

THE GREEK PHILOSOPHY OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION
IN ANCIENT ATHENS AS COMPARED WITH
THE PHILOSOPHY OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION
IN TWENTIETH CENTURY UNITED STATES

A study of the Greek
and modern idea of physical education
as a part of education

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PREFACE

The purpose of this paper is to study the philosophies of two civilized cultures, ancient Greece and the twentieth century United States, with special reference to their philosophies of physical education and to discover the ways in which they are similar and the points wherein they differ.

This study is indicative of the fact that one learns many truths from the past and that a background, such as the Greek, affords one the ability to determine the direction of the pendulum swing. The trends, the principles, the aims, the philosophies--the essentials of any way of life--are forthcoming from a consideration of the historical past of both ages, from a study of the education and physical education of certain periods within those ages, and from a comparison of the findings to discern the general areas in which they agree and differ.

CHAPTER I

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY: A BRIEF HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF ANCIENT GREECE AND MODERN UNITED STATES

A true understanding of the philosophy of a nation or the philosophy of a part of that nation is not mastered without studying the characteristics and events of the time during which the philosophy is dominant. Thus, in studying the philosophies of physical education in the classical Greek era and in modern America, one must be conversant with the thought, reason, and resulting principles of living which characterize the era. For the history of any civilization is more than a chronology of military achievements, political leaders, governmental systems, and social and economic periods; these national characteristics and events merge to form the observed philosophy of the people--the "why" behind their actions.

In order to understand more fully why the physical education programs were built as they were in Greece and as they are being constructed in the United States now, a survey of the historical background of the two eras is needed to relate the philosophies with the periods. The significance of history in philosophy may be illustrated as follows: Plato's philosophy of education and physical education was far in advance of the appreciation of his contemporaries and was not accepted during his generation. This fact is of little value to the student of ideas unless he knows the character of the times in which Plato lived and the conditions which led to the formulation of his theories. Yet, if the student of

philosophy masters this knowledge, he may see the analogy between the two.

Also, physical education reflects through its aim, principles, and objectives the political, social, economic, and philosophical nature of a civilization. War, peace, prosperity, depression, internal unrest, or security influence all phases of existence. The philosophy of physical education expressed in the era emerges from the confluence of these phenomena.

There is a problem of perspective in studying ancient Greece and the modern United States. The Greek civilization covers a period of approximately one thousand years; United States history is young and covers only three and a half centuries. It is much easier to obtain an overall picture of the Greek age with its contemporary importance and its influence on future civilizations than it is to discern the same view of the United States.

A. BACKGROUND OF THE ANCIENT GREEKS

A comparatively short period of the ancient Greek era characterized the superior culture of the civilization. Prior to this period of significance there was developed through the centuries a life which had a need for physical education. And yet, strangely enough, after this need was fulfilled, a change in the culture took place wherein physical education was neglected and its decline followed that of the Greek Empire.

A study of the ancient civilizations of China, India, Egypt, Babylonia, Assyria, Phoenicia, Carthage, and Persia indicates that the

Greeks were not the first to attempt body perfection, mind discipline, and character building through physical education activities.¹ These first endeavors, however, did not reach the height attained by the Hellenic peoples.

Greek history may be divided into two parts to clarify the sequence of events and to relate them to education. The old Greek education covered the vast period from the indefinite prehistoric era before 1000 B. C., known as the Homeric or Heroic Age, to the end of the Persian Wars in 479 B. C. The new education began with the rise of Athenian supremacy resulting from the Persian Wars and was best typified by the period of transition, the Age of Pericles. This transition from the old to the new education saw the beginning of a new philosophical trend and the formation of new educational practices.² From the Macedonian conquest near the end of the fourth century B. C. until the Greek way of life was dissolved into the Roman culture, the new education was still in evidence with the University of Athens as the differentiating characteristic.³

Greek history at its earliest date is seen only as a dim light through the fog of antiquity. The most accurate information has been obtained through excavations and the study of archaeology. The Greeks

¹Fred E. Leonard, A Guide to the History of Physical Education, second edition, Philadelphia, Lea and Febiger, 1927, p. 17.

²Paul Monroe, Source Book of the History of Education, New York, The Macmillan Company, 1901, p. 1.

³Paul Monroe, A Textbook in the History of Education, New York, The Macmillan Company, 1905, pp. 61-62.

were in the latter stages of the Stone Age about 3500 B. C. and had reached the Bronze Age about 2500 B. C.⁴ The early culture, known as the Mycenaean civilization, covered the approximate period from 2500 to 1300 B. C. These people were dark-skinned, of Southern European origin and progressed to boast a highly developed art.⁵

The second culture was the Achaean, the age described most fully by the poet, Homer, in the Iliad and the Odyssey. Homer depicts his Greeks as being fair-haired and blue-eyed, a group entirely different from the Mycenaean.⁶ As a whole the life was simple and somewhat crude.

The education of the Homeric Age was primitive and the instruction limited to training by imitation. Learning of a literary nature was non-existent. Stories of national heroes and customs were passed from father to son through the generations by word of mouth. The training of this period was for the fundamental necessities of life--food, clothing, and shelter, and survival was dependent on the physical preparedness of the people.⁷ The activities of running, wrestling, and swimming taught the youth by their fathers served recreational purposes as well as military ones, and the boys spent much time competing in these athletic exercises among themselves. Service to the tribe required high morals

⁴Ellwood P. Cubberley, The History of Education, Boston, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1920, p. 18.

⁵Willis M. West, The Ancient World, Norwood, Mass., Norwood Press, 1904, p. 83.

⁶Ibid., p. 86.

⁷Monroe, Source Book of the History of Education, p. 2.

as well as a strong physical constitution. From their mothers' instruction the girls learned to manage the household and to act in accordance with approved standards of behavior.⁸

"The ideal of education was twofold: the man of valor was typified by Achilles; the man of wisdom, by Odysseus."⁹ The man of valor or action had as his foremost objective to be brave and to be reverent to his gods and secondly to his fellowmen. The man of wisdom or council had to possess good judgment and temperance. The aim for a balance of all these prerequisites was the seed for the future development of the Greek ideal.¹⁰

The question among scholars of the authenticity of the Homeric legend is at present irrelevant to the contribution that these accounts have made in recording and preserving the ancient Greek tradition. Whether the poems were composed by one man or many or whether the writer lived about 1000 B. C. does not destroy the value of the information concerning the Heroic Age, its education, customs and religion.

The second period within the scope of old education may be labeled "Historic" and covers the years between 1000 and 500 B. C. Inclusive in this period are the Dorian migrations and the development of the city-state.

⁸Leonard Whibley, A Companion to Greek Studies, Fourth edition, revised, Cambridge, University Press, 1931, p. 597.

⁹Monroe, Source Book of the History of Education, p. 2.

¹⁰Paul Monroe, A Brief Course in the History of Education, New York, The Macmillan Company, 1907, p. 31.

The Achaean civilization on the southern peninsula of Greece was invaded by another barbaric tribe, the Dorians. Being driven from their homes, the Achaeans in search for new living quarters set other Greek tribes into motion.¹¹ This was the fuse which caused the expansion into and the colonization of the area surrounding the Aegean Sea, Sicily, Italy, Gaul, and Africa.

Even before the Doric invasions, a festival came into existence which was to be of prime importance in the athletic life of the Greeks.¹² Instigated as a local religious festival in honor of the gods at Olympia, the Olympic games gradually included more and more city-states until in a century and a half they had acquired national participation. The first record of the Pan-Hellenic celebration was in 776 B. C.; it continued until abolished in 394 A. D. by the Roman Emperor, Theodosius.¹³ Thus, the Olympics lasted through the entire period of Greek culture. Sparta captured most of the first victories proving her early power and strength among the first city-states.

The rise of the festival to national status "gave an impulse not only to athletics but to the feeling of nationality."¹⁴ About this time the Greeks began to realize a common heritage and to become conscious of the difference between themselves and other peoples, yet tribal

¹¹West, op. cit., p. 99.

¹²Norman E. Gardiner, Greek Athletic Sports and Festivals, London, Macmillan and Company, Limited, 1910, p. 38.

¹³Emmett A. Rice, A Brief History of Physical Education, New York, A. S. Barnes and Company, 1926, pp. 30-31.

¹⁴Norman E. Gardiner, Athletics of the Ancient World, London, Oxford University Press, 1930, p. 36.

origins prevented political alliance. Peace was heralded before and during the athletic festival so that both participants and spectators could travel safely; the entrants were sworn to fair play.¹⁵ The Olympic and later the Pythian, Nemian, and Isthmian festivals formed a common interest among the city-states.

The geography of the small country was an important influence in the development of city-states. The numerous mountain chains, islands, and peninsulas formed natural divisions, each isolated from the other. Each section was self-supporting and self-governing and was determined to maintain the sovereignty it possessed. All attempts to unite Greece failed because the individualism of the people, political jealousies, and isolation caused by poor communication hampered any permanent consolidation.¹⁶ However, in the time of great emergency the units would combine their forces against the common foe, but wars among the divisions themselves were not infrequent.¹⁷

Since no part of Greece was more than forty miles from the sea, powerful navies developed to protect the vulnerable coast and to spread a system of commerce over the Mediterranean which increased colonial trade and consequently Grecian prosperity. The temperate climate encouraged outdoor life, and the natural beauty of the country inspired the Greeks to devote their lives to the protection and wise governing of it.¹⁸

¹⁵Rice, op. cit., p. 31.

¹⁶Cubberly, op. cit., pp. 17-18.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 17.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 16

The evolution of the city-state began with the clan, the basic unit of primitive government.¹⁹ Later, tribes were formed and then tribal cities under the head of a king, council of chiefs, or popular assembly. These trends were evident in Homer's time.²⁰ In most Greek cities about 700 B. C. tyrants, those who seized power by force, overthrew the old oligarchies. But, the subsequent upset of these tyrants paved the way for democracy. In the Ionian cities, chief among which was Athens, the trend was toward democratic government; in Doric Greece of which Sparta was the center, there was a return to a more aristocratic form.²¹

Sparta was wholly a military organization with the emphasis of education on the training of warriors. Since the Spartans were a small group of conquerors surrounded by a large subject population, their very existence depended upon their military power and the physical fitness of their citizens. The home had little value as a social institution; the training camp was the substitute. "Strength, courage, endurance, cunning, patriotism, and obedience were the virtues most highly prized, while the humane, literary, and artistic sentiments were neglected."²² Aristotle gave this city-state, which was immune to

¹⁹West, op. cit., p. 88.

²⁰Ibid., p. 92.

²¹Ibid., p. 103.

²²Cubberley, op. cit., p. 22.

change and new ideas, its severest criticism:

"Most of these military states are safe only when they are at war, but fall when they have acquired their empire; like unused iron they lose their edge in time of peace, and for this the legislator is to blame, because he never taught them how to lead the life of peace."²³

The total subjugation of individual interests to the welfare of the state is best illustrated in the severe curriculum of Spartan education. If, at birth, the child showed no promise, it was exposed on the mountain side to die. Until the age of seven the children remained under their mothers' care enjoying natural play activities. At the end of this time the boys were sent to the public barracks until the age of eighteen; here they received little but physical drill and moral and religious instruction. Hardships of all kinds were inflicted upon the youth to increase endurance for time of war. Within each group or "herd" they were taught running, leaping, boxing, wrestling, militaristic music, ball playing, the use of the spear, and fighting.

From eighteen to twenty the young men received professional training for war, and from twenty to thirty they were stationed at the frontier posts. At the age of thirty they were given full citizenship and were compelled to marry. Even then they continued to live at the public barracks and devoted their time to the training of the young.

Sparta was the only large city-state that provided gymnastic training for girls and women. The emphasis placed on the bearing of strong

²³Quoted in Clarence A. Forbes, Greek Physical Education, New York, The Century Company, 1929, p. 43.

children for the state is expressed in a Greek poem by a Spartan mother:

"Eight sons Daemonta at Sparta's call
Sent forth to fight; one tomb received them all.
No tears she shed, but shouted, 'Victory!
Sparta, I bore them but to die for thee.'"²⁴

Death was always preferred to dishonor.

The intellectual training was composed of memorizing the Laws of Lycurgus and some selections from Homer and listening to older and wiser men talk. Spartan education, the Lycurgean Agoge, was narrow and had little influence on succeeding generations, yet it produced "the highest and most permanent results ever attained along these restricted lines."²⁵ The education ran parallel to the military and political power of the state; when Sparta declined as a political leader, the ideals of their form of education became obsolete and forgotten.²⁶

The Athenian educational system which developed simultaneously with that of Sparta was from the beginning in advance of the goal which Sparta attained. Since Athens was a democratic city-state, the individual had a more significant role in this education and possessed an education which lent itself to change and progress. Though both systems came under the old education, it was Athens which boasted the physical education ideal that characterized the Greek athletic age.²⁷

The Persian Wars, which began with the battle of Marathon in

²⁴Quoted in Cubberley, op. cit., p. 23. No original source given by the author.

²⁵Monroe, Source Book of the History of Education, p. 9.

²⁶Ibid., p. 6.

²⁷Forbes, loc. cit.

490 B. C. and ended with the battle of Plataea in 479 B. C., were important in the future emphasis on physical education. The combined forces of the Greek city-states had expelled the eastern power with its foreign idea of anarchy and despotism. This proved not only that freedom could continue to spread but also that the Greeks were more powerful than the strongest world empire. "It was a victory of intellect and spirit over matter. Unlimited confidence gave them still greater power."²⁸ The Greeks realized what part physical preparedness and fitness had played in the victory, and the enthusiasm for physical education increased the number of palaestra and gymnasia over the Western civilization.²⁹

As a result of the wars, Sparta lost her supremacy as a political power in Greece and the Athenian Empire arose between 479 and 445 B. C. This victory ushered in the period of new education. There was no sharp line of demarcation in the change of the old education into the new, and many characteristics of the old, including the interest in physical activity, were still predominant until about 440 B. C.³⁰

The new education culminated in the Golden Age of Pericles or transitional period from 445 to 431 B. C. This later education was typified by a new interest in grammar and rhetoric, changes in the character of music and literature, and the development of the science of philosophy, ethics, and logic.³¹ The novel purpose was to prepare

²⁸West, *op. cit.*, p. 153.

²⁹Forbes, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

³⁰*Ibid.*, p. 89.

³¹Cubberley, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

youth for a political career. Athens became the seat of political, literary, and artistic progress as a result of these new directions before corruption and decay started the decline of the Athenian Empire.

It was in the sixth and first half of the fifth century B. C. that physical education was at its height in the city of Athens.³² "Historical" education had been of a physical nature and had neglected intellectual training; education of the last half of the fifth century stressed intellectual curiosity to the exclusion of physical activity. This period which designates the peak of Athenian physical education will be discussed more fully later to give the picture of the Greek ideal.

Since the literary age was a product of the new education, the records of the older periods were written by students of the newer system; Aristophanes, Plato, and Aristotle described earlier forms in their plans for the best education.³³

Archaeology reveals that around 440 B. C. vase painters used gymnasium scenes less and less as decoration for their art; if the gymnasia were depicted at all, the youth were lounging about engaged only in conversation.³⁴ At this time the interest and emphasis previously placed on physical education began to decline. This fact is

³²Forbes op. cit., p. 85.

³³Monroe, Source Book of the History of Education, pp. 6-7.

³⁴Forbes, op. cit., p. 89.

lamented by Aristophanes and blamed on the sophists in The Frogs:

"He has taught every soul to sophisticate truth;
And debauch'd all the bodies and minds of the youth;
Leaving them morbid, and pallid, and spare;
And the places of exercise vacant and bare."³⁵

The sophists were a group of itinerant teachers who arose to meet the need of participation in public life.³⁶ Because of the many usages of the term, "sophist" has acquired a vague meaning. The name is derived from a Greek word meaning "wise" or "to think out." The word as originally applied to these instructors of rhetoric and political science carried no disfavor and excited no negative reaction. The sophists acquired their bad reputation from those conservatives who, as products of the old education, feared the emphasis on intellectualism and classified these men as immoral.³⁷

The reactionary group of the old school felt justified in their stand since these traveling professors claimed the ability to teach any subject if they could collect the fee that they demanded. Practices such as these collided with the ideals of the old Greek life. All the sophists, the majority foreigners in Athens, were not of the same calibre as Protagoras, Georgias, and Prodicus, the earlier advocates of higher learning. The later and lesser sophists did not claim the genuine love

³⁵John Hookham Frere, et. al., translator, The Frogs and Three Other Plays of Aristophanes, volume II, London, I. M. Dent and Sons, p. 57.

³⁶Theodor Gomperz, Greek Thinkers, volume I, translated by Laurie Magnus, London, John Murray, 1906, pp. 412-413.

³⁷R. C. Jebb, Greek Literature, New York, American Book Company; n. d., p. 116.

of wisdom and turned to teaching because of the remuneration they could receive. As a class they held no common views and possessed no general body of ideas; "they were not a school of philosophers."³⁸ Each in his own way attempted to prepare youth for participation in political affairs.

Whereas this group had included all professors of knowledge, it now referred to those who pretended to teach. Such writers as Plato and Aristophanes attacked the sophists ferociously and pointedly; often these opponents of sophistry wished only to distinguish themselves from the rabble. Socrates, often classified as a sophist because he too had diverted the attention of youth to new pursuit, also fell into disagreement with the wandering instructors. Whereas the sophists used the lecture method in teaching, Socrates, through the medium of questions, allowed student participation. His teaching and philosophy was spoken through the writings of Plato. Aristotle, the student of Plato, also shared these opinions of the new teachers.

The general teachings of the sophists did not deny the benefits of physical activity, yet the craze that they ignited in the young men of Athens obscured the previous interest.³⁹

"All practice of masculine vigour and pride,
Our wrestling and running are all laid aside,
And we see that the city can hardly provide
For the Feast of the Founder, a racer of force
To carry the torch and accomplish a course."⁴⁰

After the emergence of the sophists, physical education began its decline

³⁸Rostovtzeff, M., A History of the Ancient World, the Orient and Greece, volume I, second edition, Oxford University Press, p. 296.

³⁹Forbes, op. cit., p. 99.

⁴⁰Frere, op. cit., p. 58. (The Frogs)

and accompanied the downfall of Athenian supremacy. The weakened moral philosophy of the people corrupted their wholesome way of life, and the rise of malignant specialization and professionalism destroyed the ideals of physical education.

After the fatal effects of the Peloponnesian War from 431 to 404 B. C., conquest by the Macedonians was forthcoming as was the later fusion with the Roman way of life. The second century B. C. marked the end of the Hellenic civilization.

B. BACKGROUND OF MODERN AMERICA

The history of the United States of America follows that of the history of Greece in the growth, development, and expansion of the democratic way of life. Greece, with a much longer period of growth, overthrew the forces of anarchy and developed a form of government in which the people could participate. The native population grew into the later civilization which typified the era. The population of the United States was far from being native; pioneers and settlers came from many countries of the world bringing with them different customs, habits, beliefs, and philosophies. They had one common goal--freedom in a secure society. This aim was the force that brought the people together. The need for unity felt among the early separate colonies was met by forming the federal government.

The period from 1607 to 1733 was characterized by a struggle for survival in the vast wilderness. Building homes, providing food, and fighting Indians were activities that required the full devotion of the

colonists. Since this was a full-time job, the need for formal or organized education was not felt. Even the children had very little time for play.

The early philosophies of ascetism, scholasticism, and Puritanism, which stemmed from religious beliefs, determined the way of life especially in the New England colonies.⁴¹ Living in the new country was a hardship, yet luxurious living was scorned and unsought. Asceticism embodied the idea that the human body was "corporeal, sensuous, undisciplined and, hence, inferior. The spirit.....lofty and immortal."⁴² Self-denial was the route to attaining the proper spiritual and intellectual life.

Asceticism was the doctrine of Puritanism; therefore, any part of education which was not stern, harsh, or unpleasant was immoral. Play was to be feared in education:

Probably in no other country in the civilized world was the feeling, attitude or concept toward play so dominant and conspicuous as in America. This sternness was a domineering note in the early schools. The surroundings of the child were severe. Things should not be made too pleasant or too easy.⁴³

Scholasticism concerned itself with education through fact. It taught that proper behavior patterns would result from acquiring knowledge alone.

The Pilgrims with their denial of bodily pleasures were not typical of the whole colonial period. Other colonies, especially the southern

⁴¹Jay B. Nash, Physical Education: Interpretations and Objectives, New York, A. S. Barnes and Company, 1948, p. 18.

⁴²Loc. cit.

⁴³Ibid., p. 15.

and middle groups, were not so severe in their philosophy. Many years were to pass before sports and games were to take a place in the educational program and before physical education was to be organized as a profession, even though, outside of the school, play was a natural activity of childhood.

As the colonies became more secure physically and economically, there was less strain and less need for constant industry. Adults also saw the need for activity of a recreational nature.⁴⁴ The inhabitants of the middle and southern colonies had retained the sport customs of their motherlands and spent their moments of relaxation in these activities.⁴⁵

Despite the differences found in the social organization of the three distinct groups of colonists, and despite the various religious interpretations seen in their communities, there was apparent a lessening of national characteristics. The change, which was brought about largely through sheer necessity, resulted in the development of characteristics which since that time have been considered essentially American.⁴⁶

The desire for independence from Europe, ever present as prosperity increased, was the foundation of future freedom. The wars between the British and French from 1689 to 1748 gave the English dominance in America; this produced more conflict than unity between the mother country and her offspring.⁴⁷ The colonists resented new restrictions

⁴⁴Norma Schwendener, A History of Physical Education in the United States, New York, A. S. Barnes and Company, 1942, p. 8.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 15.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 9.

⁴⁷John D. Hicks, A Short History of American Democracy, Boston, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1943, p. 68.

on their activities, and, enraged by intensified insults from England, declared their independence in 1776. The ensuing war gave confidence to the colonists in their quest for freedom, for, with an untrained army, they had defeated the well-equipped troops from England. The British were unfamiliar with American fighting tactics learned from the Indians. European countries were accustomed to war, but a military emphasis was unknown in the infant United States.

With the winning of independence, the leaders of the new country formulated their guide to democratic government. The constitution of the United States provided for a way of life in which individual interests were protected by the state; the state existed for the welfare of the individual, not the individual for that of the state. Women, at this time were not included in the economic life nor were they educated in the schools. As yet they had not taken their stand for equality.

The beginning of the industrial revolution toward the close of the eighteenth century wrought a change which transformed social and economic life.⁴⁸ Modern inventions began with the invention of the cotton gin and led to mechanisms which later produced the industrialization and urbanization of America; new and better methods of communication and transportation brought the country closer together. Leisure time, a luxury unforeseen in earlier times, came into existence and with it a need for a wholesome program of recreation. Only after the Civil War did the industrial revolution produce changes great enough to emphasize a need

⁴⁸Schwendener, op. cit., p. 45.

for proper physical development.⁴⁹

The concern of the public over the changing nature of society and its relation to body and mental health was awakened by three German gymnasts in the beginning of the nineteenth century.⁵⁰ These German students of Jahn, the developer of the German system of gymnastics, introduced the Turnverein movement in New York in 1824. Charles Beck organized the first school gymnasium in the United States, and Charles Follen established the first college and public gymnasium at Harvard College.⁵¹ In the rural areas, however, the nature of living remained unchanged.

After the Civil War, industry increased in the North. Since the United States had no physical education program of its own to meet the demand of physical development, she had to borrow European systems. The Turners had increased the interest in gymnastics and had included men, women, and children in their programs. New systems of gymnastics in Denmark and Sweden gained acceptance also in the United States after the war and soon replaced the interest in the German system.

In the South after the War Between the States the situation was much darker. The period of reconstruction was one of economic struggle and social unrest. Not as prone to industry as the North, the southern states did not acquire leisure time but had to continue the way of life that required all their energies in regaining security. Education fell

⁴⁹Jesse F. Williams, The Principles of Physical Education, second edition, revised, Philadelphia, W. S. Saunders Company, 1932, p. 183.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 184.

⁵¹Schwendener, op. cit., p. 47.

behind that of other sections of the country, and poverty prevented the establishment of new schools. Physical education especially was neglected.

The expansion of the country westward carried with it the pioneer way of life, but as the newer sections of the nation acquired the characteristics of the East, the emphasis on education followed.

The initiation of public schools in 1850 provided an equal opportunity for youth of both high and low financial means to obtain an education. As education endeavored to fulfill the needs of the students, the principles of democracy became more conspicuous in the schools. The needs of the individual have been interpreted in many different ways in the development of modern education theory. First it was believed that foreign ideas of both education and physical education were sufficient, but these systems were alien to the nature of the American citizen; they were militaristic in emphasis and formal in method.⁵²

In 1910 there began the development of the United States' own program of physical education.⁵³ The contribution of Thorndyke and Dewey revolutionized education, and both educators and physical educators began to realize the importance and significance of the scientific method.

⁵²Eugene W. Nixon and Frederick W. Cozens, An Introduction to Physical Education, second edition, revised, Philadelphia, W. B. Saunders Company, 1941, p. 38.

⁵³Thomas Denison Wood and Rosalind Cassidy, The New Physical Education, New York, The Macmillan Company, 1927, p. 9.

They abandoned the idea of formal instruction and shifted the emphasis to the natural development of each individual through self-activity. The modern philosophy of education has emerged in the period since 1910.

In the light of the general background of the times a specific era for discussion of the classic Greek and modern American philosophy has been defined. It is now the purpose of the study to appraise the philosophies of these specific eras in each of the civilizations.

CHAPTER II

THE GREEK PHILOSOPHY OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION

A democratic country does not insist on one best method of education; rather it defends the right of the people to study under their many systems and to educate their children by many methods. Love of a free way of life and the desire to continue to live in a democratic atmosphere leads the population to a type of education that will foster the same ideals and build citizens to uphold them. This education for democratic living has its shades of differences, but ultimately the various emphases lead to the same goal. Teachers have different methods and philosophers dispute minor opinions, but their aim of education and goals of life are radiated in likeness from their students.

Greek education, and in particular Athenian education, in the one hundred fifty year period was not stagnant but changed as the character of the society changed. Earlier points of consideration lessened in importance as new principles of learning were discovered; new directions became evident when national security increased and less demands on the individual were made by the state. Furthermore, practice and theory did not follow the same path; educational theorists were either striving to set up their own conceptions of perfect systems or to return to the older forms by advocating the practices of the past. In some cases the philosophers were simply recording conditions as they existed.

In spite of these varied viewpoints the philosophy of education in this period from its earlier beginnings to its later reversals was fundamentally one. The philosophy of physical education of this period through the same course of events was one. This prime philosophy,

which has survived the ages, was that of an adequate education producing a harmonious and well-balanced individual.¹

The education of the youth was divided into two parts: music and gymnastics. In the broad sense music consisted of reading, writing, elementary mathematics, reciting poetry, music, and drawing; this was the literary education.² Gymnastics included exercises and diet with the object of developing the health and strength of the body; this was the physical education.³ Plato believed that this curriculum for the total education of youth was the best: "And what shall be their education? Can we find a better than the traditional sort?--and this has two divisions, gymnastics for the body, and music for the soul."⁴

The Athenians thought of gymnastics in terms of symmetry, beauty, efficiency, and rhythmic movement.⁵ Over-indulgence in music made the individual one-sided and warped and detrimental to the state. A well-founded Greek attended both parts of his education the same:

And he who mingles music with gymnastic in the fairest proportions, and best attempers them to the soul, may be rightly called a true musician and harmonist in a far higher sense than the tuner of the strings.⁶

¹ Eugene W. Nixon and Frederick W. Cozens, An Introduction to Physical Education, second edition, revised, Philadelphia, W. B. Saunders Company, 1941, pp. 29-30.

² Richard Lewis Nettleship, The Theory of Education in Plato's Republic, London, Oxford University Press, 1935, p. 29.

³ Loc. cit.

⁴ Plato, The Republic, Benjamin Jowett, translator, London, Oxford University Press, 1908, ii. 376 E, vol. II.

⁵ Jay B. Nash, Physical Education: Interpretations and Objectives, New York, A. S. Barnes and Company, 1948, p. 53.

⁶ Plato, op. cit., iii 412 A, vol. I.

Plato expressed the philosophy of Greek education and, consequently, physical education as an important part of education as follows:

"And both should be in harmony?"

"Beyond question."

"And the harmonious soul is both temperate and courageous?"

"Yes." 7

The curriculum of Greek physical education was indicative of the importance placed on this part of the total education of the individual. Sons of Athenian citizens spent half of their school day in the palaestra or "wrestling school" from the age of seven until they reached the age of sixteen.⁸ Before beginning their formal education, these boys had grown up under mothers' and nurses' care in natural childhood play activities. At the palaestra the youth received instruction in physical exercises such as jumping, running, wrestling, javelin and discus throwing, and religious dancing.⁹ Unlike Sparta this part of the educational program was not made compulsory by state laws: every citizen made his own plans for the education of his sons in these private institutions.¹⁰ Education was compulsory for citizenship, however.¹¹ The people realized the importance of education and usually provided the best they could afford.

7 Ibid., iii, 410 E, 411 A, vol. I

8 Paul Monroe, A Textbook in the History of Education, New York, The Macmillan Company, 1905, p.88.

9 J. F. Dobson, Ancient Education and Its Meaning to Us, New York, Longmans, Green and Company, 1932, p. 37.

10 Ellwood P. Cubberley, The History of Education, Boston, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1920, p. 24.

11 Loc. cit.

From sixteen to twenty years of age the Athenian youth devoted his time chiefly to physical training. The first two years he spent in the state supported gymnasia continuing the exercises of the palaestra. He learned to ride and sing and to dance in the public choruses, he accentuated his efforts in running, wrestling, and boxing, and he participated more strenuously in the lighter activities of his previous education.¹² He was more under the control of the state, yet this control was only in the form of recommendations, not force.¹³ The intellectual training consisted of absorbing knowledge from the discussions of the elders in the gymnasia and in the market places and from the public debates and jury trials.¹⁴ Education here became free and natural, not a formalized procedure.

The last two years were under the complete control of the state; the young man began his specific military training the first year and gained actual experience at frontier posts the second year. If he, on examination, was found to be morally and physically sound, he was admitted to citizenship.¹⁵ As a beginning cadet-citizen or Epebos, the young man of Athens solemnly took the Epebic oath:

I will never disgrace these sacred arms, nor desert my companion in the ranks. I will fight for temples and public property, both alone and with many. I will transmit my fatherland, not only not less, but greater and better, than it was

¹² Ibid., p. 34

¹³ Clarence A. Forbes, Greek Physical Education, New York, The Century Company, 1929, p. 73.

¹⁴ Cubberley, loc. cit.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 35.

transmitted to me. I will obey the magistrates who may at any time be in power, I will observe both the existing laws and those which the people may unanimously hereafter make, and, if any person seek to annul the laws or to set them at naught, I will do my best to prevent him, and will defend them both alone and with many.--I will honor the religion of my fathers...¹⁶

At the rise of the sophists and the appearance of a drastic decrease in physical education interest, the ephebia became literary and philo-sophic in character. Aristophanes fought this reversal by contrasting the old with the new in The Clouds:

This is the regimen that will insure
 A healthy body and a vigorous mind,
 A countenance serene, expanded chest,
 Heroic statue and a temperate tongue;
 But take these modern masters, and behold
 These blessings all revers'd, a pallid cheek,
 Shrunk shoulders, chest contracted, sapless limbs,
 A tongue that never rests, and mind debas'd,
 By their vile sophistry perversely taught
 To call good evil, evil good, and be
 That thing, which nature spurns at, that disease,
 A mere Antimachus, the sink of vice.¹⁷

But, it is necessary, before proceeding further, to distinguish between Greek athletics and Greek physical education. Since both employed the body as a medium of expression, they were similar; but their aims and methods differed.¹⁸ Athletics, which will be considered in a later chapter, did not concern itself with the school system, and the athletes did not necessarily acquire their skill from the palaestral instruction.¹⁹ Physical education attempted to develop "strong, sound,

¹⁶ Loc. cit.

¹⁷ John Hookham Frere, et. al., translators, The Frogs and Three Other Plays of Aristophanes, volume II, I. M. Dent and Sons, Limited, p.154.

¹⁸ Forbes, op. cit., p. 5.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 6.

supple bodies, prepared to face the manifold needs of daily life" through instruction by recognized teachers.²⁰ The ideal of beauty and perfection in both was alike, and the interest in athletic competition enriched the recognition of physical education values. When athletics became debased by extreme professionalism, physical education suffered correspondingly.

The concept of the relationship between body and mind was a significant one in Greek education. Had they believed the two were separate in the individual and that neither exerted any influence on the other, the Greeks would have had no need for physical activity. The education of either body or mind would have produced a well-rounded person; neither did they exalt one and degrade the other.

Greeks placed great emphasis upon the idea of the unity of life. They recognized the physical, mental, and spiritual aspects of life, but at the same time they appreciated rather fully the interdependence of these elements....²¹

This philosophy demanded that the capacities of both mind and body be equally developed for the perfect balance.

"Neither are the two arts of music and gymnastic really designed, as is often supposed, the one for the training of the soul, the other for the training of the body."

"What then is the real object of them?"

"I believe," I said, "that the teachers of both have in view chiefly the improvement of the soul."

"How can that be?" he asked.

²⁰ Forbes, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

²¹ Nixon and Cozens, *op. cit.*, pp. 29-30.

"Did you never observe," I said, "the effect on the mind itself of exclusive devotion to gymnastic, or the opposite effect of an exclusive devotion to music?"

"In what way shown?" he said.

"The one producing a temper of hardness and ferocity, the other of softness and effeminacy," I replied.²²

Aristotle professed the belief that the education of the body and the mind should not take place simultaneously.²³ Yet, his ideal of a sound body for a sound mind strengthened the dominant philosophy.

Thus, the aim of education was to give the body and soul all they could appreciate in harmonious proportions in order to develop good citizens for the happy life.²⁴ The aim of physical education was to contribute its all to this ultimate goal. Each part of the education was to give its due to the whole. The four cardinal virtues that comprised the balance were temperance, courage, wisdom, and justice.²⁵ To each of these physical education contributed. The result of Greek physical education was more than physical power and strength; physical education was not training of the physical, but an education through the medium of the physical self. Moral ends were important.

Temperance or "whole-mindedness" could be obtained by learning to control the emotions with the faculty of reason; wisdom or "the coordination of thought and action, the fitting of conduct to precept, of word

²² Plato, *op. cit.*, iii, 410 C, D, vol. I.

²³ Forbes, *op. cit.*, p. 107.

²⁴ Merritt M. Thompson, *An Outline of the History of Education*, second edition, revised, New York, Barnes and Noble, Inc., 1934, p. 142.

²⁵ Plato, *op. cit.*, iv, 428 A-435E, vol. I.

to actions" was achieved by using the mind in game and life situations.²⁶ Courage and justice by physical activity could also be developed in the proper relation.

In addition, the Greeks recognized the value of physical education's contribution to the development of personality and character; poise, confidence, self-control, sportsmanship, and cooperation were those virtues that the gymnastic program fostered.²⁷ The physical beauty and bodily development that enabled each Athenian to be a good soldier as well as a good citizen remained the chief and immediate objectives. Health and vigor of body were necessary for survival.

The ancient Greeks advanced basic principles of education which made the realization of these outcomes actual. Without sound methods, the philosophy could not have materialized for use in the highly civilized society. These principles carried over into the practice of gymnastic training for the education of both mind and body.

Greek education was fundamentally activity; the most effective way to learn was the actual experience of performing the task.

Education in the Age of Pericles was a doing process. The educated man was a man who performed... Education to him was a process of doing and continuing the doing to a point of perfection-- thus, achieving the beautiful and the good.²⁸

The Athenians employed every day, life-like activities in education of the youth for present and future living; all of these activities upheld

²⁶ Monroe, A Textbook in the History of Education, p. 88.

²⁷ Nixon and Cozens, op. cit., p. 30.

²⁸ Nash, Physical Education: Interpretations, p. 21.

wholesome self-expression and development of individuality.²⁹

Self-expression, part of the activity process, was characteristic of the Greek method of education and physical education. Athens did not have, as Sparta had, a pattern into which each citizen should fit. Rather, she emphasized the importance of each individual taking advantage of the opportunities presented and advancing in the direction of his special interests and capabilities.³⁰ There was a matter of individual differences to be considered in determining where and how far a child would go in a given direction. Each individual was a distinct personality, and it was the responsibility of education to provide for his development.³¹ The education of the young was left to the discretion of the parents proving that individualism in everyday life, the educational program, and the later years of service to themselves and to the state was the keynote of Greek or Athenian education.

The aim of gymnastics was the development of a healthy, beautiful body for all the youth, not just a specialized few. There was no professionalism in the palaestra training. "Games and physical contests were not indulged in haphazardly and were not participated in by the few for the entertainment of the many."³² It was activity that produced the best results in education; therefore, the more who enjoyed it, the more well-rounded citizens there were.

²⁹ Jackson R. Sharman, Introduction to Physical Education, New York, A. S. Barnes and Company, 1934, p. 22.

³⁰ Dobson, op. cit., p. 4.

³¹ Sharman, op. cit., p. 21.

³² Monroe, A Textbook in the History of Education, p. 88.

The statues of the period reflected the ideal of perfection in gymnastics and education in general. "Beauty of form rather than the ability to break records" was embodied in their physical education.³³ Even though winning was important, proper form, grace, dignified carriage, skill, sportsmanship, and self-control were paramount.³⁴ This athletic ideal which permeated all of Greek life was one which each Athenian treasured and held as a goal throughout life. After school life and military service were over, the Athenian citizen continued to use the gymnasia for physical activity.³⁵

The women found no place in the philosophy of education. Their role in life was to maintain the home and to be the mothers of strong and healthy children. The Athenian lass learned to read and write only if so taught by her own mother; beyond childhood play activities, she had no physical education provided for her.³⁶ Public appearances were frowned upon, and there was no opportunity for participation in public life.

Plato's idea of the education of women was quite alien to the approved practice. In his Republic he advocated that equal opportunity should be available for both sexes:

³³ Thomas Denison Wood and Rosalind Cassidy, The New Physical Education, New York, The Macmillan Company, 1927, p. 334.

³⁴ Cubberley, op. cit., p. 32.

³⁵ Wood and Cassidy, op. cit., p. 335.

³⁶ Emmett A. Rice, A Brief History of Physical Education, New York, A. S. Barnes and Company, 1926, p. 29.

"Men and women alike possess the qualities which make a guardian; they differ only in their comparative strength or weakness."

"Obviously."

"And those women who have such qualities are to be selected as the companions and colleagues of men who have similar qualities and whom they resemble in capacity and in character?"

"Very true."

"And ought not the same natures to have the same pursuits?"

"They ought."

"Then, as we were saying before, there is nothing unnatural in assigning music and gymnastic to the wives of the guardians..."³⁷

This was the boldest of Plato's proposals, yet it proved that his concept of democracy included a place for the women of his day.

All that has been said of Greek education applied only to the sons of free citizens. The slaves and foreign-born, who made up approximately three-fourths of the total population of the larger cities, were not included in the Athenian educational system.³⁸ Only in a much later period were outsiders accepted and permitted to profit from the Greek culture that centered in Athens. But, this later education conceived physical education in the light of bodily pleasure and sensuous enjoyment.

Aye, this is in the very style of the time;
These are the dialectics now in fashion
With our young sophists, who frequent the baths
Whilst the palaestra starves.³⁹

³⁷ Plato, op. cit., v, 456 A, B, vol. I.

³⁸ Fred Eugene Leonard, A Guide to the History of Physical Education, second edition, Philadelphia, Lea and Febiger, 1927, p. 18.

³⁹ Frere, et. al., op. cit., p. 155.

Those of the working class obtained only the education that they could scrape together from gleaning in the market places; their manual labor made up their physical education.

The keynote of Greek life and education was simplicity.⁴⁰ The nature of their existence led them to turn naturally to gymnastic sports for harmonious living and healthy development of the individual.⁴¹

The following statement summarizes the essence of Greek education and physical education:

The significance of Greek education lies in the fact that here first is found a developing conception and standard of life, consequently a conception of education which enlarges through successive periods and in which change is tolerated and development of the individual provided for. Growth or modification in social standards results from variation by individuals from formulated customs; progress comes where such variations are not only tolerated but seized upon and made permanent if deemed serviceable. For the first time, then, in Greek education, is found a type in which the individual is neither unconsciously nor consciously suppressed. On the contrary, some expression of individuality is thought compatible with, even desirable for, social stability and welfare.⁴²

⁴⁰ Plato, op. cit., vol. I, p. 142.

⁴¹ Forbes, op. cit., pp. 3-4.

⁴² Monroe, A Textbook in the History of Education, p. 52.

CHAPTER III

THE MODERN PHILOSOPHY OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION

It has been said that man is created free and equal and that he should be able to live as he desires in modern society. His equality is limited by the nature of the society in which he lives and the possibilities which he inherits by birth. His freedom within the democratic society is controlled by that of those around him. To be a happy and useful citizen of a democracy, he must have opportunities which will provide for him a way to develop along his lines of talent, and he must take advantage of these opportunities:

Implicit in a democratic way of life is the necessity to participate, to move through group thinking and pooling of ideas and interests toward newer and better ways of gaining the best interests for all.¹

This social philosophy of democracy in the United States emphasizes the importance of the group integrated in emphasis and aim, yet it recognizes that each human being is different from every other individual and that each has his own capabilities in entering the channels of American life.

The modern philosophy of education has to meet the demands of a complicated, fast-moving world in order that each individual may be equipped to live successfully and happily in it.² In the twentieth century educators have outgrown the original idea of education being a

¹ Rosalind Cassidy, New Directions in Physical Education for the Adolescent Girl in High School and College, New York, Al S. Barnes and Company, 1938, p. 50.

² Thomas Denison Wood and Rosalind Cassidy, The New Physical Education, New York, The Macmillan Company, 1927, p. 27.

mere "schooling" and have come to realize that it is life itself in which each person learns to adapt himself to his environment and to develop as a distinct personality.

Education is a continuous, life long process of change modification, or adjustment of the individual in school and out of it--resulting from his own responses to the stimuli or situations of his external and internal environment.³

The changes constantly taking place in modern life are the challenges which both the individual and education as a whole must meet; the way in which these challenges are met indicates the philosophy.

John Dewey's national philosophy of pragmatism has contributed much to the philosophy of education in making the school an agency for fostering a well-rounded existence. Pragmatism has led education to the realization that it must change with the new forces of society and contribute to the perpetuation of democratic living. Dewey states his pragmatic concept as follows:

It is no longer enough for a principle to be elevated, noble, universal and hallowed by time. It must present its birth certificate, it must show under just what conditions of human experience it was generated, and it must justify itself by its works, present and potential. Such is the inner meaning of the modern appeal to experience as an ultimate criterion of value and validity...The future rather than the past dominates the imagination.⁴

Yet, to be firm in principle, education must retain the experience of the past as guideposts for the future. Knowledge is tested by use. Practicality is a feature of modern thinking. Education has a valuable

³ Eugene W. Nixon and Frederick W. Cozens, An Introduction to Physical Education, second edition, revised, Philadelphia, W. B. Saunders Company, 1941, p. 4.

⁴ Wood and Cassidy, loc, cit.

contribution to make to the improvement of the American way of life; if its methods are good, they may be put to good use.

Education today concerns itself with the whole individual and not just parts of him; it takes the student in his entirety.⁵ The spiritual emphasis placed on education by Puritanism is fading out. The concept that the mind and body are closely linked in both physical and mental activities influences all of the educative process.

No one believes that mind and body are actually one, any more than he thinks strength and muscle are identical. However, it is impossible to have a mind without a body in the same way that it is impossible to have a smile on a Cheshire cat without a cat.⁶

This comparison is indicative of the importance of developing the mind and the body at the same time and with equal emphasis. The brain works more efficiently when the body is healthy and its organs are functioning with vigor and ease.⁷ The smile will be broader on the healthy cat.

The physical and emotional elements of muscular activity produce a well-rounded and integrated personality; this activity administers to an alert and active mind.⁸ Total body activity includes both the mental and the physical, and the term is used "in an effort to sound the death knell to the distinction which is so often made between these activities."⁹ Both are only aspects of the complete, integrated individual; there is no

⁵ Nixon and Cozens, op. cit., p. 6.

⁶ Jay B. Nash, Physical Education: Interpretations and Objectives, New York, A. S. Barnes and Company, 1948, pp. 17-18.

⁷ Nixon and Cozens, op. cit., p. 16.

⁸ Loc. cit.

⁹ Jay B. Nash, editor, Interpretations of Physical Education, volume I, Mind-body Relationships, New York, A. S. Barnes and Company, 1931, p. 4.

place for dualism in a physical education philosophy. "One cannot dissect the human body without violating a fundamental law."¹⁰

With this conception of the relationship of the body to the mind and to the efficient functioning of the entire organism, physical education is now considered a part of the whole education of the individual. World War I brought about the crisis which caused the educational field to accept physical education and physical education to realize its full significance to general education.

Statistics reported by the Provost Marshall General in January, 1918, concerning the rejections of men called in the Selective Service Draft show that of the 2,510,706 men called by local draft boards 730,756 were rejected for physical reasons; of the total examined by local and other draft boards, 29.11 per cent were rejected.¹¹

To this percentage of rejections by the local boards must be added the rejections by the Medical Corps at the cantonments. The Medical Corps rejected from two to eleven percent of those certified. The total rejections therefore must be somewhere between 30.53 and 36.80 per cent. In the main the chief causes of rejection were remediable by a little care and by adequate and wise physical education.¹²

Many young men who had no physical defects were weak organically. Military leaders stated that it required from twelve to fifteen months to train soldiers when it would have taken only three or four if the physical education programs in the schools had been sufficient.¹³ These

¹⁰ Jesse Feiring Williams, The Principles of Physical Education, second edition, revised, Philadelphia, W. S. Saunders Company, 1932, p.233.

¹¹ Jesse Feiring Williams, The Organization and Administration of Physical Education, New York, The Macmillan Company, 1922, p. 34.

¹² Ibid., p. 35.

¹³ Nash, Physical Education: Interpretations, P. 15.

facts thoroughly aroused the thinking public, and the following philosophy was forthcoming:

The physical education of today is not a thing apart, an exercise or education just of the physical body. It is simply one phase of the education of the whole child, making its approach from one aspect of his interests and his activities. Some forms of education function more effectively when approached from one angle and others when approached from another. Chemistry is taught best in the classroom and the laboratory. Swimming is best learned in the water. Physical courage and many forms of quick adaptive thinking are best learned in the gymnasium and on the athletic field. Each of these learnings, however, affects the behavior, the usefulness, and the culture of the individuals taught. So physical education is simply a part of the whole system of education and is taught in appropriate places under the most effective conditions.

In addition to being a part of education, it must be educational as well...it must specifically seek to accomplish definite, purposeful ends; it must be related to its objectives.¹⁴

Physical education contributes to the same objectives and aims as education in general; the philosophies run parallel and indicate the same directions. The methods of education are used by physical educators as well as by teachers in other fields. The only difference lies in the fact that physical education operates through the medium of muscular activity.¹⁵ Nevertheless, it is not an education of the physical which strives for strong muscles and a firm constitution as the major outcomes; it is the education that sees life as a whole and sees the many contributions which may be derived through vigorous physical activity.¹⁶ Physical education is a means to an end, not the end itself.

¹⁴ Charles H. McCloy, Philosophical Bases for Physical Education, New York, F. S. Crafts and Company, 1940, p. 5.

¹⁵ Nixon and Cozens, op. cit., p. 6.

¹⁶ Jesse Feiring Williams, and William L. Hughes, Athletics in Education, second edition, revised, Philadelphia, W. B. Saunders Company, 1936, p. 68.

As was stated before, experiences of the past constitute the guides of the future. "The physical education program is continually in a process of planning, evaluation, and replanning"¹⁷ It is important to modify the scope of physical education activities to meet the changing needs of the time. The specific areas which are considered today in meeting these needs are as follows: rhythms, games, sports, stunts and tumbling, aquatics, and outing activities. In each of these areas testing, motivating, and individual activity are basic. As the child's needs grow, the activities are planned to meet his new demands. In proof of the fact that the public is realizing the part that physical education plays in the education for life, Nash gives the following data:

Thirty-seven states have full time state directors of physical education, health and recreation. Well over ninety per cent of the school children of the nation are in schools where there is a planned program. Over 60,000 men and women give most of their time to education which stresses physical education. In the American Association of Health, Physical Education and Recreation over 15,000 members are banded together to raise the standards of their profession and to serve the youth of the nation.¹⁸

However, "our democracy, in government and in sports, is yet young, and needs to shed more than a few pinfeathers before we can claim maturity of thought or practice."¹⁹ This statement, though made in 1934, still holds true today and indicates the importance of perspective in objectively evaluating any program.

¹⁷ The National Conference on Undergraduate Professional Preparation in Physical Education, Health Education and Recreation held at Jackson's Mill, Weston, W. Va., May 16-27, 1948, p. 20.

¹⁸ Nash, Physical Education: Interpretations, p. 15.

¹⁹ Mary Channing Coleman, unpublished speech, 1934.

The aim of physical education in the modern United States is social efficiency in living.²⁰ Since the nature of society today demands that each individual be well-adjusted physically, mentally, and emotionally, all emphases are directed toward this goal. Philosophy directs the aim toward the fulfilling of this requirement. Health, command of fundamental processes, worthy home membership, vocational training, citizenship, worthy use of leisure time, and ethical character, the Seven Cardinal Principles of education, are all areas in which physical education contributes to this goal of social efficiency.²¹ The very character of well-directed physical activity is conducive to the development of leadership and fellowship, team work, cooperation, a sense of responsibility, acceptance of criticism, a respect for fellowmen, and good sportsmanship. Physical education is the laboratory for citizenship.

Physical education is not given the same emphasis in various schools systems. In the more ideal cases an hour a day may be devoted to instruction in big-muscle activities selected for specific aims and objectives. The time allotment for physical education in other schools is much less; a short twenty minute period with a brief morning and noon recess comprise all of the play opportunity during the school session.²² The aim and philosophy of these curricula are fundamentally the same, yet

²⁰ Agnes Wayman, A Modern Philosophy of Physical Education, Philadelphia, W. B. Saunders Company, 1938, p. 85.

²¹ Jackson R. Sharman, Introduction to Physical Education, New York, A. S. Barnes and Company, 1934, p. 63.

²² Nash, Physical Education: Interpretations, p. 27.

the degree to which opportunities present themselves for the actual carrying out of these programs marks the difference in emphasis on physical activity.

Modern education has been tremendously aided by the advances made in psychology, sociology, biology, and physiology. These newly enlightened areas have submitted ideas to the field of education that have revolutionized method and indicated new principles. Such principles based on scientific data point to social efficiency. These new directions contribute equally to physical education's aim of well-rounded individuals in the evolving society.

The learning process as interpreted by modern psychologists has a definite influence on the method of physical education. These methods reflect a major part of the modern philosophy of physical education. Chief among these principles is that of self-activity on the part of each student. Only through the pupil's own participation and experience may the desired educational processes take place.²³ "The honest player in the game does the truth in fair play, rather than conceiving truth as a system of ethics merely to be believed."²⁴ Here may be seen how the opportunities for personality development are manifested in a program of physical education. Hearing an explanation does not guarantee the student that he will be able to execute the activity; he must try the situation for himself and determine its value and meaning to his future needs. The situations must be identical with those of life itself.

²³Nixon and Cozens, op. cit., p. 4.

²⁴Wood and Cassidy, op. cit., p. 29.

The student must practice good citizenship from early childhood in order to continue his role of a good citizen in future society.²⁵ One must learn by doing.

Psychology discards formal discipline and formal teaching as an effective method. Formalism destroys the opportunities for active self-direction, self-expression, and self-criticism. It does not recognize individual differences, needs, and interests and denies development in the direction of the student's capabilities. The best atmosphere for physical education activities is one of pleasantness and cheerfulness. The purpose of physical education is "that of helping the individual achieve a life filled with wholesome activity which brings him satisfactions, joy, and deep appreciations."²⁶ Boys and girls learn best when they enjoy the problems which they undertake. Joy in education, therefore, is an objective and an indication that the individual is growing and developing harmoniously.²⁷ The pleasure loving nature of the American people reflects this philosophy of pleasure in education.

The natural movement which emerged at the beginning of the twentieth century threw out the formal European systems and based its philosophy on the needs and interests of the students.²⁸ The scientific knowledge that enhanced the educational field led to new ideals. This program

²⁵Williams, Principles of Physical Education, p. 414.

²⁶Nixon and Cozens, op. cit., p. 18.

²⁷Nash, Physical Education: Interpretations, p. 22.

²⁸Wood and Cassidy, op. cit., p. 31.

was based on activities which were natural to the body, which catered to characteristics and needs, and which were more closely correlated with other school subjects and social competence.²⁹ It was the gateway for present-day practices.

Sociological principles of education apply especially to physical education. Twentieth century living is an unnatural type of life and is "detrimental to human beings."³⁰ The human race was never intended to live in a society which deprived its habitants of natural physical activity. Lack of space in the cities, transportation which eliminates even walking, modern conveniences lessening household chores, sedentary forms of entertainment, monotony in the industrial life are conditions for which nature did not plan.³¹

Physical education, to take responsibility in the programs of other social institutions that concern themselves with education, recreation, physical and mental health, and morals, educates the people in the areas that the complex world leaves vacant and builds the wholesome foundations of recreation in which leisure time is to be spent.³² One reason early America developed no philosophy of recreation was that the requirements for making a living left little time for leisure. However, in this period the average person was physically active daily even though the

²⁹Ibid., p. 9.

³⁰Nixon and Cozens, op. cit., p. 14.

³¹Loc. cit.

³²Jackson R. Sharman, Modern Principle of Physical Education, New York, A. S. Barnes and Company, 1937, p. 59.

objectives of fun and principles of natural movement were lacking. The modern philosophy of life stresses the importance of worthy use of leisure time in an effort to maintain high moral standards and healthy ideals. Physical education activities, if properly chosen, have values and interests that carry over into adult life.

Education through physical education seeks to develop group consciousness and spirit and to enable the individual to live in harmony with those around him.³³ It is impossible to act in any situation completely independent of the group.³⁴ This need of group cooperation may be satisfied by the very nature that the activities of physical education possess.³⁵

The challenge to education and to society is how to get young people enthusiastic about the pattern of democracy-- competing within a circle of cooperatively framed human rights. Creating a sense of belonging is of primary importance. When one belongs, he is a teammate with others.³⁶

Through the medium of play activities during childhood, this social development begins along with that of character; the greatest opportunity for this development is during youth. As brought out previously, these young people may through team sports and recreational games create such traits as team loyalty, fair play, and good sportsmanship which are

³³Sharman, Modern Principles of Physical Education, p. 10.

³⁴Wayman, Modern Philosophy of Physical Education, p. 21.

³⁵Sharman, Modern Principles, p. 64.

³⁶Nash, Physical Education: Interpretations, p. 46.

conducive to the continuation of a socially integrated nation.

The successful democracy must not undertake to mold its citizens into any predetermined form, but undertake to give the individual fair opportunity to reach the highest self-development of which he is capable, and it must provide favorable opportunity for development of self-discipline and self-control, with which the democratic society can hardly hope to function . . .³⁷

The contribution of biology and physiology to this concept of unrestricted development upholds this sociological foundation. Each individual is different both through inheritance and environment and should be allowed to make the best of his possibilities.³⁸ These inherent characteristics are the bases and foundations for building a program of physical education.

Such a program will recognize not only the capabilities of the individual, but also his limitations. It must be remembered, too, in a balanced program that the by-products of idealism, fighting spirit, discriminating health consciousness, wise and joyous use of leisure time, fair play, and honesty, to mention a few, are as important as the activities themselves. Miss Coleman so pointedly illustrated the importance of such by-products when she said:

Just remember the friendly cow; no doubt her main job is to furnish milk with all her might, but she also, we are told, gives us the gum ingredient for gum drops; perhaps there are some of us who don't like milk and are keen on gum drops.³⁹

³⁷Nixon and Cozens, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

³⁸*Ibid.*, p. 57.

³⁹Mary Channing Coleman, "Some Newer Objectives in Physical Education", unpublished speech.

CHAPTER IV

THE COMPARISON OF THE TWO PHILOSOPHIES

WITH CONCLUSION

Physical education has existed in some form since the beginning of time. Neither is it typical of one society nor is it a new fad; it has been known to all people of all ages. It has employed varied methods; it has served military and health goals as well as educational ones; and it has contributed in some way to the life of each human being. There have been good programs of physical education, and there have been bad ones. There have been times when physical education was an integral part of education, and there have been times when it was not.

The Greek emphasis on physical education and the modern trend in this field are illustrative of two programs which depict more than any other the ideal situation. These are not two programs separate and apart, but they are closely related. Greece has exerted much influence in the United States; therefore, there must be similarities between the two.

Before it is possible to study the likenesses and also the differences between the ancient and modern philosophies, it is necessary to re-emphasize the character of the two societies under which this physical education existed. As previously stated, Athenian life was simple as compared to the complexity of the twentieth century United States. The differences in the education and physical education are present because of the varied degree of complication evident in the two ages. The similarities are

manifest in that both educational systems possessed the power of change and were capable of adapting to the constantly evolving forces within each society. As new ideals materialize, education alters to meet the needs of the people, or the ideals die.

A nation which is as fast-moving and industrialized as the United States today requires much more of each individual than one which places less strain on the human body and mind. Though the philosophy is in agreement, it directs the methods of its fulfillment through different channels to achieve the ultimate goal. The demands of the times mark the role of education.

Observation of the Greek program of physical education and of present day mannerisms reveals that the similarities heavily outweigh the unlikenesses. Placed side by side, one is the counterpart of the other. But, "physical education played a larger part in Greek life than it has in the life of any nation before or since."¹ Greece is well-known for her ideal of physical education, yet the United States has many features which overshadow her program of organized physical activity. The contrast is a matter of public opinion and support. Greece made her theory and ideal actual; modern Americans with many diversified views have had more difficulty in materializing their aims. Whenever the need for a program is commonly felt, the people as a whole react to the situation and fill the void.

This may seem to indicate from the start that differences are prevalent, but this is not true. Basically, both systems embody the same

¹Clarence A. Forbes, Greek Physical Education, New York, The Century Company, 1929, p. 3.

philosophy. Discussion of the greatest points of similarity may indicate wherein the two philosophies differ, yet it must be kept in mind that ancient Greece is typified by Athens, one small city-state, as compared to the vast United States, which is made up of forty-eight such parts and that the United States has had the experience of past ages on which to base her practice.

First, both Athens and the United States fall into the category of democracies. Through the ages education in a democracy has sought to give man strength to lead a life which is happy, secure, and productive and has given him command over the forces which control his worldly destiny. Education has given man freedom, equality, and brotherhood.

Whenever the state has been placed on a pedestal and the sum of life activity has been devoted to the service of a few, man has been subject to terrorism and anarchism; his existence as an individual interacting with those around him in such a state is denied and his education feared. Whenever the state has been formed for the benefit of those who live under it, adequate education is provided and encouraged.

Greece provided a well-rounded program of music and gymnastics but did not put those opportunities on the level of the working man. The schools were privately administered limiting the education to the wealthier class; only free citizens were allowed to attend. The requirements for the ideal democratic education stipulate that it must be made available to all and that it must be conducted impartially.² This is

²Laurentine B. Collins and Rosalind Cassidy, et. al., Physical Education in the Secondary School, New York, Progressive Education Association, 1940, p. 21.

the way in which Grecian education failed to meet the modern ideal of democracy. Women, in modern times, have taken a place beside men in education, business, and other professional fields. This role could never have been taken by the Athenian women, who were educated solely in the arts of home making and forbidden to participate in public life.³ However, the history of democracy in ancient times was in its infancy, and Greece instigated many customs which were to be the foundations of future democracies.

Both governments were built to serve the people and protect their interests. In the United States the system of public education guarantees the populace an equal chance to develop mentally and physically and to improve its economic condition. In Greece the education prepared free men to be better equipped to live efficiently. In neither case did the state dominate the education and dictate its methods. The people obtained an education because they wanted to remain free and perpetuate their way of life.

The State hath said that only free men can be educated;
God hath said that only educated men can be free.⁴
Epictetus

Though the Greeks did not provide education for the slaves, they did not suppress them as Sparta had done but protected their interests as far as

³An interesting digression is to be found in seventh and sixth century Aeolia.

The customs of the Aeolians permitted more social and domestic freedom than was common in Greece. Aeolian women were not confined to the harem like Ionians, or subjected to the rigorous discipline of the Spartans.

Henry Thornton Wharton, Sappho, fourth edition, Chicago, A. C. McClurg and Company, 1898, p. 13.

⁴Thomas D. Wood and Rosalind Cassidy, The New Physical Education, New York, The Macmillan Company, 1927, p. 25.

they recognized them to be human beings. Self-government in school life makes self-government possible in actual life situations, and student leadership in physical education makes worthy leaders in the future societies.

The second point which is typical of both philosophies of physical education, education, and consequently life in general is that of the unity of mind and body. No country has ever quite equalled the height to which the Greeks interpreted this idea.⁵ The varied degree of emphasis in the two civilizations is chiefly the result of their religions. The Greek gods were given human characteristics; of these characteristics a strong, beautiful body was predominant. They were well-proportioned mentally and physically, and in spirit they differed little from the mortal Greeks. Worship and homage to the gods was paid through dances and athletic contests given in their honor.

The way in which the teachings of Christianity have been directed and interpreted has directed the philosophy of body-mind relationship to denial of the body and exaltation of the spirit.⁶ The Puritans of colonial America frowned upon body education and pleasure in living; thus, they planted a germ which has been hard to kill. Even today some religious sects profess asceticism and some schools are purely scholastic. Early Christians interpreted worship as a communion of spirit; limited exclusively to this conception, worship could never be manifested through body activity. Proof of the fact that this philosophy is dying

⁵Rosalind Cassidy, New Directions in Physical Education for the Adolescent Girl in High School and College, New York, A. S. Barnes and Company, 1938, p. 71.

⁶Ibid., p. 70.

out may be found in the many churches today which provide recreational programs which contribute to the same goal as that of physical education. Both provide for worthy use of leisure time.

The United States has had its sophists too, but the unity of the whole man remains basic to the philosophy of physical education of both eras. The concept of sound body--sound mind is fundamental to both.

Thirdly, the aim of harmonious development of the individual and the aim of social efficiency are similar. A well-rounded personality which grows out of equal emphasis to mental and physical activity may be identified with both goals. Harmony is incongruent with over-development of one side of the individual. Likewise, a socially efficient person cannot exist without a balance in all phases of living. The only difference appears in the connotation of the words involved. Social efficiency implies more group consciousness and emphasizes more the importance of living in harmony with one's fellowmen. There may be many well-rounded people, but they must be able to interact with one another before their potentialities are appreciated. Modern Americans emphasize social living to a greater extent than did the Greeks. Survival in the modern world demands social intercourse.

A fourth and major likeness in the ancient and present day theories is that of physical education being a part of education. Education through the physical rather than of the physical is an adaptation of mind and body unity. Both today in the United States and yesterday in Athens physical education was "considered to be a way of education, not to produce soldiers, big muscles, or gymnastic posture, but to secure the educational development of individuals with the resultant by-products of

health, neuro-muscular skills, attitudes, and proper social conduct."⁷ Physical education strengthened its position in both societies by contributing to the same objectives and using the same methods as the general program of education.

In glancing back at the history of Greek physical education, one will discover that it developed hand in hand with general education. Both were native to the earliest inhabitants and professed a unity of purpose, and as the education changed so did the physical education. "Physical education in this country has developed upside down and inside out."⁸ Asceticism and scholasticism, non-existent in Greek society, retarded the growth of education through physical activity; only in the twentieth century have educators caught sight of the fact that the two have the same goal in common. This enlightening came at the time when physical educators were abandoning foreign systems for one of their own and when education was changing to the scientific method.

Though both nations made physical education a part of the whole, the Greek program was a much greater part. While Greece devoted half of the time to body activity, the United States provides at best a few hours a day in instruction in play activities. It is not to be expected that such emphasis will ever exist in the United States; yet the amount of leisure time available to most people today is equal to the time spent in the palaestra and gymnasia in Athens. If these hours can be devoted to wholesome, and educational recreation, then only will the ideal present

⁷N. P. Neilson and Winifred Van Hagen, Physical Education for Elementary Schools, New York, A. S. Barnes and Company, 1932, p. 3.

⁸Ibid., p. 2.

in Athens be reproduced. The Greeks fully realized the importance of activity of a physical nature in contributing to a well-rounded, harmonious individual.

In their gymnastic training, the ancient peoples sought moral values. This also is one purpose of modern physical education. Character development through the medium of physical activity is possible if the program has solid principles and effective methods. Sportsmanship is not for the playing field alone but for all life situations. Both programs foster the building of citizens for the present and for the future. Attitudes and knowledges, if related to definite counterparts, carry-over into adulthood:

All these activities give the students opportunity to exercise their mental capacity as well as their neuromuscular systems and learned reactions. They stimulate such responses of alertness, attention, preparedness, judgment, and so on, as are not possible to any extent in any other field of education.....and it has been observed frequently that the mental development in physical activities is just as evident and even more rapid than the gains in strength and skill.⁹

In making their program a more integral part of education, modern physical educators have sometimes forgotten the physical objectives of developing strong, sound bodies. These outcomes cannot be derived from any other means except through physical activity. Physical education in both periods has contributed to the social, moral, and mental objectives of education, but bodily vigor and health have been the special areas in which this field has functioned.

⁹Granville B. Johnson, The New Physical Education, second edition, Minneapolis, Minn., Burgess Publishing Co., 1942, pp. 69-70.

The basic methods employed are the same. Natural activity is fundamental to normal growth, permits the formation of a flexible program to serve individual needs. Each student recognized as a distinct personality with opportunities to develop his own capacities toward individual interests is the unit of both educational systems. Definitely classified as a scientific world, the United States is not the sole possessor of such a method. Though the Greeks did not have the modern discoveries at their command, they used their science to the fullest extent that they understood it. And, relatively speaking, they were not very far behind some modern ideas. The activity process gave each young Greek and young American the opportunity for individual self-expression.

The last similarity to be discussed is one which spelled doom for Greek physical education and finally Greek civilization and one which is in a position to have the same fatal effect on modern way of life. These intruders in the realm of physical education are specialization and the resulting extreme professionalism. These forces arise in the field of athletics. Though athletics and physical education are not synonymous, physical education uses sports and games in its program and as its tool with which to work. Over-emphasis in athletics tends to debase and lower the standards of wholesome competition; then, the tool of physical education is rusty and corrupted.

Specialization in the world of sport disregards participation for the many and devotes its efforts to the perfection of a few performers. A spectator class develops which demands entertainment and a good show

for its money.¹⁰ "When money enters into sport, corruption is sure to follow."¹¹ In the case of professionalism, the game becomes the end in itself, not the means to an end.

When bribery and gambling permeated Greek athletics, the national ideal symbolized by the Olympics began to crumble. The Olympics withstood the influence of athleticism for many years, and even though the sport became professionalized, cases of actual corruption were rare.¹² Olympic rules placed heavy penalties on such practices:

The offense was discovered and the guilty parties were all fined. Out of the fines were made six bronze statues of Zeus.....which were placed at the entrances of the stadium with inscriptions warning competitors that not with money but with speed of foot and strength of body must prizes be won at Olympia.¹³

The standards set by this festival were hard to kill, and many years were to pass before it would cease to mean what it did to the Greek nation.

Professionalism in the United States has expressed itself in the same manner.

It is interesting to note.....that many modern students of present-day American life profess to see in our enthusiasm for professional baseball, boxing, and other sports a development of spectator interest which bodes ill for America of the future. The same critics see a similar threat in the commercializing of college sports.¹⁴

¹⁰ Agnes R. Wayman, Education Through Physical Education, third edition, revised, Philadelphia, Lea and Febiger, 1934, p. 174.

¹¹ Norman E. Gardiner, Athletics of the Ancient World, London, Oxford University Press, 1930, p. 103.

¹² Norman E. Gardiner, Greek Athletic Sports and Festivals, London, Macmillan and Company, Limited, 1910, p. 134.

¹³ Gardiner, Athletics in the Ancient World, p. 103.

¹⁴ Eugene W. Nixon and Frederick W. Cozens, An Introduction to Physical Education, second edition, revised, Philadelphia, W. B. Saunders Company, 1941, p. 32.

Specialization is not hard to discover and soon makes itself conspicuous in any game or sport. The efforts to combat these evil forces are in vain unless the people are educated to participate in sports as adults and to realize that what happened to Greece during her decline could easily be repeated.

No longer do present-day Olympics reflect those standards prevalent in the ancient world. These festivals were brought to life again at the close of the nineteenth century to provide friendly and international competition between nations, but the strained relations following World War II have widened the gap between agreement and have made good will impossible.

Far from being merely an exhibition of athletic prowess, the Olympic Games took on in the mind and spirit of this remarkable race a religious, artistic, and literary significance truly representative of a people to whom life was not a mere struggle for existence, or a vale of tears through which one must pass in order to reach a better world, but a glorious adventure, and opportunity to live fully and completely--to think, to express, to feel, to do, and to enjoy to the utmost.¹⁵

This description of the Grecian festival explains the strength of the ancient Olympia philosophy of fair play and wholesome competition.

The 1948 international meeting in London and Switzerland indicated wherein the modern festival is deteriorating. At the winter festival a souvenir-seeking on-looker stole the Olympic flag from its spot over St. Moritz.¹⁶ Lebanon threatened to withdraw her participants if Zionist entrants were permitted.¹⁷ Germany and Japan were refused the

¹⁵Ibid., p. 31.

¹⁶New York Times, February 4, 1948, p. 29.

¹⁷New York Times, January 22, 1948, p. 1, section 5.

right to participate. Quarrels between the nations concerning the rules and regulations were too numerous to display much of the original Olympic spirit. Also, the ancient Greeks suspended all fighting between the scattered city-states to give Olympia a peaceful, religious atmosphere. The tradition of the torch has lingered on, its symbol meaningless now.

For the first time in Greek history, the torch was illuminated with Greece in a state of war. On the roads and in the hills surrounding Olympia, a thousand Greek soldiers, some in armored cars, stood alert against a possible general attack.¹⁸

Unless world peace can be established, the Olympics of today will never compare to the old festivals at Mount Olympus.

The horrors of specialization and spectatoritis should not condemn national sports and games, because it is the fault of the people that they have often times been misdirected. Athletics are natural to each country and add meaning to the culture of each nation. Without the degradation of professionalism, athletics strengthen democracy by equalizing class differences, by developing temperance, by achieving self-control, and by developing honesty and fair play.¹⁹ One should be as good a spectator as he is a performer; good sportsmanship may be displayed in many ways by the onlooker.

Though the philosophies of the ancient and modern worlds parallel each other, it seems reasonable to conclude that the Greeks at the height of their physical education had less negative forces operating against

¹⁸New York Times, July 18, 1948, p. 1., section v.

¹⁹Jesse Feiring Williams and William L. Hughes, Athletics in Education, Philadelphia, W. B. Saunders Company, 1936, p. 455. (Quoted by Williams from John A. Scott, "When Greek Met Greek--A Comparison of Ancient and Modern Athletics," St. Nicolas, May, 1929.)

them and that they have been unequalled in the importance placed on physical education by any other nation including the modern United States. The physical education of ancient Greece has been studied at its peak. It is impossible to foretell the direction of the modern program. It may be at its peak now, it may just be approaching it, or, if negative influences are not erased, it may be on the decline. It is the responsibility of the citizens of the United States to uphold the sound philosophy of physical education which is being formulated if Greece is to be surpassed and if the modern program aiming for social efficiency for each individual is to advance.

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