POTENT SLEEP: THE CULTURAL POLITICS OF SLEEP

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Why is sleep, a moment that is physiologically full and mentally boundless, thought to be a moment of absence and powerlessness? Where did this devalued notion of sleep come from and how can we situate sleep studies within a continuation of a historical processes and economic influences? In other words, how does sleep effect and exist within systems of power? To answer these questions I turn to a range of scholarship and theoretical studies to examine the complexities and dynamics at work within the cultural discourses on sleep.

By creating a genealogy of sleep I am able to track the way notions of sleep have changed and evolved over time. I develop a theoretical framework to examine how the Enlightenment effected notions of sleep by strengthening a cultural disposition for logical, rational and phenomenological modes of knowledge. I find that the advent of modernity is signified by the moment in which sleep, darkness and unknowing become negative while being awake, light and knowledge become positive.

To understand how sleep (and sleep studies) operates in contemporary situations I examine them within the economy of time in which clock time is conflated with money. Here I also visit the way sleep functions in relation to work in a neo-Taylorist management era. I offer an account of sleep's connections to passivity in the within patriarchal systems of thought. I determine that the cultural politics of sleep and sleep disorders point to a rift in the Western Self because of a presumed simultaneity of thinking, acting and being. I have engaged in a range of disciplines and use theory,
historical studies, textual analysis, and autoethnography as methodologies to outline some of the major cultural discussions that surround sleep.
Dedicated to the beloved that will not awaken,

Beverly Eugene,

and to a young life that has just awoken, my niece.
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When I embarked on a quest to uncover the cultural dynamics at work within my experience as a chronically sleepy person I had no map and I had no clue where to plant my first step. Since then my interest in sleep has been greeted with enthusiasm and encouragement by several of the faculty affiliated with the American Cultural Studies program. I want to thank Kathleen Dixon, Scott Martin, Kim Coates for the affirmation I gained while working with them. I want to also thank Rekha Mirchandani for her support throughout the initial phases of the project. Don McQuarie deserves to be acknowledged because he made everything possible, and he continues to be the backbone of a fantastic program.

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INTRODUCTION: AN EXPLORATION OF THE CULTURAL POLITICS OF SLEEP STUDIES

Although sleep is both a need and a drive it has not been the focus of critical attention within the academy and everyday life. In fact, research suggests that the study of sleep has been largely ignored by significant parts of the academy, including cultural studies. To the extent that sleep has been an object of inquiry at all, studies on sleep have been limited to the psychological analysis of dreams, the scientific elucidation of the mechanisms and functions of sleep, and the public health campaign against excessive daytime sleepiness. Within these discussions sleep becomes an object shaped and addressed by the explicit biases, methods, and expectations of the respective discipline. When the goals and assumptions of these disciplines are challenged, threatened, or transgressed it becomes difficult to constitute sleep as a meaningful aspect of everyday life that operates within systems of power; therefore, sleep itself is often relegated to the unconscious, negative, or silent aspects of other disciplines. This leads to a limited understanding of a fundamental drive and activity that takes up the single largest portion of our everyday lives. In turn, the way that we understand the human subject is limited to the study of rational consciousness, or its precise “negative” the unconsciousness of dreams. Outside of dreams, sleep science, and public health, sleep ceases to be a substantive event or topic worthy of intellectual attention. This project seeks to alter the way that we consider subjectivity in relation to sleep by contributing a much needed investigation of the cultural history and treatment of sleep, and initiating a long-overdue conversation about sleep.
**Research Question**

As a borderland, sleep contains the tensions of our age, “both corporal ‘release’ and corporal ‘control’; enemy and ally of the (protestant) work ethic; potentially medicalized ‘problem’ and marketable consumer ‘product’; personal responsibility and public concern; ’rehearsal’ of death and ‘rejuvenation’ of life” (Williams, “Liminal Bodies”). The British sociologist Simon Williams also asserts that the body is both social and biological and although this may be against certain reductionist tendencies, acknowledging this is crucial to revealing the relays between the two. Such an approach, nevertheless, validates the biology of sleep while failing to call attention to the culture that shapes it. This project is hesitant to follow such an appeasing call for incorporating both social and biological modes of understanding, because this research will attempt to situate the scientific facts of sleep (the biology) within a culture that overdetermines the value of such facts. My work will engage the binaries that Williams lists in an attempt to destabilize them and to bring clarification to the functions and implications of various discourses on sleep.

Sleep’s ability to evade the minds of many as being worthy of critical consideration allows its discourse to appear to be “self-evident” and “commonsensical.” This is exactly what gives discourses the privilege of unnoticed power that produces instruments of control. According to Paul Bové, such influence is “a kind of power that generates certain kinds of questions, placed within systems that legitimate, support, and answer those questions, a kind of power that, in the process, includes within its systems all those it produces as agents capable of acting within them” (Bové 54). To reveal and describe these processes Bové suggests that certain questions be asked. “How does discourse function? Where is it found? How does it get produced and regulated? What are its social effects? How does it exist – as say, a set of isolated events
hierarchically related or seemingly enduring flow of linguistic and institutional transformations?" (Bové 54). While giving greater attention to the latter questions, at the conclusion of the project all of these answers in relation to sleep will have been broached. As an exploration of discourses on sleep, this thesis aims to describe the surface linkages between power, knowledge, institutions, intellectuals, the control of populations and the modern state as these intersect in the functions of systems of thought (Bové 54-55).

More specifically, the objective of my thesis is to situate sleep within systems of power that determine the discursive meanings of sleep and everyday life. Within the American context of (post-industrial) capitalism and entrenched patriarchal systems of knowledge, one must wonder: how do sleep and sleep discourses participate in, or contribute to, the reification of these cultural forces?

The task of situating sleep and sleep problems within systems of power is a prerequisite for fully discussing the implications –social or ethical –of the mass availability of a drug that makes sleep optional such as Modafinil.¹ Such a framework is situated on the way Modafinil and drugs like it engage society and culture as surface answers to underlying tensions and behaviors that have their roots in long established, and largely unchallenged, systems that mediate an ever stronger demand for productive time. The ability to situate sleep within both the everyday and

¹ Modafinil is sold as Provigil. Modafinil was originally approved by the FDA for treatment of “excessive daytime sleepiness associated with narcolepsy” but not only was Cephelon Inc, promoting the drug for unapproved usage in its promotional materials, but according to a JAMA article, the drug has earned a reputations for being an “all-around pick-me-up, with roughly 90% of prescriptions going for off label uses, according to Cephelon” (Vastag 167).
the social, historical, technological, political and cultural forces that constitute society and human life is in essence a search to give life meaning in spite of, and in relation to, these determining aspects of contemporary culture. The devaluation of sleep cannot be separated from the ways human life has been shaped and valued.

A motivating premise of this project is that I want to implore those who desire the abolition of this biological necessity\(^2\) on account of its meaninglessness to rethink the aspects of culture that marginalize sleep. Such a premise is significant because it mandates the deconstruction of the relevant dimensions of culture that determine and construct the value of sleep. This disposition to ignore sleep is no longer only endemic to those who are irreversibly convinced of the worthlessness of sleep; it has invaded a culture that seeks to establish the value of sleep in systems of knowledge and production. Any exploration into the history of sleep’s marginalization is a much-needed intervention into the silent and limited malfeasance of sleep studies.

**Methodology**

Publications on the physiology of sleep and consequential proliferation of literature on sleep as a fundamental dimension of individual capacity and societal order provide an entry point

\(^2\) Beyond the casual fictional notion that sleep could be abolished, there are people and organizations who are invested in actualizing such goals. This was illustrated most vividly by the English organization Better Living Through Chemistry (BLTC) whose mission is “to promote paradise-engineering as a rigorous academic discipline and a mature applied science” ([http://www.bltc.com](http://www.bltc.com)). This includes a hedonistic imperative to abolish laws that impede this neo-Darwinian process.
into the discourse on sleep. By reading various key works in sleep studies with the eye of a cultural theorist I identified assumptions, paradoxes and dichotomies to flesh-out hidden complexities using the language of relevant cultural theorists. Works that do not participate within the professional discourses such as A. Alvarez’s book Night, news sources, and works from within academia will be used to develop an account of sleep studies from both internal and external vantage points, but are also used to assist in developing descriptions of the cultural meanings and social functions of sleep.

An initial and continual impetus of this project is to combine two fields, cultural theory and sleep studies, which have a mutual ignorance of the other to articulate what may be construed as a critical discourse on sleep. Within this critical discourse the question is: What type of social-politics does the study of sleep advance? Also what is the function of sleep discourses on political-economic perspectives and systems of knowledge and production?

My work is an extension of what Simon Williams began when he argued for a sociology of sleep. Yet, rather than being concerned with social institutions as such, I will be searching for culturally mediated messages about sleep that are communicated through sleep studies and discourses on sleep. Cultural and social theorists that I will engage include: Karl Marx, Max Weber, Theodor Adorno, Catherine Clément, Susan Willis, Elisabeth Bronfen and Giorgio Agamben. Other sources are noted in the literature review below where further explanation of the methodology is continued.

**Literature Review**

The need to engage in a scholarly discussion of the discursive meanings of sleep is, in part, a reaction to academic indifference towards the subject. Sleep is not a topic of inquiry or concern for intellectuals who engage the world through qualitative perspectives and
methodologies (sociologists, historians, literature, theory, anthropologists, artists). This absence is a reflection of the habitus of such intellectuals and the culture that nurtures them. This lacuna is significant because it is necessary to name the absence this work seeks to fill. Therefore, it is grounded on the premises that (1) the absence of discussions on sleep affects particular sectors of social and cultural production unreflexively and (2) the resistance expressed by parts of academia has delineated the circumference of this absence that disallows the meaningful integration of sleep into everyday life and other cultural discourses. These non-scientific methods and disciplines in question exclude psychology because sleep permeates several levels of this particular discipline, from occupational psychology, to psychoanalysis, to neuro-psychology. Psychologists therefore constitute a very audible voice in discussions on sleep. It should also be noted that there are a few exceptions to the indictment directed towards the rest of the social science and humanities. Yet, a consistent theme within these aberrations is the fact that the authors all acknowledge the absence that their work attempts to fill in their respective disciplines.³

The most significant, if not the only, sustained academic treatment of the history of sleep is Ekirch’s “Sleep we Have Lost: Pre-industrial Slumber in the British Isles” which provides a nuanced historical account of the customs and beliefs of sleep while also offering a wealth of information on the cultural, social and physiological nature of sleep in pre-industrial England. Another significant history of sleep is in Sleep and Breathing, which published a translation of Albert Esser’s work on snoring in the ancient world (29-32). Related historical studies include Laurence Wright’s Warm and Snug: The History of the Bed.

³ On this point see Williams, “Sleep and Health” 174, “Liminal” 178-179; Kroll-Smith, “Excessive” 641; Ekirch, Day’s Close 262; Biddle and Hamermesh 923, 941-42.
Within the history of the scientific study of sleep there is an eerie absence of non-deterministic accounts of the evolution of sleep studies. This is because rather than surveying the diversity of directions research was at one time oriented towards most historical accounts focus on research that hindsight finds valuable. In Kenton Krokers’ dissertation, *From Reflex to Rhythm: sleep, dreaming and the discovery of rapid eye movement, 1870-1960*, he explains that for most histories of sleep studies the reader is obliged to believe that sleep research took place in isolation, disconnected from a disciplinary context and laboratory practices, as if all previous research constituted deposits into a semantic container of scientific knowledge (Kroker 14). Frequently in these hastened accounts of the history of sleep the reader is introduced briefly to notions of sleep in antiquity and is then thrown into the modern period with all of its facts about sleep without any indication of the ways in which the two periods relate to each other. Kroker’s work is rare because it offers a coherent history on the study of sleep by charting the progress of various techniques and technologies that have helped transform the study of sleep into a central problem for experimental biology. Before the scientific illumination of sleep and its functions sleep was addressed as a medical and health issue in numerous Renaissance medical works where sleep was thought to play a significant role in well-being. Karl H. Dannenfeldt reviews how this tradition continued into the late Renaissance through publications that discussed such health issues with a wide readership (420).

An important literary and cultural work on sleep is found within the medical journal *Sleep Medicine*, in a brief article written by a group of sleep specialists that reread Cervantes’s *Don Quixote*. According to their article they “found examples of insomnia, sleep deprivation, rapid eye movement sleep behavior disorder, fantastic dreads and snoring” (Iranzo et al. 97).

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An example of this type of account of sleep in antiquity is found in Lavie 1-7.
This brief commentary piece points out some of the moments within the epic length text where sleep is discussed explicitly as the cause of Don Quixote’s derangements and delusions (Iranzo et al. 97). Shakespeare is another canon whose attention to sleep has been noted in the works of Jennifer Lewin, Janowitz HD, Furman et al., and Carroll Camaden. These authors tend to deal with the formal literary mechanisms of Shakespeare’s work rather than addressing the larger cultural and historical conceptions of dormancy that are embedded in his plays and poems.

What is referred to as the sociology of sleep, is a grouping of sociologists that have taken on the task of looking at how society constructs, institutionalizes, suppresses, banishes, and distorts sleep. Williams and Boden explain that since sociologists are predominantly concerned with waking life, “to profess a sociological interest in sleep, therefore, is all too often greeted initially at least, with skepticism if not hilarity: ‘are you serious?’ ‘you must be joking’, ‘good excuse for a nap’, ‘whatever will you think of next!’” (par. 1.1). Despite such antagonisms, Williams and Boden argue that a sociological engagement of sleep “enables us to critically rethink a series of deep-seated assumptions about the relations between wakefulness, consciousness, sociality and temporality” (par. 1.4). Schwartz, Albert and White, Kroll-Smith, Williams, and Taylor have also addressed the sociology of sleep. Additionally, there are also related studies that examine the colonization of the night through the expansion of activity into nighttime (Melbin Colonizing the Night, “Night as Frontier”), and the time constraints of people living in contemporary post-industrial America (Hochschild; Moore-Ede; Schor). Anthropology has briefly examined sleep but usually in relationship to dreams (Enzo; or Bastide). Up until very recently field researchers relegated sleep customs and arrangements to the sidelines as if they were a biological given (Bower 205). However, currently Anthropologists are making strides in examining the cultural significance of dormancy in traditional cultures. This new attention to
sleep challenges some of the cultural presumptions Americans and Westerns have about sleep’s “naturalness”; far from the seclusion and tranquility found in the West. For example, it may be common in some cultures for “sleep to unfold in shared spaces that feature constant background noise emanating from other sleepers, various domestic animals, fires maintained for warmth and protection from predators, and other people’s nearby nighttime activities” (Bower 206). Such cross-cultural studies reveal that the ideal of seclusion and tranquility for the Western sleeper seems to reflect social arrangements and values rather than being a product of biological prerequisites for slumber.

British scholars Sara Arbor and Jenny Hislop have found that the social reality of sleep for many women in mid-life is one of disruption. This is because women’s sleeping patterns seem to signal that gender inequalities play a role in shaping who actually receives this nocturnal reward. Rather than studying the different characteristics of sleep according to gender, which would be a physiological study, Arbor and Hislop are concerned with the cultural and social factors that influence sleep length and quality. Although their work is distinctly sociological, much of the non-sociological research on sleep is concerned with the way that sleeping patterns effect the health and safety of a particular group or population (i.e. shift-workers, children, adolescents, the elderly, college-students, parents of a new-born). There are several studies on the quality of life of extended-hours workers and shift-workers, many of which have a special focus on the affects of sleep patterns on safety and health. The safety hazards and diminished productivity of drowsy workers has been widely addressed within fields like occupational

5 For an example of research on occupational safety and sleep see Gaba and Howard 1249-1251; Åkerstedt, et al; Philip et al; Rosa et al. For sleep research on shift workers’ health and quality of life see, for example, Khalequ; Tepas and Mahan.
psychology, organizational development, occupational safety and public health. Jeff E. Biddle and Daniel S. Hamermesh attempted an alternative approach to the economics of sleep, by framing sleep as a product “subject to consumer choice and affected by the same economic variables that affect choices about other uses of time” (Biddle and Hamermesh 942). Nevertheless, the reluctance of economists to take sleep into consideration when studying allocation of time has produced biased estimations through its absence (Biddle and Hamermesh 942).

A Note on the Absence of Sleep Studies in the Social Sciences and the Humanities

The nature of sleep and the place it occupies in culture and society makes accessing the practice a difficult inquiry. Taylor echoes Williams and Boden when he asserts that sociology is a discipline that is concerned “with the relationship between individual consciousness and social structure” (463). If sleep is a state in which consciousness is utterly inaccessible, then “any interest in the social dimensions of sleep would therefore seem to deny even the possibility of any sensible sociological comment” (463). While sleep may be difficult to research as a social practice, Taylor bravely speculates that sociologists might find several social indicators worth studying within the discourse on dormancy, any one of which could provide data for hordes of sociologists.6 While I doubt Taylor’s requests for a sociology of sleep have fallen on deaf ears

6 If sociologists were so bold and curious as to engage in a critical process to better understand sleep, researchers may be able to: examine the social distribution of sleeping practices and along age, gender, and social class lines; develop the connections between sleep, death, and sex; and explore the social uses of inaction. Williams (“Health and Sleep”) also makes similar speculations.
since the publication of his article in 1993, sociologists are still guilty of overlooking sleep and sleepiness, according to Kroll-Smith\textsuperscript{7} and Williams.

The very people who collectively invest several generations of time and energy into elucidating the banal and exciting, the micro and macro, the semiotic and material, the historical and futuristic aspects of human life have not taken sleep into consideration, leaving one third of the average person’s lifetime eerily absent from the omnipresent eyes and ears of academia. Some, such as the Australian scholar Maria Tumarkin, have attributed this lacuna to the asocial, and the correlative ahistorical, nature of sleep (Tumarkin 58-59; Taylor). Such a perspective is severely biased because the sleep patterns of professors and students attest to the possibility that academia suffers from sleep deprivation – a deprivation that continues to disfigure bodies of knowledge through sleep’s omission. The university is full of professors who pull all-nighters to grade papers, tests or assignments by students who stayed up all night to study for their tests, and get their papers and assignments done. Rather than verifying that there is in fact an absence of sleep in academia, this thesis rests upon the presumption that the absence of sleep is a phenomenon that reveals that sleep is implicated in systems of power through its negation. This absence must be discussed as an actual substantive entity to fill the void with the very attributes it constitutes, as this research intends to do. Did sleep always constitute an absence or was it ever really present?

This unwillingness to engage in discussions of sleep in a sustained critical way cannot merely be attributed to a professional and educational system that runs on sleep deprivation. Rather, academia exists within a value system that has placed sleep outside of the realm of

\textsuperscript{7} In an endnote Kroll-Smith (“Excessive”) says “with a few exceptions, sociologists have ignored sleep and sleepiness” (641).
relevant meaningful culture. The inability to critically engage sleep perpetuates this disconcern for sleep and affirms the myths that keep sleep in the dark. Tumarkin notes that we tend to only think of sleep as “an individual act, fully inaccessible even to an individual herself to say nothing about the befuddled public” (58). Such an absence is plausibly real, but the implication of thinking of sleep as a moment of absence permanently cripples any understanding of life, culture and society by putting the concept of sleep itself in an inaccessible sphere. This project, again, seeks to discuss this absence as a substantive event to decipher the politics that have created it and to challenge the systems that seek to sustain it.

**Professional Discourses on Sleep**

Sleep science and sleep medicine are multidisciplinary, transdisciplinary, and interdisciplinary. Since the rise of psychology, psychiatry and neurology as serious medical sciences their borders have been, like that of several disciplines, porous, if not elusive, depending of course on the particular specialization in question. Still, literature on the scientific study of sleep can be separated into two general categories: physiological studies and the studies that are in essence not physiological. The easiest way to account for this is to acknowledge that Western epistemology has deep roots in Cartesian dualism in which the science of the mind has been historically treated as something distinct and separate from the science of the physical brain. Although the mind, the body and the physical brain all participate in sleep, each are couched in different etiologies, methodologies and technologies and accordingly they each continue to
constitute different disciplinary approach to the study of sleep.\textsuperscript{8}  

Non-physiological (or psychological) approaches to the subject treat sleep as an event that has effects on the mind and mental processes such as dreams. The advent of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century was greeted by the *Interpretation of Dreams*, a book that secured Freud’s place in the new century as a man of immeasurable influence over psychology and American culture. Freud is known most notably for his work in interpreting dreams in which he recognized the unconscious and for the development of psychoanalysis as a scientific method.\textsuperscript{9} Beginning with Freud and concluding with the current psycho-neurological research into sleep, any psychologist’s fascination with dreams has deep ties to their fascination with the human mind. Since the content of dreams and the extent that they are perceived to be either real or unreal is culturally determined, then America’s lingering fascination with dreams reveals that dreams are still a source of mystery and inspiration for some, even if this mystique fades with the onset of alertness.

Rather than being concerned with the content or affect of dreams, physiological discourses on sleep want to explain how and why the brain produces these hallucinations. Generally, this professional approach to sleep is the study of the neurophysiological attributes

\textsuperscript{8} Fields like neuropsychology, psychiatry, and behaviorism are extensions and fractions of this non-physiological discourse; however, in all actuality they participate in multiple discourses on sleep, dreaming and similar states.

\textsuperscript{9} Disregarding the literature on the subject of sleep in *Interpretation of Dreams*, Freud says “I have had little occasion to deal with the problem of sleep, for that is essentially a problem of physiology, even though one of the characteristics of the state must be that it brings about modifications in the conditions of functioning of the mental apparatus” (40).
and behaviors of sleep as it occurs within the empirically observable brain and body. These scientists (or doctors) are also involved in examining how sleep affects the body’s processes (such as immunology, hormone excretion, digestion, etc.). The physiological discourse on sleep is comprised of science, medicine and biotechnology from specializations such as: psychiatry, neurology, neurochemistry, neurophysiology, pulmnology, cardiology, otolaryngology (ear, nose and throat), dentistry, chronobiology, electrophysiology, and various specializations within physiology. Contemporary concern with the epidemic of chronic sleep deprivation and the costs it incurs grew from the scientific study of sleep within these physiological discourses. Modern sleep science and sleep medicine stands upon the scientific fact that the brain does not rest during sleep – rather during sleep the brain is quite active, and in some areas more active than the alert brain (Alvarez, 85; Dement, “Sleep Physiology”).

**Overview**

Chapter 1 will establish the fundamental dichotomies that have placed sleep in opposition to enlightened notions of the self, reason and empiricism. This genealogy of sleep examines the implications of the post-Enlightenment development of science and “progress” on sleep to uncover why sleep is connected to death and darkness within the Western psyche. While this parallel is indeed an antiquated one, what predated it and how has it shifted when the inner workings of sleep were made visible through science and technology? The answers to these inquiries provided conditions that gave birth to the modern field of sleep studies where we continue to struggle with the binaries of sleep and wakefulness.

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10 The discipline is not necessarily limited to human sleep, but for the scope of this project the contributions and relation of non-human sleep studies will be minimally discussed.
Chapter 2 continues to understand sleep studies by initiating a thorough quest to unpack the sleep/work paradox through the application of Marxist terminology and theory. The juxtaposition of sleep and work that sleep scientists deal with challenges the Weberian understanding of the American work ethic that puts sleep in opposition to productivity. This critique of the work ethic explanation is an entry point to begin rethinking how sleep participates in systems of production and consumption. I find that Weber’s account of the capitalist spirit predated the popularization of Taylorism and therefore did address sleep and the work ethic within a culture that was homogenously chained to the rigid constraints of mechanical time. To better assess the economics of sleep in the present culture sleep will be defined as a commodity that operates within, what has been called, the economy of time.

Moving beyond this cultural/economic paradigm I seek to uncover the part of sleep that remains condemnable and tainted as though some aspect of slumber were fundamentally incapable of being endowed with value. Chapter 3 will examine the engendered dichotomy of sleep and alertness as it mirrors traditional notions of femininity. The inability for feminine passivity to be valued within a Western patriarchal society that is built on an obsession with “action” places sleep in opposition to notions of the self that are built on the necessity of action. Even though the sleeping person is passive, the language of sleep as an enemy, as something to be fought, or as an overwhelming feeling that lacks reason and, in the minds of some, legitimacy, all reinforce the place of sleep and sleepiness within a phallocentric system. Chapter 3 is also a critique of discourses on sleep from the subjective vantage point of a narcoleptic. The narcoleptic is a life that is overwhelmed by sleep yet not invalidated by it. The entrance of this voice puts my work and life in direct dialogue with the cultural forces that shape the meaning of sleep and sleepiness. Such a vantage point necessitates the deconstruction of the modern notions of sleep
and the cultural distaste for passivity in order for the experience of untreated narcoleptics to be extrinsically valued. As mentioned earlier, this is a search to give life meaning in spite of and in relation to the determining aspects of cultural forces that mediate meanings of life and sleep. Therefore, the case study of the narcoleptic will be the site where theoretical articulations of the cultural meanings of sleep merges with practice and everyday life.
CHAPTER 1: A GENEALOGY OF SLEEP AND SLEEP STUDIES

Where did sleep studies come from? Did it arise from an infatuation with the phenomena? While this is plausible, such a proposition is also a bit hilarious, and the inverse seems just as unlikely. If sleep studies did not come from simple fascination with sleep then where did it come from? Although sleep studies is in its infancy, sleep itself predates science, language and history. More significantly, by tracing man’s relationship to sleep, and by unearthing the historical ideas, the cultural traditions, the myths and the science of sleep, we are better equipped to address the question of the etiological origins of sleep studies.

In the Western psyche and in daily practice sleep has deep roots as being akin to death. What are the forgotten linkages between ancient concepts of sleep and our modern sleep science and why are these linkages hidden? While this chapter is not meant to exhaust the complexities of such an inquiry the question must, nevertheless, be asked. This question, its answers and its complexities, not only frame the present discussion, but also seek to fill the void that Kenton Kroker saw in accounts of early sleep studies. By imagining the cultural history of sleep that Maria Tumarkin thought impossible we can delineate the absence it inhabits.

One of the earliest secular accounts of the relation of sleep to life is found in Aristotle’s *On Sleep and Sleepiness*. In this book Aristotle speaks of sleep as being a privation of waking life. Since the time of Aristotle the same forces that have altered the physical and cultural scapes of the West have also affected the discursive meanings and roles of sleep. This includes, but is not limited to: the Enlightenment, the scientific method, and technological and mechanical development. Through these revolutions and innovations the conceptualization of sleep as a privation of (waking) life has persevered. Why? When the theories of sleep are so diverse in
their attempts to explain the phenomena, and when the conditions in which sleep takes place are so dissimilar between and within cultures, why has this particular conceptualization persisted and endured? Lodged within the legacy of sleep’s privation is something that is essential, or at the least fundamental, to the West. Another dimension of this proposition is that although sleep is viewed as a privation of life because it lacks life-sustaining processes sleep is also widely acknowledged to be sanguine.

In Carolyn Fay’s dissertation, *Stories of the Sleeping Body: Literary, Scientific and Philosophical Narratives of Sleep in Nineteenth Century France*, she explains that defining sleep is “a matter of defining the self, either by integrating sleep into one’s experience, or by making it so fantastically other that it becomes an easily recognizable anomaly: the somnambulist, the mad man, the criminal, the women” (11). These are figures that are intertwined with the somnolence they inhabit because they are not to be found in the alert, rational self. Therefore, they constitute a form of Otherness. Both, the movement to connect sleep to the self and to the Other, occur in tandem; the simultaneity of these contradictory meanings serves an ideological function, and as she explains, “sleep coded with difference, is used simultaneously to enforce difference” (Fay 12). As if it were a keystone, sleep’s universality allows it to hold a structure in place while ensuring the preservation of the negative space beneath it.

How is sleep tied to the self in such a permanent manner? What force holds it there binding it to the self and the Other? As a product of philosophical pontification, the self was born of elitist philosophical discourses and has endured through the ages like a fortress. It is a site of industry and history with high thick walls and armed guards; a hidden treasure enclosed in a dense forest, this fortress is able rest on the sturdiness of its foundation. As Western civilization grew and (re)created laws, education, religion, and language the classical notion of the self has
endured, and until recently it has remained unchallenged and unfragmented. Born of exhaustion, a fragmented self has destabilized the classical self and its salience but this new notion does not neutralize the rational waking self and its legacy.

Much of the issue of sleep is situated upon the absence of the mind and active consciousness, which are defining aspects of the Western subject. Without this agency the person drifts off into being merely an object, which may be acceptable for fetishized femininity, but for the thinkers of pre-Romantic and Romantic philosophy such as Plato, Aristotle, Kant, Hegel and Descartes, the subject was what framed how the world was expressed and experienced. Everywhere subjects act on the world. The linguistic subject is a building block of Western languages and worldviews so if presence of the mind is not at all times a given then the fortress ages and begins to fall apart. To avoid this, the self must continue through dormancy, through the hallucinations of dreams and through the paralysis that stills the body. Accordingly, sleep is an action and the sleeper the subject, with will and mind always intact.

Challenging this long history and the “stable rational” being, Catherine Clément begins her book, *Syncope: The Philosophy of Rapture*, by revisiting this presumption asking, “where am I,” pointing towards the impossibility for those who are asleep, unconscious, or having fainted to ask, at this most crucial moment, “where am I?” for the real question is “Where was I?” (1). This is the rip that philosophers labored to mend, the moment of syncope. Clément’s notion of syncope refers to “an absence of self. A ‘cerebral eclipse,’ so similar to death that it is also called ‘apparent death’; it resembles its model so closely that there is a risk of never recovering from it” (1). This is where the subject is unstable because the rational mind is unavailable. It is the man in Goya’s *Sleep of Reason* (see fig. 2).
When time falters, suddenly, it is like the suspense of a dancer being tipped in vertigo and they stop as if frozen. This is syncope. There is no music or dance without syncope—without syncopation. The breaks in dance and in music allow the whole to have continuity and flow. In music syncope enters only as a rebound and is both the “queen of rhythm” and “the mother of dissonance”; it is the source of harmonious and productive discord (5). It is the suppression of a syllable or a letter in linguistics and writing. As syncope speeds or accelerates pronunciation in which some sounds drown in laziness and become silent. Yet, in these musical, choreographic and linguistic moments of syncope time never stops, but is suspended. While people vie to explain what is occurring in the lost moments Clément asks “But inside what is going on? Where is the lost syllable, the beat eaten away by rhythm? Where does the subject go who later comes to, ‘comes back’? Where am I in syncope?” (5). As a philosopher she turns first to her predecessors to examine how this question was dealt with because for much of Western philosophy imagining a short circuit or a syncope goes against much of Western tradition.

Here, Clément admits, “We are obsessed with the autonomous and the aware Subject, and even if nowadays we force it to follow the path of the unconscious [. . .] we never doubt its existence, even less its fundamental validity, without which no democracy, no individualism is even imaginable” (5). Thus philosophers and systematic thinkers of the West have constructed a rigid system of avoidance, to avoid thinking through the syncope that is a part of the everyday and the etiology they inherited, leaving the unthought of syncope, yet to be thought. Sleep is central to Western culture via the avoidance of syncope; the appearance of sleep as an absence and a lack perpetuates this system by continuing the avoidance.

It is this system of avoidance, this phallocentric “I,” that sleep enforces. Central to thinking about and experiencing slumber is the cerebral eclipse it facilitates, the retreat and
return of the self, and the dynamics of the subject/object. It is this suspension that occurs in slumber that provides an entryway into using the philosophy of rapture to examine the culture and history that dictates discursive meaning of sleep.

Typically, the body facilitates several brief lapses of time in which we are swept into syncope by the dislocation of time. Common minor short circuits that leave us exposed without faculties of thought are: tremors, the cough, the sneeze, the hiccup, and laughter; less common ones are asthma attacks and epileptic attacks (7-8). In all of these moments where does the subject go? In these breaks, the body is without the mind’s oversight and is invited to rapture. Epileptic attacks are one of four circles of syncope that Clément discusses. These circles – epileptic attacks, fainting fits, ecstasy, and near death experiences – indicate suspended time in which an interior door opens, and leaves the person changed. They pass beyond consciousness and return able to recount how wonderful the whole voyage was while also expressing relief in being able to live through it (Clément 7-8).11

These eclipses of the mind and suspensions of time are all around us, but as Clément argues, all of Western philosophy has been concerned with filling this hole in life and temporality. It seems appropriate to surmise that sleep, when accepted as a time in which the mind may pause while the body and the lower functions of the brain are still very active, is implicated in this hole. Positioning it in diabolical opposition to systems of knowledge and conceptions of the subject. Clément’s Syncope is a philosophical survey of the very void that sleep sits within because it explicates many of the dimensions of the Western tradition that have sought to control syncope. Traditions that have laid the foundation for modern sleep discourses

11 These states and phenomena have striking similarity to narcolepsy, which I will explore in chapter three.
to restrain and repress unbridled sleep. By looking towards the East, more specifically to India, Clément locates models of philosophy and culture that embrace moments of syncope and in doing so they are enraptured. What makes the West so resistant to this rapture, this syncope? The answer lies in the memory of Descartes, whose work ushered in the Enlightenment and continues to shed light on how sleep, syncope, and the Self relate to each other.

_Cogito ergo sum_, or I think therefore I am, is a notion so engrained in Western culture it has almost become cliché among the educated elite. Yet, this philosophical account of being was situated within a particular teleological inquiry that relied on the faculties of the mind as a substance different and distinct from the body. In Descartes’s *Meditations* sleep, and the dreaming that occupies it, is a moment where the corporal nature of man is vulnerable to deception and ambiguity that can only be remedied through a skepticism that seeks to base knowledge on absolute certainty. The Western subject is situated upon this method and certainty, allowing uncertainty, nonsense and darkness to be dislodged and exposed to decomposition. Their exclusion is the necessary loss to achieve security and preserve the precious subject.

The meditations begin when Descartes reflects on the way one’s senses are able to mislead and deceive one’s self. This seed of doubt is exemplified in the question of whether he is in a dream and whether anything that appears to be real is instead a product of his imagination because there are no conclusive indicators that distinguish waking life from sleep (77). His doubt does not merely lie at the level of perception but since there are those who deny the presence of God, this too must be conceded; perhaps God is fictitious or imperfect. For the sake of speculation of course, he supposes that everything is unreal, his self included. Through the vehicle of his own ability to think and meditate he moves from this exaggerated skepticism to a
solid certainty of the existence of himself, the existence of God, and the existence of the gradient between the two.

To illustrate how arduous this voyage into darkness is, Descartes compares his retreat from normal presumptions to being like a slave, “who enjoying an imaginary liberty during sleep, begins to suspect his liberty is only a dream; he fears to wake up and conspires with his pleasant illusions to retain them longer” (80). The unthinking path of his ordinary life is an imaginary liberty that can only be maintained during this metaphorical sleep of uncertainty. Nevertheless, he is slow to wake up from this slumber for the labor of working (thinking) awaits him. This moment of awakening is ironic because, as he notes, “instead of leading me into the daylight of knowledge of the truth, [this] will be insufficient to dispel the darkness of all the difficulties which have just been raised” (80). For, although Descartes rises after the sixth meditation with a certainty of self and God, this journey of enlightenment was conceived and commenced in the company of uncertainty and darkness. There is a peculiar resituating of sleep that happens here, for slumber and dreams were the point in which his uncertainty began, but in this metaphor it becomes the place where one becomes aware of his dreams and the deceptive liberty they bring.

One of the two enduring binaries that guide this meditation in search of certainty is Cartesianism, or the dualism of the mind and body. For Descartes the mind and its faculties provide the first and most essential proof of his own existence; declaring, “I am, I exist, it is necessarily true every time that I pronounce it or conceive it in my mind” (82). Therefore, when he asks, what am I? for him, the only appropriate response is “A thinking being,” more specifically, “a being which doubts, which understands, which conceives, which affirms, which denies, which wills, which rejects, which imagines also, and which perceives” (85). In effect, he
situates this affirmation on his ability to think about sleep, among other things. Replacing whatever unthinking that may occur during slumber by connecting his notion of self to the possibility of certainty and to the existence of insecurity within himself.

Clément realized that the second meditation, the point in which Descartes formulated cogito through the invention of the hypothetical non-Being who masters deceit, is the very opposite of syncope. Although Descartes’s narrative attempts to demonstrate a suspension of sorts, the certainty of “I am, I exist” is bought at the expense of a “total eclipse of the world.” In his hypothetical nocturnal darkness no one exists except for the subject, the “I”. The threat of rapture, the threat of total darkness and night, is responded to by building a fortress of suspicion around itself. In doing so the system of thought delays itself. It traps itself and is paralyzed, “entranced by its own gesture. I am, I exist, and then what?” (Clément 43, emphasis added).

This is where the signification of the body is implicated. Unlike the body, the mind is infinitely capable of reaching truth and it is limited only to the extent in which the body and its senses deceive. The mind is exempt from the laws of nature endowing it with will free of necessary restraint and adherence to such laws. Since a person is both mind and body, one cannot escape the possibility of being faulty or deceptive, such is the nature of man (142).

The influence of Cartesian theory cannot be overemphasized. The androcentrism in the proclamation that the mind is the most significant, if not the only, trait that distinguishes humans from the other animals that inhabit the earth is an asset that philosophers like Descartes prized. It provides a philosophical warrant to subjugate nature and to defeat any bestial corporal weaknesses within people and society. Imperialism and colonialism stands upon the divinity that Cartesianism endows the subject. Such Western philosophical underpinnings may be credited with providing the foundation for human rights, democracy and the free press. However, it has
also instigated a war against the natural world in which Westerners perpetrate violence against the ecosystem, stratosphere, and Ocean.

   Descartes also argued, along with other French philosophers and scientists, that the mind did not sleep, and that dreams were evidence of this activity. For them there could be no break in the mind’s existence for this would be cripple the subject, and turn man into an animal if at any one moment the mind ceased to exist (Fay). There could be no syncope here, no pause, no non-thinking, no void where the proof of everything sat.

   The source of Descartes’s uncertainty references the other binary that frames his meditations. The absolute attribute of God’s perfection and incorruptible temperament, as Descartes asserts, makes the wish to deceive a weakness that is not in God. For man is not merely guided by, created by, and possessed by an awareness of this Supreme Being, but man is also a means between the Supreme Being and the “not-being” (110). All that is authentic and every clear and distinct conception cannot come from the nothingness that is not God, reality and truth cannot come from the not-being (117). Or, as it is commonly claimed, something cannot come from nothing. This deceiver, this not-being that is not named here, is very present in Descartes’s logic and in the way sleep is placed within the epistemology of the self and the world. This situating of sleep and dreams outside of truth and certainty is mediated by a confidence in memory because Descartes maintains that memory does not sufficiently bind images from dreams to the rest of waking life. It is this inability for dreams to be integrated into a linear reflection of self and experiences that allowed him, by the end of the sixth meditation, to know with certainty the difference between dreaming and waking life (Descartes 143).

   Anthony Cascardi offers a critical response to Descartes’s dream argument and the epistemological model it rests on by looking at dreams and reality in Cervantes’s Don Quixote.
Focusing on Don Quixote’s adventure in the Cave of Montesinos, Cascardi is able to locate an often-unacknowledged flaw in Descartes’s assertion that dreams cannot be blended into the continuity of experience and therefore cannot be evidence of wakefulness. This argument is refuted on the grounds that Don Quixote was able to put his dreams and illusions into the continuity of memory, but he is nevertheless still quite mistaken on the point of distinguishing reality from delirium, even though he can track his own existence continuously over time through memory (112).

Cascardi finds another glaring peculiarity within the *Meditations* by reevaluating Descartes’s suppositions. Cascardi revisits the memorable description Descartes offers in his meditations in which he imagines that he has confused sleep and wakefulness and supposes that although he sees his hand, he does not have a hand, or a body, and although he senses it, he is not sitting by the fire in his dressing gown (Descartes 77-79). Cascardi contends that Descartes meticulously describes the extent in which he entertains skepticism because “if he is going to arrive at unimpeachable knowledge, if he is to be certain of what he knows, then he must submit these suppositions to verification” (Cascardi 120; emphasis added). Readers are asked to review the situation to ensure nothing has been mistakenly described as if some eventuality, near or remote, could prove or disprove the certainty of Descartes’s own mental images. In Descartes use of imagination as a mode of supposition he blurs the lines between reality and imagination because, as a skeptic he must invest in eventualities. Therefore, he treats his imagination as an experiment that can be flawed. Although this is in his imagination, Descartes presents it to us because he might wake-up from his supposed dream (Cascardi 120). His use of imagination sought to endow dreams and imagination with the very attributes they lacked; as if they were not
subjective, internal, transient, and malleable; as if his imagination was not imagination but something real and therefore can be endowed with certainty.

Rather than using Cervantes to refute the entire dream argument, Cascardi seeks to illuminate its limitations and the consequential flaws in epistemology as such by affirming the role of fiction in understanding and experiencing the world. Don Quixote responds to the skepticism of epistemology by rejecting epistemology while remaining anti-skeptical, or refusing to doubt one’s own perceptions, hence “Cervantes shows that we relate to the world including the ‘world’ of our own experiences, in ways other than what the epistemologist calls ‘knowledge’ and that all we know of the world cannot be characterized in terms of certainty” (121-122). Although Descartes uses imagination and uncertainty to eventually achieve what he considers to be a certain truth, he rejects dreams and the imagination as being akin to deceptive qualities of the body and are therefore not within the range of valid human experiences. This, in essence, destabilizes Descartes’s project because it is an exercise that sits upon a supposition of uncertainty as if it were certain; or, as Clément demonstrates when she says it is “entranced by its own gesture. I am, I exist, and then what?” (43). Cascardi calls for the rejection of epistemology as a goal and a method; such a rejection “provides a basis on which discovery of the world, as such, may begin” (122), liberating knowledge from a system that clings to empiricism and is unable to validate that which cannot be seen or incorporate perceptions that cannot fit within the boundaries of reason.

To be critical of how sleep is culturally constructed it is also necessary to be critical of the genealogy and philosophy that have given rise to contemporary notions of sleep. Since Descartes sleep and sleepiness have continued to be classified outside of the range of valid human experiences. Enlightenment epistemological thinkers like Descartes and John Locke
delineated these boundaries by putting sleep both at the fringes while simultaneously making specific understandings of sleep crucial to traditional notions of the self. Yet, scholars working within sleep discourses rarely reflect on how sleep is constructed within their particular society or on the dispositions and cultural forces that has given sleep meaning.

**From Light to Darkness: The Awakening of Reason**

There was once a fundamental virtue in sleep and sleep-like states. Far from being akin to the vice of sloth, slumbering and twilight trances were moments in which the divine and the human would rendezvous. Sleep was a part of the iconography of melancholia in coins and paintings of the Italian Renaissance. Maria Ruvoldt finds that not only did sleep represent this bodily humor, but the depiction of the sleeping nude male on coins represented intellectual achievement in the 15th and 16th century. Sleep, as a symbol of enamor, was a concept inherited from Plato’s belief that:

true inspiration comes from moments of possession, characterized by the loss of reason: ‘No man achieves true and inspiration divination when in his rational mind, but only when the power of his intelligence is fettered in sleep or when it is distraught by disease or by divine inspiration’. (Ruvoldt 13)

This platonic doctrine of fervor and divine rapture allowed sleep to be viewed not as a sign of sloth, but as an opportunity for a divine union. Both dreams and poetic creation were, at this time, characterized by the generation of new ideas (18). Therefore the iconography of sleep

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12 Martensen notes that Descartes thought that the mind was actually autonomous and active during sleep but, while his contemporary, John Locke, considered human understanding to be dependent on the sense impressions garnered when awake and alert (Martensen 1643).
invoked the dream as a source of poetics. Depicting intellectuals asleep aligns them with those who are able to receive divine inspiration. Accordingly, the depiction of sleep on coins was a kind of shorthand to communicate a person’s elite status by way of intellectual achievement or celestial selection.

To be divinely inspired one must be prostrated and take on a passive role that has since been feminized (Ruvoldt 38). This passive receptor model of fervor met resistance by those who adhered to Aristotelian rationality and control. Aristotelian philosophy is distinct from Plato’s melancholic meditation although it is not a radical departure from it; rather it simply chooses to focus on what happens after the melancholic awakens from the divine slumber. Placing sleep in relation to awakening also juxtaposes them. Depicting passivity and irrationality of sleep in opposition to the control, reason present when awake that further the actualization of inspiration; whether it is music, poetry, science, or art. What occurred while awake in the concrete world was more pertinent that the transient fervor (Ruvoldt 40).

The most profound visual articulation of the equilibrium between Platonic and Aristotelian approaches to the nature of creativity is in Raphael’s *The School of Athens* in Stanza della Sengnatura, Vatican (Ruvoldt 54; see fig. 1). Painted in 1510-1511,13 *The School of Athens* is one of four murals commissioned by Julius II (1503-13) to go in his personal library. The fresco has two distinct halves that each represent one of the two forms of *cognito causarum* (“knowledge of causes”). Plato and Aristotle occupy the focal and dividing point of the mural. On Plato’s far left stands the statue of Apollo, god of music, who governs hearing, and below this is Pythagoras and his disciples. Together they represent the study of harmony, mathematical

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13 Raphael made additions to the original painting in 1515 that included the Heraclitus figure and other additions (Hall; Ruvoldt 55).
and musical (Hall). Plato, barefoot and graying, is on tiptoe as he holds his book *Timaeus* in one arm as he points upward, as if pointing towards the place he turns for ideas and divine fervor (Ruvoldt 54). As Marcia Hall reviews the scholarship on the painting she notes that one art historian describes Plato’s gesture as it relates to the book and painting as signifying that, “Plato sanctifies all things” (36). For this ancient philosopher the natural world rises above the tangible because everything is rooted in the cosmological. Heraclitus, the man directly below Plato, sits with pen in hand while in melancholic meditation awaiting divine inspiration (Ruvoldt 55). This massive sleepy figure is said to be in homage to Michelangelo because it was added after Raphael saw the Michelangelo’s Sistine Chapel. Aristotle stands to the right of Plato. With his feet firmly planted, this student of Plato tacitly dissents by holding his book *Ethics* and reaching out towards the earth, telling viewers that Aristotle sought knowledge about the nature and causes of things in experience and perception. On the Aristotelian side is a statue of Minerva, the goddess of wisdom, who by governing insight also governs sight. Since it is through the faculties of sight that geometry and astronomy are studied, at the lower left corner of the mural Euclid is surrounded by students while a representative of Chaldens, the “authors of astronomy,” stands beside them holding up a starry globe. Hall explains that Aristotle’s take on epistemology is one that “seems to naturalize even the things that are divine” (36). The fresco, in its composition and execution, represents the zenith of the artist’s mastery over the principle of balance. One may argue that it also tacitly foreshadows the imbalance that would later come as Aristotelian philosophy asserted its influence over the burgeoning fields of science.
One way of reading the work, with the aid of hindsight, is to locate potential imbalances between the two ways of knowing. For example, Raphael paints himself on the side of Aristotle, in the visual world of astronomy, geometry, and reason. This painting also succeeds in achieving the illusion of depth, which at this time, was not a divine method or revelation, but was achieved through the geometric principle of the vanishing point which holds that as the distance between the viewer and the object increases the size, clarity, and placement recedes too. This is a trick
that painters and viewers are still fascinated with because of its ability to make a two-dimensional surface have depth, treating it as malleable space. Ruvoldt also reminds us that Aristotle codified the ancient categories of feminine/woman and masculine/man by pairing them in a way that aligned the male with stability and reason, and the female with malleability and illogic (65). Aristotle and Raphael put slightly more emphasis on the awakened concrete life and the action that occurs there. Retrospection reveals that Plato’s melancholic and divine fervor went the way of the orality that he clung to while Aristotle’s ideas and the printed word revolutionized Europe. Therefore, let me turn to Aristotle to examine the notions of sleep that began to dethrone the esteemed melancholic.

Within brief accounts of sleep in antiquity, Aristotle’s theory of sleep is often central; indeed, it dominated popular notions of sleep for more than fifteen hundred years (Lavie 3; Dannenfeldt 418). In the first chapter of The Enchanted World of Sleep, Lavie quaintly cites Elizabeth Eisenstein’s book, The Printing Press as an Agent of Change, as a work that details the vast and particular effects of the introduction of print:

> It implemented the Protestant Reformation and reoriented Catholic religious practice, [. . .] it affected the development of modern capitalism, implemented western European expansion of the globe, changed family life and politics, diffused knowledge as never before, made universal literacy a serious objective, made possible the rise of modern sciences, and otherwise altered social and intellectual life. (Ong 115-16)

The shift from orality to literacy also may have played a role in the legitimacy granted to dreams. It should also be noted that Plato’s connection to orality was via Socrates, Plato’s Socrates was a poignant critic of this new technology (Ong 78-79).
summarizes this ancient theory of sleep by explaining that Aristotle thought that as food is being digested, “vapors rise from the stomach because of their higher temperature and collect in the head. As the brain cools, the vapors condense, flow downward, and then cool the heart,” therefore, “its cooling was the cause and the reason for sleep” (3). Largely based on the observation that people get sleepy after eating a large meal, Aristotle thought of the heart as the body’s sensory center. Although we have since moved beyond such theories, the basic logic that Aristotle utilized has long outlived the acceptance of his cooling theory.

The preservation of this antiquated concept of sleep exists within the larger cultural logic of binaries that is unique to the West. In Aristotle’s *On Sleep and Sleepiness* (*Du somno et vigilia*) he declares that, “sleep is a privation of waking life,” because, as he explains:

For contraries, in natural as well as in all other matters, are seen always to present themselves in the same subject, and to be affections of the same: examples are-health and sickness, beauty and ugliness, strength and weakness, sight and blindness, hearing and deafness. (4-5)

While some such binaries are still common and widely accepted, despite the efforts of deconstruction, postmodernism and dialectical thinking, yet some of the pairs mentioned have been (successfully) contested and destabilized. For example, the “beauty” Aristotle spoke of reflected a particular aesthetic that was a reflection or a signification of divinity. While such conceptions still linger in museums and archeological sites, they have been worn dull from centuries of artistic and mechanical re-articulations of this aesthetic. Classical beauty has also had to contend more recently with the popularization of art that critiqued and abandoned the notion of the sublime. In today’s postmodern art scene works of art that are aesthetically “ugly” are not necessarily seen as unbeautiful. The sick-health binary has also been destabilized because
in the age of “surveillance medicine” we acknowledge the shades of risk that precede the onset of sickness (Armstrong). Within such a paradigm health coexists with the conditions that create sickness in a manner that topples the very essence of the binary. Just as these binaries have been implicated within systems of knowledge that have specific affects on the way the world is experienced and perceived, sleep and wakefulness too have been challenged within modern sleep studies in ways that have destabilized the simplicity of this archaic binary, yet the notion that sleep is a privation has persisted into contemporary discourses on sleep.

Ever since Aristotle began to put such emphasis on waking life, sleep has fallen from its state of grace. It is nevertheless necessary to know that before the tyranny of mechanical clocks and the invasion of public lighting sleep was nor generally regarded as to be an impoverished aspect of life. Before the mass availability of electricity and light bulbs sleep was thought to contain introspection and inspiration that alert life lacked.

Rodger Ekirch’s essay, “Sleep We Have Lost: Pre-industrial Slumber in the British Isles,” and book, At a Day’s Close, both take the reader to a time when sleep was a favorite topic among the poets and philosophers of sixteenth century England. In pre-industrial Europe sleep was far from ignored, rather “it frequently absorbed peoples thoughts” (Day’s Close 262). This was the case for literary works, from plays to poetry, and is evident in medicine and philosophy. One needs only reference a Shakespearean play for evidence that Shakespeare and his audiences’ had a dynamic relationship with sleep and its sibling states. Who could deny the centrality of sleep and sleep like states in the plays Macbeth, Midsummer’s Nights Dream, and Hamlet?

Sprinkled through diaries and legal depositions, sleep was an integrated and valued part of life. In this era sleep was alive, but modern slumber seems to have been dulled, its reveries
have been silenced and its glory has been laid to rest. Yet, before this lackluster sleep, dormancy was bright, loud, and noticed.

The salutatory affects of sleep were well known in the premedical discourses of the fifteenth and sixteenth century. And long before Benjamin Franklin’s famous statement “early to bed, early to rise” this advice was spread along with other prescriptions in how to use slumber’s elixir. Readers of the *London Chronicle* in 1764 were treated to tales of sleep’s dysfunctions and disorders while the mysterious conditions of narcolepsy and sleepwalking received lengthy attention (Ekirch, *Day’s Close* 267).

In this pre-industrial past many thought that sleep was a reward that God bestowed upon everyone regardless of rank and character. This medieval concept of “the sleep of the just,” meant that sleep belonged “to those with simple minds and callused hands, society’s toiling class,” while the powerful and wealthy were not able to use their social status or resources secure somnolent mental peace (“Lost” 346). This notion of egalitarian sleep is shown to be somewhat of a cultural myth when held up to Ekirch’s scrutiny. Contrary to these perceptions, Ekirch finds that the physical conditions of the lower classes made sound sleep a rare commodity, referencing the environment, subsistence pressures and inaccessibility of therapeutic relief as common impediments to sleep in this pre-industrial era (“Lost” 349-350). The tranquility of modern slumber has allowed a nostalgic notion of sleep displace the actual rocky terrain of somnolence. The significance and insignificance of the night and sleep continues to be implicated in cultural myths that either banish or preserve social inequalities.

Ekirch’s research also reveals that the night and sleep are not historically tightly intertwined. Rather than sleeping, during the night another world came alive; a world free of conventional repression, full of amoral pleasures, practices of subsistence, intimate and estranged
relationships (Ekirch, *Day’s Close*). Although the night possessed so much life, still for many the night lurked with fear, chaos and terror. Yet, Ekirch contends, “Whether ‘diurnal man’ evolved slowly or emerged, instead, practically overnight, genetically configured from day’s first dawn, certainly by the early modern era nocturnal repose had become inseparable from life’s natural order” (*Day’s Close* 261). While Ekirch can only speculate to determine the root cause for modernity’s apparent affinity for daylight there was, nevertheless, life that refused to rest at night. While sleep does participate in sustaining social order, the point at which society ends and nature starts is a line yet to be found. In the land of nod social lines and cultural boxes frame the distribution of slumber, and with it, the delirium and horror sleep possesses.

Nevertheless, Ekirch’s key argument is that pre-industrial sleep was divided into a first sleep and a second sleep separated by an hour or two of peaceful reflection or time to converse with others on what their dreams revealed (*Lost* 364-366). Inclusive of sleep’s intermissions, sleep was moment in which people were able to gain an understanding of the world inaccessible to the alert reasonable mind. The nocturnal intervals in which sleep came were common knowledge, and as such they required no elaboration. For example, John Locke once stated that “all men sleep in intervals” (qtd in Ekirch, *Day’s Close* 301). Ekirch’s observation of a commonness of this pattern is also supported with other diaries and essays that refer to a “first sleep” or used variations of this type of distinction. Here perceptions and thoughts mingled with dreams and the darkness. There was something mystical about this type of sleep that encased waking hours within dormant moments. Mystical, but also dangerous; as we see when Clément reflects on Euripides’ story of the awakening of Agave, queen of the bacchantes. When Agave is

15 It should also be noted that Dannenfeldt also describes the practice of a “first sleep” in his review of sleep in the late Renaissance (428).
prompted to look at what she thought was the head of a lion when the clarity of daylight revealed that she held the head of her son, which she had torn off instead of the head of her imaginary lion (Clément 28-29). Although this blended sleep and wakefulness allows myths to be relived nightly it also leaves the day susceptible to Don Quixote’s delusional sallies. Yet, Ekirch’s work leads one to wonder whether sleep and wakefulness are more indistinct and similar than convention presumes.

The first sleep gave dreamers their nocturnal visions and provided an intermission to reflect on them or in some cases act on them. Also as Ekirch notes, between this first and second sleep children were conceived and the poor arose to commit petty crimes. Prayer and sorcery both awoke during these moments encased in sleep. Yet, most people stirred only to immerse themselves in contemplation, as Ekirch adds, “to ponder the preceding day and to prepare for the arrival of dawn. Never, during the day or night, were distractions so few and privacy so great, especially in crowded houses” (Day’s Close 308-310). A fundamental aspect of the self awoke during these moments of pause.

This fragmented sleep pattern ceases when artificial light is incorporated into daily life. Thanks to the genius of Edison’s innovation, Ekirch declares, “not only has widespread artificial lighting created a hostile environment for segmented sleep, but sleep itself has come under increasing assault from the hurried pace and busy schedules of modern life” (“Lost” 384). He adds that in modern society the quality of sleep has increased in comparison to pre-industrial attempts at slumber, all while the quantity of sleep continues to diminish which may be related to the consolidated sleep patterns and a cultural disdain for idleness. Descendants of the pre-industrial British sleepers Ekirch studied continue to move further and further away from a source that gave life its color and imagination:
Ever since the eighteen-century, not withstanding the Herculean efforts of the
nineteenth-century Romantics and Freud, we have continued to lose touch with
our dreams, due in part to scientific and cultural transformations in fields ranging
from anthropology to aesthetics. (“Lost” 385)

With this diminished relevance of dreams, so too has an “understanding of our deepest drives
and emotions” also tapered (Ekirch, “Lost” 385).

While Ekirch attributes the depreciated value of sleep and dreams primarily to
technological developments such as the light bulb, the irony is that it is exactly the genius of
technology that eventually allowed science to illuminate many of the neurological mysteries of
sleep. Therefore, the relation of sleep to technology is two fold: technology facilitates the neglect
and the deprivation of sleep on one hand, while on the other, it simultaneously facilitates
advancements in knowledge and control of sleep and wakefulness. The emergence of this
dynamic can be traced to the thinkers and legacy of the Enlightenment and to notions of
progress. Like technology, medicine and science, sleep studies is one of the many heirs of reason
and Enlightenment.

In Staudenmaier’s essay, “Denying the Holy Dark,” he notes that mystical traditions of
the pre-enlightened world respected the darkness but has since been transformed by Western
envvelopment of rationality. This cast secular mystical disciplines and the like into a darkness that
was not worthy of light, lest they reinvent themselves as rational (Staudenmaier 178). The
Enlightenment is prone to forget what has not proven adaptable to the tools of reason and
therefore the West’s case of cultural amnesia cannot be thoroughly explored to discover exactly
what fell victim to the distortion of rationalization or what lay dead from perpetual omission.
Staudenmaier elaborates by saying, “mysticism went the way of playful ambiguity and
sensuality; even Shakespeare’s praise of sleep gradually became less acceptable than attacks of sloth” all while the cultural and religious leaders re-interpreted the holy dark to be something more rational, and therefore not dark (Staudenmaier 187). Since the pre-industrial sleep of poets and playwrights’, dormancy has been a practice that has been subject to the cultural forces that sought to make sleep and dreams conceivable to a world that was obsessed with reason and captivated by the observable controllable dynamics of physical life. As the West grew parallel to the march of progress, like mysticism, sleep too would be excluded from the light of enlightenment on account of its mystical qualities and its inability to actively participate in *cogito, ergo sum* conceptions of the self.

This modern notion of progress has at its core the premise that new methods in science, technology and business, which are rooted in conventional experimental methods, precision, measurement, and punctuality, will fundamentally move humans towards a Hegelian end of history. According to Staudenmaier, the currency of this conception of progress, as a historical force, was mediated by enlightenment ideas of civility and objectivity (Staudenmaier 178). Hence progress sought to improve the human condition by banishing superstition and magic with the power of its methodological rigor. The Enlightenment therefore marked the entrance of the rational method into the rising authority of science and technology, where it retains its position as the primary giver of Knowledge in the West. There are two definitions of progress and accordingly two ways the effects of progress relate to the genealogy of sleep studies. The first of which is when science constitutes progress merely in the sense that current research builds on prior research. Consequently, communities of scientists and technical practitioners acknowledge that they exist within a social context that makes them susceptible to social forces, implying that their endeavors are politically and culturally laden. This linkage reveals that the force of progress
has given birth to the technical ingenuity that allowed science to examine sleep and develop a body of knowledge on sleep’s functions and dysfunctions.

Progress can also be viewed as “cumulative processes that constitute an inexorable transhistorical force that should not and cannot be challenged” (Staudenmaier 177). Within this version of progress the light of reason is a means of challenging the darkness of sensuality, superstition, mysticism, witchcraft, aesthetic intuition, ignorance, disease, fanaticism, and ordinary crime (Staudenmaier 177). This light of progress has a peculiar relationship to sleep for it has banished sleep into a darkness that makes it inaccessible to the logic of empiricism because the nature of sleep overflows with superstition, mysticism and various variations of darkness. Therefore, by definition of its exclusion to reason, sleep is incapable of coming into the light of reason. Such social progress has also given rise to surveillance medicine and public health, which are concerned more with containment than prevention, and has recently made sleep and sleepiness a target of policy and advocacy. Both of these offspring of the Enlightenment have allowed an understanding of sleep to arise and solidify as something to be studied and contained.

The darkness that characterizes sleep is epitomized in the writings of Descartes and Cartesian thinkers that located legitimate knowledge in observable phenomena that are subject to rational processes, which tied notions of the self to the act of thinking. In a world that is essentially rational, comprehensible, and accessible to the individual through the faculties of reason, sleep exists at the border between things that are unknown and knowable. Similarly, just as Cartesian philosophy relied on analysis of experience to reach generalizable truths, the sleeping person is largely incapable of formally learning about the world while asleep. Rather, in the case of Descartes’s Meditations and for early sleep researchers, sleep was useful because of its ability to demonstrate the connections and relays between the mind and the body. For
Descartes the line between sleeping and waking life was a point of uncertainty that motivated his quest for certainty, and later he notes that it is memory that separates the two states. He fails to legitimize the source of his revelation, the very obscurity from which light has emerged; he forgets the darkness, which is darkness.

Clément helps us grasp the impossibility of darkness in Western culture when she observes that, “true night does not exist” (21). Nor is there total darkness because when darkness floods any occupied building tiny fire-exit signs stay lit reminding us of the laws of protection, to protect us from the chaos of

![Fig. 2. Fransico Goya, *The sleep of reason brings monsters*, Drawn and etched, 1797-1798; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. From OhioLINK Digital Media Center.](image-url)
darkness. It does not exist because one cannot extinguish everything, not even the exit lights in a theater that attempts to re-present night. Yet, to grasp the notion of darkness, the night may be studied to witness the confusion and breaking of taboos that it inhabits. In the night or in being shut in dark places one passes through death, and feels contradictory sensations of naïve fear and of one’s thoughts being freed and scattered. Here, in this nocturnal fear and freedom, there is a liberated logic, the logic of syncope (21-24).

Choosing the night ensures that one will be at odds with the world, one’s surroundings, or even one’s self. Philosophers have protested the discord that nighttime brings, for them the order of thought must be restored. Philosophers hated syncope and the night that imposes it. The philosopher’s true goal is control, and Clément finds evidence of this in Descartes, Hegel, Plato, Socrates and Kant. In their attempts to exercise control over syncope, which quickens time through suspension, philosophers delay syncope, passion, death, surprise, spontaneity and the darkness of the unknown. For them, thinking and thought must be a total block, not disrupted by syncopation (Clément 35).

Clément bluntly asks, “To what dryness is he aspiring to?” (49). Wringing all of the juice of life out until there is only dryness left, no superstition, no nonsense, no weakness of thought. Philosophers want to express this last drop of fear, this fear of death that is rooted in the age-old European phobia of morbidity. The aim, with this last drop, is to extinguish death, and the decomposition of ideas and thought. In their endeavor to master death, life must cease to be mortal, the mind, the soul and thought is granted immortality but its connection to the corpus must be demonstrated so in doing so it can be watched and monitored to ensure that the mind is forever dried and protected from precipitation. Any disconnection between the mind and the body takes the West by surprise because, in effect, it threatens the very idea of the subject. As
these pre-Romantic philosophers sought to keep the mind and the body always bound the sciences that are heir to Cartesian theory too, seek to keep the two tied up, to prevent either one from escaping the other. Clément disputes this aim by claiming that, “living dampness will not leave except of its own accord”; adding that, “there will always be the sleep of reason” (51 emphasis added). But will it always be Goya’s *Sleep of Reason* (see fig. 2)?

When sleep is thought of as a privation of life through out generations and across social and cultural differences, it creates a line that runs parallel to shifting conceptions of life, living and death. A tenuous line separates sleep from wakefulness. It changes shape and direction continually reinventing itself but nevertheless implying that sleep is the privation of waking life, 

16 This image of Francisco Goya’s *El sueño de razon produce monstros* (*The sleep of reason produces monsters*), which was drawn and etched in 1797-1798, visually encapsulates the shifting meaning of sleep at the advent of the nineteenth century. Rovoldt contextualizes the piece at the end of her exploration of sleep and dreams in the Italian Renaissance because it departs from Michelangelo’s *Il Sogno* (ca. 1533), which depicts the personality and the products of the melancholic mind by portraying the melancholic vices around the reception of divine inspiration in a landscape of dreams (184). Michelangelo was able to represent the doubled nature of the melancholic and their dreams, its genius and its madness; therefore Goya’s *Sleep of Reason*, signaled “a new conception of the artist and his project, one that moves beyond poetic license and divine inspiration into more sinister territory, in which dreams edge closer to nightmare” (Rovoldt 187). The ambiguity of the word *sueño*, which can be interpreted as “to sleep” or “to dream,” leaving the figure open to be interpreted as being a dreamer surrounded by monsters of his own making and the folly of social order and superstitions, or it could represent the danger of excess irrationality (Rovoldt 187). My reference to the image implies the latter.
and indeed of life itself. In modernity there are notions of the rational, conscious self that articulate sleep’s position of lack.

Here we see that it is the inability of the sleeper to observe and consciously experience sleep that makes it utterly unperceivable and dark. This aspect of sleep is one of the reasons that classical thinkers such as Aristotle looked to perceivable dimensions of waking life to make sense of dormancy. Similarly, the lack of self-perception during sleep is the launching point of Descartes’s *Meditations*. Descartes use of sleep as a supposition to build certainty mirrors other instances in Enlightenment and in the project of “Progress,” in which sleep is put in the dark, as if light depended on its shadows.

It was within this fog of somnolent darkness that self-awareness is suspended, making it difficult to internally observe and gain insight into sleep through external processes of experimentation and reason. While sleep has historically been a matter of scientific inquiry it was not until the utilization of technology to detect the energy patterns of the brain that luminosity flooded the domain of sleep. Scientists were finally able to *see sleep*, literally, through the visualizations of sleep produced by the Electroencephalogram (EEG).

**From Darkness to Illumination**

Sleep specialists in the nineteenth and early twentieth century frequently defined sleep as a state that lacked the qualities of life which were culturally lauded and prescripted: the will, consciousness and action. Kroker’s dissertation is concerned with this dimension of early sleep studies because:

the unique difficulty that sleep has historically presented for physiology is that its effects are, on a mundane level, generally below the threshold of the visible. Sleep
tends to be described in terms of the absence of phenomena (of consciousness, or
movement, of sensation), rather than the presence of anything at all. (7)

This is a continuation of sleep occupying a space of darkness. During sleep mental and
physiological activity, consciousness, will, energy, reaction to stimuli, and muscular movement
were all quite difficult to observe with the available tools of empiricism in the nineteenth and
early twentieth century. Since these things could not be observed at this time sleep was thought
to be an passive state. At this time sleep was not viewed as being fundamentally different from
similar states of absence such as coma, stupor, hypnosis, anesthesia, and hibernation (Dement,
“Sleep Physiology” 3). Although it may have slightly impeded the scientific study of sleep, the
negative conceptualization did not stop investigation into the sleeping mind. 17

Some physiologists proceeded by filling this void with socially laden signifiers. Kroker
turns to the work of Laranine Daston to make the point that psycho-physiologists turned sleep
into a place where they could turn the mind into the body because it seemed possible to resolve
the conflict of free will as either a moral imperative and therefore a mental science or as a law-
governed enterprise (24). William Alexander Hammond, a physiologist of the 1860s who sought
to interpret all neurological activity in materialist terms, directly addressed the ontological
dualism of the mind and body that concerned most physiological thinking. While he rejected this

17 In the writings of French scientists and doctors Fay has observed that the authors seem
to need to validate sleep by arguing that sleep is not akin to death, which by affiliation makes the
prospect of learning about slumber futile (22-23). She does not comment on whether this may
have also been the case for early American sleep discourses, so one is left to surmise from
Kroker and primary documents that while such arguments did exist they did not dominate the
direction of research in America.
dualism, it was based on his assertion that thinking was an exercise of will and that dreams occur without the intervention of initiation. Therefore, thinking occurred within the mind while dreaming was a phenomenon that occurred within the brain. Hammond referenced John Locke to argue that since dreaming did not accompany a self-awareness of one’s self, it could be separated from thoughts that possessed this awareness. Therefore, for Hammond “sleep involved the annihilation of the will, and as a consequence, the temporary abasement of the mind” (Kroker 25). This situating sleep as a privation of the will and abasement of the mind was derived from and validated in conceptions of the self that governed the late nineteenth century.18

The use of the term “inhibition” in the description of sleep offers another account of how sleep’s definition was subjectively determined on the basis of social expectations as a way to fill existing knowledge. In the mid-nineteenth century “inhibition” was a key term in several arguments that tied moral conduct, self-control, mental order and physiological function together (qtd in Kroker 137). Eventually this term crossed the boundaries of psychiatry and “came to signify any regulatory force that opposed free reign of excitement, and thus forged order out of chaos” (Kroker 137). For the influential psychologist Ivan Pavlov, inhibition, as the opposite of excitement, was manifested most dramatically in sleep and hypnotism, where movement and responsiveness were restricted (139). But since sleep was somewhat of an interruption in conducting his experiments on behavioral psychology, he therefore incorporated sleep into his theory of inhibition. While positivist psychologists of the early twentieth century rejected his theory of sleep, this instance shows that for behavioral psychologists sleep was framed as a loss of consciousness that could be assimilated into what was already established on the reflexes of

18 For more on the relation of notions of civility and behavioral norms in the bedroom see Elias’s *The History of Manners: The Civilizing Process* (136-142).
the mind. For them sleep was malleable and pliable. Kroker considers Pavlov’s treatment of sleep to be an example of those who were able to frame the problem of sleep in positive terms that sought to take account of how sleep contributed to psychological mechanisms. Yet, within the genealogy of the study of sleep Pavlov’s attention to sleep supplanted the prior generations’ concern with hypnotism as a provocative way of investigating the nature of human will (Kroker 140-141).

Another example of an early sleep science pioneer who defined sleep in negative terms is Constantin von Economo, who generated a theory of sleep that pointed to the “lack of stimuli” to explain the extinction of consciousness that characterized sleep (Kroker 148-149). This was supported by the case of Adolf Strümpell’s patient who in 1898 suffered from cutaneous and sensory anesthesia. As Kroker describes, “only his left ear and right eye remained responsive to stimulus, and as soon as Strümpell closed the eye and plugged the ear with cotton, the patient immediately fell asleep” (159). Therefore, he concluded that sleep must be related to the decreased stimuli experienced at night when a person’s eyes are closed and silence ensues. There are several holes in such a theory; for example, it does not account for the physiological changes that occur during sleep or for dreams. Nevertheless, this is yet another conceptualization of sleep as a privation; this time the lack occurred at the border of external and internal influence, at the level of stimulus.

There were several incremental transformations in scientific discourses on sleep that moved the field away from defining sleep as a negative state, one of which is the widespread integration of dream research into medical institutions. For Kroker, Freud’s original contribution to sleep research is that he turned dreaming into a vital function, linking it to health, rather than pathology. Therefore, “rather than serving as an example of how perception was crippled during
Eugene

sleep, dreaming began to take on a psychophysiological life of its own” (Kroker 9-10), reestablishing a model of sleep and dreaming as having a fundamental function in sustaining mental health and gaining knowledge of the unconscious.¹⁹ For Freud and fellow psychoanalysts, dreams were thought to be the guardians of sleep, making sleep the metaphorical safety valve of the mind. Dreams also captivated the minds of artists in the rise of the surrealist movement of the early twentieth century and ignited a fascination with painters like Salvador Dali who, like his contemporary Freud, still manages to inspire people to look to dreams in search of meaning and

¹⁹ For example, several people familiar with Freud’s legacy quote him saying that the interpretation of dreams is the royal road to knowledge of the unconscious activities of the mind.
awe (see fig. 3). Surrealism turns the chaos and non-sense of dreams into an aesthetically pleasing and provocative brainteaser. It is a testimony to the usefulness and intrigue of dreams, a concept that depends on the aloofness and darkness of dreams. In psychoanalysis and surrealism sleep became meaningful only because of the dreams it brought, while the sleep itself was often ignored or underacknowledged.20

In the middle of the twentieth century Nathaniel Kleitman and Eugene Aserinsky discovered rapid eye movement (REM). The discovery of REM as an observable physiological activity correlated to the moment sleepers dreamt. Therefore, a person could awaken someone during REM to ensure the sleeper would be able to recall his or her dreams. For only when one awakes during REM could such recollections could be made, otherwise the sleep cycle erases the images it created. To illustrate the energy and prevalence of psychoanalytical theories and how it affected medicine and sleep studies, Dement says that, “at the time of the discovery of rapid eye movements during sleep (circa 1952), academic psychiatry was dominated by psychoanalysts and medical students all over America [who] were interpreting one another’s dreams” (“Sleep Physiology” 6). This fervor and enthusiasm for the newfound meaning in dreams not only had the medical psychiatric establishment taking dreams seriously, but also made them receptive to supporting sleep research under the guise of dream research.

Kroker contends that the most significant moment in the history of professional and scientific discourses on sleep was the invention and utilization of the EEG to study the human brain (303). This technology revealed a new kind of physiological activity, and from this point

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20 For example, early on in his Interpretation of Dreams Freud states that “I have had little occasion to the problem of sleep, for that is essentially a problem of physiology [. . .]. The literature on the subject of sleep is accordingly disregarded in what follows” (40).
on sleep was examined as an *activity*. Kroker explains that the, “changes that sleep research has undergone are best revealed through an examination of the instruments sleep researchers have deployed.” (Kroker 283). The technological innovations are more important that the active passive theoretical paradigms because REM turned dreams into a physiological and psychological function and the EEG became a diagnostic tool, among other things, that “reconfigured the relationship between sleep, dreaming and conscientiousness” (Kroker 303).

Now that scientists and doctors could see the active brain during sleep the entire discipline became oriented to examining the affects of sleep’s neurophysiologic activities. Yet, the notion that sleep and REM sleep were neurologically active states, we must remember, was antithetical to the dominant theories of the time. Dement, an influential figure in current sleep studies, was resilient in his attempts to present the findings of a study21 challenged the scientific dogma and transformed sleep studies. This created a paradigm crisis, as Dement calls it; for in the face of the new findings made possible through the EEG recordings, “it had to been conceded that sleep could no longer be thought of as a time of brain inactivity and EEG slowing” (“Sleep Physiology” 9). But this was not an easy concession, because although Dement’s paper was eventually embraced as a significant scientific “fact,” it was first was rejected five times; the other co-author was so skeptical towards the findings that Dement had to publish as the sole author. Nevertheless, by 1960 this fundamental change in the nature of sleep had become well established: “it exists as a fact that has not been challenged in anyway since that time” (Dement, “Sleep Physiology” 9). This fact, also serves to preserve Cartesian dualism as a legitimate scientific principle.

21 This study is Dement’s 1958 paper “The Occurrence of Low Voltage, Fast Electroencephalogram Patterns During Behavioral Sleep in the Cat” (Dement “The Cat”).
With this dualism still alive, the EEG and William Dement are the most definitive emblems of contemporary sleep studies. They indicate a break with the era in which sleep was characterized in negative. As advances in diagnostic technology took a central role in the modern hospital, and pressures to increase the efficiency of hospitals were manifested in the implementation of standardized patient records, diagnostic tools such as the EEG became an “integral part of the future of American biomedical science, because there was a market for such innovations” (Kroker 305). The overwhelming significance of the EEG reveals that sleep studies is bound to the fraction of biomedical research that relies heavily on biotechnology and is therefore implicated in the politics of such an industry.

The embracing of the EEG occurred in an era where biomedicine sought to emphasize the “whole patient,” or the mind and the body, and technological means were devised to integrate this into medical practices. Many proponents of the new EEG hoped that it would reveal a connection between brain wave patterns and emotions (Kroker 310). While such explicit connections were not solidly made the EEG did lead to improvements in psychophysical classification and in medical practices. It was in this “atmosphere of holism permeated by technological innovation that rapid eye movement began to take shape as a scientific fact” (311). This ability for REM to be legitimized as a fact not only validated the dualism of the mind and body, but another form of validation occurred. Kroker fondly describes the people who occupy his account of early sleep research saying that “the characters of my story are, for the most part, physiologists who always wanted to bring the nature of society within the boundaries of their own discipline [. . .] these physiologists (and neurologists and psychologists) were always looking for a particular place to sit” (17). These influential actors in the history of sleep studies sought validation from the larger scientific community. Yet, even more compellingly, bringing
“the nature of society within the boundaries of their own discipline” references the way that cultural dispositions of sleep studies are deeply intertwined in the goals of the discipline.

As established earlier, sleep is a moment, or state, partly characterized by the lack of self-perception (Dement, *The Promise* 13). For some time this put studying sleep at odds with modes of understanding that are dependent on self-perception. Yet, this also strengthens its allure and makes sleep worthy of scientific exploration despite its position of utter inaccessibility to external empirical methods. This was eventually overcome through the use of various forms of recording. For example, the habit of recording one’s dreams upon waking as Freud often did or, more pertinently, the EEG which records brain waves to create visualizations of the brain’s electrical activity while asleep. Such methods of recording hearken back to Descartes’s role of memory in establishing reality; they are Descartes’s memory reincarnated and reified, the memory of memory. This new technological insight into sleep cast older theories of sleep, into a new darkness: a darkness that is full of the conscious forgetting that goes into creating historical accounts of scientific development that overlook the theories that were eventually disproved and are therefore antithetical to the creation of scientific “facts.”

Once sleep could be seen, it could be studied, poked, prodded and exposed to the rigors of scientific inquiry and biomedical innovation. The possibilities seemed endless once sleep became an observable phenomenon, an object of fascination and a site of exploitable knowledge.

**Bathing in the Light, Asleep**

Although sleep is currently discussed as a state in which several mental and physiological activities exist, this was preceded by various scientific theories of sleep, many of which defined it as a negative state, a void to be filled only with descriptions that compared sleeping to the awake state. While science has formally left such notions behind, these antiquated notions of
sleep still pervade popular conceptions of sleep and are therefore still – indirectly rather than directly – are implicated in sleep science on account of the social imbeddedness of science. While technology may be to blame for being partly responsible for the drastic change in sleeping patterns through the generations, it is also responsible for the credence of sleep studies. Rather than social and cultural conceptions of the self as the reference point from which the meanings of sleep are derived, technology has been able to turn sleep into an independent object that debatably lacks subjective anchoring. Yet, there is something that gets lost in these scientific discourses on sleep that may have been preserved by the mystery it once inhabited. Where is Descartes’s subject, the “I” now that sleep has been illuminated?

It has been said that we have learned more in the last 40 years on the nature of sleep than we have in the previous 4000 years (Dement, The Promise 444); but one might ask, where is all of this knowledge and whose good does it serve? Sleep medicine has specific public policies and public health objectives but the biggest barrier, according to Dement “is the failure of sleep research and sleep medicine to effectively penetrate the educational system at any level” (“Sleep Physiology” 14). While education is needed it remains secondary to the goal of expanding research (Dement, The Promise 445). The EEG and the formulation of sleep as an object accessible through tools of empirical observation has allowed sleep to exist within everyday and cultural discourses as one thing – a privation of life, a place where dreams emerge, an honored siesta, a rewarded rest, a privilege, a symbol of idleness or laziness, etc. – but in the realm of scientific discourses it is an entirely different species. Here sleep has only the darkness of a puzzle; once solved, one moves on to other puzzles, other darkness to illuminate, other questions to answer with the tools of science and reason.
A. Alvarez thought he knew what sleep was, and sought to deepen his understanding of sleep for his book *Night* by going to a sleep lab to be studied. Here he reflects on the situation:

Your dreams may be full of people and places and loony events, but you share them with no one—at least, while they are happening. And your activity—the tossing and turning and snoring, the partial waking and broken fragments of speech—all take place without your knowing anything about them. So in principle, it seems peculiarly unnatural for a person or a machine to be watching, recording and analyzing a process that is a total mystery to yourself. (Alvarez 77)

Later he notes that the sleep lab technician was not going to use visual and audio recordings on him. No one would really be watching, he sighs, “no one will hear me snore” (Alvarez 79). The next morning he awoke in the hospital room thankfully surprised that the electrodes taped to his head did not get in the way of getting a solid night’s sleep, but sensing that some how he “missed the point of being there” (79). His memory is unable to recover sleep as a meaningful experience, but there are other ways of remembering at work in a sleep laboratory.

When Alvarez is shown the chart that the polygraph reading produced he laments to himself, “the peaks and the dips and the nervous squiggles appeared to have nothing to do with my deep, dreamless sleep,” nevertheless the sleep technician studied them carefully and was satisfied with them (80; see fig. 4 for an example). After a more detailed assessment of what the graphs and recordings meant, Alvarez realized that the scientific recorded reality of his night’s sleep bore no relationship at all to the subjective experience of it (81). He continues by saying “with an event as subjective as sleep, the polygraph recording and the computer generated information were bound to be partial, and leaps of imagination were not appropriate to graphs, printouts and statistical analyses.” (84). Sleep is still not perceivable to the sleeper as a
subjective experience. The picture the polygraph painted of this mysterious giver of dreams and inspiration seemed to create a deep sense of sterile disassociation—should one dare say alienation—from himself that was mediated by the EEG. Such accounts reflect what occurs when this, or any treasured intersection of the mind and the body is deduced to merely being a body (with a brain): an object. As Kroker so aptly put it, the EEG trace “became a surrogate for the speaking subject” (304).

Sleep science was intended to be a bridge between Cartesian dualism but the nature of the dualism has changed in the context of modern medicine. Braken and Phillips note in a *BMJ*

![REM sleep: rapid eye movements are marked by arrows](image)

Fig. 4. Example of a polygraph's depiction of sleep and REM sleep (Lavie 22).
piece that in psychiatry and psychology Descartes’s *res cogitans* is measurable and is open to scientific investigation and psychoanalytical interpretation. The mind is an empirical, biological entity complete with illustrations to communicate its existence and pharmacology to control it. Unlike many medical practitioners who find this to be a sturdy bridge or see it as moving beyond the dualism, philosophers find that these innovations continue to perpetuate the distinction between the inner and outer world and fails to address the problem of deducing the mind into a “thing” (Braken and Thomas). While many dark crevices of the human mind have been illuminated and ameliorated by the application of biomedical research and treatments, there is still a resistance to syncope that keeps the subject intact. Braken and Thomas almost acknowledge the need for syncope when arguing for the transgression of the Cartesian doctrine because it represents a limited understanding of human reality and suffering. For them, the limitation of Cartesianism is the underlying problem; therefore entering into a deep relationship with philosophy will enlighten psychiatrists and create a propensity to abandon Cartesianism. Not to undermine the merit in this suggestion, for this is only a brief editorial, but the proposition that the social anchoring of meaning and understanding is not syncope, but it is a repetition of its avoidance. While their assessment of the Cartesian dualism shakes the objectivity that medicine stands on, it also reveals that this foundation was made by men and is laden with their ideology, history and politics. Within most of Western ideology, history, and politics there is no silence amongst the endless clamor, there is no syncope. Within medical and clinical sciences there is very little unthinking that occurs in dealing with the body and mind. It is all thought and all thinking and the ones that do not think but are thought of are the patients, the objects. Patients are the unthinking objects toward which the medical gaze is directed.
Yet, adding to the social imbeddedness of biomedicine and science is Fay’s point that, “we forget that we have a whole existence that has nothing to do with consciousness” (15). Yet, it is through this forgettable lack that she observed in nineteenth century writings that scientists and philosophers demonstrated over and over again “the fact that meaning works through lack” (15). Therefore, even the lack of empirical observations and measurable traits has meaning. The patient and the sleeper’s lack of knowledge and self-awareness is a darkness that is connected to the pre-enlightened night.

A case presented by Dement illustrates a meeting of this darkness and ignorance. Hypnagogic hallucinations are peculiar symptoms of narcolepsy that, according to Dement, bare a slight resemblance to stories of medieval incubi and succubi, and alien abduction (Promise 195). As he recounts one of these “abduction” tales he refers to the subject as a “victim” with scare quotes around the word, explaining that:

These stories may have a common root. They all may be products of very vivid “hypnagogic” (associated with sleep onset) hallucinations. Vivid hallucinations, behaviors, and terror are all fascinating symptoms of some of the sleep disorders that blur the line between sleep and wakefulness. People with narcolepsy, sleepwalking, night terrors, sleeptalking, and REM behavior disorder can get stranded in sleep’s borderlands, where everyday rules of thought and behavior don’t seem to apply. (Promise 195)

Well, isn’t this nice; medieval myths can be explained through distilling scientific facts, although the consequential trivialization may not be intentional, it is nevertheless notable. Dement admits that:
What we don’t know is why the content of these vivid hypnogogic hallucinations is so often very unpleasant or downright terrifying. [ . . . ] Personally I have never had a patient who reported experiencing an alien abduction, but many people have told me that they saw intruders in their bedroom, that they saw someone coming in the window, or that they heard footsteps getting closer and knew they would be murdered in their bed. [ . . . ] One patient was sure she saw a frightening stranger walk in and out of her bedroom every night for a year before her narcolepsy was diagnosed. Only after diagnosis did she finally believe that no one else was there. Prior to that she had kept silent for fear of being thought insane. (The Promise 196)

These types of experiences and suspicions are common for some narcoleptics, and in this case medical expertise was able to free a patient from the prison of fear by being able label her experience a symptom of narcolepsy. But which is more insane: not believing or trusting what you perceive or an active distrust of these senses? Dement’s skepticism and assurance in scientific knowledge trivializes the experience and minimizes how the patient dealt with the sense that someone was coming into her room. But what about the terrifying nature of these hallucinations? Even more interestingly, what remains a mystery to the annals of neurological science is exactly the fear and the terror, not only the function of the fearful feelings that accompany these hallucinations, but the literal source of fear and unpleasantness is unknown. This is significant because it allows knowledge and diagnosis to be experienced as a deliverance from darkness. Yet, perhaps there are other ways of explaining the person in the room that are specific to the room, the person, paranormal, or spiritual beliefs. Such explanations would bear
little weight in this system because the individual is a patent, a victim, an object, and the stories
they tell are myths.

In Neil Postman’s Technopoly, he explains that within American’s technopoly subjective
forms of knowledge have no official status and have no bearing on any matter unless of course it
is processed through a series of tests administered by experts. Therefore, “Individual judgments
are, after all, notoriously unreliable, filled with ambiguity and plagued by doubt as Fredrick W.
Taylor warned” (Postman 93). The vast majority of life and the world are observable,
quantifiable, and countable, while machines and technology are designed to eliminate futile
complexities, doubt and ambiguity. Providing experts and the public with a reality that can be
neatly communicated through numbers, and statistics. Postman claims that the magic of numbers
and technology directs attention away from the ideologies that technology may further and
towards the wondrous effects of machines (94).

The dependence on medicine and technology to deliver is not only an heir to classical
notions of reason but has domestic roots too. Settlers arrived in America to find that exotic
animals, dangerous pestilence, poisonous plants and deadly illnesses awaited them and turned to
medicine as a defensive measure. Medicine was not merely a means of delaying death because
here utilization of medicine was a weapon “to conquer both a continent and the diseases its
weather and poisonous flora and fauna afflicted” (Postman 97).

In the mid-nineteenth century the binaural stethoscope was invented and became a
 technological development that transformed American medical practices. Where once physicians
talked extensively to patients and physical examinations involved listening to chests and
stomachs with a bare trained ear, these careful observations would become increasingly
irrelevant after the stethoscope took its place between the physician and the patient. This single
rudimentary instrument was able to get more directly at disease without having to deal with the intermediary, the person. This notion that technology is more direct and reliable eventually leads to medicine’s increasing reliance on machinery and tools, rather than on experience and insight, to diagnose and treat patients. Explaining that, “what the patient knows is untrustworthy; what the machine knows is reliable” (Postman 100). Dement’s reference to medieval stories goes beyond distrusting hallucinations because it implies that an entire history of allowing fiction and delirium to participate in the formulation of shared knowledge is untrustworthy, unreliable, and practically useless. In the science of sleep and dreaming, though these experiences are a historical source of fiction, such unrealism is sublimated if not altogether banished.

Sleep medicine is aware that there is a “problem,” but not one of alienation via technology. One may argue that doctors and scientists are not trained to address such problems because they are supposed to be in the business of producing useful knowledge and ameliorations. According to The Principles and Practices of Sleep Medicine, the problem, or the “challenge” as they put it, is that “the majority of individuals remain unaware of the facts of sleep and wakefulness, fundamentals of biological rhythms, and sleep disorders, particularly of the symptoms that suggest a serious pathological processes” (Dement, Principles 14). The scientific discourses, armed with illuminating facts about sleep are merely furthering the goals and objectives of the scientific and clinical community it occupies. Right?

Until there is a precise method for measuring the subjective experience of sleep, one that is self-reflexive, Alvarez suggests that sleep researchers and laymen are going to have some difficulty understanding one another. “We lay men define wakefulness in terms of consciousness – of being awake to the fact that we are awake.” While sleep researchers are able define it as something entirely different with the help of neurophysiological technology (Alvarez 86). The
question that concerns the rest of this research is: what is it defined in relation to? What continues to give sleep cultural meaning if it is not explicitly defined in relation to socially anchored roles? 1

For Ekirch, the scientific rationalism of the Enlightenment is what embittered nocturnal life and sleep, turning the night and sleep into something devalued, disenchanted, colonized and dying. But his research reveals that efforts to strip darkness of its lore and lure also contributed to this metamorphosis of sleep. For example, the authorities of pre industrial Europe sought to repress and restrain that which inhabited the night (Ekirch, Day’s Close 60). Before modernity, there were no large-scale attempts to abolish darkness or the insecurities and exploits it brought. Not only was this not feasible, but there was a need for darkness where there was an entire culture with distinct relationships, behaviors, traditions, rhythms and values that existed, all of which needed to be hidden and from the visibility of daylight (Ekirch, Day’s Close 119).

By the eighteenth century, lighting the darkness that flooded city streets was rigorously pursued. Public illumination and light was a widespread symbol of progress during this time and facilitated public monitoring and control (Ekirch, Day’s Close 330). Rounding up prostitutes, gangs, vagrants, and thieves and encaging them in the norms that ruled the day, the street lamp was hoped to bring daylight to the dark streets and prevent crime. Hence, the underclass that ran the city at night were disallowed the privileges of nighttime and of not being seen yet existing within the mystery and terror of darkness. Through this superficial illumination the diseases urbanization and poverty brought were to be addressed; even if the condition could not be ameliorated the symptoms could, at the least, be managed and brought under control. In this way sleep, crime, spirituality and paganism, and social ills would all have a proper place in a contained closed space such as a bedroom, a prison, a brothel, a homeless shelter, or an asylum.
The dangers that could not be contained would be extinguished or evaded by avoiding the night and shutting-in.

This reining in of darkness also established the monophasic man as an ideal that has reserved the night for sleep. Hastened by the electrification of whole cities and nations, it was day that began to rule the night, while illness plagued both because the night became polluted with light and the day polluted with unwanted sleep and darkness. This light pollution made it difficult to see the glorious constellations the night held up and while this permanent illumination seemed to defuse the confusion of darkness, in truth it merely covered it. The darkness outside the atmosphere and inside the society still linger. In this era the contrast between black and white has been turned down and muted. Turning everything into shades of grey, which is acceptable, so long as pure blackness only exists in that final certain darkness. Otherwise, all of life should be colored with anything other than darkness.

Hence, in the darkness of our bedrooms, in the throes of night, light persists. The need for action, the drive for profit, the search for useful experiences or lessons, the eyes of big brother all continue. Anything other than darkness, we say, signing on to the project of progress. Celestial skies have been mapped and armed; this floating space is the next frontier of colonization and exploitation. The world has been traveled and anthropologists have chronicled every thriving and dying civilization, culture, and tongue. It seems that as light increases in intensity and banks of knowledge grow a fear of darkness escalates. There must be no tyranny of darkness anywhere and blackness must never supplant whiteness.

The social biases of sleep research were quite explicit in the past but currently sleep science and medicine are able to lay claim to objectivity although they clearly participate in the banishment of darkness from the everyday. The genealogy of sleep is not a history of sleep nor is
it a cultural politics of sleep, but it is the founding layer of culture that defines sleep, it is the language that communicates sleep’s whole and hole, it is the power relations that repose reifies, and it is the identities that rely on awakening. The genealogy is not a recollection of sleep because sleep does not remember and, for the most part, this one-third of life is not meant for linear recall, systematic control, or perpetual illumination because slumber is interior, intuitive, and implicit.

Disenchanted with sleep, modern culture rationalizes this dormant part of life that, according to some scientists, does not have a rationale. The function does not stop many from interpreting their dreams and trying to make sense of these non-senses we are given, or trying to give meaning to what some consider to be meaningless. Sleep and dreams lack the logic of any sane man, and like a madman, sleep has been institutionalized. It is strictly contained, managed with medication, rigidly scheduled and is constantly under the austere oversight of society and medicine. This interpretation of sleep as a temporary hysteria has, in part, replaced what was once interpreted as divine communion. But there are still many who turn to dream books to unlock what dreams hide within their ill logic. For example there are the stories that are recounted in The Committee of Sleep, in which a Nobel

22 This is a reference to the several articles and papers that seek to answer the question why we sleep. A significant portion of sleep research has this question in mind and implicitly requires of that sleep have an evolutionary benefit for making humans, and other mammals, completely vulnerable to prey for significant portions of time. For example see Siegel; Dement, Some Must Watch 14-16; Coren, Thieves 36-47.

23 One of the dominant theories on dreams explains the hallucinations that occur in REM to be random.
laureate’s scientific experiment, music from classical to pop artists, innumerable novels and paintings, artists and athletes were all shown to be creations of dreams. Plato’s fervor lives on in these stories, but beyond them, in our sleep-neglecting culture, such tales are forgotten like dreams that REM refuses to remember.
CHAPTER 2: SLEEPING IN THE ECONOMY OF TIME

As Western culture increasingly oriented itself to the principles of reason, control, order, and profitability, sleep has either fallen in line or been left behind. Many Americans seem to consciously resist sleep the way children do when in being ordered to go to bed; the resist sleep because of it’s social isolation and because it signifies children’s inferior status (Aubert and White “II”). Yet, why do adults resist it? This resistance that both adults and children exhibit should not be conflated because the structures and functions of youth’s sleep are of a particular nature. For example, sleep in the daycare is a tool to keep children from becoming irritated, to organize the day and to allow teachers to have a break. At nap time children act and react to physiological, environmental and social cues. Becoming acclimated to such cues is a behavior that helps socialize them into polyphasic patterns (consisting of several naps) and will later participate in socializing them into monophatic sleep patterns (consisting of one solid block of sleep). Sleep, in this youthful microcosm, serves many ends, and is resisted on reasonable and emotional grounds. If only sleep could always be so simple, so controlled and so purposeful.

What makes the sleep of adults fundamentally different from this?

The protestant ethic is often blamed for having a hand in the prevalence of poor sleep patterns of adults but this myth perpetuates an unwillingness to look at the larger economic factors at work. To move towards a cultural account of the economics of sleep, works like Hochschild’s The Time Bind and Schor’s The Overworked American help frame the economy of time in micro and macro terms as a preface to thinking about sleep as a type of labor and as a commodity. As a form of labor, sleep can estrange those whose slumber is merely a means of preparing for alienating work and mass consumption. As a commodity, the lauded benefits of
sleep can constitute a use-value that remains by definition elusive. The characterizations of sleep within professional and public discourse serve to encourage the work of sleep and the consumption of sleep and therefore it is this ability to actively participate within both systems of labor and consumption that pulls adults from the regimented sleep of youth.

**Saturated Time**

One may argue, however, that basic temporal demands that put on modern life determine sleep patterns. There is an over saturation of time in which possibilities outweigh realities, that is, the possible ways to spend time are always more numerous than the actual way time is spent. Society is organized by a rigid grid of temporal measurements, cutting malleable time into months, hours, minutes, and seconds. All these measures of time are abstractions, separated from nature and biology. These abstract containers can be filled with actions, tasks and meanings, or they can be filled with nothingness, stillness and pause. As containers, time can spill over and flood us with meaning, intentions, plans, tomorrows, and expectations. Rising like the Nile. Inevitably, time’s oversaturated potential plagues us with anxiety. The personal stressors created by the modern experience of time restraints are very familiar to the everyday person, but they also plague entire institutions.

In emergency rooms we see saturated time, bursting at the seams, a leaky dam ready to flood those who live underneath the failing structure. Hastened to the hospital because of broken limps, raging infections, barely breathing or barely hurting, patients are placed in the hands of fatigued and sleep deprived professionals (Gaba and Howard). Residency programs in America give medical trainees 80-hour weeks, but 100-120 hour workweeks are also common. In the emergency room, residents endure a 3 to 5 year rite of passage that is justified because it is supposed to be an intense experience that prepares novice physicians for future work (Burns 48).
This is a problem because fatigued and sleepy people make errors that could otherwise be avoided. Prolonged work, for clinicians as with anyone else, impairs cognitive and motor mechanisms (Gaba and Howard). Twenty-four hours of sustained wakefulness impairment can be approximately equivalent to alcohol intoxication. Sleep derivation has mental and emotional effects in addition to the impairments it creates (Gaba and Howard 1249).

While other countries such as the United Kingdom and Australia have succeeded in reducing the work hours of these junior doctors, the United States has been slow to address the problem and changes that have been implemented have been either minor or partial. The need to reform this life saving system is often compared to the commercial aviation system, which was not hesitant to regulate the hours of its pilots (Gaba and Howard 1250).

This intersection of sleep, work, life and economics reveals dynamics that would otherwise remain obscured or obtuse. For example, where is the uproar? Or where are the market controls that would make better service more profitable for all of the involved parties, the institutions, the patients and their family? As Gaba and Howard explain, there has been little pressure from the market for change. Malpractice cases, media exposes, and unionizing have not been successful in generating a movement towards reform. In this 2002 *New England Journal of Medicine* article only two professional societies are noted as having promoted standards and guidelines for maximum work hours and on-call duty hours (Gaba and Howard 1250). This is surprising to the authors, and I am compelled to further that sentiment by calling it appalling. It is, however, a peculiarity that provides rich insight into the different roles and expectations of patients and of those who operate medical institutions.

Among the suggested behavioral and culture changes for health care organizations that are in the midst of this problem was the use of caffeine and Modafinil, a drug used to treat
Narcolepsy. The two are optimistically discussed as substances that could be used to artificially maintain alertness in this environment of saturated time and sleep deprivation. While Gaba and Howard acknowledge that use of these substances “may pose occupational health risks,” it is unclear whether they are referring to the insomnia that both are likely to cause, which would jeopardize the intended benefits, or are referring to another “health risk.” The fact that they express hope in resorting to substances to deal with the hazards that come with fatigue is shortsighted and a bit misguided because it deters attention from the system as being flawed, implying that the situation would be resolved if the body could maintain optimal levels of alertness for longer periods of time. Similar to what Postman observed more generally, in a technopoly, the use of technology often redirects attention from ideological issues and conflicts by focusing on what technology can deliver (94). While the use of substances or pharmacology does not address the ideologies, pressures or costs at work, doctors and laymen alike nevertheless are turning to it.

Here we see that the time of experienced physicians is more valued than that of the resident, but neither is immune to the structural dictate that sleep must be sacrificed, and neither is more equipped with handling the handicap of sleep deprivation. Gaba and Howard realize that the problem is not merely located in scheduling, because some residents and experienced clinicians choose to work excessive hours. While revising incentives to overwork and moonlight should be considerer, such a proposal will encounter other barriers. In the case of residents, moonlighting hours are a means of getting extra income to pay off insurgent educational loans; therefore, a restriction on working hours would “leave many trainees with unrelieved financial pressures” (Gaba and Howard 1253). These practical issues are complex, but when the emotional intensity of medical emergency care is added to the picture we see that the price of not working
cannot be determined only by economic and policy analysis. Doctors and urgent care facilities are modernity’s first line of defense in the ongoing struggle to prolong life and increase its quality. The cultural phobia of death is also an underlying dilemma that society, along with residents and patients, must contend with. It should be noted that in this case, and in others, our somnaphobia overpowers our necrophobia.

Since much of modernity is fixated on the reduction of risks and minimalization of harm it would be too radical to suppose that perhaps sleep deprivation is not the type of occupational hazard that can be avoided or controlled. It seems that sleep deprivation is merely an effect of other processes that make time so precious that any minute is thought to be a point where life may either burn or be extinguished. There is no stockpile of time, no river from which it will always flow; time is a fleeting butterfly in the hospital and every flap is needed to stay afloat. But from where did this creature emerge? How did ephemeral time and sleep grow into such unyielding tyrants? While medical professionals may entertain several possible solutions to the situations that keep clinicians and residents fatigued, there are no clear answers to this sleep/work paradox and there are always those who will be invested in maintaining cheap

Fig. 5. *Drowsy doctors*, unknown source. The danger of being fatigued is no problem for “Super doctors.”
sources of labor and the illusion of convenience even when lives are risked in the process. Rather than solutions, what concerns me are the explanations that such phenomena provoke, and how these explanations articulate with cultural meanings of sleep. There are two extrapolations that arise: (1) the question as to the role of the protestant work ethic, and (2) whether or not fatigued clinicians are an anomaly or a magnification of a sleep-negligent culture.

Firstly, the iron cage of America’s protestant work ethic is perhaps the most evident element of American culture that seems inhospitable to an understanding of sleep containing anything other than utilitarian value. But even when utilitarian value is assigned to sleep, such as its capacity to deter error, it still remains unappealing to many. Is the work ethic the primary culprit in chronic sleep deprivation? In *Psychology Today* Estroff Hara Marano declares that “the biggest sleep robber of all [...] is work—the puritan ethic gone haywire in an era of global markets” (42). Such a reaction comes from those who are familiar with Max Weber’s most influential book, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, (or *The Spirit of Capitalism*) published in 1920. After visiting America, Weber decided that he would take on the task of explaining socio-historically how and why American modern capitalism was unique in that workers seemed driven to work not out of greed but out of asceticism. This worldly asceticism is central to the capitalist spirit, which eventually culminated in an iron cage of ascetic rationalism, because as Weber says, “victorious capitalism, since it rests on its mechanical foundations, needs [the spirit of religious asceticism’s] support no longer” (Weber 126). The rational conduct of those moved by the protestant work ethic created the modern economic order that dictates the conditions of economic and technological production. This tendency towards self-denial has been disenchanted. It is no longer religious but purely economic, and as such it tends to be implicated in accounts of the change in sleep patterns witnessed in the last century.
Central to Weber’s argument was the example of the capitalist spirit as exemplified by Benjamin Franklin. In the quote Weber uses, and in everyday adherence, the spirit of capitalism begins with the principle;

that *time* is money. He that can earn ten shillings a day by his labour, and goes abroad or sits idle, one half of that day, though he spends but sixpence during his diversion or idleness, ought not to reckon *that* the only expense; he has really spent, or rather thrown away, five shillings besides. (Weber 14; italics are Franklin’s)

This passage from *Advice to a Young Tradesman* also calls readers to remember that an individual’s duty to increase one’s capital is an end in itself. Also, to this end, the virtues of honesty, punctuality, industry, and frugality are useful only to the extent it serves this economic process. In addition to this relentless pursuit of money, the spirit of capitalism also involves a strict avoidance of all spontaneous enjoyment of life (Weber 111). According to Weber such an ethos has moved the act and means of economic acquisition from being subordinate to man as a means for satisfying material need, to the reverse position of money being the need, and material needs are satisfied on account of their capacity to allow money to be made. Therefore, this spirit of capitalism has reversed the “natural” relationship between man and money, because “economic acquisition is no longer subordinate to man as a means for the satisfaction of his material needs” but it is essential to the fulfillment of the these needs (Weber 19).

Its connection to sleep and sleep deprivation is quite valid, and at times even obvious, but the approximated relationship is also worthy of critique because it is a historically specific answer for a contemporary situation, and it therefore can not adequately account for all of the factors involved in the recent rise in sleep deprivation, the development of sleep science, post-
industrial demands on time, or the role of technology in sleep behaviors. The international rise in sleep deprivation and sleeping problems also weakens the role the protestant ethic might play. The protestant ethic is nevertheless useful in thinking about influential beliefs, attitudes, and institutions that are at work in cultural understandings of sleep and sleep behaviors.

In many ways Thomas Edison embodies this desire to do away with unproductive time because he sought to banish sleep from his life. Coren begins *Sleep Thieves* by examining what he calls Edison’s *curse* – the light bulb. According to Coren, “Edison’s reasoning was really quite simple. If sleep could be eliminated, it would add additional work hours to the day. This would improve productivity, bringing prosperity to all of society, and hasten the progress of civilization” (1-2). While Coren contends that “Edison’s negative feelings about sleep were the result of his strong work ethic, which associated long hours spent in sleep only with the lazy or the idle rich” (3), it would be simplistic to think that Edison was the only one that thought of sleep in such a way. The historical and geographical context of prevailing work ethics and emerging technological developments were also forces that influenced the cultural sleep habits of...

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24 It seems that the protestant work ethic is blamed for patterns in Anglican countries like Great Britain, but more significantly, Brigitte Steger notes that, like what Schor observed in America, the Japanese also responded to the need for extra leisure by taking time at the expense of sleep rather than reducing work hours (185). However, the Japanese have distinctly different ways of dealing with the imperative that sleep must be sacrificed for the sake of work (Steger).

25 It should be noted, that while Edison is often credited with the invention of the light bulb he pulled together various technologies to make a system that could be sold and have a level of efficiency, he is more appropriately remembered for pioneering the widespread use of electricity (*Economist*).
his time and contributed to his understanding of sleep. Despite these particularities of his life and times, Edison’s light bulb was a physical manifestation of his inability to appreciate sleep as a moment of inactivity, and its success in changing the way people organized their time is also a manifestation of an entire nation’s inability to appreciate sleep because of its inactivity.

Together, the work ethic and the light bulb still do not equal chronic sleep deprivation because, while Edison slept briefly at night, he frequently took long naps during the day (Coren 285). Even though his disdain for sleep inspired the light bulb he still slept, and one may even presume that he got sufficient sleep. The work ethic is a cultural explanation and therefore it does not sufficiently address the complexity of sleep and sleeping patterns. For example, can such a simple explanation account for the shift from getting minimal amounts of sleep to a disposition toward sleep deprivation. There are innumerable factors at play, but central to both the popularization of the light bulb and the work ethic is the economy; time’s exchangeability with money makes it something to be saved, controlled, and organized in personal and market situations.

Since the work ethic fails to completely explain medical residents’ hostility towards sleep the second issue that needs to be addressed is whether or not the situation is an anomaly. Or, in other words, is it the uniqueness of the hospital and the ER that overvalues life and therefore saturates time? On the contrary, according to several authoritative sources, a majority of Americans are suffering from an epidemic of sleepiness and sleeplessness, or as sleep professionals call it, excessive daytime sleepiness and, chronic sleep deprivation and insomnia26. Over the last forty years, sleep science and sleep medicine has revealed the role of sleep in personal health and the wellbeing of the society at large. This information provided the

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26 See, for example, Fahey; Kirn; Toufexos; Marano and http://www.sleepfoundation.org.
groundwork for public health campaigns launched by organizations like the National Sleep
Foundation with the goal of increasing public awareness of sleep. The medical community
largely accepts the correlative validity of sleep and these aspects of health (Papp et al.). Adding
to its role in common illnesses, drowsy driving makes sleep a factor in all three leading causes of
death for Americans: vehicle accidents, obesity, and heart failure.

The National Sleep Foundation (NSF), founded in 1990, epitomizes the public health
perspectives on sleep. Its mission is to “improve public health and safety by achieving an
understanding of sleep and sleep disorders, and by supporting education, sleep-related research,
and advocacy” (<www.sleepfoundation.org/about.cfm>). A study published in 2001 reports that
adults spend less time sleeping, participating in leisure and social activities, and having sex than
we did just five years ago (<www.sleepfoundation.org>). The data was collected from the
National Sleep Foundation Poll, which is designed to assess public knowledge and attitudes
concerning sleep habits. It also reports that 63% of American adults do not get the recommende
eight hours of sleep, and 2 in 5 get less than seven hours of sleep during the week
(<www.sleepfoundation.org>). Sociologists have not been eager to study or explain the social or
cultural dynamics at play, so while a poll may lack methodological rigor, limited access to
resources makes it difficult confidently account for most of the social, historical and economic
forces at work in such trends. This does not stop some from pointing to the twenty-four-hour
society, to the accelerated technology, caffeine and sugar industries, and the protestant ethic as
palpable explanations (e.g., Moore-Ede 44-63; or Schmidt). But the most people who tackle a
part of the question of causation admit that there are several dynamics and forces at work.

Regardless of the causes, the symptom should be addressed, so as mandated in their
statement of goals, the National Sleep Foundation has launched a campaign against driving
drowsy aimed at educating the public about the dangers and costs of driving drowsy. The main thrust of this form of advocacy operates on the presumption that individuals, once armed with deterrent knowledge, will be less willing to endanger their own life and the lives of others. The website drowsydriving.org, which is sponsored by the National Sleep Foundation, resorts to statistics on the economic costs of driving drowsy to persuade the public to only drive when alert. These include companies who have had to pay for the accidents their drowsy employees have made, and individuals whose accidents have resulted in million dollar lawsuits. In addition to putting pressure on individuals to take responsibility for the decision to drive drowsy, individual companies are also being held responsible for their share of the $40 billion in annual cost of such accidents. Yet, is this cost incentive approach what is going to turn our dangerously sleep deprived society into one that

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27 In “Sleepiness, Driving, and Motor Vehicle Crashes,” Davis et al. reports that “increased awareness of the relationship between sleepiness and motor vehicle crashes will promote the death and safety of drivers and highway users” (1908).
values the siesta and the revels in the security sleep brings? I doubt it, but in a culture inundated with the slogan that “education is the key,” this is the approach many sleep advocates endorse.

In his article (“Epidemic”) and book, _Sleep Thieves_, Stanley Coren treats the epidemic of chronic sleep deprivation as a result of America’s achievement-oriented culture. Therefore, the tenuous economy has left many unemployed or overemployed, therefore this additional work time is acquired by reducing the length of time that people spend doing nothing - sleeping (“Epidemic” 143). This compounds the effect the twenty-four-hour life has had on sleep cycles and the technological upsurge in round-the-clock modes of communication, transportation and activity. Unable to get the 10 hours of sleep that Coren, and other studies suggest are needed, the 7.5 hours spent with the sandman puts waking life in a delicate dance with sleep’s sibling, death. Work-related accidents cost $13.4 billion, accidents in public places cost $1.3 billion, household accidents $2.7 billion. Coren claims that over $56 billion a year is the price of a sleepy society. Combined with the human cost of 24,000 deaths that occur as a result of such accidents the phenomena of sleepiness makes choosing to be sleep deprived not merely a personal choice but an issue of public safety. To emphasize this point, Coren turns to the disasters of Chernobyl, the Exxon Valdez and the Challenger to illustrate the dangers in a way that touches the fears

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28 At 1:25 AM the Soviet Union nuclear reactor exploded exposing 17 million people (2.5 children) to nuclear contamination. Investigations concluded that a major factor was the sleep debt that effected the engineers and plant operators. (Coren, “Epidemic” 146)

29 The Exxon Valdez crashed into the Alaskan coast the morning of March 25 1989. The sleep debt of the crew caused one of them to fall sleep at the wheel of the ship (Coren, “Epidemic” 145-146).
that many harbor. Rather then relying on the power of deterrent knowledge Coren calls for political solutions to this epidemic of sleepiness.

For him, the sleepiness epidemic is a cultural fad that can be turned around with effective campaigning and social policies. Drinking and smoking are the examples he uses, saying “society often seeks to control personal behavior when such behavior poses a risk to other individuals or society” (“Epidemic” 147). Similar to the transformation of cultural norms that were motivated by the effect drinking had on violent behavior and traffic accidents, and the health risks associated with second-hand smoke, sleepiness can also undergo such a radical transformation. Rather than advocating similar laws, Coren hopes that the tolerance of sleepiness and sleep deprivation will change so “one can hope that it may even come to pass that a person who drives or goes to work while sleepy will be viewed as reprehensible, dangerous, and even criminally negligent as the person who drives or goes to work while drunk” (“Epidemic” 147). As effective as this comparison is in communicating his message and hope to the readers of a public policy journal, the likening of sleep debts to federally controlled substances is far from assuring. Despite such reservations, Coren is not alone.

The 2004 U.S. Surgeon General, Richard H. Carmona, put sleep on the national public health agenda (Lamberg “Promoting”). This constitutes a huge pay-off to the many sleep advocates, sleep doctors, and victims of sleep related accidents. The goals added to the aforementioned drowsy driving and sleepy worker problems are: moving the start time of high schools ahead an hour, giving sleep apnea diagnosis and treatment priority, educating consumers

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30 Coren quotes Dement speculating that it was the sleep deprived condition of the NASA managers that made them unable to assess the situation effectively enough to avoid the catastrophic accident in 1986 (“Epidemic” 146).
on the relationship of obesity and sleep, and create partnerships between sleep groups and disease focused agencies (Lamberg “Promoting”).

In 2000, a *US News and World Report* article on the “Sleepless Society” explained that although inadequate sleep is “a workaholic’s badge of honor,” research on the relation of sleep to health suggests a strong connection between long-term sleep debt and the national epidemic of diabetes and obesity. Chronic sleep deprivation affects about two thirds of the adult

31 An intersection of sleep and health is that insomnia is the single largest trigger for clinical depression and the most reliable indicator in predicting who is vulnerable to becoming clinically depressed (Marano). Another perplexing and revealing aspect of sleep and depression is that the terms the midday demon or noonday demon refer both to depression and to midday sleepiness and naps. This was brought to my attention first in Paquot’s review of historical attitudes towards the siesta, but more contemporarily in Andrew Solomon’s book *The Noonday Demon*. In modern discourses “depressive” is a term that describes what was once known as the melancholic. Solomon traces depression to medieval notions of acedia, the deadly sin that has evolved into the sin of slothfulness (293). Literary and poetic overlaps of sleep and depression have also been briefly examined by Crisp.

32 *Lights Out*, by T. S. Miley deals with the relationship between sugar, artificial lighting and sleep in regards to our health. His work is harshly critical of the national public health agenda because of biased nutritional recommendations that told the public that fat was bad for a person’s diet but it did not disclose any of the dangers associated with a diet that contained a lot of artificial sugar. Trying to hide the role sugar plays in common diseases means that the FDA’s prescription of low fat and exercise was ineffective and “a lie” (197). For Miley, the role of artificial light is also implicated in the conditions that extra sleep helps combat.
population, if one needs a test to see if they are part of the majority or minority in this trend
Brink offers this: “If you can lie down in the middle of the day and fall asleep within 10 minutes, you have short-changed your self on sleep the night before” (Brink par. 26).

Sleep problems are not anything new. Whether it is narcolepsy, insomnia or sleep apnea, these afflictions are centuries old. In an attempt to settle claims that sleep apnea, the leading sleep disorder Americans suffer from, is not merely a newly invented fashionable disease Netzer points to accounts of snoring in the ancient world, declaring that sleep apnea is not something newly discovered but rather “people have suffered from the effects of sleep apnea throughout generations. Thus, this disease has always produced public health care costs and is not a new burden to the health care system” (42). It may not constitute a new “cost,” but this does not divert the possibility that sleep medicine and sleep campaigns can make America a better (safer and healthier) place—and lower several costs as a fringe benefit for concerned parties.

The predicament of medical residents is not unique; rather it is a magnification of larger trends. It still can be argued that this is merely a concern of sleep advocates and a product of raised awareness of sleepiness effects on everyday life and risk assessments. In many ways sleep science and the rhetoric of the epidemic are empirical ways to deal with the crisis of modernity: the threat of nuclear fall out, the reliance on cars and the fatalities caused by them, the marvels of aviation and the fear of falling from the sky and crashing, the knowledge that many pleasurable acts contribute to our mounting mortality and risk of illness (sex and STIs, junk food and obesity and heart failure, smoking and lung cancer). According to the rhetoric of public health and sleep studies, the light science has shed on sleep has made a brave new world possible if only we were willing to make space for sleep within it.
Rhetorical Authority of Sleep Medicine

Sociologist Steve Kroll-Smith (“Excessive”) has given the rhetoric of the chronic sleep deprivation “epidemic” critical attention. According to him, the saturation of popular media, such as the Internet, magazines and newspapers, with messages calling attention to the deleterious consequences of sleepiness has allowed excessive daytime sleepiness (EDS) to be reconstructed as a disorder rather than as a symptom of an underlying condition. This transformation began with the influential study that appeared in *JAMA* addressing EDS. Following this, a stream of articles in 1982 and 1983 were published dealing with the social and medical risks of EDS that reached general and targeted audiences. Then in 1990 popular new sources such as the *Reader’s Digest, New York Times,* and the *Washington Post* “printed a steady stream of news about drowsiness and chronic sleep problems” (Kroll-Smith, “Excessive” 629). The popularization of the Internet as an important medium shaping lay knowledge about health, illness and treatments not only reinforced and complemented these printed texts, but also emphasized “a particular way of making sense of daytime sleepiness” (Kroll-Smith, “Excessive” 636). In such virtual forums EDS has been discussed as a distinct medical disorder rather than as a problematic somatic state typically associated with narcolepsy or sleep apnea.

The National Sleep Foundation also promotes EDS as a distinct pathology through its website by listing it as a sleep disorder rather than as a symptom of an underlying sleep disorder (Kroll-Smith, “Excessive” 637; http://www.sleepfoundation.org). More generally, this is also evident in the popularization of self-diagnosed EDS in which subjective Likert measures of sleepiness (the Daytime Sleepiness Test and the Epworth Sleepiness Scale) are used to self-diagnose EDS. Upon the self-administration of this test through websites and magazines, a number becomes the evidence of the relative presence or absence of EDS. Such events within
this discourse do not address the underlying causes and social forces at play in an individual’s life that may contribute to EDS; rather they serve to make individuals aware of their level of sleepiness and provide motivation for seeking medical treatment.

This beckons for a revaluation of the institutional functions at work because, as Kroll-Smith proposes, perhaps medicine is an institution that is alive only so far as it is embodied in visible social arrangements, but it is dead in as its authority to influence and have affect on human choices (Kroll-Smith, “Excessive” 639). Kroll-Smith continues by asserting that as the gaze of medicine continues, its influence over a panoptical society is diminishing. The power that medicine will exercise over lives will continue in a more discursive and less personified way than direct physician-patient encounters. This is, in part, facilitated by the softening of the once solid walls of medicine, which are now a porous institution that affects and is affected by the exchange of information and ideas in various forms of media. The modernist assumption that medical knowledge is socially located through a series of locks and keys must be re-examined because as Kroll-Smith adds:

A person who is self-diagnosed with EDS after the Epworth Sleepiness Scale found in a magazine article or on a webpage does not by herself threaten modern medical authority; but she is exercising, if only momentarily, an alternative authority, one worth investigating. (Kroll-Smith, “Excessive” 640)

In the information age, the physician is no longer the one who assigns the disease and ordinary people experience the illness, since excessive daytime sleepiness is a “disease” articulated by popular media and brought directly to ordinary people outside the institutional encounter of medicine (640). This might undermine the goals of sleep advocacy, which seeks to provide people with knowledge about sleep disorders and the effects of sleepiness in personal and public
life with the explicit and sometimes implicit expectation that concerned individuals will seek professional help in dealing with and managing sleepiness and alertness. Yet, once knowledge is made accessible it is ultimately to the person to make use of it, so the person may only grant medicine rhetorical authority. In light of this possibility, the only thing professional discourses and sleep advocates can do to address the public is to assert its rhetorical authority over the way people organize and make sense of sleep and sleepiness.

To better grasp the way sleepiness can be detached from medical knowledge and yet summon by its rhetorical authority the universal presence of sleep and sleepiness needs to be established as a site of shifting and contested meanings. The explicit social institutions and processes that are studied by sociologists will offer an incomplete perspective so long as these cultural meanings of sleepiness, sleep and sleeping are not explored in relation to micro and macro systems of power.

The whole discourse on the “epidemic” of chronic sleep deprivation detaches sleep from the everyday where it is directly influenced by localities and particular realities. As a bio-medical science, professional sleep discourses operate under the veil of objectivity so in order to address the role they have in the reification of systems of power we must move beyond the presumption of objectivity and bioethical principles by acknowledging that sleep exists with in a capitalist system that has assigned units of time monetary value; the objectivity of any science does not omit its content from being influenced by this dynamic. Within this context, and focusing on the rhetorical authority that sleep discourses present to the public, the question becomes, what is this rhetoric promoting? Is it a call to return to the regimented sleep of children and adolescence? Or does it participate in neo-liberal projects of self-management?
Such a question cannot be fully exhausted for it would yield a different answer for each individual and group that is exposed to sleep rhetoric. While academics are trained to halt at allowing such over arching generalization to exist within solid arguments, the rhetoric of sleep studies is not as wary of generalizations. The seeming universality of sleep is a slippery slope that allows the rhetoric of sleep medicine to speak homogenously of sleep in ways that are detached from the local realities and dynamics of individuals. Rather than asking how their rhetoric influences real people, which would be beyond the scope of this project, this inquiry is directed to how does the rhetoric of sleep discourses function within an economy of time. Or, as the title poses, what does it mean to sleep in an economy of time?

**The Economy of Time**

The economy and time are both central to dealing with the state of the saturated time, for medical residents and the rest of us. They are not the only factors at work but they have merged to create a rigid grid that organizes and influences sleep and other everyday activities. In a post-industrial era sleep is addressed both in terms of personal time management and artificial scarcity.

The economy of time is key to what it means to sleep in under the beam of time scarcity and time management. The economy of time was a phrase the Juliet Schor used in discussing the contemporary problem of overworked Americans, underemployment and evaporating leisure time. While she might have used the phrase metaphorically, here I want to present the economy of time as an actual system of exchange and value that is tied to both the standardization of time and the monetary medium of exchange as it exists within macro and micro economies. I intend to present the economy of time as a product of historical processes. This theorization is a necessary prerequisite to a discussion of the economics of slumber and alertness.
Before the tyranny of clock time, it was pretty clear there was no one standard time rather there were many times, or ways to measure processes. Ever since time was became an abstraction it has had some difficulty reuniting and synchronizing with nature. In *The Little Book of Time*, Klaus Mainzer discusses the early foundations Babylonians provided for our contemporary abstract system of measuring the passage of time (2-4). By creating the lunar charts and a calendar they were able to predict lunar eclipses precisely, but their lunar-based system frequently fell out of step with the seasons. To correct the matter the king would add an extra month to the calendar but today our additions are much more subtler. In addition to the familiar leap year there are leap seconds, so on June 30, 1997 and on December 31, 1998 rather than the normal 86,400 seconds that make up a day there was an additional second, making 86,401. As Jay Griffith explains “Round every year, a leap-second is added to realign the time with that of the earth—it is added to ‘accommodate’ the earth’s unreliable time, for there is no natural gearing between it and the atomic clock’s pip pip pip” (4). Clock time is an abstraction, and as such, it is unable to fully materialize or correspond to material realities. Griffith emphasizes “the” because the whole notion of Greenwich mean time (GMT) or universal time (UT) is a fiction. Instead of connecting us to the earth and its rhythms, abstract time creates numerous barriers to listening to the earth, the moon, the sun, and the waves.

This modern fictional time, the abstract, universal, mono-time has many contributing thinkers, but in Griffith’s book, *A Sideways Look at Time*, she emphasizes the relationship between the dominate Western clock with forms of domination and exploitation that began with “the great breakthrough of timekeeping”: the discovery of longitude (14). This technology of time allowed the British to gain control of the sea and colonize it as they saw fit. With this instrument of time they began to rule both empires of land and empires of time, “for it was due to
Britain’s maritime supremacy that Greenwich was accepted as zero meridian” (Griffith 14).

Western imperialist time is a tool imbedded with ideologies and as the exploits of the British spread so did this version of time.

    Classical thinkers devoted to dealing with the state or the economy such as Locke, Smith and Hume borrowed their concepts of time from classical mechanics and thermodynamics, and in doing so presumed that the actions of individuals (*Homo economicus*) were rational and predictable (Mainzer 146). Classical mechanics depended on constant measurable quantities, and therefore they depict time as an absolute, independent, unvarying entity (Mainzer 25). This use of linear models precluded nonlinearity, chaos, or synergistic effects; it precluded all life and nature that was cyclical, lunar, changing, and unstable.

    Labor was free of the clock’s oversight and regulation before economic notions of time were embodied in the clock. In *Keeping Watch*, Michael O’Malley explains that anthropologists referred to this type of time as “task orientation” (10). In the seventeenth century tasks pertaining to agricultural labor provided its own measures of time; there was a time to sow, a time to reap, a time to milk the cow, etc. But it is erroneous to think that such a way of organizing time is freer or more leisurely because protestant farmers viewed time as something that is owned by God, which granted time a divine authority over their lives. This legitimized time as a way of managing their work and as a way of organizing life (O’Malley 11). Prior to the introduction of scientific management, God’s time demanded systematic work, and this concept of time remained tied to natural and local imperatives. Eventually, by 1860, schedules that regulated labor emerged as a synthesis of science, commerce and mechanical time.

    Parquot’s *The Art of Siesta* is also hesitant to explain the evolution of time-management as a uniquely modern event, by saying that, “It was probably around 1345 that the division of the
hour into sixty minutes and the minute into sixty seconds” spread, transforming the lives of each member of the ruling class by creating a homogenous abstract time (32). “When people think of time not as a succession of experiences but as a collection of hours, minutes and seconds, they acquire a habit of increasing it or hording it” and in doing so the citizen submits himself to an inflexible automation (Parquot 32). Time was not always imperialist, nor was it always a cold scientific principle. Eventually diverse concepts of time and various measurements of time melted into one homogenous mono-time, a clock time that holds its creators hostage through mindless automation.

In industrialism this automation likens humans to machines, and in doing so uses machines as the model of efficiency. This was the essence of Fredrick Taylor’s scientific management. As O’Malley describes, Taylorism rearranged the priorities of governed life and labor for, “In its most benign guise scientific management promised a utopian where all individuals worked at their best. A frankly machine like process, it directed itself as perfecting each individuals functioning within a larger system” (165). While historians treat Taylor as a point of departure from pre-industrial America, O’Malley notes that there were antecedents to Taylor’s engineering, but Taylor signified the most influential voice that emerged from families and communities entrenched in the protestant work ethic.

Taylorism did not triumph without a battle. During a Congressional inquiry into the utility of his system, Taylor’s stopwatch was put up against the pocket watch. The violence of Taylorism was revealed when a union representative reproached him, claiming that “the stopwatch is the equivalent to a whip” (qtd in O’Malley 170). O’Malley elaborated on the parallel by saying “the stopwatch fractured Time to suit the boss’s agenda. […] As a whip cut air and skin to discipline labor, Taylor’s stopwatch cut and sliced Time itself to impose the
machine logic of scientific management on human movements” (170). The violence was not physical, and because of its abstraction, it wounds without eliciting tears or pain. The use of the pocket watch became a doubled-edged sword because although it gave workers a sense of control, reliance on their own clocks still gave clock time new precedence; so regardless of whose clock prevailed, the factory’s clock time won. The clock succeeded in transforming the factory, and went on to colonize the home, school and other public and private institutions.

The nature of the clock’s inclination towards tyranny was not completely hidden. Numerous revolts have taken place against this imposed time of Taylor’s scientific management (Parquot 38). A poster for Charlie Chaplin’s silent movie Modern Times (see fig. 7) is an artifact that came from a era in which films, novels, and slogans attacked the notion that time was

Fig. 7. Modern Times poster, from Filmsite <http://www.filmsite.org/posterpages/p_mode.html>, May 31, 2006.
measured only to be confiscated and economically exploited. This roar of revolts, like the 1960s and its culture of resistance, was heard by those in power, and has since been assimilated into capitalist systems of production. The feeling of “confiscated” time has been replaced by self-supervision and the internalization of the clock that once was once a coveted symbol of control (Parquot).

The transition from the industrial economy into an information economy replaces material resources and temporality with immateriality and abstractions in which time and information become scarce goods (Mainzer 152). Where did time go? How did it become so scarce? It can be surmised that in the era of factory production, those who worked per-hour did not own the time they spent laboring away, but what of the rest of time, our personal time?

In his book *Time and Money*, Gary Cross points out that actually what is considered “personal” time, like the holiday, the vacation and the weekend, is central to how time got equated with money, because these were alternatives to reducing work time. During the 1930s, after the depression made the utopian ideal of shorter workdays and workweeks unfeasible, the notion that free time could be used for consumption allowed leisure to become a tool for balancing overproduction with mass consumption (Cross 77). Unions, according to Cross, thought of this as “killing two birds with one stone” because workers would receive more purchasing power and employers would be obliged to increase jobs without decreasing pay (88). They began to focus on the democratization of leisure rather than giving people more free time. Hence, “free time lost its status as an end, a product of productivity but free from the iron cage of economism” (77). Instead of giving workers free time, they were given weekends, holidays, and vacations that were consumption-filled “packages” of leisure (77). Eventually Europe was able
to articulate and actualize a vision of a leisured society in which workers were given 4 to 8 weeks of paid vacation, but for many American’s such a vision no longer exists (Schor 82).

Schor’s *The Overworked American* examines the trend of increasing work hours and the consequential loss of “free time.” Since 1948 productivity has continually risen in America, yet despite this hours did not fall, rather they began to grow (Schor 2). The extra time and this extra money from prosperous industry have been relegated to fuel consumption; allowing Americans to take the world’s lead in the amount to time and money spent on shopping (Schor 3). However, there is no literal market for free time and the closest measure to it would be the travel industry which amounts to excessive leisure spending that occurs in a condensed amount of time. By the 1960s America had entered an era of rising worktime and since the advent of this trend very little academic and economic attention has been given to the nature of this trend (Schor 4-5).

Under the guise of progress, extra time off is replaced by extra income, and this paradoxically has gotten in the way of having a more relaxed leisure life. The idea of progress hides the fact that our industrious work-spend culture actually makes us work harder and longer than primitive cultures. In America, our work patterns have many working to death – dying from heart disease, hypertension, gastric problems, depression and exhaustion; all of which are strongly related to poor sleeping habits. As Schor puts it, “Sleep has become a casualty of the modern life” (6). She points to shift work, long hours, the twenty-four-hour business day, and the growth of the global economy (and the continent hopping that comes along with it) all of which implicates business culture as a major contributor to the rise in sleep deprivation. But it is more pervasive than this, because when experts warn that, “if you need an alarm clock [. . .] you

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33 Schor refers specifically to the !Kung Bushmen, Hawaiians, and Australian aborigines.
probably have been sleeping too little” (Schor 11), the management of sleep and time become bound in a way that makes its tyranny seen inescapable.

The sale of time for money is now a reigning principle. This grew from previous struggles to own one’s measure of time and then it became a struggle to determine how much time was one’s own and how much time was the property of the employer, and as Schor acknowledges, “today, many fight for overtime – the right to sell as much time as they can” (140). Clock time exists within a warped system of exchange that has turned time into both a commodity and a scarce resource. One of the benefits of this economic precept is that the price of time encourages a people to use it efficiently (Schor 140). Therefore, the economy of time has transformed the entire society – personal, public and ideological – into an efficient society. According to Jeremy Rifkin, the principle of efficiency is a widespread social value and pragmatic method (33). More specifically, the opportunity to minimize time, energy, labor and capital that is invested into completing a task or a product while maximizing yield and return is sought out in both economic and personal interactions (Rifkin 33). Time management has become a personal necessity for everyone who exists in the efficient society.

By focusing on the generational differences in the role of time management we can recount the economic redefinition of time in which clock time was imposed on institutions that were, in essence, resistant to such quantifications. In Hochschild’s book, *The Time Bind*, the workers at Amerco may keep an eye on the clock while at home, while at work and while with

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34 Schor cites Natalie Angier for this point.

35 To create her ethnographic accounts of the time bind Hochschild interviewed a total of 130 people at Amerco, a company in Spotted Dear, Illinois.
friends, but Hochschild demonstrates that their parents probably left this type of temporal awareness at work. To expound on this comparison she presents a story of Gwen Bell and her speculative great, great, great, great-grandmother to illustrate how social and economic needs gave rise to contemporary time management dilemmas. Gwen’s supposed ancestor would not have been influenced by the concept that time is money. Time, on this hypothetical seventeenth-century New England farm, would have been less geared to standardized bureaucratic rules and more oriented towards local custom. “Deadlines, openings and closing times, customer demands were all matters of informal agreement made according to community custom” (Hochschild 47).

Fast-forward to the 1920s and Gwen’s great grandmother’s world is significantly more time-conscious because during this era the rise of Taylorism placed men on industrial time and women on family time. Taylor’s introduction of scientific management imposed rigorous standards of efficiency on factory workers, equating time to production and giving small units of time utility that could be measured and saved. Accordingly:

for Gwen’s ancestor in 1920, the workplace was heartlessly taylorized and home might indeed have seemed a haven from it. But for Gwen, her workplace has a large, socially engineered heart while her home has gained a newly Taylorized feel. (Hochschild 49)

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35 This included the top and middle managers, clerks and factory workers most of whom were part of a dual-income couple, while some were single with and without children.

Hochschild also had access to childcare workers, homemakers married to employees and, company consultants in addition to the quantitative data she collected.

36 Tamara Hareven is credited for coming up with these concepts of time.
Once corporate America realized the violence that Taylor’s stopwatch inflicted, it crushed the ticking device and allowed employees to keep their equivalence to a pocket watch. We tend to take the watch everywhere because, like those who clung to pocket watches during the invasion of scientific management, our timepieces, our cell phones, our alarm clocks give their owners a sense of self-government and self-authority. Business clock time wins again.

Self-supervision is a central part of the time bind because Amerco’s engineered culture manages to give employees, who labor according to the company’s schedule, the sense that they are still in control (Hochschild 46). This illusion of control is relinquished outside of work even though the same time constraints are still used:

So Timmy’s dad, for instance, lurched from one project deadline to the next at the office, but only when he came home did he feel truly pressed. He then tried to jam many necessary activities into his domestic life: a block of time for Timmy, another for Timmy’s sister, another for his wife—all arranged like so many office hours, but without a secretary to control his flow of visitors and tasks (Hochschild 46-47).

Rather than being timed by a supervisor, post-industrial workers are “empowered” to take time management into their own hands. This “empowerment” signified a rejection of bureaucratized oversight but the liberatory significance of this self-management has quite different effects when time consciousness is taken home and is globalized. At homes across America and across the world people continue to carry out necessary chores efficiently within a limited allotment of time without the oversight of efficiency experts.

The time squeeze has created, over the last twenty years, an extra month of work for workers today. Rifkin the social critic, believes that our perception of time has changed because
of the accelerated rate at which technology is paced. An example of such technology is the nanosecond, which organizes the speed of technology to a rate not perceivable to the conscious mind. This can make people impatient with the rate of normal human interactions like talking and waiting. Another theory is that we are “victims of our own aspirations” because “since time to do and define ourselves cannot increase we naturally get frustrated” (Schor 23). This is the essence of saturated time.

While Europeans have been gaining vacation time Americans have been losing it. The recession of the 1980s created an economic squeeze, forcing companies to enact cost-cutting measures such as the restructuring of the labor market, firing full timers and hiring either part-timers, consultants or temporary workers. This has created a time squeeze at home, or, as Hochschild describes it, a time-bind. Since employed people are doing the same amount of work people did twenty years ago the total hours (household labor plus the market/paid labor) equals an extra month of work (162 hours for all people that participated in her study, 166 hours for men and 160 for women), and with this usurpation of time we have experienced a decline of leisure (Schor 35). The disappearance of stable jobs has also contributed to making the idea of having a back-up job more appealing.

Underemployment and unemployment provides an involuntary leisure that is an effect of this overworking and inflexible time regulations. These are people for whom the time-squeeze is not a problem because they have plenty of leisure time but can hardly enjoy it (Schor 39). Noting that “Just as surely as our economic system is ‘underproducing’ leisure for some, it is ‘over producing’ it for others” (Schor, 39), Schor argues that the labor market is inept at providing work for the entire population. Therefore, this growth in unemployment stems from the structure

37 For this point also see Gary; and Linder.
of a capitalist economy that is unable to effectively distribute work time and leisure time (Schor 40). Work has not been spread because the rationality of these trends are a part of a larger capitalist logic giving employers strong incentives to keep long hours instead of shortening hours and spreading work amongst the underemployed.

Modern capitalism has made time not only a valuable factor in the means of production, but it has turned time itself into a commodity (Schor 139). But in a culture that may have gone too far in collapsing time into money it is increasingly hard to develop an independent measure of time’s value. It also becomes difficult to argue that there is a job that requires “too many hours,” because this is tantamount to saying that a job pays “too much money” (Schor 140), further making it difficult to protect the time of those who are disadvantaged, in need, or those who cannot afford to buy free time. Even for those who are working, the price of time makes it hard to save or protect time for sleeping, hobbies, and relaxation (Schor). This commensurability of time has social effects by transforming something that is essentially equal (time) into something that is distributed unequally (money). This creates a situation in which the “scarcity of time puts us in jeopardy of producing a new servant class and undermining the egalitarianism of time” (Schor 142). This sets the background for Schor to argue that the right to free time be extended beyond the right to retire and have paid vacation time so that “everyone can enjoy free time while they are young and throughout their lives” (Schor 142).

Companies like the one Hochschild studied are organized by the principles of Total Quality,\(^\text{38}\) in which the worker is invited to feel committed to the job and the company. Rather

\(^{38}\) The Total Quality system is described as a work system that emphasizes autonomous work teams, “enriched” jobs, and a less obviously hierarchal structure with the aim of creating knowledgeable company-identified workers that participate in decision-making (Hochschild 17).
than being the machine that industrial workers were treated as, in this post-industrial context workers are invited to become believers in their work. “Under the moral mantel of Total Quality, however, workers weren’t being asked to consider the speed of their work—not directly anyway—only its ‘quality’” (Hochschild 209). This regard for quality was what seemed to be missing in their time at home where it was more about the quantity of chores that can be squeezed into whatever time was available. Time at home became something to be maximized through the application of Taylor’s efficiency measures.

Rather than organizing to reclaim time spent at work or arranging more flexible schedules Amerco parents developed techniques to evade the time bind. The strategies used to deal with what was perceived as a time bind – the needs reduction, outsourcing, and dreams of a potential time-rich self merely exacerbated the time bind (Hochschild 244). While all of these strategies have regretful effects and expectations on children, I want to look at how those in a time bind have turned to the time industry to “save” time. Women are the main people who shop for time, and the time industry provides a plethora of commodities to help women deal with the double duty of the second shift. While Schor looked to time saving products as a way to deal with the reality of time poverty, Hochschild is critical of this easy solution that has gone too far. While some products and services replace activities of a house wife many go very far in reducing the amount of time a person needs to invest into their families: being able to mail-order a weeks worth of food, have the daycare manage a child’s extra activities procure, a business that finds children playmates, and a dial 1-900 number to help children with their home work. These are all examples that signal that the time industry may have gone too far: “The time-starved mother is being forced more and more to choose between being a parent and buying a commodified version of parenthood from someone else” (Hochschild 232).
The most touching and disheartening aspect of *The Time Bind* was when Hochschild returns to Amerco years later to see that many of the people who had sacrificed time to the job were laid-off, and those who were not were either promoted (managers and executives) or demoted to a lesser paying position that had more demanding hours. It revealed that years of time put into a job do not mean the same as it did for previous generations (Hochschild 240-243). Since the 1980s, what matters is the capacity to devote the here and now to the demands of the job, and allow *everything else* to take the back burner. The parents of Amerco were blind to the time constraints and the time poverty they existed in because “like most Americans they tend to believe that because they enjoyed so many constitutionally protected rights—to a free press, to freedom of travel. To life liberty and the pursuit of happiness—that they were, in fact, free themselves” (Hochschild 243). This blindness also makes it difficult to grapple with the possibility that the time bind not only creates parent-free homes, but also a participation-free civil-society, and a citizen-free democracy, and I would add sleep-free (American) dreams.

Similar to the proposals put forth in Schor’s book, Hochschild finds comfort in the possibility that a time movement can ameliorate the wounds of the time bind and raise enough public concern to create the necessary environment for change. One of the goals of such a movement would be to create a national dialog centered on discussing the need for emotional investments into family life. Asking questions like, “How much energy ought we devote to the home?” and “How much time and energy do we dare subtract from work?” to create an awareness of the value of relationships that should defy the claws of commodification (Hochschild 249). This resistance to commodification is a sentiment that is rarely pursued by sleep advocates.
Both Schor and Hochschild found the commodification of time to be the point of concern because this particular intersection of time and money is a major mechanism that sustains the economy of time. Their research and findings are situated on the presumption that there is nothing fundamentally tenuous about the standardization of time and the equation of time with money. It is difficult to support the proposition that nothing is essentially problematic about the temporal prison many of us are forced to live in. While Schor and Hochschild are critical and antagonistic towards the economy of time their work tacitly solidifies the hegemony of clock time because they do not unpack the precepts of the clock’s tyranny. Nor do they suppose that that time itself is an abstraction that deduces life and actions into quantifiable typology.

The commodification of sleep has similar dynamics in the economy of time, making sound sleep purchasable for those who have sold their night hours, soporific potential and sleeping habits to the urgency of work. It appears that specific technologies are guilty of aiding and abetting in the processes that create time deprivation and the time bind while also being a willing conspirator in our release from the confines of mechanical clock time and the economy of time. Which ever it may be, we will still count the hours we sleep, deducing this nonexperience into a quantifiable thing.

The ways in which economics has reshaped the temporal landscape of everyday life leads one to wonder how sleep discourses fit into this situation. Do they, for example, contribute to the time movement that Hochschild and Schor envision, or do they merely advocate for a Taylorized self-management of one’s sleep?

**Toward a Marxist Analysis of Sleep Discourses**

If there is an epidemic of chronic sleep deprivation, which is something that I am willing to concede, then perhaps these hours of sleep could be disappearing because of the capitalist
system that depreciates the accessibility to free time. According to Marx and Engel’s (“Ideology”), since industrialism transformed all capital into industrial capital and gave rise to universal competition and free trade, the drive of universal competition has “forced all individuals to strain their energy to their utmost” for the attainment of money through labor (“Ideology” 185). The reallocation of time and energy weakened the institutions that were dependent on meaningful engagements amongst people. Therefore, within the era of industry we also see the ruin of ideology, religion, morality and the like, and, where this was not accomplished, these aspects of human life were made into a palpable lie (185). With these new conditions the only connection that still linked the individual “with productive forces and with their own existence – labour – has lost all semblance of self-activity and only sustains their life by stunting it” (“Ideology” 191). Labor, in the industrial world in which Marx existed and in the world he saw coming into existence, was not a means to directly change the material environment that connected humans with the social world as an affirmation of humanity and nature; rather, it facilitated an estrangement of the self, nature, and the human species. In an economy of time, labor is not the only site of alienation. The temporal landscape of life is both a form of labor and a dimension of life that is vulnerable to commodification. Therefore, the relationship between work and sleep is mediated through the allocation of time.

In *The Communist Manifesto*, the burden of the proletariat is not restricted to alienation and economic exploitation, but, as stated before, estranged labor stunts the self-activity that sustains life. Technology and the march of progress, with its promise of higher standards of living and release from menial work, decreases the value of labor and with it the value of self-sustaining activities. As Marx recites:
In proportion, therefore, as the repulsiveness of the work increases, the wage decreases. Nay more in proportion as the uses of the machinery and division of labour increases, in the same proportion the burden of the toil also increases, whether by prolongation of the working hours, by increase of the work exacted in a given time or by increased speed of the machinery (Engels and Marx, “Ideology” 479).

Hence the “epidemic” of sleep deprivation could be analyzed as an affect of capitalist systems in which the relative duration of sleep declines with the prolongation of working hours and the mounting toils of everyday life.

**Sleep as Work**

As a human function required for survival, the production of sleep is therefore an activity attached to the economical base. Even though at first glance the economic significance of sleep seems minuscule, for many Marxists no aspect of human life is absent of economic, and therefore social meaning, especially the fulfillment of needs that are fundamental to society.

The situation of sleep within Marx’s theory of alienation and estrangement stretches the mechanism of human needs in the life process because for Marx:

> Hunger is a natural need; it requires, therefore, a nature outside of itself, an object outside itself, in order to be satisfied and stilled. Hunger is the objective need of the body for an object which exists outside itself and which is essential for its integration and the expression of its nature. (qtd in Avineri 79)

Yet, can sleep be such a need? There is no materially external object that exists in nature that can maintain this parallel. Rather, sleep occurs outside of the alert brain and the consciously active body, which constitutes “a nature outside of itself” in a way that Marx may not have
intended but is useful nonetheless. In line with the frequent objectification of sleep as an object of desire whose absence establishes its external position, then sleep is a need whose attainment is an affirmation of a human’s relationship with nature because sleep is a physiological and therefore a corporal experience. The displacement of this relationship by estranged labor allows us to think of sleep as an aspect of the human life process that can be estranged because it too is a form of labor.

Estrangement, according to Marx, can occur between an individual and the self, nature, society and individual people. Sleep occurs on all of these levels – individuals sleep, society sleeps, the self sleeps, and nature not only sleeps but circadian rhythms participate in the sleep process. What I want to focus on is the way that allocation of time estranges the relationship between the individual and the self in which sleep is an aspect of the self through its participation in industry; this is especially the case of today’s post-industrial workers. Labor in the post-industrial world relies on the mind in the same way that the industrial revolution relied on the hands and legs of factory workers. Whether it is the technology sector, communications, engineering, health care, or business, the emphasis on education for today’s youth is a reflection of the demand for employees who have abilities and skills that are distilled in classrooms and university halls. This is also the case in the growing service sector – teaching, hospitality, transportation, customer service, telecommunications, health care – the way employees interact with people (customers and employees) has replaced interactions with raw or processed materials. The nature of labor in post-industrial America makes personality and advanced cognition an asset to the employee and the employer. This internal form of labor is still, according to Marxist theory, labor that is not owned by the laborer.
Not only are our personalities and cognitive capacities shaped by their role in the economy, but the way time is allocated and, by extension, the energy that fills this time, are directly related to the base that assigns meaning to these aspects of life in accordance to their profitability prospects. Higher education and primary education for many students today are valueless activities except for the employment prospects they create. Subsequently, the tool of the mind is given over to the economic interests, and with it, the hours, days, months, and years of time constitute an investment into nothing – estrangement. Much of this mental work of learning stunts life where the seeds of self-activity are thought to grow. This is the type of work that is the prescribed recipe for functioning within society, requiring an investment into education explicitly for the sake of pursuing corporate and post-industrial interests. Sleep is also an organized activity measured by the clock, often done with the explicit goal of increasing profitability and production. This is particularly evident in several of the texts in sleep discourses that emphasize the profitability of sleep. It is the inability of sleep to have meaning and intercourse outside of the economic prospects it creates that estranges the individual from this intimate aspect of life.

According to James Maas, author of *Power Sleep*, those who suffer from chronic sleep deprivation are often completely ignorant of the way sleep affects their mood, performance, and behavior. As Maas explains, “we slowly habituate ourselves over time to a low level of alertness, thinking that how we feel now is normal” (51). The lack of general awareness of our own bodies and minds allowed sleep scientists to ignore the possibility of shifting subjective notions of alertness and normalcy; this absence of self-knowledge and the illusion of “normalcy” granted legitimacy to reinforce social sleep norms. Therefore, Maas is able to declare that, “the truth is that most of us are functioning at a level far from optimal, far from the level of alertness that
enables us to be energetic, wide awake, happy, creative, productive, motivated, and healthy human beings” (52). Personal and individual levels of alertness are judged against those of others and according to an idealized composite of human life. Is this vision of optimal function realistic? Or does it narrow diverse ways of experiencing and inhabiting the world into a plateau of efficiency that presumes alertness is the only way life can be valued and fulfilling?

In *The Promise of Sleep*, Dement speaks to such skepticisms when discussing the productivity, creativity, and learning that sleep facilitates, asking, “What about those human dynamos who work nearly round the clock?”, explaining that, “writers and artists who may have been manic depressive such as Virginia Woolf, Edgar Allen Poe, and Georgia O’Keeffe were extremely energetic and creative in their manic phase but probably accomplished next to nothing when depressed” (325). He thus implies that, despite their productivity, their instability was nevertheless detrimental to achieving a larger goal of regular optimal performance. Indeed, the average worker or manager may be compromised by the types of inconsistencies these notable artists were disposed to having. Regimented sleep patterns or improved sleep hygiene minimizes such inconsistencies so workers are able to consistently function at an optimal level to better prepare them to compete in an economy that demands flexible bodies (Martin). What is even more important than the nature of sleep and sleepiness is the unacknowledged financial cost of sleepiness.

In the chapter entitled “A Little Night Muse: creativity, productivity, and learning” Dement begins by describing a patient, “whose life had completely unraveled” because of the misdiagnosed and therefore untreated restless leg syndrome (*The Promise* 310-11). Dement emphasizes that, “although he had been labeled a rising star because of his intelligence, skill, and gift for understanding and analyzing a complex and fast-changing business landscape, his sleep
disorder and the severe sleep deprivation had caught up with him. He was unable to maintain the performance that was expected” (*The Promise* 311). He not only lost his performance capabilities and his job, but his extreme irritability caused his wife to leave him with their children. After being medically treated and reclaiming his talents and personal stamina “he quickly found a new job, but we calculated that his undiagnosed restless leg syndrome had cost him at least $500,000 in lost salary” (*The Promise* 311). Not only is the financial cost of an undiagnosed and untreated sleep disorder central to his rhetoric, but Dement also emphasizes how restoring normal sleep behaviors is economically calculable but in doing so it seems that the success and worth of healthy sleep is tied not to human relationships but to work and profitability and performance.

Dement, along with other sleep doctors and sleep advocates, seek to challenge the typical value given to sleep within the economy of time because it seems to dispose chronic sleep deprivation. In doing so, they seem to rely heavily on the economic value of time. Dement writes: “Most of us want to be more productive in life. How much money we earn and how much recognition we get not infrequently depend on how much work we can accomplish. And not infrequently, how much work we can accomplish depends on how much time we spend working” (*The Promise* 323). Within this logic, sleep time is easily exchangeable with work time. Later, he asserts that the continual negation of sleep is detrimental to productivity, implying that sleep’s utilitarian value can outweigh the perceived value of self-imposed sleep deprivation. His initial statement seeks to appeal to lay readers who, by reading Dement’s book, are grappling with sleep difficulties and the subsequent challenges they pose in everyday life. It is also an invitation to those who have already bought into the promise of hard work, of *Oliver Twist*, of *Horacio Alger*, of the American Dream. *The Promise of Sleep* is, like these American myths,
ineffectually ignorant of social systems of stratification and dynamics of cultural power that are involved in any hierarchical system regardless of how many hours someone sleeps or works. For Dement, sleep is egalitarian, just as it was in the nostalgic accounts of sleep that did not connect to the reality of unequal access to dormancy and its promises. While Dement seeks to distill an understanding of sleep that endows it with value, it is not necessarily rooted in a complex understanding of the economy of time or the stratification it creates. This utopian depiction of sleep’s potential participates in larger discourses that reify the capitalist spirit and fortify the iron cage.

It is the profitability of sleep – or the cost of sleep deprivation – that has rallied the concern of public health officials to declare sleep deprivation and sleep disorders to be a phenomenon worthy of the title status of “epidemic,” and it was the benefits of sleep – the health risks that increased with sleep deprivation – that have motivated many to raise awareness of sleep in hopes that better sleep regimens would rejuvenate life and lower health insurance bills. Professional sleep discourses are situated within a social economy that has internalized and prioritized the lessons of Fordism, Taylorism, and the McDonaldization of temporal responsibility and accountability, tying everything and every moment to the question of profitability. The paradox of sleep/work that ultimately arises from this is that many people sleep to work. As the discourses on sleep have shown, workers are encouraged to make sleep work for them, to harness the creative potential of their dreams and to be utilitarian when weighing the value of one’s sleep. The reduction, manipulation, and usurpation of sleep for profitability is the essence of estranged sleep. In this intimate moment in which the self turns inwards, this precisely vulnerable dimension of life becomes attached and valued because of its profitability and participation in inherently mythical systems of upward mobility.
Within this discourse that advocates for the utilization of sleep for its rejuvenating and innovative capacities, sleep has become a practice that competes with other everyday tasks and responsibilities for the ever-dwindling resource of time. When sleep is placed next to, let’s say, time to read a book, the question still remains: Which is the more profitable investment of time? Sleep advocates hope to educate the public on the usefulness of sleep so that those faced with such a dilemma will have a greater propensity to choosing sleep. This method debatably failed in dietaries; educating the public about how unhealthy fast food is did not create an overwhelming propensity to cook and eat healthfully. The crux of the problem is that, like food, sleep still exists within an economy of time and will be assigned value based on this system, and like eating patterns, sleep will be fighting a losing battle unless it is able to disassociate slumber and repose from work and economic profitability. Even outside of these cost/benefit analyses of sleep, we will see that much of our society is organized around the presumption of alertness.

**Sleep as Commodity**

While Williams and Boden imply that the packaging and commodification of sleep is a recent phenomenon, Ekirch finds that, in the pre-industrial Britain, good sleep was not free in the past. In pre-Enlightenment Europe, sound and peaceful sleep was a luxury that nobility could afford by way of securing a quiet warm environment that was safe and secure. Only the privileged had access to medical remedies so that sickness and pain did not stand in the way of their precious sleep. The elaborate bedrooms of kings and queens also attest to the price sleep has historically bore. In the present developed world, many can afford the space, time, and comfort that sleep requires. However, we still harbor some of the fears that sleeping brought; the cultural rituals around sleeping from the nightly prayers, night watchers, and door locking, to raised beds are historically tied to explicit fears that surrounded the act of sleeping (Albert and
Ekirch’s survey of sleep and the night revealed that the bed was a site where life unfolded and where modern consumption was born. It was not until between the fifteenth and seventeenth century that the European bed evolved from straw and earthen floors into the raised thrones preserved still today in châteaux, castles, and modern homes (for an example see fig. 8). During this time innovations that affected the domestic environment made what was once the sleep of kings more widely purchasable. The bed was usually the most expensive piece of furniture in a household, a primary item bequeathed to a favored heir, and the first purchase of newlyweds (Ekirch, Day’s Close 274-276). A symbol of prestige and facilitator of comfort, Ekirch adds that the bed “was where most persons were conceived and born, convalesced from illness, made love, and died” (Day’s Close 276). But most people of pre-industrial Europe were not blessed with this modern comfort and would seek slumber in the arms of a single straw mat and a blanket. As with the case of both money and sleep, some had less while others had significantly more, yet the disenfranchised still were
conceived, fell ill, made love, and died in their makeshift beds.

More contemporarily, Williams and Boden point towards (practically) anything that is associated with sleep as participating in the “sleep industry,” from the movies (*Sleeping Beauty*, *Sleeping with the Enemy*, *Awakenings*, *Sleepless in Seattle*, and *Nightmare on Elm Street*) and the books (*The House of Sleep*) to night gowns or lingerie; from soporific teas to beds and bedroom accoutrements; from cosmetics that ensure a “beauty sleep” to pharmacology. In these examples of the capitalist colonization of sleep there is a symbolic association made between sleep, death, and sexuality that has contributed to making dormancy a media spectacle, “if not a box office hit” (Williams, “Liminal” 122). These are undoubtedly commodities that rest upon culturally mediated understandings of sleep, but they do not literally sell sleep, as an experience; they sell things, commodities.

Whether or not it is possible to sell sleep is, of course, dependent on the way sleep is defined and what constitutes consumption. Sleep is purchasable by way of the environment and substances that induce and sustain slumber, by providing means to control its length, quality, regulation, and rejuvenating potential, and also by ensuring the benefits affiliated with repose. It is desirable because it is not merely a human need but because of the fetishization of the alertness and efficiency that sleep is supposed to bring. I intend to argue that attempts to spread what Dement calls the “gospel of sleep” has not only put sleep in a system that measures sleep

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39 As Britons, Williams and Boden’s list is shorter than one an American may compile. For example, works that are did not achieve widespread international distribution includes: the Greg Iles series, *Dead Sleep, Sleep No More, and The Quiet Game*, the novel *Sleepers* by Lorenzo Carcaterra, and *My Private Idaho*, a movie directed by Gus Van Sant.
according to its productivity but seeks to literally sell sleep and, like the industry Williams and Boden are concerned with, turns it into a commodity.

At the beginning of the 1970s, the laboratory experience to diagnose sleep disorders was rare, so as Lavie recounts:

> The pharmaceutical companies were the first to discover the hidden potential of laboratory sleep recordings. Instead of relying on the patient’s subjective report on the efficacy of the drug, it became possible to obtain an authenticated opinion based on objective observations and evaluations from ‘sleep specialists.’ (161)

The sleep laboratory was of great promotional value to these pharmaceutical companies. This was where the first steps were taken in the area of sleep medicine under the tutelage of the pharmaceutical industry.\(^{40}\)

Following the colonization of the night that Melbin noticed during the 1960s and 1970s, there has been a colonization of or encroachment on sleep according to Williams (“Health and Sleep”), in which there have been deployments of expertise to study the sleeping body and sleep. Williams observes that,

> To the extent that sleep, particularly the diagnosis and treatment of various sleep disorders, is becoming a topic of medical jurisdiction and control at the interactional, conceptual, or organizational level – including various rallying calls for doctors to wake up to the ‘epidemic’ of sleep disorders in our midst, not

\(^{40}\) It should also be noted that Dement made an attempt at starting a sleep clinic that focused on treating narcolepsy, but it had to close because of the peculiar circumstances of this disorder (*The Promise* 46). Many of his patients were uninsured because the symptoms of the condition got in the way of maintaining gainful employment.
to mention the pharmaceutical interests and issues at stake here – then a (creeping) process of medicalization may have indeed been taking place. To the extent, however, that sleep in general is increasingly bound up with matters of health as well-being – including various lifestyle interventions or practices such as sleep hygiene, *qua* self-governance, designed to tackle sleep *debt* or *deprivation* and to maximize human potential in all walks of life through the ‘recommended’ eight hours – then a process of healthization may be seen to be taking place. (”Sleep and Health” 195; William’s emphasis)

Sleep studies not only gave pharmaceutical companies a type of legitimacy to market sleep medicines, but the field continues to participate in the market via the messages about sleep that encourage the consumption of goods in search of the “promise of sleep” via the secret health benefits of sleep and the medical treatment of sleep’s irregularities and disorders. The prescriptions given to the “sleep sick” vary, but generally prescriptions either require pharmaceutical treatment or therapies that involve the services of specialists or the purchase of mechanical or alternative remedies. 41

41 Williams (“Liminal Bodies”) says that the prescriptions for our so-called ‘sleep sick society,’ like the disorders and deprivation they claim to alleviate, come in many shapes and sizes, these ranging from: (i) the ‘judicious usage; of sleep medications (that is prescription hypnotics) for conditions such as insomnia - justifies by leading authorities such as Dement, not to mention the market interests of the pharmaceutical manufactures. . .

through (ii) *relaxation techniques, stimulus control, cognitive therapies, and sleep state restriction*; to (iii) *alternative therapies* of various sorts (for example,
Such materialist tendencies could be a reflection of the habitus of sleep scientists and sleep professionals. Williams ("Liminal Bodies") quotes Bourdieu when noting that class distinctions play a role in how sleep is defined: “not only [are] the patterning of sleep, energy and rest likely to vary in more or less predictable ways here, mirroring inequalities in health more generally, but also too is its very definition, conceived through differences in habitus and modes of bodily hexis” (120). These differences in the way sleep is socially located and its participation within systems of inequality point to the time poverty that Schor noticed, causing sleep and other “necessary” responsibilities to take the backburner while the economy continues to deprecate the value of free time.

These are very material and concrete ways in which sleep discourses participate within economic systems; what has yet to be discussed are the invisible technologies that are at play. Capitalism is not merely a system of exchange; it is a culture full of ideas, stories, and messages that support the economic structure. This is where the story of sleep’s promise and the power of sleep are crucial because they reify notions of “equality” and “control,” making sleep a fetish and giving the practice a deceptive mystique. While the audience is able to construct and decode messages about sleep actively in a way that yield unique cultural meanings, the reproduction of sleep in mass culture destroys the “traditional” discursive meanings of slumber. Like the lost aura Benjamin mourned, sleep too loses an aura when it is reproduced in mass culture as commodity and as labor.

While sleep discourses are not solely responsible for the loss of aura or the commodification of sleep, they do seek to package sleep in medicalization and healthization hypnosis, biofeedback, acupuncture, herb and flower remedies) and over-the-counter remedies/self-medication. (125)
narratives. Susan Willis’s essay on “Unwrapping Use Value” explains how mass commodity packaging defines use value as the commodity’s most gratifying characteristic even though no commodity ever lives up to its buyer’s expectations or desires. This is because in commodity capitalism, use value cannot be fully realized, but “rather haunts its fetishized manifestations in the objects we consume” (337). Maas’s *Power Sleep* and Dement’s *Promise of Sleep* declare this use value on the covers of their books: power and promise (control and certainty).

In his book’s afterward Dement confesses that “I sincerely hope that people will learn enough about sleep to live their lives more fully, with a greater sense of joy,” mourning the fact that “too many people think that it is normal to feel sleepy during the day, and they move through their lives wrapped in the gauze of drowsiness.” They should learn enough about sleep to avoid accidents and to avoid learning in hindsight; as one woman told Dement, “‘I wish my son had heard your lecture—he fell asleep while driving and was killed at the age of 19.’” Dement adds that, “too many lives have been lost” (446). It is this greater sense of joy and the “potential, creativity and learning” that has become the use value of sleep, in addition to the naïve expectation that getting a good night’s sleep will keep death at bay. Rather than merely being a possibility, which I am willing to concede, this story of the life saving potential of sleep not only reunits sleep and death in a peculiar way, but also is in essence the power and promise of sleep. Such a message has grown out of a culture that refuses to submit to death on any terms, and will even enlist death’s sibling sleep to fight him.

This is where the sleep industry, which Boden and Williams observed, enters the discourse. The themes of sleep in movies, books, advertising, and commodities communicate messages about sleep’s universality, as a right unbiasedly bestowed upon people regardless of social identifiers such as class, race, ethnicity, belief, and gender. Like advertising, this industry
seizes on this detachable appearance of use-value to render it sensually perceptible to its audience. As Willis explains, this is “the abstraction of labor which is the real basis of the fetish quality of commodities, it is not something we as consumers can directly grasp; rather, it enters our daily life experience as the inability to apprehend fully or imagine non-fetishized use values” (338). Commodity fetishism conceals the underlying social relations at work – the duality of sleep – that it is purchased as a product of labor processes and participates in labor processes. Since sleep can be a type of productive consumption, a type of consumption that is tied to the productive process, its duality is that it can also be unproductive consumption; sleep does not have to be a commodity or work. It can be liberated. Thus on weekends we relish sleep and submit to it in excess because this is not estranged sleep, rather it is unproductive consumption. It is a type of sleep that frees its self from the economy of time by refusing to be subject to it.

So, sleep is to be stolen only to be sold back to us? Do sleep discourses attempt to counter the encroachment that work and the twenty-four-hour society has made on time that otherwise would be slumbered away, or are they a baffling contradiction of the postmodern era? Whichever it may be, Williams and Boden have noted that “A whole sleep and rest industry has emerged nevertheless to address, not to say exploit these ‘needs’ (and to no doubt stimulate new concerns), invoking a range of legitimizing rationales (including optimal health and performance)” (par 2.5). The promise of sleep and sleep power epitomize these legitimizing rationales.

**The Napper**

But did it work? Did all of the attention given to the exchange value of sleep create an enduring fetish for it? In other words, was the gospel of sleep effective in converting nonbelievers? To begin to answer this question I turn to *The Wall Street Journal’s* coverage of
the Power Nap in corporate America. The first article, “Sleep: The New Status Symbol”, printed in April of 1999, only weeks after the release of Dement’s book and months after Maas’s book, has a headline suggesting readers “forget about stock options; the ultimate perk for the truly successful is now eight hours’ sleep” (Jeffrey). The article reads like an epilogue to Dement’s or Maas’s books. While taking note of the emerging trend of coveting sleep, it also adds color to the perks of being well rested. While most Americans are thoroughly sleep deprived and nearly 1/3 get less than six and a half hours of sleep during the workweek, executives, CEOs and entrepreneurs brag about their seven to eight and a half hours of sleep in the “Dow Jones Sleep Index.” To help account for this trend Nancy Ann Jeffery encourages readers to, “Think of it as a chaste form of sleeping your way to the top,” then reports that “Sleep never paid off in the old days [. . .] when moving up the corporate ladder meant working longer and staying later than your co-workers. But in today’s high-tech, information-driven economy, the fresher, more creative mind often wins the day.” (<http://0-proquest.umi.com>) Yet, this is not just a luxury; as an interviewee attested, they are doing it because it works, or in the words of Kevin Cashman, head of an executive coaching firm in Minneapolis, “CEOs aren’t sleeping to be happy[, . . .] the more balanced and rested and resilient you are the more you are going to produce” (<http://0-proquest.umi.com>). The indulgence of these elites seems to rest on the ability to recreate legitimized narratives proposing that the sleep of elites is well earned and well used. Nevertheless, she asks if this taste for longer sleep hours will ever trickle down to the sleep deprived masses.

In July 2003, the commentary piece “As Bosses Power Nap, Cubical Dwellers Doze Under Clever Disguise,” seemed to answer Jeffery’s question by pointing to the differences in those who are able to take advantage of the “napportunities” because, as Jarred Sandberg
proclaims, “All nappers aren’t created equal” (<http://0-proquest.umi.com>). Although research has shown that sixty to ninety minutes of rapid eye movement will drastically increase the productivity of the rest of the workday, it is an extra edge that is not free.

Kroll-Smith and Baxter’s essay on the normalization of this once infrequent and taboo theft of work time saw that the nap has become a rational strategy for increasing productivity. In America, the emergence of the workplace nap occurred in an “economy dependent upon information technology and extended performance of the subtle work of cognition and mental activity” (40). Engineered nap spaces change sleep from being a relinquishment of social roles and responsibilities into being a role and responsibility of workers. It goes even further than this; it is a continuation of sleeping in the light of reason because here sleep is understood by the ways it interacts with the heirs of reason: progress, knowledge, science, technology, and efficiency.

Yet, naps have to compete with a deeply ingrained taboo towards the practice that persists despite the fact we all grew up with naptime, “But you apparently have to be a napper on the level of legendary bunkers Da Vinci, Churchill, Einstein, and Edison to feel secure in doing it” (<http://0-proquest.umi.com>). Later The Wall Street Journal printed “The Power Nap’s 15 Minutes Is Over: An Unlikely Fad Gets a Rude Awakening” in which Sue Shellenburger reports that as of 2003, the power napping craze is officially over. She points to recent statistics that reveal that more employers are not allowing shift workers to take naps on their breaks and more are reprimanding or suspending those who do nap (<http://0-proquest.umi.com>). So, ingenious ways to hide snoozing are the only way for some sleepy employees to escape retribution. One clever maneuver is described in which an advertising executive fell sleep at her desk and propped her face in her hands so that when she heard her boss walk in the door she gave a quick, “Amen” before turning to greet him. The article also gives new meaning to the common uses of
the “restroom.” Basically, snoozing, while legitimately desired and even deserved just “doesn’t look good” to customers and co-workers, especially since being labeled a slacker could cost a person their job when the next round of lay-offs are called.

Efforts to encourage workers to cash in on the value of sleep by increasing the productivity of employees seems to have failed miserably in some areas, while in others it has created an opportunity to profit from this need to nap in private. MetroNaps is a company with a Vancouver Airport location and a New York suite in the Empire State building where it sells time in a high-tech nap pod for fatigued cubicle dwellers to rest and re-boost (See fig. 9). These alertness managers are mutations of Taylor’s scientific management, furthering the pursuit of productive uses of the time we spend in the land of Nod (Baxter and Kroll-Smith 41).

Although Kroll-Smith and Williams are taken aback by the conquest of dormancy by capitalist enterprise, this seems to affirm the totality of the capitalist system and its affluence on consciousness and everyday life. These discourses reify the notion that the work of sleep is an objective product of labor. As Willis explains, “reification defines the translation of commodity fetishism into human experiential terms” (338). All of

Fig. 9. MetroNap's Pod, From <http://www.metronaps.com> May 20, 2005. The Metro Nap Pod has four levels of comfort.
human consciousness, capacities and behaviors are subjected to this reifying process (Lukács).

Sleep has been reified and aesthetizied because it is a sensual dimension of life that is detached from people’s activities, and appears to be natural and obvious. The egalitarian promise of sleep and the exploitable power of sleep may appear to have use value, but, in purchasing sleep or doing the work of sleep, it is abstracted and turned into market or exchange value. Commodity fetishism is both an objective and subjective phenomena; subjectively, it is the process by which people are estranged from their activities as they become commodities. In the same way that labor is an abstraction of human activity, this notion also extends to the qualities and personalities of people. This equalizing of different kinds of labor, and of different kinds of people, is a result of reducing them down to their asset as human capital or labor power (Marx 322). Regardless of the demands on time that vary from person to person, the work of sleep is equally required and valued in relation to the pertinent sector of production and operation. The sleep of aviators, the sleep of doctors, the sleep of students, are abstractions in as far as they reduce the diversity of forces and factors that effect sleep, narrowing it to a person’s professional affiliation and the repercussions (financial and social) that drowsiness and deprivation incur.

Willis notes that in Adorno’s *Negative Dialectics*, Adorno translates Marx’s term “equivalence” into “identity” because the imperative of identification is rooted in economics and dominates all of human thought and behaviors (339). Adorno sees that capitalism, as a system, is both total and yet not total. Our ability to reclaim and rethink the daily-life practice of sleep and naps under capitalism can be achieved through negative dialectics. For Adorno, the coercive “reduction of human labor to the universal concept of average working hours, is akin to the principle of identification” (146). Through this principle, non-identical persons under capitalism become identical, and this spreads until it becomes an obligation for the whole world to become
identical, to have a price, a wage, a cost. Adorno clarifies that “if no man had part of his labor withheld from him any more, rational identity would be a fact, and society would have transcended the identifying mode of thinking” (147). The remainder of this process of translating things into their concepts is contradiction. In the case of identity, the non-identity is the remaining contradiction that opposes the totality of capitalism. It denies the non-identity, according to its own conception, or “the thing against which it was conceived” (147).

Sleep as work and as commodity transforms non-identity into identity. Sleep is a moment in which existence is detached from its source of identification, yet is put under the auspices of identity; such a translation points to a contradiction, a remainder. There is an aspect of slumber that evades the physiological study of it and the capitalist exploitation of it because it decreases the exchange value of sleep. It is a non-identity by way of the primary marker of difference and desire – sex.

The contradiction in the notion that something as habitual as sleep “doesn’t look good” associates napping with an aesthetic that in incompatible with the aesthetic of work, action, productivity, and efficiency. This goes beyond the insecurities Alvarez had about being watched while sleeping and is not sufficiently explained by the work ethic. The actual sleeping body is so loaded with cultural messages that to sleep in public is in many ways to leave oneself open to an array of labels and judgments. The men and women who have called cardboard boxes homes and city benches beds are an example of how meanings are attached to the sleeping body that awake bodies are not burdened with. Yet, when someone says that sleeping on the job “doesn’t look good,” rather than being read as a vagabond, they seem to be pointing to the inability to situate passivity within economic systems of value. Passivity is so engendered in sleep that it reveals the
ways sleep is placed in opposition to action because purposeful passivity has a rich and complicated relationship with patriarchal power and notions of the self.
CHAPTER 3: LIFE THAT IS NEITHER AWAKE NOR ALERT

What then becomes of those who sleep in the light? Do their dreams shrivel up or does the darkness explode? Or are they doomed to long for a darkness that sleep can no longer bring? In a culture determined to turn sleep into what it resists, into something that yields to the tyranny of the clock and into something that can be experienced and technologically remembered, sleep still exists in opposition to alertness, but, within the economy of time, both can be bought, and exploited, and fetishized.

In this chapter I would like to propose that both sleep and alertness are both capable of being made into fetishes. On the surface, alertness is sought after for pragmatic reasons, but within the irrationality of consumerism and the post-industrial rejection of the natural body, it becomes a fetish in the Marxist sense that it conceals the relations of production. In the Freudian sense of a fetish, sustained alertness is rendered ideal because it conceals the absence of dreams and illogic that characterize awakened life. Sleep is Freud’s phallic mother, passive yet powerful and therefore worthy of repression. Sleeping brings about a different type of fetishism, one that potentially turns the sleeper into an object of desire. Sleepiness is left out of this symbolic system of phobia and philia; the very mechanism that allows us to transition between alertness and sleep does not have a place within desire, within the economy of time, or within Western public life. Sleepiness does not seem to belong anywhere. Even in the bedroom, the place where somnolence reigns, sleep and not sleepiness is welcomed. This dislocation is the burden of the narcoleptic who is stuck in a mode of existence that has no place in everyday life or in the night landscape. The chronic somnolent is saturated with an unsanctioned desire that must remain unfulfilled.

While previous chapters have been examined the cultural politics of sleep, this chapter will move
towards a destabilization of the symbolic order by revisiting a designated site of disorder, the sleep disorder. In one of the most horrifying symptoms of narcolepsy the keystone on which all Western order leans is crushed and its fiction is revealed as such. Even within the unwelcome passivity of narcoleptics there is potential and power because disordered sleep is able to dismantle the alert rational active self and the empire it has created.

**The Sequence: Awake, Aware, Alert, Active, Alive**

The conflation of these adjectives exists in daily interactions and understandings of people. Their definitions refer to each other in a web of signification. Together, they represent the norm of post-industrial human existence; anything that hinders or changes the stability of these conditions is medicalized or criminalized. As a social norm, these states are synthetic and divorced from shifting nature. They are like the mid-morning, mid-May that Griffith notices is a permanent distortion of time that modernity has created in which the light is always the same and the temperature is always static (Griffith 18-19). Thanks to the light bulb and temperature control, our bodies always think it is summer (Wiley), while sophisticated agricultural technologies make seasonal flowers and fruits available year round (Griffith 18-19). If it is always summer and mid-morning then it is always time to harvest and there is never really a night or a winter in which all life, including humans, slows down to hibernate or rest. The norm of “Awake, Aware, Alert, Active, Alive” is an artificial extension of a particularly masculine static archetype. I want to think of these norms in relation to the cherries that Griffith describes, which are forced to blossom all the time, for “to live in the synthetic ever-present present is to live not in the fullness but in the *emptiness* of time” (19; Griffith’s emphasis). When the evanescent becomes a sculpture or a plastic flower, so we can gaze upon it for eternity, something is lost, or evaporates, and it is within this loss that we aspire to remain alert.
The middle words, “Aware, Alert, Active” seem to signify systems of stratification and oppression. To not be sufficiently aware, alert, or active may indicate one’s placement in the age bell curve, one’s achievement potential in educational and training systems, or one’s level of liberty or freedom from oppressive restraint, respectively. They are to be thought of as ideals: to be endowed with sufficient knowledge and to exercise will and agency.

The centrality of alertness in the list is no accident; it is the medium on which action is legitimized and life is sanctioned. Although they are frequently used as synonyms, all six words – their definitions, their differences, and their connections – are worth meditating on. The only definition that differentiates “Awake” from the rest of the words is the one that says “fully conscious and not asleep” (Encarta). “Aware” generally refers to knowledge of social and external activities and happenings, while to be “Alert” is to be “watchful and ready to deal with whatever happens” or to be “clear-headed and responsive” (Encarta). Alertness not only possesses knowledge, but it anticipates and reacts. In an unpredictable world, alertness is a guard against being victimized. Not only in urban or in military situations, but everyday life elicits a desire for alertness as a way of avoiding and dealing with “whatever happens.” The word that phonetically differs from the other words, “action,” is a variant of the infinitive “to act.” Action is not merely movement or “something that somebody or something does,” but it is also directed towards achieving a goal or purpose (Encarta). In the context of the sequence, the most appropriate definition for action is the last one offered, “voluntary or intended behavior, as opposed to forced behavior” (Encarta). Knowledge (via awareness) and anticipation (via alertness) makes action voluntary, regardless of what action is taken or its consequences. Hence, in a democracy action is always accountable and can at any moment be scrutinized by the panoptic authorities to unearth the knowledge and the expectations underling them. If one’s
actions are deemed legitimate or, by default, do not induce coercive acts, one’s life may be sustained – the meaning of “alive.” This procession is the rudimentary basis of democracy, liberalism, and civil society, and it weighs delicately on the central point of alertness.

It is only proper for a thesis entirely devoted to the subject of sleep to take the state of alertness into consideration. In attempting to do so, the everydayness of alertness and being awake makes it difficult to gain a critical stance on the matter. Yet, the alert self is the Western Self, and that which is not aware, alert, and active constitutes an Other. This habitus means that America (and much of the West) is a empire that has built capitalism, government, military, medicine, theology, ontology, and sociology on patriarchal notions of action that have made action an ideological imperative.

This sequence is devised to explain how alertness makes action an imperative. Particularly in the hospital and in the foreign country, our awareness of the Other must precipitate alertness, acute awareness and responsiveness, before legitimating action. This action can be direct, mediated, or indirect. Therefore, armed with knowledge of a social or biological disease, agents in the West are compelled to do something, anything. An action must be devised to address sickness, teen-pregnancy, poverty, illiteracy, non-capitalist, and non-democratic lives! These Others somehow lack the legitimacy that the sequence guarantees; they do not possess the safety or the contained constant state of freedom that belongs to the healthy Westerner.

Anthropologists and psychologists seem to be the only ones capable of resisting this cultural logic that propels persons and organizations towards action. 42

42 Of course this is not written in ignorance of the puzzles of mass-apathy and political non-participation, but to resolve or address such a “problem” is to presume that when presented with the cue to act, everyone should (re)act accordingly. Similarly the passive recipient
And so we act, react, distract, create impacts, and enact laws. Time is stuffed with as many actions as will fit. To do this sufficiently, we must be alert. Sleep discourses fixate on the relation between alertness and productive action by pointing to the reductions that sleep debt incur. Maas emphasizes the reduced productivity that is caused by sleep deprivation by elaborating on how reduced cognitive functions reduce a person’s productivity. In addition to having a delayed reaction time, sleep deprivation results in reduced ability to concentrate, ability to remember, ability to handle complex tasks, ability to think logically, ability to assimilate and analyze new information, ability to think critically, decision making skills, vocabulary and communication skills, creativity, motor skills and coordination, and perceptual skills (61). After listing these reductions, Maas asks if the reader would hire a person with these diminished traits; the message is clear, the ideal employee is an awake and alert one.

Alertness is not only an ideal, but, like sleep, it is also work and a fetishized commodity. What concerns me here is its pervasive fetish as it is embodied in caffeine and its favorite mode of consumption: coffee. In “Caffeine and the Coming of the Enlightenment,” Roger Schmidt presents readers with a Renaissance Europe that was so infatuated with its newfound coffee fetish that it scarcely knew how to make sense of how the drug affected productivity and attitudes towards sleep. Many cups of coffee later, scholarship on the subject is still sparse, signaling that in the mist of a new caffeine buzz we still struggle to make sense of this fetish. As we order our thousandth cup of Starbucks coffee, mental labor and time perspective of media studies points towards the rupture between creating awareness and creating alarm and (re)action.
management fail to be recognized as relations that are mutations of the capitalist’s clock designed to keep production and consumption going.

The fetish of alertness is not merely found in the trendy recycled-paper coffee-cup because it is endemic to everything that smacks with modernity. Since the birth of electricity, engineers and architects have had a new awareness of lighting and its impact on space and how people utilize spaces (Rossell). From the engineers that strategically design workspaces to keep worker bees buzzing, to the music stations that spew up-beat tunes, up-beat clear-headed modes of being are creations of modernity and seem to be undaunted by the postmodern turn. In a society of extroverts and choleric and sanguine humours, there is little room for the sluggards of melancholic and phlegmatic humor.

There is something else that motivates prolonged alertness. Laura Mulvey’s *Fetishism and Curiosity* reconciles the two versions of fetishism that may help to explain the alertness fetish. For Freud, a fetish is an object that acts as a sign, in that it is a substitution for something thought to be missing, the maternal penis (Mulvey 5). In contrast to the Marxist interpretation of the inscribed fetish that conceals social relations, Freud’s concept of the fetish can help to understand the desire for alertness as a cover for what alertness lacks. On the surface, alert life seems to be where all of life resides, after all; it is where the action is. As established in chapter one, all of life is not dry and without fiction. However there is a distinction that created the illusion that alertness contains what it lacks. The genre designations of fiction and nonfiction are mechanisms that work to contain delirium by designating which pages or screens are dry and which are drenched with imagination. But fiction cannot stop there; it does not stop at edges of two-dimensional planes or at the addition of a prefix – from fiction to nonfiction. Fiction is an extension of the hallucinations that animate sleeping minds.
Although it is unsanctioned, outside of the designation of fiction, outside of these two-dimensional spaces, fiction still exists. The residue of dreams, and the release and pleasure they bring, leak beyond sleep, and, when they do, we realize that they are banned from rational waking life. The rights to delirium, feminized fervor, and pure inertia, are some of many things that alertness lacks in relation to the fullness of slumbering fantasies and docile bodies. There is a freedom that we can only experience when asleep; this release from social obligations and toil is not dwelt on because the sight of it is inaccessible to ourselves. Except of course for rare out-of-body experiences, most of us can never see ourselves asleep, we cannot feel ourselves while we are free from society’s rules, while we are free. But we are, nevertheless, aware of the fact that sleep possess something that is not accessible to alert life.

Therefore, alertness, in the tradition of psychoanalysis, can also spur repression because what it lacks has such feminine power, such passivity, that it resembles Freud’s phallic mother that incites castration anxiety. While awake, these losses – the pristine passivity, the sea of sleep, the feminized loss of reason – are covered up with the idealization of mental sharpness, clarity, and perfect performances. Alertness is fetishized to cover this lack.

Who is this phallic mother? What is the perceived lack?

**A Feminine Repose: The Passivity of Sleep**

If there were something that could be pointed to, as if to say “this is why sleep is devalued and has become estranged from the everyday life of many,” in addition to the economic forces that effect the worth of time, this essential mediator would be the perceived passivity of sleep. It appears that we, as a culture, have forgotten the virtues of passivity and have constructed an empire in which action, as opposed to passivity, is always and at once both urgent and necessary. It is a culture that strives to erase even benign inaction and replace it with visible
action, and has therefore begun to erase the very forms of passivity that make all action possible. In a patriarchy of action, sleep has come to symbolize an other that is within. It is the non-identity of all conscious action, and the non-identity of the alert Self.

Society’s encroachment on the domain of dormancy because of its inaction was sanctioned when the church was able to connect sleep with slothfulness. Even though sleep discourses have been able to inject use-value and exchange value into crippled conceptions of sleep and repose, these states are still seen as a lingering manifestation of the Otherness that rational action was meant to cure or erase.

The phrase “falling asleep” could be an articulation of this perceived loss of control that characterizes sleep. This malleable passivity may seem banal but the relinquishment of control allows for assaults, injuries and horrors within the landscape of everyday life. In A Midsummer Night’s Dream, Shakespeare’s characters’ hearts are most vulnerable when asleep, which is when a love inducing substance is spread on the eyelids of sleeping characters so once they awake they will fall in love with the next creature they see. While awake the characters’ hearts are unyielding to persuasive circumstances; even the love of Helena is not swayed by the proposal of the Demetious to Hermia, and Hermia’s love was ridged in its unwavering dedication

Schmidt discusses the how John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist denomination, “confounded the symptoms of sleep deprivation (and perhaps excessive caffeine consumption) with sleep longer than six hours” and in doing this “Wesley creates a religious climate in which sleep is categorically associated with sloth and nonproductivity” (145; Schmidt’s emphasis). The use of coffee was a means of coping with the spiritual dictate of self-denial of corporal pleasures such as sleep, so when the symptoms of sleep deprivation and caffeinism are confounded, Wesley prescribed less sleep rather than more (Schmidt 145).
to Lysander, standing in blatant refusal of this torturous engagement and the wishes of Hermia’s father. These resolute hearts were made supple while they slept, and after an elaborate spectacle of a matchmaking plan gone sour, two couples arose from the confusion with reciprocating affection that could only be achieved through the interference of the gods. A place of fairies and magic, sleep was the pacifying force in this drama, and it often plays the same part in many of the ongoing dramas in Western culture.

This “falling” asleep personifies a decline into passivity for a culture unable to allow sleep and passivity to rest literally on the same plane as pristine action and clear-headed alertness. This demotion is based on the passivity of sleep as something feminine and therefore systematically devalued and excluded in Western patriarchies.

Since sleep and the sleeping person are incapable of telling their own stories, the sleep narratives found in the French science, philosophy, and literature Fay examined were “giving what was silent voice, allowing that which is still a way to move, making that which seems absent into something present” (2). Fay examines the paradoxical narratives that describe sleep as either a hole or as a whole world, and in accounting for these differences she illustrates how meaning is created through absence (13-14). Her reading of Charles Perrault’s “La Belle au Bois Dormant” (The Sleeping Beauty) lays bare the mechanisms of the narrative that tie sleep to a feminine passivity that creates meaning.

Fay explains that “‘La Belle au bois Dormant’ is not only a story about sleep, but it is also a story in which sleep and story are the same thing” (129). To review the tale, the royal family knew of the princess’s fate, that she will prick her finger on a spinning wheel and fall into a long sleep from which only a prince could awaken her. Rather than embracing such a destiny, the royal parents banned the spinning contraption in a failed attempt to delay the inevitable.
Therefore, a woman with the banned spinning instrument mysteriously appears in the castle to ensure all that was predicted will unfold. When the princess pricks her finger on the spinning wheel it is not an accident but fate; it is her fate that she falls into a deep sleep until a prince finds her. This moment in which the princess falls asleep is the moment in which the story begins to unfold, and in falling asleep the princess “falls into her story, so to speak” (Fay 130). By arguing that the Sleeping Beauty is both author and the story itself, even though she is completely passive, is to realize that, although she seems absent from the tale by being asleep, her presence is manifested in another way. The original fairy tale of Sleeping Beauty is about an absence that is forever present, for when the princess falls a sleep, Sleeping Beauty takes her place: “her sleep is the necessary loss that will allow the story to begin” (Fay 131). In light of this, “Sleeping Beauty” suggests that in order to tell the story there is a necessary loss that must occur. This is essentially the function of language in which the signified must be absent for the signifier to have meaning. This is the dual nature of sleep, as hole and whole, as absence and presence; it creates a story that depends upon the balance of loss and meaning even to the extent that the story can only be understood while it is becoming undone – while she sleeps through it. Raveling always includes what it is not, the unraveling. While the princess’s life seems to unravel when she falls asleep, Fay observes a counter-movement, a raveling that occurs. When the trees and foliage surround the castle, protecting the princess and the sleeping servants, the story sews itself back up to await the arrival of the prince: “it is at this moment that ‘Sleeping Beauty’ truly becomes ‘La Belle au bois dormant’ – Beauty in the sleeping woods” (Fay 133). Between loss and presence, sleep and awakening, in this dual movement of unraveling and raveling, the story becomes itself.
In contrast to Fay’s assessment of feminine passivity as necessary and functional in the tale of Sleeping Beauty, the story has been interpreted as something to be despised in the world that values conscious action. Like other fairy tales, Sleeping Beauty has come under the scrutiny of feminists that critique its messages of archetypical femininity. In Madonna Kolbenschlag’s book, *Kiss Sleeping Beauty Good-Bye*, the role of sleep is interpreted as helping to perpetuate feminine myths and models. Maintaining that, “at the universal level of meaning, Sleeping Beauty is most of all a symbol of passivity, and by extension a metaphor for the spiritual condition of women – cut off from autonomy and transcendence, from self-actualization and ethical capacity in a male-dominated milieu” (5). Her analysis envisions women’s capacity to awaken into spiritual maturity and into being fully human, where women are able to control their destines. But, her argument acknowledges the phallocentrism in such a vision, or that such a goal exists, in her words, “in an male-dominated milieu.” Passivity is not, in and of itself, a parasitic vice; it is only in the context of a culture that forbids and abuses malleable femininity that it can be cast as a social toxin. This attack of sleep and passivity is within a feminist discourse that has a history of dealing with and defining passivity in both a male-dominated and female-dominated milieu.

By the mid-twentieth century passivity was thought to be a problem of major importance in America, not just by misogynists and feminists, but by an entire country which sought to smother passivity. Satter’s review of passivity in modern American history describes the circumstances that incited this desire to understand docile plasticity and the arguments that evolved from them. It was the passivity witnessed in the unraveling of the holocaust and in fascist countries that buttressed the belief that, regardless of whether passivity was a result of patriarchal family structures, political systems, or emotional trauma, “the resulting passivity
threatened a free social order” (Satter 427). By the 1960s and 1970s to challenge patriarchal authority feminists drew on the research that linked passivity to political freedom, family structure, and emotionality. Later, the feminists in the sexual abuse recovery movement drew on arguments about passivity that had long supported male domination (Satter 428). Satter wanted to retrace the history of defining and dealing with passivity to clarify how it became a prescription for the liberated woman and to determine what allowed passivity and submission to be legitimized in pop psychology in the 1980s and 1990s. Embedded in the premise of Satter’s investigation is a contemporary definition of passivity that is formally beyond her scope, yet central to it. Eventually she implicitly affirmed America’s quest to solve the puzzle of passivity when she supposes, “Perhaps the exact formula for eradicating passivity and liberating our inner vitality will one day be found” (463). She quickly balances this statement by adding, “Perhaps we will one day dismiss the entire search as a goal chimerical as the Victorian effort to crush all base desire” (464). The tone of the essay leans slightly towards the first proposition, but more explicitly, for Satter, passivity is either a problem or an illusion.

The goal of eradicating passivity is nevertheless central to many socialization projects that seek to counter the trained passivity of hegemony and popular culture. To argue for the legitimacy of passivity is to argue for the enemy, to support apathy, and to imprison individualism. Although there are a few instances of the useful envelopment of passivity in business, psychology, and ethnography, much of what constitutes social systems, culture, and the individual is mediated by the negation of passivity. Like Aristotle’s sleep, passivity is a privation of modern individualistic life.

44 Faludi’s *Backlash* has a detailed feminist critique of 1980s pop psychology prescription of passivity and surrender, or “feminist-taming therapy” (335-399).
In Hélène Cixous’s “Sorties,” she wonders why men fear being a woman (157). Why do they refuse femininity? This rejection of passivity and femininity exists within a system that needs a hierarchy, and a fundamental difference that relates all concepts, codes, and values to the binary system of man/woman. Patriarchal privilege, and the phallocentrism that sustains it, is shown in the opposition between activity and passivity (149). The whole of history is a (re)production of the history of phallocentrism. As Cixous asserts, it is a “history of appropriation: a single history. History of an identity: that of man’s becoming recognized by the other (son or woman)” (150). It is the inequality and difference of sex, and it is this disparity that triggers all desire and movement towards appropriation (Cixous 150). The Western patriarchy, or what Cixous calls the empire of the Selfsame, is erected from a fear of expropriation, of separation, of men losing their masculine attribute. Their subjectivity is structured around loss, and patriarchy experiences subjectivity “only when it makes laws, its strength, and its mastery felt, and it can all be understood on the basis of masculinity. [. . .] Which is not the case with femininity” (Cixous 152). It is a history of action and reaction, the opposite of passivity, of being acted upon or of being influenced without acting in return. It is a story that moves towards the restraint and sublimation of the body and nature. Its entire identity is this subjectivity that is realized through action, through a repeated eclipse of the corporal world that Cogito ergo sum required, where a subject is maintained by remaining entranced with its own gesture: “I am, I exist.”

With phallocentrism as the declared enemy, Cixous calls for the invention of another history, not a herstory, but a radical transformation of the gendered behaviors, mentalities, roles, and political economy in which what is “feminine” and “masculine” no longer amount to the same thing because they would not be centered on the same logic of opposition (Cixous 155).
Unlike men, who fear the passivity and the femininity that is within them, their other that is within, women can acknowledge the other. Writing is the entrance, the exit, the dwelling place of the other that is within women. It is how women admit that there is an other within “the other that I am and am not, that I don’t know how to be, but that I feel passing, that makes me live – tears me apart, disturbs me, changes me” (157). She is able to open up, and it is in this opening up that women are open to being “possessed” in the sense of Clément’s rapture. For Cixous notes that, “as for passivity in excess, it is partly bound up with death. But there is a nonclosure that is not submission but confidence and comprehension; that is not an opportunity for destruction but for wonderful expansion” (158). The passive condition is not an opportunity to banish darkness, silence its myths and overpower its permanence. The feminine exists and she does not need to destroy in order to create, or to fear death to continue living.

The work of writing is entirely different for the feminine subject, for she does not give of herself to expect a return; she is not able to capitalize on her pouring out because “she is not the being-of-the-end (the goal) but is how-far-being-reaches” (Cixous 159). Women are the expanse of this reach; they fill it as seas, they are seas, and “our seas are what we make of them” (160). Unpredictable, overflowing, errant, and strong, a race of waves that covers and polishes the shores we crash onto. She is a mystery to herself, to those she carries and to those who exploit her. Hence, while ships will forever beg the waves to still, to calm, to obey, she will, nevertheless, sustain them.

Therefore, if sleep is passive, if it is fundamentally passive, it too has the capacity to give and not calculate what is being given up, to be given over to the darkness and not long for light. When this happens, the economy of time can no longer be expressed in economic terms for its contradiction would have enveloped the whole.
Even more impressive about sleep’s passivity is that it does not resist awakening, even partially; this is what animates parasomnias when docile bodies, intentional thought, and unconscious emotions awaken, but not together, not coupled as they should be. A part of the person is aroused although the rest remains entrapped in slumber. Sleep’s vulnerability sometimes conquers latent sleep altogether, creating insomniacs, all while sleep is trying to free itself of action, of time, of worry, of thinking. However, it cannot be freed; it cannot free itself; it can only be. So, the place where sleep resides is the palace that action built for her, a place where freedom facilitates more action – life is where she lives, without her there it is just an empty space.

**The Other Fetish: Somnophilia**

No person can completely avoid dormancy, or avoid becoming completely passive and passing away. Here, in this feminine repose, there are no clocks, no piercing light, no tidy order, no predictions, and no prescriptions. There is no objective action, just subjective being. In approaching sleep’s threshold we fall from the throne of subject onto what is beneath us, into what is beneath and within us; we fall into objects. We fall into the sea.

Sleep is the essential objectifier of all life. The passivity of sleep transforms subjects into inanimate objects, and in doing so removes the subject’s privilege of being able to act on the world of objects. As Fay notices, it creates a void where there was once a person, a subject, and agency; sleep creates living bodies that are un-self-conscious (262). This rendering of people into inanimate objects allows them to be fundamentally treated as objects – consumed, fetishized, and controlled. In accordance with the totality of capitalism and phallocentrism, an erotic fetish for sleeping beauties has surfaced. In Fay’s examination of the stories written onto sleeping bodies, she insists, “contemporary sleep fetish culture is driven by the idea that the sleeping person is an
absent person” (260). The consuming of a sleeping body, like the consumption of any other fetish, conceals the social interactions at play, so this fetish rests literally on the cultural interpretation of the sleeping body as absent its owner, as absent a person: “To the fetishist, sleep is that perfect moment when consciousness is evacuated, leaving a living, breathing fragment, worthy of love” (Fay 261). While sleeping beauties are rendered vulnerable during slumber, the state is equally vulnerable to awakening, retuning the person to the body. Men who seek to actualize their desire to have intercourse with a sleeping woman may use drugs to maintain the unconscious state, “for if the person wakes up, the fantasy and the fetish object become lost” (Fay 260). This somnaphilic fetish culture is mostly male and connected via the Internet. Therefore, it is an instance in which disembodied identities plot and/or become spectators of violence perpetrated on a living body that lacks an active identity. This fetish emphasizes the conflating of absence and passivity because rather than her being passive, the fetish is maintained by her absence (Fay).

What are the dynamics that created these perplexities? What can account for both the sleeping beauty fetish and the somnaphobia of a culture where people are disposed to self-inflicting the torture of sleep deprivation? Despite the sheer obscurity of this fetish culture, both

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45 Fay references [http://www.sleeping-beauties.com](http://www.sleeping-beauties.com) and does not mention the term somnaphilia, which attaches the behavior and desire to paraphilias and medicalizes it, potentially turning it into a treatable disorder. She notes that the fetish can merely involve watching a woman sleep or may involve intercourse with the sleeping woman, but most narratives (video, pictures and stories) focus on “the carry,” the picking up and carrying the unconscious woman (260). Another site I found was [http://www.somnaphilia.com](http://www.somnaphilia.com).
are, nevertheless, an exemplification of particular cultural messages that are written onto the sleeping body.\

**Between Awake and Asleep**

Beyond and within symbolic systems that create a desire for sleep and alertness there is distaste for the liminal state of sleepiness that lacks the desirability of alertness and sleep. Kroll-Smith ("Drowsy") argues that the composite “drowsy person” constitutes a risk factor in American culture that ties individualism and the culture of public concern together in two ways. Firstly, there is the idea of the drowsy person, who is responsible for huge disasters and poses a potentially fatal character flaw, reflecting how “persons as ideas and the idea of individualism are mutually reinforcing” ("Drowsy" 90). Secondly, “the composite person is linked to a public concern in two subtly different ways: as both a cause and a solution” ("Drowsy" 90). Drowsy people are often identified as causing catastrophic disasters, and it is often the identification of

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46 Somnaphilia is a phenomenon that is hidden in plan view due to the attention given to date rape drugs. In a perplexing collusion of physiology, pharmacology, and the desire to deter cataleptic attacks for narcoleptics, a drug has been unleashed that does the opposite to those who are not narcoleptic, trapping victims of this somnaphilic desire in a cataleptic slumber (Neergaard), creating sleeping beauties that have fallen out of themselves and who usually awaken with no memory of what transpired after they were slipped the drug.

47 Kroll-Smith ("Drowsy") quotes Dement’s testimony in front of the Congressional House Subcommittee on Health and the Environment claiming, “The grounding of the Exxon Valdez, the near meltdown at Three Mile Island, the Bhopal catastrophe, and the explosion of the
drowsy individuals that can curb the risks and the costs such sleepiness may incur. Kroll-Smith examines this composite person through textual analysis because it constitutes a disembodied exaggeration of particular attitudes, behaviors, and defects (“Drowsy” 91). Nevertheless, narcoleptics and other hypersomniacs, rather than being disembodied and existing as scattered accounts and incidences, are real people. We are real people, and as such the rhetoric of the dangerous drowsy person has visceral resonance in our lives and identities.

Yet, Kroll-Smith suggests that we, “Imagine, for example, if drowsiness were described as a pleasant somatic state between sleep and full attention. Which in many cases it is” (“Drowsy” 107). In an essay devoted entirely to the subject of drowsiness, such a profound possibility is only worthy of an endnote because an affinity for drowsiness does not belong in an empirical sociological study of society; it does not belong in society because it is not desired. Drowsiness is displaced in a world ordered around polarities for it is neither awake nor asleep. Truck drivers, aviators, and other drowsy drivers are subjugated to surveillance and punitive measures because in the area of transportation the ban on drowsiness is written in the language of law and policy (“Drowsy” 99-102). This extension of the state seeks to fill in what sleep begins to eat away at: agency, self-reflexive consciousness, and intentional action. It seeks to resuscitate the sleepy person, and to control more effectively the lives it governs by either reclaiming the lives that are vulnerable to slumber’s call or by creating a contained space for sleep and somnolence to reign.

Drowsiness, and the tabooed peace it brings, sways between sleep and whatever full attention may constitute. It is the sleepy life, and such a life is transitioning. It is falling into what space shuttle challenger (were) all caused totally or in part by sleepy people” (qtd in “Drowsy” 99).
is beneath us, into not caring, not thinking, not noticing, and not acting. Yet, although it does not look like life, and it does not ooze with vitality, it is alive. Sleepiness is in route to corporal nature, leaving the Self and the Subject with the society that created it.

In a society in which science has unlocked the paradox of sleep, this secluded retreat to the land of Nod has been purged of its most illusive darkness. Sleep is no longer black. It has been illuminated for decades and the light is still on. In the re-constitution of this third of human life there is a remainder, a contradiction that is left over from this translation of sleep into a controllable, scheduled, mapped, tangible, exploitable, visible, securable thing. The remainder is the subjective phenomena, a moment, a state, and an event. Being remains after the modern metamorphosis of slumber, for sleep’s enduring nature is evasive, untamed, errant, invisible, unpredictable, and unproductive. Between this framing of sleep as a subjective experience and an objective thing, each sleeper must make the leap across the elusive divide, but some are caught in the middle. Hypersomniacs and the melancholic live in this twilight.

Sleepiness is the very thing that sleep medicine and sleep science are aimed to diffuse and manage. For example, Dement promotes a “sleep-smart lifestyle” which goes over the steps of implementing a sleep hygiene regimen and creating a comfortable sleep environment. Believing that “sleep is an essential part of life—but more important, sleep is a gift” (The Promise 432; emphasis added). He goes on to describe what this gift means, explaining that,

To me there are a few things more pleasurable than giving myself over to sleep at the end of the day or lying in bed half asleep, slowly waking to the new day. [. . .] I’ve talked a lot in [The Promise of Sleep] and in lectures about the horrors of living in the twilight zone 24 hours a day, never really awake during the day and never deeply asleep at night. But I also want to emphasize the other side of the
coin: the exhilaration of being vitally awake during the day and deeply asleep at night. (432)

That the experience of being deeply asleep and vitally alert would both deserve the modifier “exhilarating” is no small point because this fetishization somehow equalizes sleep and alertness. It takes sleep out of an unperceivable and mysterious darkness and puts it in rational light; therefore, although the act of sleeping is not perceivable, both being asleep and being awake can be rendered as exhilarating experiences. Rather than needing one’s own memory to account for sleep, the gospel of sleep and its touted benefits are enough to translate the non-memory and non-experience of sleep into a memory and experience.

Why is Dement so intolerant for what is neither sleep nor alertness, for “the twilight zone” and its grayness? His particular wording, “never really awake during the day and never deeply asleep at night,” not only references the haze that Maas says most people naively occupy, but it epitomizes narcolepsy. This is the grayness that constitutes the “dis” in the narcolepsy’s status as a disorder. It deviates by being neither black nor white, neither subject nor object. Another symbol of the exclusion of grayness can be found in the icon of sleep medicine. The American Sleep Disorders Association’s symbol is based on the yin-yang symbol because it represents, as Dement explains, “the dark and the light of night and day, of sleep and wakefulness, [that] form the interlocking whole that makes up our lives. [. . .] In order to grasp the fullness of our waking life, we have to make the most of our sleeping time. We have to appreciate the many beauties of both” (Dement, *The Promise* 432). No gradations between sleep and wakefulness, light and dark, just the pure unblended blackness and unblemished whiteness. This stark contrast allows me to surmise that while Dement could be interpreted as arguing for the integrated nature of the two states, instead he emphasizes the point that sleep and
wakefulness are opposites. This symbol of medical sleep professionals represents a balancing between two distinctly oppositional concepts, one corresponding to the day and the other the night. There is no grayness because, in Dement’s own words, it is “horror,” and such an awfulness does not belong in Aristotle’s order or in Descartes’s *cogito*. It does not belong.

Defining sleep and alertness as mutually exclusive stages reinforces the displacement of sleepiness. In arguing for the siesta, Paquot declares “The word ‘liberty’ has no real meaning without each person having control over their own time” (78). This autonomy and individualization of citizenship is a willingness to inhabit one’s own time “in order to make sure of one’s presence in the world, with and among other people” (78). It is a remission that ensures the capacity to fulfill the social body because, as he continues, “availability, awareness and attentiveness are not spontaneous or regular attitudes; they gain greater substance by altering with pauses, halts and silences” (78). Therefore, the siesta is a labor “carried out by the self on the self” with the intent that we will be able to return to the social world and form relationships with others (78). Midday sleep is a very social act for Paquot, and I can only add to the awareness that he and others seek to raise by questioning the exclusive character of the pauses, the halts, and the silences that are put in opposition to availability, awareness, and attentiveness. Is there ever availability without pause, awareness without stillness, attentiveness without silence? In the case of availability and pause, to make oneself available for another implies a contingent pause; how else would availability be separated from ongoing interactions and actions. Availability is not easily defined by oppositional schemes when it contains the thing it opposes, the pause that punctuates it. Perhaps there are such instances of sustainable opposition, but this understanding of being awake, as something separated from and defined by what it is not, misleads us for being awake may take on many tones and shapes and contains within itself
numerous pauses, halts, and silences. Containing the non-identity within itself, it leads us to forget about the sleepiness that inhabits the being awake and the somnolence of alertness.

*The Grayness of Narcolepsy: Needing What No One Wants*

Sleep disorders do not belong in society or desire because they exist in the grayness that is neither a full subject nor the void of being an object. Such a space is filled with various attributes of sleep that run up against the walls of modernity, walls that are built on the certainty of subjects and their jurisdiction over objects. When the boundaries collapse in a temporary haze, the whole project of modernity fails. To fall asleep accidentally or involuntarily in public is to fall out of place, tumbling into being partially or completely asleep, into a partial or complete non-person.

This ash-colored sleepiness is the color of life for narcoleptics. It is where they return to unexpectedly and compulsively, and while the *cogito* self may not endure, there is life and being that inhabits this gray space. Narcolepsy is sleep in its barest form. Its symptoms consist of REM sleep behaviors that surface during NREM sleep and during everyday alertness. Utley adds that the key to understanding narcolepsy lies in understanding that REM sleep is where dreams are produced, where the body is paralyzed, and how the memory of dreams are erased (123-25). The first sign of narcolepsy is when REM refuses to wait the normal ninety minute progression through the sleep cycle. Its anxious passivity brings the narcoleptic dreams in the briefest and lightest of sleep. For example, my eyes may close in an accidental nap and within 5 minutes, or even 5 seconds, an entire dream could play itself out complete with its peculiar logic and offbeat rhythm. The narcoleptic’s abrupt departure into the deepest of sleep means that they may have equally abrupt reentries into alert life, and often their sense of time gets lost in transition. REM’s ability to dissolve or preserve memories also reinserts itself in everyday life, as if to say I will
not be forgotten. As a narcoleptic, I have experienced cataplexy and other narcoleptic symptoms. I carry memories of REM’s intrusions into everyday life to remind us that sleep will not be forgotten. Narcolepsy is sleep that refuses to sleep, or sleep that refuses to be dead.

While napping has been co-opted by companies and psychological efficiency gurus, it has been an area of discrimination for those who need naps to maintain minimal levels of alertness (Utley 23). For narcoleptics, excessive daytime sleepiness (EDS) is not an inadvertent result of a hard work ethic and time pressures that dispose individuals to neglect nocturnal rest. On the contrary, EDS is a part of how narcoleptics and other hypersomniacs experience life. Alertness managers did not effectively dissolve the taboo of napping because the taboo still affects those who are most in need of naps. As Utley, author of the only autobiographical account of narcolepsy, noted, before the Power Nap fad and the manufactured siesta, “in our bustling American society, there is no provision for daytime sleep” (23). The gospel of sleep won some converts and transformed some businesses into nap-friendly workplaces that literally have (a) room for naps, but there is still no space for sleepiness or for drowsiness outside of these limited spaces. While naps may occasionally relieve the sleepiness of a narcoleptic, sleepiness is a way of being for them; it is not a stage between sleep and alertness. In my case, in the absence of felt sleepiness there remains a constant potentiality of sleep and sleepiness.

The treatment of narcolepsy and other disabling hypersomnias as disabilities that are required by law to be tolerated through mandates that companies provide accommodations only resolves part of the problem. How could a company accommodate a constant potentiality of falling into a non-self? It cannot be done: rather, a space and a time must be carved out to allow sleep to fill it. While sleep is satiable, sleepiness and drowsiness remain as a constant potentiality that cannot be placed or timed. Sleepiness is without the fetishes of alertness and sleep, it is not
capable of being desired because of its evanescence and its fullness that is neither sleep nor alertness; it is both while being neither.

Utley explains that “many people with narcolepsy are self employed because they cannot adjust to others’ rigid arbitrary time schedules” (23). Even for treated narcoleptics, such as myself, although the overwhelming and ever potential desire for slumber may be kept at bay through pharmaceuticals and sleep hygiene, the arbitrary nature of schedules and deadlines leaves me unanxious to abandon sporadic repose for rigid tightness. It is a dryness that my life resists, remaining wet with sleep and with all of its awe-inspiring potential and its non-thinking. There is syncope in narcolepsy, like those who do the work of syncope. The strange work of disconnecting and untying that abolishes itself against the very idea of work because, as Clément explains, “syncope is lazy work, passive activity, a sly disaffection from those who surround me” (253). It is a disaffection from the subjects and the objects that surround us, and it may become a disaffection of the Western Self that will create an opportunity for reunion. It is a reunion with another self.

Normal sleep has a very minor role in Clément’s philosophy of rapture, while sleep disorders have a significant place within her analysis of a syncope-resistant culture. Seizing on the fact that insomnia sets in just before the onset of clinical depression, Clément describes this sleep disorder as a demonstrated desire for night (25). This desire for night is manifested in this strange phase displacement “as if it were necessary – at the cost of daily life, which has become an exhausting pain – to keep one’s eyes open and celebrate the night alone” (Clément 25-26). This staying awake at night drains the depressive of the energy that would be used at work and during the day. Clément reminds us that the essential dimension of depression is that the depressed have been stolen, or abducted, from the world: “We forget that the words ‘abduction’
rapt) and ‘raptus’ come from the same root as ‘rapture’; we ignore that fact that the depressive is also enraptured” (Clément 25). The depressive takes refuge in passivity and grief and seeks dependency on someone else, putting the responsibility to live and interact in another’s hands, for the depressed has checked out of living. For Clément depression is a retreat, or a retirement in a social world that forbids retirement. In hard-working modernity, in order to be relived of social obligations one must declare oneself old and unfit to work (25). By displacing the night and prolonging the day the depressive is in a sudden voyage into nonexistent time, he rips away from standard time; it “is a silent revolt against the constraints of light” (Clément 27).

Clément observes that there is supervision to limit these crossings into nothingness, into darkness and the night. Pain is forbidden, uncertainty banished, and “the work ethic and the energy invested in it take over benevolent night’s territory; retirement, where the senses once sheltered from thought, now resounds like the bell of productive activity” (24-25). Narcolepsy is like the short syncope of depression because it is a voyage into nonexistent time in which the narcoleptic has a displaced desire for the night and is unfit for work during the drowsy day. Compulsive sleepiness resists the tyranny of time and the fetish of alertness, and as such it resists the sites in which discursive power exerts itself over the lives of everyday people.
In addition to the excessive daytime sleepiness that connects narcolepsy to syncoped moments, cataplexy, the sudden loss of muscle control that is triggered by any kind of emotion, is a simulated death that breaks with reality and subjectivity. Clément traces this syncoped-cataplexy back to the Indian legend of an adolescent Jesus who traveled to India to learn how to hold his breath long enough to plunge into a cataleptic trance (33). In this Eastern tradition, Jesus does not give up his last breath on the cross but he holds his last breath and does not die because, in Hinduism, a god never dies and a body cannot be resurrected. In holding his breath he embraces syncope and embraces god. Unlike this self-inflected cataplexy, narcoleptics are thrown into the syncope of cataplexy by a random or specific emotion.

Utley offers a vivid account of a cataleptic attack that reveals that the cataplexy of narcoleptics is more like the syncope of asthma attacks, lovers, and epileptic seizures than that of
As the delivery men returned to their truck to get the sofa, Utley recounts that after her husband’s sister said something funny:

As my body started to slump, my husband caught me and laid me down on the floor – right across his feet. As I went down for the count, my full, short dress was pulled up to my waist, exposing my leopard-skin nylon bikinis. There I was on the floor, fully conscious of all that was going on but helpless to do anything about it.

(41-42)

As she lay there paralyzed she was aware of everything. She heard her sister-in-law’s reaction to her underwear and felt her husband remove his feet from under her. All the while, she was wanting to scream “Get me out of here,” but she lost her voice when she lost muscle control, so nothing could be uttered. She could merely lay there mute and passively trapped in a prostrated body (42). Like the syncope Clément describes, “the advantage of syncope is precisely that one always returns from it. [. . .] Syncope is like asthma attacks: one play-acts death, but not in order to die; one passes beyond consciousness, but returns with a dazzled memory” (15). Rather than moving beyond consciousness, cataleptics fully experience Descartes’s cogito, and in doing so suffer its lie. Cataplexy eclipses everything except the “I,” its senses and its memory. Far from being a point that allows cogito to act on the world, we are stripped of our bodies and witness them melt into placid objects. All that remains in cataleptic attacks is the “I,” and its isolation terrifies us. This experience of the unfulfilled cogito brings us to the death of the subject but allows us to live through it. We resurface with the memory of cataplexy and its syncope.

Cataplexy is not normal. It is an immensely frightening experience because of the futility of will and impossibility of action that it brings. We are stranded between being a subject and falling into being an object, suspended between two orders, one of the corporal body and one of
the thinking mind. This symptom is not normal because it does not fit into a system that relies on mental alertness and intentional action, a system that has carved out a place for sleep and for unthinking inaction to lie. For sleep to exist anywhere else constitutes internal and external disorder. Narcolepsy and other sleeping disorders are a fundamental threat not merely to one’s health and safety, but they are a threat to the order of subject/object, action/passive, outer/inner and one’s capacity to exist within such an order.

As detailed in previous chapters, this is a social order that was once dependent on sleep to connect with the divine but later displaced such spiritual communions for engagements with the empirical physical world as accessible via the senses and the logical mind. Since then, sleep and its dreams, its divinations, its stories, and its mysteries have either been suppressed or have resurfaced as something useful in maintaining order and extending understanding. Sleep became a darkness where illumination and understanding was sought, a darkness that gradually lost its blackness as it became subject to reason and control. It eventually became an appendage of the mind, and now sleep is something that can be put to work in a neo-Taylorist management era where the sleep that workers sell will be sold back to them. In a society where sleep has been disenchanted, forgotten, and prostituted, there is an uncanny order in what is labeled a disorder.

Besides the somnophobia of a sleep deprived populous, what could such a tragic condition as narcolepsy reveal about modern society? Such insight can be uncovered in sleep discourses in which the obvious can be reevaluated to uncover a hidden logic, an ill-logic. In Maas’ brief treatment of narcolepsy in *Power Sleep*, he includes a case study of a twenty-four-year-old female referred to him because of excessive daytime sleepiness. As he describes the “inappropriate” daytime sleepiness that she experiences, a peculiar pattern emerges. Although she gets sufficient nightly sleep:
she is likely to be sleepy on drives as short as ten minutes. She often will have to pull over to the side of the road because of an overwhelming feeling of sleepiness. She has fallen asleep reading, watching TV or talking to other individuals. She has fallen asleep while standing in a grocery store checkout line, and at work.

(Maas 189)

The nature of the handicap seems to impair mostly social and personal acts that are wholly modern or recent expectations placed on the individual. Since the establishment of sleep science, and even since its predecessor psychology, the visceral experience of everyday life has been transformed under the guise of progress to make life easier and more comfortable. While consumerism and industrialism has diminished the amount of time spent on menial work it has not been without its trade-offs. The technology and welcomed ease of living in a developed country creates excess boredom. Rather than walking, we drive or take public transportation, and rather than participating in entertainment, we are spectators and consumers of it. As such, the meaning of time has turned waiting into both fetish and fear. The entertainment and leisure consumed to defer boredom does not change the mental environment that continues to bore us and continues to put me to sleep.

The monotony of modern life literally puts Maas’s narcoleptic to sleep. When one wonders about the narcoleptics that lived before the medical treatment and diagnosis of narcolepsy, the answer is obviously tied to a modern need for alertness to operate in a high-tech, informational, post-industrial world. More romantically, one may imagine that the sleepy lives of narcoleptics that predated sleep science were lives that were not ripe for exploitation but hid their treasures in their drowsiness. Perchance they were wrapped in a melancholic gauze, and to heal their boredom, they would go to sleep while remaining awake.
Matt Wolf-Myer’s anthropological assessment of medically managed chronic sleepiness is that the “narcoleptic is the breathing breach of the social contract, and his or her interruption of social machinations points to the constructed nature of such - […] falling asleep at an ‘inappropriate’ time supposes that there is an appropriate time (and place) for sleep” (4). Sleep and sleepiness are policed and coerced into private spaces such as bedrooms or hi-tech nap pods, presumably to permit an individual’s interaction with the social world and fulfillment of the responsibilities and roles put on active bodies. The body may still be present, but as it becomes somniferous, the social body takes reprieve in a temporary remission.

**Strategic Passivity**

Narcolepsy reveals that sleepiness and unbridled sleep is not the enemy, and it does not make “victims” as sleep discourses would like to suggest. 48 The language of subjects that act on objects is inadequate to expound on what being in the twilight means. Sleepiness is without these mechanisms because sleep is unable to be phallocentric and to act on objects; it is only able to be. There are two lessons that can be taken from this disorder that destabilizes the order of the subject/object, passive/active, self/other. The first of these deals with the revolutionary potential that lies in the revelation that, for one-third of our lives, we are not thinking beings, and are not capable of being subjects or having agency. The second is that the perceived weakness of passivity is secretly quite potent. If the world were to undergo a radical transformation for the hypothetical good of the world or if we were ever actualize the goal of peace (or less violence), passivity would seriously need to be considered as a legitimate mode of existence and

48 Like many other neurological conditions, sleep disorders are discussed in terms of those who are “victims” of the condition.
interaction. Phallocentric “action” would be disavowed of its legitimacy and restrained by an ever-potential passivity.

The syncope of disordered sleep has a passive power that lies in its ability to reunite what it separates. Syncope makes music intangible; it slips on all other sides of the mind except for the ear; otherwise, when made legible it becomes poetry or musical notes. The ear is able to perceive the vibrations that syncope allows, vibrations that shatter crystal, make bridges collapse, and suppress time (256). Yet, “the development of music does not coincide at all with biological rhythms: not with the heartbeat, not the rhythm of breathing, one-two” (Clément 256). For syncope is ahead of and behind these regular rhythms, it springs from them and returns to measured time, reunited. This separation of syncope is a deviation, or as Clément reminds us, it is what is meant by the word “ecstasy,” meaning a displacement, deviation, or leading astray (256). In the West, the Subject is master of nature and is separate from it, and its sovereignty rests on maintaining this deviation. “Prohibiting syncope, shutting it up in a sort of reservation for savages,” it is a binding barrier that only psychologists and ethnologists are permitted to divorce (Clément 257).

From the outset of Clément’s philosophy of rapture, she has looked to India’s Hindu culture and traditions to locate an alternative culture and ontology that reverses the dispositions of the West and embraces rapture. In a cycle of reincarnations, deviation from life is a reuniting with nature because, while you may have been a bird before becoming a human, “it can precipitate you into another animal destiny at any moment” (258). Contrary to this, for the West, human life is a stage between birth and death; while in Hindu cultures, life is intergraded into the ecology of India in a way that makes the ownership of nature unearned. Hindus demand the right
for syncope – not the continual evasion of death, but the opportunity to deceive death and embrace God.

There is no barrier between nature and subject, “Only the Westernized, those who have been contaminated by the West, divorce themselves from this concept” (Clément 258 – Clément’s emphasis). The fear of cataplexy is rooted in a compulsive fear of being separated from our subject, our agility to think and act simultaneously. Even though many narcoleptics have experienced cataplexy before, the reproduction of its fear is based on this divorce. Our ability to embrace these privileged escapes lies in our ability to leave the subject and its compulsive acting behind, to realize that we are existing in the purest of forms. Like Levi-Strauss’ proposal for the new human rights, which decided on a new definition of man where, rather than being a thinking being, he declares that humans are first living beings (Clément 258). Such a declaration unites the rights of humans with those of other living beings that inhabit the fragile earth. Such a syncope allows a revolutionary reunion with what it separates.

Gandhi’s fast until death strategy and nonviolence resistance reveals another lesson of syncope. Clément reminds us that “what Gandhi accomplished is nothing other than the un-governing of the world: to undo, to untie, liberate” (247; Clément’s emphasis). Gandhi’s form of resistance and existence is one that embraced inaction: nonviolence, fasting, and the hartal. For his illnesses, which were rooted in his maternal femininity and ascetic practices, he chose one treatment: to do nothing (Clément 243). Gandhi fasted for pleasure and recommended that others fast to relieve physical and emotional ailments (Clément 244). His legend and story teaches us that to use syncope means “To suspend life cycle, to suppress the biological, to disengage oneself from the process, and to use it as a weapon to blame the other. Also as a weapon used
against the self, in order to escape” (Clément 244). He was a syncopated person whose legacy allows one to marvel at the secret activity that immobile energy has.

While the West is rooted in a stark resistance and denial of syncope, contemporarily there are examples of syncope as a potent inaction. Clement turns to the artist, describing the artist as a the renouncer or a voluntary outcast, who throws himself/herself into syncope: “Those who practice inspiration as a profession, be they artists, mystics, prophets, philosophers, or dancers on a crowded dance floor, go back and forth between the world of the banal and that of the extraordinary” (Clément 240). Their emancipation frees them from the constraining social body that binds identity and the subject to the corporal existence. These “syncope-people” grow wings that are clipped upon returning, yet in their return they bring a story, a memory, a message.

For narcoleptics, the remission of perpetual sleepiness and drowsiness spontaneously and quickly transports people from a mundane everyday to a surreal world. In these eclipses of the social world we visit another world, the world of Dali’s paintings and Freud’s sublimation, but dreams are only a part of this reprieve; yet we seize upon them because of their ability to be recalled and to be remembered. This remembering fastens experience to identity and the self. As for the rest of repose, the undreamt and unremembered majority, there is something about sleep’s universality that is hopeful while also being fatalistic. While Somnus visits all, this common experience of humanity is for the most part stripped of the differences and the borders that culture puts up; this commonality is nevertheless erased from our memory. Like the Tower of Bable, to feel human slumber as a shared experience, as place we all visit or a well we all drink from, is an unallowed unity. Syncope sleep tears us from the clear, certain, controllable, social, and material world and reunites us with what we are not, with a corporal, unthinking, inactive being. Most people return from this place without recollection of the break, but those of us that
are caught in the transition, suspended in twilight, will return with a memory not of dreams but of existing in limbo.

Such a limbo is not limited to cataplexy and the unfulfilled cogito, but everyday sleepiness, drowsiness, and other sleep disorders impose a passivity on the body and mind that puts us in the arms of rapture and syncope. In such deviations we are unable to take account of its affects, nor are we disposed to care about the inert power in repose and inaction at the very instant in which we are participating in it. But at that very moment, we exist, and this existence in a persistence of bare life. Agamben’s Homo Sacer helps proceed into the territory where sleep exists as an absence of power. This absence works quite well with the logic of sovereignty because “law manages nothing but what it manages to capture inside itself through the inclusive exclusion of the exception: nourishes itself on this exception and is a dead letter without it” (27). It is in the presence of sleep that alertness and awareness are absent, and with it the law that manages life too is absent.

The exception to the law that sleep occupies is a relation of ban. Agamben explains that “he who has been banned is not, in fact, simply set outside the law and made indifferent to it but rather abandoned by it, that is, exposed and threatened on the threshold in which life and law, outside and inside, become indistinguishable” (28). The ban is a decree that harm could be perpetrated against an individual and that the inflictor has immunity from judgment and punishment. This, according to Agamben, is “The originary relation of law to life is not application but Abandonment” and the subsequent production of bare life (29; Agamben’s emphasis). Homo sacer, the sacred life, is the life that must exist outside of the protection of the state yet occupies its scope of jurisdiction.
For sleep to be a moment where there is an absence of power it must also be a moment where it becomes a homo sacer and therefore becomes a “life that cannot be sacrificed and yet may be killed” (Agamben 82). In the moment of being asleep, it is not visceral life that is subject to being killed yet not sacrificed, but it is the social body, the citizen, or the political identity that is killed. The very life that society creates is subject to social monitoring and biopolitics, and what is excluded dies, allowing sleep to be maintained as a form of bare life.

The sleepy life is also a limit of such power. This assertion is not merely based on the sleep of death connection but because the cultural understanding of sleep is that of an absence of self, consciousness, and action. As the sleepy person edges closer to this, the realm of dormancy, these aspects of life that form the basis on which bio-politics and discipline of the body are formulated and instituted begin to recede. Therefore, sleepiness, according to this construction of life, is a decaying of the defining characteristics of governable life and is itself ungovernable and outside the jurisdiction of civil law, yet created by it. Such is the bareness of bare life.

The bare life that characterizes sleep and sleepiness is bare not merely because the State abandons us while as we approach and inhabit a non-person. For the sleeping person is in a moment where the absence of control, action, and consciousness is an abandonment of the life that participates in bio-politics, and in doing so abandons the capacity to participate in the State. Sovereignty can do nothing but reciprocate the abandonment.

Such abandonment can be strategic. Gandhi’s syncope strategies offer a point of departure in imagining how embracing inaction can further the ungoverning of the world. More generally, in an imperialist world in which the West is frequently spurred to act, action, activism, enact, and react, not acting refuses to use the tools of the oppressor to further its cause. To
determine the type of global violence that it is capable of resisting, inaction must first abandon the impetus of action, whether it be the Hegelian end of history or temporal restraints.

The twenty-four-hour mantra hides the variability of real life. We all do not have twenty-four hours between consecutive midnights. It may look more like eighteen, seventeen, sixteen, fifteen or fourteen hours, and this is where action and actualization, thinking, and working occur. We usually do not see twenty-four hours because we are unconscious for a large portions of it, and what may surface is vulnerable to being forgotten, returning to the place dreams originate. Despite this relapse and the untraceable moments lost in slumber, each hour that we spend awake is not the same. Hours can change speed, shape, size, and intensity. To different people an hour or a minute does not mean the same because they are not inherently equal. The notion that we live in a twenty-four-hour society brainwashes us into not thinking about the innate plasticity of time. Although it may be an object we faithfully chain to our wrists, time is fleeting, subjective, and immaterial. Measured time is an invention, a chart, an idea; it is something that is debatably real.

In its universalization, time has vanished, like other universals. In the essay “The Violence of the Global,” Baudrillard explains this process of vanishing by saying the “globalization of exchange puts an end to universalization of values” (par. 4). Mechanical expendable time is a technology that in becoming universalized was weakened. Born from the universality of earth’s orbits and of the nights and the days that walk around the globe, this sundial was a universal, an Idea. As it became “realized in the global, it disappeared as an Idea, it committed suicide, and it vanished as an end in itself” (par. 9), and it has left the omnipotent global techno-structure to dominate, inflicting a new violence of supreme “technological efficiency and positively, total organization, integral circulation and the equivalence of all exchanges” (par. 7).
Baudrillard contends that this total global system “tracks down any form of negativity and singularity, including of course death as the ultimate form of singularity” (par. 10). Within sleep discourses, this slumbering negativity, this transgendered sister/brother of death, is subjected to this violence. I would like to propose that the entrapment and disenchantment of slumber is “the violence of a society where conflict is forbidden, where death is not allowed” (Baudrillard par. 10). Sleep’s singularity, its utter isolation and necessary absence, warrants its smothering, its coerced cooperation. Yet, as it is raped, its passivity, its inward glance, tells us that it is a singularity that resists the global. Sleep is an irreducible alterity that cannot be completely regulated, for it creates its own (non)rules.
(ANTI)CONCLUSION

If one is to generally yet carefully think of American cultural studies as scholarship that seeks to deconstruct, address, respond to, problematize, critique, and define "What is an American?" then my work has made specific contributions to this discourse. Such a contribution is not based on borders, metanarratives, or media studies, per se, but it begins and ends with the wisdom of hindsight, which posits America’s technology, corporations, and warfare as the greatest engines of global systems of exchange. This work seeks to undermine their ideological hegemony and “naturalness” by pointing out the violence and costs that, by going unaccounted for, are reproduced. These institutions, born of capital and energy, have put America in the metaphorical driver’s seat, and as we drive down this road burning gas and committing vehicular homicide, we may very well be in danger of falling asleep at the wheel. This metaphor may be a bit overextended, but it seems to work well. This is because, like the light/darkness metaphor, sleep, driving, violence, transportation, and control have resonance in the way everyday lives are organized and experienced while connecting to larger systems of power and regulation. These things are not merely metaphors but are real in a very visceral sense.

Articulating how sleep is a site of power struggles is one thing, this was revealed in the work of several of the scholars that are presented here, but historically situating sleep within the grand narrative of the West is no small proposition. Realizing the sheer magnitude of such a goal and wanting to validate the need for its actualization called for a reevaluation of the nature of sleep and history. But sleep has no history; like Sleeping Beauty, it is about the necessary absence to allow a story to exist. Although this revelation came late in the thesis, it did not
warrant its abandonment, but it called for a careful treatment of slumber to avoid distorting it or participating in its disenchantment and estrangement.

Towards what practical application and larger effort does writing about sleep’s genealogy, symbolism, investigation, exploitation and commodification contribute? As an artist I am familiar with needing to make a piece of art speak for itself, not to expect to have the opportunity to clarify interpretations because the work should already be clarified. I am hesitant to overdetermine the reception of my work because it is a creation, and yes, a work of art. George Lipsitz once put artists in opposition to critics and scholars, saying “one might argue that the most sophisticated cultural theorists in America are neither critics or scholars, but rather artists –Toni Morrison, Leslie Marmon Silko, Rodulf Anaya, and Maxine Hong Kingston or musicians Laurie Anderson, Prince, David Byrne, and Tracy Chapman” (322). He explains that their work has the dynamism and the self-reflexivity that is explored in cultural theory; therefore the very same things critics deal with through abstractions and ideas are in the works of these artists and musicians. There is a border here, an invisible presumption that distinguishes artists from critics. While some may dismiss the distinction as being inconsequential, it is a point of concern here. Like the privileging of literacy that Derrida accuses the West of, there is a privileging of reason and memory in what is discussed as “methodological rigor” that sometimes goes uncritiqued in the university annals. Without walking through another polemic argument to further demonstrate academic competence, I refuse to formally and properly conclude this work in a conventional manner. It is no secret that such large endeavors do not come to an actual end and that final judgments are rarely exhaustive. Rather than patronize the tradition of linearity, certainty, and clarity, I want to transgress this fictional wall we have built between creations born of inspiration and creations born of methods and research and in doing so transgress the
gendered wall it protects. This is the point that separates Plato from Aristotle in the *School of Athens*; it is the fundamental difference in where *valid* knowledge may emerge. After considering what I now know and do not know about the cultural politics of sleep, to reach a logical judgment would border on being sacrilegious. Sleep does not speak that language. It cannot be seen with our eyes and it cannot be listened to with our ears. It refuses to remember and it spills over like so many seas.

So consider this a diminuendo, a tapering of a line, or a postscript, because rather than concluding this is an expression of faith in the potentiality of thoughtful inaction and in the unthinking of syncope. Hence in the archaic tradition of melancholic meditation I was inspired to bring forth this poetic revelation:

“*No Memory Of This Place*”

after the divine haze that is the best of light and darkness,

remember, if you must, what Dan Brown’s novel relayed to millions of readers, that the church is within you, not in the fellowship or the walls of cathedrals, but inside that most intimate place that slumber protects.

remember, if you must, that this is where scriptures were conceived, where God impregnated the minds of scribes and prophets with a story, a message, an image, a word.

remember, if you must, that it is where gods and muses interfered with the hearts and minds of mortals and where myths became real.

remember, if you must, that it is where the first thinkers thought, and it is where every thinker first thinks.

(remember, if you must, that it is where the best points for my thesis were revealed.)

but rather than remembering, thinking, and acting, *be* this creature that is connected to God and nature at the very moment when we are not able to remember, when we are not ourselves but nevertheless are. We are not permitted to remember these things because they are always there for us, always there in us, always in our Being. Without these moments we are just an empty space.
EPILOGUE: THE IMPETUS

Why think about sleep? Why care about it? It is a question that the people who seriously examine dormancy must address. For some, the answers start and end with sleep’s absence; this is a topic that it is not addressed in sociology, history, anthropology, literature, or art, and therefore there must be something unique, evasive, and yet universal about sleep. Scholarship on dormancy often addresses sleep either as a subject or an object, leaving the other absent from the discussion and therefore always reproducing an absence.

My impetus is that, as a narcoleptic, my life is shaped by sleep, sleepiness, and the cultural attributes ascribed to sleep and sleepiness which surface in everyday interactions and the responsibilities that are inhospitable to long gaping yawns. Likewise, as an African American woman, I can attest to the appeal and affirmation that black feminist thought and perspectives bring to my identity as a gendered and racialized subject. Such liberating scholarship deepens my understandings of personal tensions and experiences while also furthering an opposition against systems of oppressions, stratification, and misrepresentation. The intersection of race, gender, and power is always and at once both subjective and objective, intimate and public, for it is mediated by and framed within a larger system of shifting meanings and contested symbols. Therefore, like studies in race and gender, I sought to empower my identity and liberate it from the culture that defines and oppresses it through its invisible cultural politics.

My life as a narcoleptic acknowledges that sleep and wakefulness, as states, could be categorically defined as opposites, but the vast majority of being awake for narcoleptics is not without its manifestations of sleepiness. This is of course one of the defining traits of narcolepsy, but the extent to which even being treated by pharmaceuticals fails to completely eradicate
sleepiness makes one wonder if the successful separation of the two states is possible or even wisely sought. Coren’s argument and the statistics of the National Sleep Foundation are posited on the presumption that uncalculated sleepiness, if effectively banished from public life, will make the world safer. Yet, it must be asked, and quite appropriately by a narcoleptic, whether sleep and sleepiness are really that vulnerable to conscious effort. The lives of narcoleptics and insomniacs can attest to the fallacy in this proposition. Whether we like it or not, although sleep is passive, sleep wills. It has will and sovereignty. Our inability to banish sleep or to seduce it is built into the very structure of sleep and the structure of life. To contain this will that sleep exerts on alert life is to effectively encage the dream within the need for certainty and safety.

As a narcoleptic, sleep is far from being a means to work, as I propose in chapter 2; rather, waking-up and remaining alert is sought for profitable ends (personal or economic). Yet nonetheless, sleep overflows into the awake lives of narcoleptics. Indeed if there was something intrinsically and extrinsically valuable about sleep, we would never need to completely wake-up; we would each become millionaires, literally in our sleep, and awake only to dabble in the benefits such a profitable disorder would bring. However, the sporadic nature of some narcoleptic and cataleptic episodes would make even this constant slumber difficult to maintain. In reality, it is the control of sleep and its intrusions into everyday (awake) life that is pursued by sleep medicine and medically treated narcoleptics. Only when sleep can be effectively self-managed or trained to yield to intentionality and scheduled naps can sleep be molded into something profitable – when sleepiness refuses to be sleepy and allows alertness and calculated time to govern it. When sleep refuses to be.

I am skeptical of sleep studies’ goal to make life better for the same reasons I am a skeptic of eugenics, past and present. Anyone who stands upon the assertion that the world can
become better through the eradication or systematic treatment of a particular attribute of human life must acknowledge that there are whole lives that are drenched with this attribute targeted for extermination. My life is drenched with the sleepiness that so many want exterminated. Also, while I currently have health insurance, this is not a guarantee. The ability for me to be treated for the entirety of my diagnosis has made coping with the actual symptoms of narcolepsy a small inconvenience thanks to pharmaceutical technology. With or without insurance and treatment, the condition will remain, and this is, in part, an attempt to cope emotionally with the sleepiness my life falls into. It moves me closer to the point at which I can write my own story of sleepiness and selectively mute the cultural messages that are written on my sleeping body and my sleepy mind. I need to focus on sleep studies because, while I will not withhold the fact that it continues to deliver me from the perils of excessive daytime sleepiness, it has also reinforced messages about sleepiness that are antagonists to the sleepy life. Without the aid of pharmaceuticals my life will be this sleepy life that sleep studies seeks to banish. For me, and perhaps for other narcoleptics, this will not make the world a better place, but it will (re)make a world without us.

Such a statement is vulnerable to the accusation that I take these things too personally, that I am interchanging the targeted attribute with my life too easily. To this objection I claim that everything personal is political. This is a claim that feminists asserted when male bureaucrats and politicians, who left politics at work and the family at home, were unable to see how this separation was but a figment of the imagination, a convenient myth, a construction, wholly a product of patriarchal traditions that excluded women. What continues to be excluded
are unproductive sleep, feminine passivity, and darkness; as an African American woman that has narcolepsy, it gets real personal.49

Beyond the entrapments of identity politics, the personal nature of this work can be surmised in imagining a young girl, recently diagnosed with narcolepsy, who although the

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49 One of the most significant lessons that can be learnt from the examination of sleep and all of its sibling states and characteristics is encapsulated in the little-known story of how the work ethic, the social imperative towards action and the utilization of agency, set the foundation for one of modernity’s largest evils: apathy and antipathy. The essay by Stanford Lyman, “Slavery and Sloth: A Study in the Race of Morality,” charts the path that the sin of slothfulness laid for African Americans, who while enslaved were perceived as being indolent, and therefore was used as a rational to justify enslavement. After emancipation, religious rationalizations gave way to those of science because newly freed race still possessed a slothfulness that needed to be explained. Fast-forward past the Civil Rights movement, and analysts continue to perceive blacks as “victims of their own characterology” (Lyman 72). Accordingly, “the single-parent, the matricentric household, the sexual promiscuity attributed to unwed black teenager mothers, and the violence said to be de rigueur among young black males are all perceived as symptoms of a deeper malaise – the condition once associated with tristitia and acedia” (Lyman 72). Lyman foresaw that such characterizations were calling for a “moral crusade against sloth” (Lyman 72), and he almost predicted the welfare reform that was later enacted under the Clinton administration. Lyman also argues that if the law truly sought to avoid continual racial inferiorization then the accusations of indolence and sloth would be recognized as the hangovers from slavery that they are (74).
symptoms are infrequent and minimal, yearns to learn more about this condition that her development is now tied to. So, she reads anything about narcolepsy she can get her hands on, and, while her ego is boosted when one encyclopedia entry mentions the high intelligence of narcoleptics, the rest of the descriptions of narcolepsy abound in fear and pity. The authors were either unable to imagine a life of unexpected sleepiness and feared it and the hazards it disposes, or they took pity on those who were afflicted with such a horrible life. She can not help but internalize some miniscule part of these lessons while remaining determined that her life will not unfold this way, not with fear and pity, but, as she imagines, it will be in resistance to this fear and pity. It will be in resistance to the illusion of control and security that warrants that disdainful gaze.

As the woman that this girl grew into, I am still resisting the fear and pity that accompanies accounts of the disorder. The culture that dictates what constitutes “order,” how “dignity” is bestowed, and what “security” means needs to be scrutinized and deconstructed. Perhaps one day resistance will not be necessary because the illusions of “order,” “dignity,” and “security” will no longer appear as translucent cultural myths to just me, but others will be able to laugh at the sight of the emperor without clothes, instead of tacitly confirming the existence of clothes where none exist.
APPENDIX: SLEEP DISORDERS 101

This review of sleep medicine and sleep disorders addresses the medical terms and concepts in the thesis and provides an overview of the prominent features of professional sleep discourses. While sleep studies is central to this work, I do not present these facts as a point of contention nor as an unquestionable truth, rather I seek to present the information below as findings that are a product of a particular method of inquiry or as the typology of such findings.

Cataplexy- This is the sudden, brief loss of muscle control triggered by an emotion like fear, surprise, joy, sorrow, or anger, but Utley finds that the most common trigger is humor (35). All narcoleptics do not develop cataplexy, yet this symptom may begin several years before the onset of EDS. Cataplexy can last a few seconds to a few minutes, but it rarely extends to twenty minutes. Its intensity can vary from a complete loss of muscle control to a loss of facial muscle control, the buckling of knees, or the “giving way” of an arm (Utley 35). While Utley says that cataplexy is unique to narcolepsy, sleep paralysis, which is similar, is not. Lavie describes how people who are aware of their sleep paralysis have become panic stricken for the fear of not being able to sense one’s own body (24). This is not cataplexy, but it is triggered by the same mechanism of paralysis that usually is restricted to REM sleep. For some narcoleptics, these bouts are sensed before they arise, but for others it can come as a complete surprise. Utley adds that the “attacks are not only embarrassing but humiliating, degrading, mortifying, and demoralizing” (39). To avoid such unwanted experiences some narcoleptics learn to repress the emotion that triggers cataplexy (Utley 39).
Circadian rhythms- Occurring every twenty-four hours in humans and in animals, these natural patterns can be “disturbed by extreme pressures from continuous work and leisured activities” (Lilie 97). Circadian rhythm disorders result from a violation of the basic rest-activity cycle. These conditions include, but are not limited to, jet lag and shift work. This condition describes many people who live in a twenty-four-hour society (especially medical practitioners, pilots and airline crew, police and firefighters, and industrial and military personnel) who are prone to the detrimental effects of prolonged activity that affects cognitive processes, health, and mood. The area of science that examines the relationship between biology and circadian rhythms is called chronobiology. Sleep and wakefulness are regulated by two endogenous processes: (1) circadian rhythms which increase one’s propensity of sleep over a twenty-four-hour period, and (2) “a homeostatic process that increases sleep propensity with longer prior periods of wakefulness” (Lilie 97). Colman states that there are innate differences between individuals that give people different circadian physiologies so that people are all not programmed to run on the same rhythm (Lilie 26).

Electroencephalogram (EEG)- This is a trace that reflects the voltage change taking place between two electrodes (Empson 9). The trace can appear on “a kymographic drum, a sheet of paper, photographic film, a cathode ray oscilloscope, or more recently a computer screen.” (234) Colman defines the EEG as “the recording of brain activity made by an electroencephalograph. Tiny electrical currents in the brain are recorded with small scalp electrodes and amplified onto a polygraph” (176). See fig. 4 for an example.

Excessive Daytime Sleepiness (EDS)- For narcoleptics, EDS may involve: (1) drowsiness, sleep attacks, and microsleeps; (2) lack of alertness, dullness of the mind, and lethargy; (3)
fatigue and lack of energy. Utley claims that in the lives of narcoleptics “sleepiness is a real, ever-present force to be reckoned with” (17). EDS is not limited to narcolepsy for it can be a symptom of several mental and physiological conditions, which is why narcolepsy, up until recently, went undiagnosed or misdiagnosed for a minimum of 15 years, with diagnosed narcoleptics reporting an average of six different diagnosis that preceded the correct one.

Insomnia- Generally, insomnia is the inability to obtain adequate sleep, and about 75 million people feel they get inadequate sleep (Lahmeyer and Lilie 77). More recently, a new study estimates that there are only 31.4 million people (15.9%) in the US that have insomnia (Lichstein et al. 211). This study also found that, contrary to conventional wisdom, insomnia does not gravitate to the poles of the life cycle. There can be multiple causes for sleep disruptions such as other sleep disorders, anxiety, depression, drug reactions, and gastroesophageal reflux (Lahmeyer and Lilie 77). While Lahmeyer and Lilie, like many others, claim that insomnia often impairs daytime functioning, creating EDS, Lichstein et al. found little difference in the daytime functioning between insomniacs and normal sleepers (212).

Hypersomnia- Literally meaning excessive somnolence, Colman comments that, unlike insomniacs who are hesitant to seek medical treatment, hypersomniacs made up about 50% of the people who were seen in sleep clinics in 1982 (153). Colman defines hypersomnia as “the complaint of too much sleep or of feeling sleepy all the time, despite a normal amount of sleep at night” (176). This can be an indication of one or more sleep disorders such as narcolepsy, sleep apnea, or restless leg syndrome.
Hypnogogic Hallucinations- As Utley notes, “These are very vivid, realistic dreams that may occur upon falling asleep or while awakening. [. . .] They are so life-like that it is often difficult to distinguish them from reality” (47). A person’s senses of hearing, seeing, feeling, and smell will remain awake and functioning and therefore will participate in articulating a dream. These hallucinations can create experiences that are horrifying, especially when combined with sleep paralysis, or they can be wish-fulfillment musings.

Narcolepsy- There are two main symptoms of narcolepsy, excessive daytime sleepiness (EDS) and catalepsy. Secondary symptoms include: Sleep paralysis, automatic behavior, hypnagogic hallucinations, and disrupted nighttime sleep. A sleep test that involves the EEG is used to diagnose narcolepsy because narcoleptics quickly enter into REM sleep rather than transitioning through the cycles of NREM sleep for 90 minutes before finally entering REM. Merritt states that, “compared to other populations, such as epilepsy and Parkinson’s patients, those with narcolepsy experience a symptom burden that is similar to, or worse that these groups” (125). This prognosis reflects the more severe cases. Medical research and sleep scientists may very well be unaware of the many milder cases or the cases that are not treated. Narcolepsy was once thought to be a genetically inherited disorder or disposition, but more recent studies have found that narcolepsy is more genetically complex than previously thought and is probably triggered by an unknown environmental factor (Merritt 126).

Parasomnia- Utley describes these as “sleep disorders which occur during sleep but are not caused by abnormal sleep processes. These include sleep walking, bed wetting and night terrors” (Utley 7).
**Rapid Eye Movement (REM) sleep**- REM sleep, on a polygraph, resembles wakefulness, which is why it may be called paradoxical sleep. Named for the rapid side-to-side movement of the eyes, REM is when the heart and respiratory rates become irregular, spinal reflexes are absent, and the body is paralyzed. According to reports, REM is where dreams occur 80% of the time (Coleman 104).

**Restless Leg Syndrome**- Colman defines this as a “disorder characterized by complaints of restless, creeping sensations, or electrical activity in the legs that prevent one from falling asleep” (177)

**Sleep Apnea**- In *The Pickwick Papers*, Charles Dickens was the first to describe sleep apnea and so it was called the Pickwickny syndrome for some time (Lavie 224). People who have sleep apnea actually experience from three to four hundred brief apneas while asleep. This respiratory disorder interrupts the sleep cycle, making it difficult for the sleeper to remain asleep long enough to reach REM sleep. The main complaints of those who have sleep apnea include: (1) loud snoring throughout the night, (2) morning tiredness, and (3) tendency to fall asleep during the day.
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