

# JIU JITSU AS A LIVED BODY: A TRIADIC COMPOSITION OF EMBODIED PRACTICE

A Thesis submitted by

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## **ABSTRACT**

Jiu jitsu, also known as Brazilian jiu jitsu (BJJ), having evolved from judo, is an embodied practice comprising a diversity of individuals. While self-defence and sport together create a vitality of practice that most participants can enjoy, this research looks beyond this enjoyment to understand how the formation of jiu jitsuans (or practitioners) creates a rich tapestry of aesthetic perspective that helps to unlock the self within a dojo community of practice. The aim of this research is to consider a much broader practice of jiu jitsu and the breadth of space that it occupies in a participant's self-improvement, and, how participants might construe an image of self within a community of practice. While using a multiple methodology, qualitative approach engaging Participatory Action Research, and Grounded Theory, this thesis argues that for jiu jitsu to effect change within the practitioner's life, it cannot be discovered from afar, it must be found within the practice, and not as a practice that merely instrumentalises the body for competing objectives. Thus, jiu jitsu is reconsidered as a lived body, a body consciousness that cannot be fully objectified. Embodiment of jiu jitsu is conceptualised as a compositional work of the participant (subject) at work in the dojo (studio), and this research investigates those experiences and complex stages of transition. Through coding and categorising data sets collected from participants in a small regional dojo in New South Wales, I have re-calibrated the original triadic theory and symbol used by Jigorō Kano and Helio Gracie to produce my model of the *Triadic Composition of Embodied Practice*. This research addresses a gap in the knowledge of martial arts practice, that a unified and cohesive practice of mind, body, and soul is the embodied narrative of the jiu jitsuan. The findings illuminate a paradigmatic shift from a two-dimensional perspective of the body as object and instrument, to reveal that the embodied practice of jiu jitsu is never separate from body consciousness. I anticipate that this work will contribute to the intellectual contribution to the theoretical knowledge of embodied practice and martial arts studies.

## **CERTIFICATION OF THESIS**

I Rod Eadie declare that the Thesis entitled *Jiu jitsu as a Lived Body: A Triadic Composition of Embodied Practice* is not more than 100,000 words in length including quotes and exclusive of tables, figures, appendices, bibliography, references, and footnotes. The thesis contains no material that has been submitted previously, in whole or in part, for the award of any other academic degree or diploma. Except where otherwise indicated, this thesis is my own work.

Date: August 2023
Endorsed by:
Associate Professor Janet McDonald Principal Supervisor
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Student and supervisors' signatures of endorsement are held at the University.

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# **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

ABSTRACT		İ
CERTIFICATIO	N OF THESIS	ii
ACKNOWLEDG	GEMENTS	iii
TABLE OF COM	NTENTS	iv
LIST OF TABLE	ES	vii
LIST OF FIGUR	RES	viii
ABBREVIATION	NS	ix
CHAPTER 1: IN	ITRODUCTION	1
1.1.	Defining the study	1
1.2.	Researcher position: My jiu jitsu journey	4
1.2.1.	My researcher position	7
1.2.2.	My teaching focus in the dojo	8
1.3.	Significance of this research	10
1.4.	Contexts	11
1.5.	Interrogating Kano's principles in daily practice	21
1.6.	Research questions governing this project	27
1.7.	The research site	29
1.8.	Chapter summary	31
1.9.	Conclusion	32
CHAPTER 2: LI	TERATURE REVIEW	34
2.1.	Introduction	34
2.2.	Embodiment	35
2.3.	Brazilian jiu jitsu and the influence of Jigorō Kano's philosophy	37
2.4.	Temporality and jiu jitsu	42
2.5.	A brief scientific exploration of jiu jitsu on the lived body	45
2.6.	Embodied knowledge through drills and sparring	47
2.7.	Appraisal and self-construction through jiu jitsu practice	50
2.7.1.	The body in practice as conscious presence	52
2.7.2.	Implicit meaning through practice	56
CHAPTER 3: R	ESEARCH METHODOLOGY	58
3.1.	Introduction	58

	3.2.	Research questions	. 58
	3.3.	Ethical clearance for embodied practice and Brazilian jiu jitsu	. 59
	3.4.	The project	. 59
	3.5.	An overarching phenomenological interpretive approach	. 61
	3.6.	Multiple methodology approach	. 63
	3.6.1.	Participatory Action Research (PAR)	. 63
	3.6.2.	Participant sample	. 65
	3.6.3.	Pedagogic position	. 66
	3.7.	Grounded Theory (GT)	. 67
	3.8.	Phases and methods of data collection	. 71
	3.8.1.	Student-centred: participant practice contexts	. 76
	3.8.2.	Participant observation	. 78
	3.8.3.	Reflective essays	. 78
	3.8.4.	Audio/visual recordings of practice with participant reflections	. 78
	3.8.5.	Participant and researcher interviews	. 79
	3.8.6.	Curated archive of practice	. 80
	3.8.7.	Questionnaires	. 80
СН	APTER 4: P	RACTICE OUTCOMES	. 81
	4.1.	Introduction	. 81
	4.2.	Embodied practice and somatic transformations	. 81
	4.2.1.	Being sensorily present with others in situ (or, in the dojo	
		studio)	. 81
	4.2.2.	Feeling change and shaping experience	. 86
	4.2.3.	Moving consciously with others	. 88
	4.2.4.	Imagination in practice	. 92
	4.2.5.	Self-growth in the jiu jitsuan	. 94
	4.3.	Stages of transition	. 97
	4.3.1.	Temporality and transition	. 97
	4.3.2.	Transitioning through liminality	. 98
	4.3.3.	Separation, formation, and reaggregation	. 99
	4.4.	The attributes of a routine practitioner	116
	4.4.1.	The routine performance of jiu jitsu as a source of meaning	122
	4.4.2.	Post-liminal recognition of self-improvement	125
	4.4.3.	My transforming practice	128

4.5.	The triadic composition of BJJ practice	130
CHAPTER 5: F	RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS	135
5.1.	Introduction	135
5.2.	Recommendations – Significance of the research	139
REFERENCES	S	142

# **LIST OF TABLES**

<b>Table 1</b> Age range of participants, accumulated hours, class attendance rating	65
Table 2 Subjects (participants), age, belt ranks, and years training. Ranking colo	urs
from lowest to highest are white, blue, purple, brown, and black	66
Table 3 Phases of data collection	74
Table 4 The three stages of transition	. 100
Table 5 Attributes considered important in a routine practice	. 117
Table 6 Perceptions of routine practice	. 124
Table 7 Improvements in wellbeing since beginning jiu jitsu	. 125

# **LIST OF FIGURES**

Figure 1 Gracie triangle	13
Figure 2 Carlos and Helio Gracie	13
Figure 3 Gracie's tetrahedron of practice	14
Figure 4 UFC-1-Royce-Gracie-vs-Ken-Shamrock 1993	23
Figure 5 <i>Kano 1885</i>	24
Figure 6 <i>L and H in dogi</i>	28
Figure 7 Jigorō Kano (1860-1938) demonstrating controlled kata	39
Figure 8 Helio Gracie vs Kato (1951) demonstrating the nature of randori	39
Figure 9 Eadie's conception of jiu jitsu formation	91
Figure 10 Referee non-verbal command to enter the arena	120
Figure 11 Referee verbal command combate – commence fight	121
Figure 12 Referee verbal command parou – end of fight	121
Figure 13 The triadic composition of jiu jitsu practice	133

## **ABBREVIATIONS**

ADHD Attention deficit hyperactive disorder

AR Action research

BJJ Brazilian jiu jitsu/Jiu jitsu

GMP Generalised motor programs

GT Grounded Theory

IPA Interpretive phenomenological analysis

MLB Major League Baseball

MMA Mixed Martial Arts

NBA National Basketball Association

NHL National Hockey League

NSP Nobbs Suzuki Praxis

PAR Participatory Action Research

UFC Ultimate Fighting Championship

US United States

USD United States dollars

#### **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

#### 1.1. Defining the study

The sport of Brazilian jiu jitsu, also known as "jiu jitsu" or simply "BJJ", has gained momentum in the wake of the launch of Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC), which premiered in the United States in 1993 (Blomqvist Mickelsson, 2021, p. 1545). Brazilian Jiu Jitsu, along with Muay Thai, judo, and wrestling are the staples of Mixed Martial Arts (MMA), all of which have enjoyed increasing popularity with practitioners and spectators (James, 2016, p. 1525). In 2006, UFC television grossed USD 200 million in the United States of America (US), beating pay-perviews for National Basketball Association (NBA), National Hockey League (NHL), and Major League Baseball (MLB) games (Kim et al, 2009, p. 5). In a US BJJ market research report, it was estimated that of 50,000 martial arts schools in North America, approximately 10,000 were BJJ schools (IBIS, 2021). BJJ clubs in the United Kingdom totalled 12 in 2009 and grew to just over 320 by 2020 (Blomqvist Mickelsson, 2021, p. 1545). In 2015 Australia contributed 3.1% of the Western demographics that participate in BJJ practice, with the US totalling 54.6% (BJJ Industry Report, 2015).

This increased popularity of martial arts has piqued the interest of scholars with contributions to martial arts studies through the fields of anthropology, sociology, psychology, and philosophy (Bowman, 2018, p. 2). Recent research into the health benefits associated with martial arts now confirm what historically had been intuited over millennia. A study conducted by Carol Fuller and Viki Lloyd (2020) reveals adult practitioner viewpoints (through large-scale surveys and interviews) identified numerous benefits of increased physical and mental health through martial arts training (p. 36). While this objectively identifies martial arts quite broadly as positively contributing to a healthy lifestyle, Pedrini and Jennings (2021) argue that such research "remains exploratory in nature and tends to avoid any detailed theorising around the questions of pedagogy, embodiment, and transformation" (p. 2). This statement intrigued me and percolated within my community of practice. I have no objections to BJJ as a sport being in the spotlight; I am aware that practitioners enjoy the competitive nature of BJJ and reap the benefits from its physicality. There is a profound sense of achievement that comes with the accolades

of competition and skill development, but the subjectivity of embodied knowledge is what interests me most. I do not see that these aspects of jiu jitsu are necessarily opposing forces, but an overemphasis on athleticism and competition may simplify the experience of jiu jitsu and eclipse the under-explored attributes of embodied knowledge in martial arts. In my experience, the procurement of knowledge for the sake of skill development is crucial to both success and failure when competitively practicing BJJ. However, if the focus is only on attributes and achievements, then this is a focus on the self as the subject, known and instrumentalised. This is necessary and plays a psychological role in motivation, cognition, and social identity (James, 1891, p. 659). But with such an emphasis on "me", the self, in the performance of output, could neglect the embodied knowledge that derives from the self as "I", the subjective knower, leaving me out of touch with the reliability of connecting with my feelings and experiences that lead to a greater knowledge of who I am (Archer, 2013, p. 2).

In other words, I may practice BJJ thinking about it as something outside of me, as if I am looking at it through a window and then seeking to apply it to myself. I may think of jiu jitsu as a good set of skills that I acquire and capitalise on, to exploit my success and gain financial reward. In this context, jiu jitsu might run the risk of being a utility that fills a void or viewed as a meditative experience to calm my mind after a long day at work. These are valid reasons why people choose to be jiu jitsu practitioners, but there is more to understand about jiu jitsu than conceptualising the practice as a mere bodily instrument used purely for somatic conditioning (Fraleigh, 2015, p. xx). However, such attitudes may also dismiss the somatic transformation, denying practitioners the gratification of sensing the self, overlooking the now for the not yet. A practitioner may also fail to see that the art of jiu jitsu could call upon somatic uses of touch as being a "kinetic communication" between bodies, that it cultivates bodily awareness to be used as somatic therapy or education (Fraleigh, 2015, p. x). Aside from doing well at jiu jitsu, I am suggesting that jiu jitsu, while skilfully impressive, possesses "artfulness" in another way. I would agree with Sondra Fraleigh's (2015) statement that, "artful actions are carefully cultivated, not for show, but for the benefit of individuals and communities" (p. x). I interpret this as a way for me to interrogate the value of 'art' in connection with the agent's expression of a martial practice.

The expression of the martial artist in this research is in regard to embodied jiu jitsu. To embody the art is a way to live a story, build community, and explore the material conditions of one's existence as a practitioner. The story of jiu jitsu differs from person to person when it comes to individual desires, aims, and outcomes, especially given that jiu jitsu can only exist as one body interacts with another body in a community of practitioners. This project, therefore, seeks to embrace the stories of others, to celebrate the difference of each person and uncover a rich tapestry of meaning revealed through practice. The diversity of storytelling through embodied practice is paramount to the emerging history of the art of jiu jitsu, the knowledge base requires broadening through diverse stories from the dojo (studio), and not just from the viewpoints of its elite athletes. The lived experience of practitioners in the ordinariness of life and routine practice encourages further consideration of what knowledge can be gleaned from this practice, in a non-competitive context. The qualitative and empirical emphasis of this research focuses on stories told through a community of practitioners who live and practice jiu jitsu in a small rural town, Scone, just northwest of Newcastle in New South Wales, Australia. Without the cultural extensions embedded in city living, BJJ practitioners may have limited resources, are subject to travelling long distances for competitions, have less exposure to the broader BJJ community, and are often pulled away from jiu jitsu due to work, travel, and family responsibilities. This makes for a unique study of the stories told by these practitioners, how they embody the practice of jiu jitsu, why routine practice is so important to them, the value and meaning of jiu jitsu in their "ordinary" lives where most will not pursue elite competitive status.

This chapter provides a comprehensive background to this project that leans into the artistry of martial arts, and my own personal practice. At times, I invoke the key theorists and practitioners that have been used to construct my theoretical framework, which appears more formally in the Literature Review. This research is very much a symbiotic conflation between theory and practice, and so my Introduction leads the reader in this manner to consider the triangular union of practitioners as having been far more elucidated than what judo's founder Jigorō Kano (1860-1938) and Brazilian jiu jitsu pioneer Helio Gracie may (1913-2009) have initially intuited. This chapter provides the context necessary to understand that practitioners of jiu jitsu go through a process of becoming a jiu jitsuan (practitioner);

they are not merely products of jiu jitsu or another's objective, nor are they a mere means to an end.

#### 1.2. Researcher position: My jiu jitsu journey

Other than competing or developing skills for self-defence, I acknowledge that I have taken the view that martial arts are a way for me to construct my identity to realise my own personal growth. In 2001, I embarked on a policing career and discovered that my commitment to martial arts materialised into professional practice. I was fortunate to depend upon those skills when performing arrests or being engaged in violent and hostile situations. Once I exited the New South Wales Police Force, even though I had a high rate of self-efficacy in self-defence, I no longer drew upon the lawful execution of jiu jitsu techniques in the capacity of policing. I had to reimagine myself as a martial artist with new purpose and meaning. I returned to my practice of jiu jitsu to reform my identity and discover who I was as a martial "artist". Competition filled the void temporarily, but injuries and illness have waged war on my body and ego. More recently, I sustained an injury through medical negligence which has resulted in chronic kidney disease. The result of this disease affects levels of stress and fatigue, not to mention exacerbating the effects of arthritis on my body. As I see it, my greatest adversary is not another person, it is a battle of survival, a duel against time as I strategically aim to minimise further decline in my health. Even though I am forced to reckon with my physical condition, I have a contentment in jiu jitsu practice of a different kind. Approximately four years ago I began to observe how jiu jitsu became animated through bodies, how practice emerged through a community, and how many practitioners simply enjoyed the experience of jiu jitsu which stimulated my research ideas. I was intrigued by the ordinariness of practice, how in the absence of competition, without notable veneration, practitioners loved jiu jitsu for its own sake. Many of my students explained to me how they enjoy jiu jitsu for the regular exercise, that it is an enjoyable experience to share with others, that they find jiu jitsu challenging and mentally stimulating and yet they perceive their practice through a different lens to me. But all too often these reasons can be overlooked, generalised, and become mired down in the quotidian normality of life.

In my own experience, there appears to be much more to jiu jitsu practice, and there is great value in the routinised practice of jiu jitsu; that there exists "gold

nuggets" and "pearls of wisdom" that become revealed through the embodied routine practice. I believe, therefore, that jiu jitsuans should seek comfort in the prospect of reformation and self-improvement. To that, the improved self is a personal pursuit to become a better version of oneself, to create, recreate, or improve upon one's image and identity as determined and actualised (Jain & Apple, 2015, p. 41). This denotes a process of maturation, a transformation and evolution of human agency, or it may be a self-reformation and continual reshaping of a better form (Wendling & Sagas, 2021, p. 3). Carl Rogers (1961) puts forward a provoking truth claim on such matters, arguing that a process of self-improvement demands a deep examination of one's experience which causes an individual to face up to "deep contradictions", thus discovering behaviours and feelings that often hide behind a façade (p. 105). In all honesty, without my practice of jiu jitsu, I may have avoided facing my own contradictions. Engaging in the practice of BJJ has led me on a journey of selfdiscovery; the BJJ lifestyle loosened the thread of my ego and pulled me apart at the seams. It has been on the mats, in the dojo (studio), and in the company of others that my genuine weaknesses and inadequacies were exposed.

My first experience with the Brazilian influence of jiu jitsu was playful, a little less regimented than its Japanese counterpart, and it did not strike me as possessing any of the mystery that accompanied my previous twenty years of practice in karate. BJJ appeared too straightforward, too simple, and too obvious, but after experiencing every impulse and point of pressure in the movements, I began to realise that the artfulness of BJJ was complex and akin to a voluminous library of scientific research. My inculturation into BJJ was a slight adjustment but stepping into the dojo was still a comfortable experience. I appreciated that the traditional practice of jiu jitsu in Brazil still valued its Japanese lineage and openly celebrated the familial ties to judo's founder Jigorō Kano. Nonetheless, with seeking acceptance into any new community of practice I underwent a transitional process on the road to self-discovery. Once again, I had to begin as a neophyte and reconcile my weaknesses by accepting that the BJJ path to self-definition and formation would be demanding and difficult. In saying this, BJJ is not entirely enervating and offers significant satisfaction; a deep sense of achievement and personal happiness can come from the podium or having developed skills and elevation of rank. But this is secondary to my discovering that my self-construal and contentment is a complex matter that considers far more than the accolades of competitive BJJ. I perceive jiu

jitsu not just as self-defence or an extension of what I do; it is an expression of who I am. I have learned that I somatically understand what it means to embody my jiu jitsu, that the art animates my thoughts, and it reveals otherwise hidden truths about my body-ownership, self-location, and agency. The effort of jiu jitsu, at its most basic and simple, is lived through my body, otherwise referred to as embodied practice, which has reacquainted me with sense-awareness, breath, movement, and sound. I therefore understand jiu jitsu to be every bit art as it is martial, and my informed hunch is that my students also experience BJJ as an embodied artistic expression with similar intuitions.

Fortunately, the actions that I chose to engage in were artistic expressions that corresponded with human combat. These practices, although not yet clearly understood to be creative arts practice, will present throughout this research as the expression of artists at work, bringing the whole person into bodily experiences to process and understand the emotions of the self and of others. As John Dewey (1980) said, "in order to understand the meaning of artistic products, we have to forget them for a time, to turn aside from them and have recourse to the ordinary forces and conditions of experience that we do not usually regard as esthetic" (p. 2). I believe that my associations with combat have led to a deeper appreciation for creativity which bears similarity to the artist or artisan; they are demonstrative skills, but not merely passing through the body as a movement or the production of a completed artefact. Instead, martial arts are a moment-to-moment phenomenon, feelings that are intensely and organically connected to my body and thoughts as my personal expression (Dewey, 1980, p. 86). Martial arts materialise and construct the self in collaboration with others. Martial arts also enact feelings and emotions, they are not bound by the strictures of a formulaic process in actu primo and in actu secundo.1 But if one is to arouse interest in and learn something of art experienced and embodied, one must engage with it in the rawest sense as he/she looks, listens, and feels (Dewey, 1980, p. 3). Renowned dance scholar, Sondra Fraleigh (1996) would agree that knowledge does not emerge from movement in merely lineal form (as instrumentalised), there is a profound sensory perception felt in response to the environment which helps me to see who I am through my own actions (p. 27).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1.</sup> The former is the faculty of the mind while the latter is the exercise or function.

#### 1.2.1. My researcher position

This examination of jiu jitsu, is often informed by the lenses of Jigorō Kano and Sondra Fraleigh. I implicate Helio Gracie into my review of Kano's literature by default, as an evolved extension of Kano's work. But the bulk of Gracie's intellectualising of the art has not come to fruition through the production of scholarly work. The Gracie contribution is generally performed and practiced and evidenced through dutiful effort and succession. I have already attributed the symbolism of this triadic composition to the work of Kano and Gracie, but as I move forward, due to Kano being the founding father of jiu jitsu, he takes up a greater position in the research along with his numerous scholarly contributions.

In this research project, as well as being researcher, I also assume the role of practitioner-teacher, drawing upon 37 years of personal martial arts experience, and 33 years of teaching in my own dojo. As I reflect on my experiences in the dojo, I can attest to the routine practice of martial arts as having improved my self-care, managed my strengths, curbed my anger, and confronted my weaknesses. But more importantly, I have enjoyed discovering a teleology of martial arts in the community of practice in the dojo. With confidence, I can declare that daily practice of BJJ has contributed to my personal growth and self-efficacy, not only in martial arts, but in other areas of my life such as with my spouse, being a father, work, and social events. I believe that ordinary BJJ practice has helped form my identity in the mundanity of life which I believe may also be replicated in my students (who have been key participants providing insights throughout this project). This research reveals an investigation into those experiences, transitions, and phases of BJJ practice, especially in relation to personal growth, group culture, and self-efficacy of practice for myself and my students. In addition, while post-play identity was briefly mentioned, I acknowledge that there are many personalities drawn to the practice of BJJ. With that, my approach to this research was to be inclusive of all personality types and what they seek to discover about themselves in routine practice. By doing this I believe that yielded knowledge points in routine jiu jitsu practice in terms of how participants recognise a more improved self and especially as they reflect upon being in the moment of routine practice.

I have not limited this research to those only interested in routine practice, and Chapter 4 discusses the views and opinions of the participants who are passionate about competition and self-defence, how they too, as Fraleigh (1996) most eloquently states, "project their body-of-action and affirm their bodily mystery" (p. 8). This research contributes to the expansion of knowledge and intellectualising of self-improvement through BJJ practice. The findings and conclusions provide recognition and legitimacy for the purpose of routine training and add meaning within the immediacy of practice. This allows for increased understanding of BJJ as an important routine practice that enhances human agency.

#### 1.2.2. My teaching focus in the dojo

For over 37 years, I have participated in various martial art disciplines and environments, during which, dojo practice is usually a teacher-centred focus on a curriculum devised from declarative knowledge. Typically speaking, students are required to repeat content from a curriculum and, on the interim, between graduating ranks, students rely upon their professor/instructor for periodical progress reports to gauge their level of proficiency in practice. Educational scholars John Biggs and Catherine Tang (1999) have exposed a weakness with this pedagogical approach. Their research on quality learning identified that a move to constructive alignment appears to better bridge the gap between "a static body of declarative knowledge and personal action" (p. 97). How this works is taken from the constructivist theory that learners take from their own activity to construct knowledge and then interpret it through a schema (p. 97). In most traditional hierarchical structures of formalised martial arts practice, there are few occasions that grant students the freedom to explore innovative ideas, improvise, and question their learning and contributions to improved martial arts pedagogy. From my experience, students usually receive knowledge and then must work it out as they go, often over time or post-graduation, thus limiting the free exchange of information that could lead to the emergence of new knowledge. On the other hand, Biggs, and Tang emphasise that constructive alignment offers a more student-centred learning environment that expands the knowledge base in the immediacy of experimentation.

Quickening one's attention to learning outcomes and assessment describes the process of alignment, but when Biggs and Tang (1999) suggest that this bridges the gap in knowledge, they are homing in on the importance of discovering a functional knowledge through practice (p. 97). I would claim that the historical paradigm of knowledge transmittal which has been mostly associated with education

has shown to be rather lineal. Biggs and Tang inspired me to conceptualise a more dynamic approach to the exchange of information through sense datum. From my perspective as a martial arts teacher, I began to see that a constructed alignment invited me back into the space of student learning and research within the dojo. I then designed the research project to capitalise on the sensorial experiences of practitioners and glean knowledge points from practice. I drew inspiration from Sondra Fraleigh's descriptive phenomenological approach to dance and the Nobbs Suzuki Praxis (NSP) approach to actor training.

Borrowing from Jean-Paul Sartre, Fraleigh (1996) discovered within dance, a way to understand the process of clearing away assumptions so that which becomes familiar should yield another level of knowledge (p, xvii). For instance, to appreciate how Fraleigh interprets Sartre's statement, and principally within the context of a martial arts dojo (studio), practitioners require a dedicated amount of time to drill, to experiment, fail, ask questions, and engage the imagination. Herein lies an indelible comparison between dance and martial arts where practitioners use a mental collation of experience to perceive how they respond to complex situations and the stimulus of training. As Fraleigh (1996) states, "[M]y dance cannot exist without me: I exist my dance" (p. xvi), which reiterates the aims of this research in discovering jiu jitsu as subjectively embodied rather than objectively applied. I argue that to accept my body as distinct from another is to appreciate how I animate martial arts and signify my experience. My jiu jitsu cannot exist without me: I am jiu jitsu embodied, but if I am to learn from embodied "doing" and wish to understand how this ritual practice benefits me, I must also become aware of any learning interferences, or I will otherwise perilously deny myself the experience of the body discovered. I reflect on this thought to challenge my own role within the dojo, hence the use of Participatory Action Research in Chapter 3. While the teacher-centred approach is necessary for leadership and direction, I have experienced how engaging in the body-of-action exchange with my students reveals knowledge. For example, when a student performs a movement with correct pressure and deconstructs the stratagem of my performance, I must concede and acknowledge the excellence of expression. That student will have outwitted me, outplayed me, challenged my perceptions and interpretation of somatic gesture. Sense datum has placed itself in the midst of exchange where the teacher becomes the student. If a moment such as this is

frequently embraced by beminded bodies, each participant enters a reflexive state to interpret the happening which renders a knowledge point.

The benefits of student-centred learning are more apparent given that I draw a comparison with teacher-centred methods. But the reliance upon authoritative teaching methods still has a place in the dojo. For example, the disciplined nature of martial arts and the need for strict adherence to safety, self-defence, and curricular transmittance appears the reason for this approach. Tradition and culture play into this formation of student progress more than expected, which means that recording a student and having them examine how they embody theoretical content in Participatory Action Research is not a typical practice for martial arts instruction. Neither is it for students to examine the agential nature of practice, engaging with actants, and the ways that objects or other bodies are used to express their human agency. In the emerging scholarly field of martial arts practice, there is also the lack of conversation about the community of practice in the dojo and how practitioners navigate and articulate their learning and individual development in relation to others and the perceived benefits of routine practice. This is the point of this research, to illumine and better understand this paradigmatic shift in the pedagogy of jiu jitsu.

#### 1.3. Significance of this research

There is difficulty with using words to describe an intimate engagement with a practice such as martial arts; Karl Jaspers (1971) says, "[T]o catch sight of reality at its origin and to grasp it through the way in which I, in thought, deal with myself – in inner action," illustrates that my body communicates my engagement with phenomena, but not that I am disconnected from it, my somatic existence engaged in BJJ is a body phenomenon (p. 3). Jaspers describes what I have set out to achieve through this research, while keeping in mind that there are semiotic problems when attempting to signify "inner action" experiences. At best, discourse can only attempt to describe such an individual experience by drawing comparisons to the likeness of other things (Bowman, 2018, p. 18).

While the aims and outcomes of this research may not resolve the problem of comprehending the flesh through the knowledge of a text (Bowman, 2018, p. 18), this research contributes to the practical fields of embodied knowledge by attempting to express "the comprehension of the flesh" through reflection, conversation, and practice (Bowman, 2018, p. 19). This is because embodiment, as a practice, holds

that an agent's consciousness, rather than being the product of innate conceptual representations of the empirical world, is influenced by the agent's corporeality (Ellingson, 2017, p. 16). Thus, I side with Evan Thompson (2007) who wrote, "[E]xperience is not an epiphenomenal side issue, but central to any understanding of the mind, and needs to be investigated in a careful phenomenological manner" (p. 13). Hence, my research into the practice of jiu jitsu is to understand it as the somatic life of the body in the intransitive sense of improving, maturing, transforming, and as a consciousness of existence (Kiverstein, 2011, p. 741). This is a matter of discovering that one does not merely do jiu jitsu but is jiu jitsu. Thinking of jiu jitsu as something that I do or that I go to can also run the risk of objectifying jiu jitsu as something "other" and separate from my being. This is not my experience in jiu jitsu, in fact, through my ailments I have had to pry open my identity and rediscover who I am as a jiu jitsuan. By doing this I have also discovered what I call the isness of jiu jitsu being practiced, the essence of the phenomenon as I am a body working with other bodies. While I highlight the importance of my experiences that have led to this research, there are material constraints that impose themselves on my research such as living in a rural community and having limitations on the number of participants practising with me in my dojo studio. While I address these issues throughout the methodology, my focused aim is that this research offers valuable insights into the embodied practice of jiu jitsu and may stimulate further research and analysis.

#### 1.4. Contexts

#### i. The triangular shape as a central source of meaning in jiu jitsu

My earliest reflections of martial arts go back to 1984, when there was still an air of mystery that shrouded the practice of karate and similar styles through cinema and literature. I had no knowledge of any symbolism that was being used to describe the unity of one's mind, body, and soul in martial arts (karate and wrestling) practice, yet I was attracted to martial arts because it allowed me to explore my youthful preoccupation with the furtherance of moral character and human achievement. In many ways, practicing martial arts echoed my desire to discover purpose in what I do so that I can understand more about who I am. The mystique of martial arts as a way of self-improvement led me to a period of isolation; I became comfortable

practicing karate unaccompanied. I was capable of practicing *kata* (forms) alone, by a river, or at the beach, and I had a sense of contentment, free from judgement, with no external pressures. Quite simply, I became comfortable avoiding being challenged by others. I rested on my laurels and found solace in setting my own standards of effort. Fortunately, I had enough resolve to break the psychological comfort zone and seek the practice of jiu jitsu. That decision has affected my life favourably in many ways.

As mentioned earlier, my initial impression of jiu jitsu in the late 1990's was that it was straightforward. As an art, there was no façade, no corner of the mat to hide, no way of disguising the inability to resolve problems. Jiu jitsu exposed my inadequacies and if I could not see them, others would show me. After some time on the mats, I began to understand the words of the late Grandmaster Carlos Gracie Snr (brother of Helio) who said, "[T]here is no losing in jiu jitsu, you either win or you learn" (Medeiros, 2021). This opened a new world to me, new beginnings, and new ways of seeing things. There was a realisation that jiu jitsu associates itself with the notion of resolve, to demonstrate how efficiently, reliably, and realistically the human being can overcome problems. For this reason, jiu jitsu is symbolically represented by the triangle and I began to understand its relevance and how that it connected me to my practice. The use of the triangle in jiu jitsu became popular through the influence of the renowned Gracie family, in their rise to popularity, especially through the Ultimate Fighting Championships (UFC) in 1993. The philosophy of the triangle relates to the unity of mind, body, and soul. Essentially, as taught by Grandmaster Helio Gracie, the triangle represents a solid base upon which the vertexes denoted by mind, body, and soul are brought into unity to strengthen one's resolve (Canaria, 2014), see Figures 1 and 3 below. The triangle that Master Rickson Gracie (son of Helio) would have practitioners imagine is a tetrahedron with a solid base where each side consists of three vertices with a constancy no matter how it is situated (Canaria, 2014). See Figure 3 below.

Figure 1
Gracie triangle



Figure 1, through the use of two combatants, demonstrates how important the triangle is to the cohesion of mind, body, and spirit but that proper stability of structure and technique can depend upon a strong base.

Source: https://www.elitesports.com/blogs/news/why-is-the-triangle-used-as-a-symbol-logo-in-bjj

Figure 2
Carlos and Helio Gracie

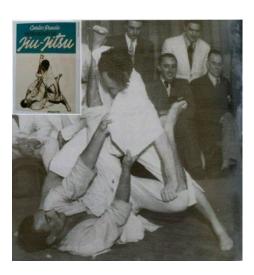


Figure 2, illustrates the marketing of the triangle as synonymous with jiu jitsu technique. Case in point, the two figures (Carlos and Helio Gracie) are bodies forming a triangle but also working inside the triangle.

Source: <a href="https://www.bjjee.com/articles/the-origin-of-the-triangle-as-a-symbol-of-jiu-jitsu/">https://www.bjjee.com/articles/the-origin-of-the-triangle-as-a-symbol-of-jiu-jitsu/</a>

Figure 3
Gracie's tetrahedron of practice

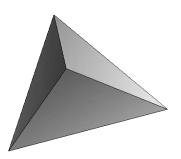


Figure 3, illustrates the tetrahedron which the Gracie family believes more accurately describes the stability of mind, body, and soul that is unified by principles of efficiency in technique to form a solid base.

Source: https://www.quora.com/What-is-a-Tetrahedron

The triangle forms the cornerstone of Brazilian jiu jitsu practice as it encapsulates the essence of jiu jitsu philosophy as well as the techniques practitioners experience in/on their lived body. Without the triangle, jiu jitsu practitioners have no base, as the triangle provides a visual way to order the chaos of human combat and situates the union of mind, body, and soul within the space of confrontation. In an article written for *Brazilian Jiu jitsu Eastern Europe*, Master Rickson Gracie says:

If you imagine a perfect triangle in three dimensions – in pyramid form – you can see how you can push it to either side, and it will always be stable. It regains its solid position every time. The application of this concept works that way. When you are mounted on your opponent and have three points of contact, he can move you around and you will easily find your third point again. No matter how or where he moves you, you will be able to find his third point of support (Fugazza, 2020).

Gracie presents the triadic symbol as algorithmic; it is computational theory animated through the body with other bodies. Nevertheless, while this symbol expresses the unification of mind, body, and soul in the technical proficiency and efficiency of jiu jitsu, one must not dismiss the fact that the symbol is three dimensional. I refer to this as the "triadic union" throughout this thesis. As I have discovered, there is more going on inside this space than simple technical

applications. During practice, I am physically compelled to engage with the contents of my personal triadic union, for there is more to be discovered in sustaining this unification. There are many facets to such cohesion that are to be discovered within the life of the practitioner that creates a process of self-construal (Cross et al, 2011, p. 142).

The notion of self-construal is here concerned with a process of self-construction or reconstruction. I have nominated these terms as necessary to the process of formation of a jiu jitsuan which is comparable to the notions of formation and reformation of practitioners. While practicing jiu jitsu and having studied the history of Gracie jiu jitsu I began to see that Grandmaster Helio Gracie lived a philosophy of jiu jitsu that he believed came from the essence of the triangle (Elite, 2022), what he posited as the soul of the jiu jitsuan striving for efficiency, patience, and control (Elite, 2022). This takes jiu jitsu a little deeper into the behaviour and lifestyle of the jiu jitsuan which Kano intuited would exceed the walls of the dojo. In other words, aside from exhausting a practitioner's opponent with efficiency of technique, one is encouraged to live well, be honest and hardworking.

According to Gracie, a jiu jitsuan ought to be patient, remaining calm, and precise in the giving of effort which are all necessary for the ordinariness of daily routine. To further complement these, the jiu jitsuan is encouraged to have control over movement and decipher how to execute techniques which is also necessary in our daily lives for controlling emotions and taking control of self-growth (Elite, 2022). The mind of the jiu jitsuan ought to be sharp and focused which is represented by one face of the triangle, while the body another side and the soul on another (Elite, 2022). In this sense, the soul or spirit of the jiu jitsuan is the bridge between mind and body that enables practitioners to discover who they are as jiu jitsuans and human beings (Elite, 2022). But Grandmasters Jigorō Kano and Helio Gracie did not expand on their ideas to investigate how the triangle takes effect as integrated into the enfleshed subject (Ellingson, 2017, p. 16), how jiu jitsu is experienced and made manifest by and through the practitioner, and how the practitioner then projects themselves into and onto the world. This caused me to analyse my own experience, conceptualising jiu jitsu as that which *I am* or how I express myself through practice, thus leading me to see a gap in the literature and a paradigmatic shift in the symbolism of jiu jitsu practice. I have observed how my experiences in the dojo have brought me to the next phase of my jiu jitsu journey. I now look within my practice in

the daily happenings of the dojo to learn how and in what way/s routine practice leads to this subjective triadic cohesion rather than objectifying my body as an instrument. This idea encapsulates and extends Merleau-Ponty's (2012) concept that:

The fusion of soul and body in the act, the sublimation of biological existence in personal existence and of the natural world in the cultural world, is simultaneously rendered possible and precarious by the temporal structure of our experience (p. 87).

This quote raises the question of how practitioners might gain a sense of agency when embodying the practice of jiu jitsu. Given that much of what is intellectualised about jiu jitsu has to do with the mind and body strategising the efficient and effective applications of jiu jitsu upon opponents in the dojo or in combat (King, 1997, p. 397) which effectively objectifies the practice as an attribute of the self (Fraleigh, 1996, p. 15). But there is a lack of scholarly discussion on how the strategies of combat elucidate self-growth inside of body-ownership, that seeks to discover the body subject as the source of meaning that embodies the triadic union. There is sufficient evidence and literature on the person as an instrument of jiu jitsu (Kimura et al, 2014, pp. 11-12), but little regarding the manner lived in which one is jiu jitsu experienced in presence. The main point that I make in this thesis is that the fullness of a person as a *minded body*, not merely a mind that commissions something that we call a body, is important to the expression of jiu jitsu when it is practiced (Fraleigh, 1996, p. 9), because, I believe, this is what individualises agency and self-location in the community of practice.

Winning competitions, successfully staving off an attacker, or being awarded a rank are clear signifiers of athletic identity and skill acquisition. But I am interested in exploring how my students experience jiu jitsu, embodied through routine practice, and how this affects their identity and present-choice-based senses. The project, undertaken in the studio/dojo with participants, provides insights into their lived experience which I believe will deepen their understanding of the principles of a triadic union in jiu jitsu, especially given that this research may then be more universally applied to the practitioner's life that Grandmasters Kano and Gracie had intuited.

Due to the semantic complexity in describing this subjectivity and how the embodied practice of jiu jitsu contributes to individual formation and self-construal of practitioners, I devised a list of keywords to better understand the eidetic reduction and existential descriptions within the findings. To perceive how the embodied practice of jiu jitsu is felt, understood, applied, and reported on, I encompass, embodiment, self-growth, self-improvement, self-construction, self-realisation, formation, and self-reformation in the descriptive process to assist in articulating practitioner reflections. These terms are also synonymous with the concept of wellbeing as it relates to agency, however, wellbeing is a complex concept with broad application across numerous disciplines well beyond the scope of this research. Thus, I use restraint in reference to wellbeing and only use the above terms as a provision for participants to better articulate how they perceive the benefits of the embodied routine practice of jiu jitsu. References to wellbeing in this study do not relate to claims of causality regarding health and wellbeing. The study of wellbeing involves a deep dive into the socio-psychological and biological factors that impact health and wellbeing. Each of these topics are an exhaustive study and are outside of the scope of this research. This study, however, does attempt to understand how practitioners observe the reward of engaging in BJJ practice and why they consider that to be valuable to their personal development.

#### ii. The lived-in body in practice

Throughout this thesis, I will refer to psychological theory and embodied cognition to give an overview of what current literature has to say about embodiment, but this research is focused on the implicit pedagogical aspects of the lived-body in jiu jitsu. A further benefit of this research is that it may reveal a greater sense of agency and the perceived value of engaging jiu jitsu as routine practice. Traditional cognitivist psychosociological research has focused on post-play identity and self-definition for athletes, which has resulted in the feelings of pleasure coupled with sense-making reasoning that comes from a creative routine practice and which has received scant attention (Kerr and Dacyshyn, 2000, p. 119). I intend for this research to make those sensorial/somatic experiences more explicit even though most computational theorists focus on the emotions as effective evaluative judgements (Morag, 2016, p. 33). In saying this, Hutto et al. (2019) argue:

The standard verdict is that cognitivist accounts leave out something essential. They need to supply an extra ingredient; they need to try – as directors like to say – "once more, with feeling." But such accounts lack the resources to account for phenomenology of emotional responsiveness – the embodied experiences of anger, frustration, or happiness – as anything other than mere accidental afterthoughts or add -ons to cognition (p. 29).

There is limited research examining the effects of feelings as "contentful attitudes that are assumed to constitute emotions" (Hutto et al., 2019, p. 28) especially when transitioning from elite sport to reformation of identity post-play (Wending & Sagas, 2021, p. 2). I am not aware of any research that yet studies how practitioners of jiu jitsu perceive feelings of a situated embodied practice which integrates emotional attunement with technical skill. If emotions matter to practitioners when they train (Hutto et al., 2019, p. 29), then a broader analysis is required than purely rationalist classical cognitive approaches. Hutto et al. (2019) believe that "[P]ure cognitivist accounts of the emotions seem woefully incomplete in that they underrate the importance of feelings" (p. 29), and for this reason I turn to the field of dance scholarship as a cognate discipline that assists in explaining how knowledge might be gained though the body subject. Thus, examination of a practitioner's sense of contentment in routine practice may serve as insightful to the lived-body experience in its immediate and engaged state. Especially in terms of self-actualisation through creative expression (Maslow, 1943, p. 370).

This research is not an investigation into pure cognitive theories, it is not a pure rationalist argument for embodied reflection on moral reasoning. Instead, I seek to describe the shaping or formation of human agency as the phenomenon of jiu jitsu practice being routinely experienced and projected into the world. I am investigating the value of feelings in moments that lead to the construction of identity as predicted by Grandmasters Kano and Gracie, along with the pursuit of meaning and pleasure as it is felt during the lived body experience in the moment. To help explicate these ideas of human agency and aesthetic perspective, I have discovered that Japanese philosophy provides great insight into the understanding of a triadic union, and I refer to Japanese literature in martial arts because Gracie jiu jitsu originated from Japan. The philosophy of Mitsue Fujitani (1811) describes the process of human formation

within the transient nature of life. Fujitani illumined the interoceptions of inner feelings and how they are inextricably linked to awareness of the embodiment of BJJ. To quote Fujitani:

Rice wine comes into being spontaneously when rice and water are combined. And yet, one does not become drunk by drinking water or by eating rice. It is simply by bringing the two together that the wondrous events for making people drunk and making their blood circulate take place (p. 1181).

This analogy improves the conceptualisation of the body as *besouled* or *beminded* and how the symbolic use of the triangle binds or unifies the practitioner as existing their jiu jitsu (Fraleigh, 1996, p. 9). To further expound this idea, the Japanese expression *kotodama* defines the beauty of the moment where rice and water become wine and where the effects of that wine stir the emotions of the human being. Like the product of rice wine, the body, mind, and soul form the culmination of ordered parts that make a whole life experience of jiu jitsu. My research shows how jiu jitsuans become aware of sense datum, or sensations, which are the "unelaborated elementary awareness of stimulation" (Hatfield, 2021), the rhythm by which emotion and consciousness become interconnected so that the living body shares in the "ordered relations of its environment" (Dewey, 1980, p. 14).

Kotodama also impressed upon me another important feature of jiu jitsu, that the wondrousness of what is being felt in an action can be located in daily practice (Mitsue, 1811/2011, p. 1180). Japanese philosophers refer to this as engagement with the thinking heart, living in the world and learning how to trust in feeling (Chōmei et al., 2011, p. 1180). This provides an insight into the difference between the self as *I*, the subjective knower, and the self as *Me*, the subject that is known (James, 1891, pp. 665-666). Hence, *I* as the thinking heart must learn to trust feelings as I am in the moment of experience. Obviously, instances of feelings are ephemeral, nonetheless, they are important phases of awareness within the experience prior to a state of reflection. According to Dewey, a disruption to the phase of participation with the environment is necessary for reflection which inevitably causes one to make meaning and purpose out of the experience (Dewey, 1980, p. 14).

The best Japanese simile to capture and convey this meaning is to compare the impermanence of life to the sakura (cherry blossom). The renowned Japanese philosopher Norinaga Motoori (1763), through his reflections upon the classic literary text Tale of Genji (1008), developed a hermeneutic using the term mono no aware to express capturing moments in time through raw emotion (Chōmei et al., 2011, p. 1176). Mono no aware is an appeal to the emotions, the pathos of things, or as Motoori says "[T]o know mono no aware is to discern the nature of happiness or sadness while experiencing the world" (Chōmei et al., 2011, p. 1177). Mono no aware teaches one how to savour the moment and appreciate the temporariness of things of this world, particularly in times of uncertainty. Most things beyond our immediate experience are levied against aspects of uncertainty, which means capturing and conveying emotion and feelings becomes relevant to contentment in jiu jitsu, because jiu jitsu is only ever lived moment-to-moment. Without one being able to enact mono no aware, Motoori argues that the participant's "thoughts are easily swayed, their moods altered between sorrow and happiness" (Chōmei et al., 2011, p. 1176). Mono no aware awakened within me a deeper understanding of my position as researcher in this work. This notion highlights my earlier claim that I am compelled to discover meaning in what I do and who I am in the moment, to find contentment in what is happening in the immediate experience, and to increase my resistance to the attacks of mental and physical perturbations. My constructed identity and self-realisation are not subject to the ebb and flow of success and failure, for I am constantly being formed and living my story, not embedded in the past nor defined by possibility, I exist, my body in the immediate embracing of the moment, as discovered through creative practice (Chōmei et al., 2011, p. 1176).

The closest research in the embodied field of practice using similar thought processes to Motoori's mono no aware is Fraleigh's (1996) analysis of dance practice. Her research methods include asking dancers about their experience during the physical application of their bodies when dancing; why they are going through the pain, and what "is there" in its "pleasures and complexities" (p. xvii). Additionally, the Nobbs Suzuki Praxis (NSP) of actor training (Diedrich & Barbe, 2023) inspired me to further explore this gap in the literature. The NSP provides a new lens for me to observe the practice of jiu jitsu in the dojo. I began to draw comparisons between dancers/actors and jiu jitsu practitioners and how the lived-bodily experience provides a source of knowledge for meaningful direction in the

ordinariness of life (Stephan et al., 2016, p. 4). Observing dancers and actors engaging in their practice under the NSP approach demonstrated starting and stopping movements that gave expression to the body (Diedrich & Barbe, 2023, p. 23). Through watching John Nobb's instructional recordings of practice in his own studio (John Nobbs, 2011, 1:10:00) I observed actors being guided through an imaginative process that considers how opposing forces on the body are being suppressed and released through practice (Diedrich & Barbe, 2023, p. 27). This impressed upon me how jiu jitsu practitioners in my dojo actually feel the suppression and release of forces on the lived-body. The NSP method also illuminates how actors and dancers must feel their bodies in time and space and learn how to cultivate precise and practical use of their bodies (Diedrich & Barbe, 2023, p. 27). This appears to parallel the feelings and experiences that my students and I have had in the dojo, especially as we have engaged with the matted space, the wearing of a gi (uniform), the sounds of other bodies in execution of techniques, and the acoustics of dojo practice which all contribute to the cultivation of the inner experience (Diedrich & Barbe, 2023, p. 27).

I began this research project with this concept in mind, accepting the task of investigating sense datum in BJJ and how practitioners perceive pleasure, purpose, and meaning in routine practice. My primary aim was to discover if other practitioners hold similar sentiments and if they too pause to reflect on the embodiment of jiu jitsu practice. The research findings suggest that this is the case, given the provisions of a constructed alignment of learning in the dojo, students can and do engage in reflective practice, make sense of their bodies (in the moment) to provide insights into their subjective experiences, and actively contribute to the personal development of others.

#### 1.5. Interrogating Kano's principles in daily practice

The famous Japanese warrior Miyamoto Musashi (1645/2021) authored *The Book of Five Rings* during the Tokugawa period (1603 – 1867) in the post-unification era of Japan. The book intellectualised martial arts, for students of *budo* (martial way), to improve their combat mastery as well as providing insights that could be more applied to other areas of the practitioner's life (p. 19). Among his writings, Musashi comments on the routinised training of martial arts as something commanded by the mind and applied to the life of the practitioner in the hope that

martial arts practice leads to civic virtue (p. 37). Even though there is the quality of nobleness implicit in the teaching of Musashi, I have not embraced such a two-dimensional view towards martial arts practice. I have observed that there is more to the embodied practice then merely viewing it as a utility of civic virtue. In fact, this research has given earnest consideration to how personal agency embraces the experience of embodied practice and how that becomes expressed in the life of the practitioner.

Martial arts scholar Jesús Ilundáin-Agurruza (2014), believes that the pedagogical and intercultural transmission of martial arts have since become appealing in Western democracies because they encourage the cultivation of excellence, as self-cultivation, combining theory with practice in performative pursuits that appear to bypass mind-body problems associated with Western ontology (p. 2). That encouraged me to reflect on the ordinariness of martial arts practice as an important aspect of moving consciously, thus causing me to consider a paradigmatic shift form instrumentation to somatic transformation of the agent. Improvisation specialist, Sally Harrison-Pepper (2017), comments on the benefits of daily martial arts practice:

Combat exercises further develop one's center through an immersion in oppositions. Balanced between aggression and fear, moving, and not moving, tension and relaxation, students learn to surrender to the demands of a sparring partner, not as adversary, my master used to say, but as a teacher, one who will illuminate one's weaknesses (p. 3).

Essentially, martial arts are the study of human combat and in many ways the practitioner will unavoidably, perhaps even subconsciously, measure their progression comparatively against a potential combative encounter. Ultimate Fighting Hall of Fame recipient, Royce Gracie (son of Helio Gracie, see Figure 4 below), demonstrated to the world in the first ever sanctioned no holds barred contest in Denver, Colorado (1993) just how BJJ (having evolved from judo) could be used efficiently to defeat much larger opponents. Gracie was not the first to publicly display the *art* in martial arts practice. It was the notable Japanese jujutsuan and educator Jigorō Kano (*Kanō Jigorō* as seen in Figure 5 below) who founded judo in 1882 and reconceptualised the learning process of martial arts through the

reputation of the Kodokan Judo Headquarters, Shitaya Tokyo (Kano, 2013). The prominence of judo spread internationally via its introduction to the Olympics in 1964, making Kano a major influencer in the disciplines of martial arts (Ebell, 2016, pp. 32-34).

Figure 4
UFC-1-Royce-Gracie-vs-Ken-Shamrock 1993.



Note the triangle configuration that Gracie uses. Source: https://www.bjjee.com/bjj-news/ken-shamrock-wants-to-rematch-royce-gracie-insists-on-royce-wearing-a-gi/attachment/ufc-1-royce-gracie-vs-ken-shamrock/

**Figure 5** Jigorō Kano 1885



Source: https://www.usatkj.org/jigoro-kanos-life--achievements.html

Kano took an academic approach to judo education insisting that the greater objective to judo practice was to be discovered through a unifying concept known as seiryoku zenyo (mind, body, and intellect). The principle of seiryoku zenyo may be loosely translated as efficiency of energy, but this is an inadequate interpretation. A more thorough understanding of seiryoku zenyo requires discipleship, it must demonstrate the dutiful attention to tasks, possess a balanced and appropriate extension of output, sublimate the unpleasantness of ill will, and be the continual regulation of behaviour towards satisfaction and prosperity in life (Kano, 2005, pp. 79-82). Thus, seiryoku zenyo begins to take shape in three distinct ways; 1) skill, 2) intellect, and 3) moral character (Kano, 2005, p. 62). Each aspect then comes together in the life of the practitioner in what Grandmaster Helio Gracie modelled as a triadic union (Elite, 2022).

Kano assumed that commitment to judo would naturally result with the discovery of seiryoku zenyo and that morality would be improved if practitioners could understand these implicit teachings (Gristchenkov, 2012, p. 44). The intuitions of Kano become the point of departure for this research. They are present within

Gracie's description of triadic unity, and they have been handed down in succession through practice in the dojo. Judo and arts akin to judo (BJJ/jiu jitsu) share this commonality of seiryoku zenyo every time one dons the *dogi* (uniform), steps into the dojo, or bows to one's training partner. The principle of seiryoku zenyo and its corresponding practices are inseparable, and this research has discovered how necessary they are to the embodied experience. Seiryoku zenyo is not an abstraction of the empirical world, it is the development and formation of agency through existential moments, it must be embodied, and ought to be manifested in presence as civic virtue.

While this philosophical and embodied practice is accepted in Japanese culture, there remains a divergence of thought with the somaticity of corporeal existence between the East and West (Fraleigh, 2004, p. 27). As I mentioned earlier, dualism (Cartesian dualism) has led to an objectification of the body, whereas Eastern philosophy perceives mind and body as the interconnected nondual awareness that are inseparable (Fraleigh, 2004, p. 31). As I commenced my quest to seek the meaning of seiryoku zenyo in my practice, I worked from the assumption that if over time, in a community of practice, that I have perceived an image of myself through routine jiu jitsu, perhaps my students, as well as other practitioners, may be experiencing this same interconnectedness.

Yet, one cannot understand routine in a community of practice without observing how routine occurs. There is a process that one must go through to create a routine practice so that seiryoku zenyo can be embodied. In martial arts, as with any community of practice, one must go through a rite of passage and acceptance which is known as a process of liminality (Turner, 1979, p. 94). However, Kano never mentions a specific process of initiation for the neophyte to emerge as an accepted and experienced practitioner. There do not appear to be any links that demonstrate how Kano's dojo connects with the broader community other than competition. The projection of seiryoku zenyo onto the world is assumed without knowing how a community of practice in the dojo leads to sociality and the process of understanding others. All that can be gleaned from Kano's institution is that teachers and students of judo/jiu jitsu ought to carefully consider how physical practice illumines the intellectual understanding of the art. As Kano (2005) stated, "[I]f you do not consider to a certain extent whether to put greater emphasis on intellect or emotions, and if you have no clear aim, you cannot practice true seiryoku zenyo" (p. 62).

Recent scholarly work in neuroscience appears to confirm Kano's hypothesis which is at least a starting point in conceptualising a body conscious practice. The meaning of the body through the emotion theory of enactivism becomes an initial point of engagement in understanding the rhythm between emotions and intellect (Haosheng et al., 2021, p. 1393). For instance, enactivism, which is the active exercising of the sensorimotor process, is a recent development in cognitive theory that provides understanding of how emotions such as mood, motivation, desire, pain, and fatigue occur deep within the material body (Haosheng et al., 2021, p. 1393). John Dewey (1980) refers to this as adumbrations of a rhythmic fluttering between the loss of integration with one's environment to being united once again and forming a conscious and purposeful encounter (p. 16). This supports Kano's intuitions that the body plays a vital role in cognitive reasoning. But as Kano (2005) suggests, what is the point in developing the mind and body without goal-directed behaviour. And to that, Kano implores his students to consider the habitual practice of judo to cultivate these powers and illumine the essence of seiryoku zenyo in the person (p. 67).

Dewey (1980) provides a cogent analysis of the concept of cultivation of powers in *Art as Expression*, where the esthetic ideal is necessitated by an adherence to observance of the present (p. 17). Fraleigh's research (2004) into Japanese dance provides a model exemplar where mind and body fixate on the present. Her examination of *butoh* dance demonstrates how the inner most bodily sensations are animated to form awareness, not merely in developing the nature of our own body but so that we can experience the bodies of others (pp. 30-31). Fraleigh (2004) discovered some interesting questions that are necessary in recognising the transformational nature of the mind-body. For example, she queries, "How does art, how does dance, make meaning, and engage life forms in its processes? How is the body affected at a cellular level? Somatically? How is the body lived through movement? How is it changed? Transformed in positive ways? (p. 30). These questions are relevant to my research and have shaped my inquiry into the cultivation of powers and goal-directed behaviours in BJJ practice.

Returning to the concept of emotion, recent studies in psychology confirm that bodily feelings provide new perspectives for understanding and that more and more contemporary scholars are dissatisfied with the mainstream cognitive paradigm and are turning to Eastern wisdom on such matters pertaining to phenomenology and biology (Haosheng et al., 2021, p. 1393). Martial arts scholar, Paul Bowman (2018),

believes that the nature of this cooperation contributes to a deeper understanding about how we "go from the guts to the intellect" (p. 20). In recent biological studies this is referred to as autopoiesis or sense-making, which is otherwise known as self-production and aligns with Dewey's imageries of organisms constructing meaningful ways to survive by acting on and connecting themselves to the environment through the lived-body experience (Haosheng et al., 2021, p. 1394). In other words, it is an individual's ability to connect the gut to the intellect with the intention of ensuring self-improvement and purpose. I believe that both Kano and Gracie intuited this connection, Kano describing this in terms of moral character and Gracie referring to the soul/spirit as the bridge between mind and body in practice. What is largely unexamined is how self comes to mind through jiu jitsu and moves one into creative expression and awareness (Fraleigh, 2015, p. 15). Perceiving the self with others as Fraleigh (2015) says, "[is] moving as knowing", and in the case of jiu jitsuans, discovering how this movement experience makes provisions for self-understanding and sociality (p. 19).

## 1.6. Research questions governing this project

Influenced by the ideas of Dewey, my research looks through the lens of creative arts in a multiple-method approach to discover how individuals' give shape to their aesthetic and somatic perspectives in the art of jiu jitsu. In doing so it was beholden of me to work within certain strictures so that I maintained integrity and respect for the art under examination. To this end, as part of the context of the setting where the data was collected, I specifically focus on the artistic expression of jiu jitsu, practicing within a dojo (studio), using traditional attire (see Figure 6 below), to discover the implicit meaning of how the practice links to the emotions, to the body, and to the intellect within a small rural BJJ community. With BJJ (jiu jitsu), (as an evolution of Kano's judo) being the subset of martial arts in which I am specialising, I seek to discover what both Kano and Gracie presumed would lead practitioners to a better life.

Figure 6 L and H in dogi



"L" and "H" demonstrating the use of the dogi worn in jiu jitsu practice. Taken at Eadie Academy Headquarters, Scone, New South Wales, December 2022.

I have, therefore, specifically designed the project to investigate how embodied and routine teaching/practice of jiu jitsu may lead practitioners through a sense-making process of self-improvement, personal growth, and contentment of self. This forms the overall guiding question of the research: *How does the embodied and routine teaching/practice of jiu jitsu lead practitioners to a sense of self-improvement?* 

I have formulated sub-questions to guide my exploration, even though I am aware that Grounded Theory (GT) does not require specific questions at the onset of the research, however Participatory Action Research may adopt these:

- 1. What is "embodied practice" in the context of a small BJJ dojo in regional Australia?
- 2. What are the participant experiences of self-improvement and/or agency through embodied practice?
- 3. How might these practices affect or produce self-improvement?

These questions are again outlined in the Methodology to help explicate the research findings about the essence of a triadic composition in jiu jitsu rather than perceiving jiu jitsu as at utility of the body object. While it is not expected that practitioners' comment on defining a triadic composition, their reflections provided insights that may lead to the understanding of this subjective unification.

#### 1.7. The research site

On an empirical level, the dojo is a studio of routine practice, and a space for the creative exploration of self-improvement, identity formation and self-reformation. Thus, I reaffirm the necessity of the studio as the beginning of one's transitional phase and the associated processes of liminality that lead to a triadic composition of jiu jitsu. Arnold Van Gennep's (1960) work heavily influenced how I describe my existing martial arts practice and what happens during the formation process that contributes to the construction of my identity. Van Gennep illuminated for me the notion of acceptance. He demonstrated through the process of liminality how individuals experience rites of passage as they transition into the group of practice and move through various phases of acceptance to deepen awareness of human agency (p. 3). Prominent anthropologist Victor Turner (1979) claims that this state of being is betwixt and between (p. 234) and I believe that martial artists experience this state of existence in embodied practice which has been illuminated through this research. I also intuit that being betwixt and between is experienced through various stages of the formation process in becoming jiu jitsuans.

Although Kano and Gracie believe that being a jiu jitsuan is a way of life, they never provided insights and understanding about the liminal process of formation. We never actually hear how these somatic transformations occur, what shape and form they take on as a way of life or how practitioners get there. There is little literature on this topic in jiu jitsu that is merely speculated or offered as anecdotes and aphorisms. Not much is yet known about how the jiu jitsuan moves consciously through practice to project themselves into and onto the world. Thus, this research shows how the jiu jitsuan evolves their agency, along with their awareness of their relationship to the world and beyond themselves. This research also broadens the abstraction of triadic symbolism as having transformative possibilities for practitioners. Given that the jiu jitsu tetrahedron has depth and volume, it is not an abstraction and the body its instrument. The jiu jitsuan can determine the shape of

their energy as an expression of one's humanness. But when I speak of triadic union, I am referring to the besouled jiu jitsuan in the subjective state (distinct and bounded), yet interdependent with the dojo of practice and interconnected with the broader community (Fraleigh, 2015, p. 166).

The point of reference for examination must not begin with observing the triangle from afar, it requires examination from within, through the formation process, and I believe that this has not been intellectualised. In other words, jiu jitsu is not taking up residency within a "minded body" (Fraleigh, 2015, p. 29), for if it did, the body would merely be commandeered as an instrument and the jiu jitsuan may then be full of affectation and pretention. Equally, jiu jitsu is not an additive to the beminded, jiu jitsu is, it is existed, the animation of being as felt and thought. This is why embodiment is so crucial to the process of formation because a conceptual understanding of jiu jitsu shifts the paradigm from jiu jitsu measured in objective terms, to jiu jitsu lived (Fraleigh, 1996, p. xxii). Theoretically, this means excavating the meaning of Kano and Gracie's triadic concept to reveal an embodied jiu jitsu, an expression of rhythm and sensations of movements that require conducting. My hope is that this transforms how coaches perceive their role as conducting others in the dojo, that they become more like guides who journey alongside their students, adjusting tempo, improving articulation and repetition of the artist's expression as it emerges.

So, if the dojo can be seen as a place that hones embodied practice, there must be specific approaches to training that are conducive to the production of artistic expression. In my experience, the most popular approaches used to shape individual performance are known in physiological terms as blocked practice and improvisational practice (Matos et al, 2017, p. 1). Blocked practice is aligned with a breakdown of techniques that the coach will require students to imitate, usually referred to in Japanese as *kata* or drilling. A significant number of studies motivated by embodied cognition demonstrate that perception and action are interdependent in relation to action possibilities, particularly if variability of practice encourages creative sequences in routines and subroutines of skill development (Maldonato, 2019, p. 695). This means that higher-level decision making for skilled practitioners inducing repetitions of error correction hold a greater probability of skilfully resolving anticipated situations (Maldonato, 2019, p. 695). What I am referring to here is also known as improvisational execution, not to be confused with an impulsive

unfamiliarity, rather, the effective goal-directed behavioural responses to predicted or unforeseen circumstances (Maldonato, 2019, p. 695). In traditional Japanese martial arts, improvisation is more akin to the notion of sparring or free play and is known by the term *kumite*. In my dojo I refer to *kata* and *kumite* as drilling and sparring. The aims and objectives of these practices is to contribute to self-efficacious aspects of self-improvement, and in another sense, to immerse the practitioner into the immediate space of practice to feel the sensations and form body consciousness leading to self-definition.

### 1.8. Chapter summary

In Chapter 2, I explore and evaluate the literature on the development of BJJ through the philosophical lens of Jigorō Kano. I discuss Kano's principles of efficiency, embodied practice, and how Kano developed martial arts as pedagogy. I further enquire into evidentiary claims that judo and BJJ practice leads to psychosomatic improvements which help to explicate cognition and somaticity. This then advances the literary discussion on the existential condition and intersubjectivity of experience through scientific inquiries. In addition, I provide a definitional understanding of embodied knowledge and how the body is perceived through practice as the subject, moving away from any notion of a separable body to a more cohesive understanding of triadic union. Specifically, this chapter seeks to bring theory and practice together as the bedrock of my deliberations leading towards the construction of the research project and data collection (Chapter 3).

Chapter 3 outlines my Methodology for this research project and presents and discusses my data collection processes using video recorded reflections of practice, recorded interactive interviews via Zoom, practitioner survey responses, and reflective essays. I map the above research questions to data collection methods and identified phases of the project to provide a timeline of milestones. There is a multiple methodology used to assist in the discovery of participant perceptions of self-improvement through routinised practice: Participatory Action Research (PAR) and Grounded Theory (GT). Given that the research participants are co-inquirers, PAR best facilitates participant reflections on practice because the experience of BJJ moves between blocked and variable practice methods. After researching Fraleigh's phenomenology of dance, it became apparent that PAR makes provisions for proper description and reduction of the phenomenon of BJJ and helps to describe the triadic

composition of jiu jitsu. Fraleigh's influence over my research methods has illuminated how crucial PAR is to the understanding of what it means to be in the "presence" of experience and how that is then projected into the world.

Chapter 4 presents key findings and themes discussed throughout the chapters and articulates the participants' responses to the main research questions as well as my findings and contributions to the knowledge of BJJ practice. The triadic composition of jiu jitsu is then presented as a model, giving clarity and depth to participant experiences and what it means to be in a rural community of practice. The model buttresses the ideas of Kano and Gracie and illustrates the complexity of formation of the practitioner's experience. It also offers a way forward in interpreting the transmittance of knowledge through sense datum, providing insights into the process that leads to formation and the numerous ways that practitioners seek improvement and project themselves into the world.

Chapter 5 provides concluding remarks and presents the triadic composition of jiu jitsu with new insight that intellectualises the embodied practice of jiu jitsu. The recommendations suggest further investigation beyond this Doctor of Creative Arts research, provide inspiration to explore the nature of embodied practice in more densely populated communities, and hopefully expand the field of knowledge in BJJ practice and the wider martial arts industry.

#### 1.9. Conclusion

Overall, this research addresses the growing trend among some BJJ practitioners who are proving to be more eclectic, researching new ideas, and encouraging students to perceive their own contentment and progress in the practice of jiu jitsu. My aim for the research is to explore how practitioners (ten, including myself) perceive themselves as the embodiment of jiu jitsu with a sense of self-construction, or selfhood, through inner feelings, and the ability to reflect on outward manifestations. BJJ as a body of intimate somatic practice is framed as a valuable and useful way of exploring perceptions to body consciousness and transformation which has been elucidated through a triadic composition of the artist embodying the art. I am interested in how those perceptions shape views of outcomes, from the opinion of those who practice them. I do not make any claims of specific techniques that lead to improved outcomes, rather that engaging various approaches to practice and the lifestyle of BJJ are reflected on for perceiving self-formation. For the

research to cover this broad concept of what it means to embody jiu jitsu, I encouraged practitioners to examine their own learning, to interrogate those processes, and to articulate how their investigations are necessary for personal growth, self-construction or reconstruction, agency, group progression, and their contribution to an emergence of new knowledge in the field.

# **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### 2.1. Introduction

The violability and instrumentalisation of the body object in jiu jitsu fail to render an adequate understanding of the triadic union of the practitioner. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the intuitions of Kano and Gracie hoped that jiu jitsu practice would lead practitioners to a more fulfilled and productive life. With the subject of self at the centre of enquiry, this research peered into human agency rather than observing the jiu jitsuan as an active agent in constructing the human body as an object or subject. This research acknowledges that as social agents, practitioners are not merely passive bodies acted upon, they are actively involved in their psychosomatic development (Swain, 2003, p. 2). As stated by Margaret Archer (2013), "the thinker cannot divide himself into two, of whom one reasons while the other observes him reason" (p. 1). For my thesis, and to assist in further understanding the awareness of agency through practice, I use a phenomenological lens to comment on the position the self plays in relation to practitioner motivation, cognition, self-definition, and how this links to embodiment. As I am not a psychologist, I only present a brief overview of psychological literature which provides context to the intellectual influence of cognitive theories in understanding embodiment. However, the ideas of both Kano and Gracie intuited that through the creativity of martial arts practice, the body would feel its way through the routine experience with implicit awareness, thus resulting in the explicit self-conscious reflection of one's actions (Swain, 2003, p. 2). It is fair to suggest that the teachings of Kano and Gracie encourage embodied practice by inviting students to participate in a practice whereby the self is being an active constructor of its self.

Studies in neuroscience describe these states as pre-reflexive and reflexive awareness (Legrand, 2007, p. 497), but they were not scientifically articulated in Kano or Gracie's teachings. Nevertheless, these insights can be applied to their theoretical understanding of practice, which I call the embodiment of *seiryoku zenyo*, Kano's principle of practice that hopes to unite intellect, skill, and moral character.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Kano does not provide an exegesis on moral character except to say that a diligent practice of judo reinforces responsibility, patience, and the extension of positive sentiments towards others which may be applicable to everyday life (see Mind Over Muscle, 2005, pp. 78-82).

For that reason, the sensorimotor process can be understood as critical to the implicit awareness through inner feelings of the body. I explicate this idea through a Dewean body construct of somatic awareness through creative practice (Dewey, 1980, p. 22). In addition to this, I use a Fraleighan (1996) interpretive approach that buttresses Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological work on perception to be applied to the understanding of the somaticity of jiu jitsu (p. 5). In this sense, I call upon Fraleigh's phenomenology of dance as a correlative approach to give clarity to the existential description of the rhythmic fusion between inner feelings and reason. The literature helps to elucidate how a practitioner may come to know who they are through the actions they consciously apply. These actions are critical moments in time that can be easily ignored through perturbation of experience and fixation upon the uncertainty of future events. Regularly returning to the historicity of Kano and Gracie, and using the correlative insights from Fraleigh's dance, emphasises the importance of jiu jitsu's engagement with contemporary culture, particularly in how a body may *self* improve.

While this Literature Review engages a relevant theoretical framework in the fields of phenomenology, pedagogy, embodiment, and identity-building, I will also interrogate the key practitioners in the field of judo and Brazilian Jiu Jitsu (BJJ). In this way, key notions around practice are embedded in this doctoral study from the inception and I use Western thinkers and practitioners to connect to these origins of practice in Kano and Gracie. Although, I use Western thinkers to examine the utility of Kano and Gracie's triadic union and to help form a paradigmatic shift from instrumentalisation to formation of agency. Before embarking on this, I will aim to define my theoretical position on the term embodiment as it is an essential concept from which to interrogate practice in the dojo studio.

#### 2.2. Embodiment

For participants to cultivate their self-definition through practice, they must accomplish multiple tasks over time to assist the learning process and make sense of the world around them. The cooperation between the faculties and the physical body is a psychosomatic synergy that balances between pure intuition and bodily experience. In this research, participants were asked to engage in practice and eventually familiarise the senses to gain knowledge of how their bodies happen to appear and reveal purpose in corresponding with techniques. As Mensch (2008)

noted, "through a set of bodily activities, we enact senses by putting the objects to the uses that disclose their senses" (p. 6). The ways in which the world reveals itself, reflects to the practitioner a sense of relationship to the physical world. It is also a way for the individual to develop a sense of expression, which Mensch says, "the embodied 'I can' always appears within the world it discloses" (p. 6).

The concept above demonstrates the role of the body in making sense of its relationship to the outside world. The Nobbs Suzuki Praxis (NSP) refers to this as "time-space formats and bridging attunement to space and time as they move" (Diedrich & Barbe, 2023, p. 30).<sup>3</sup> Thus, the term embodied is used, but if the suggestion is that an individual develops a sense of expression through the embodied practice, there must be a creative aspect in personalising one's individual tools that create a structured practice to assist practitioners in developing awareness and association to that experience. Skains (2018) suggests that creative practice encourages one to be engaged in the 'act of'(p. 9), and as far as understanding how students of jiu jitsu can do this, I introduced them to the concept of *kata* and *randori* as a pedagogical tool that can reveal implicit teaching through embodied practice.<sup>4</sup>

This leads me to consider the importance of an embodied practice in BJJ because what is not always transparent with practitioners is how the movements cultivate self-awareness, social interaction, and the notion of living well (Pedrini & Jennings, 2021, p. 2). As discussed earlier, a rhythmic balance between aesthesis and cognition causes engagement with the environment (Dewey, 1980, p. 17), but there must be meaning and purpose in the rhythm of experience for that to become a knowledge point (Dewey, 1980, p. 21). To that, Ana Caetano's (2015) explication of reflexivity provides a way of observing the interplay between the subject and object which helps to mediate between agency and structure (p. 62). In other words, students engaging with the practice of jiu jitsu also engage in reflection, conversation, and as Caetano (2015) says, "define their beliefs, attitudes, and goals, and evaluate social circumstances" (p. 62). This is what Archer (2013) describes

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Japanese theatre director and writer, Tadashi Suzuki, developed a method for actor training in the 1970's and has been adopted in the West, particularly here in Australia through the John Nobbs actor training academy and is commonly referred to as the Nobbs Suzuki Method.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> With that idea, practitioners are invited into the space of human combat, exposing them to the chaos of violence but, simultaneously helping to mediate between violence and passivity and hopefully discovering new meaning in the training.

as the capacity of mental operations to be turned, or directed, back upon the mind itself (p. 5). Although I acknowledge Akram and Hogan's (2015) criticisms of Archer's overemphasis of reflexivity (p. 609), I am mindful that reflexivity is important to current ideas but that understanding also comes from the routine of daily life and habitus. I propose a balanced approach by adopting reflexivity without forgoing habitus to ensure that the routinisation of practice, along with a student's formation, assists them in reaching the best outcome. Bowman (2018) invariably supports this approach and persuades readers to engage with a plethora of ideas and disciplines that seek to communicate what the body experiences in practice. He further adds that embodiment in martial practice helps to ascertain the proper meaning of the data, and that researchers must adhere to certain semiotic principles for understanding (p. 7). While Bowman accepts conventional methods of analysis, he concedes that there are shortfalls in attempting to articulate meaning through action. He argues that, when it comes to embodied practices, words alone fall short of communicating the experience of a thing that must be felt (Bowman, 2018, pp. 7-8). Bowman's words are a gentle reminder of the semantic difficulties when reflecting upon and attempting to describe the lived-body experience in martial arts practice.

# 2.3. Brazilian jiu jitsu and the influence of Jigorō Kano's philosophy

Martial arts studies are proving to be a "dynamic multidisciplinary research area" (Bowman, 2018, p. 1) in recognising the importance of knowledge being embodied, and that the existential condition of subjectivity forms how researchers understand the way that bodies move in and through the world (Farrer & Whalen-Bridge, 2011, p. 1). This assumes the body is the starting point from which martial arts research enquires into the connectivity of the physical, the imagined, the psychological, and the social (Farrer & Whalen-Bridge, 2011, p. 1). But these ideas have not emerged without repeated invocations of early philosophers in martial arts. For example, the fifth century scholar, Sun Tzu (2018) in *The Art of War*, and as previously mentioned, Miyamoto Musashi (1645/2021), are the most widely referenced on martial arts strategy, but how a body exists (experiences) jiu jitsu is the focus of this research, and so, introducing the musings of Jigorō Kano present more favourably regarding unveiling the Gracie's assumed triadic union of practice and formation of jiu jitsuans (Elite, 2022).

The innovations and improvisation within the implicit teachings of jiu jitsu begin with Kano's philosophy for the use of *kata*<sup>5</sup> (prearranged forms) and move to *randori* (improvised free practice: see Figures 7 & 8 below). Kano's teaching on kata has revealed to me that without kata there is no creativeness and no method for interpreting the chaos of fighting (Ravn et al., 2021, p. 33). The blocked practice of kata offers students the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the nomenclature of techniques in a systematic fashion under compliance. In turn, the student can discover pressure, impact, movement, and bodily form which can be later explored through improvisation in randori. This method of practice used by Kano was devised in such a way that it lends itself to the embodiment of seiryoku zenyo, which may then become animated in public life and active citizenry, as described by Gracie, even though this is more implicitly discovered through Gracie's practice (Canaria, 2014). But Kano only lectured to students on the development of virtue, and he used *kata* as the means of demonstrating the five important principles of judo for everyday life. Gristchenkov states these as:

- 1. Carefully observe your behaviour and the circumstances of your life; observe the behaviour of other people; observe everything that surrounds you.
- 2. Be initiative taking in every activity.
- 3. Analyse everything, act decisively.
- 4. Know when to stop.
- 5. Stick to the middle between happiness and depression, exhaustion and laziness, mad bravery, and cowardice. (2012, p. 57).

•

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Kata are prearranged techniques that teach fundamentals of attack and defence. Kata allows students the opportunity to role play under compliance. These roles are reflected in the practice of being *tori* (the winner, the one who gives) and *uke* (the one who loses, or who receives). Randori, meaning free practice without compliance, is what Kano favoured as the superior practice for training the mind. Kano believed that randori gave students greater exposure to being confronted with their weaknesses and more insights into their strengths. See Jigorō Kano (Eds, 2013) Kodokan Judo. New York, USA: Kodansha Publishing

Figure 7
Jigorō Kano (1860-1938) demonstrating controlled kata



Source: https://www.martialnet.it/judo/kata-del-judo/

Figure 8
Helio Gracie vs Kato (1951) demonstrating the nature of randori



Source: https://m.cafe.daum.net/jiujitsuism/21Wb/4909?svc=cafeapi

The application of these principles is clear in the dojo, for instance, careful observation of an opponent is necessary for safe execution of technique and positioning. Students must take initiative and learn when to attack and defend. Every action must be analysed, incrementally isolated, and developed. Practitioners must know when to apply techniques, the level of intensity, and when to cease. And lastly, practitioners must learn the virtue of conserving energy in practice. It is evident from the unveiling of these principles that the practical lessons through kata, as well as randori, lend themselves to an implicit teaching of how the rules and etiquette of the

dojo could be applied throughout life, and how students relate routine practice of jiu jitsu to self-improvement. Unfortunately, Kano and Gracie had not discovered an eidetic reduction of these, having been expressly developed in students through practice to see how embodying these principles benefits students' lives.

# i. Jigorō Kano's pedagogy as embodied practice

Beginning in the late 19th century, Kano (2005) developed judo to display a much less brutal practice than earlier samurai disciplines such as the taijutsu and yawara schools of Japan (p. 18). Japanese society was developing under Western influence and the archaic practices of the samurai were beginning to fade into the shadows of the social periphery (Ebell, 2016, p. 34). Being an educator, Kano (2005) used his influence to invite students to participate in the dojo (training hall), practicing judo as a complementary educational tool that would assist in accomplishing other tasks outside the dojo (p. 34). Pedagogically speaking, Kano's use of judo appears to have made provisions for understanding practice as "embodied knowing" which also tapped into the sapiential perspective of self-improvement. For instance, Perry and Medina (2011) describe this approach as a learning environment that affords students the opportunity to consider bodily senses through practice (p. 62). Relating this concept to the dojo means that the practitioner enters the dojo to inquire into the subjective experience at a pace that is self-directed and in a way that encourages learning and builds upon previous experiences. Gunduz and Hursen (2015), argue that methods such as these encourage a dynamic learning environment that explores experience with the potential to generate new ideas in a discipline.

Kano believed that judo would enable practitioners to capitalise on their lived experience, develop character, and become active citizens (Kowalczyk et al., 2022). Regrettably, despite the growing interest in judo, Kano never produced data to substantiate his assertions, for his main objective was to reintroduce martial arts into society with positive associations with education and personal development (Eadie, 2023, p. 1). Nonetheless, since the introduction of judo to the Tokyo Olympic Games in 1964, judo's rise to prominence has generated numerous academic endeavours in pursuit of deepening a sociological and psychological understanding of the influence that martial arts have on human flourishing (Croom, 2014). As noted in Ryan and Deci's (2001) research, the pursuit of martial arts studies is now an intense discovery into experiences that lead to optimal living and psychological health (pp. 141-142),

which is necessary to understanding of the formation of agency that Kano and Gracie were interrogating through practice.

## ii. The principle of maximising efficiency

Jigorō Kano said:

Training in judo is also extremely beneficial to those who lack confidence in themselves due to past failures. Judo teaches us to look for the best possible course of action, whatever the individual circumstances, and helps us to understand that worry is a waste of energy. Paradoxically, the man who has failed and one who is at the peak of success are in exactly the same position. Each must decide what they will do next, choose the course that will lead him to the future. The teachings of judo give each the same potential for success, in the former instance guiding a man out of lethargy and disappointment to a state of vigorous activity. One more type who can benefit from the practice of judo are the chronically discontented, who readily blame others for what is really their own fault. These people come to realize that their negative frame of mind runs counter to the principle of maximum efficiency and that living in conformity with the principle is the key to a forward-looking mental state (2013, pp. 23-24).

When Kano (2005) reformed Japanese jiu jitsu (judo) he incorporated five educational principles into the practice so that students would achieve the best outcomes in relation to their physical and cognitive development (p. 64). The *Kodokan* (Judo Headquarters in Japan) sought to balance fighting skills with mental and physical training (p. 64), establishing an association between judo practice and other worldly pursuits. To illustrate this point, Kano refers to seiryoku zenyo in terms of intellect, whereby the will of the practitioner makes manifest particular skills (p. 69). If the practitioner wastes energy, loses concentration, or lacks effort, this results in an inability to persist in effective and efficient use of applied skills, not only with judo, but Kano suspected that this would also have a negative impact upon other activities beyond the dojo (p. 69). The Kodokan Institute summarises Kano's philosophy this way:

Seiryoku Zenyo is the most effective use of the power of the mind and body. In the case of Judo, this is the principle upon which attack, and defence are based, and what guides the process of teaching as well. Simply, the most effective use of mind and body may be described as the maximum efficient utilisation of energy (Kodokan, n.d.).

My own practice interrogates how BJJ might claim to possess the same utilisation of energy as judo. According to martial arts scholar Douglas Farrer, jiu jitsu "teaches good psychological and physical habits, positive attitudes to exercise, self-confidence, and self-awareness" (Farrer, 2018). Notable judo and BJJ practitioner Dave Camarillo (2006) contends that even though BJJ stems from judo, the two arts complement each other, and participants stand to benefit from both disciplines (p. 14). While sport may divide the disciplines, in essence, both arts possess technical similarities that adhere to the same philosophy on mind and body (p. 14). So, BJJ can be interpreted as an evolved form of judo; as embodied practice, this study builds on the work of Kano and Gracie to discover how this creative practice may enhance self-improvement.

# 2.4. Temporality and jiu jitsu

To suggest that seiryoku zenyo is simply a matter of efficiently using energy, over time, would be to understate its full meaning. After the Meiji Restoration (1858), Kano (2021) believed that the Japanese people would have to be well reasoned and physically capable to compete economically with other foreign influences (Gatling, p. 56). This prompted Kano's (2021) intellectualising of Western utilitarianism for Japanese culture, preparing people on a national scale to efficiently use their energy and skill with strong resolve (p. 58). Kano believed that judo could facilitate the concept of utility for the mutual benefit of the greater good. This evidences how jiu jitsu has up to this point been viewed as two-dimensional. With Kano (2021) perceiving judo as a utility, he merely viewed the body as an instrument of the mind. He often referred to the principle of seiryoku zenyo as a prescribed method for achieving the objectives of righteous behaviour in Japanese culture (p. 59). In the absence of understanding the somatic consciousness of the beminded person, there is good reason for Kano associating utility with seiryoku zenyo because he did not believe that hedonistic pursuits of pleasure were in the best interest of his nation's

progress (pp. 58-59). In other words, human agency should make use of meaningful actions that extend beyond subjective desires, but not that those actions are void of enjoyment. Kano found much delight in the expression of judo, discriminating between good things and bad things, and diligently applying effort to the most meaningful tasks that would be attributed to the common good (p. 78).

There may be much to be gleaned from Kano's sentiments, but there is also much that is denied regarding the embodied experience of martial arts. For example, one must feel the process of *doing*; how it is being done, what the most effective means of "doing" is, and one discovers meaning in the experience if one must project themselves into the world. The reward might be in knowing what is being lived through the body and that the experience has been due to goal-directed behaviour. According to Kano, this is how one ought to conceive seiryoku zenyo in the moment as it reveals knowledge points. This encouraged me to turn to Kenichiro (Ken) Mogi (2017) for a teleological explication of self-realisation in embodied practice. From my own practice, I understand that large goals associated with the utility of seiryoku zenyo must be first grounded in much smaller achievements.

Ken Mogi introduces the term *ikigai*, to appreciate its association to mono no aware (see 1.4 section ii) which becomes an influential idea relative to this research. Mogi encourages the experience of pleasure in small things, such as serving up a cup of tea, going for a walk, improving one's attitude, or helping a neighbour. These are examples of embodied practices with purpose-driven outcomes that contribute towards life habits and value systems beyond the singular act itself (Mogi, 2017. p. 10). These actions demonstrate individual conscious beings moving consciously with others and discovering virtue and self-construal in the subjectivity of self-expression. To preserve subjectivity in this way is vitally important to the integrity of agency. Merleau-Ponty (2012) believed that this self-consciousness, when realised, is animated through action as a reflection of self-knowledge and a knowledge of all things (p. 390). Merleau-Ponty ascertained that the conscious lived-body ought not to give up its energy without goal-directed actions, conduct being self-realised, and bodied forth (p. 391). In principle, mono no aware is fundamental to the core values of Japanese culture, but Kano's strong views of the body object might eventually lead the body subject to a dry and inhospitable place, because as Merleau-Ponty indicates, the pleasure in doing comes from the pleasure in knowing (p. 391). It is a reminder that sense-making occurs in the moment and contributes to Kano's goal

that combined social strength is achieved through small and individual successes where the integrity of subjectivity is the highest value. Yet, explicating mono no aware and ikigai to illumine seiryoku zenyo is not all that I wish to achieve. I must convey that seiryoku zenyo is the rhythmic cohesion between mind, body, and soul (Kano, 2005, p. 80), or in other words, body image and body schema (Francesconi & Gallagher, 2019, p. 249). I seek to build upon this triadic concept considering the phenomenon of the body subject and how jiu jitsu might reveal somatic transformation.

To have a body image is to perceive attitudes and beliefs attributed to the body subject, while a body schema denotes the subjective sensorimotor processes (Francesconi & Gallagher, 2019, p. 249). The culmination of combined actions and awareness becomes a moment of self-realisation. The moment in time whereby one is in the midst of realisation is mono no aware, that is, recognising the beauty and nature of impermanence in the act, and those ephemeral experiences could well be lost in the utility of a body object. According to the practice of jiu jitsu, the act of throwing an opponent requires a reduction into pure physicality, to be in the moment, to sense the here and now. One must embrace their opponent through touch, and feel the energy of weight distribution, bodily impulses, and tension. Pressing into the centre of their bodies, practitioners become present-centred, thus gaining haptic knowledge, or in other words, learning through touch (Fraleigh, 1996, p. 23). These pressures, regulation of breath, perceptions of tension and release create risk or opportunity for the execution of the technique. As Fraleigh (1996) says, "I come to know who I am through the actions I take" (p. 27). The present-centred moment becomes a knowledge point of the projected self which may be reflected on to present the self-for-other (Fraleigh, 1996, p. 58). This is a fundamental point overlooked by Kano and Gracie in intuiting that practice could lead to selfimprovement.

The communal and potential value through intersubjectivity is present in Kano's theory and Gracie's practice, but not made explicit through articulated reflection, rather, I consider this aspect to have been concealed. My research aims to reveal these characteristics. Kempton (2018) argues, "we are sleepwalking through our days, senses dulled, spending much of our time cooped up in boxes, paying more attention to celebrities, advertising and social media than to the exploration of our own lives, in all their rich potential" (p. 3). He suggests that these

issues are permeating through the West and now awakening people to reconnect to their own wellbeing and the discovery of simple pleasures that matter in their lives (p. 3). Thus, the temporal nature of things may become more obvious, and have a profound effect upon our individual and collective progress. A practitioner's dutiful attention to their lived body, and all the dimensions that surround it may lead to self-realisation in the world, as theorised by Kano and Gracie. To better understand these intuitions of Kano and Gracie, as they relate to the embodiment of jiu jitsu, the following section provides a scientific overview of the psychosomatics of practice relating BJJ to its origins associated with Kano's judo.

# 2.5. A brief scientific exploration of jiu jitsu on the lived body

As previously mentioned, BJJ is an evolved practice of judo and I felt compelled to examine how recent neurological research suggests that both arts possess the ability to enhance executive functions (Amaral & Gabriel, 2021). Researching the literature on executive functions provides insights into the body and mind as a source of knowledge. The first study that I examined was conducted by Valdés-Badilla et al. (2021), of older participants in martial arts (mean age: 69.6 years) which reviewed the disciplines of Olympic combat sports (i.e., boxing, fencing, judo, karate, taekwondo, and wrestling) and BJJ, measuring physical functionality and psychoemotional health (p. 1). The findings from this research indicate that regular practice of martial arts improves balance, cognitive function, and mental health (Valdés-Badilla et al., 2021, p. 2). To further understand this, Agrawal and Borkar (2021) explain that martial arts demand high levels of cortical recruitment combined with complex repetitive actions that increases alertness and selective attention (p. 155). In their study, Agrawal and Borkar observed a broader demographic that captured data from 969 martial arts participants aged between 18 and 40 years. Their systematic review examined the effects of martial arts on attention time span, focusing on adults diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactive disorder (ADHD). The study found that the majority of participants displayed improved coordinated activation and rates of attention, and control over behaviour (Agrawal & Borkar, 2021, p. 151). In addition to this, Agrawal and Borkar (2021) demonstrate that "positive expectation in terms of sports performance leads to a high level of self-efficacy that overcomes psychological obstacles" (p. 152). This is essential because self-efficacy plays an important role in a person's ability to use

discernment, set and achieve goals, assemble ideas, and control emotion (Wilde & Hsu, 2019, p. 2). This concept of self-efficacy is crucial for humans in understanding what helps us to exercise influence over what we do so that confidence is affirmed (Wilde & Hsu, 2019). This is best summarised by renowned psychologist Albert Bandura when he said, "perceived self-efficacy refers to beliefs in one's capabilities to organise and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments" (1997 p. 3).

According to Lambourne and Tomporowski (2010), improvements with executive functions are attributed to steady-state training (a period of continuous exercise) but studies in kinesiology reveal that cognitive task performance can be impaired during acute physical fatigue (p. 17). Lethargy may initially impede the cortical recruitment during high intensity exercise, but this appears to be short-term (Lambourne & Tomporowski, 2010, p. 17). Overall, Lambourne and Tomporowski reveal that regardless of the type of physical exercise, participants' executive functions improved when tested post-exercise (p.17). A study on a visually impaired judoka, conducted by Almansba et al. (2012), reveals that judo practice improved proprioceptive (a sense of self-movement) function for balance and was thus recommended as a valuable exercise for the development of balance and coordination for the visually impaired (p. 157). In a similar study conducted by Luiz de Queiroz et al. (2016), the effects of BJJ on 62 male volunteers, noninstitutionalised and aged between 60 and 80 years old, were assessed over 12 weeks of engaging in BJJ training. The treatment intervention consisted of applying BJJ training twice a week. Each 90-minute session was divided into: a) five minutes of initial stretching, 20 minutes of warm-up with active stretching, and strength exercises; (b) three minutes of recovery and rehydration (water only); (c) 50 minutes of BJJ training that included unbalancing (e.g., takedowns and throws), submissions, positions adequate for the skill level of the participants (beginners), and self-defence techniques; and (d) 10 minutes of stretching for cooldown and relaxation (Luiz de Queiroz et al., 2016, p. 4). Luiz de Queiroz et al. (2016) state that:

In addition to strength, BJJ was also efficient in promoting an increase in flexibility levels, aerobic endurance, and motor agility/dynamic balance. During BJJ practice, many moves require the use of isometric contraction of lower and upper body muscles, which may lead to neural

and somatic adaptations, such as increased motor-units recruitment and muscle hypertrophy. This could explain the increase in strength after intervention in the present study (p. 5).

Another study conducted by Belo et al. (2021), explores the potential therapeutic effects of BJJ training by assessing blood pressure responses during and after technical sparring. This particular study consisted of seven BJJ practitioners (all aged: 24 years; height: 1.75m; body mass: 76.0kg; BMI: 24.5) who were required to perform three five-minute technical sparring rounds each day over a two-day period (p. 39). The study confirmed that technical BJJ sparring induces significant post-exercise decreases in blood pressure which suggests that BJJ can be recommended as a non-pharmacological treatment strategy for the prevention and management of hypertension (p. 42).

Current research in neuroscience, physiology, and psychology suggests that martial arts practice creates an excitability of the corticospinal motor system, improvements in alertness, and overall executive functions (Johnstone & Marí-Beffa, 2018, p. 7). In the studies conducted by Valdés-Badilla et al. (2021), jiu jitsu was identified as a martial art that improves balance, cognitive function, and mental health (p. 2), and Lambourne and Tomporowski (2010) concluded that irrespective of the type of physical exercise performed, improvements were identified in the participants' executive functions (p. 17). These studies provide some insights into demonstrating how both judo and BJJ practice substantially improve executive functions. This supports the aspirations that Kano had for practitioners in improving their skill acquisition, intellect, and active participation in society. But it equally demonstrates how ideas, when personified, form a cohesive embodiment that connects mind and body.

## 2.6. Embodied knowledge through drills and sparring

Because this research is part of a Doctor of Creative Arts that emphasises the importance of practice in developing new fields of knowledge, I seek to illumine the constituent parts of practice that promote the procedural, habitual, and descriptive aspects of embodied knowledge through practice. The terms "variable practice" and "blocked practice" are necessary to the regime of BJJ and describe the distinct phases of the jiu jitsu studio. Blocked practice, which is associated to the practice of

drills, is completed prior to the variable or randomised practice which is mostly improvisational sparring (Merbah & Meuleman, 2011, pp. 20-21). The aim of this research is to explicate how drills and sparring contribute to the embodied practice of BJJ, but it is not within the scope of this research to provide an exhaustive commentary on the scientific aspects of blocked and variable practice. I simply wish to convey that BJJ is usually learned while listening to the instructor articulate abstractions for the physical behaviour while students imitate what has been demonstrated to them prior to sparring (Ikegami et al., 2019, p. 385). As stated, variable training consists of improvised actions based upon particular drills, this grants students the opportunity for innovation, improved reactions, and to reflect on success and failure. I introduce these concepts to demonstrate the ways that the literature has informed my practice and led to conceptualising the mind-body connection, as well as helping to understand how social and cultural forces shape the embodied experience of BJJ (Habkirk, 2016).

Martial arts scholars Farrer and Whalen-Bridge (2011), move towards defining embodied knowledge in martial arts training as "an existential condition in which the body is the subjective source or intersubjective ground of experience" (p. 1). For that reason, other than a transfer of explicit knowledge between practitioners, the cognitive processes are said to be complemented by the tacit knowledge of nonlinguistic phenomena (Zheyu et al., 202, p. 3). Since routinely practicing BJJ, I feared that I may have become slightly desensitised to the rigidity of the studio practice (dojo) structure. To remedy this, and to cause awareness and deeper reflection, I explored the similarities within the scholarly field of dance to discover a unique philosophical expression that builds knowledge upon what may be intuitively perceived. Dance practitioner and scholar Einav Katan (2016) argues that "physical feelings and recognitions that are evoked within the practice lead the direction of the philosophical questioning" (p. 7). Dance scholarship demonstrates that practice variability provides a deeper conceptual understanding of the movement of bodies together.

According to Fraleigh (1996), dance is a special kind of poetry that gives rise to language, thus creating meaning through movement (p. 86). The truth of dance is spoken through the body, it is a way to body-forth in mutual correspondence with a partner and to communicate with others who are observing (Fraleigh, 1996, p. 87). Similarly, BJJ drills, or pre-arranged technical sequences, and sparring, move the

body in terms of linear (set routines) and nonlinear (non-fixed and adaptive) processing of information. Drills are used in jiu jitsu to assist this process by encouraging action-based sensory feedback, or in other words, sensory inputs that are measured against desired movement outcomes (Crotti et al., 2021). Drills also engage the short-term memory so that the practitioner may follow instructions, respond to questions, and the comprehension of concepts (Chai et al., 2018). For example, a jiu jitsuan (BJJ practitioner) may explore the body through the perambulations of balance breaking, fitting into position, gripping, and timing of technical execution in much the same way as performance training requires actors/dancers to segment the body into upper and lower halves to cultivate practical management of movement in space (Diedrich & Barbe, 2022, p. 27). Training this way encourages attention to response inhibitions that suppress actions which could be inappropriate in a given context and that may interfere with goal-driven behaviour (Xu et al., 2020, p. 2). Sparring, on the other hand, is the free exchange of variable practice, which engages practitioners with a nonlinear approach, favouring exploratory learning and the promotion of individualised movement solutions (Crotti et al., 2021). To complement this transition from linear to nonlinear training, practitioners must also exercise emotional control (or emotional regulation). In other words, poise, or restraint would be required for practitioners when under pressure and in compromising positions, allowing them to remain calm and execute techniques with precision (Côté et al., 2018). The John Nobbs (NSP) practiceenabling concepts of feeling describes how actors and dancers, while in an actual and authentic state, achieve similar control of self-definition by focusing on sensitivity of self and that which lies outside the self (Diedrich & Barbe, 2022, p. 35). The correlation of NSP to jiu jitsu practice in the dojo works on a similar principle of knowing the body, what it is doing, and being aware of the self at any point in time and in space (Diedrich & Barbe, 2022, p. 35). The importance of feeling through the process with others is a way of communing with others as bodies seek to execute techniques with precision and honesty. In terms of embodiment, this process of selfdefinition is a body-centred practice that distinguishes subjects as interconnected with other beings in the world, which then emphasises the possibility for the body to function as the object in a material world (Kershaw & Nicholson, 2013, p. 213).

## 2.7. Appraisal and self-construction through jiu jitsu practice

Psychological research into martial arts practice shows that when participants engage in the practice of jiu jitsu they will bring with them personal beliefs, perceptions of, and prospects about both their own abilities and potential outcomes in practice (Anthony, 2005, pp. 1-2). Fuller and Lloyd (2020) are instrumental in understanding the motivations behind martial arts participants who are in pursuit of improved physical and psychological health. Their research defines and affirms links between martial art pedagogy and an improved psychosomatic condition, particularly with the confidence connection between physical and mental wellbeing (p. 30). Fuller and Lloyd (2020) draw a strong link between the lived body in BJJ and confidence, demonstrating that martial arts training offers a realistic and layered approach to learning (pp. 30-31).

Fuller and Lloyd (2020) further reveal that a high percentage of respondents began martial arts in need of connection with others, to gain a sense of achievement within their lives, and because they were modelling themselves upon high profile martial artists and action stars (pp. 31-32). Provided that success was achieved in training, subjects reported that martial arts practice taught them how to gain mastery over stressors which improves confidence (p. 88). From my personal experiences, failure is a necessary part of the martial arts experience. If students gain a sense of progress, confidence may be gained from reflecting upon failures which leads to deeper learning (Anthony, 2005, p. 2). For example, participants involved in practice will have undergone, and continue to undergo, a process of positive and negative self-appraisal regarding their performance accomplishments. According to Feltz et al. (2008), this can have an enormous effect over the mastery of skill ascribed to the activity (p. 7), but when participants are gauging their improvement, Fuller and Lloyd (2020) suggest that a layered approach such as replicating coaches, role models and peers during practice, and evoking the imagination, are the techniques most widely used (pp. 30-31).

For further examination of the concept of self-efficacy, I explored Albert Bandura's work, *Self-Efficacy: The Exercise of Control* (1997). Bandura's work has assisted this research to help overcome the hermeneutical challenges that may be present during BJJ practice in the studio. Bandura's work prompted me to consider how self-efficacy can be affected by several different experiences. These include

mastery experience, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and physiological states (p. 2). The work of Bandura, Anthony, and Fuller and Lloyd complement the notion of self-efficacy with practitioners in this research so that there is greater understanding when practitioners are confronted with challenging tasks, how those tasks may be confronted, overcome, and mastered.

Throughout my own jiu jitsu journey I have often reflected on why I continue to practice this martial art. I hope for self-improvement, so that I can gauge my progress which returns a certain level of contentment, a sense of achievement, and contributes to my overall wellbeing. I therefore attribute happiness to my routine practice, but it is not always the immediate result of my practice. In most cases, I inject my efforts into training which do not always have favourable returns, and usually cause me frustration and fatigue. Although, in my persistent attitude, the immediate effects of discipline give way to emotions which I express as pleasure and satisfaction. Bandura (1997) argues that this is the state of efficacy belief which "refers to beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the course of action required to produce given attainments" (p. 3).

Happiness can mean many things to many people, but BJJ has taught me perseverance and that through insistence to better myself, happiness can be achieved. Nevertheless, immediate happiness is not always what I am desiring with BJJ training, and I suspect that my students may feel the same. Aristotle argued that the features that people explore in happiness ('eudaimonia'), are pursued in the course of εὐ ζωή (eu zen) or optimum living (ca. 350 B.C.E./1999). Clinical psychologist, Veronika Huta (2013), describes Aristotle's eudaimonia as an individual's personal growth, or the self-actualisation and manifestation of excellence and meaning within their life. According to Aristotle, finding happiness is pleasing and a condition of the soul (ca. 350 B.C.E./1999:11), which is what Gracie believed bridged the connection between the mind and body in BJJ (Elite, 2022). Therefore, happiness, in the context of this study, does form an important aspect of selfimprovement. I have incorporated happiness into the investigative practice within this research of BJJ, its impact on an embodied pedagogy, and how practitioners use these feelings to better understand their emerging self-identity. Philosophically speaking, as stated in Aristotle's *Poetics*, the claim to happiness is contingent upon the need to engage in the creation of 'likeness' and responding to likeness with pleasure which is inherently a human instinct to desire knowledge (Aristotle, trans,

1996) which Merleau-Ponty (2012) had discovered in the reflective process of knowing (p. 390). Likeness has been explored in mimetic theory but that is far from the objectives of this research. Rather, likeness, within the realms of this project, is to be associated with the creative process that leads to form and upon which prospective memory is galvanised to the embodied practice (Brandimonte et al., 2016, p. 1).

McMahan and Estes (2011) expound this notion of the subjective state of happiness. They demonstrate the importance of understanding the distinction between what is hedonic versus eudaimonic experiences. In short, hedonic pleasure is not dependent upon prudential consistency, one may think fantastic thoughts or act without objectivity and arrive at immediate pleasure (p. 4). Eudaimonia on the other hand, seeks far greater meaning and purpose in life (McMahan & Estes, 2011, pp. 4-5), and according to Aristotle, this is not merely enjoyment of expression through art and culture, but as something necessary to the core of human nature (Pitari, 2021). I refer to Aristotle's conception of happiness because the happy person will pursue, through study and action, those things in accord with virtue and not necessarily from treating the body as a utility (1999, 1101a). So, this research examines the pleasure experienced in BJJ through reflexivity conceptualising the body as subject and object, as Archer suggests "[moving] between the past 'Me', present 'l' and future 'You' (Archer, 2013, p. 3). This study will not split the mind and body as it relies on what Fraleigh refers to as the "original togetherness" of body and soul, arguing that there is no need to revert to the hostile terrain of Cartesian dualism (1996, p. 10). It is Dewey (1980) who attests that the "psychologist and philosopher have in recent times been so obsessed with the problem of knowledge that they have treated 'sensations' as mere elements of knowledge" (p. 22). Therefore, I too settle on the organic notion of my practice as besouled, bespirited, and beminded, as though my soul does not separate from my physical body, rather, it is inherently knitted together (Fraleigh, 1996, p. 11).

### 2.7.1. The body in practice as conscious presence

Buttressing the Deweyan body construct, the body subject in its pre-reflexive state is a first order cognition, an awareness of feeling, the quality of somatic awareness of such things as pain, pressure, exhaustion, fatigue, and energy (Gallagher & Zahavi, 2021, p. 2). Then there is perceptual awareness of such things

as desire, nervousness, envy, depression, or happiness. Somatic impressions are phenomena experienced in a pre-reflective state that create an implicit awareness of something prior to reflecting upon it (Gallagher & Zahavi, 2021, p. 2). In contrast, the explicit reflective self-consciousness is a second order phenomenon that depends upon the pre-reflective awareness of ongoing experiences (Gallagher & Zahavi, 2021, p. 2). An abridgement to the pre-reflective and reflective self-consciousness has been simplified in this statement by Fraleigh (1996); "I can never fully become the object of my own attention" (p. 14). Existentially speaking, Fraleigh calls to mind the reflective position that one takes when observing the performance of an activity. For example, I may observe the body-object when I analyse my own hand gripping the collar of my opponent as the object of my attention (p. 14). However, there is difficulty when speaking of the body as an object because I can only observe a particular action or reaction to a certain extent. According to Fraleigh (1996), it is not possible for one's body to become fully the object of their attention (p. 14). The body then, as subject, is what Fraleigh refers to as "reflective consciousness" (p. 14). Thus, as I practice, I am present in the moment not looking forward or back, not in anticipation or imagining of another state of existence. Dewey (1980) calls this "being fully alive" where the possibilities of the present ought to be felt as elements adjoined to "what is here and now" (p. 17).

In a martial art practice, the body subject is aware of the interoceptions of implicit feelings which become manifest through the applications of techniques. These techniques are signifiers of bodily sensations that are pre-reflexive which lead to reflexivity, but only in so far as the dojo is making provisions for such self-referential practice. As Margaret Archer (2013) suggests, "reflexivity is defined here as the regular exercise of the mental ability, shared by all normal people, to consider themselves in relation to their (social) contexts and vice versa" (p. 5). Yet, the inseparable bond between mind and body is bound in a cooperative state that will be presented in this project as having a combined effect greater than the sum of their separate effects. Unlike Kano and Gracie, who merely observed the weaponisation and instrumentalisation of the body object, I hold then that what can be known and subsequently valued about the body and the self in martial arts is largely a gestalt approach of an individual's own making, that is, self-construction (Fraleigh, 2004, p. 33).

On the ever-present subjective dimension of embodiment, Fraleigh (1996) argues that "body-subject is impossible to know as the body-object is known" (p. 43). What she means is that our subjectivity is lived rather than known, although artistically it may be described objectively, of itself is made through moving, perceiving, and feeling (p. 43). In the same way, there is difficulty in viewing the effects of martial arts (and martial artists) as objects alone. I believe that, both as a practitioner and teacher, it is possible to objectively describe and perceive specifiable characteristics of martial arts. I raise this so that what is created in the motion of martial arts practice can be appreciated as knowledge revealed through the participant's own making. That is, evidence of their own self-construction. Dewey (2005) best summarises this in stating that, "[The] real work of an artist is to build up an experience that is coherent in perception while moving with constant change in its development" (p. 53). There is a specific link here to Kano's philosophy for judo, imploring practitioners to embark on a journey of lifelong learning in the hope of improved intellectual and moral development in conjunction with skill (Kano, 2013, pp. 23-24). In a broader context of the lived body, Kano's philosophy utilises the principle of maximising of efficiency so that it can be applied beyond the explicit practice to other areas of a practitioner's life.

This notion of bringing a principle to life in connection with the practice is what social psychologist David Kolb (2015) describes as moving from being acquainted with an experience to becoming familiar with it (p. 69). To simply know a thing *a priori* is pure intuition (Kant, 2009, p. 173), but Kolb's emphasis between the subject and object seeks to entrench the learning experience as familiar knowing, so that the experience becomes more accommodating, useful, and meaningful to an individual (p. 71). The structural dimensions of Kolb's theory are:

- grasp and then comprehend the experience to acquire an assimilated knowledge that fits already acquired ideas;
- 2. gain a convergent knowledge that brings together solutions to problems;
- 3. understand a depth of knowledge through practice that allows for critical thinking and brainstorming; and
- apprehend knowledge through experience and practice that assists the practitioner to reshape ideas and garner new meanings (Kolb, 2015, p. 68).

Dewey (2005) would agree with Kolb for he states, "without external embodiment, an experience remains incomplete" (p. 53). If I apply Kolb and Dewey's ideas to jiu jitsu, practice is crucial for skill development but over time students should discover greater confidence and meaning in their practice and of themselves. This potentially transformative process may lead to greater self-actualisation, familiarity of content, and an application of subject matter that improves self-efficacy in a triadic composition.

The Nobbs Suzuki Praxis (NSP) for actor training influenced my use of the faculty and action of forming ideas to understand the implicit teachings within BJJ practice. In theatre and dance, it is important that performers understand selfrealisation and being as cultivating the energy within the internal subjective invisible body. While the phenomena might not be observed with the naked eye, dancers use an imaginative process to return knowledge points and gain awareness (Diedrich & Barbe, 2023, p. 27). Martial arts practice involves similar imaginative methods which comprise particular roles such as taker and receiver of sequenced moves. For example, traditional Japanese martial arts use the terms tori (taker) and uke (receiver) to denote prescribed roles for action sequences (Kano, 2013, p. 59). As tori takes the opportunity to execute a manoeuvre, he/she must be present in the moment, between fast and slow, developing rhythm, balance, and fitting in. The practice between tori and uke is called *uchi-komi* and it develops one's planting of weight and sensitivity to movement, but it is not so much the expression of energy out of the body as it is concerned with pressing energy into the inner body of feeling (Franchini et al., 2013, p. 3). The practice of uchi-komi is the intimation of possibility while being in the moment. This form of kinaesthesia creates awareness through sensorial efforts and offers a proposition in motion or an exhortation for tori to succeed, while simultaneously imputing uke with the demands of yielding to the execution of technique. Philosopher, Amy Kind (2022), refers to this process as "suggestions designed to help you find your imagination" (p. 33). While the imagination may be associated with the fantastic, Kind demonstrates that engaging the imagination through this type of creative expression, improves skilled activities that are under rational control (p. 35). Therefore, had Kano emphasised that kinaesthetic practice would unlock the imagination and inner body revelations, which would have given clarity to how an embodied practice leads one to project themselves into and onto the world.

### 2.7.2. Implicit meaning through practice

Kavoura et al. (2012) produced psychological research on martial artists which supports the notion of self-reformation and one's perception of wellbeing through embodied practice. Their data reveals that long term training, especially kata, along with traditional approaches to coaching, helped to reduce participant aggression (p. 8). Equally, long term training suggests that practitioners can manage with perceived environmental threats, lessen worry, and reduce anxiety (p. 10). Additionally, Kavoura et al's. (2012), research shows that martial arts training helps with providing individual purpose and meaning which gives practitioners confidence to adapt to everyday circumstances (p. 11). Kavoura et al., summarise their findings by suggesting that martial arts training positively contributes to a revealed and meaningful relationship between one's body/self, others, feelings, situational outcomes, martial practice, and actualisation.

Farrer (2018) argues that this type of participant observation helps to articulate immanent and emerging ideas in martial arts (p. 138), and this has influenced my use of Participatory Action Research as the main methodology. For example, Farrer's research on participant observation demonstrates that this methodology enables access to groups, such as martial arts clubs, with the opportunity to gain unique insider perspectives that will allow the outcomes to emerge through practice (p. 138). Similarly, I hope to offer current and future participants meaningful engagement with each other, increasing their mutual respect, and courtesy towards others, while thoughtfully reproducing a body of knowledge (Judkins & Bowman, 2017).

From my own observation, the science of jiu jitsu is a pre-reflexive and reflexive process and it constantly challenges the practitioner to examine their beliefs, judgements, practices, and biases which is how the subjects of this research became participants in action research. It is obvious to see why Kano insisted that judo offered a unique pedagogy for skilful, moral, and intellectual development, because the truth of the science animates principles, illuminates perspectives in physiology and increases thoughtfulness towards others (Pedrini & Jennings, 2021, p. 2). Drawing upon Kano's philosophy encouraged me to understand how the internal diversity and cross-institutional variance of martial pedagogies offer differing viewpoints and perspectives. This supports the notion that jiu jitsu bodies are more

than mere instruments of action, they are sources of knowledge and contrasting expressions, and I have witnessed how martial arts in all the various styles may afford new and different approaches to the cultivation of self, shared, social, and ecological benefits (Pedrini & Jennings, 2012, p. 2). Having observed how practice cultivates self-construal and self-perception leads to a discussion of the methodology used in this thesis.

# **CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### 3.1. Introduction

In this thesis, I examine and describe BJJ through consciously framing the phenomenon as an arts practice, and through the experience of practicing with my students. The following link is my archive of works where the participants and researcher have collaborated and recorded their insights, experience and knowledge of BJJ practice (<a href="https://rodeadiejiujitsu.wixsite.com/rodeadiejiujitsu">https://rodeadiejiujitsu.wixsite.com/rodeadiejiujitsu</a>). This archive serves to demonstrate how jiu jitsu exists in my dojo/studio as something practiced, and as something constructed and revealed to me and my students. Therefore, the methodology shifts between the self while being inclusive of the other participants. I examine jiu jitsu through a phenomenological interpretive lens to describe the experience and embed the data collection and analysis in Participatory Action Research (PAR) and Grounded Theory (GT). Thus, my description of jiu jitsu depends on me being a willing co-creator of the phenomenon. The primary reason for using multiple methodologies is to create better insights and more effective questions around BJJ practice (Smith & Nizza, 2022, p. 4).

### 3.2. Research questions

While GT does not encourage research questions prior to the collecting of data, rather, they are encouraged to emerge from the data retrieval and analysis, my use of PAR guided participant (autoethnographical) responses on embodied practice under several emergent themes:

- 1. An overall synopsis of what embodied practice means as a jiu jitsu practitioner;
- 2. the effects of liminality, from transition to reaggregation; and
- 3. personal reflections on BJJ benefiting self-improvement in formation. This has assisted in creating a succinct overall, central research question, restated here from the Introduction:

How does the embodied and routine teaching/practice of jiu jitsu lead practitioners to a sense of self-improvement?

In order to answer this, I have designed several relevant sub-questions to manage the collection and analysis of the data:

- 1. What is "embodied practice" in the context of a small BJJ dojo in regional Australia?
- 2. What are the participant experiences of self-improvement and/or agency through embodied practice?
- 3. How might these practices affect or produce self-improvement?

Recent research into the practice of martial arts has contributed to a greater understanding of the effects that martial arts have on the socio-psychological construction of health and wellbeing (Fuller & Lloyd, 2020, p. 6). The data collection of this research does not attempt to examine those constructions in great detail. It is important to point out that the research questions explore the phenomenon of martial arts practice as observed through jiu jitsu, to try and understand jiu jitsu as embodied and how this may inform the concept of agency and the life of formation for the practitioner. The promotion of health and self-improvement may appear complementary to participant descriptions of how jiu jitsu practice benefits their concept of self-construal and formation. Therefore, terms such as self-improvement, happiness, self-efficacy, connection, and confidence become useful terms in the eidetic reduction of embodied practice.

# 3.3. Ethical clearance for embodied practice and Brazilian jiu jitsu

Ethical clearance was granted by the University of Southern Queensland as follows: Application identifier H22REA241, date of approval, 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2022, with the final work entitled *Jiu jitsu and the Lived Body: A Triadic Composition of Embodied Practice* having been approved to conduct my research for direct recruitment and/or observation of human participants.

### 3.4. The project

The aim of this research is to engage in BJJ, with my students, to explore embodied jiu jitsu as a routine practice and discover how this might lead to the construction of identity, self-construal, and how we as practitioners project ourselves into and onto the world. With that in mind, there is scope built into the reflective practice as part of PAR and GT that encourages implicit meaning to emerge about a

practitioner's overall embodied formation and acceptance into the community of practitioners (Finlay, 2008, p. 2). In my 37 years' experience and from what has been revealed through this research, the idea of embodiment, identity, the projected self, and self-improvement can be demonstrated in multiple ways, such as taking the podium in competition, submitting to opponents during training, or elevating in rank. These are all external demonstrations of achievement, however, what is being examined in this research is how practitioners might perceive themselves, their progression, what this means in terms of embodiment, and how they peer into their subjective state to discover the various states and transitions. This is what Turner (1966) refers to as the "dialectic of the development cycle" (p. 97), which relates to the process that involves succession, belonging, identity, and overall formation in the group (p. 97). Thus, PAR helps to establish the process of liminality and reveal the phenomenon of embodied jiu jitsu that is reported in the findings in Chapter 5.

There are several observations that I made in the dojo prior to beginning this research, which led me to consider that self-improvement does emerge through regular practice. What this research does is explore this practice within its greater context and meaning, as I seek to examine the acculturation process to support the construction of self-construal through embodied practice. The results of these findings contribute deeper understanding about the participants' overall formation as a jiu jitsuan and provide greater insights into the benefits of living the BJJ lifestyle. I believe that this investigative process has more concretely anchored the research to the intuitions and claims made by Kano and further explicated by the works of Fraleigh.

Progress was then analysed in terms of how practitioners described the way that they engaged with jiu jitsu, their jiu jitsu body, with others, how skill is the expression of the body lived, how individual experiences are perceived, and in what ways they contribute to the community in practice. To complement this, somatic practice was achieved through the use of kata and randori to bring abstractions into physical form which assists practitioners in becoming familiarised with practice and group culture (Carter & Grahn, 2016, p. 1). For most generalised motor programs (GMP) in BJJ, the drills of kata and the variable practice of randori are utilised to develop skill competencies (Peacock, 2019, October 9).

While this study does not pursue metacognition to any great length, I do raise this as a potentially significant thinking skill involving a person's control and

monitoring of their own learning, including emotion (NSW Department of Education, 2021). This idea led me to consider current research in neuroscience and psychology which suggests that martial arts practice creates an excitability of the corticospinal motor system, improving alertness and overall executive functions (Johnstone & Marí-Beffa, 2018, p. 7). This guided my reading towards variability of practice as a mechanism for the application of imagination, especially as it relates to participation in Action Research methods.

The data drawn from this research project was undertaken in the small regional town of Scone in New South Wales between 2022 and 2023. Martial arts, being a broad and elusive term, was referred to throughout the interviews, but BJJ practitioners will often use both BJJ and martial arts interchangeably. The research sampled a group of participants practicing BJJ to understand the phenomenon as a lived body concept, and how practitioners perceive self-improvement during routinised training. Fraleigh's influence on my work as an interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) helps me to interpret the phenomenon of jiu jitsu and examine human experience from the point of view of those experiencing BJJ in the dojo (Smith & Nizza, 2022, p. 6). The focus of the research deliberately sets out to understand the content of the accounts provided by participants through video recorded practice and interview questions that correlate to their experiences. Participant responses were captured through a student voiceover commentary to accompany each video recording. Recorded interviews consisted of both male (n = 7) and female practitioners (n = 2), drawn locally, from previously enrolled students, at the Eadie Academy of Jiu jitsu in Scone, NSW. Participants were between 18 and 70 years of age and came from a range of vocational and socioeconomic backgrounds, with English being their primary language. I also drew upon reflections and observations of practice in the dojo which have been captured in reflective essays that are accessed through the website of archived works (this is further discussed below in Section 3.6).

### 3.5. An overarching phenomenological interpretive approach

There exists a reciprocal exchange between bodies engaging on the floor in BJJ practice, and so my ability to interpret the phenomenon of BJJ has benefited from a comparative analysis to dance in the work of Sondra Fraleigh. The work of Fraleigh (1996) clearly demonstrates a philosophical and methodological

compatibility that influenced my approach to this research. Her method of reduction of dance speaks to bodies in motion with other bodies and discovering individual efforts that share common ground with others. For example, an eidetic reduction of dance cannot be observed by Fraleigh at a distance because as she says, "[The] lived body refers to my personal manner of existing, and the meanings attached to this manner of existing, in a world in which I experience presence" (p. 32). While I have discovered this to be true of my own BJJ experiences, that my BJJ cannot exist without me, Fraleigh's work has led me to consider that my BJJ experience also depends upon the body of another. This notion is comparable to Merleau-Ponty's (2012) coexistence and perceptual consciousness, as the "subject of behaviour", not as "constituting consciousness" that is a "pure being – for – itself" (p. 367).

With the intention of successfully observing, experiencing, and describing BJJ, I drew upon Fraleigh's use of reductionism to assist me in describing how two material bodies might coalesce during meditated and deliberate moments of practice. As a result of using Fraleigh's work, the lived body concept took on new meaning for me, demonstrating that a subjective interpretation of the lived nature of human motion, particularly with BJJ, depends upon an engagement with others, as might the development of personal identity. Fraleigh provides clarity around how aspects of PAR and GT work consistently throughout this research in matching description to action.

The argument presented in this research suggests that my description of BJJ depends upon a subjective experience which is made manifest through the necessary synchronous undertaking in the practice with another (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, p. 369). Without being embrangled by the intricacies of phenomenological literature, Fraleigh (1996) demonstrates to me how to explore a nondualistic view of participation Action Research without requiring an exhaustive critical analysis of phenomenology (p. xiv). So, I too use the primary insights of the literature to advance my understanding of the lived body in BJJ. Taking this self-evidence approach provides a theoretical lens as the tool for getting to the core of BJJ practice while I attempt to describe what is basic to the phenomena under examination (Smith & Nizza, 2022, p. 7).

## 3.6. Multiple methodology approach

The above assists in foregrounding my assertion that the experience of jiu jitsu exists as embodied knowing, a lived-body phenomenon, so that any reduction and description of jiu jitsu requires capturing the whole experience. To do this, I use multiple methodologies that make provisions for participants to engage in the practice, undergo recording, reflective practice, and be afforded the opportunity to express in written and oral forms their somatic transformations. PAR is used to capture life in the dojo, the action of experience, and be able to conduct research with participants. PAR is evidenced through this research by way of active engagement, practice-base enquiry, and reflexivity. To complement PAR, I use Grounded Theory (GT) to balance the emergent nature of the research. I evidence GT in the collection, coding, and analysis of data. These methods of engaged enquiry coalesce into a phenomenological interpretive approach that will yield a greater degree of knowledge in the findings chapter.

### 3.6.1. Participatory Action Research (PAR)

Jacques Chevalier and Daniel Buckles (2019) make an interesting distinction between Action Research (AR) initiatives and PAR. The greater emphasis on "diagnostic inquiries" in AR does not necessarily require that participants must be directly involved (p. 25), whereas PAR does require genuine participation and involvement with participants. Chevalier and Buckles (2019) argue that with PAR "[participants] are co-researchers or 'co-inquirers sharing power and collaboratively making decisions' at all steps of the cooperative action inquiry process" (p. 25). Susan Spaniol (2004) says, "the goal of PAR is to empower people to act by giving them a voice and facilitate their reflection on conditions and issues that matter to them" (p. 27). This is necessary for a practice-based and practice-led approach (Candy & Edmonds, 2018, p. 65), especially given that I will be working with my students analysing how practice may lead to self-improvement and formation (Bortoli et al., 2001, p. 61). PAR is present during the interview process which drew inspiration from the concepts of Etienne Wenger's (2022) seminal work on Communities of Practice. Wenger's dimensions of practice highlight the significance of the duality and complementarity of participation and reification processes which facilitated participant interviews, particularly where new knowledge emerged (p. 62).

Accompanying Wenger and further illuminating PAR, I drew upon the work of Arnold Van Gennep's *The Rites of Passage* (1960) and Victor Turner's *The Ritual Process* (1966) to learn from participants how they participate in a community of practice in this research. Wenger, Van Gennep, and Turner are instrumental in the interviewing process and interpreting how somatic transformations might occur at the site where active, physical meaning, and sense-making is taking place. Their literature correlates to the lived experience that enables PAR to give a voice to participants, which is why I consider them theoretical anchors that belong to the methodology of this research.

Fostering PAR places meaning and sense-making in the hands of the practitioners so they can identify, along with the researcher, important aspects about their individual and group practice: what is required in the practice, how the practice will be done, and what can be done with the data (Brown, 2022). Professor of Culture and Learning, Mogens Sparre, describes PAR as a voluntary form of democratic research, redefining historical conceptions of what it means to take part in and help produce outcomes from research (Sparre, 2020). Because some students within my research have attained high levels of proficiency and expertise within BJJ, it would be remis of me to exclude such an idea. To guide my application of PAR I turn to Chevalier and Buckles (2019), as well as Spaniol (2004), who have written extensively about monitoring and evaluating PAR as a method and how it assists in the design and facilitation of programs in the research. Given that the aim of my research is to connect the specific methods with the origin of my theoretical underpinnings, Chevalier and Buckles provide a pragmatic and systematic way to improve practice of action-based inquiry when examining models of action (Chevalier & Buckles, 2019, p. 5).

PAR appears to offer a way forward for the creation of data sets that illuminate embodied experience, all while capturing and conveying as much as possible about the practice to comprehend the body at work in its animated state. A strictly textual approach would not suffice to comprehend what the "flesh" experiences, at least not from words or pictures alone (Bowman, 2018, p. 9). To do so would impose limitations upon the reflective practice and hinder the process of learning (Bertolini et al., 2010) but data can be reviewed which may encourage more emergent ideas and concepts that can be sequentially organised and summarised (Charmaz, 2008).

The unpredictable nature of martial arts, when improvised, does fall back on its combative roots and there is no way of predicting what the practitioner imagines when engaged in such a practice (Ravn et al., 2021, p. 13). This challenged me to minimise preconceived ideas and assumptions about my own and others' practice and use simultaneous data collection and analysis to inform my observations, helping me to remain open to varied explanations, and to focus my analysis to construct middle-range theories (Charmaz, 2008). Essentially, embedding the research in PAR along with GT allows for the phenomenon of martial arts to be observed while being practiced in the studio and is what led to the understanding of a triadic composition of jiu jitsu.

## 3.6.2. Participant sample

**Table 1**Age range of participants, accumulated hours, class attendance rating

Age range	No. of participants	Accumulated hours	Attendance % over 15 weeks
18-24	2	180	80
25-34	2	112	49.7
35-44	2	112	49.7
45+	3	157.5	46

Of those providing recorded reflections, seven were male and two were female. The samples ranged in age, which is illustrated in Table 1. Participants according to age range achieved a percentage of class attendance based on accumulated hours of training out of a possible 112.5 teaching hours under instruction. The accumulative hours per age range were divided against the number of participants for that range and received a total percentage for class attendance. Table 2 illustrates how each subject will be referred to in the findings and illustrates the practitioners overall routinised practice.

**Table 2**Subjects (participants), age, belt ranks, and years training. Ranking colours from lowest to highest are white, blue, purple, brown, and black

Subject code	Age	Belt rank	Years of training
Н	19	Purple	9
L	23	Black	14
D	31	Blue	3
E	32	White	14 months
Υ	36	Blue	4
S	40	Brown	9
Р	45	Brown	10
R	46	Purple	5
К	47	Purple	10

## 3.6.3. Pedagogic position

The following outlines the approach for data collection beginning with blocked practice: 1) Teacher-centred focus that comprises; a) teaching fundamental principles of BJJ that are universally applied; and b) formalising the class into a structured environment for concentration on sequences and subdivided techniques with compliance. Variable practice begins with 2) Teacher-guided focus that comprises; a) performing set techniques without compliance; and b) engaging competitively with others in sparring and discovering new ways of doing things through improvisation. My teacher-guided focus generates representative learning designs through different scenarios that encourages visualisation and practice of attack and defence techniques. I am, however, not bound by teacher-guided practice and make use of a constructed alignment of jiu jitsu pedagogy. This offers a studentcentred scaffolding that ensures my practitioners can interpret and represent the tasks, as well as give recognition to constraints such as legal obligations, cultural differences, and empathy towards others. With this in mind, I simplified tasks whereby subdividing complex sequences, moving from technique dominated approaches and encouraging students to collaborate and discover their individual

expression. The approaches used to capture and convey this experience are defined below and assist in illuminating aspects of my overall research question.

## 3.7. Grounded Theory (GT)

As not much is yet known about embodied practice to agency and formation in BJJ, reflective practice will be necessitated by an emergent method for the collection of data. Kathy Charmaz (2008) influences the basic tenets of my research with her explication of Grounded Theory (GT) which includes the following:

- 1. minimising preconceived ideas about the research;
- 2. using both data collection and analysis to inform each other;
- 3. being open to different explanations or ways of understanding the data; and
- 4. using the data analysis to form middle-range theories (p. 155).

This approach, in conjunction with PAR and phenomenological interpretation, has informed the development of my research method. GT is relevant to this research because embodied jiu jitsu is a largely uncharted and dynamic phenomenon (Charmaz, 2008, p. 155). Since participants (including myself) have been engaged in reflective practice, inductive reasoning makes for certain conditions and consequences to emerge from the practice (Charmaz, 2008, p. 155). Emergence, as Charmaz (2008) states, "is fundamentally a temporal concept; it presupposes a past, assumes the immediacy of the present, and implies a future" (p. 157). That led me to see that Kano (2005) provides the historical background of jiu jitsu which presupposes that jiu jitsu when embraced dutifully will lead to the betterment of oneself and society (p. 80). I see this as an oversimplification and a vague universalisation of jiu jitsu. Questions still remain as to how individuals benefit from practice and how does the practice of jiu jitsu become socially acceptable.

Kano's intuitions may lead to contentious debates over acceptable maxims of morality, which means that one could never be quite sure how their practice leads them to civic virtue and sociality. Jiu jitsu can never be wholly abstract to this degree, because no two people are the same except that they share the inescapable universal human condition of corporeal existence. On the other hand, individuals bring with them a unique presence that situates the self in the moment as a cocreator of jiu jitsu made manifest. It is with the subject known as 'I' that jiu jitsu takes form and then proceeds to the body object. But the body object as me can never be of itself divorced from the subjective state. I believe that Kano and Gracie effectively

defined the participating self in the situation of jiu jitsu, but then, observations of a participating self would still be a detached attitude (Tillich, 1952, pp. 123-24). I raise this to clarify the point made by Charmaz (2008), "[That] emergence contains subjective elements, as well as collectively agreed-upon objective properties" (p. 157). Comparatively, jiu jitsuans come together in the shared space of the dojo and agree to the objectives of training practices and traditions, but as Fraleigh (1996) says, "I can never fully become the object of my own attention" (p. 14). Therefore, treating the body as a tool would be inconsistent with seeking to understand the body subject, and, in keeping with the research objectives of this project, embodied knowledge through practice could not be revealed through merely instrumentalising the body. This further demonstrates that any resolve to Kano's intuitions of jiu jitsu first begins with the subjective state of each practitioner. From within the subjectivity of embodied jiu jitsu the process that leads to self-improvement can be discovered. That process makes provisions to understand how change occurs within practitioners and where the emergence of new knowledge can occur (Charmaz, 2008, p. 157).

Charmaz also suggests that temporality cannot be ignored in the process of emergence. I introduced this notion of temporality in Chapter 1, discussing the Japanese philosophical understanding of kotodama and Mitsue's conception of the thinking heart (1811/2011, p. 1180), because what is being felt by practitioners can only be experienced as the self is located in the experience of jiu jitsu from momentto-moment. I discuss this notion of self-revealing knowledge further in my reflective essay entitled The Embodiment and Co-Creation of Jiu jitsu which illustrates the importance of the subjective knower as 'I' in understanding embodied practice in relation to other bodies (Eadie, 2022, pp. 3-4). Given that the lived-body is what is under examination, GT encouraged me as the researcher/practitioner to move beyond the preconceptions of Kano and Gracie (Eadie, 2022, p. 2), and illuminated for me how crucial the role of emergence is in raising the level of theoretical knowledge for analysis (Charmaz, 2008, p. 158). Even though emergence is central to the notion of new knowledge, Charmaz (2008) reveals that the conditions under which I have examined the research fall within a constructivist grounded theory paradigm which is less likely to be associated with conditional/consequential coding matrixes into extant categories (p. 160). What that means is that, unlike other researchers who examine from afar, I am embedded in the research process to

observe the phenomena from within and I am not confined within the strictures of any given data coding method or research methodology (p. 160). This calls to mind another important issue Charmaz raises with GT, that it assumes the immediacy of the present, and implies the future (p. 157). John Dewey (1980) aptly states that, "only when the past ceases to trouble and anticipations of the future are not perturbing is a being wholly united with his [sic] environment and therefore fully alive" (p. 17). Again, this reiterates the necessity of capturing the subjectivity of human agency over observations of instrumentality.

As I engaged with my students in practice over a 15-week period of training (December 2022 – March 2023), I reflected on the practice of jiu jitsu which moved me to write reflective essays (1-3) and publish a journal article (essay 4). These are provided on the website of archived works and are accessible through the link provided: (<a href="https://rodeadiejiujitsu.wixsite.com/rodeadiejiujitsu">https://rodeadiejiujitsu.wixsite.com/rodeadiejiujitsu</a>). I have used these essays for reflection and to provide context in the formation of identity and self-reformation as described throughout Chapter 4 in the findings.

# 3.7.1 Coding and categories

The initial coding included analysing and interrogating the gathered data through GT's use of theoretical sampling using video reflections of participants. I then engaged with my students and external collaborators through interactive interviews that encouraged a reflexivity that challenged preconceived ideas and assumptions (Charmaz, 2008, p. 163). As stated by Charmaz (2008), "emergent categories form the basis of theoretical sampling" (p. 166). This was crucial given that as a researcher/participant, I did not anticipate where the theoretical enquiry would take me (Charmaz, 2008, p. 166). Once the theoretical sampling concluded, ideas of participation such as group acceptance, self-improvement, identity, and self-formation began to emerge. I then conducted an open-coding of the data that assisted with the creation of emerging themes and trends such as processes of liminality, reflections of embodied practice, and conceptualising the formation process and the benefits of routinised practice.

GT allowed me to process the data into categories and sub-categories for the purposes of theoretical saturation (Charmaz, 2008, p. 167). For example, the first phase of data collection (video synopsis and reflection) occurred during the 15-week training regime. Practitioners reflected on their participation in the community of

practice by providing a narrated video synopsis of what embodied practice means to them. Participants described training with others as key to their formation which caused me to further explore Van Gennep's (1960) The Rites of Passage so as to gain greater understanding of how practitioners create self-construal and perceive self-improvement. According to Charmaz (2008), taking this approach demonstrates how researchers need to explore categories as they emerge (p. 167). Thus, participants were asked specific questions in relation to separation, transition, and reaggregation or acceptance. This prompted further elucidation of the formation process which involved exploring concepts such as self-reflection, reciprocity, selfefficacy, variability of practice, imagination, and exploring the agential nature of engaging with actants throughout the phases mentioned in Section 3.8 below. The creation of interactive interviews was part of the axial coding process which developed around the idea of being and becoming (Böhm, 2004, p. 272). It was through the open-coding of the practitioner's synopsis of embodied practice that created a connection to Victor Turner's (1979) state of being betwixt and between (p. 234). This then led me to the concept of liminality in the jiu jitsuans' self-construal and formation.

To explain the relationships between categories, survey data were downloaded via Google forms, an online survey tool, used for both convenience and sampling techniques. These non-probability qualitative approaches to sampling data were selected based on participant accessibility and availability due to the small demographic of a rural town in Scone, New South Wales. Data were collated using Microsoft Excel and stored on a personal computer by the website creator. Video commentaries and interactive interviews were recorded via Zoom, uploaded to the archived works website, and stored on the personal computer of the researcher. Follow-up interviews are hosted as unlisted videos on YouTube.

Data from the surveys were analysed using a thematic and content analysis to capture theme development, semantic meaning, and the conceptualisation of key concepts in the research (Braun & Clarke, 2022, p. 1). Using PAR and GT approaches, data from the interviews were deciphered using narrative and thematic analysis. PAR and GT make provisions for what is shared in the dojo to be observed and captured (Braun & Clarke, 2022, p. 2). All interviews were transcribed and uploaded to Microsoft Excel spreadsheets by the researcher and stored on a personal computer. Interviews and survey data were analysed in relation to

frequencies of responses and tabulated for examination of the data. Frequencies indicated an overall picture of the data, while tabulations enabled examination of patterns and trends in responses.

#### 3.8. Phases and methods of data collection

The research reported in this project adopted a multiple methods approach that was organised into four distinct phases and outlined as follows:

Phase 1 (March 2021 – March 2022): During this phase, preparation was made for Confirmation of Candidature which included reading of literature, translating ideas into practice, and engaging with participants in the dojo in practice. This phase of the research began with creating content for application in a student-centred and participant practice context. The context for practice occurred in the dojo during regular class time covering a broad range of BJJ standing and ground techniques in multiple situations. The participants who engaged in this research have varying degrees of expertise and knowledge in jiu jitsu. A 15-week schedule of practice was devised to cover the breadth of techniques, but students were also reflecting upon their previous knowledge and experience and were not exclusively reporting upon practice that occurred within that period. The schedule merely demonstrates what can be taught and practiced throughout the life of the jiu jitsuan and helped establish a backdrop to the key themes such as embodied practice, formation, and the process of liminality.

Phase 2 (April 2022 – Nov 2022): Ethical clearance was obtained from the University of Southern Queensland and a student/practitioner briefing was conducted to explain the research objectives and participant requirements prior to commencement of Phase 3. This included participant information and consent forms as well as a participant schedule of practice. I authored reflective essays (1-3) which captured and conveyed ideas and meanings of practice along with reflections on my 37 years of martial arts training. I also included one of my published philosophical articles on the ethics of martial arts for a general reflection on practice. These essays were collated and uploaded to the website of archived works.

**Phase 3 (Dec 2022 – March 2023):** During this phase, video recordings of students in practice in the dojo were collated by the videographer. The videographer then independently interviewed each participant privately in the dojo once class had ceased. As a researcher and practitioner, I was not present during the interview

period to minimise researcher bias and allow the participants to have greater freedom when providing feedback. I was aware that being the researcher and teacher could influence the responses of participants. To mitigate researcher bias, and to ensure integrity of interviews, participants were briefed that two external collaborators (Richard Norton and George Adams) reviewed the interviews and provided feedback through interactive interviews with the researcher about the processes undertaken. The recorded participant interviews addressed the main research question outlined above and were then adapted for use as a voiceover narration for their video recorded practice. These recordings provided a synopsis of jiu jitsu practice and gave perspectives about what embodied practice meant to each student. The narrated video recordings were transcribed, timestamped, and recorded onto a spreadsheet, and revealed new ideas in relation to personal identity, perceptions of self-improvement, imagination, and working with others in a community of practice. This led to further examination of participant formation and deeper analysis of the triadic union.

Interactive interviews were then conducted by the researcher to elicit further information in relation to what emerged from the video recordings. Interactive interviews were organised over a two-week period and formed an axial coding of data that refined and differentiated concepts (Böhm, 2004, p. 271) such as perceptions of embodied practice, to formation of becoming a jiu jitsuan, to active participation in a community of practice. The axial coding provided greater insight into how agency is formed in jiu jitsu practice and how practitioners perceive benefits and self-improvement over time. The interactive interviews were developed around the concept of embodied practice to examine causal conditions of liminality from separation through to acceptance (Böhm, 2004, p. 272). The causal conditions explored the temporal and spatial relationships of practice in the dojo which led to discovering the context of motivation to perceived benefits of training. Aspects of social action were revealed through the formation process of liminality and new knowledge emerged about psychological self-efficacy due to jiu jitsu practice. The contextual conditions of the dojo led to greater understanding about jiu jitsu being perceived as something that positively benefits the health of practitioners but also positively impacts other areas of practitioners' lives such as family, relationships, and work. The interactive interviews were then transcribed and recorded onto a

spreadsheet according to the major concepts that had emerged from the video recordings.

External collaborators (Richard Norton and George Adams) were then invited to watch the participant recordings and interviews and then engage with the researcher to explore concepts and ideas from the recordings and provide feedback in relation to the research objectives. The feedback from external collaborators was then transcribed and recorded onto a spreadsheet for data analysis in relation to key themes such as embodiment, formation of a jitsuan, and the process of liminality in a community of practice. Axial coding led to further data collection in the form of online participant surveys. According to GT, this is a recommended strategy of asking repeated questions in the course of investigation, ensuring that the phenomena has been captured and that there has been an adequate theoretical saturation (Böhm, 2004, p. 273). Data from the selective coding broadened the scope of inquiry into self-improvement to include general questions relative to health, physical conditioning, and self-efficacy.

**Phase 4 (April 2023 – July 2023)** included completion of the data coding, and construction of the exegesis including findings and recommendations. The above information is tabulated to provide further clarity, and details of each collected data set follow in Table 3.

**Table 3**Phases of data collection

Phases	Activities	Data Collection	Dates	Outcomes
Phase 1	Preparation of Confirmation of Candidature. Reading of literature, translation of ideas into practice.	Engaging practice in the dojo.	March 2021 – March 2022	Draft of practice schedule to cover general techniques and overall principles of practice.
Phase 2	Ethical clearance obtained. Student/practitioner briefing conducted. Videographer and website under construction.	Consent forms given to practitioners and external collaborators along with schedule of practice and all briefing notes.	April 2022 – Nov 2022	Consent forms returned and signed. Briefing conducted and schedule of practice refined and ready for deployment.
Phase 2	Reflective essays	Reflection of experience captured in essays.	April 2022 – Nov 2022	Reflective essays captured thoughts and ideas presented through initial phases of research and in reflection of general martial arts experience. Essays uploaded to website of archived works.

Phases	Activities	Data Collection	Dates	Outcomes
Phase 3	Student/participant practice schedule released.		Dec 2022	Session consisting of 3 x 5-week blocks totalling 15 weeks of tutorials. Each week consists of 3 tutorials focused on 3 main categories: Takedowns, ground fighting, and submissions.
Phase 3	Student/practitioner video recording and synopsis.	Recorded video with voiceover narration compiled and uploaded to website or archived works.	Dec 2022	Recorded video and narration transcribed and recorded on spreadsheet.
Phase 3	Interactive interviews	Axial coding of information to address the emergence of ideas relative to recorded practice. Recorded via Zoom.	Dec 2022 – March 2023	Interactive interviews were transcribed and recorded onto a spreadsheet. Zoom recordings were uploaded to website of archived works.
Phase 3	External collaborator interviews	Recorded via Zoom.	Feb 2023 – March 2023	External collaborator interviews were transcribed and recorded onto a spreadsheet. Zoom recordings were uploaded to website of archived works.

Phases	Activities	Data Collection	Dates	Outcomes
Phase	Student/participant	Questionnaires 1-6	Feb	Questionnaire data
3	online questionnaires.	accessed via	2023 –	captured selective
		website of archived	March	coding to saturate the
		works.	2023	theoretical field of
				knowledge and other
				relative concepts or
				ideas. These data
				were collated via
				Google forms and
				recorded on a
				spreadsheet retained
				by the researcher.
Phase	Completion of findings		March	First draft edited.
4	and writing of thesis.		2023	
	First draft.			
Phase	Completion of thesis		April	Final editing of thesis
4	with recommendations.		2023 –	for submission.
	Final stages of editing.		Aug	
			2023	

## 3.8.1. Student-centred: participant practice contexts

Prior to the narrated videos, questionnaires, and interviews, participants were asked to complete the following regimes a guide to reflect on their jiu jitsu practice which consisted of 3 x 5-week blocks totalling 15 weeks of tutorials between December 2022 and February 2023. Each week consisted of three tutorials focused on three main categories: takedowns, ground fighting, and submissions. These three areas of focus best surmise jiu jitsu practice and cover the ground necessary for participants to gauge how the entire practice in motion reflects their jiu jitsu journey and may encourage insight, learning, and teaching. Participants then provided feedback through personal reflection and narrated their own experiences in relation to the main research question and sub-questions. The following tutorial regime is merely a guide to demonstrate the versatility of BJJ training. Participants were not

restricted to the regime to provide reflections and commentary about their practice, and the regime did not necessitate the production of research questions as BJJ is a fluid practice with a considerable amount of improvisation. In addition to this, participants had the option of improvising their responses to the videographer or preparing written notes on their reflections. These reflections related to the participants' overall experiences and practice of jiu jitsu and were not restricted by the key learning outcomes schedule. The learning outcomes schedule merely provided insight into how the practice of jiu jitsu can be systematised for routine practice. The participants have experienced the key learning outcomes many times over throughout their jiu jitsu journey.

#### **Block 1: Takedowns**

Week 1: Introduction to the principles of throwing: Gripping, posture, movement, unbalancing, combination techniques, and counter techniques using *Sumi Gaeshi* 

Week 2: Specific focus on Uki Waza, Tani Otoshi

Week 3: Meshing techniques from weeks 1-2 with Yoko Otoshi, Yoko Wakare and Ude Gaeshi

Week 4: From throws to ground fighting: Principles of pinning and positioning for transitions

Week 5: In class revision

### **Block 2: Ground fighting**

Week 1: Impact control: Pulling guard and passing the guard

Week 2: Effective strangulation and choking: From the guard and top position

Week 3: Principles of joint locks: From the guard and top position

Week 4: Setting up for submissions: Knee on belly, side control, and back control

Week 5: In class revision

# **Block 3: Submissions**

Week 1: Exposure to submissions, safety, and self-care: Dangers of strangulation and joint locks, capitalising on mistakes, concealment, and counter defence

Week 2: Breaking through defences

Week 3: Pre-emptive attacks: What is baiting?

Week 4: Completing the sequence from throw to submission

Week 5: Final in class revision and reflections of each phase to be recorded via Zoom

## 3.8.2. Participant observation

Participant observation offers a way to examine martial arts in practice, which Linda Candy and Ernest Edmonds (2018) argue is the basis for practice-led research (p. 64). This means that my research does not depend upon the creation of a particular artefact, but that new knowledge is gained through engaging with existing practices (Candy & Edmonds, 2018, p. 65). Hence, with my students, I will go through the "process of practice" (practice-based) to advance new knowledge about the practice (practice-led) (Candy & Edmonds, 2018, p. 65). To broaden my understanding of this concept, I turned to Candy and Edmonds who argue that the outcomes from this type of research and creative practice represent a wide variety of contributions to culture and knowledge (p. 65).

My immersion into the training of jiu jitsu with my students enabled me to reflect on the experience as a researcher, teacher, and participant. This made provisions for the use of field notes to devise interviews which enabled me to critically reflect on how the data produces answers to the research question. A reflexive process was complementary to the research methods to achieve this outcome, maintain continuity, and ensure that my research remained honest and transparent throughout the investigation (Vaittinen, 2016, p. 69).

#### 3.8.3. Reflective essays

During the research phases and data collection (outlined above), I engaged in a process of reflective essay writing that enabled me to comment on practice, what I had felt during my martial arts journey and as I engaged in the research of embodied practice. Rather than use a chronological reflective journal, I formalised the reflective process in essay form to help me intellectualise my contributions to marital arts studies. These essays can be viewed in the archive of works, see https://rodeadiejjujitsu.wixsite.com/rodeadiejjujitsu.

## 3.8.4. Audio/visual recordings of practice with participant reflections

Practitioner experience was captured on video recordings and contains a compilation of their practice and the practitioner's commentary and reflection, relative

to the research question and sub-questions. At the time of data collection, if the participants had competed in BJJ tournaments, they were encouraged to include video footage of their competition into the narrated video. The focus of the recordings translate how they have progressed or regressed during practice and in what way/s the practice may have contributed to self-development in BJJ. I have found the video recordings essential in illuminating and analysing participant action in the research which also demonstrates the variability of practice in the dojo. Ethnographic data assists in capturing the BJJ experience and reports on the phenomenological impact that this has on participants' self-improvement in BJJ. The idea was to encourage participants to share what they felt through this lived experience. Participants had the option of either improvising their reflections or referring to their own notes and written reflections in relation to the main research question. Subsequently, all videos were then archived as part of curated works which can be viewed through the website

https://rodeadiejiujitsu.wixsite.com/rodeadiejiujitsu.

## 3.8.5. Participant and researcher interviews

Each participant was interviewed via Zoom with the recordings uploaded to the website of archived works. These recorded interviews expanded upon the personal embodied experiences of participants as well as providing insights about the liminal experience, their personal formation, and how these relate to the research questions. External informants (experts and industry leaders, Richard Norton, and George Adams) were asked to view recorded practice of each participant. These informants provided an impartial analysis of the participants' practice and commentary which afforded fresh perspectives. The semi-structured interviews (x 2) conducted between 20-50 minutes using Zoom allowed for conversation and reflection. Transcriptions of the interviews are included in the contents of the archived works on the research website. The methodology of PAR and GT encouraged interviewee participation to reveal the emergent nature of the project. Zoom has been used for follow-up interviews with participants where new information emerged through practice. The follow-up Zoom interviews provide the researcher with an opportunity to comment on any ideas raised that may require elucidation. The external informants were each asked to peer review the recorded narrated videos and then conduct an interview (20-50min) with the researcher. The

two interviews allowed for the researcher to reflect on the experience of participation with students and any perceived improvements as a jiu jitsu coach and exponent.

## 3.8.6. Curated archive of practice

WiX.com website builder is the online platform for website design (<a href="https://rodeadiejiujitsu.wixsite.com/rodeadiejiujitsu">https://rodeadiejiujitsu.wixsite.com/rodeadiejiujitsu</a>) and is the primary source of data storage and curation. I organised and maintained the data collection methods above to show how the project emerged over time. The site contains short videos narrated by participants in reflection of their practice. Videos are hosted by YouTube as the intermediary (unlisted) and these video links are embedded into the website for viewing purposes.

#### 3.8.7. Questionnaires

Google forms (Google services), an online post video interview questionnaire, was used as a follow-up to the archived narrated videos. Six questionnaires were designed around the sub-questions that were also used to capture further insights relative to the participants' experiences in the dojo. The participant responses to the questionnaires were collated and organised into an Excel spreadsheet for interpretation to be reported on in the exegesis. Participants responded to the questionnaires once they had completed their interactive interviews.

# **CHAPTER 4: PRACTICE OUTCOMES**

#### 4.1. Introduction

In this chapter, the data is analysed to reveal how the embodied and routine teaching/practice of jiu jitsu can lead practitioners to a sense of self-improvement and formation. I present the views and opinions of the co-practitioners who were participants, with me, considering their experience in the dojo, their observances and critical sense-making as they actively engaged in this research. Within this context, I also draw upon my own experience as a practitioner/researcher in the dojo. This chapter primarily explores the practice of embodiment as a storytelling process from the perspective of each participant and was demonstrated in their engagement with aspects of the following themes: embodiment, temporality, and the liminal process, and finally, perceptions of self-improvement to formation. This chapter outlines my findings from the analysis of the data collection methods detailed in Chapter 3.

The outcomes from this dojo-centred, creative practice, along with supporting testimony and documentary evidence, are featured in my curated archive which captures material generated throughout the emergent collation of video recorded practice of each participant with personal commentary and reflections. In addition to this, the curated archive also features recorded interactive interviews with each participant and with the external collaborators, my own reflective essays on theory and practice, an emerging student handbook for practitioners, and photographs. The archived work can be viewed at <a href="https://rodeadiejiujitsu.wixsite.com/rodeadiejiujitsu">https://rodeadiejiujitsu.wixsite.com/rodeadiejiujitsu</a>. The findings are supported using Participatory Action Research (PAR) and Grounded Theory (GT) as the methodological processes that assisted my data gathering and analysis, interview processes, and the emergence of new knowledge in the field of embodied jiu jitsu as a triadic composition. What follows are my key learnings and findings from the research project.

#### 4.2. Embodied practice and somatic transformations

#### 4.2.1. Being sensorily present with others in situ (or, in the dojo studio)

Placing bodies into motion through martial arts practice is an unusual and extraordinary rendering of somatic output. Fuller and Lloyd (2020) explain that under the general conditions of daily life, individual martial artists seek to uncover what

their practice means, and how to extend the revelation of skill beyond the dojo "more than mainstream sporting options" (p. 48). This extra-daily creative practice is part of putting oneself to the test, to become more centred, more connected, and more aware of oneself through disciplined practice and concentration. In less abstract terms, the sentient life of the jiu jitsu practitioner relies on feelings of excitement, attraction, and positive and negative attitudes that influence the subject. Fraleigh (1996) argues that it can only be through this subjective field of inquiry that the realisation of the value of practice to self-improvement can be perceived (p. 44). As the researcher, I am mindful to empower my co-constructors to fully engage in the process of articulating their specific experiences.

Drawing upon the research of Chevalier and Buckles (2019) in PAR, participants reflected on their actions which provided insightful comments that have contributed to the knowledge base of routine practice (p. 26). The excerpts that follow in this chapter consider the concepts of "being" and "time" or being present-centred, relative to embodied practice and participatory action research in the dojo (Fraleigh, 1996, p. 86). Importantly though, as my students began exploring the lived-body concept, I ensured that the dojo invariably signified something more than combative exchange (Fraleigh, 1996, p. 113). I encouraged students to reflect on the power of the body, conceptualising the self in practice in relation to others, and directed attention to the interoceptions of body awareness (Farrer & Whalen-Bridge, 2011, p. 9). In response to the main research question, subject P considers what it means to train in a small rural dojo with a small group of others, and describes, in broad terms, his notion that embodiment is a present-centred mindfulness in action:

In the context of a small Brazilian jiu jitsu dojo in regional Australia, embodied practice refers to the physical and mental training in BJJ. This involves developing a deep understanding of the techniques and principles of BJJ through regular physical practice and repetition. Embodied practice in a BJJ dojo also means developing a strong connection between the mind and body, as well as a sense of mindfulness and presence in one's training. This can help practitioners cultivate focus, concentration, and mental clarity, as well as physical fitness and proficiency in BJJ techniques. Overall, embodied practice can help practitioners develop a deeper understanding and appreciation

for the art of Brazilian jiu jitsu as well as improve their physical and mental wellbeing (PVR-2022, 0:10).

Given that none of the participants in this study had previously considered the notion of embodiment (prior to this research project), P reflects upon the research question and sub-questions and makes a specific reference to the connection of the mind and body during practice. He refers to embodied practice as "mindfulness" and "presence" being unified in practice. To further elucidate what P means by this, I refer to the Aristotelian notion of  $\sigma\tilde{\omega}\mu\alpha$   $\kappa\alpha$   $(\psi\nu\chi\eta)$  (body and mind) as not separate from each but rather a vital life principle (Gilbert & Kuhn, 1972, p. 62). P confirms my interpretations of a much more profound triadic union between mind, body, and intellect in Kano's seiryoku zenyo as detailed in Chapter 1. P's reflections of practice refer to being mindful and present in training and not just of training. Given that P is referring to being in the moment, his somatic experience further supports my assertion of BJJ providing more than the utility of the body as an instrument for participants, thus supporting my compositional concept of triadic union.

When I explored how the field of dance scholarship and practice may inform my understanding of the lived-body in jiu jitsu, I discovered that Fraleigh shares a similar sentiment to the Aristotelian concept of sensing the self in each moment. Fraleigh (2015) describes this being in time as living essence, or in other words, phenomenology (p. xx). P confirms another of my assumptions that he is aware of his 'inner feelings' through practice since engaging in the research as a coconstructor of knowledge, but as Chevalier and Buckles (2019) suggest, active participation in the research created a "double-loop" learning process that I believe caused P to have divergence in thought which uncovered a knowledge point regarding the body, that privileges subject over the object and instrument (p. 27). Charmaz (2008) would agree that inviting P to reflect on and articulate his practice literally grounded him in the experience of pre-reflexive awareness and a reflexive state of self-consciousness (p. 163). Interestingly, this divergence in thought instigated some personal reflection for me as the observer/ teacher/ researcher. I observed a shift in the learning paradigm, from P responding to teacher-centred learning towards personal constructive alignment which Kano had not entertained. Essentially, P is developing a sense of his somatic experience, as unique to him

through the implicit teaching of BJJ with others which situates the subject/artist within the learning experience and is a move away from the object of utility.

Another important consideration emerged from the reflections of subject E in relation to the inexperienced and potentially new practitioner, upon their initiation into practice. E caused me to reflect on the influence of actants upon the embodied experience, which is something that I have become desensitised to over the years due to the familiarity of practice.

[Furthermore], I believe that having a uniform and overall sensory experience inside the dojo also assists in staying focused and calm. When you enter that space, the smells, sounds, and feel of the dojo all immediately get in your mind ready for the experience of learning and training. Like a song that reminds you of a good time, or a smell that takes you back to an old memory, the sixth senses are stimulated with the dojo and prepare me. It reminds me immediately of a place of mutual respect and presence of one another. These stimulated senses are also what become addictive in the art of jiu jitsu (EVR-2022, 6:00).

From E's response, I interpreted an eidetic reduction of the sense datum that BJJ practitioners regularly encounter through physical engagement with actants in the dojo. Turning to Kiverstein's (2011) work, E articulates "body functionalism" as he describes how his body plays a role in cognitive practice (p. 740). The emotions described by E are sensations stimulated by the external presence of actants. He expresses atmospheric realities of the dojo, such as the smell of a freshly disinfected mat space, the acoustics of others engaged in mat work, the hushed voices of practitioners combined with the gentle susurration of fabric on fabric during sequences, which all give rise to an embodied experience. In other words, E describes a sense-making encounter as his bodily actions form phenomenological connections with the environment of the dojo, thus constructing a meaningful somatic experience. There is a sense here that this engagement assists E in constructing his goals in a similar way to P, invoking subject first over object, and desires while moving through the threshold of transition to reaggregation (Haosheng et al., 2021, p. 1394). E's expressed reflections on his practice support my hunch that my students do perceive moments in routine practice as meaningful

engagements. That these encounters within this studio environment prepare them for engagement with others is distinctly not motivated by play status, nor wealth, the prospect of victory nor the possibility of defeat. Rather, there is a relatively simple engagement in sensing the moment.

This may seem insignificant, but the recalling of the minutia within the studio suggests that E's participation is reified through a personal arousal of interest, creation of awareness, and engagement with the place, which then assists in moving the neophyte through to attestation (Wenger, 2022, p. 69). E is expressing what I observed in other students in the dojo, that practitioners do declare their familiarity with the dojo and community of practice. The sensory experience of E demonstrates how he is engaged in the beginning of his formation to becoming a jiu jitsuan. He is not only reflecting upon encounters with the external world of the dojo around him, but he is also describing how his sense experience of the dojo environment plays a part in his personal formation of becoming a jiu jitsuan. As mentioned earlier, Dewey believes that it is necessary for the artist to experience the rawest nature of things in his/her environment to create meaning of the sensorial experience (Dewey, 1980, p. 3). Dewey (1980) cogently describes the embodiment of practice in the way that "mountain peaks do not float unsupported; they do not even just rest upon the earth. They are the earth in one of its manifest operations" (p. 2). Both E and P describe their jiu jitsu as being grounded in their bodily experience rather than the experience of jiu jitsu as an object being applied to their subjective state. It would be remiss of me to dismiss these happenings as trivial; I have engaged in deep listening to the data from this research in the hope that experienced and professional coaches may glean from E's statement about how students transition into jiu jitsu, how they become confirmed within the group, and how they might interpret that acceptance.

E's reflections on "being present with others", call to mind the gratification that comes with a community of practice, sharing the process of participation and the recognition of something of themselves in each other (Wenger, 2022, p. 56). As a co-constructor of practice and the knowledge that comes from this, there is a broader concept to agency expressed here than just a purely subjective awareness of self. E illustrates the synchronicity of being with others as jiu jitsu permeates through the body subject which has become observable to him, and also me, as the teacher/researcher (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, p. 92). This strongly suggests that seiryoku zenyo (mind, body, intellect) is present, within practice, as an embodied experience rather

than just an arbitrary symbol, and that jiu jitsu is a somatic experience of being present with others. I have defined this further through my construction of the triadic composition, as seen in Figure 13.

## 4.2.2. Feeling change and shaping experience

Reification means making into a thing and is directly related to deep participation (Wenger, 2022, p. 58). I focused on this through the process of participation with my co-constructors in the dojo. As P and E already identified, the dojo is not only a place that contains subjects, but also an environment that makes provisions using tools to help the jiu jitsuan project themselves onto the world in certain ways (Wenger, 2022, p. 58). Subject Y provides thought-provoking responses in relation to reification and the shaping of her formation as a jiu jitsuan. As I interviewed Y, she described how the use of the gi (uniform) and how other bodies reify the experience and deliver knowledge points for her personally. To begin, Y recalls her initiation into jiu jitsu practice and divulged some traumatic childhood experiences that involved being strangled by her father. Her only prior embodied martial art experience was through karate, where her father was the sensei (teacher). The techniques of karate are comparatively different to jiu jitsu because karate has less emphasis on strangulations and choke holds. I was enlightened by how Y could invariably control triggers of anxiety by using the method of training that I encourage during the application of such techniques; however, she encountered a triggering episode in her first jiu jitsu experience. Y shares her reflections:

There are certainly situations that I'm going to say that like physical configurations that happen can trigger fears and anxieties definitely. I had a lot of trauma and anxiety around the idea of anybody even touching my neck, my kids don't touch my neck, nobody touches my neck, everybody knows that psychologically that's a really big issue for me. My dad used to strangle me when I was a kid, and he would not let go until I was unconscious. I really just believed that I was going to die (YII, 2023, 25:21).

Y has continued practicing her jiu jitsu for over four years and progressed to the rank of blue belt. Bandura (1997) argues that actions do not necessarily produce desired outcomes, especially if they are neither intended nor wanted (p. 3). During data collection, Y observed and experienced something in practice that would change the course of direction in her life as a jiu jitsuan. Y experienced using a form of non-verbal communication through what is called "tapping out" (a direction given by the subject to cease activity or concede defeat) to assume control over her situation. Y stated:

I would say that it's interesting that men see, or that some men, hashtag not all men, that people might see tapping as a defeat. I can understand that in a kind of way, but I definitely don't perceive tapping as a defeat. In that context I see tapping as the ultimate win because I spent the first fourteen years of my life having no power over that situation [being strangled] whatsoever, no way to make that stop. So, for me that tap is a power control over that situation (YII, 2023, 29:39).

Y could not have elevated in rank and persisted in the art of jiu jitsu without undergoing an embodied experience that she believed could create a positive change. In a practice-based environment such as the dojo studio, this was made possible. According to Charmaz (2008), such a practice creates conditions for emergent inquiry (p. 161). While Y articulates gaining an emerging self-efficacy through her embodied experience, her reflection on her practice highlights a new knowledge point regarding the phenomenon of touch in martial arts (Eadie, 2023, p. 5). In this sense, Y encountered the embodiment of self-efficacy through touch in play with her training partners (Habkirk, 2016, p. 7). Y expresses the action of tapping creating a sense of control over her environment by interjecting and controlling somatic pressures. While this may not have eradicated her response to past trauma, her perturbations have minimised over time and with each embodied practice her self-efficacy increases, thus further demonstrating that her initiation into jiu jitsu moved her from initiation to declaration and formation of her jiu jitsuan identity. I have observed this process occurring in students over many years. Interestingly, Y's progression, illuminates what Van Gennep (1960) describes as "indirect rites", those encounters with other bodies and actions that do not immediately produce results, instead, the mediate response of engaging with chokes and strangulations in a controlled environment sets in motion a personified power (p.

8). In turn, Y has moved through her initiation phase with an ability to control her anxieties through embodied practice. Y demonstrates a successful confirmation of her identity being co-constructed through the help of others in feeling change and shaping her experience as a jiu jitsuan in the community of practice. The reflections on embodied practice by Y also demonstrate how the dojo community has been instrumental in the construction and reformation of Y's identity (Wenger, 2022, p. 67). From my own observations, I would suggest Y has undergone a reformation, thus further advancing the notion of being to becoming to being again.

# 4.2.3. Moving consciously with others

Subject D provides insights that elucidate the co-construction of identity through body consciousness in the dojo where practitioners engage with other bodies without words. He aptly states that "Jiu jitsu is a way of expressing ideas between two people" (DVR, 2023, 0:54), which is mirrored in the expression of Y's experiences. D is alluding to his body consciousness and how his practice expresses his somatic formation as a jiu jitsuan. My observations of D's progression over three years suggests that D has perceived his intersubjectivity of jiu jitsu practice as a form of communication with others that has occurred as an implicit pedagogy, or what Laura Ellingson (2017) refers to as "embodied knowing" (p. 16). This highlights reciprocity in a constructed alignment of learning that I have illustrated in the triadic composition model in Figure 13 and is important to the construction of identity as each practitioner uses their whole body in making sense of who they are as jiu jitsuans in the world (Ellingson, 2017, p. 16).

To complement the somatic perception of sense datum that is specific to this research site, the particular space of the dojo heightens the senses of participants at a precognitive level, acting like a resonating chamber to communicate the somaticity and sodality of practitioners (Fraleigh, 2015, p. xxi). The dojo, therefore, is the domain where the community of practitioners resides to undertake the work of the studio. While in the moment, E describes how he feels jiu jitsu in a very concrete way through the tools of the dojo, uniforms, mats, and other bodies, which Wenger argues "changes the nature of that activity" (Wenger, 2022, p. 59). The expressed feelings of subject S's engagement with the dojo community (as quoted below) and his reification process demonstrates that his efforts have manifested into active contributions visibly rendering the ethos of S as the artist at work. Additionally,

Kano's intuitions about seiryoku zenyo appear to be evidenced by both Y and E's experiences, indicating that the extension of skill and intellect begins with the first step of entering the space of the dojo. In other words, the efficiency of energy (seiryoku zenyo) towards others carries with it a mutuality of respect which Wenger says, "shapes each other's experiences of meaning" (Wenger, 2022, p. 56). This revealed to me that to project oneself into and onto the world, as intuited by Kano and Gracie, requires building relationships, engaging the simultaneous reflexive nature of being both in (subject) and as (object on the world) (Swain, 2003, p. 2). The research has demonstrated that mind-body formation in BJJ is necessitated by moving consciously with others, which is an important process for the practitioner moving beyond the threshold of initiation. This confirms for me what I intuited about my students benefiting from a constructed alignment of teaching because it provides essentially deliberate embodiment for students to understand these experiences. In further recognition of this, S reflected on his experiences in the dojo and attributes much of his development to the dojo community:

For me, embodied practice brings to life your perceived ideas of movement, technique, and/or sequence. The routine practice provides a pathway for the practitioner to grow and develop and hone skills. Of course, this can't be done without the help of others, a community of likeminded people (SVR-2022, :09).

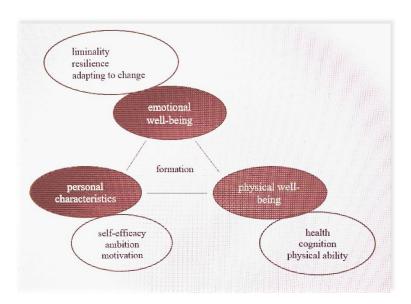
From my professional experience as a teacher, this project clearly demonstrated the efficacy of the dojo as a community that is instrumental in the development of somatic transformations, that is, practitioners such as S have been granted the opportunity to explore the imagined or awakened self as a jiu jitsuan inside the safety of the dojo community (Wenger, 2022, p. 59). If S desires to become a jiu jitsuan he must seek out a community of practice to discover who he is.

However, reflecting upon my own formation, the community of practice has not been solely responsible for how I know myself to be a jiu jitsuan. As with S, I am a body subject among other body-subjects who must first understand that for the future possibilities of how I exist, jiu jitsu requires that I be possessive of what is now, in time, in space, and of what I am engaged in (Dewey, 1980, p. 17). For S to be afforded the opportunity of self-realisation he must be aware that he is not merely an

instrument of jiu jitsu, it is in the midst of constructing jiu jitsu with others that the materialisation of jiu jitsu announces that he is jiu jitsu made manifest, which he then articulates as realisation. Merleau-Ponty (2012) would agree, arguing that: "we discover existence in the body by approaching it through a first way of access, namely, physiology" (p. 91). Fraleigh (2015) states that "soma provides the condition for perception, and also self-perception as somatically founded in bodily experience" (p. xxi). The dojo and the community which gathers in it are associates to the lived-body experience, they assist in reifying and shaping personal experience (Wenger, 2022, p. 59). In so doing, the dojo community, according to Wenger, is experiencing the embodiment of practice through the production of objects such as body-to-body creation of technique, and this solidifies the subjective experience (Wenger, 2022, p. 58).

S further demonstrates two relevant aspects of this notion. Firstly, S demonstrates his process of formation by gauging his self-growth through routine practice. He has lived the ritual process as he moves from cooperating with others in the dojo to discovering acceptance by the group. Additionally, this helps to link to the second phase transition (which will be explicated in Section 4.3). S has now embedded himself in the routine practice of jiu jitsu which grounds him in the practice towards attestation. I have captured this process through the construction of a Venn diagram below (Figure 6) which demonstrates this formation process. Even though S subjectively articulates his familiarisation of practice, he is revealing how important it is to receive confirmation of practice by the accepting community.

Figure 9
Eadie's conception of jiu jitsu formation



In another example, subject H, in his interactive interview, intimated that he draws a distinction between his practice in the dojo and his work life. He nuances that the path of jiu jitsu extends to other areas of his life:

Jiu jitsu is a part of my life. I don't think that my life would be any better without it. It's the best sport that I've ever done, and I don't think that I will stop doing it. I do have a training life and my work life which is different to my jiu jitsu life. But I look more towards the jiu jitsu path (HII-2023, 9:32).

H is not suggesting that he has two different lives, he distinguishes between two separate actions to which he applies his energy. Kano would argue that seiryoku zenyo experienced in martial arts still extends beyond the dojo. H demonstrates this idea by observing that he occupies different roles of active participation in different aspects of his life (Wenger, 2022, p. 59). The insights gained from H's reflections caused me to reflect on self-construction, taking a gestalt approach to the perception of somaticity (Fraleigh, 2004, p. 33). In my first reflective essay entitled *The Embodiment and Co-creation of Jiu jitsu* I describe how the construction of identity through participation with others is a "fusion of consciousness between practitioners" and that begins to extend into other parts of my life (Eadie, 2022, p. 4). In addition to this, Wenger explains how members in the community of practice categorise the

external world and how they relate themselves to it through the process of reification which will be examined further in the formation process. More broadly, Wenger (2022) suggests that "reification occupies much of our collective energy" (p. 59) which means that the processes of classification, procedures, and tools that emerge from the site of practice, in this case, the dojo studio, are what our community of BJJ practice uses to make sense of the things that we do within our own practice and with others (p. 59).

## 4.2.4. Imagination in practice

H's self-reflection in his interview, suggests an appreciation of his emerging perception of self-improvement. I am reminded that self-actualisation also draws upon curiosity in our everyday lives (Jain et al., 2015, p. 41). When interviewed by Richard Norton about my own personal view on self-growth, my responses were reflexive, elucidating my apprehensions and how I came to martial arts as a means to overcome obstacles in my own life (RNII, 2023, 2:10). In turn, through interviewing H, I have since realised that I have understated the importance of imagination and curiosity as an initiator to my adaptation to future possibilities. Self-growth, as reflected in H's statement, is a context driven phenomenon (Jain et al., 2015, p. 41). In H's video reflection, he equates the progression of jiu jitsu to his work life, describing that jiu jitsu is a journey, a daily process of learning during practice. But this is bolstered by acknowledging that progression is also imagined, practiced, reflected upon, and refined (HVR, 2022, 5:00). In addition to this, H revealed that he also perceives growth and progression through feeling. He argues that he can literally feel the physical development of another opponent, that he can sense that person's confidence in the way that techniques are executed and imposed upon him through bodily pressures and efficient movements (HVR, 2022, 2:15). This demonstrates another aspect to Kano's (2008) seiryoku zenyo being in the subject and not merely an instrument of the body object, which evidence Mench's claim that 'I' is appearing in the world it discloses (p. 6). H appears to outwardly express seiryoku zenyo in various ways, he animates himself through several aspects of his life, striving to improve his performances, and imagines his potential while in his daily routine. Helen Burns (2022) describes the importance of imagination as pedagogy, arguing that:

To think, we must imagine. Imagination is not a magical addition to thought but intrinsic throughout. The necessity for imagination in metacognition is particularly important, given that metacognition supports achievement and attainment (p. 13).

This supports how H's body and mind in unity are being activated in the way that Kano hoped that his pedagogy would achieve, as mentioned in Chapter 3 (Eadie, 2023, p. 1).

Imagination was not something I considered prior to conducting this research but this examination of the dojo research site suggested that the phenomenon of imagination in practice is always present and active in the subject. Ironically, imagination and reflection are what led me to the conceptualising of a threedimensional view of the triadic union of jiu jitsu that builds upon Kano and Gracie's intuitions. The entire sense-making process that links the mind, body, and soul to practice relies upon reflexivity, to wit Merleau-Ponty (2012) says "we have to reformulate the sceptical arguments outside of every ontological preconception and reformulate them precisely so as to know what world-being, thing-being, imaginary being, and conscious being are" (pp. 6-7). While I had not explicitly set out to interrogate this in the research, my observational insights of the entire project suggest that the imagination must be acknowledged within the variability of practice (Kind, 2022, p. 36) as aiding cognition in conveying ideas, animating thoughts, and planning action. Although, imagination is also part of a social body-language (Shorkend, 2018, p. 87), where communication occurs between bodies in a community of practice. In this sense, imagination is given form via the body, then uses the playful element of sparring, further conveying ideas, beauty, and culture as a bridging social capital (2018, p. 87). Additionally, the notion of play relies upon imagination as part of one's personal development in jiu jitsu practice (2018, p. 87). Richard Norton explains the imaginative process as necessary to building confidence in a practitioner's formation: "We used to say with board breaking in karate, it's not the idea of breaking the board, it's the idea that it represents an obstacle in your life that you can either commit to or work through" (RNII, 2023, 21:20). While breaking boards is irrelevant to jiu jitsu, Norton's simile is prudent: the dimensions of imagination, within the variability of practice by practitioners, aims to improve psychosomatic behaviour and contributes value to the group culture.

## 4.2.5. Self-growth in the jiu jitsuan

Through the interviewing process, H impressed upon me an important psychophysiological aspect on what is required in personal formation as a jiu jitsuan, namely, self-growth. I refer to the psychology of Carl Rogers (1961) who identifies four important aspects to self-growth in being a person: "1) being open to one's own experiences as well as those of others, 2) trust in one's organism, 3) having an internal locus of evaluation, and 4) willingness to be a process" (p. 103). To quote Jain et al. (2015), "self-growth is a desire to become a better version of oneself every day" (p. 41). H and S both illustrated a concerted effort towards self-growth in the dojo. I would suggest that this also extends into their everyday life where they may initiate growth through daily imaginings, applying themselves in the moment to actualise and then self-realise. Both H and S described the influence of their own human agency through action in the familiarisation of BJJ training. I believe, this builds confidence in one's ability to perform and to improve. Thus, their reflection on their routine practice suggests evidence to the effect of their happiness as perceived and imagined.

As Albert Bandura (1997) states, the "effects are not the characteristics of agentive acts; they are the consequences of them" (p. 3). Bandura (1997) presents a thoughtful analysis of the agentic operation to which one demonstrates the capacity to exert power over one's condition or state of being (p. 3). The difference is between a fixed mindset and a growth mindset. According to Jain et al. (2015), "a fixed mindset is rooted in various psychological complexities that may include a false sense of superiority conflicted with self-doubt, refusal to take risks, fear of failure, blaming others for one's failures, and a continual need for validation of self-worth" (p. 42). The excerpt below, from subject L, demonstrates the opposite of a fixed mindset:

Even when training now, not training for a fight or competition or anything and we're just training, I'm not actually thinking about a physical altercation outside of the training, or competition, I don't really have a fear of, I don't have any fears really, which is because of jiu jitsu, and because of martial arts and training martial arts that I don't have a fear of that. But there's something to be said about being able to solve problems on the fly while in jiu jitsu, and you're doing it physically. It's not like a

puzzle that you piece together, like a board game or something. That's more mental, but this is more physical, mental, and spiritual all at the same time (LVR-2022, 11:03).

In this instance, this appears to be a rather brash statement of self-assurance, then a fortiori warranted by his discipline and fortitude through routine practice. In fact, L demonstrates that he has shifted his perspective as an agent, and through experience in the dojo, has developed a growth mindset. Jain et al. (2015) would argue that L's growth mindset begins at the point that he accepted taking charge over the capacity to elevate his performance through vision and continual reflection (p. 42). Bandura (1997) would argue that L's perception of his self-growth "is one and the same person who does the strategic thinking about how to manage the environment and later evaluates the adequacy of [his] knowledge" (p. 5). In GT, Charmaz (2008) says that the "concept of emergence takes into account that the unexpected may occur. The past shapes the present and future but does not make either wholly predictable" (p. 157). L's self-efficacy stems from his ability to exert control over his life, through the dojo, in routine practice with others being continuously exposed to the variability of practice. Fraleigh (2015) argues that dancers also develop their somatic awareness (bodily awareness) in much the same way. She calls this "moving consciously", facilitating bodywork through explicit performance that expresses the imagination, and "moving interactively with others, playfully, and intuitively" (p. 5). Nevertheless, L is no neophyte, to the contrary, he is an experienced black belt in jiu jitsu, honing his skills from a young age and having intentionally exposed himself to countless variables. Through routine dojo practices, L's bodily awareness is illustrated by his ability to solve problems in a combative encounter and not permit fear to stifle his progress. There is a subtle but fundamental virtue implicit within L's mindset, a recognition of choice over human action, deliberating about things that can be done through his own effort and wasting no time on things about which he has no control (Ricoeur, 1992, p. 93).

The above verbatim data provide an overview of embodied practice from the perspectives of the participants. As noted from Chapter 1, the semantic challenge in describing the experience of embodiment through textual discourse is a difficult task (Bowman, 2018, p. 18). This data reveals some knowledge points on the overall perception of embodied jiu jitsu. To help bring clarity to this concept of embodied

practice, the participants revealed that embodiment is a form of somatic communication about inner experiences of the body phenomenon. For example, in the routine practice of the dojo, P constructed meaning from his experiences through ongoing disciplined practice. To turn up and be present, there with others, suggests this may be a first step in discovering a somatic experience. E recognised the intersubjectivity with dojo members as crucial to the experience, as well as engaging with actants in the dojo. This gave E an awareness of how working with others brings jiu jitsu into manifested, somatic effect. Y on the other hand discovered self-efficacy through embodied practice as she learned how to use her body to assume control over situations that would otherwise cause her anxiety. D reflected on the value of bodies engaging with other bodies as crucial to the animation of jiu jitsu. While H described how the manifestation of effort filters through to other aspects of his life. The data has thus provided a context to the embodied experience of the whole person inside the site of meaning making: the dojo studio. Although sense-making through practice occurs over time, it requires an in-depth look into the liminality of practitioners in being and becoming jiu jitsuans. As I stated in my Reflective Essay 1, sensory awareness through practice occurs through the connection of bodies/subjects co-mingling and having engaged an interpenetrating process over time (Eadie, 2022, p. 5).

What I now set out to achieve is a breakdown of the stages of liminality in more depth. This will provide greater insights as to how the body transitions through each phase of the liminal process to achieve a confirmed status of a jiu jitsuan in the dojo. Each phase within this process further elucidates the embodied experience and contributes to the intellectualising of embodied jiu jitsu practice. The stages of transition helped me to recalibrate and more effectively perceive of Kano's seiryoku zenyo and Gracie's triadic model of the individual. The three stages of transition more accurately describe the process of becoming a jiu jitsuan and provide greater clarity about the complexity of the individual, their embodied experiences, and how they move into and through the world as jiu jitsuans.

## 4.3. Stages of transition

## 4.3.1. Temporality and transition

The previous section illuminated how practitioners have experienced shaping meaning through feeling jiu jitsu with others. Thus far, the level of participation through the participant reflections has identified that an embodied experience of jiu jitsu is an inner feeling process reified by the actants of the dojo and the intersubjectivity of bodies in action with other bodies. Ellingson (2017) refers to this level of participation of embodied practice as "enfleshed subjects" (, p. 16), of which Merleau-Ponty (2012) claims to be a way of being in the world (p. 367). Although, being jiu jitsu embodied requires a lot more investigation, in terms of how the whole person moves through each phase of transition to formation, and particularly in relation to understanding how my students perceive their practice as being and becoming.

The Japanese philosopher Dogen (1200-1253CE) said, "You should not conceptualize the phenomenon of shifting as the wind and the rain moving from east to west. Nothing in the entire world is ever without movement, is ever without advancing or receding – it is always in shift" (Heisig et al., 2011, p. 150). Dogen was alluding to the concept of temporality which is defined by the term *uji* which means being and time, or at one moment (Heisig et al., 2011, p. 148). That said, Dogen, considered the state of human beings in the world as "shifting" (kyoryaku) or in other words "existential moments" (Heisig et al., 2011, p. 148). Dogen's use of the term uji (time-being), which may also be colloquially understood as simply for the time being (Heisig et al., 2011, p. 148), describes how individuals might voluntarily plunge themselves into a metamorphic subjective state that imbues them with the ideas and practices of the group. While BJJ practitioners for the time being transition into a new realm of practice, there is the expectation that the skill development will in time eventually lead to a physiological and psychological enhancement of being. To understand how this works, I use the idea of uji (to describe being and becoming) as an eidetic reduction of change relative to the liminal process that I have observed and experienced with my students in practice over the course of this research project. The existential moments of being and becoming are layered within the formation process which can be hard to discern when going through stages of progression in practice. Although Van Gennep and Turner help to elucidate these

existential moments, describing being and becoming through the process of liminality, which will now be elaborated on in the next section.

## 4.3.2. Transitioning through liminality

The process that leads to self-improvement is a transitional phase that takes place over time in a community of practice. When I examined the work of Kano and Gracie, formation, and liminality, were not mentioned and not contained within their training regimes. To that, I first turn to Victor Turner who cogently describes society as:

A structured, differentiated, and often hierarchical system of politicolegal-economic positions with many types of evaluation, separating men in terms of "more" or "less." The second, which emerges recognizably in the liminal period, is of society as an unstructured or rudimentarily structured and relatively undifferentiated *comitatus*, community, or even communion of equal individuals who submit together to the general authority of the ritual elders (1969, p. 96).

With Turner's description of societal structure, I considered the prospects of my BJJ dojo making provisions for implicit teaching that may lead to positive effects in the lives of my students in and out of the dojo. Kano and Gracie both state their own intuitions about practice leading to sociality and civic virtue where individual ideas and behaviours are conducive to the social construct and rule of law, but those ideas were largely left unresolved. What Turner (1969) impressed upon me was that the *comitatus* will, over time, go through a transitional process that he describes as liminality (p. 96), or a series of transitional phases of change. The *comitatus* in this research is the dojo and this led me to consider Arnold Van Gennep's (1909) The Rites of Passage which lays out the groundwork for the concept of transitioning from neophyte to expert and it provides a thorough explanation of formation that Kano and Gracie omitted from their work. In this section, I adopt the ideas of Turner and Van Gennep to assist in building a discrete analysis of how participants in this research have reflected on their journey as participants in a small, regional town practice of BJJ. This will deepen the triadic union to uncover the dimensions of being and becoming a jiu jitsuan in and beyond the dojo.

#### 4.3.3. Separation, formation, and reaggregation

In Turner's evaluation of rites de passage, he describes Van Gennep's concepts as "rites which accompany every change of place, state, social position and age" (Turner, 1979b, p. 94). This influenced the way that I structured interviews within the concepts of PAR, ensuring that I broadly covered the forms of ritual practice in discussions with participants, during the data collection phases (Van Gennep, 1909/1960, p. 3). Van Gennep impressed upon me that the ritual process validates an individual's transition from one state to another, which highlights what I mean by temporality in being and becoming. Each phase, from initiation through to reaggregation (confirmation and attestation) is a phase of being that opens a door to becoming. I acknowledge that there is an entire field of inquiry devoted to the temporality of psychic causality that relates to Freud's (1896) processes of stratification of memory and deferred action, but that is far from the scope of this research. Therefore, within my dojo, the process of liminality involves states of separation from other practices (whether it be martial arts or other sporting activities), transitioning from neophyte to expert, and reflecting upon phases of graduation.

In Section 4.2, I identified some of the key themes that research participants shared regarding the temporal nature of practice in the dojo and how those practitioners shape meaning through those experiences. This group of participants is a representation of some who have never practiced martial arts while others made transitions into various stages of practice. The data suggests several transitional phases within their BJJ training that substantiated my claims around identity, community, and formation. This data assists my further analysis of the notion of liminality, which Van Gennep (1960) marked as three stages: separation, transition, and incorporation or reaggregation (p. 28). I have interpreted Van Gennep's three stages of transition with the help of Victor Turner's (1979) analysis of liminality in Frame, Flow and Reflection: Ritual and Drama as Public Liminality. Turner (1979) argues that many community groups use various tools, language, symbols, and objects to help shape the experience of the group as they navigate their way through the threshold of transitional stages (p. 465). I constructed Table 4 below to illustrate my interpretation of liminality, using Van Gennep's stages as a point of departure, as it relates to the observed practice of jiu jitsu in my dojo:

- separation is associated with the neophyte's introduction into practice in the community;
- 2. transition occurs as the practitioner moves through the threshold of practice to attest to their process of formation;
- 3. incorporation/reaggregation is the phase where practitioners confirm their acceptance in the community and can reflect on the construction of their identity (Turner, 1979, p. 466).

Additionally, I have mapped Wenger's (2022) explanations to reveal how group participation and reification are intertwined to bring understanding to the practice, to encourage active and productive participation with others, and to reinforce group goals through capitalising on resources (p. 2). Combining the ideas of Van Gennep, Turner, and Wenger provides an effective way for me to articulate and ground my emerging understanding of the group dynamics in the dojo, based on evidence provided by the participants in this study.

**Table 4**The three stages of transition

	Van Gennep	Wenger	Participants	Eadie
1	Separation	Pre participation	P, E, H, Y, D, R	Initiation
2	Transition	Reification (making from the participation)	H, L, Y, E, K, R, S	Attestation
3	Incorporation	Regime of competence	P, E, H, Y, D, L, S, K, R	Confirmation

Data evidence revealed to me the stages of liminality within the dojo which is shown in the column under the heading *Eadie* and formulated as my interpretation of Van Gennep's theory on rites of passage. I will now discuss each of my newly worded stages, acquired through data collection, that are based on the views and opinions of my co-practitioners.

# 1. Separation: Pre-liminal phase of initiation

This pre-liminal phase of separation, which I have labelled as initiation is the point before transition in practice of BJJ in the dojo. This involves a separation or shedding of identity in expectation of a new identity (Van Gennep, 1960). Van Gennep notes that there is a period when an individual is separated from everyday life. In this separation, there is a marginal threshold which is also a state of vulnerability and ambiguity of social status; the individual enters a context of their conscious choice-making, perhaps not yet fully aware of the consequences of their separation, but nonetheless moving towards a new state (p. 1). I refer to this stage as the initiation because it is the first phase of welcoming practitioners into the dojo community. In this state of being, the student may have imagined the possibility of training with first stage goals and desires.

The excerpts from P's video reflections below give a synoptic overview of what it means to transition into the life of becoming a jiu jitsu practitioner. These views suggest an awareness of the pre-liminal phase of rites of passage when engaging in jiu jitsu practice:

Training involves regular physical practice and repetition of techniques in order to master the art. This takes a lot of determination and persistence over a series of years and really requires the practitioner to give a lot of himself in commitment to the art (PVR, 2022, 2:37).

... additionally, the challenges and obstacles encountered on the mat during BJJ training could also foster perseverance and a growth mindset. Through regular practice and repetition, practitioners may develop a greater ability to overcome challenges and setbacks in their lives as well as a sense of accomplishment and progress in both physical and mental ability (PVR, 2022, 3:11).

This demonstrates that *rites de passage* is a useful way to discuss how neophytes might seek admittance into other social memberships with a desire to qualify and impress the group for affirmation and acceptance (Turner, 1979, p. 235). When H was asked to describe what he experienced when transitioning to martial arts, he describes his pre-liminal experience as a feeling of awkwardness,

[E]specially at the start when you're a white belt and don't know anyone, it's hard to make friends and you're getting beaten by everyone and it is hard and really awkward at times. At the start you don't really want to talk to anyone. But when you continue to train you start to get to know people and become friends with them and you want to hang out with them every day (HVR, 2022, 5:25).

Turner (1979) argues that "[this] liminal space is the space through which the character journeys while on the way to something new. The transition is the point at which the character moves from being to becoming then back to being again" (p. 1). Van Gennep (1960) argues that "the life of an individual in any society is a series of passages from one age to another and from one occupation to another" (p. 3). But in subject K's case, her reflections touch on what Van Gennep (1960) refers to as the "sacred" and the "profane", in that society tends to protect and regulate actions and reactions to reduce suffering and discomfort (p. 3). K raised an interesting observation that may occur between the sexes:

Initially, personally, I have always been competitive, not just because I'm female, but with myself being from an athletic background. I took the challenge on but at the same time I knew, physically, I was the underdog and I spoke with other women about this. I think there was more of an interest to actually progress and actually learn the skills. Being the underdog, if I'm being overpowered in a roll, it's no skin off my nose, there was less pressure for females. I do think, even though I felt awkward at first, in my experience I've seen more males more uncomfortable rolling with a female (KII, 2023, 5:28).

Fraleigh (1996) describes this intersubjective consciousness as the communal context which discloses the body as "lived in relation to others" and the awareness of such derives from the experience of seeing oneself "understood, misunderstood, loved, or despised" (p. 58). K conveys no misconceptions about her biological difference to her male counterparts, except that some males perhaps display a tentativeness towards rolling (sparring) with a female. K has perceived that her presence as a female could be an interpolation into an otherwise male dominated practice. This is another insightful response that has emerged from the interviewing

process, the revelation of jiu jitsu breaking stereotypes and bonding the sexes through combative exchange. Interestingly, the dojo appears to be bordering the profane, allowing men to overpower women. To the contrary, as K reveals, her perspective is one of progression, that in her experience of rolling with males, skills develop, and growth takes place. In that, engaging the profane is reimagined to become sacred, as controlled aggression, the pitting of male against female ameliorates the fear of being dominated, which was also confirmed by Y. The assumed weaker person is empowered through the revelation of skills and over time advances their self-efficacy. K does not perceive herself as the lesser, she demonstrates confidence and cooperation with the group. In that, her growth mindset has not swayed from minor defeats in the dojo, to the contrary, her discipline of routine practice amounts to a celebration of empowerment.

Fraleigh (2015) suggests, perceptions of *self* play a crucial role in the communal context, especially when separating from one phase of life and transitioning to a new phase of group acceptance (p. 5). K provides insights into the formation process that may assist current and future practitioners/coaches in understanding that biological differences can impact on a practitioner's declaration of openness to the group. Had K felt excluded she may have denied herself the opportunity to actualise her potential and artful expression. Fortunately, K has experienced confirmation of her acceptance and has subsequently advanced to a position of teaching in the dojo that affirms her acceptance as a leader, especially through mentoring other women in jiu jitsu practice.

In another perspective on reaggregation, L, even though exceptionally skilled in the art as a professorial (black belt), revealed that social acceptance is much different to physical self-efficacy:

Yeah of course, there is always a feeling of not knowing what others are thinking about you. I'm certainly about wanting to prove that I am the rank that I am representing, that I'm representing the school that I'm coming from, trying to represent myself as well, trying to account for myself, and also giving a good impression and wanting people to think good things about me. When I travel and when I train, I want people to train with me, and I want to be, not that I don't feel accepted, but that I want to feel like that when I go to those places I want people to see me

and go, "that guy is very good, I want to train with him, or I want him to train with us (LVR, 2022, 1:48).

Given that L was not describing his transitional phase from the perspective of a neophyte, Van Gennep (1960) argues that the stranger, especially one who is skilled in the same discipline, may be perceived by the group in various ways such as malevolent, neutral, or benevolent (p. 26). Van Gennep is ascribing qualities of power and skill which are mystifying, which remain untested by the group, thus requiring the individual, such as L, to be put through the rigours until the veil is lifted (p. 26). In L's case, he describes seeking approval through rites of arrival (Van Gennep, 1960, p. 35). While L arrives seeking incorporation, he has not departed completely from his jiu jitsu community, he is merely transferring membership in a temporal state because he possesses recognisable signs of formation in another community of practice. In this case, L possesses rank, a signifier of his status which permits entry into the new group (Van Gennep, 1960, p. 37).

Not all transition phases are alike. I posed the question of transition to Y who yields a high degree of self-esteem as to whether she began her transition with any fear or apprehension. Her response was enlightening:

I think that I was incredibly naïve about jiu jitsu when I started. I had grown up in a martial arts family. I started wearing gi's and belts when I was reliably a toddler and I thought I had a handle on martial arts in some sense. I knew that there was a big wide world outside the form that I had done, but I wouldn't say that I had any nerves about it (YVR, 2023, 4:17).

From this perspective there is evidence to suggest that one may transition to a group without apprehensions of acceptance but rather from having perhaps misunderstood the group's dynamics. Y's assumed martial arts status did not provide a clear transverse mode of acceptance. Her separation from her former dojo caused her to undergo *transitio in sacra*, new rites of incorporation into a new practice (Van Gennep, 1960, p. 38). Fraleigh (1996) provides some helpful insight on this state of transference, that Y's intersubjective state is not entirely shared (p. 58). One may assume that Y's transition would be relatively easy given that she had previous martial arts experience, and in Y's case, the transference was in her mind negligible,

but the physical manifestations of jiu jitsu exposed her naivety. This emerges as a new knowledge point for professors (coaches) of jiu jitsu schools, that when adopting the neophyte with non-transferable skills, or their lack of, there may be no initial signs of ambivalence or worry. This could well be a delayed state of anxiety and is insightful of the declarative stage of reckoning.

In summary, separation incurs a challenging process as one transitions into new group dynamics. The practitioner is aware that entering the dojo to begin jiu jitsu practice will require perseverance and commitment. This may cause the practitioner to cast off preconceived ideas about group culture and identity, having to adjust to new personalities, discover new language and new ways of existing one's body through local actions and interaction (Wenger, 2022, p. 13). This pre-liminal phase appears to also challenge the intersubjective consciousness of gender. In this small rural dojo, there are no gender specific classes which means that both male and female learn how to exist with each other in very close proximity, bodies pressed together and engaged in movement, where the positioning of bodies would otherwise only be experienced through intimacy. This level of interaction is a form of mutual engagement which has both male and female discovering how to engage, how to embrace new relationships, defining identities, establishing accountability, and renegotiating the meaning of preconceived ideas (Wenger, 2022, p. 95). And lastly, separation may also be encountered by those experienced in jiu jitsu who transition to a new dojo culture or those who are emerging from other martial art disciplines. These practitioners undergo a temporary separation from their pervious group to learning new group dynamics, new language, new identities, and pedagogical differences. While practitioners may temporarily abandon old group dynamics, they learn how to tell old and new stories while creating and breaking routine (Wenger, 2022, p. 95). The next section looks more specifically at the liminal stage of transition and how practitioners become incorporated into the group dynamics and move into their formation of becoming jiu jitsuans.

# 2. Transition: Liminal to attestation combined with incorporation: Formation, attestation, and declaration phase

I define this as attestation, which is the second phase in the liminal process and more clearly describes how the practitioner declares the actions of being a jiu jitsuan. In this phase, students transition into practice and begin to familiarise themselves with the esoteric nature of practice and then declare their association and commitment to the group (as seen by Y and E and Table 3 above). Victor Turner believes that there is an aspect of ambivalence in the subject that comes with rites of passage (1966, p. 95). He attributes this to the obligations and expectations that come with being a *liminal personae*, or what he deems as threshold people (1966, p. 95). In this next phase of participation, the research participants reflect on how they have transitioned into the community of practice. So, applying Turner's concept of threshold people, I look to understand what led my students into reaggregation, or feelings of acceptance coupled with perceptions of identity as a jiu jitsuan. Chevalier and Buckles (2019) believe that such practical measures and reflections "[P]ull each other towards continuously new heights of knowledge" (p. 23). According to PAR, uncovering patterns or principles and delving into the causation of phenomena will lead to new knowledge paths (p. 23). In this section, I intend to uncover participant perceptions of acceptance and how they perceive themselves as jiu jitsuans, including the principles applied to their practice as artists and confirmed practitioners.

In the excerpts below, participants were asked to comment on their perceived state of being and if they felt that they were accepted into the community of practice in the dojo. I begin with this comment from H who perceives his acceptance in terms of maturation:

There's a big difference from when I was a young kid training to me being nineteen nearly twenty now training. I can understand so much more about jiu jitsu, about doing techniques properly, I've gained a lot more strength since I was a kid, and people respect me now as a young adult training jiu jitsu (HVR, 2022, 8:24).

H appears to perceive an aspect of his progression through group acceptance over time, having gained the respect of others in the community. Linda Finlay (2008) would argue that H has engaged self-awareness through critical evaluation in response to his perceived acceptance (p. 1). In reflection, H perceives that his maturation in the dojo has manifested through reciprocity and respect. The jiu jitsu being experienced by H and his peers now presents as practice-led because in effect the creation of an artefact manifests through a mature body in practice with

others, bringing to form a proper manifestation of the art (Candy & Edmonds, 2018, p. 65). However, on reflection, his childhood experience with adult practitioners was lesser in form due to unmatched skill and an unequal exchange. Turner (1979) explains this in terms of being the "passenger" and recognising a detachment from our former self to the realm of consummation (p. 235). To evidence this more clearly, H also stated, "I think that they respect me over the number of years that I've trained. I mean to be honest I can roll my hardest with everyone down there [the dojo] and not giving an inch of space and going as hard as I can" (HII, 2023, 7:45). In a different light, P uses a familial metaphor to describe his perception of reaggregation:

Yeah, I think definitely, and I guess like anything, in a marriage, it's similar that time plays a role in that. Over the course of time in the club, and rolling, I've seen a lot of people come and go and we have now, for a lack of a better word, the pillars or people that are always there. It's that kind of familiar feeling and family connection that I think leads you into jiu jitsu and the club and the spirit of why we do and what we enjoy (PII, 2023, 5:25).

Family is a term that is frequently used in many community practices. It is a way to surmise comfort and connectedness. Strandbu et al. (2020), suggest that familial associations to club sports and community activities hold strong ties to early socialisation through family activities in sport which create the foundation for embodied motivations, habits, and lifestyles (p. 932). In psychological theory, the need for human connection is described quite simply as love and belongingness which also appears in Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Martino et al., 2015, 467). P reveals a basic psychological need that ought to take centre stage when opening an invitation to prospective students. In PAR, the psychological state and emotions are powerful levers for action and can assist in dismantling barriers to self-growth (Chevalier & Buckles, 2019, p. 53). For professors of jiu jitsu dojo's, P's reflections on familiar feelings must not be neglected. Kano (2005) expressed this in his doctrine of physical pedagogy, that through fostering an environment in the dojo that loves what is good, and rejects what is evil, assists participants to complement one another's strengths by living harmoniously and unselfishly (p. 70). This principle of moral integrity is one of the three vertices in the triadic description of seiryoku zenyo

expressed through bodies practicing with other bodies. If practitioners can exist together in a familial environment in the dojo, the hope is that they extend the implicit teachings of their routine practice beyond the dojo walls as intuited by Grandmasters Kano and Gracie. This is also relative to reification through practice, that there is in this context a greater sum of its parts, that participation in the fostering of integrity and common bonds in the dojo creates a new context that might be applied elsewhere in participant's lives.

Another important aspect to the liminal process in reaggregation is transitioning from having been to becoming which I described earlier through the Japanese term uji. Jiu jitsu being a moment-to-moment experience means understanding the state of temporality that comes to the fore when jiu jitsu is made manifest. Again, Turner (1979) provides insight on this transitional phase that I have also defined as attestation. He states, "to grow a girl into a woman is to effect an ontological transformation; it is not merely to convey an unchanging substance from one position to another by quasi-mechanical force" (p. 238). What Turner means is that the transitional phase is not to be simplified as only having moved through various structural positions, he uses the term "grow" which indicates that the change one underwent is "embodied and incarnate", that change is reified through embodiment (p. 238). In terms of the jiu jitsuan this is quite evident through the reification process of graduating ranks that contribute to confirmation of identity. People often comment to me that rank is not that important, to the contrary, rank signifies and reminds the practitioner of who they were, who they are now, and a glimpse into the imagined self. K reflects upon her transitional phases through the changes that she observed during time in rank.

There definitely was a time that around blue belt it was a very busy time competing, lots of camaraderie and knowing that I can really hold my own. I think that was really forming those friendships with other males and females in the studio/dojo (KII, 2023, 11:50).

Subject S also reflects upon his time in rank, illustrating his perceived growth from being to becoming:

I think, if I was to point out a specific time, I think it is when we sat and did our presentations for the gradings in the senior ranks. We had a test

and tested our ability, our knowledge, our understanding, and it was done under duress. I think at the end of that, I felt that I think I'm getting there, I think I'm earning it. It's not just given; you're earning that next position (SII, 2023, 13:50).

S describes how he has reflected on his embodied experience to interpret sense datum. An important distinction is being made here, that the body object is only ever partially known, where certain parts are sensed in action or under duress (Fraleigh, 1996, p. 14). The body object can only ever be reported on as a two-dimensional representation of the self. This is how jiu jitsu can be perceived as a utility of the body. However, unlike the body object, the body subject (as a compositional work) is the state on which subject S initiated the process of awareness, the pre-reflexive awareness prior to his ability to reflect on his conscious state (Swain, 2003, p. 2). Reflexivity also occurs with dancers in much the same way. Fraleigh refers to this ability to reflect on a previous state of being of the spontaneous body as body consciousness (Fraleigh, 1996, p. 15). S demonstrates this through the recognition of being tested or implicated in and not separate from the experience, which evidences the complexity of the triadic composition. What is more, S illustrates how his body and consciousness, that is, the simultaneous in and as their body (Archer, 2013, p. 2), are cohesively present and purposefully perceptive (Fraleigh, 1996, p. 15). I observed S reflecting upon a moment where he experienced the body created while being the artist at work, and in cooperation with other bodies. This cannot be known as an object alone; it is pure subjective reality of the whole person in practice. Fraleigh discovered similar aspects with dancers, that the body subject is not determined by the limitation of the experience. In reflection, S experienced a sensemaking moment of becoming a new creation. This also demonstrates another aspect of reaggregation, as S discovered his detachment from his former self, and as he goes through the process of earning his position within the community of practice, he is awakened to and attests to his own self-realisation and self-making (Turner, 1979b, p. 235).

Another way of perceiving acceptance and confirmation emerged from an interview with D. He articulates being and becoming through the reification process:

I have difficulty with the belt system, um, I think because it's in my head I think that I'm always a few steps behind the belt that I'm actually wearing. I accept that the belt is a piece of prestige given by my coach, given by you to signify where I'm at in the gym, and that means a lot to me. It is a gift, a token, and acceptance in the gym. But within my own head I always have to prove that I am of that level. I never fully feel that I am at the level that you've given me, I always feel like I'm one step behind (DII, 2023, 8:57).

Even though jiu jitsu has a rigorous testing regime, D's statement is insightful, raising awareness to the phenomenon of imposter syndrome. While I am not at liberty to explore this psychological phenomenon at great length, the question of imposter syndrome raises some interesting questions about self-esteem, individual merit, and achievements (Feenstra et al., 2020, p. 1). In terms of reaggregation and feelings of acceptance, it is not uncommon that individuals may at times lead people to question their abilities and worth (Levy, 2022, p. 5). While the reification process may appear to positively provide signifiers of status and achievement within the community of practice, D reveals that the negative consequence of such things as belt ranks and position within the dojo can create questions of doubt. To ameliorate this questioning of ability and status, I am prompted by D's statement to approach this with care and sensitivity. Feenstra et al. (2020) suggest that positive reinforcement, promotion of an equitable working environment, fostering inclusiveness, and celebrating the value of individual contributions are all ways to remedy self-doubt and/or insecurity (p. 3). While D does not strike me as an insecure person, his honesty mirrors my own self-doubt as I progress through the ranks. A concerted effort to address this issue will no doubt reinforce a positive acceptance and reaggregation into a community of practice in the dojo. This demonstrates that the confirmation of status is not always experienced at a particular moment in time. While that may occur for some, others may gain confirmation of their status through the ongoing affirmation of the dojo community, achieving goals, and through reflexivity.

In summary, participants reflect on their perceived acceptance and incorporation into the dojo community demonstrating that self-awareness is crucial in understanding the self-making and self-affirming process. The desire of belonging is

affirmed through the inclusion into the groups' embodied connection of habit and lifestyle of jiu jitsu practice. The participants' embodying of seiryoku zenyo is still in its embryonic stages but is sustained through the familial group culture of the dojo community. Practitioners are still engaging practice that takes them through temporal states of being which are better understood through the reification process. In particular, ranks explicitly denote maturation of the jiu jitsuan in skill and intellect. Even so, moral character is more implicitly described through participants in the group who share a common bond and together foster integrity and respect for one another. Through this shared bond, practitioners attest to their transition to incorporation into the group, and it is through this incorporation that makes provision for reflexivity of the body conscious jiu jitsuan. That awareness of self-construction describes more clearly how the mind-body-spirit become unified through practice. The next section will explicate incorporation to confirmation and describe more clearly the post-liminal process of formation.

#### 3. Incorporation: Practitioner's post-liminal confirmation and reformation

I call this the confirmation stage because it establishes the practitioner's status (as a member with rank) within the group through reification and acceptance. This may be experienced through official recognition of membership, graduations, the wearing of ranks/insignia, and certification. The third stage is incorporation or reaggregation which is a post-liminal stage of identity that can occur beyond the state of liminal transition (Lynch, 2016). D's reflections (see above) are important in the analysis of liminality within the group. I initially considered Turner's (1979) "betwixt and between" in the liminal period between neophyte to expert, but clearly D is identifying a concern of movement between what Turner describes as "ascribed statuses" (p. 235). D is not a neophyte but as he moves towards eldership within the dojo, he is experiencing the pangs of transition through structural positions of hierarchy (Turner, 1979, p. 238). So, the idea of being betwixt and between is a rather fluid concept within a hierarchical structure. What is discovered here is that through the journey between blue belt to black belt, liminality may be perceived in a different context to the neophyte. In this context, in rites of passage, Van Gennep (1960) reveals another interesting concept that is relevant to groups, that the idea of passage is also indicative of ceremonial rites (p. 40). Like religious ceremonies the grading ceremony that occurs between belt colours is a process of reification that

helps to signify the person's transition in status. As D has shown, being designated in one rank meant that he had to change his concept of self, adapting to the group's affirmation of his elevation in rank, while reconciling the reality of responsibility ascribed with a new status. The excerpts below provide insight into how practitioners of a small rural dojo perceive their acceptance in the group as jiu jitsuans.

Acceptance may also be thought of as formation that undergoes reformation within the later stages of the liminal process which leads to a regime of competence and mutual constitution (Wenger, 2022, p. 146).

Subject R reflects upon his journey from neophyte to intermediate and advanced levels within the practice of jiu jitsu. Stepping into the dojo as a middle-aged student attempting to redefine his identity and health, R was confronted with several challenges, especially as he had to progress with no prior experience.

My mindset was always, I never really went "this is too hard", or this is um, "something that I don't want to do", as soon as, it was pretty instant, as soon as I was getting beat, I don't care, I just want to get better. I need to just keep turning up. The more that you turn up, hopefully the better you get. The more you turn up, you're creating all these relationships and you just get in the habit. Once I found the habit that was it for me. I've learned one thing; I want to learn another (RII, 2023, 11:50).

R demonstrates his reflective practice through "examining assumptions" in his everyday practice (Finlay, 2008, p. 1). He began to describe to me what he felt in the dojo as he observed himself standing in rank. This is important because positioning oneself in rank and file (embodied status) may reveal ideas and expectations such as feeling worthy of status or feeling affirmed by the recognition of others as one experiences ceremonial rites such as gradings. In that, R provides some insight into the transition from an intermediate to advanced standing in the dojo. "I felt like I was accepted in the room. I was no longer a white belt. I wasn't at the front of the line, if you know what I mean, I wasn't at the end of the line, I was in the middle and in the middle for a long time, but I felt accepted" (RII, 2023, 25:48). As noted by Van Gennep (1960), acceptance often comes through ritualised practice, periods of waiting that divide each aspect of the liminal process (p. 87). After each ceremonial

process and acceleration in rank, the jiu jitsuan undergoes a reformation or reconstruction of identity, hence reaching a level of competence that opens up more avenues of the regime or practice. The concept of being and becoming is now more evident at this point to the practitioner. In R's case, his experience of being a blue belt is constant but also continuous. His being a blue belt signifies a period of time that remains blue but at the same time is affected by each routine practice contributing to the coalescing of the next belt – purple. More importantly, without his routine practice and ceremonial phases, R would not have engaged this reflexive practice. And furthermore, although R experiences the transposition of rank, his prospects of becoming a purple belt never permitted him to settle. While R transitions through temporal states of being, he is both confirming his place within the group and constantly reforming himself as a jiu jitsuan. The continual evolutionary process emphasises the competence of the group and its mutuality of interconnectedness (Wenger, 2022, p. 147).

There is another aspect to feeling confirmed and incorporated into the dojo environment which is associated with self-growth. This involves the practitioner being grounded in their self-determination and self-realisation (Jain et al., 2015, p. 41). To achieve this aspect of self-growth, psychologists argue that one must cultivate their desires, goals, and wishes through self-actualisation to become all that they desire to be (Jain et al., 2015, p. 41). In GT, the ability for practitioners to recognise that their creative practice fulfils those needs stems from the emergence of progression, process, and change (Charmaz, 2008, p. 157). In the routine practice of jiu jitsu, R recognises that progression comes with humility and cooperation with others but that there are also frustrations in life's setbacks that can interrupt the flow of training and achieving those goals. R states:

I do get frustrated if you can't train for whatever reason, like if I'm injured or life's getting in the way a little bit. Like over Christmas, I didn't train for two months. It's probably the longest time I didn't train from like November through to probably now (Jan 2023) only having those half a dozen lessons. Like K ... [R's wife] could tell the difference in me, she was like, "gees you're getting frustrated easy" and this and that, cause I'm not training. It was impacting my home life as far as the frustration

was there, I couldn't get on the mat. I was watching videos but couldn't put it into practice (RII, 2023, 46:39).

Bearing similar experiences to D and R, I return to K and how she refers to her self-realisation through belt ranks as a concrete way of forming her security of acceptance. K comments on grit and determination, and commitment despite personal factors (Jain et al., 2015, p. 41) as a compelling indicator of group acceptance.

[T]here definitely was a time that around blue belt it was a very busy time competing, lots of camaraderie and knowing that I can really hold my own. I think that was really forming those friendships with other males and females in the studio/dojo. I remember conversing back and forth with males and females in the dojo and just loving it. It was that particular time around blue belt that I felt it (BJJ) just clicked, there were no inhibitions, it didn't matter if I was having a day getting caught or vice versa. Especially as a female, being accepted by the other males who were really experienced and even my sons you know, feeling that acceptance. Not with words, but I could tell that they were enjoying rolling with me. You know when they see you and say, "Oh, do you want to roll" (KII, 2023, 12:12).

K illustrates the embodiment of tacit knowledge through the senses. Here, acceptance into the dojo is due to an implicit acknowledgement. Others in the dojo began to invite K to roll with them (usually through the catching of eyes or head gestures), actively seeking K to engage with them competitively. The invitation to roll means that others wish to pit their skills against K, and this is interpreted by her as a compliment to her jiu jitsu presence and confirmation of competence in the regime of practice. This also affirms in K that she is respected in the dojo and considered a worthy and formidable opponent. This type of acceptance is crucial to confirmation and self-growth which Finlay argues is due to "reflection-in and on-action" that allows the practitioner to revise, amend, and hone their expertise (2008, p. 4). The more exposure participants have to training partners and competition, the more opportunity for them to reflect. Yet, self-improvement may also be measured by addressing life issues, as mentioned by R. Self-improvement may be realised in the

ordinariness of routine life. On this, I again turned to K to provide some insight on such matters:

There were times of doing well and winning gold in competition, but that was yesterday. For me it's like, I'm still able to go down and get on the mat and converse and connect with other people, connect with the community, um, our friends. We have long lasting friendships, you know, from training years and years together. Even on the emotional level, of the intimacy of connecting with others, and in my own family, connecting with my boys and you, um, is more important to me than a belt or competition. Absolutely, and also for me as part of being a dojo member, family outside of training as well, I measure progress in my role by encouraging other training partners and children to be part of it (KII, 2023, 21:15).

The formation process becomes more evident through the analysis of self-growth and perceptions of acceptance and its link to an emerging competence. P uses marriage as a metaphor to interpret his formation and acceptance into the community of practice: "I guess like anything, whether it's a marriage or any form of relationship like that, it's probably a lot similar, a similar feeling that time plays a role in that" (PII, 2023, 5:28). P perceived his acceptance and gained confirmation through continuance and time, being dedicated, and given wholly to the practice, ascribing his jiu jitsu practice as a typology of marriage. In this sense, P perceives his formation and confirmation through "feeling comfortable in what you are doing, gaining a little bit of confidence, but you feel more and more comfortable" (PII, 2023, 6:20). This comfort is a familiarity that is gained over time which Fraleigh says, "[is] like a pot on a wheel, we are in process. Unlike the pot, however, our corporeality is never finished. Rather, our body in its solidarity with the bodies of other animals and in concert with the earth's body is in every moment experiencing the mystery of time" (2004, p. 55).

In summary of confirmation, post-liminality encompasses reaggregation or incorporation into the group through having undertaken reification processes such as ceremonial gradings, certification, and recognition of membership. Practitioners happen to fluctuate between formation and reformation as they experience

promotion and certification. These stages appear to solidify the regime of competence, and the groups' common bonds further cement a mutual constitution of practice.

#### 4.4. The attributes of a routine practitioner

The special function of performing the *art* in martial arts is to acknowledge it as part of the formation of self in routine practice. The research data helped me to rediscover the artist in being martial. It has assisted in reminding me that jiu jitsu practitioners are able to consider a paradigmatic shift from the body as object and instrument to the body as subject and lived as consciousness. Deborah Klens-Bigman (2022) comments on self-expression and the development of the self through the performance of martial arts: "[P]erformance actually has more to do with how we live our everyday lives. Performance exists where any action is done in front of an audience, even an audience of one; that is, one's self" (p. 1). If I am to borrow from P's analogy of a healthy marriage union to the time spent developing oneself in the art of jiu jitsu, I will buttress this by stating that one's perception of happiness in routine practice is based on the union of the present with past actions. That is, the phenomenon of jiu jitsu is in the present, mindful of the past, but not worried about the future. It is the daily engagement with jiu jitsu and the community of practitioners that returns favourably to the soul.

Dewey (1980) says, "clearly there must be something in the present to evoke happiness. But the act is expressive only as there is in it a unison of something stored from past experience, something therefore generalized, with present conditions" (p. 74). The value of past experience will have some degree of influence over the shaping of an existing occasion (p. 74), but what I intuited from the start was that there is fruitful meaning in performing jiu jitsu regularly.

During Phase 3 of the data collection process (see Table 2 in Chapter 2) participants completed questionnaires 1-6 via the website of archived works which saturated the field of knowledge to elicit further responses about practice. The data collected and reproduced in Table 5 below indicates common attributes of jiu jitsu practice and how they are perceived to benefit the ritual performer in the dojo community. In relation to perceived benefits of practicing drills, 60% of respondents indicated that drills positively contribute towards technical proficiency in sparring, while 40% perceived benefits of practicing drills while not having to participate in

variable practice (sparring). All respondents perceive increased self-efficacy when it came to self-defence but only 40% of respondents feel increased confidence when sparring in the dojo. A lower degree of confidence in less experienced practitioners is expected within the dojo when practitioners are confronted with more advanced levels of experienced jiu jitsuans. Interestingly, while English is the preferred language in this dojo, 90% of respondents believe that Japanese and Portuguese terms are important to the cultural heritage associated with jiu jitsu.

**Table 5**Attributes considered important in a routine practice

Attribute	Response
Perceived benefits of drills to technical proficiency for variable sparring	60%
Perceived benefits of drills without variable practice application	40%
Perceptions of increased confidence to experience (for self-defence)	100%
Perceptions of increased confidence to experience (in sparring jiu jitsu)	40%
English language is helpful in describing techniques	60%
English language is sometimes helpful in describing techniques but can be confusing	40%
Portuguese and Japanese language is historically important	90%
Portuguese and Japanese language can be confusing	50%
Difficulty in explaining the experience of jiu jitsu to nonpractitioners	70%
Sometimes difficult explaining the experience of jiu jitsu to nonpractitioners	30%
Jiu jitsu is easy to explain to nonpractitioners	0%

#### Source:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdkKp6rhsHC44UJm5i\_YuaQ9J-hwcGh5955x-U94QSyh34Pqg/viewform

Table 5 highlights general areas of contentment and self-growth in routine practice of jiu jitsu. The specific focus of these questions drew inspiration from Sondra Fraleigh's *Moving Consciously* (2015) which outlines the ethereal dance

practice of light and gentle touch with partners. Fraleigh refers to this as "matching in pairs", whereby one partner finds and guides the lines of least resistance in the other partner's movement. This tactile-kinaesthetic non-invasive form of bodywork creates movement understanding which is comparable to blocked practice (drills/kata) that leads into the variability of sparring in jiu jitsu (p. 3). As one may expect when engaging in the practice of jiu jitsu, partner drills appear to positively influence the actions of practitioners due to the controlled and compliant nature of the experience. Compliancy appears necessary to the functions of variable practice when sparring, although only 40% of participants consider that compliancy is effective in the absence of sparring.

Part of their acknowledged improvements to practitioners' self-confidence in and out of the dojo comes from the understanding of how the routine practice of jiu jitsu makes them feel. The results from the data above provide further understanding in relation to the main research question on how the practitioner perceives routine embodied practice of jiu jitsu contributing to self-improvement. The questionnaires during Phase 3 by no means provide exhaustive responses to adequately address every aspect of the research, but they are data providing supplementary and supportive findings to the research question and sub-questions.

In relation to jiu jitsu existing the bodies of participants, the above data provides further insights on sub-questions 1-3:

- 1. What is "embodied practice" in the context of a small BJJ dojo in regional Australia?
- 2. What are the participant experiences of self-improvement and/or agency through embodied practice?
- 3. How might these practices affect or produce self-improvement?

Practitioners responded to the questionnaires and reflected on their perceptions of what embodied practice means. This led me to further analyse the practice of embodied knowing by exploring how drills and sparring may help contribute to improvement, how the methods of practice could benefit self-efficacy, and how the use of language and cultural awareness may be considered profitable to self-growth. The data from each questionnaire did provide insights into sense perception, assist in understanding objectives and outcomes for jiu jitsu, and reflections upon bodily awareness of technical applications.

Having collated the data from each questionnaire during Phase 3, when it came to physical training, all respondents demonstrated a degree of self-confidence in their ability to defend themselves or at least stave off an attack outside of the dojo, while 40% feel that their level of experience is effective in the dojo sparring. This is not surprising given that n=4 of the ten respondents have five years or less experience compared to n=6 respondents who have nine years or greater experience. In terms of self-growth, there appears to be consistency with practitioners exercising influence over what they can do outside the dojo (Bandura, 1997, p. 3). The level of confidence inside the dojo appears to increase over time. Kano (2005) argued that "you must clarify your goals. Once they have been clarified you must exercise your mental and physical energy in the most effective way in order to achieve them" (p. 61). Bandura (1997) puts this another way:

Such beliefs influence the course of action people choose to pursue, how much effort they put forth in given endeavours, how long they will persevere in the face of obstacles and failures, their resilience to adversity, whether their thought patterns are self-hindering or self-aiding, how much stress and depression they experience in coping with taxing environmental demands, and the level of accomplishments they realize (p. 3).

In other words, without goal-directed behaviour seiryoku zenyo fails to be efficient in focusing its energy in the participant. Without this level of attention, the lived body is not reaching its potential and therefore is not confirmed by the subject as being purpose driven (Fraleigh, 1996, pp. 4-5). Evidently, participants in this small rural dojo demonstrate that their practice creates a sense of increased self-efficacy, which may be attributed to the fact that human beings are at their best when motivated by purpose (Wilson, 1966, pp. 96-97). Bandura (1997) supports this notion because human agency, given the opportunity to take control over the production of action, can confidently achieve intended outcomes (p. 4). Nonetheless, those actions and outcomes require a certain degree of explication and description because the practice of jiu jitsu is also a means for body-to-body communication throughout the stages of transition and formation. As Merleau-Ponty (2012) argues, "it is the things themselves, from the depths of their silence, that it wishes to bring to expression" (p.

4). Paul Ricoeur (1974) further supports this, "interpretation does not spring from nowhere; rather, one interprets in order to make explicit" (p. 27).

The esoteric nature of jiu jitsu practice (particularly language) forms a complex discourse that is a necessary cultural attribute requiring interpretation. I have ascribed the language used in practice as an intricately woven attribute of the participants' routine performance in the dojo. For example, the colloquial Japanese term *OSS!* is often used to express affection, agreement, acknowledgment of an instruction, and a collective response by a group that they understand the professor. Another example can be seen in Figures 10, 11, and 12 below demonstrating the non-verbal cue to step onto the matted arena, as well as the Portuguese verbal commands *combate* (fight) and *parou* (stop) (IBJJF, 2020, p. 8).

Figure 10
Referee non-verbal command to enter the arena



Source: <u>https://www.dlgsc.wa.gov.au/docs/default-source/sport-and-recreation/combat-sports-commission/mixed-martial-arts/ibjif-rules-book-2018.pdf?sfvrsn=4faa92be 2</u>

Figure 11
Referee verbal command combate – commence fight



Source: https://tapcancerout.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/EN\_IBJJF\_RulesBook\_JAN2021.pdf

Figure 12
Referee verbal command parou – end of fight



Source: https://bjj-world.com/understand-bjj-referee-gestures/

Participants also confirmed the use of language as another attribute of routine performance in the dojo. In Chapter 1, I mentioned the difficulties that language poses in attempting to explain the embodied experience of jiu jitsu, and that, at best, it is used for the purposes of eidetic reduction (Bowman, 2018, p. 18). From the responses of the research participants in the questionnaires during Phase 3, English is the preferred and dominant language used in my dojo but does not always succeed in conveying what the body feels. While most of the participants view English descriptions of practice as helpful, 40% claim that multilingual terms are difficult to comprehend, especially when attempting to explain jiu jitsu terminology to nonparticipants. Interestingly, 90% of respondents consider that Portuguese and Japanese language (relative to techniques) hold a place of significance in understanding the cultural and historical roots of the art. In terms of formation, especially for the monolingual, research suggests that there are substantial benefits to be gained in cognitive development and wellbeing when a second language is introduced and practiced (Kroll & Dussias, 2017, p. 3). Having discussed the semantic difficulties when describing the embodied experience, I have inadvertently discovered that the multilingual additions forming parts of jiu jitsu practice are profitable to personal growth and development. This is also another important aspect to PAR in that it supports the probability over conclusive propositions when using language as a creative means to describe experience (Chevalier & Buckles, 2019, p. 16).

# 4.4.1. The routine performance of jiu jitsu as a source of meaning

Research sub-question 2 explicitly set out to explore participant experiences of self-improvement. Questionnaire results collated during Phase 3, as indicated in Table 5 below, contributed to further understanding agency through embodied practice via participant responses and how they perceive their individual practice, how they feel that they contribute to others, and if they gained satisfaction in routine practice. I drew upon Fraleigh's (1996) research in dance to assist me in interrogating the core of the phenomena being considered from the perspective of my students and, in part, upon my own experience that is held in common with them (p. xv). Fraleigh best exemplifies these correlations when she says, "[I]t is in truth-founding movement, or movement that speaks its purpose, that dance moves us toward meaning" (p. 87). From my perspective, jiu jitsu shares the mutual interest in

exploring and describing the lived substance from which bodies experience the kinetic flow of existence.

By drawing a comparison to dance, I gained insights into the meaning of practice in jiu jitsu because each practice, like dance, is a causal sequence leading to embodied knowing. This element of embodied knowing is described in Table 6 as 40% of respondents perceive the practice of jiu jitsu as a type of language, with 20% defining the practice as a form of non-verbal communication. To that, 60% of respondents perceive jiu jitsu as an active exchange of wills between practitioners. All of the respondents perceive the dojo as an appropriate learning environment for practice with 20% engaging a meditative state of mind prior to practice and 20% experiencing jiu jitsu practice as reducing stress. Only 20% of respondents feel that they are unsure how their imagination is being activated in practice. Imagination could be a neglected aspect of jiu jitsu practice that requires further attention.

**Table 6**Perceptions of routine practice

Perception of experience	Response
Perceive jiu jitsu as a type of language & reciprocal exchange of ideas	40%
Perceive jiu jitsu as an active exchange of wills	60%
Feel that the dojo environment meets their learning needs	100%
Actively imagine jiu jitsu as a non-verbal form of communication	20%
Unsure how they use their imagination in jiu jitsu	20%
Meditate and focus their mind before each routine practice in the dojo	20%
Perceive jiu jitsu as a meditative practice that reduces outside stressors	60%
Perceive jiu jitsu as inseparable from other parts of their life	60%
Believe that jiu jitsu is separate to other parts of their life	40%
Personal satisfaction gained from a sense of contribution to others	60%
Personal satisfaction gained from performing jiu jitsu well	40%
Perceived improvement through feedback from coach or teammates	80%
Gauge improvement through personal victories	20%

#### Source

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSd9Djg0wFFGdc3bFlwmMtMiqpk6MqnOIntN7PBnQjrmsFInAg/viewform

In Reflective Essay 2 of my archived works, I argue that Kano and Gracie created an environment within the dojo that they believed would contribute to other areas of a practitioner's life (Eadie, 2022, p. 1). Table 6 above reveals that 60% of respondents believe that they have gained personal satisfaction from contributing to others, while 40% of respondents believe that jiu jitsu is separate to other parts of

their lives, and 60% of respondents believe that jiu jitsu is inseparable from other areas of their lives. From the data collated above, respondents affirm the theoretical propositions of Kano and Gracie which further indicates that jiu jitsu benefits practitioners both in and beyond the dojo.

# 4.4.2. Post-liminal recognition of self-improvement

The final examination of the lived-body concept in jiu jitsu entailed examining the implications of how routine practice affects or produces improvement, self-growth, and informs practitioners' understanding of their wellbeing. Once practitioners transition to the post-liminal phase of reaggregation, perceptions of their constructed jiu jitsu identities become more obvious.

**Table 7**Improvements in wellbeing since beginning jiu jitsu

Item	True	False	Unsure
Do you feel that jiu jitsu has contributed to your overall health?	100%		
Has your posture improved?	90%		10%
Is your diet positively influenced because of training?	100%		
Does routine practice increase your weight?	10%		
Does routine practice decrease your weight?	40%		
Does routine practice maintain your weight?	50%		
Is the level of exercise adequate?	100%		

Item	I don't smoke	Yes, I smoke more often	Yes, I smoke less	I smoke the same amount	I stopped smoking completely
Has training impacted how regularly smoke?	90%				10%

Item	l don't drink	Yes, it increases my level of consumption	Yes, it lowers my level of consumption	My level remains the same	I have stopped drinking completely
Has training			20%	80%	
impacted your					
alcohol					
consumption?					

Item	Improved	Decreased	Unsure
Has training impacted your ability to concentrate?	90%		10%
Item	True	False	Unsure
Level of flexibility increased?	90%		10%

#### Source:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeDjGTcPC28G ol58EBdoyQw5ulDRMZEUYauVQuCkwnSYxlw/viewform

The open-ended comments from the recorded reflections and interactive interviews highlight a range of factors that contribute to perceptions of self-improvement, a sense of purpose in practice, and overall wellbeing. The questionnaires in Phase 3 have complemented the findings by offering greater insights into the benefits of routine practice and perceived benefits to overall health. It is important to make clear that the participants have not provided medical or psychological evaluations for this research when responding to survey questions relative to Table 7 above. Their reflections are perceptions of how they feel the routine practice of jiu jitsu and embodied practice has contributed to their formation through self-improvement and overall wellbeing. One respondent provided interesting insight to her disciplined regime of practice. Irrespective of competition or motivations towards self-defence, Y illustrates that simple reasons such as focus,

being engaged in a learning process, and the obvious health benefits through routine practice are her motivations:

I grew up being made to compete, my stepdad had a real thing about that, it was his ego thing that he trained us up from really young. Therefore, we had to compete and do well, and we did, and I hated it. I don't like any aspect of competing. I'm not in it to be better than anyone else. I want to be better than I was yesterday. So, I will say, that in my life, generally, I'm a very competitive person, I like to be the best at the things that I do or tell myself that I'm the best at the things that I do. But I do think that my competitive nature relates to myself. So, that's a nothing for me, I could be kidding myself, maybe I don't compete because I'm worried what other people think, but I think actually, I don't think that's what it is. As far as self-defence, yeah, I don't know. I've been through some really lousy things and I'm ok, and if something happens, I'll deal with it then. But I don't spend my time thinking about it. It's not my motivation to come to training. What's the motivation to come to training outside of that? There are so many things, but I'm going to say that the personal growth aspect of seeing something through, of progressing, an opportunity to think about nothing other than the thing that I'm doing. I mean I think there's health motivating aspects, I noticed how much my breathing improved and you know, my stamina improved (YII, 2023, 36:04).

While the questionnaires evidence a sense-making approach for practitioners to pursue jiu jitsu as a means of health and fitness, I believe those reasons for training are in many ways expected and quite common. Interestingly, through conversation with Richard Norton, there emerged another source of meaning to the role of instructor. Norton reflected upon our conversations about student-centred learning and believed that my invitation to students to provide feedback in class leads to open discussion about learning approaches, and shares innovations that are quite rare in most jiu jitsu classes (RNII, 2023, 26:35). This appears to break archaic constraints of teacher-centred traditions. Joseph Lathan refers to this distinction in teaching styles as "Guide on the Side" versus "Sage on the Stage" (2023). I

acknowledge that teacher-centred class structures are valuable to the control of class activities, keep track of student progress over techniques and applications, and that they help to direct focus on subjects (Lathan, 2023), but student-centred learning fosters community and collaboration, independent resolve, and sustains interest (Lathan, 2023).

# 4.4.3. My transforming practice

In an interactive interview with notable martial arts practitioner, George Adams (GAII, 2023), I was asked about what inspired my journey in BJJ. In response to this, I divulged my experience of witnessing a childhood friend stave off an attacker in the street which led me to the discipline of karate. After some years of accomplishment in karate, I was faced with my own insecurity of feeling ill-equipped to respond to a ground attack after witnessing Royce Gracie employ jiu jitsu in UFC 1 in 1993 (GAII, 2023, 5:10). These were not incidental moments, in fact, they were life changing and revelatory because they were un-verbalised sensations built through concrete experiences that gave way to conceptual recognition (Kolb, 2015, p. 59). Professor of Education, Gabrielle Ivinson (2012), describes these learning experiences as being complex, rather than lineal notions of causality, in terms of implicit learning that comes from creative bodies in motion (p. 493). This not only describes my learning trajectory, but it also provides insight into how my students have learned implicitly through their experiences in and out of the dojo.

Another way to look at this would be that individual experience and feeling, the kinetic density of bodily interoceptions breaks forth to create meaning (Ivinson, p. 493). In Reflective Essay 3, I argue that embodiment is the cooperation of the faculties and bodily performance, which from my experience, is sense-making materialised in the form of jiu jitsu as my bodily experiences morphed, thus leading to a reformation of my identity as a martial artist (Eadie, 2022, p. 6). The realisation of my inadequacies was first discovered in what Kolb describes as the prehension of sensations (2015, p. 59). Irrespective of a street altercation or inside the dojo, prehension describes what is felt in the immediate context; experienced through heightened sensitivity to sound, colours, movement, and muscular activation without need of rational inquiry. This forms the pre-reflexive self-conscious awareness as apprehension, and that eventually progresses to the mode of knowing that is called comprehension (Kolb, 2015, p. 69). While my students have not been asked to

examine prehension versus comprehension, I refer to these concepts to explicate the complexity of the process that arrives at the possibility to perceive self-growth. This technical undergirding explains the pedagogical processes that exist in the corporeality of such things as dance, martial arts, and other closely related disciplines.

The most interesting revelation that I had in terms of discussing teaching styles emerged as I began to conceive of the jiu jitsu professor in a different light. A professor of jiu jitsu spends a large proportion of time dedicated to coaching the proficiency in executing techniques. But there is an extension to this professorial position if one is willing to the task. I have a much broader concept of the jiu jitsu professor as someone who can develop skills and open doors, provide solutions but also reassure others through fellowship (Eadie, 2022, p. 6). I revealed to Richard Norton that on a couple of occasions two of my students have submitted me with an effective choke technique, which I can unashamedly announce rendered me unconscious. While that is alarming to some, I impressed upon him that in no way had that experience caused those students to lose respect for me as a coach. In fact, it demonstrated my humanness, that I am a fallible creature, that I have weaknesses and that I am open to learning from my students as much as they learn from me (RNII, 2023, 32:15). I also stated that being a coach means journeying with your students, going through pain and exhaustion. It is being alongside them and becoming with them. As Fraleigh says, "our being-in-the-world in the existential view is not predetermined; it is open" (1996, p. 89). What she means is that our choices are open, made real in action, even though the body may at times conceal what it feels, we must remember that being a body among other bodies is a valid and important process of human connection and communication. Thus, being alongside others compelled me to consider that Kano and Gracie's triadic union of practice speaks to human flourishing more than it does to human combat (Eadie Reflective Essay 3, 2022, p. 9).

In summary, the insights that I have gleaned from this project are revelatory. I have discovered through my journey of jiu jitsu that creative bodies in motion communicate the kinetic density of the body which is often unnoticed. Having the opportunity to communicate with others through jiu jitsu as a form of sense-making reveals to me a shared synchronicity of experience which is often difficult to describe. Therefore, discerning the benefits of practice is largely dependent upon the

corporeality of practice. And, when one body can feel with another body there is a unique bond between material bodies, the intellect, and souls, this animates and activates the occurrence of the triadic composition of jiu jitsu practice.

#### 4.5. The triadic composition of BJJ practice

After reading the works of Jigorō Kano (2013), I am convinced that he felt compelled to share with the world his discovery of seiryoku zenyo (p. 20). His intuitions about the ubiquitousness of seiryoku zenyo become apparent over time as he moved away from his initial lineal transmittance of knowledge (Kano, 2005, p. 51). In fact, compelled by his awakening of maximising efficiency, Kano pauses to ask, "if the same principle could not be applied to the improvement of health, that is, to physical education?" (Kano, 2013, p. 20). Upon further reflection Kano (2013) says, "after giving the matter a great deal of thought and exchanging views with many knowledgeable persons, I concluded that its aim is making the body strong, useful and healthy while building character through mental and moral discipline" (p. 20). For this reason, Kano believes that his assumptions are what attracted students from all over Japan to leave their jujutsu master's and continue their education with him (p. 19). Contemporary education theorists such as Biggs and Tang (1999) would agree that Kano was well ahead of his time as a constructivist pedagogue and that his ability to use his activity (judo) enabled him to construct new knowledge as having been interpreted from his own existing schema (p. 97). With only five years of experience, and yet to graduate from university, Kano reformed himself as a practitioner and his practice of jujutsu (Gristchenkov, 2012, p. 48). Kano's openness to reform attracted many of his contemporaries and younger generations to explore with him new judo strategies (Gristchenkov, 2012, p. 49).

In the words of Maura Sellers (2012), "[T]he most powerful, durable, and effective agents of educational change are not the policy makers, the curriculum developers or even the education authorities; they are the teachers (p. 461). A good pedagogue is attentive to self-knowledge and improved self-analysis through reflective practice (p. 465), and for this reason I take the view that Kano, as well as Gracie, were visionaries, journeying with their students as co-constructors of identity. Kano's position as a researcher and practitioner showed me that practice involves a broad description of participation beyond the dojo, building upon the Confucian

teaching that "one should expand his sphere of activities by incorporating other people and activities in it" (Gristchenkov, 2012, p. 44).

My initial perspective on teaching jiu jitsu was teacher-centred but as I progressed throughout the research, I learned that I am, as Lathan says, a "guide on the side" (2023). I also began with a symbolic representation of jiu jitsu practice in the form of a triadic union that establishes the foundations for jiu jitsu practice. I have since discovered that the embodiment of jiu jitsu has a much greater sphere of existence and meaning in the life of the practitioner. Where jiu jitsu has generally been described as sport that emphasises grappling techniques to efficiently subdue and immobilise one's opponent (Hinz, 2021, p. 2), the revealed skilful body, the development of intellect, and moral character appear to be more broadly conceptualised by practitioners as a compositional work. The data indicates that practitioners in this research perceive their embodied practice beyond an instrument of action. The data highlights that embodied jiu jitsu spans intellectual, social, and physical domains of the practitioner's life in the very ways that Grandmasters Jigorō Kano and Helio Gracie had hoped.

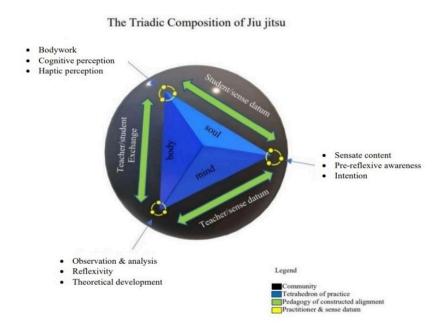
The above research findings provide insights into the interconnection between the dojo community, health, self-efficacy, self-growth, and the construction of identity. I felt compelled to recreate a model of the triadic composition of jiu jitsu, as defined in Figure 13 below, which is my reconfiguration of Gracie's initial diagram and now more aptly conveys the complexity of the individual who is pursuing formation through jiu jitsu practice in a dojo. In Chapter 1, I discussed that studies into various martial arts indicate that practice does positively benefit practitioners but that many theories remain exploratory by nature and tend to avoid any detailed theorising of pedagogy, embodiment, and transformation (Pedrini & Jennings, 2021, p.2). I also argued that, to a larger extent, martial arts studies tend to focus on the performative aspects of practice and its instrumentalisation of the body, which appears to overshadow the under-explored attributes of embodied practice. My experiences led me to consider that to understand the somaticity of my practice I had to carefully investigate this phenomenon (Thompson, 2007, p. 13). I began to realise jitsu jiu more comprehensively in a way that Kano and Gracie merely intuited; their conceptual understanding of body, mind, and spirit lacked depth of meaning and less adequately described what I began to see as embodied jiu jitsu (Eadie Reflective Essay 1, 2022, p. 4).

Kano's ideal judo/jiu jitsu never realised how a jiu jitsuan projects themselves into the world, taking up space, being received by others, and interconnecting with other bodies. Kano simply assumed that instrumentalising the body would lead to self-improvement which would hopefully benefit society. Gracie believed that jiu jitsu practice unifies the mind, body, and soul but never plumbed the depths of the triadic union to reveal the complexity of human agency in practice. Without knowing these things there is no way of knowing how the lived-body of the jiu jitsuan feels the experience that causes a projection of themselves into the world of the dojo and beyond. In my reconstruction of the triadic composition of jiu jitsu practice, I have analysed the data from this research to show that the jiu jitsuan is a complex composition of mind, body, and soul. The jiu jitsuan exists their jiu jitsu but remains dependent upon a community of practice to reveal their expression and to animate their existence, especially as practice becomes the means by which the lived body in jiu jitsu projects itself into the world.

Figure 13 below illustrates the subjective state of being which is defined by the blue tetrahedron and takes on three-dimensional form within the community of the dojo, as indicated by a black sphere. This sphere of influence forms the subject through a bidirectional transference of information as content with intent becomes the focus of bodywork which is perceived through haptics and then observed. Once the content has been received through a pre-reflexive state of awareness, observations lead to further theoretical development which makes provisions for reflective practice. A key feature of this process is that the theoretical development and progression of content is dependent upon a reciprocal exchange of information which flows through teacher and student in a constructed alignment rather than a purely linear teacher-to-student format. This pedagogical process is not new to jiu jitsu, however, this research has made it explicitly known and illuminated it through the triadic composition of jiu jitsu practice.

There is a dichotomy present in this state of transformation, the jiu jitsuan while being the subject of expression discovers the self as it *is* in the dojo, learning through touch and embodying their experience. On the other hand, the self is also recognised and existing *as* the object of a combative encounter with another. Simultaneously, the jiu jitsuan *is* the embodied experience of what exists *as* the object of combative exchange, for this is a body-reflexive practice in the process of making and becoming the self in exchange with others (Swain, 2003, p. 2).

Figure 13
The triadic composition of jiu jitsu practice



This illustrates a greater depth of understanding and complexity of the practitioner

This triadic composition of jiu jitsu practice produces findings that may stimulate further examination to inform industry leaders and practitioners of all levels about the benefits of routine practice for individuals and the dojo community. This research highlights the associations and connections that practitioners have made for themselves, with the understanding that self-improvement is complex and is intellectualised across a broad spectrum of psychosocial, biological, and philosophical domains for the purposes of my scholarly pursuit. Supporting this is the idea that formation of a jiu jitsuan is multidimensional because the image of a jiu jitsuan is fluid and not constrained by the object of jiu jitsu as being merely utilised by the body. In Figure 13, I have reengineered the historical triadic symbol of jiu jitsu which is not abrogated from practice, rather, it has been illuminated, given depth of meaning that was intuited by the forefathers of the art. This means that the individual who takes up BJJ practice ought to be viewed as a person being formed, a member of a community of practice, and a valuable participant contributing to the lives of others (Wenger, 2022, p. 56). This shaping or giving form to our experience goes through the process of liminality as the body subject learns to project the self into

and onto the world from having embodied various abstractions. This requires an engagement with actants in the dojo that help to reify the experience (Wenger, 2022, p. 59). In all, the *self* as projected through the work of jiu jitsu makes what is possible, actual (Fraleigh, 1996, p. 27).

## CHAPTER 5: RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

#### 5.1. Introduction

In this concluding chapter, I assemble key concepts presented in the thesis, focusing on the embodied practice of jiu jitsu, as experienced by practitioners of varying levels of expertise in a rural dojo, and how their perspectives contribute in important ways to self-growth and insights on how jiu jitsu practice can benefit the lives of practitioners. The practice of jiu jitsu, in my small regional dojo, demonstrates a concentration of participants rather than the mind commanding applications of an instrument that is separable from their whole body. Through this study, I have observed the self as re-situated and reimagined in the context of jiu jitsu practice due to the animation of the beminded and be-souled being. Before commenting on the process of this constructed identity, it is important to bring previous chapters into context and further elucidate the symbolism of the triadic philosophy of practice as I have now reimagined through the triadic composition of jiu jitsu practice.

As I noted in Section 1.4, there are a vast array of interpretations and meaning associated with the jiu jitsu triangle. Jiu jitsu historically evolved from a basic conceptual understanding that it was to be instrumentally used by an individual who would make provisions through implicit teaching to have some effect in society. This research brings clarity to the issue of body object, notwithstanding that elements of practice can be objectified, the essence of jiu jitsu can no longer be merely viewed in this way. This research reveals jiu jitsu to be somatically founded in bodily experience (Fraleigh, 2015, p. xxi). Jiu jitsu exists through the participant/artists' aesthetic perspective and through their engagement with others in the dojo community. There is a simultaneity to the practitioner's existence which I argue from the perspective of Swain (2003, p. 3) that the practitioner also coexists and collaborates with others. Even as a subject realises their agency of practice, in the context of cooperation with others there are two distinct and observable modes of being: Being in itself, which is the being of objects spread out in space, [or] being for itself, which is the being of consciousness (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, p. 365). Gracie's initial triadic model gave no further insight into the state of being other than that I acquire the skills of jiu jitsu, only to be placed into a world of objects (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, p. 366). Merleau-Ponty (2012) eloquently states that:

If I constitute the world, then I cannot conceive of another consciousness, for it too would have to have constituted the world and so, at least with regard to this other view upon the world, I would not be constituting. Even if I succeeded in conceiving of this other consciousness as constituting the world, it is again I who would constitute it as such ... But we have in fact learned to call objective thought into doubt and we have made contact with an experience of the body and the world beneath scientific representations of the world and the body that these presentations fail to embrace ... My body and the world are no longer objects ... established by physics ... I have the world as an unfinished individual through my body as a power for this world. (pp. 365-366).

Merleau-Ponty (2012) provides a compelling argument that highlights the foundations of the triadic composition of jiu jitsu, that the world is where I am anchored and where I exist in my jiu jitsu and my jiu jitsu exists through me. This is how I move towards the world and conceive other jiu jitsuans as inserted into and onto the world where our consciousness lived is part of the inherence of things (p. 366). This research is a more detailed interrogation into the field of phenomenology than was first anticipated, through the influences of Fraleigh and Merleau-Ponty. These influences illuminated to me that jiu jitsu is not merely the product of instrumentation but is a lived-body of a compositional work that was present and embodied. I peered into the artistic expression of one's experience and began capturing each moment to convey the phenomenology and perception of practice, in the situation of the dojo. This encouraged me to consider the research questions to gain greater understanding of how practitioners may move upon the world as intuited by Grandmasters Kano and Gracie. While Kano and Gracie never substantiated an eidetic reduction of these intuitions, the outcomes of this research buttress the previous two-dimensional form of triadic union with a three-dimensional triadic composition. This locates jiu jitsuan practice, as a martial art form, as a potentially unique experience demonstrating how practitioners are formed, how a constructed alignment engages sense datum, and how a lived body works within a community of practice.

Given that Jigorō Kano urged practitioners to bear in mind that the overall purpose of physical education ought to "develop a sound body that is useful to you in your daily life" (Kano, 2005, p. 57), and that jiu jitsu, according to Helio Gracie, is not only a sport but a way of life (Elite, 2022), I contend that the following research questions were useful in guiding the outcomes and knowledge gained from the project:

How does the embodied and routine teaching/practice of jiu jitsu lead practitioners to a sense of self-improvement?

- 1. What is "embodied practice" in the context of a small BJJ dojo in regional Australia?
- 2. What are the participant experiences of self-improvement and/or agency through embodied practice?
- 3. How might these practices affect or produce self-improvement?

The primary aims of the research were to understand current and historical perceptions of jiu jitsu and how the practitioner might apply the practice in what was intuited by Kano and Gracie. Considering these, the key objective in examining these intuitions was, for me, to better understand how practitioners discern the impact of the routine practice of jiu jitsu from the perspective of those who embody the practice. Participants in this study relate their embodiment of jiu jitsu to being beneficial to self-growth, contributing meaning and purpose in their life and to others. There is a dearth of this kind of research in the emerging field of martial arts scholarship which has instead focused on the physical benefits for practitioners, but these afford no substantive clarification without considering a theoretical background around the nature of applied practice, in explicating these findings. Practitioner interviews and reflective practice were central to my descriptive process, and I used the theoretical context to examine behaviour which then elucidated how practitioners lived their experience. Capturing this data enabled me to observe and explain how practice is embodied and how practitioners draw upon the implicit teaching and actions of practice. This was crucial in understanding how knowledge is produced through embodied practice and how new knowledge emerges in the field of martial arts.

This research re-constitutes the triadic union of practice as a composition of jiu jitsu taking on the depth of form which had not been realised by Kano and Gracie. The research addressed questions of how and in what ways embodied practice produces or complements self-growth and improvement, and the data reveals that jiu jitsu does indeed contribute to feelings of improved cognition and physicality. I have excavated the depths of the self in embodied practice to uncover that jiu jitsu is the living breathing existence of the "self" revealed. As Fraleigh (1996) describes how that she exists her dance (p. xvi), my research demonstrates how jiu jitsuans are also embodied in jiu jitsu; they do not perform demonstrations of something that represents jiu jitsu, they are not separate from it. Rather, jiu jitsuans exist jiu jitsu. Having now peered into the subjectiveness of the artist at work in jiu jitsu provides insights into how the agent therefore projects themselves into and onto the world. This provides clarity for other emerging martial arts scholars as to how jiu jitsu benefits the agent, and how this may filter into broader aspects of the practitioner's life.

Another compelling knowledge point emerged from this research regarding how jiu jitsuans exist their jiu jitsu in a community of practice. As the data reveals, the nuance of this BJJ community is revealed through a reciprocal exchange of conscious bodies. I can therefore state with confidence that the group aspect of the dojo community is vital to the minded body and the learning that occurs from the experience with others. Jiu jitsu, made manifest, relies upon embodied interactions and exchanges with another, without which, it remains an abstraction, a solo calisthenic performance. What participants revealed was the extent to which their individual consciousness was engaged through touch to productively re/construct identity. I believe the data reveals that these practitioner/subjects have emerged from practice with a sense of self-improvement and self-location through belonging and navigating their way through the rites of passage in the group through haptic knowledge. This provided vital insight for me as a teacher and practitioner because I gained greater understanding about the community of practice, that acceptance and confirmation within the group supports the benefits that can be gained from routine practice. Not only does the participant benefit from enhancing their identity through practice, but also the dojo community benefits as well. This indicates that the community of the dojo assists in authoring what type of person is being projected into and onto the world. While Kano and Gracie intuited from their observations that

practice might benefit the lives of practitioners, this research has discovered the nuances of how this occurs at the site of practice.

### 5.2. Recommendations – Significance of the research

The data from this research suggests that jiu jitsu is not merely a vehicle or instrument that is used by the body subject. More than contributing to wellbeing, boosting confidence, and forming group connections, jiu jitsu is the practitioner's body. Yet, in my dojo community, thoughts are brought into presence through the conscious exchange of bodies moving together to reveal somatic expression and transformation. The mystery of self-awareness is located and practiced in the body, and then reflected onto the world through performance, moment by moment. Even though each moment is ephemeral and destined to perish, reflection becomes fermented through the coincidence of bodies-of-action. This assertion has emerged through the process of this Doctor of Creative Arts precisely because I chose to ask participants to articulate their experiences in practice, and to have them reflect on their agency as participants of Action Research.

In summary, the research is significant on several points and gives insightful contributions to the construction of the identity of jiu jitsuans, and, how they may project themselves onto and into the world, as intuited by the founding fathers of the art. I did not set out to subvert the claims of Grandmasters Kano and Gracie, in fact, my aims were to build upon the foundational underpinnings of their work. Emerging from the data are a number of recommendations for practice and the importance of longevity in the study of embodied jiu jitsu. I offer the following recommendations for further pursuit through practice-led research, using the stages of transition (identified in Section 4.2) for the emerging field of martial arts scholarship:

1. A clear finding related to the embodiment of seiryoku zenyo and the philosophy of Kano and Gracie requires engagement of an initiation process so that these principles can become realised. This suggests that prospective students of embodied jiu jitsu practice may experience a separation from other social structures and preconceived ideas. This first phase, which I am calling marginal experience, may have the individual experiencing awkwardness as they become exposed to foreign movements, ceremonial practices, and unfamiliar language. There are gender dynamics that may also impact or that present emotional triggers for individuals.

- Previous traumatic experiences may surface and create anxiety which require understanding and careful nurturing.
- 2. There are broad demographics within all dojo studios, diversity in gender and beliefs, and where each practitioner has personalised goals and ambitions. There is an increased probability of attestation once the practitioner has gone through the threshold of marginality. This is an important stage of bodywork familiarisation, the development of skill and language, and the next stage of maturation and formation. During this phase, there may emerge questions of identity, purpose, and legitimacy of status as the practitioner moves between their being of old identity to becoming a new identity. It is important to remember that goal-directed behaviour be established through separation and initiation phases but that there is room for practitioners to reform their goals, behaviour, and identity.
- 3. Bearing these points in mind, teachers and experienced practitioners may benefit from the new paradigm of the triadic composition of jiu jitsu practice if they have embraced the practice as embodied and in the hopes of achieving what both Kano and Gracie intuited. This shift in thinking recognises that jiu jitsu is a somatic phenomenon and the experiential unfolding of personal narratives. Consciousness is vast and accrues meaning in different ways (Fraleigh, 2015, p. 15), which was revealed through the documentary evidence and verbatim testimony gathered for this research. I believe, therefore, that the responsibility of the jiu jitsu community ought to ensure that careful attention to the somaticity of the practitioner and their story is heard and observed to increase the probability of participants reaching confirmation. This should occur through acceptance and ensuring that individuals have an environment in the dojo that fosters freedom of expression. This can reduce judgement and bond practitioners in feeling and thought, it is quite literally the time spent on the mat that leads to successful formation and reformation and the coconstruction of identity. The most powerful way to encourage this practice is to create a dojo that offers the free exchange of ideas and makes provisions for the subjective body to express the lived body.

Finally, I believe that I have yielded a response to the main research question (*How does the embodied and routine teaching/practice of jiu jitsu lead practitioners to a sense of self-improvement?*) by demonstrating that practitioners in my dojo have embraced jiu jitsu as a practice of transformation, realisation, and expression. The jiu jitsuan is shown to be a body formed, but never closed to the possibility of reformation, and that lived interactions with others become expressed in the performance of jiu jitsu made manifest. The body is not merely an instrument that applies jiu jitsu to one's life, rather that the jiu jitsuan exists their jiu jitsu practice. Overall, the presence of the jiu jitsuan is a subjective field of inquiry functioning in the field of communal collaboration, where solitude and isolation are broken by the awareness of the phenomenon that passes between practitioners. This is how I have journeyed with my students to discover who we are and how we project ourselves into the world around us in all its splendour and diversity.

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