

ABSTRACT

The Malady of Busyness: A Philosophical and Psychological Approach to Curing Modern Problem

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Humanity has ever sought to distract itself from introspection and boredom; however, with the rapid development of technology in the digital age, and with the pressing need for productivity which seems to be pressed on us from a young age, this avoidance of introspection and leisure has become a growing epidemic in modern life. This thesis seeks to examine this problem from multiple angles to get a solid picture as to why the modern person abhors the idea of leisure so much. I first outline the current situation, and how this abhorrence of leisure continues to negatively affect our lives. Then, I examine the malady of busyness from the viewpoints of Friedrich Nietzsche and Blaise Pascal, comparing the two philosophers and giving their ideas on the necessity of leisure and introspection. Finally, I end the thesis by giving a few methods of curing tendencies toward busyness and turning toward leisure.

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THE MALADY OF BUSYNESS: A PHILOSOPHICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL
APPROACH TO CURING A MODERN PROBLEM

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter One: The Malady of Busyness. 1
Chapter Two: Nietzsche on the Malady of Busyness 13
Chapter Three: Pascal and Our Problem with Boredom and Anxiety. 36
Chapter Four: Approach to a Cure. 57
Bibliography. 79

CHAPTER ONE

The Malady of Busyness

Introduction

Busyness has become a mainstay in Western culture. Phrases like “I’m too busy” or “I have so much to do” have become common parlance for us, fueling our mindsets and our actions. More and more of our time is devoted to work and actions that produce less and less meaning as the years go by. But what causes this correlation between increased activity and decreased meaningfulness and fulfillment? Why do we sacrifice ourselves for affairs that mean little or nothing to us besides our own survival?

My thesis overall is designed to answer the fundamental question of why we devote our very beings to such busyness, how this devotion affects us, and how we can transform our lives from a rapid whirlwind of work and diversion to a life that creates more meaning and fulfillment. In this chapter, I will examine the statistics and psychological effects of stress and overwork on the health and wellbeing of a person. Throughout this examination, I will analyze studies showing how busy Americans (as well as members of Western culture itself) have become, and how this busyness has become a detriment to our society. I will conclude by summarizing the information within this chapter, and by outlining the material covered within the rest of my thesis.

Definition of Busyness

Before I continue with the exploration of the malady of busyness, I must first set out what I herein mean when I use the term “busyness.” “Busyness,” in this context, does not just mean putting in a lot of hours at work or having a full schedule of activities that keep you bustling from one activity to the next. “Busyness” here means a state of mind and existence wherein one cannot allow oneself to experience a sense of leisure and introspection that allows for rest, self-reflection, and self-development. With this definition established, we can proceed to the examination of the malady.

How Busy Are We? An Examination of Work Levels and Stress

People often say that they feel as if they are becoming busier and busier with every year; however, is this strictly true? Are our work hours increasing, and if so, why are they continuing to increase? According to Juliet Schor in her essay “The (Even More) Overworked American” in *Take Back Your Time*, the answer to this question of increasing work hours is a resounding “Yes.” According to Schor, the average number of hours worked by the average American increased by almost 200 work hours between 1967 and 2000; in other words, the amount of additional work increased by five weeks of work time per American.¹

With this increasing number of hours worked, one would expect that the general wellbeing and health of the American populace would increase alongside the increased financial welfare; however, this also does not appear to be the case. Barbara Brandt summarizes the effects of overworking and double-earner households in her essay “An

¹ Juliet Schor, *The (Even More) Overworked American* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2003), 7.

Issue for Everybody” in the aforementioned book. In her essay, Brandt states that the effects include parents losing time with their children, children having to remain in day-care almost all day due to parental work time, and increasing rates of injuries. For example, protests occurred in 2000 regarding registered nurses being required to work 8 more overtime hours on top of eight-hour shifts. Other instances of this grueling mindset include a man who died in a car crash while heading home from a 19-hour shift on a stage set, and the overbearing stress this mindset of busyness and overworking creates for low-income and underemployed populations of America.²

If this overworking behavior leads to such negative and detrimental effects on our physical and emotional health, then why do we continue to feel as if we must pursue this course? One explanation is that instead of willingly choosing to work more hours and sacrifice health for some sort of a greater good or the wellbeing of one’s family or life, one is made to work more and exhaust oneself by outside authorities. Dr. Lonnie Golden explores this aspect of overworking in America in his essay “Forced Overtime in the Land of the Free”. In the beginning of his argument, Golden states that, in America, it is legal for employers to force their workers to work overtime without notice.³ Golden further splits excessive labor into overtime, overwork, and overemployment, each with distinctive factors that contribute to their specific category.⁴ He explores each aspect of this stressed and exhausted condition, highlighting the negative effects of overworking,

² Brandt, Barbara , *An Issue for Everybody*, (San Francisco: Berret-Koehler Publishers, 2003), 14-18.

³ Golden, Lonnie, *Forced Overtime in the Land of the Free*, (San Francisco: Berret-Koehler Publishers, 2003), 29.

⁴ Ibid.

such as hypertension, cardiac arrest, and occupational burnout.⁵ Finally, Golden contributes this overwork to both economic and cultural factors. Economically, rising costs of healthcare and rising costs of living cause the average worker to feel pressured into taking on more work hours in order to provide for one's family. Culturally, the average, middle-income worker is pressured to work more hours to keep up with other workers and to keep up a certain economic level of income; therefore, the social pressure to continue burdening oneself with more hours increases over time.⁶

To corroborate some of Dr. Golden's claims, we can look to a rather recent report from the American Psychological Association regarding stress and work levels in America. Entitled *Stress in America: Paying With Our Health*, this report examines how stress levels are correlated with declining health and life satisfaction in the general populace. One of the primary findings regards the increasing levels of stress coupled with an unusual feeling of discontentment in the actions of individual Americans. According to the report, although the general stress levels of Americans are declining, the reported feelings of stress and dissatisfaction continue to either stay the same or to rise. In the words of the study, "forty-two percent of adults say that they are not doing enough or are not sure whether they are doing enough to manage their stress."⁷ People also report that their primary sources of stress and worry consist of money and work.⁸ Additionally, it is revealed earlier in the report that people from low-income families with lesser amounts of

⁵ Ibid, 30.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ American Psychological Association, *Stress in America: Paying With Our Health*, (American Psychological Association, 2015), 9.

⁸ Ibid.

social support tend to be busier and less capable with dealing with stress.⁹ Considering these factors, one can extrapolate a hypothesis as to one of the reasons why busyness has become so common. Due to the feeling of discontentment and dissatisfaction that is coupled with the feeling of stress over finances, the amount of work and busyness that we have in our lives increases. Thus, a cycle of increasing work and increasing stress perpetuates itself until something comes in to break it.

Taking all of this into account, the malady becomes clear. It is a malady of busyness, propagating itself through self-fulfilling prophecies of discontent and desire. And the more it grows, the more it consumes; however, in order to diagnose this illness, we must uncover some of the underlying symptoms of overworking and busyness in life, as well as how they present themselves.

Symptoms of the Malady

In this section, I will cover the three main areas affected by the person when busyness overcomes them: physical and mental health, social issues, and spiritual problems. In covering each of these three areas, I will consult various studies and sources regarding mental health and spiritual wellbeing in order to show how this malady degrades the core of a person, degenerating their health and causing them to operate under their optimal level. Finally, I will conclude with a general prognosis for the untreated malady.

⁹ Ibid, 8.

Physical Symptoms of Busyness

Some of the most noticeable effects of busyness and overwork tends to affect the body. According to Dr. Suzanne Schweikert in her article “An Hour a Day (Could Keep the Doctor Away)”, overwork and remaining in a state of constant busyness and physical unrest can cause a slew of physical health problems, including hypertension, diabetes, obesity, insomnia, and other disorders that can create detrimental effects on the body.¹⁰ Generally, this devolution of health comes from taking time away from productive activities, such as exercise, yoga, cardiovascular workouts, and other stress-relieving physical activities, and contributing the time to work and trivial activity that either does not promote or directly denigrates the overall health of the individual.

Alongside physical health problems, mental health problems abound when our lives become consumed by busyness. In the same article, Schweikert states that depression, chronic undiagnosed pain, and anxiety disorders are on the rise due to increased work levels across America.¹¹ These tend to be complications that build from increased stress levels and degraded physical health levels. Schweikert states that, due to decreased amounts of personal time, people tend to eat less healthy, exercise less, and spend less time de-stressing. This causes physical health problems to increase, as well as pushing the limit of anxiety levels continually. Finally, a spiral of negative health problems occurs, which becomes difficult to break.¹² Having examined the physical and

¹⁰ Suzanne Schweiker, *An Hour a Day (Could Keep the Doctor Away)*, (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2003), 79.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*

mental health drawbacks of busyness and overworking, we can now progress to the social drawbacks of this malady.

Negative Social Symptoms of Busyness

One of the primary negative social effects of busyness is on family relations and child development. According to William Doherty and Barbara Carlson in their article “Overscheduled Kids, Underconnected Families,” this increasing level of busyness and activity is slipping increasingly into the lives of children and families, causing times that used to be spent on family bonding and child development to be subsumed into time used for things such as homework, sports, extracurricular activities, and other outside activities that take away from the family. As these two authors jokingly stated, “A six-year old gets his first daily planners, and then asks for time just to play. A nine-year old, in his wish list of birthday presents, places ‘more time at home’ as number three.”¹³ To highlight this reality statistically, both authors highlight a research study done by the University of Michigan regarding children’s free time. According to the study, “Children have lost 12 hours per week in free time” since the 1970’s, including a 25 percent drop in play and a 50 percent drop in “unstructured outdoor time”.¹⁴

What are the results of such a lifestyle on young children and families? According to a study cited in their chapter, family time spent bonding, particularly family meal times spent together, is directly correlated to a decreased chance of negative activities, such as underage drinking and drug use, as well as directly correlated with positive benefits, such

¹³ William Doherty and Barbara Carlson, *Overscheduled Kids, Underconnected Families*, (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2003), 40.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

as higher grades and better mental health. Extrapolating from this information, we can surmise that decreased time spent together as a family outside of social engagements or extracurricular activities leads to a breakdown of family values, family relationships, and social responsibility.

Looking at the previous two sections, we can determine that busyness is a serious malady that affects the physical and social life of the typical American. The greater the amount of activity, the more a person works, the greater their chances of developing negative health consequences and of degenerating family relationships and social values. Though this is enough to recommend a further examination and a subsequent course of action to treat this pervasive disease, there is another area that must be explored to fully grasp the extent of this malady's deadly grip: the spiritual effects of busyness.

Spiritual Symptoms of Busyness

The Bible, particularly the Wisdom literature and Gospels, contains several references to the negative qualities of being too busy in our lives. One of the first examples of such a passage is Ecclesiastes 3, wherein the Teacher states that "For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven..."¹⁵ Later on in the same book, the Teacher states that "I know that there is nothing better for them to be happy and enjoy themselves as long as they live; moreover, it is God's gift that all should eat and drink and take pleasure in all their toil."¹⁶ From this, we can discern that one of the teachings regarding busyness in Scripture is that there is a time and place for

¹⁵ *New Revised Standard Version*, Eccl. 3:1.

¹⁶ Eccl. 3:12-13.

everything under the sun, and that we should discern when it is the proper time to work and the proper time to rest.

However, what happens when someone refuses to rest, according to Scripture? If someone is unable or unwilling to discern this limit, where does this lead? One example of this can be found in the Luke 10:38-42 regarding the story of Mary and Martha while they attended to Jesus. Whereas Martha went about the house serving and making herself busy with the housework, Mary simply sat at the feet of Jesus and listened to him. When Martha complained to Jesus and asked for him to command Mary to help her, Jesus responded, “Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken from her.”¹⁷ Additionally, during the Sermon on the Mount in the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus states, “But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today’s trouble is enough for today.”¹⁸

Taking all of this information together, we can see that worry, overworking, and busyness are all counterintuitive to human life and thriving. Instead of aiding in our ability to serve God and to live fully as human beings, increasing levels of busyness and worry cause us to miss out on the enjoyment of the things we already have, as well as deafening and blinding us to the spiritual messages that God can communicate to us if we

¹⁷ Lk. 10:41.

¹⁸ Matt. 6:33-34.

take our rest. Therefore, busyness does not just affect the body, but also has a negative effect on the health of our soul.

Conclusion and Outline of Thesis

In conclusion, the effects of busyness and the psychology of busyness on the everyday life of modern man cannot be understated. Physically, it degrades our bodies, leaving us tired, weak, and unhealthy; mentally, it wears on our minds and emotions, leaving us frayed, anxious, depressed, and resorting to negative coping mechanisms in order to temporarily manage these symptoms; socially, it breaks down our connections with our family members, leaving us more prone to negative behaviors and socially damaging actions, such as underage drinking, drug use, and poor performance in school and extracurriculars; and spiritually, this malady degrades the soul's health, disconnecting us from the higher reality of God, removing the joy of our toils from us, and leaving us walking in a state of endless toil and spiritual emptiness.

With all of this said, it is time to prescribe a method of examination and treatment for this ever-present malady. Therefore, I will outline my method for examination below, followed by the method of treatment as follows. First, I will take the next two chapters to examine philosophically the problem of busyness within the human condition, positing sources of this condition through the works of Nietzsche and Pascal. After having examined this condition and giving certain sources for it as seen through these authors' works, I will use the final chapter to give three different ways that one could go about treating this malady: one psychological, one secular, and one religious method for solving

this issue. In this way, I will attempt to address the physical, social, and spiritual symptoms of the malady, and thereby work to attack the illness itself.

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CHAPTER TWO

Nietzsche on the Malady of Busyness

Introduction

As discussed in the previous chapter, busyness and its negative consequences have become an increasing epidemic within “modern” society. Modern humanity fills its life with increasing levels of activity; however, our satisfaction levels are steadily declining. Why is this occurring? Why is it that the more we do, the less satisfying our lives become?

In *The Gay Science*, Friedrich Nietzsche proposes several influences that cause people to overcommit their time and effort to activities that lack meaning, and thus deny us the satisfaction we seek. In this chapter, I will begin by examining the background of Nietzsche’s life to determine the effects that his life experience had on his interpretation of life. Then, I will examine the background and structure of *The Gay Science* to determine the predominant factors involved in the writing of this work. Third, I will examine and interpret the various aphorisms regarding busyness, discontentment, and the unfulfilled life to explain Nietzsche’s views on why we choose busyness over meaningfulness. Throughout this section, I will clarify Nietzsche’s contentions with information regarding Nietzsche’s background. I will also interject certain points made by Josef Pieper in his book *Leisure: The Culture of Busyness* to emphasize Nietzsche’s contentions on the necessity of leisure for the promotion of culture and society. Finally, I

will summarize my reading of Nietzsche and give a brief statement on how Nietzsche believes this malady can be cured.

Background on Nietzsche

As Walter Kaufmann states in his introduction to *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche, although highly controversial to this day, was and still is one of the greatest and most influential German writers and poets of the modern era, and he continues to influence generations of philosophers.¹⁹ Born in Röcken in 1844 to Ludwig Nietzsche, a Lutheran pastor, Nietzsche was raised in a Christian home, surrounded by a Christian community, and grew up in the heart of the Reformation country; however, he would not remain a Christian for his entire life.²⁰ When he went off to school in Pforta, his study of the Greek classics began the spark of doubt that would lead him away from the Christian faith. Later, when he went to university in Leipzig, he met Richard Wagner, a dear friend to Nietzsche who became one of the impetuses for his writing of *The Birth of Tragedy*.²¹

Nietzsche suffered several different ailments that caused his sister, Elisabeth, to act as his caretaker for much of his life. Suffering from chronic headaches, digestive ailments, and mental-emotional problems, Nietzsche knew the meaning of embracing suffering, which is reflected in his writings. Towards the end of his life, while Nietzsche was staying in Turin, he witnessed a driver furiously whipping his horse, which caused

¹⁹ Walter Kaufman, *The Gay Science*, (New York: Random House, 1966), ix.

²⁰ Julian Young, *Friedrich Nietzsche: A Philosophical Biography*

²¹ R. Lanier Anderson, *Friedrich Nietzsche*, (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy).

him to have a sort of mental breakdown. He became increasingly deranged until he died of a stroke coupled with pneumonia in 1900.²²

His works can be divided into three categories: early, middle, and late works. His early works coincide more with his lectures and teachings while he was a professor at Basel. His middle works coincide more with the period of his leave when his illnesses began to increase in severity. His late works coincide more with his time in Turin, and reflect his continually increasing suffering and desire to find meaning in a world prone to suffering.²³ *The Gay Science*, which this chapter primarily deals with, is one of these middle works, the majority of which was written during his time in Messina.²⁴

Examination of the Malady

The Gay Science, along with Nietzsche's other middle-period works, is constructed into various sections called aphorisms, each of which deal with different topics revolving around the central theme of the work. Due to the aphoristic nature of the work, I will approach this section of the chapter by dividing each aphorism into a sub-section. Within the sub-section, I will introduce and quote each aphorism, followed by an analysis and interpretation.

²² Ibid.

²³ Anderson, R. Lanier. "Friedrich Nietzsche"; Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy

²⁴ Young, Julian. *Friedrich Nietzsche: A Philosophical Biography*, 326.

Aphorism 329: Leisure and idleness

One of the clearest aphorisms in Nietzsche's *The Gay Science* can be found in Book Four: aphorism 329. This aphorism, titled *Leisure and idleness*, regards the desire that many people have to run in what is proverbially called the "rat race". In other words, this aphorism concerns our desire to continually take on increasing levels of responsibilities to prove to those around us that we are worth more than they by getting as much done in as little time as possible. Specifically, the central point of the aphorism states:

...the distinctive vice of the new world—is already beginning to infect old Europe...Even now one is ashamed of resting, and prolonged resting almost gives people a bad conscience... 'Rather do anything than nothing': this principle is merely a string to throttle all culture and good taste...One no longer has time or energy for ceremonies, for being obliging in an indirect way, for *esprit* in conversation, and for any *otium* at all...Virtue has come to consist of doing something in less time than someone else.²⁵

The first point that draws one's attention is the vice that Nietzsche stated was infecting the Europe of his day, an infection that continues to spread throughout the modern world to this day: the infection of continual and unending work to validate one's own existence. Nietzsche believes that this infection is what lies at the heart of modernity's problems, causing people to turn away from the *vita contemplativa*,²⁶ or contemplative life, towards a life that is increasingly concerned with physical action over turning inward and contemplating your own existence. He also draws attention to how this diverges quite starkly from the ancient mindset that work was supposed to leave a bad conscience, while

²⁵ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, 259.

²⁶ *Ibid*, 260.

the contemplative life was the true form of leisure and the way that a free person was to live.²⁷ Work was meant for slaves; therefore, to devote all your time to labor was a symbol of your bondage in life.

From the passage quoted above, a few things can be gleaned about Nietzsche's view on how overworking is affecting modern man. First, our tendency to overwork is more in keeping with the mindset of a menial laborer than that of a productive human. According to Nietzsche, our choosing to work ourselves to the point that we no longer know ourselves is enslavement to a goal that distracts us from one of the nobler pursuits of mankind: self-knowledge. Second, Nietzsche observes that placing the societal value on work instead of on culture and art strangles the life out of the cultural aspect of society. Taking this to its extreme, placing the primary concern of a society on work causes society to lose its grasp of culture, turning people into cogs in a proverbial machine, slaves to their own work.

Josef Pieper expresses this theme in his book *Leisure: The Basis of Culture*. In chapter one, Pieper states that the mindset of workaholism that permeates our society would have been considered strange, if not downright immoral. In quoting Aristotle, Pieper states that "we are unleisurely in order to have leisure."²⁸ He further states the view of the "worker" has shifted from a view that highlights the advancement of the liberal arts and the development of culture to that of the more Marxist proletarian idea, wherein a human being is more than a drone in a hive than a person in search of culture and meaning.

²⁷ Ibid, 260.

²⁸ Aristotle, qtd. in *Leisure: The Basis of Culture* (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1952), 3.

Before moving on, we must define what Nietzsche means by the word “culture”. This can be most clearly seen in the fifth section of Nietzsche’s essay “Schopenhauer as Educator” in his *Untimely Meditations*. In this section, Nietzsche makes a distinction between the common masses of people, whom he likens to those who follow animal natures, and those who are the philosophers, artists, and saints. The last category of people, in Nietzsche’s belief, are the ones who build culture, and they do this by overcoming their animal natures of infighting and violence and embracing the leisure and suffering necessary to build culture and art upward. However, Nietzsche also defines this as a community act towards the end of this section, and thus makes this something that one cannot necessarily accomplish entirely on their own.²⁹ Finally, in aphorism 370, Nietzsche classifies the romanticists as propagators of culture, and of the suffering found in those either who suffer from the over-abundance of society, or of those who suffer from the impoverishment of society.³⁰ Working from these parameters, we can discern a definition of culture that runs in the following vein: culture consists of a people pursuing the truth found within artistic expression over the desire to cater to what others desire. True culture and artists express truths of the human condition, and do so without worrying about the popularity of the move. Having established this definition of culture, we may now continue on to find the source of this culture of busyness.

The source of this culture of busyness can be discerned, even indirectly, in the aphorism. Although he does not give a direct statement as to the cause of this illness of

²⁹ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Schopenhauer as Educator*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 125-194.

³⁰ *Ibid*, 326.

culture, we can glean its side effects from his statements. The first is a decrease in the joy of the individual. Nietzsche says in aphorism 329 that, instead of people seeking to do things that give them joy, people are forced to “expend their spirit to the point of exhaustion in continual pretense and overreaching and anticipating others,”³¹ and that this causes them to be suspicious of joy, and to be overly frugal in how they participate in joy.³² The second side effect is, as mentioned above, the stranglehold on culture and “good taste.”³³ Although this is a side effect, I believe this to be a secondary side effect, triggered only by the primary side effect that Nietzsche sees as the source: ignorance, both of self and of others. One question that arises from this is “what is joy?” Given the previous passages, along with the passage from quoted from “Schopenhauer as Educator,” a good Nietzschean definition of joy would be that joy is when one gets to enjoy a leisurely participation in the development of culture. With that settled, we can now progress.

But how does one come to this self-knowledge and to knowledge of others? How can one transcend this malady of busyness that ravages humanity in this era to come to a life that seeks to know the inner thoughts of our own self? In reply to these questions, I believe Nietzsche would respond that suffering is the mistress of revelation, who opens the mind to contemplate one’s inner being. This leads to our next aphorism: aphorism 338.

³¹ Ibid, 259.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

Aphorism 338: The will to suffer and those who feel pity

Suffering lies at the heart of many of Nietzsche's aphorisms. Stemming from his lifelong struggles and his sustained suffering, it is no surprise that Nietzsche would consider suffering as a central aspect of human development. This is illustrated in aphorism 338, which states:

...if you refuse to let your own suffering lie upon you even for an hour and if you constantly try to prevent and forestall all possible distress way ahead of time; if you experience suffering and displeasure as evil, hateful, worthy of annihilation, and as a defect of existence, then it is clear that besides your religion of pity you also harbor another religion in your heart that is perhaps the mother of the religion of pity: the religion of comfortableness.³⁴

At first glance, Nietzsche appears to be advocating for cruelty in inflicting suffering on others to know oneself and experience joy. However, one must be able to interpret the context of the suffering to ascertain what suffering is being inflicted. Comparing this with Nietzsche's ideas of the "religion of comfort" and of people's desire to disillusion themselves into believing mistruths about themselves, inflicting suffering is not meant to be advocating cruelty; moreover, inflicting suffering is meant to be facing the truth and proclaiming it, even when that means destroying the illusions and pulling back the veils of the religions of comfort that so many have built up.

The avoidant behavior described in this aphorism is central to Nietzsche's understanding of how human development is blocked. As he states in aphorism 325, "Who will attain anything great if he does not find in himself the strength and the will to *inflict* great suffering?"³⁵ According to Nietzsche, suffering is the impetus for greatness to be

³⁴ Nietzsche, *Gay Science*, 270.

³⁵ *Ibid*, 255.

born, the seed that plants the development of the human mind within man; however, many cannot stomach this reality, and choose to find ways to avoid this aspect of existence while feeling as if they experience this.

This avoidance takes form in what Nietzsche classifies as the “religion of pity” and its mother, the “religion of comfortableness”. The people who participate in this comfort-centered religion, who desire to avoid pain, to reduce suffering, and to dull their misfortune, use this religion to choose good works to avoid our own lives, to thrust ourselves into acts of charity and kindness, thereby delivering others from their suffering. By doing this, however, we not only leave our own paths, but take others from their own paths. This, in turn, dulls more people, increasing the number of adherents who fly into the “lovely temple of the religion of pity”.³⁶

A question that arises from this is why pity and comfort are sought so strongly as society’s remedy to experiencing suffering. At least a partial answer can be found in aphorisms 118 and 119, both of which speak to the supposed feelings of benevolence and altruism. In aphorism 118, Nietzsche expresses the sentiment that benevolence out of the desire to appropriate stems from the experience of pity. He further expresses that this sentiment of pity grows out of two different influences: the desire of the stronger organism to consume and appropriate a weaker organism into itself, and the desire of a weaker organism to experience joy via being wanted and subsumed into the stronger. Benevolence of appropriation, which seeks to diminish suffering in its own way, stems from a desire to make a weaker vessel the function of the stronger vessel, with pity being the driving force.

³⁶ Ibid, 270.

Aphorism 119 continues this theme with its rather abrupt title *No altruism!* Within this aphorism, Nietzsche explains his belief that true, selfless altruism does not exist for the most part. Instead, altruism is a mechanism by which, through the vessel of the religion of pity, the stronger subsume the weaker, thereby increasing their own strength and causing the weaker to become a function of the stronger.³⁷ Taking this in the context of suffering, this mechanism of altruism is a tool used to create strength in the herd, control the weak, and to reduce suffering overall, thus curbing the development of the individuals involved.

At this point, there is another voice I would like to bring in who would lend more discussion to this subject. Pieper discusses this need for suffering and the will to suffer as something that leads to a greater sense of knowledge and fulfillment. I believe bringing his examination of these issues into this chapter will bring further clarity and will further illuminate the matters at the core of Nietzsche's thoughts.

In chapter two of his book, Pieper discusses what role suffering plays in developing what he calls the *intellectus* aspect of knowledge and culture. *Intellectus*, according to Pieper, is the more intuitive, spiritual side of knowledge that leads to culture, while *ratio* is the more reasonable side of knowledge that we possess based on logic.³⁸ The interaction between *ratio* and *intellectus* is where the fruits of culture and spirit are born, according to Pieper.³⁹ Suffering, as seen later in the chapter, is how a person accepts this interaction between *ratio* and *intellectus*. Pieper examines the willingness of Christians to suffer for

³⁷ Ibid, 176.

³⁸ Josef Pieper, *Leisure: The Basis of Culture*, (Indianapolis, Liberty Fund, 1952), 9.

³⁹ Ibid, 11.

salvation, and shows how the willingness to suffer for a higher cause is what drives a person to accept spiritual knowledge. This knowledge, according to Pieper, cannot be accepted as a gift, because humans desire to enjoy the fruits of toil and labor over the gifts of the spirit.⁴⁰ Thus, the suffering we experience opens us up to experience the joys of spiritual knowledge.

So, what should we understand from these aphorisms on suffering and its role in the lives of individuals? The conclusion we can come to concerning these statements is that the reduction of suffering is at least a partial cause of the busyness mindset of modern society. Because we wish to avoid our own pain and misfortune, we as humans tend to latch onto ideas or people which promise to lead us away from our pain and into comfort. After we do this, we tend to pity those who are not free of their pain, and we extend our reach to them, pulling them in and bringing them out of their pain. By this misguided “altruism”, we stunt the growth of humanity, block the pursuit of knowledge, and ultimately cause more harm than good. However, according to Nietzsche, it is not the common people themselves that normally drive this action. Instead, it is normally those whom the common people turn to for wisdom that ultimately cause this: the priestly types, as Nietzsche calls them. By turning to these “spiritual leaders” to guide them, humans ultimately delude themselves further into the religion of pity. Thus, we come to aphorism 338.

⁴⁰ Ibid, 16-17.

Aphorism 351: In honor of the priestly type

The primary concern of this aphorism is the source of wisdom and instruction that the common people possess and follow. This source of wisdom is, according to Nietzsche, the central—and sometimes only—source of guidance these people have in their lives, and thus they look up to these people as their source of information on how to live. As Nietzsche states in his aphorism:

The common people revere an altogether different human type...namely, the mild, serious and simple-minded, chaste priestly type...And to whom would the common people have more reason to show gratitude than these men who belong to them and come from among them but as men who are consecrated, selected, and *sacrificed* for the welfare of the common people—they themselves believe that they are being sacrificed to God.⁴¹

One observation that should be considered is that Nietzsche does not entirely discount the sacrificial nature of the priesthood mentioned in this aphorism. As one of the only sources of wisdom for the common people, as well as the source for people to empty the worries and cares of their souls as filth is emptied into a sewer,⁴² he recognizes that these men and their office are not a waste, but can actually be a benefit to the people. This recognition, however, does come with qualifications. The main qualification is that Christianity, in Nietzsche's view, has become more an expression of Christendom and less an expression of God and the teachings of Christ.

This concept of the Christendom corruption can be seen later on in aphorism 358, where Nietzsche expresses his conception of modern Christianity quite clearly, saying that

⁴¹ Ibid, 294.

⁴² Ibid.

“The church is this city of destruction...the faith in God has collapsed; the faith in the Christian ascetic ideal is still fighting its final battle.”⁴³ Comparing this to earlier aphorisms, we can discern the prime reason why Nietzsche condemns the essence of modern Christianity: the lack of true acceptance of sacrifice and suffering. In the thought of Nietzsche, the ascetic, suffering philosopher—the man who embraces his suffering, takes up his cross, and bears his pain gladly for the pursuit of wisdom and development—is the truest form of the seeker; however, Nietzsche does not see this in the Christianity of his day. Instead, he sees an emaciated faith, a religion of comfort, of pity, of weakness that those who claimed to attempt to preserve the faith did the most to destroy it themselves. The example Nietzsche uses regarding the destruction of the true expression of faith is Martin Luther.

Luther, in Nietzsche’s examination, was a man who lacked the very thing necessary to overcome himself and truly be a teacher and instructor to the masses: the will to power.⁴⁴ This will to power recurs throughout several of Nietzsche’s middle and late works, and it is, in Nietzsche’s assessment, a will to claim the power necessary to overcome themselves and embrace their life as a whole in order to see a higher perspective of the self. Luther, however, is incapable of this. Regarding the Lutheran Reformation, Nietzsche claims that it was “the indignation of simplicity against ‘multiplicity’ or, to speak cautiously, a crude, ingenious misunderstanding in which there is much that calls for forgiveness.”⁴⁵

⁴³ Ibid, 310.

⁴⁴ Nietzsche, *Gay Science*, 311.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

Nietzsche's disgust for the Lutheran Reformation stems from the essential rejection of the ascetic and confessional ideals of the priesthood that Nietzsche saw as essential to the people perceiving the *übermensch* within them.⁴⁶ Luther, in his effort to preserve what he saw as the truth of the faith, destroyed the purpose of man within the faith. The aspect of embracing suffering and separation from worldly goods and pleasures to grow closer to God and to know oneself was eviscerated from the people, and instead, the priest was given woman, and the religion of pity was more strongly formed.

Nietzsche, however, does not give a blanket condemnation of the church. Although he has expressed that the direction which the church has taken in modern times in turning away from ascetic ideals towards comfort and pity as their mainstay is a negative and corrupting vice, he does recognize a certain aspect of the church that gives it some level of redemption. Towards the end of aphorism 358, Nietzsche gives his opinion about the church itself stating, "A church is above all a structure for ruling that secures the highest rank for the more spiritual human beings and that believes in the power of spirituality to the extent of forbidding itself the use of all the cruder instruments of force; and on this score alone the church is under all circumstances a *nobler* institution than the state."⁴⁷ Nietzsche did not believe that the church itself was an evil institution, or that its corruption has gone beyond repair. What Nietzsche claims to believe is that, unlike the German nationalists and Lutheran supporters who claim otherwise, the stripping of the ascetic ideals and the principle of embracing suffering from the church by Luther and the successive German churches, and replacing it with a system of pity that consumes the weak to enhance

⁴⁶ Ibid, 312.

⁴⁷ Nietzsche, *Gay Science*, 313.

the strong and build the herd has caused the modern church to steer away from suffering, and to support a similar mindset to that of the nationalists which Nietzsche so vehemently condemns. This last piece of information leads into the tool that is used by what Nietzsche would consider the bane of Christendom to lead people into the religion of pity: herd instinct and a rigid form of absolute morality.

Aphorism 359: The revenge against the spirit and other ulterior motives of morality

A cautionary warning is due before this subsection, and it is that Nietzsche was not amoral or relativistic. As seen in earlier subsections, Nietzsche had his own system of ascetic ideals, embracing suffering, and introspective practices that would constitute a system of morality in and of itself; however, Nietzsche typically opposed rigid moral systems as they tend to be viewed and practiced in the modern era. This is shown in aphorism 359, where Nietzsche describes, as the title states, the ulterior motives of those who preach morality. Particularly, the portion of the aphorism referred to follows:

What do you suppose he finds necessary, necessary, to give himself in his own eyes the appearance of superiority over more spiritual people...Always morality; you can bet on that. Always big moral words. Always the rub-a-dub of justice, wisdom, holiness, virtue. Always the Stoicism of gesture...Always the cloak of prudent silence...it is a screen behind which the philosopher saves himself because he has become weary, old, cold, hard...Wisdom as a screen behind which the philosopher hides from—spirit?⁴⁸

The source of this morality, though propagated by the priestly type and by the plague of Christendom, is not found in these things. The true source of this version of morality as a hiding place for the philosopher is the disgust with life that the individual feels within himself. Instead of finding meaning in the suffering of his life, humanity

⁴⁸ Ibid, 315.

forgets itself in its work, tries to cure its boredom by incessant activity, associates with groups and reads books that he does not have the capacity to understand, and fills its life with activities that do not contribute to the overall development of his mind. This, in turn, instills a sense of a desire for an “accomplished revenge”, which the human finds in using morality hypocritically to fulfill its ego and subdue that of others.⁴⁹

Eventually, this mindset leads to an absolute and rigid morality when adopted by the herd; however, before herd instinct can be examined, the different factors that contribute to the beginning of this form of rigid morality should be examined. First, boredom is the main trigger which causes these spiraling events into rigid morality and illness of the mind. Nietzsche considers boredom as one of the essential elements in triggering cultural and philosophical innovation. In aphorism 42 titled *Work and boredom*, Nietzsche describes boredom as a force that drives the contemplative and artistic life, a force that he compares to the auspicious winds of a sailing voyage.⁵⁰ It is by this force that the creative and philosophical genius of these people can be brought forth; however, very few people are able to allow for this force to enter their lives. As has been covered in previous aphorisms, boredom and leisure time are a curse, an indicator that someone else is doing more, being more productive, and achieving a higher ideal than we are. Thus, we tend to force ourselves into our work, banishing all kinds of boredom for the pursuit of being the best cog in the machine.

And what exactly does this accomplish, if not to build customs, practices, and ways of life that codify into the morals of a society an overworking, production-centered

⁴⁹ Ibid, 314.

⁵⁰ Ibid, 108.

mentality, the defiance of which is seen as an affront to God? Nietzsche describes this very thing in aphorism 43 entitled *What laws betray*, where he makes that claim that laws are not a revelation of the identity of a people, but instead betray what is normal and customary for them.⁵¹ Laws do not show us how people have come to be, but rather what the mores of the land are, as well as what the consequences of defying the mores are. Regarding these mores, Nietzsche states that “the mores of morality sustained the faith that all of man’s inner life was attached to iron necessity with clamps.”⁵² In other words, even though the people living under the morality of mores accorded to their place of origin believe that these mores are necessary and universal, this is an illusion. The truth, however, is that these are not so much iron clamps as loosely bound cuffs: they hold in theory, but release in other circumstances.

What is the effect of this “morality of mores”? How does this change our general outlook on life and our experience of what we feel? As many have experienced, this feeling of being trapped, of being stifled by the rigid structure of society, is enough to stifle the creative and contemplative life from man. Nietzsche elucidates this theme in aphorisms 47 through 50, wherein he speaks on the passions and solitude.

Aphorism 47 through 50: On the suppression of passions to the argument of growing solitude

The first result of the use of customary moralities and a business mentality is the suppression of passions and emotional experiences that otherwise could be productive.

⁵¹ Ibid, 109.

⁵² Ibid, 111.

Using the example of Louis XIV, along with the bourgeois, baroque period of the day to illustrate the height of suppression, Nietzsche states that the ultimate result of refusing oneself the expression of passions when they come is the opposite of what people want: the refusal to experience these passions at all.⁵³ What follows this suppression is an illusion of passion, a stage play of life that mimics the actions and effects of true passion, but leaves it devoid of its true influence.⁵⁴

Continuing in this theme in aphorism 49, Nietzsche builds on this when he presents the lack of modern-day knowledge of suffering and pain. Misery, in the Nietzschean mindset, is a separating factor for humankind. It separates the great humans—true artists, philosophers, visionaries, in short, the overmen—from the small, weak humans, the humans who refuse to experience the extremes of the human psyche, the ones who are bound so deeply to convention that they cannot set themselves free. In other words, there are far fewer of the great humans who choose to experience pain than there are of those who choose to avoid pain and to anathematize its presence in life and in daily interaction.⁵⁵ What does Nietzsche say the cure is? In brief, misery.⁵⁶ Misery, suffering, pain—this hurt deep within the soul, a trial that is miserable and difficult to bear—is the way to free yourself from these mindsets. To choose this experience and engrave it within the essence of your being is the key to knowing and surpassing yourself.

⁵³ Ibid, 112.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid, 113.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

And wherein is this suffering most greatly experienced? This place of suffering, according to Nietzsche, is in the realm of solitude. Aphorism 50 covers this, wherein Nietzsche explains the growing fear of solitude in society. Ordinary men, Nietzsche maintains, couch this fear in a veil of morality, whereby they say that certain things are against their morality; however, what they truly fear is the encroachment of solitude into their lives.⁵⁷ Ironically, this is what would set them free from the herd instinct that causes them to speak from this viewpoint. In *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche makes this need for solitude even more apparent in aphorism 44 when he speaks of the false philosophers, stating:

...there now is something that abuses this name...these falsely so-called 'free spirits'...are all human beings without solitude, without their own solitude...only they are unfree and ridiculously superficial...above all in their basic inclination to find in the forms of old society...just about the cause of all human misery and failure...What they would like to strive for is the universal green-pasture happiness of the herd, with security, lack of danger, comfort, and an easier life for everyone.⁵⁸

These philosophers who seek to find the source of human suffering and misery merely confirm their own biases by refusing solitude. Instead of truly seeking the source and meaning behind suffering, they seek a philosophical system that bolsters the ignorant bliss of the herd, that neglects the risk of true philosophical thought, and that neglects the pain of facing their own true reflection in the mirror. Perhaps our greatest fear in solitude and leisure is not the boredom, but the thoughts and potential for self-knowledge that this silent solitude provokes. In aphorism 52, Nietzsche states that one can suffer a bad

⁵⁷ Ibid, 114.

⁵⁸ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, (New York: Random House, 1966), 54.

conscience more easily than a bad reputation.⁵⁹ Taking this thought further, perhaps the true source of fear stems from uncertainty. Just as we do not know what people suppose and think about us, so the uncertainty of encountering a part of our own human suffering and misery, of enlightening a certain part of our minds, of knowing ourselves and embracing the darkness in ourselves, is what drives us to remain eternally busy. We cannot stop our work, for to stop working is to allow yourself to accept the inevitable pain inside yourself. So, the obvious question comes forth: what is to be done? How can we free ourselves from this piteous trap of busyness, and accept that we are flawed human beings that need to know ourselves?

The cure to busyness in Nietzsche

We have the diagnosis: over-excessive busyness mixed with a desire to remain ignorant about one's own interior thought processes. Some of the side effects include ignorance of self, ignorance of truth, and herd instinct. What can we do to treat this malady of the soul? What treatment is strong enough to counter this cultural pandemic? The answer lies in a theme that pervades many of Nietzsche's works: the theme of being a timeless, homeless wanderer, like the posthumous people described elsewhere in *The Gay Science*.

Aphorism 377, entitled *We who are homeless*, expresses this idea of living timelessly in an era that does not accept such a thing, which becomes particularly clear when Nietzsche states:

We children of the future, how could we be at home in this today? We feel disfavor for all ideals that might lead one to feel at home in this fragile, broken time of transition; as for its 'realities,' we do not believe that they

⁵⁹ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, 115.

will last...we far prefer to live on the mountains, apart, 'untimely', in past or future centuries, merely in order to keep ourselves from experiencing the silent rage to which we know we should be condemned...⁶⁰

The first step in this cure is to set ourselves apart from this and every age, to take ourselves out of time. To participate in this age is to attach oneself in the transient realities and temporary beliefs of the age and place wherein you reside, and that binds you to a limited view. Instead, to free oneself from busyness and discern yourself, retreat from the activity of the age, set yourself apart, and reflect in the solitude of the mountains. In other words, turn into yourself, look upon your soul, engage your suffering, and then you will be freed from the spiral of wasted time and regretful lives.

The second step is to investigate the depths of oneself and battle your inner demons. This step comes from a combination of aphorism 146 in *Beyond Good and Evil* and aphorism 380 in *The Gay Science*. In aphorism 146 of *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche states that, "Whoever fights monsters should see to it that in the process he does not become a monster. And when you look long into the abyss, the abyss looks long into you."⁶¹ In aphorism 380 in *The Gay Science*, he states that the one who wishes to overcome the times and the things that bind people to this time must become light within themselves, must loose themselves from the bondage of this age, and embrace their untimeliness, suffering from time, their contradiction against time, and their romanticism.⁶² Taken together, we can discern that the battle against our inner demons is a worthy one, one that will take a process of successively letting go of our material attachments, facing our inner sufferings

⁶⁰ Nietzsche, Friedrich. *The Gay Science*, 341.

⁶¹ Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 89.

⁶² Nietzsche, Friedrich. *The Gay Science*, 343.

one-by-one, and freeing ourselves via self-knowledge. To summarize, one must annihilate what one thinks oneself to be, to realize exactly what one is. Only then can one be free.

This task may seem incredibly daunting, and, to be fair, it is no small feat. To face down our greatest enemies—our own selves and the bonds of our cultures and times—requires a tremendous amount of effort, introspection and, above all, suffering. Looking into the abyss, staring into the dark parts of the soul and fighting our monsters, is inevitably going to lead to pain; however, the way to true meaning in life versus the bourgeois style of busyness culture is to embrace the darkness of suffering to gain eyes that see beyond our own individual existence. A quote popularly attributed to Friedrich Nietzsche states that “to live is to suffer; to survive is to find meaning in the suffering.” If we continue in propagating mere busyness in our lives, we only suffer; however, if we counter this by embracing the pain and finding our meaning within it, we set ourselves free and attribute meaning to our timeless lives.

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CHAPTER THREE

Pascal and Our Problem with Boredom and Anxiety

Introduction

As the previous chapter stated, Nietzsche believes that one of the root causes of our culture of busyness is that we refuse to accept suffering as a vital part of our growth. Because we refuse to experience the pain that accompanies life, we end up living a hollow life, a life that follows the natural herd instinct that controls much of the population. Idleness and leisure become curses, taking away from our productivity. And what is the cure according to Nietzsche? To embrace suffering, to delve into the abyss of quiet solitude, and to begin the eternal process of self-discovery. Once someone has begun this process, then he can truly begin to embrace the suffering that comes with life, and the joys that come through the suffering.

Having established Nietzsche's viewpoint, we now turn our attention to another influential philosopher who wrote on the condition of humanity and the reason for its busyness: Blaise Pascal. One might ask why Blaise Pascal is the appropriate parallel to Friedrich Nietzsche for this examination. The answer revolves around the parallel structure that Nietzsche and Pascal's answers have in addressing the need for suffering and leisure in this age of busyness and haste. In Nietzsche's thought, humanity fills its life with activity in order to avoid the suffering necessary to begin the process of knowing oneself and developing culture and art. Similarly, Pascal argues that man fills his life with activity to avoid feeling the anxiety that accompanies the inconstancy and

boredom of having nothing to do, as will be discussed later in this chapter. Therefore, the second chapter's discussion of Nietzsche naturally and necessarily leads to a discussion of Pascal's thoughts.

In his *Pensées*, Pascal illustrates the condition of humanity by laying out aphorisms, often quite short, on why humans are the way they are, what causes humans to avoid this, and how human can find their true selves and become who they were meant to be. In this chapter, I will begin by giving a brief overview of Blaise Pascal's life and religious beliefs to set the stage for his works. Then, I will examine Pascal's sayings on the human condition, highlighting the three main areas of inconstancy, boredom, and anxiety that he states are part and parcel to the human condition. After this, I will examine the various ways man tries to avoid these aspects of his condition in Pascal's thought, which ultimately lead to propagating them. Next, I will conclude with a summary of my interpretation of Pascal, followed by the way which Pascal believes that man can find himself and be true to his core nature. Finally, I will conclude with a comparison between Nietzsche and Pascal, especially concerning the main points of convergence and divergence between their individual diagnoses and prescriptions for the malady of busyness.

Background on Blaise Pascal and his Pensées

Born on 19 June 1623 and raised entirely by his father, Etienne Pascal, Blaise Pascal experienced a tumultuous time in the Church and in the state of France. With the Protestant persecutions and wars taking place at the time, different sects arising in the Catholic Church, and the state trying to wrest power from the Church and claim it for

itself, Pascal's world was one of turmoil and chaos. It was during this time that he wrote the *Pensées*.⁶³

Regarding the spiritual themes found within the *Pensées*, his Jansenist⁶⁴ leanings are easily discerned. This sect, founded by Cornelius Jansen after his publication of *Augustinus*, followed a line of teaching that bore close similarity to the rising Calvinist movement of the time, but drew more from Augustine's beliefs on the depravity of the human condition. One of its central beliefs regarded the complete and total depravity of the human soul. As we are fallen beings, the Jansenists believed that original sin caused our natures to become totally corrupted and incapable of seeking after God. Therefore, humans must be predestined by God to believe in Him. From this, humanity is completely and utterly geared to pursue concupiscence and diverting passions without the grace of God to turn them away from such things. These beliefs also bore striking similarities to Augustinian thoughts regarding concupiscence and sin.⁶⁵

With these beliefs laid out, it will become clear that much of Pascal's beliefs on the conditions of humankind and the depravity of its nature were influenced by the Jansenists. In examining his beliefs, I will split the examination of his *Pensées* into three sections: humanity's condition and its vain attempts at a cure, followed by Pascal's view

⁶³ A. J. Krailsheimer, *Introduction in Pensées*, (London: Penguin Books, 2005), 1995.

⁶⁴ To bring more clarity to the matter of who the Jansenists were, the movement sprung from the teachings of the bishop of Ypres, Cornelius Ypres, and was soon after condemned by the Church for its similarity in teaching to the Protestant Calvinist movement. Claiming to be distinct from Calvinism and to be non-heretical, the Jansenists set up shop in a convent in Port Royal, where Pascal's family came into contact with them. For more information on this, refer to footnote 65, and for more information on the influence of Jansenism on Pascal, see *God Owes Us Nothing* by Leszek Kolakowski.

⁶⁵ Thomas Bokenkotter, *The Church Torn By Internal Strife: Jansenism and Gallicanism* (New York: First Image Books, 2005).

on what truly cures the afflictions of the natural condition of humanity. Finally, after examining this disease of the human condition through my interpretation of Pascal's work, I will give a general overview of how Pascal identifies the main way to flee from our perceived condition, and cling to the truth of who we are and who we are meant to be.

Humanity's Condition

We begin with the crucial question of this section: what is the nature of humanity's condition according to Pascal? We find the answer to this in *pensée* 24: "*Man's condition*. Inconstancy, boredom, anxiety."⁶⁶ Though this does not elucidate much regarding the details of how these play into humanity's condition, we can glean some information which will become useful later on. Firstly, humanity's condition and his feeling of pain in this world stems from the inconstancy that man feels. Humanity is constantly shifting and changing by each passing day, flitting from one thing to the next without much rest. Thus, humanity feels this dreaded sense of boredom renew itself at every junction, and this boredom causes it to become anxious for the next thing to satisfy its ever-searching mind.

Pascal further elaborates on this point in *pensées* 26 and 27 in the example of a prince. Princes, Pascal states, are constantly surrounded by noise, people, distractions; in short, they are surrounded by busyness and haste. Everyday people mistake this constant immersion in diversion as a sign of the prince's happiness; however, Pascal states that this is more a sign of the force of habit and inconstancy in the king's life, which is

⁶⁶ Blaise Pascal, *Pensées*, (London: Penguin Books, 1995), 24. Note: From here on, I will note any reference to Pascal's *Pensées* by simply stating "Pascal" followed by the *Pensée* number.

mistaken for some sort of “mark of divinity.” Thus, Pascal concludes, the power of the king is founded on the weakness and follies of the general populace, using their mistaken interpretations to promote a sense of awe for the king. Further, in *pensée* 28, Pascal makes the claim that, due to this weakness, neither king nor commoner can claim to know what the good is that they are seeking so deeply in life, because no man has the power to know this good.⁶⁷

One may ask, however, how a passage regarding a prince can be made to relate to the rest of us. Regarding this, I would posit that we must consider that we are the princes of our own lives. We choose the activities we engage in; we choose the people and things that surround us; we choose the noise and distractions of our everyday life. In this way, we take a similar course to this metaphorical prince every day of our lives. Although many would consider that we are happy with this life, instead we are simply diverting ourselves, trying to distract ourselves from the boredom and anxieties of life.

One must ask from this, “Why are these *pensées* important? What do they tell us regarding the nature of man?” Simply put, these *pensées* teach us that every human, no matter their station in life, seeks happiness in places where they cannot find it because their own inconstancy, boredom, and anxiety teach them to do so. Humanity is constantly searching for that final piece, that last number in the equation that will make all of life add up; however, there is a certain capacity that is missing inside all of us according to Pascal, and this missing capacity prevents us from being able to reach out and discern exactly what is missing, as well as how to attain it.

⁶⁷ Pascal, 24-27.

Pascal goes on to elaborate the mental processes that feed into our inconstant states in pensées 47 and 53 through 56. In pensée 47, Pascal states:

We never keep to the present. We recall the past; we anticipate the future as if we found it too slow in coming and were trying to hurry it up, or we recall the past as if to stay its too rapid flight. We are so unwise that we wander about in times that do not belong to us, and do not think of the only one that does; so vain that we dream of times that are not and blindly flee the only one that is. The fact is that the present usually hurts. We thrust it out of sight because it distresses us, and if we find it enjoyable, we are sorry to see it slip away... Let each of us examine his thoughts; he will find them wholly concerned with the past or the future... The past and present are our means, the future alone is our end. Thus we never actually live, but hope to live, and since we are always planning how to be happy, it is inevitable that we should never be so.⁶⁸

This pensée reflects that crucial point that much of Pascal's thought revolves around: the condemnation of the lack of mindfulness⁶⁹ in humanity. We refuse to live in the present because, as Pascal stated, it hurts to be present. Being present makes us vulnerable to the injuries, worries, and insecurities we feel in this moment; therefore, we flee it via mental escapism. We either fly back to the proverbial golden days, reliving lost joys and non-existent bliss found only within memory; or, we fly haphazardly to an idyllic version of our future, fantasizing about what it will be like if we can just accomplish this one thing, if we can just finish this one project, if we can just finish one more page. Our thoughts are so wrapped up in these unpossessed times that our own present slips away from us, and happiness thereby eludes us once more. Pascal expands on this idea in pensées 53 through 56, wherein Pascal compares a human's life to an organ which a person must

⁶⁸ Pascal, 47.

⁶⁹ Mindfulness, in this context, is a sense of awareness of the present moment and of one's actions within the present moment. In other words, mindfulness consists in actively engaging with one's present actions and moment instead of passively going through the motions.

find the keys to play it properly. In other words, just like an organ whose keys constantly shift and whose tune constantly changes, people cannot stay the same. People's desires constantly shift and change to match the inconstancy they feel inside. Even though a person may know the tune to play at any given time, that tune will eventually become obsolete, leaving the person empty and void as before. Pascal concludes in *pensée* 56 with the point that, "Anyone who found the secret of rejoicing when things go well without being annoyed when they go badly would have found the point. It is perpetual motion."⁷⁰ The main source of our inconstancy is attributing the joy that stems from learning to live in the present to perceived future joys. One must learn to accept this present time—along with the ills and pleasures that come with it—to truly experience lasting joy.

So, the question remains as to why we do not live this way. If there is a portion of our cognitive processes that recognizes we cannot be happy by living with all our hope set for the future instead of the present, what keeps us in this state? One answer is found in *pensée* 73, wherein Pascal states that, "What causes inconstancy is the realization that present pleasures are false, together with the failure to realize that absent pleasures are vain."⁷¹ Put another way, we do not realize that most of what we conceive to be pleasures in this time are simply illusions, whereas any imagined pleasures that may come are mirages. We are misled by both sources, always reaching out to try and grasp these pleasures, while they always slip through our fingertips like fog. Thus, we always flutter

⁷⁰ Pascal, 56.

⁷¹ *Ibid*, 73.

from one imagined pleasure to the next, constantly in motion towards no prescribed destination.

And so, we move on to the second aspect of humanity's condition: boredom. As Pascal states in *pensée* 622:

Man finds nothing so intolerable as to be in a state of complete rest, without passions, without occupations, without diversion, without effort. Then he faces his nullity, loneliness, inadequacy, dependence, helplessness, emptiness. And at once there wells up from the depths of his soul boredom, gloom, depression, chagrin, resentment, and despair.⁷²

In other words, man naturally craves stimulation. We are so used to flitting from one diversion to another that to have nothing to do seems to be the greatest affront. By having nothing to do, humanity must face down its greatest enigma—*itself*—without the aid of distractions to keep themselves from delving into his darkest depths. Despair, gloom, depression, anxiety—all of these, according to Pascal, well up in our souls due to lack of stimulation, bearing fruit when our minds become still and take the time to try and discern who we are. This, however, is uncomfortable for us, for it is in the silence that our inner voice whispers about our true nature.

Because of our desire to silence this inner voice, we seek diversions from any and every possible source. In the interim, these diversions do work. Going back to the example of the prince, as well as the example of the organ out of tune, we can see that the distractions do satisfy our inner prince and do play a wonderful tune on our mental organ.

⁷² Ibid, 622.

And yet Pascal sees this as one of the worst things we can do to ourselves. In pensée 414, Pascal summarizes diversion as such:

The only thing that consoles us for our miseries is diversion. And yet it is the greatest of our miseries. For it is that above all which prevents us thinking about ourselves and leads us imperceptibly to destruction. But for that we should be bored, and boredom would drive us to seek some more solid means of escape, but diversion passes our time and brings us imperceptibly to our death.⁷³

Boredom can be our greatest strength; however, we rarely see it that way. Instead of allowing boredom to lead us into a contemplative mindset, we instead seek to pass the time with diversion. This causes our life to slip by, letting real and meaningful experiences of the present moment slip by for the illusory dreams of the future.

What is it in boredom that humans discover that causes such negative feelings to arise? What could possibly engender so strong a reaction as to naturally cause fear, anxiety and despair? The answer can be found in pensée 199, wherein Pascal speaks of the two infinities. In this scheme, humanity is trapped between two infinite types of space: the infinitude of the greatness and loftiness of all that is and all that can be conceived in their entirety, and the infinitude of the smallest particles of things, breaking things down infinitely to their core. Taken to its furthest extent, the imagination grows weary of imagining an infinite number of things in their entirety, but also tires of discerning the infinitude of the minute. As Pascal states in pensée 199:

I want to show him a new abyss. I want to depict to him not only the visible universe, but all the conceivable immensity of nature enclosed in this miniature atom. Let him see there an infinity of universes, each with its firmament, its planets, its earth, in the same proportions as in the visible world, and on that earth animals, and finally mites...he will be lost in such

⁷³ Pascal, 414.

wonders, as astounding in their minuteness as the other in their amplitude...For, after all, what is man in nature? A nothing compared to the infinite, a whole compared to the nothing, a middle point between all and nothing, infinitely remote from an understanding of the extremes; the end of things and their principles are unattainably hidden from him in impenetrable secrecy.⁷⁴

The confounding nature of humanity—stuck between the infinities of everything and nothing, eternally stuck as the midpoint of the abyss—is what drives it into the maddening process of seeking diversion.

Humanity cannot comprehend its place between these two infinities, nor can it understand the extremes of both their complexities. It is within silence and boredom that this contemplation begins, for boredom causes one to be present, and being present in your own reality causes contemplation of who you are and where you belong. But, as is seen in this passage, it is fearful and awful to contemplate such realities. The mind of a human could easily spiral further and further into the imagination without ever reaching a conclusion. Pascal summarizes this contemplation-induced fear in *pensée* 201, where he states that “The eternal silence of these infinite spaces fills me with dread.”⁷⁵ This dread consumes oneself unless one finds a way out of it; however, few can see that the way out of this consuming dread is their own contemplation on the self and on God, and thus they seek out worldly distraction to remove them from this state. Because of this, boredom is both the greatest gift and the ultimate curse of the human consciousness, determined by the direction which the one experiencing boredom takes in their approach to curing it.

⁷⁴ Pascal, 199.

⁷⁵ Pascal, 201.

Finally, we come to the third aspect of Pascal's conception of the human condition: anxiety. Although this has been covered somewhat by the previously discussed *pensées*, there are still some points that bear the need for discussion before moving on to Pascal's conception of the cure for man's wretchedness. The first point to be made is that anxiety stems primarily from humanity's condition of being lost in this world. As Pascal states in *pensée* 400, "Man does not know the place he should occupy. He has obviously gone astray; he has fallen from his true place and cannot find it again. He searches everywhere, anxiously but in vain, in the midst of penetrable darkness."⁷⁶ Humanity's anxiety stems from its yearning to belong in a world where it was never meant to belong. This world, in the conception of Pascal, is a place of darkness and shadow, a half-world that cannot contain the true meaning of humanity, because humanity was made for an existence of a higher sort.

This theme of constant change and shifting causing anxiety continues in *pensée* 28, wherein Pascal states, "Men are wholly occupied in pursuing their good, but they could not justify their claim to possession, because they have nothing but human fancy and no strength to make its possession secure. It is the same with knowledge, for illness removes it. We are equally incapable of truth and good."⁷⁷ Through this lens, humans are weak and unable to concretize their reality. Faced with this ever-shifting nature of reality and life, humans become anxious, because humans desire to possess their reality and make it their own. Lacking this ability, humans feel weak and powerless, bound to accept this life as it comes to them. To put it another way, *pensée* 78 describes the state of

⁷⁶ *Ibid*, 400.

⁷⁷ Pascal, 28.

humans as “Dependence, desire for independence, needs.”⁷⁸ Humans constantly desire to be free, but cannot attain freedom; they constantly desire fulfillment, but are always discontent; humans desire the good, but always fall short.

Additionally, Pascal sees anxiety stemming from the bondage that humanity is born into by being in such a depraved and fallen state. In *pensée* 434, Pascal summarizes his view of life and the human condition in the following metaphor:

Imagine a number of men in chains, all under sentence of death, some of whom are each day butchered in the sight of the others; those remaining see their own condition in that of their fellows, and looking at each other with grief and despair await their turn. This is an image of the human condition.⁷⁹

Humanity, along with life itself, is missing a necessary component that frees a man and allows him to escape this punishment of butchering that is imagined in this *pensée*. Surrounded by darkness, filled with despair and anxiety for the bitter end, we fail to see the way out, fail to contemplate on and know ourselves, and thus we remain chained in a line with our fellows, unable to live and thrive as we should.

To put the devastating effects of anxiety into sharper focus, one can examine *pensée* 413, wherein Pascal states:

Anyone who wants to know the full extent of man’s vanity has only to consider the causes and effects of love. The cause is a *je ne sais quoi* (Corneille). And its effects are terrifying. This indefinable something, so trifling that we cannot recognize it, upsets the whole earth, princes,

⁷⁸ Ibid, 78.

⁷⁹ Ibid, 434.

armies, the entire world. Cleopatra's nose: if it had been shorter the whole face of the earth would have been different.⁸⁰

This examination of humanity's vanity ties in with anxiety because vanity and misplaced love stem from our desire to fulfill a need for a constant, concretized reality for our existence. This misplaced love, as can be seen in the example of Cleopatra, can have drastic effects on humanity, and thus vanity and misplaced love themselves cause anxiety by nature. Because of this, anxiety and its symptoms become a devastating cycle for humankind, a self-inflicted parasite that slowly works to change the very face of humanity.

These states, then, are the aspects of our human condition: inconstancy, boredom, and anxiety. We shift constantly, changing with the winds; these changes and diversions must continue to avoid and suppress boredom; and we feel impelled to find our meaning outside of the truth, lest anxiety and dread overcome us. All of this is a bondage we place on ourselves. The busyness culture that fuels this condition is a self-imposed prison, and so one must be compelled to seek the truth to be free. Thus, we come to Pascal's conception of how one becomes free of this fallen condition, and how one thereby becomes free from to survive and thrive. In the following section, I will examine Pascal's beliefs regarding how freedom is attained, and what the agency of humanity is regarding it.

Pascal's Prescription: God as Panacea

For Pascal, God is our truth and our meaning for existence. In God, we find the truth of who we are, why we were made, and what person we serve in our existence. The

⁸⁰ Pascal, 413.

beginning seeds of truth existing in God are found in pensée 131. In this section, Pascal draws a comparison between skeptics, Platonists, and dogmatists, and expounds on what each party believes. For Pascal, the skeptics are mistaken because they challenge everything and accept nothing without doubt, Platonists are mistaken for believing that there are perfected forms of everything on earth, and the dogmatists are mistaken because not all laws and dogmas can reasonably cover every circumstance. Thus, as Pascal states, “Nature confounds the sceptics and the Platonists, and reason confounds the dogmatists.”⁸¹

The question can then be asked: “What is there left to believe in?” Pascal gives this answer in reply: “Know then, proud man, what a paradox you are to yourself. Be humble, impotent reason! Be silent, feeble nature! Learn that man infinitely transcends man, hear from your master your true condition, which is unknown to you. Listen to God.”⁸² God, then, is the balance between the pull between nature and reason, between instinct and the mind. In God we find the truth that neither nature nor reason can reach the unreachable God, but only through the revelation of God to humanity can humans be freed from a busy and meaningless life to live the life of true meaning which humanity was meant for from the beginning. In God, our contradictory nature is reconciled to itself, and the faults of our existence and the depravity of our fallenness is made new and worthy. As Pascal states in pensée 393, “Man’s true nature, his good and true virtue, and true religion are things which cannot be known separately,”⁸³ and similarly in pensée

⁸¹ Pascal, 131.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Pascal, 393.

407, “The Stoics say: ‘Withdraw into yourself, that is where you will find peace.’ And that is not true. Others say: ‘Go outside: look for happiness in some diversion.’ And that is not true: we may fall sick. Happiness is neither outside nor inside us: it is in God, both outside and inside us.”⁸⁴

How is God revealed to humanity according to Pascal, and how does he correct these contradictions within us? As to the first question, the answer is found in Jesus Christ. According to Pascal, Christ is the way in which God unites instinct, reason, and divinity together to show humanity what life truly is. *Pensée* 449 is the clearest expression of this concept, in that it summarizes what a belief in divinity requires, and why Christ fulfills the requirements for this belief. In the *pensée*, Pascal states that, if a true religion exists, then life itself and society will center on it.⁸⁵ Thus, for a religion to be considered true, as well as for a God to exist, all life must be centered around him and find their meaning in Him. Further, Pascal states that two truths persist regarding humanity: that they have reasoning capacities that are capable of understanding that there is a God, but that they also have a fallen nature that prevents this understanding from bearing fruit.⁸⁶

Thus, a Redeemer is necessary to combine these two things and draw humanity’s understanding up to God. This Redeemer comes in the form of Christ, whom Pascal states as “the object of all things, the center towards which all things tend. Whoever

⁸⁴ Ibid, 407.

⁸⁵ Ibid, 449.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

knows him knows the reason for everything.”⁸⁷ Christ is the virtue of humanity, the center upon which our entire being moves. Later in the *penseé*, Pascal states that the mystery of the Redeemer is found in Christ, who “uniting in himself the two natures, human and divine, saved men from corruption in order to reconcile them with God in his divine person.”⁸⁸ In this belief, Christ is necessary as a Mediator between God and humanity because, only by his uniting the human nature, with all its frailties, with the perfect divine nature could they have the power to redeem humankind and mediate a grace that could free us from the inconstancy of our lives. He leads us to the discovery of both the truths of humanity, and by this leads us to the truth of escaping this reality. Christ reveals to us that we are both wretched and great: wretched because we are so fallen that we cannot pick ourselves back up, and great because we were made to worship and exalt the true God through His Son, Christ. As Pascal states in *pensée* 417:

Not only do we only know God through Jesus Christ, but we only know ourselves through Jesus Christ; we only know life and death through Jesus Christ. Apart from Jesus Christ we cannot know the meaning of our life or our death, of God or of ourselves. Thus, without Scripture, whose only object is Christ, we know nothing, and we can see nothing but obscurity and confusion in the nature of God and in nature itself.⁸⁹

Further on, Pascal states in *pensée* 450 that, “The true religion would have to teach greatness and wretchedness, inspire self-esteem and self-contempt, love and hate.”⁹⁰

⁸⁷ Pascal, 449.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 417.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 450.

But how does Christ reveal these things in us? How can God bring out the truth both of humanity's wretchedness and humanity's greatness? The answer is similar to that of Nietzsche: pain. Pascal states in *pensée* 795, "There is no shame in giving in to pain...because it is not pain that tempts and attracts us...glory comes from mastery and control, shame only from subjection."⁹¹ The painful revelation of one's own wretchedness without God is the key which unlocks the door to humanity turning its life away from busyness and toward God, whom Pascal sees as the necessary center for one's life. However, this turning process is not easy in any way; in fact, it might be considered one of the hardest aspects of human life. The painfulness of turning to and seeking for God in this life is seen in *pensée* 405, wherein Pascal states:

I condemn equally those men who choose to praise man, those who choose to condemn him and those who choose to divert themselves, and I can only approve of those who seek with groans.⁹²

The life of seeking after God implies pain for Pascal. Within this schema, there is no room for prosperity gospels, for feel-good sermons and easygoing Christian lives. To find the truth of existence itself in Christ, one must seek through the discomfort and pain, through the groaning and hurts, to find Christ Himself. The means to embrace this pain, then, is to let go of and submit the will of our self to Christ to embrace following Him. In this way, we unite ourselves to the suffering of our Mediator, and thus become more united with the superseding, concrete reality that is the eternal God.

⁹¹ Ibid, 795.

⁹² Pascal, 405.

As Pascal states in *pensée* 362, “The will itself will never bring satisfaction, even if it had power over everything it wanted, but we are satisfied the moment we give it up. Without it we can never be discontented, with it we can never be content.”⁹³ Herein lies the crux of our dissatisfaction, as well as the way in which we still our hearts, cease our busyness, and find true contentment. Within the thought of Pascal, we must surrender our will to Christ, trust in Him, and search for meaning through Him, and then we will find meaning and peace. Without surrender to the Mediator who unites our wretchedness with our greatness; without uniting our imperfect will to the perfect will of God via Christ; without working to redeem ourselves by finding our true selves in Christ; without these things, we will constantly find ourselves lost in a game of cycles which our too weak and ensnared in to break.

Comparison with Nietzsche’s Contentions

Having established Pascal’s contentions regarding the source of busyness, along with his prescribed cure, let us now turn our attention to examining his views alongside those of Friedrich Nietzsche. The first point of convergence in the diagnosis that can be seen is the desire of humanity to avoid leisure in order to avoid contemplating themselves. Both Nietzsche and Pascal believe that humans avoid leisure to avoid knowing themselves, because to see themselves clearly would be discover all of the wretched states of themselves that they wish to remain hidden away in the darkness of their being. Another point of convergence is in the prescription of embracing suffering in order to embrace the meaning of life. Both authors recognize that the search for meaning

⁹³ Ibid, 362.

and truth in life is fraught with pain, because we must uproot the hidden parts of ourselves to find these nuggets of truth; however, both also recognize that to persist in the darkness of our existence without painfully searching for truth is a life not worth living, and pain should therefore be embraced as the element that frees one to pursue the truth unhindered.

There is one major point of divergence between Nietzsche and Pascal, and that concerns where the center and source for truth resides. In Nietzsche's worldview, truth tends towards a more subjective, but not completely relativistic, system. Nietzsche proclaims that the truth and meaning for a person's life are found via contemplation of their inner selves, and involves a battling of mental demons and of the presiding anti-culture in order to obtain it. Pascal, however, influenced by the Catholic Church, and specifically by the Catholic Jansenist movement, sees man as merely a part of the whole, with the center and wholeness of creation and its meaning found in Jesus Christ, the God-man. Without Christ as revealed to man in the Scriptures, looking into oneself is all but useless for Pascal, because one cannot perceive his own wretchedness without the aid of Christ working in the soul. If one tries to do so, he ends up either rejecting his wretchedness and becoming a humanist, or he rejects his greatness and becomes a Stoic, neither of which is favorable.

Despite this critical difference, the crux of both authors' arguments remains the same: humans must learn to turn away from diversion and seek the truth within something else. Although the answer of this is within humans for Nietzsche and within Christ for Pascal, both see a mindful, contemplative life as the source and beginning of the answer to the meaning of life, and thus busyness must decrease and contemplation

must increase in order for a human's life to be enriched with the meaning that it was meant to retain.

Conclusion

Thus far, Nietzsche and Pascal's views on the culture of busyness and the necessity of contemplation to break through this culture and attain the full meaning of life have been examined. Considering this and the statistics regarding overwork and lack of rest and mindfulness and their effects on overall health and wellbeing presented in the first chapter, we are now prepared to present a cure for this culture of busyness, and to suggest ways in which people may retrain their mental and emotional processes to turn their minds from busyness and dissatisfaction to meaningfulness and peace.

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CHAPTER FOUR

Approach to a Cure

Introduction: What has Been Discussed

In the previous three chapters, we have examined the effects of busyness and the breakdown of leisure on the individual person, as well as on society at large. In the first chapter, we examined the statistical information regarding the increase of busyness and the collapse of leisure time, and how this has affected our society in a way that is detrimental to the health and wellbeing of the individual. Overall, the levels of busyness that pervade our society has caused a degradation of interpersonal bonds and a breakdown of culture. In particular, the levels of busyness have caused a lower quality of life, a degradation of physical and mental health, and a loosening of familial and social ties.

In the second and third chapters, we examined two of the prominent philosophical examinations of busyness as it relates to this paper. In Nietzsche's view, busyness is a means to prevent us from experiencing suffering, which also serves to set back our development as human beings. In Pascal's view, busyness is a means of avoiding the boredom and existential anxiety and dread that we feel when we have little to do and too much time to contemplate ourselves. However, the main difference in their views lies in the treatment for busyness that each gives. Nietzsche espouses a more humanist view of treating busyness, wherein the person embraces suffering, faces the darkness within himself, and uses that to develop as he is and to promote the development of a truly

human culture. Pascal, however, advised listening to God and embracing Christ as the mediator between the infinities that humanity finds itself in to help make sense of the suffering and dread which it faces.

In this chapter, I will give a few practical methods of facing busyness in our lives, as well as how we can calm our lives down in order to more fully live. As the previous three chapters have followed a pattern of going from socio-psychological examinations to religious examinations of the treatment, this chapter will also follow that method. In the first section, I will examine socio-psychological methods of curbing busyness, including curbing busyness in the workplace and promoting the necessity of boredom. Then, I will follow this up with a non-sectarian cure, which will primarily focus on Buddhist mindfulness and meditation to help slow down life, focus on the present, and become more grounded. Thirdly, I will focus on a Judeo-Christian cure, which will focus on a reintegration of the Sabbath mindset into the lives of the general populace. Finally, I will conclude the chapter by summarizing the information, as well as leaving some questions that still remain to be answered.

Socio-Psychological Approach

One reason that the average lives of Americans have become so busy is that work has taken over an increasingly larger amount of the daily lives of modern people. As was mentioned in the first chapter, the time spent at work has increased, while the time spent in more meaningful activity, such as leisure or family time, has decreased drastically. In this section of the chapter, I will cover social and psychological methods to approaching busyness, so that busyness can be lessened, and meaningfulness caused to take its place.

Firstly, I will examine workplace solutions that can be implemented to help reduce the amount of time that work consumes. Secondly, I will examine social and familial methods of reducing busyness in order to promote connections between people. Finally, I will examine the positive qualities of boredom, and will show how boredom should be used to promote creativity, inspire contemplation, and help develop a more meaningful life.

Workplace Solutions for Busyness

As mentioned in the first chapter, work hours have come to consume increasingly larger amounts of the modern person's time, taking them away from time formerly spent with family or leisure in order to earn the money that they believe is necessary to make ends meet. However, this lifestyle has had far more of a negative impact than many realize, from physical health issues such as increased rates of heart disease to detachment from family members and a lack of parental figures in the household.

However, this increasing devotion to work over family and self-development does not need to occur, and, in fact, it can be curbed with a proper reframing of our mindset about the purpose of work. The first examination of this effort to reframe our mindsets comes from a chapter from the book *Take Back Your Time* entitled "Enough—the Time Cost of Stuff". In this chapter, Vicki Robin, an American author and public speaker, addresses the mindset that people need to work more in order to pay for an increasingly expensive lifestyle that we must live. In the beginning of this chapter, she lays out the real hourly cost of living, stating that, although one may be receiving a \$20 per hour wage, the actual cost of living makes the wage worth about \$6.50 an hour; therefore, by spending

like we make \$20 an hour, we sacrifice hours that we could use on developing friendships, spending time with family, or developing ourselves at work trying to maintain a lifestyle that lies outside of our means.⁹⁴

The way that Vicki Robin suggests reframing our spending and lifestyle mindset to get us out of the workplace is to reframe what we view as necessity versus what we view as a luxury via using what she calls a Fulfillment Curve. By plotting out our finances and spending on a curve from survival on the left side of the curve to clutter and excess on the right. Every time we spend, Robin suggests we ask whether this object we wish to buy will add to fulfillment, or if it will become clutter and unnecessarily remove time from our lives.⁹⁵ In this way, Robin believes that we can reframe our thoughts on what the true reason for work is, and how we can spend more time away from work and working on ourselves.

Another chapter of the same book entitled “A New Bottom Line” further expands workplace solutions to reducing busyness and time in the workplace. Written by Irene Myers, Larry Gaffin, and Barbara Schramm, this chapter primarily concerns itself with how negative mindsets of capitalism and the proverbial rat race have skewed our thinking away from spiritual development toward the desire to keep earning money and wealth while neglecting our inner development. As the authors state halfway through the chapter, “In our rush to produce, provide, and perform, to be perfect and to please, we’ve lost sight, individually and collectively, of essential spiritual truths expressed through the centuries

⁹⁴ Vicki Robin, *Enough—the Time Cost of Stuff* (San Francisco: Berrett Koehler Publishers, 2003). 135-36.

⁹⁵ *Ibid*, 137-38.

by wisdom traditions. Capitalism and the warrior archetype have served us...but every behavior pattern has its dark side...”⁹⁶

Their solution to this constant running in the rat race for more money centers around an introspective plan which places self-development at the core of who we are. Instead of spending most of the time worried about work, the authors suggest that we as human beings should come up with a plan via quite alone time spent in introspection and evaluation in order to develop a work-life balance that is more consistent with our goals in life. Then, after having come up with a work and life balance plan, the employees must then use the resources they have to claim their time and take courage in presenting their employers with their new plan for their life. Through this method, employees can learn to take back their time and use it to promote the development of the spiritual, mental, emotional, and relational sides of their wellbeing.⁹⁷

Finally, one other chapter that I would like to cite before moving on to the next part is the chapter entitled “A Case for Sabbaticals” by Bob Sessions and Lori Erickson. By their definition, a sabbatical is not just a time to go on vacation. Instead, a sabbatical is a time of mixed leisure and work, wherein one can work to discover what truly brings himself joy, thus working towards their own fulfillment.⁹⁸ In order to achieve such a situation, Sessions and Erickson agree that a sabbatical must be a planned time of leisure and meaningful work. Instead of going in with the mindset of nothingness as is done in most

⁹⁶ Irene Myers, Larry Gaffin, and Barbara Schamm. *A New Bottom Line* (San Francisco:Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2003), 156.

⁹⁷ Ibid, 157-58.

⁹⁸ Bob Sessions, and Lori Erickson, *A Case for Sabbaticals* (San Francisco: Berret-Koehler Publishers, 2003), 168.

vacation times, sabbaticals are meant to be a focused, planned time where one pursues what enriches their own life, thus working towards their own self-discovery and development.⁹⁹

Taking these workplace solutions into account, we can see that the solutions center around reframing our mind to take in a new way of looking at work and wealth. Instead of making wealth our goal, which indirectly manipulates us into working more hours to pay for more material goods, we must redirect our minds to think on our interior goods and our interpersonal goods. In other words, we must shift the focus away from worldly goods onto the more abstract, personal, and spiritual goods. Having established this, it is time to move on to the second section concerning social methods of reframing our minds and lives.

Social Solutions for Busyness

This section will primarily focus on the interpersonal and social methods that can be used to reduce busyness and increase meaningfulness in our daily lives. One such method, as suggested by the Anna Lappé in her chapter “Recipes for Relief” is to restructure how, when, and where we eat in order to promote more interpersonal time, as well as to promote greater monetary and temporal gains. In this chapter, Lappé states that much of our eating now consists of fast food and quick eats, all of which leads to degenerated health and less time spent enjoying food at home. Her solution consists of making time to cook again, finding healthy options to eat, and in making time to enjoy our food slowly and in the company of others. In this way, food can be used as a social method to rework social and interpersonal development back into our time.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹ Ibid, 159.

¹⁰⁰ Anna Lappé, *Recipes for Relief*, (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2003), 186-192.

Another solution, though it consists of a less of a personal and more of a societal shift, is found in Linda Breen Pierce's chapter "Time by Design." In this chapter, Pierce talks about how a city can be planned in order to help promote time-saving activities, as well as to promote less stressful commutes to daily activities and routines. For example, Pierce espouses planning out suburban and urban areas to place shopping centers, gyms, grocery stores, and other essential places within close proximity to each other, thereby promoting walking or biking to these places along with promoting the ability to plan less time out instead of just living in the moment of one's day.¹⁰¹

Although this solution seems to be on a more architectural or urban planning spectrum, there is a form of a personal solution to busyness that one can glean out of this chapter. Firstly, as Pierce states in her chapter, much of our time is wasted by the abundance of planning that we commit to in order to try and paradoxically save time; however, if we could make a simple plan to follow a routine which allows for less stress, less wasted time, and more freedom to pursue leisure or other activities. By committing to living less off of an abundance of plans and more in a centralized, focused way that promotes efficiency in time management, we can allow ourselves more free time to pursue leisure, and thus begin to feel less of the pressure from and overworked busyness mindset.

Examining these solutions in conjunction with the workplace solutions, a pattern for the socio-psychological solutions begins to emerge. Our brains need to go through a rewiring process: instead of focusing on the need to constantly work or have several different plans to micromanage our time, we must begin to loosen the reins, allow ourselves

¹⁰¹ Linda Breene Pierce, *Time by Design*, (San Francisco:Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2003), 198-99.

time to pursue leisure, and plan only enough to allow for efficient uses of time while maintaining our need for leisure time. Having described these solutions, I will move on to the final aspect of this section: a promotion of boredom and its use.

Redeeming Boredom to Cure Busyness

As was explained in both Nietzsche and Pascal's writings, boredom is something that humans hate to experience. Having nothing to do leaves us open to probing the depths of our consciousness, which can stir up negative and suppressed thoughts, feelings, and ideas that we never thought we had before; however, boredom does not have to be such a negative experience. As Nietzsche and Pascal expressed in their writings, boredom can be how culture and philosophy reveal themselves, and it can also be the beginning of self-contemplation and self-discovery. Through boredom, one can begin to discern what a richer, more meaningful life is, and one can also boredom as a tool to invent and create new ideas. Although Pascal does believe that boredom is a sign of a deep-seated wretchedness within man, an indication of our need to divert ourselves from the misery from our lives,¹⁰² boredom can still be contain usefulness despite being a marker of humanity's wretchedness.

One paper that expresses a positive view on boredom is "The Bright Side of Boredom" by Andreas Elpidorou. Elpidorou highlights the history of the study of boredom, illustrating how it has been viewed as negative state that must be avoided and cured as much as possible; however, Elpidorou disagrees with this. In her own words, Elpidorou

¹⁰² Pascal, 70.

states “Despite its impressive historical backing, the view that boredom is entirely negative should be rejected. Recent empirical work on boredom, taken in tandem with theoretical considerations about its nature and character, suggest a rather different picture of the state of boredom.”¹⁰³ This new picture of boredom, according to Elpidorou, consists of seeing it as a force for creative inspiration and for finding fulfillment. Boredom, in this sense, drives us to leave unfulfilling states in pursuit of things which are subconscious perceives as more fulfilling.¹⁰⁴

Another study which looks at boredom through a similar framework is one performed by Dr. Mary L. Cummings, Dr. Fei Gao, and Dr. Kris M. Thornburg entitled “Boredom in the Workplace: A New Look at an Old Problem”. In this study, the researchers defined and measured boredom in the workplace in an attempt to determine the use of boredom and how it can be lessened. As a result, they found that activities that tended to be more stimulating and engaging—in other words, more meaningful—tended to be the ones which provoked less of a reaction of boredom from the employees involved.¹⁰⁵

Looking at all of this information holistically, one can come to the conclusion that, although boredom can be a negative experience, it is more often a positive, stimulating instinct. In this sense, boredom becomes an instinct meant to drive one towards fulfillment, a tool which illuminates areas where one is not reaching their fullest potential. By allowing

¹⁰³ Andreas Elpidorou, *The Bright Side of Boredom*, (*Frontiers in Psychology*, 2015), 1-4.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Mary L. Cummings, Fei Gao, and Kris M. Thornburg, *Boredom in the Workplace: A New Look at an Old Problem*, (*Human Factors*, March 2016), Pp. 279-300.

ourselves to become bored and to listen to the inner voice that accompanies boredom, we can be guided into engaging in more fulfilling and nurturing activities that satisfy the inner silence produced by boredom.

I would be remiss, at this point, to not address Pascal's skepticism regarding human methods of curing boredom and busyness. Pascal was, at heart, a religious man, and purely human methods would arouse suspicion at best. For Pascal, boredom and inconstancy causes humans to seek out diversions and distractions to avert them from their inner wretchedness and sufferings, so that they do not have to come to know themselves. Therefore, to put one's efforts into wholly human endeavors would come across as futile to Pascal. However, if Pascal's skepticism is taken into account and moved to the section regarding the Judeo-Christian solution, then his skepticism is warranted, valid, and necessary for the solution.

Altogether, an approach to busyness must embrace three vital points. Firstly, it must seek to place the emphasis of work and money on being used for necessity alone, and not allowing these things to consume oneself in the pursuit of luxury. Secondly, it must reframe our consciousness into maintaining an efficient approach that also allows for breaks that give one time to plan and pursue activities and contemplations which build up the meaningful nature of our existence. Finally, it must embrace boredom as a means of triggering desire for pursuing fulfillment. Taken together, these factors lead to a state of being which advocates for the pursuit of interior development and enrichment of the full human person. The approach advocates leaving behind worldly wealth as the main goal, and instead seeing rest and leisure as a state of existence that is preferable to busyness and overexertion.

Buddhist Approach

Having covered the socio-psychological method for a cure to busyness, the time now comes to examine the Buddhist approach to a cure. In this section, I will start with a brief description of Buddhist beliefs to give some background information for the basis of the practice of mindfulness and meditation. Then, I will examine the use of mindfulness and meditation as a means of contemplating the self and stilling the busyness of external life. Finally, I will examine Nietzsche's criticisms of Buddhism, and show how his contentions do not counter the positive qualities that Buddhist mindfulness and meditation has in regard to reducing busyness and inducing calm in life.

Buddhist Beliefs

The principal teaching of Buddhism, also called the Dharma, is the belief that human existence is entangled in suffering, or *dukkha*. All of life includes suffering of one form or another, and this suffering is inescapable in this life. However, the Buddha expressed in his Four Noble Truths that the source of suffering exists due to desire, which incessantly gives rise to a feeling of unsatisfactory feelings, to feelings of unfulfillment that can never be quenched.¹⁰⁶ Because suffering is caused by desire, it can therefore be quenched by releasing the desires and attachments that keep us attached to the physical world and its pleasures. This is where the practice of mindfulness and meditation comes

¹⁰⁶ Samuel Bercholz and Sherab Chödzin Kohn. *Entering the Stream: An Introduction to the Buddha and His Teachings*. (Boston: Shambhala, 1993), 62.

into play in Buddhism. The goal of meditation and mindfulness, generally, is to develop a lifestyle that empties itself of self-centered and self-focused thought, and instead learns to accept what comes in life and what thoughts as the passing and temporal things that they are.¹⁰⁷ Practices such as mindfulness, mantras, meditation, and an external, present focus helps to detach oneself from the attachments of the world, and to bring oneself out of the cycle of *samsara*, the cycle of life, death, and rebirth.

Practicing Mindfulness to Reduce Busyness

Taking what we have discussed before this section and applying Buddhist beliefs to these, we can extrapolate that, from a Buddhist perspective, busyness and overworking to the exclusion of leisure, contemplation, and self-development stems from a lack of present-centered focus and from an unhealthy attachment to the world and its temporal goods. In this sense, the practice of mindfulness and meditation would be an approach which could still the mind, revise one's focus, and bring one back to a sense of the present and what lies before you.

In his book *The Miracle of Mindfulness: A Manual for Meditation*, Thich Nhat Hanh, a Vietnamese Buddhist monk, details the practice and benefits of mindfulness and meditation via anecdotes and examples meant to relate these practices to daily life. One of the examples he gives is one concerning a man named Allen. In this story, Hanh's friend Allen says that he used to divide his time into sections, leaving only a small part for himself at the end after taking care of what he perceived as his duties; however, Allen soon came

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, 228.

to the realization that he need not compartmentalize his time. Through mindfulness, Allen learned to make every act, every second a present moment which he shared with his work and with others. In this way, Allen learned to be mindful and to turn monotonous busyness into meaningful, engaged activity.¹⁰⁸

This, then, is the central focus of mindfulness and meditation which one can and should instill in his own life. Instead of viewing this practice as something that needs special time set aside for meditation and a clearing of the mind, one can and should view mindfulness as beginning a way of life, in which one becomes more focused on the task at hand and on the present time immediately before them. By doing this, one can remove the anxieties of the future and the unsated desire for more wealth which causes more work, thereby decreasing the amount of busyness and increasing the meaningfulness in one's life.

But one may ask, "How can a modern person practice mindfulness in their everyday life?" Thich Nhat Hanh gives several examples in his book as to how one can go about their normal day while practicing the art of mindfulness. A primary aspect of this practice is to follow one's breath while performing an activity in order to keep one actively engaged in what they are doing and not dissociated from the event. In this way, we constantly recall ourselves to the present, bringing our minds back to focus on what lies before us instead of wandering either in an empty state, or from becoming lost in the anxieties and worries of the day. Other activities include making a half-smile at various points of the day or listening to some relaxing music at some point during the day while tracking your breath, all with the goal of bringing one's mind out of the anxiety and fear that drives one forward

¹⁰⁸ Thich Nhat Hahn, *The Miracle of Mindfulness: A Manual for Meditation*, (Boston, Beacon Press, 1976), 1-2.

constantly, in order that the individual may become more at ease and focused on making the present moment meaningful and satisfactory for themselves.¹⁰⁹

However, a common objection could be that, though is easier to achieve in leisure settings or at home, it is difficult to achieve in a work-based setting, and is, therefore, ineffective at producing the desired result of a present-centered focus. To answer this, I would like to refer to a study performed at Maastricht University by Ute R. Hülshager, Hugo J. E. M. Alberts, Alina Feinholdt, and Jonas W. B. Lang. Entitled “Benefits of Mindfulness at Work: The Role of Mindfulness in Emotion Regulation, Emotional Exhaustion, and Job Satisfaction”, this study focused on two test groups, one of which went about their days normally and without the practice of mindfulness, while the others were given mindfulness training exercises, consisting of informal mantras, meditations, and techniques designed to bring their focus back to the present, in order to calm their emotional strain and bring them back to focus on the task at hand. The results of the study showed that, with practice of short mindfulness exercises such as mantras or foci of a short meditation, employees were able to experience substantially less emotional exhaustion, as well as to experience greater satisfaction with their work.¹¹⁰ From this information, we can discern that, although it may seem daunting, simple tasks such as short mantras repeated to oneself or monitoring one’s own breath while typing the keys on a computer, can have a substantial impact on lessening busyness, reducing stress, and increasing the satisfaction and present focus of one’s mind.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, 79-83.

¹¹⁰ Ute R. Hülshager, Hugo J. E. M. Alberts, Alina Feinholdt, and Jonas W. B. Lang., *Benefits of Mindfulness at Work: The Role of Mindfulness in Emotion Regulation, Emotional Exhaustion, and Job Satisfaction*, (*Journal of Applied Psychology*, 2013), 310-325.

Paralleling Nietzsche and Buddhism

To conclude this section of the chapter, I will explain some of my reasoning in paralleling a Buddhist practice to reduce busyness with the Nietzschean teachings regarding suffering. Nietzsche, although he had a respect for Buddhism, did explicitly condemn certain aspects of Buddhist teachings, labeling it as a nihilistic faith. However, although Nietzsche was often critical of religion, and Buddhism specifically, there is a case to be made that Nietzschean philosophy is quite similar to Buddhist philosophy. In his article “Nietzsche and Buddhism,” Benjamin Elman discusses the parallels of Nietzschean philosophy and Buddhism, going so far as to state that an examination of Buddhist philosophy and teachings is essential to understanding what the core of Nietzschean philosophy means.¹¹¹

In the last section of his article, Elman discusses Nietzsche’s statements regarding his stance on Buddhism. Although Nietzsche regarded Buddhism as decadent and pessimistic—similar to his conception of Christianity—he still considered it more realistic and closer to his conception of what religion is supposed to do: help the participant embrace the suffering that is in the world in order to discover their true selves.¹¹² However, due to a misconception of Nirvana as an embrace of nothingness that both Schopenhauer and Nietzsche shared, Nietzsche could not fully embrace Buddhism as truth, because he saw it

¹¹¹ Benjamin Elman, *Nietzsche and Buddhism*. (*Journal of the History of Ideas*, , Oct.-Dec. 1983), 671-73.

¹¹² *Ibid*, 681.

as an escapist philosophy, based on lifting one's consciousness above the physical world into the embrace of a heavenly nothingness.¹¹³

It is because Nietzsche's beliefs regarding Buddhism hinge on a misconception regarding Buddhism that was held by many in Nietzsche's time that I parallel Buddhism with Nietzschean philosophy. Instead of seeing mindfulness and Nirvana, along with other Buddhist practices and beliefs in a nihilistic sense, one should perceive Buddhism as an embracing of suffering in the world and of stilling the mind in order to experience suffering and chaos in such a way as to be developed and be enlightened in one's true self. In this way, suffering as a door to self-discovery becomes apparent in both Nietzschean and Buddhist philosophy, and thus the parallel becomes clear.

Judeo-Christian Approach

With both the socio-psychological and the Buddhist approaches in mind, we can now move on to the third and final approach of this chapter: the Judeo-Christian approach. This approach will focus predominately on reinvigorating the idea and practice of the Sabbath in the daily life of modern man. To accomplish this, I will first give a brief description of the beliefs regarding the Sabbath in the Judeo-Christian tradition, followed by outlining ways in which the practice of the Sabbath can be used to reduce busyness and resist the culture of perpetual activity.

¹¹³ Ibid, 683.

What is the Sabbath?

According to the Scriptures—specifically the Pentateuch—the Sabbath was meant to symbolize the seventh day of Creation, on which God took his rest from his labor of creating the world and observed the goodness of Creation.¹¹⁴ Because of this, God later instituted the practice of the Sabbath in Mosaic Law, wherein the people of Israel were forbidden from engaging in physical labor on pain of exile from the community or death.¹¹⁵ Though this may seem harsh to a modern reader, this practice has spiritual and psychological roots. Just as God needed a day of rest at the end of his week of labor, so to do his people need to rest and take their leisure in order to sustain themselves and give God the worship required from His people.

Having given a short but sufficient definition of the biblical basis for the Sabbath, we can now turn our attention to how this practice can be applied to daily life so as to promote the proliferation of leisure, and to reduce the epidemic of busyness. Specifically, I will focus on two specific ways in which the Sabbath could be implemented to help the culture of modern man: using Sabbath to promote a more beneficial and balanced view of work and leisure; and using the Sabbath to prevent multitasking and honing our focus on what is truly meaningful.

¹¹⁴ Gen. 2:1-3, *Revised Standard Version*.

¹¹⁵ Ex. 20:8-11; Lev. 21:1-3; Num. 15:32-36 *Revised Standard Version*.

Sabbath and a Balanced Work Ethic

More frequently in modern society, people have confused work and leisure, making work the ultimate good, while making leisure a nuisance, if not a moral evil. This view, however, flies in direct opposition to the belief in keeping a Sabbath day of rest holy. In writing on this in his book *Crazy Busy: A (Mercifully) Short Book About A (Really) Big Problem*, Kevin DeYoung states that one of the misunderstandings that cause this form of confusion regarding work and leisure in his chapter “Rhythm and Blues.” In this chapter, DeYoung places the blame of this confusion on the fact that, although technology has increased efficiency in some areas, it has done more to distort our rhythm of life. Instead of having a distinct rhythm and pattern in which to live our lives, technology such as cell phones and laptops have made us be in a grey state of being both “on” and off”.¹¹⁶

Because of this confusion and this perpetually unbalanced state caused by technology and an ever-expanding schedule, DeYoung suggests that we reframe our time around the Sabbath once more. He suggests that we learn to rest and sleep again, as God has given rest and sleep to those who love Him. Although DeYoung recognizes that this reframing of our mind is difficult, he also states that it is the only way that we will come to restructure our lives around the rhythm of the Sabbath rest. Specifically, DeYoung states that “...we’re not actually in danger of working hard. We simply work hard at things in the wrong proportions... We all know we need rest from work, but we don’t realize we have to work hard just to rest.”¹¹⁷

¹¹⁶ Kevin DeYoung, *Crazy Busy: A (Mercifully) Short Book About A (Really) Big Problem*. (Wheaton, Crossway, 2013), pp. 92-94.

¹¹⁷ Ibid, 98.

In this sense, rest is an active choice that will require planning and setting aside of time to rest and take a break from busyness; however, the only other option is to persist in a mental state where we can never relax, where we are always running from one thing to another, without a break in between. Leisure, then, becomes a necessary concept to integrate into our lives, if only to grant us the rest necessary to keep our physical and spiritual health in check. With this established, we can move on to the second aspect of the Sabbath in counteracting busyness: using the Sabbath to prevent multitasking and to put the mind at ease.

Sabbath as the Cure for Multitasking

One of the most epidemic signs of our modern scope of busyness is the amount of multitasking that an individual participates in on a daily basis. Every day, we can witness ourselves or someone we know talking on the phone, filling out work pages, and planning out their day all at the same time; however, there is a key element lacking from all of these activities. Although they are all technically engaged in what they are doing, they lack the mindset of rest and satisfaction needed to enjoy the work they do.

This is the point where Walter Brueggemann's book *Sabbath as Resistance: Saying NO to the Culture of Now* comes into the picture. In his book, Brueggemann summarizes the traditional practice of the Sabbath in the Scriptures, then follows it up with ways in which the Sabbath can be applied to our daily life. One of these sections concerns the Sabbath as applied to the idea of multitasking. In this section, Brueggemann considers

multitasking as a turn away from God to a worship of commodity and time.¹¹⁸ The Sabbath, then, is a resistance to a culture that believes saving time and acquiring wealth is the primary means of living. The Sabbath is a means of taking our rest in a week that is otherwise busy and stressful; however, being double-minded in the Sabbath equates to a worship of money and time, and must be avoided in order to experience the rest and leisure of the Sabbath as God intended. However, Brueggemann also cites Amos 8:4-8 to show that, although we are to enjoy the rest and leisure which God has ordained in the Sabbath, we must not overindulge ourselves or use the Sabbath as an excuse to commit gluttony or sloth. Instead, the Sabbath should be a period of rest and leisure in honor of the life God has given, making the keeping of the Sabbath an act of worship in and of itself.¹¹⁹

Conclusion and Considerations

In conclusion, alleviating the malady of busyness is a complicated, multi-faceted problem that will require an approach of a similar nature. Whether it be socio-psychological, secular, or religious in nature, the solution must address our perceived need to remain busy in order to avoid deeper contemplation and appreciation of our human state of existence. In this way, the cure will take out the root of the problem that man has with rest: the inability to see rest and leisure as a means of developing himself.

Regarding some open areas of consideration, one area of consideration which could be further explored would be Nietzsche's views on the practice of the Sabbath, and

¹¹⁸ Walter Brueggemann. *Sabbath as Resistance: Saying NO to the Culture of Now*. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2014), 58-59.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid*, 64-67.

how that could be further used to promote a culture of leisure. Additionally, another area of consideration could be to parallel Christian ideas of the Sabbath with Buddhist or similar Eastern religious thoughts on days of rest and leisure. In this way, comparative religion could be used to further promote a universal belief in the need to set aside time for leisure and self-discovery.

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