

*“The Puritan hated bearbaiting, not because it gave pain to the bear;
but because it gave pleasure to the spectators.”¹*
-Thomas Babington Macaulay, *The History of England*

Introduction

Happiness and recreation have been intertwined since time immemorial, however, their relationship has fluctuated over time. By examining the history of this relationship, we can yield understandings into how human action, in response to historical events, has slowly changed activities associated happiness in unintended ways. This paper will address English leisure with a focus on how popular recreation changed in dramatic ways in a relatively short amount of time.² A dearth of primary sources from the 18th and 19th century including religious tracts, diaries, letters, legal statues, poetry, newspaper articles, and more offers a glimpse into a time where activities that were associated with happiness such as recreation, leisure, and festivals were undergoing profound changes. I will offer a theory as to how and why these activities were transformed by using the linguistic framework developed by the ancient Greeks to qualify happiness using the terms: eudemonic and hedonic.

Secondary sources such as Peter Stearns *Happiness in World History* constitutes a superb framework to understanding the topic of happiness in world history and was particularly useful for his definition of the “Happiness Revolution.”³ Robert W. Malcomson’s *Popular Recreations in English Society: 1700-1850* was a crucial companion defining the scope and context of this particular historical period.⁴ This paper adds to the conversation by identifying how popular recreation in the 18th century England transformed into what I term ‘proper recreation’ and how this change was precipitated by two drivers. First, Post Reformation groups such as the Puritans and early Evangelicals worked to weaken bonds between the church as facilitators of feast days and argued that most popular recreation was hedonic in nature. In an era known for its criticism of well-established traditions, celebrations such as feast days, holy days, festivals, and wakes became increasingly secularized as responsibility for them shifted from the Catholic church to the gentry. By removing the church as mediator of responsibility the view of popular recreation as associated with sinful behavior accelerated. This trend, while slow at first, quickened during industrialization as the model of wage work became more widespread. Secondly, national policies encouraged by industrialization in England, such as Enclosure and rural policing, along with new understandings of time-discipline hastened the need to change recreation to make it more orderly. The shift from recreation being an active event to a passive event and the commodification of sports were two outcomes of these measures. Taken together, these changes to recreation trace a change from popular recreation to proper recreation. A change which decreased happiness.

¹ Thomas Babington Macaulay Macaulay, “The History of England, from the Accession of James II — Volume 1,” <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/1468/1468-h/1468-h.htm>, accessed April 19, 2024, <https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/1468/pg1468-images.html>.

² Relative in terms of history.

³ Peter N. Stearns, *Happiness in World History*, Themes in World History (New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2021).

⁴ Robert W. Malcomson, *Popular Recreations in English Society, 1700–1850*. (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1973).

Happiness: From Epicurus to Puritans

While ancient Greek philosophers would not use the term happiness in the same way that a modern speaker would, their categorization of two words, hedonic and eudemonic are useful in qualifying aspects of happiness. Defining these terms in *Happiness in World History*, Stearns notes “the hedonic argument sees happiness simply as maximization of pleasure and greatest possible avoidance of pain” whereas the “eudemonic approaches, in contrast, emphasize a wider definition of what is good for a person [...] like positive relationships with others or virtuous activity.”⁵ The eudemonic approach, articulated originally by Aristotle stresses a sense of meaning and unity in life aimed at the goal of happiness.⁶ Whereas the Hedonic approach is associated with Epicurus who saw happiness as “the highest and only good [as] pleasure and, at the same time, the absence of pain and anxieties.”⁷ During the cultural and religious upheaval from the Reformation England experienced a change in how these terms were commonly understood.

This shift in understanding in turn influenced how feast days and holy days were viewed by outspoken protestant preachers and other moralists. Before the Reformation, Catholics oversaw feasts and holy days through a eudemonic lens, with the ultimate goal and intrinsic meaning ordered towards God through the application of the sacraments. Festivals and holy days were interworked with common life:

Rituals were interwoven with the rhythms of the agricultural year. After the extended festivities of Christmas were over the serious business began of ploughing fields ready for planting, though this too had celebratory aspects. On ‘Plough Monday’, immediately following Epiphany, ploughs were festively dragged through village streets. They were often blessed in church, where special plough lights were maintained before the rood or holy sacrament.⁸

Operating in a largely agricultural society, outside of major port cities and London, the intermingling of the sacraments with festivals was anchored on saintly feast days as much as seasonal crop cycles. The sacraments were the backbone at “the feast day and Sunday high masses [which were] similar in most respects, though the holiday processions were sometimes grander than on Sundays and the crowds of people in the minster during high mass were largest on the major feast days. The crucial moment in every mass was the consecration, which turned the wafer into the body of Christ.”⁹ The consecration of the Eucharist, through transubstantiation, added a supernatural and mystical element to these celebrations.¹⁰ Following the Reformation, the Anglican liturgy did not continue this tradition of transubstantiation, envisioning instead the

⁵ Stearns, *Happiness in World History*, 14.

⁶ Susan Sauvé Meyer, “Aristotle and the Pursuit of Happiness,” in *Ancient Ethics* (Routledge, 2007), 50-54.

⁷ Neema Parvini, “Moral Philosophy in England During the Time of Shakespeare,” in *Shakespeare’s Moral Compass* (Edinburgh University Press, 2018), 71–138, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.3366/j.ctv7h0w1g.7>, 126.

⁸ Peter Marshall, *Heretics and Believers: A History of the English Reformation* (New Haven, UNITED STATES: Yale University Press, 2017), <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/gmu/detail.action?docID=4849026>, 13.

⁹ Stephen Werronen, “The Minster and Its Parishioners: The Living,” in *Religion, Time and Memorial Culture in Late Medieval Ripon*, NED-New edition (Boydell & Brewer, 2017), 76–111, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7722/j.ctt1pwt4f1.9>, 78.

¹⁰ Stephen Werronen, *Religion, Time and Memorial Culture in Late Medieval Ripon*, 76. Although medieval peasants would see the Eucharist at mass and feast days, they frequently only consumed the Eucharist at Eastertime.

Eucharist as powerful act of remembrance.¹¹ In an examination of the Anglican liturgy *The Book of Common Prayer: A Guide* Charles Hefling found that the Prayer Book of 1662 stated: “the Declaration [...] asserts that Christ’s body and blood are in heaven, not here, and that the bread and wine remain unchanged,” effectively rejecting the doctrine on transubstantiation.¹² Transubstantiation, the mystery of the bread changing form into Christ, was an act of eudemonic value — it conduces to thanksgiving, obedience, but more than that to the “participation in the sacrifice.”¹³ Receiving the Eucharist or seeing the Liturgy of the Eucharist participation in the end goal of salvation. Participation through singing, witnessing the consecration, reciting collects, consuming the Eucharist, processions, fasting, and feasting were active components of a theory of unity in the church where the people come together to worship. This is not to suggest that every participant of these acts felt a deep sense of eudemonic happiness, that is impossible to quantify. Rather, at the very least there was an *occasion* for a meaningful experience that transcended the temporal and physical realm. The rationale of Catholic feast days and holy days offered an opportunity for meaning beyond mere worldly pleasure. The dethroning of the mystical act of transubstantiation which anchored feasts and holy days in the act of the sacrifice left these festivals with a eudemonic vacuum.¹⁴

While feasts, holy days, and wakes were previously infused with eudemonic and hedonic qualities, following the Reformation Puritans began to describe them *only* in hedonic terms. As the Catholic church ceased to function in England, Puritans sought to remove all instances of Catholic tradition from Anglican churches. Puritanism is difficult to define, as John Brown notes in *The English Puritans* that it “was not so much an organized system as a religious temper and a moral force” which could be used as a shorthand, and “in the sixteenth century it was descriptive of the men bent on carrying on the protestant Reformation to a further point.”¹⁵ Stripping away residual Catholic influence in the Anglican church, politicking, and moralizing were among the more popular pursuits of Puritans. Malcomson located the Reformation as a turning point “rejecting so many of the habits and assumptions of the past, stipulated the growth of an outlook which was critical and independent and intensely suspicious of many traditions,” notably, of recreation.¹⁶

Before the Reformation, Catholic thinkers such as Thomas Aquinas showed a propensity towards baptizing Aristotelean logic to theological ends with his work *Summa Theologica*.¹⁷ However, during the Reformation this proclivity use ancient Greeks philosophy in theological arguments was reevaluated. From her book *Moral Philosophy in England during the Time of Shakespeare* Neema Parvini highlights, “Theologically, the Reformation is best understood as a

¹¹ Charles Hefling, “Establishment,” in *The Book of Common Prayer: A Guide*, ed. Charles Hefling (Oxford University Press, 2021), 0, <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190689681.003.0009>. This is true in both the Prayer Book of 1552 and the reformed version in 1662 which lay out the Anglican liturgy practices.

¹² Hefling, *The Book of Common Prayer: A Guide*, Chapter 8.

¹³ “Fathers of the Church on the Eucharist,” *The Real Presence*, accessed April 20, 2024, <https://www.therealpresence.org/eucharst/father/fathers.htm>.

¹⁴ I am arguing about a potential, which I understand is difficult to quantify. But the argument is one of possibility for a sense of eudemonic, not guarantee. The removal for the church from recreation closes a door on that specific possibility. But, I want to be clear, this is not the only avenue to eudemonic happiness.

¹⁵ John Brown, *The English Puritans*, *The Cambridge Manuals of Science and Literature* (Cambridge [England: University Press, 1912), 6.

¹⁶ Malcomson, *Popular Recreations in English Society*, 6.

¹⁷ Aquinas Thomas, *The Summa Theologica*, 2nd ed., *Great Books of the Western World 17* (Chicago: Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 1990).

‘back to basics’ purification of Christian thinking, which, in the view of the Reformers, had become corrupted by endless commentaries and scholastic disputations, and tainted by pagan philosophy...especially that of Aristotle.”¹⁸ An example of how Catholic and early Protestant’s differing attitudes towards Epicureanism can be taken from the letters exchanged between Martin Luther and Erasmus of Rotterdam.

Ole Martin Moen remarks that in the early days of the Reformation, “Martin Luther, in the tradition of the Church Fathers, interpreted Epicurus as advocating surrender to all bodily lusts, and used ‘Epicureanism’ repeatedly as a derogatory term”¹⁹ Martin Luther’s framing of Epicurus and hedonism as centered with “bodily lust” became a common refrain of many early protestants in England, such as the Puritans and later, Evangelicals. The Catholic humanist, Erasmus, responded to Martin Luther’s “misrepresentation of Epicurius’ views.”²⁰ While not absolving Epicurus, Erasmus clarified that it was not, as Luther had believed, total surrender to lust, but rather a balance of pleasure and pain. In *All the Familiar Colloquies of Desiderius Erasmus, of Rotterdam, Concerning Men, Manners, and Things*, Erasmus uses a mock conversation between two characters, Hedonius and Spudaus, to explain this balance, “When hard Drinking throws a Man into a Fever, the Head-ach[sic], the Gripes, Dizzinefs[sic], a bad Name, Decay of Memory, Vomiting, Lofs[sic] of Appetite, and the Palfy; would Epicurus himfelf[sic] think this was a Pleasfure[sic] worth seeking after?”²¹ While Epicurus was not redeemed in Catholic thought as totally as Aristotle was, neither was he completely discarded.²² Contrary to Catholic theologians adoption of Aristotelian ideas, reformers had “little patience with the sort of traditionalism which helped to perpetuate those customs which, in their view, were rooted in a popish and heathenish past.”²³ This included a move away from using the idea of the eudemonic in terms of happiness and a shift to use hedonic, and activities that incurred pleasure, as a shorthand for sinful.

Because many festivals and feast days had historic religious anchoring in the Catholic church, following the Reformation they were vulnerable to criticism. For example, a Puritan minister from Thomas Hall’s *Funebria Florae, The Downfall of the May-Games* wrote: “How perilous it is then to tolerate those prophane pastimes, which open the flood-gates to so much sin and wickedness[...]. I would open this gap to them they should have *Floria* and *Saturnalia*, they should have feast upon feast (as tis in Popery) they should have May-games, and Christmas-revels, with dancing, drinking, whoring, potting, piping, gaming, till they were made dissolute,

¹⁸ Neema Parvini, “The Reformation, Capitalism, and Ethics in England During the 1590s and Early 1600s,” in *Shakespeare’s Moral Compass* (Edinburgh University Press, 2018), 139–78, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.3366/j.ctv7h0w1g.8>, 144.

¹⁹ Ole Martin Moen, “Hedonism Before Bentham,” *Journal of Bentham Studies* 17, no. 1 (2015): 1–19.

²⁰ Moen “Hedonism Before Bentham.”

²¹ Desiderius Erasmus, *All the Familiar Colloquies of Desiderius Erasmus, of Rotterdam, Concerning Men, Manners, and Things, Translated into English*. By N. Bailey, 2nd ed. (London: printed for J.J. and P. Knapton, D. Midwinter and A. Ward, A. Bettesworth and C. Hitch, J Pemberton, J. Osborn and T. Longman, C. Rivington, F. Clay, J. Batley, R. Hett, and T. Hatchett, 1733), <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/CW0119469818/ECCO?sid=primo&xid=69c67237&pg=578>, 558.

²² Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy 1: Hell*, vol. 1, 3 vols., The Penguin Classics (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books, 1949), 128. With exception in Dante’s *Inferno*, where Epicurus and his followers can be found in the sixth circle of hell. But the *Inferno*, is a literary work rather than theological and therefore I lend more weight to Erasmus in this matter.

²³ Malcomson, *Popular Recreations in English Society*, 7.

and fit to receive any superstition and easily drawn to bee[sic] of any, or of no Religion.”²⁴ The “feasts upon feasts” celebrated in the Catholic church were condemned by Puritans who sought to identify them with hedonistic pleasures.

And where you say, that holy dayes (as they are termed) were inuented in old time for pastimes, I thinke you say trueth: For the Pope appointed them (and not God in his worde) and that onely to traine by the people in ignozance and idlenesse, where- by halfe of the yeare and moze, was ouerpasted (by their idle holpdayes) in loytering and vaine pastimes, &c. in restrayning men from their handie labours and occupations. S. Augustine,

Figure. 1 Excerpt from preacher John Northbrooke’s *Treatise*.

John Northbrooke, *A Treatise*, London, UK, 1579, 72 leaves.

<http://mutex.gmu.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/books/spiritus-est-vicarius-christi-terra-treatise/docview/2240940559/se-2>, 12.

In the preacher John Northbrooke’s *Treatise* (fig 1) the rationalization to reduce holy days hinged on their association with the Catholic church, as created by the Pope rather than God, who wanted to “train[sic] up the people in ignorance and idleneffe[sic].”²⁵ The argument against idleness will figure prominently into the section on industrialization. Popular protestant Christian groups in England, having successfully wrest the Catholic church from power unintentionally facilitated the movement of feasts and popular recreation into the hands of the gentry. As explained by British historian E. P. Thompson, “along with the secularization of the calendar goes a secularization of the style and the function of the occasions. If not pagan, then new secular functions were added to old ritual; the publicans, hucksters and entertainers encouraged, with their numerous stalls, the feasts when their customers had uncustomary harvest earnings in their pockets; the village charity and benefit clubs took over the old church ales of Whitsuntide.”²⁶ The secularization of recreation provided opportunities for a shift to early consumerism as the original Christian celebratory meanings were subsumed. The phenomenon secularization of festivals, and the reduction of feast days and holy days were unique to England at the time:

One of the notable features about the recreational life in eighteenth century England is the fact that for the most part the church was only peripherally involved in the traditional festivals of the laboring people. In much of Catholic Europe the Church’s participation in these festivities remained vigorous and of fundamental importance...But in England, where the established Church was largely a senior servant in the machinery of government, much of the religious significance of the periodic festivals had been swept away during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.²⁷

The reduction of church presence and the persistent association of hedonism with popular recreation was not enough to restructure festivals wholesale. The rhythms and traditions of

²⁴ Thomas Hall, *Funebria Florae, The Downfall of May-Games* (London: Henry Mortlock, 1661), <https://search.proquest.com/docview/2248516718?pq-origsite=primo>, 13.

²⁵ Northbrooke, “*Treatise*,” 11.

²⁶ E. P. Thompson, “Patrician Society, Plebeian Culture,” *Journal of Social History* 7, no. 4 (1974): 382–405, 394.

²⁷ Malcomson, *Popular Recreations in English Society*, 74.

England's largely agricultural countryside and the conservative nature of the gentry proved moderately resilient until industrialization began in earnest in the early 19th century. By then the association of hedonism with popular recreation made it vulnerable to change as ideas about order, time, and consumerism in the coming era of wage labor took off.

Active Recreation

At the end of the 18th century, as industrialization was beginning to take shape in the major cities of England, recreation was still enjoyed in most of the rural countryside. Under the paternalist indulgence of the gentry the agrarian English public celebrated numerous festivals and feasts throughout the planting seasons such as May Day and St. Andrews Day. Now that Feast days, revels, and festivals had become the gentry's responsibility they became avenues to exhibit their wealth as patrons: "behind a large number of recreational events was the supporting prestige or largess, often conspicuously displayed, of some prominent figure."²⁸ Recreations and festivals were essential in keeping the largely agricultural local community the cycle of seasonal planting. These aristocratic landowners also used hosting festivals as an opportunity to hire workers, engage in entertainment (notably to gamble), and to socialize which helped to "diminish any feelings of class animosity."²⁹ The Puritan moralizing continued, but the dominant conservative agricultural environment was slow to change. The entwining of purpose and recreation between the gentry and the common folk ensured its continuity, for a time, in the absence of the church.

Popular recreation at these events were numerous: football, cricket, archery, boxing, bearbaiting, Morris dancing, throwing at cocks, mumming, sword dancing, ritual processions, decorating of houses, cudgeling, punting, wrestling, cooking, eating, drinking, to name a few.³⁰ These recreations were largely active components of the event, though some were enjoyed only by men. Women were active in cooking, decorating houses, smock races, singing, mumming, dancing, and, of course, eating and drinking.³¹ Children were also included, on May Day they processed with flowers and at traveling fairs they found "puppet shows, gingerbread stalls, musicians mountebanks" and more to delight their imaginations.³²

Sports, however, were by and large the affairs of men. These sports were momentous and often undisciplined affairs with a highly local flavor.³³ For example, football (also known as camping) had a long and varied history in the region as "folk versions of the game had existed in England since at least the Middle Ages and were popular across the social spectrum."³⁴ The rules of football matches played in one town often differed distinctly from towns only a few

²⁸ Malcomson, *Popular Recreations in English Society*, 57.

²⁹ Michael Flavin, "Gambling in Nineteenth-Century England: Gambling, Leisure and Crockford's Club, 1828–1844," in *Gambling in the Nineteenth-Century English Novel*, "A Leprosy Is O'er the Land" (Liverpool University Press, 2015), 6–64, <https://doi.org/10.2307/jj.4116421.6>, 6.

³⁰ Anne Wohlcke et al., "'Heroick Informers' and London Spies: Religion, Politeness, and Reforming Impulses in Late Seventeenth- and Early Eighteenth-Century London," in *The "Perpetual Fair," Gender, Disorder, and Urban Amusement in Eighteenth-Century London* (Manchester University Press, 2014), 49–77, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt18dzt0f.8>, 50.

³¹ Malcomson, *Popular Recreations in English Society*, 20–31.

³² Malcomson, *Popular Recreations in English Society*, 21.

³³ Stearns, *Happiness in World History*, 80.

³⁴ Kevin D. Tennent and Alex G. Gillett, "Origins and Background: A Brief History of English Football and the FIFA World Cup," in *Foundations of Managing Sporting Events* (Routledge, 2016).

kilometers away. Many of these sporting events, being unstructured and without national rules, allowed for an unspecified number of players. Football could encourage the gathering of hundreds of men to participate. One dispatch from *The Times* on Shrove Tuesday in 1840 reported that historically hundreds would play football “through the most public thoroughfares, the shops and houses of which were customarily closed, and the windows barricaded with hurdles, to prevent their being broken.”³⁵ Through the turn of the century many sports did not have enclosed fields of play, often taking place across and through the parish. Overzealous players could cause damage to buildings and sometimes resulted in violence towards the other team. An anonymous report from *Lloyd’s Evening Post* in 1765 described such a football match, “in a field near Islington, between several hundred Welshmen and Irishman, when they came to blows with sticks, bludgeons, &c. and great numbers had their heads broken, and were wounded in the most dangerous manner.”³⁶ Engaging in sport was a highly involved and often violent pursuit.

Popular recreation involving sports in the early industrialization era can be characterized as active, in which hundreds of men would partake in games. The active component figured into happiness in three ways. First it provided a venue to blow off steam and relax, second it strengthened social ties, and third it provided an opportunity to increase status. Perhaps most importantly is the final element, that these sporting events offered “realistic opportunities for the common people to acquire prestige and self-respect.”³⁷ An occasion to do a feat of great athletic ability could win a prize and bragging rights for months. An unsigned opinion piece printed in the *Lancaster Gazetteer* from 1818 highlighted this prestige with romantic style, “the agility of an eminent and distinguished wrestler would astonish a person...the activity which he displays, by the different maneuvers of his body—the caution and skill with which he defends himself against the attacks of his adversary—the dexterity which he employs for opportunity to *strike* him, and the ardour with which he struggles and contends for victory, must appear as a interesting to a man who knows how to appreciate the *spirit of a Briton*.”³⁸ To perform well in sport gave one a small measure of control over one’s life. That pride and, however small, agency provided a much-needed relief in an otherwise era of intensely physical agricultural work. Thus, the active nature of sport and recreation of this time provided an occasion for happiness that was participatory and personal. It offered a framework for managing stress through play, albeit with the potential for violence, and it contained a strong social function which strengthened community ties. Finally, the participatory nature of sports and recreation at this time also encouraged happiness by offering a means to potentially increase one’s social prestige as a common person.

At the turn of the 18th century popular recreation began to be reformed on several fronts. Evangelist attitudes and the notions of progress through industrialization influenced attitudes what was acceptable as recreation. The secularization of feasts and festivals as described in the

³⁵ “Dutch Funds.- Amsterdam,” *The Times*, March 2, 1840, The Times Digital Archive.

³⁶ “Post Script. London.,” *Lloyd’s Evening Post*, March 22, 1765, Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Bury News Collection, <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/Z2000509819/GDCS?sid=bookmark-GDCS&xid=408ce1fd>.

³⁷ Malcomson, *Popular Recreations in English Society*, 85.

³⁸ “A Defence of the Athletic Diversions, Hunting, &c. &c.,” *Lancaster Gazetteer*, October 31, 1818, British Library Newspapers, <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/R3208488897/BNCN?sid=bookmark-BNCN&xid=525211fd>.

previous section left popular sport and recreation open to intense criticism by some vocal protestants as hedonic rituals that needed reform or abolishment. According to Malcomson:

Evangelism had a profound impact on English society. Its voice is to be heard time and time again in the sources of the several decades after the 1790s—in the press, in parliamentary debates, in tracts and pamphlets, in serious works of enquiry, in the appeals of social reformers; it was the voice which spoke in earnest tones, which was acutely sensitive to issues of morality (as well as propriety), preoccupied with the tension between virtue and vice. Bearing its sense of righteousness with directness and intense self-consciousness.³⁹

Yet it was not until industrialization began in earnest that these Evangelical ideas gained serious traction, especially in the Victorian era. Previously the gentry, as paternalist patrons of recreation, were reticent to change the popular traditions of common folk. This conservatism towards change insulated recreation from changing drastically. But as E. P. Thompson noted in his article *Patrician Society, Plebeian Culture*: “economic rationalization nibbled (and had long been nibbling) through the bonds of paternalism.”⁴⁰ Now, the intensification of industrialization and increasingly focused Parliamentary measures of Enclosure disrupted the countryside such that these attitudes of social reform penetrated English rural society.

Industrialization and Passive Recreation

The process of industrialization occurred over decades and had a significant effect on virtually all aspects of English society. In terms of recreations this progression facilitated a change from earlier notions of active popular recreation to a more orderly, proper recreation in which spectatorship replaced participation. Parliamentary acts, work-time discipline, and new employment opportunities contributed to the movement of popular recreation to proper recreation. As described in the previous section, sport and particularly football, had not yet been relegated wholesale to a pitch. Though some areas demarcated fields or areas as appropriate places to play in other localities the players had run of the entire parish. However, as the need for better agricultural practices intensified following population growth and the use of private and Parliamentary land enclosures increased. Land enclosure had been utilized in England since the time after the Black Death as informal agreements between landowners.⁴¹ But in the mid-eighteenth century the process moved from informal agreements to include Acts by Parliament, “In total, about a quarter or rather more of England and Wales was affected by private and General Enclosure Acts [of which] most of this very considerable area was enclosed by private Act alone between 1750 and 1815.”⁴² Land that had been previously used in common by all was now to be converted into use for “arable expansion, to convert land to urban uses, especially housing” and “the final reason, linked to both the others, was the desire to ‘control’ the commons and those who used them.”⁴³ This had a direct impact on recreation and sport by depriving the

³⁹ Malcomson, *Popular Recreations in English Society*, 105-106.

⁴⁰ E. P. Thompson, “Patrician Society, Plebeian Culture,” *Journal of Social History* 7, no. 4 (1974): 382–405, 382.

⁴¹ Alun Howkins, “The Use and Abuse of the English Commons, 1845-1914,” *History Workshop Journal*, no. 78 (2014): 107–32.

⁴² G. E. Mingay, *Parliamentary Enclosure in England: An Introduction to Its Causes, Incidence, and Impact, 1750-1850* (London, England: Longman, 1997), 30-31.

⁴³ Howkins, “The Use and Abuse of the English Commons, 1845-1914,” 115.

common people of the land necessary to host large participatory sport events in some areas of England. This was not the case writ large, however, enclosure and the 1839 Rural Police Acts created both the legal justification to prevent large unruly games and the mechanism to enforce their outlaw.⁴⁴

The town of Richmond used their newly founded police the following year to prevent the annual Shrovetide football match. An article from *The Standard* in 1840 laid out the claim, “the practice” of the Shrovetide football match, “having been attended with accidents, and much disturbance, the place appearing during the day as one under a siege, a strong opposition was this year got up by the principle inhabitants, who determined to avail themselves of the extension of the police, and the provisions of the New Police Act, for its suppression.”⁴⁵ The commissioner of the Richmond Police, Richard Mayne, reinforced the decision below the article with a warning, “It having been represented to the Commissioner of the Police of this metropolis that great annoyance to passengers and detriment to the inhabitants, has been occasioned by the practice of kicking a foot-ball in the public streets and thoroughfares of the parish of Richmond, on Shrove-Tuesday; all persons are hereby cautioned that such a practice is illegal.”⁴⁶ This example illustrates two new changes to recreation: ideas about unruly activities (such as football matches) had shifted towards being unacceptable and there was now a machinery of enforcement to prohibit such recreation.⁴⁷ Gone was the eudemonic language of the church and now, so too, was the language of the paternalist gentry who oversaw games as a natural form of de-stress in between the planting cycle. Now popular recreation was viewed, at least by the ruling class, as destructive and an avenue for irrational hedonism. “The new police, in the pursuit of order, attacked the more open and violent forms of popular recreation in the midcentury.”⁴⁸ This pursuit of order was necessary in a nation who was rapidly industrializing. Order was a key ingredient of the wage-labor system through how workers and managers conceived of and ordered their time.

By the last decade of the 18th century English inventors and investors focused increasingly on cotton manufacturing. According to Sven Beckert in *Empire of Cotton: A Global History*, “by embracing new technologies, subduing labor without enslaving it, and finding new ways to organize production emerged in cotton mills first, and as a result the once modest industry scattered along the rivers of Lancashire and neighboring Cheshire grew by leaps and bounds” which in turn “soon made it the center of the British economy.”⁴⁹ The powerful economic gains of the cotton industry soon influenced politicians to question recreation which “was suspected might not be in harmony with the scheme of the national economy; its legitimacy would have to be seriously considered.”⁵⁰ How, when, and how increasingly the common people engaged in recreation had become national question as the economy became increasingly dependent upon labor for its factories. Hugh Cunningham in *Leisure in the Industrial Revolution* marked the tension between common behavior and new expectations: “The new breed of

⁴⁴ D. J. V. Jones, “The New Police, Crime and People in England and Wales, 1829–1888,” in *The New Police in the Nineteenth Century*, 1st Edition (Manchester, UK: Routledge, 2011).

⁴⁵ “Multiple Sports Items,” *The Standard*, March 5, 1840, British Library Newspapers, <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/R3212156974/BNCN?sid=bookmark-BNCN&xid=229a759d>.

⁴⁶ “Multiple Sports Items.”

⁴⁷ It is important to note here, that not all rural communities chose to hire police forces. This was a gradual process and I am in no means trying to apply what happened at Richmond to the entire country, but it does offer an interesting study about ideas of recreation becoming identified with as disorder.

⁴⁸ Jones, “The New Police, Crime and People in England and Wales, 1829–1888,” 65.

⁴⁹ Sven Beckert, *Empire of Cotton: A Global History*, First edition. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014), 71-73.

⁵⁰ Malcomson, *Popular Recreations in English Society*, 94.

employers of the Industrial Revolution deplored all these customs —the irregular work patterns, the traditional holidays, the norm of only ten hours work, together with in many trades habits of drinking and ‘larking’ on the job.”⁵¹ These employers and managers had a new conception about how time might be employed in the factory that differed than the traditional agricultural or artisanal cycle of work. Rather than time being conceived as a seasonal movement it was increasingly measured in minutes and seconds. Time, in turn, became money.

In his article ‘Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism,’ E. P. Thompson highlighted the “changes in manufacturing technique which demand greater synchronization of labour and a great exactitude in time-routines” by creating a new interior understanding of “time-sense in its technological conditioning, and with time-measurement as a means of labour exploitation.”⁵² New time-discipline had serious implications for recreation. The relative mingling between work and leisure in the agricultural setting, with breaks for socialization and cooking and drinking, could not be supported in an industrial setting which relied on time focused work from outside of the home. Proper use of time extended its reach beyond the factory, Thompson pointed to schooling and preaching as examples of how these new ideas of time saturated society.

As Stearns describes eventually, “hours of work shortened, normal days were divided between time on the job and a period (in addition to sleep) set aside for leisure and family” with the “weekend [...] expanded.”⁵³ The weekend, in turn, became the appropriate time for leisure. Popular recreation and festivals that lasted days or occurred in the middle of the work week were labeled as distractions and caused loss of profit and were therefore perceived as irrational and immoral. In this way, “the leisured classes began to discover the “problem” of the leisure of the masses” and the challenge of popular recreation.⁵⁴ Popular recreation needed to be transformed into proper recreation, that is proper to the emerging protestant capitalist national that England was becoming. The demarcation of work and weekend created an opportunity for just such a proper recreation to unfold. One avenue was commercialization of recreation. In *Popular Culture and Social Change* Peter Burke argued it was difficult to say for sure if “Eighteenth-century England witnessed a ‘commercialization of leisure,’” but he found that it was true that “the sense that businessmen began to regard leisure activities as a good investment and in the sense that facilities actually grew [...] but there certainly were new entertainments as well as an increasing use of advertisements to tell the public what was going on.”⁵⁵ Commercialization of leisure activities provided an pathway to organizing events, such as football matches and even holiday activities, in an suitable way that would work in tandem with emerging ideas of capitalism.

Weekends and time off had the potential to be profitable because they were made up of time. Thompson ended his article on Time with the herald of “leisure industries” which grew out of “a mature capitalist society all time must be consumed, marketed, put to use; it is offensive for the labor force merely to ‘pass the time.’”⁵⁶ Led the way for mass spectator sports which flourished at the end of the nineteenth century as better communication with telegraphs and

⁵¹ Hugh Cunningham, *Leisure in the Industrial Revolution: C. 1780-c. 1880* (London: Routledge, 2016), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315637679>, 58.

⁵² E. P. Thompson, “Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism,” *Past & Present*, no. 38 (1967): 56–97.

⁵³ Stearns, *Happiness in World History*, 114.

⁵⁴ Thompson, “Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism,” 90.

⁵⁵ Peter Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe*, Third edition. (London: Routledge, 2016), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315246420>, 340.

⁵⁶ Thompson, “Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism,” 91.

travel by railroad emerged. This is not to say that popular recreation had been defeated, some towns retained their Shrovetide matches and local football clubs were often organized out of connections made while laboring. However, by and large, the recreation of the previous generation had changed greatly. Popular rural recreations association with hedonism prompted a change during the early and mid-19th century that attempted to align it more with protestant ideas of virtue, self-discipline, and right use of time synthesized into what Nick J. Watson and Andrew Parker called Victorian Muscular Christianity:

The ideology of Victorian muscular Christianity proffers the notion that sport and physical education has the potential to build manly and virtuous character, which is characterized by ‘fair play, respect (both for oneself and others), strength (physical and emotional), perseverance, deference, subordination, obedience, discipline, loyalty, cooperation, self-control, self-sacrifice [and], endurance’ (Collins and Parker, 2009: 194). This philosophy materialized during an age when the colonial, military and industrial aspirations of the British Empire were high on the agenda of the ruling classes, and thus sports in Victorian public schools were a vehicle to create leaders, that is, ‘good Christian gentlemen.’⁵⁷

Sports, such as football, in this sense were reordered from the earlier chaotic mass participatory events of the earlier century towards a rational activity. This process happened in “public schools” where “the old kicking, carrying, tackling, tripping, gouching, punching game became stylized according to each school’s facilities and traditions.”⁵⁸ The domestication of football, undertaken at schools required a codification of rules and a reduction of players such that there would be a coherence to the games. This process, while highly fascinating will not be treated here, we need only mention the result which was that in the last quarter of the 19th century football had become ‘proper’ recreation. Spectatorship of these professionalized matches evolved into commodification through professionalization and as such became a passive hobby.

Proper recreation, shaped by notions that were popularized by ongoing industrialization of England, had changed drastically from their original popular conception. When and where recreation was to occur was shaped by wage-labor ideas of time. While how recreation and leisure were to be undertaken was shaped by Victorian protestant ideas of virtues. Finally, with the institution of professionalized matches and mass entertainment came the commodification of spectatorship.

Conclusion

Modern psychologists on well-being speak about an interdependence between eudemonic and hedonic as Peter Warr notes, “a ‘happy person’ may be thought of in both hedonic and flourishing terms.”⁵⁹ The loss of the eudemonic element in festivals, feasts, and holy days following the Reformation upset the balance between these two factors. During industrialization

⁵⁷ Nick J. Watson and Andrew Parker, *Sports and Christianity: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives* (Oxford, UNITED KINGDOM: Taylor & Francis Group, 2012), <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/gmu/detail.action?docID=1046930>, 20.

⁵⁸ William J. Baker, “The Making of a Working-Class Football Culture in Victorian England,” *Journal of Social History* 13, no. 2 (1979): 241–51.

⁵⁹ Peter Warr, *The Psychology of Happiness* (London: Routledge, 2019), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315108452>, 8.

the evolution of football showcased the shift from being a broadly participatory and unregulated affair to a codified spectator sport in England's emerging mass entertainment. Gone with the active element were outlets for common people to exercise, play, and gain prestige as easily as they had in the past. These twin transformations in English recreation had a detrimental effect on happiness. One anonymous writer lamented the loss of the old recreation in a 1851 article in *The Political Examiner*, "for what are, and where are the public amusements? Public amusements are all dwindling away. The stage is in tis last decay; the old public amusements worn out or cast aside, like the toys of childhood, and no new ones rise up in place of them."⁶⁰ Thus, charting historic changes in terms of recreation is critical to understanding happiness and how modern culture has evolved out of past traditions. Studying this change will allow us to properly interrogate our own era based on happiness to find where we might recover certain traditions or move in an entirely new direction.

⁶⁰ "The Political Examiner," *Examiner*, November 29, 1851, British Library Newspapers, <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/BB3201004176/BNCN?sid=bookmark-BNCN&xid=4cb67d9f>.

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