Journal of
APPLIED PHILOSOPHY

Journal of Applied Philosophy, Vol. 42, No. 3, July 2025
doi: 10.1111/japp.70003

Meaningful Rest

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ABSTRACT *Ours is an age of incessant hustle, where resting increasingly seems like a privilege out of reach for many or else a liability to be undertaken sparingly and with discretion. In this context, we might wonder whether we have lost sight of the importance of taking a break. What place might rest have in leading a meaningful life? Unfortunately, recent philosophical theories of meaning in life have not only neglected the importance of rest but also reinforced our cultural obsession with the value of activity and the pursuit of achievements. In contrast to this prevailing tendency, this article will begin by offering an analysis of rest as the temporary suspension of active involvement in projects for the sake of rejuvenation. I then argue that rest can genuinely imbue our lives with meaning, yet not all conceptions of meaningful rest are equally existentially significant.*

> A poor life this if, full of care,
> We have no time to stand and stare.
> William Henry Davies[1]

> Two or three years ago, when I went to see some film at the Academy Cinema, the second feature of the evening was a documentary film about creatures fathoms down on the ocean-bottom. When it was over, I turned to my companion and asked, 'What is it about these films that makes one feel so utterly desolate?' Her reply was: 'apart from the fact that so much of the film was about sea monsters eating one another, the unnerving thing was that nothing down there ever seemed to *rest*'.
> David Wiggins[2]

1. Introduction

Ours is an age of incessant hustle, where resting increasingly seems like a privilege out of reach for many or else a liability to be undertaken sparingly and with discretion. Cultural critics and theorists variously diagnose our contemporary condition as owing to 'social acceleration' (Rosa), '24/7 capitalism' (Crary), or living in a 'burnout society' (Han).[3] These theorists chronicle various socio-historical forces that conspire against resting. One reason it may be risky to take a break is that we live on what Hartmut Rosa calls late modernity's 'slippery slopes',[4] which require doing more, not necessarily to attain more, but just to maintain what one already has. Empirical researchers describe how employment precarity and new technologies have heightened the sense of 'overload' among working professionals: 'Job insecurity is the emotional engine that motivates submission

to a system of intensive work demands and continual overload'.[5] This takes place against a background of tempestuous social circumstances that cultural critic and activist Astra Taylor has called 'the age of insecurity'[6] and 'a condition of generalized precarity' that Albena Azmanova attributes to 'precarity capitalism'.[7] In this context of intense competition, we can understand Jonathan Crary's comment that 'within the globalist neoliberal paradigm, sleeping is for losers'.[8]

Given this institutional and cultural background, we might wonder whether we have lost sight of the importance of taking a break. What is at stake in disregarding rest? What place might rest have in leading a meaningful life? In popular press, there has been a surge in interest in rest, relaxation, and doing nothing.[9] Unfortunately, by contrast, recent philosophical theories of meaning in life have not only neglected the importance of rest but tended to reinforce our cultural obsession with busyness and the pursuit of achievements.[10] Neil Levy's criticism of 'downshifting' movements epitomizes this spirit, claiming that 'superlative meaning' is to be attained in certain types of ongoing work.[11] Indeed, the meaningfulness of work has received substantial attention but the meaningfulness of rest has not.[12]

While some philosophers have broken away from the above-described fixation on work, they have not achieved a re-valuation of rest. For example, Joe Mintoff's argument for a conception of meaning in life centered on 'contemplative leisure', which he glosses as 'a life of knowing the good', focuses on a certain sort of epistemic undertaking that differs from resting.[13] This is true, too, of Kieran Setiya's defense of 'atelic' activities like spending time with friends and family, which still does not focus on *rest per se*, but rather on the importance of non-goal-oriented activities.[14] Indeed, many atelic activities still are, as Antti Kauppinen has argued, projects, just of a 'reflexive' sort that sustain something of value over time, for example, the continuation of a relationship.[15] Cheshire Calhoun's attention to how we use our time and criticism of 'careerist' theories of meaning centered on large-scale endeavors is a step in the right direction, but it, too, still does not bring into focus the significance of resting.[16] By contrast, this article will focus specifically on rest understood as a rejuvenating suspension of our projects, even those projects that are atelic, leisurely, or contemplative.

In contrast to the dominant tendency to valorize work and projects, this article will explore the significance of taking a break for leading a meaningful life. I begin by offering an analysis of rest as the temporary suspension of active involvement in projects for the sake of rejuvenation. While rest is commonly contrasted with work, my framing in terms of projects, which includes more than work, allows us to understand the importance of rest, even for lives that are freed from the compulsions of economic necessity. Next, I sketch five conceptions of meaningful rest: rest as re-fueling, recreation, resistance, re-attending, and re-affirmation. Each of these conceptions relate rest and meaning differently, with noticeably different underlying conceptions of what constitutes meaning in life. More specifically, I argue for two theses: (1) rest can genuinely imbue our lives with meaning, yet (2) not all conceptions of meaningful rest are equally stable, some having a dialectical tendency to collapse back into meaningful projects. All five of the senses of meaningful rest explored in this article speak to the first claim, demonstrating the variety of ways that rest can be understood as making our lives more meaningful. However, as certain modes of rest are prone to collapse back into projects in various ways, only in the final case, what I call rest as re-affirmation, do we encounter a form of meaning-conferring rest that is more resistant to pressures to tether conceptual tentacles back on to projects in

order to derive meaning. This case is significant in showing that meaning need not be tied to projects, as Williams has maintained, but can occur in the *suspension* of them, too.[17] Taken together, the two theses present grounds for taking rest more seriously as an important constituent of not only a good or valuable life, but, more specifically, a *meaningful* one.

2. What Does it Mean to 'Rest'?

'Rest' counts among the most familiar of our concepts. After all, who doesn't know what it means to take a rest? Nevertheless, arriving at a clear understanding of the idea of 'rest' presents problems for analytic inquiry. Indeed, the definitions of 'rest' proffered in empirical scientific literature have been described as 'largely subjective and ill-defined'.[18] It may be useful, then, to begin with a dictionary definition as a point of reference. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines 'rest', when used as a noun, as '[a] spell of inactivity after a period of work, a break'. When used as a verb, 'rest' means '[t]o take rest by lying down or relaxing, and esp. by going to sleep; to lie still to refresh oneself, to lie asleep'. This preliminary account, however, fails to do justice to our full use of the concept. One reason is that rest need not be the opposite of work. Indeed, this opposition appears to have its origin in the nineteenth century.[19] Even a wealthy full-time party-goer may need a rest from a busy schedule of socializing. Similarly, the sorts of 'conspicuous leisure' such as sport and hunting famously detailed by Thorstein Veblen may be exhausting and induce a need for rest.[20] Thus, we need a concept of rest that goes beyond taking a break from work and includes a suspension of other sorts of dominant activities that structure a life. For this reason, my analysis neither juxtaposes rest and work, nor identifies rest with leisure. My theory of rest casts a wider net.

Moreover, 'rest' is used colloquially to refer to more than just sleeping or its approximations, for example, napping, vegging, crashing, or doing nothing. After all, we can sensibly discuss or inquire *how* one rests. Indeed, a recent popular book on rest lists 20 ways of resting including showering, meditating, daydreaming, drinking tea, bathing, listening to music, playing music, walking, knitting, laughing, and dancing.[21] The fact that we can intelligibly 'rest' by *doing* some things (although certainly not any and all things qualify) suggests that we need to clarify a broader range of uses of 'rest' than merely unconscious or semi-conscious states. For the sake of clarity, let's call the sense that emphasizes inactivity and sleeping, as in the *OED* definition cited above, the *narrow sense of rest*. By contrast, I want to explore the *wide sense of rest* which would include refreshing activities such as walking, reading, listening to music, and the like. Thus, I will proceed with the following definition:

> *Rest*: The temporary suspension of active involvement in projects for the sake of rejuvenation.[22]

This analysis has several features worth highlighting. To start, *rest is defined against projects – not work*. The busy, party-going hedonist might not be engaged in work, but nevertheless may need to take a break from the tiring schedule of a socialite. I use 'projects' here broadly to refer to the *dominant activities that orient and structure a life*.[23] I take as my starting point Bernard Williams's concept of 'ground projects', which concern those activities that give us reasons for living.[24] These are the most fundamental motivating

activities that orient and structure our lives. But I want to stretch the concept of 'projects' to also include those *derived projects* that are connected in some way to our deeper, more existentially foundational ground projects but do not count as reasons for living in themselves.[25] Both types of projects lend continuity to a life, contribute to our sense of identity, and bring into play the evaluative norms, all features of projects highlighted by Monika Betzler's further development and elaboration of 'personal projects'.[26] Work can count as a ground project when it plays an independently motivating role in one's life or as a derived project when we work simply to put bread on the table and facilitate our other projects, say, taking care of one's family.[27] Indeed, the line between them can be quite blurry and shifting. And work will assume different roles in the projects of different people. Used in this broad manner, 'projects' thus includes both work and non-work-related activities that may exhaust us and require rest. Thus, rest may be a suspension of one's work but, more fundamentally, it is taking a break from active involvement in one's projects, broadly understood.[28]

It might be objected that not everyone has a project or a set of projects, but everyone needs rest.[29] Consider, for instance, the character Cosmo Kramer from the show *Seinfeld* (1989–98), whose life seems completely unstructured by any projects as he drifts between zany ideas. Yet this life, too, is not without projects, on my view; these are just unusually short-lived and various, owing, no doubt, to their eccentric and ill-conceived nature.[30] Even here, amidst an unconventional character and configuration of projects, rest is required to rejuvenate between harebrained schemes. Indeed, in a true limit case where a life genuinely has no projects – there are no dominant activities at all – then the concept of 'rest' ceases to make sense as there is no longer anything *from* which to rest, days all bleeding together into a temporally undifferentiated streak.

Second, the distinction between *active involvement in projects* and *resting* understood as a rejuvenating suspension of projects does not correspond to the distinction between *telic* and *atelic* activities drawn up by Setiya. On his account, the distinction turns on the structure of an activity – whether it aims at an end that can in principle be accomplished or not.[31] Yet it is clear that we can require rest from both completable and incompletable activities. Hanging out with friends and family, a paradigmatic example of atelic activity on Setiya's account, can be exhausting, and we may require a break from it. Resting, it should be stressed, is the intentional rejuvenating suspension of activity, rather than the *type* of activity.

This is, of course, complicated when we acknowledge that we may rest *through* activities. But what makes an activity restful is not its telic or atelic structure. Both telic and atelic activities alike may play this resting role in our lives. For example, a CEO may find it rejuvenating in spare hours on the weekend to restore an old automobile, knit a sweater, or carpenter a table from driftwood. These activities are telic – they can be completed – and yet may constitute a restorative break from workaday life. The same could be said for characteristically atelic activities like spending Saturday listening to vinyl records.

Moreover, resting itself can be described as both telic and atelic, depending on the temporal horizon we assume. From a broad-scoped perspective, rest is, of course, atelic – it cannot be completed in principle because, as living organisms, we require perpetual restoration. But within a narrow time horizon, resting is very much completable. We might plan on a Sunday afternoon to take a long nap, something we can check off our list of weekend goals. The distinction between rest and active engagements in projects, then, runs orthogonal to the distinction between telic and atelic activities.

Third, I want to stress that *rest is attitude-dependent*. The same activity can count both as rest and not rest, depending on how it is approached.[32] For example, painting a portrait or landscape might be restful if it brings rejuvenation from other projects. However, painting might also be a strenuous, non-restful activity when undertaken as commissioned by a demanding client. How an activity is approached will, presumably, manifest itself in different levels of intensity, among other factors. Consider another example: walking might be seen as a relaxing means of resting, but if it becomes a matter of competition or necessity, it may begin to take on project-like characteristics and thereby cease to be rest. As Frédéric Gros observes, 'Efforts have … been made to create a new market in accessories: revolutionary shoes, incredible socks, high-performance trousers … the sporting spirit is being surreptitiously introduced, you no longer walk but do a "trek."'[33] The shift in language reveals how walking may come to resemble a project. Whether an activity counts as rest, then, depends in part on the intention to revitalize, but this is not enough – it should also actually revitalize.[34]

Fourth, including rejuvenation in our analysis of 'rest' provides a *criterion* for evaluating the success of rest *qua* rest. A vacation that leaves one more exhausted than before might have been fun, but it fails as rest.[35] Indeed, according to the above analysis of rest, we might *fail* at resting in two ways: (1) *failed suspension* and/or (2) *failed rejuvenation*. If an agent fails to disengage temporarily from projects, then there is a failure of suspension. This can be due to (a) agent-related reasons, as when one cannot help but think about work demands – say, writing an article – while attempting to take a leisurely stroll or nap, and/or (b) context-related reasons, as when one's boss messages or calls during vacation. Indeed, as some sociologists document, the porosity between work and time off is a major contributor to 'overload'.[36] This is a quintessential failure to rest. In these cases, ordinary projects intrude upon time intended for rest. But rest can fail even if an agent has successfully disengaged from projects, as when it fails to revitalize. An agent that is not restored by her rest does not truly rest. A weekend plagued by insomnia or putting out fires may fail to count as rest, irrespective of an agent's restful intentions. Of course, while analytically separable, these two failures of rest may be connected: the failure to fully or successfully disengage may thwart one's best attempts at rejuvenation. This also means that rest is not entirely subject-dependent. It is responsive to objective standards for rejuvenation, that is, whether our efforts result in restoration.

Fifth, I have characterized rest as a *temporary suspension* because taking a break does not mean giving up on a project. There are interesting questions about abandoning commitments, as Cheshire Calhoun has explored.[37] In *resting*, however, we are simply putting projects on pause without necessarily radically reconsidering them. The projects that organize an agent's life continue to be present, but the agent is not actively involved in them for some period of time. They are temporarily put on hold.

Finally, *rest should neither be identified with 'leisure' nor 'recreation'*. On the influential view tracing its roots back to Aristotle, leisure refers to an end pursued for its own sake, while recreation is reduced to a mere means of recovery for some other activity.[38] In the early twentieth century, British philosopher Bernard Bosanquet recapitulated and defended the same essential distinction between leisure understood as an end and amusement or recreation as a mere means to an end with the added claim that he saw the highest contemplative fulfillment of leisure as accessible to the masses.[39] This distinction continues to exert an influence among contemporary theorists of leisure.[40] Yet, as Cyril Barrett has carefully demonstrated, talk of 'leisure' is complicated by numerous entangled threads

of meaning including: free time, carrying out activities in ease, resting or doing nothing, pursuing what one wills, undertaking an activity for its own sake, and the liberal arts.[41]

But the distinction I am drawing between rest and engagement in our projects does not map on to the common distinction between leisure and recreation. It is not a distinction stipulated in advance between different *kinds* of value, that is, one as intrinsic and the other as extrinsic. Rather, on my construal, the salient distinction is that rest involves a *suspension* of our ordinary projects, where this may potentially include both work and what are typically seen as leisure activities. Whether rest turns out to have intrinsic or extrinsic value is not stipulated in advance. In a world where people's affairs are dominated by work, however, leisure and rest may have a shared kinship as they both occur in our free time outside of workaday life.[42] But they are different insofar as *rest is essentially a break or pause* in our projects while leisure need not be. In lives dominated by work, however, leisure and rest both get squeezed into leftover time, blurring the distinction.

Rest brings into focus the *need to take a break from* our ordinary undertakings, whether these are determined by economic compulsions or disinterested leisure. It highlights the importance of having gaps, pauses, or suspensions in life activity dominated by projects, whatever their content, focusing on the *value of suspension* rather than the sort of final ends worth pursuing. In contrast to this Aristotelian conception of recreation, which sees it as essentially instrumental, the conception of rest articulated here leaves its value status undecided. I do not assume in advance that rest is necessarily instrumental. Moreover, it does not follow from the fact that rest is for rejuvenation that rest is, therefore, rejuvenation for the sake of work. It is a task of inquiry for this article to determine whether rest might have a deeper sort of significance than merely recharging us for work. The following section explores this question and makes the case that rest may indeed be meaningful, including in a non-instrumental manner. This will not be set out in advance by definitional fiat.

The problem posed by leisure is thus not the problem posed by rest. Leisure in the tradition following Aristotle confronts us with the question of what sorts of ends are worth pursuing that are not a result of economic and biological compulsions to survive, for example, working jobs to pay bills or plowing fields to feed mouths.[43] This issue has recently been re-energized by authors speculating about what it would mean to live in a world where humans no longer need to work, as in a world saturated with artificial intelligence.[44] Here we are looking for attractive pursuits when we no longer have to do things owing to the compulsions of scarcity. But this is not the problem raised by rest. The question posed by rest concerns why we should pause or suspend our ordinary activities. A world that has transcended work may not have overcome the need for rest and, conversely, a world that has through chemical or other means (seemingly) overcome the problem of rest may not have overcome scarcity or other material compulsions to labor. Thus, rest warrants a re-evaluation of its own worth, rather than slotting it into a traditionally subordinate position to leisure.

3. Five Conceptions of Meaningful Rest

Having defined rest as the temporary suspension of involvement in projects for the sake of rejuvenation, I now will sketch five conceptions of how rest can count as meaningful, that is, as conferring *meaning* on a life, as it is standardly understood in the meaning in life

discourse.[45] The meaningfulness of rest is distinct from questions of how rest might contribute to happiness or wellbeing. How to distinguish the meaningfulness of a life from the wellbeing or flourishing of a life remains a debated topic.[46] Some authors have suggested that meaning is a sub-set of concerns related to our wellbeing or flourishing.[47] Having a meaningful life, on this view, falls short of flourishing as one's life could be missing other important goods, but without meaning, one would fail to flourish. My inquiry, to be clear, does not concern whether rest can contribute to an agent's wellbeing or flourishing understood broadly, especially as this is approached and measured in empirical sciences.[48] Being overworked, stressed, and sleep-deprived quite intuitively seems to have costs to one's wellbeing. My question, by contrast, concerns whether, and if so how, resting might infuse a life with *meaning*, understood philosophically as less than wellbeing, though partly constitutive of it. Thus, my inquiry is not to be confused with the question concerning the value of rest, but rather is concerned with that domain of value that concerns meaning in life.

My concern with the *meaningfulness* of lives is one reason why I have used the concept of 'project' from Williams as a framework for thinking about rest. For as Williams characterizes it, projects have a deep connection with meaning:

> A man may have, for a lot of his life or even just for some part of it, a *ground* project or set of projects which are closely related to his existence and which to a significant degree give a meaning to his life … in general a man does not have one separable project which plays this ground role: rather, there is a nexus of projects, related to his conditions of life, and it would be the loss of all or most of them that would remove meaning.[49]

Our ground projects are, in the mind of Williams, the primary or even exclusive carriers of meaning in life. The loss of our projects, as he notes in the above quotation, would deprive a life of meaning. In characterizing rest as a temporary suspension of active involvement in projects, we are thus probing whether we can find meaning in life outside, beyond, or in abeyance of our organizing endeavors.[50] Can the gaps or pauses in life be distinctive sources of meaning, too?

It might be thought that rest cannot count as meaning-conferring because resting involves doing nothing and meaning requires doing something. This thought is especially salient when considering theories that prioritize success. Berit Brogaard and Barry Smith's theory epitomizes this conception: 'What matters to meaningfulness is that through realizing your goals you impose a valuable pattern on reality, as evaluated (actually or potentially) against the relevant public measures of success, and that this pattern is ultimately a reflection of your abilities and character'.[51] It is hard to see how resting would amount to the imposition of one's goals on the world or count as a success. For this reason, such a theory rules out in principle the possibility that rest could be meaningful. The same is true of Antti Kauppinen's theory that 'life is ideally meaningful when challenging efforts lead to lasting successes'.[52] Given that rest is a suspension of our projects and Kauppinen takes 'projects' as the building blocks for a meaningful life of successfully overcoming challenges, rest appears to be disqualified as a candidate for meaning.[53] Both of these theories of meaning in life, thus, rule out the possibility that rest could be genuinely meaningful.

However, if we take an extrinsic view of meaningfulness, as has been done in the literature on meaningful work, then we could begin to see how rest might be meaningful as a contributing factor, taking Williams's meaning-conferring projects or even the success theories mentioned above as our starting point for conceiving of meaning in life.[54] One reason to think rest can be extrinsically meaningful is that it counteracts the deadening effects of exhaustion, which impede meaning-conferring activities.[55] Peter Handke reflects on a period of manual labor in his life that left him depleted:

> Destroyed by tiredness, I would flop (rather than sit) down. Unable to swallow, I could neither eat nor speak. This particular tiredness – and that may have been its special characteristic – seemed to be terminal; one would never get over it. I fell asleep the moment I lay down, and awoke in the gray of dawn, when it was almost time for work, more exhausted than ever, as though the cruel drudgery had *cleaned me out of everything that might have contributed to the most elementary sense of being alive* – the feel of the early light, the wind on my temples – as though there would never be an end to this living death.[56]

Being, in Handke's words, 'destroyed by tiredness' renders one unable to do anything. Empirical researchers have observed that the risk of 'burnout' is increased without the chance for rest and recovery: 'a heavy workload is more exhausting when someone does not have the capacity or opportunity to recover and bounce back. Without effective, ongoing recovery processes, people only become increasingly tired, worn out, and unenthusiastic about going back to the job the next day'.[57] If this is correct, then a failure to rest will undermine the ability to carry out meaningful projects. Viewed as an antidote, rest becomes meaningful in virtue of undoing the effects of exhaustion. It functions as burnout prevention, guaranteeing a future of meaningful activity. Call this *the re-fueling conception of meaningful rest*.

> *Rest as Re-fueling*: Rest is instrumentally meaningful insofar as it enables an agent to combat tiredness and recharge so as to be able to engage in directly meaning-conferring activities.

This conception of meaningful rest has historical precedent. Philo of Alexandria expresses a similar justification in his defense of the Jewish Sabbath:

> Its object is … to give man relaxation from continuous and unending toil and by refreshing their bodies with a regularly calculated system of remissions to send them out renewed to their old activities. For a breathing spell enables not merely ordinary people but athletes to collect their strength with a stronger force behind them to undertake promptly and patiently each of the tasks set before them.[58]

We find in today's popular literature similar sorts of instrumentalist justifications for rest. As one contemporary writer puts it, 'If you recognize that work and rest are two sides of the same coin, that you can get more from rest by getting better at it, and that by giving it a place in your life you'll stand a better chance at living the life you want, you'll be able to better do your job, and your life's work, better'.[59] On this view, rest is meaningful insofar as it enables an agent to recover from the deadening effects of exhaustion and thus improve one's working performance.

Instrumentalist justifications of rest, however, are necessarily shallow in the sense that they don't probe fully how meaningful rest may or may not be. They cash out, as it were, too early, after merely establishing a causal connection between rest and some other valued activity. Abraham Joshua Heschel took issue with Philo's account mentioned above for this reason: 'The Sabbath is not for the sake of the weekdays; the weekdays are for the sake of the Sabbath. It is not an interlude but the climax of living'.[60] Similarly, Josef Pieper observes:

> A break in one's work, whether of an hour, a day or a week, is still part of the world of work. It is a link in the chain of utilitarian functions. The pause is made for the sake of work and in order to work, and a man is not only refreshed *from* work but *for* work. Leisure is an altogether different matter; it is no longer on the same plane … And therefore leisure does not exist for the sake of work – however much strength it may give to man to work; the point of leisure is not to be restorative, a pick-me-up, whether mental or physical; and though it gives new strength, mentally and physically too, that is not the point.[61]

The contemporary cultural critic and philosopher Byung-Chul Han echoes these sentiments when he laments that 'even sleep is these days regarded as an activity. The so-called "power nap" is an activity of sleep … We extend the compulsion of performance and optimization even into our sleep'.[62] Elsewhere he writes, 'The totalization of production leads to the total profanation of rest. Rest, too, is made to serve production and is degraded into leisure and recreational time'.[63] The re-fueling account of meaningful rest enables us to see positive value in taking a break, but it remains a secondary or derivative form of meaningfulness. On this conception, there is nothing intrinsically meaningful about taking a rest. It remains a necessity to recharge, for beings who grow weary. The true locus of meaning still remains confined to our activities and projects. However, were it possible to technologically render the body and mind immune to such tiring effects, then, on this view, rest would be rendered unnecessary and meaningless.

This sets up a challenge: can we provide grounds for thinking that rest can be intrinsically meaningful, that is, that taking a break can itself make a life more meaningful? A positive answer may take its lead from the wide sense of 'rest', which understands it as a time for pursuing other activities. Some of these restful activities might be seen as meaningful in themselves, for example, taking walks, spending time with friends and family, listening to music, reading a good book, and so on. On this conception, rest itself can count as meaningful insofar as it is a time for engaging in meaning-conferring activities that fall outside the purview of our main day-to-day activities. I call this *rest as recreation* because it involves the sorts of activities that are commonly associated with the term 'recreation' in its contemporary usage.[64] In isolating one conception of meaningful rest as recreation, I thus also distance rest as such from being identified with recreation. The relationship between rest and recreation is more complex. The two can be identified, as on the conception below, but not in all cases, as we shall see with later conceptions.

> *Rest as Recreation*: Rest is meaningful insofar as it sets aside time for engaging in meaning-conferring activities outside of an agent's standard projects.

This conception presents rest as an adjacent time–space for the pursuit of activities that would otherwise be squeezed out of our workaday schedules. The intuition behind this view takes note of how many of the things that matter to us get sidelined by demanding careers and otherwise one-sided pursuits of meaning.[65] Rest provides an important space for preserving activities, telic or atelic, that would otherwise be excluded in the single-minded pursuit of our projects.[66] The recreational conception of rest provides a space for diversifying our sources of meaning, which may, as Iddo Landau has argued, counteract the dangers of one-sided pursuits.[67] Relatedly, Cheshire Calhoun observes that lives built around 'a plurality of minor aims' may be less susceptible to 'stalled-life boredom' than those organized around 'dominant, long-term aims'.[68] In this regard, too, restful recreation is a boon for meaningful living.

On this conception, it is easy to see how rest could be viewed as an intrinsic source of meaning. In taking time off from our dominant projects, we can reconnect with a wider range of sources of meaning, for example, spending time with friends and family, listening to music, traveling to other cities or countries, and cultivating our skills in neglected hobbies. This conception of meaningful rest fits Wolf's theory of meaning in life insofar as our restful activities meet the criteria of both subjective engagement and objective value.[69]

Rest as recreation gets several things right: rest need not be seen as merely sleeping or re-charging our batteries; some restful activities might be intrinsically meaningful; and cultivating meaningful pursuits beyond our dominant projects has advantages. Nevertheless, the recreation conception comes with the risk of transforming rest into a secondary realm of non-rest: the pursuit of mini-projects.[70] Indeed, such a conception of rest may not leave an agent much time for a genuine break, as hobbies are squeezed into whatever time remains after satisfying the demands of our projects. This conception thus risks transforming rest into its opposite to make it meaningful. On the recreation conception, meaning is still found in carrying out various activities, even if some of these occur while taking a break from our primary pursuits. This is not to say that these recreational activities cannot count as rest – a break from our dominant activities that recharges us. But as we invest more and more time and significance into these free-time activities, they can begin to resemble projects. Joining a recreational basketball league, for example, may start as a nice break from work, but through investing it with time and attention, it can begin to structure our lives, making demands on our schedule and becoming a source of exhaustion. We might wonder whether we have overlooked the significance of resting itself.

As I have construed it, rest is the suspension of projects, but a closer look at the contemporary popular literature on rest reveals that, for some, rest itself can be a project. Despite their different theoretical and practical orientations, Tricia Hersey's *Rest is Resistance* and Jenny Odell's *How to Do Nothing: Resisting the Attention Economy* treat the act of resting as a political one – namely, a way to *resist* larger oppressive systems.[71] Nor is this a uniquely American phenomenon. The *tang ping* (lying flat) movement in contemporary China embodies 'a spontaneous resistance to social inequality, and a collective and desperate yearning for social change'.[72] Framing rest in this manner, I want to argue, imbues it with meaning insofar as breaks from work are seen as a *challenge*, for example, to the norms of contemporary neoliberal capitalism and an ongoing *program* to bring about a new way of living. We can thus identify a structure that lends meaning to rest by seeing it as part of a bigger project.

> *Rest as Resistance*: Rest is meaningful insofar as it is a part of a larger project of social resistance and change that gives life meaning.

By framing it as a mode of resistance to capitalism, racism, colonialism, and 'grind culture' (Hersey) or to the 'attention economy' (Odell), rest is assimilated to a bigger project of social change, thereby making it meaningful in a distinctive way. Resting becomes a deliberate act of non-participation that is meant to challenge and change systems that otherwise control our lives. This is exemplified by Hersey's 'Nap Ministry', an organization that seeks to bring about social change by challenging capitalism, racism, and patriarchy embodied in what she calls 'grind culture'. In her words, 'our collective rest will liberate us and shift consciousness'.[73] This happens, she argues, by creating an opportunity to reimagine the world: 'rest is disruptive, it allows space for us to envision new possibilities. We must reimagine rest within a capitalist system'.[74] She continues:

> Collective rest is not about just changing our individual lives but shifting the entire paradigm of culture. Our disruption of capitalism and white supremacy via rest is to pull back the veil and get behind the curtain to see everything that has been told to us about rest, labor, sleep, leisure, and care has been a lie.[75]

On this conception of meaningful rest, the suspension of our projects itself becomes a project of collective rejuvenation and social transformation. Seen in this way, rest takes on distinctively project-like features: (1) it sees acts of rest as *unified across time*; (2) it sees acts of rest as valuable *contributions to a greater project* of social transformation; (3) it transforms rest into a *source of identity* as one sees oneself as part of a resistance movement; and (4) rest becomes *governed by norms* of social protest and transformation.[76] This construal of rest displays features of project-like activity. Here, too, what started off as rest can, as we invest more time and significance into it, become non-rest, as organizing restful resistance may demand effort and induce stress. Thus, we might wonder whether we have genuinely shown that rest is meaningful or have transmogrified it into an overarching project.

Can we find a way of conceptualizing rest as meaningful without reducing it to an instrument of our projects, a time–space for mini-projects, or a grand project itself? Another approach sees rest as a way to free our minds from our existing set of concerns and interests and thereby discover new sources of meaning. Elijah Millgram has argued against 'top-down' approaches to agency that see our 'ground projects' (Williams) or 'final ends' (Frankfurt) as generating meaning.[77] On his view, this inverts reality: it is not final ends that give an agent meaning but rather our capacity for paying attention to new things that gives rise to our interests, final ends, and projects:

> the capacity to attend and to notice subserves both the ability to *extend* sequences of actions ordered as means to ends, and the ability to *replace* such sequences with others. If you come to identify yourself with a particular complex of means-end structures, the latter functionality seems self-destructive; it is consequently swept under the rug, and this explains the mistaken presupposition, to the effect that interest and attention are merely special sorts of means to ends.[78]

On his view, human agency has plant-like features whereby our attention moves us toward the interesting just like leaves bending towards the light, or roots stretching out

toward water.[79] According to Millgram, we ought to see the capacity to attend and take an interest as the condition for the possibility of formulating projects – rather than projects or final ends as the condition for the possibility of taking an interest. In brief, he maintains that it is attention that is the true source of meaning in life.[80] Call this the *primacy of attention thesis*.

For this to generate a conception of meaningful rest, it must be appended to another thesis linking rest and attention. Several contemporary writers have asserted something of this sort. They claim that rest provides a chance to re-attend to aspects of the world that we normally overlook, neglect, or simply don't have the energy to see. Jonathan Crary argues that periods of downtime and daydreaming enable our attention to roam freely, a condition, he believes, that is at odds with the demands and routines of contemporary capitalism:

> One of the forms of disempowerment within 24/7 environments is the incapacitation of daydream or of any mode of absent-minded introspection that would otherwise occur in intervals of slow or vacant time … When there are delays or breaks of empty time, they are rarely openings for the drift of consciousness in which one becomes unmoored from the constraints and demands of the immediate present. There is a profound incompatibility of anything resembling reverie with the priorities of efficiency, functionality, and speed.[81]

Han also stresses the importance of suspension for providing the impetus for shifting our consciousness: '[w]hoever is not capable of stopping and pausing has no access to what is altogether different. Experience transforms. It interrupts the repetition of the ever same'.[82] Nor are these merely opinions of high theory. Odell's defense of 'doing nothing' similarly makes claims about the power of rest to re-orient our attention in ways that have liberatory potential against the 'attention economy'.[83] She argues:

> rerouting and deepening one's attention to place will likely lead to awareness of one's participation in history and in more-than-human community. From either a social or ecological perspective, the ultimate goal of 'doing nothing' is to wrest our focus from the attention economy and replant it in the public, physical realm.[84]

Blending rest as resistance with rest as re-attending, Odell writes of 'the revolutionary potential of taking back our attention'.[85] Thus, these authors reveal how rest can thaw out our otherwise reified consciousness, opening it up to new movement. Call this the *de-reification thesis*.[86] When we combine this with the earlier *primacy of attention thesis* we arrive at a new conception of how rest can imbue life with meaning independently of our projects by re-orienting our attention.

> *Rest as Re-attending*: Rest is meaningful because the suspension of our projects creates a space for paying attention to and perceiving aspects of the world that will spark our interest in new sources of meaning.

If rest as a suspension of our projects allows us to notice and attend to aspects of the world that may give rise to new interests and concerns, we have then identified a conceptual path connecting meaning in life with resting understood as rejuvenating

project-suspension. It is in those moments of reprieve that our minds are released to explore novel and fresh sources of meaning.

It still might be objected, however, that this conception remains dependent on the meaning-conferring value of projects, even if it recognizes that projects, too, depend on something. Merely finding aspects of the world to which we might attend and direct our minds may provide the seedbed for meaning, but, this objection continues, meaning only becomes actualized when it takes root and blossoms into activity, that is, a project. Simply noticing things of interest, our objector may continue, does not count as meaning-conferring. Rest may instigate meaningful pursuits, but they only become genuinely meaningful when they begin to take on project-like characteristics. We thus return to a familiar starting point, asking: can rest be a distinctive and non-replaceable source of intrinsic meaning in life that is not ultimately tethered, in one way or another, to our projects?

Traditions that have carved out a special place for rest may serve as a useful starting point for reconsidering its significance. We have already seen how members of Sabbath traditions have rebuffed a merely instrumental conception of rest as re-fueling. Consider Samuel Fleischacker's observation:

> Emptying ourselves of even our most wonderful activities and personal projects ushers in a moment in which we glimpse a good beyond all of them: the highest good, perhaps … shabbat, for traditional Jews, both represents and provides space for exploring our highest end or ends, our telos, and the virtue of Shabbat observance inculcates in those who have it both a sense of the importance of that telos and a humility in the search for it. These are qualities we need to appreciate what is good in our lives and to restrain ourselves from thinking that we have full knowledge of that good. Properly developed, these are also qualities that pervade one's life, structuring how one thinks and acts not only on the seventh day, but throughout the weeks that those seventh days complete.[87]

In the Catholic tradition, Pieper has similarly argued that leisure celebrates our ultimate *telos* and the world at large:

> Leisure is possible only on the premise that man consents to his own true nature and abides in concord with the meaning of the universe … Leisure draws its vitality from affirmation … In leisure, man too celebrates the end of his work by allowing his inner eye to dwell for a while upon the reality of the Creation. He looks and he affirms: it is good.[88]

Common to both views is that rest affirms life, basking in the joy of being alive. Yet both Fleischacker and Pieper's defenses of rest are explicitly religious in orientation and link us to our final ends *qua* human beings. Indeed, Pieper argues that genuine leisure is necessarily religious in inspiration: 'What is true of celebration is true of leisure: its possibility, its ultimate justification derive from its roots in divine worship'.[89] Absent a connection to religious celebration, he thinks mere rest necessarily devolves into something superficial: '[c]ut off from the worship of the divine, leisure becomes laziness and work inhuman'.[90]

Is a conception of rest involving the celebration and affirmation of life accessible to the secular rester? Religion hardly has a monopoly on the contemplative dimension of human

life of which this variant of rest takes part, and this should encourage us to look for secular moments of restful affirmation.[91] A secular conception may have no grounds on which to connect rest with our true *telos*, but this may not count against it, especially in the minds of those philosophers who don't accept that we have a natural *telos*.[92] Without pointing us back toward the divine, rest could still provide for affirming our existence. Thus, call this *rest as re-affirmation*:

> *Rest as Re-affirmation*: Rest imbues life with meaning by providing conditions for experiencing the re-affirmation of the goodness of being alive.

Consider, for example, the cellist Pablo Casals's description of his morning ritual of playing the piano as the 're-discovery of the world of which I have the joy of being a part. It fills me with awareness of the wonder of life, with a feeling of the incredible marvel of being a human being'.[93] Raimond Gaita connects this passage with non-religious spirituality.[94] Or take Frédéric Gros's report of the feeling of existential rejuvenation while walking: 'You're doing nothing when you walk, nothing but walking. But having nothing to do but walk makes it possible to recover the pure sensation of being, to rediscover the simple joy of existing, the joy that permeates the whole of childhood'.[95] These remarks testify to the power of rest to fill us with the joy of existing, even by way of mundane activities absent religious festivals and liturgies.

The above comments – religious and secular – demonstrate how, in certain moments, we may feel our lives to be charged with meaning or what has been called 'existential repletion'[96] or 'fullness'.[97] Importantly, these moments of existential rejuvenation fall outside of our ordinary projects. In this respect, they may have something in common with aesthetic experiences or epiphanies.[98] In rest, we can experience profound moments of affirming existence and finding it meaningful. The fact that this happens outside of our projects matters because it shows that the meaningfulness of our lives does not depend solely on being immersed or engaged in various pursuits, challenging Williams's thesis.[99] One reason to be skeptical of those theories that tether meaning to work or, more generally, to our projects is that we can come to experience the meaningfulness of life in immediate and powerful ways in moments where our ambitions are suspended.

It might be objected that here, too, rest draws its meaning from its connection to an agent's projects.[100] After all, for adherents of Christianity or Judaism, are not observations of a holy day of rest elements or extensions of their projects?[101] Religious traditions ritualize and protect a space for resting, thereby creating the conditions under which the affirmation of life and the world can be experienced. It might be replied that religious conceptions of rest cannot be assimilated to mere projects, and that talk of the religious life in terms of 'projects' is inappropriate. However, even if we concede that some re-affirming rest occurs within religious projects, not all moments of life-affirming rest necessarily take place under such ritualized or liturgized conditions. It may be that secular rest demonstrates more clearly the power available in the *suspending* of our projects. The fact that rest can re-affirm life outside of our projects – not that it always does – is what makes this conception of meaningful rest special vis-à-vis the other conceptions. In this regard, the spontaneous experiences of re-affirming rest available outside of ritual or routine may speak more profoundly to us and reveal a source of meaning that was otherwise occluded by our absorption in our projects. In any case, restful re-affirmations of living that occur

within the bounds of our projects, religious or otherwise, and those that occur in suspension of them may have importantly differerent existential implications.

Conceiving of rest as re-affirmation makes only the modest claim that rest can yield profound experiences of meaning, not that rest necessarily does so. Indeed, what Pieper notes about leisure holds true of the affirmatory dimension of rest – it cannot be forced or cajoled: 'the ultimate root of leisure is not susceptible to the human will. Absolute affirmation of the universe cannot, strictly speaking, be based upon a voluntary resolve'.[102] In other words, when we rest, we cannot guarantee an affirmatory experience, but rather the most we can do is to be open to it. In this regard, rest as re-affirmation shares a dimension of 'uncontrollability' that is articulated in Hartmut Rosa's theory of 'resonance'.[103] But this need not trouble an account of meaningful rest. *That* this may occur – rather than the frequency with which it occurs – demonstrates the meaningfulness of rest. Indeed, in our age of weariness and exhaustion, where the significance of rest has been diminished or displaced, it may happen relatively infrequently.

4. Conclusion

Might rest make our lives more meaningful? This essay answers 'yes'. As I have analyzed it, rest is best understood not as a break from work but rather, more broadly, as the temporary suspension of active involvement in projects for the sake of rejuvenation. While our projects have been thought to be the primary carriers of meaning in life, this article has explored whether putting these projects in abeyance might make our lives more meaningful. Understood in this way, I sketched five different conceptions of how rest can be seen as meaningful: rest as re-fueling, recreation, resistance, re-attending, and re-affirmation. These conceptions stand in various dialectical relations to our projects, whereby rest either facilitates our projects, serves as a space for mini-projects, becomes a large-scale life project, or becomes a seedbed for the formation of new projects. The status of meaningful rest in these first four conceptions is unstable, exhibiting tendencies of various sorts to collapse into meaningful projects. Only in the last conception – rest as re-affirmation – do we find an existential pattern whereby lives can be imbued with meaning outside of our projects altogether. It is in these moments, perhaps rare yet nonetheless profound, where we discover the deepest meaning of rest.

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Acknowledgements

Thanks to Peter Cheyne and two reviewers for this journal for helpful feedback on earlier versions of this article. I presented versions of this paper at the China and Global Development Network and the "Being, Thinking, and Meaningfulness of Life" conference at Fu Jen Catholic University. My gratitude to these audiences for their feedback.

NOTES

1 Davies, "Leisure," 120. I am indebted to Peter Cheyne for this reference.
2 Wiggins, "Truth," 102, emphasis in original.
3 Rosa, *Social Acceleration*; Crary, *24/7*; Han, *Burnout Society*. See also Derickson, *Dangerously Sleepy*.
4 Rosa, *Social Acceleration*, chap. 4. Relatedly, Kelly and Moen, *Overload*, 74, observe: 'In the context of growing inequality and the sense that the United States is increasingly a winner-take-all society, even relatively privileged professionals and managers feel pressured to do whatever they are asked in hopes of being labeled a winner and keeping hold of what they have'.
5 Kelly and Moen, *Overload*, 67.
6 Taylor, *Age of Insecurity*.
7 Azmanova, *Capitalism on Edge*, 105ff.
8 Crary, *24/7*, 14; on the increasingly competitive character of elite jobs, see also Markovits, *Meritocracy Trap*.
9 See, for example, Headlee, *Do Nothing*; Odell, *How to Do Nothing*; Liming, *Hanging Out*; Pang, *Rest*; Hersey, *Rest is Resistance*. For more theoretical accounts, see O'Connor, *Idleness* and Lutz, *On Slowness*.
10 See Brogaard and Smith, "On Luck"; Kauppinen, "Meaningfulness"; Bradford, "Achievement"; James, "Achievement"; Luper, "Life's Meaning"; Cottingham, *On the Meaning of Life*, 21, 66–7. The most prominent theories in the field, too, tend to focus on successful lives as exemplars of meaning, e.g. Einstein or Gandhi. See Wolf, *Meaning in Life*, 11; Wolf, "Meanings of Lives," 92; Wolf, "Happiness and Meaning," 109; Metz, *Meaning in Life*, 4–5.
11 Levy, "Downshifting." For a criticism of Levy's view, see Scripter, "Ordinary Meaningful Lives." See also Hammerton, "What is Wrong with Workism?"
12 See, notably, Gheaus and Herzog, "Goods of Work," and Veltman, *Meaningful Work*. Indeed, as one author dismissively quips, 'If what makes compensated work meaningful is that we devote many hours doing it, then we should also be writing about *meaningful sleep*, given that we spend a good deal of time devoted to sleeping'. Mejia, "Normative and Cultural Dimension," 851, emphasis added. Nevertheless, Mejia goes on to argue that in our current context, work is especially meaningful.
13 Mintoff, "Transcending Absurdity," 77. For another investigation into leisure and the meaning of life, see also Allen, "Leisure."
14 Setiya, *Midlife*, 133ff.
15 Kauppinen, "Against Seizing the Day."
16 Calhoun, *Doing Valuable Time*, 13ff.
17 See Williams, "Persons, Character, and Morality," 11ff.
18 See Bernhofer, "Investigating," 1021.
19 As historian Alain Corbin writes, 'From the mid-nineteenth century onwards … rest was perceived as the antithesis of ordinary work and involved taking a break from activity in order to remedy fatigue. Before this time, rest had been associated with a retreat from any form of turmoil and agitation into a state of quietude and self-reflection, an experience which brought deeper self-understanding and the potential to experience a range of agreeable sensations'; Corbin, *History of Rest*, 63.
20 Veblen, *Theory of the Leisure Class*, chap. 4.
21 Hersey, *Rest is Resistance*, 85–6. Thanks to Evander Price for introducing me to this book.
22 For alternative definitions of 'rest' in the empirical literature, cf. Bernhofer, "Investigating," and Helvig *et al.*, "Rest." Both emphasize the 'restorative' character of rest.
23 For alternative conceptions of orientation in life, cf. Harbin, *Disorientation*; Kauppinen, "Experience"; McPherson, *Meaning and Virtue*, 151ff; Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, chap. 2.
24 Williams, "Persons, Character, and Morality," 11ff; see also Williams, "Makropulos Case," esp. 86–7.
25 Cf. Calhoun's distinction between primary, secondary, filler, and norm-required time spending in *Doing Valuable Time*, 13ff.
26 See Betzler, "Normative Significance," 101–2, 112. My use of 'projects' is broader than Betzler's insofar as I do not require that they be undertaken for their own sake. What I am calling derived projects may be undertaken because of their use value to our more fundamental projects. It may be objected that derived projects cannot generate a sense of identity, but this is not true. Even if someone hates their job and does it simply for the paycheck, they may not want to be seen as a lazy, incompetent, or morally corrupt worker. Cf. Wolf, "Meanings of Lives," 94, who also stresses a broad sense of 'projects' in her theory.
27 Cf. Veltman, *Meaningful Work*, 2ff, 140–1. When derived projects come to dominate our lives or their link to our ground projects is stretched too thin and comes to stand in an antagonistic relationship with them, then

they may indeed become 'alienating projects', as Todd May has described. See May, *Fragile Life*, 11–2. Nevertheless, they would still count as 'projects' in my sense if they are playing a dominant role in orienting and structuring our lives, irrespective of their flaws. Cf. Calhoun's discussion of how certain uses of time can paradoxically entail wasting time on a lot of required unpleasant or meaningless activities: Calhoun, *Doing Valuable Time*, 6, 16–8.

28 The conceptual distance between 'work' and 'projects' will vary depending on how 'work' is understood. A broad understanding of 'work' will begin to align with my use of 'projects'. See, for instance, Pang, *Rest*, 17–18. Alternatively, one might interpret work as something more inclusive like 'vocation', as does Kelly, *Fullness of Free Time*, 15–6. My focus on 'projects' is, however, still broader and more encompassing than the focus on 'vocations' insofar as some 'projects' like that of a socialite would fail to count as 'vocations'.

29 Thanks to a reviewer for this journal and, in another context, Sascha Fink for raising this objection.

30 Cf. the discussion of how projects fit into various life shapes in Kauppinen, "Meaningfulness."

31 Setiya, *Midlife*, 133ff.

32 Relatedly, leisure and recreation, too, exhibit similarly attitude-dependent characters. See Sager, "Philosophy of Leisure," 6; Kraus, *Recreation*, 33.

33 Gros, *Philosophy of Walking*, 2.

34 In limit cases, intentions may not be necessary for rest, too. When a person *crashes*, they may rest without intending to do so, as when the body simply insists on resting, indifferent to an agent's agenda.

35 Cf. Cheshire Calhoun's observation: 'Leisure … is typically conceived not just as time away from paid labor but also as time during which one ought not to engage in worklike activities. Running household errands, preparing for a certification exam, repairing the lawn mower, and the like during leisure time constitute yet more work, rather than leisure. The normative ideal for leisure is *not* working – as it were, stopping and smelling the roses, and just relaxing. To use one's leisure well comes to be equated with *not* engaging in activities that have a temporal trajectory … in *true* leisure, everything is optional, since nothing has to be done. And our cultural norms for doing leisure well enjoin us *not* to fill leisure time with work or worklike activities, on pain of being criticized for being workaholics'; Calhoun, *Doing Valuable Time*, 141–4.

36 Kelly and Moen, *Overload*, x–xi, 4–5, 21ff; see also the analysis of the impact of mobile phone technology in Anable, "Labor/Leisure."

37 Calhoun, *Doing Valuable Time*, chap. 5.

38 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1176a30–1177a8. I am grateful to an anonymous reviewer for encouraging me to address this.

39 Bosanquet, "Place of Leisure," 164–5. Commenting on Aristotle's philosophy, Bosanquet writes, 'Leisure is especially to be distinguished from recreation and amusement. Both are alike, in that they appear to be chosen for their own sake only, but it is only an appearance. Recreation and amusement are in truth means, not ends. Their value is to make work possible, not in any worth of their own. Leisure is different; it is the expression or condition of an attainment of the end; or, as we might say, it is the satisfaction of a disinterested interest'; ibid., 164. For a historical account of the development of the concept of 'leisure', see de Grazia, *Of Time, Work, and Leisure*, chap. 1. Brief histories of leisure can also be found in Sager, "Philosophy of Leisure," 6ff and Han, *Scent of Time*, 85ff. On the history of rest, see Corbin, *History of Rest*.

40 See Sager, "Philosophy of Leisure"; Kelly, *Fullness of Free Time*, chap. 1.

41 See Barrett, "Concept of Leisure." In one of Barrett's senses listed above, 'leisure' comes close to my sense of 'resting'. He writes, 'To be leisure, resting must involve temporarily *desisting from* some activity, physical or mental, whether regarded as work or itself a leisure activity'; ibid., 10. For a survey of various accounts of leisure and recreation, see Kraus, *Recreation*, 32ff.

42 For an account of how the classical ideal of leisure has been supplanted by the idea of free time in the modern world, see de Grazia, *Of Time, Work, and Leisure*. Cf. Kelly, *Fullness of Free Time*, chap. 1, which characterizes leisure and recreation as two uses of free time.

43 As one contemporary author puts it, 'Leisure raises central questions about the good life. Leisure is not reducible to free time or to the freedom to follow one's whims; rather, it arises when people undertake activities that are valuable for their own sake'; Sager, "Philosophy of Leisure," 9. Also Cf. de Grazia, *Of Time, Work, and Leisure*, 412ff.

44 See Bostrom, *Deep Utopia*; Danaher, *Automation and Utopia*.

45 On the distinction between concepts and conceptions, see Rawls, *Theory of Justice*, 10. This distinction has been applied to meaning in life in Kauppinen, "Meaningfulness," 352–7 and Metz, *Meaning in Life*, chap. 2. For a survey of the contemporary debate on meaning in life, see Metz, "Recent Work on the Meaning of Life," and, even more recently, Metz, "Recent Work on the Meaning of 'Life's Meaning'."

46 On the difference between meaning and happiness, see Wolf, *Meaning in Life*, 3ff; Metz, *Meaning in Life*, chap. 4. For conceptions of the difference between meaningfulness and wellbeing, see also Hammerton, "Well-Being"; Luper, "Life's Meaning."
47 See e.g. Metz, *Meaning in Life*, 74n11; de Ruyter, "Pottering," 383; Kristjánsson, *Flourishing*, 10ff.
48 For such a study, see Lundvall *et al.*, "Finding."
49 Williams, "Persons, Character, and Morality," 12–3. Williams's idea of ground projects has been influential in the meaning of life literature. See May, *Fragile Life*, chap. 1; Wolf, "Meanings of Lives," 94ff; Wallace, *View*, 118ff, 189ff; Svensson, "Subjectivist Account."
50 Cf. the criticism in Scripter, "Ground Projects."
51 Brogaard and Smith, "On Luck," 457–8.
52 Kauppinen, "Meaningfulness," 346.
53 Ibid., 360ff. Cf. the critique of Kauppinen's 'progressive relationalism' in de Bres, "Narrative," 553ff, and the critique of Kauppinen's linking meaning with activity in Scripter, "Meaning and Beauty," 53ff.
54 On the distinction between intrinsically meaningful and extrinsically meaningful work, see Veltman, *Meaningful Work*, 2ff, 140–1.
55 I will set aside an even more primitive sense of 'meaningful rest' found in the empirical literature that uses it to describe merely re-energizing sleep, as in a study on 'meaningful rest' for horses being transported to slaughterhouses. See Friend *et al.*, "Activity."
56 Handke, "Essay on Tiredness," 21, emphasis mine.
57 Maslach and Leiter, *Burnout Challenge*, 15.
58 Quoted in Heschel, *Sabbath*, 13–4.
59 Pang, *Rest*, 19.
60 Heschel, *Sabbath*, 14.
61 Pieper, *Leisure*, 49–50.
62 Han, *Vita Contemplativa*, 8.
63 Han, *Disappearance of Rituals*, 43.
64 My use of 'recreation' affirms that these activities may have intrinsic value and may serve as ends in themselves. Thus, I disagree with the characterization that '[r]ecreation and amusement are in truth means, not ends. Their value is to make work possible, not in any worth of their own'; Bosanquet, "Place of Leisure," 164. For an alternative view that acknowledges that 'recreation' can be intrinsically valuable, see Kraus, *Recreation*, 37: 'Recreation consists of human activities or experiences that occur in leisure time. Usually, they are voluntarily chosen for intrinsic purposes and are pleasurable, although they may involve a degree of compulsion, extrinsic purpose and discomfort, or even pain or danger'. See also the related discussion in Kelly, *The Fullness of Free Time*, 13ff.
65 This may be encouraged by certain conceptions of meaning that 'crowd out' certain sorts of personal commitments, as Calhoun observes. See Calhoun, *Doing Valuable Time*, 26.
66 On the telic/atelic distinction, see Setiya, *Midlife*, 133ff.
67 Landau, *Finding Meaning*, 24; see also a related discussion in Hammerton, "What's Wrong with Workism," drawing on Veltman, *Meaningful Work*, 12–3.
68 Calhoun, *Doing Valuable Time*, 132. Relatedly, Calhoun observes, 'A person who has many, varied, and easily pursued objects of lesser care may end her life having spent more of its days and hours in meaningful activities than her more single-minded, passionate counterpart'; ibid., 108.
69 Wolf, *Meaning in Life*, 26.
70 Indeed, bending rest to fit Wolf's theory of meaning shifts, albeit subtly, back to project-thinking. She writes, after all, 'meaningful lives are lives of active engagement with projects of worth'; Wolf, "Happiness and Meaning," 109. Also cf. the sociological phenomenon of so-called 'serious leisure' discussed in Stebbins, "Serious Leisure."
71 See Hersey, *Rest is Resistance*; Odell, *How to Do Nothing*. Even earlier, Brueggemann's *Sabbath as Resistance* employs the same metaphor.
72 Su, "'Lie Flat,'" 128.
73 Hersey, *Rest is Resistance*, 8.
74 Ibid., 60.
75 Ibid., 79.
76 Cf. Betzler, "Normative Significance."
77 Millgram, "On Being Bored." For his targets, see Williams, "Persons, Character, and Morality"; Frankfurt, "On the Usefulness"; Frankfurt, *Reasons of Love*, 53ff.

78 Millgram, "On Being Bored," 183–4.
79 Ibid., 183.
80 On the relationship between attention, meaning, and human flourishing, see Danaher, *Automation and Utopia*, 106–11; cf. Smith, *Internet*, chap. 1; also, on attention more generally, see Citton, *Ecology of Attention*; Crary, *Suspensions*; McGilchrist, *Ways of Attending*.
81 Crary, *24/7*, 88; cf. Citton, *Ecology of Attention*, 116ff.
82 Han, *Scent of Time*, 104.
83 See Odell, *How to Do Nothing*, especially chaps. 4–5.
84 Ibid., xii.
85 Ibid., xxii.
86 Cf. Williams and Scripter, "Imaginative Agency," for a relevant discussion of de-reification, the imagination, and meaning in life.
87 Fleischacker, "Jewish Sabbath," 130–1. Fleischacker emphasizes, in contrast to the Aristotelian tradition, the 'negative path to our telos' offered by the Jewish Sabbath; see his "Jewish Sabbath," 125–129, quote at 129.
88 Pieper, *Leisure*, 48–9; see also Pieper, *In Tune*, 26ff.
89 Ibid., 66.
90 Ibid., 68. A related theistic position has more recently been defended in McPherson, *Meaning and Virtue*, 166ff, esp. 174–80.
91 Notably, see Lovibond, "'In Spite of the Misery'"; Han, *Vita Contemplativa*; de Grazia, *Of Time, Work, and Leisure*, 415.
92 For example, see Williams, *Ethics*, chap. 3; Williams, "Evolution." His view has been criticized in McPherson, *Meaning and Virtue*, chap. 4, and Cottingham, *Philosophy of Religion*, 99ff.
93 Quoted in Holland, *Against Empiricism*, 60, emphasis mine. On wonder and meaning, see also Schinkel, "Wonder." I have also discussed this quotation from Casals in Scripter, "Aesthetic Imperfection."
94 Gaita, *Common Humanity*, 219ff.
95 Gros, *Philosophy of Walking*, 87.
96 Mawson, *God*, 31ff.
97 Taylor, *Secular Age*, 5ff. Cf. 'resonance' in Kauppinen, "Experience" and "Against Seizing the Day."
98 Cf. Cochrane, *Aesthetic Value*, xii, 5; cf. Chappell, *Epiphanies*.
99 Cf. Scripter, "Ground Projects," which discusses Morioka's conception of 'the joy of life' in his *Painless Civilization 1*, 18–26, and "Painless Civilization and the Fate of Humanity," 66ff.
100 I am indebted to a reviewer for this journal on this point.
101 This may seem like an odd framing, but religious convictions and practices, too, could be seen to be meaningful *qua* projects, even from a broader secular viewpoint. See Matheson, "Naturalist's Defense."
102 Pieper, *Leisure*, 72; cf. Pieper, *In Tune*, 40.
103 Rosa, *Uncontrollability*; Rosa, *Resonance*.

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