

What's (not) in *our* name?

Alan Ingham and Physical Cultural Studies

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Ingham, A. G. (1997). Toward a department of physical cultural studies and an end to tribal warfare. In J. Fernandez-Balboa (Ed.), *Critical postmodernism in human movement, physical education, and sport* (pp. 157-182). Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Amid a year wherein the second programmatic incarnation of Alan Ingham's legacy—namely, the opening of a program at Florida State University bearing the moniker “Physical Cultural Studies”—calling to recognize the contributions of those whose work is germane to the formation of a Department of Physical Cultural Studies (henceforth PCS) impresses upon us. Assuredly indebted to Ingham (1997) for the label he molds for his vision of humanistically-oriented, body and movement centered scholarly foci, he provides much more than a name. In his article, Ingham strives to produce a generative work as opposed to, though at times in conjunction with, a stringent critique of disciplines amalgamated around a more commonly recognized label of Kinesiology, presenting problematics and *in progress* ideas for negotiating them. Specifically, he accomplishes the following: locates some contradictions within the field of the study of human movement; provides a mission statement and new field focus; and outlines “building blocks” from which a new curriculum and modality for knowledge production could be constructed.

Writing in 1997 Ingham recognized the need to clarify the formation of a dedicated intellectual project beyond the ivory tower of reductive positivism. Then, and the debate about whether the article's context applies to the current context is surely important, what Ingham labels a “Technocratic Intelligentsia,” dominated the landscape of the study of human movement. These “applied science” scholars, briefly characterized by a reductivist, pseudo-positivist, instrumental, functional, and pragmatic presence, crafted specialized knowledge that at once ignored broader social, cultural, political, economic, and biographical knowledge, and relegated practitioners and humanistic intellectuals in the academic landscape of a would be “Kinesiology.” Acknowledging the need for collective focus and value-referenced scholarship and curricula, Ingham suggests a practice capable of bridging disciplinary, though not necessarily paradigmatic, divisions.

Conscious of the increasing subordination of the technician practitioner, the dominance of the technocratic intelligentsia, and the emergence of the need for humanist intellectuals in the study of human movement, Ingham proposes a mission statement and

field focus. His focus is as follows:

The DPCS consists of cross- and inter-disciplinary studies of practices in physical culture (e.g. movement activities, exercise, nutrition, training, enculturation, recreational and representational sport) which critically assess and promote programs that focus upon the intersections of physical activities, health behaviors, and movement-related lifestyle choices. (p. 165).

Following this passage, he provides both a mission statement and a preparatory program for professionals and scholars (see pp. 165-6). His orientation pushes us to consider a curriculum that: rejects prestige as a means of social control; promotes inter-disciplinarity between and among academic units; and fosters cooperative endeavors which challenge and possibly/ideally eliminate knowledge hierarchies (pp. 166-7). Doing so, he surmises, leads to a better understanding of peoples' lived experiences so that we might be better able to address students and others in and on their terms.

Ingham gives us a place from which to work towards the formation of a Physical Cultural Studies through his foreseeing of the need to understand the body and human movement within the multifarious forces and determinations (e.g.) that have, in the formation of an academic program, been separated in part by epistemological cleavages, narrowing foci and decreasingly holistic inquiry, and corresponding domination and subordination of knowledge and knowledge production. With a curriculum emphasizing the study of "sources of human commonalty" and "variability," the production of historical contexts bears importance for a range of fields and domains (e.g. historical, social, cultural, economic, political, etc.) (p. 166). Without putting forth an explicit epistemological, theoretical, axiological, or methodological stance—indeed his position is one that welcomes a range of these—his purpose for writing is an attempt to bring together those apparatuses that have produced difference and separation to the detriment of "academic tribes."

At first glance, a striking and likely overlooked feature of Alan Ingham's (1997) contribution is the text and footnote "*and Friends*" in the author line. Not only is it a mere nod to those whose contributions to his thinking made the book chapter possible, "*and friends*" captures the broader suggestion of Ingham's thoughts on a PCS. Advancing a strategic curriculum creates room for integration of humanist scholars and technicians to disrupt the tribal claims of the technocratic intelligentsia (pp. 171-72). At times, Ingham's

tone strongly moves against the technocratic intelligentsia in the call for unification, while at others he speaks more toward the unification of humanistic intellectuals and technicist practitioners in a move against the technocratic intelligentsia's hegemonic formation in Kinesiology. His call, while primarily positioned as one to bring together disciplines and not necessarily paradigms, leaves the door open to such possibilities. Indeed, in not dismissing the technocratic intelligentsia in a reformed department, Ingham sets up the possibility of forming a positioning of exchange and benefit.

The questions we might explore in this contribution's relevance to PCS are not whether it is successful in its proposal to date, or the measurement of its achievement. As a Prism, the piece is an excellent contribution because it acknowledges the arbitrary knowledge limitations of traditional disciplines and encourages thinking beyond a department itself. The thought for us is to consider what kind of foundation Ingham seeks to and does (not) provide us. Questions we might ask, then, are not oriented around whether Ingham's book chapter is a seminal contribution to PCS and the renewed call for Prisms as guidance mechanisms. Rather, we should be asking: where do we need to build from here? What do we bring with us, and what do we momentarily perhaps leave behind? To whom does this piece speak, and leave out? How does PCS at the University of Maryland incorporate his programmatic vision, or not, and expand upon them? Does this piece help us work toward these places? This, we suggest, is a place to open.