

The Psychology Club
LaGuardia Community College
City University of New York

psychology



The eye sees only

*what
the mind is
prepared to
comprehend.*



Kim Rybacki

Girls and the Martial Arts

Analyzing Potentials for Strength, Power, & Agency

The ways that we understand and define ourselves as "male" or "female" are by no means given, but instead are dependent upon our participation in various social practices. The martial arts are a set of practices that provide such a venue for self-definition and transformation. While training in a physical and mental activity, such as martial arts, can allow female practitioners the opportunity to explore ways of being, that are often denied them in our society (especially in relation to strength, power and physical agency),

this does not happen necessarily or automatically. How do girls actively perform who they are within the framework of training in the martial arts? What does it mean for them to become strong, powerful, or aggressive? How do stereotypes about girls (and boys) come into play in their training? In their relationships with instructors, other students, boys? Using life stories (writing, reading, analyzing and sharing) as a tool to explore, direct, and transform the participation of young female martial artists, Kim Rybacki attempts to use her research as a means of reflecting, together with

her participants, on the ways in which physical and ideological aspects of teaching and learning Tae Kwon Do shape their identity, especially as it relates to "being a girl".

Wednesday
April 30th, 2008
@ 2:15 pm
Room: TBA