SPINS AND DIPS THROUGH BODY LANGUAGE

By

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Spins and Dips Through Body Language

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science at George Mason University

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to pole performers of every label.
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Abstract

KINES OBSERVATIONS IN RECREATIONAL POLE DANCING

Mandy Shaver, MS
George Mason University, 2012
Thesis Director: Dr. John Nauright

This thesis explores body language in the context of culture. A year-long participant observation of one recreational pole dancing small business involved 42 women participants in the pole dancing classes in two of the studio locations. The participants’ ages range from 20s to 50s, gender –identified as female, lived in the District of Columbia-Maryland-Virginia (DMV) metropolitan area during the time of the study. Recreational pole dancers are aware or unaware of their body performance constructing from structure and agency of social norms. Recreational pole dancers’ body language communicates through cultural body norms within a tempero-spacial system.

Keywords: body, language, emotion, pole, art, dancing, culture, ritual, empowerment, leisure, performance, embodiment, marketing, neuroscience, ethnography
The Curtain Call

Through observing participants in recreational pole dancing, I study the politics of the body, the influence of culture on views of performance, and the structure and agency of marketing practices in the pole dancing leisure and sport industry. The purpose of this thesis is to enhance the understanding of how people understand and use their bodies in leisure and sport. This investigation of body performance is centering on the notion that body language is a communication of culture. Specifically, what are the movements in recreational pole dancing expressing in body language synthesis and differentiation?

For this particular leisure thesis, I worked from a grounded theory approach, gathering data while incorporating linguistic theory in anthropological body language studies. Social constructions of pole dancers, pole dance instructors, pole dance competitors, pole dancing studio owners, pole dancing competition bodies, and pole dancing representation in media outlets embed in the multicultural society of the United States of America. My observations at two of four pole dancing studios managed by a local pole dancing fitness owner in the Northern Virginia area form much of the subject matter of this particular thesis. These studios are roughly 30 miles apart although the time spent to
travel from one to the other usually takes about an hour and fifteen minutes during the day classes are being held for patrons.

For those participants who agreed to anatomical studies related to human movement, I recorded physical traits such as body alignment and muscle structure. I recorded this information on a piece of paper with a print out of the human body using my knowledge of anatomy to the best of my ability as an American College of Sports Medicine personal trainer, American Fitness Association fitness professional, and Experienced 200 hour and 500 hour internationally certified yoga teacher. The written record did not take more than 15 minutes and took place before or after a pole dancing class.

Goddess Shape studio is where I observed participants at two of their four locations. Goddess Shape has hundreds of women participating on a regular basis in over the course of a year in a schedule split into eight week sessions. These women start at Pole Level 1 and if they stay with the program, graduate Pole Level 7 as a Pole Master. The amount of longitude time spent to complete Pole Level 1 through Pole Level 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 in order to reach 7 takes a year given that each session is eight weeks long if no sessions are skipped within that year. The session schedule is set-up online using MINDBODY software. MINDBODY is the first software consultant company started in 2003 to provide web based scheduling for clients in the health and wellness businesses. Due to the economic positive revenue growth of health and wellness industries, MINDBODY processing is now a registered ISO/MSP of Wells Fargo Bank.
Founder and CEO of MINDBODY, Rick Stollmeyer, is quoted on MINDBODY’s core value webpage, “The success of any great company stems from its culture,” (2001-2012).

An eight week session of Pole Level 1 costs 180.00 USD leading to subsequent sessions costing 170.00 USD for the equivalency of 1200.00 USD after a completed year of Pole Level 1 through Pole Level 7 sessions, demonstrating the amount of profit gain a recreational health and wellness business can accumulate per client in 2012. The return in profit from one student does not include the cost of high-heel shoes, clothing for dancing, and a pole to practice at home that may be ordered through Goddess Shape. The clothing manufacturers market pole dancing athletic wear as sexier than popular sportswear from outlet stores. The high-heel shoes give the appearance of a larger lifted booty while maximizing the dominance of height within a society critical of tone and length in the female shape. In addition to the visual appeals of sexiness, these articles enhance gripping ability of pole dancers because skin grips better than fabric and high heels hook the pole for ease in spinning with an added assistance in climbing up the pole.

I contacted 42 women participating in these pole dancing classes by email using addresses given to me by three instructors at the pole dancing studios. These 42 women were sent an initial consent form along with my question of interest in participation in the study. From that sample of pole dancers, I received consistent feedback from 30 women during the time I spent collecting
data at each studio as well as participation in the study from two pole dancing instructors. The participants ranged from ages 20s to 50s, gender –identified as female, lived in the District of Columbia-Maryland-Virginia (DMV) metropolitan area during the time of the study, were healthy, and not pregnant with the monetary means to pay for their participation in recreational pole dancing classes.

At the start of my study, I recorded demographic information confidentially applying pseudonym identifications used throughout the study. Specifically my participant observations were conducted during the hour and fifteen minute classes. 15 minutes before and after classes is when I asked additional questions clarifying observations and seeking more information about emotional expression as particular signifiers in body language. The participant observations were conducted during three class sessions (eight weeks each). These observations recorded emotions, social interactions, notes on body movements, and performance routines within the studio environment. Researcher observations were taken during class time per 8 week session for up to 7 months (3X8 week sessions). Informal interviews asked questions about participation in pole dancing and demographic information. Detailed anatomical observations taken of voluntary pole participants increased the knowledge of the culture study of human movement in leisure.

During class Level 1-3 Pole enrollment, I participated and observed one Boot Camp class at Studio A, two Cardio Pole classes at Studio A, one Open
Pole class at Studio A, and two Chair Dance classes at Studio B. The consent forms for specialty classes Boot Camp, Cardio Pole, Chair Dance, and Open Pole were given in that specific class format. Some of the participants had already signed the consent forms for Level 1 Pole, Level 2 Pole, and Level 3 Pole. The studios additionally held specialty classes called Sexy Pole, Lap Dance, Burlesque, Spinning Pole, Transitions, guest instructor workshops, and catered birthday parties in which I did not participate nor collect observations because of the amount of time and personal budget available to participate in studio events.

This ethnographic research began in Summer 2011 and concluded in Summer 2012 at two of four Goddess Shape studio locations in the Northern Virginia area I called Studio A and Studio B. Specifically, my participant observations began in a pole dancing intro class at Studio A in July 2011. Then I continued observing in Pole Level 1 and Pole Level 2 at Studio B January – April 2012, and completed these observations Pole Level 3 at Studio A April 2012 – June 2012. The Pole Level 1 and Pole Level 2 were held Thursdays at 7:15-8:25 PM. The Pole Level 3 class was held Sundays at 3:15-4:25 PM. During the classes, I observed interactions between the students, students and instructor, personal interactions with students and instructors, student and instructor interactions with the pole, and student and instructor interactions in the environment of the class. The classes in each studio were identical in spins learned and routines performed although a different instructor and room.
Every evening after participating in a pole dancing class, I wrote down my observations. I gave pseudonyms to each pole student, instructor, owner of the studio, and pole dancing studio. After becoming acquainted with members of the classes, I began the assessments of body structure and movement on a one-on-one basis for those students who chose to help in kinesics research. As these recreational pole dancers became comfortable in discussing their emotions and physical feelings during, before, and after pole dancing, they confided in greater detail about their lives before and during pole dancing. In August 2012, I reconnected with the women I observed in class. I shared with the participants a portion of my thesis relating to their participation and the particular anatomical study in relation to that pole student. This reevaluation led me to revise portions of my thesis taken from observations in a more creative way beneficial to participant observations.

Because I am a woman who was observing and participating with other women pole dancing, the women were seemingly comfortable sharing details of their experience in pole dancing in relation to their intrinsic bodies, interpersonal relationships, and extrinsic goals. The limitation of my participant observations is that I do not have research information about women who chose not to continue in pole dancing classes and who I did not have a way of contacting after ending participation in a class session. In addition, because these women began to see me as a peer exhibiting trustworthiness and friendliness, some may have taken for granted how much intrinsic emotion I understood without explanation. The
more people see each other and like each other, the harder it is to separate oneself from the notion that certain feelings are understood without explanation.

In order to understand the emotional landscape within the DMV recreational pole dancing culture, as an ethnographer, I apply Pierre Bourdieu's “…positioned subject…” in Outline of Theory and Practice (17). Neurologist Antonio Damasio's studies of emotional representation in the body as negotiation of neuron-muscular decisions in a completion on a movement or set of movements interplay with Bourdieu’s body as representation in structuring itself in a position in society. Specifically Lutz and White (1986) conclude:

…Future [anthropological ethnographical research] appears to be headed beyond the simply descriptive task of cataloguing communicative codes to: (a) specification of relations among codes (such as verbal and nonverbal…)…and (b) articulation of the pragmatic functions of emotional meanings within broader systems of value… [and] identity (424).

Recreational pole dancers are aware or unaware of their body performance constructing from structure and agency of social norms. Recreational pole dancers' body language communicates through cultural body norms within a tempo-spacial system.
Empowering Claims: Fitness for Women in Recreational Pole Dancing

“Empowerment: increasing the individual’s knowledge of mechanisms of resource allocation and leisure life options. Stimulating a proactive stance to issues of bodily health, environmental balance, and the affirmation and development of rights in society,” (Rojek, 2005, p.52)

Empowerment is a buzzword utilized by the owner and instructors of Goddess Shape to promote the selling of classes. Empowerment is a buzzword in the fitness industry. Specifically in pole dancing, empowerment through an art previously thought to exist only in strip clubs creates notions of freedom in sexual agency exhibiting through the body. At Goddess Shape, empowerment through sexual agency perceivably exists only through women, perhaps only by these women. Donaghue, Kurz, and Whitehead (2011) suggest that the growing popularity of recreational pole dancing exists because a growing number of women in western cultures believe femininity is sexually alluring and should no longer be hidden from the public as it is a woman’s bodily power to exert a feminism of experience (p.444). Thus pole dancing, a strong display of the
feminine body, increases the perception women are empowering themselves through participation.

Donaghue, Kurz, and Whitehead (2011) outline a few discourses which define women’s participation in pole dancing as empowering. The first is the discourse that a woman’s “…ability to incite desire is a form of power,” (p.445). Women celebrate their desire as a sexual object. “…[T]he shift from sexual objectification to sexual subjectification, which relies on a distinction between women being objectified, and women freely and agentically choosing to objectify themselves, at their own discretion and for their own purposes (Gill, 2003,2007, 2008),” (p.445). Empowerment, in this first discourse, is perceived as legitimate because a woman chooses to participate in pole dancing “…for her own pleasure, with the added benefit that, should she choose to, she could deploy her power to render men helpless. The emphasis on choice and agency…is measured by the ability to…express…‘authentic’ self,” (p.445). The second way in which pole dancing is perceived as empowering to women is the exploitation of sexuality outside the norm of the strip club into the adult dance studio. “That is, by choosing to learn a sexy pole dance (and indeed paying for the opportunity to do so), rather than pole dancing in order to be paid by men, recreational pole dancers may undermine the idea that women’s desire to perform ‘sexy’ dances is primarily ‘for’ men,” (p.445). The authors, in their concluding argument, state “…that the tensions and contradictions between authenticity and parody [of women’s participation in pole dancing] are revealing of the uneasiness of this
postfeminist space, in which bids for ‘empowerment’ are attractive and compelling, yet at the same time contingent, fragile and insecure,” (p.455).

In an earlier article by Kally Whitehead and Tim Kurz (2009) suggests that when pole dancing is taught recreationally, pole dancing is no longer pornographic (p.227). “…[T]his process could be conceptualized as representing a form of ‘reclaiming’ an activity previously bound to the patriarchal, objectifying, social institution of the strip club…reclaimed by women in a studio.” (p.230). Whitehead and Kurz support the differentiation feminists who adhere to the idea that the separation of sexes enhances the self-esteem embodying in self-image of female pole dancers when stating “…relocating [pole dancing] in a female-only environment that is devoid of the male gaze... [is] creating a space in which women can challenge traditional representations of female sexuality as passive and subservient to men,” (p.230). However, Pierre Bourdieu (1998) disagrees different is equal. “…[D]ifference only appears when one adopts the point of view of the dominant on the dominated and that precisely that from which it seeks to differentiate itself,” (p.63). The social structure of the environment pole dancers interact determines the ways in which they dance and how the dancing is positioned in the pole dance studio. The perceptions form off the social bodies of the pole dancers (pp.63-65).

Pole dancers in the studio perform the social constructions of the gendered female stereotypes:
Thus, the…[female pole dancer's]…gaze is not a simple universal and abstract power whose efficacy depends on the relative position of the perceiver and the perceived and on the degree to which the schemes of perception and appreciation that are brought into play are known and recognized by the person to whom they are applied (p.65).

Bourdieu’s theory of masculine domination disputes Whitehead’s and Kurz’s (2009) conclusion pole dancing is reclaiming itself by women in the studio when taken from the strip club. Whitehead and Kurtz do agree with Bourdieu in their conclusion “…pole dancing… [because of]…its connection to patriarchal institutions… [that culturally] seal particular constructions of gender and sexuality that ultimately fail to disrupt…[masculine]…[dominance] within society at large,” (2009, p.230). But is a woman pole dancing in a studio sealing constructions of sex and gender that fail to disrupt the norms in a wider culture even though she is empowered; or is she communicating an emotion other than empowerment among recreational pole dancers whose expression is neither to reclaim nor defend empowerment?
Empowering Claims: Defining the Empowered

A clear definition of empowerment utilized in organized leisure would assist researchers in understanding how the female sex in recreational pole dancing relates to feeling empowered and expressing empowerment within the pole dancing studio. According to Maton and Salem (1995), empowerment is “…the active, participatory process of gaining resources or competencies needed to increase control over one’s life and accomplish important life goals,’ (p.1). The authors’ participant-observation study of three sites involving community organizational leadership resulted in community empowerment. The community participants who engage consistently over time in a leisure pursuit at a specific location develop commitment to learning a common mastery of a skill. The mastery of a skill supports individual goals in the process of adopting that leisure belief system shared in practice within their community of peers under a leader, the authority of knowledge. Maton and Salem (1995) believe their observations of organizational communities support four key social components of empowerment: group-based belief system, opportunity role structures, support systems and leadership. One missing factor does not lead to empowerment. Does pole dancing community at Goddess Shape empower women?

Goddess Shape studio caters to woman’s only pole dancing situated in diverse social communities made of generational, national, occupational, and political similarities and dissimilarities in Northern Virginia. Goddess Shape
studios markets itself as empowering place of leisure practice for a woman because she gains self-esteem, confidence in her workplace, and sexiness in her relationships. The program comprises of levels of pole dancing 1-7 where a student progresses learning a certain number of pole spins per level session and builds from the movements learned in a previous session in the next session. A routine is taught to all students in a particular level in every studio at the same time. A woman graduates pole level learning to become a pole master once she has mastered all the movements of pole dancing subscribed by owner Propel who believes a woman is empowered through a step-by-step learning process over the course of a year within the community at Goddess Shape. “… [B]elief systems are strengths-based, holding that each setting member has the capacity (strengths, resources) to achieve setting goals…” (Maton and Salem, 1995, p.4). Because Propel believes learning pole dancing in this way reduces injuries from improper form, helps women achieve a healthy shape, leads women to be physically strong and sexy, and fosters student friendships within classes, she claims these attributes her style of pole education leads to a community of women as empowered pole dancers.

“Opportunity role structure refers to the availability and configuration of roles within a setting which provide meaningful opportunities for individuals to develop, grow, and participate. Meaningful role opportunities contribute to empowerment by helping members achieve primary personal goals in an active, participatory, skill-building fashion,” (Maton and Salem, 1995, p.5). The pole
instructors are trained by Propel through a series of workshops to achieve certification. Exceptions are made for pole instructors who are certified by another pole dancing educational standard. All pole instructors must pass an audition satisfactorily to teach on a regular basis at on the Goddess Shape’s studios. The pole instructors are evaluated once or twice a year to ensure that they warm-up a class for approximately 10 minutes, teach an improv 20 minutes of dance, allocates 15 minutes for unstructured learning of a new spin or skill called open pole, allocates 15 minutes in practice of the Level routine, and ends with approximately 10 minutes of strength and flexibility exercises.

“In recipient roles members develop needed instrumental and psychological competencies, and in provider roles self efficacy is enhanced through skill utilization, helping others, and contributing to important setting goals…” (Maton and Salem, 1995, p.5). Opportunity role structures are present because each student progresses through each Level then graduates after learning a group routine to a particular song. Progression through levels is supported by the third possible component of an empowerment community outcome; support systems. “[A] support system…contribute[s]…to empowerment in two ways. First, people lacking power in society need support to deal with current disempowering conditions in their lives. Second, the process of enhancing control over one’s life and of achieving life goals may entail substantial challenge and stress for which support are needed,” (p.7). In promotional material at Goddess Shape, women students are quoted or
paraphrased as participating in pole dancing classes in order to overcome significant health concerns or career challenges. One woman details her diagnosis of cancer and how the Goddess Shape community supported her through her treatment. And after she was given the diagnosis of remission from cancer, she describes how her friends from her pole dancing class purchased and participated in a burlesque celebration party. In addition, Goddess Shape references small business owners and college students who take classes to lessen stress and seek support for financial and educational hurdles in their lives outside of the studio.

The fourth empowerment factor is the commanding leadership of Propel. She demonstrates a business model supported by her pole instructors and upheld by office staff in order to model pole dancing for women in the Northern Virginia community. “Leadership…can contribute to empowerment through two different pathways. One is…direct…influence that key leaders…have on members. The second is the indirect effect through leaders’ capacity to motivate and influence…staff…who interact regularly with…setting members” (Maton and Salem, 1995, p.9). Goddess Pole sends out an email newsletter at least once every session edited by Propel that notifies the list serve of events at each studio and special news such as workshops or national and local competition awards. The instructors are taught to break down moves into steps and show options for simpler spins in place of challenging spins in order that all students feel a sense of achievement in learning the art of pole dancing. A student or potential student
with questions may contact the instructor at any time through email or call a studio to speak with a courteous receptionist. A student is encouraged to purchase a 60 USD training one-on-one training session with an instructor for further pole study. An annual anniversary party celebrates students and instructors from each studio. Each of the four studios has a team led by a few instructors that compete for the best performance. Friendly competition increases interaction between students and staff as well as interactions between students of different studios while increasing motivation to practice pole dancing in order to support the home studio and in essence, Propel of Goddess Shape.

Maton and Salem (1995) proposal for future research is that additional types of community settings are useful for analyzing the characteristics of empowerment in pole fitness studios. Do different types of community settings, for example nonprofit environmental groups and local book and brew clubs, share common characteristics of empowerment that differentiate these groups from non-empowering community settings? Are certain characteristics of empowerment unique and different depending on location, culture, and type of activity? Is pole dancing in a recreational setting “…a form of ‘reclaiming’ an activity previously bound to the patriarchal, objectifying, social institution,” or is “…pole dancing…[sealing]… particular constructions of gender and sexuality that ultimately fail to disrupt…[masculine]…[dominance] within society at large,” (Whitehead and Kurz, 2009, p.230) ? Or is empowerment one of many and
perhaps not the most emotional expressive factor that is sensed in a community of moving bodies?

*Cultural Embodiment: Bodily Felt Sense*

“Embodiment: everyone’s actions are influenced by their genetic composition, mental-physical attributes, stage in the life cycle, gender, class, race, status, and other relations of power,” (Rojek, 2005, p. 50).

Body felt performance changes the way a pole dancer feels about self in relation to her cultural environment. “In this function of ritual, the “natural attitudes” of the human body – its everyday postures…and movements- are changed to produce different modalities of awareness…that intensify “bodily felt sense” (Levin 2003, pp.180-181),” (Nevrin, 2008, p.123). Although Nevrin’s (2008) participant observations are about those people participating in a modern postural yoga practice (MYP), his emphasis on “…the interdependence between individual and environment…” is useful in understanding how a pole student moves in the environment of the pole dance studio (p.119). Nevrin accordingly moves the ethnographer away from individualistic psychological assumptions of what is seen and felt to what is felt in the interaction between participants and environment; how people are feeling movement in an observable way. Individual feelings of empowerment after graduating from a certain pole level is temporal in the space of the pole dance studio and local community. Because this individual
cannot remain static in the pole studio, moving onto the next level after completion of weeks of skill accumulation, that individual must achieve new perceivable skills in the pole studio because these mastered skills are extrinsic motivators for empowerment feeling. “So long as we are involved in social interactions with other human beings, circumstances such as these are bound to influence us to some degree, not least by restricting our ways of feeling, thinking, and acting,” (Nevrin, 2008, p.131). A limited environmental bound exists on the body and the psychological interpretation of the body when based on extrinsically motivated learned cultural movements. So pole dancing occurs in a social space.

The Language is Spinning

So pole dancing occurs in a social space and thus begins the discussion on studies of body language in anthropology, linguistic relativity first popularized by the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis lays the groundwork for discoveries of emotional body actions. The linguistic relativity hypothesis is “…the proposal that the particular language we speak influences the way we think about reality…remains largely in the realm of speculation,” (Lucy, 1997, pp.291-292). John A. Lucy classes the possible influences of language on thought into three types: semiotic, structural, and functional. Semiotics is how speaking any language influences thinking (p.292). Expressing body language influences thought processes. Structural language is how one speaks to another which in turn
influences thinking in a particular language in which these symbols of meaning affect thinking processes (p.292). For example, word choice for a caffeinated beverage by Michigan residents’ is pop while North Carolina residents’ word choice is soda. The use of different word choice in American English in different regional areas to express the same object is an example of functional usage of language; people speaking the same language but using a different word choice to refer to the same object. Although focus here is on structural linguistics in order to understand the embodiment of emotion, all components of a language affect thought patterns and these same thought patterns produce the language acting upon reality.

Importantly Lucy (1997) invokes the need for additional empirical research of linguistic relativity:

The pattern of thought may have to do with immediate perception and attention, with personal and social-cultural systems of classification, inference, and memory, or with aesthetic judgment and creativity. The reality may be the world of everyday experience, of specialized contexts, or of ideational tradition. These three key elements are linked by two relations: Language embodies an interpretation of reality and language can influence thought about that reality. The interpretation arises from the selection of substantive aspects of experience and their formal arrangement in the verbal code. Such selection and arrangement is, of course, necessary for language, so the crucial emphasis here
is that each language involves a particular interpretation, not a common, universal one. An influence on thought ensures when the particular language interpretation guides or supports cognitive activity and hence the beliefs dependent on it (pp.294-295).

Ethnographers studying the body as a marker of emotional language benefit from behavior-centered approaches because difference of behavior links to patterns of thought within a language. “A typological approach anchored in referential semantics would significantly improve [behavior-centered approaches]…” (Lucy, 1997, p.302). In learning a new physical skill, typing movements in order to understand the emotional implications in the action orientated behavior would refer the body movement to cultural embodiment. Can emotions be measured through observable movement?

Researchers in the field of neuroscience are able to measure emotions, particularly as emotional-muscular activities become increasingly accurately measurable, useful in kinesiology and relatable fields of study in body mechanics. Antonio Damasio, a neurologist at the University of Iowa in 2000, asked participants in his study to recall events where they felt happy, angry, sad, or fearful in order to measure emotional-muscular response. Damasio's team used positron emission tomography (PET) scans to monitor brain activity in 41 people. The four emotions are associated with different activity patterns in the somatosensory cortex, the insular cortex, and other brain areas responsible for
mapping the body's state. He plotted their brain activity when participants answered the question in order to study the emotions activating or deactivating certain areas of the brain that regulate physical states in the body. According to the results of this study highlighted in the *New Scientist*, the experiences of emotion are caused by changes in the body’s physical state. “'This tells you that the 'feeling' of an emotion is, in great part, the brain representation of the state of the body during an emotion,'” Damasio said,” (Young, 2001). Scientists critical of the physical differences between extreme emotions argue the emotional neurological signal is too slight to register a muscular difference in the body. Other scientists seek to understand emotional body language with a vision of the technology to do so from current research projects. According to researchers in psychology and neuroscience:

The recognition of whole-body expressions is substantially harder, because the configuration of the human body has more degrees of freedom than the face alone, and its overall shape varies strongly during articulated motion. However, in computer vision and machine learning research, recent results about object recognition have shown that even for highly variable visual stimuli, quite reliable categorical decisions can be made from dense low-level visual cues…We restrict ourselves to the analysis of body poses (form), as opposed to the dynamics of body language (optic flow), (Schlindler, Van Gool, and de Gelder, 2008, p.2).
These recent studies from computational devices that encode emotion from analysis of body form have two conclusions according to research scientists (p. 15).

The first conclusion is emotional body language is complex. Yet computers can recognize 2D images without 3D motion. This conclusion could mean emotional cognitive processing of 2D images is directly understood between humans; although limitations in technology prevent computer emotional processing 3D motion images, 2D emotional processing is not simply a step to 3D understanding of emotions. The second conclusion is neuroscientists are working towards a quantitative computational model for processing and recognizing body form. Meanwhile these scientists and participants in the cognitive studies can recognize emotions exhibiting through body language on a qualitative scale. “Studying this component in isolation is only a first step towards a full perceptive model, which also models the motion pathway, and high-level cognitive functions, and accounts for the coupling between these components,” (Schlindler, Van Gool, and de Gelder, 2008, p. 15). Fortunately, the researcher that coined the term body language through his observations in the locus of culture began in the 1950s which if implemented through modern day anthropology can assist in studies seeking to understand the emotional human body.
Anthropologist Ray Birdwhistell in *Introduction to Kinesics: An Annotation System for Analysis of Body Motion and Gesture* (1952) and *Kinesics and Context: Essays on Body Motion Communication* (1970) built upon Sapir’s language hypothesis while engaging in theoretical and later reconnoitering body language. His term kinesics refers to the study of nonverbal communication using the body as language coining the term body language. Kinesics comprises of human movements that are coded in different patterns depending on the social context within a culture. In 1965, Birdwhistell began writing about observations of the use of the salute as a gesture in World War II as an example of a human movement understood differently depending on an enlisted military personnel’s perception of his social context. The hand salute is:

…a movement of the right hand to the vicinity of the anterior portion of the cap or hat, could, without occasioning a court martial, be performed in a manner which could satisfy, please, or enrage the most demanding officer…[b]y shifts in stance, facial expression, the velocity or duration of the movement…, and…in the selection of inappropriate contexts for the act, the soldier could dignify, ridicule, demean, seduce, insult, or promote the recipient of the salute. By often almost imperceptible variations in the performance of the act, he could comment upon the bravery or cowardice of his enemy or ally, could signal his attitude toward
army life or give [reference to a sexual encounter he had with a woman.]...It was this order of variability on a central theme which stimulated one of the primary “breakthroughs” in the development of kinesics (pp.79-80).

During that time period, one of those breakthroughs was the mind can train the body to behave a certain way within the context of a society. The way one moves the body is not a creation or degradation of a natural perfect way the human form is meant to move in a given situation. Instead body movement is emotional expression when exhibiting in a cultural environment. Therefore the way a person moves is neither natural nor unnatural because the body reflects the dominate movement cultural patterns (p.81). Most importantly a social scientist, when observing a participant’s movements in a specific activity, can only determine “…how distinctively individual any particular performance is before he knows the structure of significant ranges of behavior for a particular behavioral area,” (p.82). The individual behavior is then analyzed in relation to social interaction in hopes to describe the kinesis pattern of social performance (Birdwhistell, 1970, p.82).

The social scientist determines body language behaviors in culture through the use of structural kinesics utilizing the terms kineme, kine, and kinemorph. A kineme describes a unit of movement that acts as a phoneme in language; defined by the International Phonetic Association as "…the smallest segmental unit of sound employed to form meaningful contrasts between
utterances," (1999, Appendix 5). As phonemes are to verbal language, so kinemes are to non-verbal language. "A kine is an abstraction of that range of behavior produced by a member of a given social group which, for another member of the same group, stands in perceptual contract to a different range of such behavior," (Birdwhistell, 1970, p.193). Therefore a kineme is the smallest unit of movement in body language which is designated by movements using a system of notation, the kinemorph. Correspondingly like a phonomorph, a kinomorph is a formation of kines in a specific area of the body. "As soon as [a researcher] begin[s] to contrast… [analyze]…, with the aid of an informant, a series of kine assemblages, it becomes possible to abstract those which form unitary complexes," which are kinemorphs (Birdwhistell, 1970, p.195). An observable movement is not necessarily a kine and likewise, a kinemorph only conveys information when a participant is able to replicate movements that are performing together through translation in a social environment (p.197). In summary, "As kines combine with other kines to make isolable units (the kinemorphs), or as single kines emerge as kinemorphs, these forms combine with each other in a variety of kinemorphic constructions," (Birdwhistell, 1970, p.199).

Like the IPA chart, the kinemorph chart finds basis in theoretical rules about body language and applicable use in analyzing human movement understood in a specific culture. Kinemorphic notation like phonographic notation must contain the following: some aspects of body language are linguistically
relevant while others like amount of isometric strength is not; body language can be represented partly as a sequence of discrete movements; the movements can be divided usefully into two major categories (explain); the kinetic description of “blank and blank” can be made with reference to how they are produced and to their non-verbal characteristics; and in addition to discrete movements smaller movements are represented independently of discrete movements (IPA chart, 1999, pp.2-3). Birdwhistell understands body language in a kinetic description in four ways within a cultural system.

1."Social personality is a tempero-spacial system. All behaviors evinced by any such system are components of the system except as related to different levels of abstractions" (Birdwhistell, 1952, p.5).

*In The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual* (1967), author Victor Turner defines ritual as “…a prescribed formal behavior not given over to technological routine, having reference to belief in mystical beings or powers.” (p.19). Taken out of the context of religion, a woman identifies as a pole dancer through pole dancing at Goddess Shape. Her identification as a pole dancer causes her to engage consistently within a pole dancing community, so that pole dancing becomes a ritualized behavior after rite of passage, such as her ability to complete a spin precisely or move in synchronization with fellow dancers. This rite of passage consists of separation, liminality, and incorporation. Separation is when a person or group becomes detached from a particular set of social norms
constructed from an earlier cultural environment. She is now a pole dancer at Goddess Shape studio not in the historic norm of the strip club. Liminal is when the person or group is no longer in the earlier set of social norms and has yet to develop within new set of social norms created in the current cultural environment. She is now a pole dancer at Goddess Shape beginning to learn spins at Pole Level 1 and 2. Incorporation is when the person or group is within a new social norm (Turner, 1967, p.94). She is now a pole dancer at a studio who mastered all the spins taught through Pole Level 1 – 7 and is now a Pole Master.

Turner states symbols are "…determinable influences inclining persons and groups to [social] action," (1969, p.36). The pole dance classes at Goddess Shape are part of local fitness business' offerings to the Northern Virginia community yet exist outside of fitness classes in private gyms and dance studios. This separate existence is in part because gyms and most dance studios have yet to install poles in their classrooms and adapt an exercise program simple enough for a person of limited pole dance experience. A woman who enrolls and participates in a Pole Level 1 class begins to separate herself from the norm leisure dance pursuits in Mid-Atlantic American society because she is learning skills specifically for pole dancing fitness not taught within dance fitness classes at gyms. As she continues to progress through the levels, she embodies the characteristics of a pole dancer, specifically a pole dancer at Goddess Shape. She enters the stage liminality when she buys high heels, short shorts, pole
grips, and a portable pole for her home. She is allowed to sign-up for or make-up classes in Cardio Pole when she reaches Level 3 and additionally Spinning Pole when she reaches Level 4. A thong is given to each pole dancer at the end of her graduation in Level 2 then at each level until Level 6; the thong is a particular color denoting the level of graduation. She performs a graduation routine with her fellow pole dancers who participate in the ritualized level of liminality. The liminal pole dancers are "…neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by…custom, convention, and ceremon[y]…" (Turner, 1967, p.95).

Turner distinguishes analytically three components of liminality; the communication of the sacra, deconstruction of familiar cultural symbols to distort these familiar cultural symbols, and simplicity of relations in a social structure (pp.99-108). The communication of the sacra is where symbols communicate to the ritual subjects in the form of sacred objects, actions, and instructions. In addition to the thong given to each pole dancer after graduating a level, symbols communicate to the participant she is gaining knowledge. She calls herself a pole dancer and shows she is a pole dancer. Her ability to wear a shoe with a heel higher than five inches while performing spins and transitions is one of the traits that differentiate her from the norm of society; only walking or gently dancing in high heels.

Goddess Shape’s policy is a pole student may wear high heels after completing Level 1 and high heel boots after completing Level 3. The actions the
pole dancers do are spins, transitions, and floor work in the classroom. Pole
dancers do not learn all the spins in Level 1. Progressively through each class in
each eight week session, pole dancers learn a new spin that differentiates a
particular group of students from less knowledgeable students. Learning a new
spin is a symbol that a pole dancer is becoming a pole master. Instructions in
each class are given by the pole dance teacher. Music plays an important part in
verbal instructions; the beat, rhythm, style, and lyrics of a song reinforce the
message of a spin the instructor is trying to convey. The message is that pole
dancing wearing high heels, learning spins, and listening to the instructor at
Goddess Shape enables liminal pole dancers to unify and continue in pole
dancing classes.

Deconstruction of familiar cultural symbols to distort these familiar cultural
symbols in the sacra environment of a Goddess Shape reinforce how students
think about their movements in the classroom. The pole dancers restructure
symbols of culture that become distorted yet seemingly the same in the
perceptions of the dancers (pp.99-108). An example of familiar cultural symbols
at work from the perceptions of Sigmund Freud regarding objects as symbols of
sex in psychoanalytic observation would be familiar with most recreation pole
dancers in the United States. Using Freudian analysis, the pole reflects the
rigidity of the penis which influences the female dancers. Through biological
envy of the phallus, dancers move around and on the pole which in turn influence
how dancers think about their movements around the pole. The pole, therefore,
becomes a symbol of the phallus constructed from the pole dancers in the sacra through distortion of the allusion to the pole as phallus (Freud, 1931, pp.221-224). Those dancers reconstructing the use of the pole in regards to their movements would be doing this because the dancers know of Freudian analysis not because the analysis is truth.

Bourdieu would argue against Freud “…the visible differences between the male and female sex organs are a social construction which can be traced back to the principles of division of androcentric reason, itself grounded in the division of the social statuses assigned to men and women,” (Masculine Domination, 1998, p.15). Bourdieu strengthens Turner’s second stage of liminality, the deconstruction of familiar cultural symbols for distortion in the sacra environment, when he writes about female intuition which is rather culture deconstructed through the dominated and the distorted in the sacra environment. “The symbolic strategies that [dominated] women use…[are]…mythic operators…rooted in the androcentric view in the name of which they are dominated,” (p.32). When the community of pole dancers in the sacred place of Goddess Shape gain skills in pole dancing and become experts as pole masters in the class hierarchy, the pole dance instructors begin to be seen as peers rather than authority figures, the few pole dancers at Goddess Shape who may have seen the pole as a phallus now see the pole as a sacred object for dancing. The sacred subjects are now equal with the authorities of the sacra, so that the final stage of liminality is equality which completes the final third stage of rites of
passage; incorporation. In this ritual process of symbols in pole dancing, communitas embodies egalitarianism in the final stage of equality into the final rites of passage stage incorporation. Instead of a social structure directed from an expert that dictates the use of objects and the proper way to transition from four steps away from the pole to the pole, the pole dancers direct their movements in synch with each other creating a collective expression of the symbols of a reconstructed and manipulated social schema of American culture.

Turner concludes that communitas and structure in the ritual process in culture have a neurophysiological basis. Anthropologist Clifford Geertz, in his 1973 pivotal book in the theoretical school of interpretive symbolism in anthropology, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, states that Turner reorders culture in the sacred space of the ritual actors who are supposed to forget their old societal schemas in the creation of new social schemas. Geertz argues any system of creation distorted from culture does not transition away from the original familiar culture in the totality of incorporation; ritual actors still remember the original culture source. Geertz’s culture is "...a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life…" (p.89). Though ritual actors remember their place in culture, their symbols are interpreted through the generalization within that specific culture (p.26). Within the bounds of the physical walls of the classroom in which pole dancing takes place, pole dancers express external cultural symbols in their expression of
symbols in object, action, and instruction. Pole dancing at Goddess Shape cannot be made separate from the culture of Northern Virginia just as Northern Virginia is part of Virginia’s culture, Virginia’s culture is part of the Mid-Atlantic region’s culture, the Mid-Atlantic region culture is part of the Eastern United States culture, the Eastern United States is part of the United States of America’s culture, the United States is part of North America’s culture, North America is part of the Northern Hemisphere’s culture, and the Northern Hemisphere’s culture is part of world-wide culture. Nonetheless, culture, no matter its relation in population size and location, expresses itself not as symbols of collective expression. Geertz defines culture as "...a historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and their attitudes toward life," (p.89).

Geertz stresses symbols created in a sacred space are not ends of themselves distorted from the culture born from in an end all incorporation theorized by Turner. Rather symbols offer clues into what emotions are embodied in a culture constantly reshaping itself where the loss of conscious remembrance of culture by ritual actors does not negate the meaning of the symbols learned in rites of passage because those ritual actors continue to engage in a greater cultural proximity and populace. How was the cultural text of pole dancing created and developed in the United States; specifically its expression at Goddess Shape? Geertz assumption that symbols are understood
specifically within one culture in one place casts off historical influences of other cultures mistakenly and denies the trans-globalization of ideas linked undeniably in cultural creativities. Nevertheless Geertz’s method of thick description advocates anthropological ethnographic analysis to create a text of symbols in order to understand a culture beyond the actors.

2. "Even if no participant of an interaction field can recall, or repeat in a dramatized context, a given series or sequence of [body] motions, the appearance of a motion is of significance to the general study of the particular kinesics system even if the given problem can be rationalized without reference to it" (Birdwhistell, 1952, p.5)

Klas Nevrin (2008) suggests social empowerment creates a cultural environment text, a temporal-spatial system that creates an emotional stimulus. He argues contemporary forms of specific body movements in a social setting offer individuals a chance to express the body through exploration of senses while interacting socially (pp.133-134). On one specific occasion, pole dancing at Goddess Shape increases or decreases feelings of empowerment by an individual participant whether or not that participant recognizes and remembers the skills that enhance these feelings afterwards. Like Birdwhistell’s example of the salute, a spin is remembered through interaction in the cultural field even when the specific spin is not remembered in sequence of practice within a referenced routine. Movements in communicative process include behaviors
which: “1. [K]eep the system in operation, 2. [R]egulate the interactional process, 3. [C]ross-reference particular messages to comprehensibility in a particular context, and 4. [R]elate the particular context to the larger contexts of which the interaction is but a special situation,” (Birdwhistell, 1952, pp.86-87). These movement behaviors are meaningful and modifiable in the memories of bodies.

3. "…all meaningful [body] motion patterns are to be regarded as socially learned until empirical investigation reveals otherwise” (Birdwhistell, 1952, p.6).

In an article summarizing accumulative research of emotion in linguistic relativism, Harvard University scientist Leonid Perlovsky “Language and emotions: Emotional Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis” (2009) suggests emotions express in spoken or written language, excluding singing, cannot be borrowed from a different language to another different language. “Conceptual contents of languages and cultures to a significant extent are determined by words and their semantic differences; these could be borrowed among languages and exchanged among cultures. Emotional differences…are related to grammar and mostly cannot be borrowed,” (p.518). Specifically, language in a society where many cultures interact and converge, a human mind in this culture reduces the emotional difference in spoken language because differentiation overtakes synthesis. At the same time, cultural stability occurs because certain values are upheld by each interacting though emotionally different culture which creates
stability although stagnation although emotional reduction in spoken word (p.518). Therefore “Cultural habits and visual arts can preserve and transfer meanings, but they contain a minor part of cultural wisdom and meanings comparative to those transmitted through the language. Language models are major containers of cultural knowledge shared among individual minds and collective culture,” (p.3). If Perlovsky is correct about the transfer of cultural meanings as a minor part of language acquisition. Diverse understandings of democracy contain cultural knowledge shared in a collective culture of uncertainty (p.521).

Perlovsky’s goal in this article is to initiate future research using mathematical models to investigate the emotional differences among languages:

Future research in psycholinguistics, anthropology, history, historical and comparative linguistics, and cultural studies will examine interactions between languages and cultures. Initial experimental evidence suggests emotional differences among languages consistent with our hypothesis... that Neural mechanisms of grammar, language sound, related emotions motivations, and meanings hold a key to connecting neural mechanisms in the individual brains to evolution of cultures (p.521).

Perlovsky refers to experiments using mathematical models to investigate symbiotic and antagonistic relationships. Perlovsky proposes the “Emotional version of Sapir-Whorf hypothesis should be evaluated in parallel psychological
and anthropological research. More research is needed to document cultures stagnating due to “too” emotional languages; as well as crises of lost values due to “low” emotionality of language in English-speaking countries,” (p.523).

Synthesis in language creates an emotional knowledge of a word by itself or in a phrase that creates differentiation of use in culture. Yet when the level of synthesis reaches a high emotional state of uncertainty, differentiation of word use lessens to facilitate cultural stability.

American body language is understood through American kinesics. American body motion patterns are socially learned (Birdwhistell, 1952, p.6). Although “…variations of intensity, duration, and style of kinesic performance…remain insufficiently analyzed…” body motion is meaningful in the language it is communicated through (p.115). Non-verbal language like verbal language can be acted by people who do not speak the original language. But performing a newly learned language takes practice in a social setting. A woman participating in Goddess Shape pole dancing classes learns the Marilyn Monroe, which is the drawing of the legs together from a hip dip up side to side motion anywhere in the studio classroom. If that woman is not familiar with traditional visual forms of femininity, she does not perform the movement the same way a woman does who grew up identifying with the way Marilyn Monroe moves in American English sex appeal, or rather in this example, Western culture’s normative view of sex appeal. Later, when Marilyn Monroe is understood in culture in relation to the pole dancing studio by a body language speaker
introduced to American English kinesics after childhood, she no longer mimics this second language because she understands its kinesics motions. When an American English non-verbal actor at Goddess Shape learns pole dancer movements, she learns a new norm of movements in the studio. Although pole dancing provides her a new way to move, she has a cultural reference for her performance from American English body language in Northern Virginia.

4. "No kine ever stands alone" (Birdwhistell 1952, p.15).

According to Lev Vgotsky’s social development theory in “Interaction Between Learning and Development” (1978), “Every function in the child’s cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first, between people (interpsychological) and then inside the child (intrapsychological),” (p.32). In pole dancing, hanging upside down and spinning around a metal pole is not something we practice form childhood in America. Pole dancing, however, is introduced to women on a societal level whether from a spotlight in the media, a community referral, or an advertisement. A greater command of pole spins and inversions through demonstrations and commands given by an instructor becomes the reference for the new or less experienced pole dancer. The pole instructor becomes The More Knowledgeable Other (MKO).
According to Vgotsky, MKO refers to anyone who has a better understanding than the learner in a particular task. As the student remembers and uses spins in pole dancing classes, knowing the movement becomes an indication of the level of training of the pole instructor and dedication of the pole dancing student. When learning a spin, a student practices for 15 minutes in class after the initial introduction and demonstration given by the instructor. The spin is revisited in pole classes afterwards in the session and in future sessions until known by the student. The transition of a female student from Pole Level 1 dancer to Pole Master contains an interpsychological dedication to learning mechanical technique and emotional performance expression.

Lutz and White conclude that anthropological ethnographers study emotion within the relationship of a specialized set group within a culture (p.413). The journey to becoming a Pole Master involves support from fellow level peer pole dancers, demonstrations of dedication from higher level pole dancers, and authoritative instructor support. Propel’s marketing of Goddess Shape Studio, in turn, supports a ritualized inclusive social world complete with symbolic emotions expressing through body language.
Birdwhistell’s contributions to the field of kinesics are offered support by anthropologist Maxine Sheet-Johnstone’s research. Her academic call for investigation of body movements as an expression of kinesthetic consciousness is detailed in her 1999 book *Primacy of Movement*. She expressively deconstructs a simple movement of her arm in order to examine the signs embedding in the language of movement:

[W]e start by closing our eyes, by dropping our head so that our chin falls toward our chest, and by resting our hands in our lap. From this beginning position, we lift our arms from the elbow so that our upper arms move upward and our hands come off our lap. We continue that upward movement without a break by extending our forearms upward and overhead, and finally by extending our fingers upward and overhead. At the same time we do all this, we slowly raise our head from its dropped position to the point that our chin faces upward toward the ceiling. We then reverse the movement, first by letting our elbows flex and our chin begin moving downward, and then by simply continuing the movement of arms and head downward until we come to our original position. We do this sequence of movements three or four times slowly, by ourselves, keeping our eyes closed and sensing the phenomenon of self-movement. We next perform free variations on this movement theme or sequence of movements, not imaginative free variations as is customary in phenomenological practice, but
actual free variations in order to appreciate first-hand, in experience, what is kinetically there. Our purpose is to discover, in Husserl’s words, “what holds up amid such free variations of an original … as the invariant, the necessary,…without which something of [this] kind … would be altogether inconceivable.” What we want to know is precisely what invariants “[pervade] all the variants” of movement (Husserl 1977: 54)….Clearly, there is a manifold of possibilities with respect to the temporality of my movement….I can play around with the intensity of my movement, alternating regularly between extremes, for example, shifting gradually into higher and lower gears, spasmodically changing tensions, and so on….In sum, I can make seemingly endless dynamic variations. The question is what is invariantly there through all these variations— and any further ones anyone could possibly imagine? What is invariantly there is in each case an overall quality. Whatever the variation, the movement has a distinctive felt qualitative character coincident with that variation, a felt physiognomic aspect which is in fact a constellation of qualitative aspects.

We notice to begin with, then, that kinesthetic experiences are not equivalent to experiences of a mere change in position, any more than movement itself is a mere change of position. In each case, what is of moment is fundamentally a matter of change, not of position. In other words, kinesthetic consciousness is fundamentally a consciousness of an unfolding kinetic dynamic. Moreover we might note that while most of our adult ways of moving are typically habitual and qualitatively apparent to us only at the margins of our awareness, the typically
habitual and qualitatively marginal were at one time focal; hence, originally, in assaying or in successfully accomplishing any movement for the first time, we were aware of its felt qualitative character (pp.140-142).

Incorporating Sheet-Johnston’s detailing of kinesthetic consciousness, Turner’s understanding of ritual, and Geertz’s thick description, I investigate the movements of pole dancers in a cultural context in order to understand its “…felt qualitative character,” (Levin, 2003, 142) in the absence of devices to measure each neuron as it signals the slightest movement of the body and the absence of a present day American English kinemorphic chart with intention in the hope future research will be made in anthropological body language. Pole dancing in recreational space in the Washington D.C. metro area is “bodily felt sense” performance,” (pp.180-181); the sequences of spins, inversions, and transitions express the emotional register of the particular women participating in pole dancing.

Ray Birdwhistell’s system of notation derives from the time period of his writings although theoretically a kinegraphic system should adequately represent movement like a phonographic system represents spoken language. Lack of research in subsequent years since the 1970s by linguistic anthropologists contributes to the decision not to employ Birdwhistell’s kinesics system when analyzing body movements in recreational pole dancing. Nonetheless, Birdwhistell employs symbols of stress in American body language movements
that are applicable to current anthropological linguistic studies. The four basic
stressors on movements are: Primary Stress \( V \), Secondary Stress \(^{^A}\), Unstressed
\(-\), and Destressed \( O \). \( V \) is a “…relatively strong movement…”, \(^{^A}\) is a “…relatively
weaker movement…”, \(-\) is the “…normal flow of movement…[that]…may occur
either before or after \[V\] and before or after and between \[^{^A}\], and \( O \) “Involves
reduction of activity below normal over portions of a syntactic sentence,”
(Birdwhistell, *Kinesics and Context*…., 1970, p.104). In addition to movement
stressors, methods employing in research thought process at the suggestion of
Bateson and Hockett in Birdwhistell’s research reference body motion analysis in
these pole dancing observations:

1. Like other events in nature, no body movement or expression is without
meaning in the context in which it appears, 2. Like other aspects of human
behavior, body posture, movement, and facial expression are patterned
and, thus, subject to systemic analysis, 3. While the possible limitations
imposed by particular biological substrata are recognized, until otherwise
demonstrated, the systemic body motion of the members of a community
is considered a function of the social system to which the group belongs,
4. Visible body activity, like audible acoustic activity, systemically
influences the behavior of other members of any particular group, 5. Until
otherwise demonstrated such behavior will be considered to have an
investigable communicational function, 6. The meanings derived therefrom
are functions both of the behavior and of the operations by which it is
investigated, and 7. The particular biological system and the special life experience of any individual will contribute idiosyncratic elements to his kinesics system, but the individual or symptomatic quality of these elements can only be assessed following the analysis of the larger system of which his is a part, (pp.183-184).

The anatomical outer body charts of pole dancers under each named spin are given as a basis for physical structure (Keller, 2012). The hopes of providing these diagrams are that future researchers are able to utilize these participant observation pictures for studying body language. “"What does X mean” can only be arrived at when all of the other social systems interacting in any situation are equally thoroughly analyzed,” (Birdwhistell, 1970, p.227). How a pole dancer moves is only understood from the body she moves in relation to other bodies in a social system for the purpose of understanding one another’s body talk.
The Workout: Body Language in a Cultural Space

“Recreational pole dancing does not represent the pornographic in the most technical sense. However, the issues that arise from feminist debates about the status of pornography are undeniably relevant, particularly those relating to patriarchal power structures, gender stereotypes, objectification, sexual expression, individual choice and the freedom to resist prevailing political and societal traditions,” (Whitehead and Kurtz, p.244)

The women in the ethnographic stories in The Workout section comprise of three pseudo types of pole dancers I encountered at Goddess Shape Studio: the single college student, the working married mother, and the staff. These women engage in different professions and vary according to cultural background and social life experience. I choose to divide these stories into relationship and work life stages because I found across all my 30 in-depth interviews that the college students, recently graduated, graduate, or undergraduate, were not married although some had children. Most of the married women had either young children or young adult children. The staff I interviewed was all not married with one instructor recently becoming engaged. These social situation trends may not exist outside of the Northern Virginia area, although the women at Goddess Shape fit into these three story categories.
More ethnographic research is needed at additional studios in the Mid-Atlantic region as well as in other locations in order to discover the cultural stories existing in pole bodies across sex and gender.

Borrowing bodily felt performance in the understanding of the language of pole dancing through the use of kines observations, these observations of pole dancers at Goddess Shape are in part a record of the kinetic description of recreational pole dancing made with reference to how their bodily felt actions are produced in non-verbal characteristics in relation to social others in their classes and social others in the DMV area in relation to the social structure of identity within the United States. At the beginning of each story, a song lyric is presented which was played at some point during observations, whether of a class or an individual performance. Those women performing individual whether for graduation to Pole Master or practice for competition considered pole dancing serious leisure as opposed to casual leisure. Serious leisure participants consider themselves pole performers in pole art rather than pole dancers in pole dance as do casual leisure participants. Pole performers have benchmark goals of achievement and are willing to spend money to achieve these goals. Pole dancers do not have systematic devotion to achieve status as a pole performer but rather have immediate goals in participation (Rojek, 2005, p.178). Both kinds of participants were observed participating in bodily felt language to produce a kinetic action.
Whether a student considered herself engaged in serious or casual leisure, the pole instructor became the dominant power who corrected and assisted in the knowledge of a spin. The pole instructor was the disciplinarian over the pole students’ body. Foucault writes:

The human body [is] entering a machinery of power that explores it, breaks it down and rearranges it. A ‘political anatomy’, which was also a ‘mechanics of power’, was being born; it defined how one may have a hold over others' bodies, not only so that they may do what one wishes, but so that they may operate as one wishes, with the techniques, the speed and the efficiency that one determines. Thus discipline produces subjected and practiced bodies, ‘docile’ bodies. (p.138)

The rite to learn a new pole spin at Goddess Shape takes place in the operation of differentiating oneself or class from a lower level or same level class on a different day; the students who are taught the new spin are more successful and powerful in pole knowledge than the other students at Goddess Shape (p.25). A woman’s identification as a pole dancer and artist motivates her to engage consistently within a pole dancing community, so that pole dancing becomes a ritualized behavior after rite of passage, such as her ability to complete a spin precisely or move in synchronization with fellow dancers. Within the bounds of the physical walls of the pole studio in which these women’s movements take place, cultural symbols perform in their leisure expression. These movement
behaviors are meaningful and modifiable in the memories of bodies. The transition of a female student from Pole Level 1 dancer to Pole Master contains an interpsychological dedication to learning mechanical technique and emotional performance expression. A pole artist becomes a Pole Master through peer support, instructor support, and studio support as well as support in her community. The pole dance studio social world expresses emotions through body language. These women’s bodies tell a story about their lives inside and outside the pole fitness studio. Cultural embodiments these women embrace express through movement while emotionally artistic forays exist in their stylistic portrayal of spins and transitions.
Figure 1: Martini

(Visual Dictionary, 2010)

Direction: Step inside foot near pole (^) while outside hand loosely grips pole at chest (O) height and inside hand holds pole overhead (^). Swoop outside leg so ankle presses pole at bent knee (-). Shift body weight forward (-) so inside leg shoots straight out while spinning around pole landing on feet (V).
Figure 2: Martini Kines (1)
Injuries: None

Past Medical History:
- Two Children
  (pelvic trauma)

Occupation:
- Part-time Accountant
- Mother

Physical Exercise:
- Former Amateur Dancer
- Current exerciser 3-4 times per week in Cardio, Strength and Flexibility program

Goal in Pole Dancing:
- Tone abs from children
- Enjoy learning a new form of dance

Researcher Notes:
- Knee medial rotation more common in females than males; contribute by development of muscles from dance on pregnancy which places additional weight on psoas muscle
- Neck tilt minor and perhaps from computer use in occupation
- No pain or physical complications reported by Martini
Embodiment:

A revelation in the light of day,

You can choose what stays and what fades away

And I'd do anything to make you stay

(No Light No Light, Florence + the Machine)

Martini opens the door of a dance studio for the first time in two years. Well, if she is honest with herself, first time in four years. Now she plans to participate consistently in an adult dance class. Two years ago she took a ballet class on and off where she and another young mother were the youngest students in the class. Although the other students were not much older, she was the only student from another country whose very movements exhibited her education in ballet was based in another language, another cultural creation of art. And although this was admired by the other dance students, her stylization was not first choice. Except this form of dance is newer to the American shores comprised perhaps a touch of Chinese Acrobatics, Indian Acrobatics, and Brazilian carnival parades that converge with American circus performance. Pole dancing or pole art depending on what she’s read. And Martini prefers describing her hobby as pole art to a skeptical co-worker of all things conventional.

In Pole Level 1, Martini speaks with her body. Martini is grateful that after only 10 years of living in the United States and having two young sons, she found
a way to release the tension of her body. She feels included and acknowledged in a place where moving in a sexy manner trumps speaking in a sexy way. As Martini strengthens arms and legs not to mention the core especially after birthing two children, she feels confident at work as well. Co-workers begin to let her in on inside jokes and she wonders if a friendlier reception in the workplace has to do with a newly found assertive appearance.

Progressing through Pole Level 1 into Pole Level 2 she masters the martini and ballerina which encourages her to buy a removable pole for her home. Goddess Shape sells Lil Minx poles, so she buys a stainless steel one for 250 dollars. About 20 dollars more than online but she doesn’t have to pay shipping which saves some money. Right? Her American-born husband at first enjoys watching the array of spins, tricks, and transitions when Martini practices on the pole. He makes jokes about how the pole looks like something else she has seen before. But soon he becomes bored of watching her and critical she is so serious about getting every move just right. He should have understood in the first place the pole wasn’t for him or even about him.

Her children try to mimic Mom by jumping on the pole. She doesn’t quite know how she feels about her youngest, a girl, getting into pole dancing. Or what the teachers will think of her at school. Martini is already afraid her future teachers might think she has a disadvantage coming from a household of two languages, but this is Northern Virginia. Doesn’t the school system think two
languages can only improve communication? Maybe her teachers will think pole
dancing may communicate childhood emotions in creative play. That’s a
stretch…

Martini, while taking pole dance classes, tries going back to her old gym.
Her talkative yet trying-to-stay-a-youthful-25-year-old-in-her-mid-50s Bowflex
toned neighbor insists that the only way to work out is 30 minutes of cardio or
more with weights regardless of what Martini may think she gains in fitness form
pole dancing. Her neighbor is real nosy and insistent, so Martini decides hey I
should at least go so she will stop asking every time I go out in the yard. Martini
also hears from her husband that she should not waste money spent on a gym
membership although she remembers the social site Living Social provided her
with 50 percent off a membership. She has used half it half of the year so
doesn’t that count.

She decides to go to the gym after work for a few days with bossy
neighbor. But the standard classes of 20 reps with hand weighted lunges on one
leg repeated 3 times in a row then the same set again after ab work in between
only to do the other leg with arm work in between with an instructor who teaches
the same formatted class two times a week is just too boring anymore. These
instructors at this particular gym aren’t all too creative or really even in good
shape.
And anyways now she is a pole dancer not a gym rat. In her closet, lies two black rhinestone strapped flashing heel pole shoes. Her nosy co-worker tells her high heels are horrible on women's feet (these are six inches) but heels are great for hooking a pole especially in one-armed spins when the upper body is already taxed. Nosy co-worker should go with nosy neighbor to boring gym. Next to her pole shoes is a pole grip bottle for those days when her palms are so sweaty she couldn’t hold onto the floor if she wanted to. She has two thongs, one white and one black for graduating from 2 and 3 Pole. Graduating wasn’t easy for her because a whole routine, granted with fellow dancers, was memorized and performed at the end of the session. The most troublesome move was the cat pounce as dogs not cats arch and stick not vice versa. But once she understood, wow! how easy to do compared to back bending from upright. Above the thongs in the draw, hanging up to the right of the heels, are five pairs of short shorts in different colors; one for each of her mood – red fiery, green energetic, pink girly, black womanly, and blue artsy.

After completing Level 5 Pole and entering Level 6 pole which introduces inversions, Martini feels like a pole artist. Her pole peers are a source of support in and out of the studio as everyone knows each other’s personal business since they grab tea each week at the local pastry shop nearby. A few times the pole ladies went to the movies after a few martinis. Soon enough she progresses through Level 6 Pole Master to Level 7 Performance; a pole artist. That soon
enough was really a year, but time does fly when you are...doing spins.

Goddess Shape is her community away from home.
Figure 4: One Arm Chair

(Visual Dictionary, 2010)

Direction: Inside hand is high on the pole (O) while outside hand pushes (\^) into the pole at bent elbow. The outside leg swings up ending at bent knee (\-) and the inside leg joins the outside leg in a chair seat ending spin in squat on feet (V).
Figure 5: Cheri Kines (1)
Figure 6: Cheri Kines (2)
Embodyment:

She’ll make you take her to the club, but then she leaves with her friends

She likes to stay late at the party cause the fun never ends

And all her clothes are on the floor, and all your records are scratched

She’s like a one-way ticket cause you can’t come back

(Shes So Mean, Matchbox 20)

Pole student Cheri dances freely in a place she feels safe because of the women only environment at Goddess Shape. Her parents would not believe she would be spending money on this instead of some learning tool for enhancing college scores. Nonetheless, her folks live three states away and don’t appear that often in town luckily. She is 24 so she can certainly take care of herself. Of course Cheri thinks the price for pole dancing is steep especially because she is a graduate student. She would agree with her parents and older brother that pole classes are WAY too expensive. If her family knew about the classes. Additionally, the MINDBODY software for class registration isn’t the easiest to use. She’s ended up paying twice for the same class deciding to use the balance to sign up for a specialty class called Cardio Pole rather than put in back on her credit card. But she can’t imagine her life without the release of pole dancing especially during thesis time – she’s getting a MPH in Health Administration – which should be useful in the D.C. area especially now that she
is of the younger generation learning all the new health care rules. Or supposed to be or not knowing what they will be or what exactly she’ll be doing after graduate school – can’t you see why she is stressed out!

Back to pole dancing, Cheri especially likes swaying, dipping, and sexy standing up to Top 40 songs. She’s even had a chance to spin on a pole at a local Spanish night club. Music in the background at the studio plays louder or softer according to instructor’s noise limit. Music comprises of modern rock, classic rock, metal mixes, explicit hip-hop expressing the emotional triumphs of sexual acts in night clubs, indie vibes that can express similar vibes without explicitly singing so, pop anthems, classical mood makers, and electronic beats to keep the energy moving when late nights and long work hours tend to lessen the frequency of climbs up the poles. Her pole instructor at Goddess Shape classes can see each student in the mirror when giving instructions and performing spins to the music. Twelve poles space twenty-four inches apart in each classroom. Equipped in each classroom is a stereo system, dimmer lights, disco lights, and a shoe cubby. On top of the shoe cubby is gripping lotion for holding onto the poles, spray bottle and cloth to wipe sweaty poles, and mats in a wicker container for core work at the end of each class.

A pole class follows the Goddess Shape formula made popular at these studios by owner Propel. A warm-up is 10 minutes including dynamic stretching and walks around the pole. The instructor then leads 20 minutes floor work
dance that includes with pole spins, inversions, transitional movements the group is learning and practicing each class. Then 15 minutes allocation is learning and practicing a new spin each week as the instructor walks around the room answering questions and providing feedback about form and physical attainment of new spin in what is called Open Pole. Then the instructor gathers the group together to add onto and practice the graduation routine for 15 minutes. The last 10 minutes are devoted to floor work off the pole which includes upper-body and abdominal exercises with final stretch. Cheri’s instructor asks one broad question to the group at the end of class like “What is every body doing this weekend?” or “What is your favorite movie?”.

Open Pole is her favorite part of the class. The instructor often walks around the room adjusting each student into proper alignment for spins. The instructor gazes at Cheri when she may not necessarily be facing the instructor. Mirrors are helpful for seeing how she looks in a pose and helpful for her instructor when adjusting her spin. A pole instructor can be a bit nick picky especially if it is near graduation time. But Cheri doesn’t mind because it makes her a better dancer. Or more importantly, gives her the physique of a dancer which is hard to come by from not growing up as a dancer, working part-time at an insurance company, and studying late into the night (except when she goes out clubbing). Maybe one day she’ll become a Pole Master, but it isn’t her goal. Right now she just wants to finish up her last two years of graduate school and rock her body.
Direction: Inside arm holds high on pole with arch in back to keep chest high (O). Inside leg hooks the pole in front at bent knee (-). The outside arm pushes on the pole (^) when leaning into the spin moving forward (V) to land softly on knees (-).
Figure 8: Michelle Kines (1)
Injuries:
- Broke right toe (Index) as a child

Past Medical History:
- Severe allergies treated medically

Occupation:
- Part-time Undergraduate student
- Pole Dancer at Nightclub Full-Time

Physical Exercise:
- Pole Dances at Nightclub 4-5 times per week and at studio 2 times per week
- Meditates every day
- Swims at a lap pool occasionally

Goal in Pole Dancing:
- Perfect tricks and spins
- Socialize with friends
- Better sell as performer and artist

Researcher Notes:
- Only right knee medial rotation perhaps from pole dancing and more common in women
- Slight left head lift that Michelle says could be from thinking and researcher believes perhaps from driving as well
- No pain or physical complications reported by Michelle

Figure 9: Michelle Kines (2)
Embodyment:

“Girl look at that body (x3)

I work out

Girl look at that body (x3)

I work out “

(Sexy and I Know It, LMFAO)

Michelle feels empowered. Pole dancing in a studio is where it started and then her pole art became a lucrative career as a performer in shows and competitor in the East Coast region. Once a dancer and graduate of George Mason’s BA in Visual Technology and minor in dance, she finds little dancing in graphic designing for a defense contract company. The advertisement of Goddess Shape in her community newspaper led her on a pathway to become a pole dancer out of the doldrums of work. Then a pole artist, then a pole instructor, and finally a pole performer recognized for creativity and vibrant grace on and off stage. Empowerment is a perfect word to describe the way she feels surrounded by students who look up to her and watch her model the next spin on Goddess Shape’s learning agenda.

Well, the agenda is something she has a bit of an issue with. Shouldn’t pole dancing be more freestyle? She has Level 3 students who could be easily doing the spins in her Level 5 class. So she teaches them the more advanced
moves. Propel is none too happy about that. But who is she to stop students expressing themselves. In a culture so rigid in how one is supposed to act and behave when it comes to anything remotely involving the body, what better way to break rules of body movement choice than at a pole dancing studio! Michelle cares about learning pole art and her students care. She’ll go over the one hour and fifteen minute class time sometimes by a half hour. But no one seems to mind. In fact, she has two of the largest classes at one of the Goddess Shape studios. The growing popularity of recreational pole dancing only adds to the number of students in each class. Of course with only 12 poles in each class, there can be only so many students. And with so many students, more students are bound to become pole instructors. Femininity, in her opinion, rests ideally in the powerful woman who is sexually alluring and should no longer hide from the public. A woman’s power is expression of experience in her body and from her body. Michelle sees strong women every time they laugh over a failed spin only to pick themselves up to try again hoorayed on by fellow students. When Michelle performs at a show in the burlesque troupe she co-founded, she celebrates the woman as sexual and existing in that sexuality while creating are and entertainment. She chooses to objectify her butt wearing high heels but it is at her discretion not a man’s. True, the guy she is dating likes it. But hell, she can please herself and him.

And she pleases more than her class, her boyfriend, and herself. Pole Art competitions offer an opportunity to express her style to a larger audience in
Northern Virginia. She already placed second in the state-wide competition last
spring, third on the East Coast, and hopes to place first next year in Virginia.
That way she can compete in the national pole competitions in June in Los
Angeles. Maybe Internationally! Ok she’ll dream smaller but not too small. A
pole performer has to be out front and center.
Direction: Place one hand low (O) and the other hand high (O) while facing the pole. Swing your legs up hooking your back foot (V) in front of the pole while the other leg extends to the side (^) while leaning back upside down (-).
Figure 11: Propel Kines (1)
Injuries:
- Broke right ankle as young adult
- Broke collarbone

Past Medical History:
- Depression (current)
- Low Blood Pressure (few years ago)
- Weight fluctuations

Occupation:
- Business owner
- Pole instructor

Physical Exercise:
- 1-20 x fitness program
- Pole dancing
- Yoga 2-3 times per week
- Roller skating 2-3 times per month

Goals in Pole Dancing:
- Get back to shape and condition a year ago
- Compete more
- Open own studio

Researcher Notes:
- Knee medial rotation more common in females than males; perhaps pole dancing contributed
- Medial tilts in both feet perhaps from wearing high heels while pole dancing and consistently at work
- R – Lack of mental clarity at times at work; foot pain (left)

Figure 12: Propel Kines (2)
Embodiment:

I don't need try to control you

Look into my eyes and I'll own you

With them the moves like jagger

I've got the moves like jagger

I've got the moooooooooves... like jagger

(Moves Like Jagger, Maroon 5)

Propel steps closer to the rim of the pole, looking up from the floor at the glossy streak across the mirror in front of her frame. "Woah, what is that mess?" she asks turning open splay leg on the pole inquiring the secretarial assistant next to her. Annoyingly, the distracted assistant is picking out a sequence embedded in her right dirty foot sole. Upon hearing no answer, Propel crosses her left leg over her right and cross spins in sex stand-up, placing her arms on her hips with the sound of techno trance beep bop edging her emotions on. Certainly, she does not have time for this streak when work, friends, family, and social life cut short her workouts for form, figure, instruction, and competition. A few years ago she would have dreaded the thought of opening another pole dancing studio if it led to such a tedious and unforgiving business occupation.
Yet how was she to know that her four studios would win first place dance studio through popular opinion in magazine polls in the Washington DC-Metro area with over 2,000 women enrolling in pole dancing classes per month. Yes-business is good – but that greyish blue streak is not.

Propel walks out of Studio A, one of two the other being Studio B, to the reception area; one couch, one chair, pole shoes and shirts for sale, and the secretary desk. One reception area wall is an open window facing old downtown in a shopping center comprising of food, clothing, and restaurant shops. Not far away from two major highways, white collar businesses, and universities, her studio rests in the hub of metro cross section. Pole dance participants come from different occupational walks of life come with money, most likely through a credit card, seeking to redefine their bodies and zest for a sensual personal workout too cardio for yoga and too skill-based for most of what gyms offer in exercise formats. Of course the pole is one necessity students need in dancing at the studio that those women who become hook purchase soon enough. Then the students feel the need for high heels possibly boots even better if they purchases boots too along with the heels. Soon these dedicated women as buy booty shorts, grip proof hand lotion, and clothing with slogans expressing their love for pole dancing.

And do not forget the thong. When a student completes one level of a pole session, she receives a thong. She continues receiving a thong, a different
color every session she completes upon finishing the graduation performance at each level. Encouragement from pole instructors also contributes to the student’s growing self-image of feminine sexiness finding direct enhancement through her participation in pole dancing classes with the knowledge she has a thong award at the end. Dedicated to Goddess Pole studios, this self-imagined sexy female client remembers to pay for the session package in advance of the start of each session. If this sexy female completes Pole Level 7, (without a doubt if she is serious she will unless she moves out of the area), she will continue classes as a Pole Master, perhaps becoming an instructor completing her pole instructor certification through Goddess Shape.

It was Propel's dream to successively own some sort of dance studio since 15 years ago in graduate school. She firmly believes her background in dance and Masters of Science degree in sport marketing empowers her to offer a physically beneficial as well as emotionally therapeutic form of artistic exercise. She studied daily in college while training daily as a pole dance competitor in my final year of my master’s degree after managing a health and sports club for a fitness recreation corporation. Pole dancing is Propel's passion. Tweaking and imagining her own pole studio through the years inspired her to create a style of pole dancing easy-to-follow with progressive steps. The student becomes an extension of Propel's language of pole dancing. And although Propel has bills to pay and studios to run with the current annoyance of a blue streak, she knows
any woman who takes classes at her studios will become confident enough to make pole dancing her priority.
Figure 13: Fireman to Inverted V

(Visual Dictionary, 2010)

Direction: Step inside foot near pole while outside hand loosely grips pole at chest height (O) and inside hand holds pole overhead (O). Swoop outside leg so ankle presses pole at bent knee (^). Shift body weight forward (-) to come into Fireman then free legs using arms and abdominals (V) to life body upside down (^) in a bent leg splay (-). normal over portions of a syntactic sentence,”
Figure 14: General Kines (1)
Injuries: None severe
- Few dancers do not come
down all the way to ground
- Certain spins avoid
- Uninjured knee pain

Past Medical History:
- Less common minor
depression reported
- Frequently said no
complications

Physical Exercise:
- High frequency of
former athletes
- About 50% participate
in a form of cardio
Strength and flexibility
exercise in addition to
pole dancing
- About 30% runners
- About 30% former
audition athletes
- None overweight or
inactive before or during
pole dancing

Goal in pole dancing:
- Many want to
achieve greater health
and fitness
- Most want to learn new spins with precision
- Some want to compete or become instructors
- About 10% do pole dance for social and relaxation purposes

Researcher Notes:
- Collected over a two
month period mainly from
Studio A
- Women range from 20s to
50s, driving over an hour
or more to attend classes

Figure 15: General Kines (2)
Embodiment:

I just want to feel everything

I just want to feel everything

I just want to feel everything

I just want to feel everything

(Every Single Night, Fiona Apple)
Cool-Down:
Concluding Bodies in Pole Arts

Participants’ body language in pole dancing fitness classes embodies cultural schemas which construct structure and agency of body performance. Pole dancers through body language recognize the creation of social movements within their environment and communicate through cultural bodily movement norms yet can be aware or unaware of what effect their body performance has within a temporal-spacial system within a culture.

Anthropologists in the 1950s, 1970s, and 21st century are increasingly aware of ways people move their bodies in relation to cultural setting yet are increasingly taking guesses as to what those movements mean without translating the language of motion first in order to understand how cultural inscriptions are performing in, on, and from the body. Birdwhistell theorized body language is mimicked rather than understood by a non-native body language speaker, but his assertion is too broad especially in regards to many of the pole dancers I observed whose first body language was not American English. In awareness of the emotional landscape of the Washington D.C. area in the United States, I understand the fitness landscape in which the felt emotional environment these women experience interplays in movement. My observations
are limited to my historical emotional body in the place in time of my ethnographic research at Goddess Shape, but I emphasize the need to translate movement from mind to body in the context of a referenced culture. Each body movement may not represent a meaning of culture but rather a kinesics blip possibly from a physically uncontrolled tick or a clumsy action without any hidden intentional meaning. Further precaution derives from the idea that movement may not have a meaning in cultural body language as the abstractions of symbols of movement become manipulated for artistic performance.

Nevertheless my body language research supports the conclusion that a person begins to learn how to move in a specific way. Psychologically, body language is taught through a culture to its people through interpersonal and intrapersonal interactions as proposed by Vgotsky. A social scientist may observe the rules of body language using Geertz's thick description society. A person can add variance to the cultural rules of body language in artistic expression existing in Turner's ritualized space yet these broken rules are known to be broken from a body language cultural norm. The movements of dancers in serious pole dancing leisure can perform the manipulation of the identity of the individual within the bounds of artistic symbolism in performance that serves to identify the individual instead of the structure as an example of Bourdieu's structure and agency of the body. But Ray Birdwhistell's blueprint body language exists whether a person has a different way of understanding language and
performing language which may or may not have an empowering emotional result

Rather than approach pole dancing as embodiment solely through social theories of structure and cultural critiques of agency; pole dancing in fitness is acknowledged as pole dancing in art that challenges the kinetic bounds of structure and places the individual as shape, shaping, and shapeless in cultural practices and memories. Researchers who observe leisure may use neuromuscular technologies not available when Birdwhistell completed his body language studies. Additionally, social scientists research along with the research produced by exercise physiologists contributing qualitative studies about bodies in leisure which may further legitimate quantitative body movement studies. The journal *Body & Society* as well as the “Theory, Culture, and Society BlogSpot” featuring well-known body politic sociologist Bryon Turner and director editor Mike Featherstone are examples of how academics, seeking knowledge, challenge their research by entertaining perspectives and debating theories while applying these studies in the modern world made readily available in a public forum space.

In the relatively new field of leisure studies, the human body is observable and interactive. Body language embodies cultural schemas constructed from the structure and agency of culture. Body performance exists within the bounds of culture. When body performance art begins to unravel the kinesic symbols
known by cultural actors in order to reconstruct a manipulation of movement, the felt sense replaces an awareness of the sign of the body action pattern within a culture. The sign may still exist, but awareness of culture’s influence on bodily action hide in the interests of incorporation whether in the ritualized group or within the ritualized being. This disguised ritualized being is not to say that creativity is limited in body performance art. Rather, even in the most obscure and abstract manipulations of the body, people are communicating to themselves and others an abstraction of social language.
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Curriculum Vitae

Mandy Shaver received her Bachelor of Arts of History and Bachelor of Arts of Anthropology with a Minor in Women and Gender Studies from George Mason University Spring 2010. She received an Undergraduate Research Stipend with Honors for her research *The Yoga Production: Authentic Claims Of Mind and Body* presented at the Spring 2011 Undergraduate Research Symposium. In addition to her academic studies, she is committed to community-based voluntary action initiatives through her roles in fitness, health, and wellness.