4)

Although it seems clear that students may have novel access to knowledge about conflict, they may also gain access to unwelcome or unwanted information about experiences of violence and abuse.

Scarry (1985) describes how torture and violence are used to silence victims and reinscribe their bodies with new regimes of “truth.” Pain, and by extension the violence that causes pain, is difficult to communicate to another because it is not observable to the other. There is a leap for the other who must trust the report of the person in pain in order to acknowledge it. The person in pain is often unable to describe pain, but reverts to moans and groans to bring the pain to an utterance. Scarry writes, “Physical pain...is language-destroying” (p. 19). If pain (read violence) destroys language, other bodily practices may be necessary to release articulation or replace previous regimes of knowledge/truth with new ones. This does not mean that the articulation of pain or witness to violence is the sole goal of self-defense or a goal for some women at all. Verbal strategies alone may be insufficient to offer healing or insight to someone who is a survivor of violence and pain. Language often assumed to be liberatory can be a tool of

domination (Haug, 1987). My own research and activism have rested on the articulation of violence and pain through speaking out about its occurrence and effects, but I have, as Scarry (1985) and others (Foucault, 1990; Alcoff and Gray, 1992), become suspicious of anti-violence or healing interventions that rest solely on the confession of violence and pain, requiring the witness or mediation of another's meaning-making in that act of confession.

Violence and other means of socialization of oppressed bodies may require more than these verbal strategies in order to reinscribe bodies with new regimes of truth about bodily agency, difference, and conflict. The physical work of CAE in the form of self-defense courses and karate classes is a way to understand how bodies have been inscribed through violence and other means of body gendering and racing, and how new rituals can be laid over the old. How do the women who take classes and otherwise participate in CAE community life understand and narrate conflict and difference through and with their bodies? How do these same women understand the physical practice of self-defense?

McCaughey (1997) studied women's self-defense in its various forms including padded attacker courses, firearms courses, martial arts courses, and self-defense-oriented fitness. She then revised the saw "feminism is the theory and lesbianism is the practice" to "feminism is the theory and self-defense is the practice." She writes

A self-defender can be any of the following: a lesbian for whom having a male protector is neither a desire nor an option; a mother who conceives of herself as a virtuous 'mama bear' protecting her young; a member of the trauma recovery movement for whom learning to defend herself is secondary to the 'inner' benefits

of self-defense training; a Wall Street yuppie for whom aggression is part of professionalization; or a self-conscious dieter whose regular aerobics course became 'Cardio Combat' (1997, p. 9).

McCaughey's work focuses on how the practice of self-defense is taken up by individual women. While the separation McCaughey creates between categories of women seems a bit stark – the glossing over of lesbian mama bears and Wall Street trauma survivors, for instance – McCaughey found all these women in disparate locations and theorized across their experiences. Part of the challenge of a space like CAE is to create community across the experiences of the women that McCaughey describes. It is challenging to think about creating space through everyday practices that form an explicitly political community from the lesbian, the mama bear, the yuppie, and the dieter. These differences may at times be the points of rupture where community conflicts arise within the organization. My dissertation work seeks to identify how this practice is not isolated only in the work of individual women, but is also assumed by feminist organizations to create community.

Intra-Organizational Defense and Conflict

In pursuing the expansion of self-defense to organizational defense, a definition of this type of defense is required. Self-defense is usually considered an individual phenomenon in the face of extreme circumstances. Organizational defense is an application of self-defense to the level of organizational settings. It is taking a stance or implementing an action that enacts and protects the mission (both formal and hidden) of a group. It is a set of actions that works against/counters a threat to the organizational mission and/or its survival. Added to this basic definition, feminist organizations have

worked to encourage, recruit, and respect the differences between their organizational members, and then create organizational defenses that sustain the community and these differences.

Feminist Organizations and Feminist Organizational Theory

The gendering of organizational theory and feminist organizational literature have blossomed into a flourishing field of inquiry in the last thirty years or so. Often informed by oral history and participant observation, feminist organizational literature endows context with greater importance than theory testing. Though its methods are circumscribed, feminist organizational scholarship arose from many disciplines, including sociology, history, political science, and, of course, women's studies. Some work originated with activist women who wanted to document the process and history of their local contexts (See Red Apple Collective, 1977, for example). Other studies have been conducted by feminist academics who brought organizational theory to bear on feminist groups. Martin (1990) wrote the definitive essay on feminist organizations attempting to synthesize a broad literature, not an easy feat as the literature is in some ways a staccato account of the varied contexts in which feminists have organized. She defines organization as "any relatively enduring...group of people that is structured to pursue goals that are collectively identified" (1990, p. 185). She continues by defining an organization as feminist "...if it meets any one of the following criteria: (a) has a feminist ideology; (b) has feminist guiding values; (c) has feminist goals; (d) produces feminist outcomes; (e) was founded during the women's movement..." (p. 185).

Martin's goal appears to have been an endeavor to provide an overarching

framework for scholarship on feminist organizations. Ferree & Martin (1995) adopt a somewhat more simplistic yet concise definition—"feminist organizations as the places in which and the means through which the work of the women's movement is done" (p.13). Martin (1990) threw the net as wide in her essay to capture all the different groups that comprise feminist organizations and organizing, but feminism itself has had a history of contentious definitions of community. The conflicts have been multi-sided and have occurred within feminist communities (e.g., staff versus volunteers, race, class, sexuality, disability, etc.), between feminist organizations working in coalition, and between feminist organizations and broader social institutions like the U.S. government, and groups allied closely with sexist ideologies.

Feminist organizational literature has overwhelmingly focused upon the differences and conflicts among women within feminist organizations (See Bewley, 1996; Freeman, 1995; Leidner, 1991; Morgen, 1995; Pennell, 1987; Red Apple Collective, 1977; Sealander & Smith, 1986; Strobel, 1995; Tom, 1995; Uttal, 1990; Weston & Rofel, 1984; Whittier, 1995, for examples). This in and of itself is not a problem for the literature, but what seems to be lacking is the contextualizing of the particular organization in broader social relations. Leidner (1991) argues that feminist theory should take concrete practices of feminist organizations as their point of departure. She writes,

Feminist theory (which until recently has rarely taken for inspiration the actual practice of feminist organizations), feminist practices, and democratic theory more broadly can all benefit from an analysis of specific feminist organizations, whose innovative forms have emerged incrementally from the practical and ideological

demands of their feminist constituencies” (1991, p. 263).

I agree with Leidner that feminist organizing has much to offer and yet too often the analysis of feminist organizations has been circumscribed, insulated within the organization and rarely connected to larger social processes and events. This narrow focus may reflect the relative infancy of feminist organizational theory, but it also alludes to the encapsulation of some feminist communities.

Differences of race, class, and sexuality, although always a part of women’s communities, first began to capture the attention of (white) feminist scholarship and leadership in the 1980s, perhaps inspiring feminist scholarship to examine these differences in depth. Feminist theories and communities have been justly criticized from within for relying on a singular conception of “woman/women” who occupy feminist thought and space (Anzaldúa & Morága, 1981; Collins, 1986, 1990; hooks, 1981; Rich, 1980) or even for relying on the conception of “woman/women” at all (Wittig, 1993).

A recent approach on difference frameworks seems particularly helpful in understanding how these differences may operate within organizations. A team of scholars at the Center for Gender in Organizations at the Simmons Graduate School of Management has developed a series of frameworks for understanding gender and organization (Kolb, Fletcher, Meyerson, Merrill-Sands, & Ely, 1998; Meyerson, 1998; Meyerson & Fletcher, 2000). This formulation lays out how organizations, not just feminist ones, may understand the difference of gender and how their understandings form the base for the 1) vision, 2) gender, 3) research, 4) problem formulation, 5) approach to change, 6) benefits and 7) limitations of the framework that is in place. The application of

Meyerson's difference approaches are not limited to gender, but may be applied to other axes of difference (e.g., race, class, sexuality, and disability).

Meyerson's (1998) elaboration contains four frames. The first frame, *Fix The Woman*, is closely associated with liberal individualism. Its approach to the differences between men and women is to provide trainings and skills development to help women "catch up" with men's skills. The second frame, *Create Equal Opportunity*, operates under the belief that men and women are treated differently by organizations and to remedy this unfair situation policies are created to help women. Many of the adjustments of the second frame are still on an individual level. Women's ways of knowing and acting (their difference) are acknowledged and celebrated in the third frame, *Value the Feminine*. In order to establish just working environments, those environments must be changed to value women's ways of being and male employees must be trained in appreciating women's differences, the third frame argues. The fourth frame, *Resisting and Re-visioning the Dominant Discourse*, seems like the ideal institutional or organizational approach to difference and change as presented by the authors, and it is the one that most closely resembles the social relations approach of legal scholar Martha Minow (1990). In this frame, the discourse of difference is critiqued and re-imagined so that multiple ways of being, interacting, and knowing are valued within the organizational context.

The Meyerson (1998) formulation mirrors Minow's (1990) suggestions about how difference is conceptualized within the law. Minow's approaches to difference are "abnormal" persons-, rights-, and social relations-based. As Minow writes,

Similar contrasting approaches can be adopted in the legal treatment of difference.

We can treat differences as the private, internal problem of each different person, a treatment that obviously depends on communal agreements and public enforcement. We can treat differences as a function of relationships and compare the contributions made by different people to the costs and burdens of the difference. Or we can treat differences as a pervasive feature of communal life and consider ways to structure social institutions to distribute the burdens attached to difference. (1990, p. 11)

Although Meyerson (1998) focuses upon gender as the point of difference, Minow explores many different axes of difference. The underlying theme of her work though argues that organizational practice creates and maintains difference. If difference is constructed uncritically, it becomes an axis of unfair treatment, an impediment to community, but if constructed critically it becomes a way to create community and strengthen common understandings of what difference means.

The "Dilemma of Difference"

Nagata (1993), in the psychological moral community literature, seems to suggest that the emphasis on group differences is part of moral exclusion, a marker on the path to internment of Japanese Americans by the U.S. Highlighting cultural differences between Japanese Americans and the rest of the country was one unjust step on the way to their eventual imprisonment. This is contrary to work (Fine, Weis, & Powell, 1997; Roberts, 1998) that suggests an acknowledgment of difference is necessary for justice concerns to be met. The key that offers a possible answer to this seeming contradiction is a further development in Minow's work that she calls "the dilemma of difference" (1990, p. 20).

Minow (1990) discusses how U.S. legal thought has had a complicated stance toward differences between people and that these differences arise from the social categorization of people and things. No differences are intrinsic, apparent, “natural,” but all arise from social relations. The dilemma of difference is that relying upon the categories that separate people reifies those very categories making them seem more stable than they are, but ignoring them denies the injustices people have experienced because of these categories. She writes, “when does treating people differently emphasize their difference and stigmatize or hinder them on that basis? And when does treating people the same become insensitive to their difference and likely to stigmatize or hinder them on *that* basis?” (p. 20). With these questions, Minow presumes “good” intentions of the askers/actors for helping people to pursue their goals, to act on their rights “to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” Yet, in both cases, when actors rely on difference, they may do harm even with good intentions. This dilemma may result because equality and sameness are often conflated in U.S. legal thought and, by extension, much of American thought.

Notions of essentialism may underlie an emphasis on group differences. Liberal humanism may be in operation, maintaining that we are all really the same, when group differences are minimized. Moving back to moral community literature, Opatow (1996) argues that the root of conflicts between groups who agree that discrimination is deplorable, but disagree about the means for redress, may arise from different conceptions of procedural justice and scope of justice.

Opatow’s work (1993) provides empirical evidence for Minow’s (1990) argument

about the “dilemma of difference.” In her 1993 study on animals and the scope of justice, Opatow first reviews psychological theory and research supporting the view that consideration of equal treatment does not come easily if participants are asked to consider dissimilar others. She writes in her introduction,

Studies on social categorization (Tajfel, 1970, 1978), prosocial behavior (Staub, 1978), interpersonal attraction (Byrne, 1971), and ethnocentric conflict (Brewer, 1979; LeVine & Campbell, 1972) suggest that perceiving others as similar to oneself gives rise to concern with rights, fair treatment, and entitlements, while these concerns are less likely when others are perceived as dissimilar. (p. 73)

These theories and studies may very well be evidence of how culture, specifically U.S. legal thought and discourse, Minow reviews, is written on individual minds and behavior.

And yet when Opatow completes her study she finds that there is a complicated interaction between perceived similarity and degree of conflict, a second independent variable in her design. In low conflict situations where needs (in her study’s case, human needs and the Bombardier beetle’s needs) are not in direct opposition, participants who perceived animals as similar to *Homo sapiens* were more likely to apply justice considerations to the animal others as compared to participants in the dissimilar condition. However, this relationship was reversed in the high conflict condition. Participants in the similarity condition were less likely than those in the dissimilarity condition to apply fairness principles when needs were in high conflict. Opatow suggests that competition rather than justice concerns may be aroused by similar others in high conflict drawing on the findings of social comparison research.

Opatow (1996) comments on this reversal in the context of affirmative action, "Thus, similarity fosters inclusion during low conflict, but in high conflict, it fosters exclusion. As conflict increases, those who are perceived as similar are more threatening competitors for scarce resources, such as jobs" (p. 21). And,

From a scope of justice narrowed by worsening economic conditions, the extension of concern, resources, and sacrifices to target groups that increasingly seem prosperous and similar to oneself can be interpreted as unfair 'quotas' and 'reverse discrimination' that run counter to norms of fairness. (p. 21)

One can expect, therefore, in times of economic and cultural upheaval that outgroup members are more likely to be perceived as a threat even if there is information that they are similar to the ingroup. Feminist theory and more recently queer theory have developed a related argument suggesting that during times of cultural turmoil notions of sexual deviance are more likely to be enforced and highlighted (Foucault, 1978; Rubin, 1984; D'Emilio, 1993). Yet this re-enforcement of difference may be redundant, excessive even, if Opatow's work stands. For even if others are viewed as similar, in times of high conflict community and justice may not be extended to them, but competition and exclusion may.

The importance of conflict outside a group rather than between group needs has also received empirical attention. Classic social theories suggest that externally directed conflict, a superordinate goal in social-psychological terms (Sherif, 1988), strengthens the cohesiveness of a group (read: an organization) by providing something to unify its members against. However, feminist organizations have also experienced an influx of new

members who wish to mobilize with the presence of an external threat (e.g., legislation or judicial decisions that limit reproductive rights). These new members may have a different impact depending on the organizational form. Mueller (1995) found that formal organizations with large, inclusive memberships experience less internal conflict from the recruitment effect, the influx of new members. These more bureaucratic groups establish rules quite easily that resolve conflict, but they are often stagnant when it comes to adapting their forms. Service organizations, a mixed form between informal and formal organizations, daily come face to face with external conflict with city and state agencies. Conflict in small collectivist (informal) groups, as opposed to either formal or service groups, tends to have a longer lasting impact than conflict in larger bureaucratic groups. With small collectivist groups, external threat and a recruitment effect can be devastating; their size and structure makes the inclusion of new members difficult. On the other hand, they also may provide the impetus for innovative organizational forms. Informal, collectivist groups may produce theory following conflict that has threatened organizational existence.

Mueller's work, then, suggests that the Robber's Cave study results are only part of the story about external conflict and groups; the form that the group takes and the processing of conflicts contribute to the eventual outcomes. "The internal dissension that leads to factionalism and dissolution in small groups may also provide the impulse for theoretical generativity around competing identities. Much theoretical work on the intersections of gender, race, and class, for example, has been generated in reaction to the experience of conflict over these issues" (Mueller, 1995, p. 275). Mueller (1995) begins

to move feminist organizational scholarship outward by including the impact of external conflict like judicial decisions on feminist organizations.

Like Leidner's call for grounded study of feminist organizations, Mueller's study of the effects of new member influx on feminist organizations, and Minow's "dilemma of difference," Opatow's research begins to build an argument that justice concerns surrounding difference and sameness are more complicated than they might appear on the surface. She suggests looking to context for clues to the most effective ways to increase people's scope of justice. Both Minow's analysis of legal decisions and Opatow's analysis of her participants' responses indicate that manipulating perceptions of similarity and difference are inadequate responses to an ultimate concern with just conditions. Getting absorbed in debates about similarity and dissimilarity without interrogating the structures that undergird relationships that make these differences matter further undermines work toward inclusion (Minow, 1990; Hare-Mustin, 1992; Morawski, 1994). Opatow alludes to the importance of context to attitudes toward affirmative action and other social justice issues when she writes of "a scope of justice narrowed by worsening economic conditions..." A social psychology stripped of context or well-versed in the language of universalism – the "no context" context – may leave us high and dry, stranded in differences that have been removed from social relations (Fine, 1986).

Martha Minow's writing on the law inspires my thinking on feminist organizations. It brings both a critical view of creating and maintaining differences and yet tries to formulate what a community of difference (Fine, Weis, & Powell, 1998) or a moral community that satisfies an ethic of inclusion and justice would look like, maintaining both

a critique of and hope for community. Reading through social psychology one finds that this perspective is not entirely absent from moral community literature. In fact, Staub (1989) holds a similar vision. He writes,

It is important that people acquire a critical consciousness, the ability to see their group's imperfections as well as strengths. Then their loyalty to the group may be expressed in attempts to improve it, rather than insistence on its virtues. Such *critical loyalty* [emphasis added] may seem incompatible with the aim of strengthening the group as a community, but it is not. In well-functioning families the members can express their own needs and beliefs without rebellion, and conflicts can be resolved. The same can happen in larger groups. Close ties can provide the security to oppose potentially destructive ideas and practices. The group may come to regard such opposition not as disloyalty but as service to itself (1989, p. 266).

Feminist objection to the uncritical exemplar of family aside, Staub's vision is appealing to those of us who recognize both the potential dangers and delights of groups. What do the everyday practices of the organization teach women with regard to self-defense? In what ways do staff and organizational culture encourage particular social modes/practices that create "safer" and "just" space? What is the organizational approach to difference that is lived through the daily practices?

Organizational Defense and Community Conflict

A preliminary search of Psycinfo reveals no records for the term *moral inclusion* (but see Opatow, 2002, for a discussion of moral inclusion), although there are several

records for the terms *moral exclusion*, *moral communities*, and *scope of justice*. This absence does not necessarily reflect the exhaustive content of moral community literature nor does it belie a skeptical stance of moral community scholars toward human interaction. Yet *moral inclusion* does seem to be the aspect of moral community literature that has inspired the least follow-up. Social psychology has studied the consequences of group behavior--group think (Janis, 1972), conformity (Asch, 1955), obedience to authority (Milgram, 1974), diffusion of responsibility in bystander intervention research (Latané & Darley, 1970), etc. Social psychology textbooks are, in fact, "populated" with studies that demonstrate the mundane evils that result from simply being in a group. Perhaps, since much of this work was inspired by and sought to explain aspects of the Holocaust, considering the more positive outcomes of group connection may have been improbable. The context inspiring psychological research can certainly have implications for how and what we can imagine (See Cherry, 1995). If, for example, feminist organizations and organizing or other social movement organizations were the context for psychological theorizing, perhaps there would be a much less sanguine view of human connections and groupings.

Within feminist scholarship, a reverse focus has often been pursued. The strength of feminist communities has been underscored without a critical inspection of who was included in these settings, who was excluded to build these communities, and at what cost. This project constructs a bridge between moral community and feminist organizational literature taking the creation of communities of moral inclusion as the focal point.

Moral Communities of Social Psychology

The moral community literature within social psychology is one that offers an overarching theory of community formation. At times it seems that communities as divergent as Black nationalists and White supremacists would be lumped together by moral community literature in order to produce a universal theory of moral communities.

According to Sarason, Zitnaz, & Grossman (1971) members of moral communities have three characteristics. They 1) strongly identify with the group, they 2) adopt group goals and values, and they 3) value other group members. On the surface these three characteristics do not seem to be particularly malevolent. It doesn't seem so threatening to be part of a group in which one is valued, that one ascribes to the goals of, and to which one has formed a strong connection. But readers of the moral community literature within psychology might come away with a different impression since the moral communities that have been examined are settings of some of the greatest injustices of the 20th century including Nazi Germany (Staub, 1989) and the United States as a site of Japanese American internment during World War II (Nagata, 1993). Within social psychology the focus on moral communities has been a grim one, warning of the potential danger of groups and communities to scapegoat those they view as beyond the pale.

The concept *scope of justice* seems to have been an impetus for conceptualizing moral communities, their formation and functions. These two literatures, moral communities and scope of justice, if they can be divided so distinctly, are conceptually linked because in order to form a moral community, in Opatow's (1990) sense, one necessarily needs to form borders between those one considers to be inside and outside a scope of justice. In other words, a prerequisite to the formation of a moral community is a

response (perhaps implicit) to the question, “Who is deserving of justice and who is outside the boundaries of justice?”

Moral community scholars have undertaken the task of mapping the scope of justice in a number of contexts and consider it essential. Moral exclusion has been employed as a framework to understand the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II in the U.S. (Nagata, 1993). Barker (1995) has analyzed the responses of contingent workers in the academy, adjunct instructors, with a moral community lens. Scope of justice has been demonstrated to affect endorsement of affirmative action programs in New Zealand (Singer, 1996) and has been proposed as an explanatory framework in the affirmative action debates in the U.S. (Opatow, 1996). Homo sapiens' scope of justice within the animal kingdom has been considered when examining people's attitudes toward the use of animals in research (Herzog, 1988), how it is affected by situational factors such as perceived utility of and degree of conflict with animals (Opatow, 1993), and how it mediates relationships of similarity and utility to environmental protection (Opatow, 1994).

Opatow's work (1990) examines the much different consequences for those sitting on the outside of community borders. How a community constructs outsiders may be key to a discipline's, theory's, or scholar's overall judgment of the community's sense of morality and ethics.

Moreover, the whole concept of a boundary depends on relationships; relationships among the people who recognize and affirm the boundary. From this vantage point one can see that connections between people are the preconditions for

boundaries; the legal rules erecting boundaries between people rely on understanding social agreements and the sense of community” (Minow, 1990, p. 10).

An acknowledgment that *every* community is constructed with borders, an inside and an outside, might prove fruitful to both social psychological and feminist literature and the scholarship residing in both these domains.

The moral community concept proposes an overarching theory of communities. The feminist literatures, however, are more concerned with concrete community organizations and specific locales. Being grounded in particular organizational contexts may make it more difficult for scholars to focus on moral inclusion and exclusion simultaneously when those being excluded may not be visible within the space. This makes the utilization of methods that can articulate absence all the more important. Bringing a tool to bear that highlights shadows of meaning in organizational contexts and has the ability to theorize the foundations of identities constructed upon the Other (See Fine & Addeleston, 1996; Herek, 1993; Morrison, 1992) is essential to moral community’s and social psychology’s generativity. Both theoretical and methodological interests may prevent a complete view of moral communities, bringing inclusion or exclusion to the foreground of study.

Beyond the Borders of Feminist Organizations.

Moving outward, feminist organizational literature has little scholarship directed toward an understanding of how feminist organizations are connected with organizations that do not share feminist concerns or share the concerns of the state. Bewley argues that

“...much organizational psychology reduces power to the level of individual pathology or organizational structure and process. There is little reference to the nature of power relations *outside* [emphasis added] organizations which affect what happens within them” (1996, p. 167). In the last section Mueller began this new direction and few examples are found in the literature.

The relationship between feminist organizations/organizing and the state or other non-progressive organizations is not easily characterized or dismissed as antagonistic. Feminist organizations have a deep relationship to those outside their walls, as all moral communities have with outsiders. Perhaps organizations with a feminist stance have an even more intimate, sometimes antagonistic, relationship (intimacy and antagonism are not a foreign pairing to feminism) as domestic violence work attests to outsiders because they are actively working against the hegemony of a sexist, racist, and heterosexist culture.

The dearth of an extra-organizational analysis in feminist organizational theory may mirror the organizing outcomes of second wave feminism. Freeman discusses two, of many, possible outcomes of feminist organizing—institutionalization and encapsulation. Both outcomes are marked by a kind of rigidity that may inhibit further organizing. With institutionalization, an organization becomes so “successful” that maintaining itself may become its *raison d’être* rather than feminist organizing.

Institutionalization is what happens when a movement either penetrates existing institutions, capturing them sufficiently so that some of their resources can be used for movement goals, or movement organizations become routinized: that is, acquire stable sources of income, staff, and defined tasks. (Freeman, 1995, p. 404-

405)

Encapsulation is a related and yet somewhat inverse outcome. When an organization becomes encapsulated, it closes itself off from the larger community. These outcomes may limit how feminist organizational scholars have conceived of community or been able to represent it.

The encapsulation of some feminist organizations and communities has left them unprepared for conflict, perhaps even unprepared for contact with community beyond the organization. How does conflict between groups change when one of the groups is not a formal organization like the government or a coalition member, but rather a group of city residents who have come together for a specific fleeting purpose? How does a conflict with the local community underscore and challenge CAE's construction of self defense and community?

Roadmap

Through the next hundred pages or so, you will travel through different levels of analysis of moral inclusion as practiced by The Center for Anti-Violence Education. The next chapter lays out my methodological framework. What data did I collect and in what ways were those data analyzed? It also includes a discussion about my relationship with CAE and my own stance toward social relations and conflict. That section attempts to outline my researcher subjectivity—how do the ways that I view the social world and interact with CAE affect my research and its understandings? The three chapters following the methods chapter take up different levels of analysis and the stories that accompany them.

Chapter Three – Embodying Moral Community: Critical Distance in the Negotiation of Pleasure, Safety, and Risk is an examination of sparring as the physical work at CAE that connects its participants to safety, risk, and pleasure, their tensions, and their synergistic relationship. Through the physical work of the martial arts and self-defense, particularly the culture of sparring as it is practiced at CAE, women begin to understand how safety is something that they can carry with them and also a practice that can be created by an institution. However, safety is not a guarantee that mistakes will not be made. Instead, risk broadens social possibilities within a sparring match and enables women at CAE to explore the relationship between pleasure and risk in a safe environment. Sparring is physical work that brings challenge to individual women for whom risk is too frightening to take.

Chapter Four – Sustaining Moral Community: Working across Difference for Meaningful Inclusion On and Off the Training Floor describes two examples of internal conflict at CAE. The first surrounds an announcement about saying “hello” to other participants in CAE life. CAE staff connected friendliness, usually considered a personal choice, to broader social oppressions and our (dis)comfort with those to whom we may appear (dis)similar. The second conflict is an historical account of the women of color group at CAE that was created in the early 1980s. This was a group of women who critiqued CAE’s self-defense stance and racism within the space. They nonetheless remained active in CAE’s programming as leadership within the organization responded to their concerns and made changes to organizational structures.

Chapter Five – Extending Moral Community: Enduring Impermanence narrates the

story of a conflict over a neighborhood mural designed and painted by a group of teen women from CAE. Themes of denial of violence, the authorial control of neighborhood myth-making, and assumptions underlying mediation of conflict mark the data. This chapter argues for both the necessity of moving moral community work outside of organizational borders, but also cautions activists and community organizers about who might be at risk on the edge of community and the inevitability of conflict when vision and mission created internally collide with the vision and polyphony of a local urban neighborhood.

I conclude the work with Chapter Six – Leaving Brooklyn (for Points Unknown, But Considered) that describes the unfinished work of my dissertation and offers some tentative recommendations for working with communities that wish to create social relations where difference is not treated as remarkable. Rather, these are places where social relations diminish difference's ability to produce deficit while recognizing its enduring power to influence lived experience. The outline for practitioners lists several practices present at CAE that seem important for women's development as social actors in their communities: cultivating risk and safety together, encouraging critical distance, creating micro-spaces of segregation, extending moral community, and understanding the impermanence of outcome.

CHAPTER TWO

Methods

This study explored the ways that a moral community is sustained at three different levels: through the physical practice of sparring, through the productive address of conflict within community, and through the movement of that mission outside the community. I have conceptualized this maintenance of community as a form of self-defense and community defense. This dissertation engages these levels with a multi-method qualitative approach including 1) telephone interviews, 2) semi-structured oral history interviews, 3) ethnographic fieldnotes, 4) participant observation, 5) semi-structured interviews, 6) a focus group with karate students, the analysis of archival materials such as organizational media, and newspaper accounts of the organization. The moral community that was the focus of the exploration is The Center for Anti-Violence Education (CAE), a non-profit community-based organization in Brooklyn, NY, that teaches self-defense, martial arts, and conflict resolution to women, teen women, and children. The data were analyzed using two analytic approaches: thematic or content analysis and discursive analysis. These two forms of analysis allowed me to examine both what was said or written, but also how that information was communicated.

As discussed in the previous chapter, three separate literatures inform and prompt an exploration of the sustenance of this moral community and the kind of data collection that was conducted. Tensions between the moral community literature in social psychology and the feminist organizational literature highlight a need for an analysis of moral community that telescopes, moving analysis from individual to organization, and out

to neighborhood, nesting the organization in broader social relations (Bertram, 2001; Bewley, 1996; Mueller, 1995). The basis of the choice of the following methods is also Dorothy Smith's work on "the everyday world as problematic" (1987). Her work has influenced me to take organizational life and make it strange, to analyze and interrogate everyday organizational life and understand how it provides the mundane maintenance of social organization. These limitations of the literature lead to the following research questions:

- 1) How do the women who take classes and otherwise participate in CAE community life understand and narrate conflict and difference through and with their bodies? How do these women understand the physical practice of self-defense?
- 2) What do the everyday practices of the organization teach women with regard to self-defense? In what ways do staff and organizational culture encourage particular social modes/practices that create "safer" and "just" space? What is the organizational approach to difference that is lived through the daily practices?
- 3) How does a conflict with the local community underscore and challenge CAE's construction of self-defense and community?

Site

CAE is the umbrella organization of several projects including The Children's Empowerment Project (CEP), PACT (Power, Action, Change for Teen women), Community Outreach, and Brooklyn Women's Martial Arts (BWMA), the oldest and founding project of CAE. To limit the scope of this project, the present work focused solely upon the adult women's karate program of Brooklyn Women's Martial Arts

(BWMA). BWMA teaches adult women self-defense, karate, and tai chi. The teen women's program will be discussed, but only as it relates to the organization's response to the mural controversy and conflict.

BWMA as of May 2003 had approximately 67 active karate students. Fifty-three are white, seven are African American, five are Latina, one is Southeast Asian, and one is Afro-Caribbean. About three-quarters of the karate students are lesbian, bisexual, or queer.

Statement of Researcher Standpoint

My reliance on Dorothy Smith (1987) makes it necessary for me to be clear about who I am with regard to The Center for Anti-Violence Education. My role at CAE has changed dramatically and rapidly since I first entered the organization's doors in January of 1996. I began as a women's studies intern working to capture the history of the organization through oral history interviews. Next, I was a self-defense student. After the five-week self-defense course, I signed up for karate classes. My partner later signed up for both the tai chi and karate courses. I have served as a member of the BWMA (Brooklyn Women's Martial Arts) Council as well as the Outreach and Education Committee. My partner is on the Board and teaches tai chi and now I also teach karate classes at The Center. And I am currently an assistant self-defense teacher.

It is an understatement that this space is important to me. It has become central to my definition of self, what I understand about agency and conflict, and also what I consider to be among the best definitions of community. I am clear about these things so that I understand my relationship to the organization is not the relationship of all people to

the organization, nor is it the relationship of many to it. My clarity about this relationship enables me to separate my own feelings from those of the women I have interviewed and whose words and worlds I analyzed. Less defensively, it offers me a insider's view of the social relations in this community. In fact, I worry less about knowing not enough about social relations at CAE than knowing too much and being able to pare down that knowledge and communicate it with clarity and integrity.

My interviewees, excluding the former self-defense students who were interviewed over the phone, are all women that I see nearly every week. I train side-by-side with them. I spar and partner with them for self-defense exercises. I know the names of their partners, children, siblings, and even pets. These connections both deepen my understanding of my participants and their context, and highlight ethical considerations in dealing with their lives. At times I have pretended not to know things. I have omitted details that I find tempting and illuminating because they are not technically in my data set. I had learned them not in an interview, but over a cup of coffee. My roles at CAE – researcher, community member, teacher – were constantly shifting. In order to ethically balance these shifting roles, it has been important for me to be clear about my dual commitments to scholarship and community. It has also been essential for me to have a set of mentors to help me navigate the shifting terrain of qualitative research in context and community.

This degree of socioemotional work creates contextually rich and ethically bounded social science, but it also helps me understand the appeal of interviewing strangers with little social context. Knowing more about the lives of one's interviewees

makes the task of summarizing those lives difficult. Interviews with strangers undoubtedly carry their own sets of methodological concerns, but they also may sustain the myth of objectivity, making the ease of decontextualization tempting. Ethnographic research with its focus on individuals embedded in social relations creates conditions that make it clear how positionality affects perspective. My view of a karate student's sparring work becomes one of a dozen – clearly privileged because I have taken the time to listen and analyze, but also situated and partial. I am not the first to encounter this tension of interviewing friends or befriending interviewees (See Kreiger, 1983; Newton, 1996, for examples). As I filled out IRB forms I struggled with the fear that my participants would feel obligated to “help me out” with my schoolwork. Then, I quickly remembered two of the three were self-defense teachers skilled at saying “no” and skilled also at instructing a room full of women to effectively communicate their wants by harmonizing the messages of eyes, voice, and body language. Still, I would not have chosen to do this work in any other way. The benefits of contextualizing the study of lives through the deep understanding of community outweigh the work required of the researcher.

Similarly, I bring a stance that shapes my understanding of self-defense. I am often surprised that other people are not interested in conflict as I am. I believe this reflects a kind of world view that I hold. Being a survivor and witness of violence, I see a world fraught with conflict even when it does not escalate into fists and knives. I often see conflict in everyday relations. Life feels rife with it and even seemingly smooth interactions feel troubling at their core or at least carry potential danger. Carrying this particularly idiosyncratic – and also, I believe, feminist – view of intimate relations, the

edges of relationships are worrisome. Rather than view this stance as an impediment to this work and to everyday relations (as it can be), I see it as a kind of sensitivity to the undercurrents of social life. As someone who has tried to avoid conflict throughout my life, sometimes successfully but often unsuccessfully, I understand conflict as inevitable but often latent. As someone who has often felt conflicted, I understand the difficulty of a socialization where agreement and a smoothing over of difference is paramount when that socialization has not served its bearers well.

My raising as a white girl and woman straddling working class and poor contexts and being socialized to the middle class through education and the myth/hope of class escape/abandonment placed me between two worlds. In my own home, conflict was often open and hostile and resolved with rough words and fists. It was brutally honest, but left me feeling as if violence and raised voices were the only way to be heard. The classrooms that I encountered left me with another world. In this world conflict for girls was to be downplayed and “making nice” was the rule of those rooms. The idea that there may be many approaches to conflict and that agents in the face of conflict could choose among them did not occur to me until I watched the interactions and the body work of the women at The Center for Anti-Violence and began to understand a set of approaches to physical conflict as a metaphor for the social situations I navigate. Even as I write this I wonder if some women have modes of conflict that are successful across the contexts they traverse. I find that the straddling of contexts makes the multiple ways more practical for me, but were I still living in a home with violence my choices may well be circumscribed to few choices and a devastating technique.

Data Design and Collection

As my relationship with CAE developed over time as described above, the data I collected reflected this deepening connection to the organization. The data collection that resulted resembles triangulation, but actually reaches further as knowledge of CAE persuaded me to collect more data with different foci that would capture what I understood about the dojo. This project is a multi-year, multi-method qualitative study. The methods span from archival data collection to participant observation, from oral history and semi-structured interviewing to a focus group. Table 2 provides an overview of the methods and analyses.

Table 2.

Methods & Analysis Summary Chart

<i>Method & Reference</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Participants</i>
Participant Observation (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1994; Bernard, 1994)	recorded fieldnotes of community life as an insider	CAE community
Archival (Bernard, 1994)	study of existing data sets	CAE newsletters, media accounts of CAE, media accounts of mural controversy
Semi-structured oral history interviews (Morrissey, 1987)	gathering of organizational history	Executive Director (two interviews), two staff members
Ethnography (Burawoy et al., 1990; Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995)	recorded fieldnotes of community life	CAE community

<i>Method & Reference</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Participants</i>
Semi-Structured Interviews (Kvale, 1996; Mishler, 1986)	co-construction of meaning between interviewer and interviewee	10 self-defense students, three karate students
Focus Group (Merton, 1987)	focused conversation with five to seven participants	six karate/self-defense students

<i>Data Analysis & Reference</i>	<i>Description</i>
Thematic or Content Analysis (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996)	based on the examination of the surface meaning of a text
Discursive Analysis (Taylor, 2001; Wilkinson, 2000)	based on the examination of the underlying assumptions of a text

I began my relationship with CAE as an intern in spring 1996. I had received an Urban Student Fellowship from The Graduate Center's (CUNY) Women's Studies department. The focus of the fellowship and affiliated course work ("Women, Community, and Public Voice") was to create connections between activist women working within the academy and to those working in communities. My role at CAE was to evaluate their self-defense courses and to conduct oral history interviews.

Telephone interviews

During my fellowship, I conducted telephone interviews with ten former self-defense students. Telephone interviews were conducted rather than face-to-face interviews with former students on the recommendation of the Executive Director who thought a certain amount of time for reflection on the course should be allowed. The telephone interviewees were randomly selected from a list of women who had taken the self-defense course over the last several cohorts. CAE provided this list. The

interviewees were asked for their evaluation of the self-defense course. These interviews were transcribed by a professional transcription service.

Oral History Interviews

I conducted four oral history interviews with three staff members: two with the Executive director and one each with the Administrative Director and the Grant Writer. Annie Ellman, the Executive Director, is also the co-founder of CAE. She is a 52 year old white woman who was born into a working-class Jewish family with a multi-generational history of social activism in the progressive left. Brenda, the Administrative Director, is an African American in her late 30s, and grew up in New Jersey. She has been training at CAE for 22 years and has been on staff since 1989. Lucy was CAE's grant writer and Development Director from 1987 to 2001. She trained in karate at CAE for 20 years. She is a white woman in her early 40s. All three of these women, in addition to being staff members, are also karate teachers, self-defense instructors, and students of the martial arts. The interviews with the Executive Director were conducted under the auspices of the CUNY intern program (<http://web.gc.cuny.edu/womencenter/AWV/Ellman.html>). The interviews with the other staff were conducted the summer after my fellowship. All of the oral history interviews were semi-structured interviews. The interviews employed the two-sentence format recommended by Morrissey (1987) for oral history interviewing. Basically after reviewing organizational literature, the interviewer "fills out" the organizational record by making a statement about an event that she read about in the organizational files and then asking the interviewee about the record using open-ended questions. Each interview lasted about two hours. I personally transcribed the interviews

with the Executive Director, but the interviews with the Administrative Director and Grant Writer were transcribed by a professional transcription service as the telephone interviews had been.

I have used a mix of pseudonyms and real names for the participants in this project. When data was gathered from matters of public record, real names were used. Also I have used participants' real names when they are part of an oral history interview because those participants understood that their words and stories were being placed in a public archive. For all other interviewees and community members, I have used pseudonyms to protect their confidentiality. There are times when I have changed demographic details when other members of the community might guess their identities.

Fieldnotes and Participant Observation

In the next phase of data collection/creation I took fieldnotes and became a participant observer (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995) over my seven years (and running) of participation. I attended karate classes, special community meetings, small group meetings, and rallies where I took fieldnotes. During this phase of data collection I sought to take stock of the data I had and fill out the partial picture of community life my interviews had captured.

Interviews with Karate Students

Most recently, three semi-structured interviews were conducted with karate students. For my interviewing I draw on work by Eliot Mishler (1986) and Steinar Kvale (1996) both of whom consider interviewing a co-construction of meaning or an inter-view between the interviewer and his or her interviewee where knowledge is constructed rather

than uncovered. Unlike the sampling for the telephone interviews, the sampling for the face to face interviews was an expert selection. I asked three women who had diverse enough biographies and identities to provide narratives about physicality and moral community. From the years that I have spent at CAE, I also had some preliminary ideas about what issues would influence a woman's experiences of CAE. Therefore, I chose to ask women who I had heard be articulate about their physical training (particularly self-defense and sparring) as well as women who were demographically diverse. The protocol for these interviews appears in Appendix C along with a demographic questionnaire (Appendix D) that each woman filled out after her interview. Two books on women in the martial arts partly inspired the protocol (Hoppe, 1998; Siegel, 1993). I gleaned questions from these books about engagement, conflict, and physicality. Each of these interviews also lasted about two hours and was audio taped. Interviewees received \$30 for their participation in the project. Again, I transcribed these interview tapes.

Focus Group

Next, I conducted a focus group with six women who are adult karate students. For the focus group, students were recruited through a flier posted in the library at CAE and through an e-mail to karate students. The e-mail recruitment text appears in Appendix E. Participants had to be actively training (i.e., attending classes at CAE) and had to be at the level of sparring with both partners attacking and defending. This means that both partners in a match are initiating attacks (e.g., a kick) and both partners are also blocking these attacks. This seemed important given my desire to explore the interactions that happen between sparring partners in the course of a sparring round. Focus group

members received \$30 for their participation in the project. I personally transcribed the focus group tape.

Participants

My selection of participants was driven in part by research questions that focus upon a single community and that community's everyday life. Rather than evaluating the creation of community, I was interested in the connections between its members. Eight women participated in the semi-structured face-to-face interviews and the focus group. Table 3 organizes the demographic information gathered about these women. Six were white, one was Latina, and one was African American. The average age of the participants was 39 with a range of 26 to 67. Three women self-identified as lesbian, three as straight, two as queer, and one as bisexual. One participant identified as a woman and transgendered. (Two women chose more than one word to describe their sexual orientation.) These karate students averaged 6.4 years of training at CAE with a range from 1.5 to 11 years. All of the participants except one had taken CAE's self-defense course. Three of the women participated in the BWMA survivor's program. The survivor's program offers free classes to women who have experienced any form of violence in their lives.

Data Analysis Plan

Qualitative data analysis does not proceed lockstep from research question to data collection to data analysis and, finally, to writing. Instead, the process of qualitative research is a recursive one, moving from writing to analysis to data collection and back again sometimes with these tasks occurring (nearly) simultaneously. What follows is a

Table 3.

Participant Demographics and Participation in BWMA Programming

Participant	Gen der	Race	Age	Sexual orientation	BWMA karate	BWMA tai chi	BWMA self- defense	BWMA survivor's program	Years of training
Brenda	F	African American	late 30s	lesbian	✓	✓	✓	✓	15
Bryn	F	white	40	lesbian, queer	✓		✓	✓	5.5
Cady	F	white	39	straight	✓	✓	✓		10.5
Dory	F	white	67	straight	✓	✓	✓		6
Francis	F, trans gend ered	Latina	35	queer	✓		✓		11
Gail	F	white	26	queer	✓		✓	✓	1.5
Ida	F	white, Jewish	38	straight	✓		✓		10
Lucy	F	white	late 30s	lesbian	✓		✓		15
Olive	F	African American	35-45	bisexual	✓		✓		2

Participant	Gen der	Race	Age	Sexual orientation	BWMA karate	BWMA tai chi	BWMA self-defense	BWMA survivor's program	Years of training
Sadie	F	white	28	lesbian, queer, bisexual some days	✓			✓	4.5

linear narrative of my data analysis. A more accurate rendering of the data analysis would resemble a web with data analysis, coding, and writing overlapping throughout this project. For example, as I transcribed interviews, I often wrote pieces of preliminary analysis in a dissertation journal (e.g., how one woman's experience of the self-defense section of class differed from another's.)

This project straddles two different modes of qualitative data coding—one mode based in the ethnographic methods of anthropology and sociology, the other based in qualitative content analysis. Kidder & Fine (1987) have described this as a difference between qualitative methods with a large or a small “q.” The open coding follows a more ethnographic approach to analysis, a large “Q.” The small “q” coding enlists a specific set of codes that are applied to the data.

Open Coding

The data analysis for this project began with a period of open coding. In that process, a researcher, or the ethnographer that Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw (1995) describe, reads his or her way through the fieldnotes (data) making notes in the margins of the text. I read through the complete data set first re-familiarizing myself with fieldnotes, interview transcripts, and archival data that I collected or compiled some time ago. I excluded the more recently conducted interviews (that I transcribed myself) from this period of open coding since I was more familiar with them.

I would have earlier argued that this process drew on notions of grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998) and it does in fact distinguish itself from research that tests a given theory. However, Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw (1995) contrast

ethnographic approaches with a grounded theory approach in that the former does not make a distinction between data and theory. In ethnographic approaches, in contrast to grounded theory approaches, it is acknowledged that data are influenced by theory from the beginning, theory in the head of the researcher if not in a research hypothesis.

“Grounded theory slights the processes whereby data are assembled, processes that build concepts into the data from the start in the very process of writing fieldnotes” (p. 167). I have been influenced by several literatures and experiences in collecting and analyzing data in the CAE context. Those literatures guided my fieldnotes and the interview questions that I asked.

Focused Coding

After this initial open read through, I made my way through the data again with focused coding. This enabled me to examine the data with themes generated through the previous open coding process. The focused coding was again divided into two segments – content analysis and discursive analysis. Wilkinson (2000) describes these approaches in the context of a research project with women who have breast cancer.² One read-through focused on content analysis, identifying aspects of the interviews, etc., that pertained to my particular research questions. This coding run-through was a way to mark the content areas in the transcripts (e.g., “This is a section of data that refers to the mural work,” or,

2

Wilkinson also describes a third form of qualitative analysis (biographical analysis) in her paper. Although I think this third form of data analysis would have been helpful in fully bridging the study of social relations from individual lives to community life, the data my interviews produced did not provide enough biographical information in order to do this type of analysis justice.

“This is a section of the interview with Cady where we discussed self-defense.”). Within these codes, I also began to identify codes within codes (indicated by bullets in Appendix F). I created a sort of taxonomy with bulleted categories within the gross codes. For example, with the self-defense code, a second level of codes emerged as I began to understand self-defense as taking many forms within my data and for my interviewees. Therefore, sections of data that had been coded with the term sparring were also divided into sparring as competition, contact, context, control, etc.

The second read-through focused on the immediate context of the data collection. This second phase of data analysis used a discursive approach, noting moments in an interview or field note where the meanings created by the group or pair are embedded in the immediate context and the language that is used. I paid particular attention to moments when as a researcher I was having difficulty understanding what the participant/interviewee/community member was saying or when we were struggling to create the localized meaning that the discursive approach analyzes.

Codes

The exhaustive list of codes generated during the open coding process appear in Appendix F. The codes that appear in boldface were present across the levels of data. These codes were consistent across two levels of the data set or across all levels. Sometimes these codes identify literal instances in one level and come up figuratively in another level. For example, certain concepts in physical sparring seem illustrative for community-level conflict strategies. Specifically, critical distance is the space one needs to be in relation to a sparring partner in order to make contact to their body with a technique.

This notion of critical distance may play out in community relations in a more figurative way where community members remain relatively unaware of one another until a certain space is breached.

Certain codes generated during the open coding process were dropped as my analysis and coding continued. For instance, in the interviews I conducted with Executive Director Annie Ellman, I asked questions about grant writing and funding for explicitly feminist organizations. I categorized these sections of data with the code organizational growth and several secondary codes. These codes did not seem relevant to my current research questions.

The next chapter examines the physical practices of self-defense and sparring at CAE and how those practices connect CAE students to pleasure, safety, and risk.

CHAPTER THREE

Embodying Moral Community: Critical Distance in the Negotiation of Pleasure, Safety, and Risk

*I fell in love with karate though I remained a white belt, year after year of white belts—a legendary white belt, in fact. I was so bad, people would come to watch. Inflexible, nearsighted without talent or aptitude, falling down, sweaty and miserable—sometimes I would even pass out halfway through the class. I learned to take a glass of bouillon like medicine before I put on my gi. But I kept going back, careless of injury or laughter. What I wanted from karate was some *echo of love* for my body and the spirit it houses—meat and bone and the liquid song of my own gasps, the liquor stink of stubborn sweat, the *sweet burn* of sinew, muscle, and *lust*.*

Dorothy Allison, 1995, p. 65-66

The physical body work of CAE in the form of sparring and self-defense connects pleasure, safety, and risk for participants in the space. This connection serves as the underpinning of communities of moral inclusion because it provides reasons for members to remain in community (pleasure, safety), but also pushes participants to move beyond community (risk). The physical work then is a collective body building where CAE students work the edges of these concepts and explore what they mean for self in and beyond community.

The data in this chapter are drawn from both individual interviews and a focus group as well as organizational documents as described in Chapter Two. As interviews and focus groups potentially triangulate and produce different data (e.g., Bertram, Hall, Fine, & Weis, 2000), these two forms of data collection rounded out my sense of the physical, cultural work of CAE while raising some absences that are remarkable for the space. This chapter is dense with data that speak to pleasure, safety, and risk both in

separate and interlocking ways; pleasure, safety, and risk occupy the same sentences and sections of data rather than being found discretely. Although these themes are intertwined I engage with them separately by highlighting each in turn, moving them forward to figure and then back to ground. As an interviewer I ask about safety and hear risk and pleasure. Francis, a 35-year-old Latina and advanced student who has trained for eleven years, illustrates this nesting of concepts in my interview with her.

Fran: ...I miss sparring with [her] you know. So we used to have lots of really *wonderful*³ rounds and also just as partners, *we trusted each other* a lot physically, so that was a lot of fun like we would do all kinds of stuff.

C: And what does it mean that they were wonderful rounds? Like what thing about the round, what marks it?

Fran: Um *being able to take big risks, turning our back to the other person a lot, trying new things, um having them try new things* too. I guess I guess, in general, *feeling of safety like we trust the other person* to be thinking about themselves and us and to stay, *engaged*.

Sparring with this partner is a pleasure for Francis because she can take risks, she feels safe and trusts her partner, and they are both engaged in the match. Sparring touches on all three concepts for Cady, as well. Cady is a 39-year-old white woman who has been training nearly as long as Francis (ten and a half years).

Cady: When I spar with you or with [name], or the people *I really love sparring with*, I

3

Italics highlight phrases or segments of text to which the reader should pay attention as a guide.

don't know what to expect. I don't know how it's gonna go, so there's fluidity to it...I'm it's just this person who's evolving and each match is it's own match and some of them are really amazing and some of them are just fine you know but like, it's more org [trails off] organic is the wrong word, but it's you know, it's just more [pause] yeah, organic or spontaneous maybe is a better word. And like I don't feel like you always do the same five things or the same anything or the same ten things and [name] either...it just feels like I'm not locked into doing the same [thing]...aside from my generic challenges, I'm not locked into the same kind of defenses and the same kind of attacks and they're not either. *So we can try new things you know not worry about getting clocked in the head or clocking someone in the head.*

C: ...when a match is really going well, how do you know? What are the things that happen during that match?...

Cady: Yeah and it's partly it's just *who knows what's gonna happen next but not in that way this is really random* [C: laughter] *and fucked up and uncontrolled* but like and on principle I have no idea it's scary, it's not scary in that way. It's not scary at all. *It's challenging. It's super challenging. Like it's more challenging than anything* actually in a way because you don't know what you're gonna do and you don't know what they're gonna do, but you're together in it and *there's a connection there's a level of connection and back and forth and presence.* All of which are sort of abstract and I'm trying to be more concrete, but I feel in my head that there's an opening where I don't have to be mental I don't have to be

intellectual about it and that frees my body to you know try a kick that I hardly ever try or stuff comes out before I decide to do it, which happens in other kinds of matches too of course cause you know I'm not that plotting about it but [pause], yeah, there's just a lot more space in the match...

For Cady as with Francis the surprise of the match makes it pleasurable, but so does the ability to take risks. The "level of connection" and engagement provides a situation in which Cady can feel free with her body and take risks and not know what will happen next, not what her partner will do nor what she will do.

The creation of "safe" space is critical to many community settings, particularly for those that deal with various forms of difference and physical bodies. For the purposes of this work, I understand "safe" space to be a subset of communities of moral inclusion. Safety carries various meanings for individuals and the contexts in which they find themselves. CAE forges community across differences to create a safe space, but not safe space without challenge. CAE's space is about challenge and extreme self care. As in most education, perhaps more so with self-defense, learning is about taking risks and challenging oneself (Freire, 1993; hooks, 1994). This becomes important in spaces that have political commitments to justice as CAE does. Working across difference means that the costs of difference are distributed among everyone in the space, as Minow (1990) and Meyerson (1998) discuss, – those who are marginalized and those who are privileged. CAE contends with personal biographies of safety and then moves to a broader understanding of safety within group.

Definitions of Sparring

Sparring is a sport within the martial arts. It is an exchange of martial arts techniques – in the case of CAE, open handed strikes with the edges of the hands, closed-fisted punches, kicks, off-balancing techniques such as sweeping a partner's foot out from under her, and open- and close-handed blocks of the previous strikes. At CAE sparrers do not use equipment like headgear, gloves, and shin guards. Because much of Goju karate involves open-handed strikes and blocks, padded gloves inhibit the extension of fingers making these techniques difficult to perform. Rather, sparrers wear gis⁴ and use unprotected hands and feet to engage with one another. Sparring contact is soft or *ju kumite*⁵ and contact is only indicated to the head and neck. Unlike a street fight outside the context of an art form or rules, sparring is a rule-bound match between two partners.

At many karate schools, or *dojos*, sparring occurs as “point sparring,” a series of rounds in which partners exchange strikes with each other (as opponents) to permitted body zones using permitted techniques. If a partner penetrates the other's defensive guard and makes contact with their attack, they get a point in the scoring system. Another kind of sparring is “harmony” sparring. In this form, partners try to produce a give and take of techniques and energy within a timed round. Sparring partners still work to “get in,” but simultaneously work to harmonize with each other, neither dominating the round by

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A gi is a cotton uniform worn by martial artists. It consists of a pair of loose-fitting drawstring pants and a long-sleeved jacket that ties at the side of the body.

5

Ju kumite means soft contact. Brooklyn Women's Martial Arts (BWMA) teaches Goju karate, an Okinawan style developed by Chojun Miyagi in 1908 and brought to the United States by Peter Urban. *Go* means hard and *ju* means soft referring to the closed and open-handed strikes of the style respectively.

attacking all the time nor only defending and creating a void where their partner is presented with only the opportunity to work her defensive skills. On a continuum between these two forms of sparring, CAE's sparring culture is closer to that of harmony sparring, but this cultural script is disrupted by individual sparrers' own styles and/or mistakes (intentional, unintentional, and incidental considering the gap between intention and bodily execution) in following the rules.

The Sparring Round

A sparring round at CAE begins with two women standing across from each other. The protocol is formal and choreographed. First, the pair courtesies⁶ to each other with a bow. A teacher then tells students to move in and discuss speed and restrictions. The distance that accompanied the respect of the courtesy is closed and students talk about what speed they would like to spar. CAE has five sparring speeds: motion study, slow flow, easy moderate, moderate, and rapid fire. In the event that partners do not agree on speed, the speed of the match is the slowest speed suggested. Then partners state restrictions. Basically, restrictions are statements that prohibit those acts that are ordinarily permitted by the sparring rules. Examples of restrictions could be "no grabbing," "hands only," "no contact to the torso," etc. For instance, a student may not want to be grabbed because she has a chronic wrist injury or may not want to spar with

6

According to Webster's New World Dictionary (1986), an obsolete definition of courtesy is "a curtsy" and pronounced kʰrtʰ sē. A courtesy at CAE, pronounced kʰrtʰ tʰ sē, is a formal bow to a person or group. The back of a closed right fist hits the open palm of the left. The hands pivot on the points of the right hand's knuckles with the pivot ending when the left hand is on top, fingers pointing out. It is a bow of respect acknowledging, inter alia, the start of a sparring round or other partnered activity.

legs because she has sprained her ankle; she may not want contact to the torso because she is pregnant, or her reasons for a restriction may be more psychological (e.g., her abuse history is “triggered” by moderate speed sparring), but she need not explain the reasons behind her restrictions. After this exchange of information, partners courtesy again and wait for the command to begin, the Japanese word – *hagime*. At any time that the general sparring rules, speed, or restrictions are breached in a match, partners are again to courtesy, identify the breach and continue. If a partner does not wish to continue, she simply courtesies, says something like, “I need to bow off,” and ends the match. All of this is a fairly clinical description of what is in practice a brief interaction (often less than a minute) with the potential for conflict, pleasure, and affect-laden engagement. The complete set of CAE’s guidelines for sparring appears in Appendix G.

Pleasure

I saw women do a demonstration, a kata⁷ to music demonstration at something called The People’s Convention which was held in the South Bronx in 1980 as an alternative to the Democratic Convention that was being held in New York at that time. And I had been doing some work helping to organize that on a very low level. And I saw these women...and I was just blown away. It was *like falling in love* for me.

Lucy, white karate and self-defense teacher/student in her late 30s

...when I saw [it] *I really fell in love* with it [karate] and this man who was a friend of mine had started teaching me it a little bit before I got to Berkeley and then when there was a women’s class being offered, I saw it, *I fell in love* with it and it felt really right for my body.

Annie, CAE’s Executive Director

I think sparring is very *intimate* and I think defending yourself physically against someone is very *intimate*.

Francis, 35, Latina karate and self-defense student/teacher

⁷A kata is a choreographed series of blocks and strikes to imaginary opponents.

Dorothy Allison (at the beginning of this chapter), Lucy, and Annie all characterize their first contact with martial arts and more specifically karate as like “falling in love.” Francis describes sparring as “intimate.” Mock fighting and intimacy may seem a queer pairing and I argue it should be queered drawing on work within queer theory. Eve Sedgwick’s work (e.g., 1990) has become highly influential in queer theory because it sets assumptions on their heads. For instance, her work argues for the productive uses of emotions that previously were considered as those that undermine well-being (1993). Claiming work by Silvan Tompkins (Sedgwick & Frank, 1995), she renovates the meaning of shame for her concept “shame-creativity” (1993). Likewise, Ann Cvetovich (2003) relying upon feminism, critical race theory, Marxism, and queer theory has written across different kinds of trauma. She seeks in her work to understand trauma differently by looking at local practices that engage with trauma in non-traditional ways (i.e., outside of solely therapeutic contexts). Her book outlines what she calls “an archive of feelings,” a set of diverse cultural and community practices that are infused with emotion. Two of the public trauma cultures that she analyzes and explores are butch-femme lesbian communities and the mostly taboo connections between lesbianism and incest. In these two chapters from her book, she weaves together the dual nature of touch and intimacy.

Touch and contact have both the potential for pleasure and the potential for trauma. Touch also has affective and material connotations; Cvetovich identifies, “...the double status of *touch* [emphasis in original] as both an emotional and physical category, to the metaphorical slippages that enable the physical dimensions of touch to stand for, or make material, emotional forms of power and that make it possible to refer to being

emotionally affected as ‘being touched’ (Cvetovich, 2003, p. 68)⁸ The overlapping communities of butch-femme lesbians, sex-positive lesbian public cultures, and survivors of sexual violence harness this dualism of touch through the repetition of memory and trauma in sexual practice and performance art.

Training physically in a community has the potential to make someone vulnerable and, therefore, open to change. “Constructed as ‘openness,’ vulnerability as an emotional state is connected to the body; moreover, vulnerability in these writings takes on positive meaning as a desirable and often difficult achievement” (Cvetovich, 2003, p. 68). What does this have to do with a community of women martial artists in Brooklyn, NY?⁹ CAE is situated at the intersection of these communities that Cvetovich draws on in her analysis. CAE is not a butch-femme space, per se, although there are women who train there that identify as part of or allied to those communities, but the physical work of the space deeply connects to notions of pleasure, safety, and risk.

To argue that safety and risk are present in karate training at CAE and that those notions collide with similar concepts in Cvetovich’s work, I first want to give some examples of the ways my participants described the pleasures of their physical training.

8

The “double status” of touch is multiplied yet again because “touched” not only means to feel something deeply perhaps in a sentimental way, but it may also mean to be mentally ill.

9

There is another small crossover in the material of Cvetovich’s book and life at CAE. *Le Tigre*, one of the feminist dyke punk bands she draws on in her work, came to videotape a class at CAE and that video was used as background for their performance at the Michigan Womyn’s Music Festival. I was filmed doing *arnise*, a stick-fighting martial art that originated in the Phillipines, during their visit and was on screen during their performance at the Festival.

Bryn, a 40-year-old white karate and self-defense student who has been training for five and a half years, described moments when she does not think about individual strikes and blocks in her sparring, but she feels “flow” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1991).

...when the flow of the match is just coming right up through the floor and through my body and into my partner and back to the floor and back to me and there’s this beautiful circle that just keeps going and there’s no need for thought. Everything is just right there in the body and it’s just like riding this really great [wave].

In addition to the quotes above about “falling in love,” physical work was often connected to sexuality in other ways. Francis, a 35-year-old Latina, described how closely bonded she was with the group of women with whom she started karate. They spent time together and they also came out as lesbians together.

...we were a cycle [cohort] together. We were so fucking tight. I mean tighter than some of the other groups...We were tight. We’d be at each other’s houses. We would do all this stuff together and I went through a coming out process with them. And so I was coming out in a lot of ways. Coming out, coming into my body in a lot of ways.

Reading through Francis’ full interview is like tracing a latticework of romantic relationships that structure the time she has been at CAE. CAE for her is a place where learning about her body happened on the floor, but also concurrently romantically and sexually off the training floor. This latticework did not just include relationships of which Francis was a part, but relationships that contextualize the community for her.

Although CAE is a lesbian-positive space, many women who train there identify as

straight or bisexual. As mentioned in Chapter Two, about 75 percent of women in CAE's adult women's martial arts programming identify as lesbian, bisexual, or queer. In an early interview, Annie, CAE's co-founder and Executive Director, challenged my assertion of CAE as lesbian space.

...when I first started teaching, lesbians were in the incredible minority. I wasn't a lesbian at the time. Nadia¹⁰ wasn't a lesbian [laughs] at the time. People thought we were lovers and we weren't. And I remember having potlucks where a close friend who's still my friend and who trained here and taught here for a long time would feel really annoyed because all the women were talking about birth control.

In my second oral history interview with Annie, she remarked on the sexual energy of martial arts training at CAE.

...the eroticism or sort of the sexual energy that can also be present here is sort of interesting...because you're just using a lot of energy and when it's all women and I know when I was straight and I first started taking karate and then we did a lot of the sparring and fighting, I felt that there was a lot of like transfer of energy that was very interesting to me and new. And, you know, whether you consider, you know, if you think of sort of sexual energy as broad as a kind of energy and not necessarily meaning that you're gonna, um, you know, follow it through to any goal, but just sort of as a kind of energy, I think, um, there can be, you know. And there have been times when people have written about us and sort of erot- I want to use it as sort of a verb, eroticized sort of the whole experience here.

¹⁰Nadia Telsey, the other of CAE's co-founders who left the organization in 1980.

Annie's first quote qualifies my characterization of CAE as a lesbian space. My perception is treated as a current (perhaps fleeting) context rather than a permanent demographic description of CAE. Even Annie's sexuality has shifted over time. And yet Annie's second quote is an indication that sexuality does permeate the physical work and that others before me have commented upon this. I hear in Annie's resistance to identify CAE as a lesbian space a struggle to claim an inclusive institution around sexuality, ironically creating space for straight women rather than creating space for sexual minorities. I do not wish to repeat a perceived misunderstanding of the physical work and community of CAE. However, I do want to write against a tendency for scholars and others to "tame" relationships between women. I can find numerous examples of scholars who identify male-on-male bonding in fraternities, the military, and athletics as homoerotic behavior. Their analysis aligns itself against and with heterosexism simultaneously. For as it critiques institutions where heterosexism and homophobia are often rampant, it may in some cases be winking at the reader by calling the men in those spaces "gay."

On the other hand, relationships between women are often understood as simply friendships. Here, I am not referring to classic historical work on romantic friendships between women (e.g., Smith-Rosenberg, 1983). That work I believe is bound by the historiographical limits on social constructions of sexuality and terminology to other historical contexts. But relationships between women are often still understood as removed from erotic components and homoeroticism. I want to argue that sexual energy is indeed in operation in same-sex contexts, including women-only spaces. Spaces that include women of all sexual orientations, and particularly spaces where bodies are engaged

with each other in “touching” ways, should invite analysis that considers the erotic connections between women in a way that does not deny lesbian nor straight experience.

Given this, sparring at CAE may operate as a social and bodily practice associated with pleasure, risk, and safety much the same way that bdsm¹¹ practice does. This connection is not because women at CAE are engaged in bdsm play on the training floor. Rather, the connections result from the mundane presence of domination (and erotics) in everyday life (Chancer, 1992). More likely still, it is a response to trauma broadly defined as racism, homophobia, misogyny, and violence in the culture and the productive response of an organization through repetition and innovation, safe space and risk. Sparring and physical self-defense work the edges of bodily safety and risk as does butch-femme sexual practice. Participants of both ask themselves: What are the limits of my safety in this situation? When will I decide to end this exercise? How does risk and challenge serve me and when do they turn self-destructive? Cvetovich (2003) describes another location for these questions at the Michigan Womyn’s Music Festival – the mosh pit as a space where safety and danger are entangled.

It’s hard to say whether the mosh pit was a violation of safe space or the preservation of it; in true Michigan spirit, the pit was carefully marked off like other “special interest” audience areas such as the chem- and smoke-free spaces. But within those boundaries, women were free to create their own lezzie version

11

Bdsm describes a range of sexual practice not limited to same gender relationships, but often understood as some of the many forms of queer sexualities including bd (bondage-domination), ds (domination-submission), and sm (sado-masochism).

of an ostensibly masculinist tradition, and they proceeded to forge an intricate balance between physical abandon and attention to other bodies. Slamming and moshing may be excuses for straight male homoeroticism, but that makes them perfect for adaptation by dykes in search of rituals for public and group eroticism. As an initially tentative and then increasingly fearless participant, I can testify that moshing's appearance of physical danger is deceptive, and that one of its pleasures is its power to work with this fear; it offers the physical pleasure of touching lots of different (and at Michigan mostly naked) bodies as well as the psychic pleasure of overcoming resistance to collective and/or anonymous erotic connections. Mosh pits provide an arena for exploring the physical and psychic dimensions of safe space—a process that includes the solicitation of fear and danger (p.84-85).

I argue in this chapter, then, that much like the mosh pit, butch-femme coupling, and writing by sex-positive lesbians on incest (e.g., Allison, 1995) that Cvetovich outlines, training and particularly sparring rounds at CAE offer their participants embodied ways to explore the borders of pleasure, safety, and risk. Cvetovich's work describes sexual cultures that create community by working the edges of safety, risk, and vulnerability to re-member trauma. CAE's community is embodied in a similar way through the specific physical practices of the martial arts and self-defense. An elaborate set of sparring rules first creates a net of safety within which women who train at CAE can explore the pleasures of physical activity, safety, and risk. The creation of community is about these three because community is created through engagement which necessarily increases the chances of danger, but also of pleasure. One student wrote about this creation of

community as a breaking down of the self in an article titled, “Dojo Body Building, “ in an issue of The Dojo News.¹²

When we spar, we become what “I” cannot be—a partner, a part, not-I. At those moments, my partner and I engage in the most deadly of arts, we annihilate the self and we become a new body.

The body work of CAE is as much about building a new collective body as it is about teaching self-defense. To build that new collective body, current selves may need to be modified or “annihilated” in the above student’s words. CAE then operates on multiple levels simultaneously in regard to the creation of selves. CAE’s body work attempts to restore selves to unity, wholeness, and awareness, but also begins to outline and locate many options, ways of being, defending selves, and sparring that work against simple individualism.

Safety

My interviewees and focus group members described a few different notions about what safety meant to them in the context of sparring. For some, safety was represented by intervening structures and teachers during a match. For others, safety was a fiction, and there should be no rules because there are no rules in the “real” world. And yet for others, safety is something they actively work against. They have been told as women that they feel safe to others and now they work against that image of themselves. They strive to be safe for self, but are less concerned if they feel safe for others.

¹²

The Dojo News is an internal organizational newsletter produced by students and staff of the adult women’s programming.

Safety in Structures

An assumption of this section is that CAE creates the conditions for safety within the space by setting limits and giving people options about taking care of themselves. The sparring guidelines for rounds are a key component for making sparring and physical work feel safe at CAE, but there is no uniform feeling about that set of rules. Some students bridle at the notion that sparring has rules and others wish there was more intervention from teachers and more drawing upon the rules so they felt safer on the training floor. Bryn, a white karate and self-defense student who has been training for five and a half years, has participated in CAE's survivor program, so she has experienced some form of abuse or violence. Bryn finds safety in the structures, but also finds them lacking because they rely, in part, on her comfort with using her voice.

...there are lots of things in place that are supposed [pause] and none of them really work for me. ...one of the things that makes it so scary is that lack of structure where no one is in charge. No one's there to say, "Wait! You should not even be sparring right now," [laughs] you know, "You need to get off the floor." Not me. Not me standing there saying I can't handle this coming at me. I'm not the one who should be off the floor. The one who should be off the floor is the one who wants to tear somebody's head off, you know?! And that kind of willingness to step in from a leadership control position the teacher is something that I sometimes wish there were more of. It's very challenging to be your own coach in that situation.

Bryn is very animated as she wishes for more teacher intervention on her behalf in sparring

matches where her partner is out of control. At CAE, teachers do observe matches and step in to offer feedback on sparring technique or in the event a match seems dangerous, but Bryn is clearly uncomfortable with the CAE's culture of feedback. While the sparring guidelines are very clear about what to do if your partner is going too fast or too hard for you, Bryn does not feel empowered by the rules because they rely on her voice which she does not feel strong using. In a section of our interview when I asked about how she defines self-defense, Bryn's own definition is at odds with CAE's in her mind.

Bryn: At CAE, I think self-defense is taking up space. I think it's huge. It's really big. It's having energy that surrounds you that you can make impermeable when you choose to. And I think it's knowing quick physical ways in your body to get people out of that space. At CAE, it's also about using your voice and speaking up I know for me and I don't necessarily agree with what I would consider self-defense.

C: And why do you not think that would be a part of your own personality?

Bryn: Because it doesn't make me feel safe. It makes me feel vulnerable. Using my voice is risky to me. And I, and it's not something that I feel strong about and if I'm in a situation where I need to defend myself, I'll need to do things that I'll feel strong about otherwise I'm just increasing my risk.

C: ...When you say that um this the this interactive that it's not only about evasion, but understanding it was also about interaction, do you mean that as a physical interaction or other kinds of interactions too?

Bryn: Both physical and and verbal engaging with. I think that's what makes it so scary

for me is that when we're doing self-defense at the dojo and we're doing an exercise it's completely engaging with this person which in my mind is what you don't want to do. I don't want to do it, you know. I'll look away and break your knee [CB& Bryn: laughter] and then run home, but I don't want to discuss it. I don't want to let your energy into my space while it's happening you know. So that's really scary for me.

Bryn's narration of her self-defense stance finds evasion and physical self-defense in the form of a kick to the knee the only acceptable ways for her to feel safe defending herself. Using her voice to engage with partners working on self-defense with her in the role of attacker feels vulnerable because it is about engagement with and relationship rather than avoidance (evasion). Bryn recognizes the partnering work at the dojo as vulnerable making. She is simultaneously letting someone in and engaging in mock self-defense with releases from chokes, hold, and grabs. CAE has moved her into a more interactive defense that engages with the other, even if that other is perceived as dangerous, but she is still skeptical. How does this outward, larger defense protect her and how does discomfort and risk add up to a useful self-defense tool?

Bryn understands the limits of structures that rely on voice when she is uncomfortable using hers. Scholars have also outlined the limits of voice as a means to redress social injustice. Shields (1991) critiques sexual harassment policy that relies solely on the voices of those who have been harassed for redress. Alcoff & Gray (1993) and Bell (1993) draw on Foucault to explain how survivor discourse constructs stories of sexual abuse – what can be said and how it is uttered. Voice as a means toward justice

relies on another party who will hear the voice and offer the appropriate remedy. In sparring, that other party is a partner.

Bryn and Dory have been training together for five and a half to six years. Dory is a 67-year-old white woman who started karate at about the same time as Bryn. During the focus group, their interaction was marked by humor, but also a sense of an underlying tension in their relationship as sparring partners and students. Dory has just told the group she doesn't like to stop a match to let her partner know something is not ok with her in their round. In the focus group Dory first begins by describing how she appreciates it when her partner tells her she has broken the sparring rules.

Dory: Yeah, I appreciate it when people tell me I'm going too fast whether it's the instructor or my partner because I have a tendency to accelerate and I don't want to, but it happens. If I concentrated on staying at the right speed, I wouldn't even be doing anything. [everyone in the focus group laughs] You know I mean I can only handle a few things at this stage in my life brainwise as Bryn can attest to in arnise¹³. [laughter]

C: So you appreciate it if a teacher or a partner asks you...but that appreciation doesn't kind of transfer over to you. You wouldn't think it would be appreciated?

Dory: Well, I don't know I mean, I mean if I'm sparring with Bryn, I think I've said to you [talking to Bryn] and you've said to me, "Let's," you know, "It's too fast," or something. I I I Bryn doesn't have a problem... [pause] Do you?

13

See footnote 9, p. 58.

[laughter]

Dory: If we're sparring together and if I say to you, "We're going too fast."

Bryn: No, no.

Dory: And she says it to me because we're both...you have it too [talking to Bryn].

[laughter]

Dory: Well, she knows. Bryn knows.

[laughter]

Dory: Cut the tape. [joking because she feels like she is putting her foot in her mouth]

Dory began, sounding certain that she appreciates it when her sparring partners tell her that she is speeding up and not maintaining the agreed-upon speed of a match, but then she seemed less certain if her partners felt that same way. Amid Dory's attempts to explain her interactions with Bryn, she hesitates and creates doubt that she and Bryn are comfortable with their exchanges about sparring rules and speed, causing laughter in the room.

Again Dory and Bryn's underlying tension in working as partners is revealed by their opposing views on sparring with a more advanced student, Zoe. Dory began the exchange

...she used to on the floor on Saturdays she'd be jumping and laughing while she was sparring...

Dory: Singing and I kind of like said, well, this is something that I like to do too you know. I don't know whether doing just to lighten the moment when I'm with somebody because it's really, sometimes I feel especially if it's somebody who's a

new sparrer, I feel so, I feel for them you know because you can see that look and it's hard to spar with like that because you know I don't know how to spar with somebody like that because my my emoti...I'm emotionally involved with their feelings right then. So that but most of the time I like to make light of a sticky situation you know.

Bryn: There's something in that lightness that makes it more unpredictable to me, that makes it feel more dangerous [laughter], I mean I, I don't want to I, I don't wanna sound like I'm so completely tied up in knots every time I'm on the floor cause I don't think that's the case, but I have sparred with a number of people who have that kind of playful energy and I remember that class with Zoe with music and that *felt really safe and peaceful* and it had the same impact on me that *just calmed everything down*, but when I'm in a one-on-one regular round and *someone is acting in a way that is different or not what I expect or unpredictable than it scares me more and um puts me more on the defensive....*I mean I remember being in class with Zoe and I remember the whistling and singing and *she terrified me*, terrified me *because I thought I have no idea what this person is gonna come at me with.* [laughter] I do not wanna be on the floor here you know.

Dory: That's really interesting because she had such an opposite effect. She was so generous as an advanced students with, with me and I, I'm assuming other new sparring partners, newer to sparring. She would tell me where to hit her [laughter] you know and she was open and it made you know...I'm really...had a she made me feel comfortable even though she was so different than everybody else in the

dojo you know cause she was a little bit intimidating.

Ida: She was really tough.

Dory: Tough, yeah, but there was that other very generous side to her with her partner.

Bryn: I think it was something about boundaries and keeping walls up and I know it's it's *it's challenging to spar and keep a boundary up at the same time. And I don't want people to come in unless I've opened a wall, so I don't I don't necessarily want somebody saying, "Here, kick me here," because I'm not asking you to tell me you know. I loved Zoe as a teacher. She gave me some of the most helpful feedback when we would do advanced students helping more beginning students and it was great. Very right on and I could integrate right away. In a, in a controlled setting where that's what I was doing was asking for her to give input, but that's one of the big challenges of sparring with me is people are, someone is coming into your boundary and past your boundaries and um how do you how do you make them flexible? How do you let them in in a way that feels safe and appropriate and react in a safe and appropriate way?*

This section of transcript from the focus group is rich with information about safety concerns and may also indicate why Bryn understands using her voice as unsafe. Dory began by describing how Zoe relaxed her when they sparred together. Dory also admits that sparring with new sparrers who are having difficulty puts her at a loss particularly because she is "involved with their feelings." Zoe showed Dory that sparring could be fun and enjoyable through her singing and whistling during matches and even in her indicating to Dory when she was open or making herself open in an obvious way so that Dory could

strike and get in. But Bryn's experience of Zoe is different from Dory's. Zoe's manner in their sparring matches felt scary to Bryn. It terrified her because it was unpredictable. Likewise, Zoe's indication of openings for attacks did not relax Bryn: it was a level of openness and communication during a sparring match that was unwanted. As a matter of sparring protocol, Zoe's behavior technically breaks the sparring rules since, if talking is required, a round should be stopped and then partners can discuss the reason for holding up a match. Outside of the sparring match context, CAE's teaching philosophy asks that students not give feedback to partners unless they have been asked for feedback or unless the teacher has set up an exercise where partner feedback is included. Dory viewed Zoe's feedback as an indication of generosity; Zoe was willing to make herself vulnerable by showing Dory where to strike. For Bryn, however, Zoe was crossing a boundary and giving unwanted feedback in an uncontrolled setting. In this case, Zoe's technical rule violation created safety and pleasure for Dory, but anxiety for Bryn.

Although Bryn has described using her voice as unsafe, she felt comfortable enough in the focus group to disagree with three different group members (Dory, Ida, and Sadie; I have not included Sadie's favorable impression of Zoe's sparring in this section of data) and their impressions of a fellow student, Zoe. She and the rest of the group are engaged in verbal sparring. Each time Bryn speaks, the discourse supporting Zoe's style in sparring rounds is strengthened a bit. Dory first restated her stance about Zoe. When she ended her "defense" or restatement, Dory admits that Zoe could be "intimidating." Ida called the intimidation "tough" and Dory defended Zoe again by agreeing with Ida and then restating that Zoe was "very generous." At this point Bryn understands that in order

to be heard, she must affirm that she loved Zoe, but that does not change her impression of sparring with Zoe. This exchange seems gendered in that the women in my focus group couch their perspectives and engage in “both/and” statements. This compromising spirit may serve the community conversation well in the form of cohesion and seeming agreement, but it may contribute to Bryn’s feelings that she has not been heard, further enforcing her view that voice is a risky self-defense tool. It may also prevent open conflict/disagreement when some community issues cannot be stated in a both/and way.

Safe without Rules

As Bryn acknowledges, not everyone shares her stance toward structure. Dory actually feels safer when Zoe breaks the rules with her during sparring by offering feedback. Olive seems to carry safety with her, understanding rules in sparring as preventing in some ways her real life self-defense. Olive, an African American karate student (age between 35 and 45) who has been training at CAE for two years is newer to sparring and the rules that accompany matches. She views the rules as limiting as she reasoned in the focus group.

I feel very strongly in this room about the rules. And often I have to ask people like I just asked Ida¹⁴ because if I’m sparring I’m gonna go to protect myself however I need to protect myself and even when you were sparring I, I have to focus on remembering what those areas are in the dojo that are not allowed to and people will very nicely let me know if I’m in an area where I’m not supposed to be

14

I began the focus group with 15 minutes of sparring to foster a conversation about physical practices.

[talking about contact to head, legs, and back being illegal], but I feel that [pause] *about the rules I have a problem with because I don't think there should be any rules when you spar once you get to a certain level.* Of course, control, but go for that target because I know on my own I train that way because if I'm in a life and death situation, I don't want to remember what I practiced that I can't hit here, I can't hit there because I'll go into automatic reaction when I get frightened. But if I practiced hitting those areas of penetration that, God forbid, when something happens, I'm gonna go right on target.

Olive understands her stance against the rules is probably an unpopular one, but strongly states it in the group even as she hesitates. She believes the rules undermine her safety in the real world because she is practicing pulling punches or not going to certain targets when she is sparring. In a "real" situation where she is being attacked outside, she wants to be able to go to any target to defend herself. Olive stuttered through some of her stance against rules, but went on to argue her point more strongly.

I appreciate it when people break the rules, so for me because I, that's the type of stuff I want to have coming to me that I'm expecting stuff so I know how to take it in when God forbid it does happen on the street.

C: What kind of rule breaking do you mean?

Olive: Well, cause I know this school has certain rules so those rules. That's what I'm thinking of when you're talking about the rules *because in my mind, there are no rules in sparring.* So I like it when people remind me cause I'm like, "Oh, thank you," cause I, it doesn't register to me because in my warriorship life there are

no rules; if I need to protect I'm going to protect myself and I need to survive I'm going to protect myself and I'm really not going to try to hurt anyone, but I am going to protect myself. So I like it when people tell me, but it's not a problem people come in because in my mind *I don't think about the rules* like the knee and all that stuff and I'm like come on, let's do it.

Sparring and self-defense not only overlap for Olive, but they share essentially the same meaning. For Olive, sparring is a chance to work on threats to her in her life outside the dojo. Elsewhere in my data, Olive described her corporate job as a sparring match. Since she believes that there are no rules structuring the conflict in her corporate context or no rules to which she has access or that serve her, she believes there should be no rules in sparring at CAE. My questioning of Olive was discursively challenging because it was difficult for me to understand her stance against rules in sparring. Sparring carries the potential for physical injury and it's important for it to be conducted safely. But the safety of rules makes sparring a less effective means of training for conflict in Olive's real-world environment. Her stance may also reflect her racial identity and history. Rules (laws) for African Americans in the United States have a dubious record of protection. Rules, in a similar way for Olive, may feel like protection for other (white) people (corporate supervisors) rather than structures that can be drawn upon for her own protection.

Resisting Feeling Safe for Others

For Cady, safety has become something she resists in her presentation of self. It has become less important for her over time that people perceive her as "safe" or not intimidating. In my interview with Cady, she explained this evolution.

...people used to tell me when I was in college, for instance, "Oh, you know, it's so comfortable being with you you're so, you're so grounding or whatever," and sort of that was my job you know to be the grounding person the person that people feel safe with or whatever. And as I got older I became less invested in needing to be needed in that particular way and I think that that transition has been really valuable and you know I don't owe it to karate, but I think karate has had a lot to do with that where I'm just like, "Um, here I am," you know, "Oh, maybe that person thinks I'm a bitch. Oh, well." And you know finding out that people don't want to say fucked up shit around me, "Oh, that's too bad," you know like somebody doesn't want to make a racist remark in front of me? Bummer!...this is the person I am in the world and somehow I'm projecting it...

While Bryn's safety in structures stance seeks safety in others (teachers, structures outside herself), Cady is less concerned with whether or not others find her safe or "grounding." Rather, she resists safety altogether, wanting to not only be safe for others, but also challenging to them. Cady has begun to resist her definition of someone who must be safe for others. She is no longer interested in being unchallenging or worried about other's impression of her as safe. Her quote challenges safety as a goal in and of itself if it doesn't move people to respect, reflection, or risk.

Risk

Many participants described a fear of losing control, sometimes worded as "going too far." Most often the accompanying fear was that they would hurt someone with an out of control technique. Bryn also extended her fear of going too far to describe her

voice. She described her first attempts at sparring as follows

I remember being really slow and taking a lot of thought and it was exhausting. And then as I got a little bit more accepting of the fist coming at me and things went a little bit quicker and my responses came quicker, it was scary in a different way because it, it was going really fast....And through my whole life I've had this um feeling that um *I'm always gonna go too far* you know. *I'm always gonna push it like a little bit farther than I should have and ruin things.* I mean I'm not gonna pull a punch. *I'm gonna hit too hard. I'm gonna be too loud* or whatever or whatever, whatever it is. There's this like *fear of going too far and stepping over.* So that feeling...like *I was going too fast and not having control and blocking too hard and hitting too hard was really thin ice for me.*

Bryn describes her worry that she will do too much or be too much in the sparring. Cady, although not a survivor of violence, also struggles with this fear of being "too."

...here's another thing about karate for me and you know whatever being like just like just the *fear of your own power*, you know *fear of being too strong, fear of being too intense, too needy, too demanding, too like intimidating in all those ways* and then so then a big part of my process with karate has been coming closer and closer to being comfortable with being whatever it is that I am and *not trying to preempt being too powerful or too intimidating or too demanding or you know needy or like being comfortable, as comfortable with being, with needing as with being needed.* That's what that thing is of just like, okay, being present and having boundaries and being like I need something from you or you need something from

me and that's okay. We'll both survive this [laughter] nobody's gonna get a black eye and nobody you know...

C: and even if you do get a black eye you'll

Cady: still survive

C: You'll still survive it...Even if you walk into the kick, you'll still...we'll be ok.

Cady: Right. Right. And that's what's great about great sparring matches is that you're both there with that like if we really push ourselves something could happen. Somebody you know might walk into a kick or somebody might kick too hard and that's, and then when you do that you're like, "Was that too hard? I'm sorry," or "I'm sorry that was too hard," and it's okay for me to say, "I'm sorry that was too hard," and it's not codependent or whatever when I'm like, "Oh, I'm sorry that was too hard," or, "Was that too hard?"

While Bryn focused on going too far physically, Cady moves the fear to an emotional level. Both women walk a line where the fear is of hurting someone and of becoming someone that is out of control. They both rein themselves in so they aren't "too." Cady is beginning to be more comfortable with being herself and less worried that she will hurt the other person or overwhelm/overcome her.

Sadie, a 28-year-old white karate student who has been training for 4 and a half years, conceptualizes the risk in CAE's physical work as two-sided.

...just sort of my problem with my own power and me questioning what is my power and beginning sparring and just sort of being afraid of everybody else and am I doing this right and then sort of getting more comfortable with that and then

out on the street, could I really protect myself? Could I not? How strong am I really? In the dojo how strong am I? Outside? And not sort of an ego thing, but sort of what can I really do? I mean we don't do a lot of contact. We don't do a lot of power and that's something at different stages in my training has come up...and *sometimes being afraid that you'd be too* like, "Oh God, *I could be too strong. I could really hurt somebody* and like you know pulling back in situations like some of what you guys were saying and then in other situations saying, you know, I don't know that I'd be strong enough. And you know not really knowing and sometimes wondering, "God, I wonder what it would be like, you know. We get one of these people dressed up in cushions [a padded attacker suit] and would I hurt them or not. I don't know. It's just I don't know.

Sadie's fear of "being too" is accompanied by a fear of not being enough. She is worried that she will be too much for a partner, but not enough for an attacker. She wonders what would happen if she were in a self-defense class that employs a padded attacker. Would she be able to deliver a "knock out" blow? The push-pull between the two—being too much and not being enough—seems to freeze her without a way out.

White Girls/Women and Risk

I studied karate for eight years, going from school to school, city to city, always starting over. My first sensei was the best I ever found. That moment of perfect physical consciousness was more often memory than reality. I did not become suddenly coordinated, develop perfect vision in my near-blind right eye, or turn jock and take up half a dozen sports. All I gained was a sense of *what I might do, could do if I worked at it*, a sense of my body as my own. And that was miracle enough.

Dorothy Allison (1995, p. 65-66)

For Dorothy Allison her study of karate was not a practice for perfection of her art, but a lesson in perseverance. Although Allison is situated within the white working-class, two of my interviewees connected their discomfort with taking risk to their race and class background. Lucy and Cady described white middle-class girlhood as a context where risk – physical, educational – was discouraged. The teaching philosophy and physical training at CAE helped them understand this limiting aspect of their upbringing. Lucy, a white karate and self-defense student and teacher who has been training for 15 years, saw her socialization into white middle-class girlhood as a problematic world view.

I'd never been really very good at anything. I never committed myself to anything.

I was very much in this middle-class white girl thing. If I don't try, then I don't fail. And then I don't have to you know risk anything which was a really problematic way of going through life [laughter] and this place really turned me around in terms of understanding how to be in the world.

For Lucy, CAE's feminist teaching philosophy, body work, and the martial arts form a matrix that enabled her to make mistakes, learn, work, and try. CAE's teaching philosophy promotes risk-taking and, therefore, mistake making. Mistakes are celebrated because they are evidence that one is pushing beyond one's capabilities.

Lucy: And the other thing that I've found here was an understanding of the educational process that was totally different. You know, I went to fairly straight schools, and I ha[d], I was miserable at them, I was a miserable student. I hated it. I didn't, you know I had no understanding of what learning could be like until I came here, what a pleasure and a joy it could be. And that has to do with Annie. ...and I

don't know...where Annie's teaching style and philosophy came from entirely. ...it's very tied into the tradition of the martial arts. It's not an accident these things came together of, you know, you make mistakes, you learn, you work, you try. I don't think women in our culture are encouraged to work, at least not middle-class women...

Lucy describes her socialization as middle class white girl where she didn't want to try difficult things and was not encouraged to try new things. This socialization is described in a couple of ways: as a fear of one's own power, as a fear of not being good at something. Cady also described this when trying new techniques.

...I would have moments where I'd be doing a [kick] in a class and I'd be like, "This is never gonna happen for me." ...It's usually spinning kicks which are, duh, hard [laughter]...and then I'm like, "Well, it's because of my eyes." You know it's because I don't see well or it's because you know well like there's some physical reason that I'm never gonna get this technique... [CB: laughter] This is one of the most important things to me about training and I don't know if it's the right answer or part of the answer, but it comes in here, so that there one of the great gifts of training for me has been that *I have become a person who is who will engage with things that don't come easily* to me now and I didn't do that in my life before and I don't mean, I mean I've learned, as I've learned so many things so many of the most important things through the physical, but it is true and was true about things there were not physical as well you know and I, I'm not saying that I never would have gotten to this point if I hadn't trained, but I feel like training

really accelerated a process that may or may not have happened without training or you know just intellectually. Like when I was growing [up] I would just stay away from stuff that I couldn't do well from the beginning and probably, and that's probably just as true about emotional stuff and you know if you're good, if enough stuff comes easily, it's easy to just sort of stick with that stuff and not engage with the stuff that doesn't come so easily, but you can't do that in karate. I mean I guess you could, but I have you know, but it would be this glaring thing after awhile...And specifically in terms of graduate school you know I never would have stayed in school. I never would have cause it was too hard and there were too many other things I could have done you know...That's the thing that's been so liberating and it doesn't happen all the time and there are times I'm just, "I'm gonna keep trying to do this right now. Maybe another time," but more often I'll just be like, "This is just happening right now," you know and any minute now she's [the teacher] gonna say, "Ok, we're gonna do something else," so I'm just gonna keep trying to do this damn kick and trust that eventually maybe I'll get it or it'll feel different one time when I do it or there's something really liberating about that, too, not – and it's beginner's mind thing, too. It's like, "Oh, I don't have to be [perfect]."

In this long excerpt, Cady began by describing the physical struggle of learning spinning kicks, then connects her training and physical struggle with her graduate education, returning again to the physical at the end of this excerpt. The body work helped her to understand other kinds of struggles in her life as things that need to be worked through, to

understand struggles both physical and intellectual as impermanent. When she is having difficulty with a technique, Cady makes internal attributions at times but internal attributions that are beyond her control and about an essential, immutable quality. This internal attribution disempowers her because it suggests working harder through a difficulty will not change her facility with a technique or with graduate school. Both Lucy and Cady believe that the teaching philosophy of CAE is connected to the martial arts traditions. Beginner's mind is the openness to experience and freshness of each technique rather than being discouraged that your difficulty with a technique will never change.

The Risk of Fulfilling Expectations

Francis, a 35-year-old Latina karate and self-defense student and teacher who has been training for 11 years, explained another kind of risk in her narration, the risk of fulfilling or confirming stereotypes as a fat bodied person. She described her childhood experience in school yards in my interview with her.

My big thing as a kid was that I wasn't expected to be really physical at all. But you know even as I say that it's a little bit, I don't know, I say that with somewhat conditionally because I was a big kid, so I was expected to be kind of bullying in some weird way. And yet I was a fat kid, so I wasn't expected to be able to move well or be really aerobic in any kind of way. So it was a weird place to feel stuck in. So I had these weird expectations from my family, from kids I was growing up with, from teachers... But even within that as I look back I remember I had friends that were really jocks so to be friends with them I had...to throw a ball and I would act like I really didn't want to do it, and in fact when I was able to let myself try

doing stuff, I really loved it, but I didn't feel like I had permission to do stuff...I never thought of myself as somebody that was supposed to [be] moving around and that was never something that [was] fostered in me as a kid.

Francis described being "stuck" between one expectation that she would not be physically capable and the other that she would be so physically out of control that she would overpower other children. To manage and cope with these expectations, she pretended not to care about physical activities, so that she would neither confirm stereotypes about her size, nor challenge them. She clarified and reiterated the expectations in another passage.

C: ...you said that you were a big kid and you were a fat kid. Can you talk about the difference between those two things?

Fran: Yeah. The big thing, the big part of that was that I was physically taller and I had a bigger frame than kids, but I was also fat. I had a fat belly you know and there were different associations with my family and friends and teachers and school around that. So [I] wasn't seen as being so physically capable or graceful, but I was also seen as somewhat out of control because I was so big, so it wasn't clear. Was I gonna hurt somebody if I played with them? And I remember being told to really be careful all the time when I was playing with kids. So, yeah, so I felt like I was kind of clumsy or or out of control in some ways.

In this narration Francis remembered being told to be careful when she was "playing *with kids*." It is almost as if the adults around her did not view her as a child. In response to her size and height as a child, adults discouraged her from playing by checking her play.

Francis understood these expectations about her body and internalized them to the extent that she did not feel comfortable playing sports, participating in gym class, or even playing. These feelings continued when she first came to take a self-defense course at CAE.

I called and preregistered us [Francis and her sister] and we went in and we took the class together and I remember feeling really nervous like I was trying to get out of it in some way because I, I didn't think I could really do it. I didn't, I I didn't have, I dealt with different kinds of violence in my life, but I was being triggered at the thought of using my body publicly with a bunch of people and having somebody be a teacher and lead me around in a big space. That's scary..., but I just didn't want to do it. But I thought, well, my sister will be there and she's maybe as inept as I am and, and that might be ok [C & Francis: laughter]. This is what my thought process was.

Francis was scared of taking a self-defense class not because she is a survivor of violence and will be "triggered" by the physical activities of the class because of her abuse. She was "triggered" instead by the risk of using her large-sized body publicly. She manages the fear this time with social comparison; Francis did not perceive her sister's presence in the class as one of social support. Her sister, instead, provides her with a positive social comparison.

In contrast to these recollections of her childhood and her first classes at the dojo, Francis was described throughout my data collection by many students and teachers at CAE as the embodiment of Goju karate. Francis' karate was described as "soft," "round,"

“simple and clean,” and “center[ed].” Francis also described her first board breaking experience at the dojo in a decidedly different way than her experience of the first day she entered CAE.

I remember feeling like I wasn't completely sure it was gonna break, but really knowing that I was strong enough to break it. And I remember really focusing on having my fist tight and ah and and being only being nervous that there were a lot of people watching me. I didn't think I was going to get hurt. I was really excited when it broke. *And I felt like I wanted to do a lot more of it. I felt glad that people saw me do it.*

Here Francis again was not worried about the physical aspect of the training just as she was not concerned that the physical aspects of the self-defense classes would trigger an abuse history. She was anxious about people watching her. That anxiety turned into a pleasure that so many people had seen her break the board, be strong, and be embodied.

Francis, although not a middle-class white girl, described a connected “not trying” with her girlhood as a fat child. She describes pretending not to care when involved with sports and physical games at school. In order to not confirm stereotypes about fat children and adults—that they are inactive, sedentary, unskilled—Francis would pretend not to care, so that no one could accuse her of fitting into stereotypes had she really tried and failed. CAE socialized all of these women to risk investing and engaging with their own physicality and the community rather than maintain the safety of inaction and feigned apathy. For Cady, Lucy, and Francis, CAE played an important role in their struggle against socialized roles for girls, people of size, and survivors.

Critical Distance

Within sparring at CAE, there is a notion of critical distance. It is the distance at which one can make contact with a sparring partner's body. Sparring strategy suggests that one move into and out of critical distance because, if I can make contact to my partner's body, she can also make contact with mine. By moving into and out of range, a sparrer engages in the match by initiating strikes toward her partner, but does not remain so close that she is continuously vulnerable to her partner's strikes. Staying within critical distance throughout a match makes one perpetually vulnerable. Staying out of range means that one never engages with a sparring partner and may as well be off the training floor.

Critical distance was raised by my interviewees in two different, but linked ways, as both a physical and psychological/emotional concept. When asked about how her sparring skills learned inside the dojo have transferred to other contexts in her life, Francis responded

Fran: ...I just have that sense of watching where people's hands are, knowing what it means that distance, you know *knowing what critical distance means on a lot of different levels whether that's physical space or an emotional space* cause I believe it really exists in both. So that's helped me think about that.

C: How do you mean critical distance in emotional space?

Fran: I guess being aware of personal boundaries around stuff and sensing when I've gotten close to someone else's personal boundary. And I feel like when you hone that skill on an emotional level, you're starting to hone it on a physical [level] in

some ways. When you hone it on a physical level, you're starting to hone it on an emotional level. I feel like they're connected in some ways.

Francis described how her physical work at CAE helped her to understand the notions of critical distance in an emotional sense, particularly when she was crossing someone's boundary. She has applied her physical body learning to affective places, connecting the two and echoing Cvetovich's (2003) analysis of affect and body being tied through contact.

An incident that occurred during the data collection phase of my dissertation further illustrates critical distance as it is embodied at CAE and then transferred to contexts outside the organizational culture. Cady had a death in her family the day before our interview was scheduled. She insisted that we not reschedule and I did not try to persuade her otherwise. Part of my not postponing the interview with Cady involved trusting her choice not to cancel it, and this decision relates to the understanding of pleasure, safety, and risk that I have learned at CAE. In effect, I trusted Cady enough not to second-guess her decisions and try to take care of her when she had not asked me to do so. My self-defense falters when I attempt to guess what someone needs and what would make them feel safe. I, in fact, decrease their safety in my attempts to leap to their defense rather than focus on my own. Self-defense on some level is just what the name denotes – *selfish*. Self-defense in relation to another or in relation to community becomes a moment to maintain distance and be a witness rather than take over another's defense. Cady supports the connection between critical distance and witnessing in her interview. She relates critical distance in sparring to witnessing, during a self-defense course, a woman's

story of violence. During the first session of the course, the woman told us about how her husband had stabbed her multiple times. Many other students in the class also shared stories of violence.

...and more and more especially I think lately really lately. This ability I'm finding it's not constant, but more and more of being like really having boundaries and really being comfortable with them and what I think of as one of the better like the best sense of boundaries where you can, you can really be like looking something hard in the face and you know somebody difficult or somebody having a difficult moment and just be sort of [pause] with that self-defense class for instance. That's like an extreme version of it, but really be able to be present with yourself and with the other person and not be taking it on what's going on with them or worried about them being overwhelmed by what's going on with you. You know just be able to like speak the truth or not if you need to not and to have it like yeah [pause] and I think for me that keeps just coming back to the idea of being really present and safe with myself like being able to trust myself and I think that's what sparring is about. Just like, ok I can respond to whatever happens. I might get hit and I can do that. I might hit this other person. She's not gonna, it's not gonna hurt her I mean like if I think about that's another main challenge of sparring for me. My God, and has been from the very beginning which was the fear of hitting someone too hard. Not hitting, but like one of the biggest technical challenges for me in sparring is critical distance because I will always come like not always, but historically by just a you know few inches short of actually making contact and we

talk about this and if you're that precise in not missing then you're aiming you like you're doing what you're intending to do on some level... You could be hitting with that much precision every single time. It's not because you just can't figure it out, it's cause you've figured something out, but that's like that's the thing about the gap between what you think you're trying to do and what you're able to do like whatever subconsciously or emotionally or whatever it is, like what if I hurt her? Not even that I really think that I'll actually hurt them, but that she'll feel hurt.

This extended excerpt from my interview with Cady travels from a boundaried sense of self in the face of witnessing testimony about violence to difficulty in managing critical distance in sparring as both a physical concept and an emotional one. This seemingly strange leap in narration begins to be comprehensible when it is understood as dealing with forms of making contact, physical and emotional. Cady described critical distance as a "technical challenge," but its emotional underpinnings begin to emerge as Cady continues to make connections in her narration. That Cady moves from talking about our experience of hearing a woman's story about her husband's attempt to kill her to Cady's own challenge in sparring at critical distance seems to be material of the same fabric for her. Cady pulls punches because she doesn't want to hurt someone, so she shortens her strikes rather than following through with them. In a similar way, in witnessing stories of abuse, there is a tension of finding the appropriate critical distance, one where the listener is present and engaged, but one where the witness does not take on the role of story teller or confessor (Alcoff & Gray, 1993; Felman & Laub, 1992).

Critical distance by Francis is understood as an interplay between physical and emotional learning. Through my interactions with Cady and Cady's own narration, it is about maintaining distance through a focus on the self or selfishness (Haug, 1987), trusting that the other will care for herself. This notion of critical distance as a bridge between safety and risk to build community through body work does not work for everyone. Although Bryn has described pleasure in sparring, she does not see it as a way that community is built at CAE. Ever describing how her voice feels vulnerable, she nonetheless finds her voice and disagrees with the frame for my dissertation in the final minutes of our interview.

Well, when I was reading your proposal and you talked about I don't know if this is stuff you wanna ask people about like stuff that you wanna, but you talked about building community through the physical aspects. My thought was it's not about it's just about the training on the floor. It's not just about the physical aspect on the floor. I've felt the most community at the dojo when I've been doing physical things like going to dinners and walking to [the] dojo, painting the dojo, physical tasks things that are not sitting around just chit chatting trying to get to know people which I really suck at, but some kind of physical activity that gives you a reason to be there so that the focus is not just on trying to build community, but the community is built because of that physical thing. I feel that much more strongly than I do the physical work on the floor. I remember especially when I started, I would see people come off the floor and there would be like these little conversations and happening everywhere. [I] was never a part of any of them

because training is so isolating, but it was something that I was doing in my own head and in my own body and dealing with all these other people's energies coming at me, but doing it on my own. I didn't feel like I was connected to the other people around me. So, I don't feel that the training, the physical act of training, is what builds community so much. I think it's all the other things that happen with the people outside off the floor. I remember being really kind of jealous of the [pause] there was a cycle ahead of me they would like go out for dinner together. How did that happen? How did that happen? Because I come off the floor I can't talk. I can't you know I'm I'm processing so much that just happened. I'm not in this kind of chit chatty mood and a lot of people are. What just happened for them you know? Where have they been for the last two hours cause I would really rather be there [laughter], you know?...Especially after a really hard class you know. I've just spent two hours trying to keep everybody at a distance. I can't come off the floor and then feel like you know [pause] I just spent all this time separating you know and keeping my boundaries up so my boundaries are up, you know they're still up.

Bryn challenges my frame, but also reinforces it because she sets up physical group projects like renovating the space or clean-ups (and I argue sparring) against talking in the form of "chit chatting" or group processing as a way to build community. Talking is insufficient for her to build community, but through meeting people outside of the space or working on the physical space she has participated in the building of community. The training floor for Bryn contains the possibility of triggering abuse history and keeping

people at a distance rather than engaging with them. In her previous narrations, she has described feelings of pleasure and safety during sparring rounds, but in this section of my data she is focused on the training floor as an isolating space, one in which she cannot build community, but one in which she must protect herself. Even given Bryn's insistence that the training floor work does not build community, the body work of a space is a fruitful area of exploration. The body work of CAE nonetheless created community and provides a metaphor for the creation of community, the deepening of community in other settings.

In what I see as a theme connected to Cvetovich's work, Annie, CAE's co-founder and Executive Director, described the power of learning martial arts.

...martial arts is very powerful cause it's a physical, mental, and emotional learning all together, and we think that really helps people change and be open to new information. That after you work out or as you're working out with other people some of your defenses start to go down and and your world view can change because some of the isolation that you live with is really being changed in a very sort of guttural and intellectual way as you're working out with people for the common good.

Here, Annie views martial arts as a way that the "physical, mental, and emotional" (body, mind, spirit) come together. By the body not being subsumed by either the mind or the spirit, women training at CAE ironically start to break down individual defenses as they build skills of self-defense in community "with people for the common good." Openness on the training floor at CAE constitutes a space in which women can become vulnerable

and ritualize past violent experience, current experience, or even render metaphorical that which has never been violent nor traumatic for them.

The notion of critical distance reminds me of critical loyalty (Staub, 1997) for organizational members. In this concept, members maintain their relationship to an organization even though at times they may disagree vocally with organizational policy and stances. In both concepts – critical distance and critical loyalty – engagement and risk are seen as tied to social relations between partners, or between community members, and between community members and community. Creating a community of moral inclusion, a “safe” space, then is not only difficult because of those differences that we imagine are important given their importance across contexts – race, class, sexuality, disability, age, etc. Both notions of what constitutes safety and where a sense of safety is located – within selves, created by communities or institutions, within practices – are other axes of difference that need to be considered.

This chapter has explored the pleasures, safety, and risks in the physical work of self-defense and sparring partnering at CAE. Students at CAE bring their own histories and internalized meanings of pleasure, safety (structures, no rules, and resistance to), and risk (being “too” as related to middle-class white girlhood and fulfilling expectations) to CAE as they engage in physical partnering where contact plays off themes of critical distance. These histories are sites of difference brought into the unit of sparring partnerships. The next chapter analyzes the differences that are brought to the unit of community within CAE. I describe a historical example of critical loyalty at CAE in which a group of women of color critiqued CAE policy and practice from within. Their critical

loyalty provided themselves with respite and refined the multiracial feminist organizing of CAE in the 1980s.

CHAPTER FOUR¹⁵**Sustaining Moral Community: Working across Difference for Meaningful Inclusion On and Off the Training Floor**

Chapter Three dealt with individual women's biographical connections to pleasure, safety, and risk in self-defense and sparring. This chapter reiterates those connections and discusses the difference work at the community level with CAE's organizational work to maintain community across differences. This chapter describes CAE's ways of sustaining a moral community of inclusion or a "community of difference" in Fine, Weis, & Powell's words (1997) in the context of history and conflict. It describes and analyzes two scenes of organizational conflict and tension – one recent, from my participant observation fieldnotes, and one historical, drawn from oral history interviews and archival data analysis of organizational materials.

The first scene is an announcement that was posted and read during classes after CAE students and staff returned from a national martial arts training conference. The announcement encouraged students to say "hello" to each other as a minimum level of social justice consideration. The second scene outlines the context of anti-racist organizing at CAE in the 1980s. Beginning with a women of color group, CAE supported strong anti-racist organizing within and outside its organizational borders.

There are many aspects of CAE's everyday practices that communicate its stance toward difference. Classes are offered on a sliding fee scale that slides both down for low income and working class women as well up for women who can afford more and through

¹⁵Sections of this chapter appear in Bertram, Hall, Fine, & Weis (2000).

their privilege subsidize the fees of other women. No one is ever turned away because they cannot afford CAE's courses. Free childcare is provided to women who care for children. Survivors of violence may train free of charge for a month. Most recently, a policy explicitly including women of transgendered experience in CAE programming has been adopted. Policies provide the foundation for meaningful inclusive community, but it is CAE's training practices that best illustrate the stance toward difference.

Scene One

At the beginning of any self-defense partner exercise, the teacher first describes the exercise. Then she outlines the various ways to participate in the exercise. In the case of a one-armed choke, students respond to an attacker who approaches from behind and wraps a forearm around one's neck. Students practice pulling the attacker's forearm down to create an opening to be able to breathe, tucking chins into the crook of the attacker's elbow. Next, students practice back kicks to knees, foot stomps to the instep of the foot, or elbows to the ribs of the attacker. Then, we practice a turn away from the attacker's body followed by other self-defense strikes. This exercise, like many self-defense exercises, can be emotionally loaded for many students because of biographies of violence, discomfort with physical contact (even when no contact is being made with the strikes), self-conscious in learning a new skill, etc. Before we practice, the teacher outlines the many ways to participate in the exercise.

There are many ways to participate in this exercise: You can watch. You can have your partner indicate the choke, making no contact to your body. You can ask your partner to make contact with you with a loose choke. You can ask your

partner to make contact with a tighter choke, if that's ok with her. You decide how best to work the exercise for you. Check in with your partner about how she wants to work the exercise.

This set up signals to students that full participation has multiple meanings and that each kind of participation is a full experience. When someone requests "no contact" (as described in Chapter Three in a sparring match) her partner must agree. In this way, students become accustomed to accommodating the differences of their partners. These requests are not treated as exceptional, but as a mundane aspect of each partner exercise in the space. Students "check-in" with each other to understand how they will engage with the exercise. Observing is included in the set of ways to participate, not as less than a full experience for the student who chooses that option. Observing may yield different information than having someone's arm around your neck, but that does not make it a partial experience. Different modes of participation also acknowledge multiple experiences/differences present on the training floor.

Bryn's interview produced a moment when her difference was taken in by a teacher and responded to.

...when we were doing kata evaluations and Lucy was there and she was evaluating me on this one kata and her critique was you have the kata and now think of it as a fight. And I said, "If I think of it as a fight, I can't do it, [C & Bryn: laughter] you know I really can't." And she said, "Then think of it as a dance." And that was the feedback that made me able to do what she was saying in another way which was to go deeper into the kata. If I think of sparring as a fight, if I

think of sparring as dangerous, I freeze or speed up. If I feel like someone is really fighting me, I freeze or I speed up and it becomes not good.

Rather than arguing with Bryn about what the meaning of kata is, Lucy simply accepts Bryn's difference and is flexible enough in her teaching to give Bryn another option that works for her. In other contexts, I can imagine skills building that encouraged Bryn to work on "thinking of kata as a fight." CAE's teaching philosophy encourages students to explore their own meanings of the physical work of the space and to respect each others' choices as full participation. This respect for each other extends off the training floor.

During my continuing participant observation, I have found CAE to be a relatively quiet enforcer of its politics of anti-racism, feminism, and anti-homophobia. The commitment is always there, but at times a break in the ritual, a disruption of the fabric of community makes this commitment evident. Such a break occurred the summer of 1997, after a group of karate students at the school returned from a training camp. The camp is an annual event in which women who train in the martial arts convene from around the world to take workshops in other styles. At that year's gathering, some women from CAE felt excluded by others and groups of women broke off from one another. This prompted CAE staff to begin announcing after class that it was important for students, especially advanced students, to extend themselves to less advanced students and welcome them. These announcements were met with a vocal and sarcastic response by some of the advanced students. Some of the women considered this announcement to be a "policing" of their chosen friendships and saw it as a violation of their rights to choose with whom they would associate. On a number of occasions during and after the announcement, these

students sarcastically and loudly greeted women with whom they were well acquainted as a form of resistance to this perceived shaping of organizational culture. These greetings undermined the message from the staff through sarcasm and contempt. Discussion about the reasons for the message were thus silenced. An example of such an exchange follows:

The announcement has just been read and Jamie and Renee respond. Jamie and Renee, white women, are both advanced karate students who often go out together after class.

Renee: Hi, Jamie!

Jamie: Hi, Renee!

Jamie: It's good to see you!

During one class, Tara, an instructor who was not teaching the current class, attempted to make the point that being friendly is a serious issue for the organization. She talked about how alienated new students can feel and that the shyness of some advanced students can be interpreted as disdain. Her attempt was again derailed by the women who made light of the announcement.

After a few weeks during which the announcement had been made following each class, a new announcement, this time written, appeared on the announcement board. It read,

TEACHERS PLEASE READ ENTIRE ANNOUNCEMENT

ATTENTION—An important reminder to everyone, especially intermediate and advanced students.

Regarding our recent announcements on being friendly and saying "hi" to sister students.

When we don't extend ourselves to women we don't know--cliques start

to happen, and forming cliques in the dojo is more than just unfriendly, it's a way that racism and ageism propagate.

It can be painful and isolating if no one speaks to you when you come in the dojo, ignores or dismisses you when you greet them, or closes the dressing room door in your face. These things have happened recently to several students here.

In our training we realize mistakes, learn from them, and grow strong with the women around us. This way of learning can also be used as a model to confront racism and ageism in our lives.

Be respectful and compassionate of all the women you meet here, *including the ones that are different from you*. Confront prejudice where you find it and support others doing the same. Make this a safer place for your dojo mates as well as yourself.

There will be upcoming opportunities to address this issue in forums and in writing. We welcome input from everyone.

Remember, your teachers are a resource for you, and please keep communication open.

Thank you.¹⁶

The response to this announcement was very different than that to the first version. After this bulletin was read, there was no sarcasm and the women who had made jokes after the first announcement were silent.

The staff asserted an important stand on the dialectics of individual freedom and community responsibilities in authoring the new announcement. They moved a discussion that could have been interpreted by students as an issue of individual choice, "Who do I say hello to?" to a more macro issue relevant to the organization's mission of safety and inclusion. They spelled out in the second announcement that not saying "hello" is "more than just unfriendly, it's a way that racism and ageism propagate." CAE thus translated an issue some students thought was merely individual choice as structural and political.

I want to remark briefly on a personal experience in the dojo related to this

¹⁶Bold and italics appear in the original text of the announcement.

seemingly trivial issue of saying "hello." When the first announcement was made, I was in the changing room with a few women who were making fun of the announcement. One asked me directly, after I had been silent for several minutes, "Was I friendly to you when you first came to the dojo?" I admit (not proudly) that I replied with the same sarcasm she had been using in her previous conversation. I said, "Oh no, you were very friendly." Later, when I came to classes, I was inundated with less than sincere greetings from a woman who witnessed this exchange. These exaggerated greetings felt more hostile than welcoming. Just as I had resolved to confront her and tell her she was "killing me with kindness," the new announcement appeared and I was no longer greeted. The new announcement made the confrontation I had planned unnecessary. I relate this personal experience because it illustrates the power of a responsive institution as well as an accompanying irony. While the announcement was meant to make us all aware of the exclusion of teenage women and women of color by their fellow students, the announcement's immediate beneficiary was me, a white woman no longer a teenager. It is often the case that policies benefit the privileged first and the marginalized last.

While it could be argued that the comments made after the first announcement and their resistance to the organization's shaping of its students' civility have just gone underground or outside its walls and classes, I would maintain that one goal of the announcement was to address the vocal resistance. Even if the announcement sent disagreement underground, CAE allied itself with those in the organization that felt and were marginalized. Perhaps it is not such a bad thing to send marginalization underground temporarily, knowing you have addressed if not solved the problem. It is discomfoting,

however, to understand that at the same moment some individuals within a community are feeling protected, others may be feeling the weight of the institution and understanding their behavior as curtailed by organizational interference or intervention. Francis, a Latina who has been training for eleven years, described a scene in a sparring class when her words carried the force of the community.

And there was one partner in my cycle who left fairly early on...she was someone who trained in a martial art before and had harder contact than other people, not what right now I would, I wouldn't term inappropriate contact, inappropriately hard, but definitely harder than other people that I was working with... And I used to get a little scared. I used to, I could feel myself getting harder with her. And I didn't know how to talk about it with her. It was really [pause] it felt weird. And it felt weird to think of putting myself in a position where I was vulnerable saying, "You know that's too hard for me. You know I can't take that." And I felt not good about that, but I talked to her about it once...after a class and one of the things that I think that the way I framed it, which I wouldn't do now, was that she just goes too hard like, "You just go too hard"...and I felt bad in retrospect because *she really took that in as she was being censured by the whole place*. She was crying and had a really hard time with it. And I mean she didn't leave because of that. She left some time after that. And she was training at a more traditional school and she was happier there in some ways.

In Francis' admittedly direct criticism of her fellow student's sparring contact (no "I" statements were used) she became an enactor of institutional culture. Her words

constituted the power of CAE and concentrated on one individual's behavior. This enactment, although important for creating "just" space, creates a censure that may undermine dialogue. Francis' partner, although not moved to leave by Francis' words, nonetheless "really took that in as she was being censured by the whole place." This scene described how CAE has dealt productively with internal conflict moving toward deepening its mission of social justice with thoughtful responsive leadership. It raises a potential danger for all communities that hold missions that address social justice concerns. Interventions may feel unwelcome to individuals who have prompted organizational conflict and discussion, bringing the power of the organization and community to bear on the individual rather than distributing the costs of social (in)justice among all members of community.

Mentorship in Martial Arts Teaching

A critical aspect of sustaining CAE's moral inclusion is Annie's early mentorship by Gerald Orange, an African American sensei. Nadia and Annie, CAE co-founders, met at an anti-Vietnam War rally and began to take classes with Gerald at his school in Manhattan, The Temple for Spiritual and Physical Survival. He also talked about his experiences of racism with Annie. Gerald encouraged Annie and Nadia to teach self-defense skills to women at a time when other men in the martial arts were not supportive of women teaching or learning. Perhaps his experiences in the Black Power movement allowed him to extrapolate from raced to gendered forms of injustice. He shared his experience of social injustice across race, gender, and ethnic lines, which may have been an important catalyst for building on Annie's understanding of racism and anti-violence

work. As Annie described in her interview,

...I also felt that from his talking about racism that he pushed people and that it also he was able to use his experience of understanding racism to understand something about sexism and to encourage women to teach and women to take classes in women-only classes. I mean he allowed Nadia to teach women-only and encouraged her in his dojo at a time when women were sometimes being thrown out of martial arts schools for teaching, for doing. We have a good friend who refused to do the women kind of push-ups and wanted to do the same push-ups as the men were doing and was thrown out of her school.

Sensei Orange's dojo was not without its sexism expressed by male and some female students, but it was less prevalent than in other schools at the time. One account of CAE's organizational history refers to "macho attitudes toward training from men and some of the women in Gerald Orange's studio." Annie described one example of these macho attitudes by a fellow student who trained with Gerald.

...I had this guy who wouldn't call me anything but "princess." It was just you know [pause] I was a very strong martial artist even though he wasn't very advanced and I'm under five feet tall, and I'm not you know I mean I can project big, but I'm not very big. And you know in his eyes I was "princess." You know it was a constant battle, but in fact because the sensei set the example of treating us with respect and with equality you know there weren't as many gross incidents as there were in other places, but there certainly were men who really didn't see us as equals and then there were men who were wonderful. To this day I, I see

around who I'm still friends with.¹⁷

Gerald's support of Annie and Nadia as martial arts teachers would be remarkable in and of itself given the times, but it is also unusual for a head teacher to encourage a student to teach within the same city because it is inviting competition for students and the revenue their participation generates. A sensei might encourage a student to open a dojo in another city if they are moving, thus maintaining authority over their teaching, but Gerald encouraged Annie and Nadia to teach women in another borough of the city, not just on particular days within his dojo.

...When I started teaching I felt like I didn't know very much. And it was true I hadn't trained for very many years and he [Gerald] took me out for breakfast or lunch, I don't remember what it was, and said to me, "You know, Annie, if you show them one or two things to help them defend themselves, you'll have done a lot." So he was really in the role of pushing me through my feelings of not having enough confidence or not being able to do this big task of being a martial arts teacher.

Annie describes Gerald's support of her as unusual, coming at a time in the 1970s when women were being kicked out of their schools for confronting and acting against

17

These sexist assumptions about the strength of women's bodies within the martial arts are still present as related by Olive, a current CAE karate and self-defense student, during a focus group.

I know when I first started sparring here I was very very nervous because I had not sparred that much at all at the other dojo I was at. It was very very kata-oriented. Matter of fact only the men were allowed to spar and not the women...

stereotypes about women's strength, and yet she goes on to understand his support as also indicative of the times. This dualism is demonstrated once again in Annie's narration when she describes Gerald's response to her forgetting her gi, her karate uniform. His response and Annie and Nadia's attitude toward wearing their ranking belts led them to create a beltless school at CAE.

C: How did you make a decision to reject a belt-ranking and and competition system?

Annie: Well, basically it grew out of sort of Nadia's and my feeling about how the martial arts were really useful. We really saw it as useful to use to help change themselves and change society and we felt that we both, when we were given belts although everybody else in our school wore them, we never wore them. And that was one thing that our sensei could have made a big fuss [about]. So, what he would do he'd make these basic proclamations that you had to wear your belts. You had to be in full uniform. And then I remember after he gave this very stern proclamation one day, I traveled up and I actually forgot my uniform or I only had half of it and in fact he didn't really care that much. Also in the 70s it was a real time when there was I think a really interesting lack of professionalism. The whole idea was that if you knew more than somebody else, you taught it and you shared it. And people were doing that in all kinds of different ways, small collectives and larger collectives in the 60s and 70s.

Annie understood Gerald's support of her as both out of the ordinary given the broader culture and commonplace in the progressive circles she inhabited. But as a result of those overlapping social circles, Gerald shared his experience of Black urban manhood with

Annie, a white Jewish woman. This shared information deepened Annie and Nadia's commitment to anti-racist principles in CAE's genesis.

Gerald Orange, I remember you know probably 20 years ago he told me that he was scared to run for a bus in his neighborhood a lot cause he thought if there was a crime somewhere and a cop saw an African American man running [pause] you know and he talked to me about these things before I felt like you know it was being [pause] I heard it everyplace which I do certainly do now and certainly it shaped and helped me think about you know wanting to develop a school that you know we consider ourselves a feminist anti-racist organization because of our politics of really seeing how violence affects us all and who it affects and what you have to change to really be free.

Gerald's sharing and Annie's witnessing of his experience of racial profiling before it had that name had been coined influenced Annie's thinking about self-defense. Although she was teaching self-defense and martial arts in a women's space, that did not mean her mission would be limited to a feminist analysis. These early conversations about the importance of race in anti-violence organizing helped down the road when women of color and survivors within CAE began to question CAE's policies that they felt did not address their experience of violence.

Scene 2

The women of color group is an example of a conflict within CAE that occasioned responsive organization and astute committed leadership to develop structures and activism to address the critical voices of women of color within. In the late 1980s anti-

racism activism by women of color, as well as white women, continued the work of the women of color group. The women of color group was founded in 1984 by Brenda, a current staff member, who decided to get a group of women of color together to discuss experiences of racism within and beyond CAE. Brenda described starting the group.

We, basically it was one of those things that kind of came out of like different conversations with people. There were not many women of color that trained here. Even less than now. And there were many of us, many people -- white women, women of color that would have the standard question, "Why don't women of color stay?" And I just, after somebody said it to me, I said, "Well, maybe we should find out." So, I just like put up an announcement for a meeting. One, two and three other women came. One was Puerto Rican. One was from Colombia. One was from India, and myself. And we just kind of like [pause] We had kind of, sort of seen each other. And it was just kind of like, "Hi, how are you doing?" and, "Let's talk about ourselves and everything." And we just decided we wanted to continue to getting together. And so, I don't know how often we met in the beginning, but it was primarily just so that we could, like have some connection with each other since we didn't really see each other since there weren't that many of us. And as more women of color came to train and they came and checked out the group, it was primarily women of African descent, overwhelmingly. There were people that were very political about feminist politics, about racial politics, about class politics. Just very active. And the group really became much more political, which was really pretty wonderful because it,

you know, it really became a place where like we were really talking about not just kind of like how it felt to be here? But what it meant? Why things were the way they were? We decided we wanted to make ourselves more visible. So we, I remember doing a demonstration for New York Women against Rape's [NYWAR] annual conference. But that was like the first public thing we'd ever done. And we started doing some self-defense workshops for women of color groups. And we also decided that we thought we should have like a voice in the running of the organization. So we also got the Board to agree to have [pause] I'm not sure [pause] in the beginning there was one position on the Board for a representative from the Women of Color group, or if there were positions for two.

Brenda first describes the Women of Color group as respite, but then the group not only deals with "how it felt to be here. But what it meant? Why things were the way they were?" The group's focus expanded from answering legitimate yet internal questions about the small number of women of color karate students at CAE and supportive dialogue for each other to structural ways to address the problem such as designated seats on the Board for women of color. This push from the group eventually led to CAE's recruitment of Board members outside CAE from New York City's women's communities.

The group soon became more outwardly politically active both within the organization pushing for participation in the governing body and also making their presence felt in New York City's feminist activist communities. The Women of Color group also provided avenues like NYWAR self-defense demonstrations for political work

outside of but supported by CAE. After being denied entrance to a lesbian nightclub because of her race, Brenda and others brought the experience back to CAE and founded COOL, Committee of Outraged Lesbians.

C: Tell me the story of that night. You and a group of Black women? You were all
[pause]

B: Were we all Black? Boy, it's so long ago I can't remember...No, we weren't all Black. There was one white woman... Went to go in. There was a line to get in. And we waited on the line and there was a person at the door and when we got up to the front of the line, we still weren't getting in. And there were other people that were coming and getting in. And we were just kind of like hanging out and talking like no big deal. And then we started like realizing, "Wait a minute, what's going on?" So then we asked the guy at the door what was going on and he didn't have anything to say. And then there was somebody else that was like inside 'cause we kept asking. We were like, "We've been here. We've been waiting. Other people are going in. What's going on?" And this woman came out and she was very apologetic and like, "I'm really sorry, but you can't come in because you're Black." And one, it's like to be foolish enough to actually say it! [laughs] And we didn't believe that she had said that. We said, "What?! What did you say?!"...And not the usual, "It's a private party," or "Dress code," or however many IDs. All of that usual nonsense. She didn't do that. She just said it right out. And it really was one of those things of, "If you're going to be stupid enough to say it right out, then we have to take this opportunity to do something about it!

...And the next class that I went to, after class I told people what happened and there was just such an incredible response from everybody here...People were like, "We have to do something about this." And we started organizing and we met up with some other people who had already begun some work...we created COOL—Committee of Outraged Lesbians [laughs] It was a great acronym. [laughs] And basically we formed around this particular incident, but we all decided we wanted to try to do something along the lines of what Men of All Colors Together does and bringing together lesbians of different races to look at issues of racism within the lesbian and gay community. We didn't last very long, but we were very active and we had a very, very intense period of demonstrating and about this production company and trying to get more people aware that this happens. And we participated in other demonstrations [with] Men of All Colors Together when they were demonstrating against a men's club that had done something similar. We would join them. They would join us. We got incredible support from women here. A lot of people here were part of the group. And it was pretty neat.

Brenda's participation in a community of women where her voice had been heard through the establishment of the Women of Color group laid the groundwork for her to bring back an experience of racism to the larger CAE community. Her sharing of her experience across race and sexuality, just as a decade earlier Gerald Orange had shared his experiences of racism with Annie, created opportunities for connection and activism in the world outside the dojo deepening and extending moral community. The activism, if short-

lived, was “intense” and also spawned collaboration across gender with Men of All Colors Together.¹⁸ CAE became at that time a place for Brenda to be of support and receive support from women of color, to strategize about the racial representation of CAE, and to gather support and strategy for organizing anti-racist efforts outside CAE. Brenda’s experience could have easily been an individual (or four-person) experience with racism, isolated from the experiences of other women denied access to the club that night, but because of her connection to CAE and her experience of CAE as an institution responsive to her voice (sometimes in complicated ways), she was able to bring the experience to a community and organize to change the production company’s exclusive practices. The experience could have simply been a powerful one she told to friends, a warning for them not to go to this club on that night. Instead, she was able to change the experience for women outside her circle of friends. As she told me, “And if somebody’s gonna be that blatant about it, then I have to at least tell people. And from telling people, a movement happened.”

The Women of Color group started as a support group for women of color in a mostly white setting where they could discuss their experience of racism. Because not every student is able to attend every class, women of color undoubtedly felt more isolated because they did not regularly see one another in classes. The Women of Color group, a

18

From their website at <http://www.mactny.org>, “Men of All Colors Together/New York (MACT/NY) is a multiracial, multicultural organization of gay and bisexual men committed to addressing and combating racism and discrimination in the lesbian and gay male community, and to providing a supportive environment for non-oppressive multiracial relating among gay men.”

micro-space of segregation (Fine, Weis, & Powell, 1997), became a moment when women of color could hold race still, even the temporary fiction of a shared experience of oppression by women of color. Brenda more deeply described this holding of race.

We want to have a space for women of color where we don't have to deal with that all the time. At least not from white women. We would have to deal with our own internalized racism and prejudices and stuff about each other even. But it would be one less thing to deal with.

The Women of Color group, then, provided respite for students at CAE who needed a break from white students and a larger society where white supremacy still flourishes. While acknowledging that prejudices exist between marginalized groups and that racism is internalized by individual women of color, Brenda argues that respite can be reason enough for the formation of the group. Respite is one of the functions of "construction sites" that Weis and Fine (2000) describe. CAE went on to offer other micro spaces of segregation to students training with disabilities or injuries, survivors of violence, and women with children. Sometimes these were offered as in-person meetings, but at other times the in-person meeting was accompanied by three-ring binders where students could write their struggles and joys with training without face-to-face contact.

Their organizing at CAE was not without its difficulties as some white women who trained at CAE in the 1980s challenged the chosen segregation of women of color for these meetings. Brenda told me

...some of the earlier responses to the Women of Color group were, from white women, were, "Well, why do you need to do that?" "Well, why can't I have a

group that's for people of my heritage?" And our response depending on who was asked because some people would also kind of choose who they would make those comments to. Because they would know, there are some people you say that to they're going to be really pissed [laughs]. And there are other people that will be gentler with them. So generally a response would be like, "Nobody's stopping you." But also when we would try to [pause] that was kind of like the smart ass response. When we would try to do some educating in responding to that, we'd really try to say, to talk about the issues that are in this society, and how like all of us bring into the space, how we were raised, and our upbringing and like the prejudices that we come that we were raised with. No matter how hard we're working to fight all of that and make changes in ourselves stuff is still going to happen.

Ironically, women of color sought respite in a group only to have the existence of the group be challenged, which therefore intensified the need for it in a couple of ways. White women's challenges confused the very different roles of micro-spaces for women of color in a mainly white space with wanting a "club" for people that are like oneself along some dimension of identity. It seems unlikely that these white women really wanted a group for "people of my heritage." I imagine this comment to have been a challenge of women of color space rather than a sincere call for "equal" if misplaced opportunities to join together with like selves.

The Women of Color group was also challenged by white women whom I perceive to be more committed to anti-racist activism, but still with a limited understanding of the

needs the women of color at CAE were expressing. These women challenged the existence of both the Women of Color group and a white women's anti-racism group that formed in the 1980s at CAE. Brenda described these women as follows

And there were the people that put it [the white anti-racism group] together were interested in educating themselves and working on the racism that they'd come in here with and fighting it. And finding as many ways as possible to support women of color here and the work that we do in a variety of communities. There were white women that were very nervous about this group, about the white women's group... There were people that were afraid that it would encourage racism. There were people

Cor: So it wouldn't be anti-racist?

Right, that it was kind of like, it's isolating. There were people that felt very strongly that we should not do this work separately, that we have to do the work together. I would almost even say to the point of that we can *only* do the work together.

This more progressive group of white women believed that racism could not be conquered without women of color and white women working together. Therefore, a white women's group could only undermine anti-racism organizing. Lucy, a white staff member and member of one of the white women's anti-racism groups, described them as follows

...we've had anti-racism reading groups. We've had white women's groups. All of which have been, I don't know if unsuccessful is the right word, but they've all been problematic. And yet it's clear to me that they all helped the growth of the

discussion in this organization, and they've all helped my personal understanding of racism. And as painful as they've been in certain ways for women of color, and the white women, although I think it's a very different issue, to share. I think they've been really important.

Brenda describes the race conversations at the dojo at that time as "difficult." She and other women involved in anti-racist organizing within the dojo discovered that what they had considered idiosyncratic to CAE was what they encountered in other institutions that were struggling with racism. Brenda suggests that CAE was able to survive these conflicts through the presence of training opportunities where students could opt out of meetings and take classes – another kind of micro-space of respite – when political struggles become too frustrating. She begins by describing the frustration of witnessing the same set of reactions to anti-racism efforts which she calls "hit [ting] the same box over and over."

People get very angry, get very annoyed particularly because you would hit the same box over and over. Not necessarily the same people, but about the same things.

C: Did you feel like you were doing a lot of educating?

B: Yeah. Oh yeah.

C: A friend of mine who is a first-year student this year [in my graduate program] who's Latina was talking about the difficulties of getting her own education when she felt she was the teacher most of the time.

B: That was very true. That was very much an issue for us because eventually we started to realize that we had issues that we weren't dealing with amongst ourselves. That we weren't [pause] that just by looking at the makeup of the group that it was overwhelmingly women of African descent. What was that saying about not just who came to train, but also who identified themselves as women of color, who felt comfortable with that term? Who felt comfortable with those politics because the people in the group were very political? We also had to deal with how do you make this a space for a variety of opinions and experiences and not expect everyone to suddenly be, have that leap to where you are. That was really hard...I think probably at that time there was a certain level of feeling like this is like the problem of the dojo. And just from talking to different people and the people that were in the group who learned so many things there that took that work elsewhere. One woman that was in the group eventually started leading anti-oppression workshops. And we would talk about what she was doing and she would say, "Yeah, well remember when [trails off]" you know what happened? [laughs] "It's right here again." And I even did something with a university this past spring and so much of what they were dealing with was exactly what we had gone through. And it was fascinating to realize that you can kind of like tell people of your experience, but they're going to have to go through it themselves and figure out what they can learn from it. 'Cause I think there was a part of me that spends a lot of energy saying, "Don't do that!" [laughs] "It's not going to

work!” “ You don’t want to do that! You’re going to be really pissed!” And they were just kind of, “What? Let’s just go do that.” [laughs]

Lucy commented upon the leadership and activism of women in the 1980s.

In the late 80s there was a group of very astute women, both white women and women of color, but there was a lot of astute women of color leadership around issues of race in our organization, issues of race in the world that were real. It was really [pause] it was a period of struggle, but it was a period of enormous growth and tension. And some, you know, some of that that shift, you know, [was] in terms of tensions around issues of race, and tensions around issues of who had power in the organization. So that was...I think that was the most active time. I mean, that was a time of tremendous growth and discussion and...tension and anxiety. But I felt like that really moved the organization to a different place politically.

Through the critical voices of women of color willing to remain loyal to the mission of CAE while questioning its means, CAE was able to grow through the conflict and tension of racism within the organization.

Some figures within CAE at that time remain important progressive voices today.

Beth Richie and Stephanie Roth organized the first school-wide anti-racism training in 1986. Today, Richie is an Associate Professor of Criminal Justice and Gender and Women’s Studies at The University of Illinois at Chicago. She has written on African American women’s involvement in crime, particularly how that involvement links with domestic violence in their lives (1996). In addition, she is the co-chair of the Color of

Violence conference, a national gathering sponsored and organized by INCITE! Women of Color against Violence in Chicago. Roth is a nationally known nonprofit fundraising consultant and co-founder of the publication Grassroots Fundraising Journal based in Oakland, CA.

Gerald Orange's early mentorship of Annie and Nadia across race set the stage for the formation of an organization that creates community across differences. This is demonstrated by mundane organizational practices that engage difference and have privileged participants change their behavior to accommodate the needs of "others" rather than those others assuming all responsibility for their own accommodation. CAE also provides reminders of its democratic organizational mission when student behavior threatens or undermines it. Of these two modes of engaging difference – living the mission and enforcing the mission – the first is preferable since participants/community members (albeit privileged ones) may feel the weight of the institution and choose exit versus critical loyalty when the mission is "enforced." Respite, like safety in Chapter Three, is a somewhat static location, necessary for full inclusion, but insufficient for creating change and extension of community.

These ways of engaging difference within community are challenging even given a community with a common organizational culture and a shared physical language of martial arts training. The next chapter relates a story conflict between CAE and a small group of neighborhood residents who did not appreciate an anti-violence mural created by teen women from CAE. The organizational politics, teen meaning making, and consensus-

style decision-making felt heavy-handed to some residents who only shared a zip code with CAE.

CHAPTER FIVE¹⁹

Extending Moral Community: Enduring Impermanence

Feminist organizational literature, as stated earlier, has located two problems of scope for feminist organizations – encapsulation and institutionalization (Freeman, 1995). Encapsulation occurs as an organization and its members become increasingly insular and inwardly focused rather than connecting with those who may not share their beliefs or simply those who are not its members. With institutionalization, an organization becomes so “successful” that maintaining itself may become its *raison d’être* rather than feminist organizing.

Institutionalization is what happens when a movement either penetrates existing institutions, capturing them sufficiently so that some of their resources can be used for movement goals, or movement organizations become routinized: that is, acquire stable sources of income, staff, and defined tasks (Freeman, 1995, p. 404-405)

Both outcomes are marked by a kind of rigidity that may inhibit further organizing. They may also mark a rigidity in moral community borders where ideas and members become stagnant. In a feminist organization of CAE’s longevity, encapsulation and institutionalization may represent an ebb and flow with the organization doing more outreach at times and then retreating to focus on internal structures. In 1999 one of these flow moments occurred for the organization. CAE marked itself as a community of moral

¹⁹Sections of this chapter appear in Bertram (2001).

inclusion by moving its mission statement of anti-violence to the neighborhood where it is located.

The following columns are two of the many interpretations that were brought to bear on the mural. On the left are my observations from fieldnotes taken at the mural site. On the right are the explanations of the mural artists themselves, describing both the images of the mural and the rationale behind those images, presented at the mural dedication in September 1999. An image of the full mural is shown in Figure 1.

Mural Descriptions

At the left end of the mural, three young women in what appear to be maroon choir robes hold the edge of the mural like the edge of a great quilt. Or perhaps they are lifting a shroud and revealing the story that they wish to tell. The figures lift or place a shroud that may conceal or shield us, provide a kind of security of narrative, of community that leads residents to think that violence does not happen in our neighborhoods and homes. Just to the right of the three figures a maze begins with red walls. A hand projects from the wall grasping the

Earth in its fist (the fist of globalization?).

A figure in red with a featureless face is the marionette of a skull. Near the end of the maze, three small dogs chew at a spot of red. A wolf emerges from the end of the maze with teeth bared and blood dripping from its mouth. On the brick walls of the maze are these words in blue block letters, "Desperation, peer pressure, past experiences, greed, control, repression...can lead to violence."

As the viewer leaves the maze, a new scene opens up with this preface in yellow, cursive script, "try walking a mile

in someone else's shoes." In this new scene flowers of red, pink, yellow, and white bloom. Vines frame the scene and grow up into the grey concrete above the main mural wall. In the center, a barefoot man with a pregnant belly peers at his reflection in a mirror held in the hands and lap of a wise woman with white hair or a white head wrap. In the mirror, his hand cradles the fetus-like circle in his abdomen, revealed by the reflection. The fetus also resembles the yin-yang symbol of Eastern philosophies and the physical location of the tantien or the energy reservoir that is the source of chi, life energy important to the practice of martial arts.

The central and largest image of the mural is the head and shoulders of a woman. The edges of her forehead and temples are surrounded by small flowers and leaves, tucked neatly into the purple cloth that wraps her head. She wears a

golden women's symbol adorning her right ear (Is she queer? What does the earring mean?). Her confident eyes stare out from the mural. They are direct and forthright with no hesitation. The force of her roaring mouth agape produces a hurricane, a purple cyclone that surrounds and perhaps causes a grey and red shadowy figure to collapse. The cyclone is inscribed with the words "Speak Out" written in red block letters. The collapsed figure contains several images of threats: a couple of bills with dollar signs, a group of three syringes filled with red fluid signifying the threat of perhaps both intravenous drugs and AIDS/HIV, a broken bottle with a "XXX" label, a belt bringing to mind the use of a belt by some parents to abuse their children in the name of discipline, a knife, and hand guns, one held in the hand of the shadowy figure. Floating above the figure is a woman dressed in a long, flowing yellow

dress. Its skirt provides the background for the last image of the mural. The woman in yellow pushes a long, brown broom and sweeps up the objects that have buried the collapsed figure, perhaps even sweeping up the figure itself. From the base of the mural where the collapsed figure rests, rise seven white doves that fly to the collaborative poem written by the teen women. The poem reads,

Don't you see that some of our
children are lost,

Wandering through a maze,
searching for values to lead them
a simple act of awakening: what
you feel, I feel. You have the
power

to sweep away the bad and shout
out the good.

Peace is not a dream in storage.

Take it in & let it be...

the next thing you do."

With this collaborative poem, the mural closes, interpreting the previous images over the last image in the mural—a reclining woman. Her hair falls over her eyes in waves. She wears a long, pink dress holding a single bloom in her right hand. Beneath the resting and peace-full woman is a small meadow with flowers blooming again in shades of pink and red. She is at peace, sleeping, but active and dreaming of what might be, what could be if we act upon our dreams, take up their visions in the light of day.

Shari: To the very left of the mural, we see three young women holding a banner which represents ourselves. These young ladies symbolize all of us. Like other figures in the mural, these women are blue, transcending any particular race.

Karen: In the first part of the mural, the maze and its contents represent the causes of violence. The maze itself symbolizes desperation or confusion, a state of mind we felt led to Acts of violence. In the maze, we see a marionette, showing that sometimes people control or lead others to be violent. Sometimes the way one is raised or something in our past makes one violent. We conveyed this by showing a "skeleton in a closet." Then, you see a wolf with blood dripping from its mouth. This symbolizes someone who expresses anger or hurt by hurting others. The second main area of our mural suggests

that empathy is a way to decrease violence. We decided to show this by displaying a pregnant man. Basically, what we are trying to say here is that if we could feel each others' pain, if we could feel what we each go through every day in our lives, that it would be a way to decrease violence.

Shari: The third section of the mural is where we speak out and, in doing so, hold perpetrators responsible and show solidarity with others who have experienced violence. This is illustrated by the central women's voice as a hurricane around the shadow of a perpetrator. We also see a woman sweeping away symbols of violence such as knives, guns, needles, etc.

Karen: Finally, we chose to portray a young woman sleeping and dreaming of

anti-violence. And, we came up with a poem that is our own dream of anti-violence:

*Don't you see that some of our children
are lost,*

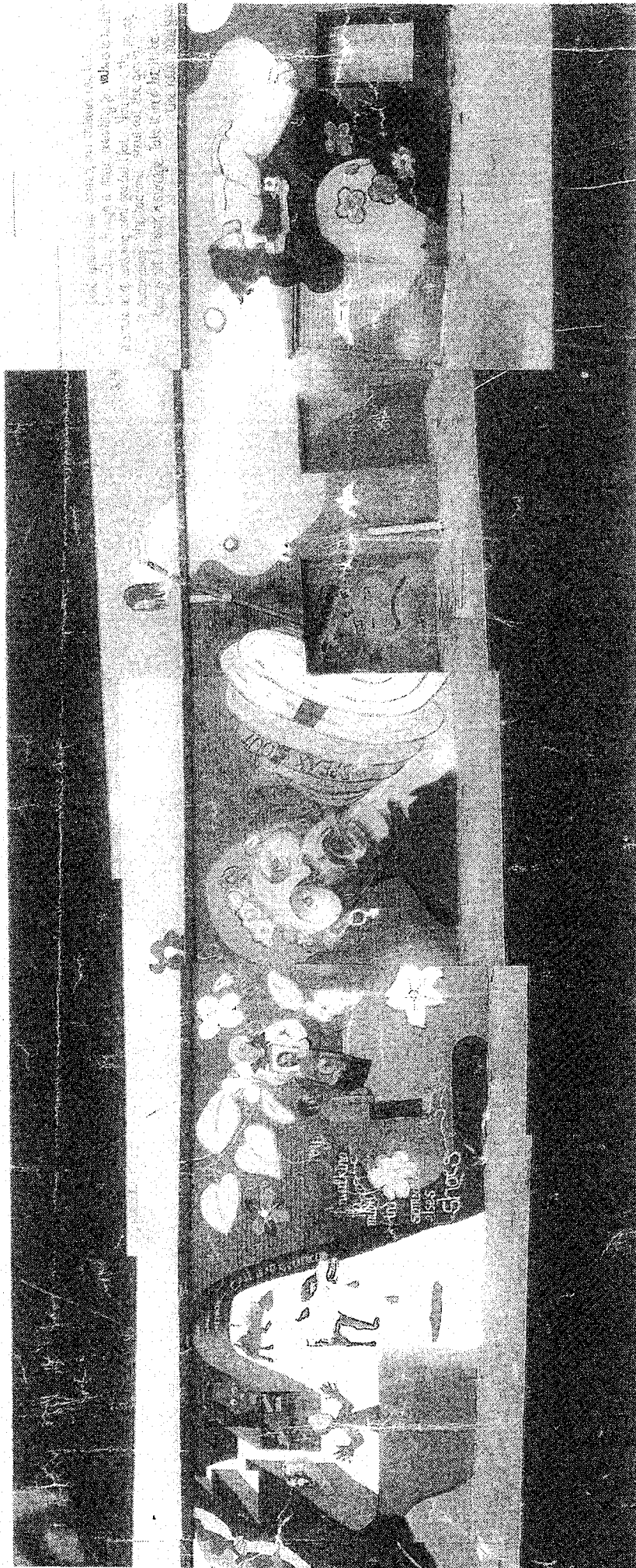
*Wandering through a maze,
searching for values to lead them.*

*A simple act of awakening:
what you feel, I feel. You have the power
To sweep away the bad and shout out the
good.*

*Peace is not a dream in storage, make it
the next thing you do.*

Figure 1.

Peace is Not a Dream in Storage



In the summer of 1999, a group of teen women created an anti-violence mural in Brooklyn, NY, USA. Under the auspices of CAE and Groundswell Mural Project, a non-profit community art project, and with funding from a national feminist organization, nine young women gathered each week to paint a mural they had designed collaboratively. They agreed on this project as a group in response to the violence of the neighborhood. Park Slope is not a particularly violent urban neighborhood, but a rape had been committed in the preceding months at the subway stop nearest CAE. CAE teens and Groundswell first approached the Metropolitan Transit Authority of New York (MTA) for a site for the mural. They had hoped the MTA would allow a mural to be created at the subway station where the rape occurred. The MTA refused. The teens then approached the management of a new neighborhood Rite-Aid, which agreed. For the late spring and summer of 1999 the teen women brain-stormed mural ideas, collected magazine clippings for inspiration, received hands-on training in mural design and painting, and then spent weekends and evenings painting.

After the mural was completed, a small group (about twelve) of residents of the block where the mural was located contacted CAE and expressed its dissatisfaction with some of the images in the mural. They included a petition with a dozen signatures asking that the mural be re-vised. The petition stated that the mural was ugly and contained graphic and disturbing images. The images that were contested included a pregnant man, a wolf with blood stained fangs, drug paraphernalia (i.e., syringes, pills, and a bottle inscribed with "XXX."), the race/color of the human figures portrayed, and the inclusion of a poem in a piece of visual art. These images were not central to the canvas of the

mural, but they were essential to the meaning that the young women wanted to convey. After a community meeting and several meetings with residents on the block, the City Councilperson representing the district of the block, and the a Rite-Aid Vice President, the young women decided not to make any changes to the wall. They preferred to risk having their mural destroyed than alter its message. And so six months after the mural was dedicated, Rite-Aid whitewashed the wall in the middle of the night. A complete chronology of the mural controversy as well as related events appears in Appendix H.

Three themes central to community meaning making emerged from this controversy: a denial of violence within the neighborhood, assumptions about who can speak for or create meaning for a neighborhood, and a revelation of assumptions regarding conflict resolution, particularly how continuing disagreement or difference of opinion even after negotiation was regarded as bad faith. I will approach each of these in turn drawing on my data to illustrate them.

The Neighborhood and the Block

Park Slope, Brooklyn, where CAE and the mural block are located, has undergone a process of gentrification over the last eight years that has been stepped up over the last four years or so. Rents and housing prices have increased exponentially as New Yorkers from Manhattan have moved into Brooklyn. On this particular block there is a diverse mix of residents by race and class. A five-year resident of the block wrote, "My neighbors may be right that a mural would do well to celebrate the diversity of the block. From seniors to Latinos to South Asians, lesbians, Italians, blacks and Jews, we've got it all, plus a V.F.W. hall" (Schwartz, 1999). On one side of the street are small, single-family row

houses that in some cases have been divided into apartment units. There are white working class homeowners who did not leave the neighborhood in the 1960s and 1970s when many urban neighborhoods experienced “white flight.” Newcomers to the block are middle-class homeowners. The other side of the block is the Mitchell Lama housing project with predominantly Latino and African American residents (Sananman, 2000). The Prospect Expressway cuts into the block near the Fourth Avenue side.

Denial of Violence

Park Slope is not a violent neighborhood, but like any neighborhood in America there have been incidents of violence. That is something that we have to come to terms with.”

Karen, one of the muralists (Barnes, 1999).

Your mural is offensive and doesn’t suit our community. Its message is one directed to a community riddled with violence, drugs, and a lack of hope. Our neighborhood has improved dramatically in the last ten years....and even at its worst, the mural would have been too extreme!”

Block resident (Sananman, 2000, p.1)

The very act of mural creation by these young women anticipated a denial of violence at its core. During the mural dedication ceremony two of the young women spoke about denial of violence. Jennifer said, “We also wanted to send a strong message that problems need to be solved, not hidden away in a box.” Margareta said,

We chose to do the mural...Because we are not the source of the violence that occurs in our neighborhood. Therefore, it is not our fault, and it is not our responsibility to internalize it and cover it over. We are not ashamed to exist near it, but proud to have survived it thus far. This very public art marks our equally public pride (Center for Anti-Violence Education, 1999).

While all the Tenth Street residents who opposed the mural were homeowners, not all homeowners on the block were in opposition to the mural. In response to a feedback form given to Tenth Street residents, a couple replied,

My husband and I think the mural depicts reality. It is what we know is happening to defenseless women, children, men and animals. It reminds us not to ignore the bad things in life. And it says that there will always be a fight to help others survive (Sananman, 2000, p. 12).

Even some supporters of the mural that lived on the block did not necessarily acknowledge the violence near or on the block, but focused on “quality of life” problems in the neighborhood.

But those who think that the urban blights of drugs, violence and abuse don’t exist on Tenth Street or in Park Slope are in denial. We may not have the rabid wolves depicted on the wall of the Rite Aid but we’ve got enough dog waste, potholes and homeless right on our block to warrant the mural’s message...” (Schwartz, 1999, p. 19).

Although this supporter does list violence as present on the block, his listing of specific concerns does not include violence as traditionally defined. In fact, his concerns resemble those identified and targeted by Mayor Giuliani’s administration in New York. “Dog waste, potholes, and homeless” people on the block name concerns about the appearance of the neighborhood rather than community building through violence prevention.

The Tenth Street residents rejected the mural as a depiction of their neighborhood as violent. This denial of violence is undermined by violent crimes that occurred on or

near the block. The body of a woman was discovered in a dumpster at the housing project on Tenth Street. In the year prior to the mural conceptualization, a woman was raped at the subway station at Tenth Street and Fourth Avenue. Another woman was attacked at that station later the same year. Two gay men were stabbed in the neighborhood, a lesbian was stabbed at the corner of St. John's Place and Fifth Avenue, about 16 blocks or a 15 minute walk from Tenth Street (Szymanski, 1998), and a lesbian was dragged from a car down 5th Avenue past Tenth Street as homophobic epithets were yelled at her. These hate crimes were well publicized in the local gay press as evidence of increasing tension in a neighborhood with a large gay and lesbian population (Szymanski, 1998). The crimes against gay men, lesbians, and transgendered folks led to a street march down Fifth Avenue adjacent to the mural block. It is unlikely, therefore, that residents of this block would have been unaware of these crimes. Nonetheless, these well-publicized public acts of stranger violence do not touch the many forms of domestic violence that may have occurred on the block within the homes of the residents. Apart from these instances of documented violence, recent statistics on violence against women find 31 percent of American women report being physically or sexually assaulted by a boyfriend or husband at some point (www.ndvh.org/dvInfo.html).

Children as Innocents

I think this mural was put up specifically for them and they didn't even come from this neighborhood. I don't think I should have to explain drug paraphernalia to a five-year-old."

Long-time block resident

Red Riding Hood ate the grandma. You gonna tell me this [the mural] is violent?!

Muralist

A point of disagreement related to the depiction of violence dealt with concerns about children on the block. Jonathan Silin in Sex, Death, and the Education of Children (1995) describes how children are often used by adults in order to mask other concerns that adults feel they cannot express openly (Roman, 1996; Silin, 1995). Some parents on the block wanted the mural removed or revised because it scared their children. "I can choose what my children see [on television]" said a resident (Sweeney, 2000). A muralist responding to this perspective argued, "Guns are portrayed in newspapers, magazines, video games and on TV and elsewhere. Why are they more frightening or upsetting in an artistic context?" (Sananman, 2000, p.16). The teen women themselves were not included as children of the neighborhood worthy of concern. It seems that the mural opponents did not see them as youth who were speaking about violence in their neighborhood. Perhaps the teen women were caught between the categories of child and youth, youth and adult for some of the block residents just as the language "teen women" marks them as liminal—in limbo between categories. "Girl" has assumptions of innocence. "Teen" at times reflects a gathering spectacle of moral crisis.

Perhaps their speaking out about violence in their neighborhood created the conditions for the denial of their childhood. Speaking out about violence, drawing violence to the attention of a neighborhood marks the speaker as someone who may be intimate with violence and therefore tainted by it. The multiracial make-up of the nineteen women (the group of teen women was comprised of four African Americans, three Latinas, and two white girls) may have enforced these connections by resting on dual

racist assumptions, both that families of color are laden with violence and that teens of color are responsible for violence.

Some block residents wanted to shield their children from depictions of violence and drug use, but there were also parents who understood their roles differently. A white woman who is a karate student at CAE described her parental role as interpreter at the community meeting held at the VFW hall on the block. She said,

As a parent it's my job to interpret the world for my son. I want him to know what I think about things. I'm doing that all the time as I walk down the street with him. The mural is no different.

Two African American women narrated a similar stance at a press conference at the mural site,

I think they are blowing it way out of proportion and really don't get the message. If you walk past the mural all you really see is a lovely thing...Bring in your children, grandchildren and explain it to them. Sit down and talk to them. You don't wait until they're grown. Suppose they pick up a drug vial and put it in their mouth or bring it home. You would have to explain it. You don't want to wait until they bring it home and get sick.

In both cases these parents describe actively working against denial of the realities of life, not solely urban life, in the US, but the realities of drugs, violence, and sexuality in US life in general. A white woman who works for the New York City Board of Education came to one of the Saturday rallies to protest Rite Aid's decision to whitewash the mural.

Well, I think the new people that have moved in from the suburbs, they don't want their sweet children to see hypodermic needles and all that. They want to come here and not acknowledge there were drugs. They don't want to look at it. They want to pretend it's their suburbs. They don't want their sweet little kids to see that. They want to put the people out. That's part of the city. That's Park Slope.

The teen women were not seen as children unless the adults from CAE were being persuaded to control them. Adult facilitators of the teen's mural process were told at times that they needed to be the adults and rein the children in. In a community meeting held at the VFW hall on the block, some opposing residents demanded "the adults to be adults," meaning that they should tell the teens to change the mural and deny the consensus decision making as well as the teen-centered vision of the mural project. During the mural negotiations, the City Councilperson and the Rite Aid Vice President told the teens that they should be "stronger people" and "grown ups" and then they would be able to make a decision about the changes in the mural the residents on the block wanted. The teens understood this as a form of manipulation. One of the muralists said, "I think making changes would be like changing the message and changing a piece of ourselves. It would be like how it is in society, where adults tell children what to do" (Sweeney, 2000).

Whose Neighborhood?

They took kids from impoverished homes and brought them to our block. Don't make me seem racist. I am not. But this is a multiracial block and should have a multiracial mural" (Barnes, 1999).

The leader of the opposition group

We must correct the assertion by an opponent of the mural that 'kids from impoverished homes' were 'brought' to the block. Many of the artists are

residents of Park Slope...They come from varied socioeconomic backgrounds. Even if the young women were impoverished, would that diminish their right to make public art in a community that is also theirs? (Sananman, 2000, p. 13)

Annie, the Executive Director of CAE

The teen women were denied their youth, and also denied their neighborhood. Just as the small group of Tenth Street residents did not believe their block was violent, they also did not believe the residents of their block were well represented by the teen women's perspectives. Actually eight of the nine teen women lived within one mile of the mural site. As I discussed in Chapter One, Susan Opatow's work complicates the manipulation of sameness and difference in order to achieve justice concerns by adding conflict as a variable in context. The mural conflict is an example of both a high conflict situation with a dozen block residents wanting changes made to the mural and CAE mural advocates wanting no change. But it also represents a situation where sameness and difference were struggled over. Mural opponents argued CAE teens were "brought in"²⁰ from other neighborhoods, claiming a difference argument. The teens were seen as different, as outside these block residents' moral community and scope of justice. CAE attempted to correct the record by stating that the teen women were from the neighborhood, perhaps engaging in a similarity argument by reinserting them into community. Opatow's work might have predicted this strategy would fail since her work demonstrates that justice is not extended to even to similar others in high conflict situations.

²⁰This brings to mind the busing of African American children to desegregate schools.

The opposition leader's perspective above is mirrored by another resident on the block who supported the mural. A five-year resident of the block wrote, "My neighbors may be right that a mural would do well to celebrate the diversity of the block. From seniors to Latinos to South Asians, lesbians, Italians, blacks and Jews, we've got it all, plus a V.F.W. hall" (Schwartz, 1999). This concern about racial representation of the mural may also have masked a concern about property values on the block just as the concerns about protecting the children from the mural's images masked adult concerns. One resident told a reporter that the mural made their neighborhood appear "ghettoish" (Montero, 1999). "They said the blue people look black, and that it will lower property values. They said the noses of the people were too wide," Margareta, one the muralists, told a reporter (100 protest..., 2000). The human figures in the mural were painted shades of blue and purple to make them more racially neutral. The teen women feared that had they painted the human figures white, black, or brown that people would draw inaccurate conclusions about who is responsible for violence, who are its primary perpetrators. They again anticipated that mural viewers would read race and racism into the mural so they wanted to be careful not to include race of the figures in a way that the victims of violence or its offenders would come from only one group. Perhaps it was naive for the teen women to believe that the blue figures of the mural would be read as anything but Black. Racism cannot necessarily be bypassed through unrealistic imagery because viewers will impose their own assumptions about race on those images.

The Meanings of Compromise

Angel Rodriguez, the City Councilperson representing the Tenth Street block, first entered the mural controversy by calling a meeting of all interested parties at the VFW hall on the block. He selected a few block residents in attendance to meet with the muralists and an adult from CAE. Rite Aid hosted the meetings in their Manhattan offices. Councilperson Rodriguez' role was that of mediator and Rite Aid was disinterested host. The discussion of these mural negotiations highlighted tensions of language and meaning among the participants at the meetings.

The teen women, CAE, and Groundswell staff described the meetings as "disrespectful." Councilperson Rodriguez eventually sided with Rite Aid. "If somebody's offended, you have to address that concern," he said. "I think Rite Aid acted extremely responsibly, but the adults from the center were completely inflexible" (100 protest..., 2000). If racism and disrespect characterize the discourse of a conflict, should flexibility be valued or should negotiation be suspended? On the day of the teen women's press conference, I recorded the following statements in my fieldnotes from a white woman in her late 40s who lives on the mural block. She said of the negotiations, "We tried to talk to CAE." A mural supporter responded, "Just because you talk doesn't mean you get your way." "No, we tried to talk, but they cancelled the discussions facilitated by Angel Rodriguez. Nobody compromises. We didn't want the mural down, but nobody compromises. There was no discussion. It was a threat." Another white woman said, "Where were any skills of conflict resolution?"

Schehr & Milovanovic (1999) argue in a critique of conflict resolution literature that conventional conflict resolution strategies of conciliation, consultation, arbitration, and peacekeeping have shortcomings because they

privileg[e]...hierarchical representations, the supposition of order, the celebration of the ideal speech situation and consensus dynamics, the continuous encroachment of legal discourse at the expense of alternative discourses, and finally the lack of connected strategies between the macro and micro domains (p. 208-209).

The speech situations provided by Councilperson Rodriguez and the Rite Aid Vice President were not ideal speech situations for the teen women. And CAE's representatives did not imagine that consensus could be reached although they had built that into their decision-making process with the teens.

The teen women refused to compromise their vision of their neighborhood, of its problems, and the solutions to those problems by the denial of violence and racism of a few homeowners on the block of Tenth Street. Annie suggested another possible goal of negotiations – integrity. “It’s a piece of artwork,” she said. “We have to uphold its integrity, even if it gets whitewashed” (100 protest..., 2000).

Understandings

In conclusion, I want to raise some issues for consideration about this conflict. I am interested in following up on the assumptions that undergird the concepts of compromise and negotiation, particularly when communities in conflict seek mediation. In this case, CAE is a feminist organization with a 30-year history of consensus decision

making within community. CAE carried a set of commitments to consensus decision making into its negotiations with Rite Aid, Councilperson Rodriguez²¹, and the opposing neighborhood residents. The teens' mural project also had consensus decision making as a goal. It is not clear that CAE understood that these commitments would potentially conflict with the Councilperson's or Rite-Aid's assumptions about decision making, but the Councilperson as mediator also did not intervene and raise up these potential problems with negotiation. Without this commitment being clearly articulated by CAE and understood by the other parties, negotiations were fractured at the start.

It is important for those working with groups in highlighting oppression to consider its impact on youth and communities. Amy Sananman, the Executive Director of Groundswell Mural Project, wrote in her mural report (2000), about the possible risks in teaching youth about community participation in a real world setting.

However, it is important to recognize *the possibly perverse effect* [emphasis in original] of the power of teaching about democratic process experientially as opposed to in an academic or theoretical setting. First, lessons become more personal and therefore taken in to a greater degree. Therefore, groups undertaking

21

Angel Rodriguez is currently serving four years and four months in federal prison for conspiracy to commit extortion. Less than a year after he acted as a mediator between the teen women of CAE and the residents opposing the mural, he was working on a development deal in Red Hook, Brooklyn. Greg O'Connell, a former police detective turned real estate developer, planned to open a Fairway, an upscale grocery store, on the water front. Red Hook residents and Councilperson Rodriguez were opposed to the development because they believed it had not been accompanied by enough thoughtful community planning. Rodriguez then changed his position. He agreed to support the project and change his position if the developer agreed to sell him and a partner a property in another Brooklyn neighborhood at half the cost.

such projects should be aware that youth may very well learn lessons of political cynicism or stereotypes of racism may be enforced (p. 17).

This concern is raised similarly in scholarship inside urban public high schools by Michelle Fine and Jennifer Pastor (Fine, 1992; Pastor, 1993; Pastor, et al., 1996). In this group of studies, youth that have a critique of social institutions with no sense of possibility within that critique do not fare well in the long term. They have less developed possible selves (Pastor, 1993). They are less likely to remain in school (Fine, 1991). Sananman extends this research by suggesting that even if youth take action with their social critique, they are exposed to a world that does not always welcome their perspectives. This is the world's stance toward youth already, but it is worth noting that groups that seek to instill a sense of possibility and efficacy may have those goals stunted by a world that denies violence and the voices of youth of color. As CAE moved to extend its organizational borders and resist encapsulation, its teen women were at the front lines of a border war, a conflict about who can make meaning of a neighborhood and what that meaning will ultimately be. Moving outside of the organization's usual purview requires risk which may lead to a sense for these young women of themselves as agents, but it may also lead them to deeper cynicism about change. It would be interesting for example to follow these girls and see how they reflect on the mural conflict. What did they glean from the experience? What are the long-lasting effects of this work for the girls?

It's ironic that I'm interested in the long-lasting impact on these young women, because I also have a potential critique of the way we as social scientists measure social change. We often understand and measure the success of social change by its endurance

rather than what its impact has been, and those two things while related are different. I thought the mural would be at Tenth Street and Fifth Avenue forever, or at least the forever of my lifetime. What *is* the life expectancy of a neighborhood mural? Perhaps a better measure of impact would be that the teen women created a material flashpoint for a moment, where urban neighborhood anxieties about public art, violence, citizenship, and gentrification could be dis-placed or simply placed. This material object created important conversations across race, class, gender, sexuality, and political affiliation and across perspectives that arise from those lived experiences.

With this model, a version of the mural story develops that is closer to that of the martial arts – the form of art mundanely practiced in one of the sponsoring non-profit organizations. In that model, art is practiced, not finished. The completion of a karate or tai chi form is less important than the daily ritual of doing the form. Here, unlike the longevity model, art is ephemeral, but it nevertheless provokes local observers and participants to community participation, reflection, and change. Had the mural been accepted with fanfare and little controversy, it may not have had such a broad “showing.” As it was, the message of the mural and versions of the local conflict reached local news audiences throughout the five boroughs of the City of New York. [See Appendix I for a list of local newspaper articles covering the mural controversy.] Permanency was a “failure.” Provocation was a success. A resident of the block described the provocation as follows,

Walking up to the unveiling with my seven-year-old son, I initially was impressed by the high level of energy in the group that was clustered on the sidewalk and out

into the street; people were buzzing with conversations about the art...People were engaged, thinking deeply about the issues brought up by the mural, and I was excited by this! It's not often in my daily life that I get to see people debating issues that are important to them...So I wasn't bothered by the fact that the people I talked with and listened to were expressing all sides of the issue...I was just grateful that thoughtful dialogue was taking place...(Sananman, 2000, p.13).

The images in the mural could not be contained by the wall and surely not by the minds of those residents who opposed some of its images. The wall has a small ridge at about the ten foot mark, and the mural's images extended above that ridge; flowers, vines, women who sweep away the bad, all reach further, unable to be confined to either the interpretation of the block residents or my longings for longevity.

Postscript

The current group of teen women at CAE created a new mural this year. It is critical of the "War on Iraq" with images of eagles with guns and dollars signs in oil fields. This mural was painted on a portable canvas and exhibited at some community events and organizations in Brooklyn although its permanent home is CAE. The political voices of teen women at CAE have not been silenced by the controversy over the mural that used to be on Tenth Street, but CAE seems to have reconsidered the risks of extending moral community on others' properties.

CHAPTER SIX

Leaving Brooklyn (for Points Unknown, But Considered)

The concluding chapter lifts themes across the three preceding chapters and highlights both the tensions in my work and how concepts connect across levels.

Conceptually, I understand the body work of sparring, the micro-practices of communities of difference, and the mural conflict as constituting moral inclusion at CAE at different levels – on individual bodies, within community, and extending community through the mural work.

Revisiting my research questions, I assumed that student bodies would narrate conflict and difference and that organizational culture would highlight safer and “just” space. Instead, in individual narratives of women I heard safety, risk, and pleasure (as well as conflict and difference) and in community level data I heard conflict and difference. Conflict and difference were explicit in announcements and practices described in Chapter Four. Although I have written about conflict and difference together, I do not want readers to come away with the notion that they are the same. Oftentimes they are partnered because of the framework with which difference is approached. Conflict, at times, arises from social relations that produce difference and treat difference as exceptional or as a deficit. CAE struggles to respond to difference by providing many options for participation as equally valued and distributing the costs of difference across community members.

The mural conflict did in fact occasion a challenge to CAE’s construction of community in that the mural attempted to extend the CAE’s anti-violence perspective, but

it also challenged CAE as their perspective was resisted by some neighborhood residents. The mural project might have been designed differently to include neighborhood residents or youth to curb this resistance, but then the project would not have been centered on and driven by the young women's participation or an anti-violence or progressive political perspective. The teens could have met with neighborhood residents to solicit ideas and support. The teens could have recruited other block teens to help create the mural. This type of participatory project would also require CAE staff to facilitate a group with which they do not share an organizational culture. A project that brought in neighborhood residents (other than the teen women and CAE staff) at the onset would prompt a community expansion that might be outside CAE's organizational mission. All of these "solutions" to the conflict suggest it would have been possible to either avoid conflict or possible to reach consensus among the mural players. My calculations estimate the number of block residents at nearly 800. Consensus seems unlikely given this number. Ironically, CAE's participatory commitments may have given these 12 people more power to influence the mural outcome. CAE took their concerns seriously, asked for their feedback.

Challenges for Moral Inclusion

The following section proposes a set of challenges for the creation and maintenance of communities of moral inclusion that has risen out of this dissertation — cultivating risk and safety together, creating micro-spaces of segregation, encouraging critical distance, and extending moral community. What enables good group work — not just what inhibits groupthink (Janis, 1972) or decreases obedience to authority (Milgram,

1974), but what actually facilitates productive counter hegemonic, difference-loving gathering?

Cultivating Risk and Safety Together

Many progressive educators and feminist organizations have focused on the production of “safe space” for their students and participants. These strivings have been accompanied by critiques suggesting that safety is an impossible goal when there are so many competing individual meanings of that term (Khayatt, 1999); for whom is space safe? In Chapter Three, I described the challenge of creating safety for karate students at CAE when students may need very different things to feel safe. I would like to set aside this concern about whether or not safety is a realistic goal and suggest that safety without concomitant opportunities for risk is stunting for organizations and individuals. While safety is an admirable goal, safety in and of itself may be inadequate. In the teaching of courses that deal with gender, race, and sexuality more recent work focuses less on the creation of safe space and more on the creation of space where students cannot count on one another as allies, but where multiple alliances can be forged along unexpected lines of identity.

Encouraging Critical Distance

My data moved me away from a focus on self-defense at different levels to a focus on critical distance as both a physical and emotional construct. Critical distance is a reimagined selfishness, similar to Haug’s (1987) reconfiguring of guilt, where focus on the self ironically enables care of community and other. Critical distance may seem to some to be a reassertion of Western, Cartesian assumptions about how to find “Truth.” By critical

distance I do not mean a distance from community at which length you can accurately and objectively assess its practices. Rather, I understand critical distance to be a stance that is adopted in community, in relation. Consciousness of critical distance is the awareness of both the separation between people and the potential for connection. In Chapter Three critical distance was illustrated as both a sparring term and introduced as an emotional concept where understanding and having a commitment to community does not undermine a commitment to self or to a critique of that community. CAE through responsiveness to marginalized voices and creation of spaces for those voices to gather has encouraged critical distance in the form of critical loyalty, also. Community members are then able to "...move into liminal space, helping them to become critics of their own cultural contexts out of which they make decisions (Bowers, 1984)?" (Dempsey & McCadden, 1997, p. 162).

Creating Micro-spaces of Segregation within Community

Fine, Weis, & Powell (1997) have already understood the importance of micro-spaces of segregation in their work inside public high schools. At CAE, these spaces have been created for women of color, survivors of violence, and students training with injuries. These spaces provide important opportunities for students who may be in the minority within a setting or historically marginalized without to provide support for one another and find moments of respite away from white students, a culture that denies violence, and the temporary nature of bodies free of injury or disability.

Extending Moral Community

Moral communities, like feminist organizations, can also become so bounded and focused on deepening community within that they rarely connect with people with other perspectives. In Chapters Four and Five, CAE moved beyond the borders of community through anti-racism organizing in the support of COOL in the 1980s and through the teen women's mural project in the 1990s²². In both cases, the extension of community meant a potential accompanying mission change because the organization made contact with others who did not share their commitments or whose focus was slightly different. Mueller's work (1995, reviewed in Chapter One) on the influx of organizational members after conflict may also offer a warning for small communities in particular when they extend themselves beyond previous community boundaries. Although there was not a noticeable influx after the mural controversy, extension of mission could overwhelm. This does not mean that encapsulation is preferable to extension. It means projects that move outside of organizational or community borders need to be conscious of the assumptions brought to new contexts (e.g., commitments to consensus decision-making or youth-centered participatory action) and that those assumptions may need to be at least translated if not revised for other audiences and potential allies.

Understanding the Impermanence of Outcome

In Chapter Four, Cady described struggling with spinning kicks and then realizing that struggle will not always be there – the teacher will move to another exercise, she will perform the kick better with practice, or it will feel different one time. Cady's realization

22

See the organizational timeline in Appendix A for other examples of CAE's community activism.

mirrors mine in Chapter Five as the teen mural was whitewashed, but I tried to hold on to provocation as another measure of success. Projects that seek to broaden community and strive for social justice also require an acknowledgment that struggle and conflict will be a part of the process. This understanding is more accessible with mentors in social justice movements, such as Gerald Orange and Annie Ellman at CAE, who can model persistence and commitment to community for younger activists even in the face of erasure.

Unfinished Understandings

Community as a Construct

I understood organization as a more formal manifestation of community, but given the fluidity of organizational/community borders, organization may not be nearly as bounded as I previously thought. As Opatow has argued (1990), “in” or “out” do not adequately describe the positions of individuals in relation to communities. They may be only two of multiple positions in relation, particularly when the construction of some communities and identity itself may rest on processes of establishing self in opposition to Other (Fine & Addeleston, 1996; Morrison, 1992; Wong, 1994). If displacement occurs at the level of identity, perhaps a similar process occurs at the level of community where entire communities construct themselves upon this “not X” formula. Julia Hall, in a case study of a girl’s club in a community center (Bertram, Hall, Fine, & Weis, 2000), describes a space for girls to gather around gender that shifts depending upon who is in the room. In her individual interviews, the girls revealed violence within their white working-class families. When the girls spoke in groups, however, they focused on the problem of violence in their communities from men of color.

Being unable to name and blame, at least in the group, those who truly threaten their safety (White boys and men), as they construct identities, these girls do not so much self-blame as they find someone else to blame for their sense of violation in historically available scapegoats (Bertram, Hall, Fine, & Weis, 2000, p. 740).

Community borders, then, may be much more fluid than terms like “in” and “out” suggest as groups are included or purged depending on both who is present for the conversation and what is being discussed. Although certain groups and individuals may be excluded in practice or policy, they may be present nonetheless in constructions of community. The comparative data of interview versus focus group methods in my own project produced another interesting finding, this one related to “fantasies of self-defense.”

Fantasies of Self-Defense

Unfortunately, the denial of violence particularly violence within families, relationships, and communities is a persistent theme in much community work (e.g., Fine, Genovese, Ingersoll, MacPherson, & Roberts, 1996). I intend to follow up on the limits of community within the focus group I facilitated. Like Hall's (Bertram, Hall, Fine, & Weis, 2000) white girls in one respect, the women in my focus group did not discuss violence from family members. However, a number of them did describe self-defense fantasies where they imagined an attack and then successfully defended themselves. These fantasies did not involve attacks by people the women knew, but by undefined others in public places. I want to explore the functions of these fantasies and their content. The fantasies may serve as a visualization exercise that accompanies many kinds of physical learning and performance. Athletes are often encouraged to imagine themselves throwing

the perfect pitch or delivering the perfect serve. Self-defense fantasies, then, may be providing self-defense students a practice run at defending against violent attacks. This visualization may not be effective, however, unless women recognize the greater dangers of attacks from intimates within their own homes. I would feel uncomfortable describing a visualization (i.e., abuse from family or intimates) as a fantasy and that may be a key to its absence in the focus group.

Scholarship on fantasies of violence (Halberstam, 1995), the uses of monsters among children (Jones, 2002) and horror films among adults (Clover, 1992), may lead to other functions. I understand fantasies of violence and fantasies of self-defense as discrete, but potentially related categories. In my brief reading of some of the literature, it seems that fantasies of violence particularly among young boys and men are troubling for many psychologists and me (e.g., du Bois, 1997). In contrast, I am not troubled by the self-defense scenarios the women in my focus group play out for themselves. This tension and its underlying justification are lines of thought I intend to pursue by analyzing the focus group data more closely and gathering additional data to examine what it meant when Dory, one of the focus group members said, "I make up fights in my mind all the time."

The Challenge of the Body

I was excited by capturing the body in my descriptions of sparring, but unprepared for the difficulty in writing about the body. Browning in her analysis of a set of Brazilian cultural practices (1995) – samba, candomblé, capoeira, and carnaval – writes, "Acknowledging dance as a form of cultural inscription means I have to ask myself – why

write?" (p. xxii). Similarly acknowledging karate, self-defense, and sparring, in particular, as modes of creating a collective body and an articulate body means I have been challenged not only by the words I use to describe the bodily work, but also whether I can communicate the power of this body work most effectively and fully with words. In the end, I am left with words when what I really want is to take you (the reader) to classes and have you understand what it feels like to exchange energy with sparring partner after sparring partner and risk vulnerability and connection with every round.

After the data collection phase, I began to conceive of other ideas for body-based data collection including videotaping, student journals, student use of disposable cameras to document their training, and an autobiographical journal of sparring experiences. These data collection ideas require more reliance on participants and more coordination of their participation, but they excite me as innovative ways to both engage and describe the body in action, in community. I remain eager to explore new modes of data collection and analysis, but those innovations remain isolated if they are unaccompanied by new modes of dissemination and presentation.

Landscaping Moral Inclusion: A Gesture toward Generalizability

Opotow (2002) and Katz (2001) both lift up multiple levels at which justice concerns may be tended to or undermined, and argue that all levels must be engaged in order for justice to be considered across contexts and pursued strategically. Both scholars also seek theories that are not confined to a particular locale, but are able to generalize to other places. Opotow writes,

In addition to procedural, distributive, and inclusionary justice, it is important to consider both immediate and long-term approaches to justice, as well as justice at both micro and macro levels, so that individuals and small communities are not lost in thinking about the larger society, nor are larger societal issues lost when considering the circumstances and well-being of individuals (p. 215).

Katz in her work on gender and globalization (2001) advocates for what she terms “counter topographies” deploying a geographic metaphor for counter hegemonic uses. Geography, particularly area studies, has been used for capitalist and militaristic purposes. One of the ironic dangers of this usually advocated contextualization is its misuse by entities wanting to understand local culture and community for invasive purposes (e.g., war). Katz suggests that by using the geographic tools of close local study and then lifting up other cases and comparing and contrasting the effects of globalization in different locales, scholars can put hegemonic tools to counter hegemonic purposes. She illustrates this point through another mapping feature.

Contour lines are lines of constant elevation, connecting places at precisely the same altitude to reveal a terrain’s three-dimensional shape. I want to imagine a politics that maintains the distinctiveness of a place while recognizing that it is connected analytically to other places along contour lines that represent not elevation but particular relations to a process (e.g., globalizing capitalist relations of production) (p. 1229).

I see the potential of this counter topography to facilitate the extension of moral community as Katz writes,

Tracing the contour lines of such a 'counter-topography' to other sites might encourage and enable the formation of new political-economic alliances that transcend both place and identity and foster a more effective cultural politics to counter the imperial, patriarchal, and racist integument of globalization (p. 1216).

Murals are a part of the landscape of many places around the globe. At one point on the globe, some Irish women have destroyed murals that they felt promoted violence by marking Protestant or Catholic areas through color, symbol, or image (C. Aitchison, personal communication, March 19, 2004; Jarman, 1998). Imagine a project that connected the teen women muralists in Brooklyn, NY, with these adult women in Northern Ireland. What would be shared in these stories that share a contour line of public art and what would be inverted? Both seek an end to violence in their communities. Both are engaged in risky meaning-making about their neighborhoods. What are the global processes that underlie these two different communities? What are the local meanings of pleasure, safety, and risk? How is difference engaged with or destroyed? How is community being created in each and through what means?

Like Katz I have also used geographic and natural metaphors in relation to the analysis of social worlds (Bertram, 2000). Moral communities of inclusion and exclusion are grounded in the same set of social relations, a hegemonic shared social reality (Smith, 1987). While moral community literature has focused upon the exclusive aspect of moral communities, what I believe are the stagnant areas – the standing waters – of social relations, all of these communities whether based on inclusion or exclusion inhabit a common social world. The articulation of the social injustices present in moral

communities based on exclusion has already begun within the moral community literature in social psychology. Within feminist organizational literature, scholars have been critical of these communities holding an ideal of inclusivity. Yet, feminist organizational literature because of its focus on particular relations and moral community literature with its focus on exclusion have not begun to map the social practices that “communities of difference” use to create just relations.

Think of the social world as a river—a metaphor and geographical feature that I am familiar with since I lived within a few blocks of a small river in the Midwestern United States for about 20 years. The river I grew up near is a good one to visualize because its own nature is dual. The river is stagnant; a series of algae-covered ox bow lakes and ponds lay alongside the river, formed by years of currents gradually grinding away the river’s bank. The river is also full of life; water fowl stop to rest below the dam on their return north each spring. Walleyes can be caught from a bridge straddling the two sides of my hometown. The river for me represents the common social world that Dorothy Smith describes (1987). We as social actors are all being carried along by the common current of the social world, the pull of a commonly-held construction of reality. Swimming against the current is possible, but it is tiring and requires much effort by the contrary swimmer.

All along this common current, however, is the presence of eddies, small circular currents of water that change the prevailing current of the river. An eddy is “a current at variance with the main current in a stream of liquid or gas, esp. one having a rotary or whirling motion” (Webster’s New Universal Unabridged Dictionary, 1994, p. 453). For

me, eddies are communities, moral communities, if you will. These communities are part of the larger social world and yet they are “at variance with” it also. Eddies are small whirlpools, whirlpools defined as being “produced by irregularity in the channel or streambanks, by the meeting of opposing currents, by the interaction of winds, and tides, etc.” (Webster’s New Universal Unabridged Dictionary, 1994, p. 1628). There are multiple reasons for the appearance of eddies as the appearance and development of communities. For some moral communities, the eddies of the social world swirl into communities based on encapsulation where the hostility of outside forces encourages the formation of community. In the same river, though, other eddies are formed when the current becomes strong enough to swirl.

Two forces of community creation seem to be at work. And here again I want to stretch the metaphor I am using and think about the two forces that create and sustain eddies and that I believe are helpful in illustrating the creation and sustenance of communities. These are centripetal and centrifugal forces. An action that follows a centripetal force is “proceeding or directed toward the center” (Webster’s New Universal Unabridged Dictionary, 1994, p. 240). A centrifugal force, the opposite of centripetal force, is one that is “moving or directed outward from the center” (Webster’s New Universal Unabridged Dictionary, 1994, p. 240). These two forces seem to illustrate the pushes and pulls of moral communities. First, conceptualizing for illustrative purposes moral community as circles with an inside or an outside prevents scholars from seeing them with borders that are permeable. There may be difficulty in some communities with entrance and exit, but they are not closed systems. Next, moral communities are dynamic

organizations with currents of their own at variance to some extent with the broader culture. These two opposing forces of moral community help me get at processes that the feminist organizational literature discusses and worries over – encapsulation and institutionalization (Freeman, 1995).

Centripetal force is “directed toward the center.” Its spiraling deepens the center of the eddy. This process seems to reflect a moral community’s encapsulation where its members become cut off from the rest of the flow of social life. While the moral community’s relations deepen, their impact on the rest of the social world remains unlikely and small. Eddies that have a centrifugal force, however, are “directed outward from the center.” Their currents reel out into the social world, but community life itself may be shallow.

Scholars of moral community social psychology and feminist organizations have recognized communities less as circles than as eddies, in process, dynamic (Opatow & Weiss, 2000), permeable not bounded, connected to the general flow of social life, to other communities, and the rest of the environment. With this we can place moral communities into a context where their formation and grouping is not just malevolent, but whose formation can be understood if we understand the social world it is embedded in and the individual actors that decided to swim or walk upstream. Without the living creatures in rivers, the water becomes stagnant. Without social actors, the social movement organizations we study and our own scholarship becomes cut off from social life like an ox bow lake. The question that scholars and activists must engage with is the

following: how can communities be open enough to inspire risk and creativity, but closed enough to offer safety and connection?

Appendix A

Chronology

- 1950 Annie is born in the Bronx, New York City.
- 1968 Annie enters SUNY-Old Westbury as an undergraduate.
- 1970- Annie moves to Berkeley, California, and participates in demonstrations against the Vietnam War. During her time in Berkeley, she begins to take karate.
- 1972 Annie settles back in New York City again.
- 11/1972 Annie meets Nadia Telsey at a demonstration
- 1974 Brooklyn Women's Martial Arts (BWMA) is founded
- fall 1974 Nadia moves to Brooklyn
- *1974 BWMA sent reps to 2 women's events in Canada organized in solidarity with the people of Vietnam.
- *1975 Support for Joanne Little, an African American woman tried for killing a prison guard who attempted to rape her. BWMA organized city-wide event that included speeches and women's martial arts demo. Little was eventually acquitted and freed.
- 8/26/1977 BWMA becomes a not-for-profit organization, Brooklyn Women's Martial Arts, Inc. This happens under aegis of The National Congress of Neighborhood Women, an amalgam of community-based women's groups
- *1977 Support work for Cheryl Todd and Dessie Woods, African American women accused--and eventually acquitted--of murder of man who attempted to rape them. BWMA organized community education event at the Women's Coffee House.
- *1977 Support for Yvonne Wanrow, Native American woman raped by boyfriend and tried--and found not guilty--of his murder. BWMA helped to organize city-wide support.
- BWMA spends two years in Brooklyn Heights

- 4/1978 Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) funding begins
- 11/1978 BWMA moves to its present location on Fifth Avenue in Brooklyn
- 1/1979 Annie gives birth to her daughter, Tanya
- *1979-
1989 BWMA and other feminist women pushed NWMAF to make commitment to reaching a broader group of women than the federation's "white, middle-class norm" through raising issues about high fees, child care, and outreach to women of color as students and instructors.
- 9/1980 CETA funding ends
- 10/20/1980 BWMA has a potluck with, "The Experience and Feelings of Being a New Student," being the topic of conversation
- 11/15/1980 BWMA holds a fundraiser at P.S. 41 (11th Street & Sixth Avenue) showing "The Life and Times of Rosie the Riveter"
- 1980 Nadia leaves BWMA and moves to Washington state
- 1981 Annie begins to train other teachers at BWMA
- 1981 BWMA had a series of discussions on gay and straight issues
- 1982 Annie begins self-defense teacher training
- 1983 Annie starts working with Barnard College Office for Disabled Students (BCODS) teaching self-defense to people with disabilities
- 6/1983 Lydia Dean Pilcher makes, "Kiai!: Women in Self-Defense," a 26 minute documentary film. She received a Judges Award at the Sinking Creek Film Celebration in Nashville, TN. She earned her Master's thesis at New York University Graduate Institute of Film & Television.
- *1984 Women of Color Group founded, so women of color training in dojo could get to know each other. Met monthly to talk about school-related issues; had periodic workouts together (also to give new teachers experience). Over the years, the group gave several workshops to organizations of women and lesbians of color.
- The Women of Color Group was the driving force pushing the white staff and membership of BWMA to confront our/their racism and

racism within the dojo--and educated the membership around importance of making a clear commitment to building an anti-racist and multi-cultural organization.

- *1985 Civil disobedience at the South African Consulate on International Women's Day, BWMA, with two other feminist women's groups, organized the event. About 20 dojo members were arrested.
- *1985 NWMAF Teacher's Conference: BWMA runs anti-racism educational.
- 1986 Retreat is held where women discuss "establishing a working structure so work doesn't fall on a few shoulders"
- 2/1986 Potluck Anti-Racism workshop, *first school-wide anti-racism educational training led by Stephanie Roth and Beth Richie.
- 3/8/1986 Members of BWMA demonstrate in front of the South African consulate to protest apartheid for International Women's Day
- 6/1986 BWMA receives \$3,500 grant from North Star Foundation for general support and to run the children's karate and self-defense classes
- *1986 At NWMAF's Special Training (four-day training event for women martial artists) at Yale Univ., BWMA protests Yale's refusal to divest its stock portfolio of corporations with investments in South Africa. And performed at the NWMAF's demo in commemoration of Soweto Day, when South African children were murdered by police as they protested for better schools. Also, BWMA led anti-racism workshop for white women.
- 1987 Lucy Grugett is hired as full-time staff
- 5/1987 A Ta'i Chi representative becomes a member of the Board
- 5/9/1987 New York Women Against Rape (NYWAR) Speaker's training
- 5/21/1987 Mt. Sinai's Rape Crisis Intervention Center's Conference
- 5/24/1987 New York Friends of Madre Benefit to honor women political prisoners in El Salvador and South Africa
- *1987 Yanira Corea, survivor of rape and torture by Salvadoran death squads, traveled around the U.S. speaking out on her experiences and educating U.S. on how government's funding of repressive government affected

women in El Salvador. BWMA worked with coalition of women's and solidarity groups to organize NYC leg of tour; we also provided security.

8/22-29/1987 Renovation of BWMA

1987 A man named Doug, Annie's T'ai Chi teacher, joins BWMA to teach T'ai Chi classes

1987 BWMA receives a \$9,000 grant from The Ms. Foundation

1987 BWMA organizing to attend The National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights

12/1987 BWMA submits a proposal to The Astraea Foundation for \$5,000 to develop course curriculum for specifically targeted groups

*1987 At Special Training at Kent, Ohio, BWMA leads an Anti-Racism workout, which combined history of racism in the U.S. and anti-racist struggles with martial arts workout.

*1987-1988 Series of open-to-all meetings that resulted in the formation of a bi-racial Anti-Racism Committee (first a volunteer group, then elected) which wrote "Anti-Racism Policy Recommendations"--including suggestions for changes in teacher training, "raps" for self-defense courses, and outreach. Also, restructured Board of Directors' to include more student representation.

*1988 BWMA boycotted Special Training because of NWMAF leadership's refusal to acknowledge racism at Special Trainings or work committedly to create trainings that reach out to and are comfortable for a multi-racial group of women.

*1988 Fighting for Change--Martial Arts as Resistance to Oppression: BWMA organized 2-day training for women martial artists. Celebrated the roots of martial arts in Asian, African, & Latin American cultures and the tradition of resistance in the martial arts. Brought together multi-racial group of instructors and worked to outreach to women of color. Charged sliding fee from \$5 to \$75.

*1988 City-wide feminist organizing--including march--around Tawana Brawley rape and racism in the media and mainstream culture around issue of rape against women of color. BWMA participated.

- *1988 Lisa Jimenez and Evelyn Rivera, two Latina lesbians, came to the aid of gay man being attacked. They were beaten and arrested by police, who also taunted them with racist and homophobic insults. Lisa and Evelyn were charged with assaulting officers. BWMA and others city-wide attended trial in support of them.
- 6/11/1988 Art Jam, a Brooklyn Women's Martial Arts Benefit, readings and exhibition of visual art
- 1988-present BWMA begins The Children's Empowerment Project, 14 week courses for Fifth and Sixth graders in Brooklyn public schools funded by The Aaron Diamond Foundation, *violence and abuse prevention for predominately low-income children of color in Brooklyn. Course covers range of attack and abuse they may face--from peers, family members, authority figures in school and society, as well as strangers.
- 1989 Brooklyn Women's Martial Arts changes its name to The Center for Anti-Violence Education
- 4/9/1989 Women from The Center attend The March on Washington for Abortion Rights
- 6/1989 Bi-racial group of five women from The Center attend "Parallels and Intersections: Racism and Other Forms of Oppression," a conference in Iowa City, IA, sponsored by Women's Resource and Action Center (WRAC) of University of Iowa
- 1989 The Center boycotts the special training of The National Women's Martial Arts Federation
- *1989 Series of letters in NWMAF newsletter around issue of racism in the organization, from BWMA and from others supporting or protesting our boycott.
- 10/1989 Brenda Jones joins The Center staff
- 10/21/1989 Women of Color Fifth Anniversary and dance celebration, *retreat, On retreat, we/they discussed issues of class, cultural, and political differences among the group.
- 7/12/1989 Boat Ride Dance

- 12/16/1989 15th Anniversary Gala Concert, Casselberry-Du Pree with Toshi Reagon and Annette A. Aguilar
- *1989 2nd school-wide anti-racism educational led by Stephanie Roth and Beth Richie.
- *1989 Internal discussions (and attendance at city-wide meetings) of issues--esp. in media and criminal justice system--of racism and violence against women raised by Central Park rape case.
- *1989 Participation in Park Slope organizing & march to protest attack on Akeem Davis, African American teenager attacked by gang of white teens.
- *1989 March in Bensonhurst to protest death of Yusuf Hawkins, BWMA contingent participates.
- *1989 Karen Straw, an African American women, was tried for killing her long-abusive husband, as he attacked her. BWMA joined many women's anti-violence groups in monitoring the trial. Karen was acquitted.
- *1989-1990 White Women Against Racism Group meets in an attempt to take on more responsibility for anti-racism education and work.
- *1990 Park Slope white lesbians and gay men organized march to protest an attack against two lesbians--one Latina and one white woman--at the Purity Diner. Women of color and white women from BWMA worked with others in community to urge that agenda of march include fighting racist as well as heterosexist violence. Also wrote letter to OUTWEEK explaining our reasons for withdrawing our institution's support from the march, a decision widely criticized by some in the gay and lesbian community.
- *1990 & 1991 5-week self-defense course for women of color, to offer women of color as supportive atmosphere as possible to deal with issues of violence in our/their lives.
- *1991 3rd school-wide educational on anti-racism led by Stephanie Roth and Lisa Miller. First in a new series of anti-oppression trainings; other topics will include heterosexism/homophobia and issues of class/classism.

- *1991** St. John's rape case, BWMA participates with other women's anti-violence groups to organize court watch and put forth feminist and anti-racist perspective on attack.
- *1991-1992** Participation in Astraea, the National Lesbian Foundation, trainings on building a multi-cultural organization.
- 6/3/1992** Fourth Annual Gala Boatride, Special Bon Voyage to Stephanie Roth
- 6/9/1993** Fifth Annual Evening Dance Cruise
- 2/2/1995** The Center receives \$25,000 grant from The Ms. Foundation
- 1996** The Center receives \$17,500 in grant money from The New York Women's Foundation
- The Center begins Action for Young Women's Empowerment, 6-week self-defense and violence prevention courses to teenage women 14-18 years old in low income Brooklyn neighborhood funded by New York Community Trust

***--These events and activities excerpted from a chronology of "Anti-Racism Related Work at Brooklyn Women's Martial Arts," compiled by Brenda Jones and Lucy Grugett of The Center for Anti-Violence Education**

Appendix B

	Research Questions	Method	Participants
Body Work	<p>How does the embodiment of this organization relate to the practice of conflict and difference?</p> <p>How do the women who take classes at CAE and otherwise participate in community life understand and narrate conflict and difference through and with their bodies?</p> <p>How do these same women understand the physical practice of self-defense?</p>	<p>⊙ Participant observation</p> <p>⊙ Semi-structured interviews</p> <p>⊙ Telephone interviews with self-defense students</p>	6 karate students

	Research Questions	Method	Participants
Intra-Organizational Difference and Conflict	<p>What do the everyday practices of the organization teach women with regard to self-defense? a) What is the framework for understanding difference (Meyerson, et al.)</p> <p>In what ways does staff and organizational culture encourage particular social modes/practices that create "safer" space and "just" space?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☉ Description of women's typical days at the dojo ☉ Coding of oral history interviews ☉ Coding of student newspapers, organizational newsletters, Lesbian Herstory Archives folder materials, local and metropolitan newspapers ☉ Semi-structured interviews with key staff (n=2) – topics include particular internal conflicts, coding with Freeman (1995) socialization, institutionalization, encapsulation, identity, community, empowerment, difference, conflict, bodily metaphor, mural, activism 	

	Research Questions	Method	Participants
Organizational Self-defense and Community Conflict	<p>How does a conflict with the local community underscore and challenge CAE's construction of self-defense and difference?</p> <p>How does a conflict with the local community create an occasion to examine the organization's commitment to difference and activism?</p>	<p>● Coding of fieldnotes during community meetings</p> <p>● Coding of files on the mural project</p>	<p>One staff member who worked with the teen woman on the mural project</p> <p>folks who are no longer with the organization, but whom I have identified as important ex-participants</p>

Appendix C

Individual Interview Protocol

Background

1. What physical activities did you participate in before you came to CAE?
2. Why did you come to train here?

Self-Defense

1. How do you define self-defense? If a friend asked you what self-defense is, how would you describe it?
2. How does that compare with how you defined self-defense before CAE?

Sparring

1. If a friend asked you what sparring is, how would you describe it?
2. What was it like when you first started to spar?
Probe: Were there times in your training that your body caught up with your mind or vice-versa?
3. How has sparring changed for you since then?
4. What is your sparring style?
5. Tell me about someone's sparring style that you admire.
6. Do you have strong memories about sparring with a particular person or a particular match? Describe them for me.
7. Tell me about someone with whom you have a difficulty sparring. Why?
Probe: How do you know when a match is going well?
8. Do you think sparring is more or less difficult for you than for other women at the dojo? Why?

Application outside the Dojo

1. Tell me about a time when you used self-defense or sparring skills outside the dojo.
Probe: times that are not necessarily physically threatening
2. Does your sparring style relate to your style in other areas of your life? How?
3. Can you give me an example of how you would use sparring or self-defense or karate in a personal relationship?

Closing

1. Is there anything else you would like to tell me that you think it is important that I know?

Appendix D

Background Questionnaire

1. How long have you trained at CAE?
2. How do you identify racially/ethnically? Please check all that apply or add a category that you choose to describe yourself.
 - African American
 - Asian American
 - Biracial
 - Caribbean American
 - Latina
 - White, Caucasian
3. How old are you?
4. How do you identify your sexual orientation? Please check all that apply or add a category that you choose to describe yourself.
 - Straight
 - Lesbian
 - Bisexual
 - Queer
5. What CAE programs have you participated in as a student? Circle all that apply.
 - Children's Empowerment Project
 - Brooklyn Women's Martial Arts (BWMA) karate
 - BWMA tai chi
 - BWMA self-defense
 - BWMA survivor's program
6. How do you identify your gender? Please check all that apply or add a label that you have chosen for yourself.
 - Female
 - Transgendered

Appendix E

E-mail Recruitment Text

Dear BWMA karate student:

I'm trying to put together a focus group that will focus on sparring and its relationship to engagement and disengagement in the dojo and in your life outside the dojo. This focus group is a piece of my dissertation work. The plan is to do a few rounds of sparring and then move into a group interview to discuss sparring in general. I am recruiting six karate students for the focus group. In order to participate, you should be actively training and sparring with both sides attacking and both sides defending. Each participant will receive \$30 for the approximately two-hour long focus group. The focus group is likely to be scheduled for a Sunday so that it doesn't conflict with CAE programming. If you have any questions or are interested in participating, please reply to this e-mail (DO NOT HIT REPLY TO ALL), call me at (718)435-0582 or (917)945-8013, put a note in my mailbox at the dojo, or talk to me after class sometime.

Thanks,
Corrine

Appendix F

List of Codes ²³

activism	•	compromise
• Black Panthers	•	consensus
• Civil Rights movement	•	cooperation
• Committee of Outraged Lesbian (COOL)	•	flexibility
• Jewish Left	•	rules
• labor movement		dance
• Rosenbergs		demo
• SUNY-Old Westbury		difference
• public schools		discursive (moment)
ageism	•	laughter
anti-racism		educational philosophy
• white women's group	•	with community
• women of color group		engagement
• racism		family
• segregation		fear
anti-war	•	of fulfilling expectations
being active	•	of hurting someone
• victimhood	•	of power
Board	•	of using body publicly
board breaking		feminism
body		gender
• disability	•	man teaching tai chi
• injuries		HIV/AIDS
• epilepsy		inclusion
• warm-ups		intimacy
children	•	boundaries
class		karate/martial art
community		kata
• & outward/individual to community		labor
• bridging		metaphor
• coming down on individual	•	"stepping off the line"
• cycles/cohorts	•	"side-stepping"
• women only space		mural
competition	•	art
• belts	•	Angel Rodriguez
conflict	•	copyright
• collective action	•	development
		National Women's Martial Arts Federation

²³Codes in bold print are those that appear across the levels of data.

(NWMAF)

- childcare
- neighborhood
 - gentrification
 - housing
 - Park Slope
 - property values
- organizational growth
 - CETA funding
 - decision-making
 - foundations
 - grants
 - lack of professionalism in the 70s
 - naming
 - neutrality
 - renovation
- organizing
- outsiders
- physical
- politics
 - identity
- power
- privilege
- work
 - white women
- quote
- resistance
- risk
 - white girl
 - good girl
- safety
 - with self
- self-defense
 - avoidance
 - exit
- sexism
- sexuality
 - coming out
 - lesbian
 - straight
- size
- sparring
 - competition
 - contact
 - context
 - control
 - critical distance
 - evasion
 - exit
 - “going too far”
 - hard
 - “keeping everybody at a distance”
 - lying
 - present
 - “put them in their place”
 - soft
 - spontaneity
 - style
 - “taking up space”
 - tension
 - touch
- staff
 - burn out
 - lack of professionalism
- structure/agency
- survivor
 - choice
 - taking up space
 - stranger violence
 - evasion
 - interactive ways
- teaching
- training
 - making mistakes
- trust
- violence
 - denial
 - hate crimes
 - rape
- voice
 - public
- whycome

Appendix G

Brooklyn Women's Martial Arts
Sparring Information, Guidelines, and Rules

Introduction:

At BWMA students start to learn to spar after training nine months. The process of learning includes pre-sparring exercises, check-ins, and time to ask questions and get information. Learning to spar is different than learning anything else in your training. There's no exact formula or choreography like in a kata. Because of this the learning process takes time and can be both exciting and challenging. Learning to spar can sometimes make us feel anxious. It's important to remember along the way if you have questions or concerns, teachers can be a great resource.

What sparring is (and isn't):

Sparring partners exchange hand strikes, kicks and blocks in a fluid way to specific targets at pre-designated speeds. Sparrers at BWMA aren't actively trying to beat or win over their partners. Rather, the focus is on doing your best and improving (and your partner doing the same.) In this way we learn by challenging others and having others challenge us in an open, supportive environment. Sparring is a sport with rules, in which there's space to share and learn with (and from) your partners.

Targets:

Legal targets vary in different karate schools. If you are sparring with a visitor from another school and/or style, before beginning a round clarify BWMA legal targets.

The following targets are legal in sparring matches for sparrers of all levels:

1. groin,
2. stomach/solar plexus
3. ribs,
4. and chest.

The following targets are legal to indicate to (meaning no contact) for all sparrers, when going motion study or slow flow:

1. side of the neck
2. face
3. temples

Students who have sparred one year and up may indicate to these targets at easy moderate speed as well.

The following are illegal targets for all sparrers:

1. the back,
2. anywhere below the groin (especially the knees.)

3. back of the head

Legal Techniques:

1. Closed-handed strikes - sanchin punches, backhands, hook punches, chudan/jodan/gedan punches etc...
2. Open-handed strikes - shuto, reverse shuto, ridge hand, reverse ridge, etc...
3. All kicks to legal targets (no kicks to knees)

Illegal Techniques:

All self-defense techniques are illegal in sparring matches, except for groin kicks. These include:

1. palm heel strikes
2. strikes to the eyes or throat
3. elbows to any target
4. scratching
5. pulling hair
6. stomping on insteps

Note: Always make sure you can see the target you are striking towards. Don't throw any techniques while looking in a different direction than your technique.

Speed:

The following are the official speeds-

1. Motion Study (*without motion study breathing, just regular breath*)
2. Slow Flow
3. Easy Moderate
4. Moderate Speed (*Tuesday night only*)
5. Rapid Fire (*Tuesday night only*)

Follow the teacher's instructions about speed, or keep to the agreement made with your partner if a slower speed was requested. Any student can ask her partner to work slower than the teacher-designated speed for a round, or to slow down once the round had [sic] started. (More on this kind of check in later.) *Students should not go faster than the teacher-designated speed.*

Contact:

The level of contact in a school can vary. At BWMA we practice *ju kumite*, which is light contact sparring, going to the appropriate target areas mentioned. Light contact is more than just touch contact, but less than the kind of contact that would make you exhale forcibly. Light contact should go past the gi to actually make contact with the body, but be soft enough to not cause pain.

During the advanced class Annie may set up exercises in which students have the opportunity to use moderate contact to the body.

When contact is made to a legal target it is common for the partner that was "hit" to acknowledge that the technique got in by saying, "Osh." *When contact is made to an illegal target (head, neck, back, legs,) both partners must stop, bow, and check-in. Sparring can resume if both partners are OK.*

Before a round starts:

1. Courtesy to your partner.
2. The teacher then gives instruction for the round and / or asks partners to choose speed.
3. **Check-in with your partner** about speed (can be slower than teacher-designated speed, but not faster). If either partner requests a slower speed, the round will proceed at the slower speed. Also communicate to your partner any requirements you have that you think will affect the round. Some things that can be communicated at this time are needing no contact, no contact to a specific area, no sweeps / reaps (more on these later), no grabs, hands only, or legs only.

We encourage you to be as specific as possible about what you need your partner to do or not to do in the match. (For example, letting her know what you need from her in regards to an injury you're sparring with is more important than describing the injury itself. "*Don't grab my right wrist, I have an injury,*" works much better than, "*I have this injury in my wrist that hurts a lot when I bend it, so be careful.*") Do your best to be mindful of your needs when sparring.

You can be in charge of making sparring rounds work for you physically and emotionally. Focus on communicating what you need your partner to do or not do. This can put you in the position of figuring out the difference between not wanting to do something that can be challenging and beneficial, and not doing it because it will hurt you physically or emotionally. (What you're able to do physically or emotionally may also change over time.) This aspect of being your own teacher is an important part of training. If you need any support or guidance around these issues, please speak to a teacher.

4. Pick up a short fighting stance as soon as you're done checking-in.
5. The teacher starts the round.

During a round:

1. Bring your full attention to the round.
2. Keep to the teacher-assigned speed, or the speed agreed upon, keep to appropriate targets and contact level, and respect whatever direction your partner gave you before the round started.
3. Stop if necessary.

Stopping the Round:

- **You must stop a round if -**
 1. any contact is made to the head at any speed (courtesy and acknowledge it, if both partners are OK, continue)
 2. any contact is made to an illegal target (courtesy and acknowledge it - if both partners are OK, continue)
 3. either you or your partner (or both of you) aren't sticking to the agreed upon speed
 4. you feel that you or your partner are out of control in any way
- **How to stop a round -** Say "Stop," or "I need to stop," step back if possible and courtesy to your partner, then check-in. If you're not able to say stop take a big, quick step back with both hands up in front of you, courtesy, then check-in. If a student is unable to check-in with her partner after stopping a round and needs to leave the floor, her partner should let the teacher know.
- **Checking-in once the round is stopped -** Clarify anything you need to for a few moments. Focus on speaking from your own perspective. Remember that you can call a teacher over for assistance. Once you've checked-in you can resume sparring. If either partner feels the situation hasn't changed after checking-in, the round should not continue.
- **If the round is not to continue -** Both partners can solo-spar until the lines rotate and partners change. (If the teacher doesn't rotate the lines once the round is over, make sure she's aware of the situation so she can get both of you new partners.)

Stopping a round can be challenging. Please remember that it's an important way to take care of yourself at BWMA. It shouldn't lead to assumptions about others' capability, life experience, or feelings.

Sweeps and Reaps: These are controlled takedowns that are learned once a student is Tuesday level. They involve using leverage and a sweeping motion with the foot to off-balance a sparring partner. Sweeping and reaping are always done with the offensive partner holding onto the defensive partner. In this way, the defensive partner's fall can be controlled.

Tuesday level students sparring with other Tuesday level students may take their partners all the way to the ground (controlling their fall) if it's clarified and agreed on in the check-in, or indicate (off-balancing using hands to control), but not take their partner all the way down.

Only sweeps and reaps from the outside are legal (that is, no inside-to-outside sweeps that split your partner's legs.) Sweeps should be foot to ankle, not calf or knee height. *Don't ever sweep a partner standing on one leg.*

Grabs: Grabbing a partner's arm or leg is legal when the speed is easy moderate or faster, and the grab leads immediately to an offensive strike. At that point the grabber should let go. Do not grab when the speed is motion study or slow flow. If you grab a partner's leg, do not lift her leg or you may dump her, throwing her off-balance and causing her to fall.

Note: Students should only use sweeps, reaps, and grabs after being officially taught them in class.

Equipment: Our policy is that generally no protective equipment should be worn. This grows out of the Goju style of karate, which emphasizes soft blocking that is impossible to do with most gloves. From time to time we do use sparring gloves for particular exercises. Because of injuries, disabilities, or other special needs some students wear gloves, shin, or foot guards. Talk to an instructor if you want to wear equipment, or have questions about the issue.

Personal Conflicts: We are all individually responsible for negotiating and resolving personal conflicts with the goal of maintaining full training relationships with everyone at the dojo. If a conflict isn't easily resolved, and you feel unable to spar with someone until it is, please speak to the teacher for that class. Adjustments may be made for a limited amount of time.

Taking Care: Some of us come to sparring with histories of abuse, and this can sometimes make sparring an activity that brings back memories and feelings. It is important to listen to our feelings in the moment and respond to them the best we can. What matters most is that we approach sparring mindfully, listening to and communicating our needs, and respecting all our partners.

Lots of different feelings can come up when sparring; excitement, pride, competition, anger, powerlessness, etc. If feelings come up that make it difficult for you to spar you can speak to one of your teachers. (Remember that you always have permission to make mistakes, as well as take risks in the learning process.) The balance between challenging ourselves and taking care is one that we all work to find, and that's part of the martial arts journey we take.

Appendix H

Mural Chronology

1998

- September 3 Two gay men are stabbed in Park Slope
- September 4 A lesbian was stabbed in Park Slope at St. John's Place and Fifth Avenue
- September 23 A community meeting was called to address anti-gay violence in the five boroughs

1999

- September 23 Neighborhood residents began to circulate a petition against the teen women's mural
- September 24 CAE delivered letters and feedback forms to residents of Tenth Street
- October 14 Teen women began their own petition in support of their mural
- October 18 Mural was defaced with black dye on wolf with fangs
- October 21 Community meeting held in VFW Hall on 10th Street
- October 26 300 signatures were received in support of teen women's mural

2000

Over the next few months teen women, CAE representatives, neighborhood residents, Rite-Aid representatives and Councilperson Angel Rodriguez met to negotiate mural controversy.

- March 3 Councilperson Angel Rodriguez released a statement supporting Rite-Aid's decision to whitewash mural
- March 11 Over 40 people participated in a rally/demo to protest Rite-Aid's decision to whitewash the mural
- March 15 Teen women conducted a press conference at the mural site
- March 18 Over 100 people participated in a rally/demo to protest Rite-Aid's decision to whitewash the mural; 864 signatures and 150 letters of support were gathered to support the mural

- March 19 Mural is whitewashed
- April 23 Angel Rodriguez voiced opposition to the Fairway development in The New York Times
- 2001**
- April 1 Councilperson Angel Rodriguez began plan to change opposition to Fairway development in exchange for real estate deal
- 2002**
- January 20-27 Red Hook community advocates attended City Council meeting to protest Fairway development
- January 28 Councilperson Angel Rodriguez and Jonathan Morales signed a deal to buy \$2.5 million of property for \$1 million
- January 29 Councilperson Angel Rodriguez changed his position on the Fairway Development
- March 28 Angel Rodriguez resigned from all City Council committees and was indicted on federal charges
- March 31 Community groups sued to block Fairway development project
- August 28 Councilperson Angel Rodriguez resigned
- August 29 Angel Rodriguez plead guilty to conspiracy to commit extortion
- 2003**
- June 18 Angel Rodriguez was sentenced to four years and four months

Appendix I

Local News Articles about Mural

- Adriano, J. (1999, December 30). Anti-violence mural divides Park Slope. Lesbian and Gay New York, p. 12.
- Barnes, J.E. (1999, October 3). Mural attacks violence, and neighbors attack the mural. The New York Times, Section 14, p. 10.
- Hirsch, M. (1998, November 2). Spreading their message stroke by stroke. Brooklyn Papers.
- Montero, D. (2000, March 15). Forget the Whitney: B'lyn mural pits teens vs. 'yuppies.' New York Post, p.2.
- Mural stands in defiance of violence. (1999, October 4). Park Slope Courier.
- 100 protest plan to cover up a mural deemed too violent. (2000, May 19). The New York Times, Section 1, p. 42.
- Schwartz, M. (1999, October 31). Anti-violence mural has fans in Park Slope [Letter to the editor]. The New York Times, Section 14, p.19.
- Sweeney, M. (1999, October 8). Tenth Street mural irks nabes. Brooklyn Papers.
- Sweeney, M. (1999, December 3). Rite Aid mural fight hits a brick wall. Brooklyn Papers.
- Sweeney, M. (2000, March 27). Mural artists fail to stop paint-over. The Park Slope Paper, 23(13), p.1.

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