CHAPTER 18
The History of Human Movement and Sport

TABLE OF CONTENTS

WHY STUDY THE HISTORY OF MOVEMENT?

“If you want to understand today, you have to search yesterday.”
PEARL BUCK
• Our primary goal in studying the history of kinesiology, then, is to trace the impact of cultural attitudes, practices, and key individuals on the study of human movement.

Early influences
• Greek influences
• Roman Age

Past Influences on Human Movement

Early Influences
• Physical activity has been a universal phenomenon
• Forms of physical activities and their relevance to everyday life have varied with culture and changed over time
• In Sports and Games in the Ancient World, Olivova elaborated:
They [physical activities] were influenced by the character and structure of society. They were a significant cultural phenomenon, reflecting contemporary ideas about the world, and moral and aesthetic norms, the degree of social differentiation, and the political evolution of society. All these factors determined the many and changing forms of these activities at different moments in history. (p. 9)

EARLY INFLUENCES

• Early on physical abilities used to engage in useful activities

• After hunting-gathering societies, activities became more distinct and new activities emerged

• For today’s appreciation, Olivova noted

In these communal dances movement assumed a wide variety of forms, presenting in embryo the many activities that were later, after specific development, to form separate disciplines, ranging from dance itself to drama. (p. 14)
GREEK INFLUENCES

- 1700 BC
- Their cultural values and physical practices have had a great impact on modern field of kinesiology
- Spartans had a preoccupation with battle and physical activity was part of it

The survival of early classical Greek civilizations depended largely on their military prowess, so physical activity played an important role in developing disciplined, brave, and obedient citizens.

“Athenians crafted a culture that emphasized a balanced lifestyle.”

Physical activity was incorporated into everyday Athenian life, and multipurpose gymnasiums provided a place for citizens to meet, talk, and perform various activities.
GREEK INFLUENCES

- Athenians joined philosophy and athleticism together
- Athletic festivals emerged (Olympic games)
- Competitive activity accompanied by harmony, all-around experience and beauty

They accorded the body equal dignity with the mind. They associated sport with philosophy, music, literature, painting, and particularly with sculpture. They gave to all future civilizations important aesthetic ideals and the ideals of harmonized balance of mind and body, of body symmetry, and of bodily beauty in repose and in action. To these contributions may be added educational gymnastics, the competitive sports of track and field, the classic dance, and the Olympic Games. (Van Dalen & Bennett, 1971, p. 47)

THE ROMAN AGE

- More conservative and military orientated like Spartans
- More emphasis on strength and hardiness, less on beauty and grace
- Games were characterized by brutality, professionalism and corruption
ENTERTAINING THE MASSES

Although many of the Roman emperors were known to promote games and festivals, the purpose of these events was primarily to occupy and appease Roman subjects, not to celebrate personal excellence or the beauty of human movement. In general, the participatory, holistic emphasis of the “golden age” of Greece was replaced by professionalized, often brutal, spectator-oriented contests that were designed to entertain the masses.

ENDURING THEMES IN THE STUDY OF HUMAN MOVEMENT

- Dualism and naturalism
- Renaissance

DUALISM AND NATURALISM

- Two dominant and competing mentalities that have shaped cultural practices
- Both mentalities emerged during the ancient Greek years
- Have been accepted during different times and shaped physical activity
The concept of a balanced program of physical and intellectual education that put an emphasis on the whole person meant forms of physical recreation could be enjoyed by citizens without being featured in competition at the major sports festivals.

**TWO CONFLICTING APPROACHES**

Cultural attitudes and practices change with the dominant cultural mentality, which may affect society as a whole. A *naturalistic* philosophy places people at the centre of their universe, emphasizes being and becoming, and includes physical evidence as an integral part of that humanistic process. *Dialectic* philosophy, on the other hand, subdivides people into discrete components, allowing the placement of hierarchical value on one component (e.g., mind) over another (e.g., matter).

**DID YOU KNOW?**

Key changes in the cultural history of the study of movement have been precipitated by a reversal of the hierarchical order of mind and body. For instance, the shift from the highly commercialized, provincialized spectator sports scene of 1st- and 2nd-century Greco-Roman culture to the ascetic, anti-play spirit of medieval culture was the result of the souls reversing hierarchical position with the body.
Scholasticism

- Dualistic approach
- Emphasis in higher education on ideas at the expense of action
- Purpose of physical activity is to keep the body healthy and out of mischief so it may help the mind be more alert and receptive to the intellectual process
- Leads to an educational process in which one’s physical being is not as important intellectual development
- Prevailed into modern times

Asceticism

In religion
- Dualistic thinking that separates body from soul
- Create self-denial because physical pleasure is viewed as a distraction from spiritual devotion or may be sinful
- Part of Christianity (Lutheranism, Calvinism, Puritanism)
- Physical activity was viewed as a means to keep the hands from mischief and maintain the body as “the temple of the Lord”
- Religion based on naturalism has not found great popularity in the Western tradition, but it did in many Eastern religions (e.g., Zen Buddhism)

Although gaining enlightenment through physical experience is a central feature of Eastern religions such as Zen Buddhism, religion based on naturalism has never gained popularity in the West.
ASCETICISM

In medicine

• Also very influential over the history of Western medicine

• Emphasis on treating the human body for disease and injury, rather than healing the whole person

• Diseases are caused by either mental or physical factors, and treatments should be as specific as possible to combat the observed symptoms

• In Eastern medicine, the integrity of the human organism and the forces of healing beyond the treatment of symptoms are important

While Western medicine places an emphasis on treating the body for disease and injury, Eastern methods are geared more towards healing the whole person through the interconnectedness of mind and body and nature’s healing power.

ASCETICISM

In physical activity

• The Western tradition has also been dualistic within the physical realm of play, games, and sport

• The athlete becomes performer first and person second

• Extrinsic product (winning) takes overwhelming priority over the intrinsic process (playing)

• The human body becomes an object of manipulation and exploitation
THE RENAISSANCE

- Represented a shift away from dualism characterizing medieval life
- Began in the 14th century in Italy with humanism
- Then spread to Northern Europe with realism
- Scientific logic of realism and humanistic emphasis on classical pervade higher education

HUMANISM

- Celebrates the quality of being
- Encourages the exercise of worldly talents, and emphasizes harmonious development of the whole personality
- A new spirit of intellectual inquiry challenges scholasticism
- Although holistic, did not override the dualistic perception of mind and body
- Led to acceptance of the classical ideal of a "sound mind in a sound body"
- A renewed appreciation of the beauty of human movement and greater emphasis on physical activity in education

Promoting the ideal of balance and harmony for a "sound mind in a sound body," humanists extolled the virtues of physical activity, which was reflected in its important role in education and its inclusion in the fine arts.
REALISM

- Emphasis on the quest for knowledge through scientific inquiry (observation and experimentation)
- Classics: Copernicus, Galileo, Descartes
- Challenged traditional understandings of the world and people’s place in it
- A scientific approach brought to the study of human movement
- Increased scholarly interest in the human body and its capacities

MODERN EUROPEAN THEMES IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- 17th century
- Age of enlightenment
- 19th century

17TH CENTURY

- More dualistic mentality redefined
- Evolution of political democracy
- Some individuals contributed novel and influential ideas, having lasting effects on attitudes towards physical activity in education
THE AGE OF ENLIGHTENMENT

• 18th century
• Transition to modern political, social, religious and educational ideas

• Jean-Jacques Rousseau attacked social inequality in education and advocated for allowing children to develop naturally through education.

THE AGE OF ENLIGHTENMENT

• Johann Friedrich GutsMuths combined the naturalism of Rousseau, the medically based concern for health of John Locke, and Renaissance realism.

• Developed a program of physical education that he described in Gymnastics for the Young and instituted at the Salzmann school.

BREAKING THE “LOCKE” ON EDUCATION

John Locke’s strong belief in religious tolerance and people’s political rights have been woven into the fabric of modern education. The disciplinarism of the age is evident in his philosophy that children are empty vessels to be filled with knowledge, that desirable behavior patterns should be practiced and enforced continually, and that a well-disciplined character can be achieved only through a sound mind and a sound body.
“Growth and development of the body should be the initial emphasis of education.”

GutsMuths combined the naturalism of Rousseau, the medically based concern for health of Locke, and Renaissance realism to create a program that promoted good health through gymnastics exercises.

19TH CENTURY
- Time of patriotic pride and industrial modernization
- Physical education more political in nature, in addition to focusing on health benefits
- Education became means of ensuring progress of the nation
- Democracy ensured that education was no longer a privilege
19TH CENTURY

• Friedrich Jahn developed a gymnastics system for the development of sturdy citizenry.
• Per Henrik Ling developed a program reminiscent of Roman military training to improve soldiers’ fitness.
• Gymnastics used to create a sense of nationalism through nationalistic programs of exercise freely chosen by the citizens.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF SPORT IN NORTH AMERICA

• Early Years
• Modern Themes

THE EARLY YEARS

• European explorers discover the New World and Native North Americans in the 15-16th centuries.
• Games were important to natives, and focused around ceremonial and religious practices and teaching of survival skills.
• Early explorers were fascinated by baggataway.
**The Early Years**

- With the exception of baggataway, early colonists were more interested in survival than they were in games.
- Slow development during 17-18th centuries due to church and war influence.
- Industrial Revolution - increased leisure time and engagement in sport and games.

---

**Modern Themes in Physical Activity**

- Spears and Swanson examined the following themes that apply to modern physical activity and sport in the US and Canada.
THE GOOD LIFE

• The pursuit of happiness, or the good life, is a popular notion today
• Beyond the necessities of life lie other qualities of existence that people choose to make their priorities and that directly impinge on kinesiology

DIVERSITY

• During the colonial period, settlers brought their distinctive ethnic traditions and physical pastimes to the areas in which they congregated, giving games and sports a regional flavour
• Immigrants were forced to adapt their amusements and sports to suit the many different climates and lifestyles in North America
VALUES

- The pursuit of happiness and the diverse cultural values of immigrants have coalesced to create a system of values existing today
- As North America slowly became secularized, laws restricting sportive behaviour on Sundays and taboos about who might play (e.g., women) were liberalized

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

- Social organization dictates who has access to which sports
- The ideology of amateurism had been popular with a privileged minority of people who did not need to be reimbursed for their performance.
- The cult of masculinity was based on the prescription of physical activities to develop manly virtues
Many of the games imported from Britain in 19th-century North America (such as croquet and cricket) were restricted largely to the privileged, upper-class minority.

**Technology and Urbanization**

- It was not until the industrialization and urbanization that modern sport began to emerge due to people having more time that is structured and energy to engage in sports.

- Sport became more commercialized as entrepreneurs developing new technology and retail conglomerates selling uniforms and equipment.
Promoting the ideal of balance and harmony for a “sound mind in a sound body,” humanists extolled the virtues of physical activity, which was reflected in its important role in education and its inclusion in the fine arts.

**CONCEPTUALIZATION OF TODAY’S SPORT**

- The changing justification and conceptualization of sport and physical education has effected the evolution of modern sports
- Modern sport has assumed a prominent role in popular culture and North American society, becoming intertwined with other major social institutions such as politics, economics, education, and mass media.

“Sport offered an alternative form of communal identification and character building.”
CONCEPTUALIZATION OF TODAY’S SPORT

Professional sports
• Focal point of the historical popularity of sport.
• Industrialization provided the financial means
• Urbanization created the spectator potential
• Technology contributed standardization, media focus, and equipment

Baseball was one of the first games to be professionalized, and the Cincinnati Red Stockings were the first professional baseball team, formed in 1869.

CONCEPTUALIZATION OF TODAY’S SPORT

College sports and amateurism
• College sports first followed a path toward professionalism
• Educational benefit of sports to all students was a drive for the development of large-time athletic programs (Harvard and Yale)
• A tug of war between professionalism and education-based amateurism
• Throughout the 20th century, the justifications for amateur participation have been invoked successfully to sustain athletics within higher education
• Physical education responded to the success of this strategy by joining with athletics in making sport a curricular centerpiece
There can be no doubt that nearly every important institution of higher education in America has at some point in its history emphasized big-time intercollegiate athletics. From the first contest, intercollegiate sport has been a commercial enterprise, and professionalism followed closely on its heels. (p. ix)

**PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER**

- A sense of history keeps kinesiology from drifting aimlessly into the 21st century
- Early civilizations (most notably ancient Greece), individual contributions (such as those of GutsMuths and Jahn), happenings (such as the Renaissance and the Industrial Revolution), and enduring attitudes (such as asceticism and scholasticism) have helped shape modern practice

“Study the past if you would define the future.”

CONFUCIUS