

Abstract: A qualitative study exploring the impact hoplology has on stage and screen combat, from the perspective of choreography, performance, and spectatorship. A series of interviews combined with action research in the form of workshops lead to industrial application and a summary of findings.

Theatre of War: The application of hoplology to stage and screen combat.

(Or the symbiotic relationship between fictional/simulated violence and real violence and how one should inform the other)

Acknowledgments

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Chapter 1: The statement of the problem

Introduction to the chapter

This dissertation is an exploration of the impact that hoplological research can have on stage and screen combat, whether that be positive or negative. This quest comes at a time whereby hoplology has seemingly failed as a serious academic study, however, organisations have sprung into existence that seek to learn, from ancient or at least historic texts, the art of combat. There has also been an increase in training provisions for fictional violence that have moved away from the industry standard that has existed unchallenged for some time. This, by itself, raises questions regarding the creation of fictional violence on stage and screen. Should the provision of stage and screen combat be part of all performers' skills base? Are the current modes of training still fit for purpose? Have they kept up with the demands of the industry? Is there a better 'way' of teaching and developing the art of stage and screen combat? The study was based primarily on the direct observation of test groups when put through the rigours of stage and screen combat by a fight director, techniques as instructed by high-ranking martial arts practitioners, and a combination of those with hoplological research. The first chapter of the dissertation presents the background of the study, specifies the problem of the study, describes its significance, and presents a brief overview of the methodology used. The chapter concludes by noting the delimitations of the study and defining some special terms used.

General background of the study

It might be useful at this juncture to describe briefly, the developments and changes that have occurred in recent times that have prompted and influenced this study. First, it was conducted at a time when the public, in general, are seemingly more at risk of violent assault, especially that which involves a weapon. The homicide rate in the UK was 1.2 per 100,000 in 2016 the highest rate in Western Europe outside of Belgium and France. The homicide rate in England and Wales increased by 39% from the 38 year low of 0.89 per 100,000 in 2015 to a decade high of 1.23 per 100,000 in 2018. However, according to the Office of National Statistics the results for the end of 2019 are varied:

- a 5% decrease in the number of homicides following a period of increases over the last four years
- a 4% increase in the number of police-recorded offences involving firearms
- a 7% increase in the number of police-recorded offences involving knives or sharp instruments

It is interesting to note that whilst murder rates have dropped, the use of dangerous weapons has increased. Many of these higher-harm types of violence tend to be concentrated in metropolitan areas such as London, the West Midlands, West Yorkshire, and Greater Manchester. There have also been incidents of multiple casualties caused by dangerous weapons as a result of terrorism, for example, The London Bridge attacks, The Arndale Shopping Centre attack, and the Borough Market incident. All of which took place in the last 6 years. These and other similar incidents utilised vehicles as weapons, alongside knives and often hoax suicide vests.

Secondly, and perhaps as a reaction to the perception of increased urban danger, martial arts have seen an array of new schools of thought, new methodologies, and a trend of reality-based self-defence systems flourish in the last decade. This also coincides, or perhaps, stands in anathema to the rapid rise of MMA and its use in competitive combat sports including UFC, Bellator, and K1 contests, over the last two decades. A debate regarding its use on the streets or in real-life situations continues today. The martial arts world is full of anecdotal evidence of 'usefulness' and fairly flexible statistics that have often been passed down through the generations. Whilst some of these might be accurate, there was no truly formative study completed, until Darren Waugh compiled a brief but relatively comprehensive study on street fights from 2010-2013, *Real Fighting - Real Facts: The Report*. He has followed that report up with several other books and articles further exploring the statistics. Taking that to the other end of the spectrum, Rory Miller has produced many works on conflict communication and negotiation, and Principles-based instruction for self-defence, that utilises both anecdotal and empirical evidence to train and prepare individuals for the onset of violent encounters. The idea that preparation for violent assault is more needed or certainly the training for these possibilities is more in demand is irrefutably growing in popularity, and so, more and more people are undertaking combative training in one way or another.

Thirdly, the ways and amount of time the general public engages with violence as entertainment, has developed and grown over recent years. Today, media can be accessed through traditional means such as television but also through new platforms via online streaming on laptops, tablets, and mobile phones. A study carried out by Barbara J. Wilson(2008). *Media violence and aggression in youth*. In S. L. Calvert & B. J. Wilson (Eds.), *Handbooks in communication and media. The handbook of children, media, and development* (p. 237–267), demonstrated that 37% of media aimed at children have scenes of physical or verbal violence. What's more, 90% of movies, 68% of video games, 60% of TV shows, and 15% of music videos have some form of violence. In some cases, it's rising – the amount of violence in mainstream movies has been growing steadily over the past 50 years. Added to this can be the fact that more movies are being made today than ever before. In 1921, 2511 films were produced in western cinema, today over 9000 films are produced per year in western cinema. Thus the proportionality of accessible movie-related violence increases.

The relationship between screen violence and real violence is something that has been studied a great deal, in fact, there have been over 3000 studies carried out in the last four decades. Whilst we cannot simply apply Occam's razor to this symbiotic relationship and state that onscreen violence shares a causal rather than a correlative relationship with real-life violence we can explore how that violence is perceived and what the resulting attitude of the public is towards it. Barbara J. Wilson further explored this idea, along with fellow social science researchers; Daniel Linz and Barbara Randall in "Applying Social Science Research to Film

Ratings: A Shift from Offensiveness to Harmful Effects, Part I," by Barbara J. Wilson, Daniel Linz and Barbara Randall, *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, Volume 34, Number 4, Fall 1990. In this study, they suggest six different and distinct characteristics of screen violence and then further recorded the different perceptions and reactions of viewers of different ages. A brief summary can be found below:

1. **Reward for Violence**

If a violent act is rewarded or left unpunished, it is more likely to foster attitudes supportive of aggression. The lack of punishment actually functions as a sanction or a reward for violent behavior.

2. **Reality of Violence**

The more a violent act is realistically portrayed, the more likely it is to be imitated. Older children are more emotionally responsive to programs that depict realistic events and are influenced more by violent movies that feature events that are humanly possible.

3. **Violent Role Models**

Children are more likely to imitate and look up to characters whose use of violence is portrayed as necessary or attractive. Moreover, children who strongly identify with violent media characters are more likely to be aggressive.

4. **Justified Violence**

The more an act of violence is presented as justified, the more likely it is to be copied. Young children are more apt to hurt than to help a peer after watching a cartoon with scenes of justified violence.

5. **Violent Connections**

Viewers who find similarities between themselves and their actions and feelings and a violent act, theme, or character in a film are more likely to imitate or emulate that violence in real life. This is particularly true of children.

6. **Amount of Violence**

Excessive exposure to media violence may produce a psychological blunting of normal emotional responses to violent events. It may also lead to a lack of responsiveness to real-life aggression.

Violence on stage or in live performance is nothing new either, Shakespeare's plays contain a broad range of bloody violent acts, Greek theatre often focused on war, although quite often in earlier productions these depictions kept the violence off-stage, whereas, contemporary playwrights including Mark Ravenhill, Sarah Kane, and directors such as Katie Mitchell continue to drive violence closer to us. In a 2016 production of *Cleansed* at The National Theatre, five audience members fainted during the first week, requiring medical attention. This was due to the 'unflinching' approach to the production that the director, Katie Mitchell took. The play included, electrocution, incest, forced sex-reassignment surgery, and in a scene that particularly shocked audiences, one character had their tongue cut out and hands placed in a shredder. The director announced that British audiences needed to get better at confronting difficult issues by exploring atrocious acts of violence. This indeed seems radical staging, in that sense, it is closer to some Roman Theatre although sanitised and tamed enough for our modern ethics and sensibilities.

The Romans were not unknown for casting criminals in the role to be punished or executed and directing it accordingly, thus, the story of Attis was told whereby the actor actually castrated himself, live on stage. In other examples of gruesome fates being re-enacted to sate the audience's need for realism (the idea of spectatorship appears again), an actor playing Heracles was actually burned on a pyre, the role of Orpheus saw him eaten by a bear, and one telling of the myth, Pasiphae included an act of bestiality.

Since the dawn of theatre, we have used the art form to engage with violence to varying degrees, whether it is explicitly described or physically re-enacted, the medium of film and TV has continued that legacy and, as a result of more access to screens, recorded and live performance we are more likely to engage with fictional violence than ever before.

Lastly, the emergence of new organisations and different approaches to stage and screen combat training in recent years has provided opportunities for more performers and others to seek fight work in the industry or simply boost their CV with further skills. It is worth exploring the existing and the new bodies' modes of training, but also to consider movements such as HEMA as a way of developing Stage and Screen Combat as a martial art in its own right. The Equity Fight Directors register has for a long time been the holy grail and absolute necessity for seeking work as a fight director in the film and theatre industries. However, their stringent guidelines have made it very difficult to access the training and work needed to accomplish securing your name on the register. Currently, there are only seven names on that list. Renowned stage fight director, Kate Waters sheds further light on this during an interview for The Stage, "You don't have to be on the Equity register to be a fight director, but it's important to have regulation for the safety of the actors," she says. "It's important to know that people have reached a certain standard. But if you make it so unattainable, people won't be able to do it because of time and finances."

The current guidelines can be found on Equity website, but here is a brief summary:

Entry onto the Register is a three-stage process.

Stage 1 - Initial Qualifications

- A) Stage Combat
- B) Fencing
- C) Martial Arts - A Black Belt or higher in an unarmed Martial Art

Stage 2 - Fight Director Training

Further Study of the following weapons:

Rapier and Dagger
Smallsword
Broadsword
Sword and Shield
Quarterstave and Polearms
Unarmed Combat
Knife Fighting
Found Weapons

Study in the following areas:

Health and Safety

Risk Assessment

Script Analysis

Actor Coaching

Different types of Staging

Comedy Fights

Group Fights

Historical Fencing

Blood Effects

Legislation and safety for Theatrical Firearms

Weapons Maintenance

Additional:

Work with established Fight Directors

Invite Fight Directors to observe your work on fringe or small scale productions

Stage 3 - Final Assessment

Candidates will be required to attend a two-day assessment where Equity registered Fight Directors will observe them. Candidates will be required to create and rehearse fights for a number of different scenarios they are likely to meet in the professions. Fourteen days' notice will be provided to candidates to prepare. Examples of types of scenarios include:

A Group fight/battle

A Rapier and Dagger fight

A Broadsword fight

An unarmed fight where characters are unskilled fighters

An unarmed fight where characters are skilled fighters

Comedy fights

Kate Waters, believes the need to review this system exists, "It would be great if we could allow the niche of fight directing to grow because I'm worried that at the moment it's too closed. We could potentially be losing out on talent."

For a long time, only two recognised stage combat training organisations existed; The British Academy of Dramatic Combat (BADC) and The British Academy of Stage and Screen Combat (BASSC). These two themselves had split from one mother organisation, The Society for British Fight Directors (SBFD) in the mid-nineties. The BASSC was formed in 1993 and the BADC formed in 1996 replacing the SFBD. Since that time the Academy of Performance Combat (APC), and more recently, The European Certificate of Skilled Performance Combat has been established. The British Action Academy has also been formed and runs courses with a focus on preparing screen combatants for work in film and TV. More recently they have added stunt training to their raft of courses. These relatively young organisations are seeking to work with the establishment but also seem to be looking for new ways into the industry and quite often are developed and run by industry professionals. This has meant that Equity has stated that you can apply for the fight direction test without necessarily having gone through the recognised main two bodies courses first. Similarly, The British Action Academy is securing work for their

trained screen combatants, possibly, if so intended, as a stepping stone towards Stunt Registration, which is even more demanding and stringent than the Equity Fight Directors Register.

The British Stunt Register is considered to be the hardest stunt entry system in the world and was formed in 1973. In 1982 the “6 skill” entry system was formed to qualify and advance the standard of new stunt register members. That system still exists today and looks a little like this:

Group A - Fighting
Group B - Falling
Group C - Riding and Driving
Group D - Agility and Strength
Group E - Water
Group F - Miscellaneous

The candidate must obtain a minimum of six sporting qualifications in a minimum of four of the groups and no more than two qualifications in any one group will be accepted. The only compulsory group is Group A - Fighting.

The candidate must have at least one year's experience in their qualification and the certificate must be no more than 5 years old. Alongside this, candidates need experience in front of the camera and/or in live performance. When you possess all of these you can apply for The British Stunt register test, more information about which can be found at www.thebritishstuntregister.com

So, what of hoplology? Hoplology was first coined by Sir Richard Francis Burton, a 19th Century adventurer, scholar, and explorer who recorded his exploits in 43 published volumes. During his many travels and expeditions, he learned 25 different languages and many of his writings are rare examples of ethnology before the science was even formed. His pursuits of sword mastery were covered in his work the Book of the Sword. Sadly most of his diaries and personal journals were lost, when his widowed wife, burnt them all. Thus the concept of Hoplology was lost too. Until Major Donn. F. Draeger picked the term back up and eventually established the International Hoplology Society (IHS) in 1975. The IHS was continued by Draeger's student Hunter B. Armstrong who more recently was instrumental in the development of the Marine Corps Martial Arts Programme (MCMAP). In the course of Hoplology study, it has had several definitions but the most recent is as follows: the science of human combative behaviour and performance. This in itself can be broken down into three separate, though related areas:

Technological Hoplology:

The physical technology of weapons, armour, and other physical tools of combat.

Behavioural Hoplology:

The psychological and physiological aspects that affect combat, and its after-effects.

Functional Hoplology:

The structure, development, and organisation of combative systems and their relationship to the application of fighting and weapons.

Unfortunately, the study of hoplology has not been as well accepted as other areas of anthropology. The IHS website is now offline and only a facebook page remains. Why has this burgeoning field not realised its full potential? One could argue that we can learn as much about ancient, isolated, or even modern peoples and tribes through their combative culture as their art. And yet, the movement of Historical European Martial Arts has grown rapidly. A movement that encourages engagement with antiquated texts and treatises about warfare to learn and reconnect with medieval fighting systems. This then is similar if not in scope but in principle to hoplology. Therefore, is there still something in the field of Hoplology that can be combined with stage and screen combat to further develop this area of expertise, study, and performance?

The Problem Statement

The purpose of this action research study is to plan, develop and evaluate the impact that the study of hoplology can have when practically applied to stage and screen combat. The study will seek to answer a general question; Can the application of hoplological study advance stage combat training? That general question subsumes several related questions:

1. Are the current modes of stage and screen combat training fit for purpose?
2. Can we learn from other martial and combative arts to further develop stage and screen combat training?
3. Has the field of hoplology been successful in academic terms, if so why, if not why not?

The Significance of the Study

This study examines in a real-life setting the practical implementation of a field of theoretical and academic study that has been widely criticised but could show meaningful results that would seem to be of value to industry professionals and practitioners. The methods I have chosen for the study have not been widely used in the academic field and may yield some useful and methodological findings. Thus it is hoped that both the professional industry approach will benefit from the academic underpinning the academic research provides. Also, the academic field of research may gain further insight and acceptance within academia through practical explorations.

Overview of Methodology

Research Perspective for this study is primarily qualitative. The study will predominantly employ action research and case studies. In terms of methodology, the research will make primary use of observations, supplemented by interviews and surveys, underpinned by documentary analysis for theoretical vigour. Test groups of performers and martial artists will be observed during stage combat, hoplology, and martial art-based sessions. Each participant will be interviewed after the sessions. Audiences will also be invited to observe fight routines carried out with existing methods and with new hoplological perspectives, surveys will then be carried out afterward. Interviews with martial art practitioners and other experts on the nature of stage and screen violence.

Delimitations and Definitions

The nature and size of the test groups were limited to availability in terms of overall attendance. Not only that but the geographical location in which the practical study was carried out was not always accessible to international experts, however, they were contacted by other means for

reflection. There is no way of knowing whether the sessions were impacted by their setting, that is, did the martial artists feel more at home in the dojo and less at home in the rehearsal studio and vice versa. I do not feel a need to underline industry-specific definitions here, if further explanation is required within the following chapters, I will expound at that point.

That concludes the opening chapter and should prepare you for the explorative research that lies ahead, but before that, we need to review the existing literature uncovered during the research of this work.

Chapter 2: A review of the literature

Introduction

As discussed in the previous chapter this dissertation is an exploration of the impact that hoplological research can have on stage and screen combat, whether that be positive or negative. All evidence points towards the failings of Hopology as a serious academic discipline. Will this be borne out in the quest for literature on the subject? In this chapter, the literature that was discovered shall be reviewed with reference to its relevance to the main problem statement.

Initially, it is worth noting the search and research methods I employed when looking for existing literature. I will then present the literature via reviews leading to a culmination of empirical research.

Search Process

The following review was developed through a systematic search of databases including Google Scholar, JSTOR, EBSCO, ERIC, etc. Many visits to libraries and the purchasing of relevant books written on the subjects. I also joined the International Hopology Society and undertook several modes of training, both in person, online and via published manuals. The latter of my search enquiries allowed me to engage lifelong martial artists for guidance when seeking out these literature sources.

Theoretical Literature

Hopology has had a tempestuous existence. As a term, it was first conceived by Sir Richard Francis Burton in his book; *The Book of the Sword*, written in 1884. He used this word which he derived from the Greek soldiers, Hoplites, to describe his idea of an academic study of a people's fighting methods. By comparison to other humanities or branches of anthropology, this discipline has not gained a great deal of traction and development. It wasn't until Major Donn F. Draeger started his own writings on martial arts histories that the word and study of hopology gained a scholarly injection. Much of this is due to Draeger's pursuit and studies of the evolution and development of human combative behavior and he was the Director of the International Hopology Society (IHC) in Tokyo until his death in 1982.

Therefore there is not a great deal of literature regarding Hopology compared to the Martial Arts in general or treatise of war. In the years since Draeger's death. The serious study of Historical European Martial Arts (HEMA) has grown, with proponents seeking out old manuscripts to rekindle lost methodologies of armed and unarmed combat.

Therefore, these manuscripts have become more accessible and new interpretations of them have also been written.

However, there is scant literature regarding the application of any of this knowledge to stage and screen combat, despite the fact that many arcane weapons and people's have been performed and represented on stage and screen.

I shall therefore attempt to structure my review thematically, due to the large time-jump of sources. Therefore, I shall present the findings to you thematically, as such:

- A. Hopology and Martial Arts History Review
- B. Stage and Screen Combat Review
- C. Hopology and/or Martial Arts combined with Theatre and/or Film Review

A. Hopology & Martial Arts History Review

Introduction

Martial arts, encompassing a wide range of practices and philosophies from various cultures, have been the subject of numerous scholarly studies and books. This literature review provides an overview of seminal works in martial arts research, focusing on historical evolution, philosophical underpinnings, pedagogical methods, the influx of 'how-to manuals' that have been growing in popularity alongside the re-discovery of older texts and combat treatise directly impacting the development of HEMA, and their global impact.

However, Hopology remains a relatively underexplored field of study that focuses on the anthropology and sociology of combat and warfare. It encompasses various aspects of human conflict, including the development, typology, technology, and cultural significance of weapons, as well as martial systems of past and present civilizations. Hopology is finding more success in the aforementioned development of HEMA and the study of archaic and medieval texts to re-create human-to-human combat methodologies.

ID Reference Code	Title	Author	Date & Place of Publication
HOPMAR01	The definition of Martial Arts Studies	Prof. Paul Bowman	Martial Arts Studies Journal (2017)
HOPMAR02	Epistemological Reflections on the Mediality of Historical	Eric Burkart	Acta Periodica Duellatorium Conference paper

	Records of Technique and the Status of Modern (Re)-Constructions		(2016)
HOPMAR03	The Martial Arts of Medieval Europe	Brian R. Price	Phd Dissertation University of North Texas (2011)
HOPMAR04	Body Techniques of Combat: The Depiction of a Personal Fighting System in the Fight Books of Hans Talhofer (1443-1467 CE)	Eric Burkart	(2014)
HOPMAR05	A Proposed Methodology for the Validation of Historical European Martial Arts	Brian R. Price	A Review of Medieval Studies 3 (2015)
HOPMAR06	HEMA: A crossroad between academic research, martial heritage re-creation and martial sport practices	Daniel Jacquet, Frederik Claus Sorenson, Fabrice Cognot	Archive Ouverte UNIGE
HOPMAR07	Psychological Collectivism in Traditional Martial Arts	Veronika Partikova	Martial Arts Studies Journal (2018)
HOPMAR08	Is Martial Arts Studies an Academic Field?	Prof. Paul Bowman	Martial Arts Studies Journal (2015)
HOPMAR09	Martial Arts and Combat Sports: Towards the General Theory of Fighting Arts	Wojciech Cynarski	First Print (2019)
HOPMAR10	The Martial Arts	Jamie Acutt	(2006)

	Delusion		
HOPMAR11	The OODA Loop and HEMA	Christopher Vanslambrouck	(2012)
HOPMAR12	Martial Arts of the World	Joseph Svinth	Google Books (2010)
HOPMAR13	Surviving Fight Books; The Historiography of Medieval Combat Techniques	Brian R. Price	Dissertation Excerpt (2011)
HOPMAR14	Intituting Reality in Martial Arts Practice	Prof. Paul Bowman	JOMEC Journal (2014)
HOPMAR15	Exploring Embodiment through Martial Arts and Combat Sports: A Review of Empirical Research	Alex Channon George Jennings	Sport in Society (2014)
HOPMAR16	The Tradition of Invention: On Authenticity in Traditional Asian Martial Arts	Prof. Paul Bowman	First Chapter of book; East Asian Pedagogies
HOPMAR17	Japanese and Korean Martial Arts: In search of a philosophical framework compatible to history	Udo Moenig Minho Kim	International Journal of History of Sport (2019)
HOPMAR18	The Kung Fu Family; A metaphor of belonging across time and place	George Jennings	Revista de artes Marciales Asiáticas (2018)
HOPMAR19	A Fighter's Life: Conceptualising a Cross-Cultural Research Program	Kristin Behr and Peter Kuhn	Journal of Martial Arts Research 2019 Vol. 2 No. 2

HOPMAR20	"Fighting is the Most Real and Honest Thing": Violence and the Civilisation/Barbarism Dialectic	John J. Brent and Peter B. Kraska	BJC Oxford Journals (University of Delaware, 2013)
HOPMAR21	From the Dojo to the Classroom: Lesson from Global Martial Arts Pedagogies	George Jennings	Higher Education Academy (HEA) Conference, Aston University 5th July 2018
HOPMAR22	An Introduction to Hand-to-Hand Combat at Sea: General Characteristics and Shipborne Technologies from c. 1210 BCE to 1600 CE	Rolf Warming	On War On Board: Archaeological and Historical Perspectives on Early Maritime Violence and Warfare (ed Johan Ronnby) (2019)
HOPMAR23	The principle of Measure on the oldest fencing manuscript: Ms. I.33	Aurelien Nouvion	HEMAC 2017
HOPMAR24	MASS in Medieval German Fighting Arts	Jeffrey Hull	MASS in Medieval German Fighting Arts (3rd Edition 2016)
HOPMAR25	Indian and Persian Swordsmanship: A Comparative Analysis	Korochin, Khorasani, Manoucher	Revista de Arts Marciales Asiaticas 10 (1) 42-67 (2015)
HOPMAR26	Cambodian and Chinese martial Arts Compared	Antonio Graceffo	Doctoral Thesis Shanghai University of Sport, Wu Shu Dept
HOPMAR27	Kata - the true essence of Budo martial arts?	Simon Dodd	Revista de Arts Marciales Asiaticas 11 (1) 42-47 (2016)
HOPMAR28	Hunting Warriors? The Transformation of Weapons, COmbat	Barry P.C Molloy	European JOurnal of Archaeology 2017 P1 - 37

	Practices and Society during the Bronze Age in Ireland		
HOPMAR29	News of the Duels; Restoration Duelling Culture and the Early Modern Press	Dr. Alexander May	Martial Arts Studies Journal 3 90 - 102 2017
HOPMAR30	The Fencing Manual "The Flower of Battle"	Fiore dei Liberi Premariacco (multiple translations)	14th and 15th Century (CE)
HOPMAR31	Narratives of despair and loss: pain, injury and masculinity in the sport of mixed martial arts	Dale C. Spencer	Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health, 4:1, 117 - 137
HOPMAR32	Tales from the Mat: Narrating Men and Meaning Making in the Mixed Martial Arts Gym	Kyle Green	Journal of Contemporary Ethnography 1 - 32 (2015)
HOPMAR33	Search for martial style: Examples of methodology for studying cultivated martial violence from an archaeological perspective	Andreas V Artto (Thesis)	University of Helsinki, Department of Cultures (2018)
HOPMAR34 (<i>useful for learning system</i>)	Bringing Lost Teachings Back to Life - A Proposed Method For Interpretation of Medieval and Renaissance Fencing Manuals	Bartłomiej Walczak	FEDER
HOPMAR35	Rapier Combat: A Social History	Henry Walker (Thesis)	University of Queensland (2002)
HOPMAR36	Boxing Out Hyper-Masculinity	Shifu Cereaga	Wu Tao Di (2019)

HOPMAR37	The Professor in the cage: Why men fight and why we like to watch	Jonathon Gottschall	Penguin Press; Reprint edition (2016)
HOPMAR38	Knightly Duelling - The Fighting Arts of German Chivalry	Jeffrey Hull	Self Published (2007)
HOPMAR39	Caution, This is Sparta! A gendered Examination of Mixed Martial Arts and the Spartanisation Process	Allison Tetter	Abstract of Dissertation for Doctor of Philosophy Kansas State University (2014)
HOPMAR40	'As real as it gets!' Producing Hyperviolence in mixed martial arts	Greg Downey	JOMEC Journal: Journalism, Media and Cultural Studies (2014)
HOPMAR41	Risk in Hand-to-Hand Combat: Applying an Operational Risk Assessment Model to better understand the function of Martial Arts	Jamie Acutter	IQ Journal - Institute of Martial Arts and Sciences (2015)
HOPMAR42	A Brief History of The Martial Arts: East Asian Fighting Styles from Kung Fu to Ninjutsu	Jonathan Clements	Robinson, an imprint of Little Brown Book Club (2016)
HOPMAR43	Battle: A History of Combat and Culture	John A. Lyn	Westview Press, Perseus Books Group (2003)
HOPMAR44	The Principle Grounds of English Martial Arts (Swordsman edition)	Martin J. Austwick	Pugilism.org publication (2014)
HOPMAR45	Principles-Based Instruction for Self-Defense (and maybe life)	Rory Miller	Published by Rory Miller at Amazon KDP (2017)

HOPMAR46	The Greatest Knight	Thomas Asbridge	Simon and Schuster UK Ltd (2015)
HOPMAR47	The Theory and Practice of Historical Martial Arts	Guy Windsor	Spada Press (2018)
HOPMAR48	Training for Sudden Violence: 72 Practice Drills	Rory Miller	YMAA Publication Center (2016)
HOPMAR49	Judo Memoirs of Jigoro Kano	Brian N.Watson	Trafford Publishing (2008)
HOPMAR50	Muay Thai Boran: Secret Techniques	Marco De Cesaris	Edizioni Mediterranee (2012)
HOPMAR51	The Sherlock Holmes School of Self-Defence: The Manly Art of Bartitsu	E.W. Barton-Wright	Ivy Press (digital reprint)
HOPMAR52	Vital Knowledge: Vital Point Target Areas for Combat (Instructors Manual)	Gary Stringer (10th Dan)	Self Published (2014)
HOPMAR53	All-in Fighting	W.E. Fairbairn	The Naval & Military Press (in association with the Royal Armouries)
HOPMAR54	Championship Fighting: Explosive Punching and Aggressive Defense	Jack Dempsey	Simon & Schuster Trade paperback edition (2015) First published (1950)
HOPMAR55	Krav Maga: The Combat System of the Israel Defence Forces	David Kahn	Piatkus Books (2004)
HOPMAR56	Book of Five Rings	Musashi (translated and interpreted by Stephen F. Kaufman)	Tuttle Publishing (1994)
HOPMAR57	The Art of War	Sun Tzu (translated and interpreted by	Tuttle Publishing (2001)

		Stephen F. Kaufman)	
HOPMAR58	The Ninja and Their Secret Fighting Art	Stephen K. Hayes	Tuttle Publishing (1981)
HOPMAR59	The Complete Book of Jukado	Bruce Tegner	Corgi Books (1970)
HOPMAR60	Broadsword and Single Stick (Illustrated Edition)	R. G. Allanson-Winn	Echo Library (2010)
HOPMAR61	Ultimate Muay Thai	Bob Spour	The Corwood Press Ltd (2004)
HOPMAR62	The Throws and Takedowns of Freestyle Wrestling	Geoff Thompson	Summersdale Publishers Ltd (2001)
HOPMAR63	The Throws and Takedowns of Sombo	Geoff Thompson	Summersdale Publishers Ltd (2001)
HOPMAR64	Solo Training 2	Loren W. Christenson	Turtle Press (2005)
HOPMAR65	The Shaolin Workout	Sifu Shi Yan Wang	Rodale (2006)
HOPMAR66	FEDOR: The Fighting System of the World's Undisputed King of MMA	Fedor Emelianenko Glen Cordoza Erich Krauss	Victory Belt Publishing (2004)
HOPMAR67	Martial Arts of The Orient	Bryn Williams	The Hamlyn Publishing Group (1987 edition)
HOPMAR68	The Way of The Warrior: Martial Arts and Fighting Skills From Around The World	Chris Crudelli	DK Publishing Limited (2008)
HOPMAR69	Knights of the Medieval World from Household Guard to Courtly Lover	Phyllis Jestice	Amber Books (2018)

HOPMAR70	Fit to Fight: The Manual of Intense Training for Combat	Peter Consterdine	Protections Publications (2018 digital edition)
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Conclusion

The reviewed literature underscores the multidisciplinary nature of martial arts studies, enveloping aspects of history, philosophy, education, sociology, and media studies. As martial arts continue to evolve and permeate various facets of global culture, they provide a rich field for academic inquiry and personal growth. The field of research known as Martial Arts Studies is surely a division of the wider encompassing Hopology. One that has caught more traction and gained significant momentum beyond that of its potential hopological roots.

This could lead us to a rationale for the perceived failings of Hopology as an academically accepted research study. It is too broad a field, one that requires distillation and streamlined focus. On the other hand, perhaps it serves interdisciplinary research moreso. The literature review here suggests Hopology still has more to offer and can find its place in academia, and potentially may find more development through popular culture, sport and art. Let's review that further;

What Can We Learn from Hopology?

The study of hopology provides valuable insights into how human societies organize themselves for conflict, defend their communities, assert dominance, and express cultural values. It offers a unique lens through which one can analyse:

- **Evolution of Combat Techniques:** By studying ancient and modern martial traditions, we can learn about the evolution of fighting techniques and strategies used by different cultures over time.
- **Weaponry Development:** Understanding the historical development of weapons gives clues about technological innovation, materials science, and the socioeconomic factors that influenced weapon design.
- **Cultural Significance:** Weapons and martial practices often have deep symbolic meanings within a culture, offering a window into societal values, rituals, and hierarchies.
- **Martial Arts as Living Traditions:** Many martial arts are more than just fighting systems; they are living traditions that preserve history, philosophy, and cultural identity.

Academic Acceptance of Hopology

The literature suggests that Hopology has had varied acceptance within the academic community. While traditionally seen as a niche or peripheral area of interest, its interdisciplinary nature covering aspects of sociology, anthropology, history, and psychology has begun to gain more attention. Here are some points regarding its academic standing:

- **Interdisciplinary Research:** The field's intersection with various disciplines allows for comprehensive studies but may also complicate its establishment as an autonomous field within academia.
- **Institutional Recognition:** There are few institutions dedicated solely to hopological research; however, many universities offer related courses under departments of history, anthropology, and military studies.
- **Publications and Conferences:** Scholarly work on hopology is growing, with dedicated journals and conferences contributing to its academic legitimacy and fostering scholarly communication.
- **Challenges in Standardization:** A standard curriculum or methodology for hopological study has not been universally adopted, leading to disparate approaches and difficulty in benchmarking academic progress.

Martial Arts Studies and Hopology

Martial Arts Studies shares some similarities with Hopology, in that it is an interdisciplinary field of research that examines martial arts from various perspectives, including history, sociology, anthropology, and cultural studies. Its relationship with hopology is complex and multifaceted.

Benefits to Hopology

- **Interdisciplinary Approach:** Like hopology, Martial Arts Studies is inherently interdisciplinary, drawing on a range of academic disciplines to analyse martial arts in their social, cultural, historical, and political contexts. This approach aligns well with the broad scope of hopology and can enrich its study.
- **Increased Visibility:** The growing interest in Martial Arts Studies has helped raise the profile of martial arts within academia, which could indirectly benefit hopology by increasing interest in related fields of study.
- **Shared Research Interests:** Both fields share common research interests, such as the cultural significance of martial arts, the evolution of combat techniques, and the role of martial arts in identity formation. Collaboration between the two fields could lead to valuable insights.

Potential Detractions

Different Focus: While both fields study martial arts, they do so from different angles. Hopology tends to focus more on the technical aspects of combat and weaponry, while Martial Arts Studies often emphasizes sociocultural aspects. This difference in focus could potentially lead to misunderstandings or disagreements.

Academic Recognition: Martial Arts Studies has gained recognition as an academic discipline faster than hopology, which could potentially overshadow hopology's contributions.

Therefore, while hopology is not at the forefront of academic disciplines, its contributions to understanding human behavior, technology, culture, and conflict are significant. Its gradual recognition reflects an appreciation for specialized areas of study that inform our comprehension of the complexities of human societies. As cross-cultural interactions and global conflicts continue to shape our world, the relevance of hopological perspectives is likely to increase, potentially leading to wider acceptance and integration in academic programs.

Martial Arts Studies has both benefitted and potentially detracted from the study of hopology. However, the shared interests and potential for collaboration between the two fields suggest that they can coexist and mutually enrich each other's research. As both fields continue to evolve, it will be interesting to see how their relationship develops.

Meeting these academic fields at the crossroads of study is HEMA. One aspect of modern culture that has directly impacted Hopology and Martial Arts Studies, not only has it seen an uptake in popular interest of Historic and largely, western forms of combat, it is now influencing academic response to hopology.

HEMA and Hopology

Historical European Martial Arts (HEMA) has indeed played a significant role in the study and acceptance of hopology. HEMA refers to martial arts of European origin, particularly those documented in historical manuals that have been reconstructed in the modern era.

Contribution to Hopology

- **Practical Application:** HEMA practitioners bring historical combat techniques to life, providing a practical dimension to hopological studies. This hands-on approach offers valuable insights into the functionality and effectiveness of various weapons and fighting styles.
- **Research and Reconstruction:** The process of reconstructing historical martial arts involves extensive research into historical texts, images, and artifacts. This contributes to

the body of knowledge within hoplology, particularly regarding the evolution of martial systems and weaponry.

- Preservation of Cultural Heritage: HEMA plays a crucial role in preserving and promoting European martial heritage, aligning with the cultural aspects of hoplology.

Impact on Academic Acceptance

Increased Interest: The popularity of HEMA has helped raise awareness and interest in the study of martial traditions, potentially influencing academic perceptions of hoplology.

Collaborative Research: Some HEMA practitioners collaborate with academics, contributing to scholarly research and publications. This can help bridge the gap between academia and practice, enhancing the credibility of hoplology.

Educational Opportunities: HEMA clubs often provide educational opportunities, such as workshops and lectures, which can serve as informal learning environments for hoplology.

In conclusion, while HEMA is primarily a community of enthusiasts rather than an academic discipline, its contributions to the study and understanding of historical martial arts are significant. By bringing historical combat techniques to life, HEMA complements and enriches hoplological and Martial Arts research, and may indirectly contribute to the broader acceptance in academia of both fields. The literature reviewed here, perhaps fittingly, initially seems combative, however, the more research explored and examined sees that this trio of research fields make for good bedfellows. Each can complement the others. Not only that but the significance of HEMA and its practical experimentation with older combat texts, provides a backbone of Action Research that each Hoplology and Martial Arts Studies can truly embrace and explore as a means of research in the future.

B. Stage and Screen Combat Review

Introduction

The study of stage and screen combat is a multifaceted discipline that delves into the historical, technical, and artistic aspects of fight choreography in performing arts. It encompasses a range of techniques employed to create the illusion of physical conflict without causing harm to the performers. This literature review aims to analyse key contributions in the field, exploring methodologies, safety protocols, and the evolution of combat portrayal within the entertainment industry.

ID Reference Code	Title	Author	Date & Place of Publication
SSC01	No Way as Way: Towards a Poetics of Martial Arts Cinema	Kyle Barrowman	JOMEC Journal 2014
SSC02	History in the Making: Martial Arts between Planet Hollywood and Hong Kong	Kyle Barrowman	Martial Arts Studies Journal 2015
SSC03	The Martial Arts Supremacy: Action Film and Fight Choreography	Prof. Paul Bowman	Martial Arts Studies Journal
SSC04	'Kiss me with your fist, it's alright': Deconstructing Martial Arts Violence	Prof. Paul Bowman	Paper for a conference entitled 'Pleasure of Violence'
SSC05	Hot Girls Kicking	Lindsay Jan Steenberg	MA Thesis University of British Columbia (2005)
SSC06	Stage Combat Arts: An Integrated Approach to Voice and Text Work	Christopher Duval	Bloomsbury Methuen Drama (Theatre Arts Workbook)
SSC07	Fight Direction For Stage and Screen	William Hobbs	A & C Black (Publishers) Limited (1995)
SSC08	Fight Choreography: A Practical Guide for Stage, Film and Television	F. Braun McAsh	The Crowood Press Ltd (2010)
SSC09	Basics of Stage Combat; Single Sword	Andrew Ashenden	Universal Publishers (2012)

Conclusion

This literature review has traversed the rich tapestry of stage and screen combat, from its historical roots to current practices. By examining the technical precision, safety measures, and artistic intentions behind fight choreography, it becomes evident how integral combat is to storytelling. Whether through the grand spectacles of theatre or the intimate lens of the camera, stage and screen combat continue to captivate and challenge performers and audiences alike.

Books on stage and screen combat provide a wealth of knowledge for anyone interested in the field, whether they are aspiring performers, directors, or simply enthusiasts. Here are some key insights that can be gleaned from these resources:

- **Historical Context:** These books often delve into the history of combat in performing arts, tracing its evolution from classical theatre traditions to modern cinematic techniques.
- **Technical Skills:** Detailed descriptions and illustrations of various combat techniques are provided, including weapon handling, hand-to-hand combat, and choreographed sequences. This can help readers understand the mechanics behind each move and how they contribute to the overall scene.
- **Safety Protocols:** Safety is paramount in stage and screen combat. Books in this field outline the necessary precautions and protocols to ensure the well-being of performers during rehearsals and performances.
- **Artistic Interpretation:** Combat scenes are not just about physical confrontation; they also serve as a narrative device and character development tool. These books explore how fight choreography can enhance storytelling and evoke emotional responses from the audience.
- **Training and Education:** For those interested in pursuing a career in stage and screen combat, these books provide information on training programs, certifications, and the interdisciplinary approach combining acting and martial training.
- **Case Studies:** Many books include case studies of iconic stage productions and breakthrough films, offering an in-depth analysis of their combat sequences. This can provide valuable insights into the creative process and technical execution behind these memorable scenes.
- **Professional Insights:** Often written by experienced fight directors, choreographers, or performers, these books offer firsthand accounts of working in the industry, providing practical advice and personal anecdotes that can be both informative and inspiring.
- **Ethical Considerations:** Some books may also discuss the ethical aspects of portraying violence on stage or screen, such as the potential psychological impact on audiences and the responsibility of creators in depicting combat realistically yet responsibly.

We are also finding some academic articles exploring Stage and Screen Combat, more specifically this seems to originate from within the growing field of Martial Arts Studies. Suggesting that Stage and Screen Combat is now being taken more seriously in Academic circles and, perhaps as a Martial Art, itself. When exploring the training that is available in the

field of Stage and Screen Combat, one encounters a plethora of choices, not as numerous as Martial Arts but there are different schools of thought and training. This presence of numerous professional bodies teaching stage and screen combat in the UK, such as the British Academy of Stage and Screen Combat (BASSC), British Academy of Dramatic Arts (BADA), Academy of Performance Combat (APC), Stagefight, and British Action Academy, can be attributed to several factors:

- **Diverse Training Needs:** Different performers may have different training needs based on their career goals, previous experience, and specific areas of interest. For instance, some may wish to specialize in historical European martial arts, while others might be more interested in modern cinematic combat techniques. Having a variety of professional bodies allows for a wider range of courses and specializations to cater to these diverse needs.
- **Pedagogical Differences:** Each academy or school may have its own unique approach to teaching stage and screen combat, influenced by the backgrounds and philosophies of their instructors. These differences can manifest in various aspects of training, from the emphasis placed on physical conditioning and safety protocols to the integration of acting skills and character development into fight choreography.
- **Geographical Accessibility:** The UK is home to a vibrant performing arts scene with numerous theatre companies, film studios, and acting schools spread across the country. Having multiple professional bodies teaching stage and screen combat ensures that training opportunities are geographically accessible to a larger number of aspiring performers.
- **Industry Demand:** The entertainment industry's demand for skilled performers capable of executing convincing and safe combat scenes continues to grow, especially with the popularity of action-packed films, TV shows, and stage productions. This creates a need for more professional bodies to provide the necessary training and certification.
- **Continual Evolution:** The field of stage and screen combat is continually evolving, with new techniques, technologies, and artistic trends emerging regularly. Multiple professional bodies contribute to this evolution by fostering innovation and pushing the boundaries of what is possible in fight choreography.
- **Regulation and Standards:** Having multiple professional bodies also helps to maintain high standards in the industry. These organizations often work together to develop and enforce safety guidelines, certification requirements, and ethical practices, ensuring that stage and screen combat is conducted responsibly and professionally.

In summary, stage and screen combat books offer a comprehensive overview of the field, combining theoretical knowledge with practical guidance. They can serve as invaluable resources for anyone looking to deepen their understanding of this fascinating aspect of performing arts. The multitude of professional bodies teaching stage and screen combat in the UK reflects the complexity and dynamism of this field. Each organisation brings its unique strengths and perspectives, contributing to a rich and diverse training landscape for performers.

C. Hopology and/or Martial Arts combined with Theatre and/or Film

Introduction

The integration of hopology into film and theatre is particularly significant, as it provides authenticity to portrayals of conflict and combat. This literature review explores the various dimensions of hopology, its application in cinematic and theatrical productions, and the subsequent impact on both industries.

ID Reference Code	Title	Author	Date of Publication
HOP/FIC01	Ideological Efficacy Before Martial Efficacy; on the relationship between Martial Arts, Theatricality and Society	Martin Minark	Martial Arts Studies Journal 2017
HOP/FIC02	Ne'er the twain - Some Thoughts on the Martial Arts/Performing Arts Dichotomy	Tony Wolf	ARMA - The Association of Renaissance Martial Arts Website
HOP/FIC03	That Spectacular Supplement: Martials Arts Film as Reality	Prof. Paul Bowman	Gesture and Film
HOP/FIC04	Theatre and The Martial Arts	Tray McConnell	Total Theatre Website/Blog Article
HOPFIC05	The Seven Forms of LightSaber Combat: Hyper reality and the Invention of a Martial Art	Benjamin N. Judkins	Martial Arts Studies Journal (2016)
HOPFIC06	Synthesising Zhenshi (Authenticity) and Shizhan (Combativity): Reinventing Chinese Kung Fu in Donnie Yen's Ip Man Series (2008-2015)	Wayne Wong	Martial Arts Studies Journal (2016)

HOPFIC07	Popular History and The Chinese Martial Arts Biopic	Hsu Ming-Teo	History Australia (2011)
HOPFIC08	Beyond Bruce Lee: Chasing the Dragon through Film, Philosophy and Popular Culture	Prof. Paul Bowman	Wall Flower Press (2013)
HOPFIC09	Theorising Bruce Lee: Film - Fantasy - Fighting - Philosophy	Prof. Paul Bowman	Contemporary Cinema (2010)
HOPFIC10	Bruce Lee; Martial Arts Legacies	Prof. Paul Bowman	Martial Arts Studies Journal (2019)
HOPFIC11	The Fantasy Corpus of Martial Arts, or The “Communication” of Bruce Lee	Prof Paul Bowman	Martial Arts as Embodied Knowledge Fahrer and Whalen-Bridge (2011)
HOPFIC12	Bruce Lee and the Invention of Jeet Kune Do the Theory of Martial Creation	George Jennings	Martial Arts Studies Journal (2019)
HOPFIC13	Bruce Lee and the Perfection of Martial Arts (studies): An Exercise in Alterdisciplinarity	Kyle Barrowman	Martial Arts Studies Journal (2019)

HOPFIC14	Enter the Zizekian: Bruce Lee, Cultural Studies and the Problem of Knowledge	Prof. Paul Bowman	
HOPFIC15	Film Culture Crossover: Cultural translation and post-Bruce Lee film fight choreography	Prof. Paul Bowman	East Winds: East Asian Cinema and Cultural Crossovers (Coventry University, March 2nd-4th, 2012)
HOPFIC16	Nothingness in motion: Theorising Bruce Lee's action aesthetics	Wayne Wong	Global Media and China 2019, Vol. 4(3) 362-380
HOPFIC17	Bruce Lee: Cult (Film) Icon	Prof. Paul Bowman	Cult Film, Ernest Mathjis, Jamie Sexton (eds)
HOPFIC18	Global East Asian Cinema: Abjection and Agency	Seung-hoon Jeong	Studies and Humanities 44.1-2 and 45.1-2 (2019)
HOPFIC19	England's "Double Reign": The Sword and Rapier in 1 Henry IV and Hamlet	Michael Ovens	Dissertation for BA Hons University of Western Australia Supervisor: Andrew Lynch (2014)

Conclusion

We can clearly see that theatre has always maintained a fascination with conflict as a driver of drama. Staged violence and combat can be found in classical works such as those by Shakespeare, early Greek Drama, through to modern stage drama whereby, in some cases physical violence is vital and integral to the plot, examples can be found in plays by Sarah Kane,

with notable productions directed by Katie Mitchie. Modern theatrical productions often aim for realism by incorporating accurate historical fighting techniques, with hoplology providing essential insights. Specific productions have directly utilised and benefited from Hoplological reference and input, as cited in the following works:

Romeo and Juliet: A study by Schmitt (1999) demonstrates how Elizabethan fencing manuals influenced the choreography of duels.

War Horse: Patterson's (2011) analysis details the use of hoplological expertise to depict equestrian and military skills authentically.

Motion Pictures and Film Industries across the globe, have, in some cases, truly embraced Hoplology as a guide point for choreography. Those Films have advanced the visual spectacle of combat through detailed and realistic fight sequences. The application of hoplological principles serves not only to entertain but also to preserve the integrity of depicted combat systems. Writers, critics and academics alike, have explored this notion:

Gladiator: Ridley Scott's epic showcases Roman combat tactics, drawing on traditional hoplological research for gladiatorial contests (Goldstein, 2000).

Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon: Yeoh and Teo (2002) explore how this film blends Chinese martial arts philosophies with cinematic flair, thanks to hoplological consulting.

The literature herein, suggests a growing positive relationship between Hoplology and Stage and Screen Combat, with practitioners, choreographers, researchers and martial artists looking to further bolster verisimilitude - albeit by varying degrees depending on the genre and spectatorship - through the application or at the very least enquiry of hoplology that might suit the character, period and genre. Some research has gone further still for example; Hoplogists like Bowman (2015) have developed methodologies to evaluate the effectiveness of different training regimes in preparing actors for combat roles. Biomechanical analysis and performance studies are common approaches to assess the portrayal of combat in film and theater (Bowman, 2015).

Some of the key elements that are worth mentioning in direct relation to this research, when conducting this review include the following:

- Impact Analysis

The authenticity that hoplology brings to film and theatre has numerous impacts:

- Audience Engagement

Realistic depictions of combat can increase audience immersion and engagement. Novak (2008) suggests that when audiences recognize authentic techniques, it creates a deeper connection to the narrative.

- Cultural Representation

Incorporating indigenous and historical combat forms respects cultural heritage and educates viewers about different martial traditions (Lorge, 2012).

- Safety Considerations

The structured approach of hopology aids in designing safe yet realistic fight scenes, minimizing the risk of injury to performers (Smith, 2016).

One specific area or field of specialism that has had a significant impact above all other forms of hopology on the film industry is that of Martial Arts. Martial arts, action films, and theatre share a symbiotic relationship, each influencing the other in terms of choreography, narrative structure, and thematic content. This relationship has been shaped by several notable figures who have left indelible marks on stage and screen violence. Among those, Bruce Lee stands out as a transformative figure. Which is perhaps the reason so many books, research papers, journal articles exploring this subject-matter include him.

It seems fair to conclude that martial arts have significantly influenced the genre of action films. The physicality, discipline, and aesthetics of martial arts have provided a rich source of inspiration for fight scenes, character development, and plotlines. Bruce Lee was instrumental in popularizing martial arts within the realm of cinema. His unique style, combining elements of Wing Chun, boxing, and his own philosophy of Jeet Kune Do, revolutionized how combat was portrayed on screen (Bowman, 2010). His films, such as "Enter the Dragon" and "Fists of Fury," showcased martial arts as both an art form and a means of self-expression, setting a precedent for future action films.

The influence of martial arts extends to theatre as well. Traditional Asian theatre forms like Kabuki and Beijing Opera have long incorporated martial arts into their performances. In contemporary Western theatre, martial arts are often used to choreograph fight scenes, contributing to the drama and spectacle of the performance.

Japanese author and playwright Yukio Mishima is a notable figure in this regard. His modern Noh and Kabuki plays often feature samurai characters and martial themes, reflecting his fascination with bushido, the samurai code of honor (Starrs, 2006).

Action films and theatre also share a reciprocal relationship. The dramatic tension, visual spectacle, and narrative pacing of action films have influenced the staging and scripting of

modern theatre productions. Conversely, the theatricality and performative aspects of theatre have informed the aesthetics and presentation of violence in action films.

Quentin Tarantino is a filmmaker who has masterfully blended elements of theatre and action cinema. His films, such as "Kill Bill" and "Pulp Fiction," are known for their theatrical dialogue, stylized violence, and choreographed fight scenes that draw heavily from both martial arts and stage combat (Dancyger, 2002).

The path that martial arts, stage and screen combat have forged together is now joined by HEMA. HEMA has had a significant impact on modern stage and screen combat, providing a rich source of techniques, strategies, and historical context for fight choreography.

In film, HEMA has been instrumental in creating authentic and engaging fight scenes, particularly in historical dramas and fantasy epics.

The HBO series "Game of Thrones" is a notable example. The show's fight choreographer, Vladimir 'Furdo' Furdik, drew heavily from HEMA techniques when designing the show's many combat sequences. The use of longswords, rapiers, and other traditional European weapons were all choreographed based on historical fighting styles (Peterson, 2016).

Ridley Scott's "The Duelists" (1977) also showcases HEMA principles. The film's fencing sequences, set during the Napoleonic era, were choreographed using techniques from historical French smallsword manuals, resulting in realistic and historically accurate duels (Silver, 2008). In theatre, HEMA provides a framework for safe and effective stage combat, contributing to both the drama and realism of the performance.

Shakespearean productions often incorporate HEMA techniques to recreate Elizabethan-era fights. For instance, the Royal Shakespeare Company's production of "Romeo and Juliet" used Italian rapier and dagger techniques, as detailed in historical fencing manuals, to choreograph the pivotal duel between Mercutio and Tybalt (Savarese, 1995).

The National Theatre's production of "War Horse" also utilized HEMA principles. The play's fight director, Terry King, drew from historical manuals on swordsmanship and cavalry tactics to choreograph the World War I battle scenes (Patterson, 2011).

Some of the literature and indeed specific schools of Stage and Screen Combat training are raising the idea that HEMA should be included more so in Stage and Screen Combat training and methodologies. This has led to a healthy debate in both academia and industry circles.

The inclusion of Historical European Martial Arts (HEMA) in stage and screen combat training can offer numerous benefits. However, the decision to incorporate more HEMA-based training should be carefully considered based on several factors, including the nature of the production, safety considerations, and the desired level of historical accuracy.

Advantages of HEMA-Based Training

Authenticity

HEMA techniques can provide a high degree of authenticity to fight scenes, particularly in productions set in historical or fantasy contexts. This can enhance the credibility of the performance and engage audiences who appreciate accurate portrayals of combat (Clements, 2006).

Variety

HEMA encompasses a wide range of weapons and fighting styles, from longsword fencing to polearm combat. This diversity can enrich the choreographic repertoire of performers, allowing for more varied and interesting fight scenes (Zabinski, 2014).

Physical Conditioning

HEMA training can also contribute to the physical conditioning of performers. It involves rigorous exercise and develops skills such as balance, coordination, and spatial awareness, which are beneficial for any kind of movement on stage or screen (Welle, 2015).

Considerations for Incorporating HEMA

Despite these advantages, there are several considerations that should be taken into account when deciding whether to include more HEMA-based training in combat schools.

Safety

Safety is paramount in stage and screen combat. While HEMA techniques are designed for real combat, stage and screen fights are choreographed illusions meant to minimize risk to performers. Therefore, it's crucial to adapt HEMA techniques to ensure they are safe for theatrical use (McClellan, 2008).

Relevance

The relevance of HEMA techniques depends on the nature of the production. For contemporary settings or productions that require stylized, non-realistic combat, other forms of fight choreography may be more appropriate.

Training Time

HEMA techniques can be complex and require significant time to master. Productions with tight schedules or performers without prior martial arts experience may find it challenging to incorporate extensive HEMA training (Zabinski, 2014).

It would appear that fight directors who stand out are indeed the ones who also delve into historical record, cite medieval, renaissance and other relevant time-period combat manuals, to fuel the authenticity of their choreography. These professionals have significantly contributed to the field of stage and screen combat, creating memorable fight scenes that enhance the narrative and engage audiences.

William Hobbs: Known for his work in both theater and film, Hobbs has choreographed fights for productions such as "The Duellists," "Willow," and various Royal Shakespeare Company plays. His approach emphasizes character development and narrative context in fight scenes.

Richard Ryan: A leading fight director with credits including "Troy," "Sherlock Holmes," and "The Dark Knight." Ryan is known for his innovative choreography and ability to adapt to different historical periods and styles.

B.H. Barry: A Tony Award-winning fight director, Barry has worked on numerous Broadway and West End productions. He's renowned for his meticulous attention to detail and commitment to performer safety.

J. Allen Suddeth: An experienced fight director and author, Suddeth has worked in television, film, and theatre, including Broadway productions. He's also a professor of stage combat, teaching the next generation of performers.

Terry King: King has extensive experience in both theatre and film, with credits including "War Horse" and "Richard III." He's respected for his historical knowledge and ability to create dramatic, engaging fight scenes.

Philip D'Orléans: A veteran fight director and stunt coordinator, D'Orléans has worked on films like "Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World." He's known for his expertise in Historical European Martial Arts (HEMA) and his focus on authenticity.

Thomas Schall: A prominent Broadway fight director, Schall has worked on productions like "King Lear" and "The Crucible." His work is characterized by its realism and emotional impact.

Some of these leaders of the industry have written books about the subject themselves;

"Fight Direction for Stage and Screen" by William Hobbs: This book provides a comprehensive guide to choreographing realistic and engaging fight scenes for both stage and screen. Hobbs' experience as a fight director for numerous films and theatre productions lends practical insights into the process.

"The Art of Stage Combat" by Richard Ryan and J. Allen Suddeth: This manual offers detailed instructions on various stage combat techniques, including unarmed combat, swordplay, and the use of other weapons. It also emphasizes safety considerations and the importance of character and narrative in fight choreography.

"Combat Mime: A Non-Violent Approach to Stage Violence" by J. D. Martinez: This unique book explores the use of mime techniques in portraying violence on stage, offering a non-violent approach to stage combat that prioritizes the safety of performers.

Whilst there is a growing number of highly regarded essential HEMA texts, that are imperative to the recognition of HEMA and that can largely benefit stage and screen combat. These include, but are not limited to;

"Sigmund Ringeck's Knightly Art of the Longsword" by David Lindholm and Peter Svard: This book is a translation and interpretation of one of the classic German longsword fencing manuals from the 15th century. It provides valuable insights into historical combat techniques.

"The Swordsman's Companion" by Guy Windsor: An excellent introduction to the Italian longsword tradition, this book covers everything from basic footwork to advanced techniques and strategies.

"Old Sword Play: Techniques of the Great Masters" by Alfred Hutton: Written by a Victorian-era fencing master, this book examines historical fencing techniques from a variety of European traditions. It remains a valuable resource for HEMA practitioners.

"Cold Steel: The Art of Fencing with the Sabre" by Alfred Hutton: Another classic by Hutton, this book focuses on the use of the sabre, a weapon that features prominently in both HEMA and stage combat.

Based on the analysis of books, manuals, and academic papers, it can be concluded that theatre and film indeed share a productive relationship with hoplology. This discipline, which studies human combative behavior and performance, has significantly influenced the portrayal of combat in both mediums.

Hoplology provides a rich source of techniques, strategies, and historical context that can enhance the authenticity and engagement of fight scenes. It offers a framework for choreographing combat that is not only visually compelling but also grounded in real-world martial traditions. Its impact extends beyond mere aesthetics, contributing to cultural preservation, performer safety, and audience engagement.

Notable figures in theatre and film have drawn from hoplology to create memorable and impactful fight scenes. These individuals have not only redefined the portrayal of violence on stage and screen but also highlighted the artistic potential of martial arts and combat choreography. Their work demonstrates the potential of hoplology as a tool for narrative storytelling, character development, and visual spectacle.

Alongside that, HEMA has had a profound impact on modern stage and screen combat, providing a historical and technical foundation for fight choreography. By drawing from HEMA, filmmakers and theatre directors can create realistic, engaging, and historically accurate combat sequences that enhance the narrative and dramatic impact of their productions.

Furthermore, the integration of hoplology into stage and screen combat training can offer numerous benefits. It can enrich the repertoire of performers, contribute to their physical conditioning, and increase the safety and effectiveness of fight choreography.

However, the application of hoplology should be carefully considered based on the specific needs and constraints of each production. A balanced approach that combines hoplology with other forms of combat training can provide a comprehensive skill set for performers, ensuring both authenticity and safety in their performances.

In conclusion, while there are challenges and considerations involved, the symbiosis between hoplology, theatre, and film is largely beneficial. Future research should continue to investigate the evolving influence of hoplology, especially with the advent of new technologies like motion capture and virtual reality, which may further revolutionize the representation of combat on stage and screen. The continued exploration of this relationship can further enhance the artistry and impact of stage and screen combat.

Chapter 3: The methodology of the study

Introduction to the chapter

This chapter explains the methods used in carrying out the study. Giving special emphasis to the case-studies, ethnographic, action, and ultimately evaluation research. It should be noted at the outset that methodology to a certain extent was an evolving one, guided at times by the test groups and experts, which took definite shape as the study progressed.

The General Perspective

As a qualitative study, the research reported here predominantly features qualitative perspectives but does also include quantitative perspectives to underpin the situational, multiple context case studies and action-research. This leads to a formative evaluation process that features me, in the role of participant-observer, as I will be deeply involved in the processes of identifying and solving the problems that occur during the research.

The Research Context

The study took place in several locations including; a martial arts dojo, a professional theatre, and a university. In all cases, the venues are located in a small city in the East Midlands region of England, with an approximate population (according to the last census of 2014) of 250,000. Within the wider county, the population is approximately 780,000.

The martial arts dojo is a modern facility that comprises a renovated warehouse with several matted rooms, an area with a sprung wooden floor, a punchbag zone, and a classroom. It has approximately 100 students who attend classes several times a week. It also has a variety of private class students. Several different martial arts are taught there including, Stringer Jukado, Tai Chi, Jiu-Jitsu, Aikido, Karate, and Wrestling.

The professional theatre is both a producing and receiving house, by that, it has an artistic director who programmes and directs in-house productions, but also accepts touring work. The theatre is part of the Arts Council of England National Portfolio and thus receives funds to produce this type of work. The theatre has a main auditorium that seats 550, with a deep stage and extensive wing space, it also contains a fly-tower. The venue also possesses a smaller black-box studio theatre that seats 120 approximately. The venue is owned by The local University and also works as a learning theatre with several undergraduate and postgraduate courses being taught. The theatre is situated as part of a large shopping complex in the city. At the point of this study, it is the only mid-to-large scale venue in the city.

The university is a multi-campus university with sites spread across the city. It has a very good reputation as a teaching university and strong ties with different industries. At the time of this study, there are approximately 21,500 students enrolled at the University.

Derby College is a multi-campus FE provider spread throughout the city. The college offers A-Levels, Apprenticeships, and other Vocational Qualifications. The performing arts and media departments are relatively small by comparison to other departments, especially those that fall within the STEM agenda.

The Research Participants

As the researcher, I was primarily observing the workshop participants, who ranged from practicing martial artists, both professional and amateur performers with some stage combat experience, or, with no or little stage combat experience, theatre directors, and the general public. However, I was also paying attention to the workshop leaders and their delivery style, and their use of further knowledge.

In total 46 people engaged in the participatory elements of the research, they were of varying ages, physical attributes, and sporting experience, but the key statistical markers are referenced below. For the purpose of anonymity, should I reference individuals, I shall provide them with fictitious names.

Whilst 12 professionals who have a vast array of experience and knowledge in their field responded to either questionnaire, survey, or were interviewed by myself, including; Gary Stringer, Raph, Sarah Brigham, and Dr. Pete Meakin.

Instruments Used in Data Collection

Several instruments and recording processes were used in the data collection process...

- **Observation Instruments** including observation forms written by myself, directly relating to workshop participants skills and understanding development.
- **Interviews/Questionnaires:** Specifically to martial arts practitioners, and fight choreographers
- **Surveys:** Survey forms. Specifically to workshop participants, post-workshop.
- **Document Analysis:** Especially relevant to old instructional manuscripts.

Procedures Used

In carrying out the research design, systematic procedures were used:

1. randomly assigned groups given pretest of fight choreography or workshops exploring either stage combat or martial arts

2. All groups received training and instruction in stage combat and martial arts underpinned by hoplological research.
3. All groups given post-test survey/questionnaire

Data Analysis

The data were analysed using several strategies;

1. Transcribing interviews
2. Collecting survey results
3. Reading all transcripts and surveys to identify categories of responses
4. Correlating responses to observations carried out during practical explorations
5. Tallying responses

I shall report the data through a combination of percentages and raw data. I shall display the data by employing narrative text, tables, graphs, and charts. I will then offer further explanation of how I interpreted the data.

Summary of the Methodology

This chapter has explained the methods used in this qualitative study exploring the impact hoplology and real-life scenarios have on stage and screen combat. The next chapter presents those results.

Chapter 4: The results of the study

Professional specialist interviews

The following are excerpts from interviews carried out with industry specialists from the fields of self-defence, martial arts, military and police, fight direction, theatre direction, and film direction.

Gary Stringer: BEM retired Police Officer, Parachute Regiment (Vet), Head of UK Self Defence Association, 10th Dan Stringer Jukado

1. Tell me about yourself Gary. Your experience and career.

“My martial arts career was initially heavily influenced by my father and his two older brothers. My father was a veteran of the Korean War, whilst he rarely talked of his experiences he did once tell me he was where he wasn’t supposed to be with people who weren’t supposed to be there doing something no one was supposed to know about! I remember him suffering with nightmares for years as I grew up. My two uncles, both older than my father, had served during world war 2, one as a Commando and the other in MI6. My father and my uncles taught me to box, some rudimentary ‘judo’ as they called it, but looking back with some educated hindsight it was more like very much watered down unarmed combat. I started this training on my eighth birthday with my cousin who is a year older than me. By the time I attended senior school at 11 (1968) I was quite well-versed in both boxing and unarmed combatives. It had been drilled into me that I was never to use what I knew, this had an unintended effect as I was the subject of bullying over the next few years until my final year when I had eventually endured enough and let’s just say I put an end to it and leave it at that.

The Tegner Effect

Around this time I purchased my first martial arts book (The first of very many) The book was entitled JUKADO Self Defence (Jiu Jitsu modernised) and its author was one Bruce Tegner. Little did I realise at the time what a profound influence this man’s teachings were going to be. It is a regret that I never got to actually meet him as he died in 1985.

Tegner was a prolific martial arts author and although viewed by many as an iconoclast his writings stand the test of time. He wrote a total of 14 books on subjects as diverse as Savate

and Karate to Kung fu and Aikido as well as Police Defensive Tactics and Self Defence for Girls and Women with Alice Mcgrath.

His approach to the martial arts fired my imagination and continues to inspire me today.

Concerned only with what worked he tried to debunk the many myths and misinformation perpetuated at the time. I believe he does not receive the credit he is due and is often overlooked for another man, who also espoused similar theories and practices, and incidentally was supposed to have had copies of all Tegn timers books in his extensive martial arts library, one Bruce Lee.

As you are aware I subsequently based my own system on JUKADO and pay due homage by naming our system STRINGER RYU JUKADO (The Stringer Method of JUKADO) like the original our system is based on multiple disciplines, the major attributes derive from western boxing, Jiu-Jitsu, Aiki-Jitsu, Karate (Shotokan) and Jun Fan (JKD) so my interpretation utilising Tegn timers approach as both inspiration and template.

SHERLOCK HOLMES

Another profound influence although older in origin but more recent for us is Edward Barton-Wright who after studying Boxing, Savate, Cane Fighting and Shindo Fudo Ryu Jiu-Jitsu, went on to formulate his system which he called BARTITSU and this was developed and taught between 1898 - 1902. The system was later to be immortalised by the author Arthur Conan-Doyle who tells readers that Holmes was an exponent of 'Baritsu' either a spelling mistake or a deliberate attempt to disguise the source. Who knows, but nonetheless with the fateful events recorded at the Reichenbach Falls in the story entitled The Final Problem BARTITSU (Baritsu) was made known to the wider public. This legacy is carried forward today by such groups as The Bartitsu Society, and several Bartitsu schools are now in operation.

THE CHINESE CONNECTION

In 1968 I was eleven years old and in the September of that year I started at Secondary School. It was here that the next stage of my martial arts education was to begin. I made friends with a Chinese boy who had joined the school at the same time as me. He was viewed as different and a foreigner, but times were different then and multiculturalism was in its infancy. We became good friends and one day at school I saw him deal with one of the school bullies in a very efficient manner, unbeknown to me, I had just witnessed Chinese Boxing and Chin-Na (Chinese grappling system-also now known as Quin-Na) I asked him what he had done and we started to

collaborate and train together exchanging our knowledge, although his knowledge far surpassed mine. One day whilst we were 'practising' in his backyard his father happened upon us.

He gave us a long talk on the ethics of martial arts, how a martial artist should act and conduct themselves and that it wasn't a game or a sport. He told us that martial arts was intended for fighting and its purpose was to produce cripples or corpses. I suppose it was his way of telling us that we should be careful with whom we shared our knowledge and even more careful of how we used it.

During the following four years we trained together often, under the tutelage of Mr Chen, my friend's father, the lessons were hard and by today's standards would be viewed as being brutal. Bloody noses, sprains and bruises were the norm. Sparring was pretty much full contact with no pads or gloves as there simply were none and as our teacher would often point out, neither you or your opponent will be wearing pads or gloves should the need arise to utilise our skills.

The lessons were very physically demanding, I quickly learned to concentrate and pay attention otherwise I would find myself on the floor with the command 'get up' ringing in my ears closely followed by 'try again' I learned a great deal during those years.

2. You served in the military, can you tell me more about those experiences?

FROM APPRENTICE TO PARATROOPER

Upon leaving school with a fistful of 'O' Levels I subsequently secured an apprenticeship at the Carriage and Wagon works for what was then known as British Rail. After my first year I had passed the examinations with a Distinction which meant I was eligible for promotion onto a Degree Level Engineering course which entailed far more academic study and attendance at College than the more practical, hands on work in the workshops which I enjoyed far more. So it was that aged 17 ½ I walked into the Army Careers Office and said I wanted to join the army. To give the recruiting sergeant his due, once he had seen my aptitude scores on my entrance tests and taking into account my engineering courses he tried his best to persuade me to join the Royal Engineers where he was confident I would do well and would gain further qualifications. I think I rejected this approach as I thought I would be spending even more time 'in school' and with the confidence and arrogance of youth I stated I wanted to join the Parachute Regiment. Also during this time Mr Chen decided to move his family back to his native Hong Kong so I lost my teacher.

During my time in the Army I tried many different martial arts including Shotokan Karate and Jiu-Jitsu as well as the British Army's staple - Boxing. I also maintained my practice of what I had already learnt as best I could. Leaving the Army in late 1982 after serving in places such as Cyprus, Northern Ireland and the South Atlantic I found myself back in Derby without a trade. If only I had taken the recruiting sergeants advice!

3. Lets discuss the Martial Arts world again, can you enlighten me on your continuing Journey and how that relates, blurs with real-world violence?

THE GRANDSTAND YEARS

1982 found me working at a local foundry which was full of ex-military men and although the work was heavy, physically demanding and dirty the money was good and the camaraderie was reminiscent of my time in the military. It was at this time that I was approached by a few workmates to see if I might teach them some martial arts. And so it was that on a Monday evening at around 7pm one day in late 1982 I held my inaugural martial arts lesson in the back room of The Grandstand Public House just on the outskirts of Derby city centre, adjacent to Derbyshire County Cricket Club. In those days the area was known as being somewhat rough and ready and the denizens frequenting the Grandstand were no different. It was an interesting time as we trained there twice a week, on most nights I would have an 'interaction' with one or more of the pubs' more aggressive customers. It was another set of lessons in my martial arts education, and I learned quickly, I had to. As the instructor I could not afford to back down or lose, the proof of what I was teaching and whether I was up to the task was there for all to see. Stringer Ryu JUKADO was born. After about a year, through a contact of one of my students we moved to a much nicer and safer venue, a community centre in Chaddesden which would be our home for over twenty years.

THE PROFESSOR AND THE MINDER

Around the same time as I had begun my teaching career I read an article in the now defunct Karate and Oriental Arts magazine, an excellent publication edited and published by an accomplished martial artist Danny Connors. The article featured a man Prof. Brian Dossett and he had, like me, formulated his own system but many years before me. His approach seemed to mirror mine and so I got in touch with him, over the next few years I was to travel down to London to train with him and studied both Spirit Combat and Aiki Jutsu under him, attaining a First Dan in Aiki Jutsu. It was during this time I also saw Aikido used combatively by Prof.

Dossett and it was impressive. We remain friends to this day, and the professor is still active today at over 80yrs old.

Also on one of the many courses I would attend during those years, I was at a large course, several hundred people, held at Haden Hill Leisure Centre somewhere in the West Midlands. At this event I was to meet another of my influences Tom Baldwin Soke who headed a Bu-Justu school in the East End of London on the Isle of Dogs. 'Hard' doesn't come anywhere close to describing this man, who was to become a close friend until his untimely death in (insert date) Tommy was a hard man and a harder teacher but his knowledge was wide and deep and once again I was happy to immerse myself in yet another stream of learning. Where DOSSETT was soft and technique centred BALDWIN was hard and more external in his approach, I hold both in high esteem and credit both with the evolution of Stringer Ryu JUKADO.

THE QUIET MAN

1985 saw me once again travelling to London, this time to train with a true Karate legend, Charles Mack Sensei who holds the distinction of being the first occidental to be awarded multiple Dan grades in Karate (Shotokan), Aikido and Jiu-Jitsu. He also held a teaching diploma in the art of Tai Kyoku Ken (a very old, but highly effective grappling and locking system) It was Tai Kyoku Ken i was learning subsequently gaining 1st Dan. MACK sensei was a big man, over six feet tall with a heavy but fit physique, yet despite his size he moved like a cat and was very quiet and scary! I still incorporate Tai Kyoku Ken in my teaching today and teach the entire system to my 2nd Dans and above due to its destructive capabilities, I prefer to know the people I pass this skill set onto as well as I can.

UNKNOWN BUT IF YOU KNOW - YOU KNOW

At the same time I met another martial artist who has become a lifelong friend, John Mellon. Chances are you will not have heard of him, and that's just the way he likes it. This man's knowledge, ability and skill set is truly awesome, his martial arts knowledge is encyclopaedic. John is currently the technical advisor to Prof. Leon Jay the successor to the Small Circle Ju-Jitsu system developed by his father the late, great Prof. Wally Jay. Both John and I studied under Wally although John much more so and hence he became Wally's technical advisor for Small Circle Ju-Jitsu until his death in May 2011, when his son Leon took on the mantle of headmaster of the style, it was an obvious choice to keep John in post. It was via this

connection that got to meet and train with Sifu Nino Bernardo of Wing chun. Nino is a force to behold and his Wing Chun is deadly effective, however, he is also very open minded and invited myself and John to give a joint seminar on practical martial arts at his famous school 'THE BASEMENT' in London. This would be around 1985 -6 I think.

I still keep in touch with Nino who moved to Spain many years ago, he still refers to me as his 'dangerous friend!' Shortly after this seminar I was interviewed by Bey Logan for COMBAT magazine who dubbed me "one of the UK's most effective martial artists"

THE JKD CONNECTION

As a result of teaching at the basement I subsequently met and trained with one of the world's premier martial artists and the man Bruce Lee named as the keeper of JKD, Danny Inosanto, via Danny I met and became friends with JKD's toughest exponent, Larry Hartsell.

Between 1985 and 1995 I trained with Larry, hosting him at my clubs many times, travelling all over the UK with him and he always stayed at my home when in the UK. I was subsequently granted a Full Instructors Certification in Jun Fan Martial Arts (JKD) Jun Fan is used as there is only one JKD practitioner certified by Bruce Lee directly, Inosanto himself. Larry sadly lost his battle with cancer on 20th August 2007. He was my good friend and I miss him dearly. His military career was remarkable but he was an extremely private and modest man, letting his martial arts prowess do the talking for him.

THE AMA AND MEIJI SUZUKI SENSEI

This is a little out of sequence as some events were happening very close together, in 1984 I decided to try and get some official recognition for the system I was teaching. To this end I attended the HQ of the Amateur Martial Associations in London, not far from St Pancras Station. The AMA had been originally formed as the Amateur Karate Association to offer a home to those clubs the Martial Arts Commission refused to recognise. This is a long complicated story and has no bearing or relevance here. The founder of the AMA was Tom Hibbert MBE, he had been awarded his MBE for services to English Karate. Tom was a visionary and very open minded and extremely knowledgeable about martial arts. The Chief Instructor at the AMA was Meiji Suzuki Sensei, a fearsome individual and the founder of the highly successful MUGENDO martial arts system whose fighters were dominant on both the national and international competition circuits.

I was to demonstrate my system in front of Suzuki Sensei and he had me on the mat for two six hour stretches over a Saturday and a Sunday. It was a long weekend, he left no stone unturned and was determined to test the limits of both my abilities and my knowledge, which I can assure you he did! At the end I was battered, tired, mentally and physically exhausted but also the proud recipient of the rank of 4th Dan and Stringer Ryu JUKADO was officially recognised by one of the largest martial arts governing bodies in the UK, I felt like we had arrived at last. I am eternally grateful to Tom Hibbert MBE for giving my fledgling system the chance to exist and its first official home within the martial arts community in this country. Tom became a close personal friend and his death at the ripe old age of 95 in 2020 came as a sad shock. There are a great number of martial artists, some now quite famous or prominent that owe a great deal to this man, myself included.

RECENT TIMES

In 2001 I was invited to teach in Germany by the World Martial Arts Association at the behest of Toni Finken-Schaffrath. At this event the SJKD system was officially recognised by a body with direct links to China and the Royal Martial Arts Academy (ROC) headed by the last living descendant of Ghengis Khan, Prince Dschero Khan (The Invincible)

In 2011 I was invited to join the prestigious Kodo Butoku Renmei. Membership is by invitation only and the organisation boasts a global membership numbering over 30,000 practitioners on every continent, all studying a multitude of Okinawan and Japanese arts. This obviously begs the question of how a modern non traditional system such as ours came to be accepted. The president Stephen Grayston Meijin had seen me teach at a couple of seminars he had also been teaching at. He approached me and after a long talk he said “although your approach is not traditional, it draws upon traditional systems and it is obvious to me that your values and those of your Instructors and Students adhere to the ethics of good Budo as we promote it and we would like you to join”

This from a man who has been personally commended by the Emperor of Japan for his services to Karate was high praise indeed, how could I not accept?

Over the intervening years I have managed somehow to impress both Grayston and Stockey Meijin (Vice President) and the then Vice President Castoro Meijin before his untimely death in 2018. I now have the honour to be a member of the Executive Board for the renmei.

Whilst being a member of KBR I have had my grades ratified in Japan and the system recognised by the KBR further ensures its legitimacy.

2016 saw me inducted into the Martial Arts illustrated Hall of Fame and the same year into The Black Belt Hall of fame also. At this time I was also a regular columnist for MAI.

In 2017 I was made a Fellow of the Institute of Martial Arts and Science having graduated some years previously.

My greatest accolade came in 2020 when I was honoured by her late Majesty the Queen in the Birthday Honours List, being awarded the British Empire Medal for my services and contribution to the Martial Arts.

In 2021 I was approached by the head of the British Combat Association (BCA) The legendary Peter Consterdine 10th Dan, to join the BCA as an associate Instructor. I am also an honorary lifetime member of the All Styles Martial Arts Association and The Self Defence Federation both headed by Dave Turton 10th Dan who is widely acknowledged as the highest graded pure self defence instructor in europe. (He also taught Peter Consterdine and Geoff Thompson for a while)

THE DOORS

During this time other things had been happening in my life, I now had a wife to support and whilst the money at the foundry was good and teaching was providing a little extra, we literally had no money after having met and married in six weeks we had nothing, so money was needed. We lived with my wife's parents at this time.

One of the guys I worked with at the foundry also worked the doors and suggested that I should give it a go and so it was that a few weeks later aged around 25 I became a fledgling doorman or door supervisor as they are now called although the term 'bouncer' was and still is used. My first 'door' was at a club called Sadies and to say the design of the foyer was dangerous is an understatement. Originally a cinema the company had simply ripped out the seats and made two dance floors and added a bar and a DJ booth, the foyer was small and stairs led down into the club itself from the main door, therefore door staff had a set of fairly steep stairs to their rear, not ideal really, but ignorance is bliss as they say.

I was soon to learn a very great deal about non consensual violence and what would and would not work when things got real. On more than one occasion I had cause to thank my previous experiences in the military. Through a combination of luck, instinct and maybe a little skill I survived having a razor pulled on me, ruined my shirt and jacket though, being shot at with a crossbow and other adventures. I carry a scar on my forehead from a bottle and a lovely souvenir from a knife along my right forearm.

THE POLICE

In 1988 I joined Derbyshire Constabulary for what was the beginning of a twenty five year career in policing. I had previously spent a couple of years working as a Special Constable. My first posting was to Full Street Police Station located in the centre of Derby. I retired as a Detective in July 2012.

SOME THOUGHTS AND OBSERVATIONS ON VIOLENCE

If we take the term 'Martial Arts' in its most literal sense it literally means the art of war, the term martial being derived from the word Mars the Roman God of War. By extension then, anyone who serves in the armed forces is actively engaged in the martial arts. This is more than evident in weapon drills, bayonet practice, close quarter combat training etc. This is completely different to the controlled practice in a Dojo, Dojang or Kwoon. When I joined the Army I met for the first time people that not only enjoyed combat but actually seemed to thrive on it!! Soldiers are trained to fight and when they don't have an enemy will often fight each other or another unit. Fights amongst squaddies bring a whole new dimension to violence, these are men trained to be good at it!! Fights between soldiers can escalate very quickly from two men fighting to the mayhem of a barroom brawl involving large numbers. Anything can and is used as a weapon and injuries can be quite serious at times, broken bones and stitches all round is quite often the norm.

I have seen men injured in such altercations, suffering injuries that should have stopped them in their tracks simply ignore their wounds and keep on fighting until nature or the law intervenes. I remember seeing one bloke with a shard of glass sticking out the top of his head like a glass mohican, still fighting although absolutely covered in his own blood before collapsing unconscious.

Whilst working the doors I had far too many fights to recall and I always regarded a fight a failure on my part in not resolving the issue without the use of force. There are however a few individuals that sadly will only respond to greater violence than they are capable of.

Whilst considering the question of witnessing violent acts I will attempt to tell you about a few of those that stick in my mind. I am not wanting to tell a series of 'war stories' but there have been incidents I witnessed or later investigated that I believe illustrate how unpredictable, ugly and horrendous real world violence can be.

The first comes from my time on the doors, Derby, in the eighties and early nineties was a mecca for nightclubbers, the city boasted some of the best venues in the country. The mix of strangers from all over the UK, alcohol and drugs was sure sooner or later to fuel violence and it often did so. This particular incident I witnessed took place outside the club I was working at. There was a loud argument taking place on the street, the shouting was what drew my attention, but since it was on the street and not on or in the premises I had no lawful authority to act. Pushing and shoving soon gave way to the exchange of blows, both had been drinking. Oddly, I was familiar with both the participants. One was a well known local 'hard man' and the other we would describe as just a regular punter at the club, not someone I would describe as a fighter by any means.

However, they say you should never judge a book by its cover' and so it turned out on this occasion. What happened next vividly illustrates that violence escalates really quickly and that people in combat become completely unpredictable and capable of acts of extreme savage, violence. (even the ordinary man) Hard Man was getting the upper hand until his opponent suddenly grabbed him by the head, ignoring the blows being landed upon him, he tore Hard Man's ear off with his teeth, chewed it, swallowed it before vomiting it back onto the pavement. That ended the fracas instantly, Hard Man was rolling about the floor in the blood and vomit whilst his opponent made good his escape. Never make the mistake of underestimating how far an opponent is prepared to go, you simply have no idea what anyone is capable of in the right or wrong circumstances.

IF YOU HAVE TO FIGHT DO IT ON YOUR TERMS AND END IT AS QUICKLY AS YOU POSSIBLY CAN. DO NOT HESITATE.

On my first day in the Army the IRA blew up the NAAFI at the Parachute Regiment Training Depot in Aldershot. Picking up body parts was a quick initiation into extreme violence. The human brain is a strange thing, especially if you're a soldier or a cop, both professions share a type of black, gallows humour. I suppose it's a defence mechanism. The IRA did eventually blow me up whilst travelling with my patrol in a snatch landrover, using a roadside bomb. Whilst I was thrown clear as I had been sat at the rear as tail end charlie, others were less fortunate, two killed and a third badly wounded. My mate 'Smithy' had lost a leg below the knee, when I got to him he was being tended by another Para who was applying a tourniquet, I jabbed him with my ampule of morphine from my kit. (All Paras are trained in battlefield firstaid) Smithy shouted 'I've lost my fucking leg!' to which I remember replying calmly 'no you haven't mate, it's over there' and I went to retrieve it. The weight of a limb is surprising when detached from a body.

My new role as a Police Officer in a busy city centre was to provide me with ample opportunity to employ my martial arts skills, however, this time, with the odd exception, gaining and maintaining control was the order of the day. This required a completely new set of skills and mental outlook. I was no stranger to street violence having worked the doors and done a tour in Northern Ireland, Policing was to open my eyes even more. I naively thought I had seen most things.

Police Officers back in the eighties and before were taught Taho Jutsu (art of arrest techniques) whilst the system itself is excellent the training delivery was far from being so. Many years later MCSDA was recognised by the Taho Jutsu Association, the certificate is on my office wall at the Academy. I quickly realised that I needed to fall back on my previous training when restraint and control was called for. The difficulty for any Police Officer dealing with violence is this; we must win, but we cannot cause any lasting injury. This is an almost impossible task if you are trying to subdue a violent individual.

Toward the end of my career, I moved away from being a Detective (for my own mental health) and did a spell as a gaoler in custody at St Mary's Wharf Police Station. At the time, this was one of the busiest custody suites in the UK. Any custody suite can be an extremely hostile and demanding environment to work in and you are utterly dependent on the other team members to have your back. This means that custody teams tend to become very close and in a lot of ways this mirrored my experience in the military. There was rarely a day go by without some kind of violent incident occurring, and over a weekend you could find yourself fighting through an entire 10hr shift.

I have spoken earlier about the capability of ordinary people to enact extraordinary acts of violence, this capability is often magnified in criminals who are prepared to do anything to evade capture or to achieve their ends. Criminals have little regard for others, an example is this case I worked on as a Detective.

Late December 2004. The victim was an Amazon delivery driver, he was out on his round when his van was hijacked by at least two offenders (according to witnesses) in a vain attempt to prevent the robbery the driver stood in front of his van. I am guessing he was expecting the driver to stop, get out and either run or have a confrontation with him. The offender had no such intention and simply accelerated, mowing down the van driver, but not content with this, he continued driving with the victim's head caught under a front wheel, grinding his skull into the road, killing him. Bone fragments were so heavily embedded into the tarmac that that section of road had to be resurfaced. You could actually see a white skid mark where the skull had been driven into the surface of the road. Robbery was now a Murder enquiry. We worked many long hours on that case, we knew the suspects to be members of the travelling community but suspects were never apprehended. It is thought they were smuggled out of the country very quickly. Running someone over is in itself bad enough but to continue with that person trapped under a wheel is something else entirely and displays a level of callousness I still find difficult to comprehend. This was the only murder I worked on where we failed to apprehend the suspect.

The murder of an Army recruiting sergeant in Derby in 1992 was my first murder case. This is another example of extreme, cold blooded, violence. To walk up to someone in broad daylight and at close range, shooting them in the head takes a particularly evil kind of individual. A close colleague of mine (we joined at the same intake) found the sergeant shortly after he had been shot, lying in a pool of his own blood. Sergeant Newman died in his arms as he tried to render first aid and awaited the arrival of an ambulance. I know this experience affects him even to this day, how could it not?? Eighteen years were to pass before the offender was arrested and sentenced to life in prison.

Facing someone who has a weapon is another fear that people rightly have, some martial artists practise weapon defences that frankly are little short of suicidal whilst others don't address the problem at all citing there is nothing one can do. This is not the place for that debate but what I will say is this: you simply cannot replicate the visceral feelings you experience when you are faced with an armed opponent.

Summer 1991, Derby, St Peters Street. It was a quiet Sunday morning when a report of a male walking into the city centre brandishing a machete was received at the control room. I was dispatched to investigate. One solo copper, armed with a piece of wood. No body armour, taser or armed response, all those things were years into the future.

Fortunately for me, the man had no knowledge of how to wield his weapon and he was a little high on some substance. After trying to talk him down it became obvious that talking wasn't going to work, he grew increasingly agitated and had begun to swing his weapon in wide sweeping arcs back and forth across the front of his body. I remember being 'scared shitless' so much so that I didn't even think to call for assistance!! I waited for him to swing again and as the weapon went past me and across his body I closed in, trapped his weapon arm against his body and punched him in the head as hard as I could and executed one of the finest Kote Geash (Wrist lock throw) I was ever likely to do, which sent him flying in an arc away from me, the machete flew from his hand, narrowly missing me. Due to perceptual narrowing brought about by a massive dump of adrenaline, I had failed to notice how close we were to a large plate glass window and Machete man went through it! This was now very dangerous for us both as the remaining glass could drop like a guillotine at any moment. I quickly dragged him back onto the pavement and handcuffed him and secured the weapon.

It was only afterwards when the alarm in the shop activated that other officers arrived.

I would never describe myself as an 'expert' and most definitely not in the field of violence which is far too vast a subject for any one person to have total knowledge of in my opinion.

Street violence is quick, unpredictable and can escalate quickly as I have already stated.

Combat is frightening, exhilarating, unpredictable, bloody and escalates even quicker!

Domestic Violence is perhaps the most insidious kind of violence I can think of alongside Child Abuse and Sexual Violence. During my decade plus time as a Domestic Violence Detective it never ceased to amaze me the lengths people would go to in order to inflict pain and suffering upon another - especially those they professed to love and care for. This interview is not the time or place to go into those issues but I mention it as it is also a part of the violence lexicon.

5. Does all of that knowledge make you critical of on-screen/stage violence?

ON SCREEN VIOLENCE (It's all pretend isn't it?)

On screen or stage violence is just that, it's on the screen or on the stage. We can turn off the screen or choose not to look at the stage. In either case it cannot physically harm us or maybe it can and does.

Over the years the portrayal of violence on screen in particular has evolved, these days 'realism' is the order of the day. If we look back to the many kung fu movies put out by the Chinese cinema in the 70's fuelled by Bruce Lee mania there are literally hundreds of examples of grossly exaggerated on screen violence where two or more combatants would exchange fight ending blows for extended periods of time. The extreme would be when one protagonist might rip out his adversaries throat or even his heart with his bare hands!!

The Chinese cinema industry glorified extreme violence under the guise of entertainment and helped perpetuate many martial arts myths. Not the least of which was the infamous Dim Mak whereby a practitioner of this dark art might touch or strike their victim at a certain time of day in a certain way which would result in their target dying at some time in the future in a time frame that might be several seconds to years later!

Even the untimely death of Bruce Lee in Kowloon Tong on July 20th 1973 was initially attributed to a Dim Mak strike, there are still those that believe this to be the case today despite contrary autopsy evidence. Such is the power of the media.

On screen or stage violence can never replicate the feelings of fear, revulsion, anger and sheer desperation that drive people to acts of cowardice, savagery or seemingly suicidal acts of bravery. On screen violence is two dimensional. We can see and hear it but we can't physically feel or experience it.

Perhaps the most realistic portrayal of actual combat and the effects it has upon those involved can be seen in the TV Series 'Band of Brothers' along with 'Saving Private Ryan', 'Flags of our Fathers' and 'We Were Soldiers', I know that in at least three of these productions actual participants were consulted and worked as technical advisors, this lent these films their realism. Band of Brothers in particular made extensive use of the surviving members of Easy Company when telling their story. Colonel Hal Moore was the technical advisor for the film of his famous battle as portrayed in 'We Were Soldiers'

Tom Hanks has to be given kudos for utilising the experiences and memories of those that were there and for treating all combatants with the respect they deserved irrespective of which side they fought on.

Portraying actual violence on stage or screen should be as realistic as possible, not to glorify it in any way but to illustrate how truly frightening it is if you're at the centre of it.

I am not an actor, I don't possess the mental agility required nor do I have the required discipline or skills, but I can appreciate how difficult it must be for actors and directors to replicate violence in a realistic way as very few, if any, will have had any direct, real world experience to draw upon. Interpersonal violence such as murder is another problem area, the genius of Shakespeares 'Macbeth' lies in the way it tells the story of a man who commits regicide and the mental anguish that follows, this resonates even today. It shows that violence always has consequences.

FILMS

Being a bit of a 'movie buff' I tend to enjoy Film Noir, more or less anything with Bogart in it as he is my favourite actor. I have a small collection of movies dating back to the 1930's which contain some kind of martial arts action in them. The way violence is used and portrayed is far different in these movies but in some you can see the seeds of an attempt to get it right within the confines of the times it was produced in.

Blood on the Sun (1945) starring James Cagney, himself an accomplished practitioner as was Peter Lorre. The film opens with Cagney practising 'judo' at the Kodokan in Japan, this was echoed over forty years later by Steven Seagal's first major movie 'Nico' also known as 'Above the Law' the opening scenes showing Seagal displaying his prowess in Aikido. Of the two performances I find Cagney's the more believable and hence, realistic.

There is a long, well choreographed fight scene toward the end of Blood on the Sun between Cagney and his enemy, a Japanese 'judo' expert. This sequence was far ahead of its time as Cagney transitioned seamlessly from western Boxing and Wrestling into Ju-Jitsu as the fight progressed. Is it realistic? Maybe not, but it is a fine example of a well choreographed fight done by someone who had a solid understanding of martial arts using two actors that obviously possessed the right skills to pull it off. It remains one of my favourite fight scenes and would not look amiss in a Jason Bourne movie.

One of the greatest failings in the portrayal of historical violence has to be the scene in Braveheart where Wallace is hanged, drawn and quartered. The depiction of the acts themselves are, I have no doubt, historically and medically accurate. My problem is this:

Here you have a man that has been hung in such a way that his neck has not been broken, therefore surely the rope would be around his throat restricting his windpipe and at the very least damaging his larynx and voice box. The unfortunate recipient is then split from chest to crotch and his intestines and internal organs are pulled out whilst he is still alive and thrown onto a hot griddle. It is at this point the filmmakers would have us believe that Wallace was still conscious, lucid enough to shout a coherent message to the crowd and had not succumbed to shock through the pain and trauma inflicted. Who knows? Maybe he possessed a pain threshold so high he could just ignore what was being done to him. In my experience, injured men scream with pain and it is a battle to keep them conscious and prevent them from succumbing to shock.

CONTEXT ?

People on the whole can and do differentiate between real violence and fictional violence. Whether anyone can learn from it in my view is dependent very much on the context in which it is portrayed.

Kurosawa's Seven Samurai shows the heroes named in the title using violence to fight violent men as they defend the villagers from the marauding bandits. The subsequent remake in 1960 retells the story, setting it in the wild west. Again the violence is justified and the lead character played by Yul Brynner gives a short speech to the villagers in which he states that once you start down the path of violence you must continue until its end. He is talking about escalation and the after effects of violence. Interestingly the 2016 remake of the remake shows that both sides are equally capable of acts of savagery, the violence is brutal, bloody and graphic. The violence is now the main feature of the film more than the actual story itself.

If violence is portrayed in a realistic way, and by that I mean medically accurate when it comes to injuries and their effects, showing the consequences both physical and mental, then I believe the viewing public can learn some valuable lessons, without them having to experience it directly, which I suppose is the point of the exercise.

6. Are you familiar with the term Hoplology and what do you understand by it?

HOPLOLOGY

My understanding of this term is that it refers to the study of combative behaviours and performance in humans. Upon making that statement it dawns on me that, in my own way, I

have been a student of Hopology for almost as long as I have been involved in the martial arts. It is my considered opinion, that one cannot be a serious practitioner without the pursuance of knowledge of how people act / react under combat conditions and the way any training methodologies or systems influence the outcome.

Hopology isn't just useful, I would consider it a vital research tool in the quest to enhance one's understanding of combat and fighting systems, leading to improved teaching and practice methods that not only benefit the individual student but help in the evolution of the martial arts themselves. If you don't know why something works or fails, one cannot as an Instructor hope to pass on any level of understanding or physical competency to the student.

In closing this somewhat lengthy interview I would just say that with all the fantastic teachers I have had the fantastic good fortune to meet and train with, I was never destined to tread a traditional martial arts path, and for that I thank them all.

Raphael Aldis: Level 5 Instructor, Owner, and Lead Instructor STAGEFIGHT. Co-founder of the European Certificate of Skilled Performance Combat. Registered Modern Fencing Coach. HEMA Coach. Fight Director and Action Coordinator.

1. Tell me about yourself Raph. Your experience and career.

My name is Raphael Aldis, I am a professional fight director and action coordinator for the stage and screen with over twenty-years of experience. My background is entirely martial arts and fencing-based which led me to train in stage and screen combat and the establishment of STAGEFIGHT – School of Performance Combat. Over the years I have choreographed stage and screen productions all over the United Kingdom and parts of Europe. In addition to fight direction, I am also a fully qualified modern fencing coach and historical martial arts (HEMA) instructor.

2. Did you always want to be a Fight Director?

I've always been interested in films and filmmaking, particularly how fights and stunts were performed on film.

3. You have other martial arts history? Can you expound on that, please?

I've trained in a number of martial arts to varying degrees, including Judo, karate, kung-fu, taekwondo and much later MMA. Currently hold a black belt in karate and coaching qualifications with the British Academy of Fencing and British Fencing Association. Shortly after the Millenium, a fellow fencing coach directed my towards 'Derek Ware' and the

London Stunt School, where I began training in stage and screen combat and various stunt disciplines. It was through stage and screen combat that I started to research Historical European Martial Arts (HEMA) and began to interpret and practice historical combat with other like-minded individuals.

4. Does all of that knowledge make you critical of on-screen/stage violence?

Yes, but also appreciative of well-choreographed and executed fight and action scenes as I'm aware of the efforts that the production has made in order to create an action-packed scene.

5. You are a bit of a movie buff too, right? Favourite genre? Are there any particular pet-peeves or personal irritations when you observe fictional violence?

Huge movie buff. I enjoy all film genres. I get annoyed with the bad choreography, historical inaccuracy and scenes with protective armour that doesn't seem to protect the user the way it should.

6. Do you have any particular fight scenes or moments of action in movies or theatre that stand out as memorable?

First time watching Hamlet at the RSC in Stratford-upon-Avon as a teenager. I had never seen a swordfight performed live on stage before – the duel between Hamlet and Laertes was spectacular!

There are three films that prompted my interest in fight direction and have memorable moments that still inspire me – The Vikings (1958), Excalibur (1981) and Highlander (1986). The final confrontation between Kirk Douglass and Tony Curtis on the tower in The Vikings. King Arthur against Lancelot and the final battle sequence in Excalibur, and the final confrontation between MacLeod and Kurgan in Highlander. Although all three of these films contain questionable targeting of weapons and poor historical accuracy, they still contain outstanding cinematography, breathtaking locations and excellent storytelling.

7. Can you tell us a little about some of your own favourite work?

I'm incredibly critical of my own choreography and always seek to build on my own knowledge and concepts. In the first few years as an FD, I was repeatedly asked to choreography 'The Scarlett Pimpernel' and spent almost two-years moving back-to-back from production to production. It was a great time, and I learned a lot about how the same roles were approached by many different actors and how my approach to the choreography had to adapt each time.

8. Are you aware of the term hoplology? If so, what do you think about it, usefulness?

I first heard the term Hoplology over a decade ago when it was described as the study of death

and death dealing – I thought it was an interesting concept and area of study but found very few resources that clearly focused on it.

The study of confrontation and combative behavior is an incredibly complex area of study, which from my point-of-view requires knowledge from a number of different scientific studies including mechanical, historical, anthropological, physiological, psychological and sociological disciplines. This knowledge base is vast and is in almost constant change as any modern emerging study has the potential of challenging recognised concepts and principles. For example, the study of Historical European Martial Arts has increased exponentially over the last decade. The rediscovery and interpretation of primary source manuscripts and materials are not only accounts of lost martial technique, but also a snap-shot of the contemporary human condition at the time of authorship.

The disciplines mentioned previously, are extremely useful to know, and over the years have helped me to understand and improve my approach to teaching, choreography, and my understanding of historical accuracy, and I would recommend any fight choreographer to research beyond the simple mechanical principles taught within dramatic combat.

9. Do you believe that the fictional violence should attempt to be historically and factually (medically) accurate wherever possible?

Fictional/staged violence exists in a twilight zone between reality and fantasy. It recreates scenes of violence for dramatic purposes, drawing techniques from both martial principles and the performing arts, to perform scenes of aggressive confrontation that, while being safe to perform, fools an audience into believing what they are seeing is real. The level of violence being projected should be driven by production-type, genre and intended age of the viewing audience.

10. Do you believe that the general public can learn something from fictional violence?

For many years the entertainments industry has presented characters that appear capable of surviving and shrugging off serious injuries that would kill or incapacitate in real-life. In recent years, however, audiences have started to reject the fantasy in favour of the reality by demanding higher levels of authenticity – which in some cases has led to higher levels of historical and factual accuracy with scripts that explore the emotional aspects and repercussions of confrontation.

11. You established Stagefight, which I believe to be quite unique in this sphere of performer training, can you tell me more about that, please?

After receiving quite a serious head injury during my early stage combat training, I felt a more 'martial arts' approach rather than 'set fight routine' approach to teaching dramatic combat would be beneficial to actors and could help to improve the standards of safety throughout the entertainments industry. STAGEFIGHT was established in 2004 with the intention of offering

actors based in the Midlands and north of the United Kingdom an opportunity to train in stage combat as an alternative to London-based courses. Rather than teach set fight routines for each combat discipline, we began to teach stage combat as though it was a martial art. The syllabus was drawn from industry recognised stage combat techniques, weapon-specific historical manuscripts and various acting principles to create a system that was driven by the need to understand how and why particular actions were delivered rather than the need to get through a fight routine 'parrot-fashion'. The approach proved to be very successful, extremely safe and provided a higher level of historical accuracy and understanding for each combat discipline. This approach was further developed and refined over a number of years and was launched in the United Kingdom during 2011 and became known as the European Certificate of Skilled Performance Combat (ECSPC). Initially the syllabus only covered stage combat (basic, intermediate and advanced levels), but then grew to include a screen combat training programme and firearms training. In more recent years our advanced stage combat training courses have been recognised by Equity and STAGEFIGHT has become one of the leading training schools for actors and stunt professionals wishing to enter the television and film industry.

Sarah Brigham: CEO & Artistic Director, Derby Theatre.

1. Tell me about yourself Sarah, and your experience.

I've worked in theatre for 25 years, graduating from Bretton Hall in 1998. I've worked as an actor, director, writer, dramaturg and Youth Theatre and community theatre practitioner. I was Associate Director at Dundee Rep, Director of The Point Eastleigh and I am now Artistic Director and CEO of Derby Theatre – a midscale producing house in the East Midlands. We make 4-8 professional shows inhouse a year, about 6 youth theatre productions, have a wideranging outreach programme and aim to support local artistic talent too.

2. Did you always want to be a Theatre Director?

No as a child I wanted to be an actor but a module in my third year at Bretton made me realize it was directing I was really into but I had no idea how to do that – I did one assistant job when I first graduated for free but it was easier to get acting work so that's what I did for a while, whilst directing young people on the side and eventually professionals. On an acting job that took me across Europe I realized: I was on tour to some wonderful theatres, "living the dream" but bored. That repeating the same show night after night held no joy for me. It was the rehearsal room where I really come to life and enjoy myself so that's when I focused my efforts more on getting into directing.

3. Can you tell us a little about some of your own favourite work? Can you also, tell me about other work you have seen that you particularly enjoyed?

I like different types of work – a catch all would be “stuff that really connects to me emotionally”. Often I like stuff that’s fluid in its movement by companies like Gecko and Theatre Ad Infinium but I also like work that includes live music like Kneehigh and that which is detailed in its approach to text like many shows I’ve seen at MRX or YV. I like studio work that hits a punch and one person shows – like the stuff Daniel Kitson makes which is really pure storytelling. I also like work that plays with form and ideas like the work of Tim Crouch.

4. Do you have any particular fight scenes or moments of action in theatre that stand out as memorable? If so, why?

Not fight scenes – I feel like I know when a fight is good and when its not but its not something that has stayed with me... maybe I haven’t seen enough good stuff.

5. Are you aware of the term hopology? If so, what do you think about it, usefulness?

No I had to look it up! I got this explanation:

"the study of the basis, patterns, relationships, and significances of combative behaviour at all levels of social complexity" (Draeger, 1982)

But I think its useful to know about the history of weapons and when I approach a show with fighting in it then I do the same amount of research on this as I do of other parts of the show. If I’m setting a show in a period then we try to be accurate.

6. Do you have any martial arts history? Can you expound on that, please?

Not really no – I did my combat levels as a young actor but haven’t kept it up. Ive also done ab it of Tai Chi if that counts.

7. Do you believe that the fictional/staged violence should attempt to be historically and factually (medically) accurate wherever possible? Expand as you feel necessary.

No – in the same way I don’t think you always need to stage a play in the exact period. If you are going period with the whole show then yes aim for accuracy but if you’ve set your classic play in the swinging 60s there’s no point in fighting with a broadsword.

I do think fights need to be directed truthfully – in the same way you direct the rest of the show so it’s important for it to make sense for an audience. Obviously there are also times when a more cartoon approach is appealing – for instance in panto

8. Do you believe that the general public can learn something from fictional/staged violence?

As a pacifist that's a hard question – I guess you learn what leads to violence, why people are pushed to violence what the consequences of violence are.

9. Have you ever worked with a fight director/choreographer? If so, was it a positive experience, why?

Yes a number of times. I've had good and not so good experiences. When the FD has read the script, understood the characters and worked with the actors its great. I also like to have proper prep time with a FD not just have them rock up on the day.

10. When working with fight choreographers/directors, do you select them depending on what the production needs?

We have a local fight director who is qualified and good and knows how to work with the actors to put them at ease so we often use him in a bid to support the local ecology. We have used other people and that's been based on recommendations. I imagine it would be useful for a more nuanced approach but I openly admit I'd probably need some guidance in that

Dr. Pete Meakin: Freelance Theatre Director & Creative Producer

1. Tell me about yourself Pete. Your industry experience.

After leaving school, I spent 6 years at three different universities: a BA in English and Drama, a teaching qualification (PGCE) also in English and Drama, and an MA in Shakespeare Studies from the Shakespeare Institute. However, I'd always wanted to be an actor, so I auditioned for, and took the 1-year post-graduate acting course at the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School. Thereafter, I spent over 20 years as a professional actor in theatre, TV and radio. When not working as an actor, I would take on supply teaching to ensure the money kept coming in.

2. Did you always want to be a Theatre Director?

After about 10 years as a professional actor, I became more and more frustrated with the job. So much of what I was doing was purely for the money. I hadn't entered the acting profession to become rich. I'd done it in search of artistic, ideological and personal enrichment and fulfilment. In reality, I was doing an awful lot of adverts, videos, soap operas and sit-coms. Even when I did land a part that I believed offered the kind of scope and challenge I was looking for, I so often found myself frustrated and short-changed by a director who knew far less than I did about

acting and/or the piece in question. Although I continued to act professionally for many more years, gradually I began to take things into my own hands. If it was artistic control I was after, I might as well start directing myself. I began with directing a radio play and quickly moved on to directing productions in the theatre. This culminated in my becoming Associate Director at Derby Playhouse for 8 years and Artistic Director at Derby LIVE for more than 10 years. In between times, I've also continued directing on a freelance basis.

3. Can you tell us a little about some of your own favourite work? And that of other work you have seen on stage?

This may sound incredibly dry and boring... but I like works of art to have coherence, integrity and, ultimately, unity. To misquote what Polonius says to Laertes, a work of art must be true to itself. All its elements must fit together and complement one another. Form and content must be inseparable and, in the final reckoning, as one. I can't stand theatre productions which are, basically, dressed-up dogs' dinners – "Wouldn't it be a good idea if...?", "Won't it be funny if...?" I also don't like works of art – often misnamed "conceptual art" – which lay their substance in front of you and have their message/meaning (frequently mundane) floating somewhere slightly to one side.

For me, one of the most important aspects of a director's job, therefore, is to excavate, articulate and help dramatise/realise the thematic substance of a play. The director must ensure that all members of the company – not least the actors and creative team members, but also, for example, the Marketing team – know clearly what this production is about, what it is aiming to say, the questions it is striving to explore, the story it is seeking to tell and the style in which it will tell it. Put simply, the director must ensure that everyone is on the same page.

For all these reasons, it perhaps will come as no surprise that my favourite theatre director is Nicholas Hytner. So much of what I've seen of his work exemplifies what I've tried to say above. As Keats put it: "Beauty is truth, truth beauty – that is all Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know". Working in a different genre, I would say that this hallmark of joined-up integrity is also key to the work of Matthew Bourne.

4. Have you ever worked with a fight director/choreographer? If so, was it a positive experience, why?

So many fight scenes I've seen in the theatre (and on TV) I've found to be quite disappointing, especially when compared with fight scenes witnessed on film. Frequently, of course, this has something to do with "realism" – it's not easy in the theatre to persuade an audience that this fight scene is "for real". The strings of the puppeteer are often all too visible. However, I also think that sufficient time and attention are not always afforded to the importance of fight scenes. The fight director will come into a couple of rehearsals (often without the director being present), do their thing, and then bummer off. This is hardly guaranteed to achieve the kind of artistic unity and integrity I was talking about above. Like everyone else involved in the production (see above), the director needs to have ensured that the fight director is fully conversant with what this production is all about. What type of production is it? What is its essential "style"? What is

the show aiming to achieve and how does this particular fight (or fights) specifically contribute to the achievement of this overall artistic aim? Who are the characters involved in the fight and how does this encounter, at this particular moment in time, contribute to specific characters' developing narrative? How, in other words, can this fight scene help tell different characters' different stories? The fight isn't a pause in the play, it's part and parcel of the dynamic continuum of the story-telling. Think of the fight sequences towards the end of Robin Hood, Prince of Thieves – both at the hanging and also the final fight between Kevin Costner, Alan Rickman, Morgan Freeman, et al. Though few words are spoken, stylistically they're a perfect fit, and narratively a perfectly fitting conclusion, to the story as a whole.

5. Do you have any martial arts history? Can you expound on that, please?

I used to take my grandchildren to Thai Boxing. That's the limit of my martial arts expertise.

6. Are you aware of the term hopology? If so, what do you think about it, usefulness?

Yes, I know the term. If the word is used to infer such things as: requisite knowledge, detailed understanding, apposite and comprehensive research, the application of appropriate theoretical and historical erudition, then, as in any area of the performing arts, its use and usefulness can only be good things.

7. Do you believe that the fictional/staged violence should attempt to be historically and factually (medically) accurate wherever possible?

This ties in completely with my answer to Question 3 above. If the production itself, for whatever reason, is striving for historical, "realistic" accuracy then, in the vast majority of cases, the fight scenes should aim to do the same. They are, after all, an integral part of a historically realistic production. This is yet another example of where an understanding of the production's style and genre comes to the fore – if the show is a thriller, then the staged violence must be thrilling; if it is a tale of derring-do, then the violence must buckle its swash; if a comical parody, then the fights must be comically parodying; if slapstick, then slapstick violence is called for. You get the picture. If you think my argument doesn't hold good, just imagine an Errol Flynn fight sequence in the middle of a Laurel and Hardy film. End of.

8. Do you believe that the general public can learn something from fictional violence?

Ultimately, this will usually come down to quality. If the production, and its component elements, are good, then it will persuade us to ask questions about the nature of violence, or love, or loyalty, or betrayal, or gender, or sexual attraction, or fear, or whatever the major thematic concerns of the production are. If the production isn't good, then I, for one, won't be encouraged to invest in it, to be moved emotionally and stimulated cognitively. I'll be bored.

9. Have you ever worked with a fight director/choreographer? If so, was it a positive experience, why?

I've worked with numerous fight directors and the positivity of the experience has always been in direct correlation with the abilities of the fight director and the quality of our relationship and mutual understanding. If the experience is perfunctory and lackadaisical, then guess what? The product will also be perfunctory and lacking in impact.

*One of my most positive experiences was working with a fight director on *The Adventures of Robin Hood*. (For some reason, Robin keeps cropping up in this conversation.) The production was a pantomime, but I wanted it also to be exciting, to be a genuine adventure, not knowing what was going to happen next. And I also wanted both Robin and Marian to be genuinely heroic (each in their own ways). I discussed all of this with the fight director. He created a fight sequence between Robin, Marian, the Sheriff of Nottingham and Guy of Gisborne which was witty, breathtaking, laugh-out-loud funny, congruent with – and contingent upon – all four characters' varying personalities, and narratively satisfying. All things which I wanted the production as a whole to achieve.*

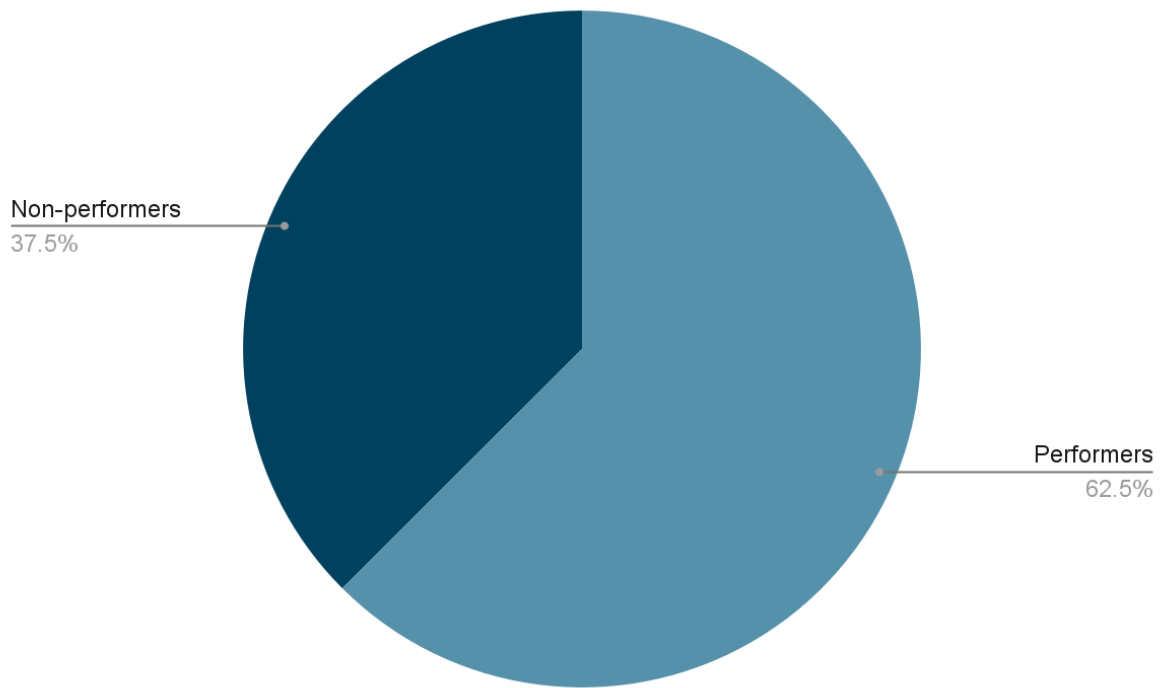
10. When working with fight choreographers/directors, do you select them depending on what the production needs?

Not really. Once again, it comes down to the quality of the fight director and our ability to work cohesively and constructively together. I even like working with a fight director (if they are good) in a genre which is relatively new to them. We all like a new challenge, to stretch our creative muscles and to stray out of our comfort zone.

Post-workshop surveys

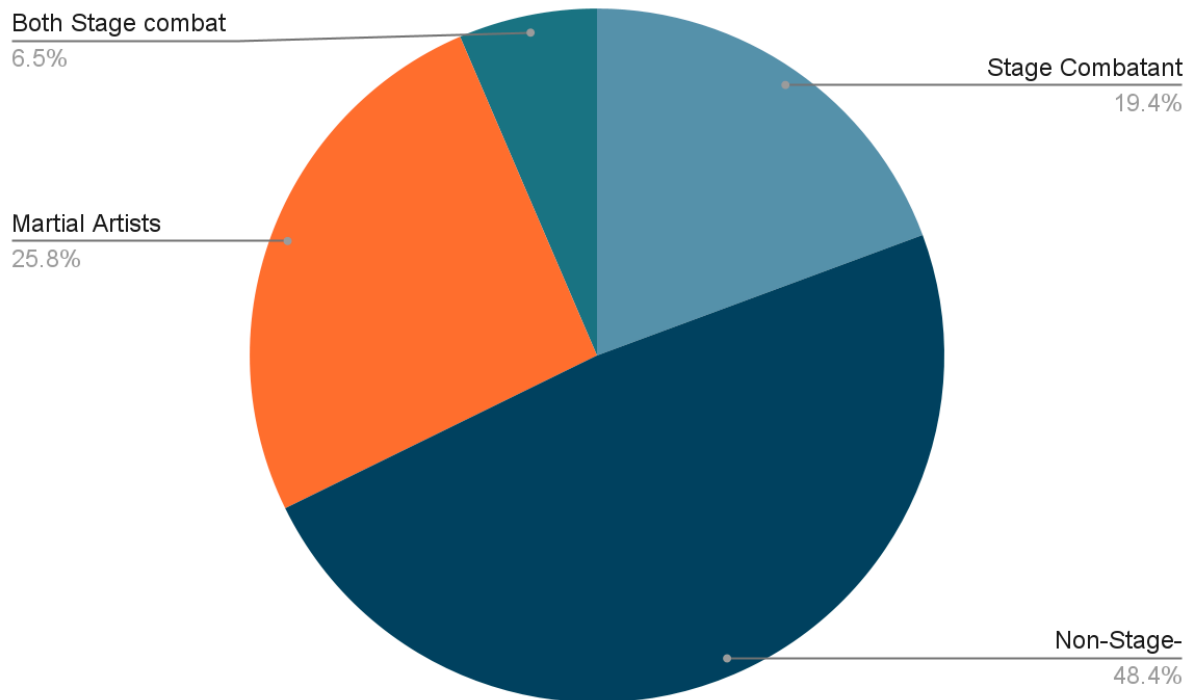
The following results come from a post-workshop survey carried out with all workshop participants whereby the central problem/question was explored via stage screen combat, real-life violence training in the guise of appropriate martial arts or self-defence, that was underpinned by hoplological detail and referenced with real-life examples. In these workshops, we first taught basic stage and screen combat methods, then presented the group with research on contemporary street and domestic violence. This was followed by Martial art and practical self-defence techniques - including police and legal restraint method training - that were regarded as being applicable to the most common physical threats and actions in the selected areas of violence. The participants were then asked to create a fight sequence that used a combination of martial techniques with safe and theatrical stage combat techniques, which were inspired by real-life violence research.

Performance Experience



Here, we can see that the performance experience across the group was heavier in favour of performers. However, there were significant numbers of participants who had sports and fitness interests, which contributed other transferable skills.

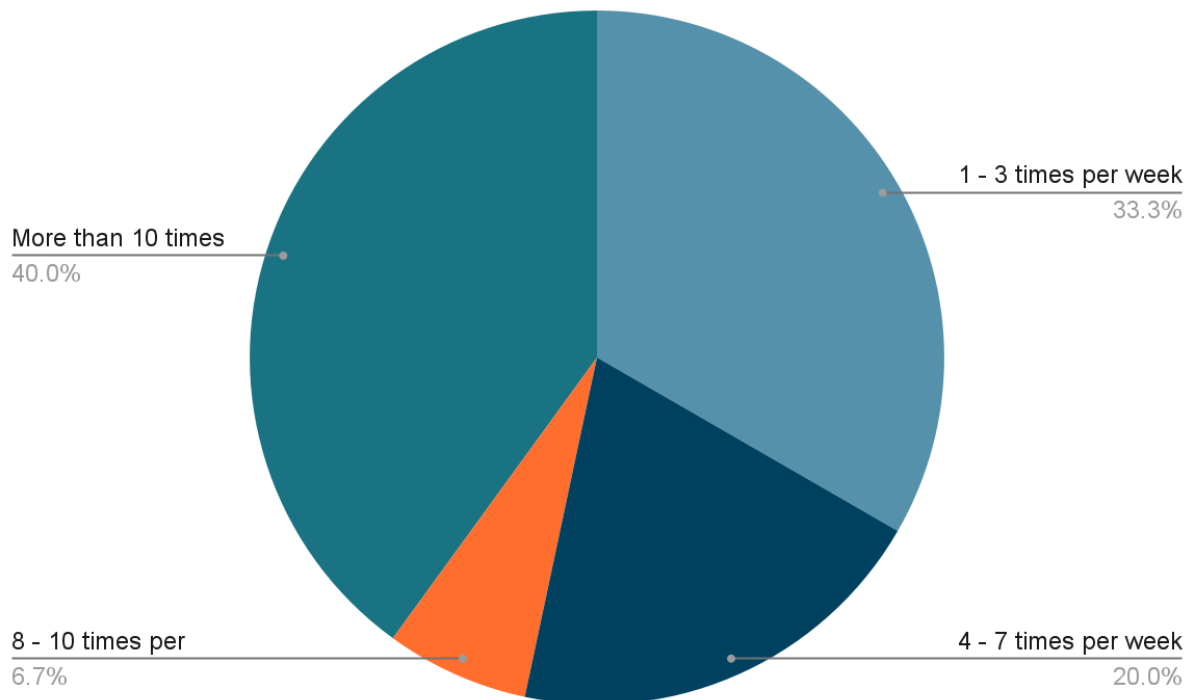
Stage Combat and/or Martial Arts Experience



Less than 20% of the participants held any stage or screen combat experience. Almost a quarter of the group possessed Martial Arts experience to varying degrees. Whilst that data set may be correlative in terms of this study, it reinforces the statistics of Martial Art participants in England alone. According to the data published by The Statista Research Department in December 2022; between November 2020 and November 2021, approximately 160,000 people participated in martial arts in England. (1). Although that number had shown a declining trend since its peak in 2017/18, over 260,000 people took part in Martial Arts.

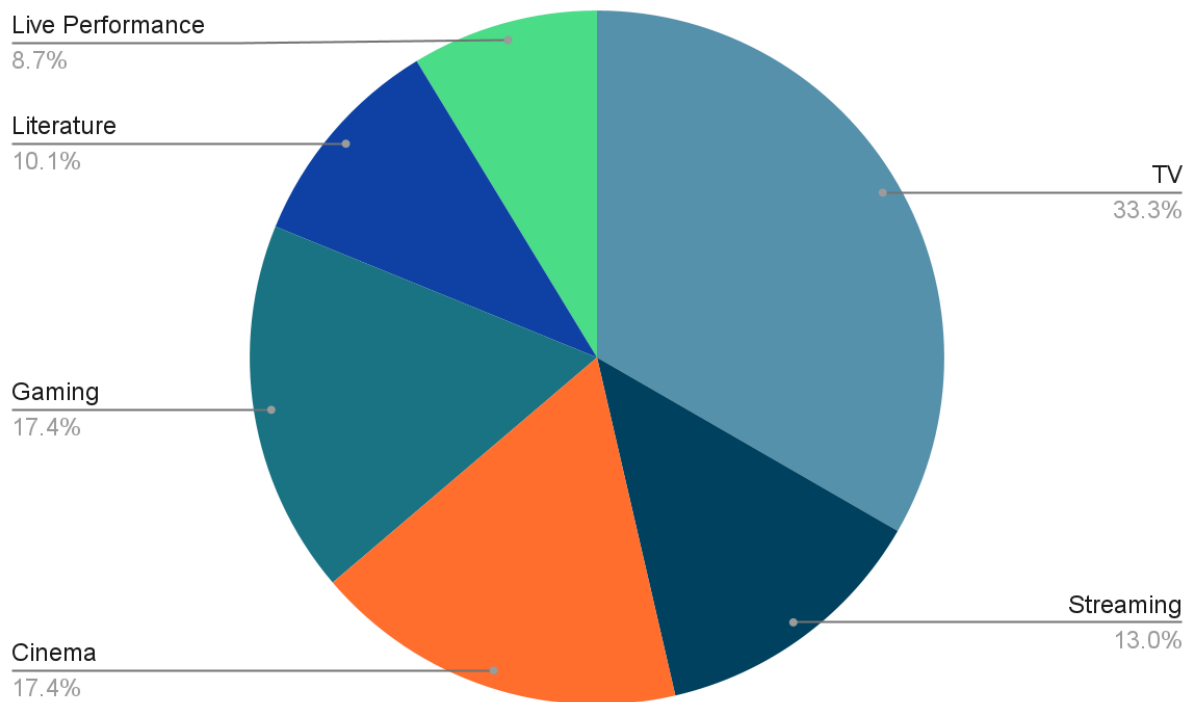
It is difficult to truly establish the number of actor-combatants, fight directors, and/or stage combat teachers in England or the UK. However, the British Stunt Register, the largest and only professional association of industry-recognised Stunt Performers and Co-ordinators in the world boasts over 430 members. (2) This number is a fraction of the Martial Arts engagement number. Following up on this, The British Association of Stage and Screen Combat has an approximate total of 492 members, teachers, and directors. (3) The British Academy of Dramatic Combat, only has 59 members, fellows, and teachers listed on its website. (4) There are other organisations as previously mentioned, however, there is no data at this time to reflect their input on the statistics. If we compare those national participant numbers we see a significant divide; Martial Arts engagement and participation; 160,000. Stage and Screen Combat engagement (estimated) 981.

Engagement with Fictional Violence



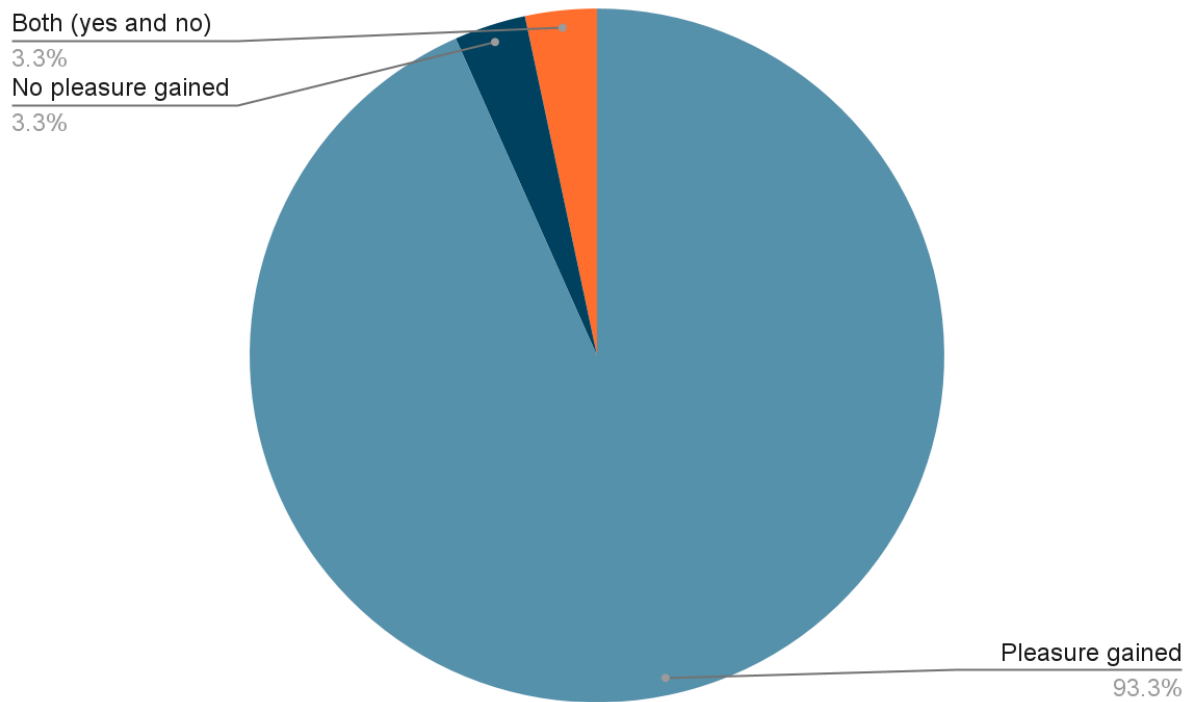
Firstly, it is worth noting that all participants engaged with fictional violence on a weekly basis. Secondly, 60% of the participants engaged with fictional violence at least four times per week, equivalent to more than every other day. Anecdotally, some participants in a group chat discussed how difficult it was to actually avoid fictional violence, whether seeking it or not, however, diametrically opposed to that were those that engaged with fictional violence more than ten times per week, were quick to tick that box, it was beyond question the frequency with which they engaged with fictional violence. It was simply part of their cultural engagement.

Medium whereby most fictional violence was accessed?



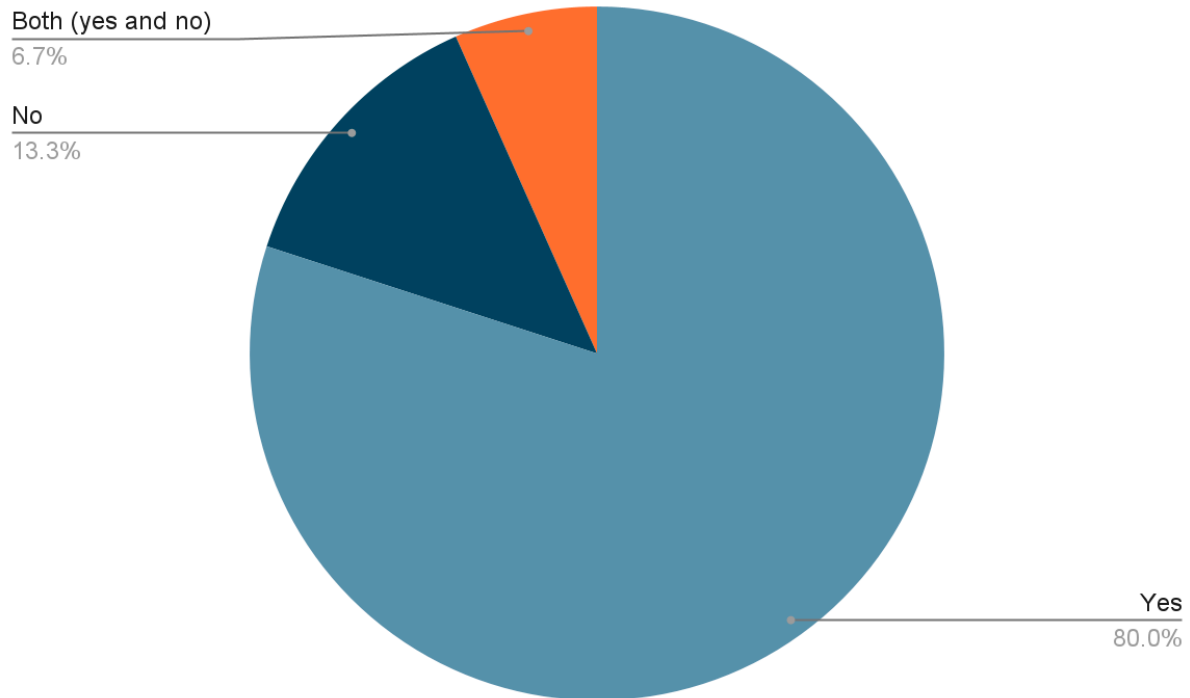
Overwhelmingly TV was the most engaging medium, however, when cross-referenced with other demographics, there may be further reasoning behind this. What is abundantly clear, is that screen-based media made up the majority of fictional violence engagement. Gaming and Cinema share the second most popular medium place. With literature and live performance. Again, there are probably correlative data markers that might provide further explanation if required, such as age, gender and socio-demographic elements. However, this study is not necessarily concerned with those, rather than how fictional violence is engaged. What becomes clear is how easy it is to access fictional violence, especially on screen from TV, PC and personal electronic devices. Over 80% of engagement came via screen-based activity and/or viewing.

Pleasure Derived from Engagement with Fictional Violence



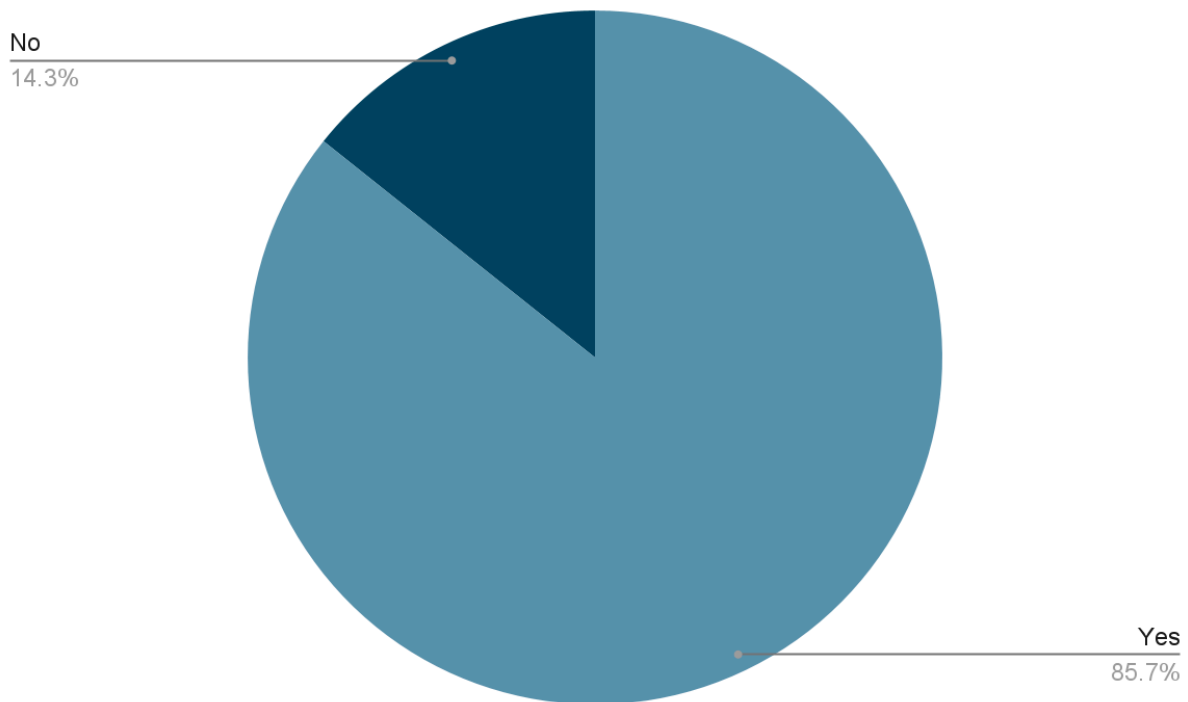
Over 90% of the participants derived pleasure from fictional violence. That is a significant amount. The pleasure derived from fictional violence is an indicator as to why the participants so frequently engaged with it in the first instance. Why do we get pleasure from fictional violence? SCHADENFREUDE.

Do you think you can learn about real-world violence from fictional violence?



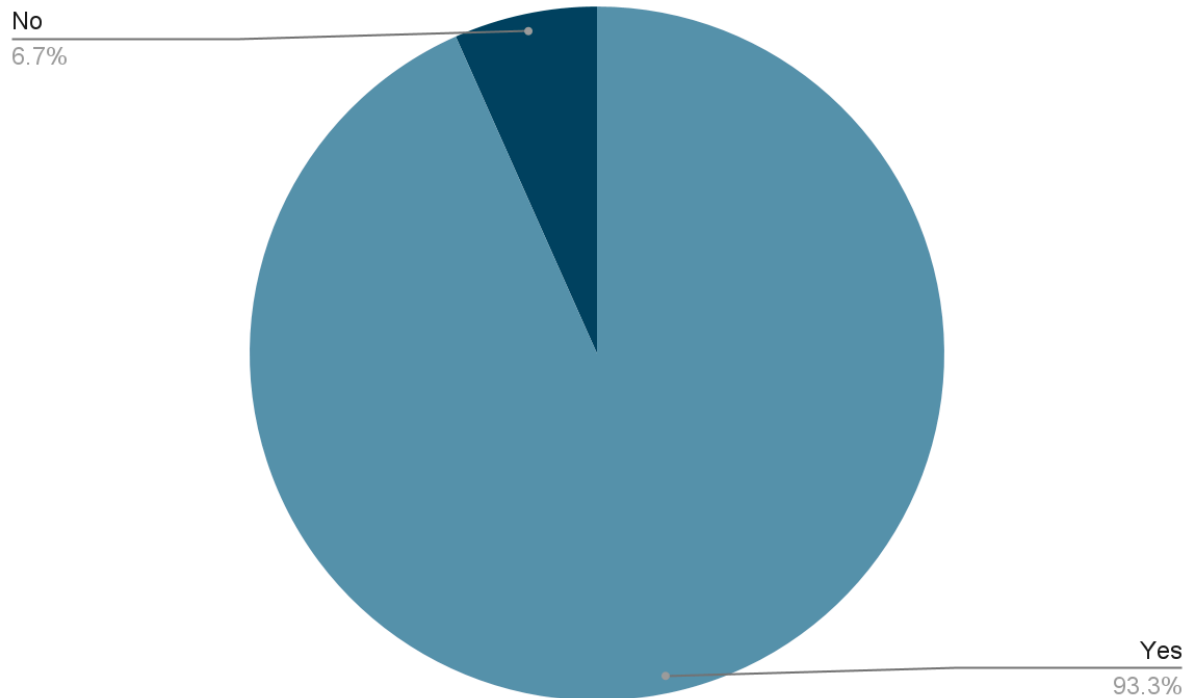
Three quarters of all participants said 'yes' to this question. When pressed for further explanation, most cited, strategy and what reality-based martial arts instructors would refer to as situational awareness, rather than specific movements.

Have you ever witnessed or been part of real-world violence?



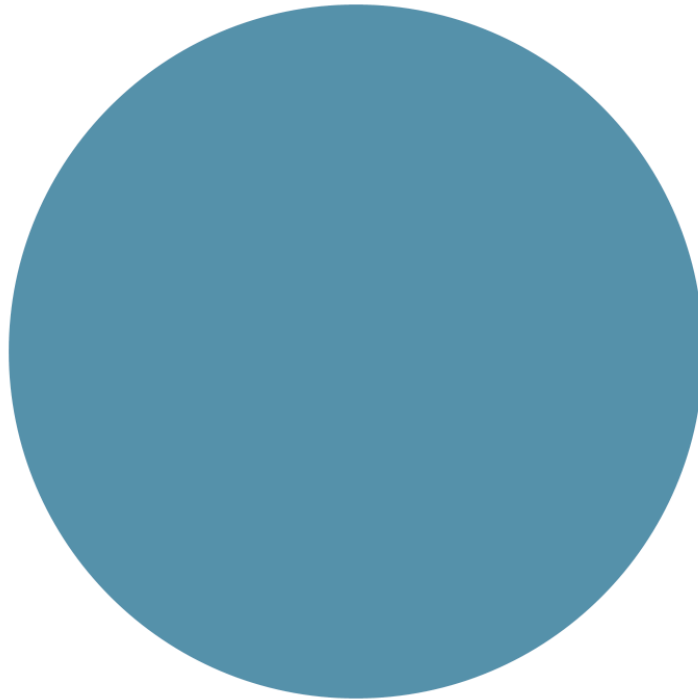
Unfortunately, the number of participants that had witnessed or been part of real-world violence was high. Most of the participants preferred not to enter further detailed conversations about those encounters. This is something to be aware of when utilising historical and modern violence data with future participants or learners. That is if we have intimacy coaching for romantic scenes do we need to include behaviour and counselling skills or awareness within stage and screen combat training.

Do you think that the Martial arts and Hoplology sections helped you create more realistic fight scenes?



Over 90% of the participants responded 'yes' to this question. That is an emphatic result. The fight scenes being underpinned by either historically factual context or modern-day research seems to have enabled the participants to develop a deeper connection with the fight work.

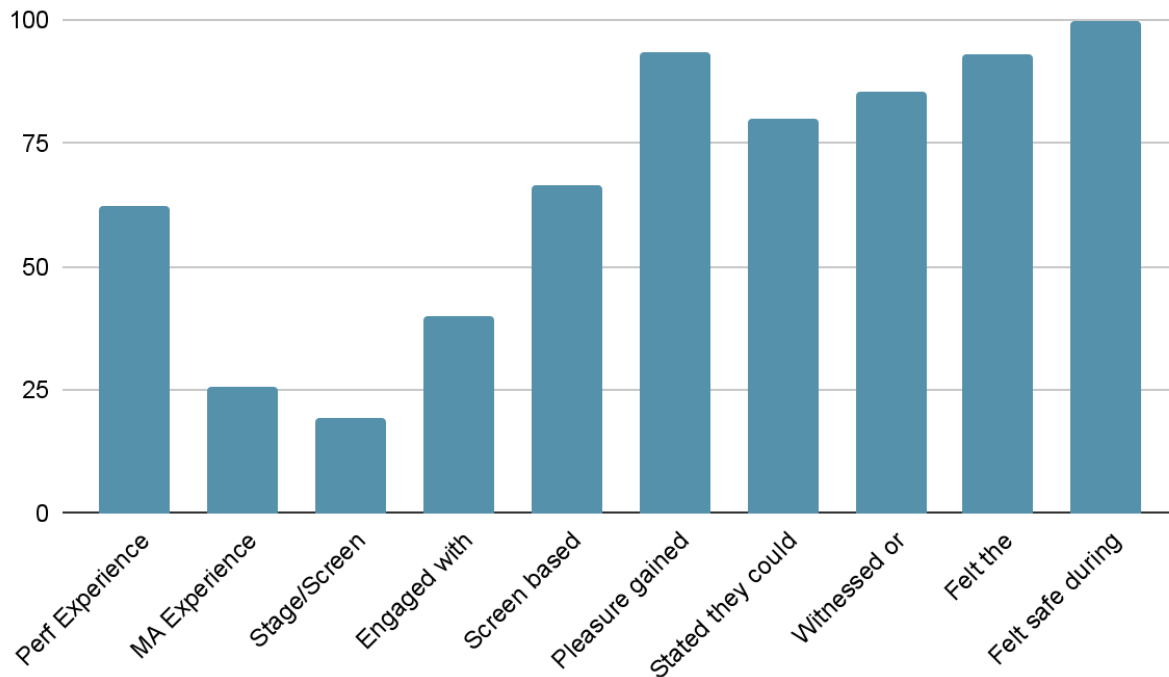
Did you feel safe at all times when engaging in the workshop and choreography?



Another emphatic result, with 100% of participants responding 'yes'. Whether working in Martial Arts Instruction or Stage and Screen Combat Instruction, it is imperative that the sessions are well planned, and carefully executed to ensure maximum safety. This remains the case when applying a deeper layer of real-world, historical violence and hoplological references. All of this enables the goals of verisimilitude, entertainment, and professionalism.

A summary in general terms of the results obtained:

An overview of the post-workshop survey results



The striking information gained from this data is that over 75% of all participants enjoyed fictional violence, and felt they could learn something about real violence from fictional violence engagement. Furthermore, over 75% of all participants stated they had witnessed or experienced real-world violence and yet over 90% of all participants felt the hoplological section of the workshop enabled them to create better and/or more realistic fight scenes. This data set suggests that real-world experience and knowledge of real-world violence can and does benefit fictional combat creation, choreography, and performance, in particular, those with performance experience responded this way. This perhaps comes as no surprise to those actors who have studied, Stanislavski, Lee Strasberg, Uta Hagen etc, therefore, there may also be a broader link to actor training as well as stage and screen combat training inherent in this approach.

It is strange that the academic study; Hopology, has not become more relevant, successful or productive in terms of academic research and acceptance. At its outset, it had a clear definition, this was then revisited and revised by Draeger and The IHL to modernise it and make it relevant to hobbyists, martial artists, defence departments; and ripe for further academic development. This is in comparison to the burgeoning and rapidly growing academic study of Martial Arts, whereby during its earlier days, obstacles were abundant due to the difficulty in defining what

martial arts actually meant. However, through the work of Paul Bowman, Professor of Cultural Studies at Cardiff University, and the Martial Arts Studies Research Network that discipline has grown in stature and significance.

One wonders if the mystic elements and the secrecy of some martial arts practice have created a drive for knowledge and understanding, whereas hopology does not have the broader appeal. You can study military history, usually centred on great wars, you can watch Vikings, Medieval Knights, and Greek Warriors on screen. In fact, the frequency you can engage in historical combat presented at the cinema or at home might influence your understanding, lack thereof, or desire to pursue further genuine knowledge of that form of combat.

Yet for the practitioners of this fictional combat, this study suggests that by underpinning the art of staging or filming fight sequences set in certain periods of time, specific nations containing specific martial heritage with; factual knowledge of the original art form and contextual understanding of the situation represented helps both create and portray the combat in a more realistic and rewarding way.

There are some fight directors who abhor historical inaccuracies within fight work, there are some who are happy with taking artistic licence. To be perfectly honest, does the viewing audience care? Perhaps, perhaps not. Nevertheless, this study was designed to see if Hopology could make a positive impact on fictional combat, surely, if the directors and performers think so, then their performances and creation of these sequences will benefit, emotionally, physically, and artistically.

So how then to impart and underpin this knowledge?

Chapter 5: The summary and discussion

As an aid to the reader, this final chapter of the dissertation restates the research problem and reviews the major methods used in this study. The main sections of this chapter summarise the results and discuss their implications.

The Problem Statement

The purpose of this action research study is to plan, develop and evaluate the impact that the study of hoplology can have when practically applied to stage and screen combat. The study will seek to answer a general question; Can the application of hoplological study advance stage combat training? That general question subsumes several related questions:

4. Are the current modes of stage and screen combat training fit for purpose?
5. Can we learn from other martial and combative arts to further develop stage and screen combat training?
6. Has the field of hoplology been successful in academic terms, if so why, if not why not?

Review of the Methodology

As explained in Chapter, the study reported here was a qualitative study, but also included quantitative perspectives to underpin the situational, multiple context case studies and action-research. This led to a formative evaluation process that featured me, in the role of participant-observer, as I was deeply involved in the processes of identifying and solving the problems that occurred during the research. Therefore this study relied chiefly on observations, interviews and post-action surveys.

The researcher - in this case, myself - observed the study groups, participants and industry specialists over a period of three years, divided into days of intensive action-research and observation, usually in the form of workshops exploring a specific area of the study. For example, Two days of intense workshops exploring a new way of teaching stage and screen combat to experienced combatants using medieval and renaissance combat manuals as a guide, or half-day workshops with novice stage and screen combatants exploring reality-based self-defence and stage combat.

These workshops and sessions were followed by post-action/participation surveys, group discussions and interviews with industry professionals and specialists in their field. This method of data collection allowed me to gain anecdotal and empirical evidence, using both open and closed questions.

Summary of the Results

Throughout the entire period of the study, the researcher was a constant participant and observer, with reflective practice also forming the direction of the remaining study and observations. There were two main strands to this, participation and observation of Stage and Screen combat workshops, and Martial Arts, Reality Based Self-Defence and Hoplological workshops. The participants were either experienced in one area or other, or complete novices. This allows for both qualitative and quantitative data to be captured. This is reflected in the expert interviews and participant post-action surveys. The post-action surveys seemed to

reinforce the stage and screen combat teachers, fight directors and martial art instructors' opinions that some element of hoplology, reality-based violence would have a positive effect on creating stage and screen combat sequences.

To clarify and underpin that notion:

- 90% of the action-research workshop participants of this study stated that the Martial Arts and Hoplology elements of the workshops enabled them to create more realistic fight scenes. From an observational point of view, I would also say that the participants seemed to enjoy the stage and screen combat session more, knowing the true or real-world implications of their choreography.
- Interestingly, 80% of those participants expressed the opinion that engaging with fictional violence in a passive way (watching violence on TV, Film, Stage, Gaming, etc) gave them more understanding of real-world violence. More on that later.
- It is worth noting that fictional violence played a big part in the participants' lives, with 60% of them engaging with fictional violence in one form or another a minimum of four times per week.
- *"Over the years the portrayal of violence on screen in particular has evolved, these days 'realism' is the order of the day" Gary Stringer 10th Dan*
- *"I get annoyed with the bad choreography, historical inaccuracy and scenes with protective armour that doesn't seem to protect the user the way it should." Raphael Aldis, Fight Director and Action-Coordinator*
- *"I think it's useful to know about the history of weapons and when I approach a show with fighting in it then I do the same amount of research on this as I do on other parts of the show. If I'm setting a show in a period then we try to be accurate." CEO and Artistic Director, Derby Theatre*
- *"If the production itself, for whatever reason, is striving for historical, "realistic" accuracy then, in the vast majority of cases, the fight scenes should aim to do the same. They are, after all, an integral part of a historically realistic production." Dr. Pete Meakin, Theatre Producer and Director (Freelance)*
- From an observation point of view, the fight scenes created following workshops exploring reality based self defence, martial arts and hoplology, were more intense, better choreographed and better performed, than those that had only undertaken Stage and Screen Combat workshops.

Discussion of the Results and Meaning of this Study

Researchers Insights

On the basis of this study alone, it would be straightforward to suggest that Hoplology could have a positive effect on stage and screen combat. The previous fight work by the fight directors, discussed in Chapter 2; The Literature Review, that have incorporated hoplology into their work has, firstly stood the test of time, in a field of professional practice, whereby the status quo is being threatened. Secondly, it stands as testament to historically accurate, real-world violence relevant fight choreography that entertains and acts as a key part of the narrative, within which it is situated. However, one has to be tread carefully, so many attempts have been made to bring credibility to the academic pursuit of Hoplology, without resounding success. That

being said, the advent of HEMA has had a remarkable impact on the worlds of combat sports and stage and screen combat that one cannot help think, stage and screen combat could become the perfect proving ground for the pursuit of hoplology.

In terms of this study, a blend of historical weapons and historical combat manuals have been used by practicing stage and screen combat proponents, alongside, reality-based self defence and martial arts being employed as part of stage and screen combat workshops for the novices. Therefore, whilst not exhaustive, it has provided a range of period combat treatises and manuals, and up-to-date statistics on real world violence. Therefore there is surely more to study and learn. What has been apparent to me, during the course of this study, is that the participants, whether they are experienced stage and screen combatants, martial artists, or new to the world of fictional combat, have vastly benefitted from deeper understanding that hoplological context brings to the scene they are creating or performing in.

This then should not come as a surprise, when there are many acting methodologies that employ deep research, lived experience, psycho-physical relationships and understanding to develop the role or character. Is hoplological underpinning not an extension of that?

Relationship of the Current Study to Prior Research

Previous studies of the efficacy of hoplology and its application to stage and screen combat are scant. However, when exploring literature from the field of Martial Arts Studies, it is clear that there is a crossover between applied combat and theatre and film. This study maintains that idea and explores it further.

Implications of the Study

Yes, there are movies with actors who were first and foremost martial artists. Yes, there are stage actors who undertake basic stage and screen combat training for certain roles. However, can we create martial actors, via new training methodologies that include hoplology, HEMA principles, martial arts and stage and screen combat? While a single case study cannot provide a sound basis for that argument, this study would suggest that reinvestigating the way stage and screen combat is taught and propagated, with an inclusion of hoplology might enable us to further embed martial history and practice into the training of the actor-combatant.

Explanation of Unanticipated Findings

To underline that idea, the fact that the novice stage and screen combatants excelled with the same amount of workshop time as the experienced stage and screen combatants, suggests that the Hoplological framework in those workshops made the difference. There was, perhaps, also a notion that the participants had digested enough fictional combat, via a strange osmosis, that they could recall and apply some of those observed experiences to their own fight work and choreography. After all, so many of them had stated how much fictional combat they engaged with per week. This is a leap of 'Matrix'-like proportions, and may even seem derivative, but then how many times do children play-fight based on what they have watched on television. I would expect much further psychological understanding and research would be required to truly explore that idea.

What does that all mean?

Let's recap, In short, the participants whom, engage with fictional violence on a weekly (in some cases, daily) basis, through this study, were able to access education and action-based

skills-building of real-world implications of violent encounters, and Historical combat treatises before combining those with a stage and screen combat workshop creating realistic and entertaining fight choreography that seemed to match the ideals preferred by the industry professionals who also took part in this study. A reminder of what those different industry professionals said or wished for;

“It is my considered opinion that one cannot be a serious practitioner without the pursuance of knowledge of how people act / react under combat conditions and the way any training methodologies or systems influence the outcome.”

*Gary Stringer 10th Dan - Stringer Jukado, Retired Police Officer,
Head of UK Self Defence Association*

‘Acting and Reacting’ - core components of a performer's arsenal, building blocks of a well-acted scene. A fight scene is no different, a series of back and forth, questions and answers, attack, retorte, touche. To be believable in the moment, whether delivering dialogue or a rapier thrust to your fellow actor. Director, Dr. Pete Meakin takes this idea further and explains the significance of creative unity, for the production.

“So many fight scenes I’ve seen in the theatre (and on TV) I’ve found to be quite disappointing, especially when compared with fight scenes witnessed on film. Frequently, of course, this has something to do with “realism” – it’s not easy in the theatre to persuade an audience that this fight scene is “for real”. The strings of the puppeteer are often all too visible. However, I also think that sufficient time and attention are not always afforded to the importance of fight scenes. The fight director will come into a couple of rehearsals (often without the director being present), do their thing, and then bugger off. This is hardly guaranteed to achieve the kind of artistic unity and integrity I was talking about above. Like everyone else involved in the production (see above), the director needs to have ensured that the fight director is fully conversant with what this production is all about. What type of production is it? What is its essential “style”? What is the show aiming to achieve and how does this particular fight (or fights) specifically contribute to the achievement of this overall artistic aim? Who are the characters involved in the fight and how does this encounter, at this particular moment in time, contribute to specific characters’ developing narrative? How, in other words, can this fight scene help tell different characters’ different stories? The fight isn’t a pause in the play, it’s part and parcel of the dynamic continuum of the story-telling. Think of the fight sequences towards the end of Robin Hood, Prince of Thieves – both at the hanging and also the final fight between Kevin Costner, Alan Rickman, Morgan Freeman, et al. Though few words are spoken, stylistically they’re a perfect fit, and narratively a perfectly fitting conclusion, to the story as a whole.”

Dr. Pete Meakin, Theatre Producer and Director (Freelance)

Therefore, the same rigour and vigour a performer applies to their voice work, line delivery, movement, character development, should be applied to any inclusion of stage and screen combat. Of course, there are caveats to the realism, but never to the artistic integrity of the

production. The same is to be said of the Director and other key creative team members, as reinforced here by Sarah Bringham.

“If you are going period with the whole show then yes aim for accuracy but if you’ve set your classic play in the swinging 60s there’s no point in fighting with a broadsword. I do think fights need to be directed truthfully – in the same way you direct the rest of the show so it’s important for it to make sense for an audience. Obviously there are also times when a more cartoon approach is appealing – for instance in panto”

Sarah Bringham, CEO and Artistic Director, Derby Theatre

In a nutshell, that first sentence from Sarah Bringham highlights the very basics of Hopology and its relevance to stage and screen combat. We all know that broadswords were not the weapon of choice in the swinging 60s. It is that straightforward. Hopological reference doesn't stop there though. It is not simply about the right weapons being used for the period in which the play or film is set. Hopology can give us a cultural reference point; ethnography, social structures, customs, strategies and philosophies can be uncovered and in turn, fed back to the production, the cast, the audience.

Therefore, the significance of hopology and the integration of martial training into the practices of actors, theatre-makers, and filmmakers can yield significant benefits. These disciplines offer valuable insights into the physicality, psychology, and cultural context of combat, enhancing the authenticity and depth of violence portrayed in film and theatre. Let us break that down further:

Physical Authenticity

Martial training provides actors with a practical understanding of body mechanics, movement, and spatial awareness, which are crucial for performing convincing fight scenes. It also promotes physical fitness and agility, enabling actors to execute complex choreography safely and effectively. Consider Viggo Mortensen's extensive sword fighting training for "The Lord of the Rings" trilogy helped him embody the character of Aragorn with authenticity and precision. Keanu Reeves' training in Judo and Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu for the "John Wick" series greatly enhanced his physicality and believability in the action sequences.

Hopology, on the other hand, offers an academic perspective on human combative behavior and performance. This knowledge can inform the creation of realistic fight sequences, contributing to the overall believability of the production.

Psychological Depth

Understanding the psychological aspects of combat can add depth to an actor's performance. Both hopology and martial arts studies delve into the mental and emotional dimensions of conflict, providing actors with tools to portray characters engaged in violence more convincingly.

Cultural Context

Both hopology and martial arts studies provide valuable insights into the cultural and historical contexts of various forms of combat. This knowledge can enrich the narrative and visual elements of a production, offering audiences a more immersive and authentic experience.

Safety

Safety is paramount in any performance involving staged violence. Martial training equips actors with the skills to perform fight scenes safely, minimizing the risk of injury. Similarly, the principles of hopology can guide choreographers and directors in creating safe yet effective combat scenes.

Ethical Considerations

Finally, both hopology and martial arts studies encourage ethical considerations around the portrayal of violence. They promote an understanding of the potential impact of depicted violence on audiences, fostering a more responsible approach to staging combat scenes. In conclusion, the incorporation of hopology and martial training into the practices of actors, theatre-makers, and filmmakers can significantly enhance the quality, safety, and ethical integrity of their work. By fostering a deeper understanding of combat in its various forms, these disciplines contribute to more authentic, engaging, and responsible portrayals of violence in film and theatre.

As we have discovered the symbiosis between simulated violence in fiction and the reality of human conflict is undeniable. Through interdisciplinary collaboration and mutual learning, professionals in the fields mentioned above can produce representations of violence that are not only accurate and compelling but also conscious of their broader societal implications. It is through this careful negotiation between artistry and authenticity that the true depth of both real and fictional violence can be explored and understood.

At the intersection of this symbiotic relationship, and the hopological application to stage and screen combat we must surely find new pedagogies. One such training school in the UK springs to mind. Stagefight School of Performance Combat. Established in 2004. Their methods are underlined by Raphael Aldis, in an interview as part of this study;

“After receiving quite a serious head injury during my early stage combat training, I felt a more ‘martial arts’ approach rather than ‘set fight routine’ approach to teaching dramatic combat would be beneficial to actors and could help to improve the standards of safety throughout the entertainment industry. STAGEFIGHT was established in 2004 with the intention of offering actors based in the Midlands and north of the United Kingdom an opportunity to train in stage combat as an alternative to London-based courses. Rather than teach set fight routines for Each combat discipline, we began to teach stage combat as though it was a martial art. The syllabus was drawn from industry recognised stage combat techniques, weapon-specific historical manuscripts and various acting principles to create a system that was driven by the need to understand how and why particular actions were delivered rather than the need to get

through a fight routine 'parrot-fashion'. “

Raphael Aldis, Fight Director and Action Coordinator

I have had the pleasure of witnessing and training under the auspices of Raph and Stagefight. Their interdisciplinary approach to learning stage and screen combat provides a strong foundation of knowledge that when blended with the combat techniques leads to a much deeper understanding of the combat in question. As much time is spent on history (in its broader sense, but also in terms of fight choreography), acting, and weapons, as the fighting itself. My journey on this study has further reinforced the notion that Hopology can have a positive impact on stage and screen combat, and perhaps, leads to the need for a deeper study to be carried out, whereupon a fully codified training methodology and system could be developed for actors, directors, film and theatre-makers. What might that look like?

Recommendations for Further Research

Ultimately, this study has provided a bedrock for further investigation into the practical application of Hopology within stage and screen combat, perhaps leading to the creation of a new system of teaching and choreographing the fictional fight work that we, as TV, film, streaming, live performers, audiences and gamers engage with on a weekly basis.

This system would need to take into account all of the implications uncovered in this study, when creating violence for public entertainment and consumption, including; ethics, health and safety, knowledge and understanding, cultural values and history.

A codified, graded system similar to judo for stage and screen combat, with real-world violence examples citing up-to-date data and research such as Waugh's study, Hopology and historical context lessons, weapons and their development (including their own contemporary tools). Rather similar to the burgeoning field of intimacy coaching, should fight teachers/directors have behaviour and basic counselling skills at their disposal too?

At its heart the system should echo that of its originator, Sir Richard Francis Burton, who described Hopology as: An Academic Study of A Peoples Fighting Methods. That is culture by culture, Who, When, Where, How and Why did those cultures create their own fighting arts. If this original description was the foundation for a new stage and screen combat methodology and pedagogy, then fight work would become more realistic, and culturally significant in terms of cultural education. What of entertainment? Verisimilitude can be a bedrock that allows strata of fantasy to develop. The more knowledge, understanding and skills a fight teacher or director might have in terms of cultural and historic fighting styles, the bigger the melting pot from which new amalgams can be forged.

Therefore, a combination of the old and the new applies here, in terms of hopology, and the pedagogies of stage and screen combat.

Original Definition of Hopology: An Academic Study of a People's Fighting Methods

Modern Description of Hopology:

- Technical Hopology - The physical technology of weapons, armour, and other physical tools of combat.
- Behavioural Hopology - the psychological and physiological aspects that affect combat, and its after effects.
- Functional Hopology - The structure, development, and organisation of combative systems and their relationship to the application of fighting and weapons

This, potentially leads to:

Theatrical Hopology: A practical system of People's Fighting Methods for the purposes of live and recorded performance:

- Technical Hopology - The physical technology of weapons, armour, and other physical tools of combat with specific reference to the most commonly required era's depicted on stage and screen. Ranging from Ancient Greece, to modern day via Rome, the Medieval ages, Elizabethan Period and 20th century.
- Behavioural Hopology - the psychological and physiological aspects that affect combat, and its after effects This would include cultural ethics, anthropological perspective, historical context, hard data of war, casualties, individual and societal collective psychological responses in terms of terrorism, media and seemingly random acts of violence.
- Functional Hopology - The structure, development, and organisation of combative systems and their relationship to the application of fighting and weapons, character and genre.

Ultimately the theatrical hopology is aiming for historically accurate, culturally appropriate and entertaining combat for consumption by mass scale audiences. The system should follow a logical progression and be fit for the industry it is intended. That is, we would want to see Fairbairns fighting system employed by British SOE in a WWII film. This covers the Who (characters and cultures), What (WWII), When (Early 20th Century), where (Europe), How (style, roots, development, weapons available), Why (world peace)

The organisation and structure of this new system would be the focus of further research and study. Whether as a belted and graded system, with common principles of striking, grappling,

arms employed at more complex stages, or via time-period and linear progression based system, or perhaps an combat-method origin defined by each cultural society.

Final Thoughts

Is there need for this review of the approaches to training performers, choreographers, and directors in the art of fictional combat and simulated violence, to ensure that all of the demands of the arts and entertainment industry are met alongside the responsibility that carries in terms of information, misinformation and health and safety of the general public?

Whilst, it can be contended that violence has always had a place in the theatre and onscreen there is a growing argument against the gratuitous nature of some works. However, violence matters, we do need to see it or experience it in art and entertainment. It allows us to contemplate raw emotions that result through violence; fear, pain, power, death without the deeper emotional, psychological or physical traumas.

This study suggests that a higher percentage of people engage with fictional combat on a weekly basis than those who do not.

This study also suggests that Hopology when applied to stage and screen combat, whether with novices, or experienced actor-combatants, enriches the performer's understanding and thus the performance itself. Not only that, but the speed with which the performers were able to apply the hopological underpinning to their own fights, suggests that a foundation for hopological understanding could actually save time on productions when staging action and imparting choreography to the cast.

One such example from this study, was the approach taken in several workshops to present and explore the practical application of self-defence and martial arts in a scene from a play, as the first workshop. This was then followed up by a stage and screen combat group choreography workshop exploring the same scene. The level of anatomical, psychological and ethical understanding learned in the first workshop, greatly impacted the second workshop and thus the choreography, with the actors describing their characters emotional and physical actions and reactions at a much deeper level. The result was more intense performances.

Perhaps then the inclusion and application of hopology within stage and screen combat pedagogies and direction, might result in a new hopology all together. One with refreshed enthusiasm and vigour. A theatrical hopology.

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