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## MARTIAL ARTS AND MORAL LIFE

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A row of uniformed British police officers cower before a solitary 'Ju-Jitsu Suffragette' in a July 1910 cartoon from *Punch* magazine. She is depicted as having tossed to the side her gloves, hat, and her placard, on it emblazoned 'Votes for Women.' The caption reads, 'What we may expect when our women all become Ju-Jitsu Suffragettes.'



THE SUFFRAGETTE THAT KNEW JIU-JITSU.

THE ARREST

FIGURE 3.1 Ju-Jitsu Suffragette (used with permission by Punch Ltd)

What caused such a stir? Earlier in the month, photographs of 'Mrs Garrud, a well-known Suffragette' appeared in the *London Sketch* in which she is throwing jiu-jitsu style, a uniformed British police officer to the ground (Swinth 2001). Garrud's power created a mockery, not only of her power to demand the right to vote but also of her power to physically defend herself. The feminist point is that Garrud's case is not surprising. Undermining women's power is a pervasive and integral part of current social and political structures, which are mainly aligned to accord power to men (Bartky 2004; Bartky 1990; Held 2006; Aguilar and Nighthingale 1994). If power is a capacity or ability to transform oneself or others then undermining women's power threatens that capacity of self-transformation (Burrow 2012).

My purpose in this chapter is to point to autonomy and integrity as key sources of transformation. Each is essential to moral life. Moral persons are autonomous, at least to some degree, since persons are held morally responsible only for those actions originating from their own choices. Autonomy expresses self-governance and thus relies on the capacity to form and act on choices. Integrity is a matter of standing for those beliefs, judgements, values, or principles that are important to who one is (Calhoun 1995). This view of integrity as *standing for something before others* has gained considerable currency in moral theory because it captures a common element present to theories of integrity as: (i) self-integration; (ii) fidelity to what is necessary to one's identity; and (iii) setting limits to what one will not do. Autonomy and integrity are each self-protective. Integrity protects the self's commitments through demonstrating to others that one's commitments matter to who one is, so one is not willing to compromise those commitments. Autonomy is self-protective because withstanding pressures against counterforces protects our ability to form and act on choices—this is why autonomy is undermined through force, threats, manipulation or coercion. The ability to protect our commitments is relevant to the capacity of self-transformation. Without autonomy we lack the ability to govern and guide our lives in directions we choose. And without integrity we miss having a self to transform in any coherent or consistent way (even supposing that the self is not entirely consistent or unified in its beliefs). Hence, both autonomy and integrity are significant sources of our power to live our lives as moral beings.

A key point of feminist moral philosophy is that social and political conditions continue to work against women's ability to flourish as moral agents. By pointing to how autonomy and integrity are threatened for women I aim to uncover a significant means through which women's power is undermined in society. My focus is on violence against women as a pervasive, inescapable social condition that threatens both integrity and autonomy. Concern for personal safety routinely constrains woman's power to have and act on choices while undermining the ability to stand for judgements before others. Socialisation in public vigilance further entrenches women's fear of violence and hence, restricts women's possibility to flourish as moral agents. I

cultivating confidence in skills of self-protection. I understand martial arts training as training in self-defence and so my account also speaks to training provided through self-defence classes. Martial arts training aims at the cultivation of specific skills of self-defence through embarking on a long-term programme of skill acquisition taught by instructors who have demonstrated their skill and superiority according to the style's accepted traditions. In contrast, self-defence classes aim at short-term acquisition (usually in less than 20 weeks) of a limited number of self-defence applications aiming to control, defuse, or leave a threatening situation. Feminist self-defence classes include the latter but situate learning physical skills within a curriculum attending to women's threat of sexual violence and includes attention to verbal assertiveness in response to threats of violence (Hollander 2010). Self-confidence is, in my opinion, integral to acquiring and advancing skills of self-defence in any of the above forms. My thesis is that self-confidence is important to self-protection and so it is significant to both autonomy and integrity. Thus, self-defence is a significant source of women's power to live as moral persons within a culture of violence against women.

### 1 A culture of violence against women

Amnesty International (2006) has accrued data from over 50 independent world surveys on violence against women (VAW) that indicate one in three women worldwide will experience personal violence in her lifetime. Both the experience and the threat of violence create what I call a *culture of violence against women*. A culture of VAW is a culture in which women are commonly assaulted and so it is a culture in which women fear or are otherwise worried about threats of violence. I argue below that fear of violence is deeply engrained in women and that it threatens women's autonomy and integrity.

A culture of VAW is composed of both the experience and threat of harm. Women's experience of violence is typically physical and sexual assault. The experience of violence is often followed by the psychological harm of post traumatic stress disorder' (PTSD). PTSD includes feelings of disassociation, nightmares, intrusive memories, excessive startle responses, and agitation (see Brecklin 2004). PTSD interferes with women's ability to live normal lives, particularly if it is severe, as it often is after rape (Brisson 1999; Brisson 1997). I suggest that the threat of harm most matters to women's ability to develop integrity and autonomy. Threat of violence is routinely part of women's lives. Women most fear sexual assault and this fear is targeted towards strangers; physical assault is not feared in itself but because it might occur during sexual assault (Cobbina et al. 2008). Research on fear of stranger violence shows that, even factoring for differences such as race, economic status, social status, or age, *gender* is the most stable predictor of a person's fear of violence (May et al. 2010).

Women's fear of stranger violence is a common part of life that is closely associated with restrictive behaviours. Women routinely take evasive actions

lots or streets, not walking alone, and so forth. Such precautions reflect a deep concern for women's safety and security in public, which is so familiar as to appear self-evident. Socialisation of girls and women encourages the need to be vigilant of stranger assaults. Popular belief supposes that assaults against women are most likely to occur by strangers in parks or streets, whether day or night. Media reports of sexual assaults feed this popular view through publicising accounts of strangers leaping out of bushes to assault lone female walkers or joggers (Pain 1997). Police literature and government campaigns focus on personal prevention strategies to avoid stranger assault (Stanko 1995). Prevention strategies focus on stranger violence and women's responsibility to avoid assault, identifying potential sources of danger and effective resistance techniques (Orchowski et al. 2008). Not only is a focus on women's responsibility not effectively targeted, it is objectionable because it supposes that women are in charge of avoiding attacks. Responsibility needs to be placed on perpetrators. Perpetrators of VAW are accountable for assaulting women, period. My emphasis on cultivating skills of self-defence should not be taken to suggest that women are responsible for VAW or responsible to avoid VAW. Rather, my point is to show that women fear violence and are socialised to act on this fear through restrictive behaviours that result from a focus on women's responsiveness to the threat of violence.

Now, one might point out that women's fear of violence appears to be misplaced because it is targeted towards stranger violence. Far more women experience violence at the hands of intimates than strangers. Women are typically threatened, intimidated, and so forth by people they know prior to their physical or sexual assaults (Stevens 1996, Downs et al. 2007). International evidence reveals that, while the rates of this violence change, the threats from intimates remain. The World Health Organization's (2005) study across ten countries shows that, for example, 15 per cent of women in Japan and 71 per cent of women in Ethiopia reported physical or sexual violence by a husband or partner. According to one estimate, domestic violence affects more than 32 million women (Tjaden and Thoennes 2000). Heterosexual women are most vulnerable since violence by male partners is the most common form of violence against women (Robinson 2003). Psychological research shows that personal assaults are usually preceded by verbal and emotional assaults, or what is called psychological abuse. Psychological abuse commonly includes belittling, mocking, insulting, manipulating, threatening, yelling, withholding access (to money, car keys, house keys, and so forth) and being forced to witness physical violence (slamming, hitting, destroying objects or animals). Women subject to psychological harms often feel threatened by the possibility of physical or sexual assault and this perception seems accurate. Psychological abuse usually precedes physical or sexual assault (Penn and Nardos 2003). So if women are worried about violence, it would seem that the scrutiny should be of intimate partners and not where one walks at night. Yet the focus on heterosexual women's partners is interestingly obscured by a quiet yet relentless orientation towards women's own actions to

Fear of stranger violence is not due to some error in belief women somehow possess *en masse*. I doubt fear of stranger violence is due to some strange error of belief presiding over women even while we are well-informed of the widespread prevalence of acquaintance and partner violence (at least in most Western countries). Feminist inspired media campaigns, feature articles, and documentaries since the 1980s have brought considerable attention to domestic assault and brought important legal changes, such as making date rape a crime. Stranger violence is more frightening to women because it seems both unpredictable and unavoidable; and women generally feel confident in their abilities to predict and avoid intimate violence (Pain 1997). While stranger assault is less predictable, this does not sufficiently explain why women predominantly fear it. One suggestion Pain notes is that socialisation in fear of stranger violence is encouraged to draw attention away from acquaintance assault and to incite women to seek safety at home as part of 'keeping women in their place.' (Pain 1997, 299) More recent research suggests that fear of stranger assault is linked to women's more general fear of victimisation. Women are typically aware that VAW is a widespread issue but are socialised to associate VAW with strangers in public. As we saw above, media reports and both government and police literature focus on stranger violence. Women are socialised to avoid harm by monitoring choices and actions to minimise risk-taking and avoid risk of danger in public (May et al. 2010). Socialisation in fear of stranger violence appears to best explain why women fear stranger violence far more than acquaintance violence. Below, I expand on how socialisation in fear of stranger violence is a serious concern for women's ability to flourish as moral persons.

## 2 Autonomy and integrity

In a culture of violence, intimidating or threatening postures, words, or actions are threats to women's safety. Typical responses to the threat of violence emphasize women's vulnerability and so do little to counter fear of violence. The upshot is that women adopt constraints on behaviour that undermine both autonomy and integrity. Constrained action takes the form of either *avoidance* or *defensive* behaviours (May et al. 2010). Common avoidance behaviours are avoiding certain places, not going out at night, not walking or taking the bus alone, and choosing against certain events or activities. Defensive actions include carrying pepper spray or mace, owning a gun, having a burglar alarm or watchdog, holding keys in hands when walking, and so forth. Both avoidance and defensive actions constrain action because they introduce limits on what one can do, whether it is not going to certain places or not going alone. Many restrictive behaviours are quite routine and so ingrained as habits that women tend not to notice them as restrictions. Nevertheless, these restrictions are in place because women fear violence when alone in public. Note that what women find as sexually violating or threatening need

women through everyday, mundane situations (Stanko 1995). Stanko points out that fear of physical and sexual assault is fuelled by everyday forms of sexual harassment such as catcalls, comments by male passerby, being followed or felt up on public transport, or receiving obscene phone calls. Experiencing threat of VAW on a routine, everyday basis emphasizes women's vulnerability to violence. We see this vulnerability enforced in the United States by marketing of products such as the Shri!l Alarm, a personal handheld alarm; Cellnet, a cell phone company advertising through depicting a lone stranded woman; the US National Rifle Association's \$2 million campaign reminding women to buy guns to address fear of crime; panic pendants; and other products designed to respond to women's fear of sexual assault (Stanko 1995). The advertisers of these products all appeal to women's vulnerability to assault. The obvious message is that women need to buy these products and try to avoid violence as best as possible. The less obvious message is that buying these products should be accompanied by a prudent exercise of caution and avoidance exemplified in the sorts of defensive and avoidance behaviours we saw above. Constraining behaviour is expected but it is, in the end, simply a passive response that fails to lessen women's fear of violence while emphasizing public vigilance. In what follows I plan to draw out the point that constrained behaviour undermines women's power of self-transformation through limiting possibilities of both autonomy and integrity.

I have argued elsewhere through pointing to socialisation in femininity that constraining behaviour limits autonomy (Burrow 2009). Rather than summarise my earlier points I wish to extend my argument here through pointing to *limited live options* as limits to autonomy. Options that are not practically pursuable are not live options. A woman's option to wear whatever she likes and to go wherever she wants at night are not live options for most women because of fear of VAW. We say persons lack autonomy if choices are the result of threats, coercion, force, or manipulation because each interferes with persons' capacity for choice formation and pursuit. The 'option' to constrain behaviour is forced in the sense that women have little practicable means of escaping fear of stranger violence due to feminine socialisation, as I have earlier argued. If this is correct then women simply lack any live option to avoid constraining behaviours and in this way, autonomy is limited. I do not suppose that autonomy is limited because choices are limited (for instance, where to go in public, or with whom, or when). My view is that autonomy is also limited in a more global way since the fabric of women's daily lives is informed by a subtle but insistent limit on choices interwoven throughout the most pedestrian decisions (what clothes to wear, what shoes to put on, where to keep one's mobile phone, and so forth). Both obvious and not so obvious restrictions in choices are informed by safety concerns of going about one's business in public. For women, going out in public is inextricably tied to a concern for one's vulnerability to assault and a corresponding restriction of choice formation and pursuit. That is, women do not have the option of making choices without

eliminate certain choices from the realm of what is practically pursuable, fear of violence undermines autonomy.

We see a similar impact in the case of integrity. I suggest that VAW restricts practical possibilities for integrity through limiting those commitments women are willing to take on or how and when women are willing to act on those commitments. Integrity is threatened by two sorts of pressures in virtue of living in a culture of violence, internal and external pressures. Internal pressures may wreck integrity through self-criticism, self-denial, or other internal turmoil that brings persons to violate their own views. External threats usually take the form of others' reproaches, criticisms, wheedling, or persuasion, all of which press us to cave in on those values, beliefs, or judgements that are important to the self. Internal and external pressures can work separately or together to compromise aims, goals, or projects because of fear of violence. If we change how we dress, who we walk with, where we choose to go, and so forth out of threat of violence then those choices can impact what commitments to stand for (or not). Let's say I am committed to jogging as part of my view of myself as both an athletic person and a person with discipline. Exercise is not simply something I do when the impulse strikes me, it is something to which I am committed. Even though I have this commitment, I still might consider it unwise to jog when travelling in a new city if I am unsure which places or times of day would make me more vulnerable to assault. Or perhaps I have just moved neighbourhood. Or simply varied the time of day in which I go out to exercise. If in any of these cases I do not see going out to exercise as a wise choice because of threat of violence—even if I do not consciously think to myself 'I might be assaulted'—then I have not stood by my commitment to exercise. I have, in fact, weakened my commitment. In cases like these, the external threat of violence impairs my capacity to uphold my commitment and hence, erodes integrity.

Internal pressures working against the capacity to stand for something before others are less obvious but no less worrying. I argue elsewhere (Burrow 2012) that self-confidence is necessary to integrity because without it, we cannot stand for our commitments. Doubting oneself by doubting one's choices erodes the fortitude necessary to withstanding pressures working against integrity. Threat of violence is often, although not always, linked to fear or intimidation. Fear and intimidation undermine self-confidence through doubting one's choice of action. Doubting whether one is making the best choices to protect one's safety undermines self-confidence. Now threat of violence is less likely to erode self-confidence than the actual experience of violence. We see this most obviously in the case of intimate partner assault. When people wonder 'How can she stay with him while he continually assaults her?' they need not shake their heads in disbelief. It is all too believable that a lack of self-esteem undermines one's ability to defend oneself against personal attacks; or brings a person to believe 'I must be the cause of his violent outburst.'

assaults. Victims often come to believe that they are the source of the violence because they did the wrong thing, said the wrong thing, or otherwise acted to provoke the attack. Social workers commonly recognise this blaming as part of the tension evident in a cycle of violence that evidences how psychological abuse is tightly connected to physical assault.

Psychologists recognise that psychological abuse erodes self-esteem, undermining women's capacity to consider themselves valuable or worthwhile (Bartky 2004; Penn and Nardos 2003). Thus intimate partners who keep women in a cycle of violence perpetuate their loss of self-esteem. In this environment, it is no wonder women lack the confidence to stand for their commitments. Not even the commitment to one's own well-being is immune since women in abusive relationships predominantly focus on their partner's needs and wishes at the expense of their own (Lynch and Graham-Berman 2000).

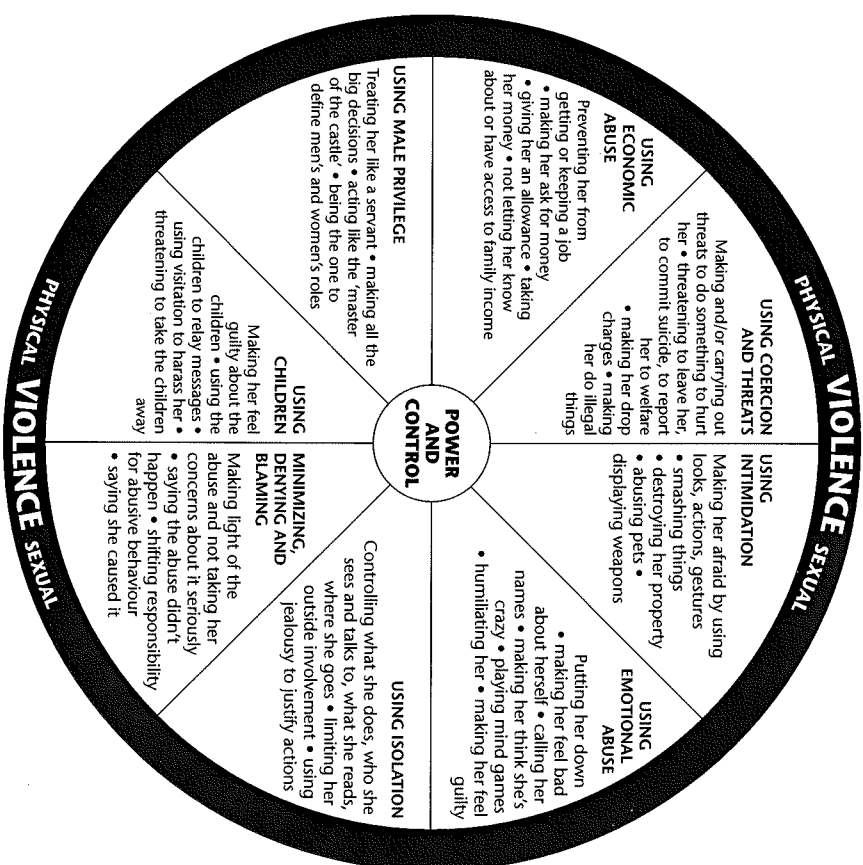


FIGURE 3.2 Wheel of Violence (used with permission of the Duluth Domestic Abuse Intervention Project)

Loss of self-confidence is not limited to the experience of violence. Sutton, Robinson, and Farrall (2011) point to empirical research linking restrictive avoidance and defensive behaviours to negative emotions such as fear, anxiety, frustration, and sadness. The authors confirm earlier studies in rape literature showing that women exposed to a description of rape experience lower self-esteem than a control group. Their study shows that women's self-esteem is eroded by the societal view that women ought to be protected by men, a view that is shared by men and women alike. This view exemplifies benevolent sexism since it is a positive expression of concern for women's well-being but embeds a sexist assumption that women are unable to protect their own well-being. Endorsing this benevolently sexist view entrenches social norms casting women as weak, helpless, vulnerable to assault and thus dependent on men for protection. The cost to self-esteem is a function of women's perceived loss of control. Hence, the authors conclude that threat of violence heightens women's sense of vulnerability and decreases the sense of self-efficacy, each of which lower self-esteem.

Undermined self-esteem because of fear of violence affects self-confidence. Fearing violence in a culture that presses women to accept responsibility to avoid violence burdens women with choosing the best or most appropriate restrictive actions for any given situation. When the onus to avoid violence lies with women and women's vulnerability to violence is weighted heavily, women may easily doubt their choices. Did she make the right choice in going to an event with a woman friend instead of a male friend? Will she be vulnerable to assault if she chooses to walk down this street as opposed to that street? Did she say the 'wrong thing' to her partner this morning? Self-doubt creeps in when choices are made in a threatening environment because the costs are high. When that environment has already proven harmful, as is the case with intimate partner violence, confidence in one's ability to stand for one's commitments is derailed by lowered self-esteem. Hence, whether women are in public or private environments (not that the division between the two is necessarily sharp) women can suffer threats to self-confidence. Integrity is eroded by lack of self-confidence when it undercuts one's ability to stand for one's commitments before others. And if we consider that we have no commitments to stand for without autonomy, then we can appreciate that undermining integrity affects autonomy. That is, the capacity to choose and act is undermined if we lack confidence in our decisional capacity.

### 3 Martial arts training

The view I develop below is that martial arts training counters fear of violence through instilling self-confidence and hence, expands women's possibilities for autonomy and integrity. Self-confidence is integral to maintaining and exercising the ability to form and act on our choices, and to stand for those

culture of violence. This is not to say that self-defence training provides an invincible shield against the harms of VAW. In particular, assault by intimates opens a complex set of vulnerabilities and worries for women because domestic violence is typically tied to psychological abuse. As we saw above, psychological abuse harms self-confidence through belittling, insulting, coercing, manipulating, and so forth. Martial arts training may seem to do little to protect the self against such harms because its emphasis is on learning physical skills, not psychological skills. But I suspect that martial arts training places women in a better position than we would otherwise be. Let me expand.

Empirical research shows a connection between improved self-confidence and martial arts training. Much of this research focuses on self-defence training, but we can understand it to extend to martial arts training since self-defence training is a central component of martial arts training. Admittedly, different styles of martial arts may emphasize specific techniques of self-defence to greater or lesser degree and may 'hide' or embed self-defence techniques within traditional patterns or sequences of movements. But these points do not detract from the claim that martial arts training necessarily includes training in self-defence. While I acknowledge that self-defence classes differ in their duration and intensity than traditional martial arts training, if taking a 12 or 20 week self-defence class can produce measurable results in self-confidence then we can expect that longer durations of time will improve or at least maintain those levels of confidence. Since traditional martial arts training usually consists of more than the standard duration of a self-defence class I expect martial arts training will improve or maintain self-confidence levels.

Martial arts training produces *skill self-confidence* (confidence in one's skills of self-defence) and this self-confidence appears to be connected to an increase in *overall self-confidence*. Skill self-confidence is measured in one's confidence to execute specific techniques with correct timing and distance to evade, subdue, or counter-strike an opponent. Numerous empirical studies show that self-confidence in self-defence skills is increased after 10 week, 12 week, and 20 week programmes (Ball and Martin 2012; Hollander 2004; Hollander 2010; Brecklin 2011). This effect is not lost quickly. Ball and Martin (2012) note that tests measuring improved skill self-confidence show that even after training ceases, skill self-confidence remains at comparable levels six months later. Less data is available on traditional martial arts training. Angleman et al. (2009) consider a popular view in the media that, unlike self-defence classes, martial arts training does not provide women with adequate skills needed for self-defence. The authors point out that the popular view is evident in recent research that excludes traditional martial arts as a source of skill self-confidence and focuses on self-defence classes instead (Angleman et al. 2009, 90). Angleman et al. failed to find any actual comparison studies between martial arts training and self-defence classes concerning skill self-confidence. The authors' research suggests that martial arts training develops automaticity

before they become fully-fledged attacks. While the authors admit we need more research on the connection between learning martial arts and skill self-confidence, gaining an understanding will likely be complicated by differences between martial art styles and the kinds of skills each cultivates.

Self-confidence is far better documented in research focusing on overall self-confidence. Overall psychological health is typically measured by psychologists in terms of global self-esteem, which relies on feelings of self-worth and self-respect. Global self-esteem is closely correlated with a general attitude of self-confidence since the latter relies on positive beliefs about one's worth, self-efficacy, good qualities, and so forth (Owens 1993). Psychological studies show that self-defence training increases overall self-confidence in conjunction with assertiveness, self-esteem, and perceived control, whilst it decreases anxiety, depression, hostility, fear, and avoidance behaviours (Layton 1993; Angelman et al. 2009; Hollander 2004). Ball and Martin (2012) argue that it is likely that self-defence training programmes for women produce higher overall confidence because these classes are oriented towards enabling women to overcome psychological barriers to acting assertively. Women may be reluctant to implement risk reduction strategies while on a date because cultural dating norms encourage women to focus on relational cues rather than safety cues. Such norms discourage acting assertively, associating assertion with negative responses such as rejection and embarrassment. The authors' study shows that participants were more likely than the control group to be more assertive and to engage in far more self-protective behaviours. These results support previous research findings showing that self-defence classes instructing women how to overcome psychological social barriers encourage assertive resistance and thus improve overall self-confidence.

Improvements in overall self-confidence extend across self-defence classes to more traditional forms of martial arts. A variety of studies since the early 1990s have since shown a positive correlation between martial arts training and improved psychological health and personal development (Theeboom et al. 2009). This psychological research is a positive indicator of improved overall self-confidence through martial arts training. More recent studies examining specific styles of martial arts confirm this view. Improved overall self-confidence has been established in Kuan and Roy's (2007) study of Wushu athletes, Steyn and Roux's (2009) research on Tae Kwon Do students and Richman and Rehberg's (1986) comparison of self-esteem in senior Karate students compared to beginners. We should be cautious and not generalise from such studies to assert that all martial arts improve self-confidence or equally well. Vertonghen and Theeboom's (2010) review of the literature on martial arts' socio-psychological outcomes shows that positive psychological effects are associated with years of training. The authors nevertheless caution that psychological studies need to consider whether these positive effects are produced equally well through: (i) more traditional forms of martial arts

approaches to teaching in different styles; and (iii) personality traits of training participants. Kavoura et al. (2012) further add that Vertonghen and Theeboom's review of psychological research in martial arts fails to consider the impact of gender. Ignoring gender difference is troubling since most empirical research concerning martial arts training is gender-biased, considering male athletes the norm.

My main aim in what remains is to show that self-confidence produced through martial arts training is significant to autonomy and integrity for women, who live within a culture of violence. I do not deny that other sources of self-confidence contribute to choosing and standing for one's judgements. It is possible to develop strong self-confidence through sport or dance, particularly for girls and women (Young 2005; Meyers 2004; Magyar and Feltz 2003). But other forms of sport or dance need not generate self-defence skills since these athletic endeavours do not aim to train in self-defence. So even if these other forms of athleticism lead to improved overall self-confidence, that improvement need not be linked to improved confidence in one's skills of self-defence. My claim is that *because it trains in self-defence*, martial arts training develops self-confidence and this improves women's possibilities for autonomy and integrity. Self-confidence here includes both skill self-confidence and overall self-confidence as two related forms. Weirauf et al. (2000) cite a significant amount of data that correlates perceptions of skill self-confidence with overall self-confidence. Those holding robust confidence in their skills are more likely to attempt difficult tasks, persist in overcoming obstacles, and are less likely to experience anxiety in the face of threats. The authors' study compared participants' skills self-confidence with overall self-confidence before and after self-defence training focusing on women's verbal, emotional, and physical resistance to threats. Their conclusions show that overall self-confidence increases with improved skill self-confidence and that both are maintained after a six month follow-up. If the authors' study is any indication, martial arts training develops both kinds of self-confidence through a focus on self-defence.

As an important disclaimer, we should note that self-confidence does not suggest rash, foolish, or aggressive displays of one's ability to defend the self. Self-confidence is not aggression, arrogance, or foolishness. The latter are excesses of confidence failing to take one's own vulnerability into account. Excesses of self-confidence undermine one's ability to protect oneself through encouraging rash or overly-risky behaviour. And lacking self-confidence in one's ability to protect oneself undermines the ability to do so, since self-doubt produces hesitation or lack of follow-through that leaves one open to attacks and counter-attacks. An effective amount of self-confidence lies between excesses of self-doubt and arrogance. This is an Aristotelian way of capturing the kind of skill self-confidence that arrives from self-defence training. Aristotle held that an appropriate amount of a disposition such as courage lies between an excess of rashness on the one end and an excess of fear on the



do not mean to imply that self-confidence is a virtue but that self-confidence is a mean between two extremes characterised by self-doubt and arrogance. My account is not normative because I neither hold that women ought to undertake self-defence training as a moral requirement; nor that self-defence training is necessary to integrity or autonomy.

#### 4 Improving integrity and autonomy

In this section I point to martial arts training as a source of developing integrity and autonomy. I plan to draw out how self-confidence relates to the self-protective nature of both autonomy and integrity. We saw above that autonomy is a matter of self-determination that relies on the capacity to form and act on judgements without undue pressure, coercion, or force. Resisting counter-pressure against one's capacity for self-determination is to be true to oneself. Autonomy is, in an important sense, the capacity to decide to do what is good for oneself and so to carve out a space for oneself in the moral community, even if that requires resisting counter-pressures. In this sense autonomy is similar to integrity because integrity requires resistance to counter-pressures—indeed, it is best revealed in those situations testing one's commitments to one's values, beliefs, or principles. Carolyn McLeod (2005) points out that integrity and autonomy are each *self-protective*. Both autonomy and integrity require protecting the self against pressures that interfere with our ability to flourish and thus to express our standing as the individuals we are in our moral community. I am extending this account by adding that self-confidence is significant to the ability to be self-protective. We saw above that cultivating skills of self-defence generates both skill self-confidence and overall self-confidence. I suggest that such self-confidence is relevant to one's ability to protect the self from undue pressures working against autonomy and integrity.

Autonomy is promoted through martial art training because it produces self-confidence. Self-confidence allows persons to maintain autonomy in precisely those situations in which others interfere with our ability to make and act on our choices. We cannot act autonomously if others force us to choose according to *their* agendas because they threaten, coerce, or physically force us to carry out actions they decide are good to do. Most obviously, self-defence training enables us to resist if someone wants to harm us or force us to harm others. Notice I am not claiming that martial arts training is an invincible shield and so we can always resist others' attempts to thwart our autonomy. If someone points a gun at me and asks for my wallet I will probably hand over my wallet. It is not worth risking my life for the contents of my wallet. But training in martial arts prepares us in many ways to resist others' demands. We saw above that women who have confidence in their skills of self-defence have confidence in other areas of life. A woman who has skill self-confidence can resist those who evidence aggressive behaviour or postures by speaking calmly

It provides a source of resisting others' attempts to influence our choices or actions due to threat of harm and so fosters confidence that one can maintain one's position without intimidation or fear. Less obviously, protecting our choices can simply be a matter of resisting others' attempts to thwart us from forming or carrying out our choices. If threats of violence can limit autonomy, then it seems that increasing self-confidence through martial arts training is a fitting means to reclaiming our possibilities for autonomy. And since martial arts training allows persons to choose among several possible courses of action in response to threats, coercion, or force, it provides more options for action and thus improves autonomy.

Self-confidence is important to integrity and when it results from martial arts training provides a key source of resistance against pressures others can place on our integrity. Possessing self-confidence to stand against physical or sexual harms, if it is to be well-placed, requires both having and recognising that one has the sort of physical and psychological skills enabling one to prevent harm to oneself. These skills foster a resilience to protect one's commitments *despite* the possibility of harm. Experiencing another's anger or agitation may be enough to silence those who fear further repercussion, especially those who have already experienced psychological harm (such as bullying or insults), physical assault, or sexual assault. The ability to remain strong in the face of adversity and to calmly maintain one's position is a result of confidence in oneself to respond well to such challenges. Those who undertake martial arts training develop their abilities, physical and psychological, to reject certain expectations as inappropriate because they are prepared to defend themselves if that rejection prompts intimidating words or gestures. This resiliency matters to one's capacity to maintain or develop integrity just as it does autonomy. Intimidation need not *directly* threaten violence to have an impact on women's integrity or autonomy. We saw earlier that women are socialised to fear violence and so even when others have no intention of physical or sexual harm women may feel threatened in ways that lead to restrictions in choice. Women who have already experienced violence are more vulnerable to intimidation from others' demands or reproaches. Since one in three women worldwide will experience some form of violence, we can expect an astonishingly large number of women will face some degree of intimidation or fear. Resiliency to intimidation and other responses to threat of violence is essential if autonomy and integrity are to flourish. My claim is that cultivating self-confidence through martial arts training is an important means of developing such resiliency.

The ability to remain strong in the face of adversity and to calmly maintain one's position is a result of confidence in oneself to respond well to such challenges. I suggest that this is the case not just for women who fear stranger violence but also for women who fear intimate partner assault. In response to the threat of stranger violence, women are encouraged to internalise social stigmas of weakness and vulnerability and are concomitantly discouraged

overcomes such socialisation through encouraging assertive responses to threat of harm appropriate to the level of threat presented. Women who undertake martial arts training develop their abilities, physical and psychological, to publicly reject certain expectations as inappropriate because they are prepared to defend themselves even if that rejection prompts retaliatory attempts of physical or sexual assault. Possessing such resiliency results from self-confidence in one's ability to protect oneself. Notice that self-protection here is much more focused on actual threats of stranger violence and does not rely on the sorts of passive avoidance or defensive behaviours that women are commonly socialised to adopt.

Improved self-confidence is also a significant source of the ability to resist pressures associated with intimate partner violence. Self-confidence suffers for women caught in a pattern of domestic violence. Psychological abuse undermines self-esteem and contributes to feelings of hopelessness and helplessness (Aguilar and Nightingale 1994). Persons tend to become passive and accepting of violence and this lack of resistance is further associated with helplessness, depression, and low self-esteem (Penn and Nardos 2003, 148–150). Self-efficacy is a key component of self-confidence, so we can expect general feelings of hopelessness and helplessness to erode overall self-confidence. Lacking self-confidence to address psychological abuse opens women to physical and sexual assault since psychological abuse typically precedes physical or sexual assault. I suggest that possessing confidence to resist physical and sexual assault provides an opportunity for women to resist psychological abuse instead of avoiding resistance due to a fear of physical or sexual assault. Women facing psychological abuse but who are confident of resisting physical or sexual assaults as retribution for resisting psychological abuse can be more confident in their ability to resist psychological abuse. Thus, women who possess self-confidence in virtue of martial arts training are further enabled to resist intimate partner violence.

## 5 Conclusion

I have shown that autonomy and integrity are centrally a matter of protecting the self and that martial arts training enhances confidence in one's ability to protect oneself; hence, martial arts training is a source of improved possibility for autonomy and integrity. Since both autonomy and integrity are central components of moral life, martial arts training expands women's ability to live their lives as moral persons. History is shaped by persons standing for their commitments, those who display autonomy and integrity despite threatening circumstances. Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela, and more recently, Aung San Suu Kyi have taken public stands for great commitments that matter politically, nationally and internationally. Suffragettes such as Mrs Garrud fought for similarly great commitments in taking a stand to have women legally recognised as persons. Garrud's ju-jitsu training no doubt contributed to

against women is eradicated or at least diminished significantly, martial arts training proves an opportune route to withstanding its challenges to integrity and autonomy.

My argument is limited to the general aim of showing that women gain self-confidence through martial arts training which, along with physical skills in self-defence, better situates women to stand for their commitments than those lacking such training. Self-defence classes, and in particular feminist self-defence classes, focus more on women's practical assertive responses and common forms of threats or attacks and so appear to do more than martial arts training to overcome feminine socialisation in vulnerability. If that is correct it well explains why empirical research shows self-defence classes are more tightly correlated with improved skill self-confidence and improved overall self-confidence. Martial arts training may move closer or further away from the self-defence model depending on style, instructor, and whether training is traditional or competition-oriented. Further research might account for the impact such differences have on self-confidence. As a philosophical analysis, my account is open to further expansion and revision in light of new research in psychology, martial arts, and violence against women. I welcome research in these areas focusing on positive responses we can engage in to counter women's socialisation in fear and vulnerability to violence and most importantly, to counter violence against women.

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