

# **Leisure's Anthropology and the Anthropology of Leisure: The Coverage of Anthropology in Leisure Texts and Leisure in Anthropology Texts**

Garry Chick  
The Pennsylvania State University

## **Abstract**

*Introductory textbooks often provide students with much of the information about a subject that they will ever encounter during their educational careers or form part of the foundation of their future studies. Hence, the authors of textbooks are obliged to present information that is both accurate and comprehensive. The purpose of this study is to examine samples of introductory texts in leisure studies and in anthropology in order to evaluate the presentation of anthropological issues in the former and leisure in the latter. The evaluations indicate that leisure studies texts contain numerous errors of fact and interpretation while anthropology texts virtually ignore leisure. Suggestions for how leisure educators may deal with textbook problems are offered.*

*Keywords:* introductory textbooks, anthropology, leisure

## **Biographical Information**

Garry Chick is an Associate Professor in the School of Hotel, Restaurant, and Recreation Management, Pennsylvania State University, 201 Mateer Building, University Park, PA 16802-1307.

## **Introduction**

Textbook authors have a responsibility to present information that is both accurate and representative of the domain of study for which the text is designed. Introductory texts, in particular, commonly serve as a primary source for either the only information on a topic that students will ever encounter during their formal educational careers or as an important foundation for later studies. Hence, it is imperative that the information students receive from their texts is the latest and the most accurate (or, at least, most agreed-upon) possible. Unfortunately, this may not always be the case. Until recently, for example, leisure in small scale, technologically simple societies has either been ignored completely or unintentionally caricatured in sometimes demeaning and patronizing ways in leisure studies texts. Kraus (1994), for example, reprises a more or less standard assessment of the nature of work and leisure in preindustrial societies.

“... the line between work and leisure is not sharply drawn. The orientation of daily life is toward periods of intense effort—a mass hunt, a battle, planting and harvesting a crop—interspersed with periods of relative rest. Throughout, the rhythm of life is influenced by the seasons of the year and is marked by rituals, songs, dances, games, and ceremonies that are closely linked with practical tasks.” (1994, p.25)

This passage suggests several things. First, it hints that we know the difference between work and leisure and those who live or lived in pre-industrial societies do or did not and that the line between work and leisure is, in fact, sharply drawn in industrial societies. The first point is simply incorrect and the latter is certainly disputable. Second, the “rhythms of life” metaphor implies that there is something inhumanly quaint and simple about preindustrial life or that the lives of the inhabitants of modern, industrial or post industrial societies lack a rhythm, whatever that means. Finally, there is the suggestion that our lives in our modern societies are not influenced by the seasons or are not marked by rituals, songs, dances, games and so on. Each of these implications could be disputed. However, it would be wrong to say that only writers from the field of leisure studies have erred with respect to leisure in preliterate societies. Indeed, anthropologists writing only a couple of decades ago held many of the same views and may well be responsible for the errors of their colleagues from other fields.

It is probably safe to say that social psychology has provided the principal theoretical and empirical foundation for leisure studies, though important contributions have also come from sociology, psychology, history, and other fields. It is probably equally safe to say that anthropology has contributed very little to the study of leisure, either theoretically or empirically. But this is not to say that anthropological theory and research have nothing to offer. For example, leisure studies texts, and the field more generally, have always seemed to me to be both narrow in focus and distinctly ethnocentric. The idea that leisure is a Western invention or the perception that so little is known, or worth knowing, about leisure in non Western societies has meant that cross-cultural research on the phenomenon is all but non-existent. But, cross-cultural ethnographic information can contribute to the recognition that leisure is a pan human phenomenon. This is not explicitly acknowledged in perspectives that have a distinctly Western focus, such as social psychology. Further, the “varying formats” should be of great interest to leisure researchers inasmuch as they ultimately circumscribe the phenomenon. It is unlikely that leisure can ever be fully understood without taking into account the great majority of the contexts in which it occurs; that is, in non Western cultures. Hence, the first, and most important, contribution that anthropologists can make to the study of leisure is to describe it as it is experienced in societies other than our own. Though important in its own right, knowledge of cross-cultural aspects of leisure will also provide a backdrop for the study for intra-cultural issues, such as occur in large, heterogeneous societies such as North America, Europe, Latin America, or East Asia.

It is becoming increasingly clear that diversity exists not only between cultures, but within them, and that leisure is a significant part of cultures past and present. Fortu-

nately, authors of recent introductory texts have begun to recognize this and to deal with issues of diversity and multiculturalism in Western society. Several of the most recent texts also discuss leisure among members of preindustrial cultures (e.g., Godbey, 1994; Kraus, 1994, 1997; Edginton, Jordan, DeGraaf, & Edginton, 1995; Kelly, 1996; Russell, 1996; Shivers & deLisle, 1997). Most of these texts offer brief, but relatively useful, glimpses of the nature of leisure in technologically simple, pre-industrial, or preliterate cultures. Unfortunately, most also include long-discarded theories, erroneous "facts," and specious interpretations. This is unfortunate. Students have every right to expect that the books that they are required to read and study are state of the art and comprehend issues that are generally regarded as important in the fields of study covered by the texts. Moreover, leisure studies has something to contribute to anthropology, as well, namely the recognition that leisure is an extremely important part of human life and is worthy of attention. Neither field is well served by the misrepresentation of the subject matter of one by the other nor by the inattention of one to the subject matter of the other.

The purpose of this paper is threefold. First, the presentation of anthropological issues as they appear in leisure studies texts will be examined and assessed. Second, what anthropology has to say about leisure, also as presented in introductory texts, will be evaluated. Finally, some suggestions will be offered regarding how leisure researchers and educators can better use information about cross-cultural aspects of leisure and how anthropologists can be made more aware of the importance of leisure in culture and act accordingly.

### **The Presentation of Anthropological Issues in Leisure Studies Texts**

For this study, I selected seven of the most recent introductory texts in leisure studies. They are cited in the introduction above. I believe that the seven selected comprise nearly the entire population of such books presently or recently in print. I did not have access to the 3rd and most recent edition of Bammel and Burrus-Bammel's text, *Leisure and Human Behavior* (1995). However, the 2nd edition (1992) had no distinct chapter or chapter section devoted to leisure's anthropology though it does contain a few scattered references to preindustrial people and their activities. I assume that the seven texts that I have selected are representative of those in the field of leisure studies. I will discuss each of the texts in terms of how they portray anthropological issues.

Godbey (1994) includes two pages of discussion on "Leisure in Nonindustrial Cultures" in his text. Though this section of his book is brief, it is useful. Godbey wisely avoids doctrinaire and/or traditional, but inaccurate, information and he cites relatively up to date anthropological sources for the most part. While the most recent work on time use in food collecting societies challenges some of the sources that Godbey cites and brings into question some of his conclusions that are based on those sources, his general treatment of leisure in technologically simple societies is worthwhile and will not lead students astray.

Kraus has published two recent leisure studies texts. The older one (1994) is designed for upper level undergraduates and beginning graduate students. Although the author claims that it offers a “multicultural” approach, it contains no information on cross-cultural or anthropological approaches to leisure. In his chapter, “Racial and Ethnic Influences on Leisure,” Kraus provides brief, but useful, discussions of the leisure of modern Native Americans, Hispanic Americans, African Americans, and Asian Americans. Kraus’s (1997) newer text, designed for beginning undergraduates, has a brief (2 1/2 pages) section subtitled, “The Play of Early Societies,” wherein he discusses “tribal” attitudes toward work and leisure, the origin of games and sports, and various functions of play in technologically simple societies. I have two concerns with this chapter. First, I question the use of the term “play” in the chapter title. I wonder whether the use of “play,” rather than “leisure,” is an intimation that people in “tribal” cultures are somehow childlike (a common 19<sup>th</sup> century belief). I do not know that Kraus meant this at all but I suspect that it is a question that many anthropologists would raise. However, my primary concern with Kraus’s (1997) treatment of leisure in technologically simple societies is that he makes those societies and their members appear unnecessarily exotic. For example, he indicates that:

In such tribal societies, work tends to be varied and creative, rather than being a narrow, specialized task demanding a sharply defined skill, as in modern industry. Work is often accompanied by ritual that is regarded as essential to the success of the planting or harvesting or to the building or hunting expedition. The ritual may involve prayer, sacrifice, dance, or feasting, which thus becomes part of the world of work. (1997, p. 160)

First, is it difficult to understand what Kraus means by work being “varied and creative.” My work as a machinist when I was in graduate school was far more varied and creative than the work of the small farmers in the Mexican village where I did my dissertation field research (see e.g., Chick, 1980; 1991; Chick & Roberts, 1987; Chick & Hood, 1996; Roberts & Chick, 1987). Is a hunter’s ability to track and kill an antelope a less “sharply defined skill” than the ability to work on an assembly line or drive a truck? Is the knowledge of the food or medicinal values of sometimes hundreds of plants in one’s environment not a “sharply defined skill?” Second, ritual is still often part of work in modern society. Many of us wear ritual clothing to work (e.g., uniforms or suits and ties for men, heels and hose for women), for example. We also have holiday rituals, such as office parties, that many would like to avoid but cannot because attendance is part of the job. Prayer, gift-giving, dance, and feasting are often part of status changes at work, including promotions, job changes, and retirements. So, what Kraus makes appear exotic in other cultures may not be so different from what we also do in our own “modern” society.

Kraus’s discussion of non Western games and sports both makes them appear exotic and contains errors of fact. His description of tlachtli, the Mesoamerican rubber ball game, seems to be based on what might best be described as urban legend. Tlachtli is a Nahuatl (Aztec) word that refers to the ball court, though it is now commonly used to

indicate the game, as well. Technically, the game was known as ullamalitzli or ollamalitzli. As a Nahuatl word, tlachtli is native to the central highlands of Mexico, not in Central America, as Kraus indicates. In southern Mexico and Central America, the Mayan orbit of Mesoamerica, the game was referred to by various names, depending on the local language. Kraus (1997, p. 161) indicates that ball "courts were about 200 feet long and 30 feet wide." In fact, courts varied greatly in size. Many were quite small while the largest, the court at Chichén Itzá in the Yucatán, is 150 meters (nearly 500 feet) long. On average, ball courts in the Mayan area measured some 25 meters long and 7 to 8 meters wide (Scarborough, 1991) while Aztec tlachtli were apparently somewhat larger, being about 36 meters long and 7.2 meters wide (Motolinía, 1970). This makes the average court considerably shorter, but about the width that Kraus indicates. There is also archaeological evidence for small, flat, dirt courts of varying size that were probably used recreationally. Kraus indicates that scoring was accomplished by driving the ball through one of the stone rings that were "fixed about halfway up the wall at either end." Information such as this is likely to have led to the often-repeated tale that the Mesoamerican rubber ball game was the precursor of basketball. In fact, the stone rings appear at some, but far from all, of the courts and are mounted not at the ends, but in the middle of the long walls (sides) of the courts. The holes in the rings were very little larger than the size of the balls used in play so hitting a ball through a ring must have been a fairly rare occurrence. In addition, the rings were mounted such that the "cylinder" created by their openings was horizontal, rather than vertical as in basketball. Scoring more likely took place when the ball was directed into an opponent's end zone. Driving a ball through a ring, when one existed, apparently resulted in immediate victory (Chick, 1996). Though the inaccuracies regarding the Mesoamerican rubber ball game are forgivable, Kraus's apparent effort to make the recreation of past, or present but technologically simple, societies seem romantic and alien is more difficult to excuse. Even though most of the information that he presents is accurate, the form of the presentation may lead students to accept erroneous stereotypes.

Edginton et al. (1995) devote about four pages in their text to pre-modern leisure. First they propose that history can be divided into four periods: the pre-literate era, the agricultural era, the industrial era, and the technological or information era. While this scheme has some heuristic value and, for the undergraduate students for whom the text is intended, it provides a useful simplification, the implication is that these eras are real and genuinely distinct. However, agriculture was developed long before any known system of writing. Many early agricultural societies were preliterate, and a few still are. And, even in those early agricultural societies that had indigenous forms of writing, the vast majority of the population was unable to read. A better sequence might be preagricultural, agricultural, industrial, and information, although no progression should be regarded as invariant.

Further, for Edginton et al. (1995), evolution evidently implies progress (for an extensive and entertaining refutation of the "evolution as progress" perspective, see Gould [1997]). That is, they describe "preliterate societies" as ones in which "survival was the main concern of life" (p. 56). An apparent implication is that survival is not a main

concern of life in modern society. While we probably spend relatively little time dwelling on survival in life and death terms, we would no more deliberately step in front of a speeding bus than an ancient inhabitant of the African plains would have strolled through a pride of lions. The origin of this caricature is undoubtedly Thomas Hobbes' well-known description of humanity in a "state of nature" as "a time of warre, where every man is enemy to every man." This passage ends with, "and which is worst of all, continual feare, and danger of violent death; And the life of man, solitary, poore, nasty, brutish, and short" (1881, pp. 94-96, orig. 1651). Indeed, many famous anthropologists and archeologists accepted this description of precivilized life well into the middle of the 20th century. British archeologist V. Gordon Childe remarked in 1944 that "in early and primitive societies the quest for food was and is the most absorbing preoccupation for all members of the group. The enlargement of the food-supply was therefore presumably the indispensable condition for human progress" (p. 12). However, it is now well known that food collectors, both present and past, could easily increase their own food supplies simply by expending more effort. But they apparently choose not to do so.

In his discussion of leisure in preliterate societies, Kelly (1996), like Kraus (1997), contrasts such societies with modern industrial societies in terms of the segmentation and differentiation among activities in daily life. He indicates, first, that, in simpler societies, "the separation of work and leisure that is characteristic of industrial societies is almost totally lacking" and that "In a simple society, life appears to flow without clear boundaries among such activities as production of goods, family life, child rearing, music and dance, affective expression of relationships, and maintenance of social order" (Kelly, 1996, p. 120). In support of this position, Kelly cites the research conducted by Margaret Mead in Samoa (Mead, 1928) wherein she gave an impression of "tidal ebb and flow as opposed to separated segments of life" (Kelly, 1996, p. 120). According to Kelly, Mead found that expectations for males and females are related to their age and capabilities. Some do hard work such as fishing all day in the hot sun. Special occasions of festivity and community celebrate some aspects of life together. But time is a matter of the rhythm of climate, harvest, and mythology rather than the clock and calendar. (1996, p 121)

This observation is surely correct. And, though it is true that the clock is firmly part of our culture and not of those where it does or did not exist, the greater part of what Kelly says here is as applicable to modern societies as to simple ones. Rightly or wrongly, we have different gender and age roles. We differentiate roles on the basis of ability. And we have festivals and community celebrations. Further, the climate has a great effect on the lives of people everywhere, with respect to both work and leisure, regardless of whether they are part of simple or complex societies. While the harvest itself may not have much direct impact on most citizens in modern societies, its indirect effects are substantial. The types of food available and food prices, for example, depend on harvests. Moreover, our work is often influenced by the seasons in modern societies and our sports, television programs, books, movies, vacations, and many other aspects of our leisure are seasonal to an even greater extent. Finally, modern societies also are heavily

influenced by mythology, though we tend to regard our myths as true (and therefore not as myths at all), whether they are religious in origin or myths of science and technology.

Kelly's (1996, p. 122) second principal point is that "role taking expected of each sex has a dramatic effect on leisure." This statement is undoubtedly true and, in support, Kelly again cites Margaret Mead. This time, he refers to her 1968 (orig. 1935) publication, *Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies*, wherein she described male and female roles in three New Guinea cultures. Mead asserted that both males and females among the Arapesh were expected to be nurturant, peaceful, and cooperative while Mundugumor males and females both were aggressive, warlike, and competitive. Finally, she claimed that Tchambuli females occupy what Americans would have regarded as traditional male roles; that is, they held the principal economic positions, were domineering, and were sexually aggressive. Tchambuli males, on the other hand, were said to be passive and spent their time occupied with art, music, and costuming. Hence, male and female roles in each of these societies contrasted with stereotypic male and female roles in the United States.

What Kelly does not mention is that Mead's Samoan and New Guinea studies have both come under heavy assault in recent years as reflective not of fact, but of her social constructionist ideology, including the beliefs that human behavior is infinitely malleable and that biology has nothing whatsoever to do with it. But, there is good reason to wonder whether Mead saw what she believed, rather than believed what she saw. Derek Freeman (1983), an Australian anthropologist who conducted field research in Samoa for many years (as opposed to Mead's eight months) disputed many of her "findings." For example, Mead claimed that premarital adolescent sexual relationships were common and sexual aggression, in the form of rape, was unknown. But, according to Professor Albert Wendt, a Samoan himself, Samoans place "a great priority on female virginity" and "forbid premarital and extramarital sex and promiscuity" (Wendt, 1983, p. 14). Police records for the time that Mead worked in Samoa showed that rape was a significant problem (Freeman, 1983).

Mead's work in New Guinea has been similarly challenged. Some readers immediately questioned her extraordinary luck in finding three societies with such diverse gender roles located within 100 miles of each other. In the preface to the 1950 edition of *Sex and Temperament* Mead (1950, p. iii) herself noted that "many readers felt that her analysis was too pretty" and that "I must have found what I was looking for." Nevertheless, she maintained that her reports were objective. However, Deborah Gewertz (1981) showed that Mead failed to consider certain historical events in her study of the Tchambuli (or Chambri, as Gewertz found that they preferred to be called). Mead evidently saw Chambri men engaged in the reconstruction of their villages, including their ceremonial accouterments, which had been destroyed during a war and took it to mean that men stayed at home, engaged in art, music, and ceremony, and did little else. While females did have major roles in the Chambri economy, since they controlled the means of production (fishing and trading fish for other foodstuff), Gewertz found that Chambri men controlled the relations of production. Lines of authority were held by males and rein-

forced by violence. The relationships between Chambri men and women did not reflect the female dominance and male passivity for which that society has become legend. Thus, while Kelly's (1996) points have merit, the effort to support them with references to the work of Margaret Mead may not.

Russell (1996) devotes an entire chapter of her text to the anthropology of leisure. This chapter is generally quite good though it contains several inaccuracies. For example, Russell (1996, p. 143) indicates that humans developed from the ramapithecines of some 15 to 8 million years ago. In fact, paleontologists dismissed this possibility by the early 1980s and have for many years regarded the ramapithecus to be on the line leading to the modern orangutan (Howels, 1993; see esp. Tattersall, 1995, pp. 119-126). Russell evidently based her discussion of the ramapithecines on a exposition by Shivers (1981) that was out of date even when first published (Chick, 1986b).

Russell's treatment is also outdated with respect to another anthropological debate, that of whether hunter-gatherers had or have more abundant free time than agriculturalists (this is true of Godbey's [1994] discussion, as well). She cites a 1988 reprint of a 1968 paper by Marshall Sahlins that was published soon after evidence from long term research among the !Kung San and other inhabitants of the Kalahari Desert in southwest Africa suggested that they have ample free time after the food quest is satisfied. However, Hill, Kaplan, Hawkes, and Hurtado (1985) rejected Sahlins' notion of "primitive affluence," reporting that, among the food collecting Aché of the upper Amazon basin, adults spend long hours each day on subsistence tasks. Further, they noted that when time spent processing food and miscellaneous work, such as tool construction and repair, is taken into account, the amount of time spent in the food quest by most hunter-gatherers increases markedly. They also indicated that there is considerable variation in the amount of time spent on food acquisition by different groups that are technologically equivalent or by the same group depending on conditions such as season. In my own cross-cultural work (Chick, 1993), I found little evidence for a systematic difference in the amount of time spent working by members of technologically simple hunting and gathering societies, horticultural societies, agricultural societies, or modern industrial societies. Instead, there was great variation among groups with relatively similar technologies, but no clear trend toward either increasing or decreasing free time among those with differing technologies.

Shivers and deLisle (1997) devote the first chapter of their text to "The Dawn of Leisure." This discussion is largely derived from Shivers' (1981) earlier work, a book riddled with errors of fact, interpretation, and logic (Chick, 1986b). For starters, Shivers and deLisle (1997, p. v) state that "It is our position that leisure can be defined only as free time. Other scholars sometimes embellish that definition, but in our opinion, no other definition is logical." But, unless Shivers and deLisle are referring to operational definitions, logic has little to do with how leisure or any other word is defined. Definitions of words are the result of tradition and usage, not logic. Leisure is sometimes operationally defined as free time by researchers for particular studies, of course, and it is true that anthropologists almost always mean free time when they refer to leisure. But,



few leisure scholars now define leisure solely as free time (see, e.g., the definitions given in the other introductory texts mentioned in this paper). That “The most commonly accepted definition of leisure is free or unobligated time” (Shivers & deLisle, 1997, p. 191) may be true of the general public, and even most social scientists, but it is not true for leisure scholars.

Nevertheless, armed with their definition of leisure as free time, Shivers and deLisle (1997, p. 5) attempt to demonstrate that “Most cultural advances have been made in ages when people have had and used leisure positively.” First, they try to determine when leisure first appeared. They state:

Leisure became integral to culture when the human brain conceived the difference between survival activities and activities that developed without compulsion. In the beginning there was only survival, the struggle to stay alive. The nascent human beings of 5 million years ago must have learned to adapt to their environment. ... Of course these protohumans could think, but that was no evidence of leisure. It was probably not until they had evolved to a point where they better understood their habitat and achieved some degree of safety that they could relax their constant vigil. At that point, whenever it was, leisure was created. (p. 5)

Does this statement then mean that early hominids had no free time? Abundant evidence refutes this Hobbesian notion. Present day primates, such as baboons or chimpanzees, simply do not live in constant vigilance and fear for their lives. Nor are they constantly engaged in desperate foraging for food. Instead, most primates, in most environments, have ample free time. Juveniles engage in extensive play episodes and adults spend significant amounts of time in mutual grooming, an apparently leisure-like activity. Adults even play on occasion with juveniles (see, e.g., Fagen, 1981). And all this takes place even though there are still predators about. Why should have the situation been different 5 million, 500 thousand, or 50 thousand years ago? Do chimpanzees have leisure? If leisure is defined solely as free time—as Shivers and deLisle demand—then chimpanzees, baboons, and virtually all animals, for that matter, have abundant leisure. Otherwise, it is necessary to lard the definition of leisure with “extraneous values” (Shivers & deLisle, 1997, p. v), such as being human, having the ability to differentiate “survival activities and activities that developed without compulsion” (p. 5), and so on, something that Shivers and deLisle clearly reject.

In addition to their dubious reasoning, Shivers and deLisle present muddled versions of both biological and cultural evolution. Animals do not “learn to adapt” to their environments, though the ability to learn may well be an adaptation. Adaptations come about through natural selection. In addition, with respect to early hominids, they write that “over the millennia, changes in habitat, sexual reproduction, and the need for forage for meat protein may have caused them to begin the tricky business of learning to walk upright about 3.75 million years ago” (Shivers & deLisle, 1997, p. 5). Again, upright walking is an evolved capability, not one that is learned like a circus bear. Second, what are the changes in “sexual reproduction” to which they refer? Though individual species

of plants and animals have their idiosyncrasies, the principles of sexual reproduction are pretty much the same wherever it appears. Third, what is the value of upright locomotion when foraging for meat? Other than humans, every mammalian predator is quadrupedal, clearly a better system if speed and agility are important. Later, Shivers and deLisle (1997) state that: "The hominid brain, unlike the brains of infrahuman species, had the potential for growth and reorganization that made habilis and its descendants capable of planning for the future" (p. 6). First, how do they know that habilis was capable of planning for the future? If they deduced this from the apparent fact that habilis produced tools, then chimpanzee brains must be capable of planning for the future as they (chimps) also make simple tools. Second, hominid brains apparently evolved from earlier, non hominid, brains. When in the evolutionary process did brains with no potential for growth and reorganization suddenly become brains with such potential? Indeed, what is the exact nature of this "potential," some sort of anthropocentric élan vital?

Other claims made in this chapter by Shivers and deLisle simply contradict common anthropological knowledge (and literature). For example, they state that "modern hunter-gatherers, usually found in tropical climates, have merely to stretch out their hands to obtain food in abundance. Unlike their ancestors, they do not have to expend tremendous effort to survive" (Shivers and deLisle, 1997, p. 6). This claim is utterly and absolutely incorrect. In fact, modern hunter-gatherers (and there are presently still about 250,000 of them world-wide) typically occupy very marginal environments (where they have often been forced by more powerful agricultural neighbors). These environments include the sub arctic (e.g., the Inuit), the Australian Outback (e.g., native Australians such as the Arunta), and the Kalahari Desert of southwest Africa (e.g., the !Kung San). Even when hunter-gatherers do live in tropical rain forests (e.g., the Mbuti of the Ituri Forest of central Africa or the Aché of the upper Amazon River area in Paraguay), it is utter nonsense to suggest that they can "stretch out their hands" for "food in abundance." In fact, tropical rain forests are usually very resource-poor, especially in terms of animal protein. Such forests are largely composed of inedible (for humans) woody and leafy vegetation while ants, termites, and other small invertebrates that can eat wood or leaves compose upwards of 90 percent of animal biomass. Large vertebrates are relatively rare (Bodley, 1997, p. 62). Indeed, Bailey et al. (1989) claimed that natural food resources that can be exploited by humans are so rare in rain forests that full-time foragers (as hunter-gatherers are now often called) cannot exist in such environments unless they have access either to aquatic resources or to garden products obtained from horticultural neighbors. Moreover, the ease with which foragers acquire food varies greatly, depending on the environment that they inhabit. Rasmussen (1931), for example, reported that the Netsilik, who lived in a barren region northwest of Hudson Bay in northern Canada, were constantly on the search for food and, hence, had little free time. He found that about 10 percent of Netsilik deaths were due to starvation. Similarly, Balikci (1968) noted that food acquisition in the extreme environment of the Netsilik was arduous and stressful. On the other hand, Lee (1968) found that the !Kung were well fed, worked relatively short hours to acquire food (though this has been disputed as a general condition of foragers by Hill et al. [1985] and others, as noted above), and were quite healthy,

despite the fact that they lived in a desert. Approximately 10 percent of his sample was sixty years of age or older, a figure that approximates the situation in industrialized countries (Lee, 1968, p. 36).

The portrayals of hunter-gatherers, prehistoric humans, and biological and cultural evolution in this sample of leisure studies texts range from the cartoonish (i.e., Shivers and deLisle, 1997) through those that are useful, earnest, and well-meaning, but which sometimes reflect Western ethnocentric, especially progressivist, biases (i.e., Kraus, 1997; Edginton et al., 1996; Russell, 1996), to those that are generally accurate (Godbey [1994]; Kelly [1996]), though possibly at the expense of detailed coverage. However, and though it should not be used as an excuse, the authors of these texts did not get much help from anthropologists.

### **The Anthropology of Leisure as Presented in Anthropology Textbooks**

There are many more introductory texts in the field of anthropology than there are in leisure studies. To determine how leisure is treated in anthropology texts, I examined eleven that have been published since 1994. This sample was not random, as would be most desirable, but consisted of complimentary copies loaned to me by two members of the Department of Anthropology faculty at the University of Illinois. Despite not constituting a random sample, these books cover similar material and appeared to be quite representative of introductory texts in the field.

The most striking thing about the treatment of leisure in introductory anthropology textbooks is its nonexistence; apparently leisure is not considered important enough to even mention, for the most part. Of the eleven texts, "leisure" is considered in only two and, in both of these (Bates, 1996; Bodley, 1997), the discussion deals only with the notion of "primitive affluence." This is the idea that members of hunter-gatherer societies have more free time than members of modern, industrial societies (see Sahlins, 1972; Chick, 1986a; 1993; 1994; 1995, for review and an empirical assessment of the primitive affluence hypothesis). Otherwise, leisure as a concept is all but absent from introductory anthropology textbooks. But, if leisure is all but absent, "recreation" is completely so—the term does not appear in any of the eleven texts. Play is disregarded nearly to the same extent as recreation; it is indexed in only one text (Womack, 1997), though the author does give it eight pages of coverage. Finally, with respect to the more general rubric of expressive culture, three of the texts (Haviland, 1996; Howard, 1996; Rosman & Rubel, 1995) have chapters that deal with the arts, which may include painting, sculpture, music, dance, textiles, and verbal arts (i.e., typically storytelling, myths, legends, and folktales). One of these texts (Rosman & Rubel, 1995) has a separate chapter on myth, legend, and folktales while several of the others include these topics in chapters on religion. Two of the texts (Hicks & Gwynne, 1996; Womack, 1997) have chapters on expressive culture but neither mentions leisure. Six of the texts (Bates, 1996; Robbins, 1997; Bodley, 1997; Smith & Young, 1998; Kottak, 1997; Scupin, 1995) lack chapters on any aspect of expressive culture.

These texts also illustrate a distinctive feature of anthropological coverage of expressive culture. Expressive cultural phenomena can be roughly divided into the arts, which receive some coverage in this sample of texts, and entertainment, which gets virtually none. Leisure, for the most part, would fall into the latter category. The lack of coverage of leisure, recreation, and play displayed is distressing, but not surprising. Chick and Donlon (1992) demonstrated that there is a long-term trend in both American anthropology textbooks and in the flagship journal of the American Anthropological Association, the *Journal of Anthropology*, toward diminished coverage of expressive culture since the end of the last century. This is especially true of leisure activities such as play, games, and sport. As an additional indicator, in the fall of 1997, the American Anthropological Association surveyed members in order to determine their specialties so that a database could be created. Members were instructed to circle up to eight of the 295 specialties listed (an "Other" option was also provided). The available specialty options included aesthetics, art, art markets, craft production, dance, music, fairs and festivals, folklore, literature, music, myth, narrative, ornament, performance, poetics, sculpture, sports, theatre, and tourism, but not leisure, recreation, or play. Even expressive culture was excluded. Leisure, recreation, and play were not excluded because of either being too specific or not specific enough, as such highly specific categories as traditional medicine, educational linguistics, and ceramics were included, along with very general categories such as visual anthropology, museum history, and cultural anthropology.

The foregoing analysis indicates that there is an egregious lack of anthropological attention to leisure, recreation, and play, at least as evidenced by introductory texts. Leisure researchers can justifiably ask how a discipline that has traditionally touted itself as a holistic science of humanity can ignore such significant aspects of human life and culture.

### Summary and Conclusions

Evidence from introductory leisure studies textbooks indicates that there is growing interest in anthropological approaches to the study of leisure. Regrettably, the number of errors of fact and interpretation in the texts appears to vary more or less directly with the amount of coverage given to the topic. Astonishingly, none of the authors of the leisure texts referenced any recent introductory anthropology texts. Though the anthropology texts I examined would not have helped much with respect to the anthropology of leisure, the leisure text authors could have avoided other egregious errors by consulting one or a couple of them. Perhaps they did not look to introductory anthropology texts inasmuch as they recognized that such texts offer very little about the leisure of members of other cultures.

Clearly, some sort of articulation between leisure researchers and anthropologists is needed. Further, as leisure researchers and writers become more involved with issues of multiculturalism and the cross-cultural understanding of leisure, they must neither try to reinvent the wheel nor rely on Tarzan movie ethnography. Information on the relationship between leisure and culture is available but it must be located in up-to-date primary sources, not through continually citing either outdated references or themselves

(Kelly, 1998). Leisure authors must be careful to determine if multiple, and possibly conflicting, points of view exist before accepting one or another as correct and worthy of being passed along to students.

For their part, anthropologists have been serenely uninterested in leisure and there is evidence that this lack of interest is deepening, not abating (Chick & Donlon, 1992). While it will be hard to displace traditional anthropological concerns, such as kinship, the family and household, religion, political organization, or subsistence, the claim that leisure plays a meaningful part in each of these—as well as many other—universal aspects of human life seems undeniable. To some extent, the anthropological disinterest in leisure is simply due to a difference in terminology. The word “leisure,” as I have argued above and elsewhere (Chick, 1985b; 1994; 1998), refers to a Western cultural concept, though the lack of the word does not prevent others from experiencing the phenomenon. Rather than “leisure,” anthropologists appear to be more comfortable with the term “expressive culture.” Though expressive culture has some of the definitional vagaries that plague leisure, it does not seem to reflect a Western cultural bias to the extent that leisure does. However, even expressive culture is relegated to a relatively minor role in anthropological discourse and, when it is discussed, the arts, rather than entertainment, are typically emphasized.

One solution to the problem of anthropological disinterest in leisure is for leisure researchers themselves to use extant cross-cultural data and to demonstrate how the phenomenon articulates with other aspects of culture. Elsewhere (Chick, 1998), I have suggested how the process might begin with respect to four issues; namely, the ethnography of leisure, the cross-cultural validity of the concept of leisure, leisure and adaptation, and leisure and the evolution of culture. But these are my particular interests and others should feel free to pursue research on the relationships of leisure to any of the aspects of culture. Introductory texts in cultural anthropology commonly have chapters that deal with language, subsistence, economics, sex and sexuality, family, kinship, descent, marriage and the family, politics, and religion and belief systems. The interaction of each of these with leisure offers fertile ground for both cross-cultural and intracultural research.

In the meantime, what can leisure educators do to insure that erroneous information is not transmitted to students via texts? First, it is important to realize that our knowledge of leisure, culture, and virtually everything else is not static, but is constantly being altered and augmented. It is wise to be suspicious when text authors fail to cite recent literature, especially when they are not themselves experts on the topic at hand (i.e., as when leisure educators discuss anthropological issues). Similarly, there is reason for concern when authors ignore primary (e.g., anthropological) sources but either cite only themselves or other authors from their field when they are addressing topics from other fields. The failure to utilize primary sources is an almost certain path to the perpetuation of errors. It is particularly sad that nearly all of the errors of fact and interpretation found in the sample of leisure texts used in this study could have been avoided had the authors simply consulted one or two recent introductory anthropology texts.

Every campus that has a department of recreation or leisure studies probably also has a department of anthropology or, at least, resident anthropologists. It is certainly reasonable for leisure educators to consult with peers in other departments over issues raised in textbooks. Moreover, what is true for text presentations of anthropological facts and issues may well also be true for presentations of facts and issues from psychology, sociology, history, economics, and other fields. I have not discussed how leisure studies texts present information from these fields because I lack the expertise to do so. Text authors, however, are implicitly making the claim that they have the requisite expertise to discuss the topics covered in their books. With respect to anthropological concerns, at least, the results of this study suggest that such claims are not universally valid. Whether they are valid for other disciplinary areas is now a question that should be addressed.

The image of recreation and leisure studies as a field of scholarly inquiry is not enhanced by the presence of textbook errors that even an undergraduate anthropology major would spot quickly and easily. Perhaps this is true of textbook expositions related to other disciplines, as well. But leisure educators can turn weaknesses into strengths by pointing out controversies, theoretical disputes, "facts" that have been revised, and so on, in their courses. To do so, however, they must shoulder the responsibility for informing themselves about the topics covered in their courses, including what is contained in the texts that they use.

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