PASTIMES
The Context of Contemporary Leisure
fifth edition

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For Pres and Aloise
PART ONE
Leisure as a Condition of Humanity:
Personal Context

Chapter 1  The Meanings of Leisure

Preview ................................................................. 3
Key Terms ............................................................... 3
Meanings in the Humanities ........................................ 4
  Literature .......................................................... 4
  Art ................................................................. 5
  Music .............................................................. 8
Meanings From History .............................................. 9
  Stone Age: Artists ............................................... 9
  Ancient Greece: The Leisure Ideal ......................... 10
  Ancient Rome: Spectacle .................................... 11
  Early Polynesians: The First Tourists? ................... 12
  Muhammad’s Early Empire: Relaxation ................. 13
  Medieval Europe: The Work Ethic ......................... 14
  The Renaissance: Humanism ................................ 14
  Colonial America: Purposeful Pastimes ................. 15
  The Industrial Revolution: Leisure as Problem Solver 16
Today’s Connotations ............................................. 20
  Leisure as Free Time ........................................ 20
  Leisure as Recreational Activity .......................... 22
  Leisure as Special Spirit .................................. 23
What We Understand About Leisure’s Meanings ............ 23
References .................................................................. 23

Chapter 2  The Value of Having Fun

Preview ................................................................. 27
Key Terms ............................................................... 27
Freedom ............................................................ 28
Intrinsic Meaning .................................................. 30
PART TWO
Leisure as a Cultural Mirror: Societal Context

Chapter 5  Leisure's Anthropology..................................................... 89

Preview ........................................................................................................ 89
Key Terms ..................................................................................................... 89
Leisure and Culture .................................................................................... 90
  Characteristics of Culture ..................................................................... 91
  Cultural Change .................................................................................. 94
Hunches About the Earliest Human Cultures ............................................. 99
Cultural Development and Leisure ............................................................. 101
  Cultural Vitality .................................................................................. 103
  Modernity .......................................................................................... 104
What We Understand About Leisure and Culture ...................................... 107
References ................................................................................................ 107

Chapter 6  Leisure's Geography............................................................... 109

Preview ........................................................................................................ 109
Key Terms ..................................................................................................... 109
Leisure as Space .......................................................................................... 111
  Crowding ............................................................................................... 112
  Distance ................................................................................................. 114
Leisure as Place ............................................................................................ 116
  Place Identity ........................................................................................ 117
  Place Dependence ............................................................................... 119
Environmental Impact .................................................................................. 119
What We Understand About Leisure's Geographical Significance ............. 124
References ................................................................................................ 124

Chapter 7  Leisure and Technology.......................................................... 127

Preview ........................................................................................................ 127
Key Terms ..................................................................................................... 127
Leisure and Technology Linkages ............................................................... 130
  Scientific and Military Technologies Have Become Popular Leisure ...... 130
  Technology Developed Specifically for Leisure Has Increased ............... 132
  Technology Expands Leisure ................................................................. 135
  Identities Can Be Created Through Leisure Technology ...................... 138
The Issue of Goodness................................................................. 140
What We Understand About Leisure and Technology ............. 143
References.................................................................................. 143

Chapter 8 Popular Culture......................................................... 145

Preview .................................................................................. 145
Key Terms .............................................................................. 145
The Importance of Popular Culture ........................................ 146
Characterizing Popular Culture .............................................. 147
Examples .............................................................................. 149
The Role of Entertainment ..................................................... 156
What We Understand About Popular Culture ....................... 160
References .............................................................................. 160

Chapter 9 Taboo Recreation......................................................... 163

Preview .................................................................................. 163
Key Terms .............................................................................. 163
Leisure and Deviance ............................................................. 164
Examples of Taboo Recreation .............................................. 167
Vandalism .............................................................................. 167
Gambling .............................................................................. 169
Risky Health Behaviors ........................................................ 172
Violence in Sport ................................................................. 173
Explanations of Taboo Recreation ......................................... 175
What We Understand About Taboo Recreation ...................... 179
References .............................................................................. 179

PART THREE
Leisure as Instrument: Systems Context

Chapter 10 For and Against Productivity ................................. 185

Preview .................................................................................. 185
Key Terms .............................................................................. 185
Balancing Leisure and Work .................................................. 186
Why Work? ........................................................................... 187
Work for Leisure or Leisure for Work? ............................... 188
Chapter 11  The Freedom and Tyranny of Time .............................................. 207
   Preview ........................................................................................................ 207
   Key Terms ..................................................................................................... 207
   Types of Time ............................................................................................... 209
      Cyclical Time ............................................................................................. 209
      Mechanical Time ......................................................................................... 210
      Biological Time ........................................................................................... 211
      Cultural Time ............................................................................................... 212
   Are Time and Leisure Friends? .................................................................... 214
   Time Tyrannies ............................................................................................... 219
   What We Understand About Leisure and Time ............................................. 223
   References .................................................................................................... 223

Chapter 12  Is Leisure Fair? ............................................................................. 227
   Preview ........................................................................................................ 227
   Key Terms ..................................................................................................... 227
   Prohibitions and Permissions ........................................................................ 229
   Examples ....................................................................................................... 233
      Women ....................................................................................................... 233
      Persons With Disabilities ........................................................................... 236
      Gays and Lesbians ....................................................................................... 238
      Racial and Ethnic Minorities ...................................................................... 240
   What We Understand About Leisure Equity ............................................... 242
   References .................................................................................................... 242

Chapter 13  Leisure Systems .......................................................................... 247
   Preview ........................................................................................................ 247
   Key Terms ..................................................................................................... 247
   Why Leisure Systems Are Important ............................................................ 249
Leisure Resource Types

Tourism .............................................................................................................. 253
Cultural Arts ........................................................................................................... 254
Sports ..................................................................................................................... 255
Outdoor Recreation ............................................................................................. 257

Leisure Resource Sponsors .............................................................................. 258
Public Agencies .................................................................................................... 259
Private Agencies ................................................................................................... 262
Commercial Agencies ......................................................................................... 264

Careers in the Leisure System ........................................................................... 266
What We Understand About Leisure Systems .................................................... 269
References .......................................................................................................... 269

Index ..................................................................................................................... 271
The purpose of this fifth edition of *Pastimes* is to extend the discussion about leisure in society to new concepts supported by new research findings and commentary. Throughout, I have pursued the most interesting, relevant, exciting, and contemporary information possible. This wasn’t at all difficult; leisure is simply a very intriguing subject.

First, as an introduction to the phenomenon of leisure, the book must be current. Momentous changes, actual and alleged, have always been the root of leisure expressions and experiences. To match, *Pastimes* again reflects a wide range of material from the disciplines of leisure studies, sociology, psychology, economics, political science, anthropology, geography, the humanities, and media and cultural studies.

Second, as a learning tool, this fifth edition teaches more. It contains new illustrations of concepts through field-based cases, biographical features, exploratory activities, and research studies. While the basic organization remains similar, in addition to new material, some former concepts have been relocated. For example, the topic of history and its meanings for leisure is now combined into one chapter. Also, the discussion of work is now combined with that about economics in the same chapter.

Also, theories explaining leisure behavior are now organized according to their home discipline. A chapter on well-being and leisure is a new feature, and because of the amazing speed of change, the chapter on leisure and technology has been completely rewritten. The chapter on time has also been expanded. Finally, the last chapter on leisure systems has a new section on professional preparation.

More than a textbook, *Pastimes* is very much a point of view. Leisure is presented as a human phenomenon that is individual and collective, vital and frivolous, historical and contemporary, factual and subjective, good and bad.
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This edition is the result of what I have learned from years of engagement with leisure theory and research, as well as personal and professional practice. Signs of my worldwide wanderings are also evident. Throughout, I have felt grateful to many people: family, friends, students, university and practitioner colleagues, and fellow recreation participants. In particular, thank you to Pat Setser for her constant patience and support. I also wish to especially thank Trish Ardovino, Boyd Hegarty, Debbie Smith, Jeff Nix, Austin Anderson, and Agnes Kovacs, former doctoral students who worked with me in courses about this subject at Indiana University, and who are now distinguished colleagues in their own right. I also learned a great deal from my IU collaborator, Rasul Mowatt, with whom I shared the efforts of developing many grant applications and teaching initiatives. Learning is the greatest of joys, and I am lucky to be able to devote my life to it.
We are human in large part because of our leisure.

We begin our exploration of leisure by considering its significance for us personally. Leisure helps shape us as human beings. It is expressed throughout our lives and is revealed in our growth, health, motives, feelings, and actions.

Chapter 1
Demonstrates leisure’s meanings for us through the humanities, in ancient and contemporary histories, and according to today’s connotations.

Chapter 2
Discusses the benefits of leisure to us, including our happiness, freedom, pleasure, and spirituality.

Chapter 3
Offers some explanations about our leisure choices and behaviors.

Chapter 4
Traces the ways leisure helps us grow and thrive.

What is leisure?
Leisure is an intricate and dynamic concept with different meanings depending on the context.

What are the contexts of leisure meaning?
Leisure's meanings can be found in the humanities, history, and today's connotations.

Where do we find meanings of leisure in the humanities?
Perhaps leisure can be best understood through the ideas portrayed in a story, a song, and a painting.

What are the clues to meanings of leisure in history?
From the beginning of human culture, leisure has been a part of everyday life, and these legacies endure today.

What do we understand leisure to mean today?
Leisure is individually and culturally defined, but most common are the themes of free time, recreational activity, and a special spirit.

Key Terms

Humanities .................... 4
Impressionism ............... 6
Schole .......................... 10
Olympian ..................... 11
“Bread and circusus” ....... 12
Ludi ............................. 12
Feudalism ..................... 14

Work ethic ..................... 14
Renaissance ................... 14
Humanism ........................ 15
Industrial Revolution ...... 16
Social movements ........... 17
Settlement houses .......... 17
Discretionary time .......... 21

To have leisure is one of the earliest dreams of human beings: to be free to pursue what we want, to spend our time meaningfully in pleasurable ways, to live in a state of grace (Godbey, 2008, p. 1). In this chapter, we set the stage for understanding the essential humanness of leisure by exploring its foundational meanings.

Because leisure is a complex concept with different meanings depending on the people, the place, and the time, defining it requires journeys to different peoples, places, and times. First, we define leisure through its reflections in the humanities: literature, art, and music. Next, we examine some of the original meanings of leisure in history, and finally, we summarize leisure’s contemporary common connotations. Throughout the discussion, you’ll notice that leisure has multiple, and even contradictory, meanings.

**Meanings in the Humanities**

The complexity of leisure’s meanings is reflected through the humanities. The subjects of the humanities include the arts, such as music, paintings, and stories, which convey what it is like to be human. The word *art* itself comes from the same root as the word *artificial*, meaning something made by humans.

In creating a song or a poem, songwriters and poets portray their own experience. So, when we listen to a musical performance or read a poem, we understand something about the experience of its creator. In these expressions are ideas, images, and words that serve as a kind of self-reflection, telling us who and what we may be and informing us of our humanness. As well, the humanities introduce us to people we have never met, places we have never visited, and ideas that may have never crossed our minds.

**Literature**

Literature, in the broadest sense, is widely apparent in everyday life. It is the written art form found in magazine articles, greeting card verses, and blogs, as well as in poetry and novels. Reading literature in itself is a popular leisure expression, and to prove it, Americans spent about $27.94 billion in 2010 on books, representing almost a 6% increase in just two years (Association of American Publishers, 2012). Another example of the popularity of literature is the role-playing literary camps sprouting up across the United States (Otterman, 2010). Structured around children’s books such as the Harry Potter, and Percy Jackson and the Olympians series, both residential and day camp programs feature kids acting out book scenes and situations.

Like looking into a mirror, literature offers a view of human life, including leisure. For example, American fiction writer F. Scott Fitzgerald wrote many short stories that
The Meanings of Leisure

tell us about the good-time culture of the 1920s. Labeled his “flapper stories,” short stories such as “The Camel's Back” glamorized the social life of the young:

Now during the Christmas holidays of 1919 there took place in Toledo, forty-one dinner parties, sixteen dances, six luncheons, male and female, twelve teas, four stag dinners, two weddings, and thirteen bridge parties. It was the cumulative effect of all this that moved Perry Parkhurst on the twenty-ninth day of December to a decision. This Medill girl would marry him and she wouldn't marry him. She was having such a good time that she hated to take such a definite step. (Fitzgerald, 1920, p. 35)

In comparison, Maya Angelou's (1971) poem “Harlem Hopscotch” uses the rhythm of a children's street game to express a serious problem in society:

One foot down, then hop! It's hot.
Good things for the ones that's got.
Another jump, now to the left.
Everybody for hisself.
In the air, now both feet down.
Since you black, don't stick around.
Food is gone, the rent is due,
Curse and cry and then jump two.
All the people out of work,
Hold for three, then twist and jerk.
Cross the line, they count you out.
That's what hopping's all about.
Both feet flat, the game is done.
They think I lost, I think I won. (p. 100)

In the poem, Angelou uses the children's game of hopscotch to vent frustration and a sense of betrayal. Although the poem is about the injustices of race and social class, it makes light of it by putting it into the rhythm of a classic children's pastime. Or does it? What do you think is meant by the game's outcome in the last line: “They think I lost, I think I won”?

Art

People have always had an interest in the beauty of pattern. We enjoy designs of contrast and balance for their own sake. We create our own aesthetic experience every day; we doodle during class, wear jewelry, and make figures with the lawn mower in our yard. The use of pattern also has a commemorative function. The most important events in our religious, social, and political lives, for example, are reflected in images and icons. We take pictures of relatives at family reunions to record the visual memory, and we hang out flags to celebrate a national holiday. In other words, art mirrors what we consider to be both beautiful and important. Because our curiosity is about leisure's meanings, what is considered beautiful and important about leisure through art?
Perhaps one of the most readily recognized reflections of leisure in art comes from the impressionist period. Impressionism is a style of art that presents an immediate “impression” of an object or event. Impressionist artists try to show what the eye sees at a glance, so the image seems spontaneous. Although painters and other artists have created impressionistic works in several periods of history, the term is most commonly applied to the work of a group of painters exhibiting in Paris from about 1870 to 1910. What is the impression of leisure in this art?

One answer is in the painting “Terrace at Sainte-Adresse” (Figure 1.2) by Claude Monet. Painted in 1866, Monet’s painting depicts vacationers. Out in the water are pleasure boats moored on the left and steamers on the right. In the middle-distance is a fishing boat (just above the parasol). This perhaps represents the transitions from sail to steam, and from the local and traditional life, with the arrival of tourism. This mirrors what was happening at that time in most of coastal France. Fishing villages were changing into resorts, with broad avenues, sidewalks, formal gardens, and large buildings, just as many waters-edge locations have in the years since. The creation of artificial spaces for the visiting tourists changed forever the lives of the fishermen and shopkeepers who once lived there (Herbert, 1988).

Another impressionist painter of the time, Mary Cassatt, painted “Woman in Black at the Opera” (Figure 1.3). Cassatt presents a woman using her upward-tilted opera glasses to scan the audience. With a bit of humor, Cassatt also placed a man in the distance leaning out of his box to point his glasses in the woman’s direction, emphasizing the fun of spying on others (Herbert, 1988). We can also learn from this painting that leisure defined the upper social class of this era.

**Figure 1.2**

__Claude Monet. Terrace at Sainte-Adresse. 1866.\__

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, purchased with special contributions and purchase funds given or bequeathed by friends of the Museum, 1967 (67.241)
Even this brief glance at the art of the late 1800s reveals clear meanings of leisure in Paris. Indeed, idle hours and entertainment greatly expanded during this period, particularly for the upper class. As thousands of paintings by impressionist artists portray, by the end of that century, daily life was dominated by theaters, operas, cafés, restaurants, dances, racetracks, gardens, and parks. Tourism expanded as well, with a focus on the beauty of the seaside.

**Figure 1.3**

Mary Cassatt. Woman in Black at the Opera. 1879.
The Hayden Collection.
Courtesy The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

**Box 1.1. Web Explore**

Romanticism

In addition to Impressionism, the artistic tradition of Romanticism provides an interpretation of leisure’s meaning. While Impressionism suggests leisure means a daily life dominated by theaters, operas, cafés, dances, gardens, and racetracks, Romanticism in art suggests something different. What is that? Explore the following website and form your own conclusions: [http://www.metmuseum.org](http://www.metmuseum.org)
(To easily access a complete, updated list of Pastimes links visit [http://www.sagamorepub.com/pastimes5](http://www.sagamorepub.com/pastimes5).)

Music

Music is perhaps the most universal activity of humankind. Beginning as the natural sound of the human voice, music over the centuries has taken many forms and reflected many ways of life. People in today’s Western cultures express themselves through jazz, rock, rhythm and blues, country, rap, gospel, classical, and many other musical styles through the purchase of CDs, ringtones, digital downloads, music videos, and other musical recordings, of which sales have reached over $7.0 billion (Recording Industry Association of America, 2012).

How might music portray leisure? All forms of music reflect leisure's meanings, but as an initial illustration, we’ll consider rock and roll, and Elvis Presley in particular, who remains rock's most indelible image worldwide. In Elvis, millions of young people found more than a new entertainer; they found themselves, or at least an idealized image of themselves, which stood in stark, liberating contrast to the repressed atmosphere of the 1950s.

What was this new identity? In Elvis’ “Hound Dog” and the flip side’s “Don’t Be Cruel,” the highest selling single record of the decade, we find a summary of how Elvis’ rock and roll represented young people and their leisure of that time. While the straight rock of screaming guitars and drums in “Hound Dog” emphasizes a wild and raucous sound, a light beat and gentler accompaniment in “Don’t Be Cruel” highlight a sweet melody and lyrics. This makes for a big difference between the sexually aggressive and the playfully innocent. Thus, just like the two sides of this one single record, youth of the 1950s were bumping, although timidly, against the outer edges of a sort of rebellion.

Box 1.2. The Study Says

A New Generation’s Vanity

Can the lyrics of popular songs reveal something about those who listen to them? Based on a computer analysis of lyrics from three decades (1980–2007) of hit songs, a statistically significant trend toward narcissism and hostility in popular music was found by researchers at the University of Kentucky. The study was controlled for genre to prevent the results from being skewed by the growing popularity of rap and hip-hop. In general it was found that hit songs in the 1980s were more likely to emphasize happy togetherness (e.g., Diana Ross and Lionel Richie sang of “two hearts that beat as one”), while today’s songs are more likely to be about one very special person: the singer (i.e., Justin Timberlake proclaiming “I’m bringing sexy back” and Beyoncé exulting “It’s blazin’, you watch me in amazement”). Do these findings reflect your understanding? Why or why not? Are other studies available that contradict these results?

Specifically detailing leisure and summer, later in the 1960s, The Beach Boys sang in “All Summer Long,”
- T-shirts, cut-offs, and a pair of thongs
- (T-shirts, cut-offs, and a pair of thongs)
- We’ve been having fun all summer long.

From the opera “Porgy and Bess” by George and Ira Gershwin, first performed in 1935, a similar sentiment about summer is expressed:
- Summertime
- And the livin’ is easy
- Fish are jumpin’
- And the cotton is high

We can find meanings of leisure in other musical forms as well. For example, in the rap song “People Everyday,” recorded in 1992 by Arrested Development, leisure is about hanging out in the park,
- putting one’s soul at ease.

Meanwhile, Gang of Four’s “Natural’s Not In It” released in 1979 gives us a glimpse of leisure as consumption:
- The problem of leisure
- What to do for pleasure
- Ideal love a new purchase
- A market of the senses
- Dream of the perfect life
- Economic circumstances
- The body is good business
- Sell out, maintain the interest

**Meanings From History**

It is not really known where civilization, that is, settled community life, originated. The retreat of the last glaciers (about 11,000 years ago) initiated successive periods of cultural evolution from primitive hunting-and-gathering societies, to the development of agriculture and animal husbandry, and ultimately to the urbanization and industrialization of modern societies. As people gathered together into societies, more formalized rules of conduct emerged, including governments, religions, work occupations, and, of course, leisure. Our contemporary meanings of leisure have been shaped by the histories of these past societies. Let’s explore some of them.

**Stone Age: Artists**

Our understanding of life for the earliest humans is very much conjecture. Archeologists are not even sure exactly when and where these populations began. But recent discoveries made of 50 samples of symbol-based art from 11 caves in northwestern Spain (Wilford, 2012) suggest our earliest ancestors lived in what is now Europe some 43,000–45,000 years ago.
This is intriguing from a leisure perspective as well. The international team of scientists determined that the art in a cave known as El Castillo was part of the earliest known art. The red handprints found in the cave, for example, were probably made from blowing pigment on a hand placed against the cave wall. Thus, the scientists said this motif “implies that depictions of the human hand were among the oldest art known” (Wilford, 2012, p. 1). Until these discoveries, archaeologists usually saw prehistoric people as incapable of creating artistic works much beyond simple abstract markings and personal ornamentation.

**Ancient Greece: The Leisure Ideal**

Although much has been debated about Greek concepts of leisure (see Sylvester, 1999), one constant theme from this ancient culture seems to be its focus on leisure as a means to the good life. The philosopher Plato, for example, believed there were spiritual as well as physical rewards from participating in gymnastics. Throughout his writings, Aristotle considered the power to think to be the most unique of human qualities and thus was convinced that a life of contemplation was the proper use of leisure. Yet, to him life should be devoted not only to thinking noble thoughts, but also to doing civic and productive deeds (Hemingway, 1988).

Leisure scholars have labeled these philosophical ideas the leisure ideal. That is, leisure is a force that can ignoble us. This traditional interpretation comes from the Greek concept σχολή, which was translated as *scholē*. This word is also connected to the Latin (*licentia* and *licere*) and associated French (*loisir*) and English (*leisure* and...
The Meanings of Leisure

school) words. Extending these associations, then, the ideal pastime was in pursuit of scholarship: reading, thinking, debating, discussing, and studying.

How the ancient Greek people interpreted this advice of their philosophers into daily life provides a legacy for leisure today. For example, intellectual pursuits such as mathematics, poetry, and music were popular. Even in sport, the importance of the leisure ideal is evident. Organized sport was a religious ritual. The ancient Greeks used athletics, as well as dance and drama, as a means to communicate with their gods and goddesses (Lattipongpun, 2010).

For example, excavation at the ancient Olympic site in western Greece shows that the first formalized Olympic Games took place in 776 BC. Originally named for the god Olympian, these games were later held as worship to the god Zeus. Zeus was thought to favor some and to deny victory to others. If an athlete was fined for cheating or bribery, the money was used to make a cult statue of Zeus.

Part religious and part sport, the Olympic Games were held every 4 years, and in the first 13 Olympiads, a footrace of 180 meters was the only event. Later, longer running races were added, as well as horse races and weight lifting. One particularly savage sport called pancratium was introduced in 648 BC and combined boxing and wrestling. Scholars tell us that in pancratium, all types of physical attack were encouraged, with eye gouging and biting the only hits not allowed.

Of course, athletes in the games were the aristocratic young men who had the privilege of leisure. Social distinctions were prominent in all of ancient Greek leisure. What Plato and Aristotle taught about leisure was available only to the upper classes. In Athens at the time, native-born males who were citizens were a privileged leisure class. Their control of a system of slaves and the limitations on women empowered their lives of leisure.

Yet, within this contradiction to the leisure ideal, there is another contradiction. There is some evidence, for example, that women had their own games in Olympia (Pausanias, 1918). These were the Heraea Games, held every 4 years to honor the goddess Hera, the consort of Zeus. Here, unmarried women competed in foot races, with winners receiving the traditional olive branch garland.

Putting all this rich complexity of leisure meaning together, then, we can conclude that for the ancient Greeks leisure was both intellectual and physical. It was the importance of developing both the mind and the body through participation, learning, and noble actions. The good life of leisure for the Greeks was an “ideal” maintaining that knowledge and physicality lead to virtuous choices and conduct, which in turn lead to true pleasure. But this leisure ideal was only available to the socially privileged.

**Ancient Rome: Spectacle**

Films and television often portray the ancient Romans as military conquerors as well as ardent pleasure seekers. While there is some truth to these images, this civilization also shaped many other civilizations with important advancements. Even today the remains of vast building projects, including roads and bridges, enormous aqueducts, temples, and theaters, as well as entire towns and cities throughout Africa and Europe, stand on Roman foundations.

Rome began its rise to power around 200 BC. It prospered under a policy of expansion by using both military and political methods until around 200 AD. Although

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**Olympian**

one of the ancient Greek gods; being like the god, especially in being calm and untroubled by ordinary affairs
ancient Romans borrowed a good deal of Greek philosophy and copied Greek art and architecture, they had a unique notion about leisure. For example, as Rome conquered its neighbors (Greece, Syria, Egypt, Macedonia, and others), the problem of overseeing an immense empire began to require control of the social order. Discipline and careful regulation of a growing middle class of people were required.

The ancient Romans accomplished this by what today we would refer to as mass leisure. There were heated public baths, parade grounds for various ball games, and grand athletic exhibitions. Often the middle-class masses of people were spectators to gladiators fighting each other to the death and to political prisoners, criminals, and slaves being thrown to wild animals. Based on the policy of “bread and circuses,” leisure as spectacle was used as a form of social control and as a means whereby rulers and officials could win popular favor. For example, beginning about 31 BC, such ludi, or public games, became annual events in the Roman calendar (Ibrahim, 1991). By the end of the Roman Empire, the year included 175 official holidays, with 101 of them for theatrical entertainments, 64 devoted to chariot races, and 10 given over to gladiatorial combats (Roberts, 1962).

Specialized facilities were provided for these events. The oldest of these, the Circus Maximus, was built for horse races, trick riding, mock cavalry battles, and chariot races. Amphitheaters hosted gladiatorial combats, with the largest, the Colosseum, holding thousands of spectators. The Colosseum also hosted the naumachiae, a ship battle requiring the flooding of the Colosseum floor. Yet, the greatest of all naumachiae was staged by Claudius outside Rome in Lake Fucine. A total of 19,000 men boarded a fleet of 50 ships and battled each other beginning at 10:00 a.m., and by 3:00 that afternoon 3,000 of them were dead (Butler, 1971).

As the spectacles became more popular, and more widely used by emperors to gain support from the people, they also became more and more lavish and depraved as each tried to outdo his predecessor. Enormous amounts of money and human resources were spent on the games, which many historians conclude ultimately degraded the Roman culture. Restrictions began to be imposed on these practices. For example, gladiator fights ended in the east of the empire at the end of the fourth century and in the west at the end of the fifth century.

**Early Polynesians: The First Tourists?**

Today, Hawaii is one of the world’s most popular tourist destinations. Ironically its early settlement perhaps can be viewed as the effect of tourism itself. Polynesian
seafarers were skilled ocean navigators and astronomers who traveled long distances at a time when boats rarely went out of sight of land. While scholars still debate the founding history of Hawaii, some believe the first Polynesians arrived there around 200 AD from the Marquesas (Kamakau, 1992).

These Polynesian voyagers (sometimes an entire village) loaded up their double-hulled canoes with animals, plants, food, and water and headed out into the middle of the Pacific Ocean. They had more than 2,000 miles to go before they would reach the island of Kauai (Howe, 2006). But they didn't know that; they didn't know what lay ahead of them at all. They surely did know, however, about the dangers of swamping or capsizing in heavy seas. Nonetheless, archaeological evidence indicates that by about 1280 AD, the Polynesians had settled the vast Polynesian triangle with its northern corner at Hawaii, the eastern corner at Easter Island, and the southern corner in New Zealand (Lowe, 2008).

What was their motive? Were they trying to colonize or to escape famine, drought, or overpopulation? Were they exploring? No one really knows, of course, but given the dangers and unknowns about the trips, we can at least conclude their actions reveal an adventuresome spirit, a yearning for travel.

Muhammad’s Early Empire: Relaxation

Muhammad, which means “praised one,” was the founder of the religion of Islam and one of the most influential people of all time. Within 100 years after his death, in 632 AD, Muslims had carried his teachings into other parts of the Middle East, North Africa, Europe, and Asia. Today, Islam is the second largest world religion, with about 1.6 billion followers, or 23% of the world’s population (The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, 2009).

Included in the teachings of Muhammad is another meaning of leisure still lived today. Early Muslims learned Muhammad’s philosophy of leisure through one of his sayings: “Recreate your hearts hour after hour, for the tired hearts go blind” (from the Hadith). In the Qur’an (the Islamic holy book), paradise for the faithful is envisioned as a verdant garden where chosen men recline on beautiful carpets next to rippling water and delight in the fragrance of flowers.

This vision of relaxing was practiced by ancient wealthy Muslims, who spent hours among lush landscapes of pools, pavilions, and fountains. During the day, they conversed with friends and played chess. At night, musicians provided entertainment, and dancers performed until dawn. Women from this period were segregated from men,
but the wives and other female relatives and children of the wealthiest men lived similarly relaxing lives within the palace in a special place called the harem.

**Medieval Europe: The Work Ethic**

The Middle Ages, or medieval period of human history, describes the era between ancient and modern times in Western Europe, extending from the end of the Roman Empire (about 400 AD) to the 1500s. The former Roman Empire was divided into large estates called kingdoms and ruled by wealthy landowners. Later, this evolved into the system of *feudalism*, which altered leisure's meaning again.

Feudalism produced a social class and an individual, power-based meaning of leisure according to distinctions between lords, vassals, and fiefs. A lord was a wealthy nobleman who owned the land, a vassal was a person who was granted possession of the land and thus protection by the lord, and the land itself was known as a fief. In exchange for the fief, the vassal would provide military service to the lord (Ganshof, as cited in McKitterick, 1988). This meant leisure expression was personally owned and bartered.

As well, leisure was never far removed from a basis in violence. For example, as practice for defending the fiefdom, lords and their vassals were particularly interested in hunting and sport contests as means to keep their fighting skills and strategies sharp (Labarge, 1965). Hunting with hounds and falconry was the most popular, and tournaments were mock fighting events. When the events turned into wild melees, a new variation of the tournament developed: The Round Table, which was also a social occasion accompanied by jousting with blunted weapons, wrestling, darts, and even skipping contests (Labarge, 1965). Pastimes within the fiefdom's castle also included performing minstrels (musicians, acrobats, jugglers, and storytellers all in one); games of backgammon, checkers, and chess; and also social drinking, gambling, and theatrical performances.

However, and as you might already suspect, the story of leisure during the Middle Ages includes a subtext. Life was difficult for everyone. People lived only an average of 30 years. Very few could read or write, and much superstition surrounded daily life. In the midst of this hardship, the Catholic Church became the main civilizing force, and according to church doctrine, the main goal of life was abstinence from worldly pleasures. The Church maintained that the way to a higher quality of afterlife was through hard work, good deeds, and self-deprivation. This is why this period of human history is often considered to be the birth of the *work ethic*. Yet, contradictorily, church clergy were wealthy noblemen and enjoyed the same pastimes as other noblemen.

**Renaissance**

By about 1300 AD, medieval Europe began to give way to modern Europe, a period in history called the *Renaissance*. Renaissance is a French word meaning “rebirth,” and in this 300-year period, it meant changes in ways of experiencing leisure.

This was the age of Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci, William Shakespeare, and Cervantes. Art, music, drama, and other literary forms flourished. This was also the age of adventure; people were fascinated with the world and other
people. Books about travel began to flood England, for example, and it became a widespread practice for young gentlemen to complement their education with lengthy travel (Hudman, 1980).

Under the sponsorship of wealthy nobles and royalty, theaters and opera houses were constructed and formal balls, exhibitions, banquets, and masquerades were arranged. The middle classes also participated in festivities, and children's activities stressed creative pastimes such as studies in music and science (Bucher, Shiver, & Bucher, 1984).

This Renaissance emphasis on the rediscovery and study of literature and the arts formed a new 20th century philosophy known as humanism. Although today within both religious doctrine and individual beliefs there are many interpretations, humanism includes the idea of happiness as its own justification. Like leisure, life is to include freedom of expression and awareness of beauty and to harmoniously combine personal satisfaction with self-improvement.

**Colonial America: Purposeful Pastimes**

As early as the 1400s, native people were the only inhabitants of the western hemisphere, but following Columbus’ voyage of 1492, for the next 400 years, large waves of nonnative people mostly from Europe sailed across the Atlantic Ocean to North and South America. Among them were British colonists, who settled on the east coast of North America between what are now the states of Maine and Georgia. They came in search of opportunities for wealth, power, freedom, and adventure.

Yet those who settled in the northern regions of this area did not find great riches at first; instead, they found rugged wilderness. The earliest colonists suffered from starvation and disease as they worked to harness America’s abundant resources. Little time and energy could be squandered when there was so much work to be done just to survive. Often this view about idleness led to strict policies against it.

As well, because many of the new settlers were motivated to cross the Atlantic by a belief in “divine mission,” a calling that rebelled against conspicuous pleasures of the privileged classes of the English aristocracy, leisure’s role was doubly questioned. For example, the Puritans of the American colonies represented a broad movement of radical Protestants who sought to purge society of godlessness. Indeed, the Puritan calendar of the late 1640s abolished all Catholic holy days, including Christmas, and replaced them with holidays based on fasting, humiliation, and thanksgiving (Borsay, 2006).

Over the years, history has incorporated evidence such as this as the basis for concluding that the early American colonists did not enjoy themselves, and by extension, this is what renders many contemporary American pleasures chained to guilt, sanctimony, and hypocrisy (Daniels, 1995). Recently, however, a few historians have begun publishing new and opposing interpretations of Puritanism. According to them, the Puritans did enjoy themselves.

Thus, in spite of the hard work to be done and religious reforms, early colonial life provides numerous examples of common pastime practices. These included reading, socializing, singing, dancing, archery, shooting, hunting, fishing, fowling, football, wrestling, ninepin, tennis, an early version of shuffleboard, and even horse racing, gambling, and card games (O’Keefe, 2002). As well, and typical of people of the 17th century, they liked to drink and eat well.
What is distinctive about these colonial pastimes is that it was expected that they serve a purpose. Their leisure ethic is best understood as utilitarian. Celebrations while making a quilt or building a barn, for example, made it possible for many hands to help with the task. The northern colonists took great pains to distinguish “lawful” recreation as that contributing to the greater good.

The Industrial Revolution: Leisure as Problem Solver

Beginning in Great Britain during the 1700s, and spreading to other parts of Europe and to North America in the early 1800s, the development of industrialization brought major changes in leisure's meaning. So significant were the challenges that historians refer to this period as the Industrial Revolution. Widespread by midcentury, industrialization created an enormous increase in the production of many kinds of goods because of the introduction of power-driven machinery. Obviously this had significant impact on society’s work.

Perhaps not so obvious at first were the radical changes in just about every other area of life. For example, industrialization not only changed the nature of work by taking it out of the rural home and workshop and into the urban factory, but also changed people's thinking about work time. The clock was now important as it ordered the pace of work. Also, women and men were now separated for most of the day, and the importance of community was diminished as no one was there much anymore.

Some people were able to amass huge fortunes through industrialization. By 1900 there were about 3,000 millionaires in the United States, compared to only 20 in 1850. American author Mark Twain called this the Gilded Age, describing the leisure-based culture of the newly rich. Attending operas and horse races, holding balls and parties, yachting, and relaxing at luxurious resorts represented the pursuit of lavish pleasure.

For the middle and lower classes there were major changes in how leisure was experienced as well. Indeed, the main story of leisure's utilitarian role was extended by how the lower classes of people experienced daily life at this time. Most of those who tended the machines lived and worked under harsh conditions. In the factories the machines forced them to work faster and without rest. Jobs became specialized, so the work was monotonous. Wages were as low as 20 cents an hour, and workers put in at least 60-hour workweeks (Fourastie, 1951). Children, many under age 10, worked up to 14 hours a day, at only a small fraction of these wages.

Meanwhile, housing in the growing industrial cities of New York, Chicago, and others could not keep up with the migration of workers from rural areas and other countries. Severe overcrowding resulted, along with poor sanitation and inadequate diets, making people vulnerable to disease. As an
obvious consequence, some came to believe that social reforms were needed to correct these conditions. Churches and social welfare groups set up charities, Horace Mann demanded better schools, and workers’ strikes for better wages and shorter work schedules erupted.

Most meaningful from our perspective were those reforms that used leisure. These reformers believed wholesome and enriching leisure expressions would solve the problems of industrialization. We will use as examples two turn-of-the-century social movements: settlement houses and playgrounds.

Copying the British model of Toynbee Hall in London, Stanton Coit, Jane Addams, and Ellen Starr established settlement houses in the United States as a way to help the urban poor. Coit established the first settlement house in 1886 in New York City, and 3 years later Addams and Starr established a settlement house in Chicago that became famous as the Hull House.

Social movements
a significant change in the social conditions and patterns of behavior in a society

Settlement houses
an institution in an inner city providing various community services

Box 1.3. In Profile

Jane Addams, Ellen Gates Starr, and Hull House

In 1889 Jane Addams and Ellen Gates Starr, college-educated, upper middle-class women, using their own money, founded the Hull House in Chicago and quickly made it a model for nationwide efforts to improve the lives of people coping with urban poverty. When the heir of Charles Hull granted Jane and Ellen a rent-free, 4-year lease on his large, dilapidated old home that had become surrounded by the sprawling, densely packed, deteriorating immigrant slums of Chicago’s 19th ward, they took it. A few days after Jane’s 29th birthday, the two former college roommates moved in. They intended to share their gifts of culture with their neighbors. Indeed, Hull House made a special reputation for itself based on “the exaltation of art for the benefit of the masses” (Smith, 1890, p. 10).

From the beginning, Hull House was the center of activity. A day care center and kindergarten were available in the morning. In the afternoon, classes and clubs for teens were provided, and adult education programs were held in the evening. Nearby buildings were acquired and converted into a coffeehouse, a gymnasium, and a playground. Classes were offered in pottery, rhythm and dance, photography, and chorus. Concerts, dramatic readings, art exhibits, and lectures were weekly events, and the audience was always packed. These carefully supervised programs were central to helping people, especially children, resist the negative effects of the city around them (McBride, 1989).
The settlement house objective was to improve living conditions in cities, particularly for new immigrants. To accomplish this, they offered educational classes, nurseries, and civil rights and fair employment advocacy. Also, the recreational services—typically play apparatus for young children, sport activities and social clubs for older children, and cultural arts programs for adults—not only provided a more positive balance in desperate lives but also taught skills needed for productive lives.

Meanwhile, another use of organized play to solve social problems can be traced to Friedrich Froebel, who founded the first kindergarten in Germany in 1837. He believed children should be schooled early in a gentle manner that allowed them to develop freely, thus leading the way for another social movement. In the United States, this was represented by the insight of public-spirited members of the New England Woman’s Club. Their project was the establishment in 1885 of The Boston Sand Garden, which is considered by many historians to be the first actual playground in the United States. Borrowing the idea from the public parks of Berlin, Germany, the New England Woman’s Club gave the city’s children huge piles of sand in which to play.

Later, strides to promote playgrounds in Boston were made by Joseph Lee, who helped create a model playground that included an area for small children, a boys’ section, a sports field, and individual sand gardens. Other playgrounds sprang up elsewhere. Jacob Riis initiated the movement for publicly sponsored playgrounds in New York City, and Philadelphia moved ahead with full playground programs in the summer. Unfortunately, most of these playgrounds were segregated, and those for African American children were “less numerous, smaller, poorer in equipment and less adequately supervised than playgrounds for white children in the same city” (McGuinn, as cited in Johnson, 1930, p. 91).

There were other initiatives using leisure as a problem solver at this time as well. Agencies serving youth organized to help the cause. For example, Sir Robert Baden-Powell of Great Britain started the Boy Scout movement in 1907, and 6,000 girls registered too. As he “could not have girls traipsing about over the country after his Boy Scouts,” he got his sister Agnes Baden-Powell to form the Girl Guides program in Britain in 1909 (Schultz & Lawrence, 1958). Their first law was that they must not even speak to a Boy Scout if they saw him in uniform! A few years later, while visiting Britain, Juliette Gordon Low met the Baden-Powells and became fascinated with their organizations.
Box 1.4. What Do You Say?

Tragedy of the Commons

The actual beginnings of the city park in the United States are obscure. Some historians assert the plaza in St. Augustine, set aside in 1565, should be considered the first city park, whereas others refer to the Boston Common, established in 1634, as the first city park. The common was originally a British tradition, and the plaza was a Spanish one. Both had similar uses: People had unlimited access to the commonly held land for whatever they wanted, including grazing their livestock. As cities grew and open space was lost, the common and the plaza became important commonly held recreation resources.

However, the consequences of this idea have been unintended, so claims Garrett Hardin (1965) in his essay, which refers to this as tragedy of the commons. Here is the logic. Imagine a pasture that is fixed in size and accessible to all the livestock owners of a village. Each herdsman naturally wants to maximize his use of the pasture by grazing as many cattle as possible. Therefore, he expands the size of his herd, recognizing the benefits from this will be his alone, whereas any costs for the increased grazing will be shared among all the village members. What each herdsman fails to recognize, though, is that every other herdsman in the village is following the same logic, and the cumulative effect of their independently rational action ultimately destroys the pasture.

Later, in their own essay, Dustin, McAvoy, and Schultz (1982) asked us to imagine this tragedy of the commons another way. Consider an urban resident who wishes to escape the heat, congestion, and noise of the city on a summer weekend. She gathers the family, packs the car, and heads for one of the public beaches. In fact, thousands of other city dwellers are making the same logical decision. So, instead of a cool, quiet, and refreshing leisure experience, they are treated to a beach with traffic jams, noise, and crime—to the ultimate destruction of the recreation resource itself.

1. What is meant by the tragedy of the commons concept?
2. Is Hardin’s logic applicable to recreation settings as Dustin et al. suggest? What other examples can you cite of this?
3. Visit a public recreation area in your community or campus. Can you find traces of the tragedy of the commons there? What are these?

When she returned to her home in Savannah, Georgia, she brought the idea with her. Changing the name to Girl Scouts, Daisy, as her friends knew her, held the first troop meeting in her home on March 12, 1912.

Other efforts to use leisure as a problem solver included the establishment of therapeutic recreation services in state hospitals, the expansion of the national park system, the beginnings of the organized camping movement, the establishment of private athletic clubs, and the offering of college-level professional training for recreation leaders.
As a result of all this, sports, games, music, dance, and enjoying the outdoors became means to create better communities. Ultimately the effort was so sweeping that it involved city, state, and federal governments, as well as private and voluntary hospitals and welfare agencies, all relying more and more on leisure as a tool. People formed organizations, raised funds, held interminable meetings, wrote volumes of handbooks, and conducted numerous training sessions to discover better ways to teach people how to use their leisure productively. This “leisure movement” continues today.

**Today’s Connotations**

By tracing the meanings of leisure in the humanities and through history, we can see the term means many things depending on the place, the time, and the people. So, what are the legacies of these meanings for today? Our contemporary definitions are also a matter of perspective: Individual experiences and cultural biases continue to define leisure in multiple ways. As described in a study by Watkins and Bond (2007), today’s leisure meanings are a “continuum of experiences that reflect high levels of contextual diversity and flexibility” (p. 287).

This means that today, as it has always been, leisure is achievement of the highest ideal, mass spectacle, relaxation, adventure, relief from work, humanism, utilitarian, and a problem-solving tool. It also means sport, tourism, and the arts. It is an experience, but in context; it is a form, but not defined by form; and it takes place in time, but is not defined by time (Kelly & Freysinger, 2004). Therefore, as we now consider the contemporary connotations of leisure, we need to be aware that clear boundaries are not possible.

Yet, when taken altogether, some of the many leisure meanings can be categorized in three ways: free time, nonwork activity, and a special state of mind or spirit (Table 1.1).

**Table 1.1**

Contemporary Themes in Leisure’s Meanings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leisure is …</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Free time—time free from obligations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“To me, leisure is the weekend.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreational activity—nonwork kinds of experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“To me, playing golf and watching TV are leisure.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spirit—a self-actualized attitude about life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“To me, getting the most zest out of the day is leisure.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Leisure as Free Time**

A very common connotation today is that leisure is time available after obligations. That is, leisure is a time with which we can make our own personal choices about
how to spend it. Often referred to as *discretionary time*, leisure as free time divides life into separate spheres, such as work, study, sleep, eating, and leisure. Life, then, is a matter of prioritizing these “boxes of life” within time according to importance. The free time definition of leisure, then, suggests that leisure is leftover time, or spare time, and thus of lower status. Furthermore, leisure defined as free time suggests that its purpose is to fill vacant time.

All this means that leisure is quantifiable and that it is possible to refer to differing amounts of it. For example, we often look forward to weekends and holidays because we will have more free time than usual.

This also means that leisure as free time is comparative. Time–budget studies that contrast population groups demonstrate, for example, that some have more leisure (free time) than others. According to a 2007 study by Ray and Schmitt comparing annual government guaranteed paid vacation and paid holiday days, workers in Austria and Portugal have the most leisure: a total of 35 days a year. This contrasts with France with 30 days, Australia with 27 days, Canada with 18 days, and Japan with 10 days. In the United States, 0 days of guaranteed paid vacation and holidays are offered to workers. Kelly and Freysinger (2004) have also compared free time across demographic groups in North America and found that teens have more free time than do middle-aged adults, single men have more than married men, and single mothers employed outside the home have the least of all.

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**Box 1.5. In Your Own Experience**

**Definition Interviews**

Why not discover the complexity of leisure meanings today for yourself! Here’s one way:

1. Randomly ask at least 20 friends and family members what leisure means to them. Ask them to give you one-word definitions. Record every definition you are given.

2. Next, select for more lengthy interviews two people you don’t know very well and who are different from your friends and family. For example, you might choose someone from another country, a person quite a bit older or younger, or a person of a different race than you. Ask them about leisure in their lives. What do they like best and least about leisure? How do they experience leisure? What does leisure mean to them?

3. Compare the results from both the quick and extensive interviews. In an essay, discuss the multiple meanings of leisure and their context.
Leisure as Recreational Activity

A second definition of leisure today is based on participation in nonwork activities. That is, we define leisure according to the form of our recreational activities. Riding a bike, knitting a scarf, playing a video game, and throwing a Frisbee are leisure. As shown in Table 1.2, and according to many other sources, the overwhelmingly most participated in recreation activity is watching television. As you study the table, are you surprised that there are no active pursuits?

Recreational activity experiences are of great benefit to us. According to Dumazedier (1974), for example, through recreational activities we achieve relaxation, diversion, refreshment, and re-creation of ourselves. Thus, it would follow that only those activities that provide benefits such as these can be considered leisure. Some scholars have pointed to a contradiction in this qualification, however. For example, in considering the purpose of relaxation, can’t we achieve this by sleeping in on Saturday morning, competing in a triathlon, and driving a car to work? Yet, would you consider all these activities to be leisure? There is a related problem in defining leisure as recreational activity. Let’s consider tennis to illustrate. Is tennis leisure when played at the local park and something else when played in a required physical education class or when competing in the professional tennis circuit?

As with the free time definition, leisure defined as recreational activity means it can be counted and compared across different population groups. For example, in Australia participation in sports and physical activities differs according to gender, with women more likely to walk for exercise, attend aerobics and fitness programs, and swim, while men are more likely to cycle, jog, and play golf (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011).

Table 1.2

The Most Popular Recreation Activities for American Adults, 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>% participated in last 12 months</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Watch TV</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dine out</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entertain friends/relatives at home</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read books</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbeque</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go to beach</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baking</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cook for fun</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play cards</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go to bars/night clubs</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play board games</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go to museums</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Leisure as Special Spirit

Defining leisure as time left over after obligations and as recreational activity helps us to understand leisure objectively. That is, we can observe, count, and compare it. But as you can guess from our humanities and history journeys earlier in the chapter, there is more to it than this. Thus, the third way of defining leisure today is as a special attitude, or state of mind.

Although subjective, this third definition asserts, in fact, that time and activities are irrelevant, that only personal feelings count. That is, leisure is a psychological condition by the meaning it holds for us, as our own spirit about living. Almost poetically Pieper (1963) observed, “Leisure … involves the capacity to soar in active celebration, to overstep the boundaries of the workaday world” (p. 78).

Multiple research studies have demonstrated this leisure spirit. For example, study respondents have described leisure as

• achieving fulfillment (Watkins & Bond, 2007),
• positive outlook and happiness (Hull, Steward, & Yi, 1992),
• apprehension and excitement (Lee, Dattilo, & Howard, 1994), and
• a quest for a new spiritual center (Cohen, 1979).

What We Understand About Leisure’s Meanings

Leisure is a complex concept. To understand its contemporary meanings, this chapter explored its definitions from three perspectives: the humanities, the histories of past societies, and the current connotations. After studying this chapter, you should know the following:

• Leisure is contextual. That is, its meaning depends on the place, the time, and the people.
• Literature, art, and music offer interpretations of leisure as integral to the human experience.
• In past societies, leisure has meant many things and has varied in its importance.
• Our contemporary meanings of leisure are derived in part from the legacies of past societies, as well as from the humanities.
• Contemporary themes of leisure's meaning include free time, recreation activity, and a special spirit.

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