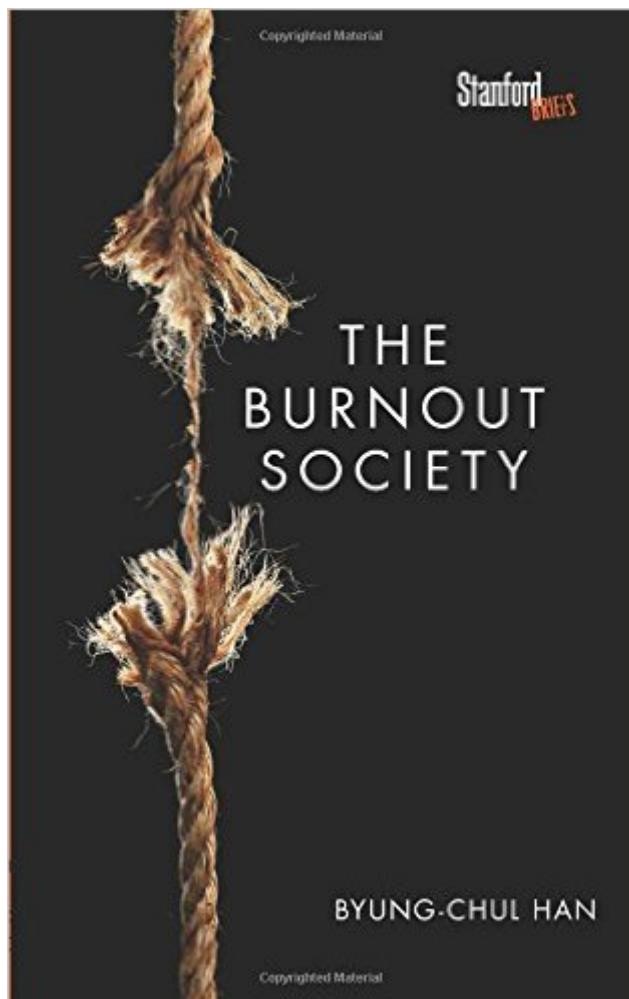


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# The Burnout Society



## Synopsis

Our competitive, service-oriented societies are taking a toll on the late-modern individual. Rather than improving life, multitasking, "user-friendly" technology, and the culture of convenience are producing disorders that range from depression to attention deficit disorder to borderline personality disorder. Byung-Chul Han interprets the spreading malaise as an inability to manage negative experiences in an age characterized by excessive positivity and the universal availability of people and goods. Stress and exhaustion are not just personal experiences, but social and historical phenomena as well. Denouncing a world in which every against-the-grain response can lead to further disempowerment, he draws on literature, philosophy, and the social and natural sciences to explore the stakes of sacrificing intermittent intellectual reflection for constant neural connection.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Easily one of the most profound and relevant contemporary works of philosophy I've read. Han combines his (extremely far-reaching) knowledge of continental philosophy with the absolute latest issues that modern life is throwing at us, resulting in a work that is erudite and actually--gasp!--helpful. It's not exactly a popular press book--the man is deeply engaged with not only philosophy but also psychoanalysis and deconstruction--but it's well worth it if you can handle some complexity. (Not sure what the grumpy reviewer's beef is with the translation--if you know the German original, this English is actually a gift.) I've been recommending the book to friends extensively, as it looks at what contemporary society is doing to our psyches: making us internalize

all the pressures that used to come from outside; making us push ourselves indefinitely (because we're never "off"); causing us to burn out because there is literally no end in sight to the onslaught of information, media, sharing, news, tasks, goals, etc...I highly recommend this author, this translation, and all of his books.

I came across Byung-Chul Han's ideas in a talk by the famous piano maestro, Daniel Barenboim. As of May 2016, Han's ideas are unavailable in English except in the two translations by Stanford University Press. Han's take on The Burnout Society and The Transparency Society are very important and needs to be read in English. Stanford University Press, surely has the good judgement to make these available, but the translation is abysmally bad. Han presents his ideas in concise volumes. The English translations are précis, but not precise. They are pedantic and needlessly written in a verbose and prolix text. It defeats the dissemination of Han's crucial concepts. This has been a huge disappointment. I would recommend the present translation as the only source of Han's ideas (unless you know German), but sincerely hope that either Stanford University Press or another varsity publisher, commissions a fresh translation. This translation deserves the shredder.

I don't understand how couple reviewers have given 2 stars to this book as this is a smart and profound analysis of our current society. In case you haven't hear about him, Byung-Chul Han is the rising star of the German philosophy.

A great work for those wanting to understand neoliberal subjectivities. The movement that the author make from Disciplinary societies and societies of control as Negativity to Achievement society as Positivity opens many theoretical paths to be followed. The author also establishes many fruitful dialogues with other contemporary theories. Besides, his understanding of depression as excess of positivity is quite interesting and well argued. Thoroughly recommended.

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