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An Interactionist View of Elementary School Physical Education and Socialisation: The Past and Present Process of Learning One's Place in Society

Christopher D. Stonebanks

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in
The Department
of
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Abstract

An Interactionist View of Elementary School
Physical Education and Socialisation:
The Past and Present Process of
Learning One's Place in Society

Christopher D. Stonebanks

Physical education programs have been charged with the responsibility of developing our children's bodies through sports and exercise. In addition, we expect adult-supervised, structured play to expose our children to fundamental concepts of modern life: competition, co-operation, rules, values, structure and hierarchy. If this is so, then physical education is an important socializing mechanism; yet somehow society does not expect this to be its explicit goal. This paper investigates the value of physical education in the socialization of children, how it has served and failed societies in the past, and how it may serve and fail them in the future. An historical survey of various societies' athletic programs details their socializing effects in the past. Discussions on the social consequences of our current programs are evidenced by field observation; we study the dynamics of athletic peer groups, observe the initiation of novices and examine the effect of professional sports heroes. An examination of the theoretical principles behind the observations allows the reader to appreciate the impact on the developing child of the social dynamics of formalized play. We come to understand that much of the skill and knowledge acquired during such activity are vitally social; from the social perspective, we cannot discount the implications of improperly directed formal play. Furthermore, we cannot ignore the tremendous positive socializing potential of our children's physical education.

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I would like to thank Professor Ailie Cleghorn for the exceptional effort and attention she has put into my graduate, as well as my undergraduate, education. Most students have had one teacher who has influenced their life, that they are never forgotten; Dr. Cleghorn has been that teacher for me. I would also like to express immeasurable gratitude to my parents, Charles W. Stonebanks and Soraya Guidefar-Stonebanks, for the continuous support and encouragement only a mother and father could give. I would like to thank my brother and sister, Carlo A. Stonebanks and Corina N. Stonebanks, for simply listening to and helping their little brother. I would like to thank Carman and Cynthia Bennett, my mother-in-law and father-in-law, for all their assistance. I also extend my deep appreciation and gratitude to Olga Hrycak, of the CECM, for her advice and guidance. Most importantly, I credit and dedicate this thesis to my wonderfully supportive and lovely wife Melanie and my equally beautiful daughter Farah Roxanne, the two most inspirational people in my life.

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Chapter One

Introduction

The main question that this study will address centres on the function of physical education for learning about the social structure and value system of the broader society, and the place of the self within that structure. More specifically, it is expected that gym classes and other formal play settings will come close to a caricature of society itself, with the norms for selection, allocation, and participation rigidly set out and defined. It is also expected that the primary criteria for in-group membership will be ascriptive: the child with the best physical ability will enjoy the higher status.

By means of participant observation, an Interactionist theoretical perspective, and a historical analysis, this thesis will explore the implications of children's socialisation through physical education. The focus of the investigation will be twofold: the first will establish physical education as an effective educational tool for socialising children; the second will pertain to the socialisation process for the hierarchical structuring of children's groups, especially regarding the criteria children use for selecting or rejecting their peers. Of particular interest will be the extent to which upward or downward mobility in the group occurs, and to what extent adult teaching or coaching influences this process. Children's perceptions of this mobility will also be explored.

Within this first chapter, a historical perspective of physical education will be presented in order to illustrate its long established use as an agent of children's socialisation to the broader society. Chapter two will provide the reader with a brief background of the current status of physical education in Canada

The theoretical foundations and central concepts on which this thesis is based will be covered in chapter three. The theories of Interactionism, as defined by Cooley, Weber, and Mead, will be advanced including notions of the "self", socialisation, social stratification, the hidden curriculum, and formal and non-formal play settings.

The manner in which data for this thesis were gathered will be found in chapter five, which outlines the methodology of participant observation. Chapter six will present the findings that will then be discussed in the concluding section, chapter seven.

Participant observation, combined with a grounding in the Interactionist perspective, was used to observe and gather data on the actual play and games of children within an elementary school physical education milieu and, to a lesser extent, outside of the "institutionalised" educational setting. Data accumulated in non-institutionalised environments were compiled for comparative purposes and to acknowledge that locations of "sport learning" for children have increasingly been shifting from the formal institutionalised educational setting to outside sport organisations.[1]

The elementary school participant observation took place at an English speaking Montreal Catholic School Commission (CECM) co-ed school located in the east end of Montreal. The position of the participant

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[1] Berryman, Jack W. "The Rise of highly Organized Sports for Preadolescent Boys". Children in Sport: A Contemporary Anthology.

observer in this study was actually that of the primary (or sole) physical education teacher for grades four to six, from September 1993 to June 1995. The first year in this milieu was spent simply learning how to teach physical education, before any observations concerning children's interactions could be documented in the second year. This will be discussed in further detail in the chapter dedicated to participant observations.

The participant observation and preceding analysis will explore the socialisation process to which children are exposed through physical education and the impact this has on the perception of "self". Specifically addressed will be the "social stratification" and "hierarchical structuring" that occur within the "society" of children through physical education and the probability that these perceptions are carried on into one's adult years.

Social stratification refers to the hierarchical ordering of individuals and/or groups according to their possession of whatever that society values, such as authority, prestige, wealth, physical competence and attractiveness, intelligence, and power.[2] The self is defined as a "hypothetical construct: something which serves to explain observable behaviour but is not directly observable itself"[3]. The self, or self concept is what each person finds individualising about him/herself in a social setting. Therefore, without the action of individualisation, or setting oneself apart from others, there would be no self. The concept of self relates directly to that of social interaction.

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2 Mifflen, Frank J. & Mifflen, Sydney C. The Sociology of Education: Canada and Beyond. pgs. 39-42.

3 Ibid. pg. 183.

The Interactionist theory, which is central to this thesis, "...focus(es) on the micro rather than the macro level, on humans as creative, active beings instead of forces external to them, on the negotiation of meanings, and therefore on processes that need to be interpreted rather than on structures"[4]. The concern here is with the interactional process that brings about the structures of children's groups; the interactional process between a child and his/her peers or a student and his/her teacher. Proposed, is the theory that children's sense of self, and their perceptions of and towards society are greatly influenced by how they learn to interact and "play the game" within the physical education setting. The physical education class becomes, in effect, the learning ground to the ways in which the larger society functions.

The concept of "playing in the game" stems from the Interactionist perspective of socialisation, developed by George Herbert Mead. *It is this viewpoint that will be central to the research.* Mead theorised that the genesis of the self is accomplished through the gradual developing ability in a child to take on the role of others, and then to visualise his/her own performance from the point of view of others. It was the belief of Mead that the human concept of "self" was derived through these social acts within a society.[5]

In defining the methodology of participant observation, Robert Bogdan (1972), author of Participant Observation in Organisational Settings

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4 Murphy, Sociological Theories of Education. pg. 141.

5 Mead, George Herbert. On Social Psychology.

and James Spradley (1980), author of Participant Observation, both state the compatibility of the participant observational methodology to the Interactionist theory. Interactionism offers participant observation a theoretical framework for understanding the development of "self" and participant observation allows a chronicled understanding of the individual's defined role. Both seek to define the role of the individual within any given society or setting.

> Much social interaction centres around physical skills. The child lacking in motor skills is often barred or not accepted in social participation. Human personality cannot be developed apart from the social group and, since our children are destined to live in a highly organised social order the physical activities of children and youth should be used to develop social learning and a gradual intensification of social consciousness.[6]

Our sense of self is dependent and moulded by how others perceive us. It is hoped to demonstrate that within the western Montreal cultural experience, sports is one of the predominant social contexts in which children develop their sense of self-identity. When we consider the ramifications of Charles C. Cowell's statement that children will most likely be socialised through some form of physical education or participation, it only seems logical that we as educators and educational researchers investigate the topic thoroughly.

> One factor that appears to have significant influence on peer relations, especially for boys, is physical competence. Children gain peer acceptance by excelling at something

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6 Cowell, Charles C., "The Contributions of Physical Activity to Social Development". pg. 292.

> valued by other children, and there is much evidence that athletic skills are valued by other children.[7]

In North America at least, children are particularly prone to rank its members according to physical ability and the achievements that go part-in-parcel with it. And as the above quote suggests, the world of a child is not much different from the world of adults, where a combination of ascribed and achieved characteristics determine one's place in the group. As Rainer Martens, professor at the University of Illinois and author of numerous books and articles dealing with sport psychology says, "through the eyes of a young boy, failure to learn to ride a bicycle is just as serious as his father's failure in business".[8]

I would concur with this viewpoint. Having grown up in an English speaking suburban district of Montreal, Canada I observed that boys from the area seemed to mimic the way that their parents (mostly their fathers) viewed economic wealth in high regard, by valuing the only wealthy possession they owned: their bodies. It might be argued that it is not physical fitness, per se, that they were interested in; rather, but the power and respect that is associated with being a valued member or player in a prestigious sport.

This study will explore the strong socialising and influential effect that physical education has on developing a child's sense of self. Furthermore,

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7 Evans & Roberts, "Physical Competence and the Development of Children's Peer Relations". pg. 23.

8 Martens, Rainer. "Kid Sports: A Den of Inequity or a Land of Promise". Children in Sport: A Contemporary Anthology. pg. 204.

we will address the concern that if schools continue the trend of phasing out physical education classes, then in whose hands are we leaving the responsibility of socialising our children through sports education?

Outside of the "game", we very much become the individual who we were perceived to be in the game: the best, the worst, average, loser, prevailer of great odds, assertive, bully, victim, winner, and so on. It is important to note that these are genuine and real occurrences of everyday life, with equally real social ramifications. Many people still have vivid memories of being the last picked for a soccer game, or being the individual singled out during an overtime loss in hockey. These events can leave deep emotional scars with long term effects on the way we perceive ourselves, and consequently on how others perceive us. It is the premise of this work that peer assessment in sports is a stronger agent of socialisation than some researchers believe and is, therefore, a worthy topic of investigation.

It is hoped that this study will establish physical education as a convincing socialising agent in a child's education. Its intent is to cast a light on the ways in which children interpret one aspect of the social world they live in, and illuminate the impact that events and their interpretations have on the child's sense of self. At a more practical level, it is important for educators to understand the dynamics of the formal participation structures of children's groups so that children who risk being isolated can be helped to feel as an integral part of the group. Children who experience peer rejection and isolation may be at risk for school failure and later, drop out. The

ultimate aim of research such as this is to identify strategies for dealing with school failure, peer rejection and drop out.

Chapter Two

Historical Perspective of Physical Education

A historical perspective is essential in understanding how and why a situation exists in its present day condition. This chapter will trace the historical evolution of our modern day conceptualisation of and approach to physical education, and will demonstrate how it has long been used as an effective agent of socialisation.

> Since all human institutions and agencies as they exist today represent only the latest stage in a long process of growth and development, each is best understood when we turn back to the past and retrace the significant steps in its evolution to present forms.[9]

Additionally, it is hoped that a historical perspective on physical education will firmly establish its influence and relationship within the broader educational establishment.

Earle F. Zeigler noted that "(t)here is a scarcity of material currently available" that deals with the history of Canadian physical education.[10] Much of what has influenced our Canadian perspectives on, implementation of, and attitudes towards physical education have derived from other cultures and countries. In examining the history of physical education comparatively, we uncover that, indeed, our modern day use of physical education is inspired by the success that many countries have reported in socialising their children through physical education.

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9 Leonard, Fred E. "Introduction to Pioneers of Modern Physical Training". pg. 1.

10 Zeigler, Earle F. A History of Physical Education & Sport in the United States and Canada. pg. 431.

Fred L. Martens' "Time Line of the History of Physical Education" (1968), clearly indicates the major historical influences to the modern North American physical education, and will therefore serve as a guide for the countries that will be discussed. Our focus will begin briefly with the birth of organised physical education in the ancient Oriental nations, move to ancient Greece, then Rome, shift to the educational Benedictine Monasteries of medieval Europe, touch on the Renaissance, continue to the major philosophies during the colonisation period of North America, and conclude with a Canadian perspective.[11]

It should be noted that the history of physical education has, to the greater extent, been chronicled in the male perspective and often the histories of young girls were omitted due to their exclusion from their societies' physical education programs. The feminine segregation from education should be regarded as a form of socialisation in itself. Whatever exclusion, or participation in physical education girls underwent will be mentioned within this thesis.

> The history of education reveals that physical education has always been present but as a subject it has been regarded with varying degrees of importance.[12]

It is without doubt that physical training has been taught to children of nomadic peoples, of centuries long ago, in order to pass down techniques of hunting and basic survival. This sort of physical education, however

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[11] Martens, Fred L. Basic Concepts of Physical Education: The Foundations in Canada. pgs. 118-123.

[12] Kirchner, Glenn. Physical Education for Elementary School Children. pg. 4.

interesting, is not pertinent to our research and would be best reserved for further study in an anthropological field. For historical events of physical education to be included in this chapter they must meet particular criteria: first, that the physical training or learning be located in a "formal" educational setting as deemed by that society's "state"; and secondly, that it has had a direct influence on the way in which modern Canadian physical education has developed.

Revealed to us through antiquated relief art of Babylonia and Assyria are sculpted men engaged in physical training. Ancient Sumeria has left us the legacy of Gilgamesh, inscribed on twelve tablets, proclaiming his heroic stories of physical prowess. Egyptian hieroglyphics, dating back to approximately 5000 B.C., portray wrestlers in numerous wrestling positions.[13] Extrapolating the extent and value that these societies placed upon physical education is difficult, given the fact that there is limited documentation dealing directly with this subject matter. However, through the various mediums of communication that these ancient civilisations have utilised, we can see that physical training played an important enough role that they were documented and preserved in their respective histories.[14]

Through the art of these ancient Oriental nations we can gain a sense of the significance and respect that was placed upon physical achievement and proficiency. Yet, to what extent physical education was taught and to whom it was taught is subject to debate. Credit is given where credit is due.

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[13] Emmett, A. Rice, Huthcinson, John L., & Lee, Mabel. A Brief History of Physical Education. pgs. 3-9.

[14] Zeigler, Earle F. History of Physical Education and Sport. pgs. 4-29.

Ancient Egypt, Sumeria, Babylonia and Assyria can all equally claim recognition for having given birth to the concept of teaching physical training in an early version of a formal educational setting. Athens and Sparta, of ancient Greece, are two well-known civilisations that perhaps best exemplify societies that held physical education in the highest regard. Partially due to admiration, but more importantly out of necessity, it was the Greek's rivals, the ancient Persians, that inclined Athens, Sparta and other city states to develop physical education programs of high importance in their communities. Therefore, it is with the influential Persian empire that we begin our history of physical education.

The Persian empire reached its pinnacle of affluence in 529 B.C. in the rule of King Cyrus (the Great), with his ever expanding empire extending from the Indus river to the Aegean sea, subjugating, to name a few, the nations of Media, Babylonia, and Greece. The astonishing success of these conquests was due in large part to the education of the Persian boy and young man. (...)Persian education was primarily moral and physical...[15] Mothers in the Persian empire were expected to teach their children morality, truth, and obedience coupled with the teachings of Zoroaster. At the young age of six the state took over the education of the young Persian boy, teaching him physical and military training; running, slinging, horsemanship, archery, javelin throwing and other athletic sports were all part of his daily routine. This training continued until the age of twenty;

[15] Ibid. pg. 7.

however, since Persian men were expected to serve in a military capacity until the age of fifty, physical training was made a part of their daily life.[16]

Physical education, the very element that created, socialised and reinforced a powerful army and way of life for the Persian empire, unwittingly became its downfall. With such a strong emphasis on physical education it has been surmised by historians (Emett A. Rice et al.) that the oversight of intellectual pursuits, and therefore industrial advancements, weakened the Persian empire to the progression of Alexander the Great and his armies in 334 B.C.

> (P)hysical training formed at least half of every system of education practised in the Hellenic states or recommended by Hellenic Philosophers. We immediately realise that Greece was unique. Such a stress on physical education was unknown and unthinkable in earlier cultures of the East, Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Asia Minor.[17]

The Greeks held the Persian empire's heavy emphasis on youth physical education in high regard.[18] This can be recognised through the Greeks duplication, in their own youth programs, of the Persian philosophy of commitment, severity and socialisation in the training of a young boy. By reproducing their enemy's dedication to the use of physical education, the Greeks surpassed all other nations' commitment to physical education in many ways, and thereby strengthened their ability to combat the continuous

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16 Ibid. pgs. 7-8.

17 Forbes, Clarence A. "Athenian Physical Education in the Fifth Century, B.C... History of Physical Education and Sport. pg. 151.

18 Rice, Emmett A., Hutchinson, John L., & Lee, Mabel. A Brief History of Physical Education. pg. 8.

threat of an invading Persian army and warring neighbour city-states within Greece.

The Persian empire, along with the other aforementioned ancient Oriental nations, used physical education to create a physically stronger populace and to socialise its youth towards military obedience and acceptance in which to aid in the conquest of other nations. The reoccurrence in which physical education was used by the state in order to create and/or socialise a better militarily trained citizen in a society was perhaps no better exemplified than in Athens and Sparta of Ancient Greece.

> The Greeks were the first people in Europe to attain a high degree of civilisation ... Physical education held a more important place among the Greeks than in any society since that time.[19]

Ancient Greece of the fifth and fourth century B.C. boasted a culture and civilisation that was as equally revered in its own era as it is now. Athens and Sparta, two groups that are best described as independent city-states within ancient Greece, are the best known examples of this "brilliant and productive period of Greek history".[20] Considering that Athens, Sparta, and other city-states were independent of each other the possibility and reality of aggressive encounters from other neighbouring city-states were ever present.

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[19] Ibid. pg. 10.
[20] Ibid. pg. 14.

> The political groups varied in many respects, but in one they were very similar, namely, their attitudes towards military and physical training.[21]

Perhaps it was the constant threat and fear of having a rival city-state occupying or laying siege to one's land that evoked similar responses in the many city-states to create physical and military training programs, or perhaps physical training programs were designed to facilitate a city-states ability to overpower another.

Sparta and Athens possessed what one historian described as "two strongly contrasted types of education, unlike in aim and method"[22]. The Athenian child's education was described as a "broader" form of education, in which the individual was highly valued and "free development" was encouraged. In contrast, the Spartan youth's education was overtly designed to train a boy into becoming a warrior soldier and socialise him to become a citizen of Sparta who would place his city's success and strength above all else. This in essence, would produce a "citizen warrior" who was prepared to fight and die for the state.[23]

The physical education program in which the Spartan male partook was one in which pain and hardship were conditions that they were taught to endure.[24] State sponsored schooling of a Spartan youth was similar to that of his enemy, the young Persian boy. Both Persian and Spartan youth

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21 Ibid. pg. 14.

22 Leonard, Fred E. Introduction to the Pioneers of Modern Physical Training. pg. 1.

23 Ibid. pg. 1.

24 Rice, Emmett A., Hutchinson, John L., & Lee, Mabel. A Brief History of Physical Education.

schooling were based on the teachings of morality, duty and physical education, learned attributes that were necessary to perpetuating proper citizenship in a militant society. However, historians have surmised that the physical educational experience of the Spartan child was by far more harsh and militant than that of his Persian counterpart.[25]

> Sparta, surrounded by an unfriendly and subject people, (...), in which self preservation required a form of training designed to mould every citizen into the best possible weapon of defence. Individual welfare was therefore strictly subordinate to that of the community.[26]

The implementation of this unyielding philosophy of maintaining and perpetuating a military state began at birth with the state examination of every new-born child: "At birth the child was examined by state authorities and if found to be physically deficient it was exposed in some remote place to die"[27]. If the state believed the new-born child to be strong enough to endure his impending physical training the mother was then given the responsibility of raising a child with "a well disciplined character and a hardy constitution"[28]. At the age of seven the young male child's rearing and education was taken over by the state.

Once removed from his parents, the state began educating and, in essence, enforcing the norms and standards of Spartan society upon the

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25 Forbes, Clarence A. "Athenian Physical Training in the Fifth Century, B.C... History of Physical Education & Sport.

26 Leonard, Fred E. A Guide to the History of Physical Education. pg. 18.

27 Rice, Emmett A., Hutchinson, John L., & Lee, Mabel. A Brief History of Physical Education. pg. 15.

28 Ibid. pg. 15.

young child. The primary manner in which this socialisation of Spartan society was administered was through physical education.

> Education was viewed as a function of the state, and physical hardihood, skilful use of weapons, self-reliant courage and iron discipline were developed by a type of education which was chiefly gymnastic and military.[29]

All education within Spartan society was designed to meet a specific end: the creation of a loyal and obedient citizen warrior. "Music, art, and literature counted for nothing in this narrow-minded policy, save as in some trifling way they subserve this end"[30]. To quell the sense of individuality, the state placed all young Spartan children in public dwellings along with a large number of other boys. Removed from his family, which is a primary agent of socialisation, the Spartan child would eat, sleep and train with his peers so that they would ultimately share the commonly imposed disciplined physical training and resulting obedience for his superiors.

The physical education curriculum for the Spartans included running, wrestling, archery, throwing stones and javelins, boxing, the pancratium, hunting and wrestling, horseback riding, and gymnastics[31], all being physical training with a specific militant intent. His state controlled physical training lasted until the age of twenty, at which time learning was over and he was expected to serve in a military capacity. Throughout his life, the Spartan male was expected to remain in top condition for military duty. It has been

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29 Leonard, Fred E., A Guide to the History of Physical Education. pg. 18.

30 Forbes, Clarence A. Greek Physical Education. pg. 14.

31 Ibid. pg. 25.

said that for a Spartan "war was a welcomed relief from the strenuous discipline of peace".[32]

It was briefly stated in the introduction of this chapter, the history of physical education has chiefly been written from, and for, the male perspective. As is usually the case, a feminine perspective, or historical accounting thereof, is only mentioned in recognition that young girls had no particular participation in physical education. This seems to be symptomatic of the general problem of exclusion that women have historically endured in dealing with the educational systems. The issue of feminine prohibition in physical education, which grew into feminine discrimination in physical education is, as noted earlier, in itself a form of gender socialisation. However, ancient Sparta is a unique exception in that the Spartans included girls in physical education programs as a method of active socialisation.

> A rare and noteworthy feature of the Spartan education was the admission of girls. The purpose here again was utilitarian: girls had to grow up sturdy and hard if they were to be mothers of Spartans.[33]

The author of the above quote recognises that "little is known of how the (Spartan) girls trained"[34]. However, enough has been chronicled to conclude that they did engage in much of the same physical training and lived in dwellings similar to that of Spartan boys, although not to the same

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[32] Rice, Emmett A., Hutchinson John L., & Lee, Mabel. A Brief History of Physical Education. pg. 16.

[33] Forbes, Clarence A. Greek Physical Education. pg. 28.

[34] Ibid. pg. 28.

physically demanding extremes. The primary function of the Spartan girls' education was to produce a strong, loyal, child-bearing Spartan citizen; the manner in which this was taught to girls was through physical education.[35]

The only indication as to how long the Spartan state supervised the young girls' education is found in the writing of Plato's Laws. Here Plato states that "girls should exercise from the age of thirteen until they reach the age of nineteen, unless they marry first. They may, if they wish, continue their training until the age of twenty, but under no circumstances longer than that, and never after they become brides"[36]. Forbes, however, believes that the age in which the Spartan state seized control over the physical education of young girls started at the age of seven, rather than thirteen, and then continued until the age of twenty or marriage.

In Sparta, female participation in physical training was simply a means to an end: the development of a stronger military society and the socialisation of Spartan women to accept their place in society.

> The Spartan system of physical and military training obtained the desired results: the army was the best in the world... Sparta did not contribute great drama, immortal verse, models of architecture, and inimitable sculpture but left such accomplishments to her more cultured neighbour, Athens.[37]

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35 Leonard, Fred E. The History of Physical Education. pg. 19.

36 Ibid. pg. 31.

37 Rice, Emmett A., Hutchinson, John L., & Lee, Mabel. A Brief History of Physical Education. pg. 17.

Athens of the fifth century, B.C., was Sparta's greatest rival.[38] Athens developed a markedly different educational system that reflected a society dedicated to a democratic and enlightened philosophy.[39] "In the city of Athens nearly every one was eager to be a good citizen"[40], and with good reason: Athens boasted an educationally, artistically, economically, and governmentally fruitful democratic community that was at the time the envy of most other societies, and became the model of many others in the future.

> Pericles, one of the chief Athenian statesman of the time, heard no voice of dissent when he proudly proclaimed, "I declare that our whole city is the school of Greece".[41]

The state, hoping to reproduce and maintain a democratic, enlightened and patriotic society, provided opportunity for a "well rounded" education for all "free" citizens of Athens. Prominent in the Athenian philosophy towards education was physical education, combined with the studies of the arts, music, and literature.[42]

Freedom of the individual in Athens was noted at the moment of birth: whereas in Sparta the state decided whether or not a new-born child was strong enough to live, "(t)he Athenian father - not the state - decided

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38 Forbes, Clarence A. "Athenian Physical Education in the Fifth Century, B.C.. History of Physical Education & Sport. pg. 151.

39 Leonard, Fred E. "Introduction to the Pioneers of Modern Physical Education". A History of Physical Education & Sport in the United states and Canada. pgs. 1-10

40 Ibid. pg. 2

41 Ibid. pg. 5

42 Rice, Emmett A., Hutchinson, John L., & Lee, Mabel. A Brief History of Physical Education. pg. 17.

whether his offspring was to be reared"[43]. If the Athenian father deemed his child to be deformed, sickly and/or weak then the baby met the same fate as its Spartan counterpart: it was exposed to the elements and left to die. However if the new-born child was judged healthy and strong, it received an education within Athens that "in its heyday enjoyed more prestige than any other city in Greece or indeed in all of Europe"[44].

> It is in Athens that we can see physical education at its best, for there it grew up and flourished as an integral part of an admirable society.[45]

Physical education flourished in the Athenian educational system for several reasons: first, physical fitness was integral in creating the Athenian archetypal "whole man"; second, in a society that honoured beauty and art, a perfectly sculptured body was an accomplishment to be admired and respected; third, a recognition that longevity of life and health was correlated to physical fitness; and fourth, and perhaps most importantly, physical training of Athenian citizens ensured a stronger army and therefore secured the protection of the city-state.[46] As with most other societies, Athens saw physical education as a vehicle in which "proper" citizenship could be socialised or instilled in its youth.

The Athenian society was one in which the educational program reflected the broader philosophy in which the "free choice" of each and

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[43] Ibid. pg. 17.

[44] Forbes, Clarence A. "Athenian Physical Education in the Fifth Century, B.C... History of Physical Education and Sport. pg. 151.

[45] Forbes, Clarence A. Greek Physical Education. pg. 54.

[46] Ibid. pg. 54.

every individual citizen was valued. However, the Athenian educational system, that was the envy of all that surrounded it, possessed a deep rooted flaw that its Spartan neighbour did not: "Athenians were superior to their warlike neighbours in all the arts of peace except in the education and the social position of women"[47].

> The women of Athens were disregarded and slighted; they were made to be neither seen nor heard; and that they should be educated, or in any way be allowed to participate in the life and affairs of the men was incredible and taboo.[48]

Simply, Athenian women were not privileged to the educational advantages that their free born male Athenian counterparts possessed.

It is difficult to describe an Athenian youth's physical education program, in the fifth century B.C., in precise terms. This is due to an Athenian philosophy that encouraged every free born male citizen to freely choose the individual educational path of his son. Xenophon, native son of Athens, disciple of Socrates, philosopher and writer, was part of a minority group of Athenians who took their liberties so far as to send their sons to the rival city-state of Sparta to be trained. "Through his children, Diodorus and Grylius, he obtained a first-hand knowledge of the (Spartan) agoge"[49].

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[47] Rice, Emmett A., Hutchinson, John L., & Lee, Mabel. A Brief History of Physical Education. pg. 21.

[48] Forbes, Clarence A. Greek Physical Education. pg. 99.

[49] Forbes, Clarence A. Greek Physical Education. pg. 93.

Xenophon's perceptions and philosophies towards the mighty Spartan and Persian agoge (educational system), which were overtly entrusted in perpetuating a strong military society, never wavered. Furthermore, Xenophon continuously espoused his distaste in the (namely Athenian') "unwise policy of allowing the individual parents to rear their child with whatever education they please'[50].

Xenophon's sympathies and campaigns favouring the Persian and Spartan educational philosophies and practices did not go unnoticed by his Athenian peers. Xenophon's twenty year exile from Athens demonstrated that despite each citizen's "freedom of choice" there were strong societal norms and values that dictated or persuaded the actions of most men.

> As far as we can make out, physical education was nearly universal in Athens and yet it was not compulsory.[51]

Forbes states that "(i)n the city of Athens nearly everyone was eager to be a good citizen" because "every one felt close to the beating heart of municipal government".[52] Despite the city-state's proclamation that its inhabitants were free to educate the child as they saw fit, Forbes states that the Athenian government was not without its direct authority over its citizens.

> There did exist at Athens certain educational laws, which it was the business of the Areopagus to enforce if

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50 Ibid. pg. 94.

51 Forbes, Clarence A. "Athenian Physical Education in the Fifth Century B.C... History of Physical Education and Sports. pg. 154.

52 Ibid. pg. 151.

> occasion arose... (A) seventh law commanded parents to have their sons educated in music and gymnastics.[53]

Forbes explains that an Athenian boy's physical education was enforced by the Athenian state. However, what constituted that physical education was left to the discretion of the father. Fred Eugene Leonard perhaps puts this "freedom of choice" of a boy's physical education into proper perspective when he chose to use the words "(c)ustom required"[54] to explain an Athenian parent's decision.

Whether the Athenian child's physical education took on a standard form due to a sense of inherent parental "civic duty"[55], a parent's concern for the child's physical health, Athenian state law, or through societal norms and values is debatable; perhaps all were equally important reasons. Whatever the reason, despite a freedom of choice in physical education and considering that there were Athenian laws stating that young citizens must include gymnastics in their schooling, physical education did take on a standardised form that lent itself heavily to civic socialisation.

Similar to the Spartan, the Athenian male child spent his first six years under the tutelage of his mother, where he was encouraged to play "in a form of active exercise and games".[56] The games that were played by

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53 Forbes, Clarence A. Greek Physical Education. pgs. 73 & 75.
54 Leonard, Fred Eugene. A Guide to the History of Physical Education. pg. 20.
55 Ibid. pg. 152.
56 Leonard, Fred Eugene. The History of Physical Education. pg. 20.

Athenian boys in the fifth century B.C. have a remarkable similarity to those games that children are playing in twentieth century North America[57]:

> (V)arious exercises and games with balls, hide-and-seek, blindman's buff, games like our drop-the-handkerchief, and others in which sides were chosen and one side then chased its opponents in the attempt to make them prisoners.[58]

The seventh year of the Athenian male boy's life marked the beginning of his entrance into formal physical education. As with most of its neighbouring Greek city-states, a required education was available only to free-born citizens. In Sparta it was the state that oversaw the expense of their young children's education, whereas in Athens it was the duty of the father to pay for and decide the amount of schooling his son received. Schooling in literature and music were included in the child's education, "(g)ames and gymnastics, however, seem to have occupied the larger part of the boy's time".[59]

From the age of seven to eighteen, the Athenian boy partook in a physical education that included running, jumping, boxing, discus and javelin throwing, playing with balls of various weights and sizes, and of course wrestling.[60] The palaestra (school of gymnastics) was run by independent physical educators. Fathers with higher incomes had the luxury of sending

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57 Rice, Emmett A., Hutchinson, John L., & Lee, Mabel. A Brief History of Physical Education. pg. 17.

58 Leonard, Fred Eugene. A Guide to the History of Physical Education. pg. 20.

59 Ibid. pg. 21.

60 Rice, Emmett A., Hutchinson, John L., & Lee, Mabel. A Brief History of Physical Education. pg. 18.

their children to schools of higher prestige, thereby ensuring social stratification through education. Although run independently, it should be noted that all schools were closely regulated by the state.

At the age of eighteen, young Athenian men were summoned for military training: a two year education in the art of war that was completely controlled and run by the state. Referred to as an ephebus, or cadet, the eighteen year old Athenian was considered an adult. He took his oath of citizenship and was expected to dutifully fight for his homeland.

> This compulsory ephebic training as designed by the state indicated a lack of faith in the previous method of developing strength and loyalty through individual freedom, creativeness, and voluntary choice. This preparation became a paternalistic state effort to ensure military security and efficiency.[61]

Despite the outward appearance of one's "freedom of choice", military training and citizenry education was ultimately enforced as being of primary importance. Considering the climate of the era, in which rival city-states and foreign armies were continuously posing a threat to Athens, it seems only reasonable that military training would prevail in Athenian education.

Rice, Hutchinson and Lee suggest that given the father's duty to pay for their son's education, those students who had the benefit of a "better", or more expensive, training would posses a greater facility in achieving a higher or more prestigious position at the state's military school.

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[61] Ibid. pg. 19.

Considering this point, and, furthermore, that women and non-free-born-citizens were completely excluded from this education, it would seem that the Athenian system, unwittingly or not, promoted and ensured the status-quo through its educational system.

> We see in Greece the development of the world's first democracy, and the foundation for Western traditions. But by 168 B.C. (Battle of Greece), 63 B.C. (the annexation of Syria), and 30 B.C. (the annexation of Egypt) Rome had swallowed up the Greek world.[62]

Similar to the history of Greece and prior to the rise of the Roman Empire, Italy consisted of factional tribes that were frequently warring amongst themselves. This dictated the necessity of each tribe to develop and train soldiers.[63] Physical education and training, once again, became the socialising tool with which to ensure a strong military citizenry.

"Eventually the Romans subdued all important cities of Italy and turned to their neighbouring countries for other fields to conquer".[64] At its peak, the Roman Empire laid claim to much of the 'Known World', including Greece, Spain, and North Africa. Such endeavours of conquest necessitated a potent military society which could carry out the military mastering of and the maintenance of their conquered lands and people.

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62 Zeigler, Earle F. History of Physical Education and Sport. pg. 30.

63 Martens, Fred L. Basic Concepts of Physical Education: The Foundations in Canada. pg. 131.

64 Ibid. pg. 131.

Rice, Hutchinson, and Lee wrote that "Rome owed her success in war to the physical training of her youth".[65]

Whereas the Athenian concept of the "whole man" demanded a combination of physical conditioning and academia, the Romans were by far more Spartan in their approach to physical education, and made no attempt to conceal the objectives in which their physical education and training courses were designed:

> Bodily exercise was desirable only as it gave robust health and prepared for military service.[66]

During the early period of Roman History, the period of Kings (753-510 B.C.), "(t)he first duty of the family was to serve the nation and to that end rear robust children with the true Roman ideals".[67] During this period there was no formal schooling, and the duty of instilling the Roman ideals upon the nations children were placed in the hands of the family.[68] The Romans of the period of Kings were described as "warlike and ambitious".[69] War was common and nearly every father was a soldier at one time or another. It was the duty of the mother to ensure that her children be healthy and robust, and it was the charge of the father to train his sons in the art of war. Children's physical education simply prepared them for warfare, and

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65 Rice, Emmett A., Hutchinson, John L., & Lee, Mabel. A Brief History of Physical Education. pg. 31.

66 Leonard, Fred Eugene. A Guide to the History of Physical Education. pg. 28.

67 Ibid. pg 29.

68 Leonard, Fred Eugene. A Guide to the History of Physical Education. pg. 28.

69 Rice, Emmett A., Hutchinson, John L., & Lee Mabel. A Brief History of Physical Education. pg. 30.

no Athenian ideals of grace or beauty held any appreciation for the Romans of this time.[70]

During the period of Kings the Roman military was, in essence, a citizen army; therefore, physical education was a necessary part of every common Roman citizen's life. From the Period of the Republic to the period of the Empire we see a shift in the composition of the Roman Empire's army: efficiency of the professional soldier replaced the duty and passion of the citizen warrior.

> The prolonged campaigns tended to develop a professional standing army rather than a citizen army.[71]

Wealth displaced poverty as the Roman homeland reaped rewards from a conquering army.[72] The ideology associated with physical exercise saw no change during this period, and was still regarded as a necessity associated foremost with military training. Therefore, the bulk of the Roman populace, who no longer partook in military duty, saw no practical reason in participating in physical training. Furthermore, citizens who were not from military families would have seen no reasonable advantage in placing their children in physical education classes.

> Elementary schools taught reading, writing and calculation; grammar schools taught the literature of Rome and Greece ... and schools of rhetoric gave instruction in oratory, composition, law, and other high subjects. Although the organisation, the methods, and

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[70] Ibid. pg. 30
[71] Ibid. pg. 31.
[72] Ibid. pg. 31.

> even the teachers were Greek, Romans failed to accept the Greek idea that gymnastics and music were essential to a complete system of education. The Roman was too practical to see any value in music; and as for gymnastics, its real value was thought to be military.[73]

Clearly, the Roman perception of the use of physical education was limited to those citizens who were to be a part of the military, or for slaves who were used in the famed gladiator tournaments conceived to amuse Roman spectators. Rome's fall has commonly been ascribed to its social decadence, moral decay, and overall indulgent living that left it weak to the invading Teutonic tribes from the north. Some authors of the history of physical education, such as Fred L. Martens (1986), state that the "(n)eglect of the physical condition of the body together with the indulgent living resulted in the disintegration of the nation".[74]

> As the Empire approached its final collapse, the young men, who should have borne arms in defence of the country, were enervated by luxury, wrecked physically by excess, and frequently self-mutilated so that they may escape the rigorous discipline and the dangers of war.[75]

Perhaps, had Rome continued with the same citizenry convictions of the period of Kings, the physical condition of the citizens' body would have been strong enough to repel the Teutonic invasion. Had this occurred, a

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73 Ibid. pg. 31.

74 Martens, Fred L. Basic Concepts of Physical Education: The Foundations in Canada. pg. 132.

75 Rice, Emmett A., Hutchinson, John L., & Lee, Mabel. A Brief History of Physical Education. pg. 38.

time in history that is commonly referred to as the "Dark Ages" may have developed in a dramatically different fashion.

> The earlier years of the Middle Ages were largely shrouded in mystery. It was a period when hordes of uncivilised and unlettered peoples left scant record of themselves.[76]

Since the Teutonic people had no written language, historians have had to depend on other sources such as ancient songs, folk-tales, and information from the very people that the Northerners overpowered for information on them.[77] What little is known of the lifestyle of these people indicates harsh conditions that hardened them into a military society, much in the same manner of the early Romans "...(F)ormal instruction was unknown"; physical education for the Teutonic children was furnished by the father and "(h)unting and warfare were their chief school-masters".[78]

The Teutonic invasion of Romanised Europe was, although brutal, quite impressive in its influence of change: The Roman Empire and its long-standing system of rule was methodically ground to a halt, and perhaps more importantly, as the Northerners spread throughout Europe, their disruption of power became a catalyst to the creation of new independent nations.[79]

> Life in the early centuries of this period was chaotic and often brutal. It was a case of "the survival of the fittest".

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76 Lee, Mabel. A History of Physical Education and Sports in the U.S.A.. pg. 7.
77 Leonard, Fred Eugene. A Guide to the History of Physical Education. pg. 34.
78 Ibid. pg. 34.
79 Leonard, Fred Eugene. Guide to the History of Physical Education. pg. 35.

> People were driven to refuge in monasteries and to the protection of the Church generally.[80]

As the above quote by Martens states, the "Dark Ages", (just as other eras that preceded as well as proceeded it), were a time when superior strength translated directly into authority of control. Considering that the Teutonic people were tribal and factional, and that tribal chiefs themselves were as numerous as the lands they were invading, the people of Europe could find no comfort or safety in the central governing law that they once possessed under the Roman Empire. Religion, namely Christianity which had already spread throughout the Roman Empire, became the security to which the people of Europe turned. Leonard writes that "(n)o sooner had the Teutonic tribes overrun Romanised Europe than they began to yield, in turn, to the proselytising activities of the young and lusty Christian Church".[81] The rise of the Christian religion marks the suppression of any formal physical education designed for citizens, and once again reduces the role of physical training to a military purpose for a select class of people.

The Christian church's abhorrence of physical education and training during the middle ages derived from the savage incidences they endured during, and at the hands of, the pre-Constantinople Roman Empire and associated this with athletic endeavours in which they occurred. Roman gladiatorial contests, public nude bathing, the aristocracy's association and indulgence with sexual decadence, and the worship of "pagan" gods during

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[80] Martens, Fred L. Basic Concepts of Physical Education: The Foundations in Canada. pg. 132.

[81] Leonard, Fred Eugene. The History of Physical Education. pg. 37.

athletic events all stand out as persuasions of The Christian church's perspectives and aversions towards any physical undertaking.[82]

Pursuit of Christian spiritual excellence was exalted, whereas the pursuit of bodily worship was seen as a "paganistic" vice. Through the fourth and fifth century AD, the Benedictine monasteries grew into the prime location of Western formal education and, considering that they were established in Christian philosophy, there was no place for physical education. The development of Medieval Universities had little effect on the development of physical education, as physical amusement or training were still viewed as vanity or devil's work.[83]

In the tenth century AD, the Age of Chivalry, the Islamic movement of the east became a threat to Christian Europe and the Catholic church changed its position on physical training "in order to further her own designs".[84] From 1096 to 1270 AD the Crusades became the common focus of the people of Christian Europe, and "the hermit of early Catholic legends had been displaced as a popular hero by the knight".[85] If a child aspired to join the ranks of the knights, he was not only expected to achieve certain goals that were physical and philosophical, but he was also expected to be of "gentle birth"[86]; gentle birth being of an elite class.

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82 Martens, Fred L. Basic Concepts of Physical Education: The Foundations in Canada. pg. 121.

83 Leonard, Fred F. "Pioneers of Modern Physical Training", A History of Physical Education & Sport in the U.S.A. & Canada.

84 Ibid. pg. 43.

85 Zeigler, Earle F. A History of Physical Education & Sport in the United States and Canada. pg. 4.

86 Leonard, Fred F. Guide to the History of Physical Education. pg. 43.

From the age of seven the young boy would have left his household to be educated in the court of a nobleman-knight. Here he would learn the arts of war and the breeding that was expected to accompany his position. If successful, the student of knighthood would rise from the position of page to squire and then ultimately to that of knight.[87]

During the Early Middle Ages, physical education and training meant little to the greater population of Europe, unless, of course, it was of military use. It was not until the Renaissance period that there was a literal "re-birth" in the interest of physical education apart from military training. An aroused interest in learning allowed the Humanist educators of the time to proclaim the importance of physical education, as was stressed by the ancient Greeks. Formal education was still a luxury of the wealthy; however, the values and beliefs that were imparted during the Renaissance shaped the future educational system.[88]

> During the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries, feudalism gave way to monarchy, private warfare to comparative peace, provincialism to nationalism, barter to commerce, ignorance of geography to discovery and exploration, institutionalism to individualism, superstition to investigation, faith to reason, asceticism to aesthetics, preparation for the hereafter to enjoyment of the present, otherworldliness to worldliness, and, finally, hand-written manuscripts to printed books. At the same time, a widespread interest in the civilisation of Greece and Rome arose.[89]

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87 Ibid. pg. 43.

88 Martens, Fred L. Basic Concepts of Physical Education: The Foundations in Canada.

89 Rice, Emmett A., Hutchinson, John L. & Lee, Mabel. A Brief History of Physical Education. pg. 47.

The Greek concept of "a sound mind in a sound body" was reintroduced in a budding European educational system, and physical education was once again included in an academic setting. The Humanist perspective of physical education stemmed from a common belief that an idleness of the body, as well as the mind, were perhaps not the workshop of the devil, but rather as the predecessor of decay, lethargy and overindulgence. Humanist, Sir Thomas Elyot (1490-1546) of England, author of The Governor (1885), a treatise on education, wrote of the importance of physical education and recreation as he believed it was an important break from long hours of studying.[90] Elyot's opinion of "little reason for idleness"[91] in an individual or society is a philosophy that can be easily observed in the values of the Reformation, and later as carried to the teachings of modern North America.

> Among the educational and religious leaders who influenced physical activity and sport in various countries during this era, the influence of Martin Luther (1483-1546) was truly significant... Catholic Counter Reformation are very important... because they influenced European education during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries at the very time the early North American development was taking place.[92]

Although the reformation was a movement that was religious in origin, it affected many other aspects of society and, among other transformations,

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90 Ibid. pg. 50.

91 Ibid. pg. 50.

92 Zeigler, Earle F. History of Physical Education and Sport. pg. 87.

"may be regarded as the cradle of the elementary school system of Europe which gave the masses an opportunity to gain a basic education".[93]

It was Luther's conviction that every citizen be given the opportunity of an elementary education. Luther was determined that every Lutheran parish be prepared to supply children with an elementary education. Reading was the primary goal in Luther's elementary education so that it would provide every citizen the opportunity to decipher the Christian Scriptures; however, physical education was also part of his curriculum "...Martin Luther himself was enthusiastic about the place that sport and physical activity could fulfil in the educational pattern of youth".[94] Physical education, in Luther's opinion, was valuable in the development and improvement of both the body and the soul.

In the final stages of the Renaissance, a new philosophy named "Realism" emerged as the Humanist perspective began its decline. The Realists "believed that the aim of education should be to prepare one for a real life career".[95] Physical education was viewed by the Realists as a necessity to the human condition that could not be overlooked: "Body and mind were considered as complementary forces, acting together for a healthy individual".[96]

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93 Rice, Emmett A., Hutchinson, John L., Lee, Mabel. A Brief History of Physical Education. pg. 51.

94 Zeigler, Earle F. History of Physical Education and Sport. pg. 88.

95 Rice, Emmett A., Hutchinson, John L., & Lee, Mabel. A Brief History of Physical Education. pg. 53.

96 Martens, Fred L. Basic Concepts of Physical Education: The Foundations in Canada. pg. 122.

John Locke (1632-1704), English physician, educator, and perhaps the most famous Realist, wrote the treatise, Some Thoughts Concerning Education. In his treatise, Locke stipulates the aim in which education should fulfil: "First, vigour of the body; second, virtue of the soul; third, knowledge or mental acquisitions".[97] Hygiene, discipline, and hardening of the body are the main features of Locke's Physical education. He was more concerned with physical education as a means to achieve physical welfare rather than as play.

The Renaissance came to an end during the eighteenth century and gave way to a period of European history that is called the Age of Enlightenment. Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) stands foremost in this era as one of the greatest influences of modern education. Through his writings in Emile "he gives physical education a prominent place in an ideal education".[98] Rousseau denounced schools and society of his time for treating children as small adults: "dressing them in long, tight clothing and powder, paint and wigs and compelling them to act as adults... trying to teach them as though they were grown people and flogging them when they fail to learn".[99] Through his fictitious character Emile, Rousseau demonstrates what he considers an ideal education as one that allows children to explore innocently, to develop by the laws of nature, uncontaminated by man, to develop their bodies before their mind. It is an

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97 Rice, Emmett A., Hutchinson, John L., & Lee, Mabel. A Brief History of Physical Education. pg. 56.

98 Martens, Fred L. Basic Concepts of Physical Education: The Foundations in Canada. pg. 122.

99 Rice, Emmett A., Hutchinson, John L., & Lee, Mabel. A Brief History of Physical Education. pg. 61.

education that perceives "physical and intellectual development... intimately bound".[100]

During the period of the Reformation, several European countries, predominantly England and France, endeavoured to colonise North America. A settling that, as we know, birthed the separate nations of Canada and the United States of America. The physical education histories that shaped the schooling philosophies of Europe did have a shared effect on these two North American countries. However, in a relatively short period of time Canada, as well as the United States, developed their own perspectives towards physical education. As the colonies began settling North America, their physical education shifted from the direct influence of Europe to a perception that was inspired by self discovery and development.

According to historians, Deobold B. Van Dalen and Bruce L. Bennett (1971), the transformation of the North American physical education philosophies occurred simply because the colonies were developing into autonomous nations distinct and apart from their European roots.[101] The independence of the United States from the British Empire and a Canadian and American lifestyle, dictated by land that was often harsh and described by European standards as a wilderness, separated the paths of physical education development.

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[100] Ibid. pg. 61

[101] Bennett, Bruce L. & Van Dalen, Deobold B. A World History of Physical Education. pgs. 365-366.

Within Van Dalen and Bennett's book, A World History of Physical Education, they provide a comprehensive and thorough account of the evolution of North America's physical education, titled "... Education for Nationalism". Within these chapters they dissect the history of physical education into major historical time periods; for instance, the settlement of the American continent to the commencement of the American's Revolutionary War of Independence. According to the authors, three major themes instigate a North American change in physical education. They are the military emphasis, scientific movement and developmentalism.

> The *military emphasis* is usually related to a strong nationalistic spirit, in general, and to wartime conditions in particular. It is characterised by total subservience and allegiance to the purposes of preparing for war, carrying on war, or trying to prevent war by maintaining a strong military force. (...) The *scientific movement* in education refers to the use or application of scientific procedures to the problems of education. (...) The term *developmentalism* describes that movement in education where the focus shifted from the curriculum and subject matter to the child himself. [102]

Within the early years of American history, from the European colonisation to 1865, physical education was driven by the military movement. A movement which sought to openly transmit sentiments of nationalism through their particular brand of education. The scientific movement had not yet transferred from it's pure science roots to the field of education. As well, developmentalism, with its focus on child-centred education, had little relevance to people who were more concerned with

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[102] Ibid. pgs. 366-368.

basic survival.[103] As the above quote states, this was a movement driven by either the threat of, or preparation for, war. Considering that most of America was continuously in some state of war, be it battling with the Native Peoples, the British, the French, the Mexicans, etc..., one could understand why this movement had its fervent members.

It was difficult, however, for the proponents of this movement to enforce their ideals within educational institutes. At this time, schools and school boards were fractional and controlled at the local level. The idea of centralising a youth physical education program, within the military for nationalism theme, was spearheaded by President George Washington in 1790. The first attempt was to legislate and enforce mandatory military education in teenage men in return for the right to vote; a proposal which was rejected. Upon this defeat, the military movement then endeavoured to centralise an elementary school physical education program:

> The House of Representatives in both 1817 and 1819 defeated a proposal that "a corps of military instructors should be formed to attend to the gymnastics and elementary part of instruction in every school in the United States." [104]

The military movement had a great deal of influence on the development of our modern physical education program. It would have had an even greater influence had it not been for a population who, having recently pulled away from the British Empire, was wary of allowing too much

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[103] Ibid. pgs. 372-373.
[104] pg. 372.

power and control to a central government. Another important factor to consider was that physical education barely made any progress during this time as the general population in Canada and United States saw little or no use in it:

> A large part of the country was wilderness. So much of the life of an early settler was spent in the open air, and so many of his activities demanded the use of big muscles, that there seemed no need to provide for physical education or even teach habits of health. [105]

During this time, the general population of America saw no use for government controlled physical education program. But, it seems obvious that those who were within the government saw the benefits of controlling the general population by socialising their youth through physical education. The scientific movement and developmentalism themes are somewhat bound to their respective eras. However, the military theme, bound to American nationalism and of particular interest to this thesis, is one which resurfaces often and at various points in history.

Bennett and Van Dalen note that between the years of 1865-1900 "the incredible total of 13,260,000 immigrants were admitted to the United States. From the standpoint of both geography and population, therefore, the effectiveness of the nationalising process was all the more remarkable." [106] The United States central government achieved this feat through a strong nationalisation, or socialisation, campaign; one site of this campaign

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[105] pgs. 371-372.
[106] pg. 392.

being within children's physical education. Because these events, and those which proceed them, are relatively recent and have a more substantial impact on our present day physical education programs we will discuss them within the chapters that follow.

The introduction to this paper raised the principal question on which this thesis is based: Are children being socialised to the hierarchical structuring of the broader society through physical education? We find in the preceding account of the history of physical education more than ample evidence that physical education has a long history as a means of socialising children to the goals of the larger society. The physical education programs that we have developed in our recent history, as well as the physical education practices we employ today, are a direct result of the experiences of other nations. In the following chapter, the present day status of the Canadian physical education program will be discussed.

Chapter Three

The Present-day Status of the Canadian Physical Education Class

Physical education is described by Earle F. Zeigler, a professor in the Faculty of Physical Education at the University of Western Ontario, as "a struggling profession"[107]. For those of us who attended elementary school during the late 1970s, in the Montreal West Island area, physical education was an integral part of our curriculum and it seems odd that this class that was so important to so many of us in our youth would hardly a generation later be termed "struggling". Some school boards throughout Montreal, Canada and the United States have cut back on their physical education programs (as well as other programs) on the grounds that dwindling funds are better spent on the three "R"s or the "basics": reading, writing, and arithmetic.[108]

The status of physical education as a "subject" appears to have slipped, ostensibly because funds are being cut back and choices have to be made. This impression is confirmed by the fact that physical education specialists are infrequently hired, and often the task of teaching gym classes falls into the hands of home room teachers, who, as we shall see later, are not always fully prepared to teach their gym classes.

As educationalist Garth A. Paton notes; "the people of Canada are strongly influenced by their neighbours to the south"; historically our relatively recent changes in physical education have most commonly been

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[107] Zeigler, Earle F. Sport & Physical Education: Past, Present, Future. pg. 1.
[108] Ibid. pgs. 2-3.

initiated by educational shifts that have occurred first in the United States.[109] This correspondence allows us the luxury to extrapolate a rich written and researched history of the American physical education programs to a Canadian perspective, (which we will cover in the chapter that deals with socialisation (Chapter Four)). This chapter will cover the recent status of physical education programs in Canada.

Although information is limited, Zeigler argues that: "Canada's sporting past has been a largely neglected subject".[110] Nevertheless, it is apparent that the Canadian situation is similar to that of the United States of America. According to Zeigler, "it is very difficult to imagine the peoples of any two countries in the world as being more alike than are Canadians and Americans",[111] and that our physical education aims, goals and implementations "closely resemble those sought through physical education in the United States"[112].

Physical Education in Canada and the United States has been through many changes during the 150 years since the start of the earliest programs that we think of as physical education. The field of physical education has moved from an emphasis that was purely on the health of the student to a concept of concern for the education and state of the "whole" person - mind and body unified. It has come from a system promoted by

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[109] Paton, Garth A. "The Historical Background and Present Status of Canadian Physical Education". A History of Physical Education & Sport in the United States and Canada. pg. 432.

[110] Zeigler, Earle F. History of Physical Education and Sport. pg. 214

[111] Ibid. pg. 214.

[112] Rice, Emmett A., Hutchinson, John L., & Lee, Mabel. A Brief History of Physical Education. pg. 103.

self-taught "amateurs", to one supported by science and the medical profession; from one of teachers with ten weeks or less of professional training to one of trained teachers who hold degrees up through the doctorate level. Physical educators are a diverse group: individually they may be healtn educators, park administrators, recreational program directors, or teachers of dance.[113]

An American perspective, by Rice, Hutchinson and Lee, of the Canadian elementary physical education program is described as follows:

> Elementary school physical education stresses physical fitness, fundamental skills, sports skil's, and the social aspects of games and sports. Most provinces, however, have not developed well-rounded programs of physical education. This lack has been attributed to many factors, such as the lack of adequate gymnasiums, poor public support, and a serious lack of qualified professional personnel.[114]

Traditionally, physical education at the elementary school level has not ranked high in importance within the overall program. Its place in the curriculum has been justified more for its palliative effect, reducing the surplus physical energy of children, than for its educational value. Many principals and teachers have shown a keen interest in the elite performers but the usefulness of classroom physical education for the average child has not been adequately recognised. In any case, the so-called academic subjects have taken precedence and in most cases they have been all that

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[113] Freeman, William H. Physical Education and Sport in a Changing Society. pg. 146.

[114] Rice, Emmett A., Hutchinson, John L, & Lee, Mabel. A Brief History of Physical Education. pg. 103.

really matters. Martens has stated this to be "a vestige of the scholasticism of the Middle Ages".[115] Martens continues, stating that as far as physical education was concerned the feeling seemed to be:

> After all, only play, the children were too young, their skills were, at best, very unsophisticated and therefore until they reached secondary school let them just "run off their energy" and play dodgeball![116]

Physical education had generally not been considered a medium of learning and therefore could be conducted much more casually than other school subjects. Special training of teachers of the very young had therefore not been necessary and almost any curriculum was acceptable. It has been documented that "inspectors typically ignored this subject area anyway in their tours of the school".[117]

Increased time allotments and concern about quality of instruction in elementary physical education are of fairly recent origin. During the thirty, to forty years prior to 1970, physical education was not given a high priority and consequently few changes were made in the way it was handled in schools.[118]

The late 1960s and early 1970s were a time of attack on many traditions in many nations. Sport and physical education were attacked from

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115 Martens, Fred L. Basic Concepts of Physical Education: The Foundations in Canada. pg. 386.
116 Ibid. pg. 386.
117 Martens, Fred L. Basic Concepts of Physical Education: The Foundations in Canada. pg. 386.
118 Ibid. pg. 382.

numerous directions. The basic argument was that while physical activity is beneficial, the student should be allowed more freedom in deciding what activities to take, or even if such activities would be taken. The attack on the physical education requirement was a small part of a larger educational movement of the time, which was a general attack on all course requirements in the school. Many opponents of school structure considered physical education to be the weak link in the "required" educational system and thus the most logical place for an initial attack.[119]

It was during the seventies, a period that has been called "The Decade of Daiiy Physical Education", that a wide-spread, almost universal, movement thrust the importance of Physical Education for children into national prominence.[120] According to Martens, the principal impetus that pushed elementary Physical Education into the forefront was a series of national conferences in 1972 and 1973, funded in part by the federal government. Recommendations from these conferences unanimously advocated that more time be devoted to Physical Education for children.

Perhaps the most important underlying factor that propelled elementary Physical Education into a new era was the research presentations and writings of professional leaders. They pointed out the criticalness of the age of childhood in the individual's development, the importance of physical activity to development and the weakness of the

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[119] Freeman, William H. Physical Education and Sport in a Changing Society. pg. 139.

[120] Martens, Fred. Basic Concepts of Physical Education: The Foundations of Canada. pg. 382.

physical education system in this respect. The shocking fact that fitness of the Canadian child began to decline at age 10 or 12 was revealed.[121]

By 1979, investigators across the country were able to compare results of studies and to use these data in the promotion of better programs. The benefits of improved programs with a greater time allotment were identified in experiment after experiment.

> The most common finding was the improved attitude in children and therefore an improved learning atmosphere. Evidence was found in the studies that academic achievement was maintained if not improved, even though a greater portion of the school day was allotted to physical activity.[122]

School Boards and Ministries of Education were persuaded by these studies that physical education deserved a more prominent place on the curriculum. Elementary programs across Canada, responding to public interest and promoted by professional leadership, became significantly stronger in the short period of a decade.[123]

Even though under the terms of the B.N.A. Act provinces set their own curricula and time allotments for courses in the schools, practices in scheduling physical education are fairly standard from province to province. Time allotments for physical education vary as much from school to school as they do from province to province. In the elementary schools of Canada

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[121] Ibid. pg. 382.
[122] Ibid. pg. 384.
[123] Ibid. pg. 386.

the norm still appears to be two periods per week with periods varying 30-40 minutes in length.[124]

Are we now able to assume that leaders in this field no longer need to worry about the future of physical education? The 1980s and, so far, the 1990s have been a time of rapid growth of school costs beyond the ability of many communities to pay. A consistent result has been the threat of terminating school sports programs and limiting, if not eliminating, physical education programs as unnecessary "frills".[125] The popularity of school sports has helped to defend these programs, but a public facing the problems of inflation and an economic recession has lost much of its sympathy in the face of rising costs. Although we are told through the media that the economy seems to be improving somewhat, the financial picture for local schools is no brighter.

As this chapter has shown, actual changes in physical education are slow in coming. It takes time for new philosophies to permeate the population responsible for implementing the ideas. It takes time for traditions to be overcome. Progress has been made in improving the effectiveness of elementary programs in Physical Education. Reform, while it has affected a significant number of schools, has not touched the majority of them where traditions in physical education continue to rule. Principals are still averse to allocating more time and importance to physical

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[124] Martens, Fred L. Basic Concepts of Physical Education: The Foundations in Canada. pg. 381.

[125] Freeman, William H. Physical Education and Sport in a Changing Society. pg. 140.

education. Martens states that even with all we have learned "children continue to be sedentary and to suffer the consequences."[126]

Physical educators will need to continue their efforts at improving programs and toward convincing schools of the benefits of such programs. They cannot relax until quality physical education during the most critically formative period of development, described by Martens to be "when the child is malleable, impressionable, enthusiastic, energetic, when the foundations are laid for later life"[127], becomes a universal reality.

"Malleability" and "impressionability" in a child during a time when they are "enthusiastic" and "energetic" is the precise consideration of this thesis. As we have examined through the history of physical education, civilisations that have preceded us have used this exact combination covertly and overtly to socialise their children, sometimes to simply develop healthy citizens, while at other times to develop philosophies towards one's spirit and body. More often than not, however, these courses have been put in place for military purposes. Despite what each specific goal for employing physical education was, the common element seemed to be the socialisation of children into the greater society.

In the next chapter, the concept of Interactionism and the theory of the development of "self" through the actions of others within the school setting will be forwarded. In the previous chapter a historical perspective

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[126] Martens, Fred L. Basic Concepts of Physical Education: the Foundations in Canada. pg. 392.
[127] Ibid. pg. 392.

was provided to tangibly lend support to the *existence* of the use of physical education as a mechanism of socialisation for children. It is through the theory of Interactionism that we will develop the argument of *how* and *why* physical education classes can be, unwittingly or not, the breeding ground of children's conception of "self" within their society.

Chapter Four

Interactionism, Socialisation and Hierarchical Structuring in the Physical Educational Setting

The introduction of this paper briefly presented the concept of Interactionism and its relevance to the topic at hand: the socialisation of young children. Later, it was argued that despite an apparent decrease in the importance allocated to formal physical education classes in the elementary schools, there is ample evidence to suggest that children need this kind of activity during the course of the school day and moreover, the benefits of a well planned program of exercise are known to have neurological benefits for cognitive as well as physical development. There is and always has been, however, a hidden curriculum associated with physical education. Apart from the obvious and overt goals and rationale for physical education, there is a more subtle social function, one that helps us to see the connections between what goes on in school and the wider society. It is with this idea in mind that the theory and concepts of Interactionism are forwarded within this chapter. It will be proposed that the micro-level analysis of the Interactionist theory will thoroughly address the evolution of the child's development of self within the context of the educational system, which ultimately leads to his/her socialisation to the larger society.

Reiterating, in greater depth, what was stated in the first chapter, the "self" is a "hypothetical construct: Something which serves to explain observable behaviour but is not directly observable itself."[128] The self, or self concept is what each person finds individualising about him/herself in a social setting. Therefore, without the action of individualisation, or setting oneself apart from others within a social environment, there would be no

[128] Mifflen, Frank J. & Mifflen, Sydney C. The Sociology of Education. pg. 183.

self. The concept of self, consequently, relates directly to that of social interaction.

It is the development of self through interaction that is the main focus of this chapter. More specifically, the chapter will ground this thesis in the social concepts of the pioneers of Interactionism: George Herbert Mead; Charles Horton Cooley; and Max Weber. They all believed that the self was developed through interaction. This chapter will analyse the theories put forth by Cooley, Mead and Weber on the development of self in society and the role that, first in a broader review, the educational system plays in the "evolution" of the self and then secondly, in a more specific analysis, how physical education may influence a child's development of the sense of self.

Cooley, (1864-1929) believed that the self always possesses a social setting. This means that we draw much of our identity through the ways others perceive us, just as others are influenced by how we perceive them. One's sense of self is intertwined with society:

> Self and society are twin born, we know one as immediately as we know the other, and the notion of a separate and independent ego is an illusion.[129]

The self, in Cooley's perception, is not an island unto itself; it develops solely through the communication with others. Cooley states "(t)he

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[129] Cooley, Charles Horton. Social Organization. pg. 5.

social origin of his life comes by a pathway of intercourse with other persons"[130].

Although the self is developed through interaction, it is the individualisation of one's subjective feeling in a social setting that indicates the birth of the individual. The self, subsequently arises simultaneously with the act of socialisation. We can only develop a sense of identity when we understand who others are. Then we can compare our differences. Cooley states "(t)here is no sense of "I"... without its correlative sense of you, or he, or they"[131]. Cooley maintained that there can be no isolates. One's consciousness of self is a reflection of the ideas about him/herself that s/he attributes to other minds and perceptions. This action is called the "reflected self" or the "looking glass self".[132]

The reflected self implies that we are all a reflection of how others see us. Our identity is, therefore, foremost derived from others' perception of oneself, just as theirs are somewhat moulded from our perception of them. The conception of the reflected self is composed of three principal elements:

1) The imagination of our appearance to the other person;

2) The imagination of his/her judgement of that appearance, and;

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[130] Ibid. pg. 5.
[131] Cooley, Charles Horton. Human Nature and the Social Order. pg. 182.
[132] Congalton, A. A. & Daniel, A. E. The Individual in the Making. pg. 136.

3) Some sort of feeling derived from this action, such as pride or mortification.[133]

The interweaving of perception and influence becomes overwhelming when we consider the great number of individuals who can effect our perception of self. The complexities of such a procedure are illustrated by Cooley when he fictionalises an encounter between Alice, who has a new hat, and Angela, who bought a new dress. He theorises we then have:

1) The real Alice, known only to her maker

2) Her idea of herself; e.g.: "I (Alice) look well in this hat."

3) Her idea of Angela's idea of her; e.g.: "Angela thinks I look well in this hat..

4) Her idea of what Angela thinks she thinks of herself; e.g.: "Angela thinks I'm proud of my looks in this hat"

5) Angela's idea of what Alice thinks of herself; e.g.: "Alice thinks she is stunning in that hat"

6) And of course six analogous phases of Angela and her dress.[134]

"Society", Cooley adds, "is an interweaving and interworking of mental selves". He continues with examples of possibilities: "my mind affects your mind, I imagine your mind, you imagine mine, I fictionalise about what you think I think of myself just as you do about me; (w)hoever cannot or will not perform these feats is not properly in the game."[135]

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[133] Source adapted from Charles Horton Cooley

[134] Cooley, Charles Horton. Life and the Student. pgs. 200 - 201.

[135] Ibid. pg. 201.

The concept of "playing in the game" is notably George Herbert Mead's greatest achievement and extremely relevant to socialisation through physical education. Mead (1863-1931) theorised that the genesis of the self was accomplished through the gradually developing ability in a child to take on the role of others, and then to visualise his/her own performance from the point of view of others. Mead, like Cooley, believed that the human concept of "self" was derived through society and that there can be no self apart from society.

According to Mead, it is interaction that makes a collection of individuals a society, and gesture is the key element through which social acts are effected. Mead separates the non-significant gesture, being unself-consciousness, as found on the animal level, and the significant gesture, being self-consciousness, as associated with most human interaction. Human interaction only becomes possible when the meaning of an act, or symbol, is interpreted the same way by the individual as it is by other individuals.

> Gestures become significant when they implicitly arouse in an individual making them the same responses which they explicitly arouse... in other individuals.[136]

Symbolic interaction thus occurs when significant gestures are socially recognised. Symbolic interaction can take many forms of communication, such as the vocal, as in different languages; i.e. Arabic,

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[136] Mead, George Herbert. Mind, Self and Society. pg. 47.

French and/or English, or the physical; i.e. frown or smile. Children must learn the shared meanings of symbol in order to develop a sense of self within their society.[137]

The development of the self, for Mead, then is a gradual learning of roles consisting of three stages:

> **PREPARATORY STAGE**: Simple imitation of adults.
> e.g. Child play-talking on telephone just like mom/dad does.
>
> **PLAY STAGE**: Role playing is deliberate, but children cannot understand the relationship between different roles.
> e.g. Child plays house, takes on the role of "mom". Although s/he may understand the role of "mom" as pertains to him/herself, s/he does not understand his/her real mother's various roles to others. For example, the child may believe that his/her mother is his/her father's mother as well.
>
> **GAME STAGE**: The youngster sees him/herself playing one role in a network of roles.[138]

In Mead's final stage, the child learns his/her individual role in a network of individual roles that make up a society. The example of a baseball team is given by Mead to illustrate his theory; for a baseball team to actually be a team everyone must know their role. A pitcher must be aware of not only his/her role but everyone else's, just as every other player must be aware of the pitcher's role. An individual's role, however, may change depending on circumstance.

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[137] Blumer, Herbert. Symbolic Interactionism.
[138] Source adapted from George Herbert Mead

> We carry on a whole series of different relationships to different people. We are one thing to one man and another thing to another. There are all sorts of different selves answering to all sorts of different social relations. It is the social process itself that is responsible for the appearance of the self; it is not there as a self apart from this type of experience.[139]

If the established self changes according to one's circumstance or situation, as Mead states, then one's self perception at a young age, during the developmental stage, is vulnerable to negative, as well as positive influence from his or her surroundings. Both Cooley's and Mead's theories of development of self are derivative of a societal influence on the individual's development of self. This leads us to the perplexing questions of how this development of self is established throughout life, and in which ways are social institutions, such as the educational system, addressing their roles in shaping children's development and perception of self? An appropriate beginning in dealing with these queries are through the theories of Max Weber (1864-1920).

Society, in the view of Weber, is divided into groupings and strata with accompanying distinctions of lifestyles and views. This distinction, of course, is a result of class divisions according to societal status. One's status in Western society is based on possession of goods and opportunities for income. Those with higher status have easier access to vehicles of authority (e.g. the justice system, political influence), and therefore wield power over those classes under them.

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[139] Mead, George Herbert. On Social Psychology. pg. 207.

It is power that is the ultimate struggle of individual and groups within a society. Weber argues, however, that at times status as well as class grouping may conflict: "most members of society accept fairly stable patterns of superiordination and subordination".[140] Even though power and prestige are desirable for all members of society, most of us seemingly accept our social position without much question.

The Interactionist perspective explains that it is not ascriptive characteristics or instinctive behaviour at birth that socially places one on the social ladder; rather, it is what is learned through social relationships that dictates our social stratification. Reflecting on the theories of Weber, Coser writes (1971):

> A status group can exist only to the extent that others accord its members prestige or degrading, which removes them from the rest of social actors and establishes the necessary social distance between "them" and "us".[141]

Higher status groups will obviously try to monopolise their higher standards and lifestyle. Weber's theories assert that the distance between "them", in this instance being a lower and competing classes, and "us", being the upper classes is maintained through the manipulation of institutions. Institutions, therefore, wield an immense control over the ways

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[140] Weber, Max. Basic Concepts in Sociology.
[141] Coser, Lewis A. Masters of Social Thought. pg. 229.

in which people perceive their roles within their society. Illustrating Weber's perspective, Lachmann writes (1970):

> An institution provides means of orientation to a large number of actors. It enables them to co-ordinate their actions by means of orientation to a common signpost.[142]

Institutions of power, being political parties, law enforcement agencies, medical institutions and courts are controlled by those in power to best serve those in power. Lachmann continues:

> Almost always some people proclaim... norms and the others then submit to them. Institutional norms, then, have their usual origin... in the few imposing their will upon the many.[143]

Education, in the Weberian design, is seen as a means to acquire, or more importantly, maintain, one's social status. Higher status groups have the ability to impose, or set rules in the educational system because they wield the ultimate control over all institutions. Boundaries are established by higher status groups to keep other individuals out; one example would be the imposition of high tuition fees that are out of reach to all but the elite. Lack of education for lower social groups leaves them with a lack of credentials, therefore making it virtually impossible to achieve any upward mobility. Weber saw bureaucracy as the major vehicle of enforcing a cold, and depersonalised inequality. Weber devoted much of his energy to the

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[142] Lachmann, L. M. The Legacy of Max Weber. pg. 50-51.
[143] Ibid. pg. 62.

analysis of the ownership of bureaucracy by those who held power. The struggle for power was a phenomenon that Weber had little hope would disappear.

The Weberian view that education is kept at a distance from the lower classes by economic means is perhaps an obvious and accepted statement in our society; in a capitalist world if you want something you must pay for it. This chiefly legitimises the "American Dream" of working hard to get ahead. We have all heard the exceptional story of how some underprivileged person worked nights washing dishes, to put him/herself through medical school. These stories are not myths, they are always possibilities. But these exceptional stories of struggle to achieve success are just that; they are the exception to the rule. Talcott Parsons' (1959) article "The School Class as a Social System: Some of its Functions in American Society" maintains that it is rarely through formal institutional agencies that the individual achieves upward social mobility. He states:

> The legend of the "self-made man" has an element of nostalgic romanticism and is destined to become increasingly mythical, if by it is meant not just mobility from humble origins to high status, which does indeed continue to occur, but that the high status was attained through the "school of hard knocks" without the aid of formal education.[144]

The underprivileged and lower classes who struggle through life, on average, simply struggle through life with no advancement. The concept of

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144 Parsons, Talcott. "The School Class as a Social System: Some of its Functions in American Society". pg. 318.

social class distancing through economic means is accepted in our society because there is always the element of merit and reward if someone works hard enough; one may literally "earn" the right to distance him/herself apart from the less desirable.

The notion of effort directly linked to reward is a philosophy that plays itself out frequently in the physical education class. For example, if a child exhibits a hard working ethic that, given sufficient agility, translates itself into the mastering of skills in a certain athletic endeavour, he/she will receive praise, extra attention and a higher social and class status from his/her classmates, family and teacher. The reflection of how others perceive this child may create a positive image of "self" and instil a belief of hard work being equated with reward. This is just one example of how the socialisation in a physical education class may occur, and the variables from the interactions a child may receive from his/her actions are as countless as the actions themselves. The previous example given was positive; however, imagine the message that is being delivered to a child who is picked last for a soccer team, due to his/her poor aptitude, despite a continuous effort on the child's part to improve his/her skill. In this scenario, the child's perception of self and of reward due to effort will be drastically different than the first. Obviously, hard work is not enough.

The Weberian perspective of social organisation demonstrates a macro perspective of how social groups, and the individuals within, are socialised into their divided strata and social distinctions. In essence Weber pioneered a "micro-level analysis and... its integration with macro-level

theory"[145]. Using the Interactionist theories forwarded by Mead, Cooley and Weber, we are able to take a micro perspective on the individual's socialisation into his/her greater society and account for the development of one's self through the individual's interaction with his/her society.

Given the theories advanced by the Interactionist, we must consider the importance of defining the educational system's role in socialising and developing a child's sense of self. We must consider the possibility that the educational system, in a somewhat covert fashion, is programming the children of lower classes for failure, as they are moulding the elite children for success.

Mead felt that children's individual tendencies were to be directed towards co-operative living in the school community. The school would function as a miniature society and, in a healthy setting, children would interact with one another and have a positive role model in his/her peers and significant others so as to draw information to develop the self. This is perhaps an idealistic view -- but why not? If we are to aspire to a greater good, then we will certainly need a model to draw from.

However, within the specifics of a physical education class and to the school in general, we should not ignore the possibilities of this process working in a negative manner. What if a child during his/her developmental years has few positive role models to emulate? What if a teacher is an

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[145] Mifflen, Frank J. & Mifflen, Sydney C. The Sociology of Education: Canada and Beyond. pg. 67.

underfunded, overworked instructor who has little time for anything else than teaching the basics in an overcrowded class; does the child learn frustration and ambivalence? What if the child's peers are cynical youths who have found no advancement or reward by staying in school; does not the child learn the same attitude him/herself? In a larger perspective, if the development of self is learned through the process of interaction, can the child of a ghetto ever see him/herself being anything else than someone from a lower class? This socialisation of the self, in effect, becomes a domestication where children of different classes learn to accept or embrace their social status.

Cooley's concept of the development of the self through the reflected self produces the same end result as Mead. The educational system is ultimately an agent of socialisation, and more importantly domestication. Cooley states:

> Every variant idea of conduct has to fight its way; as soon as anyone attempts to do anything unexpected the world begins to cry: "Get in the rut! Get in the rut![146]

The school system becomes an agent of producing the action that is most desired in our society: predictability. In essence, as stated above, the school is a prime location of our children's socialisation through interaction. It is with these presuppositions of an Interactionist perspective that we consider the effects that physical education, which is a class that most, (not

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[146] Cooley, Charles Horton.

all), children highly value and respect[147], has on the socialisation of our youth. If we accept the concept of the school as an agent of socialisation then we must insure that it is a prime location of instilling positive civic value and self image.

The history of physical education illustrated and substantiated the notion of a societal use of physical education as an effective means of socialising its youths. The aims and outcomes of the various nations and civilisations may have varied, but the element of importance was in revealing the authenticity of physical education as a socialiser. This historical analysis was included in order to validate the theory of this thesis: that our physical education classes are imparting the socialisation of children's perceptions of hierarchical structuring through a hidden curriculum.

Three concepts, that have been briefly described in the prior chapters, must now be defined in greater detail prior to the analysis of contemporary investigations on socialisation through physical education. They are: the hidden curriculum, hierarchical structuring and, of course, socialisation.

The term socialisation refers to the "... transmissions of standards and values from one generation to the next..."[148]. Leslie (1976) explains that the "term socialisation encompasses the whole process of learning the

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[147] Martens, Rainer. "Kid Sports: A Den of Inequality or a Land of Promise". Children in Sport: A Contemporary Anthology. pgs. 201-216.

[148] Damon, William. "Socialization and Individuation". Childhood Socialization. pg. 8.

values, attitudes, knowledge, skills, and techniques which a society possess - in short, it involves learning the culture".[149] The transmission of information is an interactive process, where the individual is not entirely passively manipulated, but rather actively participates in the learning of his/her society's norms, values and attitudes.

> As one learns more about others, one learns more about the self, and vice versa... socialisation and individuation are really opposite sides of the same coin: they are the yin and yang of social development.[150]

The principles of socialisation are analogous with the Interactionist's theory of the development of the "self". The defining of one's sense of self is the act of individualisation within a group through interaction. Yet, it is the very group that one interacts with that defines one's perception of self. The individual and his/her socialisation into the greater society are intertwined. As Cooley stated, "(t)here is no sense of "I" ... without its correlative sense of you, or he, or they".[151] If the individual is to be accepted by the group he/she must learn the rules of the game. This is done through socialisation.

Learning the rules of the game allows the participant to comprehend what to expect from the society or group to which he/she belongs and allows the individual to understand the same shared expectations that will dictate his/her acceptable behaviour. Socialisation, from the perspective of a group, ensures the continuation of acceptable and established behaviours to

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[149] Leslie, G. R. The Family in the Social Context. pg. 11.
[150] Damon, William. "Socialization and Individuation". Childhood Socialization. pg. 6.
[151] Cooley, Charles Horton, Human Nature and Social Order. pg. 182.

its new members. Socialisation, from the perspective of the individual, "... helps them to cope with the demands of their social groups by giving them the capacity to meet these demands".[152] "In a sense, then, socialisation is a process for making people safe..."[153]

The family, educational and religious organisations, institutions of justice and law, peer groups and economic agencies are all agents of one's socialisation. A child's initial location of socialisation occurs within his/her family. Moreover, the character of the family is rapidly changing. Dual income families, single parent families and excessive technologies (twenty-four hour television programming, computer games, etc...) that limit human interactive social time are just a few recent changes that are transforming the way in which the modern family functions. Some would argue that these changes limit the family's ability to adequately convey the social information necessary for a child to function. The duty to socialise children has increasingly been placed on the shoulders of the educational institutions and the schools have become our primary agent of socialisation.[154]

> Some socialisation is deliberate: the mission of public schools ... is to transmit formally to younger generations many of the dominant behaviour and value patterns of the larger American society... Most socialisation, however, is neither formal nor intentional: as people go about their usual activities within their social groups, for the most part, socialisation just happens.[155]

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[152] Schwartz, Audrey James. The Schools and Socialization. pg. 3.
[153] Bernstein, B. Class, Codes and Control. pg. 174.
[154] Mifflen, Frank J. & Mifflen, Sydney C. The Sociology of Education Canada and Beyond. pgs. 288-291.
[155] Schwartz, Audrey James. The Schools and Socialization. pg. 1.

Informal socialisation that occurs within the school setting is customarily fulfilled through the "hidden curriculum". The formal curriculum is that which is overt and recognised by the greater society. The hidden curriculum is covert. It may be unrecognised by those who impart and receive it and may form part of the actual curriculum. Greene (1983) states that "the hidden curriculum always has a normative or moral component".[156]

Jackson (1968) defines the hidden curriculum as the unnoticed aspects of school life that give rise to the norms and values. One must "catch on" to the hidden rules of the game in order to succeed.[157] Connelly & Clandinin (1988) state that even the most mundane of activities are often accompanied by unintended consequences.[158] These outcomes or messages, according to Dale (1990), that are imparted through the hidden curriculum, may never be recognised or identified, and even if they are they may never be formally recognised.[159]

Cornbleth (1984) believes that "while the term "hidden curriculum" is an intuitively attractive phrase... it tends to label more than to explain... (and) implies some sort of conspiracy".[160] Portelli disagrees with Cornbleth's assumption, stating that "the notion of conspiracy is not always implied by the concept and that one does not need to defend a form of

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[156] Greene, M. "Introduction". The Hidden Curriculum and Moral Education: Deception or Discovery. pg. 3.
[157] Jackson, P. Life in the Classroom. pgs. 33-34.
[158] Connelly, F. M. & Clandinin, D. J. Teachers as Curriculum Planners: Narratives of Experience. pgs. 154-156.
[159] Dale, M. "Intentional Explanations and Radical Theories of Education". pg. 191.
[160] Cornbleth, C. Beyond the Hidden Curriculum. pg. 29.

conspiracy theory in order to argue the importance of the hidden curriculum".[161] Educationalists of "conservative bent" maintain that the hidden curriculum is a figment of imagination created by leftist ideologues, and the leftist perspective contends that the hidden curriculum entrusts a conspiratorial agenda. Portelli turns to Barrow (1976) in affirming the existence of the hidden curriculum. Barrow states that "(s)chools undoubtedly do influence children in more ways than by overtly instructing them or otherwise consciously teaching them".[162] It is Portelli's belief that regardless of one's perception of the hidden curriculum "authors have the responsibility to make the hidden curriculum as explicit as possible".[163]

It is in this spirit of "revealing" that we explore the world of the North American child and reveal the hidden curriculum in physical education classes that socialises children to the norms of the broader society. In this instance, the hidden curriculum involves teaching children to assess their peers in a hierarchical manner, thereby socialising them to the stratification and norms of the wider society.

"Social stratification" refers to the hierarchical ordering of individuals and/or groups according to their possession of whatever that society values, such as authority, prestige, wealth, physical competence and attractiveness, intelligence, and power.[164]

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[161] Portelli, John P. Exposing the Hidden Curriculum". pg. 344.
[162] Barrow, R. Radical Education: A Critique of Freeschooling and Deschooling. pg. 137.
[163] Portelli, John P. Exposing the Hidden Curriculum". pg. 343.
[164] Mifflen, Frank J. & Mifflen, Sydney C. The Sociology of Education: Canada and Beyond. 1982. pgs. 39 - 42.

Studies on peer acceptance and stratification have shown that children with poor motor ability tend to have low social prestige among peers and are more likely to be left out of play activities.[165] Marlowe's research (1980) shows that children's peer assessment and social placement takes place through competition in gym classes or in play. He established this theory by administering a roster-and-rating sociometric questionnaire to fifth grade children. Marlowe found that the popular children were termed by their peers as "athletic" and those with lower social prestige were deemed "unathletic". Marlowe also found that when children who were peer assessed as unpopular were given extra help in their physical skills, they made gains in peer acceptance.

Percival Symonds (1948), while studying the personality development of what he termed "normal elementary school" boys and girls, concluded that "... the greatest need of these children was the opportunity for social participation and the greatest personality handicap was social isolation".[166] Symonds indicated that physical education and recreational activities created the main settings for success or failure among children.

Physical education in elementary school is unique in that it is basically adult supervision and intervention of children's play. It is also an ideal forum in which to impart attitudes and values of co-operation, dedication, a strong work ethic and considerably more, in an environment

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[165] Marlowe, Mike. "Games analysis Intervention: A Procedure to Increase Peer Acceptance of Socially Isolated Children", The Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport.

[166] Symonds, Percival. "Education for Development of Personality", Teacher's College Record. pg. 166.

that most children seem to like. The socialisation that occurs naturally amongst a peer group of children involved in play at a park is beyond the control of most educational researchers. However, the play and sporting games that children are involved in within an adult supervised, organised instructional setting, and the potential socialisation that occurs is, as Portelli stated, very much the responsibility of educational researchers.

> Sport has been an increasingly integral part of American culture and is regarded as a major social institution. Thus it is not surprising that more and more children become involved in organised sports each year. Under the auspices of the public schools and community agencies, youth sport programs including baseball, football, soccer, and swimming have grown to such an extent that they are changing the course of childhood.[167]

The above quote, from the book Children in Sports, contextualises the attitudes that surround what is essentially a "formal" play setting. Terms such as "institution", "organised sports", and "youth sport programs" all have the same connotations that reflect a formal setting. All these settings (i.e. school, organised, youth sport programs, etc...) have four things in common: they all include children, adults, goals, and obviously any specific sport. Similarly, a "non-formal" play setting can, and often does, include these elements, with the exception of adult participation. What makes the difference between these two play settings is not really the participants that are involved in the sport/play, rather, it is the attitudes and reasoning that the individuals bring that differentiate the two forms of play and games.[168]

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[167] Magill. & Ash. & Smoll. Children in Sport. pg. 1.
[168] Ibid. pg. 1.

> Since World War II children's play has been transformed from informal games to highly organised sports events. Adults now organise and direct most sports programs for children from Little League baseball to youth soccer. Today these programs mirror professional teams. Each team has a coach, a manager, uniforms and an official schedule. Scoreboards, official league standings, tournaments now determine success. Trophies and newspaper coverage signify winners.[169]

Gai Ingham Berlage (1982), author of the above quote, suggests that the informal play of children is fast being changed, through adult intervention. Informal or non-formal play is characterised as a setting where children can "relax... let off steam... and have fun"[170]. Adults can be a part of the non-formal play setting, but they must remain an equal participant to the play. In a non-formal setting children are equal partners in the direction that the play takes. They are not being dictated to through adult rules and intervention.

> Children's sports resemble more and more training grounds for the adult world and for business than games for fun.[171]

In a formal play setting, just like in any other organisation, there is a specific goal that is sought. In the example of the youth hockey programs, these goals can be overt in nature: to teach children how to skate, and/or to

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[169] Berlage, Gai Ingham. "Are children's competitive team sports teaching corporate values?". pg. 15.

[170] Ibid. pg. 15.

[171] Ibid. pg. 15.

improve the quality of children's health. Or, as Berlage implies in the above quote, formal sports may have a more covert function: the socialisation of mostly male children into a business oriented society.

> The rise of highly organised competitive sport programs for boys below the age of twelve was a phenomenon of the first half of the 20th century... To be sure, young children played games and enjoyed a variety of sports throughout America's history, but regulated and administered sport programs by interested individuals and organisations solely for the use of small boys did not begin until after 1900.[172]

Non-formal games and play have probably always existed, and probably always will. The nature of non-formal play, based primarily in the spontaneity and enjoyment of children's actions, dictate that it will always exist. According to specialists on children's formal play (Berlage, Cavallo, Berryman, Goodman, Schwartzman, & Godbout), organised sports is a relatively recent institution that was conceived at the turn of the century. The rationale for the impassioned resurgence of organised sports for children provides a sound argument for those specialists who believe that formal play was consciously developed as a tool of socialisation. This is not an unlikely hypothesis when we consider the use of organised training of children for military purposes through games by ancient civilisations. It is important for us to examine the roots of organised sports to understand the basis of today's formal play.

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[172] Berryman, Jack W. "The rise of highly organized sports for preadolescent boys". pg. 2.

One element influencing the rise of children's organised sports is the increased popularity of professional sports. Here in Montreal, for instance, the first Stanley Cup was awarded to the Montreal Maroons in 1893. The popularity and success of such teams as the Montreal Maroons, the Montreal Wanderers, and then finally the Montreal Canadiens, must have influenced young children throughout the respective years to aspire to play hockey; of this there can be little doubt. However, according to the previously mentioned specialists, the establishers of formal sport/play settings had ulterior motives for developing organised sports for children.

> Children's sport organisations led to changes in the American family structure and, in many instances, added a new aspect of the socialisation of children.[173]

Most specialists agree with Berryman (1982) that there is a strong element of socialisation inherent in organised games for children. Berryman states that organised sports were "organised specifically to provide wholesome leisure-time pursuits for young boys and keep them out of trouble."[174] This is a possible interpretation of the reasoning behind the inception of formal settings of play, but, as we have noted authors such as Berlage have a different perception behind this intent.

> One of the most important aspects of Americanization from 1890 through 1914 was the effort to colonize the play habits of immigrant children.[175]

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[173] Ibid. pg. 14.
[174] Ibid. pg. 4.
[175] Goodman, Cary. "Creating Americans at the Educational Alliance". pg. 1.

Cary Goodman (1976), author and director of an American based organisation called Sports for the People, provides an excellent account of the methods of the Manhattan upper class and national government to socialise the immigrant population of New York, during the late 1800s, through organised sports. He accuses the upper class business owners of the Manhattan area and the National Government of America of using play to curb the "clannish", "religious", and "radical" behaviours of the East European immigrants. Direct proponents and funders of this socialisation (or Americanization) plan included the likes of John D. Rockefeller and Teddy Roosevelt.

The two groups of business and government formed an organisation called The Playground Association of America (P.A.A.). Its prime directive was to create "settlement houses" in all the major ghetto areas. These settlement houses would provide a disciplined approach to organised sports that would "ease" the young immigrant population into the ideals of the popular American society. One advocate and supporter of the P.A.A. was quoted as saying: "Play was the "weak link" in the immigrants' culture and therefore it provided an opening crack in immigrant subculture into which a wedge could be driven."[176]

Goodman cites one method of enticing the immigrant youth into joining sports programs as simply "taunting" their pride. Jewish Ghetto children were continuously being bombarded with the image of "Jewish

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[176] Ibid. pg. 1.

physical inferiority"[177]. The P.A.A. sports program, which Goodman often describes as being militant in nature, was touted by its founders as being the answer to overcoming this supposed inherent physical shortcoming.

Goodman's position on the P.A.A. motives is open to question. Authors, such as Dom Cavallo, paint a more positive picture of the incentives and out-comes of the P.A.A. sports programs. Cavallo does not deny that the purpose of organised sports was meant to socialise. However, Cavallo believes that this was a "child saving" organisation that allowed immigrants to learn the ways of a new world.[178]

Theorists, such as Cavallo, attest that in North America children assess their peers mostly by their established reputations, which are most often based on physical aptitude. It is through this that they first attain social acceptance or rejection. Newcomb and Rogosch in 1989 studied children's perception of peer reputations, concluding that:

> (C)hildren may maintain and use their reputation as a way to screen their social relations in order to interact with peers with whom they are likely to have positive encounters... these reputational barriers may limit the opportunity to develop more adaptive behaviour through peer interaction and may foster maladaptive behaviour as rejected children are unsuccessful in their attempts to enter the mainstream of the peer system.[179]

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[177] Ibid. pg. 18.

[178] Cavallo, Dom. "Social reform and the movement to organize children's play during the progressive era".

[179] Newcombe, Andrew F. & Rogosch, Fred A. "Children's Perception and their Social Reputations Among Peers". pg. 609.

This chapter has illustrated the various ways that in-school and out-of-school sports programs are looked at to socialise the young; to inculcate "foreigners" and the "less fortunate" with the norms of society. At the same time, we see that included in the norms being taught are those of one's "place" or position in the hierarchy.

The following chapter offers the methodology that was used to try to observe this otherwise theoretical process first hand and to document at the micro level of interaction, the mechanisms that link macro social variables with micro social variables such as "the self".

Chapter Five

The Methodology: Participant Observation

This thesis has thus far established the hypothesis of children's socialisation through physical education by means of a historical viewpoint and a theoretical grounding based on the Interactionist perspective. The historical analysis and theoretical perspectives were included in order to back up the hypothesis of this thesis. By including the prevailing literature on the history of physical education, we demonstrate that physical education has been used by numerous societies to socialise their children. The validity of this position is further secured through the Interactionist theory which stipulates that the development of one's self within his/her society is greatly influenced by how others perceive them.[180]

While the foregoing historical and theoretical analysis of the nature and function of physical education has been "convincing", the theoretical material in particular is based on very little concrete data. What "proof" can we obtain to substantiate the claims of theoreticians? What data can be found to bring these ideas beyond the level of "ringing true" into the realm of the valid?

One of the problems with the kind of research question at hand is that it cannot be studied in a manner that lends itself to statistical manipulation and the "respectability" that the academic community tends to accord it. Rather, qualitative investigative procedures are more appropriate, even though the *evidence* is likely to be of the case study sort. It is to be pointed out that the case study has no more likelihood of representing an idiosyncratic situation than does the randomly selected situation. Thus, with

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[180] Cooley, Charles Horton. Human Nature and the Social Order. pg. 182-183.

no further defence or defensiveness about the use of a qualitative approach, this chapter will describe the methodology that the author used to provide concrete documentation of a process that is all too familiar to all of us.

Four principle texts were used as methodological sources of which this thesis was based. They are Participant Observation in Organisational Settings, by Robert Bogdan (1972); Ethnography and Qualitative Design in Educational Research, by Judith P. Goetz and Margaret D. LeCompte (1984); Social Investigation in Physical Education and Sport, by E. D. Saunders and G. B. White (1977); and Participant Observation by James P. Spradley (1980).

Participant observation produces studies that might be sorted out into two broad categories.[181] The first consists of findings related to specific areas which are generally at a low level of abstraction. For example, in a study of an adult educational facility, one might find out how new students perceive courses that are offered. The second includes findings which are more closely tied to basic sociological questions and are generally at a higher level of abstraction. This second category describes the abstraction of this thesis, where questions and understandings concerning children's socialisation through physical education are sought.[182]

Participant observation is defined as qualitative "research characterised by a prolonged period of intense social interaction between

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[181] Glaser, Barney and Strauss, Anlem. The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research. pg. 32.

[182] Bogdan, Robert. Participant Observation in Organizational Settings. pg. 11-12.

the researcher and the subjects, in the milieu of the latter, during which time data, in the form of field notes, are unobtrusively and systematically collected".[183] The function of this methodology is to "elicit from people their definitions of reality and the organising constructs of their world".[184] To explain this concept of examining a subjects "world" from their point of view, Spradley and Bogdan both turn to Herbert Blumer (1962). Blumer states:

> Human beings act towards things on the basis of the meanings that the things have for them (...) Meaning of such things is derived from, or arise out of, the social interaction that one has with one's fellows (...) Meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretive process used by the person dealing with the things he encounters.[185]

Blumer's theory of actions, events and things having different interpretations for various groups substantiates the necessity for a methodology that allows the researcher to observe from a subject's perspective.[186]

Empathy and reflection are the hallmarks of participant observation.[187] These attributes, through the methodology, allow researchers to view the world as the subjects they are studying see it. Perhaps, the "studying" of people is an inappropriate way to look at this

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[183] Ibid. pg. 3.

[184] Goetz, J. P., and Lecompte, M. P. Ethnography and Qualitative Design in Educational Research. pg. 110.

[185] Blumer, Herbert. Symbolic Interactionism. pg. 2.

[186] Spradley, James P. Participant Observation. pg. 3.

[187] Bogdan, Robert. Participant Observation in Organizational Settings. pg. 4. & Goetz & LeCompte. Ethnography and Qualitative Design in Educational Research. pg. 109.

methodology. A more appropriate perspective would be that participant observation means *"learning from people"*.[188] Spradley refers to a participant observational study on the mountain people of the Appalachian Valley and states:

> In order to discover the hidden principles of another way of life, the researcher must become a *student*. Storekeepers and storytellers and local farmers become *teachers*.[189]

In this thesis, we use participant observation to view the world of physical education from a child's point of view; the children become the teachers and the researcher becomes the student.

Goetz and LeCompte, Spradley, and Bogdan classify the methodology of participant observation into three phases: Pre-Field Work, Field Work, and Analysis. Bogdan warns that the methodology of participant observation "requires a good deal of flexibility in approach and timing" and "in most cases the lines between the stages are blurred".[190] This is an opinion which complies with my experiences as a researcher. This chapter, will outline these phases, explain the specifics required at each step and describe the relating experiences that occurred in carrying out the field work for this thesis.

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[188] Spradley, James P. Participant Observation. pg. 3.
[189] Ibid. pg. 3.
[190] Bogdan, Robert. Participant Observation in Organizational Settings. pg. 9.

The Pre-Field work phase constitutes a period in which the design of the study is loosely prepared, a situation and/or site is chosen, and permission is sought and received to study the targeted organisation.[191] In the design stage of the study, a question or theory is loosely proposed. In this thesis the question relating to the role of physical education in the socialisation of children. The location of the research site is now defined with the formulation of the research question.

> Each social situation is a laboratory where some aspect of social life can best be studied because there it is best illuminated.[192]

Naturally, an inquiry using participant observation to delve into children's socialisation through physical education is confined to specific research locations; that is, locations in which children participate in physical education. In the previous chapter, we discussed the concept of children's "formal" play settings and concluded that physical education was, basically, a location in which adults had an authoritative-participatory or supervisory role.[193] With this definition in mind, locations where formal play occurred were sought as possible research sites.

The ideal location to study would have been an elementary public school physical education class within the Montreal, West Island area, as this was the environment with which I was most familiar. The alternative would prove to be any public English school within the Montreal district.

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[191] Ibid. pg. 11.
[192] Ibid. pg. 12.
[193] Magill, Ash, & Smoll. Children in Sport. pg. 1.

Recognising that formal physical education classes were no longer confined to the institutional school setting, the second possible location for study were the hockey "schools" that are found in abundance in Montreal. Non-formal children's play areas were also studied for comparative purposes. Once the locations were generally determined, the process of gaining access to the organisations ensued.

In the winter semester of 1992, it was decided that an exploratory participant observation study would be done. This coincided with the writing of the thesis proposal in order to familiarise myself with the methodology that would later be used in this thesis. A school in Lachine, part of the Lakeshore School Board, became a promising target in which to carry out the exploratory observation, as the physical education teacher had already agreed to allow a researcher into her class. The hope was that this school would not only be a learning process of the methodology, but also a prime observational location for actual data collection. As it turned out, not only did this experience prove to be valuable in learning the methodology of participant observation, it also became a lesson in dealing with, what Bogdan termed, a prospective "gatekeeper".

> The overt participant observer can obtain access to an organizational setting only by requesting permission from those in charge. I will refer to people who have the power to grant this access as "gatekeepers".[194]

[194] Bogdan, Robert. Participant Observation in Organizational Settings. pg. 13.

The gatekeeper in this scenario was the principal of the elementary school and the naive assumption that permission to carry out the study from the physical education teacher alone proved to be a mistake. Once the principal discovered that there was an "outside" researcher observing her students she promptly called me into her office. She immediately inquired as to the nature of the research being carried out and specifically to the process in which I had gained entry into her school. She made quite clear to me that the "chain of command" started with her and permission alone from the actual physical education teacher was not enough. Furthermore, the thesis hypothesis that was advanced, on the socialisation of children through physical education, did not seem to meet with her approval.

Reflecting upon this incident, the principal's reluctance to allow me extended entrance to her school, (beyond the week that she granted), seemed logical. This episode taught two lessons beyond how to carry out field work participant observation that comply with Bogdan's recommendation on Pre-Field Work stages: who are the principal gatekeepers that a researcher approaches for entry into an organisation and what exactly should a researcher tell a gatekeeper about his/her research?

In the fall of 1993, the process of seeking entrance into an institutional physical education setting began. Entrance into non-institutional physical education settings, such as children's hockey programs, was a simple matter of volunteering for an assistant coaching position. However, entrance into the public school system was slightly more complicated. In seeking a long-term study location the recommendation of

Bogdan was followed. This time, permission was sought from *the top* of the organisational chain.

> One good rule to follow - both with the gatekeeper at the start of the research and with other organizational members throughout the endeavour - is to *tell the truth*. (...)Telling the truth does not mean going into elaborate detail as to your substantive or theoretical interests or the technique you are employing.[195]

Three school boards were approached: the Protestant School Board of Greater Montreal, the Lakeshore School Board, and the Montreal Catholic School Commission. Upon initial contact with each school board, the question was asked "Who was in charge of decision making concerning the physical education programs?" Once these people had been identified, they were approached for approval of gaining entrance into elementary physical education classes. This time, while remaining truthful, Bogdan's advice about not offering too much information was followed and I tried to stay clear of educational sociological jargon.

> An explanation of your purpose masked in jargon may do much to scare off potential subjects.[196]

Remembering my last encounter with the principal from Lachine, terms such as hierarchical structuring, Interactionism, social mobility, and especially socialisation were purposefully left out of conversations. Despite

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[195] Ibid. pg. 15.
[196] Ibid. pg. 16.

this approach, both the Protestant School Board of Greater Montreal and the Lakeshore School Board refused entry into their schools.

> Often, the choice of a setting may be determined by such factors as one's having a friend who knows the "gatekeeper" of a potentially interesting organisation.[197]

The Physical Education, Moral and Religion Instruction Consultant in the Montreal Catholic School Commission, was introduced to me through a mutual friend in September of 1993. True to Bogdan's claim, it was through this woman that I gained admittance to an elementary school. Having had two prior entry rejections with the other school boards, when I first met with the Physical Education Consultant the basic content of the project was avoided. Luckily, she facilitated absolute honesty when it came to explaining the hypothesis of the proposed thesis. It was the "Consultant" who finally stated, in a matter-of-fact manner, after listening to me skirt around the subject for ten minutes: "what you're talking about is socialisation". Once it was established that there was a common understanding of the subject matter and intent of the thesis, we commenced what Bogdan calls the "bargain stage" of the Pre-Field work phase:

> An important part of the "getting in" is the "bargain". The bargain is the written or unwritten agreement between the gatekeeper and the researcher that defines the obligations they have to each other. What the gatekeeper has to offer is access to the organisation; whether the researcher has anything to give may be in question.[198]

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[197] Ibid. pg. 12.
[198] Ibid. pg. 18.

Originally, it was planned that I would carry out participant observations of a phys-ed teacher and his classes in two Montreal West schools. The bargain, under this arrangement, was that I would assist the instructor in organising teams, preparing equipment, and refereeing games and in return, I would be allowed to carry out my study. This agreement allowed the researcher to assume the role of participant observer that had earlier been carried out in the organisational formal play settings of children's hockey programs.

A year earlier than the physical education participant observations, the hockey observations took place in the winter of 1992-93, at an arena in Montreal West. All children in this arena's program reside in the Montreal West area. The arena is a municipally owned rink. The hockey level of the children observed was "pre-novice". This group is further split into two age groups: six to seven years old in one group, eight to ten years old in another. Although open to both boys and girls, there was not a single girl enrolled in the program. Therefore, all participants observed in this setting were boys.

Practices at this age are mixed between actual games and hockey drills, which, for each child, took place three times a week for one hour. There was a single coach, whom we will name "Sean", and entry into this organisation went through him. The bargaining process between Sean and me was relatively short: If I wanted to observe the children I would have to commit myself for the full year to the duties of an assistant coach, primarily,

to implement the demands given to me by the head coach. On occasion, I was told I would have to assume full coaching responsibilities when Sean was not available. This was approximately the same scenario I expected to achieve in the formal, institutional physical education setting. However, such was not the case.

The physical education instructor whose classes were to be observed was a part-time teacher with the M.C.S.C. His full time position was of head coach at another educational institution. Due to his latter obligations, phys-ed classes were often scheduled on an unconstrained (irregular) basis and taught when his busy calendar permitted. The children of both schools were assured of their phys-ed classes every week and for the brief three weeks I spent with them they did not seem to mind the eclectic (erratic) schedule. However, for a graduate student, time is precious and the unpredictable time of observational sessions became somewhat troublesome.

The Catholic School Board's Physical Education "Consultant's" solution to this dilemma was one that was hard to refuse: a situation in which the participant observer could be the actual physical education instructor. This was a "bargaining" process in which the researcher received entry into an organisation and the gatekeeper found a physical education teacher for a district that was in need of one. With entry to a long-term site secured, the preparation for the Field Work phase and a new set of obstacles began.

> The observer is passive in the sense that he does not change the situation in any way that may affect the data. He conducts himself in such a way that eventually

> becomes an unobtrusive part of the scene - someone whom the other participants take for granted as belonging, and whom they consider to be all "insider" in a special, nonthreatening role.[199]

Becoming a physical education teacher created multiple problems which took two years of experience and research to solve. The first problem was, simply, learning how to teach phys-ed. The second problem was how the role of a participant observer was defined by the authors Bogdan, Spradley, Geotz and Lecompte and how my role was deviating from their methodological prescription. Bogdan states that "(i)deally, the researcher is perceived as a neutral figure",[200] and in the eyes of a student, a phys-ed teacher is definitely *not* a neutral figure. Spradley concurs with this position, explaining that "the ethnographer can hardly ever become a complete participant in a social situation".[201] However, Spradley also states that "(e)thnographers do not merely make observations, they also participate. Participation allows you to experience activities directly, to get the feel of what events are like, and to record your own perceptions".[202] Bogdan also tempers his position on the role of participation in this methodology contending:

> I suggested earlier that a potentially successful research role to assume is a passive one. By this I do not mean that a researcher should not participate with his subjects, but rather that he should cautiously participate and hold back in interaction at least until he has gained a feeling for the situation and an

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[199] Ibid. pg. 21.
[200] Ibid. pg. 21.
[201] Sradley, James P. Participant Observation. pg. 51.
[202] Ibid. pg. 51.

> understanding of what specific research role might be most successful.[203]

Jonathan Swift's quote "necessity is the mother of invention" holds particularly true in this situation. Taking on the dual role of physical education teacher and participant observer was the only option available. Therefore, necessity dictated that a model of participant observation had to be either found or created on which to base this thesis. Bogdan Spradley, Geotz and LeCompte imply that there seems to be a fine line between the passive, participant observer and the active, participant observer.

> The active participant seeks to *do* what other people are doing, not merely to gain acceptance, but to more fully learn the cultural rules for behaviour.[204]

Whichever role of participant observer one takes, Bogdan cautions: "Control your participation; keep in mind that your primary concern is collecting data."[205] In regards to controlling one's participation, the children of the school in which I taught will attest to the numerous occasions their physical education teacher was intensely watching the interactions of children squabbling on the bench while questionable goals were being scored on the other side of the court.

Bogdan also cautions against "being forced" into the very role in which I was becoming involved:

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[203] Bogdan, Robert. Participant Observation in Organizational Settings. pg. 26-27.
[204] Spradley, James P. Participant Observation. pg. 60.
[205] Bogdan, Robert. Participant Observation in Organizational Settings. pg. 28.

> (O)rganizational members will attempt to place the observer into the same category as a more commonly known outsider. For example, in school systems observers are often forced to take on some of the trappings of volunteers, since the volunteer is a familiar role to the institutional personnel.[206]

The question of how much the researcher should actively participate is one that the above mentioned authors all ask. The answer seems to be based on the situation that best facilitates the accumulation of data. the less one actively participates the more able one is to gather information However, that luxurious position was not available and, to further complicate the matter, the school which was the target of this study did not view the researcher as a volunteer, but rather as an employee. This created the dual problem of not only "learning the ropes" of participant observation,[207] but also of learning how to be a physical education instructor; in essence, to learn "my place" within the school's format. The methodological practice in Saunder and White's Social Investigation in Physical Education was used as a model on which to base this thesis's participant observation.

> Frequently we hear of or read about the need to understand the relationship between physical education and social development and even the most sceptical teacher has at least considered its importance. Yet so few have felt the need to study these aspects objectively, to understand the nature of social relationships and supplement personal experiences by findings of sociology.[208]

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[206] Ibid. pg. 28.
[207] Ibid. pg. 23.
[208] Saunders, E. D. & White, G. B. Social Investigation in Physical Education. pg. 16

Saunders and White believe it necessary for the physical education field to open itself to sociological inquiry. In an attempt to encourage this belief, they created a series of projects, examples and recommendations for researchers to follow. The focus of their work being: "to develop a knowledge of sociological perspectives, to give practice in the analysis of documentary evidence, to promote experience of observing and recording behaviour... and to study behaviour of groups..."[209]

In one of Saunders and White's research projects, they tackle the social interaction between teacher and student in regard to physical educators' disciplinarian tactics of "lay(ing) down rigid rules in the first instance"[210]. To highlight examples of this social interaction, the authors advance an excerpt from a "diary of a young teacher"[211]. The data being analysed is participant observational in method, it is written in hindsight, and most importantly, it is participant observation from a young teacher's perspective. It is in this manner that the participant observational data for this thesis will be recounted: from a new teacher's perspective, whose only preconceived notions towards physical education stem from his own childhood experiences.

> To try to understand social life by standing back and being emotionless in the interest of objectivity and refusing to assume others' roles is to risk the worst form of subjectivism.[212]

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[209] Ibid. pg. 20.
[210] Ibid. pg. 32.
[211] Ibid. pg. 32.
[212] Bogdan, Robert. Participant Observation in Organizational Settings. pg. 45.

Throughout the next chapter which deals with the analysis of the field notes, an attempt will be made to explain whatever preconceived notions the researcher had prior to the experience, bringing the researcher's biases to the fore as best as possible. This is intended to allow the reader to assess the extent to which the researcher had an impact on the research process itself.

> Field notes are the main data for a participant observation study, but other forms of data are collected and other research methods can be employed in conjunction with intensive field work if these are productive to your goals.[213]

In accordance with the methodological parameters of participant observation as determined by Bogdan and Spradley, three questionnaires concerning children's perceptions towards the sports they played and the physical education class in which they took part were administered (figures 1-3). Through their home-room teachers, questionnaires were distributed to the students as home-work and were intermingled with weekly assignments concerning more general attributes of physical education, (for example, a take home test reviewing game rules). The children's responses to the questionnaires will also be discussed within the following chapter.

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[213] Ibid. pg. 53.

Chapter Six

Notes From a Participant Observer in an Elementary Phys-Ed Class

In the introduction, it was stated that the primary intention of studying formal and non-formal play settings outside of the elementary school milieu was comparative. It was anticipated that participant observational data obtained outside of the school setting would serve as comparative to the main focus of inquiry; the elementary school. The prior experience proved worthwhile, as upon entering the formal school setting of "Guy Lafleur" (invented name) elementary, in October of 1993, comparisons concerning the use and effectiveness of the methodology were immediately drawn.

Seven months earlier, in the month of March 1993, the illness of the head coach forced me to take sole responsibility of the pre-novice children's hockey practices. After these sessions, I reached the conclusion that it was rather difficult to play the part of participant observer and head coach at the same time. Spradley and Bogdan both warned the prospective researcher of the futility of trying to get "it all down", or in other words, to completely document every incident. They also cautioned the researcher of the supplementary difficulty one would confront in accumulating data during an active participant observation. It was fully anticipated that I would not be able to get "it all down". However, taking on the role of the hockey head coach did not allow getting *anything* down and active participant observation demonstrated itself to be a difficult methodology to master.

I wrote down that perhaps, at some future date, additional experience in participant observation would facilitate the combination of these two roles. My first week at the "school" brought the realisation that this combination was an exhausting task to accomplish. Compounding this predicament was

the fact that I had no training in either teaching children of this age or the subject of physical education. What was originally planned to be a one year project in participant observation turned into a two year project to allow the researcher to explore his dual role of participant physical education teacher and participant observer. Subsequently, as shall be expanded in the discussion and conclusion chapter, the active participant role opened this researcher's eyes to a new and rather positive viewpoint of socialisation through physical education and of the influential role the physical education teacher plays.

Located in the East End district of Montreal near the Olympic Stadium, the school in which the study was carried out is an English speaking co-ed school which is, as stated before, part of the Montreal Catholic School Commission (CECM). The ethnicity of the children at the "Guy Lafleur" school is mostly of italian or Portuguese origin, with a minority of children from Anglo Saxon or French backgrounds. The majority of children are of the Catholic faith.

The school's gymnasium court or playing space is 70 feet by 28 feet, with approximately 12 feet to spare at both sides of the length and 5 feet at either end of the width (figure 4). Well lit during the day from the large windows that encompass its western wall, the gymnasium is in full view of the main entrance to the school. The door to the principal's office is no more than five feet away and the door to the custodian's office is accessed through the gymnasium as well. Like many other gymnasiums, it serves multiple functions: for physical education classes, an after school program

locale, auditorium, assembly hall, and cafeteria. The first impression noted upon initial view of the gym is that the playing surface is overwhelmingly crowded by the folded tables that are used for the lunch programs. The tables were, at most, a foot away from the lines that define the court area, and games would often be delayed due to balls that would roll under them.

This gymnasium, upon first impression, with its antiquated and threadbare equipment, seemed to have lost its original intent as a location for physical activity. It now seemed more suited to the guardianship duties that have befallen most schools. However, despite a lack of funding for a physical education program, the principal appeared resolved to provide his students with some form of physical education.

I had already met the "Principal" prior to the commencement of this study, as he was the principal of the school in which my wife had her first teaching post one year prior. Consequently, this facilitated the Catholic School Board's Physical Education Consultant's search for a school in which I could teach physical education and created an informal and familiar setting for my first contact with the site under study. Before I taught my first class, the principal and I talked in his office about the content and hypothesis of my thesis and he seemed familiar with all the concepts that I discussed.

The Principal was unlike other members of the elementary school community who appeared nervous with the concepts of "socialisation", "hierarchical structuring", and "ascriptive membership". He nodded his head as I explained the nature of my thesis, not in total agreement but more so in

a knowing manner. He advanced the idea that perhaps the elementary schools in the West Island that had the budget for physical education teachers were in a more advantageous position in terms of their children's socialisation: the students have the benefit of knowing *how* to compete and *how* to react to group situations. And, that will assist them in the future, he said.

This was a viewpoint that, in honesty, flustered me. At this early stage of my research, I had just completed a small scale literature review on the history of physical education. Everything that I had read so far had been slanted to a position of physical education being used as negative covert learning in which children are manipulated into personalities or ascribed castes that fit to the schemes of the larger society. I realised that we had very different points of view concerning physical education. What I did not realise was that his perspective was built on years of practical experience, and my practical experience concerning this subject had just begun.

The idea of children benefiting from the interactions that made up a physical education encounter did not really make any sense to me. I openly asked myself in the first few months, "what possible good could come out of children's struggle to gain acceptance and prestige through physical competition?". My preconceived notions of children suffering on the lower rungs of a hierarchical ladder of prestige and stature did not allow me to see the benefits of what the Principal was discussing. Looking back on my notes, it took a half year of learning how to teach physical education to

begin to see the advantages a child can gain in an educational atmosphere of "accepted" social norms.

In the first year, four groups of children were taught and observed: a grade five-"G", Special Education class, with 8 boys and two girls, taught on Wednesday afternoons; a grade four class with 15 boys and 10 girls, taught on Wednesday afternoons; a grade five class with 14 boys and 11 girls, taught on Thursday afternoons; and a grade six class with 18 boys and 11 girls, taught on Friday afternoons. I kept track of the children by means of an identification sheet that had their name and a photograph as well as personal notes (figure 5).

That first half year can only be described as frantic and discouraging. The children barely listened to instruction and were frequently running wild. Most participant observations recorded dealt with extreme circumstances, because it takes an extreme situation for a first year teacher to stop looking at the progression of the game and notice, for example, two kids on the bench in conflict. Consequently, hardly any worthwhile notes were recorded in that first year. Most participant notes that were taken consisted of entries that complained about the specific game we played and how out of control the children were. This I attribute to my lack of realisation that the role of physical education teacher was part of the school socialisation process I was studying. It was shortly after the Christmas break that the custodian of "Guy Lafleur" elementary helped me to see the significant role the physical education teacher must play in the socialisation process of his/her students.

In essence this encounter taught me to accept my role as Spradley's active participant observer.

It was a Wednesday afternoon in mid-January, 1994 and physical education for the 5G special education class had just begun. I was going over my class list while some children were running around the gymnasium playing a "tag" sort of game. Other children were talking amongst themselves in a corner, and two boys named "Robby" and "Scott" were trying to strike up a conversation with me. "Chris, what did you get for Christmas?", they asked repeatedly. I responded repeatedly, "Never mind, please go sit in the circle so I can do attendance and we can start gym!" My requests were pretty much ignored. As I managed to get two children to sit in the circle at the centre of the gym, eight others would be either running around, sipping water from the fountain, or rummaging through the gym supply room for their favourite basketball.

Usually, at this point the home-room teacher would leave the staff room that was adjacent to the gym and yell any number of threats that would send the class scrambling to her commands. On this occasion, she threatened them with a loss of behavioural points that she allocated to each child at the end of each period (the child who accumulated the most good behavioural points in a week was given a reward). Once order was established, we briefly talked about the Christmas holidays and then the children were told that we would be playing basketball for the next two classes. This news was met with great enthusiasm, as most children are inundated with imagery and commercial products marketing professional

basketball (NBA). A glance around any of my gym classes would reveal a multitude of children wearing shirts, pants, shoes or socks carrying Pro-Basketball brand-names.

As was usually the case when it came time to split the eight boys and two girls into two teams of equal strength significant resistance was displayed by the children. Prior experience with the boys rolling their eyes, sighing, groaning or the more overt vocalised statements of "No, not "Victoria"!", or "Put "Anne-France" on the other team!" had made the girls apprehensive of being placed on a team. Victoria and Anne-France learned they could reduce any feelings of anxiety concerning peer rejection if they were placed in the same group. So, this was usually their plea from the start. Two boys, "Rusty" and "Fred" met the same resistance due to their comparatively lesser skills to the other boys. They too would often find solace in playing on the same team so that peer reproach to their less-than-average play was reduced. There were many reasons not to allow Anne-France, Victoria, Fred, and Rusty to play on the same team. First, left as a group they had little motivation to improve their skills as they received no form of praise from their team-mates; secondly, the jeering they received from the opposition, that greatly overpowered them, did little to improve their perceptions of self-worth; and thirdly, their gym class was reduced to a period in which they quietly endured, playing the part of "loser" and then went off to their next class.

Much of the physical education class was wasted with the forming and reforming of teams, approximately the first twenty minutes of a fifty-five

minute class. Victoria and Rusty voiced the greatest concerns of not being allowed to play. "If I play with "Scott" I'll never touch the ball!", Rusty contested. Victoria, when placed on the same team as "Marc", a young boy who had often displayed a strong competitive streak and equally forceful temper, was brave enough to express "Please Mr. Stonebanks, don't put me with "Marc" he never passes me the ball!". To which Marc quickly retorted "Yeah, 'cause you always drop the ball, stupid!". These events sum up a typical encounter with most classes, including the regular grades 4, 5, and 6. The children were very obvious about who they did or did not want to play with, and their reasons for acceptance or rejection was based on physical skill, gender or presumed "stupidity".

As soon as the two groups were selected the game began. Basketball had been reviewed and/or taught to the children three months earlier, so only a quick review of the rules was necessary. Despite their earlier protests, insisting they play together on the same team, "Sid" and "Scott", two of the physically stronger and more able athletes in the class, had been separated and brawling between them commenced after the first "jump ball".

Both were being encouraged by their team-mates to score and the pressure to outplay each other became intense. On a number of occasions I would blow the whistle to stop the play and calm Scott and Sid down. "Fine, Okay! Let's play! Start!", Scott screamed, cutting my sentence off halfway, obviously oblivious to my warnings. Marc, who was playing on Sid's team, was particularly vocal in taunting and laughing at Scott as he was being

outplayed by Sid: "Denied! Denied! *DENIED*!!!", he would taunt Scott every time he missed a basket. The two main players, Sid and Scott, fought over the ball, as lesser actors, so to speak, stood on the court either exchanging taunts and unpleasantries, mimicking the verbal actions of the "better" players, or simply watching. Victoria and Anne-France, who were playing on opposing teams, had both quietly shuffled to the north-west corner of the gym and were in conversation unaware of the basketball game.

Admittedly, I stood watching what can only be described as a mess of a gym class, arms folded, and ready to simply give up. Behind me, the custodian (janitor) of the school, an older man with greying hair, who had been with the school for what he described as "quite a few years" stood watching the disarray. Arms folded, head cocked up and shaking, he said in a strong French-Canadian accent, "If they learn one lesson here, they must learn discipline!" He continued, while motioning towards them, "They won't even be able to work as `burger flippers at McDonald's if they can't follow instructions! And I know, I've seen it. This is where they must learn discipline... to follow instructions!", pointing down to the gym floor. He walked away, and I realised what he was referring to was their socialisation into the norms of broader society. I had been so busy looking for the negative applications of students' socialisation into acceptance of hierarchical structuring and peer assessment that I had been ignoring the positive values of socialisation that could be imparted to these children.

The Principal's comments concerning the advantages other schools possessed in offering their children physical education classes made sense

after the episode with the custodian. Within the physical education class children are exposed to peer assessments that may have a powerful influence on how they perceive themselves. Furthermore, as was theorised, the location of a phys-ed class is a prime location for a child to be socialised to the broader norms of his or her society. Observed within that first half year was the probability that a child's perception of him/herself and others' perception of this same individual, within his/her society, is influenced by interactions within the elementary gym class.

Witnessed through the physical education class, were all the socialising, normative concepts of hierarchical structuring, peer assessment and the children's subsequent rejection and acceptance of their peers. However, after the scrutiny of the school's custodian, I realised all these concepts could be observed without having to accept them within *my* gym class. In essence, I was fostering or condoning harsh peer assessments by not dealing with the children's behaviour. As a passive participant observer this would be acceptable, but as an active participant observer I was somewhat duty bound to fulfil my role as gym teacher to the best of my abilities. It now became a responsibility to correct a student's social or peer dilemma once it had been observed.

The physical education class, during the latter half of the first year, now took on a more rigid and structured tone. When the children entered the class they were told to immediately sit on the benches next to the windows. They were allowed to quietly talk amongst themselves until role call commenced. After attendance was completed I had the children sit in

the centre circle of the floor, where they would be told what the agenda of the day's class would be. Questions and comments concerning the class from children, who raised their hands, were encouraged. We then continued with a short warm up period, either led by myself or a student, and then proceeded to do laps around the gym. Once the children were about two minutes into their laps I would blow my whistle and have them line up in single file. They would then be assigned to four separate teams by random order and were told to sit with their respective teams. Every week a new captain would be picked and it would be his/her responsibility to hand-out and retrieve pinnies and ensure that everyone was getting equal chance to play.

Within that second half of the school year, time-outs in the hall-way and trips to the principal's office for improper behaviour became common. But it did not take long until the children realised what kind of play environment I was demanding of them and they soon complied. Fair-play and teamwork were encouraged and this environment did not facilitate children's harsh interactions with others. Therefore, observations concerning children's socialisation into peer-assessed hierarchical structuring and self-image took on a less drastic tone. These incidences still occurred and were documented, however, as a phys-ed teacher I was obliged to deal with the situations appropriately. Three incidences will be discussed in this chapter; others, will be documented in lesser detail in the ensuing discussion chapter.

In the second year, the grade four class was coupled with the special-ed five class, consisting of 20 boys and twelve girls while the grade four special-ed class was also matched with the special-ed grade five class, consisting of 15 boys and three girls. The third group was a grade five class, containing 18 boys and 12 girls. The grade five class, regular and special-ed, represented a group of children that I had taught for both years. Consequently, most of my detailed observations revolve around these children.

"Ricky" was one of the grade four students whom I taught in the first year of the study, and in the second year when he advanced to grade five. The development of Ricky's perception of himself along with other children's perceptions of him represent the most striking data on the influence of interaction in a physical education class and its importance on the development of self. Ricky, a healthy young boy, smaller in height and modestly heavier in weight than most of his peers, had been the target of much teasing from his classmates. This mainly occurred within the first six months of my teaching. Despite the harassment, for the most minor of mistakes, his positive attitude never faltered. His physical abilities were only slightly below average and what seemed to be the focus of his classmates anger was his refusal to accept a non-active, non-participatory position in the game.

On one occasion, in the late half of the first year, the class was in the midst of playing a game of "European handball" and Ricky was growing frustrated with his team-mates not passing to him. "I'm open! Pass the ball!",

he would scream repeatedly, thrusting his arms straight out with his hands open in anticipation. He would rarely get the ball and when he did, it was not one of his team-mates passes, but rather from his own hard work of picking off an errant pass from the opposition.

This had been a typical experience for Ricky and his frustration reached its pinnacle when one of his team-mates, "Alex", refused to pass the ball to him on a clear scoring chance. "Why didn't you pass the ball to me? I was open!", Ricky pleaded with him. "You'd just screw up", came Alex's matter-of-fact response. Ricky stood open mouthed, looking at his team-mates for support, but no one was prepared to counter Alex, a student who excelled at sports. Catching the preceding incident out of the corner of my eye, Ricky, undaunted from a lack of support, continued to pursue the matter with Alex as they went to the bench. "Pass the ball, Alex! I pass to you!", Ricky persisted. Alex, who seemed to be growing tired of Ricky, spun around and pushed him. I immediately blew my whistle, grabbed Alex by his shirt and sent him straight to the hall-way in front of the principal's office.

Soon after this incident the class ended and I had to leave the matter of Alex pushing Ricky in the hands of his home-room teacher. However, I decided to make the conscious effort of alleviating Rick's crisis. Up to this point, Ricky did not seem to enjoy the same amount of popularity as his other classmates and, as confirmed by his homeroom teacher, was the frequent target of ridicule outside as well as inside the gym class. It was decided that starting with the next gym class, Ricky would receive positive feedback from me whenever he was trying hard, which he frequently did.

Whenever Ricky was on the court and he was trying to get the ball I would yell out encouragement, such as "Good work!", "Way to get open, Ricky!", or "C'mon get the ball to Ricky, he's wide open!". Ricky did start getting increased "ball time", meaning time in which he was actually in control of the game. Initially, from a lack of experience, Ricky would fumble with the ball. Soon, however, with encouragement Ricky became more and more confident with the pressure of handling the ball and became a valued member of any team he was put on.

Within a month, Ricky went from being a child who had to endure his peers rolling their eyes and sighing whenever he was put on their team, to cheers and approval. This same approach was used for different children in other classes and they enjoyed similar success. It became apparent that, as a teacher, my perspective of any given child would affect how other children saw them. Of course, I was aware that Ricky couldn't be turned into a "Maurice Richard" within his gym class. At this point of his life, he simply did not possess that kind of skill or potential. However, I could influence how his classmates perceived his positive qualities and aid Ricky in feeling more confident about other aspects of his "game" in gym. Moreover, as affirmed by his teacher, the children's new perspective of Ricky continued outside the physical education class. Having used this technique successfully with other children, I decided to use this method in the following gym year.

The second year progressed very smoothly, as I was confident in teaching physical education, observing the children's interactions with each other and intervening in the children's actions whenever necessary.

Incidences, such as the one Ricky underwent, still happened regularly. True to Mead's theory of children learning to "play in the game", it would seem that my students were not only content in learning to play the different roles within a team to make it function, but they were also intent on creating a hierarchical structure within each team of "the best" and "the worst".

As I was determined to do, I would observe these incidences, document them and subsequently intervene. One such episode stands out in validating physical ability as the measuring rod in children's perception and acceptance of peers. Within three months of each other, two new students arrived from separate foreign countries. The children's reaction to them were markedly different depending on the child's physical aptitude.

"Sirus" arrived first, in the early days of November, from Turkey. He spoke little or no English and communicated mostly through gestures and non-verbal motions. He was a handsome young boy, in very good physical condition and easily as big as any of his peers in grade five. However, his motor skills were somewhat below his class's average and, perhaps due to a recent growth spurt, he had an awkward time with hand-eye co-ordination games and running. This made him an immediate target with the boys in his class and soon he endured all the exclusion from the games that Ricky did. But, unlike Ricky, Sirus had no way of defending himself verbally, so he started lashing out physically.

On one occasion, he reacted in such a fashion in the midst of playing a game of floor hockey. Earlier, while explaining the game to the class, I

paid particular attention to Sirus, showing him the motion that the stick must be swung in, how to shoot and accept a pass and in which net he had to score. He looked up, nodded his head and smiled in approval, signifying he understood. When the game began, Sirus, with a beaming smile on his face, ran up and down the court, hockey stick on the ground, waiting for a pass. After a few minutes of Sirus not touching the puck I yelled out at his team-mates: "You have a person open here, pass him the puck!". "Jason", who was carrying the puck during one of the numerous times I was yelling, looked at me and rolled his eyes, as if to say "are you crazy?".

At the end of his team's first game the smile slowly started disappearing from Sirus's face. At the start of his next game, Sirus had a resolute stare, determined to get the puck. A few minutes into the game Sirus was chasing the puck, along with other children, into the eastern wall of the gym. The puck became lodged under the folded monkey bars and Sirus reached down to retrieve it. The captain of Sirus's team, "Brent", motioned him to hand over the puck. Sirus furrowed his brow, clutched the puck to his chest and said "No!". Brent stared flustered, "Give me the puck!", he screamed, attempting simultaneously to grab the puck from him. Sirus twisted away, ran towards the opposition goalie with the puck in his hand and proceeded to throw the puck past a bewildered goalie into the net. Sirus turned smiling, his team-mates and the rest of the class started laughing at him and then an incensed opposition goalie gave him a hard shove from behind. After splitting Sirus and "Derek", the goalie, apart, I escorted a teary eyed, frustrated Sirus to the hallway in an attempt to calm him down.

The remaining thirty minutes of class was spent talking about the concept of "sportsmanship". Consequently, the next week the children received their first questionnaire dealing with that same topic. After two weeks dealing with the topic of "sportsmanship", the condition of Sirus's physical education class improved. But, he always seemed wary of his classmates and never really gave the same effort and enthusiasm he did in his first weeks again. In comparison to Sirus's situation, when a young boy named "Tie" arrived from China his physical capabilities turned him into a class hero on his first day.

Tie, like Sirus, was of average size in his grade five class and in good physical shape; however, unlike Sirus he spoke absolutely no English. He had arrived on a Monday at the "school", in early February, and he took his first gym class four days later on the Thursday. On this day we were doing "indoor track" and timed sprinting was first on the agenda.

No one had been paying particular attention to Tie until his turn came up to run his sprint around the gym. Tie, who was one of the last students to run, had been intensely observing the children before him in an attempt to understand what was expected. When I called his name I was prepared to use a lot of gestures and hand waving to explain what he was supposed to do, but he immediately went into a ready running stance without my help. I blew the whistle and Tie shot off like the proverbial "bullet". He was obviously substantially faster than any of the other children in grade five. When he crossed the finish line all the children knew, before I could even

confirm their assumptions, that Tie had run the fastest time. All the children cheered, patted him on the back and Tie smiled, appreciating the attention. In weeks to come Tie was considered a valued member of any team he played on and was always assured positive feedback when placed on a team.

In an attempt to gain insight into children's perception towards their "sports education", questionnaires in the form of take-home-work were handed out to the students on a bi-weekly basis. Often, questions or essays were based on issues that were discussed in class, such as sportsmanship, game-rules, fitness, favourite sports, sports-heroes or even broad scoping topics as "what sports and games I played over the Christmas holidays". The accumulated data and the questionnaires themselves are in no way intended to be of "quantitative" significance. They were simply designed to get a "feel" for the children's comprehension, perceptions and experiences concerning locations and situations of physical education.

The fourth homework assignment (figure three) asked: "Which games are more fun: The ones with adult supervision or the games that you would only play with kids?" Sixty-five percent (65%) responded that they would rather <u>not</u> play with adult supervision, thirty-one percent (31%) stated they enjoyed playing under adult supervision and four percent (4%) said it did not matter. What is significant in the children's answers are the reasons they provide for their preferences. Forwarded are some of the reasons from children who would rather <u>not</u> play games under adult supervision:

"You can make up your own rules..

"The games you play with kids are funner, because you can cheat and there are no rules."

"Because they don't scream at you..

"No adults is cool, because they cannot punish us..

"Because nobody can tell us what to do..

"Because you have no one to boss you and tell you what to do..

"Because you can do whatever you want..

"When we are with adults they boss us around..

"Because we get to cheat and we get to make up the rules and we don't have to listen to any parents telling us what to do..

Observation within the educational setting supported the theory that children's social status and rejection and acceptance from their peers are significantly influenced by the physical skills in which they possess and demonstrate. The children's microcosm is not unlike the macrocosm of the adult world in which our social ranking is dependent upon a combination of ascribed and achieved characteristics that are valued within that society. The following observations, compiled in a formal hockey "school" setting, demonstrate a prime location in which adults, unwittingly or not, transfer these values and perceptions to children. This is where children learn the concept of, what Mead termed as "playing in the game".

This first observation took place with 11 and 12 year old boys on February 23rd, 1993:

Practice had begun this evening on a rather sour note. It had been mentioned often to the children that they were not to play with pucks when they come on the ice. Convention, as well as the head coach, had dictated that all the players were to skate in circles to warm themselves up for the hockey drills as well as the game. On this night the children decided in poor judgement that they were going to play with the pucks that have always been marked as "taboo". It seems curious that the children decided to disregard the fact that they knew they were not allowed to play with the pucks. They surely must have known from experience that when the coach came out of his office he was going to yell at them, and that is exactly what happened.

The children decided to throw discretion to the wind and they undoubtedly knew they would be scolded for it. Once the proper amount of screaming had taken place the children were told to put the pucks back and commence skating drills. The drills in themselves were not unusual. It was the manner in which they were delivered as well as the tone of exercises that changed. What was once considered to be fun was now made to be punishment. Often one would hear from the coach: "We're gonna repeat this until you get it right", "I don't think you guys are taking this seriously", or "If you don't work hard now, gentlemen, there won't be a game later". The inflection of the coach was one of disappointment and frustration. He

repeatedly told the players that if they did what they were asked to do, they could commence the game.

The reactions of the children were mixed between that of lethargy, rebellion, and obedience. Some children started executing the drills in their own way, by either cutting corners to avoid skating full lengths, continuing with horse-play, or talking back to authority figures. Others became angry with their fellow players for not working hard enough or for fooling around and not performing the drills to exact specification. Most of the children were simply tired and often skated over to their parents for moments of relief from the work-out.

The children spent their entire practice/game time executing drills, and consequently there never was time to start an actual game. It may seem hard of the coach to take away the enjoyment of the children by taking away the "game" aspect of the practice. However, the game of hockey has to be learned, and in the coach's mind this is the most effective manner to do it. A mix of shouting, discipline, hard work, and fun is the way most of us learned to play the game, and it is usually when the game stops becoming fun when most children quit. I know that was indeed the case for myself and quite a few of my friends.

The following data establishes the extent to which parents view their children's sports as a vehicle in which societal values and norms can be taught to them. These observations were accumulated on February 18th.

I was ten minutes late arriving for practice today, so by the time I had put my skates on and was on the ice the children had already started their hockey game. The children were playing "Half ice" at the northern most end of the arena. Sixteen children, eight to a team, were on the ice. "Sean", the head coach, had all the kids playing at the same time, so there were no substitutes. Eight children were wearing green jerseys, the other eight were wearing red. Sean was the only adult on the ice supervising the children.

As soon as I jumped on the ice Sean asked me to govern the blue line to make sure that the puck stayed in play. The children's game had no particular "flow" to it because children at this age have not really learned the whole perspective of the game; the children rarely (if ever) pass the puck to a team-mate, play defensively or positionally. The only defined position that these children are positively aware of is that of the goal-tender. Even then, sometimes we had to remind the younger kids who are playing this position not to leave the net.

There were approximately ten parents watching their children play. One parent, who was often yelling directions at his son, was sitting at the northern-most end of the players bench, closest to the game. Every so often he would instruct his son "Adam" on things that he thought his son should be doing in the game.

Adam is one of the younger players on his team, approximately six years old, and is much smaller than his team-mates and the opposing team.

Due to his age, experience and size compared to the rest of the children his hockey skills are somewhat below average.

I have talked to Adam's father and I know that he is an avid hockey fan and player. He is a large, healthy and fit looking man who still plays hockey. He often asks me my advice on what his son's hockey weaknesses are and how we could improve his skills. He is one parent, out of many, who takes a particularly strong interest and gets rather excited over his son playing the game.

During this practice/game, Adam's father was continuously directing his son on what he should be doing. He (Adam's father) was sitting near to Adam's team's defensive zone, so whenever the play came back to that end of the ice he would start yelling instructions. At one point Adam could not hear what his father was saying so he left the game to talk to his dad.

"Cover your MAN! Adam, cover your man!!", his father shouted. Adam looked over to his father as the play continued in his defensive zone and then looked back at the group of kids playing. "COVER YOUR MAN! ADAM!", his father yelled again. "What?", Adam called back to his father. "Cover your man! Your MAN. THAT guy!", he yelled pointing at one of the other children. Adam looked over to where his father was pointing. "What?", he said, as he skated over to his father. His father threw his hands up in the air, half spun around, and while motioning to his son to come closer said, "Always stay with number EIGHT! Now go!". Adam skated after number eight.

Play continued for approximately three minutes with Adam's father calling out a few comments to his son. At one point when Adam's team was in the offensive zone, one child shot the puck towards the net. It missed the net, hit the boards and bounced right back into the middle of the slot and simply stopped. Besides Adam (and his shadow), not a single child was near the puck; however, he did not skate towards it. Instead he stood and continued to stay with the opposing player that his father had told him to shadow.

Adam's father started yelling, "Adam get the puck!" But it was too late. By the time Adam moved towards the puck, an opposing player had taken it and cleared his defensive zone. "Adam, what are you doing? I told you to always stand in front of the net! Come here!" Adam's father yelled as he motioned him towards himself. "In the opposition zone I want you to always stand in front of the net! You could have had the puck and scored a goal." he continued. Sean, the head coach, skated over to Adam and his father and talked to Adam without acknowledging his father, "Come on. Don't talk to your dad now, he's not on your team." Adam looked at his father and his father motioned to him to get back in the game and Adam skated away.

A few minutes passed and approximately the same play happened again, Adam was no where near the slot and another one of his team-mates knocked the puck into the open net. Adam's father started yelling "Jesus, Adam! Why didn't you skate to the slot?! That puck was yours!" Again, he

called his son over. "Skate into the slot! Look for the puck! Now DO IT before I SMACK you one!" Adam started to skate away as Sean was skating over to them.

"Look either I coach or you do," Sean said with a half smile, "I can't control these kids if they're skating all over the place." Adam's father concurred with Sean and the game resumed. Adam's father sheepishly looked over to where I was standing on the ice and silently motioned me over to talk with him. "I swear," he said, pointing to his son, "that boy has got to learn how to deal with people and not back down here, or he's gonna get pushed around all his life."

"Is this where they're supposed to learn how to handle themselves later on in life?", I asked as I leaned against the boards. "Yeah," he responded in a matter-of-fact tone, "Either you're in control or you're not. This --" he signalled towards the children playing, "is where they learn to be tough. You know, not to be pushed around!".

The previous observations confirm the parent's and adult supervisor's clear knowledge of the socialising that these sports settings hold over children. In one of six "non-formal children's play setting" observations that were completed, the data accumulated on February 6th, 1993 establishes the children's knowledge in the differences between adult intervened sports play and children controlled sports play.

The location of this non-formal play setting is an outdoor rink situated within a park in the West Island of Montreal, more specifically Baie d'Urfé. The time is precisely 3:15 in the afternoon, the sun is shining brightly without a cloud in the sky, and eight children, approximately nine years of age, are enjoying themselves tremendously while playing a game of informal hockey. Their howls of laughter could be heard as soon as we opened the car doors. It was obvious that most of the kids on the ice were enjoying themselves.

Four adults, including myself, prepared to join the activities on the ice. Richard, one of my friends, decided to ask one of the kids how the ice conditions were. In many ways he was really trying to break the ice with the children more than he was curious about the actual rink conditions. Not a single child responded to his query. He was absolutely ignored, he turned to us and laughed: "Ever get the feeling you're not wanted?"

Noticing the children's reaction to Richard, I quickly laced up my skates and jumped on the ice. I was soon followed by my three friends. "Who is playing on which side?", my friend Chris asked. He was met with silence. The whole time the children never stopped playing, but the conversation amongst themselves died down considerably. It was obvious we were being ignored, so Rob tried a more obvious approach: "Do you think we could play with you guys?", he asked. The response of the children was a quite simple "No".

This was a most curious reaction from the children, as usually we are badgered by kids to play with them. I realised that this was probably the first time I had seen kids on a rink without a single adult, or even a teenager for that matter. They had found this rink first, and it seemed they were not going to give it up to anyone. We tried to reason with the children but they refused to listen to us and kept playing. They were, quite simply, ignoring us.

We had hardly been on the ice for ten minutes when three other children showed up. The kids on the ice stopped playing and decided to reform teams to compensate for the new players. I decided to use this moment to try and include us in the game. As the children threw their sticks in the centre of the ice to form teams, we also placed our sticks with theirs. "No big guys allowed!", one boy yelled. They, being the children, were all quite emphatic about this statement.

Despite ourselves we could not help but laugh, I don't think most of us had been socially rejected by nine-year-old children in quite some time. "Why can't we play with you?", I asked. Their response was unanimous, and it all stemmed around the same theme: "Big guys always hog the puck". Others testified that "Big guys never pass the puck". This seemed rather curious to me, as most times I can recall playing with any kids it seemed like the point of the exercise was to pass the puck to the youngest player.

We assured the children that we would indeed pass the puck to them, and after much reassuring we were grudgingly allowed to play with them. At

one point a child mentioned that the puck belonged to him and he would "take it home" if we didn't pass. Another child mentioned that because we did not live in any of the houses that surrounded the park that the rink was "not yours, anyway", so it was their liberty, or right, to tell us to leave anytime they wanted to.

No adult agreed with the children's rationale, and instead assured them that it would not come to them having to throw us of the rink. We played for approximately an hour before the children started to disperse for their evening suppers. The game had become an exercise in which we, the adults, tried to gain the confidence of the children. It seemed as though we succeeded, as they asked us to join them again after supper.

My time as a participant observer taught me three important lessons: that children do indeed accept and reject their peers according to their physical prowess and that children are indeed socialised to the broader society within the highly influential physical education class. It also taught me that the hierarchical structuring that goes along with the acceptance and rejection of peers can be modified and controlled by a watchful, conscientious teacher and that, despite the preconceived notions I brought into this study, the socialisation children receive through their physical education class can teach positive social skills and citizenship. Another lesson I learned was the awareness that both adults and children had in the "hidden curriculum" aspect of teaching larger societal values through sports play. These notions, as well as further consideration of time spent with

children in physical education settings, will be the prime topic of the next chapter.

Chapter Seven

Discussion and Conclusion

It has been the intent of this thesis to explore the potential influence physical education has on the socialisation and development of a child's sense of self within his/her society. More specifically, it was expected that gym classes and other formal play settings would come close to a caricature of society itself, with the norms for selection, allocation and participation rigidly set out. It was also expected that the primary criteria for in-group membership would be ascriptive, revealing that the child with the best physical ability would enjoy the higher status. This final chapter is dedicated to a discussion and conclusion in which the data will be discussed and will close with the author's perspectives and suggestions for further research. Researcher bias, supporting documentation, and further pertinent participant observations will also be included to validate the conclusions of this thesis.

This thesis sought to investigate the ways in which our society developed physical education and utilises physical education, unwittingly or not, to socialise, develop and mould a child's sense of self to meet the needs of the larger society. Throughout this essay this argument has been advanced and supported by means of historical and theoretical analysis and through the qualitative methodology of participant observation.

An historical analysis allows us to uncover the use of physical education as an efficient means of socialisation. The historical analysis also demonstrates where our own current perceptions of physical education came from.[214] Interactionism was advanced as a theoretical foundation to

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[214] Leonard, Fred E. "Introduction to Pioneers of Modern Physical Training". pg. 1.

examine the ways in which children's sense of self within their society is developed and to demonstrate the way interactionist theory of socialisation can be observed within the physical education setting. Charles C. Cowell, author of "The Contributions of Physical Activity to Social Development" (1960), echoes this perception of physical education as an agent of socialisation, stating:

> We socialise our pupils or contribute to their social learnings when they learn the ways of the group, become functioning members of it, act according to its standards, accept its rules, and in turn become accepted by the group. We socialise youth by helping them acquire social experiences, social habits, and social relationships. Our interest is in the development of the social phases of personality, attitudes, and values by means of games, sports, and related activities.[215]

Cowell's quote defines, in a factual manner, the reality of socialisation through physical education. His stance is one of necessity: physical education socialises our children, therefore, we should accept it, study it and use it to our advantage. He contends, "(m)uch social interaction centres around physical skill. The child lacking motor skills is often barred or not accepted in social participation". Understanding that human personality or one's sense of self cannot be developed as a social isolate, Cowell asserts "the physical activities of children and youth should be used progressively from kindergarten through high school to develop social learnings and gradual intensification of social consciousness".[216]

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[215] Cowell, Charles C. "The Contributions of Physical Activity to Social Development". in Physical Education and Sport: Sociological and Cultural Perspectives. ed: Mangan, J. A.. pg. 53.

[216] Ibid. pg. 59.

Cowell's position was adopted in this study. As such, it provided direction and focus, his work, as well as that of Berlage, also helped the researcher to articulate his own biases. As the chapters on the history of physical education and Interactionism were researched, an opinion on the part of the author of this thesis was being formed prior to any participant observations. The main one was that:

> Children's sports resemble more and more training grounds for business than games for fun. (...) Today, sports may serve to socialise children in values, attitudes and behaviour suited to corporate jobs.[217]

Authors, such as the above quoted Berlage, created the tone for what was expected to be observed in the physical education classes. Berlage wrote "(s)ince World War II children's play has been transformed from informal games to highly organised sporting events".[218] Mark Naison's (1973) article "Sports and an American Empire" concurs with Berlage, declaring that "(s)ince the Second World War, sports has been one of the major areas for assimilation of new racial groups... into the mainstream of American life and... into the orbit of modern capitalist relations".[219] Naison uses much of the same reasoning as Berlage, stating that sports and physical education are used as tools to assimilate children into accepting militant thought, corporate hegemony, male dominance, and industrial-like

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[217] Berlage, Gai Ingham. "Are Children's Competitive Team Sports Teaching Corporate Values?". Arena Review. pg. 15

[218] Ibid. pg. 15.

[219] Naison, Mark. "Sports and the American Empire". pg. 1.

work situations.[220] This is a perception that is certainly echoed within the historical chapter of this thesis.

Many of the educational and/or sport sociological researchers that were introduced in chapter four (dealing with socialisation), agreed that physical education and sports are agents of children's socialisation. Goodman, for example, revealed that prominent business and political persons, such as John D. Rockefeller and Teddy Roosevelt, supported a physical education program in the early 1900s, called the P.A.A., that would "colonize the play habits of immigrant children", thereby creating a "weak link in the immigrants' culture and therefore... provid(ing) an opening crack in immigrant subculture into which a wedge could be driven".[221]

Ingham, Cowell, Berlage and Goodman offered a perspective of physical education as a socialiser of children in a somewhat covert manner. Their arguments are supported historically as well as theoretically, as the historical and theoretical chapters show. Jacques Godbout (1986), a Quebec professor, furthers this perspective at a local level:

> Comme tout Québécois male, quand j'étais jeune, je jouais au hockey. Dans la rue ou j'habitais, les patinoires étaient nombreuses. Celle ou je jouais étaient a deux pas chez moi. Nous la refaisions a chaque hiver, améliorant les "bandes" tous les ans. Les plus vieux étaient responsables de l'arrosage, et tous se partageaient l'enlèvement de la neige. Je jouais presque tous les soirs, après les devoirs, faits le plus rapidement possible. Au début je n'avais que des

[220] Ibid. pg. 1.
[221] Goodman, Cary. "Creating Americans at the Educational Alliance". pg. 1.

> patins, un bâton, et des "catalogues Eaton" en guise de jambières. J'ai appris a patiner... en patinant. Souvent on jouait "a pied", c'est a dire sans patins. Un peu plus tard j'ai eu des gants comme cadeau de Noël. Mon équipement n'a jamais dépassé ce stade rudimentaire. Je jouais pour la plaisir...[222]

Godbout reminisces about his childhood and the joys he had playing hockey in the out-door rinks of Quebec. If one will allow the liberty of a "loose" translation, into English, Godbout's description would be fairly close to the following:

> Like all other male Quebecers, when I was young, I played hockey. In the area that I lived, ice-rinks were numerous. The rink that I frequented was a stone's throw away. We rebuilt it every winter, repairing the boards each year. The oldest among us were responsible for watering the ice, and we all participated in removing the snow. I played every night, right after I completed my homework, which was done as fast as possible. When I started, all I had was skates, a stick, and "Eaton's catalogues" for shin pads. I learned how to skate... by skating. Often we played "on foot", that is to say, without our skates. A little later I received gauntlets as a Christmas present. My equipment never surpassed that fundamental level. I played simply for pleasure...[223]

Godbout compares the non-formal experiences that he had in hockey to that of his friend's children:

> Aujourd'hui le fils de mes amis joue aussi au hockey. A six ans, il a rendez-vous tous les dimanches matins, a

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[222] Godbout, Jacques. "La participation: instrument de professionnalisation des loisirs". pg. 33.

[223] Ibid. pg. 33.

> 10h15, a un très moderne centre sportif ou un entraîneur professionnel lui apprend a patiner et a manier la rondelle.[224]

English translation:

> Today, my friend's son also plays hockey. At the age of six, he has appointments at 10:15 every Sunday morning at a very modern sports centre where a professional teaches him how to skate and stick-handle the puck.[225]

Godbout continues by stating the conditions and atmosphere under which he feels children learn hockey: "D'ailleurs, il ne joue pas: il s'entraîne."[226] Translation: In reality they do not play: they train. Godbout argues that the spontaneity of children's non-formal hockey is fast being replaced by a regimented adult controlled form of hockey/play. He asserts that there is no more leisure and play associated with the game, it is being "professionalised" into an autonomous, homogeneous setting for participation and socialisation. In short, due to the modern setting of formality the aspect of "play" is fast being lost.

What then, if not for play, is the point of organised sports for children? It has been mentioned in the introductory section of this thesis that "socialisation" is a prime, if not covert, aspect of organised sports. Again, it is hoped that this paper is not giving the message that there is a "hidden conspiracy" of socialisation in organised sports. It is recognised

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[224] Ibid. pg. 33.
[225] Ibid. pg. 33.
[226] Ibid. pg. 33.

that socialisation exists as an aspect of formal sport settings, and it is also recognised that there are positive, as well as negative connotations to this fact.

Following the same rational as the Interactionist George Herbert Mead, Bennet J. Lombardo (1982), author of "The Behaviour of Youth Sport Coaches: Crisis on the Bench", alludes to the theory that the sports team is somewhat of a microcosm of the larger society. McElroy (1983) concurs with this theory noting that when hiring applicants, business corporations look for and value aspects of aggressiveness, competitiveness, general spirit of toughness, and the ability to work in a group associated with having played in organised team sports.[227] According to Smith (1982), parents of children playing in formal settings are very aware of the socialisation aspects of organised sports:

> Fisticuffs also appear to be character-building in the eyes of some parents who see hockey as a training ground for later life. One father, an official in a minor league hockey organisation, put it this way: "It's a violent society, eh? This is a tough society we're in. I put my own kid in hockey so he would take his lumps." He said he saw "nothing wrong with taking off the gloves" and that "the day they turn hockey into a namby pamby game for sissies is the day I get out."[228]

Smith also discovered in his research that coaches as well as parents were aware that socialisation was an aspect of the organised game; most felt that they were preparing children for their future life. Smith's insights

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[227] McElroy, Mary A. "Parent-child relations and orientations toward sport".
[228] Smith, Micheal D. "Social determinants of violence in hockey". pg. 300.

were paralleled in my own participant observational experiences within the formal settings. Looking back through the observational notes, there are examples of how the head coach of the formal pre-novice hockey school would continuously demand that his kids follow his exact orders.

In these field notes, the "coach" seemed very preoccupied with establishing a hierarchy, of which he was in command and I was second in command. Perhaps he felt he was preparing these children for the experiences of command and obedience that they will deal with later on in life. It does not seem that far-fetched a notion, considering the overt manner in which I had observed some parents discussing the important socialising role they expected "hockey school" to impart on their boys. The observational data of six and seven year old boys chronicled on February 18th, 1993, in the formal pre-novice hockey school illustrates this point.

One often hears the argument that there is nothing wrong with children learning about, and being prepared for, the hardships of the larger society. The rational forwarded is: if this lesson must be taught, then why not instruct it in a game and sport setting? My response would be that, yes, children should be prepared for the larger society, but not at the expense of losing in their youth the enjoyment of play, and not at the expense of allocating children into hierarchical ordering in a corporate manner. The participant observations, dated February 6th, 1993, reveals how children are aware of the differences that occur when adults are present during "playtime".

Much of the data from the participant observations compiled in the formal and non-formal hockey settings concur with the theories of Berlage, Ingham, Cowell and Goodman. These theories suggest the implementation of physical education as a method of child socialisation that is either overtly controlled and recognised by special interest groups (as in the case of the Rockefeller and Roosevelt sanctioned P.A.A.[229]), or that the socialisation process is simply so engrained into the very fabric of the program that it is inherently covert and serves "those who are in power" by socialising children into accepting established authorities (an idea promoted by Berlage who wrote that children's sports resembled training grounds for business values[230]). Hargreaves (1977) also contributed to what we understand about physical education as a mechanism of socialisation to the ideologies of our larger society. She states that physical education:

> ... can be seen as a purveyor of bourgeois values and attitudes, which include competitiveness, individualism, respect for authority, work discipline and maleness.[231]

Furthermore, according to the responses of the questionnaires completed by the participant observation elementary school children, concerning their perceptions towards adult supervised games and sports, most responses displayed an awareness to issues of adult control through sports.

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[229] Goodman, Cary. "Creating Americans at the Educational Alliance".

[230] Berlage, Gai Ingham. "Are Children's Competitive Team Sports Teaching Corporate Values?".

[231] Hargreaves, Jennifer. "Sport and Physical Education: Autonomy or Domination". pg. 22.

Some of the children's responses simply state that it is "funner" playing without adult supervision, however most children wrote it was the authority that the adults possessed that diminished their enjoyment. Most answers from children who responded that they enjoyed playing under adult supervision centred on physical safety, control of peer cheating and bullying and the explanation provided by adults on how the game is "meant to be played".

> "The ones with adults. Because there are more games we can do and we get to know the whole point of the game."

What the above quoted child claims he/she is learning is exactly what this thesis sought to explore and is the point of further consideration within this conclusionary segment: Is "the whole point of the game" within physical education to socialise children into accepting one's place in society? All of the children's responses, regardless of whether or not he/she enjoyed adult supervision, referred to aspects of "rules" and "authority" rather than any mention of "play" or "fun". Revealed through the children's answers is their awareness of the control and authority that is present within adult supervised games.

The insights we gain from the responses of these children lend credence to Fernandez-Balboa's (1993) position that physical education functions as an agent of reproduction of hegemonic ideology.

> (P)articular patterns, self-concepts, social relations, and world views that reflect the exclusive interests of a self-

> selected coalition of powerful groups are learned in physical education through its hidden curriculum.[232]

According to Fernandez-Balboa, the lessons taught to children in physical education, through the hidden curriculum, are those of elitism, sexism, cultural-bias, stratification and hierarchism, all of which are instructions that serve the needs and ideology of "corporate America".

> (S)chools act as screening agencies for business and government institutions by fostering win/lose ideology. As a result the educational system shapes students' personalities to conform to the demands of hierarchy and dominance in order to produce individuals who will fit in the social bureaucracies.[233]

As we have already established, the literature concerning the topic of physical education and children's socialisation reveal a common theme of children's inculcation through physical education into the ideology of capitalism. Fernandez-Balboa states this quite clearly within the above quote, adding that since "the beginning of the Industrial Revolution in the United States of America schools were assigned the mission to "inculcate" immigrants to accept the industrial order and other attitudes and values of the establishment (white, Anglo-Saxon) so that these values and attitudes could be preserved".[234]

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[232] Fernandez-Balboa, Juan-Miguel. "Sociocultural Characteristics of the Hidden Curriculum in Physical Education". pg. 231.

[233] Ibid. pg. 240.

[234] Ibid. pg. 244.

Literature on the subject of schools and sociology will likely state that elementary schools primarily "function in the society as an agency of socialisation and allocation"[235], this is an accepted and popular theory.[236] It is the opinion of this thesis that if the elementary school is an agency of socialisation, then physical education has the capacity within the school to be its most efficient socialiser.

> For the past four decades physical educators have speculated upon the possible interrelationships between physical activity and various social factors. However, few attempts have been made to summarize the available evidence.[237]

This thesis followed the recommendations of Cratty (1967) and explored the potential influence physical education has on the socialisation and development of a child's sense of self within his/her society. A substantial number of educational, sociological, and physical education researchers have been quoted in support of this theory (Cowell, Evans, Roberts, Fernandez-Balboa, Kirk, etc...). To add to these voices, Cratty writes "(m)en are usually influenced by some component of the social clime when engaging in physical activities"[238] and continues to reason that physical education's function as an agent of socialisation should be used to the advantage of the community it serves.

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[235] Talcott, Parsons. "The School Class as a Social System: Some of its Functions in American Society". pg. 434.

[236] Mifflen, Frank J. & Mifflen, Sydney C. The Sociology of Education: Canada and Beyond. pg. 9.

[237] Cratty, Bryant J. Social Dimensions of Physical Activity. pg. vii.

[238] Ibid. pg. 1.

> For years the literature in physical education has contained statements which held that physical activities contributed positively to an individual's "social adjustment". (...) Implicit in such statements is the argument that the manner in which a person participates and is led in physical activity and the way he feels about physical activities influence his whole philosophical outlook, can mould his feelings about authority, and should thus be in harmony with the prevailing climate of the nation in which the participation takes place.[239]

Cratty's philosophical view on children's socialisation through physical education is unlike that of authors such as Berlage or Fernandez-Balboa. Cratty takes a far more "functional" or conservative stance on this issue. His perspective validates the existence of children's socialisation through physical education and recommends it be used "in harmony with the prevailing climate of the nation"[240]. Not only does Cratty's writing support the theory of socialisation of children through sports it also recognises the hierarchical lesson that is being taught.

> The desire to dominate or lead one's fellows seems to be a fundamental trait of the human society. A status system has been seen as low on the animal hierarchy as the lizard, and the "pecking order" in the hen house has also been documented extensively.[241]

In comparing the human experience to the animal world, Cratty creates a ideological framework that some refer to as "naturalistic", "functionalistic" and/or "realistic" to justify what is being socialised to children through the gym setting. It is within this "practical" view of life that

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[239] Ibid. pg. 4.
[240] Ibid. pg. 4.
[241] Ibid. pg. 44.

Cratty contends "physical prowess... may enhance the leadership possibilities of one or several group members".[242] He continues:

> The adolescent boy's primary mean to group-accepted leadership is usually through physical skill in athletics; young children in the playground, as they grow older, evidence a growing awareness of the relevance of physical prowess on the part of their members to the gaining of leadership.[243]

Physical prowess as a means of achieving group status can be observed within the participant observations of the two "immigrant" boys who were new to the school, (chapter six). Sirus's lack of motor skills made him an unpopular playmate and, as corroborated by his teachers, isolated him. Tie, on the other hand, was immediately perceived as an athletic child and therefore gained quick peer-acceptance. We can also see, from the participant observational notes, how peer-acceptance can be manipulated through teacher intervention or interaction, as was the case discussed in chapter six when Ricky's peer-group favour increased as he was continuously being praised by his physical education teacher. When incidences such as these are experienced through participant observation, it substantiates one's perception of physical education as an influential setting for a child's socialisation and, ultimately, development of self.

In exploring the current articles concerning socialisation and physical education we observe continuances in application with the ancient history of physical education and modern physical education. Chapter two revealed

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[242] Ibid. pg. 45.
[243] Ibid. pg. 45.

that, historically, physical education socialised youths to the norms and ideologies of his/her nation and maintained the allocation of one's role within that society. The nature of this socialisation reflected the norms centred around military; a way of life that was rampant in the histories discussed. Even though our societies are not quite as overtly militaristic as that of ancient Persia, Greece or Rome, authors such as Cratty acknowledge that "service academies have frequently pointed to the importance of participation in vigorous sports in forming the leadership qualities sought in combat".[244]

These findings follow the proposition previously advanced by Lombardo that physical education classes are a microcosm of the larger society. The opinion advanced within this concluding segment is that, just as Spartan's socialised their children through physical education to accept the norms of their society's way of militaristic life, we are socialising our children to accept concepts of stratification and hierarchy that are found within our society through the influence of the business world. This is observable through the participant observations, such as the father responding that his son should learn "how to handle himself later on in life" through the game of hockey, the hockey coach demanding respect for his authority and the janitor in the physical education class who commented on the necessity to teach students discipline or risk them not even achieving jobs such as "burger-flippers at McDonald's".

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[244] Ibid. pg. 45.

Just as the children of Sparta were taught the roles that they were expected to play within their society, our children are taught to accept their roles within our capitalist society. In learning those roles, children must grasp attitudes, norms, beliefs and values in order to fit into their society.

It has been advanced within this thesis that the manner in which children are socialised into their society can be explained through the Interactionist theory. As stated in the fourth chapter, the Interactionist theory accounts for the process in which children learn who they are expected to be and what is expected of them within their society. This is an interactive theory that deduces the development of one's sense of self as integral to the process of socialisation; "(t)here is no sense of "I"... without the correlative sense of you, or he, or they", Cooley explains.[245] This has been the premise of this thesis. The development of self is an interactive process in which the perceptions and actions of significant others socialises the individual. The self arises simultaneously with the act of socialisation and it has been the argument of most researchers, advanced within this thesis, that the hidden curriculum imparts the most significant lessons of socialisation. Therefore, the hidden curriculum has a large role in the development of our children's sense of self and it is through the Interactionist theory that we comprehend how and why this socialisation occurs.

Authors such as Cratty see the socialisation of children through physical education as a natural process of influence and learning of a

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[245] Cooley, Charles Horton. Human Nature and The Social Order. pg. 182.

society's accepted behaviour. "People", he states, "may influence one another's actions at a relatively unconscious level".[246] Other authors, such as Fernandez-Balboa, Berlage or Naisson account for what Cratty describes as an "unconscious influence" as socialisation through the hidden curriculum.

> In some circles, the hidden curriculum is a convenient way of describing all of the goings-on in classrooms and gyms over which teachers feel they can never gain control. In others, it signifies something sinister, suggesting subversive or perverse knowledge that has no proper place in educational programs.[247]

Before entering the research settings it was my "researcher's bias" that there were "sinister" elements intrinsic to a physical education class. It was expected that participant observation would reveal a situation in which children were being taught many of the injustices of the larger society in a microcosm setting. Participant observations displayed that children were being socialised into their larger society. Some lessons imparted and learnt were of questionable intent others were extremely important lessons of life. However, participant observations revealed no *sinister* element in any of the physical educational settings. What was discovered were people attempting to impart to children lessons they considered valuable. If our western world is characterised by corporate culture, does it not make sense that it is in a child's best interest to learn the intricacies of his/her society? My time as a participant observer revealed that in the instances when parents, teachers

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[246] Ibid. pg. 2.

[247] Kirk, David. "Physical Education, Discourse and Ideology: Bringing the Hidden Curriculum into View". pg 36.

and/or coaches felt that a social message was being imparted on children through sporting activity it was done to facilitate their children's or student's entrance into the larger society.

The hockey coach in the formal play setting did teach children, what Berlage termed, corporate values: Acquiescence to authority, uniformity, a male centred environment, competition, discipline, reward, punishment and hierarchical ordering of children depending on skills; all of which are lessons that can be transferred to locations of business. In my opinion there was no "sinister" motivation or element of "conspiracy" (two perspectives of the hidden curriculum that Portelli and Kirk satirically described) on the part of the coach to inculcate children into a hegemonic, male-centred, capitalist, corporate world. He was simply teaching children cultural values that he himself was taught through the same environment.

Within the setting of my own physical education class, I initially tried to avoid imparting norms of the adult world (i.e. corporate culture as described by Kirk and Portelli) to the world of children. However, as reported in the participant observation chapter, it soon became clear that many of these values and norms of society's corporate culture were essential within the class if there was to be any semblance of order and/or learning.

The history of physical education, the theory of Interactionism and two years of participant observation as a physical education teacher have equally contributed to the conclusion of this thesis: Physical education is a

highly valued activity for children within our society. This allows the physical education setting to become a site for much more than mere organised play. In fact, important aspects of the child's self are honed in the interaction with peers and adults in the context of "the game".

Today, in North America, the glorification of professional athletes and of sports simply increases the likelihood that children will come into contact with the norms and values of the adult world through organised play. Parents themselves hold athletic programs in high esteem, probably due to their own socialisation through physical education, and view it as an acceptable way for children to learn the "larger lessons of life".[248] To attest to the faith that we have in physical education, all we have to do is look at physical education programs such as "midnight-basketball" designed to socialise inner-city children. These physical education programs have become the vogue throughout many of the larger inner-cities in North-America as a way to curb illegal activities in youths as well as impart a sense of self worth and proper civic duties through sports.

After having taught physical education for two years it is without any doubt that I recognise the effectiveness and value of such programs. Children's perceptions of their own self-worth, their views of fairness, co-operation and empathy can all be fostered through a physical education setting. It is my opinion that less desirable corporate cultural messages, such as hierarchical ordering among children, can be avoided if the teacher

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[248] McElroy, Mary A. "Parent-child relations and orientations toward sport". Sex Roles.

is made aware of the implications of such actions and discourages it whenever it is recognised.

I am sure that, despite my active disapproval of such actions, children within my own physical education class were still prone to peer-assessment and subsequent ranking of children depending on one's physical prowess. As long as professional athletics are hero-worshipped, children *will* be inclined to repeat a winner/loser ideology.

We cannot ignore that our society is made up of many competitive elements. As the principal of the participant observed elementary school stated (in chapter six), children who are taught in a competitive environment "have the benefit of knowing *how* to compete and *how* to react to group situations. And, that will assist them in the future." It would not be right to ignore the realities of society and not adequately prepare our students for them. However, we should also be aware of the cruelty and inequality of the larger society and, in recognising this, not repeat them in the next generation.

What we can do as teachers is make ourselves aware of such activity, and not ignore it, by intervening and offering proper role-models. When we address social injustices, such as a child's self-perception of being on the low end of the status ladder, we aid in the socialisation of children towards a more empathetic generation.

In closing, I would like to take this opportunity to advance a few considerations for further research on this subject matter. These research questions explore aspects of physical education and socialisation of which this thesis touched but, due to the practical restrictions, could not adequately cover:

1) A study centring on children's perceptions of what lessons of socialisation they are being taught through the physical education setting.

2) Because most research of socialisation through physical education was very male centred, research concerning female aspects of socialisation in physical education classes would prove fascinating.

3) An investigation of physical education teachers' perceptions of children's socialisation and what part they believe they play in the process.

4) The findings of this thesis concluded that physical education is inherently effective as an agent of children's socialisation. Considering this point, a research project which explores citizenship duties and the manners in which they can be taught to children through a physical education curriculum would be of considerable interest.

FIGURE ONE

Physical Education Class

Name:

Grade:

Date:

SPORTSMANSHIP: What does the word "sportsmanship" mean?

Give an example of what GOOD sportsmanship is like.

Give an example of what BAD sportsmanship is like.

FIGURE TWO

Physical Education Class # 2

Name

Grade

Date:

GAMES AND SPORTS: Please list some of the games and sports you like, and some that you dislike.

games I like	games I dislike
1	1 .....
2	2 .....
3	3 .....
4	4 .....
5	5 .....

Please explain why you like the games that you have listed.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Please explain why you dislike the games that you have listed.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

FIGURE THREE

Physical Education Class # 4

Name:

Grade:

Date:

"WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN GAMES I PLAY WITH JUST KIDS, AND GAMES I PLAY WITH A TEACHER OR A COACH?"

PLEASE LIST BELOW THE KINDS OF GAMES AND SPORTS YOU WOULD PLAY WITH JUST YOUR FRIENDS AND IN THE OTHER SECTION WRITE DOWN THE KINDS OF GAMES YOU WOULD PLAY WITH ADULTS

games with my coach and/or teacher	games I play without any adults
1	1 .....
2	2 .....
3	3 .....
4	4 .....
5	5 .....

Please explain why you play certain games or sports without any adults:

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Which games are more fun: The ones with adult supervision or the games that you would only play with kids?
Explain why.

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FIGURE FOUR

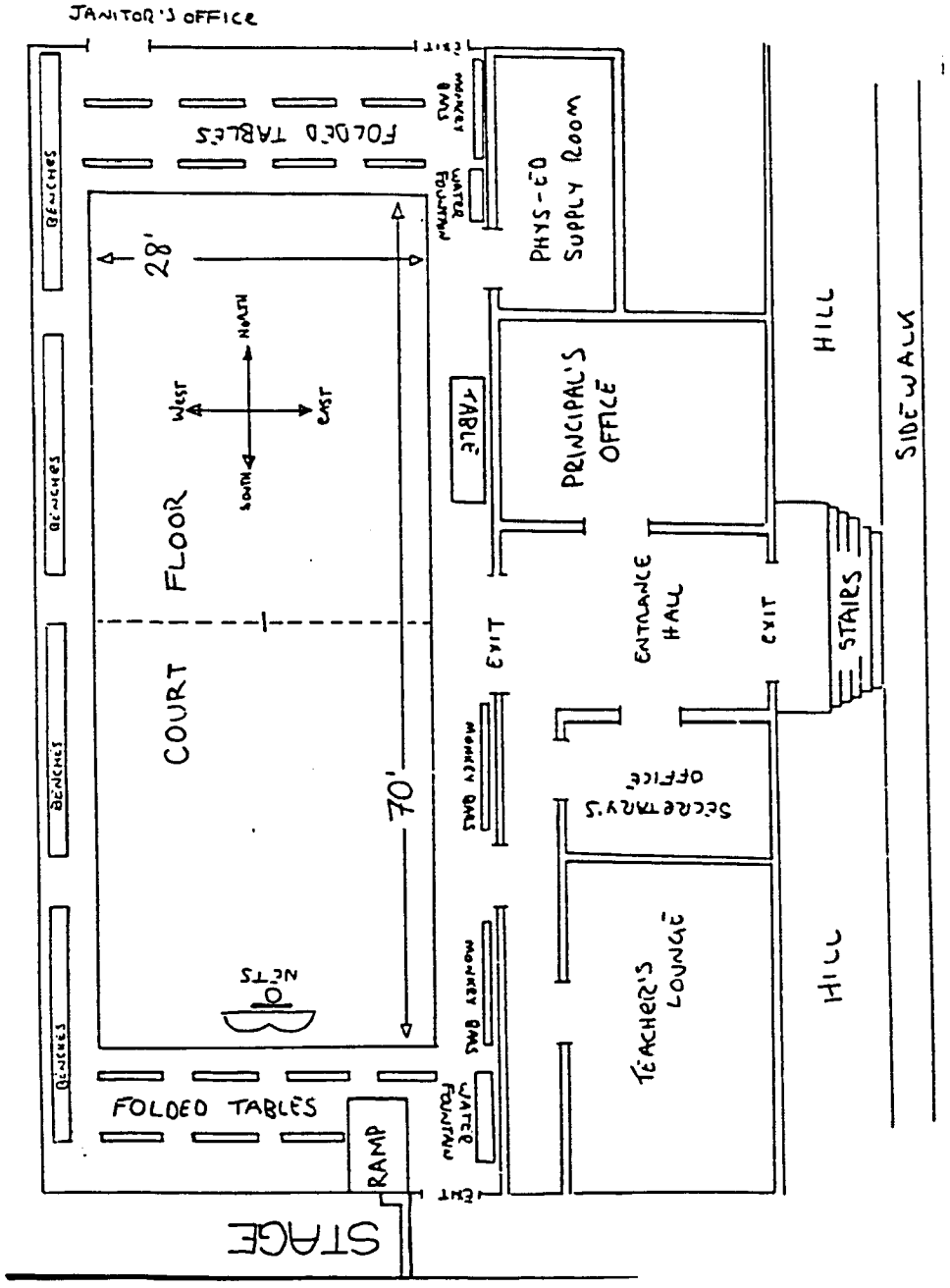
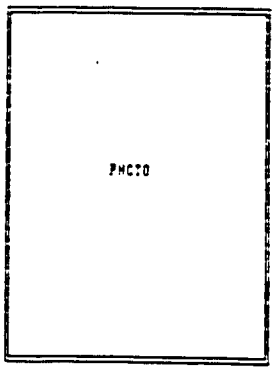

JANITOR'S OFFICE
FOLDED TABLES
BENCHES
BENCHES
BENCHES
BENCHES
28'
70'
NORTH
WEST
EAST
SOUTH
COURT
FLOOR
NETS
FOLDED TABLES
RAMP
STAGE
PHYS-ED
SUPPLY ROOM
TABLE
PRINCIPAL'S
OFFICE
EXIT
ENTRANCE
HALL
EXIT
STAIRS
HILL
SIDEWALK
SECRETARY'S
OFFICE
TEACHER'S
LOUNGE
HILL

FIGURE FIVE



Name:

Age:

Grade:

School:

Favorite Sport or Activity :

Attendance :
(As of February 16, 1994)

CLASS BEHAVIOR AND PHYSICAL NOTES :

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