

UC Riverside

UC Riverside Electronic Theses and Dissertations

Title

A Critical Dance Studies Examination of the Teaching Methodologies, Exercises, and Principles of Pilates

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/7sj2k7f7>

Author

Holmes, Sarah

Publication Date

2013

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
RIVERSIDE

A Critical Dance Studies Examination of the Teaching Methodologies, Exercises, and
Principles of Pilates

A Dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Dance History and Theory

by

Sarah Woolverton Holmes

June 2013

Dissertation Committee:

Dr. Jacqueline Shea Murphy, Chairperson

Dr. Anthea Kraut

Dr. Tamara Ho

Copyright by
Sarah Woolverton Holmes
2013

The Dissertation of Sarah Woolverton Holmes is approved:

Committee Chairperson

University of California, Riverside

DEDICATION

To Riley Holmes and Carole Reed.

Thank you.

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

A Critical Dance Studies Examination of the Teaching Methodologies, Exercises, and Principles of Pilates

by

Sarah Woolverton Holmes

Doctor of Philosophy, Graduate Program in Dance History and Theory
University of California, Riverside, June 2013
Dr. Jacqueline Shea Murphy, Chairperson

This project examines the teaching methodologies, exercises, and Principles of the exercise practice commonly known as Pilates from a Critical Dance Studies perspective.

Muscle memory, or embodied knowledge, is significant to dance scholarship in that embodied knowledge houses important unwritten cultural, social, and political histories.

This project examines the racial, gendered, and class-based issues embedded in the exercises and Principles of Pilates, revealing the ways that the embodied discourses Pilates perpetuates are “white” in nature, and work to conceal and absent other cultural histories.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Figures	vii
Chapter I: A Critical Dance Studies Approach to Analyzing Pilates.....	1
Chapter II: The Pilates Exercises: The “Quiet” Hips of Pilates and the Racial Instability of the Pelvis.....	35
Chapter III: Classing the “Classical” Pilates Principles: Demonstrations of Discipline and Bodily Comportment	89
Chapter IV: <i>Imagining</i> and Imaging Pilates: White Gender Norms, Beauty and the “Ideal” Body.....	146
Chapter V: The Presence of Absences: Unconscious Competency of Cultural Appropriations.....	196
Afterwards: So What? Where Do We Go From Here?	225
Bibliography	232
Appendix A: Evolved Principles.....	248
Appendix B: The Universal Reformer	250
Appendix C: Sources of Figures	251

LIST OF FIGURES

Number	Page
Figure 1.1: Author and Student Learning the “Chest Expansion” Exercise.....	30
Figure 1.2: Author Performing “Plank” on the Reformer, Part of the “Long Stretch” Exercise	30
Figure 2.1: Polestar Pilates, “One Leg Stretch” Exercise.....	39
Figure 2.2: Polestar Pilates, “Leg Circles” Exercise	43
Figure 2.3: Polestar Pilates, “Quadruped Series” Exercise	47
Figure 2.4: Ballerina in Arabesque	67
Figure 2.5: The Transversus Abdominus.....	72
Figure 2.6: The Core Muscles	72
Figure 2.7: The Action of the Transversus	73
Figure 2.8: Author Using Tactile Cues to Stabilize a Student’s Pelvis	88
Figure 3.1: Julianna Demonstrating Concentration in the Advanced “Bicycle” Exercise.....	97
Figure 3.2: Joseph Pilates Demonstrating Centering in the “Hundred” Exercise.....	98
Figure 3.3: Dana Demonstrating Control in the “Open Leg Rocker” Exercise.....	101
Figure 3.4: Peak Pilates Model Demonstrating the Inhalation in the “Chest Expansion” Exercise.....	103
Figure 3.5: Joseph Pilates Demonstrating Precision in the “One Leg Stretch” Exercise.....	105

Figure 3.6: Illustration of Women Demonstrating Flowing Movement In the “Rollover” Exercise.....	107
Figure 3.7: Author Teaching Flow, Precision, and Centering.....	145
Figure 4.1: Julianna Demonstrating the “Leg Pull Up” Exercise	152
Figure 4.2: Front Cover of Pilates “How-To” Book.....	152
Figure 4.3: Peak Pilates Model Demonstrating the “Pilates Stance”	153
Figure 4.4: Illustration of a Woman Demonstrating Proper Pilates Abdominal Support.....	154
Figure 4.5: Another Pilates Body?	154
Figure 4.6: More Defined Abdominals	155
Figure 4.7: Photograph of Woman Demonstrating the “Teaser” Exercise With “Magic Circle” Prop	156

CHAPTER ONE

A Critical Dance Studies Approach to Analyzing Pilates

Like many dancers before me, I came to know the benefits of an exercise system commonly known as “Pilates” because of an injury I sustained while dancing.¹ Realizing I needed help outside of what “traditional” physical therapy could offer I sought Pilates to help my recovery. That was over twelve years ago, and since then, I have been certified by three different Pilates organizations, and continue to practice and teach Pilates on a regular basis.² Early on in my Pilates career, I was very interested in the rehabilitative benefits of Pilates; I “shadowed” physical therapists, enrolled in anatomy and physiology courses, studied dance kinesiology, and became determined to understand the moving body from a kinesiological and biomechanical perspective. My passion for Pilates focused more on the “science” of the moving body and how Pilates could assist the body in healing.

My story is not unusual. “The body” was an amazing *machine* to me, and one that I wanted to understand as such. But my perspective of the body, although beneficial in many ways, was singularly focused. As a first year graduate student in Critical Dance Studies at the University of California, Riverside, my understanding of the body began to shift. I came to see how the body’s movement can be understood not only scientifically, but culturally, historically, racially, sexually, and emotionally. Almost immediately into

¹ For the purposes of this essay “Pilates” will be written as Pilates, and denotes the exercise practice. Its creator, Joseph Pilates will be referred to as Joseph Pilates. Additionally, “Pilates” can be pronounced: “Pil-AH-teez” or “Pil-AH-tus.”

² Polestar Pilates in 2004, Peak Pilates in 2009, and the Pilates Method Alliance in 2011.

my coursework, questions about Pilates began to tug at my hagiographic and scientific perspectives. What, if any, are the *embodied* cultural values of Pilates? Are there “kinesthetic traces,” to borrow the term from Priya Srinivasan, of bodies which have otherwise been silenced over the course of its history? What kind of bodies are/were “produced” as a result of Pilates, and what does this tell us about culture? To what extent does Pilates discipline the body? How does Pilates effect the body’s participation in culture? Is the image of a “healthy” body accessible only to those who can afford it? Does Pilates contribute to a “politics of appearance” (that privileges whiteness and healthiness) which, ultimately, subjugates the disabled and/or non-white body? How can I understand the historical kinesthetic legacies of the “Pilates body” from cultural, gendered, class and racial perspectives? This research project grew from these initial questions. While I realize the ideas presented in this project may be controversial to some, I hope that my readers will approach these theories with an understanding that examining Pilates in a critical way will only expand and deepen our understanding of it. The tensions that surface throughout this project exist along side, or in conjunction with, what we already know and understand about Pilates. Any mistakes are wholly my own.

This Introductory chapter develops in three main areas: part 1 outlines the scope of this project, methods, potential issues with this work, and discusses why a dance studies approach is used; part 2 examines various dance studies arguments which theorize the body and its potential to make meaning; part 3 considers traditional understandings of Pilates, its history, and the presumptions of Pilates.

Part 1: Discussion of the Project

Other scholars have examined Pilates anthropologically, psychologically, biomechanically, therapeutically, scientifically, its relationship to somatic practices, and most recently, spiritually.³ Yet the available histories about Joseph Pilates' life, or articles on Pilates practice, or research presented at Pilates conferences, rarely, if ever, discuss issues of race, class, and gender from a critical dance studies perspective. Many research presentations, like "The Efficacy of the Pilates Method in the Treatment of Knee Osteoarthritis" by Claudiane Brum Viera or "Pilates Technique in Patients with Osteomuscular Disease Related to Work" by Helena Mathias, Selma Franca, and Adriano Bittar, do not examine issues of culture, race, class, or gender. Likewise, in workshops like "Principles of Intelligent Movement"TM by Angela Crowley, or "The Effective Use of Language" by Alastair Greetham neglect the cultural implications and complexities surrounding their claims.⁴ More contemporary scholarship like Isabelle Ginot's "From Shusterman's Somaesthetics to a Radical Epistemology of Somatics" (2010) or Gary Caldrone's *The Pilates Path to Health: Body, Mind, and Spirit* (2011) while insightful in many ways, still neglect issues of class and race as they pertain to Pilates. This oversight is odd to me, and I wonder why no one has considered these perspectives in the research of Pilates.

Generally speaking, much of the scholarship surrounding Pilates examines the practice for the pleasure and power it gives to its participants: however to my knowledge,

³ I am thinking of Gary Caldrone's publication, *The Pilates Path to Health: Body, Mind, and Spirit* (2012).

⁴ I attended these workshops and presentations at the June 2004 Polestar Pilates Conference in Miami, Florida.

it has not been evaluated from a *Critical Dance Studies* perspective for the values, norms, and beliefs which it may house. This project is important since, as Leena Rouhianinen's "The Pilates Method as Somatic Practice" (2006) confirms, "there is no general theory discussing the values, norms, and beliefs that are integral to somatics or the somatic practices" (123). While I am not suggesting Pilates is a somatic practice, engaging this project from a Critical Dance Studies perspective allows me to consider the multiple ways in which "the body" has participated in the production and proliferation of a specific culture and its values. Critical Dance Studies offer methods of understanding the moving body commonly overlooked by other disciplines. It values the body and its muscle memory, or kinesthetic history, as one that can educate us about previously overlooked pasts. Broadly stated, a Critical Dance Studies lens is one that considers the body's participation in its environment through multiple perspectives, including but not exclusively class, race, gender, or politics. These critical perspectives guide my understanding of how cultural legacies are transmitted, perpetuated, revealed and concealed through the muscle memory, teaching methodology, and Principles, of the Pilates practice.

This project strives to answer the following question: "What does focusing on the embodied practice, verbalizations, written, and pedagogical work of Pilates tell us about what types of bodies, behaviors, and attitudes it values?" While broad in its scope, this project explores certain tensions and obscurities found through a deeper examination of the embodied, written, and verbal components of the work. I would like to examine Pilates not only in terms of what cultural values it is perpetuating or revealing, but also

for what cultural values it is concealing. I believe that the body as shaped and influenced by Pilates the exercises and its movement principles will tell us something that has been previously unacknowledged, or unaccounted for in its written history. I will argue that the bodily exercise of Pilates through the way it conceals, re-absorbs, and absents, is normalizing, reinforcing, and embodying issues surrounding race, class, and gender. The muscle memories, which are culturally specific, that Pilates trains to the point of “unconscious competency” in a body, I argue, replaces other embodied memories.

Before moving further, I believe it is important to state what this project does not examine. This project is not an ethnography about a Pilates Studio, nor a rehabilitative study on how we can use Pilates in physical therapy, a study about how to open a Pilates studio, a commentary about how Pilates should or should not be taught, or the history of the “New Woman,” a search for the “truth” in Pilates history, a history of the United States in the Progressive Era, how Pilates makes people feel, or if Pilates can be classified as a somatic practice, or a biography about Joseph Pilates’ life in Germany, the German body, or a recounting of the history of physical culture in the United States. It does not concentrate on archival research in the hopes of uncovering previously unfound historical information on Joseph Pilates’ life. This extensive and important research has already been undertaken and awaiting publication.⁵ Additionally, this project will not celebrate Pilates as a means of empowerment. All of these topics are common and important in Pilates discourse, but more exploration of these ideas isn’t, what I believe, is

⁵ Stacy Redfield-Dreisbach is currently publishing a book, to my knowledge, that examines the history of Joseph Pilates’ life and the development of physical culture.

needed. Rather, I am interested in disrupting some of these ideas, and moves forward with a critical analysis from this point of departure.

This project unfolds in five chapters. Chapter 2 examines the exercises of Pilates, and their relationship to racial histories of the hips, pelvis, and buttock (“butt”). The pelvis can be examined through many different of theoretical and practical lens, and it can be understood very differently from culture to culture, and person to person. There is not one ‘correct way’ to view or understand the cultural significance of the pelvis, its movement, lack of movement, or its meaning-making potential. Yet in dance studies scholarship, the movement of the pelvis and its implicated meaning is both exciting and problematic. To borrow from Susan Foster, my approach to pelvic movement in Chapter Two is more of a “meat-and-bones” view of the body – or one that is “based on analysis of discourses or practices that *instruct* it” (1997, 236). This chapter analyzes the Pilates exercises for what *isn’t* normally racially articulated or expressed. Broadly speaking, I seek to answer the following question: are the teaching practices of the hips, spine, and core commonly found in Pilates educational manuals as well as in their verbalization, reinforcing behaviors of racial “whiteness” or Europeanist aesthetics?

Chapter 3 broadens the common understanding of Pilates by looking more closely at the Pilates Principles through a dance studies and historical studies lens. The body’s performance of cultural meaning is often overlooked in historical studies, and dance studies can deepen our understanding of this history. I suggest that Pilates perpetuates a certain kind of physical identity within social and economic arenas. Like others before me, I suggest the appearance of class in the body is a conscious demonstration of the

health and control it takes to maintain the comportment which is associated or affiliated with that class. Depending on the culture, the demonstrations of upper-class identity will vary from community to community. This chapter looks at the embodiments of “upper-class” behaviors, or the social activities and values traditionally associated with white environments. This chapter seeks to define and interpret the embodied expressions of class in the Pilates Principles that I believe our current understanding of the Principles neglects or overlooks.

Chapter 4 situates Pilates in feminist, historical studies, and disability studies contexts in order to gain a deeper understanding of the gender norms, beauty, and able-bodiedness that are revealed and concealed through the imaging and goals of Pilates as they are marketed today. Educational and ‘how-to’ manuals illustrate and normalize the types of female bodies affiliated with the Pilates practice. These images and goals perpetuated through many Pilates manuals further discourses surrounding bodily perfection. Many of the images and goals reinforce mainstream ideals of white female behavior and beauty and simultaneously promote a “healthy body” as an “ideal body” that is actually unachievable and unrealistic. This chapter questions if we have neglected the impact of how the images of Pilates are affecting the audiences they serve.

Chapter 5 concludes this project by examining the Pilates Method Alliance (PMA) “Learning Matrix” and the goal of “unconscious competency” in the Pilates pedagogy. This chapter utilizes dance scholarship to create a bridge between a scientific perspective of bodily learning and the Pilates pedagogy and practice. It seeks to integrate the arguments presented in the previous three chapters in order to illustrate what

kinds of cultural values and discourses that Pilates trains into the muscle memory of the body. It also illustrates how Pilates conceals and absents other cultural histories that, in fact, are a part of Pilates kinesthetic legacy. I maintain that the PMA's kinesthetic goal of "unconscious" (therefore unreflective) performance of the Pilates exercises -- are actually promoting an exclusive body type that emphasizes and normalizes specific bodily behaviors and mannerisms.

Methods

This project integrates multiple scholarly discourses which have compelling intersections with Pilates. Scholarly work from Women's Studies, Cultural Studies, Historical Studies, and Disabilities Studies will help frame and situate this work. With respect to the historical understanding of Pilates today, I access commercial "at-home how-to" Pilates books, Pilates education manuals and educational DVDs, articles and archival materials and photographs, and commercial Pilates "how-to" DVD's in support of my arguments. I also consider the images from marketing and advertising materials from the Fitness/Health and Pilates industries. This project utilizes both the "Classical" and "Evolved" pedagogy, and is based on my teaching and educational experiences with Polestar Pilates Education, LLC in 2004, and Peak Pilates Education Company in 2009.⁶

My sources for Joseph Pilates' biography consist of archival photographs of Joseph Pilates, archival video footage of his work, on-line sources, Pilates education manuals, as

⁶ For the purposes of this project, the terms "Classical" or "Tradition" and "Evolved" or "Progressive" are used to describe the teaching practices of Pilates as it exists on a continuum. As I understand, many Pilates instructors identifies with the work very differently, and consequently defines these terms very differently. I will define "Classical" or "Traditional" work, as the movement exercises and execution of those exercises as Joseph Pilates might have originally conceived them. "Evolved" or "Progressive" I define, as movements and exercises which might utilize and progress, perhaps creatively or rehabilitatively, the work of Joseph Pilates.

well as video documentaries which highlight the “Elders” (original group of Pilates teachers) and interviews with other prominent Pilates instructors.⁷ Additionally, I rely on other academic discourses to help me situate my perspectives on race, class, and gender. Pilates is becoming more of a popular form of bodily movement. Due to this, some of my resource material is noticeably mainstream work. Many times the popular, commercialized “how-to” texts fail to critically examine issues of race, class, and gender. Since they *don’t* critically evaluate issues of race, class, and gender, I suggest, they further normalize stereotypical issues regarding race, class, and gender surrounding Pilates.⁸ Lastly, and somewhat reluctantly, I access my experiences learning Pilates, becoming certified in Pilates, and working with clients, and my teaching experiences in both mat and group equipment classes, and as an “MVe” Teacher Trainer for Peak Pilates.⁹ I do so only because these experiences allow me to understand and observe the complexities surrounding how bodies learn Pilates and how bodies *teach* Pilates.

Scope of Project and Potential Complications

This project is a twenty-first century examination of Pilates, which seeks to gain a deeper understanding of how cultural values and kinesthetic legacies are continually

⁷ While I do not rely on these interviews as evidentiary material for this project, I refer to them throughout this project from time to time. My Human Subjects Protocol No. HA-11-022 with the University of California, Riverside determined that my interviews were exempt from Federal Regulations per 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2) Exempt.

⁸ For example, in much (not all) of the Pilates manuals, educational materials, and commercial exercise manuals, the models are youthful looking, white, slender, women. Beyond that, many of publications I suggest assume that their reading audience are white women.

⁹ I am reluctant to draw on my personal experiences because I believe that so much of what has been written about somatic practices, or movement practices, rely on the individual’s experience. While beneficial in many respects, I worry that these individual experiences overlook or escape critical and contextual evaluation.

produced and maintained in the Pilates body in the United States. Prior scholarship has argued that beauty, consumerism, politics, national ideologies, art, dance, physical culture, and science were integral forces that influenced how female bodies were/are imaged, objectified, presented, and produced.¹⁰ Because these topics have not been previously examined in academic scholarship on Pilates, I will theoretically develop each area utilizing pertinent scholarly discourses. This project situates our understanding of Pilates in a contemporary context in the United States and utilizes historical, cultural, feminist, and dance studies scholarship.

I put forth that the body in Pilates participates in the perpetuation of specific cultural values, and adds to our ability to interpret cultural values. Cynthia Novak's "Looking at Movement as Culture: Contact Improvisation to Disco" (2001), states that

the body and movement are social realities interacting with and interpreting other aspects of culture. Structured movement systems like social dance, theater dance, sport and ritual help to articulate and create images of who people are and what their lives are like, encoding and eliciting ideas and values; they are also a part of experience, of performances and actions by which people know themselves (405).

She looks at the interaction between language and movement, and maintains that movement precedes language in personal development; movement forms "a primary basis for both personal identity and social relationships" (405). Novack argues that movement systems need to be examined as a part of the cultural reality, so that the movement system in and of itself is not solely created or determined by the culture – but

¹⁰ I am thinking of Heather Becker's work in *Art for the People* (2002), Lois Banner's work *American Beauty* (1983), Kathy Peiss' work *Hope in a Jar* (1998), or Robert Rydell's work *All the Worlds a Fair* (1984).

as a part of it (405). In this sense, Pilates is a movement system that is a part of a larger cultural reality and the history which precedes it.

But this project is by no means a finger pointing endeavor. On the contrary, it is an exploration or a revisiting of a *Pilates* bodily history. This project maintains that the body's physical appearance is often constructed socially and economically, and carries these values. I take issue with the idea that the Pilates body is (apparently) *so* revered in the community to which it serves, that it has escaped critical analysis.¹¹ I maintain that Pilates has its own imbedded racial, cultural, and social values that are actually proliferated through the *movements and pedagogy* of Pilates, and are furthered by those who are involved with the Pilates industry. In order to uncover these racial, cultural, political and social values, multiple frameworks will be used to situate this work and will be developed and examined in each chapter.

The pitfalls and weaknesses of this project seem apparent. History is not static or absolute. It does not exist in a vacuum. Neither does gender, identity, race, class, or sexuality. To narrowly define, reduce, or generalize any one of these terms is to neglect the dynamic complexities involved in their production. For example, the cultural, political, and social histories of Europe and the United States are vastly different. The variances between bodily histories differ greatly from area to area, country to country, and culture to culture, and individual to individual. This project suggests the Pilates body embodies many white cultural values and the history associated with its construction, and

¹¹ I am a petite, physically fit, white, middle-class, able-bodied female. I am very aware of my participation in Pilates as the instructor who physically embodies certain cultural values, through my body as well as in the way I dress and comport myself.

is a part of these forces of influence. In this regard, there are dangers of broad generalizations, racisms, normalizations, Western assumptions, assumptions of privilege, and “absolutisms” which could potentially arise both in the historical recounting, but also in the analysis of the Pilates practice. Additionally, I do not profess or assume to be a Pilates “expert.” There is much to the Pilates practice and its history that I do not know, and I welcome critical commentary and feedback that this project may generate.

Because this is an initial critical study of Pilates, most of my analysis looks at how the body is inscribed by Pilates, and *not* how it has been empowered by Pilates. In this respect, my treatment of the *female* body and its participation with Pilates may be troubling to some.¹² My treatment of the female body as one who is shaped and disciplined by exercise and constructions of beauty, rather than one who is empowered to make choices for her own body and unaffected by consumer culture, may seem problematic to those who emphasize (female) agency through bodily control and discipline. However, I put forth that the body’s materiality is formed by its social world and believe there is much to be learned from cultural recovery in the Pilates practice.

With respect to the practice itself, I also understand that there are variations in the way Pilates is both taught and practiced in the United States. This project recognizes that people participate in Pilates for dramatically different reasons: weight management, pain-

¹² Much of dance studies views the body as having agency, or the power to inform and educate us about history. Although her work is critiqued by dance scholars, I am aware that Judith Butler in “Subjects of Sex/Gender Desire” (first published 1990) states the body can be thought of a “a passive medium on which cultural meanings are inscribed or as the instrument through which an appropriative and interpretive will determines a cultural meaning for itself. In either case, the body is figured as a mere *instrument* or *medium* for which a set of cultural meanings are only externally related” (41). I am also aware that Butler examines how we can move beyond this structural thinking, and find other critical ways of understanding gender and sexuality.

free living, injury rehabilitation, camaraderie, to gain abdominal strength, to stave off neuromuscular degeneration, to have flatter abdominals, to get ready for their wedding, or to transform their lives – and these reasons are just a few. To say that one person’s justification for doing Pilates is better or worse than another’s is not relevant to this project. Moreover, I understand that the *effects* or physical and emotional results of Pilates vary as well. The physicalization of the Pilates body may be as much a myth as the “ideal body.” All told, this project does not lose sight of these concerns, yet moves forward past them cautiously and critically.

Another point of concern is what does the Pilates body look like? How does it differ, if at all, in aesthetics, composition, composure from other bodies that are shaped by the activities of daily life? What do generally “fit” bodies look like? The answers to these questions are highly complicated; however, I suggest that there is a visual difference between a ballet dancer’s body, a swimmer’s body, a gymnast’s body, a soccer player’s body, and a cyclist’s body. Each one has been shaped by the activities in which it participates. There is a way that we kinesthetically internalize how we perceive, “know” and understand, or relate to these bodies. One can describe the *ideal* Pilates body as one that has elongated not overly developed muscles, upright posturing, shoulders drawn back and down, and minimal muscular imbalances. From a commercial perspective, the Pilates body could be described as a white, youthful, female, balletic-like body. I think it is important to acknowledge that the *perceived* and/or *ideal* Pilates body is one that evades many of its participants. From my experiences, sometimes it can be very hard to tell if one practices Pilates. Unless one witnesses a body change over time,

it is virtually impossible to discern if the body trains in Pilates, ballet, or another practice that potentially affects the body in the same way. Keeping this idea in mind, this project refers to the perception of the ideal Pilates body as it is maintained by the Pilates consumer culture, as well as how it is communicated in teaching Pilates.

At this point, I think it is important to recognize Pilates relationship relative to other movement practices like ballet, somatics practices, and yoga. We can gain a deeper understanding of Pilates by examining the cultural similarities and differences it has with other movement forms. For example, what are the similarities or differences between the movements of the pelvis in Pilates versus ballet? Are there greater *differences* in the intensions and attention to the body in Pilates and yoga?¹³ What are the similarities and differences between Pilates and other somatic practices (Alexander Technique or Feldenkrais)? What do these differences tell us about the cultural values in Pilates? If Pilates shares similar cultural values to somatic practice then what does that tell us about Pilates? These questions are addressed throughout this project in order to further clarify, illuminate, and position the cultural values present in Pilates.

Another concern is one regarding the accessibility of Pilates. While this project is not a financial and demographic analysis of Pilates, it is important to recognize that Pilates is limited to those with the time, money, and desire to do it. Generally speaking, Pilates classes are typically more expensive than Yoga or other fitness classes, especially if taken privately. From my experience working at a number of different Pilates and fitness facilities, the socio-economic demographic tends to be middle-upper, to upper-

¹³ I use the word “differences” here in italics because the popular belief is that Pilates is very similar to yoga. This idea is examined in Chapter 5.

class populations. In this respect, I suggest that the type of body, with its behaviors and mannerisms, reproduced and perpetuated by Pilates, is available to those who can afford to obtain it.

At this point, I think it is important to acknowledge the joy and pleasure that Pilates brings to so many people's lives, including my own. Many students diligently attend their weekly Pilates classes, and likewise, I look forward to taking classes from my mentors and colleagues. After I practice Pilates, I not only feel more physically "connected" throughout my body, but I am mentally refreshed and physically energized. Most importantly, because Pilates strengthens and elongates my torso as well as teaches me to stabilize my pelvis, it perpetuates a pain-free reality for me. Without it, my day-to-day physical activities would be much more difficult. For some participants, the appeal of Pilates is precisely because of its regenerative mental and physical effects. This is where the practice of Pilates can have power, so to speak, over its participants. There is a strong bodily and mental desire to practice Pilates, because of its physical effects. My challenge in this project will not be to negate or deny this pleasure and/or the benefits from Pilates, but rather bring a critical lens to understanding the cultural underpinnings in its practice and movement principles.

Part 2: Theorizing the Body

My conceptual and theoretical approach to understanding the body and its potential to make meaning is not new to dance studies. Many scholars have looked at bodies to better understand how cultural values are "stored" and proliferated, or how a

bodily “texts” have their own cultural “language” with which they speak. This area examines dance scholars perspectives on how the body can be theorized regarding its participation in culture.

Sally Banes’ seminal work “Power and the Dancing Body” (1994), provides an overview of several ways to read the dancing body. One of the theories she sets forth is a feminist Foucauldian perspective of the body which suggests that “bodies are ... molded and rearranged by dominant powers, which simultaneously promote the illusion that people are ‘free’ to construct their own bodies” (Banes 46). She argues “we *can* make our own bodies, but only to a limited extent. ... [we must] account for the various powers that restrict or release physicality” (Banes 47). A more recent work by Judith Hamera *Dancing Communities: Performance, Difference and Connection in the Global City* (2007), elaborates on Bane’s assessment, as she examines the interrelationship between Pilates and the body as a *production* of Foucauldian theory:

It deploys two Foucauldian technologies: those producing a ‘reformed’ and disciplined body, adapted to regimes of high culture aesthetics and/or the state, and those of self-fashioning, which, according to Foucault, ‘permit individuals to effect, by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality’ (30).

Hamera’s attention to the disciplined body, and more specifically its relationship with the Pilates practice, helps broaden our understanding of how Pilates is potentially influencing and shaping the body.

Understanding how to interpret the body becomes an important component of dance scholarship. Elizabeth Dempster's "Women Writing the Body: Let's Watch a Little How She Dances" (1995), argues that "ideologies are systematically deposited and constructed on an anatomical plane, in the neuromusculature of the dancer's body, and a precise reading of this body can only proceed if the reader/spectator's gaze is not deflected by, but penetrates beneath, the brilliance of the body's surface" (23). In reading bodies, the interpreter's gaze must strive to go beneath the superficial structure, and instead, I suggest, consider the body's neuromuscular structure and physical behaviors. The physical body can be deliberately shaped and molded through labor, lifestyle, and culture. According to Sherril Dodd in "Images of Dance in the Screen Media" (2001), the body can be "modified through exercise regimes, such as aerobics and weightlifting, or through cosmetic surgery in the form of breast implants and liposuction" (37). The body's capacity to be shaped and changed can also educate us on the larger cultural values which influence the shapes and changes in a body. Sally Banes, recounting the words of Susan Bordo, puts forth that "popular culture" encourages women to alter and change their bodies as they see fit and maintains that *fashion* is another mechanism to instruct the female body in a "pedagogy of personal inadequacy... [it] is a powerful discipline for the normalization of *all* women in this culture" (46). The pervasiveness of fashion, and its influence and perception of the female body, according to Banes, contributes to the pedagogy, or what I suggest can also be called the culture of personal inadequacy. The body's construction, and how it is perceived, albeit superficially or critically, is a significant social marker. According to Mary C. Beltrán in "The

Hollywood Latina Body as Site of Social Struggle: Media Constructions of Stardom and Jennifer Lopez's 'Cross-over Butt'" (2002), "the body is an especially loaded symbol in the overall structure of representation that serves to organize society" (80). Additionally, she states it is evident "that the mass media continues the process of inscription and reinforcement of social norms in its representations of the body, and particularly of women's bodies" (Beltrán 81). In this sense, the images and perceptions of the body in mass media is significant in the proliferation of dominant cultural values.

However, it is not just the mass-produced images of the body and its physical construction that complicate our understanding and interpretation of culture, race, class, and gender. Jane Desmond's seminal work in "Embodying Difference: Issues in Dance and Culture Studies" (1997) attests that "much can be gained by opening up cultural studies to questions of kinesthetic semiotics and by [looking at] dance research" (30). She argues that dance scholars consider bodies as texts, and consequently "can further our understandings of how social identities are signaled, formed, and negotiated through bodily movement. We can analyze how social identities are codified in performance styles and how the use of the body in dance is related to, duplicates, contests, amplifies or exceeds norms of nondance bodily expression with specific historical contexts" (30). This statement is significant, since it speaks directly to how identities might be affected or shaped by the bodily movement of Pilates. Banes suggested earlier that there is a correlation between power (racial, social, political, gendered) and the body. "The rhetorical linkage of nondominant races, classes, gender, and nationalities with 'the body,' to physicality instead of mentality, has been well established in scholarship on

race and gender. But the implications of those linkages, their continuance or reworking within the context of daily bodily usage or within dance per se, have yet to be investigated fully” (Desmond 30). Desmond’s interest in the implications of the linkages between race, class, gender and sexuality with the body – especially as it pertains to the use of the body in day-to-day context, is exciting. Desmond suggests that “the effects of the commodification of movement styles, their migration, modification, quotation, adoption or rejection as part of the larger production of social identities through physical enactment” have not been adequately addressed (30). I suggest the movement practice of Pilates has been largely commodified, and hence works to produce a new representation of female social identity through its physical practice, and perceived in the day-to-day behaviors of her body.

Another important idea in this project pertains to the images of body comportment that circulate and are produced in Pilates. I question to what extent Pilates has become a part of the culture of personal inadequacy, or the purveyor of class, or both. As Banes notes, “even to this day [ballet] remains the upper-middle-class method for training daughters in proper carriage and deportment. To study the history of manners, then, is to learn what has been both acceptable and possible in dancing events – in regards to, proximity of partners’ bodies, individual posture, position of the limbs, and so on” (1994, 47). Could it be that the successful embodiment of Pilates is a way for people to “class” up? Banes’ argues that dance, and I would suggest exercise, plays a role in the “micropolitics” of how bodies interact with one another (1994, 47). I put forth that as bodies begin to overlap, intersect, and intertwine, issues of culture, race, class, and

gender surface as a result of these intersections. The result of these intersections are both inspiring and disturbing.

The body-to-body transmission of choreography and recent theoretical ideas in dance scholarship tell us much about the Pilates work. Jacqueline Shea Murphy's decisive work *The People Have Never Stopped Dancing* (2007) maintains that there are ways of rethinking understandings of representation in dance, and of recognizing the historical, spiritual and political agency of bodies on stage (25). Shea Murphy states that dance making passes "spiritual, philosophical, theoretical, historical training from person to person, [and] generation to generation, over time" (25). Although different in many respects, the relationship between Pilates instructor and student can be thought of similarly. The transmission and comprehension of bodily information occurring between student and teacher (dancer and choreographer) is highly relevant to this project. Utilizing Shea Murphy's ideas, I suggest that the practice of Pilates passes transmits these same ideas. This project recovers, or sheds light on, the some of the previously overlooked histories in the Pilates research thus far. The Pilates history, as we know and understand it today, is important in establishing a foundation from which this project will grow.

Hagiographic Underpinnings of Pilates History

At this point, I think it is critically important to understand the implications of continuing the hagiography in the Pilates history. I draw upon Isabelle Ginot "From Shusterman's Somaesthetics to a Radical Epistemology of Somatics" (2010) to shed light

on this problematic area. Her work provides a platform for thinking about how Pilates is reiterated both physically and theoretically in contemporary practices. I believe that Ginot's arguments are highly valuable to understanding the many ways the Pilates' history is currently understood.

Ginot argues that most somatic practice, and I suggest we can view Pilates in the same way, "presents itself as an empirically based mode of bodily thinking whose discourse relies strongly on oral tradition" (13). Ginot suggests there are two primary methods for framing *endogenous* somatic discourse, "first is a scientific discourse, and the second is a first-person narrative of recovery" (13). Ginot argues that the founders of somatic work are usually gendered and *politically* implicated. She states,

Consider the importance of the authority figure. In many works by the 'founders,' we find prefaces, afterwards, tributes, and acknowledgements whose various authors, supposedly of a certain prestige, are singled out from among other men of science. Science thus functions like a validating gaze cast over somatics from afar (14).

From my experience, I have found the same to be true in our contemporary understanding of Pilates' history. Joseph Pilates was the founder of the *Contrology* a practice understood and used by some instructors or "practitioners" today for rehabilitative purposes. Ginot argues that scientific discourse does not necessarily guarantee the scientific value of the practice. Ginot argues that "somatics induces us to believe in the 'scientific,' 'universal', and 'provable' nature of experience, in order to provide a stable collective context for what is fundamentally an unstable, highly individualized experience" (15). Additionally, Ginot suggests, the emphasis on the generalized nature

of scientific discourse does not, in effect, validate a scientific attitude of its founder. Ironically, while science is generalizing the individual experience into a collective experience, Ginot suggests that many somatic practices emphasize the *individual* experience over the collective (15).

Ginot also argues, “the ultimate perspective of the somatic narrative is always a *previous* somatic narrative whose inevitable starting point is the autobiographical story of the founder” (17). While understanding the history of Joseph Pilates’ life is important, it is only significant in that it helps contextualize the practice. What is notable in biographies of Joseph Pilates is the *lack* of historical contextualization, which further perpetuates its misunderstood and hagiographic history. For example, many of the commercial Pilates exercise books have an opening chapter on Joseph Pilates’ life about his involvement with physical fitness, the effects of his work on the body, and his moral character. Additionally, commercial Pilates books include excerpts on Joseph Pilates’ belief in his work to transform, reshape, and rectify bodies into a happier, healthier way of life. Ginot maintains that characteristically, somatics’ discourse “is often a question of transformations of posture or a function (such as breathing, digestion, general motor skills, etc.), it is always done from the point of view of the observer” (17). This narrative, which Pilates so closely follows, is another example of its hagiographic underpinnings.

Ginot also examines the different types of narratives that are a discursive trait of somatics. The ‘experiential narrative’, or case study, according to Ginot describes the client/patient/student in the role of “victim” (16). She argues, “the case study enjoys a

privileged place in the secondary literature, probably both because it complements the founder's discourse and because it belongs to scientific, medical, and psychoanalytical rhetoric" (16). From my research thus far, I have come across Master's Thesis (in various fields), and Physical Therapy Dissertations, which use this same type of experimental or "case study" narrative structure.¹⁴ I draw attention to this structure to alert the reader of its presence in the Pilates-related research, but because I seek to move away from this type of knowledge production.

Lastly, while Ginot's logic seems to isolate and prohibit extension of the effects of the somatics work outside the body, she maintains that somatics does contribute to the "reorganization of the multiplicity and heterogeneity of that which we call the body" (25). Ginot states that "we must ask ourselves what body is it urgent to produce, what theoretical discourse could invent a body that is both conscious and unconscious, a body that can act and resist, a flexible body and an unshakeable body" (26). I utilize Ginot's questioning in this case: "What body is Pilates so urgent to produce?" as one of the cornerstone questions of this project.

¹⁴ I am thinking specifically of Heather Hawkins' Dissertation, *Pilates Training: A Mind-Body Practice: Transformative Effects on Women's Well-Being* (2005), or Maria Earle's Master's Thesis "Sing My Song": *The Legacy of Kathleen Stanford Grant* (2006), or Brent Anderson and Aaron Spector's work "Introduction to Pilates-Based Rehabilitation" (2000). Additionally, much of my research and training in Dance Kinesiology used similar "case" studies and scientific models.

Part 3: The Unavoidable Trap?

I draw attention to the history of Joseph Pilates' life in order to identify the popularized, yet decontextualized history that this project attempts to contest.¹⁵ In many ways Joseph Pilates' biography has existed in somewhat of a historical vacuum: the cultural, political, social, and economic factors which surrounded Joseph Pilates' life tend not to be scrutinized. I put forth that the history of Joseph Pilates' life, as we understand it today, has not been adequately contextualized and for this reason is problematically hagiographic.¹⁶ So much of the history of Pilates, as it is written in the pedagogy today, has been generated from the memories of oral history and passed from one generation of teachers to the next. I am not denying the validity and importance of oral history, rather I am concerned with the historical recounting since the retelling of memories is a dynamic and entirely subjective process, and this affects the stability of what we know as the history of Pilates today.¹⁷

What follows are the commonly known excerpts from various descriptions of Joseph Pilates' life and are typical, and in many instances overlapping. Each one, though limited in comprehensiveness, assesses the historical development of Pilates. Shelly Powers, of Polestar Pilates Inc, in "Pilates History" in the *Polestar Pilates Education*

¹⁵ I suggest it is important to have an understanding of what the Pilates community has commonly recognized as "Pilates history" and how it has been reproduced over the past 90 years.

¹⁶ Written excerpts regarding Joseph Pilates' life are commonly found on the web pages of private Pilates studios, in the introductory chapter of commercial Pilates exercise books, or in the introductory chapter of Pilates educational material. Google search terms "Pilates and History."

¹⁷ I am thinking about the relations between memories and history, and how in some cases, oral histories are passed on, re-created or imagined; cf. Paul Connerton's *How Societies Remember* (1989).

Studio Certification Instructor's Manual (2002), recounts a typical recounting of Pilates history, and the following passage illustrates the actual paucity of this history.¹⁸

Joseph Pilates, who was born in 1880 near Dusseldorf, Germany, created the Pilates method of exercise. Joe was frail as a child, suffering from asthma, rickets and rheumatic fever. He overcame his physical limitations with exercise and bodybuilding, becoming a model for anatomical drawings at the age of 14. He became accomplished in many sports, including skiing, diving and gymnastics. Joe went to England in 1912, where he worked as a self-defense instructor for detectives at Scotland Yard. At the outbreak of World War I, Joe was interned as an "enemy alien" with other German nationals. After his release, Joe returned to Germany. When Joe was asked to teach his fitness system to the German army, he decided to leave Germany for good. In 1923, he immigrated to the United States. During the voyage, he met Clara, whom he later married. Joe and Clara opened a fitness studio in New York ... (Powers 21).¹⁹

Sadly, this limited amount of information is what most practitioners know about Joseph Pilates' life. Although these insights are well intended, this passage gives us very little information about the nearly 40 years of Joseph Pilates' life in Germany. Maria Earle's Sarah Lawrence College Master of Arts thesis, "*Sing My Song*": *The Legacy of Kathleen Stanford Grant* (2006) recounts Joseph Pilates' life in Germany, and his affiliations with the German dance community:

While in Germany, he is said to have known Rudolf von Laban, a famous movement analyst. They appear to have influenced each other and incorporated some of each other's theories and exercises into their own work. Also

¹⁸ Powers credits this information to Balanced Body, Inc. There are discrepancies in Joseph Pilates' date of birth. Joseph Pilates' birth certificate and his application for naturalization states his date of birth as December 9, 1883.

¹⁹ Although I understand these passages are lengthy, I use them to illustrate how little is known about the history of Joseph Pilates and the development of the practice.

during this time, Mary Wigman, a famous German dancer and choreographer, was a student of Pilates and used his exercises in the warm-ups of her dance classes (Earle 32).²⁰

Unfortunately, not much is known about the extent to which Joseph Pilates and Rudolf von Laban incorporated each other's work as their own.²¹ What is clear to me is Earle's suggestion that there was an embodied transmission of the Pilates work into the German dancer's body.

In another reference to Joseph Pilates' history in Europe, Peak Pilates' insightful statement adds to some common assumptions thus far. Peak reports:

Around 1914, Joseph Pilates was a performer and a boxer living in England, and at the outbreak of WWI, was placed under forced internment along with other German nationals in Lancaster, England. There he taught fellow camp members the concepts and exercises developed over 20 years of self-study and apprenticeship in yoga, Zen and ancient Greek and Roman physical regimens. It was at this time that he began devising the system of original exercises known today as "Matwork," or exercises done on the floor. He called this regimen "Contrology." A few years later, he was transferred to another camp, where he became a nurse/caretaker to the many internees struck with wartime disease and physical injury. Here, he began devising equipment to rehabilitate his 'patients,' taking springs from the beds and rigging them to create spring resistance and 'movement' for the bedridden (3).

This is the only commentary Peak Pilates makes regarding the developmental history of Joseph Pilates and his work.

²⁰ Earle does not cite where she gathered this information.

²¹ I have reached this conclusion after my research into the history of Joseph Pilates' life.

Once in the U.S., Joseph Pilates became well known to the American dance community. His relationship with the U.S. dance community is important to this project since this relationship would significantly impact the perception of Pilates and shift the focus away from its (perhaps) Germanic cultural values.²² Earle states:

[Once] he arrived in America ... the building he and his wife moved into housed several dance studios and rehearsal spaces. Word of Pilates and his exercise system quickly spread through the dance community. George Balanchine, the famous ballet choreographer, rehearsed his company, The New York City Ballet, in the building; he also studied with Pilates. Balanchine sent many of his dancers to Pilates for strengthening and rehabilitation before physical therapy was available to dancers and athletes. From 1939 to 1951, Pilates taught every summer at Jacob's Pillow, a well-known dance camp in the Berkshire Mountains of Massachusetts. Pilates was both friend and teacher to such renowned choreographers as Ted Shawn, Ruth St. Denis, Martha Graham and Jerome Robbins, who required their dancers to go to Pilates. Hanya Holm, another modern dance pioneer, even incorporated Pilates' exercises into her dance technique (Earle 32).²³

Apparently, the connection between the U.S. dance community and Joseph Pilates was, in large part, due to the proximity of his studio to the New York School of ballet. Perhaps his subsequent relationship with the dance community might have been a consequence of this location.

While the relationship between Pilates and dancers is significant, I question what other kinds of bodies, besides dancers, worked with Joseph Pilates both in the United

²² Another interesting connection, currently being undertaken by a Pilates instructor in Santa Fe, New Mexico, is how ballet dancers actually influenced the "original" Pilates exercises themselves. I suggest that the interjection of the ballet dancer is significant in the mainstream perception of Pilates. Chapter 4 undertakes this discussion.

²³ This particular passage from Earle's work does not have a notable citation as to where she gathered this history.

States and abroad. There are numerous pictures in Sean Gallagher and Romana Kryzanowska's *The Joseph H. Pilates Archive Collection: Photographs, Writings and Designs* (2000) of Joseph Pilates' clients exhibited in "before and after" postural photographs. Male clients were photographed in their gym shorts and bare-chests in order to fully demonstrate the physical results of his work. Before doing Pilates, these male clients exhibited poor posture, with sunken chest, bow-legs, and sloping shoulders. After doing Pilates, the male clients were photographed demonstrating the ideal Pilates posture: chest expanded, shoulders broadened, legs parallel, spine erect and standing tall.

From Joseph Pilates' publications *Your Health* (1934) and *Return to Life Through Contrology* (1943), we can deduce that he was inspired by representations of the ideal Greek and Roman God-like male body. Pictures from archival video, compiled in a series of still photographs, capture Joseph Pilates and his brother dressed in Roman-gladiator like costumes.²⁴ I suggest these photographs illustrate the depth to which Joseph Pilates was enamored with and inspired by Roman figures. As many Pilates instructors will attest, Joseph Pilates endorsed the male bodily ideals that he gained from the images of male Roman and Greek bodily perfection. When he wrote *Return to Life Through Contrology* in 1945, it represented the culmination of his life's work up to that point. In it he stated that "a perfect balance of body and mind is that quality in civilized man which not only gives him superiority over the savage and animal kingdom, but furnishes him with the physical and mental powers that are indispensable for attaining his ultimate goal—health and happiness" (132). When put in historical context, I suggest

²⁴ See Sean Gallagher and Romana Kryzanowska's *The Joseph H. Pilates Archive Collection: Photographs, Writings and Designs* (2000).

Joseph Pilates' idea of the "civilized man" was a white, male body.²⁵ Joseph Pilates argued

Contrology is designed to give [one] suppleness, natural grace and skill that will be unmistakably reflected in the way [one walks], in the way [one plays], and in the way [one works]. [One] will develop muscular power with corresponding endurance, ability to perform arduous duties, to play strenuous games, to walk, run or travel for long distances without undue body fatigue or mental strain (Gallagher 33).

I suggest this passage also gives insight into how certain bodies were behaving as well as to the populations his work would service. This passage also draws attention to underlying cultural values that prize (physical perfection), athleticism, able-bodiedness, and uprightedness.

When the exercise practice of *Contrology*, first introduced in the United States (circa 1924-April 1927), it was practiced predominately by men. In this respect, it privileges the male form by emphasizing exercises that develop strength in the upper back, shoulders, chest, neck, arms, hands, and deep abdominal muscles: all areas of the body that, I put forth, are areas in the body where normative forms of masculinity have been embodied and/or defined. *Contrology's* results had the effect of broadening a man's shoulders, strengthening his chest and back, and straightening his legs (Gallagher 2000). The contemporary photos shown on the succeeding page illustrate how some of the

²⁵ I am thinking specifically of Karl Toepfer's work in *Empire of Ecstasy: Nudity and Movement in German Body Culture 1910-1935* (1997), Laura Bossi's "The 'New Man': Degeneracy and Regeneration" and Philip Comar's "Crystal and Mud: Academic Approaches to Figurative Representations of the Body" both from *The 1930's: The Making of "The New Man"* (2008).

Pilates exercises strengthen areas of the body that are stereotypically “masculine” or that men are more likely to enhance.



Figure 1.1: Author and Student Learning the “Chest Expansion” Exercise²⁶



Figure 1.2: Author Performing “Plank” on the Reformer, Part of the “Long Stretch” Exercise

Yet, returning to the early twentieth century, by the 1940s, once Joseph Pilates established himself in the U.S., more female dancers and women became involved with

²⁶ Many of these photos are from the author’s personal collection, however for a complete listing of photo sources see Addendum C. Permission to use photos was also requested.

Pilates. For this reason, and because oral history suggest that Joseph Pilates catered to the individual's body, the goals and the practice itself began to shift (Fiasca 2009).²⁷ As women became increasingly more involved in the practice, the abdominals, buttock, legs, coupled the ideas like the "elongated" muscles, became more and more significant in the work. These are areas of the body that, I put forth, are stereotypically feminized. Perhaps it should come as no surprise that today, many people who are unfamiliar with the practice understand Pilates to be a form of exercise for women and dancers.²⁸

Additionally, many people who are unfamiliar with the Pilates practice also think it is similar to Yoga, and for good reason. Judith Hamera describes Pilates "as a combination of low-resistance weight training, yoga's emphasis on breath, and ballet's emphasis on stretching with an apparatus that supports the neck and back, minimizing the potential for injury" (29). This summation defines Pilates in a way that many unfamiliar with the practice can understand, yet it also aligns Pilates with movement forms like yoga and ballet.²⁹ Likewise, Jennifer Stacy, in a movement session at the International Association for Dance Medicine and Science, defined Pilates as, "a sophisticated movement system with structured levels, sequencing, transitions, and a scientifically sound system of design that can be personalized for each client" (166). In this definition,

²⁷ The "original" work of Joseph Pilates, according to Stefan Liebert of *Aware Pilate* in Santa Fe, New Mexico was intended for "men and athletes." As previously noted, the work began to change as more female dancers practiced *Contrology*. According to the Santa Fe instructor, dancers, unable to perform the vigorous shoulder girdle and chest exercises, needed alternative exercises to account for their upper body weaknesses. Joseph Pilates, teaching to the individual body, adjusted the work accordingly.

²⁸ The complexity and generalizations of my assumptions are obvious. On one hand, Pilates might be "masculinizing" women, while on the other, Pilates might be "feminized" due to the high volume of women who participate in it.

²⁹ I thank Prof. Tamera Ho for bringing to my attention that while yoga might be generally recognizable, it may not be understood uniformly. For example, yoga might be a spiritual practice for some, or strictly an exercise practice for others. Some conservative perspectives see yoga as a sign of non-Christian beliefs, and a potential threat to Protestant values.

Stacey utilizes words like “scientifically sound” and “sophisticated” in describing Pilates for her audience. She also states, “like dance, all the Pilates movements are based on a set of simple movements that can be modified or made more difficult” (Stacy 166). Her connection between Pilates and dance, (as she was presenting at a Dance Science Conference), is important: this relationship helps shape the perception and understanding of Pilates, as well as the values to which it subscribes. Susan McLain, former Graham dancer, reports that:

Each series of evolving exercises are dance-like in movement and are designed to lengthen and strengthen muscles and create trim and toned bodies. Exercises are performed as controlled movements with minimal repetitions to safeguard against mindless, automaton-like activity, which Joseph felt was detrimental to his goal of mind/body/spirit development (315).

Again, McClain notes the relationship between Pilates and “dance-like” movements, as well as uses descriptive phrases like “lengthen muscles” or “trim and toned bodies” and “controlled movement.” McClain also states that Pilates has often been referred to as the “‘thinking person’s technique,’ where the disciplined mind governs the body to take ownership of one’s conditioning and rehabilitative task” (318). The idea that one can *own* one’s body with sufficient disciplining and hard work reinforces an ethic that unfairly correlates visual appearance with moral worth. McLain explains, “[Pilates] exercisers gently transform their bodies toward the ‘Balanced Ideal’ and walk away feeling revitalized instead of exhausted” (317). While this harkens to Ginot’s previous claims, it also describes what Pilates *is* and illustrates the type of body, and the life-style of the person who participates in its exercises, all of which Pilates values.

I draw the reader's attention to one last point before concluding largely because it is very relevant to the way Pilates is understood and expressed. With Pilates growing popularity, the healthy and fitness industry developed extensive Pilates Certification and Educational Training Programs. Today, the Pilates technique can be generally categorized into two approaches: "Classical" or "Traditional" and/or the "Progressive" or "Evolved" approaches.³⁰ There are Pilates educational companies that specialize in either approach, and there is much controversy in the Pilates community surrounding which approach is "better." Classical Pilates practitioners strive to maintain the "authentic" work of Pilates by teaching Joseph Pilates' "method" as it was originally conceived. Yet some believe that "altering pure classical Pilates inevitably yields degraded strains, derivatives and hybrids of the traditional system" (Fiasca 121). The Evolved approach understands the Classical Pilates principles, but approaches the work from a more kinesiological and physical therapy-oriented foundation. According to Anderson and Spector in "Introduction to Pilates-Based Rehabilitation" (2000), the term "Pilates-evolved" is used to "differentiate practitioners who are continuing to define and expand on Pilates' work from the Classical Pilates practitioners" (399). According to Fiasca, changes in the original method occurred because the students who learned the movements from Joseph Pilates, learned "through the lens of how he taught [to] *their*

³⁰ For many in the Pilates community, issues of "authenticity" surface in discussions about the performance and value of the Pilates exercises. Classically trained teachers may argue that Evolved teachers have appropriated Joseph Pilates' "authentic" exercises for their rehabilitative use. The controversial presumption in the Classical perspective is that there is, in fact, an "authentic" or "original" movement. This project will not consider whether the exercises in Pilates are or are not "authentic." Rather, it moves forward on the presumption that all movement, once reiterated from the source, is always already appropriated. Yet the issues of "appropriation" in the Pilates practice reveal another tension, one between the value of tracing origins and the danger of moral absolutisms. Rather than take-up this endeavor, I maintain we should recognize and respect the source cultures present in the work itself.

individual bodies, *their* individual strengths, *their* individual limitations, and *their* individual idiosyncrasies” (121). These “idiosyncrasies” and the act/actions/verbalizations of Pilates pedagogical transmission are an important component of this project, largely because it suggests that not only can the work change, but also that it will change because of the bodies that practice it.

In conclusion, from my experiences teaching Pilates, and contrary to what I have just put forth -- I *have* witnessed the power of the practice to *transgress* cultural norms. For example, women who have access to Pilates can use it to strengthen their bodies, minds, and self-esteem, and perhaps push against patriarchal ideologies that women should be weak or docile (Bartky 2006). While this project strives to make visible the ways in which the practice perpetuates certain problematic discourses, at the same time, I struggle with the complicated seemingly inherent contradictions in Pilates in my own life. So while I seek to uncover how Pilates both conceals and reveals some previously unaccounted for cultural values, I work to maintain the practice in my own body. Perhaps in the future, we can become more comfortable with Pilates instability, rather than continuing to recycle some of its historical mythology and potentially worrisome discourses about a perfectible and socially permissible bodily.

CHAPTER TWO

The Pilates Exercises: The “Quiet” Hips of Pilates and the Racial Instability of the Pelvis

“We judge our fellow man much more by the arrangement and movement of his skeletal parts than is evidence at once.”
Mable Elsworth Todd, 1937

The physical and mental benefits of Pilates, as well as the joy which people experience doing Pilates, are clear to those who teach, practice, and are involved in the Pilates community. Over the past fifteen years Pilates has received a great deal of scientific, biomechanical, and kinesiological attention. With many scientifically oriented studies utilizing biomechanical movement analysis to reflect the rehabilitative benefits of Pilates, I suggest there are other ways we can understand and interpret the Pilates exercises. The following chapter analyzes the Pilates exercises for what *isn't* normally articulated in these biomechanical approaches; for example, many of these studies tend to overlook issues surrounding race. We can benefit from recovering race in this project since it can help us understand how the embodied behaviors of certain races are normalized or privileged over others. Additionally, we can examine how certain movements of the body are *internalized* kinesthetic methods of understanding bodies, and by doing so, helps us amplify our understanding of race.¹ Broadly speaking, I seek to answer the following question: are the teaching practices of the hips, spine, and core commonly found in Pilates educational manuals, reinforcing behaviors of racial

¹ This question was brought to my attention by Prof. Anthea Kraut, and one I would like the reader to keep in mind throughout this chapter.

“whiteness” or Anglo-Europeanist aesthetics?² This type of questioning and theorization seeks to illuminate how we have normalized perceived kinesthetic understandings of race in the body. More specifically, utilizing a dance and historical studies lens, this chapter examines movements (or lack thereof) of the pelvis in the Pilates exercises “Single-Leg Stretch,” “Leg Circles with Loops,” (Leg Circles) and “Quadruped Series facing Foot.”³ I argue that the way Pilates trains the pelvis to conceal, restrict, and control its movements perpetuates behaviors that have been normalized as “white.”

This chapter develops in three sections, Part 1 examines the three different Pilates exercises as they are commonly taught, verbalized, and embodied. Part 2 examines the history of the hips/pelvis/butt⁴ as a site where racial stereotypes have been located. With these new understandings, part 3 concludes with a re-examination of the Pilates exercises for their cultural and racial implications. Because this chapter relies heavily on the work

² I rely heavily on Richard Dyer’s seminal work “The Matter of Whiteness” in *White* (1997). This chapter does not examine the degrees of whiteness, but rather, it examines the stereotyped behaviors of non-white movements in order to better understand if the exercise in Pilates could be “white” behavior. I also am aware of the problems this analysis creates, including ways it reinforces a white/other binary as a method to culturally understand the significance of the Pilates exercises. This project assumes that bodies produce cultural meanings and values – and that in some cases – race is linked to culture. However, the suggestion that movements of the pelvis in certain Pilates exercises only constitutes “white” behavior is problematic, since by doing so reduces, essentializes, and overly simplifies the racial and cultural embodiments of whites and non-whites. With these problems in mind, this chapter moves forward with the stereotypes of non-white hips in order to contextualize and draw out potential issues in the movement of the hips in Pilates.

³ I am reminded of Ruth Frankenberg’s, *White Women, Race Matters: The Social Construction of Whiteness* (1993) when she states, “to call Americans of European descent ‘white’ in any celebratory fashion is almost inevitably, in the present political moment, a white supremacist act, an act of backlash. In fact, only when white activists and cultural workers name themselves racially in the context of anti-racist work does naming oneself as ‘white’ begin to have a different kind of meaning” (232). My intention is not to imply or support Pilates as act of white supremacy, but rather to make visible Pilates potentially problematic embodied racial discourses.

⁴ “Pelvis” and “butt” and “hips” describe the same generalized bodily *area* (i.e. lower torso), but can be interpreted very differently by the reader. Although each word carries its own set of implied cultural value and meaning, the use of the terms hips, pelvis, and butt will be used interchangeably throughout this chapter.

of Brenda Dixon Gottschild and her work with Africanist and Europeanist aesthetics, I encourage the reader to consider, as an extension of this work, Pilates position relative to ballet.

Before beginning, I think it is important to distinguish how the verbal and tactile cuing in Pilates differs from other movement forms. There are many different approaches to teaching Pilates, and much of the success of teaching depends on the client's learning style. However, from my experiences teaching, observing, and learning Pilates, I believe some generalizations can be made about Pilates teaching methods. For the most part, Pilates tends to privilege verbal cuing to guide clients through the exercises. Teachers might talk students through images, or placement cues in order to facilitate the right movement and quality of movement *throughout* each exercise. Additionally, teachers in Pilates tend to use tactile cues to help guide a student through the correct movement pattern. Facilitation of spinal flexion or the encouragement of a deeper abdominal hollowing, position of the shoulder girdle or pelvis can be enhanced through a teacher's touch. Lastly, in many cases the Pilates teacher will demonstrate the exercise and describe actions of the body during the exercise. In this teaching approach, Pilates tends to privilege the visual senses, stressing the execution of how the exercise should look like when performed properly. What is unique about Pilates is the combination of all of these teaching approaches. While some teachers stress one method over another, from my experiences and observations, most teachers utilize all three. The use of all three approaches allows the student to explore his or her own internalized

kinesthetic understanding of the movement more deeply. I believe this sets the teaching practices of Pilates apart from other movement practices.

Part 1: The Pilates Exercises

There are over 200 hundred different Pilates exercises (excluding countless variations and modifications) and each one promotes some aspect of healing, restoring, balancing, stretching, or strengthening in the body. The following section analyzes only three Pilates exercises: “Quadruped Series facing Foot,” “Single Leg Stretch,” and “Leg Circle with Loops” (Leg Circles). The choice to analyze these Pilates exercises is deliberately restrictive since I seek to highlight exercises that are purposely training the body to stabilize the pelvis. In this regard, this section utilizes two different educational approaches and their instruction manuals to describe and analyze each exercise. I employ the Peak Pilates (i.e. “Classical”) and Polestar Pilates (i.e. “Evolved”) teaching approaches, and the inclusion of both perspectives is also deliberate.⁵ Both methods

⁵ The names “Classical” and “Evolved” are commonly used in the Pilates industry to denote the style and type of training. Brent Anderson and Aaron Spector define the “evolved” approach in “Introduction to Pilates-Based Rehabilitation” (1999) as “practitioners who are continuing to define and expand on Pilates’ work from the Classical Pilates practitioners” (399). Conversely, “Classical”, as defined by Peter Fiasca in *Discovering Pure Classical Pilates: Theory and Practice as Joseph Pilates Intended: the Classical Method vs. The Lies for Sale* (2009), suggests that classical (i.e. “traditional”) Pilates is the performance of the Pilates exercises as they was originally created and intended by Joseph Pilates (2). Both Polestar Pilates and Peak Pilates are situated, more or less, on a continuum. The Peak Pilates approach is generally more “Classical” while the Polestar Pilates approach is generally more “Evolved.” Peak Pilates specifically highlights that the company’s “intent was to create a new paradigm for Classical Pilates education that preserves the integrity while making it more accessible and user-friendly” (Peak Pilates 1).

emphasize how movements of the pelvis and spine are reiterated, however their respective sets of “Pilates Principles” are distinctly different.⁶

Single Leg Stretch/ One Leg Stretch

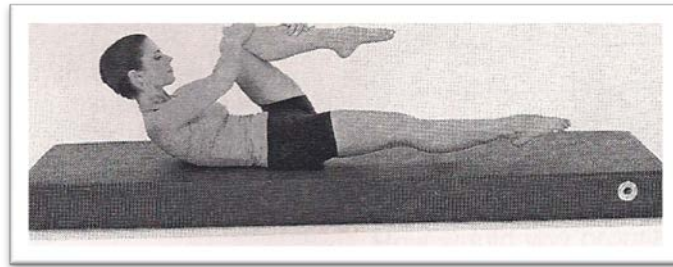


Figure 2.1: Polestar Pilates, “One Leg Stretch” Exercise

The principles of movement, breath, and performance of each Pilates exercise are uniquely different.⁷ In Single Leg Stretch, the two central principles are “Core Control/Axial Elongation” and “Movement Integration” (Polestar Pilates, *S-3 Manual*, 24).⁸ In the performance of Single Leg Stretch the student lies on the mat, draws her head and shoulders off the floor, draws one knee in towards her chest, and simultaneously lengthens the opposite leg out. The way an instructor cues the student to breath depends largely on the desired result or teaching approach. For example, a beginning student

⁶ Pilates Principles are set of six different movement characteristics that act as the foundation to all the exercises. The Classical principles will be discussed at length in Chapter Three. However, for a clearer understanding of the Evolved Principles, please see Addendum A.

⁷ I am using Halifu Osumare’s definition of *performance* from “Global Breakdancing and the Intercultural Body” (2002). *Performance* is “a series of bodily enactments that bring conscious intent and purpose to the physical execution of rhythmically patterned movement. These performances often have resonance with codified, learned systems of movement practices and specific dance styles that encompass gestures that represent implicit sociocultural values” (31).

⁸ To assist the reader in understanding, Polestar maintains that “axial elongation decreases the compressive forces on the disc, and weight bearing increases the compressive force on the disc. This compression and decompression provides nutrients and health to the disc” (*P-F Manual*, 26). Polestar also states that “axial elongation promotes an optimal environment for segmental movement and prevents compressive and shear forces that are thought to cause spinal pathologies” (*P-F Manual*, 27).

might be told to inhale as she pulls one knee to her chest, and to exhale to change legs, whereas the more advanced students inhales for one complete left and right exchange, and exhales on the other (Peak Pilates, *Instructor's Manual*, 10).

According to Polestar and Peak Pilates teaching instructions, in order to facilitate the correct movement patterning in the body, instructors can use verbal prompts like, “shoulders down the back”, “draw abdominals in, up and wide” or “pelvis still” or “keep the neck long.” Imagery cues for this exercise include statements like, “draw the leg in strong, reach long” or “reach your toes to your target!” However, if vocal cuing is not working, instructors might choose to use tactile cueing (touching firmly) in both the rib cage/sternum and upper/thoracic back areas. The excerpts from the Polestar Pilates instructional manual, describes two of the instructor directives in the following way:⁹

Verbal Cuing:

- Axial elongation
- Hip disassociation
- Lower extremity alignment

Watch for:

- Hyper-flexion of cervical spine, rocking of pelvis and torso (*S-3 Manual*, 24).

Notice that these instructions emphasize spinal elongation (“axial elongation” verbal cue) and hip/pelvic stability (“rocking of pelvis” watch for direction or “hip disassociation” verbal cue).¹⁰ In this case, hip disassociation is an *intended* and desired consequence of pelvic stabilization. One cannot happen without the other.

⁹ Although tedious to the reader, it is relevant to illustrate the language that educational manuals use to describe each one of these movements. I have highlighted passages from the manual that draw attention to the hips/pelvis/butt.

¹⁰ In this context, the word “dissociation” means a student has the ability to move the legs and hips independently (in many cases, stabilizing one area while the other moves).

The Peak Pilates' *Peak Pilates System I Instructor's Manual* (2009) describes elements of the exercise in the following way:

Goal of Exercise:

- Strengthens and builds endurance in abdominals. Promotes alignment and centering of the body.

Signs of Readiness:

- The ability to stabilize the pelvis and torso during independent leg movement, as demonstrated by performance of Fundamental Knee Folds, Tree-Front, One Leg Circle.

Precision Point:

- Legs move out and in on the same diagonal plane (no bicycling motion). Move without rocking side to side. Sacrum on the Mat (10-11).

Notice Peak Pilates' description also focuses on the stabilization of the pelvis, as well as the core control needed to properly gesture the legs in a precise, efficient and smooth manner. For example, in this exercise the legs and toes must lengthen and extend towards the same point in space (verbally cued as "reach for your target!"). By reaching the legs towards the centerline of the body, Peak Pilates advocates that this exercise "promote[s] alignment of the body" and suggests the adherence to a central axis in the body (*Instructor's Manual* 10). Most importantly, like Polestar Pilates, Peak Pilates recommends that a student is ready to progress when she is able to stabilize the pelvis, *without* rocking side to side in the body.¹¹

¹¹ It is important to state that both teaching approaches are unique and equally comprehensive. From my experience, while Polestar teaches the "why," Peak teaches the "how" of Pilates. From my experience, Polestar requires more from an instructor intellectually, creatively, and spiritually – thereby giving them more agency as teachers. Conversely, Peak educates in a more structured, controlled, or dogmatic approach. From my experience, Peak emphasizes how the exercises "should be" performed, rather than how exercises "can be" performed. Although deviations from the method are allowed in special circumstances, Peak Pilates trains instructors to perform and teach the exercises in a very precise way.

The position of the pelvis in this exercise is generally thought to be in a posterior pelvic position; meaning that, laying in a supine position, the pelvis tips towards the person's navel. This action flattens the lumbar curve, and is accomplished by "scooping" or "drawing in" the abdominals. Interestingly, neither Peak Pilates nor Polestar Pilates gives specific instructions on the actual physical placement of the pelvis in this exercise. Polestar Pilates states that the body should be in the "supine" position in this exercise, but does not indicate the position of the pelvis (*S-3 Manual*, 24). Similarly, Peak Pilates recommends to "lie on your back ... and keep your lower back on the Mat" (*Instructor's Manual* 10).¹² What both companies emphasize is to maintain control and stability of the pelvis in this exercise.

In conclusion, there are subtle, but significant differences between the two approaches in the educational manuals. Peak Pilates emphasizes the abdominals and core, while I suggest, Polestar Pilates attends to and emphasizes the neurological by-product of pelvic stabilization (i.e. "disassociation," lower-body alignment, etc.). Single Leg Stretch emphasizes a student's ability to control, support, and elongate the legs with his or her core.¹³ Ultimately, according to both instructional manuals, this exercise's embodied "benefits" are hip and leg disassociation and increased abdominal strength.

¹² According to Peak Pilates, "it is impossible to maintain [a] neutral lumbar spine when lying supine due to the relationship between the spine and gravity. An attempt to maintain neutral spine will actually 'fire up' the spinal extensors inhibiting the recruitments of the transverse abdominals" (*Instructor's Manual* 14).

¹³ Historically speaking, it has been suggested that if a student was unable to successfully master a specific mat exercise, Joseph Pilates would work with him or her on the apparatus. The apparatus was used to strengthen their abdominals for the mat work.

Leg Series with Loops (Leg Circles)

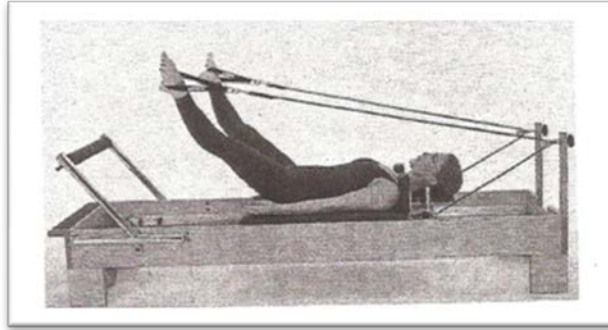


Figure 2.2: Polestar Pilates, “Leg Circles” Exercise

The three elements of breath, performance, and movement principles, also influences the physical effects of the exercise. The primary principles of movement, from a Polestar Pilates perspective, in Leg Circles are “Core Control/Axial Elongation” and “Lower Body Alignment” (*S-1 Manual* 22). To perform this exercise correctly, the student lies on the “Reformer’s” moving carriage, places her feet in the “Footstraps” and while maintaining a still pelvis, mindfully draws imaginary ovals or “circles” in space with the legs.¹⁴ Depending on the teaching approach, a student can either inhale or exhale as the legs circle away from the body. According to Polestar Pilates, inhalation coupled with leg flexion encourages spinal stabilization. Conversely, exhalation coupled with leg *extension* encourages spinal stabilization as well (*P-F Manual* 18). Like Single Leg Stretch, the breath, performance, and movement principles create abdominal strength while encouraging effective neurological control of the legs.

¹⁴ The “Reformer” is a piece of equipment that is commonly found in a Pilates studio. The moving “carriage,” or a padded platform, is the area where clients lay down to work through various Reformer Pilates exercises. The carriage is attached to the front of the Reformer with springs. The springs attach to a mechanism called a “Spring-” or “Gear Bar.” The Gear Bar provides exercise resistance and assistance, depending on the amount of springs attached to the Gear Bar. For more information, please refer to Addendum B to review an illustration of the Universal Pilates Reformer.

As previously suggested, verbalized instructions and tactile cues are important teaching components in facilitating the proper engagement and neurological patterning of muscles. An instructor can verbally facilitate this exercise by saying things like, “create the longest possible arc in space” or “move the legs from your powerhouse,” or “lengthen and strengthen the legs.” Imagery cues for this exercise include sayings like, “anchor the hips to the carriage” or “paint the sky with your toes.” Additionally, an instructor may choose to use tactile cueing in areas like the rib cage, pelvis, and legs to assist the student with pelvic stabilization and hamstring and gluteus facilitation.

The Polestar Pilates instruction manual outlines the exercise performance and instructor directives in the following description:

[Performance of Exercise]:

- Maintain spine and pelvis in neutral throughout the movement

Cueing:

- Axial elongation of trunk and extremity
- Hip disassociation
- Neutral pelvic position

Watch for:

- Tilting pelvis at end of range (*S-1 Manual 22*).

In addition to axial elongation and spinal lengthening, notice this exercise description also emphasizes the “neutral pelvic position” (this is similar to the neutral spine position).¹⁵ Consequently, in order to maintain the neutral pelvic position, the Evolved approach encourages instructors to “watch for” students “tilting the pelvis at the end range of motion.”

¹⁵ The “neutral spine” position differs from person to person. Generally speaking, the neutral spine is defined as a pelvic position where the two ASIS protuberances (anterior superior iliac spine) and the pubic bone are parallel to the ceiling in a supine position (Isacowitz 19). This pelvic position encourages the natural curve of the lumbar spine.

Similarly, the Peak Pilates instructional manual states:

Goal of Exercise:

- Challenge to powerhouse. Improves symmetrical alignment of legs. Lengthens and tones the legs and buttocks while lubricating the hip joints.

Signs of Readiness:

- The ability to isolate leg movement from the pelvis and to maintain pelvic stability with distal challenge from legs...

Precision Point:

- Circle legs within the frame of carriage. Feel separation of legs and pelvis. Abdominals stay drawn in and up (*Instructor's Manual 12-13*).

Note Peak Pilates suggests the goal of the exercise is to challenge the core by learning how to isolate movement of the legs from the pelvis. Different from Polestar's recommendations, Peak Pilates' more involved description focuses on a client's ability to *feel* the separation of legs and pelvis, and additionally, instruct the legs only circle within the "frame" of the carriage.¹⁶

The position of the pelvis in this exercise differs between Polestar Pilates and Peak Pilates. Peak Pilates states "lower back anchored into the Mat" (*Instructor's Manual 12*). While Polestar Pilates recommends to maintain the "neutral pelvic position" (*S-1 Manual 22*). Peak Pilates' suggests that the pelvis is in a posterior pelvis position, while Polestar Pilates promotes the natural curvature of the lumbar spine. Although both companies can easily justify their reasoning of one position over the next, it is a point of contention between the Classical and Evolved schools of thought. Additionally, for the purposes of this project, the actual difference in pelvic positions is perhaps measureable

¹⁶ The "frame" of the carriage essentially creates a leg abduction space no wider than 2.5 feet. According to Peak Pilates, the legs should move no wider than this distance.

in no more than 10 degrees of pelvic tilt. What both companies do emphasize is the isolation or “dissociation” of lower limb from the core, and core strength and stability.

In conclusion, unlike Single Leg Stretch, the Reformer’s cord/"Footloop" mechanism in the execution of Leg Circles can provide assistance to the limbs and core. The Reformer cords and springs assist the abdominals by supporting the legs during flexion. They also add resistance to the hamstrings during extension, which in turn, facilitates an awareness of the back of the legs, inner thighs, and gluteus muscles. Ultimately, this support aids in learning “correct” pelvic stabilization. As previously suggested, in both Evolved and Classical descriptions, the range of motion of the legs is determined by the body’s ability to stabilize the pelvis. However, in the more Evolved approach, the legs can potentially circle as low to the "Footbar" as the cords will allow. In some cases, this height may reflect the height of the legs in exercises like the Single Leg Stretch.

Quadruped Series Facing Foot¹⁷

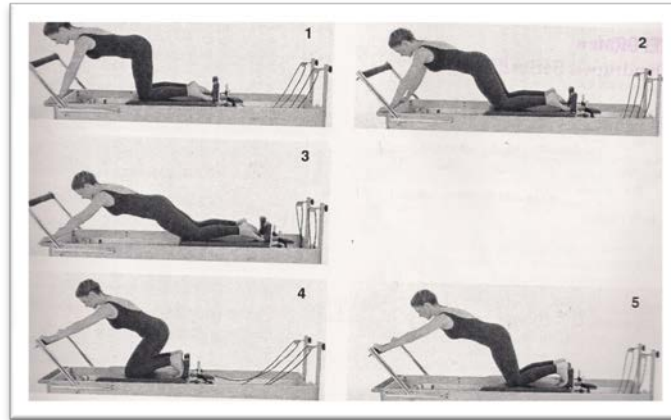


Figure 2.3: Polestar Pilates, “Quadruped Series” Exercise

The third exercise, Quadruped Series Facing Foot, uniquely challenges the body through the combination of its breathing pattern, performance, and movement principles. According to Polestar Pilates, the most important principles of movement of Quadruped Series Facing Foot are “Core Control/Axial Elongation” and “Shoulder Girdle Organization” (*S-2 Manual* 52). In this exercise, the student positions herself with her knees hips’ distance apart on the Reformer’s moving carriage, and positions her hands shoulder’s distance apart on the Footbar. Like Leg Circles, the breathing pattern in Quadruped can be altered depending on what the instructor wants to facilitate in the student’s body. For example, a beginner student might be instructed to exhale as the knees glide away from the core, and told to inhale as the knees move back to their

¹⁷ This exercise is not in the Peak Pilates Instructor Manual.

starting position.¹⁸ The special combination of breath patterning, performance, and movement principle synergistically create strength in the core.

Again, verbalized instructions and tactile cues are critical components in facilitating the proper neurological engagement of muscles in Pilates. During the performance of Quadruped, an instructor might say things like, “funnel the ribs,” “draw your shoulders down to your waistline,” “long through the spine,” or “draw the abdominals in up and wide.” These verbal cues aid in facilitating diaphragmatic and forced exhale breathing.¹⁹ Additionally, verbal imagery cues for this exercise include sayings like, “knit the rib cage together,” or “corset the abdominals.” However, if verbal cues are not producing the correct embodied results, an instructor might use tactile cueing in areas like the rib cage, shoulders, and hips to facilitate the correct placement in the body.

The Polestar Pilates instruction manual describes the exercise in the following way:

[Performance of Exercise]:

- Disassociate at the hips
- Maintain neutral spine

Cueing:

- Axial elongation

Watch for:

- Flexion/Extension of the spine
- Tucking, rotating, or tilting of the pelvis (*S-2 Manual 52*).

¹⁸ The reader should understand the exercise movement descriptions are by no means comprehensive. They are deliberately sparse so that the reader gains a general idea of the body’s position and pelvic movement during the exercise.

¹⁹ The action of the breath will be explored in greater detail toward the end of this chapter, as well as in Chapter 3.

Notice how this teaching approach emphasizes spinal lengthening, stabilization of the pelvis (as seen in the “Watch For” directions), and hip and leg “dissociation.” In this exercise, the immobilization of the pelvis and hip dissociation are critical in performing the exercise correctly. Essentially, there should be no movement of the pelvis (i.e. ‘tucking, rotating, or titling’). Instead, the pelvis is to maintain its “neutral” and non-moving position. According to some Pilates instructors, correctly stabilizing the pelvis and lower back is vitally important, since it facilitates the correct neurological patterning of the spinal, core, and hip muscles, and by consequence, protects the discs of the lumbar spine during movement. Said differently, since the Reformer’s moving carriage (i.e. unstable surface) proprioceptively challenges the shoulder girdle and pelvis/femur intersections, any movement of the pelvis throughout the leg movement could potentially be injury causing to the lower back.²⁰

Examining the individual body areas, like the hips, shoulders, and spine from a biomechanical and kinesiological perspective is beneficial to a new instructor’s understanding of the Pilates exercises specifically with respect to how the exercises can potentially balance, restore, and heal the body. But, I suggest, this perspective also neglects the cultural and racial aspects of how these exercises inform the body. In this next section I examine the historical development of the behaviors, privileges, and race of whiteness, and looks more closely at the history of the hips as a site which carries with it

²⁰ Potential injury occurs when the abdominal muscles are flaccid, leaving the lower back unsupported. According to some Pilates instructors, a non-stable pelvis and unsupported lower back, facilitates the over-recruitment and bracing of the muscles of the lower back and/or hips. These actions, coupled with resistive leg flexion, might cause strain in the lower back area.

sources of racialized tensions. I argue that the controlled “Pilates hips” have become a site where Europeanist values and whiteness are most clearly situated.

***Part 2: Whiteness and the
History of the Pelvis as a Racialized Location in the Body***

Many white dance forms are visually recognizable by the vertical spine and upright torso (Gottschild, 1998; Malnig, 2001). I suggest the cultural analyses of “Anglo-American,” “Anglo-European,” “Caucasian,” or “white” movement forms emphasize the vertically aligned spine and movement of the arms and legs. Generally speaking, the movement of the pelvis is not a primary point of departure in describing Europeanist-based movement forms. With respect to Pilates, the hips/pelvis/butt in relationship to the vertically aligned spine, to my knowledge, is commonly overlooked or absented from analysis in Pilates research. In the Pilates pedagogy, *if* the hips are factored in the analysis, it is only in reference to vertically aligned spine, and more subordinately speaking, viewed as a ‘base of support’ for the spine in each exercise.²¹ As this section will illustrate, the *movements* of the hips/butt/pelvis have been traditionally and problematically stereotyped as racialized behaviors of the “other.” I put forth that if the *movements* of the hips are stereotyped as the racial “other,” then the *lack* of movement of the hips suggests racial whiteness. I propose the un-accentuated pelvis, which is commonly associated with ballet and some “white,” or Anglo-American or European aesthetics, is also visible in Pilates.²²

²¹ Even the term “base of support” I suggest, further *subjugates* the pelvis to the spine.

²² For the purposes of this project, movements that have “Europeanist” or “Anglo-Europeanist” values are those having a greater emphasis on the limbs, an erect spine, and un-accentuated pelvic movements. Since

The narrative of this section unfolds in two parts: part one examines the discourses that discuss how the hips are stereotypically racialized as movements of the ‘other’ in much of white cultural production. This section places the hips in the context of other writings on race, as well as how other scholars have argued that the hips’ and butt’s movements and size, are problematically racialized as black, African, or Latina.²³ Working from this, part two examines the seminal discourses that have been presented on whiteness and its corresponding social and political power. I suggest these discourses help frame or situate the Pilates exercises in terms of their potential to “whiten” the body, and thus work to kinesthetically privilege the body. It is through an examination of the racial stereotyping of the African-American and Latino hips, that we can better understand how the hips are “whitened” through their pronounced muteness.

Area 1:
UNDERSTANDING THE RACIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE HIPS

This next area outlines important scholarly arguments which have examined the hips as a location where racial stereotypes manifest. These arguments are seminal to this project because it illustrates how race is physicalized both internally and externally in the body. In this regard, Brenda Dixon Gottschild’s foundational work as it pertains to this project cannot be adequately underscored. I utilize Gottschild’s exceptional contribution

I am arguing that the absence of pelvis movement is a way to “whiten” the body, then the *movement* of the pelvis as it has been stereotypically racialized becomes significant. Historically speaking, as non-Western dance forms are overtaken by Europeanist values, movements from the pelvis, shoulders, and spine are diminished.

²³ Defining and isolating race is incredibly complex, and to reduce our understanding of race as simply skin color, or bodily movements is problematic and negligent. Race is a highly intricate and multifaceted web of culture, body, spirit, religion, food, behavior, music, art, and country. All of which are influenced and shaped by political, social, environmental, gendered, religious, historical, and economic factors.

to dance scholarship in *Digging the Africanist Presence in American Performance* (1998) as a significant methodological and theoretical platform.

In her work, Gottschild examines how we can understand the “Africanist Aesthetics” found in many Afro-Cuban and African dance forms. She analyzes specific cultural traces found in bodily movements, and then discusses their consequent meaning. This approach offers an invaluable methodological and theoretical platform from which this project will work.²⁴ For the purposes of this section, Gottschild’s consideration of the Africanist Aesthetics is utilized to draw out the embodied distinctions in Europeanist aesthetics. In *Digging* she introduces five primary Africanist Aesthetics: 1) Embracing the Conflict, 2) Polycentrism/Polyrhythm, 3) High-Affect Juxtaposition, 4) Ephebism and 5) The Aesthetics of the Cool (13-16). For the sake of discussion and analysis, Gottschild acknowledges that these traits have been separated so they *can* be viewed in isolation (12). Although analyzed separately, each characteristic works in harmony with the others in the body. The Africanist aesthetic most relevant to this project is Polycentrism (many-centers), primarily due to the aesthetics’ physical effects to the spine and pelvis. Gottschild states, “from the Africanist standpoint, movements may emanate from any part of the body, and two or more centers may operate simultaneously. Polycentrism runs counter to academic European aesthetics, where the ideal is to initiate movement from one locus – the nobly lifted, upper center of the aligned torso, well above the pelvis” (1998, 14). With respect to the spine’s movements, African Aesthetics point to a greater fluidity of movement and articulation of the spine, and unlike Europeanist

²⁴ The cultural traits of Pilates and their potential meaning will be examined in greater detail in Chapter 3.

aesthetic, the spine is not the point of emphasis in the body. Gottschild states “Africanist dance idioms show a democratic equality of body parts. The spine is just one of many possible moving centers; it rarely remains static. ... The component of auxiliary parts of the torso – shoulders, chest, rib cage, waist, pelvis – can be independently moved or articulated in different directions” (Gottschild 8-9). She states that “from an Africanist perspective, a pulled-up, aligned stance and static carriage indicate sterility and inflexibility” (Gottschild 9). The vertically aligned spine, cherished in ballet, is not as desirable from an Africanist perspective.

Building from this, I examine another of Brenda Dixon Gottschild texts, *The Black Dancing Body: A Geography from Coon to Cool* (2003) in order to understand how specific *sites* on the body can produce their own cultural meaning. Gottschild uses areas of the body to draw apart and compare the European and African binary and argues that the black body is a terrain which has already been “mapped” with meaning, and stores cultural values or “muscle memory of cultural experience” (253).²⁵ Areas of the black body produce their own cultural meaning, and through her treatment of the body’s compartmentalization, (i.e. feet, hair, “butt”, and skin), she carefully examines the social history of degradation of each body part. She maintains that the difference between the Europeanist and Africanist position is most clearly located in the movement of the torso (18). Diagramming the anatomy of body in order to unearth cultural meaning and values, offers us an entirely new way of understanding social histories of dancing/moving bodies.

²⁵ As an aside, Peter Fiasca states “[Joseph Pilates] regularly gave students exercises to practice between lessons so the movement patterns and muscle memory would become more intimately known in the body” (121). The technique of “Contrology” (as Pilates was once known) was not only instilled in the clients through physical repetition, but the cultural memories of Pilates were also verbally and kinesthetically instilled in generation upon generations of bodies.

For example, Gottschild suggests that part of the African Aesthetic is the expressed through the pelvis in the “get down” stance, found within many African dance forms. The position of this stance requires the “dancer to ‘get down’ in posture and attitude, rotate the hips and articulate them in movements [which] involve full rotation of the pelvis in a flexible, unbound manner” (Gotschild 187).²⁶ Gottschild is suggesting that body in the “get-down” stance produces meaning not only through the body’s performativity of cultural values but in its actual embodied, muscled and/or physical manifestation of the Africanist Aesthetics. Again, Gottschild’s work provides a theoretical platform to examine specific sites in the *Pilates body* and to consider them as the locations where “the muscle memory constellations of cultural traits and tendencies” are both made and stored (299).

Continuing with these ideas, the non-white body and its hips, is a site where scholars have argued that white cultural production has projected negative racial stereotypes.²⁷ According to Gottschild’s Europeanist aesthetic, the Africanist dancing body is perceived to be “vulgar, comic, uncontrolled, undisciplined, and most of all, promiscuous” (Gotschild, 1998, 9). Additionally, Dunagan and Fenton maintain that “dances arising within African-American communities and those imported from Latin American countries (such as Cuba) have involved action in more of the body, and have therefore been viewed as both more emotionally expressive and more sexual” (Dunagan

²⁶ The circumduction, or full rotation of the pelvis, as discussed in the “get-down” stance, produces concentric and eccentric muscular development of the hips. The hips are conditioned by three-dimensional or multi-planar movements of the pelvis. Generally speaking the muscles of the hips and thighs are the primary movers (and stabilizers) of the pelvis in the “get-down” stance. The body’s orientation to gravity in the standing position, conditions the muscles differently than if the body were in a supine position.

²⁷ I want to express that by discussing Pilates in context with the stereotypes of non-white hips, I believe more clearly situates how the Pilates exercises could potentially perpetuate problematic racial discourses.

7). The Europeanist aesthetic, in this context, denigrates movements of the hips implying that the converse, stable or stationary hips, are preferable.

More can be understood about the stereotypes of the racially “othered” hips by examining Melissa Blanco Borelli’s discussion in “A Taste of Honey: Choreographing Mulatta in the Hollywood Dance Film” (2009). She examines how the tropes associated with the mulatta hips in movies like *Flashdance*, *Honey*, and *Sparkle* confirm the hips are *still* visually encoded as a site where racial stereotypes reside. She states that “the contours of the hip as a site of cultural production, produced and deployed by historically racialized mulatta bodies in their negotiation of ‘blackness’, ‘whiteness’, the political economy of pleasure and becoming...”(142). Additionally, she maintains that the *excesses* of the mulatta hip’s movements, as a “product that can dazzle, dodge, divert, and hip-notize” works to push against racial stereotypes (142). Borelli argues that the ‘mulatta’ narrative, through the use of her body and how the body is read, can work against its previously inscribed coding of promiscuity, sexual desire, and lower-classness (152). While Borelli’s argument empowers the mulatta narrative *depending on how she is read*, it also confirms that these racial stereotypes are continuously promoted and problematically *condoned* by Hollywood culture.

Although the reduction of female identity to the sum of their body parts is problematic, the relationship of the hips and racial identity is significant. “Jennifer’s Butt” (1997) by Frances Negrón-Muntaner discusses the complex relationship between the hips and identity for Latina women in popular music. The *hips in performance* become a location of public cultural production. Selena Quintanilla and Jennifer Lopez

became cultural icons who flaunted, embraced, and capitalized on the curves of their hips (Negrón-Muntaner 184). These two women utilized the common stereotypes associated with the hips, and marketed it to their advantage. Negrón-Muntaner suggests that the hips, which are areas associated with heightened sexual tropes and historical forms of ethnopolitical subordination is the place in the body where the racialized subject resides.

Additionally, Mary C. Beltrán in “The Hollywood Latina Body as Site of Social Struggle: Media Constructions of Stardom and Jennifer Lopez’s “Cross-Over” Butt” (2002) argues the deliberate performance of the “other” can be successful. Yet in order to have a successful performance of the “other” we must recognize what bodily images are currently valued as superior. She states that “with respect to bodily ideals in particular, ... the contemporary system of body image in the U.S., perpetuated through the mass media, and particularly the star system, as encouraging women to achieve the slender body at all costs, equating such a body with the qualities of discipline, self control, and success. ... fat, or even curves, are associated with powerlessness, both actual and perceived, and lack of self-control” (82). Bodies with excess curves, jiggling hips, double chins, flabby arms, or sagging butts are not perceived by the media as appealing. In this sense, the balance between successfully marketing curves, and the hips, become an important component of understanding racial stereotypes, but also understanding how these stereotypes are related to issues of power or domination of one body type over another.

What do “white” butts look like? How are they shaped? The appearance of the hips and whiteness apparently, or are stereotyped, to look a certain way. According to

Maria P. Figueroa in “Resisting ‘Beauty’ and *Real Women Have Curves*” (2003), suggests that non-white women erase their “ethnic” selves, through bodily grooming, in order to appear more socially acceptable and desirable (266). She states “to become beautiful one must conform to the system formation of beauty, which historically in Western culture has been a ‘normative’ white beauty” (266).²⁸ Figueroa suggests that socially acceptable constructions of white beauty, “the preferred ideological construction of thinness as well as feminine, desired beauty” depends largely on the perception and understanding of the *non-white* body (272). Figueroa furthers her argument by stating that “bodies and sexuality are also interrelated ... as is the notion of an ideal beauty and its direct relationship with active sexuality or asexuality” (273). Latina woman, or stereotypically “othered” bodies, have hips, curves, breasts (i.e. more sexualized) whereas white women look more and more like pre-pubescent girls (i.e. boys), and lack hips, curves, breasts, or butt. This relationship suggest that the muted pelvis, or non-existent hips in images of white female media corresponds with a lack of sexual urge, and as Dyer put forth earlier, moral superiority.

When an area of the body, like the hips, is racially marked or socially coded, I suggest it can work to heighten the performance of both race and class. To behave, embody, or appear a certain way can socio-racially mark someone. These markers, as Julie Bettie suggests in *Women without Class: Girls, Race and Identity* (2002), are produced and contained by the social and economic inequalities to which bodies are subject. She states,

²⁸ I examine issues of white-beauty in greater detail in Chapter 4 however, I draw the reader’s attention to this work because of its significance to the non-white body and hips.

exceptions to the rule aside, social actors largely display the cultural capital that is a consequence of the material and cultural resources to which they have had access. Cultural performances most often reflect one's *habitus* – that is, our unconsciously enacted, socially learned dispositions, which are not natural or inherent or prior to the social organization of class inequality, but are in fact produced by it. Here it is useful to think of class as *performative*, in the sense that class as cultural identity is an *effect* of social structure (Bettie 61).

Performances of race and class, according to Bettie, are not “natural” but rather the byproduct of social environment. In her work, Bettie stated that “Mexican-American students did have a way in which they simultaneously recognized and displaced class, at times explaining differences among themselves in racial/ethnic terms as ‘acting white’” (91). Mexican-American girls would alter their hair, make-up, and language to reflect what they perceived as “whiteness” as well as differentiate them. Bettie’s work can be used as a theoretical cornerstone. I put forth that if one were to change their demonstrations of embodiments of race seen through the control and immobilization of the hips, and upright spine, then one could potentially “whiten” themselves.

In conclusion, this section illustrated that skin color is not the only marker of race, but that race is also marked in the hips/butt/pelvis. The moving, circumducting, gesticulating, bumping, and swirling of the hips has been racially stereotyped. As Gottschild states, the pelvis is a site where the “dominate culture projects its collective fantasies” (1998, 9). This next section examine the behaviors traditionally and historically associated with ‘whiteness’ in order to support how the deliberate restriction

of the hips movements in Pilates can be examined for its potential to physically “whiten” a body.

Area 2:
PHYSICALIZING WHITENESS?

Central to this project is the troubling notion of white racial superiority, and specifically, the colonizing, prejudicial, and denigrating mentality often found in the superiority of whiteness. For centuries the embodiment of whiteness has represented both perceived and realized moral and social capital (Wheeler, 2000; Dyer, 1997). Ruth Frankenburg’s seminal work *White Women, Race Matters: The Social Construction of Whiteness* (1993), states “whiteness refers to a set of locations that are historically, socially, politically, and culturally produced and, moreover, are intrinsically linked to unfolding relations of domination” (6). This section explores how the embodiment of whiteness and its social privilege and power are inextricably linked. The narrative of this section strives to set up a dialog regarding the historical development of whiteness, power, and supremacy. It seeks to present the common, well established, discourses surrounding whiteness. Some of the scholarly arguments have been foundational to whiteness theory, and for that reason, I rely heavily on these seminal works. Other, more recent scholarship although not as theoretically rigorous, are well established and highly recognized in the academic cannon.

Whiteness and the power that has come to be associated with it, has its root in colonization, religion, and the body (Dyer, 1997; Gottschild, 1998). Roxanne Wheeler’s *Complexion of Race: Categories of Difference in Eighteenth-Century British Culture*

(2000), argues that initially, in the 18th century, the British thought of themselves and other people, more in terms of religion, civility, and rank, *rather than* skin color, shape of nose, or hair (7). Initially, Wheeler suggests that issues of class were largely determined by the way one dressed; and it was easier to distinguish the ‘who’s who’ in English culture by their physical and material appearance. She suggests that clothing, grooming, and material items reflected a person’s social standing and moral character. Over time, Wheeler suggest, as British colonization expanded, *complexion* came to matter more to the English. Skin color became a marker for race, and white skin color became the marker of racial superiority. Britons believed that as skin tones became increasingly darker, that people with those skin tones became increasingly more uncivilized. According to Wheeler, the English felt that their whiteness reflected their European superiority. Additionally, Wheeler theorized that race became reflective of a person’s “emergent character” (7). Consequently, during the third quarter of the 18th century, skin color had become the most important component of racial identity and moral character, in Britain (Wheeler 9). The “racial imagery of white people, not relative to other races in white cultural production, but the imagery of white people themselves” becomes incredibly important when put in conversation with the discourses surrounding the Pilates practice (Dyer 1).

As English colonization and Christianity began to globally proliferate, the ideology of the spiritual sacredness and its relationship with white skin and the white body, spread with it. The paintings of Jesus Christ and the Virgin Mary began to take on whiter and whiter skin tones (Dyer 17). White skin and moral superiority developed

through images of the Virgin Mary and Jesus Christ. The Virgin Mary was portrayed as the “supreme exemplar” of feminine whiteness; she is innocent, pure, and self-sacrificing (Dyer 74). She is traditionally known as the mother of Jesus Christ, who through immaculate conception, gave birth to the Son of God. Yet there is very little Biblical attention, historically speaking, to her pelvis. The white female pelvis, or the site which is life-giving and where female sexual desire can be located, is obscured or buried in many Christian texts.²⁹ According to Gottschild, the source of unease with the movement of white hips stems from Christianity, and its “dialectic on the corporeal capacity for sin” (2003, 147). If movement the pelvis was sinful, then its muteness was divine. I suggest that the behavioral muteness or control of the pelvis is physically reflective of whiteness.

The religious premises of Christianity began to define and complicate the relationship between the body’s appearance, its spirit, and whiteness (Dyer 1997). Christianity maintains that the body is the conduit through which the spirit can manifest itself (Dyer 16). The white body, and by consequence the white spirit, was normalized and implied through depictions of Jesus and the Virgin Mary. Dyer states

above all, the white spirit could both mater and transcend the white body, while the non-white soul was a prey to the promptings and fallibilities of the body. A hard, lean body, a dieted or trained one, and upright, shoulders back, unrelaxed posture, tight rather than loose movement, tidiness in domestic arrangement and eating manners... all

²⁹ In a recent email interview on April 6, 2012, Biblical scholar, Jario Ramos-Lagos, suggested that the Bible refers to these terms in “polite or hidden language.” He gave examples found in the following sacred-texts: *The Old Testament*, in *Isaiah* 3: 16-17 refers to a woman’s genitals as “secret parts” and in *Numbers* 5:21,22,27 the vagina is referred to as the “thigh.”

of these are the ways the white body and its handling display the fact of the spirit within” (23-24).

The white person’s physical embodiment, as indicated by an upright spine, controlled movement, and social etiquette reflected the presence of the power of the spirit.

According to Shilling, medieval Christianity refined the regimes of physical disciplining involving diet, prayer, and an “ascetic lifestyle” (191). Whiteness became affiliated with control, disciplining, and restraint, or a reflection of its ability to house the Christian spirit.

According to Dyer and Peggy McIntosh, whiteness and the power associated with its race afford unequal social and economic privileges. As Dyer states, “as long as race is something only applies to non-white peoples, as long as while people are not racially seen and named, they/we function as a human norms. Other people are races, we are just people” (1). Whiteness must be seen as white, but must be kept as something that continues to be unaccounted for. Although whiteness is racially normalized through its invisibility, whites “must be seen to be white, whiteness as race, resides in invisible properties and whiteness as power is maintained by being unseen” (Dyer 45). Peggy McIntosh in “White Privilege and Male Privilege” (1988), states that “white privilege is like an invisible weightless knapsack of special previsions, assurances, tools, maps, guides, codebooks, passports, visas, clothes, compass, emergency gear, and blank checks” that she can cash in on every day (91). McIntosh comprises a list of her privileged experiences as a white woman. She illustrates that many mainstream conveniences, like hair stylists, book stores, or grocery stores, commonly market to white people and white culture. She states, “I can go into a book shop and count on finding the

writing of my race represented, into a supermarket and find the staple foods that fit with my cultural traditions, into a hairdresser's shop and find someone who can deal with my hair" (93). The behaviors of whiteness, its images, and its perceived and real power in the public are invisible to white people. A white person's body, financial standing, and skin tone, according to McIntosh are unearned assets equated with issues of entitlement.

The power of whiteness and its embodied ideal, according to Dyer, resides in the inherent instability of its definition and, by consequence, in its *inability* to be obtained.

Whiteness,

is founded on compelling paradoxes: a vividly corporeal cosmology that most values transcendence of the body; a notion of being at once a sort of race and the human race, and individual and a universal subject; a commitment to heterosexuality that, for whiteness to be affirmed, entails men fighting against sexual desires and women having none; a stress on the display of spirit while maintain a position of invisibility; in short, a need always to be everything and nothing, literally overwhelming present and yet apparently absent, both alive and dead (Dyer 40-41).

Dyer illustrates the complexity of whiteness as a power whose greatest strength is in its fluidity and inability to be defined. Because of the instability the whiteness, according to Dyer, the white ideal is something wholly unattainable. But its unattainability (e.g. immortality) does not detour people from trying to obtain it. The drive to achieve this unrealistic ideal, "(which in women must also be passive) is registered in suffering, self-denial and self-control, and also material achievement, [but only] if it can be construed as the temporary and partial triumph of the mind over matter" (Dyer 17). For example, as Dyer stated above, white men must contain their heterosexual urges, while white women are obligated to have none. While white women physically ignore or deny themselves,

white men use their mind to control themselves. Again, when put in context with the discourses surrounding the Pilates practice, whiteness, and the “quiet” pelvis is troubling.

Over time, historical, religious, and political ideologies have stabilized whiteness and its corresponding physicality as a “superior” race. This is both highly troubling and problematic because of the racist discourses these ideologies promote. I transition into Dance Studies scholarship because Historical Studies can gain from dance scholarship by examining the embodied traces of power visible in arts forms like ballet and European court dancing. In dance scholarship, ballet, political power, and the embodiment of Anglo-Europeanist aesthetics are closely correlated.

Courtly dances and ballet have been commonly associated with the physical characteristics like the upright spine or elongated torso, but also with grace, control, and social status. Gerard Jonas’ work in *Dancing: The Pleasure, Power and Art of Movement* (1998), states “Louis [XIV] had found a way to control the obstreperous nobility of France, by structuring his court literally around the dance floor” (73). A person’s political success or failure balanced on his ability to successfully negotiate the court space by demonstrating his embodied knowledge of courtly dancing. Consequently, in order to “succeed at court, a man of ambition had to be as accomplished in dancing as he was in riding, fencing, and fine speech. The proper bearing for a courtier, according to Baldassare Castiglione, who wrote the book *Il Coregiano* (1528), was to “preserve a certain dignity, albeit tempered with a lithe and airy grace of movement” (Jonas 74). The dancing body became a site where power could be maintained or manifested. In this regard, the physical comportment of the diplomatic body became a site where personal

and political status was judged. Jonas maintains, “it was important to maintain a ‘noble carriage,’ to keep the torso upright as a still center of gravity while movement of the head, forearms, wrists, fingers, legs, and feet flowed into each other without awkward breaks” (80). The controlled flow of the body, otherwise known as grace, as well as the transitions between movements, were important physical components of socially-acceptable dancing.

Echoing this sentiment, a forthcoming work by Colleen Dunagan and Roxanne Fenton, “*Dirty Dancing: Dance, Class, and Race in the Pursuit of Womanhood*” argues that “in the European-based forms that were considered acceptable, partnered dances sequences included held torsos, a standard embrace with limited body contact, verticality, and an emphasis on the feet as the most active body part” (7). In this sense, the lack of the movement of the pelvis both defines and differentiates Anglo-European-based dance forms from African-based, Afro-Cuban, or Latin American dance forms. The “acceptable” dance forms had a “held” torso, whereas I suggest, unacceptable (by white aristocratic European standards) contained just the opposite: uncontrolled or unregulated torsos.

I return to the well-established and seminal work of dance scholar Brenda Dixon Gottschild, *Digging the Africanist Presence in American Performance: Dance and Other Contexts* (1998), because she adds another analytical lens to the movements of the balletic body. Gottschild examines the significance of the vertically aligned spine and its metaphorical relationship to the European monarchy. She states, “in traditional European dance aesthetics, the torso must be held up-right for correct, classic form the erect spine

is the center – the hierarchical ruler – from which all movement is generated. It functions as a single unit. The straight, uninflected torso indicates elegance or royalty and acts as the absolute monarch, dominating the dancing body” (8). In ballet, many of the movements emanate outwardly, from proximal to distal points or from the center of the body to the limbs. The ballerina in arabesque is the most significant demonstration of this concept (see Figure 2.4). The body’s position in arabesque, according to Gottschild, is metaphorically akin to the colonizer as the center of the wheel, with the spokes of “her” colonies stretching outwardly.³⁰

I suggest that the Europeanist aesthetics and white body characteristically described as possessing an elongated spine and *un-accentuated* hips, is embodied and visibilized in the three Pilates exercises described earlier. I question what the deliberate restriction of the pelvis’ movement in Pilates signifies culturally and racially.

³⁰ Gottschild puts forth that George Balanchine utilized the Africanist Aesthetics to create the “sassy” style of the New York City Ballet by making the movement of the pelvis more pronounced in ballet. I suggest this furthers my point, because it was through the injection of the movement of the ‘other’ that ‘stylized’ the NYC ballet.

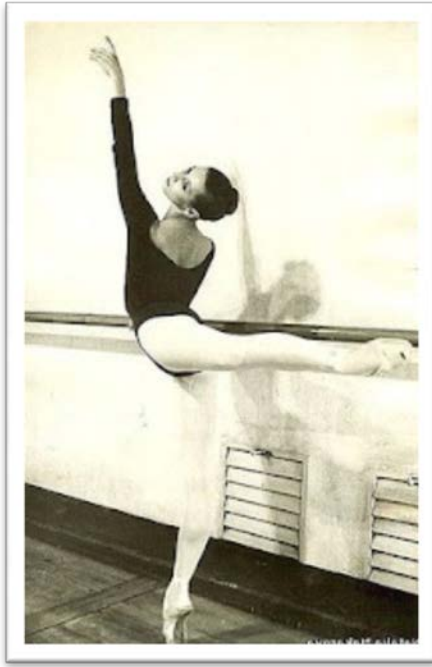


Figure 2.4: Ballerina in Arabesque

Part 3: The “Core” and the Pilates Exercises Revisited

Cultural and Feminist studies gains from dance scholarship’s approach to understanding the body’s ability to make and store cultural values and practices. For example, as non-Western dance practices become “Europeanized,” the movements of the hips become more contained, and as a result, the limbs become noticeably marked and privileged, and more “sanitized” as the torso and pelvis become increasingly more controlled.³¹ To reiterate, the mark of Europeanist behavior are those that privilege the verticality of the torso, restrains the hips, and accentuates movements of the arms, legs,

³¹ I am thinking of Marta Savigliano’s work in *Tango and the Political Economy of Passion* (1995) and the effects on the Tango as it migrated to Europe. Savigliano puts forth that the movements of the Tango were changed, or “tamed” or “sanitized” by Europeans. The verticality of the spine, muted movements of the hips, and the space between dancing partners significantly changed the Tango as it was originally performed.

and feet. I suggest that the selected exercises in this chapter value the same type of Europeanist movements. In these exercises, the Pilates pelvis does not move in tri-planar or circumductive motion, but instead trains the hips into minimized and controlled movement.³² Since the pelvis is intimately connected to the body's "core" or "powerhouse," it behooves us to understand how Pilates educational manuals define and verbalize these terms. This final section develops in two parts: the first examines the "core" or "powerhouse" as it is traditionally understood in Pilates pedagogy. Because this project is trying to situate Pilates relative to other movement forms, this section also examines how other Western dance practices like ballet and the Graham Technique utilize the core. Lastly, the second section will conclude this chapter by re-evaluating the previously described Pilates exercises for their cultural and racial implications.

Area 1: THE CORE

I believe the torso of the human body is a dynamic location from which movement and energy emanates from, or passes through, and is a spiritual, supportive, sexual, emotional, or artistic location. Part of the allure of the "core" is in its ability to be understood, constituted, and valued so differently from culture to culture. American Pilates instructors might understand the core in one way, and we might believe we know what the core "is" – but in reality, our understanding is not a universal truth. Our understanding of the Pilates core is in actuality, a specific cultural interpretation of this area of the body. There are many ways of understanding the significance and function of

³² The majority of Pilates exercises are non- or partial weight bearing movements. Said differently, there are virtually no movements in Pilates that mimic Gottschild's "get-down" stance.

the core in other movement practices and cultures. Livia Kohn's *Daoist Body Cultivation: Traditional Models and Contemporary Practices* (2006) states "all bodies move and stretch and breathe and that certain exercises are essentially good for us [yet they] mask a deeper layer of complex and sophisticated differences in worldview, history, social role, and practice" (124).

For example, in T'ai Chi Ch'uan the *dien tien* is the place where energy moves through, drawing up from the legs, moves through the center of the body, and is expressed through the limbs of the body (Kohn 184). In many cases, for the energy to flow most effectively the *dien tien* is relaxed so as not to block energy or hold excessive neuromuscular tension. Bede Bidlack states,

advanced Taiji quan practitioners reach a state where they minimally use their physical bodies by moving their minds, which then moves their *qi* and consequently their bodies. Their muscles become loose and relaxed, allowing *qi* to flow freely through the body, creating a state of health – defined in Chinese medicine as the presence of abundant, free-flowing *qi* (Kohn 182).

Bidlack emphasizes the importance of *qi* (energy) rather than the core. According to Bidlack, the center of the body in T'ai Chi Ch'uan, although vitally important, is perceived as something through which energy must move effortlessly. Generally speaking, the *dien tien* is located in the area surrounding the abdomen in the body. This is where the mind must situate itself; "to aid the body, mind and spirit, the mind is given a home base where all or a portion of it should rest" the mind sinks down into the abdomen and the *qi* follows and in turn, the body responds (Kohn 184). T'ai Chi Ch'uan

is just one understanding of the core, or center area of the body, and I suggest differs from how many Pilates practitioners' understand the Pilates "core."

In the Pilates practice, like many others, the core and breath are two cornerstones. I suggest these two elements in the Pilates practice differ from their uses in T'ai Chi Ch'uan, Yoga, and other somatic movement relatives like Feldenkrais, Alexander Technique, *Ideokinesis*, or the Bartenieff Fundamentals. Pilates is not something that the body intuitively "feels"; it is not entirely emotive; or strictly sensory based; the body in Pilates does not govern the mind; nor is it subsumed to it. Pilates does not *passively* "undo" what society has done to it; but instead actively trains the body into corrective postural patterning. According to Fiasca, the "corrective exercises" of Pilates strictly adheres to *actively* facilitating change in the body *through* the breath and core (13). For example, Peak Pilates draws our attention to the significance of the body's core area, stating "the body's midsection is its *command-control center*, often referred to as the 'core' or the lumbopelvic girdle. When working efficiently, the powerhouse stabilizes the pelvis and torso, initiates movement, and acts as a dynamic force against gravity. Ideally, all Pilates movements begin from the powerhouse" (italics added, *Instructor's Manual* 7).³³ Unlike Bidlack's attention to the *qi* and *dien tien* this idea of the core is culturally specific and I suggest it reflects Western American values that privilege bodily structure, science, anatomy, and kinesiology.

³³ The term "powerhouse" is used by many Pilates instructors and educational manuals to denote and describe the core of the body in Pilates. For example, as an MVe™ Teacher Trainer, I am instructed to teach the definition of the powerhouse as "a 4 inch band in and around the center supported by the inner thighs and gluteals" (MVe™ 2 Day Chair Lesson Plan, 8).

In the Pilates practice, a student learns how to initiate movement from the core *through the breath* and by engaging a “scoop” in the abdominals. Peak Pilates explains the scoop in the following way: “the Pilates Scoop is a hollowing of lifting of the abdominals inwards towards the spine, and upward underneath the ribs, that creates support for the organs and spine, thus providing a very stable base from which to move. The Scoop draws the transverse abdominus in like a tight corset, tightening more with every breath” (*Instructor’s Manual 7*). The dynamic muscular engagement of the “scoop” can be understood from a kinesiological or biomechanical perspective. Polestar Pilates suggests that there are “force couples” which are responsible for the proper neurological engagement of the core muscles.³⁴ These force couples not only facilitate the “scooping” of the deeper abdominal muscles, but all incorporate the back and muscles of the hips. Polestar Pilates suggests that the “diaphragm/transverse abdominus/pelvic floor” force couple, along with the “latissimus dorsi/transverse abdominus/gluteus maximus” and the “serratus posterior superior and serratus posterior inferior” force couples all work synergistically to produce axial elongation, and core control (*P-F Manual 27*). As many Pilates instructors attest, the efficient functioning of these muscle groups is paramount to proper core stabilization and upright posture.

³⁴ A force couple can be thought of as two equal but oppositely directed forces acting simultaneously.

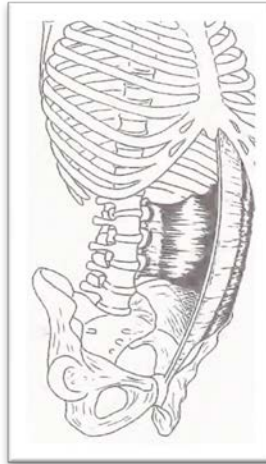


Figure 2.5: The Transversus Abdominus

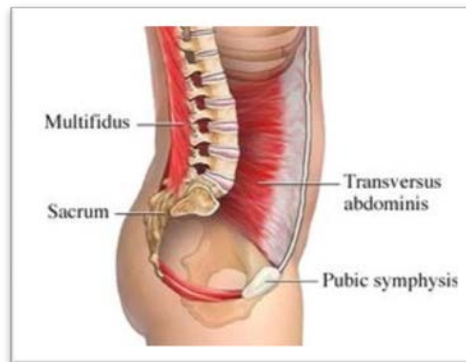


Figure 2.6: The Core Muscles

The muscles of the core, as illustrated in the above photos (Figure 2.5 and 2.6), and when engaged in the Pilates breathing method, are thought to elongate the spine.³⁵ Although the muscular activation is more complex, the core and its corseting affect is illustrated in the following illustration:

³⁵ I draw the reader's attention to the racial marker of white skin in Figure 2.6.

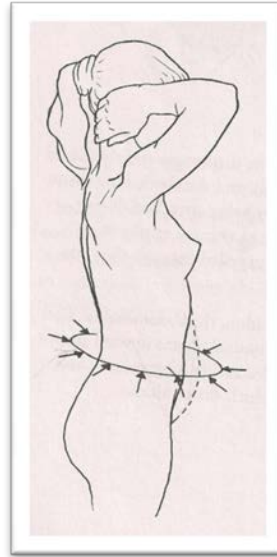


Figure 2.7: Action of the Transversus

The transversus abdominis “reduces the diameter of the abdomen, or ‘pulls in the belly’”. An easy way to feel the action of the transversus is to wrap your hands around the sides of your abdomen and cough” (Calais-Germain 92). In this sense, the drawing in of the waistline creates a muscular contraction. Ideally, the deep stabilizing action of the transversalis (when properly recruited) is

thought to contract at a submaximal level, which is less than 30% to 40% of maximal voluntary contraction. This submaximal contraction happens simultaneously while disassociating the extremities... As the extremity disassociates from the trunk and the pelvis remains in neutral, the deep stabilizers work efficiently to maintain control (Anderson 401-402).

The complexity of the level of neuromuscular contraction of the deep core muscles is apparent, as well as the position of the pelvis in stationary “neutral.” According to Fitt, maximal contraction of the transversalis can only be consciously facilitated, and this

activation can be difficult to learn (180). For example, the study “Effects of Practice on the Ability to Perform Lumbar Stabilization Exercises” (1999), states

the most common compensation errors were rectus abdominus protrusion and pelvic tilt, both of which stem from overactivation of the rectus abdominis. The rectus abdominis is a “global” muscle rather than a “local” muscle, and as such it operates primarily to approximate the ribcage to the pelvis. Stabilization training aims to target to “local” intersegmental muscles, which are thought to “stiffen” the spine. Disengaging the rectus abdominis and locating voluntary control of the TA [transversalis] appears to be the most difficult task in the stabilization exercises (Hagins et al 553).

Despite the scientific language, the point is clear: the deepest abdominal muscles *require* conscious training so a person can maintain spinal health. Additionally, improper recruitment of the deep stabilizing muscles causes the pelvis to move, and thereby incorrectly establishing the correct neuromuscular positioning of the pelvis. By inference, this passage suggests people who do not learn how to properly engage the abdominals run the risk of injuring themselves.

Learning to breathe in the Pilates method can be a complicated, unnatural, and often times, allusive process for students just beginning with the practice.³⁶ In my 13 years of experience as a Pilates student, instructor, and more recently, Teacher Trainer, I have been introduced to at least four different ways to breathe “correctly” in the Pilates practice. For example, recall from the Quadruped Facing Foot exercise, certain verbal

³⁶ Breath is another point of contention in the Pilates community. All instructors would agree that the breath is critical to the practice, however many would disagree to the extent it should be taught, described, or explained to beginning students.

cues (e.g. “knitting the ribs” or “corseting the ribs”) encourages diaphragmatic and ‘forced expiration’ breathing. According to Polestar Pilates,

diaphragmatic breath is associated with the organization of the pelvis and thorax. The connection between the diaphragm, transverse abdominals and pelvic floor create an environment that supports the vital organs and creates and axial elongation of the spine. The funneling of the ribs with forced expiration and the activation of the transverse abdominus facilitate an effect of elongation of the lower trunk (*P-F Manual* 20).

This method of breathing, trained into the student’s body through specific verbal coaching, helps to muscularly engage the Pilates core. Much like a corset, “forced expiration” is defined the “combination of muscles and external pressure that decreases the three dimensions of thoracic movement” (Polestar Pilates, *P-F Manual*, 14). These two ways of breathing, diaphragmatic and forced expiration, when combined produce the knitting or corseting effect in the torso of the body (see Figure 2.7).

Another reputable source describes the Pilates breath in another way. According to Real Isacowitz and Karen Clippinger in *Pilates Anatomy: Your Illustrated Guide to Mat Work for Core Stability and Balance* (2011), “three key ways that breathing is shaped, or controlled, in Pilates is through *lateral breathing*, *set breath patterns*, and *active breathing*” (italics added, 7). They maintain

lateral, or *intercostal breathing* emphasizes the lateral expansion of the rib cage while maintaining a consistent inward pull of the deep abdominal muscles during both inhalation and exhalation. This is in contrast to the type of breathing that emphasizes the lowering of the diaphragm during inhalation (or diaphragmatic breathing), with the abdominal muscles relaxed so that are allowed to push outwardly (7).

They continue to explain that using lateral breath (over diaphragmatic breathing) helps “maintain abdominal contraction while performing Pilates exercises during which keeping a stable core is important for successful performance and for protection of the body” (7). In this description students are encouraged to use “lateral breathing” instead of diaphragmatic breathing. Although both Polestar’s and Isacowitz’s understanding of the breath in Pilates is correct, the confusion in deciding which method is the “right” way to breath is apparent.³⁷ More importantly, much of the language that Pilates texts and educational materials use to define the “core” is kinesiological and biomechanical terminology. The core is presented as a muscular and structural component of the body, and such terminology, I put forth privileges anatomy over a spiritual, emotional or energetic understandings of the core.

Now, I move away from the discussion of the breath and core, and into a brief examination of the core’s function in ballet and Graham Techniques. Their respective uses of the core can widen our knowledge of Pilates, and although adversarial in most aesthetic respects, the Graham Technique and ballet share similar biomechanical and *cultural* characteristics. Additionally, all three of them are generally recognized as Western-based movement forms, and both rely heavily on the core and breathe to facilitate and control movement.

To begin, Martha Graham’s use of the core (e.g. “contraction and release”) is visibly and artistically significant to her technique. From my experience, the Graham

³⁷ My point here is not to confuse the reader, but to illustrate that when defining “breathing” in Pilates there is more than one “right” way. Often times, instructors’ dogmatic approach to the breath is physically prohibitive, in that it is explained in a highly complicated way. I have found that rigidity to one approach and specifically one that can be over-scientific, is ultimately harmful and confusing to students.

Technique emphasizes movements emanating from the body's torso. Centrally initiated movements stand in contrast to movements which are polycentric, or distally initiated; characteristics which are commonly associated with Gottschild's Africanist Aesthetics. The muscular engagement of the Graham contraction is very similar to the corseting of the abdominals in Pilates.³⁸ According to Sally Fitt in *Dance Kinesiology* (1996), "it is thought that the transversalis functions to pull the abdominal muscles farther into the abdominal cavity in an action like the 'Graham Contraction'" (174). The Graham contraction "is essentially an exhale that curls the pelvis under and allows the chest to hollow inward. ... [it] is an amplification of an involuntary physical reaction to a sob or laugh" (Thomas 91). Movement in the Graham Technique begins in the core, expands outwardly into space, and draws back into the center again. This differs from an energetic understanding of the *dien tien* in T'ai Chi Ch'uan where the body's movement flows through the core, and guided by *qi*. It also differs from the biomechanical understanding of the Pilates core as a muscular tool to elongate the spine, and facilitated by breathing techniques.

Likewise, the core in the ballet dancer's body is equally important. As previously suggested, ballet emphasizes the elongation of the legs, arms, and spine, and achieves this aesthetic by control through the core. According to one ballet enthusiast, ballet dancers

must maintain the illusion of ease of airiness. ... [they can do this] because of the incredible strength and discipline of their core muscles, dancers scarcely seem to breathe. Ballet [appears to be] all grace and flow. ... [and ballet] can do [this] because a dancer works from her core, those

³⁸ Although outside the scope of this project, the historical intersections, and possible kinesthetic tracings, between the movement techniques of Martha Graham, Hanya Holm, and Joseph Pilates are compelling.

powerful center muscles of the body that the rest of us mostly just let hang out (Stephens 16).

In this sense, the core is in part, responsible for creating the aesthetic of ballet's effortless. Additionally, Jennifer Homan in *Apollo's Angels* (2010) suggests that ballet trains the body in elements like core strength, precision, and restraint (511). Following ballet's artistic aesthetic, the upward lift of the abdominals allows a ballet dancer the freedom of movement to elongate or extend his or her legs, as well as draw his or her body up vertically, in opposition from the floor. In sum, the ethereal levitation which a ballerina achieves *en pointe* is accomplished by a strong upwardly lifting abdominal core, as well as incredible strength in the legs and feet. Ballet's use of the core, in this sense, is similar to the function of the core in Pilates. Yet, where one is an artistic dance expression, the other is an exercise technique. Perhaps it should come as no surprise that many ballet dancers practice Pilates!

This leads into another important component in the Pilates practice, and directly relates to the proper use and muscular facilitation of the core abdominal muscles: external rotation. External rotation in the legs in ballet is important in maintaining the balletic aesthetic, just as it is in Pilates. Countless hours are spent in ballet classes developing, shaping, and maintaining a ballet dancer's external rotation. From a Pilates perspective, Fiasca maintains

pre-positioning femurs in external rotation can activate the six deep external rotators and strengthen the inner thigh and buttocks muscles. These muscles are essential aspects of the "girdle of strength," as Joseph Pilates called the powerhouse, and should not be neglected. External femoral rotation is also responsible for creating more stability when the body is standing upright (72).

In Pilates, we can see this most clearly through the “Pilates Stance,” (see Figure 4.1, Chapter 4) where the legs are slightly externally rotated at the femur/acetabulum intersection. This position, as Peak Pilates suggests, encourages a deeper connection to the midline (or core) of the body (*Instructor’s Manual 2*). According to Fiasca, the importance of the upright and vertical spine in relationship to the external rotation of the femur is biomechanically significant because it creates more standing stability. While the scientific references to justify external rotation in Pilates are commendable, they are also aesthetically and culturally significant.³⁹ Pilates use of external rotation in the “Pilates Stance” not only mimics a once common weight lifting and gymnastics stance, but also, the aesthetic found in ballet.⁴⁰

In summary, from a contemporary kinesiological perspective (with which Pilates is in accord), the pelvis is seen as a structural component that is physically linked to the muscles of the core of the body. Yet all of the ways we can understand the core are culturally and historically specific, and I suggest that the kinesiological perspective of the core in Pilates is culturally more Western. Although highly useful, a person does not need to understand the muscle attachments, ligament structures, and engagement patterns of the core in order to dance. The movement and engagement of the core and pelvis are

³⁹ While I theoretically understand this perspective, I would argue that the body can find similar strength and stability in the “anatomical position,” or when the legs and feet are in parallel (Calais-Germain, 1993, 1). Furthermore, an illusion of external hip rotation could be created with the hips in parallel. If the placement of the femur in the acetabulum was actually in parallel, and *tibial torsion* (or a structural rotation of the tibia) pivots the ankle joint so the toes point outwardly. Although not in external rotation, this hip position has just as much balance and stability.

⁴⁰ Stacy Redfield-Dreisbach in her lecture “Physical Culture: The History of an Industry” at the Pilates Method Alliance Conference in Long Beach, CA on November 6, 2010, suggested that the Pilates stance was derived from the weight lifting stance. This weight lifting stance was used in German physical fitness, and one to which Joseph Pilates was exposed to in the 1890’s and early 20th century.

critical for a successful performance of both ballet and Graham Technique. Graham Technique initiates movements from the pelvis, core, breath, and spine. From my experiences, I suggest that in ballet, the pelvis is a central place of balance, and moves with the body but does not *originate* or initiate movement within the body.⁴¹ The pelvis acts as more a critical foundation from which the legs, extension, and balance grow. I suggest this foundation is very similar to the function of the pelvis in Pilates. The next section concludes this chapter by re-evaluating the pelvis' immobility in the Pilates exercises and theorizes how to interpret this behavior from racial and cultural perspectives.

Area 2:
THE PILATES EXERCISES REVISITED

Each one of these three exercises serves a slightly different analytical purpose, and one may be better suited for this project's argument than the other. However, the choice to use these three exercises is deliberate: they illustrate how the pelvis is intentionally stabilized and quieted. The embodied biomechanical elements of Pilates, as seen in the core's muscular facilitation of axial elongation/spinal lengthening, pelvic stabilization, and the way they are deliberately trained into the body, I argue, further inscribes the previously discussed Europeanist aesthetic values. "Single Leg Stretch" and "Leg Circles" and "Quadruped Facing Foot" can be understood through their markings of specific Europeanist cultural values: lengthening, toning, balance, and symmetry. They can also be evaluated for the ways the muscles are specifically conditioned to accentuate the development of the core, and conceal the action and development of the hips. As was

⁴¹ See Brenda Dixon Gottschild's work in *Digging* (1998).

noted earlier, part of the troubling power of whiteness is in its ability to be visible and simultaneously invisible. Said differently, the behavioral characteristics of whiteness are normalized and privileged, while bodily behaviors outside of the ‘norm’ are condemned. I take issue with Pilates in that it problematically *masks* this normalizing process by emphasizing how spinal elongation and core strength is biomechanically necessary for the health of spine. Pilates asserts the kinesiological and biomechanical importance the core through its written manuals and teaching methodologies, thereby justifying the erasure of other movements. This chapter illustrated that moving, circumducting, swaying, or swirling the pelvis, as previously discussed through the Latina, black and *mulatta* hips, marks movements of the racial “other.” I put forth that Pilates normalizes the whiteness within its practice, thus further contributing to problematic embodied discourses. Whiteness and power are inextricably linked, and the appearance of and construction of the corporeal reinforces what is or is not considered a legitimate social body. By utilizing how scholars have located the hips as a site where racial stereotypes have been situated, we can analyze the movements of Pilates from a racial perspective. This section suggests that whiteness is localized in the disciplining of the hips in exercises like the “Single Leg Stretch” and “Front Leg Pull- Support” where the hips are immobilized, stabilized, and “quieted.” In this last section, I seek to demonstrate not only how Pilates mirrors many of the European aesthetics, but does so through its neurological training or disciplining of the pelvis, and de-emphasis of the muscular structure surrounding the hips. Ultimately, I argue that the three Pilates exercises consciously

create an invisible/unregistered embodied “currency” of racialized kinesthetic knowledge: or in this case – the *unconscious* performance of whiteness.

Gottschild’s work in *The Black Dancing Body* (2003) methodologically dissects the black body, and in conjunction with the racial stereotypes and legacies of slavery, illustrates how the black body was colonized, dissected, and “mapped” by its stereotypes. Instead of being understood and viewed as one working ‘human’ unit, Gottschild’s analysis illustrated how the racial stereotypes broke down the black body into its parts: skin, butt, hair, and feet. Not only does the black body and its parts carry stigma, but as Gottschild suggests *movements* of black body parts are also racialized. With respect to the core and torso, recall from earlier, “...Polycentrism [more than one center] runs counter to academic European aesthetics, where the ideal is to initiate movement from one locus – the nobly lifted, upper center of the aligned torso, well above the pelvis” (Gottschild, 1998, 14). The movement of the Africanist core is different from the movement in the Europeanist core: one moves fluidly as a democratic participant in the body, the other (Europeanist) controls how the body’s participants will move.

First, I would like to draw attention to the discourses commonly found in Pilates instructor manuals, and more specifically to the manner in which they examine muscle groups, areas of movement initiation, places of stabilization and elongation, and in my opinion, over-emphasize these ideas in the learning process. While I am not critiquing the correctness of the biomechanical perspective, I suggest that we should be careful to acknowledge that the biomechanical perspective is not universal, and that there are potentially problematic underlying concerns within it. I suggest that many of the terms

used in Pilates instruction manuals have strong gendered, class, and cultural implications. The constant practice, repetition, and verbalizations of the biomechanical/scientific approach, I argue, instills racialized tropes in the body. For example, verbalizations like “dissociation,” “precision,” “control,” “endurance,” and “corseted” suggest a somewhat dogmatic, almost mechanized instruction for the body. The rhetoric that pervades much of Pilates has, I argue, affects the body and mind through its language. Pilates physically and linguistically infiltrates the body, regulates its movements, and justifies this practice through science and health. Pilates rhetoric dictates how the body “can” and “should” or “should not” move. The hips in Pilates are stripped of extraneous movements in order to become quiet and unthreatening. By consequence, the spine becomes elongated, and the body becomes more “regal.” I put forth that these iterations are very different from Gottschild’s five African Aesthetics, specially Polycentrism/polyrhythm and Epehism.

To begin the analysis, recall Gottschild’s discussion of the “get-down” stance in the Africanist Aesthetics. We can use the same analysis to broaden our interpretation and understanding of “Single Leg Stretch” and “Leg Circles” as well as further clarify Pilates similarity to Europeanist values. “Single Leg Stretch” and “Leg Circles” are both supine position, or said differently, make the body’s orientation to gravity so that the hip muscles are not the primary weight bearing muscles.⁴² There are some teaching methods which reinforce the engagement of the gluteus muscles, so that they can assist, guide, and support the legs, while simultaneously stabilizing the pelvis. In this capacity, the

⁴² Historically speaking, the supine position developed from Joseph Pilates work with injured soldiers in WWI. From a contemporary perspective, the supine position aids in injury rehabilitation because of its non-weight bearing environment.

relationship between the heel, core, inner thigh, and the “sitz” bone (located at the base of the pelvis) is critical, according to Peak Pilates, in the performance and execution of this exercise. The neuromuscular connection between these areas of the body works to “oppositionally lengthen” the lower limbs from the body’s central axis. This action, in turn, facilitates a deeper connection with movements emanating from the core. Yet since this exercise is a supine, non-weight bearing activity, the muscles of the hips are not the primary movers. Instead, they are classified or considered as “accompanying muscles” (Isacowitz 82). The primary stabilizers of this exercise, and those that are the most activated/stressed/developed, are the muscles of the torso and core -- and consequently de-accentuate the development of the gluteus muscles. According to Rael Isacowitz in *Pilates Anatomy* (2011), “[Single] Leg Stretch is a valuable stability exercise that emphasizes the abdominals. The abdominals work in multiple roles to keep the trunk lifted, maintain contact between the lower back and the mat, and keep the abdominal wall pulled in. This abdominal action is necessary to maintain pelvic and spinal stability...” (83). Thus requiring the muscles of the torso to work to support, elongate, and protect the spine is precisely where this racial disciplinary patterning in the body begins. Although it is very difficult to argue with “health,” and harder to argue with “science,” in much of the Pilates educational exercise analysis, the attention on the core diverts from the pelvis.⁴³

⁴³ As an aside, there is a strong correlation in female reproductive rights, women’s physical fitness, and science. Science, under the guise of “reproductive safety,” has influenced the nature and practice of women’s physical fitness for centuries. One can see how certain political platforms influenced the physical appearance of women’s bodies by looking at the changes in women’s physical fitness between the late 1800s and into the mid 1930s. An archival documentary, narrated by Linda Hunt, *Fit: Episodes in the History of the Body* (1994) provides a unique turn-of-the century analysis of “America’s fitness fanaticism” from a race, class, and gendered perspective.

The privileging of the core over the pelvis suggests a reluctance to highlight the pelvis, and instead fanatically emphasizes and scientifically justifies the core. Additionally, Recall Hagins' discussion of the "TA" (transversalis) and the use of "global" and "local" language. While scientific in context, it resonates with somewhat troubling and colonizing-like language. The superficial "heavy lifters" of the body are secondary to the "local" or more highly valued muscles of the deep core. The overzealous almost obsessive drive to contain the movements of the pelvis, and *only* utilize or strengthen the gluteus muscles *when necessary* is problematic.⁴⁴ As if, again, use of the pelvis and the muscular development, much less the *overdevelopment*, of the gluteus muscles is somehow taboo.

Although the "Single Leg Stretch" and "Leg Circles" exercises reiterate the same principles in "Quadruped Facing Foot", they differ in the "allowable" or "permissible" range of movement of the legs. The primary exercise goal of "Leg Circles" according to Peak Pilates is to challenge the "core" of the body. Additionally, according to the Classical approach, the core's action (or "scooping") elongates the lumbar curve thereby allowing it to maintain contact with the moving carriage, and stabilizing the pelvis. As the legs' circle, they draw away from the abdominal area, while at the same time, the abdominal area draws the legs into the centerline of the body. The legs movements are deliberately segregated from the core, as the legs are instructed to move "up" and "out" from the core, so as to create length and opposition in the body. Peak Pilates suggests that the goal of this exercise is to "improve the symmetrical alignment of the legs"

⁴⁴ A common phrase in Pilates is "as much as necessary as little as possible" (Polestar, P-F, 35). This encourages the idea of neurological efficiency in the body.

(*Instructor's Manual* 12). However, as in “Single Leg Stretch,” because of the body’s supine position, the buttocks or hips are not primary stabilizers as they would be in the standing position.⁴⁵ In a supine position, the hips can strengthen, but only up to a certain point (perhaps that is why Peak Pilates uses the word “tone” to describe the buttock in this exercise). The body’s supine position shapes the muscles of the hips very differently than in Gottschild’s “get-down” stance.⁴⁶ Again, the body is trained to keep the pelvis still, and as the spine is elongated, the legs stretch out and around in a large circle. The *movement* of the legs emanating from the core, and the corresponding *stillness* of the pelvis becomes more valued. Recall that the Pilates instructor’s manuals suggest *the circumference of the circles is only as big as the client’s ability to keep the pelvis still*. If the pelvis destabilizes/moves, then the legs circles are too big: the core controls the movement of its disciples.

Valued embodied characteristics of the Pilates work, which “Quadruped Facing Foot,” “Single Leg Stretch” and “Leg Circles” also facilitate in the body are: breath, external rotation, correct spinal positioning, strengthening the chest, back, and training coordinated movement. They are also characteristics of the white ideal and European aesthetics. Recall Dyer’s analysis of the white body and spirit, “... a hard, lean body, a dieted or trained one, and upright, shoulders back, unrelaxed posture, tight rather than loose movement... all of these are the ways the white body and its handling display the fact of the spirit within (23-24). Recall too, Borrelli’s discussion around the racialized

⁴⁵ The Pilates education and equipment manufacturer, “Balanced Body,” makes a piece of equipment called “CoreAlign®” where the client is in a standing position while practicing Pilates.

⁴⁶ What has not been evaluated is if there are different cultural aversions and/or partialities to the use of the floor. In Western modern dance practices like Graham technique, the dancer’s use of the floor for training and conditioning is paramount.

stereotypes of the Latina and *mulatta* hips, and “its existence as a product that can dazzle, dodge, divert, and hip-notize” (Borelli 142). The Pilates hips in all of these exercises, have been completely and deliberately restricted. Any movement of the hips in Pilates -- either in the way the exercises are taught or how they are verbalized --- is not encouraged; almost as if movement of the pelvis in these exercises, in some way, was unsanitary or morally unsafe. The obsessive attention to the core, and the stabilization of the hips, points to common “whitening” theme: pelvic control and Europeanist aesthetic value.

In conclusion, this chapter examined how three different Pilates exercises trained the pelvis to be more stable and controlled. I also sought to express how Europeanist behaviors resist the movement of the hips and butt, and instead, replaced them with the vertical spine and a fanaticism with the core. By using the racial stereotypes regarding the movement, size, and behavior of non-white hips, we can more clearly understand the behavior of “white” hips and butt, as mute and restricted. Through the act of restricting the movement of the hips, Pilates racially disciplines the body to become more “whitened” thus disallowing the stereotyped movements of the racialized “other” body. The three Pilates exercises consciously create an invisible/unregistered embodied “currency” of racialized kinesthetic knowledge: or in this case – the performance of whiteness. In this respect, white women who participate in Pilates or other cultural “whitening” practices may not recognize the very deliberate behaviors which operate to

separate themselves from racial minorities.⁴⁷ As we will see, much of the educational rhetoric used to teach the Pilates Principles also emphasizes upper-class ideologies of bodily comportment. The next chapter examines the Pilates Principles and the ways they work to inscribe performativities of upper-class behaviors in the body.



Figure 2.8: Author Using Tactile Cues to Stabilize a Student's Pelvis

⁴⁷ I suggest that “whitening practices” are material and embodied behaviors that mimic or emulate mainstream images of white female American idealness through body, hair, make-up, clothing, food, demeanor, and physicality.

CHAPTER THREE

Classing the “Classical” Pilates Principles: Demonstrations of Discipline and Bodily Comportment

“The body’s posture is a mirror that reflects the internal self to the outside world,
including attitudes, ideas, and feelings.”

Peak Pilates System I Instructor Manual, 2009, 2.

In the socioeconomically upper-class predominately white neighborhood, of Santa Monica, California there are six different Pilates studios located in-between 7th and 18th Streets off Montana Avenue alone. As newcomer to the area in November 2006, I meandered through my new community to familiarize myself with the neighborhood. Strolling down the street, I noticed many young women enjoying their mid-morning “Starbucks” at outside tables, and boasting their toned, exceedingly slender, well poised, donned in the latest fashionable exercise clothing, bodies. Their smiling faces, which touted smooth, slightly “sun-kissed,” unblemished white skin made me feel slightly uncomfortable and somewhat out-of-place. In my wandering, letting the scenes, smells, and sounds from my new community wash over me, I noticed there was a Pilates studio on almost every block.¹ What does the prevalence of Pilates studios, and the bodies in this neighborhood, tell me about the new area in which I find myself? Can the composure and “carriage” of bodies, shaped by physical activities like exercise, be specific to a particular area?

¹ I loosely borrow from Lena Hammergren’s work, “*The re-turn of the Flaneuse*” (1996) in the describing of my wanderings through the streets of Santa Monica.

Over the past 13 years I have witnessed, observed, overheard, and realized that Pilates profoundly influences and disciplines bodies. I have seen, time and time again, the positive and potentially problematic discourses that Pilates interjects into the participating body. There were times during my Pilates education and training, (the most recent being with Peak Pilates in the affluent, predominantly white city of Boulder, Colorado), when I was left perplexed. I did not fully understand *what* kinesthetic and cultural legacies were passing from one body to the next. The teaching environment and Principles of Pilates have neglected, and have not been critically evaluated for the embodied legacies that they house.

This chapter broadens our understanding of Pilates by looking more critically at the embodied class values in the Pilates Principles taught and understood today. The body's performance of cultural meaning is often unnoticed or obscured in historical studies, and dance studies can recover this oversight. Foremost, this chapter seeks to answer the question: do the six Classical Pilates Principles, as they are commonly taught, verbalized, and embodied, reinforce the type of bodily comportment and disciplining historically associated with the activities of upper-class socio-economic populations? Moreover, what issues and problems might understanding the Pilates Principles as a performance of upper socio-economic class raise?

This chapter examines how the body reproduces embodied appearances of "class," and I argue Pilates promotes these bodily gestures and mannerisms through its

Principles.² I put forth, there are embodied traits of “upper-classness,” constructed from their historical moment, and expressed in the Principles. I examine the embodiments of upper-class behaviors, and the activities traditionally affiliated with higher socio-economic values, and engage these findings with the Pilates Principles. According to Chris Shilling, “there are good reasons for why those in the dominant classes continue to make substantial investments in the body. This has much to do with the natural and biological *appearance* of physical capital” (126).³ The perceived value of “physical capital,” as Schilling maintains, is “the ability of dominant groupings to define their bodies and lifestyles as superior, worthy of reward, and as, metaphorically and literally, the embodiment of class” (2003, 122). This chapter proposes that the embodiment of the Classical Pilates Principles produce physical, culturally constructed upper-class behaviors whose have their roots in European courtly or “noble” class behaviors. By examining the Principles from this perspective, I hope to reveal the class based ideas surrounding the

² I understand the term “class” is defined and understood in a number of ways. For the purposes of this dissertation, I conceptualize class fluidly, existing more on a continuum. Gregory Mantsios in “Class in America – 2003” (2004) suggests that American’s tend to obscure how the systemic dynamics of class operate in capitalism. “Class” is a complicated matrix of social, political, economic, racial and cultural factors. This project suggests that the appearance of class in the body is a conscious demonstration of the health and control it takes to maintain the comportment that is associated or affiliated with that class. I am interested in the bodily behaviors and comportment afforded to those who belong to the financial upper economic sphere, since it is those physical practices which discipline and shape bodies, and become markers of financial upper economic class status. The term “class” often improperly assumes normalized behaviors. To some extent, this project uses those assumptions and normalizations to draw out how Pilates has also normalized bodily behaviors as “correct” patterns of movement. I am not using “class” as a term that defines a person’s moral character, yet I realize these ideas are mistakenly equated and normalized as well. Productions like *My Fair Lady*, *Cinderella*, *Pretty Woman*, or *Flashdance* are examples in popular culture where physical comportment, dress, make-up, and other behavioral markers illustrate how women transition from lower-class social and economic status to a higher-class social and economic status.

³ This project defines physical capital (after Chris Shilling’s “Educating the Body: Physical Capital and the Production of Social Inequalities” (1991) and his interpretation of Pierre Bourdieu’s work on social and ‘embodied’ capital) as “the methods by which the body has become a comprehensive form of physical capital; which possess power, status and distinctive symbolic forms which are integral to the accumulation of various recourses. The production of physical capital refers to the development of bodies in ways which are recognized as possessing value in social fields...” (Shilling, 1991, 111).

Principles of Pilates and are physically conditioning the body to reflect class-specific mannerisms. Said differently, I want to reveal previously unaccounted for issues of class housed in its principles and ultimately, effect/influence the people who practice Pilates. Furthermore, like Schilling suggests, I argue that if Pilates studios exist only in higher socio-economic arenas, then it perpetuates a certain kind of physical identity only affiliated and represented by and dutifully sustained by people in that area. In an area like Santa Monica, California (close in proximity to Hollywood), this kind of physical identity has a way of infiltrating systems like popular culture.

This chapter unfolds in four sections, and positions the Pilates Principles in context with historical, feminist, cultural, philosophical and dance scholarship on class. These frameworks better situate the Pilates Principles as a tool for upper-class comportment. Some of these scholarly ideas are perhaps dated, but are seminal in their findings. Other ideas are relatively new. Each source helps to locate or frame the Pilates Principles in a contemporary context. Section 1 examines the Classical Pilates Principles as they are taught, reproduced, and commonly understood today. Section 2 utilizes historical, feminist, cultural, and philosophical studies to examine how bodies are disciplined, regulated, and controlled through diet and physical fitness. These texts draw-out historically relevant issues specific to my concerns about the Pilates Principles. Out of these ideas, Section 3 examines dance studies scholarship regarding the embodiments and performances of class in bodies of physical culture, ballet, and the American Delsarte system. As suggested in the Introduction, we can learn more about Pilates from the ways it might differ from other movement practices like ballet, somatics, and yoga. We

gain from understanding how Pilates stands relative to these other practices. Lastly, with these new understandings, Section 4 returns to the Principles and reevaluates them through a dance scholarship lens. It utilizes my own experiences as a teacher trainer to better illustrate how class-based values in the Principles physically affect the body in practice.

Part 1: The “Classical” Pilates Principles

This area independently examines, devoid of critical analysis, the Classically-based Pilates Principles as they are conceived, taught, and understood both historically and in contemporary practice.⁴ Joseph Pilates’ theorized the six guiding Principles in his publications. Over time, his “disciples” excavated the theories from his work in order to help educate others about the intent of the practice.⁵ This section examines Joseph Pilates’ two publications *Return to Life Through Contrology* (1945) and *Your Health* (1934), as well as *The Pilates Method of Physical and Mental Conditioning* (2005) by Philip Friedman and Gail Eisen, and the Peak Pilates instructor manual. Each one of these publications describes the Classical Principles in slightly different ways, and for this reason is put in dialog with each other. What can be gained from examining these works in tandem is not necessarily the tension between their differences, but an

⁴ Many instructors will disagree with my use of “classical” or “classically-based” to describe these principles. Drawing from my understanding of the Pilates Method, as well as the work of Peter Fiasca in *Discovering Pure Classical Pilates: Theory and Practice as Joseph Pilates Intended, The Traditional Method vs. The Lies for Sale* (2009), I am using the terms “classical” and “classically-based” in this regard to describe the principles as how I believe, Joseph Pilates envisioned.

⁵ People in the industry often refer to Joseph Pilates’ students as “disciples,” which I suggest reifies the hagiographic approach to Pilates history, which is common today.

understanding of how the Classically-based interpretations of Joseph Pilates' theories did or *did not* evolve over time.⁶

The Classical Pilates Principles of movement, commonly known today, are Concentration, Centering, Control, Breathing, Precision, and Flowing Movement. According to Peak Pilates, “when isolated, these concepts are not unique. However, they become unique when applied holistically to [Pilates]” (6). In this regard, the *collective experience* of the Classical Principles encourages a more qualitatively based practice based on these movement characteristics. I suggest the Principles and the exercises are indivisible, they fit hand-in-hand with each other, and that one cannot exist without the other. According to my discussions with various Pilates teachers, the overarching intent of these Principles, (from one perspective) is to help students move in the way Joseph Pilates believed the body *should* perform when exercising. The process of embodiment of these Principles, or the expression of their movement qualities, is learned through a classroom setting, “how-to” books, and educational manuals. From my experiences, the most effective transmission of the Principles from teacher to student is found in the classroom or private “one-on-one” student session. In each situation, the instructor can verbally guide or cue the Principles as a part of the exercise practice.

The first principle of movement is “Concentration” and is where I turn your attention.

⁶ I put forth the value of the Classically-based principles is in their preservation over time. The preservation of these principles and their perpetuation through present day Pilates certification courses further aids my argument. Contrarily, Gary Calderone’s recent publication *The Pilates Path to Health* (2012) contextualizes Joseph Pilates’ work and its *evolution* in the 21st century.

Concentration

Joseph Pilates' philosophy regarding Concentration, I suggest, was deeply heartfelt to him. In *Return to Life Through Contrology* (1943) Pilates' wrote, "Concentrate on the correct movements. EACH TIME YOU EXERCISE [sic], lest you do them improperly and thus lose all the vital benefits of their value. Correctly executed and mastered to the point of subconscious reaction, these exercises will reflect grace and balance in your routine activities" (*A Pilates' Primer*, 14). According to Joseph Pilates, concentrating on the body's movements result in their mastery, and unconsciously instills grace and poise in the body. Although he did not specifically define "Concentration" as one of the Principles of movement, his point was clear. The foundation of this principle, set forth in 1943, was fully realized in 1980 by Friedman and Eisen. They translated Joseph Pilates' idea into a principle which is widely recognized today, stating "most [importantly], the [Pilates] method relies on **Concentration**. To do the movements properly, you must pay attention to what you are doing. No part of your body is unimportant; no motion can be ignored" (Friedman and Eisen 5). Concentration is one of the Principles in Classically based Pilates certification courses. The Peak Pilates instructor manual states,

our mind controls our body; therefore, to do the movements properly, we must concentrate fully. Joseph Pilates believed this deep focus would lead to mastering the movements until they became automatic and ingrained, and that focused concentration would increase total body proprioception. How right he was! This concentration, or inward focus, is a primary component of Pilates that separates it from calisthenics (6).

Peak Pilates integrates Joseph Pilates' theories about concentration with Friedman and Eisen's interpretation of his work. I suggest that Peak Pilates draws from Joseph Pilates' understanding of the "subconscious" and interprets that as "automatic" and "ingrained."

Peak Pilates also recommends the following directives to new instructors:

When working on Concentration:

- Focus deeply and inwardly to master the movements.
- Be aware of every part of the body while performing the exercises.
- Listen to cues and incorporate them into the practice.
- Focus on the task at hand. Let go of the details of daily life, which distract from deep concentration.
- Remember that concentration is a skill that will improve with practice (6).

Notice the directions for the new instructor to teach students about concentration emphasize the mental control of the body *and* the mind. A student is directed to "let go of the details of daily life" and that "concentration is a skill that will improve with practice." In practice, an instructor might elect to verbally cue this principle saying, "focus on your body," or "concentrate on the task at hand," or "listen to your body." These verbal cues allow students to understand better the principles of concentration *as* they move through the exercises.

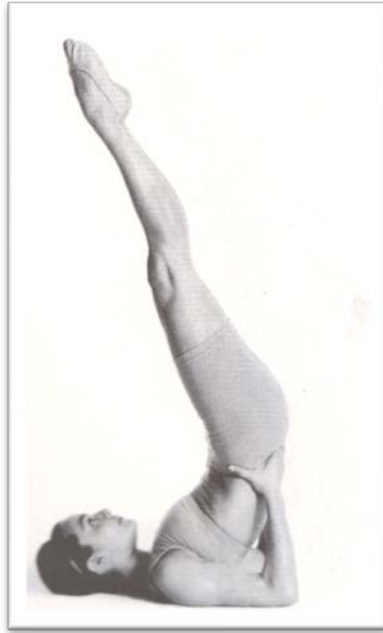


Figure 3.1: Julianna Demonstrating Concentration in the Advanced “Bicycle” Exercise

Centering

Around 1943, Joseph Pilates wrote that *Contrology* is “a unique trinity of a balanced body, mind, and spirit,” thus in theory creating a balanced and centered person (*Return to Life Through Contrology, A Pilates’ Primer*, 23). Loosely drawing from this idea, Friedman and Eisen describe Centering as an overall awareness of the Pilates center (i.e. core or powerhouse) of the body (15). Furthering Friedman and Eisen’s ideas, the Peak Pilates instructor manual states, “the powerhouse is the focal point of all Pilates exercises, and all movement comes from the center -- not through it. Learn how to work using the Centerline of the body as a reference point, and how to initiate movement from the center of the body outward toward the periphery” (6). Peak Pilates also recommends the following directives:

When working on Centering:

- Remember that every exercise has as its goal the development of the powerhouse.
- Initiate movement from the center with good alignment so that the limbs are free to move without strain.
- Move from the center with opposition, to create length.
- Create a centered mind and body, not just during your session, but in all of your life (6).

In addition to the emphasis on the powerhouse and creating length and opposition in the body, notice how Peak Pilates explains that centering the mind and body can also impact “all of your life.” The inference is that a centered, calm, focused lifestyle, one that is free of any distractions, is preferable. From a practical perspective, instructors might verbally cue this exercise by asking students to “lengthen your body out into space,” or “reach for the sky with your arms and legs as you deepen your center.”

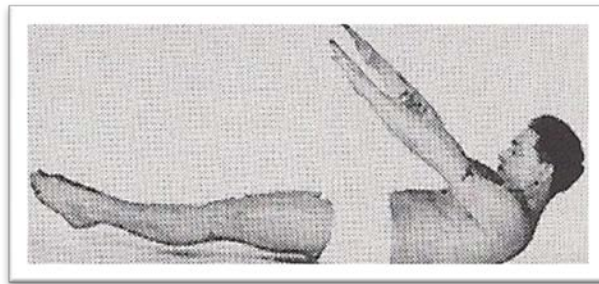


Figure 3.2: Joseph Pilates Demonstrating Centering in the “Hundred” Exercise

Control

Perhaps one of the most significant characteristics of Pilates, I suggest, is Control. Joseph Pilates stated the goal of *Contrology* is to gain “mastery of the mind over the complete control of the body” (*Return to Life Through Contrology, A Pilates’ Primer*,

9).⁷ In this case, the body surrenders to the will and control of the mind. Friedman and Eisen explain

nothing about the Pilates Method is haphazard. The reason you need to concentrate so thoroughly is so you can be in control of every aspect of every movement. [For example], Suzanne Farrell has been a principle dancer with the New York City Ballet and a guest soloist of worldwide renown. She is someone whose control of her body is as complete as anyone would want. ... sloppiness carries over into our everyday life (14).

According to Friedman and Eisen, “every aspect” of the body’s movement is *under* the control of the mind. Notice also Friedman and Eisen’s attention to a ballerina, as an example of someone who demonstrates supreme mastery of one’s body. Additionally, we gather that “sloppiness” resides on the opposite spectrum of bodily control, and I suggest, negatively perceived. Drawing more directly from Joseph Pilates earlier quote about Centering, the Peak Pilates instructor manual maintains that Pilates brings “together all the parts of the mind and body into a physical movement experience. [Joseph] Pilates’ believed that exercise without control would not reap the benefits of the exercises. In Pilates, every movement matters and is coordinated, efficient and smooth. To reach mastery in Pilates you must control every part of the body at all times” (6).⁸ In the truest sense, the body must subsume itself to the mind. The Peak Pilates instructor manual educates new teachers with the following directives:

⁷ Obviously, this principle stands in contrast to Centering. It is not my intension to draw out the tensions between the principles themselves, rather, to illustrate what these principles, both from an individual and collective standpoint, are creating in contemporary bodies.

⁸ "Pilates" was referred to as “The Art and Science of Contrology” when Joseph Pilates first created the practice.

When working on Control:

- Coordinate and control the body, the mind, and the breath to allow change to happen at a physical and emotional level.⁹
- Perform each movement in a rhythmical, controlled manner.
- Move with control, not momentum.
- Achieve good alignment when the entire mechanism of the body is under perfect control.
- Think “effort with ease” (6).

Notice how Peak Pilates explains that control of the body can allow for physical and *emotional* change. Apparently, gaining control of one’s emotions is an unintended benefit of the Pilates practice. Additionally, note the suggestion that a student should work “effort with ease” during Pilates, moving in a rhythmically controlled manner, absent of momentum. In the classroom, instructors might cue Control by guiding students to use less moment. For example, they might say “as much as necessary as little as possible.” This statement loosely means to work with muscular ease by not overexerting any part of the body with “unnecessary” or over strenuous muscular involvement.

⁹ In my experience watching and observing other teachers, I find it troubling that for an exercise practice that strives to develop inner strength, or “core” strength, many Pilates teachers will ignore or discount the emotional experience of its participants. Martha Eddy states, “emotional experience often times becomes neutralized or otherwise confined by the ‘universality’ of bodily experience” (Eddy 5).

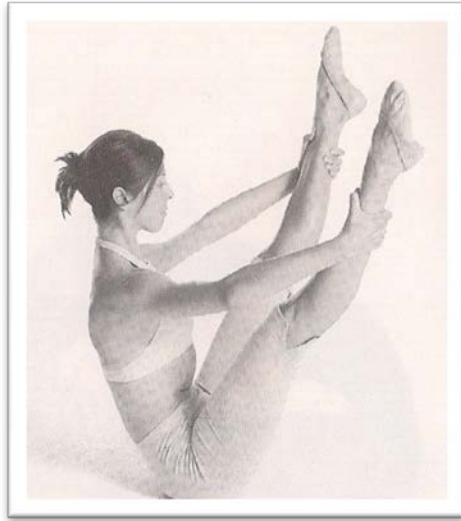


Figure 3.3: Dana Demonstrating Control in the “Open Leg Rocker” Exercise

Breathing

I suggest that learning how to breathe properly was a critically important idea to Joseph Pilates. He stated “to properly deflate the lungs is an art in itself, and this final step in correct breathing is least understood” (*Your Health, A Pilates’ Primer*, 138).

From this, Friedman and Eisen surmised the principle of Breathing as “full and thorough inhalation and exhalation are part of every Pilates exercise. Joe saw forced exhalation as the key to full inhalation. ‘Squeeze out the lungs as you would ring a wet towel dry,’ he used to say” (16). Breathing completely and fully, in this regard, “cleanses” the body of impurities through full oxygenation of the blood (*Return to Life Through Contrology, A Pilates’ Primer*, 13).¹⁰ From the Classically-based educational perspective, Peak Pilates recommends the

natural rhythm of the breath enhances fluidity of movement
and sets the rhythm of an exercise. Joseph Pilates

¹⁰ The reader may notice how similar these directions are to those practiced in yoga. Chapter 5 examines the implications of Joseph Pilates involvement with yoga.

understood the link between inhalation and exhalation. He knew that complete exhalation facilitates a full inhalation, which allows for increased oxygen supply to all cells with increased waste removal. Deep, full breaths increase effectiveness exponentially. Practice and teach full exhalation to stimulate breathing, facilitate core support, and intensify the movement (7).

In this case, breathing correctly means that each inhalation and exhalation should fill and empty the entire lung cavity. Notice Peak Pilates attention to the notion of cellular “waste removal.” Suggesting that to breathe more fully will heighten or facilitate a “better” exchange of oxygen and carbon dioxide. According to Peak Pilates, the breath is directly related to core support, and level of movement intensity. The Peak Pilates instructor manual educates students to practice the following:

When working with Breathing:

- Inhale and exhales through the nostrils and focus on exhaling fully.
- Complete, thorough, and purifying – use lateral, upper lobe, and back breathing rather than deep abdominal breathing.
- Connect the mind and body with the breath – focus on your exhalation to deepen into the powerhouse.
- Generally, inhale during the extension and also with the point of effort.
- Generally, exhale during flexion, twisting, and rotation to facilitate the “wringing out of the lungs.”
- Don’t let students get “hung up” in the breath, just remind them to breathe.
- Generally, inhale as the carriage goes out and exhale as it returns (7).

Again, the breath is “purifying” and “deepens” the connection to the core. Fiasca explains that “In [the Classical Pilates], we inhale and exhale calmly, slowly, and with ease, avoiding any tightening around the chest, or tension in the neck or the jaw.

Breathing quietly, rather than forcefully, during the exercises is important because it can

carry over to daily life and function” (75). In this regard, the breath is quiet, controlled, and calm, not something that is effortful, forceful, or violent. In the classroom, instructors might elect to guide students verbally by saying “breathe completely and deeply,” or “let the breath guide the movement.”

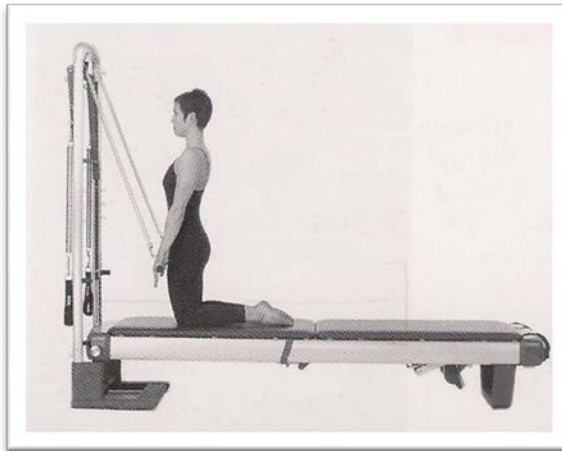


Figure 3.4: Peak Pilates Model Demonstrating the Inhalation on the “Chest Expansion” Exercise

Precision

Joseph Pilates wrote “Contrology is not a system of haphazard exercises designed to produce only bulging muscles” rather, exercise must be direct and exact, not something that imbalances the musculature of the body (*Return to Life Through Contrology, A Pilates’ Primer*, 14). Over 35 years later, Friedman and Eisen state that “concentrating on precision of motion and precision of placement creates a kind of bodily fine tuning that carries over into everyday life as grace and economy of movement” (16). Precision, in this sense, literally translates to the embodiment of grace and efficiency. Furthering these ideas, the Peak Pilates instructor manual explains:

precision builds on Concentration and Control. In Pilates, it's not just what you do – it's how you do it. Every movement has a purpose; every cue or instruction is important to the movement's successful execution. Precise movement in reference to one's own body frame and anatomy is corrective and produces significant results. Classical Pilates uses few repetitions and a large variety of movements so that precision can be practiced without fatigue and is frequently reinforced. Working with precision helps to re-educate faulty movement patterns, allowing for proper alignment and helping to prevent injury (16).

According to Classically-based ideology, Precision is an important component of the Pilates work since the precise alignment of each exercise facilitates effective movement and staves off injury (Peak Pilates 16). Both Peak Pilates and Friedman and Eisen suggest that the embodiment of precise movements, as they are practiced in Pilates, carry over to behaviors of everyday life. Grace, economy of movement, and the “proper” body alignment are aspects of Precision that facilitate a healthy and injury-free body. Peak Pilates recommends that new instructors work with the following directives:

When working with Precision:

- Perform each exercise exactly as instructed.
- Execute and coordinate the movements with command of the mind over the body.
- Move from a specific place of beginning and ending.
- Elicit optimal muscular firing patterns with attention to detail and precision.
- Place the body with care, as if were a priceless vase (7).

Notice how Peak Pilates explains to “place the body with care, as if it were a priceless vase” suggesting a deliberate, careful, and reserved approach of bodily behavior or self-care. Peak Pilates recommends to “perform each exercise exactly as instructed,”

implying the successful student will pay attention and follow directions. Instructors may verbally cue Precision as “always hit your target!” or “every position has its place!” or “work with precision, no sloppiness!”

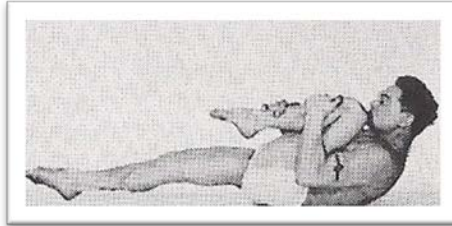


Figure 3.5: Joseph Pilates Demonstrating Precision in the “One Leg Stretch” Exercise

Flowing Movement

From my experience as a student, and as a teacher trainer, Flowing Movement is commonly the last Classical Pilates Principle learned in a Classically-based teacher training course. Although some might disagree, it is often the most difficult to achieve since, I suggest, it is the complete embodied integration of all the Classical Principles in practice. With respect to Flowing Movement, Joseph Pilates wrote “[Contrology] was conceived to limber and stretch muscles and ligaments to that your body will be supple as that of a cat...” (*Return to Life Through Contrology, A Pilates’ Primer*, 14). Although perhaps somewhat difficult to see the correlation, Friedman and Eisen developed this idea and stated “nothing should be stiff or jerky. Nothing should be too rapid or too slow. Smoothness and evenly flowing movement go hand in hand with control” (16). From an educational perspective, the Peak Pilates instructor manual states:

when Pilates is performed properly, it is light and fluid.
The ultimate goal is to move with greater grace and ease
within each exercise and also from exercise to exercise.

The increased flexibility and control created by regular discipline enhances the movement possibilities and enables them to be performed with greater fluidity. Working with Flowing Movement facilitates the functional translation of Pilates movements into daily life. Additionally, the creation of fluid movement will help to prevent trigger points from forming, as well as release those that may already exist (8).

Notice that the qualities of a “properly performed” Pilates exercise are “light,” “fluid,” and full of “grace” and “ease.” Notice too how Peak Pilates that Flowing Movement “facilitates the functional translation of Pilates movements into daily life.” Again, the perceived value of the Pilates exercises are ones that can discipline the body’s behavior to move in a very specific way. Classically-based Peak Pilates recommends that students follow the directives below:

When working with Flowing Movement:

- Link the breath and transition of each movement.
- Perform each movement smoothly and evenly without rushing or jerking.
- Work without stress or strain.
- Allow the natural flow of a movement to be dictated by its multi-joint actions and directional changes (8).

Notice Peak Pilates’ instructions to work “without stress or strain” and encourages students to “allow the natural flow” of movement to occur in the body. Many Classical teachers maintain that Pilates is an *indivisible* practice, meaning that one exercise flows continuously and seamlessly into another. As Fiasca explains “with energy, coordination and focus [on the exercises], we aim toward creating a symphonic arrangement of all our movements. Our mind is the orchestra conductor, and our body is the symphony. Each exercise has its own tempo, its own song, so to speak” (80). Although Joseph Pilates suggested that *Contrology* was the trinity of a balanced body, mind, and spirit, is it clear

that the mind has slightly more power over body. To facilitate this symphony of bodily movement, instructors might say, “move lightly, and effortlessly through your practice” or “smooth over the lines of your practice,” or “no sharp edges!” or “find the lightness from the exercise.”

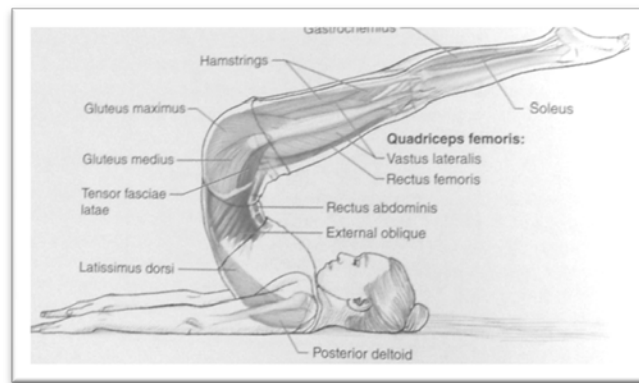


Figure 3.6: Illustration of Woman Demonstrating Flowing Movement in the "Rollover" Exercise

In conclusion, Peak Pilates states “sound movement is dependent on the Pilates Principles. Ideally, the Pilates Principles are applied consistently in every exercise and are consciously integrated into every workout” (MVe Instructor Manual 20). These Principles, when actively practiced, facilitate bodily change. According to Fiasca, the embodiment of these Principles reflects a person’s *values*, and in turn, helps guide a person’s individual choices. He states “it is also important to have awareness of what kind – and to what degree – we express various qualities of movement, such as suppleness, energy level, smoothness, sinewy strength, fluidity, sturdiness, luxuriance, and so forth. These movement qualities arise from expression of one’s values and imagination, and they direct one’s movement choices” (83-84). According to Fiasca,

personal values are embodied in the corporeal discipline of the body that is found through the Pilates Principles. One learns about their individual body, and the way it is publically presented, through the Pilates Principles. The Classical Principles as presented here, I suggest, have *not* changed significantly over time. Instead, in keeping with Joseph Pilates intentions, they have been reiterated and perpetuated through Classical-based Pilates educational manuals and at-home/how-to guidebooks. In this sense, I suggest the social values embodied in the Classical Pilates Principles remain static.

Part 2: Histories of Comportment of Bodies

This area narrativizes multiple histories that examine the disciplining and shaping of bodies in the United States. The chronology of selected scholarship extends as far back as the mid 1700s and reaches far forward into the 21st century. I utilize historical, feminist, philosophical, and cultural scholarship to construct a framework to gain a broad perspective about the disciplining practices of upper-class bodies. The choice of scholarship is by no means comprehensive. The selective and specific histories highlight how the white, disciplined body was perceived as socially superior, *because* of its restraint and control. It is important to examine these histories since it illustrates how social and cultural values, carried through bodies, evolve (or stay stagnant) over time. This scholarship illustrates that diet, emotional management, exercise, self-care, and posture all contribute to the demonstrations of upper-class behavior and normalize the appearances of a “desired” public self.

Much can be learned from Michel Foucault’s prominent, influential, and well-known work, *Discipline and Punishment: The Birth of the Prison* (reprinted 1991). I

examine this scholarship at length because much of his analysis can be used to situate the Pilates Principles from a new perspective. The theory of “bodily disciplining” develops, in large part, from Foucault’s examination of how the penal system coerced and shaped bodies, circa 1757. “Docile bodies,” according to Foucault, are bodies that can be manipulated, disciplined, punished, and are more or less compliant. He maintains the “ideal figure of the soldier” is the “bodily rhetoric of honor” (135). Foucault suggests the bodily figure and comportment of a good soldier is ““a lively, alert manner, an erect head, a taut stomach, broad shoulders, long arms, strong fingers, a small belly, thick thighs, slender legs and dry feet’” (quoting from Montgomery, 135). Soldiers embody specific bodily characteristics:

[hold] their head high and erect; to stand upright, without bending the back, to sticking out the belly, throwing out the chest and throwing back the shoulders; and, to help them acquire the habit, they are given to this position while standing against a wall in such a way that the heels, the thighs, the waist and the shoulders touch it, as one turns the arms outwards, without moving them away from the body... (135-136).

I suggest that the modern equivalent of this description is the Pilates stance and the Pilates axial-elongated spine. Foucault’s docile body is shaped, transformed, and controlled and we can learn more about the cultural values of the docile body by examining those who participate in disciplining practices.

The *economy* or efficiency of the body, and its regulation, normalization, and training practice becomes increasingly more important as Foucault examines how a disciplinary *time* was imposed on pedagogical practices like exercise (Foucault 159). Exercise programs, he suggests, “must take place during a particular stage and which

involves exercises of increasing difficulty” (Foucault 159). Time was used as a regulatory tool to “exercise power over men” through its arrangement (Foucault 162). Excise becomes increasingly more difficult, in the allotted time-frame that it has been given.

Foucault suggests that the success of disciplinary power depends on systemic elements like hierarchical observation, normalizing judgment, and processes of examination. Foucault discusses hierarchical observation from an *institutional* perspective and suggests that the power of the “all-seeing gaze” of the institutional observer reinforces and normalizes judgment (173). His analysis of “normalizing judgment” and “examination” discusses how bodies have become classified and disciplined through the development of the modern penal system, but realized through disciplinary practices like training and exercise. He suggests that “normalized” judgment is created by institutions of power, like factories, medicine, or schools. These institutions generate the ideas of what is considered to be “normal and “abnormal” and thereby reaffirm their power through the creation of status and a “homogenous social body” (184). A body that can be disciplined through exercise is reified, judged by normalizing powers, and then accepted as a homogenous social body.

I suggest one of the more poignant ideas in Foucault’s work is his analysis of scientific “examination” and the construction of the individual. He states:

The examination as the fixing, at once ritual and “scientific,” of individual differences, as the pinning down of each individual in his own particularity (in contrast with the ceremony in which status, birth, privilege, function are manifested with all the spectacle of their marks) clearly indicates the appearance of a new modality of power in

which each individual receives as his status his own individuality, and in which he is linked by his status to the features, the measurements, the gaps, the “marks” that characterize him and make him a “case”(192).

To Foucault, the individual is a construction of power. The more “abnormal” and by consequence, the more excluded a person becomes, the more he or she is negatively “marked.” Being an individual, in the sense that we understand it today, is not seen as having control over one’s life, rather, it is someone who is in need of institutionalization or furthering disciplining. Foucault suggests bodies need to be homogenous in order to operate and function successfully in society. I put forth that certain bodies exert more power over others, and those bodies deemed as more powerful because of the way they look, are normalized. Foucault’s theory of the docile and disciplined body aids in situating and contextualizing how bodies have been socialized, civilized, and trained.

I put forth that a docile body, once constituted through disciplinary systems like courtly etiquette, becomes a representation of the “civilized body.” While this is not a new idea, the representation of the “civilized body,” according to Shilling, stems from European courts and reflects power through its ability to be self-aware and exert control. The civilized body “has the ability to rationalize and exert a high degree of control over its emotions, to monitor its own actions and those of others, and to internalize a finely demarcated set of rules about what constitutes appropriate behavior in various situations” (Shilling 131). As bodies became increasingly more civilized they became “more aware of themselves [as individuals] and others as separate entities, and [exerted] more control over their bodies” (Shilling 145). Historically speaking,

court societies institutionalized highly detailed codes of bodily management that were used to differentiate between people on the basis of their relative worth. Sanctions were invoked against those who refused to follow court etiquette and there was a heightened tendency among people to observe and seek to mold themselves and others. In this context, bodies were placed at the very centre of the value system within court etiquette (Shilling 135).

The ability for a person to control himself became an important bodily value in court society, as punishment or “sanctions were invoked against” those who did not follow courtly etiquette. Yet, what does courtly etiquette look like? How does one behave at court? Recall that Jonas maintains to “succeed at court, a man of ambition had ... to preserve a certain dignity, albeit tempered with a lithe and airy grace of movement” (Jonas 74). I suggest that the roots of European courtly etiquette became associated with grace, emotional control, poise, vertical uprightness, and bodily carriage and these values became normalized over time with upper-class behaviors. The upper-classes were becoming more poised, upwardly lifted, regal in bodily carriage, and I suggest their bodies changed as a result of this behavior. In the United States and centuries later, upper-class bodies changed in appearance in another way: waistlines slimmed under the rhetoric of bodily control.

Building on Foucault’s and Schilling’s ideas, I transition into a historical examination of how American bodies, through the act of dieting, were socially and economically perceived as superior. Foucault alluded to the physical appearance of the military body (“a lively, alert manner, an erect head, a taut stomach, broad shoulders, long arms, strong fingers, a small belly, thick thighs, slender legs’ ...”) (Foucault, 135) in

the earlier analysis of docile bodies. I put forth that acts of dieting keeps the “small belly” or “slender legs” of the docile body. Dieting, according to Katherine Vester’s “Regime Change: Gender, Class, and the invention of Dieting in Post-Bellum America” (2010), was a system of bodily regulation that influenced upper-class persons. Vester suggests that *dieting* and its slimming effects became a method that illustrated one’s upper-class status and, in turn, manifested racial stereotypes. She examines American trends in late 19th century self-care and their relationship with class and racism.¹¹

According to Vester, dieting practices promised that a white man’s “influence, political power and social privileges would grow as [his] waistlines slimmed” (39). She explains

the new slender body ideal appropriated first by white men and eventually by white women also served to further exclude African Americans and immigrants from access to equal political and cultural representation. Since the advent of diet discourses in the US, people labeled as overweight were not only “othered.” In a mirror image, the racial and ethnic other was imagined as overweight, and thus as less disciplined, more sensual, and unfit to exercise social power. (40)

A male body’s *less* than slender appearance, or its corpulence, became the site of racist stereotypes regarding their aptitude for social power or politics. According to Vester, the dominant classes perceived fatter bodies as being less disciplined and more sensual. As she surmises, in Post-Bellum America, bodily mastery was an illustration of upper-class

¹¹ Much of my work prior to this project examined the histories of eugenics and the ideologies surrounding the ‘ideal body’ in the United States at the turn of the 20th century. Although this project does not undertake this topic as a primary focus, I suggest there is an undeniable relationship between the Pilates body and eugenic beliefs surrounding the ideal body.

behavior and whiteness and to over-weight bodies were racially and emotionally stereotyped.¹²

Historical speaking, Vester argues that willpower and dieting reflected racial and moral superiority. The first modern diet program, written by William Banting, *A Letter on Corpulence* (1863), stated that a person's weight was not hereditary but "could be willed down" (Vester quoting Banting, 42). According to Banting, his nutritional regime "promised weight loss for anybody educated and determined enough to follow it" (Vester 42). This set a precedent suggesting those who were neither "educated" nor "determined" were stigmatized as weak and lacking. Vester states "weight and body management became part of an evolving new race ideology connected to the desire for an American empire" (45). These eugenic ideologies and their ties to nationhood through acts like dieting are alarming. Those who took dieting one-step further, and embraced *fasting*, were even more highly regarded. So much so, the justification of fasting was "reframed" by the scientific community to suggest that dieting and fasting was a "sign of enormous willpower [and] was truly a masculine practice" (Vester 47). The slender male body "served the legitimization of class and race privilege on the assumption that control over food intake and body shape is evidence of superior morality and refinement" (Vester 59). As men began to slim down, the women's rights activists urged women to have "mastery over their bodies" as well, and to avoid being "plump" so they would be considered healthy and beautiful (Vester 39). Among other things, white while a man's

¹² The contemporary stereotypes and systemic problems surrounding the appearances of health, race, and the correlation to socioeconomic privilege continue to exist today.

slimmer body offered him promise of political power, a white women's slimmer body offered her the social acceptance of being beautiful.

Building from Vester's work, I maintain that in a 21st century American context, the practices surrounding physical fitness and bodily appearance perpetuates the relationship between social, economic, and moral power over others. Participation in physical practices that shape and mold the body in a specific way, like Pilates, insidiously reflects what the dominant groups value. Pirkko Markula's "'Tuning into One's Self: Foucault's Technologies of the Self and Mindful Fitness'" (2004) contextualizes Foucault's theories with exercises practices like Pilates, Yoga, T'ai Chi Ch'uan and "Western" strength training (302). She draws attention to the Greek practice of self-care and Foucault's understanding of power, stating:

The Greek's ethical self-care implied a relationship with others: the care for the self was always aimed at the good of others because it was designed for administering one's power in a non-dominant manner. In this sense the ethical care of the self can be understood as a conversion of power, because 'it is the power over self which will regulate the power over others' (Markula quoting Foucault). Consequently, today's individuals can play the games of power with a minimum of domination by engaging in care for the self (Markula 307).

Her reference to the Greek ideals of self-care should come as no surprise to many Pilates instructors. Yet equating bodily self-care as a reflection of power, albeit in a "non-dominant" manor, might be a new idea for some. I suggest Joseph Pilates' fixation with self-care stemmed from his fascination with the culture surrounding Greek and Roman

body care.¹³ Statues of Greek and Roman Gods, like Heracles, Zeus, Apollo, or Adonis, whose bodies display balance, muscular perfection, and self-discipline were coveted and used as the mark of an ideal. However, for Markula, self-care of the body was a tool which possessed power, although not forcefully, over other bodies. Self-care is the currency of power. To Markula, to appear as though one cared for their body, through the act of athletics, dieting, or muscle building, was a way to exhibit one's power.

Adding to this notion, Kenneth Dutton's work, *The Perfectible Body: The Western Ideal of Male Physical Development* (1995) states:

... the example of ancient Greece has all too frequently been invoked in societies obsessed with mastery and dominance by an elite group of "superior" members over those who, ... were considered less capable of embodying prevailing social ideals and thus of lesser inherent value in human terms ... (199).

The Greek ideals of bodily perfection apparently adopted by societies that wanted to exert power over other societies. According to Dutton, the non-dominant social groups were considered "less capable of embodying social ideas" and judged as less human. Recalling Dyer's work, those who did not exhibit control, restraint, and self-care in their bodies, were deemed incapable of receiving the Christian spirit, and by inference less holy or morally inferior. What athletes achieved for the ancient Greek culture of the body, I suggest exercise and 21st century physical fitness practices achieve for the contemporary body. Problematic discourses surrounding self-care continue to manifest

¹³ Gallagher's work displays pictures of Joseph Pilates' posturing his muscularly well-defined body. Many issues could have influenced Pilates' obsessive attention to his body. What we know about his biography suggests his sickliness as a child, German ideologies surrounding the body, or his parents could have been factors that influenced his career choices. Commonly overlooked are issues surrounding his sexuality.

themselves through Western contemporary physical fitness practices, like Pilates. I suggest that access to care of the body, through *exercise* modalities like Yoga, T'ai Chi Chuan, commonly affiliated with socioeconomic populations that have time and disposable income to afford such classes.¹⁴ If the physique of a Greek God was superior in times long ago, what does a morally and socially superior body look like today?

I suggest we can learn more about the appearances of upper-class bodies by examining how lower-class bodies or those without “class” are marked or stigmatized.¹⁵ If upper-class appearances have specific embodied characteristics, then does *classlessness* look like something else? Building on Markula’s work, we can understand more about the embodied formations of upper-class persons, and its normalization, through an examination of people judged as having “classlessness.” In a 21st century context, according to Alex Evans in “Greedy Bastards: Fat Kids, Class War, and the Ideology of Classlessness” (2010), the embodiment of class continues to take on a normative value specifically through exercise, diet, and control of the body. Evans suggests that class is not only embodied but naturalized as well. The process of naturalizing, or becoming a normalized value, is accomplished with practices like diet, physical fitness, and other forms of bodily control that closely intersects with one’s socioeconomic status. Evans states, “of course, there is nothing unquestionably ‘natural’ about the production of the body; it is always a site of discursive production and inscription” (148). We can discern that behaviors are groomed or disciplined in the body,

¹⁴ In the United States, I suggest, Yoga and T'ai Chi Chuan are generally recognized as exercise practices, rather than spiritual practices. Others believe that Yoga is a spiritual practice. See “Yoga Class Draws a Religious Protest” (2012).

¹⁵ The term class in this sense reflects social and moral characteristics of a person, rather than pertaining to economic factors alone.

and are not “natural” but rather socioeconomically formed. After Foucault, I put forth that a person’s socioeconomic *habitus* can be shaped by dominant systems of power. In many cases, those with higher socioeconomic status are arbiters of “right” and “wrong” social behaviors. Evans highlights how complicated and manipulative this relationship is by examining America’s “obesity epidemic” (162). Apparently, according to Evans, if fat bodies cannot be “saved” or turned into “legitimate” bodies, then they are criticized further. He states, “the ideological deployment of the ‘Obesity Epidemic,’ concentrated in the poor and lower class, is almost impressive in its elegance, telling us as it does that the poor working classes are lazy and greedy, and bolstering by opposition the idea that the bourgeoisie are dynamic and unselfish. ... the bourgeoisie has managed to construct *the poor and working class* as the greedy bastards” (162). Slender, upper class bodies are socially legitimate while fat, poor, or lower-class bodies are morally reprehensible. The fat body, according to Evans, “is used to create, in historically exigent form, the stubbornly, resistantly residual, classed subject: that is [a], lazy, refusenik, lower-class moron...” (Evans 162). The higher socioeconomic classes, according to Evans, manage to mark lower-class bodies as lazy and morally inferior through the fatness of their bodies.

Lastly, I conclude this narrative with another look at the idea of “classlessness,” but in this case, examined by Julie Bettie’s *Women Without Class: Girls, Race and Identity* (2003). She visibilized class behaviors of women by examining the social

behaviors in young teenage women (43).¹⁶ Teenage women who were not white, she found, displayed behaviors of “acting white” through their clothing, gestures, and hair styling. Bettie suggests teenage girls who were not white, and who did not dress, speak, or appear white, were otherwise perceived as lower-class. Their behaviors of “acting white” reflected the perceived appearances, behaviors, and mannerisms of upper-class white women. Yet, Bettie suggests the appearance and behavior of upper-class white woman seem to be one of the more troubling stereotypes. She explains “it is curious to most feminists, I’m sure, that the most despised creature in the leftist imagination appears not to be, say, a greedy white male CEO, but a middle-class or upper class *unproductive* white woman” (italics added 44). I suggest that the “unproductiveness” of this white, upper-class woman illustrates another kind of *class productivity* through her body: her class status manifests itself through the physical appearance and behavior of her body. Recall my meanderings down Montana Avenue in Santa Monica, California. At the time, I presumed that many of these women did not have traditional “full-time” jobs. I gathered that many of them had the time and money to take exercises classes, and have a leisurely coffee or lunch afterwards with their friends. Their “productiveness” and “value” was not measured in financial terms. According to Sherril Dodds, the “woman’s ‘exercise body’ serves a number of ideological purposes. Although this construction presents an empowering and independent image for women, it had been noted that the energy women invest in decorating and maintaining their bodies is a time-consuming

¹⁶ While I fear I have reduced and over-simplified the complexity of Bettie’s work I use it again here as a theoretical cornerstone. I suggest, like the authors in this Chapter argue, that the perception of class is embodied, stereotyped, and expressed through the way the body looks and acts.

regime” (Dodds 43). It is through this productivity that Schilling’s “physical capital” of the desired appearance of the body can be “acquired” through the time-consuming practice of exercise. The labor of creating the appearance of class identity may be visibilized in the body of the white, upper-class woman. While discussions of discipline, dieting, emotional control, and class are relevant to this chapter, what historical scholarship neglects is a deeper attention to the actual physical processes in which the body *becomes*. These physical processes provide and make meaning and tell us more about the body’s cultural environments.

Part 3: Dance Studies and the Performance of Class

Historical studies gains from the work of dance scholars because dance studies expands our understanding of how bodily demonstrations and performances of class work to control, mold, train, and reconstitute the body. Dance studies allows us to glean more from history because of its ability to understand how the moving body is both a site -- and shapes -- the production of cultural, social, and political meaning. This area examines, both from historical and contemporary vantage points, how dance studies scholars have argued for ways in which movement practices inscribe class values. More specifically, I examine arguments made by dance scholars about the Delsartian movement system, ballet, and ballroom dance. So I may put these ideas in context with the Pilates Principles in the final section of this chapter, I spend time detailing the Delsartian movement system, ballet, and ballroom dance in order to illustrate their similarities to the Pilates practice. However first, I examine the work of prominent dance

scholars, Cynthia Novak and Linda Tomko, in order to situate our understanding of how bodies *shape* culture and the multitudes of intersections therein.

This narrative begins rather broadly, and examines the significant work of Cynthia Novak's "Looking at Movement as Culture: Contact Improvisation to Disco" (2001). According to Novack, bodies can educate us about time, place, or lifestyle -- not as a repository for social, economic, or political values -- but as a creator of culture. She argues that the ways in which the body performs culture, through social dancing or codified dance techniques, can help us better understand historical *changes in cultures over time*. Novack argues

the body and movement are social realities interacting with and interpreting other aspects of culture. Structured movement systems like social dance, theater dance, sport and ritual help to articulate and create images of who people are and what their lives are like, encoding and eliciting ideas and values; they are also a part of experience, of performances and actions by which people know themselves (405).

The "structured movement" activities in which people participate helps to form people's bodies, and this participation not only educates people about themselves, but alerts others to what their lives, and subsequent values, might be. The *perception* of bodies both informs and is informative to self and others. Bodies that change over time can educate us about the changes over time in culture. While Novack's ideas on examining the nuanced differences in body practices tell us more about changes in culture, I suggest too, that Novack's ideas can be used to stabilize just the opposite. Perhaps movement practices that have *not* changed over time reflect the perpetuation of certain cultural

values.¹⁷ For example, I question the degree to which physical culture, and the bodies which shaped it over the past two centuries, have changed.

We can build upon Novack's work and deepen our understanding of the relationship between culture and bodies, by examining how gender, class, and movement intersect with each other. Linda J. Tomko's seminal work, *Dancing Class: Gender, Ethnicity, and Social Divides in American Dance, 1890-1920* (1999) examines how bodies *were informing class* and *being informed* by class labor. I draw attention to this work not only for its findings, but also because to illustrate how Tomko's work can shed light on Dodd's exercising body, and the "unproductive" upper-class white female body.

Tomko accounts for the predominance of women in dance between 1890 and 1920 by examining the body as the site of evidence that shapes and informs history. Tomko examined the changes in American economic life and these economic changes altered the nature of work, identities, and specific spheres of capitalist production (1). She describes a number of different types of bodies that shaped, and were shaped by, these changes: *laboring* bodies, *urban* bodies, and the four different bodies of physical culture: *extensive* bodies, *poised* bodies, *well-rounded* bodies and *relaxed harmonious* bodies. Laboring bodies made limited range of motions, and "labored at top speed with few breaks during ten-hour working days, workers in this industry were routinized and pushed to the limits of their endurance" (Tomko 8). The urban bodies of the working class and immigrant

¹⁷ For example, I question what the evolution of techniques from the "Traditional" or "Classical" method into the more "Evolved" approach suggest about changes in Western cultural values? I suggest that the shift in the Pilates technique that incorporates more scientific and biomechanical rehabilitative ideas reflects how Western American values (both negatively and positively) have changed and broadened over time. While some may say the incorporation of science is more progress, others might argue that it sterilizes the work, and by doing so, risks preserving the original exercises entirely.

groups were at risk for “imprinting by laboring process” because their bodily labor marked and transformed the body (Tomko 8). According to Tomko, urban bodies were at risk of immature development, due to the cramped working and living spaces, and limited access (primarily due to safety and family size) to run and physically develop. Physical culture during this era also worked to construct the “American” body. Tomko maintains that “systems of bodily exercise took as postbellum given that American bodies needed assiduous cultivation” (11). As Tomko suggests, the *extensive* body stemmed from the German systems of bodily development, and used apparatus to shape and condition its form. “People used such apparatuses [vaulting horses, rings, horizontal bars, etc] as stationary bases for building muscular strength and projecting their bodies into space” (Tomko 11). According to Tomko, these bodies *lengthened out into space* because they had the space and room to do so. Another type of body, the *poised* body affected by Dio Lewis and the Swedish gymnastics system, “promoted suppleness and quick reflexes” (Tomko 13). As the name suggests, these bodies were alert, able to respond quickly to the situation at hand. Tomko discusses that the *well-rounded* body was modeled after Dudley Sargent’s (a famous physical culturist and body builder at the time) idea of a balanced body: toned but not too muscular, and possessing flexible alertness (17). A body could be toned, but no overly so. Lastly, the *relaxed harmonious* body “helped illuminate the class and ethnic distinctions that permeated physical culture systems” because the relaxed harmonious body modeled itself after the Americanized Delsartian system of bodily movements (Tomko 18). This body “modulated the energy required for any desired action, and to perform it in kinesiologically economical ways” (Tomko 19).

The Americanized Delsartian movement system relates to the kinesiologically efficient body. I suggest that the *relaxed harmonious* body can help us better understand the intersections between class, gender, and bodily mannerisms in the Pilates Principles. I put forth that the exercising body and the Pilates Principles actually incorporate many of the ideas present in the relaxed harmonious body and the Delsartian movement system.

Adding to Tomko's work, more can be learned from Genevieve Stebbins' classic 1902 work *Delsarte System of Expression* (1977). To reiterate, certain exercise and movement practices are predominantly accessible to certain classes of people, and I believe this situation is no different. From a historical perspective, I propose that Delsartian movement helped lay the groundwork that shaped and fabricated the movements and behavioral expectations of the female white-upper-class body.¹⁸

François Delsarte, a French musician and teacher, created a series of gestures and poses which facilitated an actor's development of specific emotions. Over time, this system transitioned into "American Delsartism" which is commonly known in Dance Studies as the precursor to American Modern Dance and was practiced by white, upper-class women between the 1880s and early 20th century (Ruyter 1979). According to Stebbins, Delsarte's system of poses emulated the postures and character of Greek statues. She suggests the material body and components of spirituality, manifested itself in the Delsartian figure. Stebbins explains that "the laws and Principles underlying true art – whose grandest expression culminated with ancient Greece – and the Principles

¹⁸ This discussion should come as no surprise to many Pilates instructors. On page 116 of Gallagher and Kryzanowska's *The Joseph H. Pilates Archive Collection: Photographs, Writings and Designs* (2000), is a photograph of Stebbins' text. Apparently, her book was a part of Joseph Pilates' collection of literature. The acute similarities between Stebbins's work and Joseph Pilates ideas in *Your Health* suggests there may have been a trend in physical comportment that stressed the importance of emulating Greek ideals.

underlying the system of expression formulated by François Delsarte are one and the same; they differ only in the material choice for their outward manifestation” (370). The relationship between the values of “ancient Greece” and their manifestations in the female body illustrates the kinds of values (control, grace) which, I put forth, were the behaviors that white, upper-class American women were consuming and promoting at this time.

According to Stebbins, Delsarte’s work is the unification of “life, mind and soul” and these form the trinity of expression and are the three Principles of “being” (384). “Being,” which I suggest for Stebbins, meant being human in the “truest” and “purest” capacity required the blending of the trinity through physical realization. Stebbins explains the “mental activity expresses itself in the physical organism, either by expression in the face, gesture of the arm, or attitude of the body, or what is more perfect, as harmonious blended expression of all three” (379). The relationship between “mental activity” and physical expression is a powerful one. Emotional characterization and bodily gesture learned through Delsarte’s principles -- trained a woman’s ability to control her body and regulate her emotions.

Stebbins argued, from her studies in physical culture, the Delsarte system was a perfect blending of “relaxation, energizing and breathing” (401). However, as Stebbins recommends, the Delsartian form of expression required a healthy, well-conditioned body, otherwise, one could not express properly. The Delsarte system encouraged three different types of physical fitness: “1) health of body, 2) strength of musculature and 3) grace of motion” (414). Stebbins explained “health is the concomitant, to some extent

the result, of the heterogeneous activity of mind, nerve, and muscle, causing diffusion and therefore, equilibrium of nutritive effects” (405). The musculature of the body, mental state, and emotional expression of the individual, in this sense, reflected and presented “health.” As an aside, Stebbins’s reference to scientifically oriented language in her descriptions of health are also indicative, I put forth, of Western-based values that privilege medically based language. Only with a healthy body, according to Stebbins, accessed through the physical training methods of Delsartism, could a woman achieve her fullest potential of “being” and emotional expression.

Stebbins’ explains the “perfect culture requires strict regard for every physiological principle of the human body, correct rebuilding of every vital organ, and perfect development of every muscle; a perfectly graded system of gymnastics, and a thorough knowledge of the laws of grace” (416). I suggest the “perfect culture” in this sense, was comprised of bodies that reflect the synthesis of physical fitness, breathing, relaxing, energizing, and hence “embodied as opposition, sequence and poise” or the full expression of Delsarte’s principles (Stebbins 421). Stebbins states that statue posing should “convey the idea of absolute calm and response of an immortal soul, possessing infinite capacity of expression, but at the same time giving no definite expression except that of capacity and power in reserve” (444). She explains that “success [in statue posing] requires such absolute control of features and muscles of the body, that easy, graceful, self-reliant calm, with unmeasured power in repose, shall be clear to every beholder” (Stebbins 450). Self-control, gracefulness, calm, or the ability to convey and possess power without overt expression, and how it was socially perceived were

considered immortal, “God-like” qualities. Nancy Ruyter’s seminal work “The Genteel Transition: American Delsartism” (1979) also adds to our understanding of these ideas, stating,

[the American Delsartians] formed a complete system of training which based techniques of emotional expression on a new or rediscovered esthetic of the human body. Fundamental to the whole method were principles of relaxation and naturalness, and these principles remained throughout the three phases. In the words of a later Delsartian, the training was designed to give symmetrical physical development and to take out the angles and discords, to reduce the body to a natural, passive state (19).

Ruyter draws attention to the *harmonious* development of the body, as well as to the need of restoring and relaxing the body, thus returning it to its “natural, passive state.” The body frees itself “the angles and discords” through Delsartian posing. In order to restore the body, Stebbins “developed ‘energizing’ techniques. These exercises trained the body to contract one set of muscles while keeping the rest of the body relaxed. The idea was to control tension and effort to use the body as energy efficiently rather than haphazardly” (Ruyter 22). Participants trained their bodies to use energy as efficiently and effectively as possible.¹⁹ Ruyter suggests that women who practiced Delsartian movement prepared themselves to behave and emote in public. This idea of training and disciplining the female body in their homes, or private lounges, to “become” an acceptable public body is both troubling and compelling. It illustrates how women have been conditioned to

¹⁹ A brief on-line synopsis of Lisa Kay Suter’s dissertation for Composition and Rhetoric, *The American Delsarte Movement and The New Elocution: Gendered Rhetorical Performance from 1880 to 1905* (2009) suggests Suter argues American Delsartism also provided a means for women to empower themselves by teaching them how to *speak* more confidently and with more eloquence in public. Perhaps in this sense, Delsartian principles became a pro-active tool of empowering women’s body, mind, and voice.

believe their moral and social acceptance hinges on the appearance of their bodies. Something that can be obtained, and should be obtained, in the privacy of the home. Once achieved, exercising in public spaces becomes more permissible, since their “healthy” bodies are socially and morally acceptable. Recollecting my stroll down Montana Avenue, I wonder if Delsartian movement practices were to mid-19th century upper-class woman, as Pilates is to early 21st century upper-class women.

Ballet and the Pilates Principles

Moving away from the Delsartian principles, in this last area I would like to transition into a movement practice that may be more familiar to some. From a 21th century perspective, I suggest upper-class values are expressed, learned, and conditioned through ballet. The bodily protocols disciplined through ballet also share in some of the same disciplining practices as Pilates and the Pilates Principles. Helena Wulff’s work in “Ethereal Expression: Paradoxes of Ballet as a Global Physical Culture” (2008) help shapes our understanding of how the physical discipline of ballet trains the body in behaviors valued by upper-class populations. Wulff argued the *physical culture* of ballet shaped the ballerina’s body and her emotional comportment. I maintain the same type of culture exists within the Pilates community. Wulff’s observations can help us better recognize the kinds of cultural disciplining participants to which those in the Pilates community may inadvertently subscribe. According to Wulff, the ballerina’s body, together with her ability to control herself, her willpower, and her commitment, impact what she calls the “politics of performance.” I draw attention to the politics of

performance because of Wulff's consideration of willpower, morality, bodily disciplining, and body type, and how these factors not only shape the ballet body, but in large part, constitute the personality of the ballerina. She states:

...Ballet body types are connected to the different roles in Classical Ballets. There is the *soubrette*, a small woman who is characterized by quick movements; ... It is notable that Ballet dancers who do not fit into any of these body types, or who, because of company politics, are never offered solo parts, may prosper if they leave Classical Ballet and join a contemporary company where a wider range of body types and stage personalities (526).

According to Wulff, the physical appearance of the ballerina's body significantly influences her career as a dancer. A ballerina's body perceived as the product, or reflection, of her determination and willpower, largely gauges her placement in the strata of Classical ballet. Wulff states that even though a dancer has the "right" body, she may fail as a professional dancer because of her "poor work" ethic, or her lack of dedication and commitment to ballet (528). The ballet dancer must have a "strong work" ethic, and according to Wulff, this ethic is trained into the body and mind through the physical process of learning ballet. "Not only are they [ballerinas] controlled by Ballet physically, but their habitus drives them to maintain this discipline themselves" (Wulff 529). The habitus, in this case, are the social customs found in the micro-environment of the Ballet studio.²⁰ Along with a strong work ethic, Wulff suggests that the politeness and etiquette of a Ballet dancer is trained or disciplined into their bodies and minds at a very early age

²⁰ I am reminded of Judith Hamera's "micro-practices" found in the Pilates studio environment, which is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4. I suggest "micro-practices" in ballet are also found in the environment of the ballet studio, and that these can ideas be thought of somewhat similarly.

(529). Wulff argues these characteristics, like politeness and deep bowing or subservience, perpetuates a physical culture whose origin has its roots in the “prestigious ‘high’ European culture” (533). These values and subsequent behaviors affiliated with those values migrate from body to body through the practice of ballet. As Wulff states, the ballet archive has been “preserved” for as long as it has because it is “a physical culture which has been taught and cultivated between bodies for centuries” (518). Ballet’s movement vocabulary, according to Gerald Jonas in *Dancing: The Pleasure, Power, and Art of Movement* (1992), “evokes an ideal of beauty derived from the ‘social discipline’ common to societies shaped by a European past” (131). While the evolution of the ballerina’s physical body may have changed over hundreds of years, I suggest the class-based values embodied in its physical comportment have not. Additionally, the physical culture of Pilates disciplines similar attitudes and behaviors into the bodies that participate in the practice. The Pilates archive of exercises, their Principles, and the cultural and class values they house, travels from body to body much in the same way as they do in ballet. The Pilates studio, much like a ballet studio and perhaps, a Delsartian movement salon, becomes a space where these values are perpetuated and maintained.

Control, discipline, dedication, and emotional restraint, I propose, are valued traits of bodily comportment by the white upper-classes and are embodied in ballerinas. As previously suggested, the appearance of “upper-classness” by the upper-class is necessary to normalize and perpetuate the image or ideologies associated with upper-class bodies. We can see when upper-class embodiments are trained into bodies that may not

necessarily come from upper-class backgrounds.²¹ Wulff draws out the tensions that Ballet dancers from lower-class backgrounds feel, and I suggest, points to the environmental disparities that shape behavior, attitudes, and perceptions, between socioeconomic classes.

Although Ballet is regarded as a bourgeois cultural form, Ballet dancers do not on the whole possess high levels of cultural capital from their familial backgrounds. Ballet people come from a wide spectrum of social classes, with an emphasis on upper working-class and lower middle-class background. Whatever their background, dancers focused on attaining and presenting artistic excellence. However, they tend to face a dilemma, they “often feel trapped between cultural capital and the market, out of place in both of them. They want the audience to enjoy their artistry that is what matters to them. Meeting sponsors at functions is less enjoyable for them,” yet this is a part of a socially constructed Ballet decorum. With Ballet training comes “a certain politeness involving, for example, frequent thanking and apologizing.” ... To this decorum belongs a way of greeting which goes back to Romantic Ballet: a deep bow while keeping the back straight and the legs together (528).

These behaviors are traces of Europe’s courtly values, and apparently carried through ballet’s physical culture. As Wulff states, “ballet dancers are often caught between two worlds” they possess a certain “cultural capital” which is associated with upper-class

²¹ As I mentioned earlier, productions like *My Fair Lady*, *Cinderella*, *Pretty Woman*, or *Flashdance* are examples in popular culture where physical comportment, dress, make-up, and other behavioral markers illustrate how women transition from a lower-class social status to a higher-class social and economic status. I suggest that movies like *Titanic*, *Save the Last Dance*, or *Dirty Dancing* illustrate how upper-classness is de-conditioned, or “liberated” from bodies where movements and mannerisms of “lower-class” (and racial) populations help to “free” the restraints of white upper-class behaviors.

culture, but they themselves may *not belong* to that socioeconomic culture.²² I suggest ballerinas, through the physical process of learning ballet, acquire the behaviors that afford them to move in-between classes. “Class passing” is when someone chooses to “perform class identities which are sometimes not their own” (Bettie 59). Akin to Shilling’s “physical capital” I suggest that the unwavering bodily rhetoric of ballet, acts as a “currency” that allow those who possess it, “spending power” in social arenas which require it. In this sense, the currency of Pilates also trains the body to comport itself both physically and emotionally. While Pilates students may not bow deeply to their instructors after each class, Pilates students do learn how to strictly control, and discipline their bodies and minds in a similar context. Those who may not have had ballet training in their younger years, can access similar bodily training through Pilates and the Principles, from at-home practice books like Brook Siler’s *The Pilates Body* (2000) or Philip Friedman and Gail Eisen’s *The Pilates Method of Physical and Mental Conditioning* (1980).

I move away from the discussion of Pilates and ballet, in order to examine Julie Malnig’s seminal work, “Two Stepping to Glory: Social Dance and the Rhetoric of Social Mobility” (2001). I do so to illustrate how Pilates, from a 21st century perspective, operates in much the same way that ballroom dancing did in the early 20th century. Malnig reminds us that social mobility (in the U.S. 1920s and 1930s) was not often accessible through financial means alone and that “attainment of those behaviors,

²² I am reminded of the documentary *The Children of Theatre Street* (1977) which examines the Vaganova Academy of Russian Ballet. Working-class parents audition their children in the hope that, if accepted, they will have a better social and economic future.

attitudes, and sensibilities that indicated one's familiarity with the next upper strata of society" and had to be acquired through other means (275). One of these means of accessing opportunities of "social mobility" was through ballroom dance (Malnig 275). Malnig argues that ballroom dance became an embodied *rhetoric* of upper-class status. I suggest that Malnig's attention to behavioral comportment associated with upper-class status and the desire to obtain those behaviors, are central in understanding how Pilates and the Pilates Principles, they train upper-class bodily values in the body and more so, how other bodies can gain access to these embodied characteristics.

In the 19th and early 20th centuries "the entire circumscribed nature of the dance atmosphere itself, reflected, and also fostered, a restrained sense of cordiality and decorum valued between the sexes" (Malnig 272). This environment created an opportunity to learn upper-class behaviors and mannerisms. Irene Castle, a famous ballroom instructor and dancer, stated that for her, ballroom dance "teaches rhythm; it keeps her in tune with life; it gives her a graceful swinging walk; it shows her how to hold her head, and how to use her hands, and what is more, how to use her feet. Many women are awkward in their ways of moving and standing" (Malnig 274). Ballroom trained women (and men) how to hold themselves and, although it does not address race in great detail Malnig's work illustrates how social dance became a bodily rhetoric for upper-class social status. As Tomko states, bodies were "rendered by social dancing, into observable, performing bodies in public dance venues" (28). The *socially acceptable body for upper-class populations* was a body physically conditioned and groomed for public acceptance.

***Part 4: Behaviors of Upper-Class Rhetoric and the Pilates Principles
in 21st Century Practice***

In the beginning of this chapter, I discussed Foucault, Dutton, and Schilling's work and their examination of *men's* bodies. This was important and deliberate since the exercise practice was created by Joseph Pilates, and utilized predominantly by men. I sought to illustrate the embodied characteristics that have been traditionally valued by and for men. Markula and Vester's work aided in our transition from male bodies to an examination of the behavioral practices of female bodies. More specifically, Vester illustrated how female bodies often times absorbed and reproduced the practices of male bodies, and how these practices were also racially and class coded. Dance scholars, Tomko and Novak resituated our ideas regarding the importance of how bodies -- their shape, behavior, and physical design -- inform our understanding of culture. Likewise, the examination of Delsartian movement, ballroom dancing, and ballet emphasized how a women's behavior and emotional comportment influenced her public acceptance. Moving from this, I put forth that the majority of 21st century adult women generally do not practice ballroom dance, ballet, or Delsartian movement. Instead movement practices like weightlifting, running, Yoga, Pilates, swimming, surfing, rock-climbing, walking, rowing, tennis, basketball, cycling, "Spinning," golf, or "Zumba" -- although accessible to those who can afford it -- are practiced more than ballroom dance or ballet. Yet Pilates differs from the exercises practices just mentioned. The Principles of Pilates, I argue, actually train the embodiment of class values. I argue that in the United States, and specifically around Santa Monica, California, *Pilates* is a tool that trains the body to reflect and perpetuate upper-class bodily values. In this sense, the reproduction of the

Principles in the Pilates exercises – specifically in the way each exercise is taught, verbalized, or written -- become very important in instilling the class-based values in participants' bodies. In this regard, this final section resituates the Classical Pilates Principles within the multiple frameworks presented thus far. Primarily, it seeks to reveal, uncover, or visibilize how the Principles create and instill control, posture, centeredness, physical discipline, movement efficiency, “grace,” emotional control, a relaxed state of mind, “poise,” longer less “bulky” muscles, a lengthened body, stronger core, or taller stature. Each of these traits collectively reinforces the embodied rhetoric that is translatable to and recognized as, historically “white” upper-class bodily behaviors.

Recall the Classical Principles: Centering, Concentration, Control, Precision, Breathing, and Flow. Concepts such as “concentration,” “centering,” “gracefulness,” and “balance” are deeply rooted in bodily values that stemmed from physical culture in the United States in the early 20th century. Through Stebbins work, and the Delsartian movement principles, I suggested that there is a long history of how upper class women were trained to perform in public.²³ The Pilates Principles seem to garner qualities of comportment directly related to “gentility” and “proper” behavior that are Eurocentrically driven. There is an ethnocentric way of thinking about these principles. For example, imagine if the six Classical Principles were: “Polyrhythmic,” “Abstraction,”

²³ I am thinking of Laurie Bach's *Fit: Episodes in the History of the Body* (1994), Nancy Ruyter's work, and Joseph Roach's "The Everlasting Club" in *Cities of the Dead* (1996) in his discussion of the spectacle of debutant balls and Marti Gras, and his understandings of the genealogy of performance.

“Distal-oriented,” “Spontaneous,” “Asymmetrical,” and “Meditative.” The Pilates exercises are the conduit through which the Principles (and cultural values) express themselves.

I return to Tomko’s historical discussion regarding the bodies produced by physical culture in the United States’ Progressive Era. She describes the type of body which Pilates resembles the most. This historical correlation is important, since it establishes the connection between what kinds of bodies were shaping and informing culture. I restate Tomko’s work to remind the reader, as well as to illustrate the associations between bodies produced by physical fitness and the Pilates Classical Principles. Tomko asserts that physical culture shaped four different body types: *extensive* bodies, *poised* bodies, *well-rounded* bodies and *relaxed harmonious* bodies. Each one of her “bodies” readily overlaps with the Classical Pilates Principles. Recall that the *extensive* body used apparatus to shape and condition its form, “people used such apparatuses [vaulting horses, rings, horizontal bars, etc] as stationary bases for building muscular strength and projecting their bodies into space” (Tomko 11). According to Tomko, these bodies reached and extended into the space around them, and used exercise equipment to help them achieve this lengthening. The Pilates Reformer is an apparatus Pilates instructors use to train bodies to lengthen out into space, presumably from a strong central core. The Pilates Principle of Centering verbally cues the body to “move from the center with opposition” (*Instructors Manual* 6). This cue, in effect, emphasizes the importance of physical elongation and reaching outwardly into space. Another body, the *poised body*, “promoted suppleness and quick reflexes” (Tomko 13). Quickness,

precision, and “effort with ease” are values most commonly associated with the principle of Control and Precision (Peak Pilates, *Instructor’s Manual* 6). Tomko also presents the *well-rounded* body, as a body that was toned, but not too muscular and possessed flexible alertness (17). These desired physical traits are imbedded in the Principles of Precision and Concentration. Pilates “is not a system of haphazard exercises designed to produce only bulging muscles” (*Return to Life, A Pilates’ Primer*, 14). Additionally, Concentration allows bodies to “focus at the task at hand. Let go of the details of daily life” or the common distractions to one’s attention (Peak Pilates, *Instructor’s Manual* 6). Perhaps the most significant, Tomko’s *relaxed harmonious* body, “helped illuminate the class and ethnic distinctions that permeated physical culture systems” (18). These bodies modeled themselves with the Americanized Delsartian system of bodily movements (Tomko 18). The relaxed harmonious body “modulated the energy required for any desired action, and to perform it in kinesiological economical ways” (Tomko 19). Recall Stebbins work on American Delsartism, and her statement that statue posing should “convey the idea of absolute calm and response of an immortal soul, possessing infinite capacity of expression, but at the same time giving no definite expression except that of capacity and power in reserve” (444). She argued that in order to be successful in statue posing, one “requires such absolute control of features and muscles of the body, that easy, graceful, self-reliant calm, with unmeasured power in repose, shall be clear to every beholder” (Stebbins 450). These ideas are most readily found in the Principles of Flowing Movement, Control, Precision, Concentration and Centering. The *relaxed harmonious* body, I suggest, is the synthesis of the Pilates Principles and their embodied

goals. Recall that Flowing Movement allows the body to “work without stress or strain” and encourages “the natural flow of movement” in the body (Peak Pilates, *Instructor’s Manual* 8). Fiasca suggests that with Flowing Movement the body “is a symphony” (a European musical form) of well-performed movements. Control promotes “physical and emotion change” to occur in the body, as well as achieving “good alignment with the entire mechanism of the body is under perfect control” (Peak Pilates, *Instructor’s Manual* 6). Centering works to “create a centered mind and body, not just during your session, but in all of your life” (Peak Pilates, *Instructor’s Manual* 6). Recall that Ruyter stated two of the fundamental principles of Delsartian movement were “relaxation and naturalness ... the training was designed to give symmetrical physical development and to take out the angles and discords, to reduce the body to a natural, passive state” (Ruyter 19). The Pilates Principles facilitate the creation and appearance of a relaxed harmonious body, which through the process of its normalization, becomes a homogenous social body or one that is “fit” to be seen publically, emotionally composed, and socially accepted.

More structured characteristics like control, self-discipline, self-awareness, and self-care, that Foucault, Shilling, and Dutton brought forth earlier, I suggest, become *intended* consequences of the Pilates Principles of Control, Precision, and Concentration. Foucault’s docile body is one that is easily manipulated and compliant, and consequently can be shaped by institutions of power. The soldier’s body (the most docile) stands erect, shoulders broadened, head held high, and ready to obey. This body is one that Joseph

Pilates emulated, and wanted for his clients.²⁴ Yet the militaristic/docile body was not the only body that exhibited control and self-discipline. As Shilling's work explained, self-control became a critically important value in court society. Likewise, the court of French King Louis XIV "found a way to control the obstreperous nobility of France, by structuring his court literally around the dance floor" (Jonas 73). Courtly etiquette became associated with bodily carriage and emotional control, and to reiterate, to "succeed at court, a man of ambition had ... to 'preserve a certain dignity, albeit tempered with a lithe and airy grace of movement" (Jonas 74). The strength, reliance, and compliance of a soldier, coupled with the noble carriage of a courtly subject, are qualities housed within the Pilates Principles of Control, Precision, Concentration, and Flowing Movement.

I argue the Classical Principles of Control, Concentration, and Precision also shape the "civilized" body. Vester previously stated that a slender, restricted, and controlled body "served the legitimization of class and race privilege on the assumption that control over food intake and body shape is evidence of superior morality and refinement" (59). Recall from Shilling that the civilized body "has the ability to rationalize and exert a high degree of control over its emotions, to monitor its own actions and those of others, and to internalize a finely demarcated set of rules about what constitutes appropriate behavior in various situations" (Shilling 131). The civilized body and mind, according to Shilling, is aware of the social codes of proper behavior. These bodies are "more aware of themselves [as individuals] and others as separate entities, and

²⁴ See images from Gallagher and Kryzanowska's, *The Joseph H. Pilates Archive Collection: Photographs, Writings and Designs* (2000).

[exert] more control over their bodies” (Shilling 145). These characteristics, as Evans suggested, are naturalized in the body as a reflection of the body’s social-economic *habitus* (148). Pilates is practiced in predominantly wealthy areas, like Santa Monica, California. As previously discussed, “civilized” bodies and upper-class bodies are normalized as such. The Classical Principles’ unchanging nature and their perpetuation over time, normalize these values.

Lastly, I suggest the “exercising body” of Pilates after Dodds, works to physically *produce* and reiterate upper-class values. If the Pilates Principles, as Peak Pilates stated earlier, influence the student’s “daily life” -- then these “daily life” embodiments and influences are imbued with upper-class values. Recall Ruyter stating that “Delsartian statue-posing and pantomime [was] the ultimate in refinement and gentility” (Ruyter 29). While Delsartian movement expression is not the same as Pilates, the correlations between the two, with respect to the population they serve and the values they promote, are similar.

The most compelling argument for the disciplining of upper-class behaviors through the Pilates Principles, I suggest, is through its teaching.²⁵ The Pilates Principles, as they are instructed, performed, and verbalized – are done so in a highly methodical, controlled, and critical manor. The student’s body is trained by the Pilates instructor to be “under perfect control” at all times (Peak Pilates, *Instructor’s Manual 6*). The

²⁵ As a Peak Pilates MVe™ Teacher Trainer and volunteer instructor at the Santa Monica, California YMCA, I taught Classically based Pilates. While I understand my position as an objective observer is tenuous, my unique position as a Peak Pilates MVe teacher trainer gives me insights into these personal accounts. I am also aware that this section is not an ethnography in the truest sense. However, these experiences evolved from previous ethnographic work (2010-2011), which I believe exemplify how the Pilates Principles work.

movements of Pilates exercises are not loose, floppy, polycentric, distally initiated, or uncontrolled. Rather, the expression of the Principles influence the body's performance of the exercises to conserve movement, create efficiency, and rhythmically transition from one exercise to the other. The exercises are taught to be precise, upwardly lifted, controlled, and (from a Laban Movement Analysis perspective), retain the qualities of "bound-flow" (Newlove 128).²⁶ As illustrated in Chapter 2, many times Pilates teachers will employ language like "reach the crown of the head to the ceiling" so that they might facilitate certain movements in the body. The *verbalization* of spinal elongation suggests the presence of monarchical values of comportment and upper-class nobility.

This last synopsis briefly highlights two poignant jottings from past ethnographic experiences; one from my work as a teacher trainer for Peak Pilates, and another as a volunteer Pilates instructor for the YMCA of Santa Monica, CA. I believe the inclusion of these two experiences is significant in that they illustrate the perceived effects of the Classical Pilates Principles in practice.

Northridge, CA: MVe™ Teacher Training

... the participants at the 2-day training workshop are here to learn how to teach the MVe™ Pilates Reformer pre-programmed classes. They were given manuals, DVD's, on-line resources, and a workbook to help them prepare to teach the classes. I am here to coach them in the teaching process...

... On the first day the training, I took the students through an MVe Reformer work-out. Peak Pilates designed this teaching unit to illustrate how the Pilates Principles work through the exercises and

²⁶ Bound flow, according to Newlove, is a movement in which the mover feels confident, "when you are performing a task that requires care but you know exactly what you are doing" (128).

ultimately affect their bodies. This workout focused on the basic Reformer exercises, and I emphasized verbal cues that emphasized their breath, control, flow, concentration, centering, and precision in the workout. Although I did not use these words specifically, the intention was spoken in how I delivered the exercise itself. I directed them to "move with control," or "breathe fully and completely" or "center your body," and "focus your mind" as they worked through the exercises.

After they completed the workout, we gathered into a semi-circle to discuss and share thoughts on the workout, and how they felt. I asked them to give me one word to describe how they were feeling, and wrote them on an easel pad as they spoke. "Longer," "centered," "relaxed," "energized," "focused," "taller," "more connected," and "in control." After they were finished, I shifted back to the notes where I had written down the six Classical Pilates Principles and described the similarities.

This situation is not unique, yet I suggest the teaching illustrates the way the Principles affect the bodies that practice Pilates. The ideologies of upper-class behaviors, and consequent bodily disciplining, are normalized through the Pilates Principles and visibilized in the practice itself. The MVe™ participants' realization of the effects of Pilates in their own bodies, with language like "longer," "centered," "focused," "taller," and "in control," were suggestive of upper-class qualities like axial elongation, self-control, emotional attentiveness, and internal balance.²⁷ Terms like "liberated," "empowered," "free," "loose," "open," "flexible," "confident," "good," or "released" were not mentioned, or expressed, at the time.

²⁷ I note that these are all *perceived* effects of Pilates in their bodies. For more information, see Cruz-Ferreira et al., "Effects of Pilates-Based Exercise on Life Satisfaction, Physical Self-Concept and Health Status in Adult Women" (2011).

This chapter sought to examine the appearances of class in the body as a *conscious* demonstration of the behaviors it takes to maintain the comportment that is associated or affiliated with upper-classness. The embodiments of upper-class behaviors are grounded in the Classical Pilates Principles. More specifically, I suggest that the element of axial elongation, or a reaching or growing of the spine vertically, upwards towards the heavens emphasizes behaviors of upper-classness. The Pilates Principles, once trained into the body, become an *unconscious* performance of white upper-class embodiments and this potentially problematic to bodies that are unknowingly participating, or who do not want to participate – or culturally affiliate -- with those values.

In summary, the material and embodied production of class, I suggest is manifested through the public display and perception of gestures, bodily comportment, mannerisms, emotions, hair, clothing, social networking, and etiquette. “The body is where our physical, mental, symbolic, and lived experience, in other words, culture, is reproduced and manifested. The body does not “represent” its knowledge because the body itself is formed through its socialization, where both the materiality of the body and thought are constituted” (Hancock 440). The physical effects of Pilates works as a socialization tool, and can transform the body into a specific physical, culturally constructed upper-class identity. If Pilates functions only in the economic arena that can consume it, then it works to perpetuate a certain kind of physical identity attributed to that economic area.

Lastly, Dyer states “white cultivation brings partition, geometry, boundlessness to the land, it displays on the land the fact of human invention, of enterprise. The frontier, and all the drama and excitement its establishment and maintenance entail, is about the act of bringing order in the form of borders to a land and people without them” (33). The next chapter examines how the marketed images and goals of Pilates reinforce common mainstream ideals of (white) female behavior and beauty and simultaneously promote a “healthy body” as an “ideal body” whose perfection is actually unachievable and unrealistic.

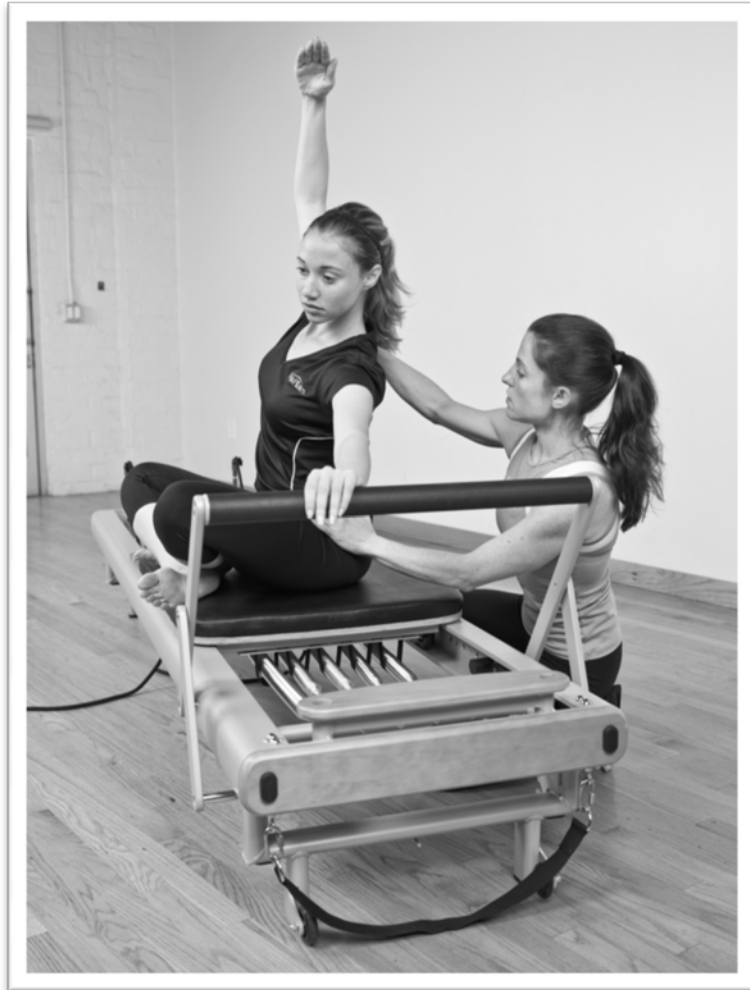


Figure 3.7: Author Teaching Flow, Precision, and Centering

CHAPTER FOUR

Imagining and Imaging Pilates: White Gender Norms, Beauty, and the “Ideal” Body

“Pilates is for a normal, healthy body.”
Peter Fiasca, *Discovering Pure Classical Pilates*, 2009.

Not long ago I was standing on the Montana Avenue sidewalk in Santa Monica, California. I had stopped to peer through the glass store-front of a local Pilates studio because I noticed youthful looking women performing Classical Pilates. They seamlessly moved with control, precision, and flow. Becoming anxious about my peeping, I continued my strolling. A few storefronts away, I came across “The Beauty Park” which, according to the advertisements, specializes in laser treatments for the face and body, as well as “Botox” injections, and numerous other (costly) anti-aging practices. Through the glass storefront, I noticed many of the women sitting in the lobby, waiting for their beauty treatments, reflected the images of the ideal Hollywood-like beauty for this area: full lips and cheeks, flawless skin, long blonde hair, and exceeding slender bodies. Becoming more self-conscious, I continued down the street. A few blocks later, I found myself at the local grocery store, and while perusing the isles, I noticed more white, mid-twenties, youthful looking women smiling out at me from the glossy front pages of *Self*, *Shape*, *People*, *Women’s Health*, *Prevention*, and *In-Style*. Glancing around, I noticed mainstream “alternative” magazines like *Yoga Journal* and *Natural Health* that pictured the same types of women. For a moment, I thought, *If I look like that would I be a better, nicer, and happier woman?* Walking back up Montana Avenue, and hoping my self-

esteem would withstand the journey I noticed *more* Yoga and Pilates studios. Although the ideal of physical beauty varies from culture to culture, in the Southern California Santa Monica area, there seems to be an obsession with youthfulness, flawlessness, and physical perfection. It seemed as if perfectly healthy, beautiful bodies that did *not* approach the unachievable “norm” became oddly marginalized, less than ideal, and somehow derelict. Standing at the intersection of Montana Avenue and 16th Street, I questioned to what extent Pilates participates in the culture of inadequacy. Have I overlooked the impact of images of Pilates? What do the images of the Pilates body tell us about the cultural values of Pilates?

With these questions in mind, this chapter engages the reader to think critically about Pilates as a 21st century practice that continues to impact the female body in ways that took root in the early 20th century. This chapter examines early 20th century cultural values, and positions them in context with contemporary Pilates images and goals. The intersection between image and bodily behaviors is tenuous, but I suggest the *perception* of normative bodily behaviors and attitudes are influenced and stereotyped by its commercially marketed images. The imagination of popular advertising and its commercial images, in large part, creates a culture of beauty where an unobtainable physical ideal is the goal. This, however, is not a new idea. The culture of beauty intimately connects to class, race, and gender, and I suggest Pilates participates in this culture by perpetuating similar ideals.

Generally speaking, I argue that Pilates participates in the production of a specific type of culture in the United States: the overwhelming predominance, normalization, and

superiority of white beauty ideals and able-bodiedness. Pilates does nothing to challenge the stereotypical beauty norms grounded in the early 20th century. Instead, it is practiced *in response to* and *accordance with* these hegemonic ideas. I suggest that bodily images of Pilates reinforce mainstream ideals of white female behavior, identity, and beauty and simultaneously promote a “healthy body” as an “ideal body” that is largely unachievable and unrealistic. To draw out these ideas, this chapter situates Pilates in dance, feminist, historical, and disability studies contexts so that we may gain a deeper understanding of the discourses of gender norms, beauty, and able-bodiedness. Like Jane Desmond argued before me, I too understand that both “gender” and “identity” are incredibly broad and overlapping concepts, yet they can be read at a bodily level (Desmond 29).

In this regard, I seek to “read” and reveal how the images and goals of Pilates reinvigorate gendered tropes of white femininity, notions of white beauty, and simultaneously reinforce the superiority of able-bodiedness.¹ The relationship between the images of Pilates, and the physical labor (i.e. “body work”) required to emulate those images is often times misleading, and many times further subjugate women. The process of gaining physical perfection through “body work” connects deeply, although not accurately, with images produced by Hollywood. Hamera maintains that “in Los Angeles, this process of [bodily] inscription is intimately linked, in both the popular

¹ Biddy Martin’s “Sexualities Without Genders and Other Queer Utopias” (1994), offers a poignant critique of the body and how people can perceive it. She draws sharp focus to the dangerous notion of perception, and complications that arise from surmising values based on perception. My experience meandering down Montana Avenue is indicative of this. Yet I suggest it is not a coincidence that the female body and its involvement with Pilates is closely associated with displays of white femininity. The Pilates goals and images are predominantly geared towards stereotypical and historical female gender norms. The perception of female identity is significant to maintaining Pilates stronghold in the industry.

imagination and in practice, to “body work,” perfecting physical appearance and potential in response to real or vicarious engagement with the entertainment industry...” (26).

Hamera argues that “[Pilates] as a set of protocols for mapping and reading the body, is simultaneously constituted by an overarching, ideal vision of the subject-ed body, and through the micro practices which actually inscribe this vision onto specific bodies with varying degrees of success or failure” (20). While I am not contesting Hamera’s argument, I move these ideas forward by suggesting that the “micro practices” to which Hamera refers, *are* the Pilates pedagogical methods which ultimately influence how the instructor facilitates the work in a client’s body. More so, these pedagogic “micro practices” are imbued with socially constructed ideals about beauty, appearance, behavior all of which are part of a larger patriarchal system, and go hand-in-hand with the images proliferated in Pilates.

The narrative of this chapter develops in three sections: part 1 examines the images of the ideal female Pilates body as they are commonly pictured in educational manuals and at-home Pilates books. It also examines the goals of Pilates as they are commonly known, understood, and marketed today from the vantage point of two “at-home” Pilates “how-to” books. Part 2 examines the histories surrounding white beauty and gender norms, as well as examines the historical and contemporary issues surrounding able-bodiedness. While this section does not comprehensively examine the history of female beauty in the United States, it highlights areas that are relevant to contextualizing the goals and images of Pilates. Lastly, part 3 concludes this chapter with a re-examination of the Pilates images and goals through the lens of dance scholarship.

In this respect, it also examines the apparent traces of the dancer's balletic body in Pilates. I argue the balletic body infiltrates the images in Pilates, and in this regard, has become largely associated with Pilates. The complexity of this relationship cannot be overstated. The balletic body, with its emphasis on spinal elongation, long limbs, slender hips, discipline, and sometimes emaciated, prepubescent appearance is troubling, especially when put in conversation with common images in the Pilates industry. The perceived traces of the balletic body also contribute to the culture of beauty and bodily perfection prevalent in Pilates.

Part 1: Images of Pilates Women

Over the past 20 years, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of commercially produced Pilates books in circulation. The two books examined thus far are similar to many of the Pilates books in circulation today. The discourses, as reflected through rhetoric surrounding the Pilates goals, not only travel from body to body, but also are perpetuated through the images found in the at-home guides, educational manuals, and marketed internet images. The 21st century "Pilates body" commercializes and markets an ideology of a well-toned, slender, and perfectly balanced body and relies heavily on contemporary perceptions of white beauty and female bodily ideal. Consider the images presented in previous chapters. The images of the ideal Pilates body, as it is marketed today, can be seen in the bodies that demonstrate its movements. These images shape how participants may perceive themselves, and what is desirable. Jane Desmond states, "we signal, form and negotiate our identities through our bodies" (29). This

section brings attention to the insidious ideologies regarding femininity, health, beauty, and able-bodiedness that pervade much of the images in Pilates. The bodily goals of the practice, as discussed earlier, also reinforce unrealistic bodily perfection.

To begin, I consider again the images of the models in Brooke Siler's *The Pilates Body* (2000), many of which we have already seen in previous chapters. In the introduction, Siler introduces the reader to three demonstrative bodies: "Caitlin," "Dana," and "Julianna." Each woman represents a different level of Pilates proficiency: Caitlin represents the introductory level, Dana – intermediate, and Julianna -- advanced.² These women reflect images of the Pilates ideal body type: long-limbed, muscularly lean, white, youthful, and "attractive;" they are by no means disfigured, disabled, or ugly. I suggest this type of female body is common to Pilates manuals, at-home guides, educational publications, commercial publications or on-line images.

Consider Figure 4.1, Julianna's demonstration of the "Leg Pull-Up" exercise. This is considered an advanced exercise, requiring well-developed core strength, shoulder girdle flexibility, pelvic stabilization, and adequate neck stability. Julianna's body is slender, but well-toned, her hair is neatly pulled back away from her face with a hair band, and she is wearing a two piece exercise outfit that accentuates her torso. She appears to be fairly small-breasted, white, and her feet appear to have a well developed arch, flexible lower spine and hamstrings, akin to that of a ballet dancer.

² Siler's personalization of the women in this text highlights that there is an imagined intimacy between the Pilates teacher and student, and the pseudo-intimacy, I suggest reinforces the impact that the commoditization of the Pilates body -- and the opportunity to experience Pilates -- has on its potential consumer.



Figure 4.1: Julianna Demonstrating the “Leg Pull-Up” Exercise

Another image on the cover of *The Pilates Method of Physical and Mental Conditioning* (1980) illustrates a white, youthful looking woman, wearing what appear to be a ballet leotard, tights and slippers, with slender hips, smaller breasts, lean legs, smooth skin, and long hair pulled neatly back.

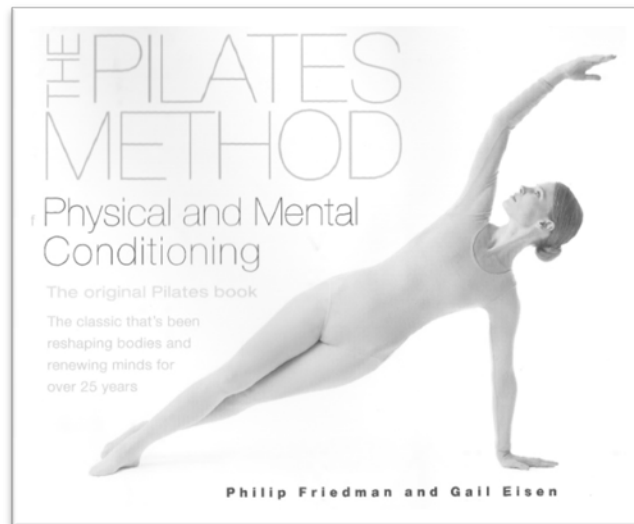


Figure 4.2: Front Cover of Pilates "How-To" Book

Additionally, the position of the hand and arm could be interpreted as a ballet dancer's fifth position.

In the Peak Pilates educational instructor manual (Figure 4.3), a model demonstrates the correct/ideal posture of the “Pilates Stance” from the MVe Reformer instructor manual.



Figure 4.3: Peak Pilates Model Demonstrating the "Pilates Stance"

The model is young, white, blonde, and muscularly well-toned. Her gluteus muscles or breasts are not overly developed or enlarged. Her shoulders appear to be slightly broader than her hips, and are visibly open to the front. Her gaze is direct and focused. Her legs are neither bowed nor knock-kneed and her abdominals appear to be firm and flat.

The image of the female model in *Pilates Anatomy* (2011) by Real Isacowitz and Karen Clippinger (Figure 4.4) illustrates the “proper”/ideal abdominal muscular engagement.

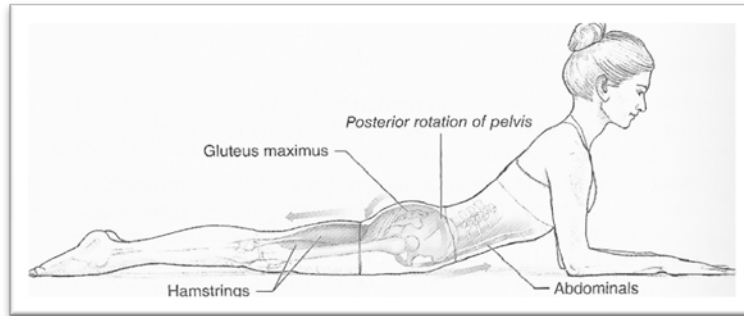


Figure 4.4: Illustration of Woman Demonstrating Proper Pilates Abdominal Support

Although this illustration is not a photograph of a woman, it is one that has been altered to “anatomically” emphasize certain parts of her body, (i.e. “gluts,” abdominals, legs). From what I can surmised of her body, she appears to have long hair, and although racially “unmarked,” I would argue that she *appears* to be a white woman, who is slender, and smaller in hips, bust, and thighs.

Marketing of Pilates extends not only into the instructors who teach (or will teach) Pilates, but to the “mainstream” public. Consider a June 2010 cover of *Pilates Style* magazine:



Figure 4.5: Another Pilates Body?

We can see this “Pilates body” is portrayed in a slightly different way. The model is blond, very slender, with long hair, slim arms, slim legs, and shoulders that appear to be almost as wide, if not wider, than her hips. Unlike the other photographs, this model’s hips are tilted slightly to one side. Ironically, it looks as if there is no abdominal development (as in Figure 4.6), but rather a softer, less-muscular mid-section. In slight contrast, consider the photograph of the on-line advertisement for the “PilatesStick®,” an at-home or studio use Pilates “prop” used to complement a student’s Pilates work.



Figure 4.6: More Defined Abdominals

This white, youthful model’s mid section, arms and lower leg shows more muscle tone. Her well-toned upper arms and shoulders, and more clearly defined abdominals illustrate the form of another Pilates body. She is sitting in a vertically aligned position, with her knees drawn together, and legs tucked neatly to one side. Again, she has longer, blonde hair, flawless white skin, narrow hips, broader shoulders and straight teeth.

Lastly, I draw attention to a recent on-line “Google Images” search, (keyword “Pilates”), which presented hundreds of photographs of predominately white, younger

looking women practicing Pilates. The image on the following page (Figure 4.7), is another example of a young, white, long-haired, muscularly well-balanced, but not overtly so, model.³ Additionally, I suggest by the apparent articulation of the toes and development of the arch that she may have had some ballet training.



Figure 4.7: Photograph of Woman Demonstrating the "Teaser" with "Magic Circle" Prop

What can we learn from these images? What ideas do these photographs and pictures communicate? Are they just illustrating the correct posturing of the exercises?⁴ These commercialized images further the embodied philosophical ideals of Pilates, as well as promote dated notions of white female beauty and gender norms.

³ I am deliberately accessing "Google" and the on-line advertising communities to illustrate how pervasive advertisements for Pilates are on the internet.

⁴ From my experiences as a volunteer Pilates teacher at the Santa Monica, California YMCA, these images look nothing like many of the women in my classes. While many of the women in my classes are white; they are also Latina, Mexican, Black, or Asian women. Their bodies do not resemble those portrayed in these photographs. Many are hippy, full-breasted, curvy, and older.

Reading the “Text” of Pilates: the Goals of Its Embodiment

Chapter 3 examined the how the embodiments of the Pilates Principles produced behaviors and comportment of upper-classness. By doing so, it linked the movement goals of the practice to the appearance and/or production of class. Many people associate their sense of self with their socioeconomic class and the behaviors associated with that population. A person’s movements, according to Jane Desmond, can be a marker of a person’s identity (1997, 40). At its foundation, this section puts forth there is a relationship between the marketed goals of Pilates and gender norms, and ideal body type and its behavior. This section looks at two very popular at-home Pilates books to better understand how Pilates markets its embodied goals, and *what* kind of body is getting reinforced and consumed.

Consider again the flagship book *The Pilates Method of Physical and Mental Conditioning* (1980) by Philip Friedman and Gail Eisen. Regarded as one of the “original” mainstream Pilates books, this at-home exercise book made Pilates more accessible to the general population. Outside of Joseph Pilates’ own publications, it was the first to outline the benefits and goals of the movements of Pilates.⁵

The Pilates Method of Physical and Mental Conditioning (1980):

I open the pages of the book happily anticipating its pages.⁶ Sitting on the couch, I allow the full experience of the text to draw me in as a newcomer to Pilates. The

⁵ I maintain that this text is marketed for white, middle class, women.

⁶ In this brief section, the tone of voice changes to incorporate my thoughts, behaviors, and reflections while reading the book. While I understand this way of incorporating my own thoughts in italics conveys

opening chapter explains, “wouldn’t it be wonderful to be fit and supple, stronger without big, bulky muscles; to have good body tone and a firmer flatter belly? And wouldn’t it be wonderful to sit and stand and move gracefully, without having to think about it or work at it?” (Friedman 1). I think, *Stronger? Less bulky muscles? Better posture without thinking?* I adjust my position to sit up a bit straighter. Friedman continues,

with the Pilates Method, you’ll come to look forward to the stimulation it can provide. And as time passes, you will find that without conscious effort you are walking and sitting straighter, moving more gracefully. Your muscles will become firmer and sleeker, better shaped, stronger without being large and bulky. You will be more supple. You will be calmer and more relaxed, with a new sense of control and inner harmony” (3).

Becoming more excited, I think, *I could become firmer and sleeker?* The goals, according to Friedman and Eisen, of the Pilates method are to “[firm] and [strengthen] your center while keeping it stretched and supple is the prime physical result of practicing the method, and what a glorious result it is! It means a trimmer waist and flatter belly; it means better posture and more regal carriage. A properly developed center can mean less fatigue and a lowered incidence of back pain and injury” (Friedman and Eisen 15).

Hmmm, I wonder, How glorious indeed! I will have a trimmer waist and flatter belly!

More regal carriage too! To be injured would be terrible. But through Pilates I can

protect myself from injury and disability. I close the book, letting my thoughts stir in my

how women’s thoughts are subjugated, I do so with intention. While my thoughts are indicated italics, my behaviors’ and feelings are in “normal” text. Obviously, many people who read this book do not share these thoughts. However, I suggest the book’s text is problematic, and my intention with my “thoughts” are to try to engage problematic dominant hegemonic ideologies about women.

head, sitting slumped into the couch, and alone. Feeling a bit-self conscious, but completely determined, I reach for another text.

The Pilates Body (2000):⁷

At first I was reluctant about opening Siler's book. *Of course*, I thought, *not all readers are that easily swayed, right? I am sure many of them just look at the photos to see how to perform the exercises correctly.* Yet what bothered me was a nagging idea that, through my teaching of Pilates, I was reinforcing unrealistic ideals. Grappling with my own positionality, I recognized that I felt same way while walking down Montana Avenue: somehow inadequate, incomplete, imperfect, or less-than the ideal.

The Pilates Body (2000) states:

in today's fast-paced life the physical and mental stresses we encounter are dangerous threats to both our health and happiness. We spend countless hours sitting in front of our computers or bent over our desks, or we're running around, lifting, lugging, and creating havoc in our bodies and minds. Without properly caring for our bodies it is impossible to feel good. Most if not all of our stress and fatigue comes from poor posture, imbalances in the, and lack of correct breathing. We must first learn to properly strengthen and control our muscles before subjecting them to the rigors of daily living (8).

In the havoc of everyday life, perhaps the only control we can have is over our body.

Siler orients this book towards people who spend "countless hours" in front of computers, as well as those who "run around, lifting and lugging." *Who are these people?* Siler

⁷ This is a broadly circulated book; the other day, a Pilates client brought this book to me to get my opinion of the work.

warns us that the stresses of daily life create “havoc” in our bodies. *Havoc? From what? My job?* She clarifies “the Pilates method is not an arduous technique that leaves you tired and sore. Think about all the hours you have spent exercising and letting your mind drift away from what you are doing. Instead of watching television or thinking about taxes or baby-sitters, remember what it is you are trying to achieve” (Siler 8). *What am I trying to achieve? Control? Proper breathing? Inner harmony?* My couch is becoming more comfortable. Siler states by practicing Pilates, “you will begin to understand how the movements are merely tools to understanding your body. Structured around the stomach, hips, lower back, and buttocks – the center of the body, or its “powerhouse” – the movements of the Pilates Method are instrumental in maintaining good posture and alignment” (10). *Hips, stomach, powerhouse, and buttocks...why are these areas highlighted?* Siler confides, “I am lucky in that I get to watch small miracles happen every day. I have watched the weary become strong, the stiff become flexible, and those suffering from pain become pain-free. There is nothing we cannot achieve if we put our minds to it, and this is especially true when we are speaking about our bodies” (12).⁸ I sit up a bit taller on the couch and continue reading. Siler inspires her reader by explaining that “subconscious rhythm is inherent in us all” (9). *What subconscious rhythm?* Siler also suggests that students must learn and integrate Pilates into their everyday life. “Once [Pilates is] learned, muscle control can be applied to any function of physical movement, from walking and running to lifting and carrying. These are key elements in proper muscle use and make even the most difficult daily tasks seem effortless” (Siler

⁸ I am reminded of Dyer’s and Garland-Thomas’ work and how normalized this attitude of dedication and hard-work has pervaded as a trope.

10). *I must integrate these exercises into my body. They must be a part of my everyday life!* But, apparently, the path to achieving these goals is often very difficult. Siler argues,

The first and biggest hurdle in exercise is combating the mind's self-deprecation. Many people come to my studio and instinctively begin reciting their shortcomings: "I'm weak," "I'm uncoordinated," "I'm lazy." They are looking to me to fix their bodies, but the truth is that becoming dedicated and succeeding in fitness are already within their control. Believing in your innate ability to achieve is the key to changing your body. Autonomy is a powerful tool against the risk of failure in exercise. For this reason Pilates matwork is designed with the intent of making you the master of your own fitness destiny. Whether you do five or forty-five minutes a day, committing yourself to your body is the key (11-13).

Sitting back in the couch, I am confronted with a number of different feelings: insecurity, reassurance, self-reliance, and self-determination. I continue reading. Siler asserts that "uniformly developed muscles are the key to good posture, suppleness, and natural grace" (18). *A balanced, healthy body.* I gaze at the images of the women posing in each exercise – they were inspirational. Their perfectly balanced bodies and faces looked beautiful to me, and I understood these images must be a reflection of the ideal Pilates body. Sighing deeply, I leaned back in the couch again (realizing that at some point during my reading I had unconsciously sat up), and carefully considered how I perpetuate these ideas in my teachings and body.

Part 2: The Histories of Beauty, Gender Norms, and Able-Bodies

Setting aside the images, goals, and ideals of the Pilates practice, this section places multiple texts in conversation to discuss the perception, treatment, and evolution of white beauty. This next section puts into dialog specific, and although seemingly unrelated, histories that examine the practices of beauty. The selected historical scholarship casts a wide net, examining behaviors in the late-19th century and moves to the 21st century. This scholarship aids in framing how contemporary Pilates rhetoric reflects and reiterates the historical rhetoric surrounding the behaviors and societal norms of femininity. These texts paint a very deliberate picture of how white women's bodies have been coerced and disciplined by patriarchal ideologies.⁹ As suggested before, the images, behaviors, comportment, and disciplining of the white female body relate to its historical moment. The images and goals imbedded in the physical culture of Pilates – and by consequence -- the practice itself, carry on these dated ideologies and discourses.¹⁰

I maintain that the images and goals of Pilates reinforces “patriarchal constructions that align women with the body, and men with mental faculties, keep the mind-body, reason-emotion, objective-subjective, as well as masculine-feminine hierarchies stable” (Conquergood 180). I suggest a woman's body and her beauty, and thus perhaps her inferiority, becomes the template on which her morality and social

⁹ I am reminded of Kathy Peiss' *Hope in a Jar: The Making of America's Beauty Culture* (1998). It is an in-depth historical examination of the evolution of cosmetics, race, and gender in the United States from the mid-19th century to the turn of the 21st century.

¹⁰ Additionally, politics and national ideologies have more influence on shaping the perception and images of women's bodies than previously recognized. For example, the images of women and men in the publically funded Depression-era murals paint a very specific type of body that illustrated the national ideologies associated with a specific class, and race, of people.

acceptability is projected and the Pilates images further these ideas. Not only do the images and goals of Pilates perpetuate these discourses, but the very practice itself perpetuates this inferiority. As Sandra Lee Bartky states in “Foucault, Femininity, and the Modernization of Patriarchal Power” (1990), the disciplinary practices (like exercise) that women endure to become beautiful, or “the process by which the ideal body of femininity – and hence the feminine body-subject – is constructed; ... produce a ‘practiced and subjected’ body, i.e. a body on which an inferior status has been inscribed” (283). After Bartky, I suggest Pilates can be situated as one of the processes that women subject themselves in order to become “beautiful” and thus re-inscribing their inferior status, and this idea is illustrated through the Pilates images and goals.

With this in mind, and beginning from a broader perspective, I suggest that we can learn more about the drive to maintain youthfulness, health, and beauty from a much earlier model demonstrated through the cultural ideologies surrounding the Greek bodily ideal. I draw attention to this idea because it relates so closely to Joseph Pilates’ own interests. His attention to the Greek male body, and the Greek ideal of self-care, is apparent in both of his publications.¹¹ As Dutton pointed out earlier, this form of male self-domination realized through the Greek God-like muscular body, was used to define, judge, suppress other bodies. I suggest this ideology infiltrated women’s lives as well, although in different physical demonstrations. Recall how Stebbins’ reinforced the Greek ideal in her description of Delsartian movement, “the laws and Principles underlying true

¹¹ The archival images in Gallagher’s work illustrate Joseph Pilates and his brother dressed in Roman Gladiator-like costuming and pictured sword fighting. This same demonstration of masculinity is also in archival video of Joseph Pilates.

art – whose grandest expression culminated with ancient Greece – and the Principles underlying the system of expression formulated by François Delsarte are one and the same; they differ only in the material chose for their outward manifestation” (370). In this instance, the outward manifestation of Greek ideals in a woman’s body, through the Delsartian principles, was reflected by her grace, poise, emotional control, cared-for body, and the ability to comport herself in public. Dare I say that beauty among women, to those who possess it, wields power and opportunity.

Building on these ideas, Lois Banner’s seminal work in *American Beauty* (1983) adds to our understanding of how women’s bodies were becoming sites that housed societal values and gender stereotypes. Attesting to the influence of Delsarte’s movement principles, Banner states that by the 1880s “to appear beautiful, women paid careful attention to body movements and facial expressions, as well as to physical appearance and attire” (48). Banner suggests the acceptable images of the female body changed from the fuller-figure of the earlier 19th century, to ones having a waif-like appearance. Yet the appearance of a white woman’s body was not only a reflection of her moral fortitude, but as Banner puts forth, served as an indication of her “reproductive” health as well. This idea becomes significant when put in context with the current practices of Pilates, since many times, Pilates is justified as something that is necessary/mandated/required to maintain a woman’s “health.”¹² According to Banner, in the early 19th century, medical science justified (and controlled) what a woman should

¹² Some Pilates instructor suggest that Pilates can help women strengthen and retain the health of their pelvic floor muscles. They encourage women to practice Pilates after childbirth so that they may strengthen this area of the body again.

and should not physically, so that they could maintain and preserve their reproductive health. In this respect, physical fitness (up to a point) was scientifically justified as a way for women to stay in reproductive shape. Over time, the “medical and scientific theories lent legitimacy to the [thinner appearance] of beauty for women” (Banner 49). To further these points, science attempted to normalize and define a “healthy” woman’s body.

Jacqueline Urla and Alan C. Swedlund in “Measuring Up to Barbie: Ideals of the Feminine Body in Popular Culture” (1995) state by the late 19th and early 20th centuries, there was

an attempt to scientifically define a normative “American” female body ... upper class, largely WASP, young people ... were the basis of some of the early attempts to define the measurements of the “normal” American [college] male and female (290).¹³

Youthful, upper-class, white women were the models of “normal” and, I would suggest, of “healthy.” At the same time, Banner states “with regard to women, phisionomists argued that small features indicated virtue and ‘great delicacy of sentiment’; large features indicated sensuality and slothfulness” (50). Banner suggests the physical fitness recommendations in the late 19th and early 20th century for women were modest, and discouraged strenuous or vigorous exercise. Banner points out, “the major difficulty for advocates of women’s exercises was the belief that strenuous activity produced muscular bodies ... many critics of rigorous exercise for women realized the need for some sort of regular physical activity, but they thought that walking or calisthenics was sufficient”

¹³ I also suggest that John Higham’s work, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism 1860-1925* (1970) and “The Reorientation of American Culture in the 1890’s” (1970) speak to the development of physical fitness from a political and problematic nationalistic perspective.

(140). Exercise was beneficial for the female body to slenderize herself and necessary to maintain reproductive health, yet *too much* exercise produced results that were discouraged for women at the time.¹⁴ I draw the reader's attention to these ideas because so often the images and goals of Pilates reiterate the same ideologies.¹⁵

I suggest that in the early part of the 20th century white, middle- and upper-class women conditioned their bodies in the privacy of their homes.¹⁶ The at-home exercise manual, *The Art of the Body: Rhythmic Exercises for Health and Beauty* (1931) written by Margaret Agniel, a New York health and beauty author of the 1920s, helps us gain a historical perspective on the bodily conditioning practices at the time.¹⁷ Margaret Agniel's work was published three years before Joseph Pilates *Your Health* (1934), and was a well-established "physical culturist" in the New York area long before Joseph Pilates' arrival. I draw the reader's attention to this work to illustrate not only how the female body was shaped during this time, but also, to shed light on the history of "at-

¹⁴ The documentary, narrated by Linda Hunt, *Fit: Episodes in the History of the Body* provides an analysis of "America's fitness fanaticism" from a race, class, and gender perspective. The types of physical fitness available to women at the turn of the 20th century ranged from body-building to statue posing. The changes in trends in women's physical fitness between the late 1800s and into the mid-1930s, help illustrate the scientific and social ideologies that influenced a woman's body.

¹⁵ Recall that Joseph Pilates immigrated to the United States around 1925, and as he acclimatized to mainstream notions of American culture, the ideology of a healthy, white, female body took root in U.S. soil. I put forth there was a deliberate construction of what a "healthy" female body looked like, and that those ideas remained closely connected and perpetuated by physical culture. The intersections between physical culture and national ideologies, I suggest, impacted the white female body. What white women were "scientifically" permitted to do, often times dictated what the image of the ideal body looked like.

¹⁶ I gather my ideas from Linda Tomko's work, as well as the documentary *Fit: Episodes in the Body*. However, I put forth the relevance of at-home exercise manuals like *Art of the Body* (1931) is important since it establishes how certain ideologies concerning women's bodies have not significantly changed over time. Public displays of physical fitness, it seems, was for an already fit body. Bodies that were not socially acceptable for public displays of fitness, might find solace -- as well as the opportunity to gain a physically fit body -- in the privacy of their home. From a present day perspective, at-home books like *The Pilates Body* (2000) fill this need, not to mention the multitudes of television and cable fitness programs, and for-purchase programs like "P90X" or other "at-home" fitness DVD workouts.

home” exercise guides for women. Additionally, the remarkable similarities between Agniel’s work and Siler’s text should illustrate how gendered and physical discourses are normalized and reproduced over time.

The inside cover in *The Art of the Body* (1931) displays a photograph of the author posing like a Greek statue, naked, with oiled skin, and illustrates her finely, sculpted body. To her consumers, she reflects one bodily ideal: a slender, slightly toned, and small-breasted white body. From the start, Agniel’s at-home exercise manual claims to help both the “aged” and “busy” woman in shaping their bodies (10). The busy woman, according to Agniel, who “finds it impossible to set aside a particular time or place for [her] exercises” offers an exercise solution to her demanding and perhaps, hectic life (11). Agniel’s statement, as well as the described image of her body, is strikingly similar to Siler’s earlier attestation in *The Pilates Body* (2000).

In “Rhythmic Exercise and Dancing” Agniel explains that “in many people nowadays this spontaneous feeling for rhythm and beauty has been submerged by the artificialities introduced by civilization to the detriment of their health and happiness” (1).¹⁸ She combines the methods of dancing, and exercises she gathered from her experiences in physical culture, to uniquely position her approach to “rhythmic exercises” for the “modern” woman (1). The appeal of her work, she argues, is that physical culture is “boring” for most women and that dancing in public can be a “self-conscious” experience (2). Agniel suggests her exercises are “based on animal movements” which

¹⁸ I suggest the “back to nature” ideal of “natural” rhythm and beauty is problematic since it encourages a return to something more “pure” and “animalistic.” It illustrates, among other things, how physical culture capitalized on the *adverse* effects of labor in the Progressive Era. The book’s publication date of 1931 and the readership to which it was marketed, I put forth, were working women who wanted to gain the appearances of upper-class white women.

she believed are “the fundamentals of rhythmic self-expression” (6).¹⁹ Agniel maintains that the progression of learning new exercise movements, beginning with more animalistic exercises, will successfully progress students to statue posing and graceful posture. She claims the progression of exercises in her book “lead up to other [exercises] in a natural sequence which in turn lay a foundation for the ones following, having as an objective a definite aesthetic goal in the form of a sculptural pose, a graceful sitting or standing posture or a dance pose” (6-7).²⁰ The influences of Delsartian movement ideas in Agniel’s work are notable. Agniel argues that when the exercises are performed with music, it stimulates “the sense of rhythm and imagination [which] leads to dancing in its highest form. . . . the actual work usually associated with exercise is minimized or lost sight of altogether in the achievement of an artistic result, and the art of the dance is given a new significance” (7). She utilizes the appeal of dancing, and the idea of becoming “lost” in the act of artistic expression, encourages her readers to exercise. Perhaps it is no surprise (stated earlier in Chapter 1) that Pilates is described as a “thinking person’s” exercise, and although somewhat more “rational” than Agniel’s “animalistic” justification, positions Pilates as a form of exercise during which one cannot become bored.

Recall from earlier that walking or calisthenics were recommended for women as a “prescribed” form of exercise. I draw attention to Agniel’s chapter “How to Walk

¹⁹ The historical reference to animals as a source of inspiration for movement can also be seen in animal dances like the “Turkey Trot” and the “Grizzly Bear,” popularized by Vernon and Irene Castle in the early quarter of the 20th century. Perhaps it should come as no surprise that Joseph Pilates also referenced animal movements in his work as well.

²⁰ Again, like in the Delsarte practices, there is a way that we can see how the disciplining of the female body in the private sphere was important in creating a body for the public.

Well” in order to further illuminate the similarities between the capitalization on early 20th century recommendations, and 21st century Pilates texts. Agniel describes the exercises necessary to improve walking. However, in a bold move, she moves beyond describing how to walk well, and suggests that her rhythmic exercises help treat the “imperfections of the figure” which, according to Agniel, mere walking could not eliminate (13). Interestingly, the “imperfections of the figure” as she describes, “in a large majority of people, one or more muscle groups has been overtaxed by carrying more than its share of the body’s weight, while others have grown flabby from not having had enough to do” (13). Implying the need to balance and fortify the body, she states her exercises promote “harmonious development” of the body (13). The proper walking carriage of the body, described by Agniel, situates the body so that “the chest should be held firm, head easily poised, and the body lifted out of the hips” (13). These descriptive characteristics emphasize verticality and lifting the body upwards against gravity. Her text references how the abdominal muscles should be “elastic,” more supple and resilient, as they work to support the movement of the torso (16).²¹ For example, moving into an examination of “Correct Posture” Agniel explains that

women appreciate the beauty of the erect carriage, but to attempt to attain it by wearing artificial support can only result in a stiff unnatural poise of the body which presents a wooden artificial appearance in comparison with the freedom and buoyancy reflected by the woman whose erect posture is gained through the strengthening of her muscles

²¹ There are some Pilates instructors who maintain that the contraction/engagement of the muscles of the core in Pilates should be dynamic, or elastic, and not static or braced. Said differently, stabilizing the deep abdominal muscles should be a process of progressive concentric and eccentric contractions, rather than a static isometric contraction.

and the proper distribution of the body's weight (Agniel 47).

These descriptions (again) suggest an emphasis on the verticality of the spine, as well as a fluidly moving and muscularly balanced body. The verticality of the spine discussed repeatedly at length in her work, and I suggest, illustrates what type of bodily posturing was valued at the time. To this end, she explains “we write into our bodies a record of our daily activities and thoughts” (48). A woman's body was a reflection of the way she lived and thought.

Moving from this, I examine a slightly different perspective of Agniel's work, and I do so because it correlates closely with the discourses iterated in Pilates pedagogy. In Agniel's “Exercises for Strengthening the Back,” she discusses the way women can achieve back health, and verticality of the spine, through her exercises. Again, drawing attention to the torso muscles, Agniel explains

in a well-developed state these muscles form a natural support, rendering the use of artificial devices, such as corsets, unnecessary. The corset has been responsible for more weaknesses in women than any other restrictive device invented, both from the standpoint of precluding any free movement of the confined surface while wearing it and from causing an atrophy of the muscles which are most directly connected with this part of the body (42).

According to Agniel, the corset renders women physically weaker while creating the aesthetic of a longer more sculpted waistline. The muscles of the torso that in effect mimic the corset, according to Agniel, are the “natural support” of the body. Again, the similarities to the discourses surrounding 21st century Pilates are noteworthy since so much of Pilates language describes the action of the deep postural muscles as the body's

“natural corset.” No longer do Pilates instructors tout the benefits of a strong core so as to liberate women from restrictive fashion. Rather, we tout the benefits of a strong core for better postural and spinal health.

In “Reducing the Hips,” Agniel discusses ways in which women can stretch and exercise to reduce the size of their hips. Agniel implies that if a woman has large hips, then their largeness indicates insufficient self-care or signals a woman’s aging. Her exercise recommendations are fashioned after her observations of the “natural” behavior of animals and children, and recommends somersaulting to help reduce the size of the hips. She maintains that rolling and somersaults should be done outside in the grass, or in the privacy of the home (31). While outdated in a 21st century context, Agniel’s exercises provided at-home methods for women who wanted to change the shape and appearance of their bodies – especially their hips. From my experiences teaching in 21st century context, the hips and waistline continue to be areas that receive much attention.

However, the hips were not the only area of a woman’s body receiving critical attention and reflection in the 1930s. In “Improving the Symmetry of the Bust” Agniel focuses on exercises that tone and strengthen women’s breasts. According to Agniel, the breasts should be neither over-developed nor under-developed. Agniel maintains that lifting the chest/breasts gives one confidence, “the mere placing of the parts of the body in certain positions has a tendency to produce a psychological state which directly effects one’s mental state and well-being. The importance of a posture which will react favorably on our own personalities as well as others watching us” (28). Proper carriage of the breasts and body, according to Agniel, affects a woman’s “mental state” and “well-

being.” A woman’s confidence, Agniel suggests, was embodied and visibilized in her breast-care and bodily carriage.

Lastly, “Facial Exercises, and the Care of Skin, Eye and Teeth” states that a “good complexion is largely a constitutional matter, depending upon the general health of the body and mind” (73). Again, this is an indication that a woman’s inner “constitution” was reflected through the appearance of her skin. She elaborates on caring for and maintaining the skin and muscles of the face, the eyes, and teeth. She explains that “the habitual display of strong emotions on the face undoubtedly causes wrinkles, and for this reason many people imagine that a placidity of features is the thing to cultivate in order to retain a youthful appearance” (74). Apparently, according to Agniel’s recommendation, a woman should not overly express because to do so, might jeopardize the longevity of youthful appearance.²²

Agniell’s work in *Art of the Body* (1931) help situate the physical trends popular in women’s bodies at the time. The figure of the white, upper-middle class woman, by the turn of the 20th century was “slender and sleek” (Green, 1986, 240). Agniell’s work attended to the women who wanted this physique. As previously discussed, no longer was it socially acceptable for a “respectable” woman’s body to be curvy and full-figured, as was the case in the mid-19th century, but instead she was streamlined, slender, and less “hippy.”²³

²² Perhaps this is obvious to the reader, but Botox’s use to paralyze the muscles of the face in order to reduce the appearance of wrinkles clearly erases the ability to emotionally express.

²³ I am reminded of Robert Allen’s work in *Horrible Prettiness* (1991) of the Burlesque body. The Burlesque body was large-breasted, curvaceous, publically displayed, and seemingly unaccepted in upper-class “society.” Allen’s Burlesque body stands in stark contrast to Agniell’s.

The socially accepted physique of women's bodies is never their own choosing, but rather regulated and influenced by the forces that effect physical culture and medical science. Many times, the overwhelming attention to the appearance and regulation of one type of body detracts, somewhat deliberately, from the presence of another. In the early 20th century, "healthy" bodies were connected with dominant ideologies surrounding what was publically acceptable. "Beautiful" and physically desired bodies heighten the stigma associated with *disabled* bodies. I draw attention to these discourses because of the overwhelming and almost obsessive attention to health, bodily balance, and self-care that Pilates stresses and values.²⁴ Susan Schweik in *The Ugly Laws: Disability in Public* (2009), states that as early as the 1880s and more concretely by 1911, many of the larger metropolitan cities in the United States had laws regulating unsightly beggars, "cripples," or "freaks." According to Schweik, the imperfect, disabled, or deformed body fell prey to the legislative scrutiny of the United States government. Schweik extensively examines the legal processes, beginning in San Francisco in 1867, of cities across the United States that judged bodily aesthetics and used the law to "repress the visibility of human diversity in social contexts associated with disability and poverty" (3). While this project does not focus on the "politics" of the Pilates body, it is important to understand that "Americanness" as Schweik suggests, was based on the *body's* capabilities, confidence, and the ability to work hard (Schweik 5). Again, the values of "confidence" and a strong "work-ethic" were characteristics according to Schweik that came to define

²⁴ Many Pilates instructors, myself included, have worked with non-able bodied clients. These clients benefit from the Pilates exercises just as "normal" bodies do. Often times, however, these clients are considered as specialized "cases" involving the attention of more experienced or educated Pilates instructors.

Americanness. Further, what it meant to be an “American” in large part, was visualized and materialized through the body.²⁵ Additionally, the normalization of the body’s reflection of “Americanness” marginalized bodies that did not fall under this guise. Schweik points out that the “naming and production of standards of perfection and beauty – and conversely, imperfection and ugliness – still operate and influence everyday interactions” (Schweik 6). To this end, I suggest that Pilates is a part of the “naming and production of standards of perfection and beauty” that operates today.

Tobin Siebers in his work “What Can Disability Studies Learn from the Culture Wars?” (2003) states that the ugly laws “demonstrate that the compulsion to maintain instances of ideal form in public ... echoes a more primordial obsession with perfect, public bodies (198)” (quoted in Schweik 15). These legislative processes furthered naturalized, I suggest, the healthy male Grecian-God body. The “healthy” body reaffirmed trends in physical fitness by influencing what the body *should* look like. Furthermore, I suggest the legislation that marginalized the physically disabled compounded the significance of advertising able-body images, body therapies, mainstream beauty products, politics, and social values.²⁶

Moving from Schweik’s work, Rosemarie Garland-Thomas’ “Integrating Disability, Transforming Feminist Theory” (2002) examines the deeply ingrained stigmas associated with gender, disability, and ugliness. I draw attention to this work because it further illustrates, reveals, and deepens our understanding of how the ideologies

²⁵ We can see these national ideologies represented in the bodies painted in public murals from Heather Becker’s *Art for the People: The Rediscovery and Preservation of Progressive – and WPA-Era Murals in the Chicago Public Schools, 1904-1943* (2002).

²⁶ We can also examine these trends in O’Connor, Francis V. “Mural Themes from the Progressive Era to the WPA Federal Art Project: 1904 to 1933 and After” (2002).

surrounding the ideal Pilates body (marketed as the white feminine ideal) perpetuates incredibly distributing discourses. She states “disability is a pervasive, often unarticulated, ideology informing our cultural notions of self and other. Disability -- like gender -- is a concept that pervades all aspects of culture: its structuring institutions, social identities, cultural practices, political positions, historical communities, and the shared human experience of embodiment” (Garland-Thomas 4). She suggests the disabled body challenges mainstream conceptions of “culture,” since the disabled body cannot be adequately placed within the acceptable ideals of culture, and consequently are marginalized, labeled as deviant, sick, or dependent (Garland-Thomas 4). Historically speaking, the “female, disabled, and dark bodies are supposed to be dependent” and were marked and imagined as medically abnormal (Garland-Thomas 7). The implications for these stigmas reach broadly into the creation of dominate beauty culture ideology and gender norms. In the very lengthy text that follows, Garland-Thomas discusses how *sickness* was gendered as “female,” and the medicalization of subjugated bodies normalized standards of beauty for women:

...both women and the disabled have been imagined as medically abnormal—as the quintessential sick ones. Sickness is gendered feminine. This gendering of illness has entailed distinct consequences in everything from epidemiology and diagnosis to prophylaxis and therapeutics. Perhaps feminist disability theory’s most incisive critique is revealing the intersections between the politics of appearance and the medicalization of subjugated bodies. Appearance norms have a long history in Western culture, as is witnessed by the anthropometric composite figures of ideal male and female bodies made by Dudley Sargent in 1893. ... in modernity the [Greek] ideal has migrated to become the paradigm that is to be attained (10).

Perhaps it should come as no surprise that “appearance norms” as Garland-Thomas terms them, have long been a part of Western culture. She continues,

As many feminist critics have pointed out, the beauty system’s mandated standard of the female body has become a goal to be achieved through self-regulation and consumerism. Feminist disability theory suggests that appearance and health norms often have similar disciplinary goals. For example, the body braces developed in the 1930s to ostensibly correct scoliosis, discipline the body to conform to dictates of both the gender and the ability systems by enforcing standardized female form similarly to the nineteenth-century corset, which, ironically, often disabled female bodies. Although both devices normalize bodies, the brace is part of medical discourse while the corset is cast as a fashion practice (10).

The multiple suggestions in this passage are alarming, and one argues that science has standardized, stigmatized, and normalized female bodies to look a certain way. For example, the corset was a garment that both shaped and confined women. While Agniel and Garland-Thomas view the corset as a means to weaken the female body, Garland-Thomas also reminds us how the corset was problematically marketed as a fashion accessory. The tension surrounding both the scientific and aesthetic discourses is apparent. While on one hand, the corset was a sign of idealized slenderness, the other, marks it as a potentially damaging and repressive confinement.²⁷ I remind readers of the inferences one can make to the Pilates practice and the corseting affect of the transverse abdominals. However, in this case, the corseting affect of the abdominals in Pilates is

²⁷ I would like to thank Prof. Anthea Kraut for bringing this idea to my attention. Additionally, she suggests we more deeply question how the 19th century corset, with its gendered and racial implications, translates into the muscular “corset” of Pilates.

justified as a requirement for a healthy and elongated spine. Garland-Thomas also speaks to the “medicalization” of bodies as a tool used to sanitize non-perfect bodies, and the medical justification deeming non-perfect bodies as inferior, corrupt, “diseased” and in need of medical correction. I put forth that discourses in Pilates view the body in similar ways. Many times the women who practice Pilates are perfectly healthy and able, yet the Pilates ideology and the images that surround it, idealize something that is wholly unobtainable. Perfectly healthy clients are “evaluated” for postural, neurological, and muscular imbalances, deemed as imperfect or unbalanced, and in need of Pilates as a means of correcting bodily deficiencies.²⁸

Adding to Garland-Thomas’ ideas, Naomi Wolf’s *The Beauty Myth: How Images of Beauty are Used Against Women* (2002) describes the evolution of 19th century female hysteria and its relationship to medical coercion. Quoting Deirdre English and Barbara Enrenreich from *For Her Own Good: 150 Years of the Experts’ Advice to Women* (1979), Wolf restates, “‘medicine’s prime contribution to the sexist ideology has been to describe women as sick, and as potentially sickening to men.’ The ‘vital lie’ that equates femaleness with disease has benefited doctors in each of these three phases of medical

²⁸ These stereotypes and societal behaviors reinforce what Robert McRuer calls “compulsory able-bodiedness” from his essay, “Compulsory Able-Bodiedness and Queer/Disabled Existence” (1999). McRuer created “compulsory able-bodiedness,” after Adrienne Rich’s analysis of “compulsory heterosexuality” in “Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence” from *Blood, Bread, and Poetry* (1986). McRuer argued that these two systems, heterosexuality and able-bodiedness, are contingent upon the other, and to further his point, exchanges “able-bodiedness” with Rich’s “heterosexuality” in his essay (302). McRuer states “able-bodiedness is even more naturalized than heterosexual identity” (302). It is a subversive trope that is only uncovered when a non-able-body presents itself. Able-bodiedness, as McRuer points out, is defined by the *Oxford English Dictionary* as “soundness of health; ability to work; robustness” (303). Recall the striking similarity to Schweik’s definition of “Americanness” from before. In this case, returning to the women of Montana Avenue, if upper-class women choose not to work, then her ‘productivity,’ according to normalized tropes of upper-class womanhood and beauty, need to be reproduced in the shape and perception of her body.

history, guaranteeing them ‘sick’ and profitable patients wherever middle-class women can be found” (243). The inference in this passage is troubling, since I suggest, the medical community profits from the “sicknesses” that it coerces women into believing they might have. If “feminine movement, gesture, and posture, must exhibit not only constriction, but grace as well...” then conversely, a hysterical woman, or one who is out-of-control, perhaps overly emotive, or creating too large of gesture with her arms is considered unfit for public acceptance (Bartky 281).²⁹ According to the norms at the time, “a woman must not allow her arms and legs to flail about in all directions; she must try to manage her movements with the appearance of grace” (Bartky 281). In some cultures, woman are trained to hold their arms closer to their bodies, show facial deference, avoid direct stares, and smile (Bartky 280-281). Shilling reaffirms this by stating “while a man may be described as angry or aggressive, the same behavior in a woman may be redefined as hysteria or ‘nervous disorder’ and be seen as in need of correction” (48). A deviant woman, or one who *may* become hysterical, is a woman perceived to be both physically threatening and physiologically unstable. While fearing redundancy, I remind readers that Friedman and Eisen suggest Pilates encourages “inner harmony,” increased relaxation and calmness.

The more distressing question is how far have we moved from these historical practices and ideologies? The fear of the disabled and non-perfect body I put forth pushes many women into unrealistic and unhealthy bodily practices so that they may

²⁹ Rebecca Kukla’s *Mass Hysteria: Medicine, Culture, and Mother’s Bodies* (2005) keenly addresses the histories affiliated with pregnancy, lactation, motherhood, and the stereotypical ideas associated with the hysterical woman.

“successfully” construct their identities in a 21st century patriarchic system. Yet these ideas are rooted in a much earlier model of acceptable femininity. In today’s consumer culture, many women’s attention to the self-regulation of their bodies, and the insidiousness of modern advertisements, perfectly positions Pilates as a remedy to satiate this unattainable bodily ideal. The “aesthetic of [white] femininity” (for those who can obtain it),

mandates fragility and lack of muscular strength... women are forbidden to become large or massive; they must take up as little space as possible. The very contours of a woman’s body takes on as she matures – the fuller breasts and rounded hips – have become distasteful. The body by which rigorous discipline she must try to assume the body of early adolescence, slight and unformed, a body lacking flesh or substance, a body in whose very contours the image of immaturity has been inscribed (Bartky 284).

Bartky’s insinuations are troubling since, I would add she suggests that the socially acceptable ideal for a woman is to look like a young boy. Not only do women participate in rigorous physical disciplining but, in a troubling realization, Wolf also reports that as women advanced in their professional careers “the diet and skin care industries [became] the new cultural censors of women’s intellectual space, and because of their pressure, the gaunt, youthful model supplanted the happy housewife as the arbiter of successful womanhood” (16). Successful womanhood and the bodily identity associated with it, reaffirm patriarchal ideologies that are also ensconced in the discourse of Pilates. As Wolf puts forth, “it is not that women’s identities are naturally weak. But ‘ideal’ imagery has become obsessively important to women because it was meant to be so. Women are mere ‘beauties’ in men’s culture so that culture can be kept male. When women in

culture show character, they are not desirable, as opposed to the desirable, artless ingénue” (68). I suggest that “character” in this case could be mental and physical qualities like intelligence, anger, uniqueness, curves, spontaneity, breasts, hips, joy, self-acceptance, fear, self-promotion, or unbounded creativity. According to Wolf, 21st century women not only succumb to the male construct of female beauty culture, but sadly, some will stop at nothing to obtain this image.³⁰ Cosmetic surgery, liposuction, breast enhancements, laser treatments, hair removal, and many other “treatments” can often times be very painful processes. The “Age of Surgery” as Wolf refers, actually destabilizes all that a healthy woman actually has. Instead, much like Agniel’s facial care advice, it makes the gift of longevity a sickness. According to Wolf, a modern woman who

is blessed with a body that can move, run, dance, play, and bring her to orgasm; with breasts free of cancer, a healthy uterus, a life twice as long as that of the average Victorian women, long enough to let her express her character on her face; with enough to eat and a metabolism that protects her by laying down flesh where and when she needs it; now that hers is the gift of health and well-being beyond that which any generation of women could have hoped for before – the Age of Surgery undoes her immense good fortune. It breaks down into defective components the gift of her sentient, vital body and the individuality of her face, teaching her to experience her lifelong blessing as a life-long curse (253).

Wolf suggests the cosmetic surgery industry exacerbated the processes of inscription works to further subjugate women’s bodies. I am reminded of my strolling down

³⁰ I am reminded of a relatively recent experience with a Pilates client. The client was a slim, tall, perfectly muscled, flawlessly-skinned, middle-aged white woman. Before beginning our session, she pinched a small fold of skin at her perfectly sculpted waistline and told me, “I want to get rid of this.”

Montana Avenue in Santa Monica, California, and intermixed with the myriad of Pilates studios, were a number of different cosmetic surgery boutiques, laser-hair removal storefronts, and numerous other beautifying salons. Surgical processes, according to Wolf, compartmentalize the women's body as areas that need rejuvenation, and consequently emphasize what culturally defines successful womanhood. A women's beauty: her face, breasts, butt, abdominals, and waist-line – all areas which can be trimmed, tucked, pulled, enhanced, and perfected so that she may display her success to others.³¹ More alarming is Wolf's findings that "fully able women may now be less satisfied with their bodies than disabled people: 'Physically handicapped people,' reports a recent study quoted in *The New York Times*, 'generally express an overall satisfaction about their bodies' – while able-bodied women, we saw, do not" (253). I draw attention to Wolf's work to further underscore how complicated, ingrained, and troubling the histories of medical coercion, manipulation, and deception are entangled with ideas of "beauty" and white femininity.

Lastly, building from Wolf's work, Susan Bordo in *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture and the Body* (2003), illustrates how "systems of power" influence white female identity and the perception and *creation* of the white female body. Systems of power, in this case, are "the network of practices, institutions, and technologies that sustain positions of dominance and subordination in a particular domain" (Bordo 167). The body, according to Bordo, is shaped and molded so much so,

³¹ As previously suggested, a woman's body is reduced further when it is valued by its parts, rather than as a whole. Recalling Chapter 2, Brenda Dixon Gottschild brought this to our attention in the racialization of the black body.

that women have been led to believe that achieving *any type of body* is possible (247). The system of medicalized aesthetic procedures (i.e. Wolf's "Age of Surgery") has deceptively opened up the realm of reaching otherwise unreachable or unobtainable bodily goals. I suggest the perception of this "medical" industry has exacerbated the culture of inadequacy among many women. Additionally, Bordo suggests the rhetoric of self-choice is in itself problematic, since it is based on assumptions of accessibility, privilege, and power. While medically altering the body is one method of creating the ideal image, physical conditioning is another. For example, Bordo examines the body of a cultural icon, Madonna, and how her physical form changed dramatically over the course of her career. Madonna's body transformed from the voluptuous figure in her early career, into one that "runs several miles a day, lifts weights, and [has] developed, in obedience to dominant contemporary norms, a tight, slender, muscular body" (269). Madonna's disciplined and highly regimented workout schedule reflects, according to Bordo, her "obedience to dominant contemporary norms."³² Yet Madonna has the power, time, and money to afford the privilege of disciplining and shaping her body. As I have suggested before, the body shapes and conforms to the environment in which it is a part. My explorations of Montana Avenue both confirm and reaffirm this position. For example, there were no disabled bodies in public, or even the visibility of wheel-chair access ramps on the Avenue. As previously suggested, when a body does not meet the expectations of its perceived public self, then not only does it become "othered" but is

³² I am sure many feminist scholars would argue that Madonna's ability to constantly construct and shift her image complicates and destabilizes how she is perceived and thus gives her more control and agency of her own image. Even so, many of us (myself included) cannot comprehend the kind of discipline, time, and money, it takes to maintain and achieve Madonna's body. This type of awe-inspiring reverence to her ability to discipline herself, I suggest, is also problematic.

also stigmatized as needing repair or “fixing.” Sadly, bodies which may be otherwise healthy, beautiful, able or disabled bodies become marginalized, or judged, by their own perceived imperfections.

Part 3: Pilates Images and Goals Revisited

This final area utilizes the perspectives gained from dance scholarship to examine the images and goals of the Pilates practice for the problematic ideologies they perpetuate. Broadly speaking, the physical culture of Pilates over-emphasizes youthfulness and physical perfection. The images and goals of Pilates neglects and refutes ugliness and disability, while it visually reinscribes whiteness, healthiness, and “ideal” femininity through its educational manuals, at-home books, magazines, and on-line marketing. Pilates does not perpetuate contemporary ideals of bodily beauty, rather, I maintain it reiterates the same ideals and values of the early 20th century. Recall Chapter 3 argued that the Classical Principles of Pilates have not changed much over time. The Principles and goals of Pilates can be viewed similarly, specifically in the sense that both have not undergone significant change. I put forth that the images we have seen throughout this project, as well as the goals of Pilates, perpetuate and naturalize dominant 20th century ideologies surrounding the body of white femininity: a well-toned, slender, and perfectly balanced, and well-groomed body that is a reflection of her moral character.

Dance scholarship broadens, deepens, and further contributes to our understanding of Pilates by examining how the body reflects and provides cultural

meaning. According to Paul Scolieri's recent publication, "'An Interesting Experiment in Eugenics: Ted Shawn, American Dance, and the Discourses of Sex, Race, and Ethnicity'" (2012), Ted Shawn allowed the eugenic mindset of the 1920s and 1930s to inform his perspectives in American dance. I draw attention to this scholarship in order to situate how Joseph Pilates' values and his client's values seemingly intersect. Scolieri draws attention to Shawn's *American Ballet* stating, "Shawn describes his 'dream' for a dance school that would be a breeding ground for eugenic dancers. He envisioned a campus of sixty to a hundred children 'chosen in regard to parentage which would indicate artistic leanings, physical health and beauty, character and intelligence'" (23). Shawn believed the disciplining and artistic ideals of dance could create the ideal person and, more so, that "eugenics and dancing were affined 'methods' for (re)producing ideal bodies" (3). Pilates instructors may already realize the significance, and obvious problems, of Shawn's ideas. Ted Shawn, together with Barton Munaw, practiced with Joseph Pilates at his New York studio (Gallagher 89). Although Shawn's ideas are overtly more eugenic, I suggest the bodily ideals that Joseph Pilates and Ted Shawn supported were in line with each other. Likewise, the "methods" of Pilates also worked to "(re)produce" ideal bodies. Perhaps the backlash against the disabled body, and the disturbing ideologies which surrounded it, became a more powerful indicator of what a socially legitimate body should not look like, rather than what it should.

Moving from this idea, and to help shed light on the presence of cultural values in dance forms, I draw attention to perhaps an unlikely counterpart: Hip-Hop. I do so in order to emphasize the complex relationship between images of bodies, the bodies

produced by movement, and cultural values. As previously discussed, socioeconomic status can be defined through body capital, or one's appearance and physical comportment. The images, marketing, and body in Hip Hop, especially as it pertains to the embodiment or physical representations of cultural values, is noteworthy since these same frameworks can be utilized (albeit with very different results) with Pilates as well.

I suggest the images of the bodies in Hip-Hop are exceedingly pervasive in Westernized cultures today, and they can tell us more about the perceived cultural values of those who consume it. Joseph G. Schloss states in *Foundations: b-boys, b-girls, and hip-hop culture in New York* (2009), that Hip-Hop

is increasingly used as a kind of loose demographic designation for contemporary African American youth, regardless of whether or not they have any overt connection to rap music or to other hip-hop arts. This is the sense of hip-hop that is evoked by such phrases as "hip-hop attitude" and the "hip-hop generation." Hip-hop, in this sense, is usually invoked to emphasize age and class over race when singling out young African Americans... (5).

While Schloss' work is more involved, the specificity of Hip-Hop's target audience is significant: its marketers want to access an attitude that appeals to young African Americans. The images and perception of those images is important to the audiences that consume them. They are also marketed images that invoke stereotypical ideas about class and race.

Yet the tension between the images of Hip-Hop and its historical development is more complicated. I draw attention to this scholarship because, when viewed in tandem, helps to clarify the cultural attitudes grounded in Pilates historical development. Alan

Hughes in “Hip-Hop Economy” (2002) states that Hip-Hop is “the culture of America’s urban youth. It’s a way of dressing, speaking and behaving, all with an in-your-face attitude. It evolved from rap music, a sound born in the inner city...” (72). These cultural behaviors and attitudes express themselves in the bodies, images, and dress of its participants. As Jeff Chang reports in “It’s a Hip-Hop World” (2007), “race riots, urban renewal, arson, and government neglect wiped out educational and social service programs, eviscerating housing stock, accelerated White flight and job loss, and created an international symbol of urban despair” (61). This history of turmoil is one of the cornerstones of Hip-Hop and its marketers use this legacy to promote it. According to Hughes, Hip-Hop’s legacy is that it has transgressed white, popular culture by reinforcing the historical connection to poor and disenfranchised in large part *because* of its marketing. As Schloss reports, “[Hip-Hop is] a corporate way of promoting something that’s urban...” (60). Hip-Hop’s development, and the images and attitudes capitalized upon to reinforce its class and racial history, are visibilized most clearly through the body.

The body in Hip-Hop communicates in a commercial realm by embodying the community from which it was developed. “This relationship between the individual and his or her community is seen in other areas as well, such as the way one carries oneself” (Schloss 74). The Hip-Hop body of b-boying or break dancing is a body that communicates struggle, embraces him or herself, reflects community and street, as well as projects through dancing how to overcome difficult socio-economic situations. At one point in time, the Hip-Hop body was a representation of a time and place, even to a

specific urban street block in the Bronx. Schloss suggests that at its foundation, the Hip-Hop body is creative, bold, daring, improvisational, not bound or restricted by one movement, but required to think quickly and move spontaneously. Its movements are multi-planar, multi-directional, multi-jointed, and weight bearing over all areas of the body (hands, knees, elbows, fingers, head). It is fluid and loose, while simultaneously contained. The Hip-Hop body is well-conditioned, although at times, deliberately hides this physique. The differences in the two movement forms and the bodies that practice them are compelling, however, I suggest that more can be learned by examining the differences between the cultural production of the Hip-Hop body and Pilates body – since both serve to perpetuate the values of the communities that produce them. While the images and body of Hip-Hop promote an urban, youthful African American culture, I suggest Pilates and the bodily images it produces, promote the cultural values of beauty and white femininity grounded in the era in which it proliferated.

The Hip-Hop image is marketed to promote, among many other things, the urban attitude of the culture from which it developed. The emphasis in Hip-Hop is not on obtaining an “ideal” Hip-Hop body. Rather, Hip-Hop is a form of artistic self-expression. Yet its commercialized images are important in the perpetuation of a cultural attitude. Pilates, on the other hand, markets an ideal body through the images it promotes. Many of the images marketed today may actually include women who do not, in fact, practice Pilates at all.³³ Instead, they reflect the marketed goals of the ideal mainstream white feminine body. To clarify this idea, I look to dance scholar Susan Foster and her

³³ I have been involved in a few Pilates advertising “photo shoots” where the models posing as Pilates students or instructors do not practiced Pilates.

important work from “Dancing Bodies” (1997) so I may better examine the *allusiveness* of the ideal body. Foster discusses how dancers train their bodies through dancing so that they may continue to progress their proficiency in dance. According to Foster the ideal *dancer’s* body “may specify size, shape, and proportions of its parts as well as expertise at executing specific movements” (237). She recommends that a dancer’s training not only produces the aesthetically ideal body, but also the *perceived* body. The perceived body is one that the dancer lives *in*, while the aesthetically ideal body, as Foster suggests, actually *eludes* all dancers. It is an imagined ideal body which in many cases, cannot be achieved. In Pilates, according to Hamera, (after Susan Foster) there are “two inter-animating bodies created by [Pilates], ‘one, perceived and tangible; the other, aesthetically ideal’” (Hamera 20). The tangible body is the perceived body, and in many cases the “demonstrative body.” The aesthetically ideal body is the body that is marketed in Pilates. According to Foster, the “demonstrative body” and as the name would suggest, is a body that in many cases is used to demonstrate dancing in technique classes. The demonstrative body should represent the ideal technique and bodily form. Foster suggests that years of dance or movement technique shapes and transforms the body into its dancing form (239). The body, in the best-case scenario, becomes the demonstrative body or the one that is portrayed in the images of Pilates. The demonstrative Pilates body (not the “ideal” Pilates body) not only reflected in the marketed images of Pilates, but in many cases, is the body of the Pilates instructor. The interplay which occurs during the act of learning or embodying Pilates *through* the demonstrative body is significant: as Hamera states, “the [Pilates] student as object-body of technique re-conceives her own

corporeal geography through the mediation of another who is, simultaneously, an ideal and another body, an interlocutor, a friend. Pilates training births and stabilizes a shared history between its interlocutors: a repertoire of movements and of stories” (31). While I do not contest Hamera’s argument, I suggest those “stories” which are replayed through the Pilates learning experience and through the demonstrative body from which one learns, stabilizes a cultural history which is imbued with gender norms and stereotypes about women’s beauty.³⁴ The way the student’s self-perception in Pilates is conditioned is in large part due to the marketing of Pilates and the *demonstrative body* of her instructor. In many cases the instructor’s body is perceived to be the ideal demonstration of Pilates effects – one to which the student aspires – but ironically, the instructor might not regularly practice Pilates at all.³⁵

Furthering this idea, the marketed goals and images of Pilates contributes to the pursuit, and inevitable failure, of an unobtainable bodily ideal. Women who attempt to obtain the health and beauty standards of the feminine ideal “requires such radical and extensive measure of bodily transformation that virtually every woman who gives herself to it is destined in some degree to fail” (Bartky 283). For example, in both examples of the at-home Pilates books, the ideal body can be “earned” through hard work, strong will, and dedication; thus perpetuating a fantasy of obtaining an ideal. Yet, say the reader of

³⁴ I suggest the Pilates exercises (over 200 of them) are social and political “stories” of their own. Each one is marked, I suggest, with its own cultural appropriations and cultural elements not yet adequately addressed.

³⁵ From my experience, I have known many Pilates teachers who are fantastic instructors, but whose bodies do not appear to be “in-shape” or even “healthy.” Many Pilates instructors, or career Pilates teachers, will admit that they rarely have time to practice Pilates. The myth of the Pilates body is one that I believe is perpetuated by the images and goals of Pilates, since the actual demonstrative body might not actually practice Pilates at all.

Brooke Siler's *The Pilates Body* (2000) undertakes the project of Pilates and fails to reach an unrealistic bodily goal, then according to Bartky, "a measure of shame is added to a woman's sense that the body she inhabits is deficient: she ought to take better care of herself; she might after all have jogged that last mile" (283). More alarmingly, since the standards of social acceptance of the white female body are completely unrealistic, trying to achieve those standards manifests itself in the "tighter control over the body" which subsequently, "[gains] a new kind of hold over the mind" (Bartky 289). This bodily and mental control is examined in its most aggressive form in Lorin Taranis and Caroline Meyer's, "Perfectionism and Compulsive exercise among female exercisers: High personal standards or self-criticism?" (2010). This study examines women exercisers, and concludes that compulsive exercising among females correlates to self-criticism and dysfunctional perfectionism (Taranis and Meyer 6). I suggest that this stems from many different socially constructed issues, one however, being unrealistic bodily expectations. Sadly, these expectations are also reflected and perpetuated in the images of Pilates; in many cases, there are no overweight, average looking, ugly, large-hipped, large-breasted, deformed, or wheel-chaired individuals in the images of Pilates.

From this, we can return to the more problematic issue, one that "healthy" bodies are often defined to be so and justified through medical science. The ideals of "fitness," "health," and "beauty" as they are portrayed through the images of Pilates, are narrow, and underscore the idea that to be "healthy" is the best possible outcome for the body.³⁶

³⁶ A study completed in 2004 by Segal et al., "The Effects of Pilates Training on Flexibility and Body Composition: An Observational Study" (2004) concluded that weekly Pilates training, over a 6 month period, did not result in any significant changes to the participants overall health. They stated "the high

Yet as previously suggested, medical science, socioeconomic status, and the physical displays of privilege often times overlap. As Banner states “changes in the standards of beauty is a complex issue in the interaction of class, women’s changing expectations, social modernization, medical points of view and other factors” (5). Displays of beauty, I suggest, often get confused with the marketing of health and idealness. Many women who try to become “healthy,” only so that they can “feel better,” are in reality succumbing to deeply ingrained moralistic beliefs.³⁷ Evans states “worrying about weight and being held accountable for one’s girth, then became part of a wider moralistic and ideological process, firmly stitching together medicine and ‘hygiene,’ with socioeconomic self-production” (155). Understandably, not all women “buy into” the mainstream constructions of “Anglo beauty ideals” which have been circulated by the media and Hollywood (Baltrán 73). But, as previously suggested, most women participate to some degree in the culture of beauty either unknowingly or knowingly. This participation is something that is unavoidable and inescapable.

From these ideas, I return to the notion of disability and able-bodiedness. Pilates, as stated before, does nothing to refute the stigma associated with disability through its images or goals. The culture of able-bodiedness, especially in the Pilates goals and images, according to Kafer, “is also instituted and maintained through less physical – although no less coercive – means, though ‘verbal and nonverbal messages’” (80). I

initial assessment of health status may show that the Pilates class attracts a relatively healthy population...”(1980).

³⁷ Working in the “health and wellness” industry, I have spoken with many women who enjoy exercising because, at face value, it makes them “feel better.” Yet more times than not, these same women will admit to the fact that they ultimately want to achieve a desired weight loss goal, smaller hips, and gain flatter tummies.

suggest the non-verbal messages are clearly visibilized in the images of the bodies that demonstrate and teach Pilates today. The obsession to avoid appearing physically deviant is an insidious condition in the Pilates work. Many students of Pilates are self-reported “fanatics” and “religiously” practice every day so as not become athletically de-conditioned or unhealthy.³⁸

Earlier I put forth the images of Pilates also have residual traces of a balletic body present within the bodies of their models. Again, more can be learned by positioning Pilates relative to other dance practices, like ballet. The images of women in Pilates and the ballerina share similar bodily markers. I maintain the traces of the balletic body underscore how the images and goals of Pilates negate and refute the not only the disabled body, but reinforce bodily perfectionism. George Balanchine, choreographer for the New York City Ballet, famously and somewhat problematically said that “ballet is woman” (Croce 36, Jonas 227). Yet this “ballet=woman” correlation began much earlier in time.³⁹ Susan Foster’s work in *Choreography and Narrative* (1998) discussed Théophile Gautier’s obsession with the ballerina’s form, describing Fanny Elsser’s body as “tall, supple, and well-formed; she has delicate wrists and slim ankles; her legs, elegant and well-turned, recall the slender but muscular legs of Diana, the virgin huntress” (227). Although Elsser’s body is more rotund compared to today’s standards, Gautier’s attention to the female form, as well as the Roman deity, is historically illustrative of aesthetics of femininity in ballet. The image of the ballerina: one who

³⁸ Some clients’ drive to stay “in shape” stems from a desire to fix their perceived physical imperfections.

³⁹ The intention is not to engage a full history of the ballerina’s body over time. That is far outside the scope of this project. However, I believe it is important for the reader to recognize that the ballerina’s body has come under the scrutiny of the male and female gaze for a relatively long time. The ballerina’s body, once a sexual prostitute of sorts, eventually became a marker of ideal femininity.

trains and disciplines her body with an untold amount of sacrifice and pain, performs feminine innocence and virginal purity, while displaying technical virtuosity, and supreme command over her body to her audiences (Jonas 134).⁴⁰ As Foster alluded to earlier, to achieve bodily perfection in ballet requires enormous amount of training and restrictive practices. From a contemporary vantage point, as Wulff pointed out, a ballerina's body can work to define or sabotage her career. Jennifer Dunning reported that "in classical ballet, there is popularly believed to be an ideal "Balanchine" body type for women, with the jobs going to tall, slender women with long necks, long legs, and short torsos" (NYT on-line). Yet to achieve this type of ideal ballet body, as many in the dance community understand, encourages *unhealthy* and restrictive eating behavior (Dunning NYT).⁴¹

The traces of the ballerina's body operate on a more subversive level in the Pilates images. Many times a ballerina is only *seen* and not heard, and the lack of voice is a more disturbing characteristic. This seen-but-not-heard idea has been layered into ideal qualities of femininity. Elizabeth Dempster's "Women Writing the Body: Let's Watch a Little How She Dances" (1995) discusses how dance (especially ballet) has been

⁴⁰ Dance scholarship has extensive historical analysis regarding femininity, ballet, and the body. Sally Banes in *Dancing Women: Female Bodies on Stage* (1999) analyzes the role of the female ballet dancer through a lens of female empowerment by looking at the choreography of the well-recognized western ballets. Susan Foster's, "The Ballerina's Phallic Point" in *Corporealities: Dancing Knowledge, Culture and Power* (1996) takes a slightly different approach, by looking at the ballerina's body and its relationship to gender identity and sexual desire. Both scholars analyze the female ballerina, however, the emphasis of this chapter is not to comprehensively examine this scholarship. Rather it uses this work to provide points of reflection and contextualization for Pilates.

⁴¹ Ironically, if we look back to the turn of the 20th century, Susan Foster points out that the early modern dancers, "unabashedly hostile to the geometrized ballet body, to its pedagogical practices, and its unseemly reputation, ... argued for an alignment of all dance practice with the natural. 'Culture' had produced ballet's deformed bodies..." (1996, 261). The ballerina's body, eventually became a reflection of deformity, rather than the ideal.

perceived as the feminine art form, and examines the absence of “voice.” For instance, the ballet through its technique and bodily discipline, posits an ideal to both dancer and audience, and governs the presentation and definition of “perfected bodies” (Dempster 26). Yet if ballet is a movement practice that inscribes patriarchal ideology, then the female dancers who train in ballet subsumes their bodily initiation into the patriarchal order through the rhetorical of the ballet (Daly 26). A ballerina’s power is perceived rather than real, because she has no rights of authorship over the ballet “text” (Dempster 27). The ballerina might possess and have command over a powerful body, but is powerless in voice. This subversive perception to the on-looker, in many respects, is detrimental to feminine identity. The female audience member, while watching ballet, vicariously experiences a moment where the “normal body” is subsumed to the perfected body of the ballet dancer (Dempster 33).⁴² The problematic ideologies surrounding the ballerina, and the ballet body, find themselves in the perceived traces of the ballet body in the images of Pilates. The traces of the balletic body are present in Figures 4.1, 4.2, and 4.7 in this chapter. The women’s body, as reflected in the position and placement of their arms, development of their arch of foot, and slender but well-toned legs hints at traces of ballet training.⁴³ Even the image of the woman with more defined abdominals in Figure 4.6, while perhaps not balletic-looking, poses no real threat to the “aesthetic of femininity.” Additionally, although Figure 4.5 might be more “sexy” because of her

⁴² Deirdre Kelly’s recent publication *Ballerina: Sex, Scandal, and Suffering Behind the Symbol of Perfection* (2012) discusses the detrimental eating and unhealthy exercises behaviors a dancer must go through to achieve the ballerina’s body.

⁴³ Many Pilates instructors come from dance backgrounds, or were professional dancers themselves. For various reasons, Pilates is a wonderful career for many dancers to transition into. But the significance of this cannot be adequately underscored. Not only are the strict disciplining practices already instilled into the ballet dancer’s body, but with that comes a representation of the feminine ideal.

outfit, hips cocked to one side, and bare stomach, she is noticeably thinner, less muscular, and physically immature looking. Her appearance is youthful and girlish. I suggest these women are not reflections of Rosie the Riveter, Marilyn Monroe, Margaret Thatcher or Hilary Clinton. Instead, they are the ideal representations of what the Pilates industry is marketing as a “healthy” demonstrative Pilates body (which actually might not be that healthy) and the perfect perceived inscription of white femininity. These balletic, and perhaps somewhat unhealthy-looking bodies, as they are reproduced and replicated in at-home Pilates books further perpetuate unrealistic bodily ideals, and reinforce a problematic discourses.

In conclusion, the 21st century images and goals of Pilates reflect and embody legacies surrounding stereotyped gender norms, standards of beauty, and able-bodiedness from the mid-19th and early 20th century in the United States. This is alarming since “it is estimated that over 10 million people are now practicing Pilates in the United States alone” (Cruz-Ferreira 251). The next and final chapter concludes this project by addressing, what I believe is one of the most alarming concerns developed within these pages. If according to many Pilates instructors, Pilates is a practice that conditions the exercises into the participant’s body to the point of “unconscious competency,” then *what* muscle memories are we unconsciously training into the body?

CHAPTER FIVE

The Presence of Absences: Unconscious Performances and Muscle Memories

I recall my first “official” Pilates class at the American Dance Festival in 2001. Up to that point I had dallied in various “core” strengthening exercises that conveniently found themselves at the beginning of my modern dance classes.¹ Truthfully, I despised my first Pilates class. I resisted every second of the one hour and some-odd minutes. Lying there, staring at the ceiling, I thought, *When will this ever end?* It was painfully boring, dreadfully slow, and in my opinion, completely unnecessary. As we dutifully performed the Classical repertoire of the Pilates mat exercises, I arrogantly thought, *We’re dancers -- we don’t need core strengthening, we are already strong in our cores.* To this day, it surprises me that Pilates is such a significant part of my life.

The journey of learning Pilates is highly personal. Each person learns and responds to Pilates in very different ways. From my observations, people practice the “gestures” of Pilates until they become a part of their body’s muscle memory. These gestures or exercises, performed with greater or lesser vigor, instill what many Pilates instructors believe to be, beneficial musculoskeletal and mental posturing. Out of all of the approaches to Pilates, there is not one method that is particularly “right” or “wrong”/“better” or “worse.” Much of the student’s execution of the exercises depends

¹ The traces and intersections of these two movement forms is noteworthy since, although outside the scope of this project, I suggest that the relationship between Mary Wigman, Joseph Pilates, and Hanya Holm interjected traces of Pilates into the repertoire of Modern Dance as we know and understand it today.

on the instructor's choice of direction to the individual body. The teaching approach or style is not significant to this chapter. However, what is reinforced in the body during the process of learning Pilates is. Up to this point, I have put forth that examining the certain aspects of the Pilates practice reveals its cultural and social meanings. This project examined the teaching manuals, exercises, at-home books, Classical Principles, and other Pilates learning guides for their consequent cultural implications. Yet the way a body *learns* a new movement practice, like Pilates, as well as the process of transmission of movement forms in-between bodies has yet to be discussed. Much of this chapter seeks to theorize certain ideas -- not necessarily for their concreteness or stability -- but for what they can tell in the process of theorization. For this reason, this chapter may come across to some readers as unstable and disjointed. There is not a clean, crisp, resolved answer in its pages. However, I suggest this disjointedness adds to the cultural complexity and enriches our understanding of Pilates. Although many of these ideas appear disjointed when viewed separately; knitted together they illustrate and expose a more complicated and perhaps problematic finding.

With these ideas in mind, this final chapter unfolds in three areas. Part 1 examines the Pilates "Learning Matrix" according to the Pilates Method Alliance (PMA) Exam Study Guide. While Pilates is sometimes seen as a somatic practice, part 2 discusses some of the ways it differs, particularly around the issue of consciousness. In this respect, part 2 examines dance and cultural studies scholarship about the significance of body-to-body transmission of movement forms. Dance scholarship is important to this cause, because it broadens our understanding of *what* is exchanged and expressed

between instructor and student while teaching, learning, and doing Pilates. Understanding the cultural underpinnings of the body-to-body transmission processes will cast a different light on *what else* (besides physical movement) the body gains through the process of motor learning in Pilates. Part 3 examines how the processes of conditioning “unconscious” movement in the body, potentially replaces other muscle memories. By this, I suggest not all embodied memories have liberatory effects. This could be potentially worrisome in the larger scope, especially with respect to the historical marginalization of non-white bodies. The significance of synthesizing these two seemingly disparate scholarly areas (i.e. the PMA Exam Study Guide and Dance Studies) illustrates how the Pilates pedagogy continuously overlooks values culturally transmitted from body-to-body through the Pilates practice. I maintain by making the goal of Pilates an “unconscious” and therefore unreflective performance of its exercise, perpetuates specific cultural and behavioral values. These embodiments are inclusive to those who participate, but more problematically, also neglect, absent, and potentially replace other, and perpetuate as unmarked, embodied memories present in the Pilates work and in the participants’ body.

Part 1: The PMA’s Learning Matrix

Joseph Pilates used the idea of “motor learning” to describe what he believed was the ultimate benefit of the practice for his students. He explained, the exercises, “correctly executed and mastered to the point of subconscious reaction, . . . will reflect

grace and balance in your routine activities” (*A Pilates’ Primer* 14).² This section critically evaluates what it means to train a body into “unconscious” or “subconscious” behaviors. Although there are many benefits to Pilates, I am troubled by Joseph Pilates insistence on training its’ participants into an “unconscious” performance of its embodied goals and principles. By specifically examining the goal of “Unconscious Competency” in the “Learning Matrix” presented by the Pilates Method Alliances’ (PMA) Exam Study Guide, I seek to uncover if there are problematic issues surrounding unconsciously embodying Pilates.³

Yet, what does it mean to “unconsciously” embody a behavior or exercise? In my conversations with dancers, athletes, and performing artists, I learned that many of them claim that at a certain point in their artistic or athletic development, they no longer consciously think about what their bodies were doing. Their bodies integrated and adapted their training to the point where it became “second nature.” Much in the same a person learns to walk, swim, or ride a bike, the body’s ability to perform, move, or behave in a sport specific or choreographic way happens at an “unconscious” level. These athletic or artistic movement behaviors became embodied muscle memories. These movements, according to some, also become a part of a person’s identity. But

² It is beyond the scope, and point, of this chapter to analyze *all* of the theories of motor learning.

³ In 2001 an internationally recognized non-profit organization, called the “Pilates Method Alliance” (PMA) was founded. The PMA markets itself as an organization that promotes and protects the quality of Pilates instruction. In response to the overwhelming supply of unregulated Pilates certifying programs, the PMA created a “legitimizing” exam that Pilates teachers, regardless of their training, can take. In doing so, the PMA purports they insure the level of quality and standard of excellence of Pilates instruction. The exam, which cost \$300.00 (July 2011), allows the instructor to become recognized as a PMA certified instructor. This certification this is both problematic and (according to some in the industry) “justifiable,” and continues to be a source of tension/contestation for some in the Pilates community.

these movements don't always have to be highly virtuosic or athletic; they could also be the posturing of everyday movements. Halifu Osumare in "Global Breakdancing and the Intercultural Body" (2003) suggests that a person's social identity unconsciously performs through "pedestrian" gestures:

an often unconscious but meaningful series of bodily postures, gestures, and movements that implicitly signify and mark a sense of social identity or identities in everyday pedestrian activity. ... gestures and body language constitute the manner in which we understand ourselves through our bodies, literally through the muscular and skeletal structure as well as semiotically and metaphorically (31).

The unconscious gestures, postures, behaviors, or "second nature" skills live at a muscular and skeletal level. These physical markers or behaviors, according to Osumare, characterize a person's social identity. In many cases the sport, or the style of dance, can be discerned by looking at the physical and behavioral characteristics of the person's body.⁴

Physically embedded unconscious bodily gestures, or "second nature" skills, I suggest, are similar to a (seemingly) unrelated concept called "excessive neuromuscular tension." Ironically, second nature skills and excessive neuromuscular tension, many times are realized when they are noticeably *gone* from the body. For example, an athlete who retires, or a ballerina who is no longer performing professionally, might notice skills that were once second nature, or intuitively performed, can no longer be produced at will. These skills are recognizably gone from the body. The same can be said for excessive

⁴ I remind the reader of Wulff's earlier examination of a ballerina's body type, and subsequent performance roles in the ballet's politics of performance.

neuromuscular tension. Sally Fitt author of *Dance Kinesiology* (1996) states, “[excessive] neuromuscular tension is an insidious condition; unless it becomes severe enough to produce pain, we don’t even know it’s there until it is gone. Gradual buildup of tension allows a neurological system to become accustom to its presence. Until the tension is released in some way, we are not aware it was there” (307). The presence of tension in the body is only noticeable through its release, or newly found absence. From my experiences in Pilates, I have found that Pilates releases unnecessary tension in the body by facilitating the “correct” neurological functioning/patterning of muscular behavior. But in order for Pilates to release excessive neurological tension in the body, I suggest, it must teach new muscular patterns (i.e. the Pilates exercises) in the body. This new patterning creates bodily awareness through new movement, but only by alerting clients to the presences of absences that the new movements have replaced. From this perspective, the client’s new awareness of the absence of excessive neuromuscular tension in his or her body is replaced with another movement. This process of exchange, according to the PMA, happens in specific stages of motor learning.

The PMA Study Guide’s “Conscious Competence Learning Matrix” assumes that each body moves through the stages of learning at various times and, I suggest, depends on a student’s “kinesthetic sense.” Motor memory and the kinesthetic sense can be thought of similarly. The kinesthetic sense, “is literally the perception of motion” (Fitt 276). Motor memory, according to Fitt, is the body’s memory of an activity like riding a bicycle (277). Fitt states, “true motor memory is stored in the cerebral cortex and is assisted by the kinesthetic sense, but full motor memory goes beyond the scope of

kinesthesia. This common use of *kinesthetic* includes perception and memory of motion, position, and motor coordination, and integration of sensory information” (italics added, Fitt 277). I suggest that the ‘integration of sensory information’ and ‘kinesthetic’ can be connected with Osumare’s understanding of a person’s social identity, or the “gestures and body language [which] constitute the manner in which we understand ourselves through our bodies, literally through the muscular and skeletal structure” (Osumare 31). Motor learning, motor memory, and kinesthetic sense, I put forth, relate to a person’s self-perception. Although lacking cultural or social analysis, the following is the PMA Study Guide’s perspective regarding the “traditionally” understood stages of motor learning.

According to the PMA there are five different stages in motor learning. The first stage of the PMA’s Learning Matrix is “Unconscious Incompetence.” According to the PMA, this stage is characterized by the learner’s lack of awareness of the existence, or relevance, of a movement skill (Lesson 52). A new comer to Pilates may not understand its physical benefits, or comprehend *how* to move as instructed. Additionally, a student may not recognize that he or she is performing the exercise incorrectly. In this respect, it is up to the instructor to facilitate the “correct” technique in the learner’s body. Fitt states, “learning any new movement skill requires the ability to physically focus movement on selected areas of the body. To do so, one must be able to inhibit undesired movements. In order to achieve control, the tension goes up. In the initial stages of learning any new movement skill, the [muscular] tension level is typically very high” (308). The second learning phase, “Conscious Incompetence,” the learner recognizes the

relevance of a movement skill and also becomes aware that he or she cannot perform the skill correctly (Lesson 52). The learner is aware that he or she is performing the exercise incorrectly, but may not be able to self-correct. The job of the instructor in this stage of learning is to facilitate the correct neuromuscular patterning in the student, typically through the use of verbal cues, tactile cues, or physical demonstration. The third stage, “Conscious Competence,” describes a point when the learner performs the skill correctly and reliably at will (Lesson 52). The student self-corrects and implements the correct movement patterning in his or her body. Fitt states, “as new neurological patterns are imprinted in the repertoire of the individual, the amount of control required to prevent extraneous movement can be relaxed and the motion learning becomes more fluid” (308). The instructor recognizes this stage, and can challenge the student by providing new, more rigorous exercises. The fourth stage “Unconscious Competence” (i.e. “Unconscious Competency”) describes skills like driving or typing where a learner “unconsciously” knows how to perform the skill, however he or she may not be able to teach the skill to another person (Lesson 53). The body, at this stage, is working towards muscular efficiency, or “using the minimum amount of effort to perform a given action... reducing the number of active muscles to a bare minimum. It is, in effect, *economy of motion*” (Fitt 309). This stage is the point in the learning process when the skill is “so practiced that it enters unconscious parts of the brain” or it becomes “second nature” (Lesson 53).⁵ Lastly, the PMA references a stage called “Reflective Competence” which, I suggest, has more to do with the ability of an instructor’s teaching skill, rather than a

⁵ This is not to be confused to the idea in Eastern movement practice of “no mind” or “learner’s mind” – which reflects that the mind is open and ready to receive new embodied information.

part of the overall learning process. The seasoned practitioner with “Reflective Competence,” according to the PMA, can teach their own unconscious skills to beginning students (Lesson 53).

An individual’s progression through the “Learning Matrix” will differ, and by practicing the Pilates exercises ‘correctly’ expedites this process. Fiasca suggests “the master [i.e. Joseph Pilates] regularly gave students exercises to practice between lessons so the movement patterns and muscle memory would become more intimately known in the body” (121).⁶ Over time, the Pilates movements became ingrained, to the point of unconscious reiteration, into American bodies. As Pilates’ students un-learned one neurological patterning (i.e. sloping shoulders, knock-knees, “bracing patterns,” muscular imbalances, etc), they re-learned another, (i.e. vertical spine, broader shoulders, straighter legs).⁷ Pilates became a currency (like Shilling’s “physical capital”) of embodied knowledge. Recall Peak’s suggestion, the Pilates Classical Principles (housed in the movements) affect “all aspects of one’s life.” This embodied knowledge becomes an autonomic process, or an unconscious performance of a student’s day-to-day behavior that, I put forth, translate into perceived socially acceptable body. Yet these ideas reveal a more troubling issue: the PMA’s “unconscious competency” actually imbeds movements in the body to the point of the erasure of other bodily characteristics, as well as specific social, gendered, classed, and racial bodily discourses. The issue is not necessarily that a replacement happens; this happens many times in bodily practices. The

⁶ I am troubled by use of certain hagiographic or hero-worship like language (i.e. “master” or “disciples”) in the Pilates literature. In the video documentary *Ron-Sez*, Ron Fletcher professes to have had the “blessing” of Clara Pilates to continue teaching the work.

⁷ There is an assumption, in this terminology, that one form of muscular behavior is “better” over others.

Pilates practice and its teaching, is designed to present a “universal” approach that is not culturally marked. In this sense, the issue is that the process of replacement is expressly part of the Pilates training method is linked to the supposedly “universal” aspects of it. Pilates, through its exercises and training methodology, deliberately replaces a person’s neuromuscular patterning (which might already bare cultural meaning) with new movement behaviors that carry their own cultural values and stigmas.

Part 2: Acts of Cultural Transmission

Chapter 4 examined the images and goals of the Pilates practice, and how these images perpetuate problematic discourses. It touched on the relationship between the Pilates instructor’s body, and the student’s body. Using this idea as a backdrop, this next section develops the relationship between the student and instructor more fully. Dance studies can help us draw out what has been previously unexamined in the Pilates learning process. It can also help us understand the significance of body-to-body movement transmission, specifically how it is translated through the repertoire or choreography of Pilates. What I hope to reveal from this examination is not necessarily stable or definitive answers, but rather expose the tensions can be found through this theorizing process.

Although terms like “choreography” and “repertoire” are commonly associated with dance practices, they also apply to Pilates. Many Pilates teachers would agree that Pilates is a system of codified movements. These movements, when linked together, create a movement sequence that could be referred to as “choreography” of the Pilates “repertoire.” A student learns these movement sequences, or exercise series, during a

Pilates class or individual “one-on-one” session. Choreography and repertoire can also be thought of as archival ‘units’ of movements which carry cultural, social, and political values over time. Diane Taylor in *Acts of Transfer* (2003), states “repertoire, whether in terms of verbal or nonverbal expression, transmits live, embodied actions. ... traditions are stored in the body, through various mnemonic methods, and transmitted ‘live’ in the here and now to a live audience. Forms handed down from the past are experienced as present” (24). The past political, social, and cultural values, housed in repertoire, are replayed in present day bodies. Yet how these histories transfer from body to body is important. Taylor offers that “the telling is as important as the writing, the doing as central as the recording, the memory passed down through bodies and mnemonic practices” (35). “Telling,” from a Pilates perspective, could be the passing down/sharing of oral histories, or I suggest, the verbalizations of teaching movements. Susan Foster’s “Choreographies of Gender” (1998), states “choreography resonates with cultural values concerning bodily, individual, and social identities ... [and it] presents a structuring of deep and enduring cultural values ...” (5). In this sense, a choreographic series of movements becomes an important historical archive that can tell us more about the cultural values from a particular time, place, or identity. These historical archives pass from one body to another through the learning, or embodiment, process.

After Taylor and Foster, I suggest that as the muscles of the body learn a new movement form, it is also learning the historical and cultural values of the activity. In this sense, the teaching methodologies – or the way a dance or movement form is communicated; whether through demonstration, verbalization, or touch, express these

values. For example, in many dance studios across the United States, ballet is taught in a specific way. Many times the instructor, or star pupil, will demonstrate the movement while the other students observe. After the demonstration, students attempt to perform the exercise as demonstrated. In this regard, the body demonstrating the movement becomes very important, since that body acts as the student's guide. As students perform a ballet exercise, the teacher may count the music, give them verbal guidance cues, or make the occasional tactile adjustment to their arms, legs, or feet. For the most part, the learning student must remember the demonstration, and try to reproduce it in his or her own body. The visual component of learning ballet becomes important. Many components of the exercise might get lost in translation between the visual demonstration and practice. The learner must rely on his or her cognitive and visual ability to translate the verbal cues into movements in his or her own body. I suggest, for the beginning student, there is limited opportunity for kinesthetic introspection during a ballet exercise. The internal sensing that a ballet dancer experiences, like locating or feeling external rotation, releasing the hips, lifting the torso, grounding through the floor, reaching through the limbs, or lengthening through the spine, comes with time and practice. Ballet is a movement form that, through years and years of rigorous practice, becomes "unconsciously" ingrained in the body. The physical repertory, and the cultural histories housed within its "text," shapes the muscles of the body in very specific ways. I suggest there are many shared similarities in the teaching methodologies, cultural, and social values found in a ballet class and a Pilates class and they are predominately more Western. Yet, before moving further with this idea, I put forth we can learn much more

about cultural and social values by examining other movement practices like somatics and “Eastern” movement forms.

Many times Pilates and “somatics” fall under the same guise of “body therapies” and we can learn from the established scholarly research (Rouhiainen 2006). Somatic practices traditionally and characteristically focus “on the self, or awareness [and] this attention permits us to address the *nonconscious* or *automatic* aspects of ongoing movements, in order to change their organization” (italics added, Ginot 20). In this sense, attention to the automatic or “nonconscious” movement patterns, or tensions in the body are discoverable, and rectifiable through the somatic experience. As in Pilates, this presumes the automatic or “nonconscious” movement patterns the self-reflective body discovers, needs correcting. Returning to Ginot’s work, somatic practices have certain elements in common: “they favor slowness, feeble articulatory amplitude, a minimum of muscular effort, and, above all, an attention directed toward the self” (21). Apparently, the physical slowness and mental attentiveness of somatics encourage the discovery of undesirable neuromuscular patterns in the body. Somatic practices discover “incorrect” unconscious patterns and work to ‘undo’ them in the body. What does the desire to “undo” “incorrect” neurological patterning tell us about somatics? What are the cultural and social values affiliated with somatic movement forms?

Martha Eddy’s “Somatic Practices and Dance: Global Influences” (2002), maintains that the cross-cultural influences on somatic movement forms stem from an Asianist perspective. She suggests that movement forms like Tai Chi Chuan, Aikido, Judo, and Chi Kung influenced body therapies developed by Irmgard Bartenieff, Rudolf

Laban, Moshe Feldenkrais, and Bonnie Cohen. Each of these dancers/practitioners, she suggests, found intersections between science and movements stemming from an Asianist tradition, and these intersections helped them conceive their movement forms. Many somatic practices, according to Eddy, facilitate a deeper connection, internal sensing, and kinesthetic introspection within the somatic student's body. This internal sensing of the body helps to produce qualities of movement which are reflective of the self's "authentic movement" (Eddy 7).⁸ She suggests this kinetic introspection fosters a similar interaction with *other* bodies. For example, according to Eddy, the Japanese martial art of Aikido draws on the relationship that one person has with the other. Qualities of attention and *intention* must be contemplated throughout the entire Aikido practice. Additionally, according to Eddy, a non-linear awareness of the partner, (i.e. the dynamic relationship between body and mind and your partner's actions at any given time and space), are *always already* in play. Eddy suggests that an Asianist perspective of learning maintains that the body and mind are in learning in a circular tandem. The Eastern perspective, Eddy puts forth, views the *separation* of the body and mind as prohibitive: it creates an *unbalanced* understanding of the self and others. Movement practices, like Aikido, are suggestive of a culture's prioritization of social values. The sensing and perceiving of other persons, according to Eddy's interpretation of Eastern movement, is important to the development of the self. The relationship between somatics and Eastern

⁸ I take issue with Eddy's use of the word "authentic." If somatics tries to "undo" incorrect patterning in the body, and the internal sensing of movement allows for this detection – then how does the student distinguish between his or her "authentic" movement – and movement that need to be "undone"? What if somatics is "undoing" important "authentic" movement? Additionally, while I am not contesting Eddy's use of the word "authentic" it troubles me. Many times there is a stereotype of the "East" as a place of ancient truth, or "authenticity." "Authentic" used in context with conversations regarding the "Asianist perspective" is worrisome to me.

movement forms is significant only in the sense that it draws out different perspectives between body and mind in the learning process. It also draws out how a culture's values can influence the process of learning new movement forms. I suggest the learning processes that Eddy brings forth stands in contrast to ballet and Pilates.

At this point, it may not come as a surprise that the interaction between practitioners in an Aikido practice, varies from those in Pilates. In Pilates, as Hamera argues, the teacher-to-student interaction promotes a relationship that “over time, working with another to read, reread and rewrite the body's possibilities, this biomechanical relationality becomes something else; interpersonally, emotionally, the capacity to be touched becomes the capacity to be moved” (30-31). While I am not contesting Hamera's perspective, when put in conversation with Eddy's remarks, draws out interesting differences between the two movement practices. For example, Eddy suggested that Aikido encourages the participants to be aware of each other so that they may learn about themselves and others. Although Hamera's suggestion is well intended, it implies that there is a need to “rewrite” the body, as if the body somehow needs changing, and the biomechanical component (or I would say “rewriting”) of the work transforms into “something else.” This is troubling to me for two reasons. There seems to be a constant mantra in Pilates that encourages a bodily inadequacy to its students. Additionally, Hamera's insistence that “biomechanical relationality” develops into an emotional one conforms to an idea that equates “emotionality” with womanhood and “rationality” with manhood. Yet Hamera moves forward in her explanations. Hamera maintains that the interaction between bodies in Pilates allows “the student as object-

body of technique to re-conceive her own corporeal geography through the mediation of another who is, simultaneously, an ideal and another body, an interlocutor, a friend.

Pilates training births and stabilizes a shared history between its interlocutors: a repertoire of movements and of stories” (31). Again, I suggest that Hamera’s description suggests that the process of learning Pilates between bodies facilitates an infatuation with “an ideal” body which presumably, is the instructor’s. These “shared histories” passed in-between student and teacher in Pilates, according to Hamera’s description, are remarkably different from the cultural transferences between bodies in an Aikido practice.

Tomie Hahn’s, *Sensational Knowledge: Embodying Culture Through Japanese Dance* (2007) can further our understanding of the transmission of cultural values between bodies. She maintains that “transmission, [or] the physical internalization of aesthetic practices, is the path to comprehending cultural aesthetics, social structures and interactions” (59). Hahn’s discussion of *Nihon buyo* is significant to this project because of Hahn’s examination of the cultural values imparted between teacher and student. When describing the art of transmission of *Nihon buyo* Hahn suggests that “it is not uncommon for [*Nihon buyo* teachers] to speak about learning dance as a process for understanding self and spirit” (41). Like Eddy’s earlier assessment of Aikido, Hahn suggests that the embodiment of the art form helps the student learn more about him or herself. *Nihon buyo* teachers “stress the value of learning through the body and speak of *kokoro* (literally – heart, soul, spirit), an expressive essence projecting from one’s inner self within the body” (41). The attention to the spirit, heart, and soul or *kokoro* in the

discipline of *Nihon buyo*, Teachers maintain that the artistic discipline of *Nihon buyo* fosters the flow of *kokoro* (42). I suggest this idea distinguishes itself from Western artistic and movement disciplines.

A critical aspect of transmission in *Nihon buyo* is the way a student's body mimics, or absorbs, the movement of their teacher. The two bodies move simultaneously; one acting and the other absorbing, and thereby creating embodied transmission. One can think of this like the practice of "T'ai Chi," where the students follow or mimic the instructor's movements in silent practice. Buddhism, particularly Zen philosophy, "stresses the value of direct transmission (teaching without words) that manifests itself through the active body" (Hahn 44). Hahn explains that the roots of many art forms in the East are grounded in Buddhism where the body becomes very significant in shaping the learning process. In *Nihon buyo*, following Buddhism, the body is the central component of the art form. Many *Nihon buyo* teachers state "first comes the body. The most important thing is *kokoro*. Theory lies in the practice of embodiment" (Hahn 45). This Japanese artistic philosophy stresses the notion that the mind and the body are conceived of as "inseparable" and that it is the *process* or *development* of the mind-body complex. This formation happens simultaneously, and is important to the overall development of the participant's experience of the art form (Hahn 46).⁹ Hahn maintains that "the aspects of Buddhism's spirit may be observed in four aesthetic approached in the arts – simplicity, irregularity, suggestion and impermanence" (51). These are the general aesthetic principles the guide *Nihon buyo* and

⁹ I remind the reader how remarkably different this approach to motor learning is relative to the PMA's "Learning Matrix."

are a part of the transmission process. In this form, the body is privileged over the voice, since the voice is often “considered an obstacle in that it can impose a self-conscious aspect to the flow of dance or music, resulting in an apparently academic, stiff execution of the form” (Hahn 53). What is gained from this exploration of *Nihon buyo*, with respect to this project, is Hahn’s analysis of cultural transmission that occurs through the act of learning movement. In this case, the body and spirit are more significant than the mind, and reflect the cultural values of those who practice *Nihon buyo*. Yet what happens as one body learns movement from another, but in the process of doing so, absents or neglects the cultural values from which it learned?

The act of body-to-body exchanges cultural and social values, as well as *neglects* aspects of culture and people. Priya Srinivasan’s groundbreaking article “The Bodies Beneath the Smoke or What’s Behind the Cigarette Poster: Unearthing Kinesthetic Connections in American Dance History” (2007) examines how the historical understanding and development of American Modern dance invisibilized the labor of dancing Indian women and men (9). “Kinesthetic haunting” is a term that Srinivasan employs to attend to the body’s importance in constructing and masking cultural history (10). Srinivasan suggests that the Oriental influences, and their consequent “kinesthetic hauntings,” in Ruth St. Denis’ work were both numerous and significant to the development of American Modern Dance history. She argues that “a focus on corporeality and kinesthetic exchange offers an opening for bodies who have been unaccounted for in text-based recoveries alone” (11). Srinivasan’s kinesthetic recovery of the Indian dancer’s bodies offers the opportunity to explore how body-to-body

transmission of movement carries more than just memories of muscular contractions, but of the transmission of neglected, or lost, embodied cultural memories.

Prominent dance scholar, Jacqueline Shea Murphy argues that bodies are locations where cultural history is stored and transferred. Shea Murphy in *The People Have Never Stopped Dancing* (2007) positions dancing bodies as sites of historical investigation (241). Dance and the dancing body, are Shea Murphy's primary evidences in tracing the interconnections between politics and practice, and by consequence, allow us to have a deeper understanding of history that only a dancing body can tell. Further, dancing bodies can tell us more about history in ways that other forms of history (i.e. written or spoken) cannot. Bodies interacting with each other on stage and, as well as in the behaviors of daily life, create historical archives -- archives that leave kinetic traces on other bodies. Her ideas are significant to this project since like Srinivasan, Shea Murphy embraces the idea that often times in dance, there is a visible and tangible presence of an otherwise absented body (157). Additionally, Shea Murphy adds to this projects understanding of how bodies, when sharing and reproducing choreographic experiences, create *historical* archives. The theoretical significance of both Shea Murphy's and Srinivasan's work, although much more involved then my summary here, cannot be adequately underscored. Both act as a framework to situate and contextualize how the Pilates practice has absented other cultural presences in the work.

The practice of neglecting and absenting bodies contributes to problematic issues. Yutian Wong's "Towards a New Asian American Dance Theory: Locating the Dancing Asian American Body" (2002) argues that if we continue to neglect Orientalist

stereotypes of the Asian body, we remain entrenched in racialized perceptions of the other (72). She analyzes the Asian American entanglements with Orientalism in American modern and postmodern dance.¹⁰ Wong argues that Orientalism affects *how* narratives of aesthetic innovations are historicized in modern American culture (73). While Wong's depth of study extends into the 1960s and 1970s, she examines the legacies of Orientalism from a much earlier vantage point. Wong explains that European enlightenment thinking established Asian bodies as "ghosts; a race weighed down and bound by a stifling an overabundance of tradition, culture, and history" (71). The recovery of traces of culturally appropriated bodies, and their stereotyping becomes critical in understanding how movement forms actually conceal and neglect other bodies. I suggest that the common narrative of Pilates, and its involvement with Eastern movement forms further perpetuates Orientalist discourses.

Part 3: The Potential Cultural Masking within "Unconscious Competency"

My intention in this final section is not to disagree with concepts surrounding motor learning, muscle memory, posture, core strength, or kinesthetic sensing. Rather, the notion of bodily memory, or muscle memory, can be understood for both its and scientific *and* cultural relevance. As previously stated, I question whether there are any cultural, racial, gendered, or class issues surrounding the unconscious embodiment of Pilates. The goal of this final section is not necessarily to find stable answers to these questions, but rather to raise awareness of the cultural influences in the Pilates practice.

¹⁰ I gather my understanding of "Orientalism" from Edward Said's seminal work in "Knowing the Oriental" in *Orientalism* (1979).

Understanding the cultural influences of Pilates complicates how the practice is “unconsciously” affecting the body. In a troubling but valid assertion, Martha Eddy maintains that little has been done to study the interrelationships of spiritual, emotional, cultural, and physical influences on somatic thinking from a historical or political context (15). She argues that through the global study of these influences on somatics, we can find deeper explanations of power, authority, healing, and access (Eddy 15). While not globally examined, I suggest that this project attempts to reveal, possibility for the first time, the cultural values *perpetuated and concealed* in the Pilates practice.

Melanie Bales in “Training as the Medium Through Which” (2008), states that *somatic* technique is “a part of the heritage of modernism insofar as it emphasizes transcendence of the deformities that culture has wrought” (32). I suggest that one way we can read the “deformities” of culture is the physical indicators of labor, stress, and dance techniques housed in the body and by consequence, create excessive muscular tension and inefficiencies. From my experiences, somatic practices also emphasize that one *must/should/ought* unlearn and release these deformities so that he or she can have a more balanced and healthy body. As Bales suggests, somatic work stemmed from *rhetoric* that hailed healing and self-discovery of the body (32). I suggest Pilates stems from similar rhetoric of self-awareness, self-reflection, and self-care. Yet instead of undoing what society has done to the body, Pilates attempts to activity re-shape, re-mark, and re-structure bodies in order to stave-off what society’s deformities. If the Pilates participant reaches the point of unconscious competency in her of his practice, then *what* exactly, has been unconsciously re-structured, re-marked, or re-shaped into her or his

body? The body's muscle memory of "unconscious competency" in Pilates, institutionalizes the "correct" neurological patterning, which are reflective of the cultural, social, class, and gendered values discussed in this project.

Moving away from these ideas momentary, I believe it is important to draw out the potentially troubling discourses in the Pilates literature. Oral historians, its written history, suggest that there are multiple borrowings from Eastern movement practices in the development of the Pilates practice. However, to my knowledge, Joseph Pilates gave no credit, or specified any particular Eastern movement practice in his written work.¹¹ To this end, this project takes issue with the somewhat flippant historical accounts of Eastern movement practices in the Pilates history.¹² It seems the Pilates history, as it is commonly shared in the pedagogy today, legitimizes Joseph Pilates' borrowing from Eastern movement forms by citing it as a historical afterthought. For example, Peak Pilates, in "Pilates History" (2009), reports that "over 20 years of self-study and apprenticeship in yoga and Zen (sic)" aided Joseph Pilates' creation of his system of exercises (3). Additionally, Scott Brown's "Pilates: Man or Method" (1999) reports that Joseph Pilates "synthesized elements from ... Eastern principles..." (137). Likewise, Sean Gallagher and Romana Kryzanowska in *The Joseph H. Pilates Archive Collection: Photographs, Writings and Designs* (2000) also state, "the influence of yoga (in Pilates)

¹¹ I realize that examining Eastern movement in order to gain a clearer understanding of Western appropriation is a dangerous endeavor. Yuasa Yasuo's *The Body* (1987), states "we are liable to slip unconsciously into the tendency to investigate and evaluate Eastern thought in the light of Western modes. There is a danger of gross misinterpretation [in the treatment of pre-modern Eastern thought] unless one carefully takes into account the fundamental philosophical differences between East and West" (75).

¹² "Eastern" in the United States often refers to those people from East Asia, not those from Middle or South Asia.

is evident” (27).¹³ Although Yoga’s presence in the practice may be “evident,” Pilates has not critically evaluated what the presence of Yoga in the practice might actually mean. The following paragraph is a common understanding of the history of Joseph Pilates’ childhood and includes references to Eastern movement forms:

As a child he had suffered with asthma, rickets, and rheumatic fever. Even as a young adolescent he made a life-altering decision that he would restore his own health. He studied the Eastern disciplines of yoga and martial arts and blended them with Western forms of physical activities such as bodybuilding, gymnastics, boxing, and recreational sports.¹⁴

These passages suggest Joseph Pilates, in order to heal himself of his illnesses, “blended” Eastern movement practices with traditionally Western movement forms. While I question the accuracy of this historical account, it prevails in much of the Pilates literature. To this end, earlier I suggested that Pilates has more in common with ballet than somatics. Yet the historical accounts illustrate Joseph Pilates’ borrowings from Eastern movement disciplines. I believe these tensions forefront the complexities surrounding cultural appropriations. As previous chapters have illustrated, the movement qualities that Pilates values is undoubtedly more Western than Eastern.

¹³ I maintain the number of Pilates exercises derived from Yoga is very high. So much so, that it reaches beyond Gallagher’s use of “influence” and “evident” and, I suggest, borders on movement plagiarism/appropriation.

¹⁴ This passage comes from, “History of Pilates,” was gathered from the “All-American Golf Pilates.com” web site. Unfortunately, like many online sources, I was not able to verify the author, or where the author gathered his or her information. To rectify this, I tried calling the telephone number listed on the web site, but it had been disconnected. This is one example, of many, that illustrates how the Pilates “history” circulates today. See: http://www.golfpilates.com/Golf_pilates/Golf_Pilates_Pilates_History.htm.

Additionally, many of these passages allude to the notion of “blending” or “synthesizing” Eastern movement forms with Western physical activities.¹⁵ I find it very unsettling how Western movement practitioners and choreographers seem self-entitled to “borrow” or become “inspired” by the East, only so that they can “reinvent” or “recreate” themselves, or position themselves as “experts” in their field (Wong 2002). They seem to take liberties from the East to “infuse” their work through the gross misappropriation of Eastern and non-Western movement forms. I speculate that the commercialized Pilates history has perpetuated the language of “inspiration” instead of “appropriation” for a variety of different reasons; reasons which also underscore the importance of this discussion. To say that someone was “inspired” by something has a much different connotation than to say someone “appropriated” something. As Yutian Wong suggests, Western choreographers “often mask appropriation through accounts of inspiration” (81). Choreographers like Deborah Hay, Martha Graham, Merce Cunningham, Ruth St. Denis and others, have looked to non-Western movement forms or practices to somehow infuse, inspire, or differentiate their work. These acts of appropriation from Eastern movement forms or Eastern belief systems, masked as “inspiration” furthers Orientalist discourses. From the historiography of Pilates, and its dismissive citations of Eastern movement forms, I surmise that Joseph Pilates did appropriate from Eastern movement practices and consequently further perpetuated Orientalist discourses.

¹⁵ German-born Joseph Pilates immigrated to the United States in mid-1920s, at a time, as David Palumbo-Liu in *Asian/American: Historical Crossings of a Racial Frontier* (1999) suggests, of great fear and heightened nationalism. I speculate during this time, Joseph Pilates wanted to establish himself as a reputable physical culturist, as well as to possibly *separate* himself from his German heritage. He did this by promoting a physical culture structured around Greek bodily ideals, and an exercise program that produced expanded chests, parallel legs, and a toned and muscularly balanced body.

I put forth the most alarming part of unconsciously training the body in Pilates is that it invisibilizes the presence of another culture. Muscle memory, as it is perpetuated through the Pilates repertoire, stores a dangerous *cultural* insidiousness. To borrow from Fitt, many Pilates instructors may not be aware of another cultural presence in the practice, until it's recognized or recovered. There is a "haunting" presence of the "Eastern" body in the Pilates work. The value of acknowledging and problematizing this history is significant, since examining Eastern cultural influences in the Pilates practice establishes how these influences have been neglected, Orientalized, and appropriated. I suggest this form of cultural appropriation in Pilates, coupled with the unconscious demonstrations of race, class, and gender as put forth in the previous chapters of this project, gives the Pilates body a perceived social power over other bodies. Recall that ballet trains the female body into strict disciplinary practices, ones that stress uprightness and elongation. Through its exercises, Principles, and teaching methodology, Pilates disciplines the female body in similar ways. Said differently, Pilates does not encourage slothfulness, overindulgence, or hysteria – qualities otherwise known to be stereotypically associated with behaviors of the "other."

These Orientalist acts of appropriation continuously transfer from body-to-body in the Pilates practice. Contrary to Friedman and Eisen's account of Pilates, that "East does not meet West" – I suggest that West does meet East, in the important sense that there is a "kinesthetic haunting" of an Eastern body in the Pilates repertoire.¹⁶ This contributes to the issues surrounding the appropriations of movement forms of

¹⁶ At this point, and to my knowledge, the work to recover the Eastern presence in specific Pilates exercises has not been undertaken at a scholarly level.

disenfranchised populations. It reaffirms an arrogant, Western, colonizing-like behavior of “take-what-you-want-and-leave-the-rest” mentality. In this sense, returning to somatic scholarship, Ginot attests, “most somatic methods have as a backdrop a homogenous, universal, ahistorical, and *occidental* body” (23). The Western body is assumed in somatics work, just as the “East” is used to justify somatics’ uniqueness as a way to “heal” the body. Ginot states

the East is often seen as the antidote to the afflictions of a Western body that can be taught a better relationship to the environment, to stress, to breathing, etc. Paradoxically, then, what is borrowed from multiple cultures does not disturb the homogeneity of the body produced by somatics because the main purpose is to take care of or heal a Western body, a victim of its own culture (23).

I put forth that “borrowing” from “multiple cultures” actually does disturb and/or complicate the *homogeneity* of the body “produced by somatics.” The East is Orientalized as a place to heal, escape to, or become “restored” or “renewed.” As Susan Foster states in *Choreographing Empathy: Kinesthesia and Performance* (2011), “corporeality helped to determine how colonization would undertake to examine the unknown and foreign, and how the body could be cultivated so as to assume a relationship of power over another body” (175). I suggest that the appropriation of Eastern movement in Pilate ultimately gives Pilates power over the Eastern body.

I argued the transmission of movement between bodies in the Pilates practice not only absents and Orientalizes Eastern culture, but perpetuate a specific one of its own. Each chapter of this project reveals a different aspect of cultural, social, racial, and gendered values stored within the Pilates practice. As Chapter 2 put forth, the goal of

Pilates as an “unconscious” (therefore unreflective) performance of its exercises like “Leg Circles,” or “Quadruped Facing Foot” actually “whitens” bodies. As Chapter 3 argued, the Pilates Principles perpetuate upper-class behaviors in the body. And as Chapter 4 argued, the images and goals of Pilates carry with them specific and troubling legacies of beauty and (white) female comportment. These cultural values overtake and neglect the bodies from which Pilates was developed. Infusing movement forms with values of the Pilates Principles significantly alters the meaning and movements, and conceals the cultural histories and bodies housed within those movements. For example, the gestural movements of “Single Leg Stretch” in Pilates and *Pavanmuktasana* in Yoga, at face value, are strikingly similar. However, when concepts like Concentration, Centering, Control, or Precision, Core stabilization, Axial Elongation infiltrate *Pavanmuktasana*, they overtake its cultural history and bodies that created and conceived of the Yoga pose. Simply put, *Pavanmuktasana* becomes “Single Leg Stretch.” As this chapter argues, the “unconscious competency” of Pilates not only reinforces white, upper-class, normative values, but as I have said before, sheds light on the troubling submission of another.¹⁷

¹⁷ There are other ways that Pilates asserts Western ideals through its practice, rhetoric, and teaching methodologies. For example, the PMA’s Learning Matrix I maintain is built on the premise that assumes learning is taking place in a Western context or one that privileges the visual sense, voice, and mind over the body. In the second learning stage “Conscious Incompetency” the learner *knows, recognizes, understands, and realizes* that she or he is doing something wrong. Ironically, I have heard instructors say that the “body learns at its own pace,” thus suggesting that the mind already knows what to do – while the slower body does not. Additionally, from my experience, when an instructor only *verbally* cues a student to perform an exercise, it takes longer for the student to synthesize the work. In this sense, I wonder what would change if Pilates mat classes were taught like “T’ai Chi” classes? Would a Pilates class modeled like a *Nihon buyo* practice, ultimately change the nature of Pilates entirely? Again, I am not seeking answers to these questions, but instead, offer them as a way for us to contextualize how the PMA reinforces a Western-oriented mind/body binary.

In conclusion, these discourses when put in conversation with each other, help to offer a different perspective on “unconscious competency” and motor learning in Pilates. I suggest that this type of theorization uncovers previously unrecognized aspects of Pilates. Yet, I am reminded to proceed cautiously with this new information. Ginot advises us to critically evaluate the risk of “instituting the strategies proper to somatic practice into social norms of good movement and good sensing” (22). With this in mind, I conclude with a rather lengthy quote from Ginot, and one that many Pilates instructors may agree with.

[Somatics] arranges itself according to an axiology of the more and the less, where exaggerated techniques (too much effort, feeling, speed, force, etc.) embody a modern Western civilization of violence, whereas the subtle techniques could be a pathway to improving of the self that seems to be the only path possible for collective salvation. Thus emerges an ideal of the body and of experience centered on the self, where “pleasure” can only qualify as measured pleasure, while immoderate perceptive and sensory experience is in reality marked by a “deficit:” of finesse, of feeling, of democracy, etc. The dichotomies between natural and artificial, ancestral and contemporary, Eastern and Western, slow and fast, gentle and violent, conscious and “un-self-aware,” imperceptibly form the environment of self-awareness, with its solid boundaries of “good” and “bad” sensation” (Ginot 22).

While I may not agree with Ginot entirely, what I hope has emerged from this project is not necessary what is “good sensing” or “bad sensing” or “good values” and “bad values,” but another understanding of the cultural values which are unconsciously produced, normalized, replicated, and transmitted in the Pilates work. I do not want to

institute a newly carved pathway to “collective salvation,” but rather, want to shed light on a new critical understanding of the values and issues that Pilates, and those of us who passionately participate in Pilates, might unknowingly promote.

AFTERWARD

So What? Where Do We Go From Here?

In September of 2011 I submitted a paper for the 2012 Pilates Method Alliance Conference. Initially it was denied. A month later, and for reasons still unknown to me, I decided to submit my paper (an abstract of Chapter 2) again. In May 2012, I was contacted by the research coordinator for the PMA. She said supported my work and wanted to see more of “this kind” of research at the conference. Yet, she suggested that I change my words, omit “white” and “whitening” and to replace it with “Caucasian.” When I asked her if I could use the word “racial” she hesitated, and inferred I could use it sparingly. I was temporarily caught off guard by this censorship and withdrew my paper from the conference. Apparently, from her perspective, the Pilates community was not ready to hear what I had to say. This opinion is not unusual. Over the course of this project, I have been met with this type of cautionary attitude. Sadly, I have also confronted much more disturbing accusations, in my conversations with instructors in the Pilates community. Not long ago someone accused me of “hating Joseph Pilates” and another did not want to be “associated with that type of attitude.” This kind of combativeness and defensiveness speaks to many issues, however, I put forth that it is indicative of the underlying hagiographic tendencies and hero worship that are detrimental to the community. Each instance reminded me of the importance of this research.

So where do we go from here? What do we do with this new perspective? In what ways is this research important? Can the Pilates community embrace the complicated ideologies surrounding race, class, and gender within its practice? How do I place my own passion for the practice in relation to these discussions? I grapple with these questions on a daily basis. Each time I “speak” to a body, or demonstrate an exercise, I am critically aware of what I call the “cultural tensions” in the work. Initially my thought was to rewrite the history of Pilates. In my mind, this “new” history would include ideas surrounding Eugenics in the United States, as well as examine the historical development of German physical fitness, and the body that Joseph Pilates knowingly exported to the United States. I didn’t want to write Joseph Pilates’ biography, but rather I wanted to examine the political, economic, and social histories surrounding his life is important in contextualizing what we know now. But I reconsidered this idea. Perhaps the PMA research coordinator is right, perhaps the Pilates community will never be able to embrace other historical perspectives. I am concerned that instructors will continue to practice, educate, teach, learn, promote, and espouse Pilates as an important component of health and wellness without considering its cultural and embodied implications. Pilates is, of course, how many of us make our living. Today, I am still unsure of how to move forward with these new understandings in my own instruction.

Much of what I have suggested in this project, because of its engagement with Critical Dance Studies, might be very hard for some to understand or embrace. Yet I remain convinced that examining Pilates through new lenses deepens our understanding of the practice, and sheds new light on its embodied participation in the communities it

inhabits -- especially with respect to the female body. One hundred years ago a woman's body, and especially the child-carrying body, was considered a "privatized domain" (Kukla 2005). I wonder how much of the discussions surrounding the Pilates exercises have either enforced or pushed against these ideas. From my experience in the Pilates studio, traditionally private discussions (only held in doctor's offices and in bedrooms) regarding the pelvis, have made their way into a more public (or semi-private) environment of the Pilates studio. Has Pilates actually given permission to discuss (more openly) issues like the pelvic floor, prolapsed uterus, pelvic trauma, incontinence, or lumbopelvic issues? Or has it worked to heighten stereotypes, and perhaps myths, surrounding the pelvis? I optimistically believe that these traditionally "awkward" or "private" conversations are becoming more socially acceptable; and that the myths surrounding the "mystery/privacy" of the women's body are unraveling through discussions in the Pilates studio.

As I noted in the Introduction, the theoretical and practical pitfalls in this project are clear: there are obvious essentializations and generalizations. However, I hope that this project has highlighted cultural tensions deeply embedded in the act of transmission from body-to-body in the Pilates practice. There are silent cultural markings and absented bodies that find themselves continuously passed on from one Pilates exercise to the next. Sadly, the commercialized, mainstream, images of Pilates caters to many problematic ideas; for one, it encourages a "culture of comparison," as I call it, and secondly reinforcing a "culture of inadequacy." The more I invest myself professionally into Pilates, the more I am troubled by these realizations. The sub-narrative presented in

Chapters 3 and 4 of my own insecurities and fascination with the bodies in the Montana Avenue neighborhood were offered as insights into what I believe many women might feel, to lesser or greater extent, today. As a vested participant and instructor of Pilates, I am not sure I want to promote cultural values that underscore unrealistic bodily ideals, gender norms, class comportment, or those that may “whitewash” the body.¹

To some readers it may come as a great surprise that I wholly embrace my position as a Pilates instructor, and that I will continue to promote Pilates as we know and understand it today. But I have lingering concerns that will be with me for the rest of my Pilates career. Unbeknownst to many of us, Pilates instructors have become modern-day adjudicators of the body, or “body experts” which involve discerning whether bodies are “legitimate” or “deviant” subjects (Shilling 126). Our clients’ either perform the exercises in the way we would like them to, or they are not. With our direction, they pattern the exercises correctly in their bodies. Yet the interpretation of their performance cannot be viewed solely as “doing it right” or “doing it wrong.” Nor can we hide behind the protective shroud of promoting “health and well-being” or “injury prevention.” Our discernments or judgments as Pilates instructors, through the very act of our instruction, go much deeper than that. Whether we like it or not, regardless of how well-intentioned, heart-felt, sincere, beneficial, or pleasurable it is, our job requires us to judge, shape, and discipline bodies.

¹ I am using Desmond’s term to describe how the movements of the pelvis have been “toned down” in Pilates, much in the same way the movements of the *New Kids on the Block* toned down their displays of “pelvic thrusting, rotating, and crotch grabbing” to heighten their “boy next door” image (1997, 38).

Yet, in all of this, I believe the body *does* have a voice. It is not *just* a receptacle in which we place or store values. It has agency and the ability to *make* meaning. It has the overwhelming capacity to change, release, gain, shift, age, secrete, grow, learn, expand, ingest, collapse, die, and remember. It is not *just* a repository for ideas, or a canvas to be painted upon. In this regard, the dance scholar's work is slightly more complicated, since it undertakes not only the *corporeality* of the body, but the body's participation in, resistance to, and involvement with history as an agent to make meaning in history. As Susan Foster's states in *Choreographing History* (1995), "the possibility of a body that is written upon but that also writes moves critical studies of the body in new directions. It asks scholars to approach the body's involvement in any activity with as assumption of potential agency to participate in or resist whatever forms of cultural production are underway" (15). The Pilates body has this potential. Yet in this project, rather than striving to illustrate how the Pilates body *resists* cultural and gendered normative ideologies, instead sought to recover how it has embodied certain cultural values and movement legacies. Maybe in the future we can explore how Pilates resists – or can resist -- certain ideologies.

Many of my concerns are equally balanced with pleasure, fascination, and joy. What I find most exciting about the embodied learning process, as a student and as one who regularly practices Pilates outside of the "formal" Pilates classroom, is the constant level of inquiry into my body. Pilates acts as my own personal map, of sorts, of self-exploration into the vicissitudes of my bodily structure. To some extent, Pilates *is* embodiment. As an instructor, I am constantly reminded of the powerful, life-changing

effects and joy that Pilates gives to its participants.² Sadly, this project has told us nothing about how Pilates *positively* affects a person's spirit or attitude. Many Pilates teachers attest that they have seen first-hand how Pilates positively affects people's lives. Clients gain the strength to walk up and down stairs, or find the emotional strength to stand up against unfair social treatment, or live without pain, or regain mobility. One of my mentors suggested that Pilates touches the *spirit* of the person in ways other exercise movement forms cannot. Clients *feel* empowered because of Pilates.

In the future, I will continue researching Pilates. There are many ideas this project did not consider. For example, I would like to examine the kinesthetic intersections between German Modern Dance, Rudolf van Laban, Hanya Holm, and *Contrology* and how these intersections might tell us more about the development of "American" modern dance technique. Additionally, I believe there are many exciting research possibilities involving the intersections between Dance Science and Critical Dance Studies. Lastly, I hope to integrate a Pilates Certification Course – one which would include a unit on its history and cultural contexts -- into an undergraduate Dance Studies program.

This project, I hope, has helped us gain a better understanding of the complexities of the Pilates body's relationship to culture. I am optimistic that this critical analysis, and its implications, will become a part of the Pilates history that Pilates educators' share with future students of dance and Pilates. This project strove to recover, reveal, and

² I am sure many other Pilates teachers and students can attest to this as well. Just the other day a client told me that she could stand up from a chair entirely on her own; without the help of her cane or other chair.

acknowledge cultural values and meanings in the Pilates practice that were previously overlooked, neglected, or absented. Perhaps my colleagues in the Pilates industry have already embraced the some of the unspoken problems with its kinesthetic history. However, for those who are just beginning their Pilates' teaching career, or perhaps are experiencing Pilates for the first time, I hope that this project will provide new insights and perspectives into the history, teaching, and learning of Pilates as we know and understand it today.

Bibliography

- Agniel, Margaret. *The Art of the Body: Rhythmic Exercises for Health and Beauty*. London: B.T. Batsford, Ltd, 1931. Print.
- Albright, Ann Cooper. "Mining the Dance Field: Feminist Theory and Contemporary Dance." *Choreographing Difference: The Body and Identity in Contemporary Dance*. Hanover: University Press of New England, 1997. 1-27. Print.
- Allen, Robert Clyde. *Horrible Prettiness: Burlesque and American Culture*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991. Print.
- Anderson, Brent D. and Aaron Spector. "Introduction to Pilates-Based Rehabilitation." *Orthopedic Physical Therapy Clinic of North America* 9.3 (2000): 395-410. Print.
- Archival Footage of Joseph Pilates*. Dir. Power Pilates Inc. Power Pilates Inc., 2005. DVD.
- Bales, Melanie. "Training as the Medium Through Which." *The Body Eclectic: Evolving Practices in Dance Training*. Ed. Melanie Bales and Rebecca Nettle-Fiol. Urbana: University of Illinois, 2008. 28-42. Print.
- Banes, Sally. "The Body is Power." *Greenwich Village 1963: Avant-Garde Performance and the Effervescent Body*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1993. 189-234. Print.
- . "Power and the Dancing Body." *Writing Dancing in the Age of Postmodernism*. Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, 1994. 43-50. Print.
- . *Terpsichore in Sneakers: Post-Modern Dance*. Reprint. Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1987. Print.
- . *Dancing Women: Female Bodies on Stage*. New York: Routledge, 1998. Print.
- Banner, Lois. *American Beauty*. New York: Knopf, 1983. Print.
- Barlow, Wilfred. *The Alexander Technique*. Alfred A. Knopf: New York, 1973. Print.
- Bartenieff, Irmgard. *Body Movement: Coping with the Environment*. New York: Gordon and Breach Science, 1980. Print.
- Barthes, Roland. *Empire of Signs*. New York: Noon Day Press, 1989. Print.

- Bartky, Sandra Lee. "Foucault, Femininity, and the Modernization of Patriarchal Power." *Theorizing Feminisms*. Ed. Elizabeth Hackett and Sally Haslanger. Oxford University Press: New York, 2006. 277-92. Print.
- Beals, Carleton. *Brass-Knuckle Crusade: The Great Know-Nothing Conspiracy: 1820-1860*. New York: Hastings House Publishers: 1960. Print.
- Becker, Heather. *Art for the People: The Rediscovery and Preservation of Progressive – and WPA-Era Murals in the Chicago Public Schools, 1904-1943*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2002. Print.
- Beltrán, Mary C. "The Hollywood Latina Body as Site of Social Struggle: Media Constructions of Stardom and Jennifer Lopez's "Cross-Over" Butt". *Quarterly Review of Film and Video* 19.1 (2002): 71-86. Print.
- Bettie, Julie. *Women Without Class: Girls, Race and Identity*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002. Nook Color file.
- . "Women without Class: Chicas, Cholas, Trash, and the Presence/Absence of Class Identity." *Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 26.1 (2000): 1-35. Print.
- Beyond Affliction: The Disability History Project*. Dir. Laurie Block. Straight Ahead Pictures, 1998. Audio CD.
- Bloxom, Marguerite. *Pickaxe and Pencil: References for the Study of the WPA*. Washington, D.C: Library of Congress: Supt. of Docs., U.S. G.P.O., distributor, 1982. Print.
- Bordo, Susan. *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture and the Body. Tenth Anniversary Edition*. Reprint. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003. Print.
- Borelli, Melissa Blanco. "A taste of honey: choreographing mulatta in the Hollywood dance film." *International Journal of Performance Arts and Digital Media* 5.3 (2009): 141-53. Print.
- Bossi, Laura. "The 'New Man': Degeneracy and Regeneration." *The 1930's: The Making of "The New Man."* Ed. Jean Clair. Canada: National Gallery of Canada, 2008. 36-57. Print.
- Brown, Ann. "Beauty Practices and the Aging Female Body." *Outskirts: Feminisms Along the Edge* 19 (2008): 1-10. Web. 15 November 2008.

- Brown, Scott E. "Pilates: Man or Method." *Journal of Dance Medicine and Science*. 3.4 (1999): 137-38. Print.
- Burns, Judy. "The Culture of Nobility/The Nobility of Self-Cultivation." *Moving Words: Re-Writing Dance*. Ed. Gay Morris. New York: Routledge, 1996. 203-26. Print.
- Butler, Judith. "Subjects of Sex/Gender /Desire." *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, 1990. New York: Routledge Classics, 2006. 34-67. Nook Color file.
- Calais-Germain, Blandine. *Anatomy of Movement*. Seattle: Eastland Press, 1993. Print.
- and Bertrand Raison. *No-Risk Pilates: 8 Techniques for a Safe Full-Body Workout*. Translated by Martine Curtis-Oakes. Rochester: Healing Arts Press, 2010. Kindle file.
- Calderone, Gary. *The Pilates Path to Health: Body, Mind, and Spirit*. Fort Collins: Word Keepers, Inc, 2011. Kindle file.
- Carless, Will. "Yoga Class Draws a Religious Protest." *New York Times* 15 Dec. 2012: n. pag. Web. 16 Dec. 2012.
- Carter, Rita, Susan Aldridge, Martin Page, and Steven Parker. *The Human Brain Book*. London: DK Publishers, 2009. Print.
- Chang, Jeff. "It's A Hip-Hop World." *Foreign Policy*. 163 (2007): 58-65. Print.
- Chauncey, George. *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World 1890-1940*. New York: Basic Books, 1994. Print.
- Comar, Philip. "Crystal and Mud: Academic Approaches to Figurative Representations of the Body." *The 1930's: The Making of "The New Man."* Ed. Jean Clair. Canada: National Gallery of Canada: 2008. 80-5. Print.
- Connell, R.W. *Masculinities*. 2nd ed. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995. Print.
- Connerton, Paul. *How Societies Remember*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989. Print.
- Conquergood, Dwight. "Rethinking Ethnography: Towards a Critical Cultural Politics." *Communications Monographs* 58 (1991): 179-94. Print.
- Cowley, Geoffrey. "Biology of Beauty." *Newsweek* 3 June 1996. 60-66. Print.

- Croce, Arlene. "Balanchine Said: What was the Source of the Choreographer's Celebrated Utterances?" *The New Yorker*. 26 January 2009: n. pag. Web. 18 January 2013.
- Cruz-Ferreira, Ana, Jorge Fernandes, Dulce Gomes, Lisa Marie Bernardo, Bruce D. Kirkcaldy, Tiago M. Barbosa, and António Silva. "Effects of Pilates-Based Exercise on Life Satisfaction, Physical Self-Concept and Health Status in Adult Women." *Women & Health* 51 (2011): 240-55. Print.
- Daly, Ann. "The Natural Body." *Moving History/Dancing Cultures: A Dance History Reader*. Ed. Ann Dils and Ann Cooper Albright. Middleton: Wesleyan University Press, 2001. 288-99. Print.
- DeFrantz, Thomas. "Simmering Passivity: The Black Male Body in Concert Dance." *Moving History/Dancing Cultures: A Dance History Reader*. Ed. Ann Dils and Ann Cooper Albright. Middleton: Wesleyan University Press, 2001. 342-49. Print.
- Dempster, Elizabeth. "Women Writing the Body: Let's Watch a Little How She Dances." *Bodies of the Text: Dance as Theory, Literature as Dance*. Ed. Ellen W. Goellner and Jacqueline Shea Murphy. Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1995. 21-38. Print.
- Desmond, Jane. "Embodying Difference: Issues in Dance and Cultural Studies." *Meaning in Motion: New Cultural Studies of Dance*. Ed. Jane Desmond. Durham: Duke University Press, 1997. 29-54. Print.
- . "Dancing Out the Difference: Cultural Imperialism and Ruth St. Denis's 'Radha' of 1906." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 17.1 (1991): 28-49. Print.
- Dodds, Sherril. "Images of Dance in the Screen Media." *Dance on Screen: Genres and Media from Hollywood to Experimental Art*. New York: Palgrave, 2001. 36-62. Print.
- Dunagan, Colleen and Roxanne Fenton. "Dirty Dancing: Dance, Class, and Race in the Pursuit of Womanhood." *Oxford Handbook of Dance and Popular Screen*. Ed. Melissa Blanco Borelli. New York: Oxford University Press, (forthcoming). Print.
- Dunning, Jennifer. "Eating Disorders Haunt Ballerinas." *The New York Times* 16 July 1997: n. pag. Web. 27 April 2012.
- Dutton, Kenneth R. *The Perfectible Body: The Western Ideal of Male Physical Development*. New York: Continuum, 1995. Print.

- Dyer, Richard. "The Matter of Whiteness." *White*. London: Routledge, 1997. 1-40. Print.
- Earle, Maria. "*Sing My Song*": *The Legacy of Kathleen Stanford Grant*. MA Thesis Sarah Lawrence College, Ann Arbor, 2006. UMI Number 1434788. Print.
- Eddy, Martha. "Somatic Practices and Dance: Global Influences." *Dance Research Journal* 34.2 (2002): 46-62. Print.
- Endelman, Ken. "Joe Pilates: What Was He Thinking? The History and the Development of Pilates Equipment." Pilates Method Alliance Conference. Long Beach, California. 6 November 2010.
- Evans, Alex. "Greedy Bastards: Fat Kids, Class War, and the Ideology of Classlessness." *Historicizing Fat in Anglo-American Culture*. Ed. Elena Levy-Navarro. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2010. Print.
- Farrell, Amy E. *Fat Shame: Stigma and the Fat Body in American Culture*. New York: New York University Press, 2011. Nook Color file.
- Feldenkrais, Moshe. *Awareness Through Movement: Health Exercises for Personal Growth*. New York: Harper & Row, 1972. Print.
- Fiasca, Peter. *Discovering Pure Classical Pilates: Theory and Practice as Joseph Pilates Intended, The Traditional Method vs. The Lies for Sale*. LaVerne: Classical Pilates Inc., 2009. Print.
- Figueroa, Maria P. "Resisting 'Beauty' and *Real Women Have Curves*." *Velvet Barrios*. Ed. Alicia Gaspar de Alba. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003. 265-82. Print.
- Fit: Episodes in the History of the Body*. Dir. Laurie Block. Straight Ahead Pictures, 1994. DVD.
- Fitt, Sally S. *Dance Kinesiology*. 2nd ed. New York: Schirmer Books, 1996. Print.
- Foster, Susan. *Reading Dancing: Bodies and Subjects in Contemporary American Dance*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986. Print.
- . "Choreographing History." *Choreographing History*. Ed. Susan Foster. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995. 3-24. Print.
- . "Dancing Bodies." *Meaning in Motion: New Cultural Studies of Dance*. Ed. Jane Desmond. Durham: Duke University Press, 1997. 235-58. Print.

- . *Choreographing Empathy: Kinesthesia in Performance*. New York: Routledge, 2011. Print.
- . *Choreography & Narrative: Ballet's Staging of Story and Desire*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996. Print.
- . "The Ballerina's Phallic Point." *Corporealities*. New York: Routledge, 1996. 1-24. Print.
- Foulkes, Julia. *Modern Bodies: Dance and American Modernism from Martha Graham to Alvin Ailey*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002. Print.
- Frankenberg, Ruth. *White Women, Race Matters: The Social Construction of Whiteness*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993. Print.
- Franklin, Eric. *Pelvic Power for Men and Women: Mind/Body Exercises for Strength, Flexibility, Posture, and Balance*. Trans. Frances Shem Barnett and Arja Laubaucher. Highstown: Princeton Book Company, 2002. Print.
- Friedman, Philip and Gail Eisen. *The Pilates Method of Physical and Mental Conditioning*. New York: Warner Books, 1980. Print.
- Gallagher, Sean and Romana Kryzanowska. *The Joseph H. Pilates Archive Collection: Photographs, Writings and Designs*. Philadelphia: Bainbridge Books, 2000. Print.
- Garland-Thomas, Rosemarie. "Integrating Disability, Transforming Feminist Theory." *Feminist Formations* 14.3 (2002): 1-32. Print.
- Ginot, Isabelle. "From Shusterman's Somaesthetics to a Radical Epistemology of Somatics." *Dance Research Journal* 42.1 (2010): 12-29. Print.
- Glen, Colleen. "Pilates History." *Peak Pilates System I Instructor's Manual*. Venice: Mad Dogg Athletics, Inc. 2009. 3. Print.
- Goh, E. "The Legend Lives On." *Dance & the Arts* 13.4 (1996): 21. Print.
- Gottschild, Brenda Dixon. *The Black Dancing Body: A Geography from Coon to Cool*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003. Print.
- . *Digging the Africanist Presence in American Performance: Dance and Other Contexts*. Westport: Praeger Publishers, 1998. Print.

- Graff, Ellen. *Stepping Left: Dance and Politics in New York City, 1928-1942*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1997. Print.
- Gray, John. *Your Guide to the Alexander Technique: A Complete Course in How to Hold and Use Your Body for Maximum Energy*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990. Print.
- Green, Harvey. *Fit for America: Health, Fitness, Sport and American Society*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1986. Print.
- Hagins, Marshall, Keri Adler, Michael Cash, Julie Daugherty and Gayle Mitrani. "Effects of Practice on the Ability to Perform Lumbar Stabilization Exercises." *Journal of Orthopedic Sports Therapy*. 29.9 (1999): 546-55. Print.
- Hahn, Tomie. "Unfolding Essence – Energetic Sensibilities and Aesthetics." *Sensational Knowledge: Embodying Culture Through Japanese Dance*. Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2007. 41- 69. Print.
- Hamera, Judith. "Introduction: Dancing the City" and "Intimacies in Motion." *Dancing Communities: Performance, Difference and Connection in the Global City*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007. 1- 60. Print.
- Hammergren, Lena. "The re-turn of the *Flaneuse*." *Corporealities*. Ed. Susan Foster. New York: Routledge, 1996. 53- 69. Print.
- Hancock, Black Hawk. "Steppin' Out of Whiteness." *Ethnography* 6.4 (2005): 427-61. Print.
- Hawkins, Heather. *Pilates Training: A Mind-Body Practice: Transformative Effects on Women's Well Being*. Diss. California Institute of Integral Studies, San Francisco, 2004. Ann Arbor, 2005. UMI Number 3158586. Print.
- Hewitt, James. *The Complete Yoga Book*. New York: Schocken Book, 1977. Print.
- Higham, John. "The Reorientation of American Culture in the 1890's." *Writing American History: Essays on Modern Scholarship*. Bloomington: Indian University Press, 1970. 73-102. Print.
- . *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism 1860-1925*. New York: Athenaeum: 1970. Print.
- Homans, Jennifer. *Apollo's Angels: A History of Ballet*. New York: Random House, 2010. Nook Color file.

- Huang, Wen-Shan. *The Fundamentals of Tai Chi Chuan*. Seattle: South Bay Book Company, 1979. Print.
- Hughes, Alan. "Hip-Hop Economy." *Black Enterprise* 32.10 (2002): 70, 6p. Print.
- Isacowitz, Rael and Karen Clippinger. *Pilates Anatomy: Your Illustrated Guide to Mat Work For Core Stability and Balance*. Champaign: Human Kinetics, 2011. Print.
- Jain, Andrea. "No, I Don't Owe My Yoga Mat to Vivekananda." *Religion Dispatches* 4 Oct. 2011. Web. 24 Oct. 2012.
- Jonas, Gerald. *Dancing: The Pleasure, Power, and Art of Movement*. New York: Harry N. Abrams Inc., 1992. Print.
- Jowitt, Deborah. *Time and the Dancing Image*. New York: W. Morrow, 1988. Print.
- Kaminoff, Leslie. *Yoga Anatomy: Your Illustrated Guide to Postures, Movements and Breathing Techniques*. Champaign: Human Kinetics, 2007. Print.
- Kealiinohomoku, Joann. "An Anthropologist Looks at Ballet as a Form of Ethnic Dance" *Moving History/Dancing Cultures*, Ed. Ann Dils and Ann Cooper Albright. Middleton: Wesleyan University Press, 2001. 33-43. Print.
- Kearns, Lauren. "Somatics in Action: How 'I Feel Three Dimensional and Real' Improves Dance Education and Training." *Journal of Dance Education* 10.2 (2010): 35-40. Print.
- Kelly, Deirdre. *Ballerina: Sex, Scandal, and Suffering Behind the Symbol of Perfection*. Vancouver: Greystone Books, 2012. Print.
- Killing Us Softly*. Dir. Margaret Lazarus and Renner Wunderlich. Cambridge Documentary Films, 1979. DVD.
- Koch, Liz. *The Psoas Book*. 2nd ed. Felton: Guinea Pig Publications, 1997. Print.
- Kohn, Livia, ed. *Daoist Body Cultivation: Traditional Models and Contemporary Practices*. Magdalena: Three Pines Press, 2006. Print.
- Koritz, Amy. "Dancing the Orient for England: Maud Allen's the *Visions of Salome*." *Meaning in Motion: New Cultural Studies of Dance*. Ed. Jane Desmond. Durham: Duke University Press, 1997. 134-52. Print.
- Kowal, Rebekah. *How to Do Things with Dance: Performing Change in Postwar America*. Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2010. Print.

- Krohn, D. "Origins and evolution: Pilates and the East/West Connection." *Dance Theatre Journal* 13.2 (1996): 47-49. Print.
- Kukla, Rebecca. *Mass Hysteria: Medicine, Culture, and Mother's Bodies*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005. Print.
- Laban, Rudolf Van. *The Language of Movement: A Guidebook to Choreutics*. 1st American ed. Reprint. Boston: Plays Inc., 1974. Print.
- Lee, Diane. "Why Your Pelvic Floor Should be on Your Resolution List for 2003." *The North American Institute of Orthopedic Manual Therapy* 8.1 (2003): 1-3. Print.
- Lee, Josephine D. *The Japan of Pure Invention: Gilbert and Sullivan's The Mikado*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010. Print.
- Lee, Robert G. *Orientalism: Asian Americans in Popular Culture*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1999. Print.
- Lesson, Deborah, ed. *The PMA Pilates Certification Exam Study Guide*. Miami: Pilates Method Alliance, 2005. Print.
- Levy-Navarro, Elena, ed. *Historicizing Fat in Anglo-American Culture*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2010. Print.
- Lewis, Christen. "Yoga and Pilates Studios Weather Recession." *Fitness Business Pro* 25.7 (2009): 10, 11. Print.
- Liu, Da. *T'ai Chi Ch'uan and I Ching: A Choreography of Body and Mind*. New York: Harper and Row, 1978. Print.
- Loosli, Alvin R. and Diana Herold. "Knee Rehabilitation for Dancers Using a Pilates-Based Technique." *Kinesiology and Medicine for Dance* 14.2 (1992): 1-12. Print.
- Malnig, Julie. "Two-Stepping to Glory: Social Dance and the Rhetoric of Social Mobility." *Moving History/Dancing Cultures: A Dance History Reader*. Ed. Ann Dils and Ann Cooper Albright. Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2001. 271-87. Print.
- Manning, Susan. *Modern Dance, Negro Dance: Race in Motion*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004. Print.
- . *Ecstasy and the Demon: Feminism and Nationalism in the Dances of Mary Wigman*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993. Print.

- Mantsios, Gregory. "Class in America – 2003." *Race, Class, and Gender in the United States*. 6th ed. Ed. Paula Rothenberg. New York: Worth Publishers, 2004. 193-207. Print.
- Markula, Pirkko. "'Tuning into One's Self': Foucault's Technologies of the Self and Mindful Fitness." *Sociology of Sport Journal* 21 (2004): 302-21. Print.
- McCarren, Felicia. *Dance Pathologies: Performing, Poetics, Medicine*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998. Print.
- McGrath, Jennifer A., Maureen O'Malley, and Thomas J. Hendrix. "Group Exercise Mode and Health-Related Quality of Life Among Healthy Adults." *Journal of Advanced Nursing* 67.3 (2010): 491-500. Print.
- McIntosh, Peggy. "White Privilege and Male Privilege" (1988). *Women's Voices Feminist Visions: Class and Contemporary Readings*. 4th ed. Ed. Susan Shaw and Janet Lee. Boston: McGraw Hill, 2009. 91-9. Print.
- McLain, Susan. "The Pilates Method of Body Conditioning." *Dance Kinesiology*. 2nd ed. By Sally Fitt. New York: Schirmer Books, 1996. 313-18. Print.
- McMains, Juliet. "Brownface: Representations of Latin-ness in Dancesport." *Dance Research Journal* 33.2 (2001): 54-71. Print.
- McRuer, Robert. "Compulsory Able-Bodiedness and Queer/Disabled Existence." *The Disability Studies Reader*. Hoboken: Routledge, 1999. 301-08. Print.
- Melosh, Barbara. *Engendering Culture: Manhood and Womanhood in New Deal Public Art and Theater*. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991. Print.
- Michaels, Walter Benn. *Our America: Nativism, Modernism and Pluralism*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1995. Print.
- Morris, Gay. *A Game for Dancers: Performing Modernism in the Postwar Years, 1945-1960*. Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2006. Print.
- Morton, Pat. "An Architectural Physiognomy of the Colonies." *Hybrid Modernities: Architecture and Representation at the 1931 Colonial Exposition, Paris*. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2000. 216-71. Print.
- Needleman, Sarah E. "Study: Yoga and Pilates Studios Poised for More Growth." *Wall Street Journal* 24 August 2011. Web. 23 March 2012.

- Negrón-Muntaner, Frances. "Jennifer's Butt." *Aztlán* 22.2 (1997): 181-94. Print.
- Ness, Sally Ann. "The Inscription of Gesture: Inward Migrations in Dance." *Migrations of Gesture*. Ed. Carrie Noland and Sally Ann Ness. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008. 1-30. Print.
- . "Understanding Cultural Performance: Trobriand Cricket." *Anthropology, Sport, and Culture*. Ed. Robert R. Sands. Westport: Bergin & Garvey, 1999. 39-50. Print.
- Newlove, Jean and John Dalby. *Laban for All*. New York: Routledge, 2007. Print.
- Novack, Cynthia. "Looking at Movement as Culture: Contact Improvisation to Disco." *Moving History/Dancing Cultures: A Dance History Reader*. Ed. Ann Dils and Ann Cooper Albright. Middleton: Wesleyan University Press, 2001. 404-13. Print.
- O'Connor, Francis V. ed. *Art for the Millions: Essays from the 1930s by Artists and Administrators of the WPA Federal Art Project*. Reprint. Boston: New York Graphic Society, 1975. Print.
- O'Connor, Francis V. "Mural Themes from the Progressive Era to the WPA Federal Art Project: 1904 to 1933 and After." *Art for the People: The Rediscovery and Preservation of Progressive – and WPA-Era Murals in the Chicago Public Schools, 1904-1943*. By Heather Becker. San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2002. 53-60. Print.
- Osumare, Halifu. "Global Breakdancing and the Intercultural Body." *Dance Research Journal* 32.2 (2002): 30-42. Print.
- Palumbo-Liu, David. *Asian/American: Historical Crossings of a Racial Frontier*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999. Print.
- Peak Pilates. *Peak Pilates® System I Instructor's Manual*. Venice, CA: Mad Dogg Athletics, Inc. 2009. Print.
- . *Peak Pilates MVe™ Fitness Reformer Instructor Manual*. Boulder: Peak Body Systems Inc, 2008. Print.
- . "MVe™ 2 Day Chair Lesson Plan." *Peak Pilates MVe™ Fitness Chair, MVe™ Fitness Chair Instructor Preparation Workshop Teacher Trainer Lesson Plan*. Boulder: Peak Pilates, 2009. 1-12. Print.
- Peiss, Kathy. *Hope in a Jar: The Making of America's Beauty Culture*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998. Nook Color file.

- Pilates, Joseph. *A Pilates' Primer: The Millennium Edition: "Return to Life Through Contrology" and "Your Health."* Ashland, OR: Presentation Dynamics, Inc., 1998-2007. Print.
- Polestar Pilates, LLC. *Polestar® Education P-F Manual: Polestar Pilates Fitness Principles.* Coral Gables: Polestar Education, LLC. 2002. Print.
- . *Polestar Pilates™ Education S-1 Manual: Polestar Pilates Studio Level I.* Coral Gables: Polestar Education, LLC. 2002. Print.
- . *Polestar Pilates™ Education S-2 Manual: Polestar Pilates Studio Level II.* Coral Gables: Polestar Education, LLC. 2002. Print.
- . *Polestar Pilates™ Education S-3 Manual: Polestar Pilates Studio Level III.* Coral Gables: Polestar Education, LLC. 2002. Print.
- Powers, Shelley. "Pilates History." *Polestar Pilates Education, Studio Certification Instructor's Manual.* Coral Gables: Polestar Education, LLC. 2002. Print.
- Preston-Dunlop, Valerie and Susanne Lahusen, ed. *Schrifttanz: A View of German Dance in the Weimar Republic.* London: Dance Books; Pennington: Distributed by Princeton Book Co., 1990. Print.
- Redfield-Dreisbach, Stacy. "Chasing Joe Pilates." *Pilates Diaries Blog.* www.thepilatesdiaries.blogspot.com. Web. 14 April 2012.
- . "Physical Culture: The History of an Industry." Pilates Method Alliance Conference. Long Beach, CA. 6 November 2010.
- Ramos-Lagos, Jairo. Biblical scholar. E-mail interview. 6 April 2012.
- Reyneke, Dreas. *Ultimate Pilates.* Carlsbad: Hay House, Inc. 2002. Print.
- Rice, Anne. *Interview with the Vampire.* New York: Ballentine Books, 1976. Nook Color file.
- Roach, Joseph. "The Everlasting Club." *Cites of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1996. 17- 24. Print.
- Ron "Sez": A Compilation of Talks Given by Pilates Master Ron Fletcher.* Dir. Ron Fletcher. Ron Fletcher Company, 2005. DVD.

- Rouhiainen, Leena. "The Pilates Method as a Somatic Practice." *Continuing Dance Culture Dialogues: Southwest Borders and Beyond*. Tempe: The 38th Congress on Research in Dance Annual Conference, 2006. 122-29. Print.
- . "The Evolvement of the Pilates Method and its Relation to the Somatic Field." *Nordic Journal of Dance – Practice, Education, Research* 2 (2010): 56-69. Print.
- Rotundo, Anthony. *American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era*. New York: BasicBooks, 1993. Print.
- Ruyter, Nancy Lee. "The Genteel Transition: American Delsartism." *Reformers and Visionaries: The Americanization of the Art of Dance*. Dance Horizons: New York, 1979. 17-30. Print.
- . "American Delsartism: Precursor of an American Dance Art." *Educational Theatre Journal* 25.4 (1973): 420-35. Print.
- Rydell, Robert. *All the Worlds a Fair: Visions of Empire at American International Expositions, 1876-1916*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984. Print.
- . *A World of Fairs: The Century-of-Progress Expositions*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993. Print.
- Said, Edward. "Knowing the Oriental." *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books, 1979. 31-49. Print.
- Samuels, Allison. "Exercise: Pilates for the People." *Newsweek* 11 Sept. 2006. p10. Web. 12 Feb. 2012.
- Savigliano, Marta. *Tango and the Political Economy of Passion*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1995. Print.
- Scaravelli, Vanda. *Awaking the Spine: The Stress-Free New Yoga That Works With the Body to Restore Health, Vitality and Energy*. New York: Harper Collins, 1991. Print.
- Schloss, Joseph G. *Foundations: B-Boys, B-Girls and Hip-Hop Culture in New York*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009. Print.
- Schweik, Susan. *The Ugly Laws: Disability in Public*. New York: New York University Press, 2009. Print.

- Scolieri, Paul. "'An Interesting Experiment in Eugenics': Ted Shawn, American Dance, and the Discourses of Sex, Race, and Ethnicity." *The Oxford Handbook of Dance and Ethnicity*. (forthcoming). 1-43. Print.
- Segal, Neil A., Jane Hein, and Jeffery R. Basford. "The Effects of Pilates Training on Flexibility and Body Composition: An Observational Study." *Archives of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation* 85 (2004): 1977-1981. Print.
- Self, Brian P. Anita M. Bagley, Teresa L. Triplett and Lonnie E. Paulos. "Functional Biomechanical Analysis of the Pilates-based Reformer During Demi-Plié Movements." *Journal of Applied Biomechanics* 12 (1996): 326-337. Print.
- Shawn, Ted. *Every Little Movement: A Book About François Delsarte, the Man and His Philosophy, his Science and Applied Aesthetics, the Application of this Science to the Art of the Dance, the Influence of Delsarte on American Dance*. Pittsfield: Eagle Print and Binding Co., 1954. Print.
- Shea Murphy, Jacqueline. *The People Have Never Stopped Dancing*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007. Print.
- Shilling, Chris. *The Body and Social Theory*. 2nd ed. London: Sage Publications, 2003. Print.
- . "Educating the Body: Physical Capital and the Production of Social Inequalities." *Sociology* 25:4 (1991): 653-72. Print.
- Siebers, Tobin. "What Can Disability Studies Learn from the Culture Wars?" *Cultural Critique* 55 (2003): 182-216. JSTOR online file.
- Siler, Brooke. *The Pilates Body: The Ultimate At-Home Guide to Strengthening, Lengthening, and Toning Your Body – Without Machines*. New York: Broadway Books, 2000. Print.
- Smith, Andrea. "Heteropatriarchy and the Three Pillars of White Supremacy: Rethinking Women of Color Organizing." *Color of Violence: The Incite! Anthology*. Cambridge: South End Press, 2006. 66-73. Print.
- Srinivasan, Priya. "The Bodies Beneath the Smoke or What's Behind the Cigarette Poster: Unearthing Kinesthetic Connections in American Dance History." *Discourses in Dance* 4.1 (2007): 7-47. Print.
- Stacey, Jennifer. "Pilates Spine Corrector Class." *Proceeding of the 14th Annual Meeting of the International Association for Dance Medicine and Science 2004*. Ed. Ruth

- Solomon and John Solomon. San Francisco: International Association of Dance Medicine, 2004. 165-67. Print.
- Stebbins, Genevieve. *Delsarte System of Expression* (1902). 6th ed. New York: Dance Horizons, 1977. Print.
- Stephens, Margaret. "Living from the Core." *National Catholic Reporter* 18 March 2011. 16, 23. Print.
- Sweigard, Lulu. *Human Movement Potential: Its Ideokinetic Facilitation*. Lanham: Harper and Row, 1974. Print.
- . "The Dancer's Posture." *Impulse* (1961): 38-43. Print.
- Taranis, Lorin and Caroline Meyer. "Perfectionism and Compulsive Exercise Among Female Exercisers: High personal standards or self-criticism?" *Personality and Individual Differences* 49 (2010): 3-7. Print.
- Thomas, Helen. *The Body, Dance and Cultural Theory*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003. Print.
- Thomas, Marnie. "Graham Technique." *Dance Magazine* 81.3 (2007): 90-92. Print.
- Todd, Mable E. *The Thinking Body: A Study of the Balancing Forces of Dynamic Man*. New York: Dance Horizons, 1972. Print.
- Todd, Mable. *Early Writings 1920-1934*. New York: Dance Horizons, 1977. Print.
- Toepfer, Karl. *Empire of Ecstasy: Nudity and Movement in German Body Culture 1910-1935*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997. Print.
- Tomko, Linda. *Dancing Class: Gender, Ethnicity, and Social Divides in American Dance, 1890-1920*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999. Print.
- Urla, Jacqueline and Alan C. Swedlund. "Measuring Up To Barbie: Ideals of the Feminine Body in Popular Culture." Adapted from "The Anthropometry of Barbie: Unsettling Ideals of the Feminine Body in Popular Culture." *Deviant Bodies: Critical Perspectives on Difference in Science and Popular Culture*. Ed. Jennifer Terry and Jacqueline Urla. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995. 285-98. Print.
- Vester, Katherine. "Regime Change: Gender, Class, and the invention of Dieting in Post-Bellum America." *Journal of Social History* 44.1 (2010): 39-70. Print.

- Wheeler, Roxanne. *Complexion of Race: Categories of Difference in Eighteenth-Century British Culture*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000. Print.
- Wigman, Mary. *Liebe Hanya: Mary Wigman's Letters to Hanya Holm*. Ed. Claudia Gitelman. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003. Print.
- Wolf, Naomi. *The Beauty Myth: How Images of Beauty are Used Against Women*. Reprint. New York: HarperCollins, 2002. Nook Color file.
- Wong, Yutian. "Towards a New Asian American Dance Theory: Locating the Dancing Asian American Body." *Discourses in Dance* 1.1 (2002): 69-90. Print.
- Wright, Michael. *Golf and Pilates for Pilates Professionals*. New York: The PhysicalMind Institute, 2005. Print.
- Wulff, Helena. "Ethereal Expression: Paradoxes of ballet as a Global Physical Culture." *Ethnography* 9.4 (2008): 518-35. Print.
- Yoshihara, Mari. "Asia as Spectacle and Commodity: The Feminization of Orientalist Consumption" and "'When I Don Your Silken Draperies' New Women's Performances of Asian Heroines." *Embracing the East: White Women and American Orientalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003. 15-44, 77-100. Print.
- Yuasa, Y. *The Body: Toward an Eastern Mind-Body Theory*. Ed. T.P. Kasulis. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987. Print.

Web-sights:

<http://www.pilates.com/BBAPP/V/about/library/bibliography-of-pilates-articles.html>

http://www.golfpilates.com/Golf_pilates/Golf_Pilates_Pilates_History.htm

Addendum A: The Evolved Principles

The Evolved approach not only understands the Classical Pilates Principles, but works from a kinesiological and scientifically-based foundation to organize their own approach. According to Anderson and Spector, the term “Pilates-evolved” is used to “differentiate practitioners who are continuing to define and expand on Pilates’ work from the Classical Pilates practitioners” (399). Polestar Pilates in the *Polestar Pilates™ Education S-1 Manual: Polestar Pilates Studio Level I* © (2002) defined the six Evolved Principles as:

1. Breathing: Trunk Organization with Inhalation and Exhalation (i.e. “Breathing”)
2. Axial Elongation/Core Control
3. Efficiency of Movement Through: Organization of the Shoulder Girdle, Thoracic and Cervical Spine (i.e. “Shoulder Girdle Organization”)
4. Spinal Articulation
5. Alignment and Weight Bearing of Lower Extremity and Upper Extremities (i.e. “Lower Body Alignment”)
6. Movement Integration of Pelvis, Thorax, Head and Extremities (i.e. “Movement Integration”)

The scientific research in the Evolved field of Pilates’ also sets it apart from the Classical method.¹ Anderson suggests, “in the 1990s, many rehabilitation practitioners were using the method in multiple fields of rehabilitation, including general orthopedic, geriatric, chronic pain, neurological rehabilitation, and more” (395). Additionally, there are a number of groundbreaking articles that discuss the benefits of the Pilate breathing,

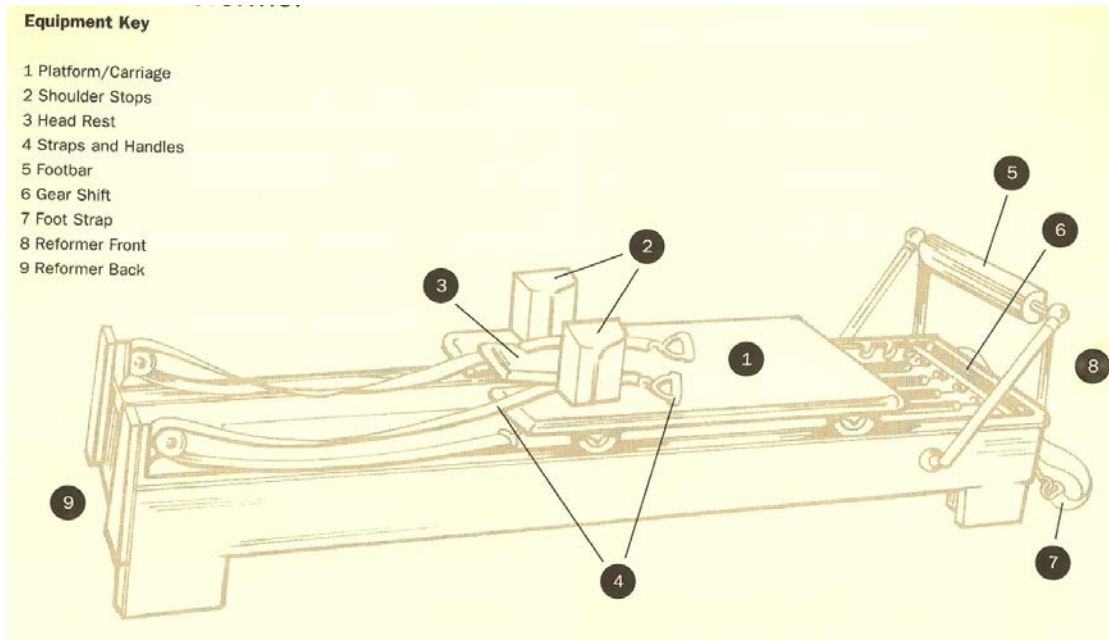
¹ For more information see: “Effects of Practice on the Ability to Perform Lumbar Stabilization Exercises” (1999) by Marchal Hagins et al; or “Knee Rehabilitation for Dancers Using a Pilates-Based Technique” (1992) by Alvin R. Loosli and Diana Herold; or “Why Your Pelvic Floor Should be on Your Resolution List for 2003” (2003) by Diane Lee; “Functional Biomechanical Analysis of the Pilates-based Reformer During Demi-Plié Movements” (1996) by Brian P. Self, Anita M. Bagley, Teresa L. Triplett and Lonnie E. Paulos.

recruitment of the transverse abdominals, and pelvic floor muscles that help facilitate lower back health.

One of the Evolved assumptions is that Pilates' movements stimulates or increases neurological efficiency in the body, and can help all populations. The Evolved approach, embraced by some Pilates instructors, is a way to transition their clients from a post-physical therapy environment into everyday "functional fitness." This is achieved, in part, through an awareness of the deep postural muscles, or the body's "core" area. Brent Anderson, PhD Physical Therapy, and President of Polestar Pilates Education, maintains that the benefits of Pilates (from an adaptive approach) can help heal the imperfect body. The Evolved approach to Pilates considers Pilates as a set of "tools" one can use to assist the body in recovery, or to use with physically imperfect bodies: i.e. obese bodies that are not able to bear weight, bodies that do not include limbs, partially paralyzed bodies, bodies without sight, or bodies with neuromuscular diseases. According to the Evolved practitioners, without the evolution of Pilates' exercises, certain populations (i.e. injured, overweight, chronically in pain) might not have had access to the healing benefits of the work.

Addendum B: The Universal Reformer

Image on page 20 from *The PMA Pilates Certification Exam Study Guide* © 2007, used with kind permission from the Pilates Method Alliance.



Addendum C: Sources of Figures

Chapter One

Figure 1.1: Author and Student Learning the “Chest Expansion” Exercise. Photograph of author guiding student through an exercise. Photo courtesy of Mad Dogg Athletics, LCC. February 18, 2011.

Figure 1.2: Author Performing “Plank” on the Reformer, Part of the “Long Stretch” Exercise. Photograph of model guiding author through an exercise. Photo courtesy of Mad Dogg Athletics, LCC. February 18, 2011.

Chapter Two

Figure 2.1: Polestar Pilates, Quadruped Series. Photograph of model demonstrating Quadruped Series Facing Foot. Polestar Pilates, LLC. *Polestar Pilates™ Education S-2 Manual: Polestar Pilates Studio Level II*. Coral Gables, FL: Polestar Education, LLC, 2002. Page 53.

Figure 2.2: Polestar Pilates, Leg Circles. Photograph of model demonstrating Leg Circles. Polestar Pilates, LLC. *Polestar Pilates™ Education S-1 Manual: Polestar Pilates Studio Level I*. Coral Gables, FL: Polestar Education, LLC, 2002. Page 23.

Figure 2.3: Polestar Pilates, Single Leg Stretch. Photograph of model demonstrating Single Leg Stretch. Polestar Pilates, LLC. *Polestar Pilates™ Education S-3 Manual: Polestar Pilates Studio Level III*. Coral Gables, FL: Polestar Education, LLC. 2002. Page 25.

Figure 2.4: Ballerina in Arabesque. Imaged gathered from the internet, April 5, 2012. <http://www.google.com>. Search term “Natalia Markova.”

Figure 2.5: The Transversus Abdominus. Blandine Calais-Germain, *Anatomy of Movement*. Seattle: Eastland Press, 1993. Page 92.

Figure 2.6: The Core Muscles. Web source, “Abdominal Muscle Anatomy Transversus Abdominus” from: <http://www.ab-core-and-stomach-exercises.com/transversus-abdominus.html> April 5, 2012.

Figure 2.7: Action of the Transversus. Blandine Calais-Germain, *Anatomy of Movement*. Seattle: Eastland Press, 1993. Page 92.

Figure 2.8: Author Using Tactile Cues to Stabilize a Student’s Pelvis. Photograph of author guiding a model’s hips. Photo courtesy of Mad Dogg Athletics, LCC. February 18, 2011.

Chapter Three

Figure 3.1: Julianna Demonstrating Concentration in the Advanced “Bicycle” Exercise. Brooke Siler’s *The Pilates Body: The Ultimate At-Home Guide to Strengthening, Lengthening, and Toning Your Body – Without Machines*. New York: Broadway Books, 2000. Page 90.

Figure 3.2: Joseph Pilates Demonstrating Centering in the “Hundred” Exercise. Presentation Dynamics, Inc. *A Pilates’ Primer: The Millennium Edition: “Return to Life Through Contrology” and “Your Health.”* By Joseph H. Pilates and William J. Miller. Ashland: Presentation Dynamics, Inc., 1998. Page 26.

Figure 3.3: Dana Demonstrating Control in the “Open Leg Rocker” Exercise. Brooke Siler’s *The Pilates Body: The Ultimate At-Home Guide to Strengthening, Lengthening, and Toning Your Body – Without Machines*. New York: Broadway Books, 2000. Page 75.

Figure 3.4: Peak Pilates Model Demonstrating the Inhalation in the “Chest Expansion” Exercise. Peak Pilates. *Peak Pilates System I Instructor’s Manual*. Venice, CA: Mad Dogg Athletics, Inc. 2009. Page 6.

Figure 3.5: Joseph Pilates Demonstrating Precision in the “One Leg Stretch” Exercise. Presentation Dynamics, Inc. *A Pilates’ Primer: The Millennium Edition: “Return to Life Through Contrology” and “Your Health.”* By Joseph H. Pilates and William J. Miller. Ashland: Presentation Dynamics, Inc., 1998. Page 36.

Figure 3.6: Illustration of Woman Demonstrating Flowing Movement in the “Rollover” Exercise. Rael Isacowitz and Karen Clippinger. *Pilates Anatomy: Your Illustrated Guide to Mat Work For Core Stability and Balance*. Champaign: Human Kinetics, 2011. Page 112.

Figure 3.7: Author teaching Flow, Precision, and Centering. Photograph of author guiding student through an exercise. Photo courtesy of Mad Dogg Athletics, LCC. February 18, 2011.

Chapter Four

- Figure 4.1: Julianna demonstrating the “Leg Pull-Up.” Brooke Siler’s *The Pilates Body: The Ultimate At-Home Guide to Strengthening, Lengthening, and Toning Your Body – Without Machines*. New York: Broadway Books, 2000. Page 132.
- Figure 4.2: Front Cover of Pilates “How-To” Book. Phillip Friedman and Gail Eisen’s *The Pilates Method of Physical and Mental Conditioning*. New York: Warner Books, Inc., 1980. Front cover picture.
- Figure 4.3: Peak Pilates model demonstrating the “Pilates Stance.” Peak Pilates. *Peak Pilates MVe™ Fitness Reformer Instructor Manual*. Boulder, CO: Peak Body Systems, Inc., 2008. Page 29.
- Figure 4.4: Illustration of Woman Demonstrating Proper Abdominal Support. Rael Isacowitz and Karen Clippinger. *Pilates Anatomy: Your Illustrated Guide to Mat Work For Core Stability and Balance*. Champaign: Human Kinetics, 2011. Page 68.
- Figure 4.5: Another Pilates Body? Model posing on the cover of *Pilates Style Magazine*. June 2011. Gathered from “Google Images” search of “Pilates Style Magazine.” April 27, 2012.
- Figure 4.6: More Defined Abdominals. Model posing for the PilatesStick® by Peak Pilates. Gathered from “Google Images” search of “PilatesStick.” April 27, 2012.
- Figure 4.7: Photograph of Model Demonstrating the “Teaser” Exercise with “Magic Circle” Prop. Gathered from “Google Images” search of “Pilates.” April 27, 2012.