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Hypnaesthesis: The Perception of Sleep in Brown, Poe, and Melville

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Abstract

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Hypnaesthesis argues for understanding somnambulism, nightmare, and insomnia as aesthetic categories in the gothic and dark romantic traditions of antebellum American literature that provide critical insights into the experiential costs of the exhortations to normative vigilance prevalent in the American Enlightenment. During this period unceasing vigilance became the watchword for liberty as the Lockean conception of the self, understood as dependent on waking consciousness, fused with Protestant and Enlightenment ideas about salvation, productivity, and freedom to form the philosophical and political core of American identity. By exploring the nocturnal territory of thought through aesthetic experience in the works of Charles Brockden Brown, Edgar Allan Poe, and Herman Melville, I show how American literature provides alternative paths for post-enlightenment thinking, introducing sleep as a fundamental problem for reimagining subjectivity and collectivity. Beginning with the category of somnambulism in Brown's *Edgar Huntly* (1799), I show how an emergent medico-literary understanding of the nervous self in the eighteenth century provided an opening for identifying a novel form of sharedness in the pre-subjective affect that I call *somnipathy*, adapting the nineteenth-century definition of this term from Noah Webster's 1848 *American Dictionary of the English Language*: "sleep from sympathy, or by the process of mesmerism." The interconnected sense of life arising from somnipathy established the foundation, in my account, for the aesthetic category of nightmare developed in *The Philosophy of Sleep* (1830) by Robert Macnish, who later created an

hypnotic formula for inducing the feeling of horror specific to nightmare in fiction. Under the influence of Macnish's short stories for *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, Poe pushed nightmare experience to its natural limit with his ontological portrait of insomnia in "The Man of the Crowd" (1840), somnipathically conveying the crushing sense of isolation and despair arising from a society that systematically denies the necessity of sleep. I conclude with an analysis of Melville's theorization of the sleep drive as a political problem in *Moby-Dick* (1851) and "Bartleby" (1853), revealing how a critical interpretation of insomnia and nightmare phenomena may give rise to the perception of the necessity of sleep as a common right belonging to each (political) animal.

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Introduction: The Price of Liberty

> Say what is sleep? and dreams how passing strange!
> When action ceases, and ideas range
> Licentious and unbounded o'er the plains,
> Where Fancy's queen in giddy triumph reigns.
>
> —Phillis Wheatley ("Thoughts on the Works of Providence")

"The price of liberty is eternal vigilance" is the formula that best captures how postrevolutionary narratives of awakening figured sleeplessness as a general orientation and condition of American identity. Variously attributed to Patrick Henry and Thomas Jefferson, among others, this idea was repeated throughout the nineteenth century by politicians, orators, and authors as diverse as Andrew Jackson, Frederick Douglass, and Charles Chesnutt. As Douglass expressed the idea in an 1883 address delivered in Washington, D.C., "Freedom has brought duties, responsibilities and created expectations which must be fulfilled. There is no disguising the fact that the price of liberty is eternal vigilance…" (57).

The modern formulation likely derives from Irish politician John Philpot Curran's 1790 "Speech on the Right of Election of the Lord Mayor of Dublin," in which Curran observes that "it is the common fate of the indolent to see their rights become a prey to the active. The condition upon which God hath given liberty to man is eternal vigilance; which condition if he break, servitude is at once the consequence of his crime and the punishment of his guilt" (188-9). The idea as we have come to know it today, in the form expressed by Douglass, lacks the explicit theological dimension that is manifest in Curran's statement, but it nonetheless presupposes a distinction in the flesh of the political body between the subjection of sleep and the freedom of waking life. The conceptual origin of this distinction may be traced back to Aristotle's

articulation of human virtue with the notion of the political animal (*zoon politikon*). Emphasizing the theoretical need to qualify political life in contrast with mere life, Aristotle's proposition informed the concept of civic virtue developed in the Atlantic republican tradition. By reckoning eternal vigilance as the basis for God's gift of liberty to "man," and "servitude" as punishment for the "guilt" of a lapse of vigilance, Curran's statement underscores the compatibility between the core republican/Aristotelian belief in the power of vigilance to qualify the life of the political animal and the way that theological and biopolitical concepts have come to inform modern politics.[1]

In the early-American context, the political value placed on vigilance was amplified by the two most influential ideologies of the era, Evangelical Protestantism and the Enlightenment, both of which proclaimed the superiority of waking conscious attention over soporific corporeality to distinguish the religious and political freedom of white, Anglo-Saxon men from the supposed unfreedom of non-white, non-male, non-American others. The religious heritage of this thought stressed vigilant labor as the primary means for ascertaining the signs of salvation. Following Cotton Mather, Puritan thinkers in America would connect sleep with the sin of slothfulness and warn of its interference with productive service to God. This legacy was intensified in the Great Awakening revivals of the eighteenth-century by preachers like George Whitefield, who sought to spread the light of Christ to the slumbering multitudes. Secular narratives of national founding drew on Puritan injunctions to moral insomnia in the salvific

[1] In making this claim, I am following Giorgio Agamben's account of the philosophical separation of notions of the good life, morality, and virtue from life itself as a matter of ethical or political concern, which he traces back to Aristotle. See *Homo Sacer*, 1-14. For more on the influence of republican ideology on Puritan and Enlightenment thinkers in America, see Pocock 506-552.

narratives of awakening crafted by spiritual leaders railing against the moral threat posed by intemperance in natural sleep.

In the eighteenth century, narratives of national self-hood effectively expanded the concept of vigilance to encompass the indefinite negation of somnolence as a fundamentally new political mood and defining capacity of American subjectivity. The "paranoid style" of self-reflexive early-American political skepticism discovered new value in nervous vigilance as the cohesive ideal of sleeplessness took substantial form in writing and in print. In his 1791 *Autobiography* Benjamin Franklin draws on the accumulated force of his carefully curated self-image as an early riser to implicitly condemn the intemperate sleeping habits of the Indians who "at Midnight … came thundering at our Door, demanding more Rum" (115). Thomas Jefferson likewise presupposes the superiority of white sleep hygiene in his 1785 *Notes on the State of Virginia,* in which he links the somnolent states of enslaved Black people to the sensational economy of the animal body, speculating that although they "seem to require less sleep" (231) they nonetheless have a "disposition to sleep when abstracted from their diversions, and unemployed in labour" (232). Contributing to the narrative of American national awakening in his 1791 *The Rights of Man,* Thomas Paine likens the political somnolence of England to the "vegetable sleep" of plants in winter, awaiting the dawn of their "political summer" (174).

In the above three instances, we see how the articulation of national identity on the basis of vigilance enables opposition to somnolence to emerge as more than a mere political proposition. Indeed, this opposition forms the basis of the exclusionary triad that Dana Luciano has identified in "the English tyrant, Amerindian pagan, and African slave," constituting a diurnal contrast that "permits the nation to present a concept of the fully human, who is

guaranteed freedom, without ideological self-contradiction" (9). I want to emphasize, however, that the general orientation toward wakeful vigilance displayed in such narratives is not primarily a matter of conceptual articulation. Awakening as a political orientation does not express a conscious belief subject to the formality of contradiction. Rather, the normality of vigilance finds expression in the attitudinal dimension displayed in the tropes of wakefulness that lend a decisive teleological pattern, leading from unconsciousness darkness to the light of awakening. The positive valuation of awakening transpires in the dimension of perception Charles Taylor indicates when he differentiates between a theory and an imaginary, explaining that an imaginary "is carried in images, stories, and legends" and constitutes the "largely unstructured and inarticulate understanding of our whole situation" necessary for everyday practices (172).

Since the postrevolutionary era, demonstrating control over one's sleep and the ability to cultivate vigilance have been crucial for establishing claims of rational, national self-possession and social cohesion. If the capacity to maintain watchful vigilance signified the possibility of fraternal self-standing as well as the sense of security afforded by verticality, the corporeal incapacity for self-determination in sleep conjured the specter of profound vulnerability along with the feeling of interdependence in a horizontal plane. "As Hobbes and Rousseau … remarked long ago," Bruno Latour reminds us, "no giant is strong enough not to be easily overcome in his sleep by a dwarf" (66). Latour's remark illuminates the fundamental theoretical and practical problem sleep poses to the continuity of individual and social existence for self-governing beings aiming to secure community through social compacts entered on the basis of rational volition.

From Benjamin Rush's conception of the vigilant industry of "republican machines" (Rush, *Essays Literary, Moral, & Philosophical* 14) to "the vigilant and jealous political sensibility" (Frank 130) theorized by the Democratic-Republican societies of the 1790s, one observes a striking ascendancy of wakeful vigilance as a marker of rational self-possession and national identity. Indeed, the Democratic-Republican Society of Pennsylvania effectively secularized the connection between vigilance and liberty in 1794 with the injunction, "Let us keep in mind that supineness with regard to public concerns is the direct road to slavery, while vigilance and jealousy are the safeguards of liberty" (qtd. in Frank 147). Sleep and supineness were to be avoided at the penalty of corporeal servitude. "Vigilance" and "watchfulness" defined the new spirit of liberty and were, as Jason Frank has observed, "the two most representative descriptors of this spirit in the societies' writings" (Frank 147). The Federalists for their part sought to represent the ideal vigilance of the people in state legislatures that would, in Alexander Hamilton's words, "constantly have their attention awake to the conduct of the national rulers" (199). In each instance the political valorization of sleeplessness involved a secularizing thrust insofar as it represented the fusing of Protestant and Enlightenment ideas regarding the qualifying conjunction of wakefulness, self-government, and liberty.

Narratives of awakening and figurations of sleep and the night in American literature thus provide sites for reflecting on the basic political and ethical presuppositions of individual and communal identity, continuity, and connectivity. That sleep should appear as a problem worthy of political speculation at the end of the eighteenth century was overdetermined by the value given to vigilance in modernity. Put simply, sleep posed a threefold threat in religious, philosophical, and political terms: to be saved, enlightened, and free meant to be awakened from

the sin, dogmatism, and tyranny of sleep. These three discourses were overlapping and often mutually reinforcing, impossible to disentangle from each other. Protestant and Enlightenment thinkers alike conveyed their revolutionary doctrines through powerful, teleological narratives of awakening.

The narratives of awakening constituted by the images, stories, and legends of postrevolutionary America differentiated vigilant, vertical modes of agency from somnolent, horizontal modes of passivity. Such accounts informed an image of what Justine Murison has called "moral citizenship" ("The Tyranny of Sleep" 244) in the early national period, a moral and cognitive portrait of national belonging defined, on my reading, by a common rhetoric valorizing sleepless vigilance. As Murison explains, "the emergence of moral citizenship in the 1780s and 1790s drew upon the peculiar medical construction of the mind, a discourse that depended upon somnambulism, in its turn, to prove empirically the existence of the faculties of memory and morality" (244-5). Medical, scientific, political, and cultural interpretations of modern sleep pathologies—including somnambulism, insomnia, and nightmare—emerged out of the religious and secular narratives that determined the value of wakefulness, diagnosing deviations from normative vigilance as pathological in discourses of personal hygiene and self-government. Healthy, self-governing subjects were incited to regulate sleep so as to avoid both the explosive dangers of sleeplessness and the deadening effects of somnolence alike.

Religious and political narratives incorporated, augmented, and amplified eighteenth-century medical and scientific notions of nervous sensibility. As the concept expanded, the significance of vigilance as a generalized opposition to sleep, a synonym for wakefulness itself, solidified in eighteenth-century medical discourse, augmenting and in some cases supplanting its

prior designation of a particularly acute but temporary form of attention. In his 1749 *Observations on Man, His Frame, His Duty, and His Expectations,* David Hartley, the English physician and philosophical founder of psychological associationism, used the word vigilance as a synonym for wakefulness. Hartley expounded a vibration theory of sleep, dreams, and consciousness, which combined Lockean associationism with Newtonian optics, and understood sleep in physiological terms as the absence of sensation, a physical state in which sense perception (*aesthesis*) ceases to operate (Kroker 65). While Hartley's theory of sleep did not catch on in the medical realm, it reinforced dominant cultural assumptions about vigilance and placed the question of whether sleep could be perceived as a domain of knowledge in modern epistemological terms.

Against this backdrop, the absence of sensation in sleep itself became a sensation in the form of new clinical speculations and medico-scientific spectacles performed for a curious viewing public. Enlightenment science transformed sleep and dreams into epistemological problems for thinking about the nature of sensory perception, the constitution of the cognitive self, and the foundations of rational government. Within this material and epistemological framework, sleep became an experimental object and a stage for testing the limits of reason by granting observational access to the forces of irrationality and the unconscious mind. Over the course of the nineteenth century, sleep emerged for the first time as an object of scientific investigation and, in the process, the basic contours of modern sleep were historically determined, effectively establishing many of the presuppositions underlying twentieth and twenty-first century sleep science and medicine. Prior to the Enlightenment, sleep had been considered a state of being that could grant special access to diagnostic and transcendent truths

regarding the health of the body and the spiritual condition of the soul via the medium of dreams. Disrupted sleep eventually came to be associated with mental disease and, in the second half of the nineteenth century, physicians would subordinate the problem of sleep to fatigue, as a matter of concern in the age of industrialization.[2]

The first attempt at a systematic medical treatment of sleep appeared in 1830 with the publication of Robert Macnish's *The Philosophy of Sleep*. Despite Macnish's effort, with the second edition of his book in 1834, to couch his science of sleep in phrenological terminology, his primary concerns were personal hygiene and experience—not experimental observation or the government of populations. The publication of William Whitty Hall's *Sleep* in 1861 represented a new perspective in the science of sleep medicine. Hall shifted medical focus on sleep from individual experience to the biopolitical management of laboring populations in the midst of the industrial revolution. William Hammond's *Sleep and Its Derangements* followed in 1869, laying the groundwork for the modern notion of fatigue by theorizing sleep as a process of mental rejuvenation.

The object of sleep that the hygienists, clinicians, and experimentalists discovered and in part invented over the course of the nineteenth century was also shaped by a number of historical, economic, and political forces outside the domains of science and medicine. The spread of liberalism as a national ideology gave rise to an emphasis on privacy; new architectural designs emerged to meet liberal demands in the private home. White middle-class Americans came to expect their own private beds if not in their own rooms to sleep in. The work-discipline pressures of the industrial revolution wrought another significant change in sleeping patterns by

[2] For more on the history of sleep as an object of scientific investigation in the nineteenth century and beyond, see Kroker 71-9.

the middle of the nineteenth century, condensing normal sleep time down to eight consolidated hours, usually straight through the night. As Roger Ekirch discovered, "segmented sleep" (303) was common prior to the advent of consolidated sleep, with typical habits consisting of one roughly four-hour block of sleep interrupted by an hour or two of wakefulness and various nighttime activities, which would then be followed by another four-hour block of sleep known as "second sleep" (308). The erasure of segmented sleep coincided with new expectations regarding national simultaneity and personal punctuality. The modern American sleeper would come to sleep alone, in a consolidated block of time, synchronized with the interests of market capitalism. By the end of the nineteenth century, the private consolidated sleep of liberal individuals had to be synchronized with the rhythms of national time, with railroad travel, the implementation of national time-zones, growing telegraphic communications networks, and the exigencies of labor and trade under industrial capitalism. Thus an image of "normal" sleep emerged that formed the background for the discovery of new pathologies that sleep science and medicine would study and treat.

The Perception of Sleep

Hypnaesthesis focuses primarily on the works of Charles Brockden Brown, Edgar Allan Poe, and Herman Melville to trace the emergence of three sleep pathologies that have significantly shaped our understanding of life in modern America: somnambulism, nightmare, and insomnia. I show how the above-mentioned authors developed these sleep pathologies into aesthetic categories indexing and diagnosing the "price" of liberty in philosophical and political

terms. My analysis depends primarily on three key theoretical terms: somnipathy, aesthetic category, and *hypnaesthesis*.

Somnipathy in the nineteenth century designated the state of the somnambule in mesmerism and hypnotism and pointed to the communicability of sleep between persons. I use the term to focus on the affective presupposition that makes mesmerism and hypnotism, not to mention lullabies or contagious yawning, possible, the common potentiality of the need to sleep. For somnipathy was not only understood to be a unique case limited to experiments with artificial somnambulism but a common condition, as the Rev. John Bell explained in 1788 and I analyze further in chapter one, "every man is born a somnambule" (20).

Unlike Adam Smith's notion of sympathy, which grounds liberal subjectivity in the moral reflection and self-feeling that emerge from the ability to imagine oneself in the position of others, somnipathy establishes a feeling of connectedness in the affective appeal to sleep as a necessary inactivity common to all living animals. As I use the term, somnipathy is to feelings like drowsiness and sleep deprivation as affect is to emotion. Whereas the latter is a state of feeling that belongs to a conscious subject, the former is a condition of feeling that can circulate atmospherically, as a mood, under the radar of waking attention.

In my analysis of these feelings I rely on Spinoza's notion of affect as the power of a body to influence another body's power of acting or existing, constituting those "affections of the body by which the body's power of activity is increased or diminished, assisted or checked, together with the ideas of these affections" (103). Thus a somnolent feeling affectively communicated between bodies through somnipathy may either decrease the power of life as in

feelings of illness or increase it as in feelings of health, and sometimes the difference may be negligible or impossible to determine without a clear understanding of future consequences.

From this perspective, the explosion of interest in cases of artificial and natural somnambulism as well as conduct manuals and sleep hygiene guides outlining how to properly care for the nervous body and manage the problem of sleep in the nineteenth century constituted what may be understood as a somnipathic public. Akin to what Lauren Berlant calls an affective or intimate public, a somnipathic public is predicated on feelings of belonging and identity organized around the common need to sleep and the widespread sense that disrupted sleep poses a threat to life. As I use the term, somnipathy designates the feeling of a shared interest in sleep(lessness) not only as a health problem but as a cultural, social, and political problem with the potential, to borrow Berlant's words, to "magnetize optimism about living and being connected to strangers in a kind of nebulous *communitas*" (xi).

In my analysis, the somnipathic feelings of health and disease captured by somnambulism, nightmare, and insomnia become aesthetic categories in relationship with the form(lessness) of life disclosed in the perception of sleep (*hypnaesthesis*), which I explain below. I analyze the experience and recognition of sleep pathologies in literature and art using the term *aesthetic category* both in the Kantian sense of a judgment of taste, specifically with regard to nightmare, and in the broader philosophical sense of a category of thought determined by aesthetic means. The potential for understanding aesthetic categories in this way was indicated by Deleuze under the heading of "symptomatology," which he argues "appeals to a kind of neutral point, a limit that is premedical or sub-medical, belonging as much to art as to medicine: it's all about drawing a 'portrait'" (132).

From a methodological perspective, I adapt Deleuze's notion of symptomatology to show how Brown, Poe, and Melville draw diagnostic portraits of somnambulism, nightmare, and insomnia. Combining a Spinozist sense of affect with a Kantian appreciation for reflecting judgment, *Hypnaesthesis* approaches literature as a privileged space or neutral territory of thought in which the imperatives of art, philosophy, and medicine interact, to explore the formation of aesthetic categories that function both as means of capturing feelings of judgment in matters of taste and of diagnosing feelings of wellbeing and disease in matters of health.

While the category of nightmare operates in both senses, enabling for example the predication of the adjective *nightmarish* in a judgment of taste based on the aesthetic feeling of horror, which I analyze in chapter two, somnambulism and insomnia primarily function in the broader aesthetic sense encapsulated by a Spinozist definition of affect. They provide diagnostic portraits that allow for the formation of common notions expressing feelings of suffering as well as the creative potential of life. Viewed as a whole, it may be possible to say that somnambulism designates the lower boundary or somnipathic/affective substratum and insomnia the upper boundary or theoretical limit of nightmare aesthetics.

In my analysis of somnambulism, nightmare, and insomnia, I draw from medical, scientific, and philosophical discourse in the nineteenth century, emphasizing the theoretical indistinction between these forms of thinking and what would come to be recognized as American literature. Foremost among the terms articulating sleep pathology that I deploy is *hypnaesthesis*, which appeared in medical dictionaries in the nineteenth century, beginning perhaps with Robert Gray Mayne's 1855 *An Expository Lexicon of the Terms, Ancient and Modern, in Medical and General Science* to designate pathological cases of "dulled sensibility"

or "drowsiness" (485). Combining *hypno-* (sleep) with *aesthesis* (sense perception), the concept indicates, in my use, the potential for the perception of sleep phenomena not only from a medical perspective but also in aesthetic, political, and philosophical terms. That this word appeared in the medical and scientific lexicon of 1855 may have been a matter of pure contingency, but it has become a felicitous occurrence for my project, as it allows me to illustrate how American literature has shaped the ways in which sleep could be perceived, roughly between 1799 and 1853.

In exploring the theoretical potential of *hypnaesthesis*, I rely on the productive power of the genitive "of" in the phrase "the perception *of* sleep," following Jacques Derrida's sense of the "double genitive" (*Writing and Difference* 74). In my use of the term, *hypnaesthesis* designates a wide range of objective, subjective, and affective perceptions of sleep considered as an object of knowledge, a feeling belonging to a particular subject, and/or a pre-subjective affect that belongs properly to nobody and is common to each. My use of *hypnaesthesis* may sometimes appear ambiguous for this reason: sleep is a difficult thing to perceive, and the perception that belongs to sleep borders on the indiscernible.

Hypnaesthesis, as I use the term, involves the perception of a sleepy, sleeping, or sleep-deprived body insofar as it is not merely the incapacitated body of the sleeper or the sleepless that is perceived but the incapacity of sleep itself as a perceptible intuition, sometimes registered as a passing or fading from the presence of waking consciousness or as an absent presence. Examples of *hypnaesthesis* may include: the feeling of somnipathy such as in artificial somnambulism induced by mesmerism or hypnotism or in the natural somnambulism common to each sleeping animal; the feeling of contagious sleep arising from the yawn of a nearby person or

the presence of a natural sleepwalker; the feeling of discomfort when you encounter someone suffering from insomnia and think "that person needs more sleep"; *and* the perception that belongs to and is conditioned by sleep itself.

In the history of Western philosophy since Plato and Aristotle, theories of *aesthesis* (sense perception) have informed inquiries into fundamental problems of perception, epistemology, and ontology as well as aesthetics. I use *hypnaesthesis* to designate modes of perception that belong specifically to sleep perceived as the necessary condition of *aesthesis*.

In framing *hypnaesthesis* as a mode of perception that enables reflection on the limits of perception itself, I have in mind modern developments in phenomenology that have shed light on this kind of inquiry into the dim boundaries of *aesthesis*. Some prominent examples include: Husserl, when he describes the difference between proximate and distant forms of retention (the essential presence of what was previously present in the perception of the present) in the constitution of time-consciousness as the distinction between *falling asleep* and *being asleep*, enabling, as Nicolas de Warren has shown, the possibility of a phenomenology of dreamless sleep based on the view of the "living present" as the "constitution of an original difference between falling asleep and wakefulness" (281); Merleau-Ponty, when he identifies sleep with the "vague reserve of power against which the gesture and its goal stand out, and the zone of non-being in front of which precise beings, figures, and points can appear" (102-3); and Levinas, when he seeks to differentiate the impersonal or "anonymous vigilance of the *there is*" from the vigilance that has come to define consciousness in modernity, in order to shift the ground of ethics from waking consciousness to the infinite demand of the Other, concluding that, contrary

to the Enlightenment understanding of vigilance, consciousness is the "possibility of tearing itself away from vigilance" or "the power of sleep" (51).

Similarly, modern philosophical aesthetics have ventured into the nocturnal domain to perceive the previously imperceptible, perhaps most notably in Maurice Blanchot's observations on sleep and night: "To sleep with open eyes is an anomaly symbolically indicating something which the general consciousness does not approve of. People who sleep badly always appear more or less guilty. What do they do? They make night present" (265). This line of thinking may be traced through Deleuze's identification, in Kafka and Beckett, of what he calls the "insomniac dream," a form of dreaming that does not guard sleep (as in Freud) but sleeplessness, "a dream of the mind that has to be made," which gives expression to the "crouching beast that stretches out as long as the days and curls up as tightly as the night," or "the terrifying posture of insomnia" (*Essays Critical and Clinical* 171-2).

In these attempts to probe the limits of waking life and identify what is distinct in modern literature, philosophers in the twentieth century pointed to modes of perception that do not properly belong to diurnal waking consciousness or *aesthesis*. Thus I use the term *hypnaesthesis* to designate perceptions, affections, and aesthetic intuitions that belong to the perception of sleep understood as the material condition or pre-conscious presupposition of *aesthesis*.

A primary goal of my project is to underscore how gothic and dark romantic American literature explored the nocturnal domain of perception in the first half of the nineteenth century and established some of the foundational intellectual groundwork for future endeavors. Thus before Deleuze could define the method of symptomatology as an appeal to "a kind of neutral point, a limit," Hawthorne had already indicated the unique contribution of American literature

in the aesthetic exploration of the mode of perception found in “moonlight,” which is “so unlike a morning or noontide visibility,” capable of revealing “a neutral territory, somewhere between the real world and fairy-land, where the Actual and the Imaginary may meet, and each imbue itself with the nature of the other” (48).

And before Deleuze deployed this method to analyze insomnia in Kafka and Beckett, Hawthorne had already developed a diagnostic portrait of how the Puritan antipathy to sleep, the favored Puritan metaphor for all carnal life, could give rise to a new form of self-torturing sleeplessness in the terrifying posture of Arthur Dimmesdale’s vigil. Indeed, in *The Scarlet Letter* Hawthorne reveals how Puritanism brought not the light of civilization to the shadowy New England wilderness but a damaged form of existence he characterizes as “walking in the shadow of a dream, as it were, and perhaps actually under the influence of a species of somnambulism” (171). When Henry James observes “Hawthorne's cat-like faculty of seeing in the dark” (99), he is pointing not only to a form of nocturnal perception but an aesthetic project aimed at generating new forms of perception predicated on *hypnaesthesis*.

The authors and works that I analyze in this project make the perception of sleep perceptible through the production of the specific affects and aesthetic feelings that comprise somnambulism, nightmare, and insomnia. In Brown’s treatment of somnambulism (chapter one), I find the development of an affective-tonal structure expressing somnipathy, a disorder of sleep that is characterized or marked by fellow feeling, “sleep from sympathy” (Webster 1053), which challenges the Enlightenment understanding of sleep as the withdrawal or absence of reason. My reading of Brown suggests that the eighteenth-century nervous self was a continuation, in empiricist terms, of the sleepless Lockean self, which I analyze below. I argue that reading

Edgar Huntly from the perspective of *hypnaesthesis* allows us to see how liberal accounts of the self have attempted to obscure the problem of sleep through will, attention, and memory, from John Locke to Michael Warner.

Chapter two examines how the Scottish philosopher and author Robert Macnish theorized nightmare as a new aesthetic category overshadowing the sublime and then applied this theory in his short fiction for *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, inventing nightmare aesthetics as a form expressing the material genesis of modern subjectivity in sleep. My analysis of Macnish's method reveals how his creation of what I call the Macnishian nightmare object inaugurated a modern aesthetic tradition that can be clearly discerned in the works of Poe and Melville, which continues to resonate in theoretical terms with theories of fetishistic and sublime aesthetic objects today.

In chapter three I argue that Poe's portrait of insomnia in "The Man of the Crowd" extends Macnish's theory of nightmare aesthetics to diagnose the pathologies of capitalist society in the experience of the modern city. I place Poe's work in dialogue with other nineteenth-century *flaneurs* who explored the nocturnal life of modern cities, such as Charles Dickens and Walt Whitman, and I argue that Poe captures the nightmare feeling of a specific historical moment, when sleeplessness or insomnia was beginning to feel like the norm for many Americans.

Finally, in chapter four I argue that Melville provides resources in "Bartleby" and *Moby-Dick* for articulating the right to sleep as a political response to the exigencies of modern nightmare phenomena, including insomnia and night terrors, understood as social pathologies. I locate the aesthetic and political novelty of Ahab, the totalitarian type, in his appeal to the wish

to sleep, as he assumes the burden of insomnia and implicitly promises to protect the sleep of his crew from the ravages of capitalist labor. In this context, Bartleby's claiming of a right to rest from work presents the potential of imagining a right to sleep at the very point of undecidability when his final rest becomes indistinguishable from death, revealing how a sleepless society renders the distinction between life and death uncertain.

In the nineteenth century, theories of sleep informed philosophical debates regarding the nature of the thinking subject, the core of modern political and social theory, and the problem of self- and thus also of social continuity over time. In his 1791 dissertation for The College of Philadelphia, *On Sleep and Dreams*, Samuel Conover, Benjamin Rush's student, invokes the Chevalier Ramsay to ridicule the Cartesian idea that the mind must always be thinking in sleep:

> It is false to maintain, with the Cartesians, that the soul thinks always. They never did, nor can, give any solid reason for this assertion. Experience shows the contrary, when we are in a swoon or deep sleep. To think, know, and feel always, are privileges of a pure and unfallen state, when the living images shall have a perfect resemblance to him who never slumbers. This is one of the principal changes made in nature since the fall, and a law established in the sphere of lapsed souls. (qtd. in Conover 9)

Descartes's positing of the *Cogito* as the impossibility of sleep enabled modern subjectivity to guarantee the authority of knowledge and eventually of modern social and political compacts. But as empiricists like Conover, following John Locke, never tired of pointing out, the a priori insomnia of the *Cogito* was contradicted by our complete lack of memories in deep sleep.

In *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Locke identifies the specific theoretical problem of sleep for modernity by way of his response to Descartes's claim. As Descartes puts it: "I am, I exist—that is certain. But for how long? For as long as I am thinking…. Were I totally to cease from thinking, I should totally cease to exist" (18). In response, Locke argues that the self must cease to exist when the body sleeps precisely because we have no memories, and

hence no empirical verification, that we are always thinking in our sleep. The loss of self is crucial, Locke reasons, because the denial of the metaphysical extinction of the self in sleep, coupled with the absence of memories from dreamless sleep, would entail a difference in identity between the sleeping and the waking self. Significantly, Locke thinks that a diversity of selves, as in the Whitmanian idea that we "contain multitudes" (123), is not impossible but rather ridiculous and of no practical interest for philosophy or political theory. Thus Locke argues:

> If it be possible, that the soul can, whilst the body is sleeping, have its thinking, enjoyments, and concerns, its pleasure or pain apart, which the man is not conscious of, nor partakes in: it is certain, that Socrates asleep, and Socrates awake, is not the same person: but his soul when he sleeps, and Socrates the man consisting of body and soul when he is waking, are two persons; since waking Socrates, has no knowledge of, or concernment for that happiness, or misery of his soul, which it enjoys alone by itself whilst he sleeps, without perceiving anything of it; no more than he has for the happiness, or misery of a man in the Indies, whom he knows not. (114)

The political implications of Locke's argument for the continuity of waking consciousness over the abyss of sleep become clear when he connects this sense of self to indifference regarding the "happiness or misery of a man in the Indies." While he does not specify whether he means the East or West Indies, Locke's conception of slumber effectively immunizes the waking self from concern for the material vulnerability and well-being of others. Thus from Descartes to Locke, the ideal of un-interrupted wakefulness forms the essential presupposition of the modern self.

Locke nonetheless introduces the problem of sleep as a routine rupture in sovereign wakefulness. The Lockean self is comprised of a perpetual oscillation between waking and sleeping. Its basic structure is intermittency. Thus between Descartes and Locke a chasm briefly opens up in the constitution of modern subjectivity; beneath that chasm lies the enigmatic abyss of sleep to which Locke consigns the empiricist critique of rationalism. Locke attempts to suture over the gaps with the aid of memory by claiming that personal identity depends on the

continuity formed by a conscious gathering up of each waking state, and he does not shirk from the full consequences of this position:

> Had I the same consciousness, that I saw the Ark and Noah's flood, as that I saw an overflowing of the Thames last winter, or as that I write now, I could no more doubt that I that write this now, that saw the Thames overflowed last winter, and that viewed the flood at the general deluge, was the same self, place that self in what substance you please, than that I that write this am the same myself now whilst I write (whether I consist of all the same substance, material or immaterial, or no) that I was yesterday. (307)

In his attempt to approximate the impossible ideal of ever-wakeful consciousness, Locke has to imagine a self that might look something like Frankenstein's monster, consisting of a patchwork of memories that inscribe, no matter how seamless the stitching, a minimal materialist pattern of waking and sleeping.

The threat lurking in dreamless sleep for Locke is the dissolution of the buffered sense of self that, in Charles Taylor's words, is "not open and porous and vulnerable" (27) and which essentially consists in a sense of the "possibility of disengagement" from "one's whole surroundings, natural and social" (41). This is why it is crucial that the self must either be present in wakefulness or metaphysically absent in sleep: any sense of inbetweenness, any indistinction between waking and sleeping would threaten the sovereign isolation incumbent upon the modern self, exposing it to the prospect of awakening to the ethical and political implications of the happiness and misery of unknown others. What is intolerable from this perspective is any recognition of sleep as the liminal state of being, full of potentiality, that Aristotle identified when he observed that "because the change from not being to being takes place through the intermediate, and sleep seems to be in nature among the things of this sort, being as it were a boundary between living and not living, a sleeper neither fully is not nor fully is" (*Generation* 164).

In drawing attention to pathological states of somnolent sensibility, *Hypnaesthesis* renders the perception of sleep as a liminal condition harboring the potentiality for reimagining life otherwise. For it has been true of much of Western history, especially since the beginning of the nineteenth century, that "living," in Aristotle's words, "most of all belongs to being awake, because of perception" (*Generation* 164). But it was also Aristotle who observed that "sleep belongs of necessity to each animal" because it is the "condition" that makes sense perception or *aesthesis* possible (724). By arguing that "it is necessary that every creature which wakes must also be capable of sleeping, since it is impossible that it should always be actualizing its powers" (722), Aristotle grounds the necessity of sleep in the notion of potentiality as the enabling condition for the actualization of waking life. Shifting focus to the potentiality of sleep thus invites the possibility of perceiving what Aristotle identified as the "noble element" inherent in "mere life" (4009), a natural good unqualified by the attributes of waking consciousness or political status.

If sleep is necessary for *aesthesis*, as potentiality is for actuality, then *hypnaesthesis* may be considered the form of perception in which that necessity itself becomes not only perceptible but salient, a way of registering sleep as an invitation that may also become a claim or demand, which I identify, in my analysis of "Bartleby" in chapter four, as an apostrophic appeal, in the performance of inoperativity, to the right to sleep. Thus *Hypnaesthesis* presents a way of theorizing in aesthetic terms the "necessity" that Marx and Freud would each recognize in their own way in the nineteenth century, namely, sleep as the most vital of the "physical limits" (Marx 341) to the length of the working day and the "wish to sleep" (Freud 220) as the underlying wish animating the interpretation of dreams.

From this point of view it becomes possible to parse works of American literature into those that are attentive to the potentiality of sleep as a critical problem challenging sovereign conceptions of the self and those that are primarily concerned with the project of securing vigilant nationalism after Locke. In this context Ralph Waldo Emerson's vision of a "transparent eyeball" (26) in his essay "Nature" might be understood as the Transcendentalist reworking of the ideal of an unblinking sovereign subject. Herman Melville's celebration in "Hawthorne and His Mosses" of "deeply thinking mind[s]" (63) who are attuned to the "power of blackness" (63) may thus be construed as an identification of a unique philosophical strain in American thought that refuses to abide by the disciplinary distinction between philosophy and literature. Indeed, sleep presents recurrent opportunities for critical reflection in Hawthorne's fiction, from the nocturnal wandering of "Young Goodman Brown" to Arthur Dimmesdale's sleepwalking in *The Scarlet Letter*. In "The Haunted Mind," Hawthorne captures the sense of sleep as a shadow discourse of modern subject formation:

> With an involuntary start, you seize hold on consciousness, and prove yourself but half awake, by running a doubtful parallel between human life and the hour which has now elapsed. In both you emerge from mystery, pass through a vicissitude that you can but imperfectly control, and are borne onward to another mystery. Now comes the peal of the distant clock, with fainter and fainter strokes as you plunge further into the wilderness of sleep. It is the knell of a temporary death. Your spirit has departed, and strays like a free citizen, among the people of a shadowy world. (345)

Hawthorne presents the passage into sleep as a possible opening to a different political orientation, in which the "free citizen" comes to recognize themselves "among the people of a shadowy world."

Like Hawthorne, Melville repeatedly returns to figures of sleep to stage fundamental philosophical problems, from Bartleby's "deadwall reveries" (26) and his final sleep "with kings

and counsellors" (33) to the sleepwalking of Benito Cereno and the magnetic powers of Babo. In chapter four I argue that *Moby-Dick* effectively locates the problem of sleep at the philosophical center of his diagnosis of the pathologies of political modernity. But well before he wrote *Moby-Dick*, or invented Bartleby and Babo, Melville had already formulated a theory of sleep in *Mardi* that can only appear as a direct rebuttal of Locke. As if reflecting on the implications of Locke's argument, Babbalanja identifies waking consciousness as "the incomprehensible stranger in me" (158), an inherently variable, if not duplicitous, multiplicity: "for in one lifetime we live a hundred lives" (158). Rather than trying to suture these lives together through memory, Melville reverses the Lockean premise, as Babbalanja displaces the sense of self from consciousness and memory to the sleeping body: "The common error, my lord. Our souls belong to our bodies, not our bodies to our souls. For which has the care of the other? which keeps house? which looks after the replenishing of the aorta and auricles, and stores away the secretions? Which toils and ticks while the other sleeps?" (212).

In Babbalanja, we glimpse an alternative philosophical grounding to modernity, as he finds that he can only be certain of two things, as he puts it: "that I myself exist, and that I can most happily, or least miserably exist, by the practice of righteousness" (128). Unlike Locke, who sleeps so that he may disregard the "happiness or misery" of others, Babbalanja locates the possibility of existing "most happily, or least miserably" in relation with others, through the "practice of righteousness." Whereas Locke feels most himself when awake and possessed of an unbroken stream of conscious memories, Babbalanja discovers his strongest sense of self in the dark, "when I sleep," he says, "and dream not, my lord" (159). As if continuing this line of thinking in *Moby-Dick,* Ishmael will also claim that he feels his sense of self most vividly in the

dark, when he is in bed, "because no man can ever feel his own identity aright except his eyes be closed, as if darkness were indeed the proper element of our essences, though light be more congenial to our clayey part" (110). By identifying "light" with "our clayey part" and "darkness" with "our essences," Melville reverses the Enlightenment binary separating the light of the mind from the darkness of the body, allowing for a sense of identification with the potentiality of the sleeping body, effectively grounding the *hypnaesthetic* intuition that "our souls belong to our bodies" in a demonstration of the existence of the sleeping self.

Considered together, Hawthorne and Melville allow us to see in sleep, with the "power of blackness" or *hypnaesthesis,* the possibility of shifting our sense of self from the Cartesian and Lockean models of normative insomnia to a different feeling of freedom and connectedness. From Babbalanja to Ishmael to Bartleby, Melville demonstrates the potential to feel the freedom of existence in sleep in a way that contrasts sharply with the Enlightenment account of sovereign vigilance, which I would translate in the following terms: "We sleep, therefore we may be (otherwise)."

Methodological Observations and Other Conflicts of the Faculties

In offering a new perspective on Melville's nomination of the "power of blackness" as the decisive signature of American literary genius, I risk retreading a hoary path in the history of American literary criticism. My interest in retrieving this path has been sparked by recent theoretical attempts by critics of antebellum American literature to reimagine the field in light of insights stemming from science studies and affect theory. As Paul Hurh aptly summarizes this development: "affect theory has worked to make emotion more objective, more scientific, while

science studies have exposed how the story of objectivity is more subjective, more affective" (20). In *American Terror*, Hurh presents a masterful philosophical synthesis of these trends to offer a new hypothesis about the significance of the "power of blackness" in the American gothic and dark romantic traditions: "the 'power of blackness' is ultimately best understood as an aesthetic associated with thought itself" (22). To be specific, Hurh argues that this power is constituted by the feeling of terror understood as the "peculiar affect of scientific objectivity" (19). The critical significance of Hurh's argument rests on the claim that a philosophical understanding of affect and aesthetics "complicates the repressive/expressive model by which literary fears are often understood" (18). Thus terror or the power of blackness should not be read merely as a symptom of some repressed remainder haunting the American political unconscious but as an affective demonstration of "reason's power" (20). While I find Hurh's approach refreshing and clarifying, and I also seek to identify the power of blackness with the aesthetic demonstration of a particular kind of thinking, I locate this power not in abstract reason but in the perception of the necessary condition of *aesthesis* and, therefore, also of thinking, namely, the affective structure of sleep as the condition for (waking) life itself.

One way of thinking about the (re)turn to aesthetics or the feeling of thinking or affect theory in literary studies in recent years may be in terms of a growing sense of crisis regarding the efficacy of traditional forms of critique. Whereas the latter have been typically concerned with probing the boundaries of historical meaning by investigating what has been excluded, the former are concerned with experiences that feel meaningful but which cannot be completely captured or determined by concepts or discursive thought. This distinction may also be thought of in terms of the difference between critique (the negative limitation of forms of thought) and

affirmation (a creative process of discovery beyond discrete forms) or as a distinction between retrospectively analyzing representational forms of knowledge/power and anticipatorily contemplating (usually in the mode of the future-anterior) the non-representational, spontaneous (unconscious) play of differences celebrated by poststructuralists. One might say that the incommensurability of critique and affirmation forms the unresolved knot at the core of literary studies, critical theory, and philosophical aesthetics alike. Regardless, my invocation of this problem is intended to raise the specter of what Nancy Bentley aptly refers to—invoking growing interest within literary studies in the post-hermeneutical endeavors of Bruno Latour, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, and Peter Sloterdijk—as the condition of being "disenchanted with disenchantment."

I take it that the root cause of such disenchantment lies in the difficulty of thinking through the gap that disjunctively joins critique, or a focus on the historicity of concepts which may also include historicism, and aesthetics in such a way as to avoid either dissolving the knot in a Dionysiac fury of unbridled differences (which often means contemplating the promise of dissolution as an ethical stance), on the one hand, or anaesthetizing the sense of crisis by plunging into historicist re-emplotments of the forms of representation on the other. Whereas the former amounts to a kind of transcendental realism, according to which ideas, thought of not as fixed essences but as processes of becoming, possess a sensibly real logic, if not structure, that subsumes the autonomy of the individual(s) contemplating them, the latter is a form of nominalism, according to which all intelligible forms are merely the social constructions of historical practices of knowledge/power, willful or not, giving shape to an implicitly presupposed substratum of primordial chaos. From the perspective of post-Kantian critical philosophy, my

preferred approach, the fact that the line separating historicist nominalism from the poststructuralist demiurge of knowledge/power and Difference is typically undecidable functions as a reminder that empiricism was always inverted Platonism: transcendental realism of any variety entails empirical idealism.

The result, I want to urge, is a critical tendency towards nihilism, or the denial of the intrinsic integrity or meaningfulness of life itself: individual differences and concrete meanings are either absorbed/dissolved by the sublime (in)difference of ideas or they are all equally (in)significant in that they comprise so many arbitrary impositions on a meaningless natural world. In the parlance of canonical nineteenth-century American literature, the contradiction involved here would be between Emerson's self-creating *Oversoul*, according to which everything and everyone is "part or parcel of God" (24), and Melville's suspicion, voiced by Ishmael in *Moby-Dick*, that "all deified Nature absolutely paints like the harlot, whose allurements cover nothing but the charnel-house within" (306). It matters little, for my purposes or for Melville's, whether we think Emerson finally winds up closer to Spinoza's God of identity or, as Branka Arsić would have it, the Nietzschean god of Difference. Neither a transcendental realism of ideas, whether predetermined or in constant flux (Emerson's [post]structuralist dream), nor nominalism (Melville's skeptical nightmare)—including all their ontological, epistemological, and ethical variants—seem capable of offering a satisfactory account of the significance of life in modernity. The contemporary mood of disenchantment with disenchantment thus cannot simply be about recovering the affirmative or creative moment of aesthetic experience, for it must also register the sense of despair arising from the lingering

suspicion that affirmation alone cannot offer a meaningful alternative to critique, much as aesthetics or affect theory cannot displace historical analysis.

My project suggests one response to this impasse by indicating a way to rescue Melville from his own skepticism, using Melvillean resources of course, by locating in the "power of blackness" a specific strain of the critique of sovereignty rooted in the American literary tradition. *Hypnaesthesis* focuses not on the sovereignty of reason in the practice of scientific abstraction but on the sovereignty of the will applied to the living organism through such concepts as vigilance, consciousness, and intention(ality) or decision. In each chapter I suggest how this particular strain of thought may be traced through the philosophical discourse on sovereignty that runs directly from Poe and Melville, with Brown being a crucial antecedent, through the reception of their works by continental thinkers like Charles Baudelaire, Stéphane Mallarmé, Walter Benjamin, Jean-Luc Nancy, and Giorgio Agamben. In chapter four I indicate how this line of thinking has come to be associated with the politics of "inoperativity" as developed by Nancy and Agamben in part by interpreting the power of blackness in Poe, Hawthorne, and Melville.

From a literary perspective, the advantage of my account may be that it offers a more complete picture of the logics of feeling comprising the "power of blackness," enabling us to better differentiate between terror and horror in modern aesthetic terms. I agree with Hurh that these feelings flow from the mutually reinforcing coincidence of the "cold demands of a determinist religious orthodoxy and the equally cold prospects afforded by the logic and objectivity of a new scientific era" (15), the foundation of the American literary tradition, namely, Evangelical Protestantism and the Enlightenment. But in my view terror marks the

feeling of awakening to salvific faith as much as to abstract reason because in both instances it indexes the feeling of the willful or normative negation of the condition of waking life, which on my account stems from the negation of sleep.

Thus when Jonathan Edwards invokes the terror of Judgment to awaken his community, he relies on the Lockean account of sensation, sleep, and selfhood to appeal to the spirit of "watchfulness" as the only safeguard against the "carnal security" that sleep promises: "In sleep all the sences are bound up, the outward sences especially, the eye watcheth not, the ear hears not, the tongue tastes not, the body feels not; so this is an ingredient of carnal security, it binds up all the sences, as it did the Prophet *Jonah* his in the storm" (135). Edward's narrative of salvific awakening renders the absence of sensation in sleep an existential moral threat, illustrating how the Puritan dream of eternal life exposes the living body to the carnal insecurity of sleeplessness.

In making this argument, I offer a somnipathic twist to the axial turn toward a materialist account of the ways in which life is damaged by systems of religious myth and Enlightenment reason outlined by Horkheimer and Adorno in *The Dialectic of Enlightenment*: "What human beings seek to learn from nature is how to use it to dominate wholly both it and human beings. Nothing else counts. Ruthless toward itself, the Enlightenment has eradicated the last remnant of its own self-awareness. Only thought which does violence to itself is hard enough to shatter myths" (22). While myth may have originally arisen as an attempt to manage the terror of uncontrollable nature, Enlightenment thinking supplants myth by demonstrating the limitless efficiency of its form of mastery, generating a new experience of terror. Modern terror does not

arise from the feeling of life threatened by the incomprehensible forces of the natural world but from the feeling of life threatened by reason itself.

The violence that Enlightenment thought does to itself consists in the willful negation of its own foundation in natural life. To put this argument in terms that are essential for contemporary affect theory, one need only reference Spinoza's assessment of sovereign decision in the *Ethics*, in which he points out that those who believe that the mind controls the body argue from a position of ignorance because "they do not know what the body can do" (106). Spinoza concludes that "those who believe that they speak, or keep silent, or do anything from free mental decision are dreaming with their eyes open" (107). By inverting the waking-sleeping binary to identify belief in the rational superiority of waking consciousness with dreaming, Spinoza underscores how Enlightenment thinking is predicated on the negation of the body as the foundation of reason.

It was of course Kant who provided the ultimate philosophical articulation of this Enlightenment belief with his notion of the categorical imperative, insisting on a strict separation of the phenomenal world of nature from the rational world of morality. Observing how the application of the guillotine during the Reign of Terror was made possible by the Enlightenment evisceration of the body as a site of meaning, "a negation … of the individual as a being *existing* in the universal," Hegel established the philosophical discourse on terror in modernity with his analysis of how the revolutionary drive to absolute freedom resulted in the mechanical production of the "coldest and meanest of all deaths, with no more significance than cutting off a head of cabbage or swallowing a mouthful of water" (*Phenomenology of Spirit* 360).

The form of modern terror is the guillotine, not the mystery of nature, and in either case the feeling of terror can only be understood in terms of bodily danger or the negation of individual existence. From the perspective of *Hypnaesthesis*, the price of liberty may be understood as the internalization of the guillotine in the form of eternal vigilance, a mnemonic device encoding the Enlightenment imperative to separate the sovereignty of the will from the frailty of life. Terror from this perspective expresses not the feeling of mastery over nature, the object of Christian morality as much as Enlightenment reason, but the feeling of being mastered as a natural being through relentless injunctions to sovereign vigilance.

It is crucial from my point of view that the feeling of terror cannot be explained as the tone or affective structure that grounds abstract reason without accounting for why reason engenders this feeling and not some other. Terror is the feeling of feeling itself repudiated and condemned to premature entombment by the prison/mausoleum of sovereign reason, which is, I argue in chapter four, exactly what Melville shows us with Ahab's night terrors.

Horror, in contrast, may be understood as the feeling of the abject arising from insight into the necessary interconnection and indeterminate boundary indefinitely separating and joining reason to life, waking consciousness to sleep, ethics and meaning to the natural world, which I argue in chapters two and three finds its preeminent modern expression in the nightmare aesthetics developed by Macnish and Poe.

In Poe and Melville I identify the emergence of insomnia not merely as a special modification of nightmare, what Macnish called "daymare," but as the natural limit of nightmare aesthetics, a new aesthetic experience combining the terror of sleeplessness with the horror of nightmare. On my reading, aesthetic and phenomenological explorations of sleep(lessness) and

nightmare phenomena in nineteenth-century American literature comprised the privileged affective domain from which to develop and explore these feelings.

Hypnaesthesis thus combines an historicist perspective on the emergence of sleep pathologies, rooted in a philosophical or sociological account of the meaning of normative insomnia as a conceptual problem, together with a symptomatological analysis of the logics of feeling comprising the aesthetic articulation and diagnosis of somnambulism, nightmare, and insomnia in literary works, to reveal the material historicity of these categories and suggest their ongoing relevance for modern life.

Chapter 1: "The incapacity of sound sleep": *Edgar Huntly* and Somnambulism in the Early Republic

> Sleep … which seems to be a state purely passive, resembling that of death, is, on the contrary, that which a living animal first experiences, and is the very foundation of life.
>
> —Buffon (*Natural History*)
>
> Sleepwalkers do many things in their sleep that they would not dare when awake;—clear evidence that the body, solely from the laws of its own nature, can do many things at which its mind is amazed.
>
> —Spinoza (*Ethics*)

Edgar Huntly criticism has been divided historically over the distinction between universally abstract and nationally concrete iterations of subjective or nocturnal doubt, the constitutive ambiguity incumbent upon the citizen-subject of American popular sovereignty, with critics of American colonialism and imperialism such as John Carlos Rowe and Jared Gardner opposing earlier psychoanalytic readings of the novel. As Gardner succinctly puts it, "the question of identity in *Edgar Huntly* is importantly national rather than (generally) human or (particularly) individual" (429). The historicizing force of Gardner's argument underscores the ethical dimension of early-national politics, demonstrating how "the threat of the Native American presence [in *Edgar Huntly*] has less to do with questions of what it means to be civilized than with the question—newly urgent in the United States in 1799—of what it means to be American" (429). While Gardner correctly identifies *Edgar Huntly* as a narrative of "savage awakening" in the determination of American identity, he does not theorize the nature of awakening as an historically specific narrative structure in the early-American novel. On my reading the question of what it means to be American in *Edgar Huntly* is inextricably connected

to the night and to sleep through somnambulism, not merely as a vehicle for representing or critiquing political crisis but as an emergent matter of literary and political concern.[3]

In a world in which the "failure to be autonomous [could] mark one as a member of an inferior race" (Doyle 11), the capacity to maintain wakeful vigilance as the negation of somnolence, or at least the steadfast appearance thereof, functioned in biopolitical terms as a purportedly innate trait that separated the self-proclaimed hyperactivity of a specific strain of vertical Anglo-American (white male) self-making from the horizontal plane of lazy existence variously ascribed to non-male, non-white, or otherwise non-free others. Sleepwalking in *Edgar Huntly* functions as a method of critique of the project of separating vigilant Americanness from somnolent otherness. In first attempting to maintain his benevolent intention to benefit the apparently deranged Irish immigrant Clithero Edney and then again in setting out to convey his acquired knowledge of sleepwalking to Mary Waldegrave in memoir form, Edgar pursues the task of appropriating and ultimately possessing his own corporeal and intellectual labors in a narrative of awakening to early-national self-making. *Edgar Huntly*, however, represents a failed awakening in the traditional sense, an awakening to somnambulism—not from it.

[3] In light of recent sociological and anthropological investigations that have developed Bruno Latour's work as a useful frame for theorizing the role of sleep in the sociology of modernity, I find Latour's notion of a matter of concern particularly helpful for literary analysis. A matter of concern, Latour writes, "is what happens to a matter of fact when you add to its whole scenography, much like you would do by shifting your attention from the stage to the whole machinery of the theatre" (39). See Matthew Wolf-Meyer, "Sleep, Signification and the Abstract Body of Allopathic Medicine" and Bruno Latour, *What Is the Style of Matters of Concern?*

Somnambulism as Aesthetic Category

The modern image of the sleepwalker emerged against the backdrop of sensibilist ideas about the nature of the nervous self, between the early modern period and the rise of Romanticism in Europe, after Shakespeare's *Macbeth* and before Bellini's *La Somnambula*. During this period the ground for the modern conceptions of consciousness, autonomy, and morality shifted to the paradoxical vigilance of a "nervous self" capable of "integrat[ing] the vital, involuntary motions with conscious, voluntary actions" (Bassiri 447). In the process the Cartesian hypothesis of the *Cogito*'s immunity to sleep came to rest on a passive synthesis of external and internal sensations made possible by continuous unconscious sensitivity.[4] By 1606 the condition that had once intimated the possibility of possession, whether divine or demonic, had become an index of exceptional guilt—regicide. Long before 1831, however, Macbeth's murdered sleep had become a common disorder.[5] As Charles Brockden Brown puts it in the

[4] In the context of American literature, Justine Murison has made the case for viewing the nineteenth-century subject as a nervous self. As Murison puts it, "this experience of the self was profoundly tumultuous, barely 'buffered' from the world in the way that Charles Taylor has described it. Because both body and mind were open to environmental pressures, they proved vulnerable to the political climate and the social world" (2). I differ with Murison's account insofar as I read the nervous self as an empiricist transferal and intensification, at the level of the nerves, of the problem sleep poses to the conception of a sovereign knowing subject. The nervous self remains buffered insofar as it represents a scientific explanation of the integration of self and world, which presupposes the universality of theoretical reason to account for the forces acting on the self. To see body and mind as "open to environmental pressures" is not the same as seeing them open to a world of magic and spirits operating beyond the explanatory powers of science. The nervous self represents a generalized conception of pathology specific to modern subjectivity understood as a universalist or Enlightenment project of self-knowing.

[5] Like other neurological disorders, sleepwalking had previously been understood either as a sign of supernatural possession or of insanity. Its modern classification as a disease specific to the sleeping condition did not occur until the nineteenth century (Riva et al. 117). For more on the history of the sleepwalker in science and art, see Michele Augusto Riva, et al. "Sleepwalking in Italian Operas: A Window on Popular and Scientific Knowledge on Sleep Disorders in the 19th Century."

decisive preface to his 1799 *Edgar Huntly; or, Memoirs of a Sleep-Walker*, somnambulism by the end of the eighteenth century could be considered "one of the most common and most wonderful diseases of the human frame" (3).

Brown's engagement with the problem of somnambulism functions as a critical reflection on the broad cultural influence of new medical and scientific views circulating in the late eighteenth century. Take for example the Rev. John Bell's crucial speculative claim, contained in his influential 1788 *Essay on Somnambulism, or Sleep-Walking, Produced by Animal Electricity and Magnetism, as well as by Sympathy*, that "there is no sleep without Somnambulation" (20). Bell's proclamation casts new light on the kernel of truth contained in Leslie Fiedler's well-known conclusion that, in the world of *Edgar Huntly,* "*We are all sleepwalkers!*" (158). In Brown's novel this thought rests less on the possibility that "any man may wake to find himself at the bottom of a pit" (Fiedler 158), owing, as psychoanalytic criticism would have it, to the plague of unconscious fantasies, and more on an emergent understanding of sleepwalking as the defining symbol of a domain of obscurity separating sleeping from waking life. In arguing that "every man is born a Somnambule" (20), Bell was not merely anticipating psychoanalytic readings of somnambulism but helping establish the conceptual precondition for the emergence of a discourse of the unconscious.[6]

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[6] With the publication of his 1792 *General and Particular Principles of Animal Electricity and Magnetism*, which appeared first in London and then again in modified form that same year in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, Bell declared himself to be, on the cover page, "the only person authorised by patent from the first noblemen in France to teach and practice that science in England, Ireland, etc." His publication represented a synthesis of eighteenth-century ideas on the prevalence and potential of somnambulism, focusing on the capacity of the soul to operate, in Bell's terms, "thro' the nervous system" even as the external senses are closed off in sleep (35). The influence and pervasiveness of this conception of nervous awareness can be traced well into the twentieth century, as Freud summarized the common view in the following terms: "the fact

Bell hastens to note that while "this proposition [about the normality of somnambulism] … is apparently a paradox" its meaning depends on a crucial re-articulation of the concept:

> In a sound and natural sleep, the person whose mental powers were absolutely in suspension, preserves still a more or less active portion of watching, by means of which divers motions are performed: Who does not know that during our very sleep, the body is agitated and combines itself, in order to ch[oose] an advantageous position; the hand is continually assisting the incommoded parts, properly adjusts the bed clothes, destroys insects, etc. All these things doubtless belong to the watch, and of course constitute a kind of Somnambulism. For we must comprehend, under that denomination, the exercise of every motion whatever occasioned during sleep. (20)

In order to grasp how the normality of somnambulism, attributable to the anonymous vigilance of the nervous self, what Bell enigmatically refers to here as "the watch," informs the emplotment of awakening in *Edgar Huntly*, it is necessary to understand how this idea informed a new image of a subject conscious of its own automatism, what Emily Ogden has dubbed "the oxymoron of the mechanical subject" ("Mesmer's Demon" 159). Grounded in the always-on nature of the nervous self, such a conception of somnolent subjectivity complicated attempts by eighteenth-century physicians to distinguish between rational waking activity and automatic physiological processes, between "the common motions of the brain which take place in profound sleep," in Benjamin Rush's words, "and those which produce thought, whether in the waking state, or in the act of dreaming" (*Lectures on the Mind* 650).

Representations of this new zone of obscurity connecting waking life and sleep constituted a definitive trend in many stories appearing in American periodicals by the end of the eighteenth century. For example, in the 1798 article "A Comical Adventure of a Sleep-Walker," the nocturnal activity of a sleepwalking young gentlewoman is mistaken for the hauntings of a

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that a fairly powerful stimulus will awaken us at any time is evidence that 'even in sleep the soul is in constant contact with the extracorporeal world'" (21).

ghost until one night she comically invades the sleeping quarters of a visiting young gentleman. After the gentleman reveals the true nature of the seemingly paranormal activity, he is rewarded with the somnambulist's hand in marriage. Like "A Comical Adventure," *Edgar Huntly* shifts the focus of the gothic mode from supernatural phenomena to the uncanny marvels of physiology. Furthermore, in translating the gothic tropes and geographies of the old world, the "puerile superstition and exploded manners" contained in "Gothic castles and chimeras," into "the incidents of Indian hostility, and the perils of the western wilderness" (Brown 3), *Edgar Huntly* probes the role of nervous conceptions of sleepless self-hood in the founding narratives of American national identity.

Understanding Brown's aesthetic category of somnambulism requires developing a new nocturnal literacy in which we are able to see the history of sleep and the history of literature as intertwined. For example, Thomas Ball observes, in his 1796 dissertation *On the Causes and Effects of Sleep*, that "there is no part of our existence in which we enjoy more pleasure, and from which we derive more beneficial effects, than we do from sleep" (12). "And yet," Ball continues, "… there is no part, in which mankind in general are not as well or better acquainted with themselves, than what they are during this state" (12). While Ball is ostensibly writing about sleep from a scientific point of view, he nonetheless relies on the eminently literary categories of pleasure and mystery to frame his argument about the significance of his study for modern life. If *Edgar Huntly* and other figurations of somnambulism and somnolent states in the early republic are capable of advancing our understanding of sleep as an entirely immanent state of pleasure and mystery, then perhaps one day it will become possible to concur with Ball that "out of sleep we have awoke to time; and out of sleep we shall awake in eternity" (25). At first

glance, Ball seems to simply repeat the Aristotelian idea that sleep is the original condition out of which waking life awakens to historical time followed by some vague notion of sleep as the condition out of which we may gain awareness of the eternal verities of spiritual life. On my reading, however, Ball's evocative idea that thinking more carefully about sleep can change our perceptions of life and time may find firmer philosophical backing.

To illustrate the larger philosophical and political stakes of Brown's aesthetics of somnambulism, I will briefly turn to Francisco Goya's iconic 1799 *Capricho 43*, "The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters," which was composed more or less contemporaneously with *Edgar Huntly* and can shed light on the meaning of *somnipathy* as a fellow feeling that can potentially expand the Enlightenment concept of reason (see fig. 1). The thought that seems to animate the work of Brown and Goya alike, on my reading, may best be summarized by Jean-Luc Nancy's reflections on the meaning of the sleep of reason. In *The Fall of Sleep*, Nancy writes: "Though it still remains true—painfully true—that the sleep of reason gives birth to monsters, it is no less true that it is by letting itself be inclined to sleep, to dream, and to the possibility of no longer waking that thought lets itself awaken to the last possible day of its full probity: the first day, the day without day of our holy eternity" (45). In what follows, I attempt to show how both Brown and Goya deploy the gothic mode to offer moral instruction that pushes reason toward "the last possible day of its full probity" by advancing aesthetic form beyond rationalistic principles, inventing a noctuarial grammar. Their works ultimately express a materialist aesthetics of the night, which I find to be rooted in affective, somnipathic intuition, and display the operations of a complex ambivalence toward awakening, sleep, and the somnorine power of imagination.

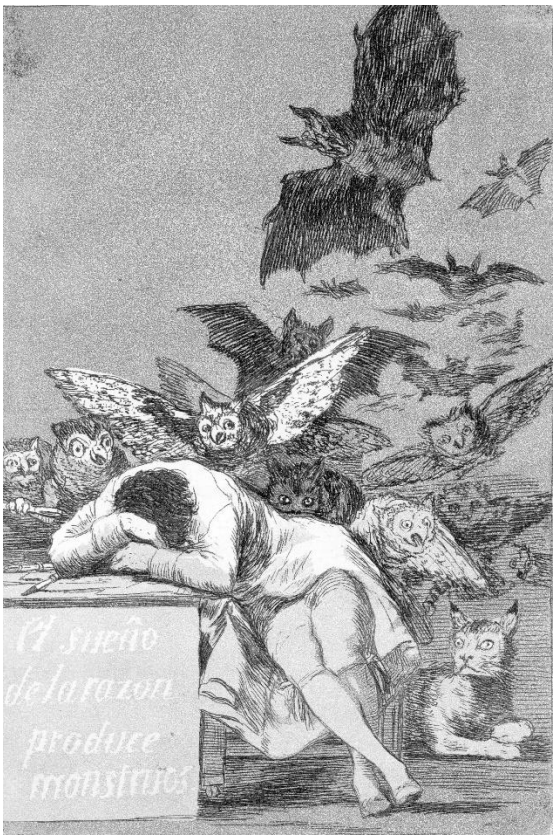

Fig. 1: Goya, Francisco. *Plate 43, Los Caprichos: The sleep of reason produces monsters.* 1799, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

"The Sleep of Reason" does not fit neatly into any Enlightenment narrative of awakening because it portends the experience of a vigilance that will no longer be separable from the depths of sleep. Goya's etching depicts a writer or artist in the process of falling asleep at his desk, surrounded by a hypnaesthetic vision of nocturnal beasts. Owls, bats, and a watchful lynx allude to shadowy, monstrous allegories of evil in traditional Spanish folk tales, representing ignorance and fear. A singular creature, perhaps an owl, lurks half-hidden behind the sleeper with only its eyes and the top of its head visible. Staring directly at the viewer, the gaze effectively collapses the safe distance of the spectator. The look of this obscure creature, however, does not invite the

sharing of wakeful, diametrically opposed attention so much as it provokes an altogether different, somnipathic form of awareness.

Meditating on the fall of sleep in a letter to William Wood Wilkins in May 1792, Brown records the following reflection, which could well serve as a description of Goya's etching: "My eyes are closed, my head reposes on my arm, my thoughts are scattered, my attention dissipated. I linger for a moment on the verge of sleep; I just retain discernment to discover what it is that hovers over the threshold of my imagination…" (Brown). In this scene of writing that gives way to sleep and the night, there appears an irresistible nocturnal limit to Enlightenment vigilance and intentionality. The somnipathic relation thus established with the viewer/reader anticipates the new orientation toward sleep that Michel Foucault would observe from a different point of view, in his analysis of how the nineteenth-century witnessed the advent of a "domain of phantasms [that] is no longer the night, the sleep of reason, or the uncertain void that stands before desire, but, on the contrary, wakefulness, untiring attention, zealous erudition, and constant vigilance" ("Fantasia of the Library" 90).

Goya's caption to *The Sleep of Reason* illuminates the logic involved in this transition. It reads: "Imagination abandoned by reason produces impossible monsters; united with her, she is the mother of the arts and source of their wonders." Whereas the somnorine dreamscapes of the imagination—within which, Phillis Wheatley slyly reminded her readers in 1773, "*Fancy*'s queen in giddy triumph reigns" (line 88)—appeared to Enlightenment thought as an aberration of fallen or embodied mentation lacking rational discipline, gothic artists and writers envisioned the sleep of reason as both threat and promise: potentially deadly when isolated from reason, as in sleep or madness, yet potentially revolutionary if united with reason, generating a different kind

of (in)somnolent imaginary that carries a new image of the human, one that can be categorized as neither fully awake nor insensibly unconscious.

Writing a short time later, in 1805, Hegel would capture the emergence of this gothic orientation toward the night that contemporary artists and writers like Goya and Brown had already begun exploring. According to Hegel's well-known gothic formulation of modern subjectivity:

> this is the night, the interior of [human] nature, … and in phantasmagoric representations it is night everywhere: here a bloody head suddenly shoots up and there another white shape, only to disappear as suddenly. We see this night when we look a human being in the eye, looking into a night which turns terrifying. [For from his eyes] the night of the world hangs out toward us. (87)

As with Goya the "moral" image that Brown develops in *Edgar Huntly* contributes to an (in)somnolent gothic imaginary in which the night appears not as the opposite of daytime consciousness but as its limit, its material condition. In *Edgar Huntly* Brown develops an image of the night of the world in the memoirs of a sleepwalker and simultaneously demonstrates the incompatibility of eighteenth-century Enlightenment narration, in the form of the memoir, which attempts to suture over the gaps of sleep to secure the continuity of the waking self, with gothic or noctuarial form. At the same time, *Edgar Huntly* anticipates how a specific form of day-oriented vigilance would influence American narratives of awakening and come to define conceptions of the fully human in American political life.

Despite the claim to universality, Brown nonetheless also posits somnambulism as a singular condition for probing problems of American national identity. Indeed, in *Edgar Huntly* Brown specifies the American gothic mode with the surprising conjunction of somnambulism and the unique "condition of our country" (3). Along with Brown's three previous novels, *Edgar*

Huntly represents an extended meditation on postrevolutionary American selfhood. With the gothic trope of the sleepwalker, Brown discovered a unique approach for displaying "the effect of a constitutive undecidability, a necessary excess, in the intentional experience of the modern subject" (Downes 427).

Brown was far from the first American novelist to observe the above-mentioned trends. Indeed, *Edgar Huntly* participates in the long tradition of the eighteenth-century novel in this regard. The nervous self emerged in the social imaginary of the Atlantic world as the somnorine indistinction of a subject that is constitutionally awake (capable of willful or quasi-willful actions) and asleep (possessed of involuntary motions) found representational form in the operations of sensation and sympathy on display in the novels that defined the culture of sensibility.[7] Three early American novels in particular, each published prior to *Edgar Huntly*, mapped the somnaical terrain of the nervous self to articulate historically specific problems of identity and subjectivity: William Hill Brown's *The Power of Sympathy* (1789), Susanna Rowson's *Charlotte Temple* (1791), and Hannah Webster Foster's *The Coquette* (1797). In each instance a moral lesson is ostensibly drawn from a seduction narrative meant to awaken readers to the unconscious powers of the body by highlighting how sensibility and sympathy alike could produce somnolent states of subjectivity. Regardless of whether readers were more interested in tutelage or in titillation, these novels ultimately represented narratives of awakening that disclosed the new idea of somnambulism, at least in formal or metaphorical terms.

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[7] This is why the Enlightenment conception of the sleepwalker as evidence of the nervous self is fundamentally compatible with Lockean empiricism: the bifurcation of the self into willed and unwilled domains presupposes the division between waking consciousness and sleeping unconsciousness. Thus for Enlightenment thinkers in the eighteenth century, like Dugald Stewart, sleep could be understood as the "suspension of the voluntary powers of the mind, and of all those faculties that were dependent on them" (Eric T. Carlson et al. 396-7).

Thus when Ophelia realizes the danger she faces in *The Power of Sympathy*, it is sleepwalking that functions as the guiding simile: "upon aw[akening] from her dream of insensibility," Ophelia discovers that "she was like one who had been deluded by an *ignis fatuus* to the brink of a precipice, and there abandoned to his [sic.] reflection to contemplate the horrours [sic.] of the sea beneath him [sic.], into which he [sic.] was about to plunge" (Brown 27). The trope of a sleepwalker suddenly awakening to discover a precarious steep, which had come to signal the perils of Enlightenment by the end of the eighteenth century, here merges with the chronotope of sea crossing that Laura Doyle has identified in the swooning scenes that define English-language narratives of Atlantic modernity, figuring a common image of restless awakening.

The wake-up call sounded in the proleptic irony of Ophelia's allegorical, oceanic plunge into the depths of insensibility intensifies in *Charlotte Temple* as the eponymous protagonist's literary swoon leads directly to an Atlantic crossing that, in Doyle's terms, "condenses the Atlantic economy's bodily, psychic, and socioeconomic uprootings" (8). Rowson renders Charlotte's unmooring as a sleepless condition filled with night terrors that transform her into a modern noctivigator: "[a]wake to real misery," conditioned by the mechanical "motion" of her fancy, which "chases the illusive dream" of severed familial bonds, Charlotte is beset by a "horror and despair" that "tear every tortured nerve" as she "start[s], and leave[s] [her] restless bed, weary and unrefreshed," in flight from the phantom-filled darkness of "horrid caves" (Rowson 85).

Charlotte's tattered nerves and nocturnal wanderings bespeak not only the centrality of nervous conceptions of selfhood to questions of Anglo-American identity in this period, but also

suggest the ontological status of sleeplessness for the early American novel and Atlantic modernity more generally. If *Charlotte Temple* functions to suture revolutionary rupture, as Julia Stern argues, with the "fantasy of unobstructed relations of sympathy" (34), those relations are forged in somnipathy and a materialist aesthetics of the night. The uptake of Charlotte's sleeplessness invokes a fundamental unshareability underlying post-revolutionary affective relations, a "common emotional ground around the experience of loss" (Stern 34) predicated on the post-traumatic mood generated in the presentation of an absence and a disorder of wakeful attention.

Charlotte Temple's terrifying nocturnal awakening to and flight from "horrid caves" represents just one example of how early novelists turned to the chronotopography of subterranean spaces to explore specific configurations of modern subjectivity. From the performance of self-possession in Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) to the contemplation of an aesthetic "spring" with "sufficient energy to rouse" the imagination of "low" or supine peoples in the fourth volume of Hugh Henry Brackenridge's 1797 *Modern Chivalry* (88), the chronotope of the cave in the eighteenth-century novel became the effective stage on which the relation of culture to nature, the separation of waking conscious life from somnolent states, post-revolutionary vigilance from subservient slumber, would be explored in accordance with various figurations of awakening. As Nancy Armstrong explains, such authors were able to "perform what the Lockeans could only theorize: the possibility that a new form of literacy could provide something on the order of a supplement capable of turning an early modern subject into a self-governing individual" (6). But the supplement of fictive self-possession promised by the

recording of personal history and life experience in writing would prove to be inherently unstable.

In *The Coquette*, the mechanical motion that drives Charlotte Temple from nightmarish caves becomes a self-reflexive force and source of narrativity as Hannah Webster Foster effectively translates wider cultural tendencies toward nervous monism into a dramatic narrative of awakening to somnambulism as the formal, interior condition of seduction fiction in America.[8] Eliza Wharton, the protagonist of Foster's novel, effectively short-circuits the narrative of awakening from the chronotope of the cave, introjecting the objective correlative of a post-revolutionary subjectivity uprooted from the authority of tradition and exposed to unfamiliar and unstable environs. In the process Eliza becomes the mechanical subject described by Ogden, "the oxymoron that Lockean sensationalism—in its limited rapprochement between mechanism and consciousness—at once enabled and abhorred: she is both driven by her mechanical body and lucidly self-aware" ("Mesmer's Demon" 159-60). As Ogden indicates, and as I argued in the introduction, Locke's philosophy was central to founding narratives of vigilant American subjectivity.

It is no coincidence, on my reading, that Eliza's narration of her impossible situation as a desiring subject, tirelessly inscribing herself into an early-republic discursive field that denied

[8] For a better understanding of the idea of nervous monism in the various cultural and scientific writings of this period, see Sarah Knott, *Sensibility and the American Revolution*. Perhaps no better illustration of this development can be found than in Mary Wollstonecraft's aptly titled 1798 fragment "The Cave of Fancy," in which Sagestus, a cave-dwelling sage, defines sensibility as "the result of acute senses, finely fashioned nerves, which vibrate at the slightest touch, and convey such clear intelligence to the brain, that it does not require to be arranged by the judgment." In the chronotope of the cave, the coincidence of philosophical and physiological bases for sympathetic identification—organized around experiences of loss, suffering, and insensibility—engender a collapse of sensory experience and judgment that signals a wider tendency in the culture of sensibility toward nervous monism.

agency to women, emerges out of a forty-eight-hour bout of insomnia followed by a swoon into unconsciousness, after which Eliza finds herself "absolutely forsaken" by what she terms "the balmy influence of sleep" (Foster 93). If it is true, as Carroll Smith-Rosenberg has argued, that *The Coquette* displaces the emergent properties of middle-class men, the speculative pathologies generated by paper money, onto the portrait of Eliza Wharton, I want to emphasize how this displacement illustrates the symptomatic unity that Benjamin Rush identified as "Scriptomania" ("fever," "obstinate wakefulness," and "mania") (*Lectures on the Mind* 166). I would only underscore that scholars of American literature and seduction narratives have so far paid scant attention to figurations of the middle attribute in Rush's novel triad, Eliza's obstinate wakefulness.[9]

In the domain of eighteenth-century reason, the seduction-novel heroine takes on the burdens of speculative desire and of sex in part by becoming the first articulation of the novelistic subject to reflectively assume what Foucault would later describe, in the terms of his genealogical typology of the day-night dyad of modern reason, as "the fragment of darkness that we each carry within us" (*History of Sexuality* 69). Sleeplessly inscribing herself into the night of republican virtue, Eliza bears nocturnal witness to the Stygian generality that is specific to Enlightenment thought, a noctilucent supplement that haunts, to borrow Foucault's words again,

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[9] Benjamin Rush describes the following events, which occurred the same year that *Charlotte Temple* was published: "The history of the coffee house in the city of Philadelphia between the 10th and the 15th of August in the 1791 will long be remembered by contemplative men, for having furnished the most extraordinary proofs of the powerful stimulus of the love of money upon the human body. It composed the week of *Scriptomania*. It produced a fever in one, an obstinate wakefulness in another, and a mania in a third person, all of whom came under my care as patients. The anxiety of countenance, the quick and irregular motions the desultory conversation, and the extempore manners of all the persons who were interested in this new species of speculation, gave a truer picture of a Bedlam, or of a hospital, than a coffeehouse" (166).

"not the end of this particular day, but the period of darkness separating all sunsets from all dawns" (*The Order of Things* 113).[10] Eliza thus represents a fictive demonstration of the essential category of restlessness that defines the heart of the Lockean self.

Following Foster, Brown outlines a bourgeois structure of feeling in *Edgar Huntly* that suggests the normality of sleeplessness in modernity. Emphasizing gendered vulnerability in the nocturnal displacement of sleepers from their sleeping quarters, *Edgar Huntly* arranges key events in accordance with the chronotope of the bed/cave. Restless, absent, and/or displaced sleepers frequently function as metonyms for the precarity of bodily integrity and personhood at night. The following list of examples is not exhaustive: Mary is abandoned by Edgar in the night; Waldegrave is mysteriously murdered when walking outside after dark; Mrs. Lorimer and her daughter Clarice are attacked by Clithero in their bedchamber while asleep; Wiatte, Mrs. Lorimer's nefarious brother, is murdered by Clithero in a dark alley; Clithero is deprived of sleep and driven to sleepwalking and murder by unconscious forces; Edgar is driven to sleeplessness, sleepwalking, and murder by his obsession with Clithero; Farmer Selby's wife and baby are forced to seek refuge in a barn, in flight from the abuses of a "drunken wretch … returned from his nocturnal debauch" (Brown 247); Old Deb, or Queen Mab, the Delaware originator of rebellious dreams whose "tongue was never at rest but when she was asleep" (199), is found to be missing from her sleeping quarters by Edgar; Old Deb's "rude bedstead" is subsequently

[10] Elisabeth Bronfen has helpfully connected the resurgence of such a notion of a "psychic night" which "sets limits to the interpretative sovereignty of reason … primarily in the shape of affects, dreams, and desires" (17) in Foucault's account of the episteme that would shape the late eighteenth-century Atlantic world. On my reading this resurgence corresponds with the emergence of a new form of post-Cartesian doubt, what Bronfen calls an "epistemological uncertainty" (67) at the nocturnal core of the thinking subject, originating in sleep, the restless remainder of the Lockean self.

removed by Clithero and replaced with "some straw near the fire, which, with a woollen rug, appeared to constitute his only bed" (277).

Better grasping how Brown develops his materialist aesthetics of the night and somnambulism, as a way of engaging with the interruption of sleep as a problem for post-Enlightenment self-constitution, requires reading the *Edgar Huntly* in conjunction with his early experimental letters. In correspondence with his close friend Joseph Bringhurst, Jr., on 13 May 1792, for example, Brown projects a program of literary self-making routed through Edinburgh and Verney, the medico-scientific and humanistic pillars of eighteenth-century Enlightenment thought. Articulating the goal of "producing original compositions of my own, that shall be worthy of the notice of Posterity" (*Collected Writings* 65), Brown fabulates a transatlantic epistolary exchange between an unnamed lawyer, writing from the Cocoa Tree on Pall Mall, an elite chocolate house located near St. James's Square in London, and an anonymous man in Philadelphia. The ambition to engage in a project of literary self-making stated by the lawyer in this exchange is shared by the aspiring author of the letter, as becomes clear in the final postscript that immediately follows in Brown's own voice. Tellingly, however, the entire enterprise is abruptly interrupted by a dramatic fall of sleep.

Restless to undertake the above-stated literary journey, and impatient of the speed of his pen to keep up with his thoughts, Brown questions whether "imagination [may not] supply the place of reality" (*Collected Writings* 66). Much as Samuel Taylor Coleridge would later explore the aesthetic potential of hypnagogic imagery in "Kubla Kahn," Brown experiments with the power of somnolent states to exceed the waking imagination in a meta-psychic condensation of temporality. Abandoning ink and desk in the wee hours of the night, Brown withdraws to bed

and there allows his fancy to guide him through the fantastic vistas of the Enlightenment foreshadowed in his epistolary tale, on a path leading directly through Voltaire's Ferney. With a hypnagogic "web of pleasing and fictitious narrative" flashing before the mind's eye, Brown proclaims that his brief waking dream "would have filled a dozen volumes" if only there had been "some Magician … present to reduce them to words" (*Collected Writings* 66).

Flowing in at the limits of intentionality, however, against the will of the writer, sleep submerges the pleasing flow of imagery and narrative in Brown's recounting. His journey dissolved into phenomenological darkness, Brown laments: "But alas! Sleep overtook me at the foot of the Alps, and while my heart beat high with … expectation … the Scene gradually vanished…. The vision was fled with all its train of incidents and circumstances, and I slept, not in the village of Fernez … but—alas! Alas! Alas!—" (*Collected Writings* 66). This narration of an Enlightenment awakening interrupted by a narco-aesthetic plunge anticipates the discovery of somnambulism in *Edgar Huntly* as an inversion of Enlightenment accounts of intentionality or *aesthesis*, revealing the potentiality of the sleeping body to perform, as Spinoza has it, "many things at which its mind is amazed" (105), but does not yet present somnolent sensibility as a subject of aesthetic production.

In a subsequent letter to William Wood Wilkins in May 1792, Brown furthers the nocturnal turn inaugurated in his previous letters by dramatizing the fall of sleep in writing. Setting somnolence in opposition to the kingdom of reason, Brown questions:

> What expedient shall I practice to restore me to the empire of my thoughts? How the curtain of each eye gradually falls, how the objects vanish by degrees 'remote and small'! My pen moves with difficulty through the line. Each letter is at least a league in length, in traversing a third of which I grow unsufferably weary. I must sleep—doze, I mean; pos—itively I—m—m—ust sl—sle—sleep—.

> What! have I lost the dominion of myself? Cannot I resist, when I will, the approach of that unseasonable and impertinent intruder sleep?" (*Collected Writings* 54-55)

Brown's experimentation with the fall of sleep overtaking the scene of writing results in an image of the sleep of reason: the necessity of sleep intrudes at the level of language as the speaking subject's stammering, somnolent recognition of powerlessness and undoing: "I—m—m—ust sl—sle—sleep—."

Edgar Huntly adds a self-reflexive, insomnolent twist in thematizing the attempt to record the memoirs of a sleepwalker: "I have said that I slept. My memory assures me of this" (152). With these words Edgar communicates a desire to relate his hypnaesthetic experience to Mary Waldegrave, his definitively absent, probably pregnant, and almost certainly soon-to-be-ex- fiancé. In pursuing his desired aim, however, Edgar encounters a representational impasse, proclaiming: "no eloquence that I possess would do justice to the tale…. I shall furnish thee with little more than a glimpse of the truth" (152). Framed as an epistolary exchange between Edgar, Mary, and Sarsefield (Edgar's British mentor), *Edgar Huntly* renders sleep as a problem of self-control and a trailhead for exploring the power of gothic, unconscious sensibility to articulate the truth of Enlightenment morality in letters. For Brown draws a moral lesson or diagnostic portrait from Edgar's inability to capture and translate the experience of somnambulism in the form of the memoir.

Indeed, Brown unambiguously states this purpose in the preface to the novel, in which he identifies his task as that of the "moral painter" (3) with an historically specific object: "the sources of amusement to the fancy and instruction to the heart, that are peculiar to ourselves [Americans]" (3). Between Brown's stated goal, echoed in Edgar's triumphant claim to

awakening at the start of his letter to Mary ("What light has burst upon my ignorance of myself and of mankind! How sudden and enormous the transition from uncertainty to knowledge!" (6), and Edgar's subsequent admission of incompleteness ("glimpse of the truth"), somnambulism constitutes an enigmatic gap at the core of Enlightenment self-possession through the recollection of waking perception.

This gap appears when Edgar first encounters the figure of a nightwalker in the Pennsylvanian wilderness, he identifies the spectacle before him as a species of "morbid activity" (13), a body overflowing the proper limits of personal possession. In an attempt to relate the thoughts structuring his perception of somnambulism to Mary, Edgar records the following query and observations: "What did he seek, or what endeavour to conceal in this fatal spot? The incapacity of sound sleep denotes a mind sorely wounded. It is thus that atrocious criminals denote the possession of some dreadful secret" (13). Edgar thus reconstitutes his prior feeling of awe in the contemplation of somnambulism and simultaneously registers how (disturbed) sleep was both shaped by and posed crucial problems for Enlightenment epistemology, psychology, and morality: sleep marked the boundary between knowledge and illusion, it could reveal concealed information, particularly with regard to the balance of the mental faculties, and it was used to delimit agency and moral responsibility.

Deploying a rudimentary form of free indirect discourse in the epistolary mode, *Edgar Huntly* problematizes the distinction between the sleepwalking self recalled in memoir and the narrating self constituted in the act of remembrance. Following Dana Luciano's reading, we can say that writing and reading overtake the rational, self-possessed subject of Edgar's memoir at the precise moment that "absorption into a well-told story produces a state like sleepwalking, in

which the body runs away with itself, is outside all conscious control" ("Perverse Nature" 19). Edgar's becoming unable to sleep due to the *somnipathic* relation he develops with Clithero, his affective identification with "the incapacity of sound sleep" (Brown 13) in sleepwalking, rather than insensibility, is on my reading the central problematic in *Edgar Huntly*.

Setting out on the teleological path leading from unconscious ignorance to conscious knowledge, *Edgar Huntly* drifts into narrative lacunae, displaying what Dana Luciano has aptly described as an "inescapable drive toward embodiment" ("Perverse Nature" 4), an absorptive aesthetics bordering on untranslatable opacity. Edgar awakens not to the daylight of reason but to the obscurity of the night, finding himself inside a cave, immersed in total darkness, an intersomnious zero-degree of social existence and nightmare. "I emerged from oblivion," Edgar writes:

> by degrees so slow and so faint, that their succession cannot be marked. When enabled at length to attend to the information which my senses afforded, I was conscious, for a time, of nothing but existence…. My thoughts were wildering and mazy, and though consciousness were present, it was disconnected with the loco-motive or voluntary power. (152)

Atonia, Edgar's relating of sleep paralysis, in this passage ruptures the sleeping-waking binary, generating a hypnaesthetic affect through the sensorial presentation of the sleep of reason. This affect contributes to the inter-somnorine atonality of the novel, establishing an affective-tonal structure, in Sianne Ngai's sense of tone as the aesthetic object's "general disposition or orientation toward its audience and the world" (Ngai 28), that I characterize as *somnipathic*.

The somnipathic affective structure of the novel is expressed by the noctuarial form. The entire action of the plot takes place across thirteen nights, with the rising action beginning at night as Edgar leaves Mary to walk to his uncle's house, discovering Clithero sleepwalking

beneath the elm along the way. This inversion of the day-night binary persists throughout the novel, with the first significant daytime action occurring as late as day six, when Edgar hears Clithero's tale at Norwalk. As the narrative develops, distinctions between daytime and nighttime action begin to dissolve, and Edgar eventually seems to float from dream to nightmare in a never-ending night of indistinction, culminating in his confusion with Indians and his confronting of Sarsefield as foe. Along with the day-night inversion, the novel also stages an inversion of location, centering much of the significant action around beds and sleeping quarters, from Edgar's bed at his uncle's house, the cave, and Inglefield's barn, to Mrs. Lorimer's bedchamber in Ireland, Old Deb's hut, and various guest beds containing Edgar, Sarsefield, and Clithero. This constellation of nocturnal temporalities and locales coheres in the naming of a minor character, Philip Beddington, whose farm Edgar encounters at "night-fall" for his final confrontation with Clithero (277).

That Edgar ultimately fails to dissuade Clithero from following a path of self-destruction should be read as a critique of Enlightenment intentionality. Failing to see that his intentions themselves were the problem, Edgar insists to the end that: "I have erred, not through sinister or malignant intentions, but from the impulse of misguided, indeed, but powerful benevolence" (281). Brown's letters on suicide disclose the critique of intentionality in *Edgar Huntly.* In a 1792 letter to Joseph Bringhurst, Jr., Brown distinguishes between *volo* and *facio*, benevolence and beneficence. Following this distinction in *Edgar Huntly,* we see not only the failure of Edgar's benevolent intention or wish (*volo*) but the inversion of the intentionality in action of beneficence (*facio*). In his crucial letter on suicide, Brown distinguishes between Enlightenment

conceptions of argument and existential reasons, outlining the logic involved in his critique of Edgar's thought:

> If to destroy ourselves it be only necessary to justify Self-destruction it would not be easy to conceive a question of more unspeakable importance but it is evident that somewhat more is requisate, and that whether Suicide be justifiable is a question of importance only to him whom some other motives have previously influenced to resolve on death, but if, in those circumstances, any one can by any means convince himself that he is acting rightly would it be kindness or cruelty to undeceive him, and to convince him that what he is about to do, in pursuance of *other irresistible* motives, is, in the highest degree, criminal, when that conviction, would not prevent the deed? It would in my opinion, be the summit of Inhumanity. Let me assure you that I shall take no fatal resolution of this kind but in consequence of some other motive, than a belief, a naked abstract and philosophical belief of its justifiableness. A motive too strong to be obviated by an opposite opinion, and a motive that in itself, will be a sufficient justification of the act. (*Collected Works*, emphasis in original 143-4)

Edgar's beneficent impulse to heal Clithero and dissuade him from committing suicide turns out to be another inversion of intentionality, as becomes evident when read in conjunction with Brown's letters on suicide.

I read the inversion of intentionality that Edgar undergoes in pursuing his project, in narrating the pursuit of Clithero, as a dramatic, historically specific presentation of the phenomenological reversal that Merleau-Ponty identified as fundamental to the performance of sleep. "Sleep 'arrives,'" Merleau-Ponty observes, "at a particular moment, it settles upon this imitation of itself that I offered it, and I succeed in becoming what I pretended to be: that unseeing and nearly unthinking mass, confined to a point in space and no longer in the world except through the anonymous vigilance of the senses" (166). Read from this perspective, Edgar's experience in the cave exposes the ideal of unceasing wakeful vigilance as a basic marker of (national) identity to its extreme limit in the paradoxical sleeplessness of the nervous self, on display in somnambulism, a mode of anonymity that properly belongs to nobody in

particular: “I was conscious, for a time, of nothing but existence.” Rather than leading from unconsciousness to a glorious awakening in liberty, Edgar’s descent into somnolence critically highlights the state of suspension or hiatus between Edgar’s oblivion in sleep and his emergence from the cave into which he sleepwalked, between the “instant when [his] thoughts ceased to flow, and [his] senses were arrested by the leaden wand of forgetfulness” (152) and the re-constitution of his early American national identity through memory and violence.

In disclosing the fundamental contours of perception, a phenomenological account of sleep, for Merleau-Ponty, sheds light on existential modalities of healing. As Merleau-Ponty puts it: “sleep and waking, illness and health are not modalities of consciousness or will, but presuppose an ‘existential step’ (164). Brown likewise approaches sleep with a view to its capacity to unlock the creative, healing potential of automatism in the unconscious, embodied operation of the imagination (sleepwalking), which Enlightenment rationality is incapable of acknowledging. Explicitly articulating this concern in an 1804 “Student’s Diary” entry in the *Literary Magazine*, some years after the publication of *Edgar Huntly*, Brown critiques the Enlightenment denunciation of mesmeric healing contained in the Franklin commission report for the French Academy of Sciences. In the section titled “Empiricism and King’s Evil,” Brown faults empiricist ideology, which, in its “disdain of every influence but the merely physical,” fails to take notice of “the reality of the effects” of the imagination (“Student’s Diary” 85-86). The Enlightenment prejudice against imagination displayed by the Franklin commission, Brown concludes, “has been productive of more *evil* than good” (“Student’s Diary” 87).

In the same “Student’s Diary” entry, Brown presents what I take to be an allegorical image of this critique in the fantastic example of the automatic chess-player. This contraption

Brown claims should be seen as "the most admirable, and … the most mysterious and inexplicable display of mechanical skill which has ever been known" ("Student's Diary" 84). Even after revealing the automaton to have been a fiction, an illusory device "moved by a well instructed boy," Brown nonetheless insists that this example demonstrates "the facility with which the agencies of nature and the mechanic powers may be directed to excite the wonder of mankind" ("Student's Diary" 84). This device suggests that Brown's real interest in the case lies not in the revelation of illusion but in the inversion of the primacy of Enlightenment mechanism over embodied imagination. What Edgar discovers, as if by accident, is the domain of "*other irresistible* motives," the unexpected realm of sub-, pre-, and unconscious associations, imaginal webs of affect operating beneath the level of conscious motivation, prior to the formation of any causal agency.

Brown's reading of the mechanical chess player helps shed light on the significance of the parallel allegorical image of the mechanical box in *Edgar Huntly*. Both Clithero and Edgar conceal their most treasured letters in, and somnipathically circulate them from, such a device. As Emily Ogden has rightly pointed out, these boxes represent a "strange hybrid of Locke's two principal metaphors for the mind: the cabinet of curiosities and the page, or slate" (427). For Ogden the relation between box and page points to the problem of recovering the insensible as a domain of possible experience. On my reading, the box operates as a vehicle for the transmission of somnipathic relations that overturn the day-night binary but are not for that reason fully translatable into the domain of wakeful consciousness. As Edgar explains near the end of his tale: "The miracles of poetry, the transitions of enchantment, are beggarly and mean compared with those which I had experienced: Passage into new forms, overleaping the bars of time and

space, reversal of the laws of inanimate and intelligent existence had been mine to perform and to witness" (229). Edgar's experience of the potentiality of the sleeping body, or the "reversal of the laws of inanimate and intelligent existence," cannot be captured and translated into the Enlightenment form of the memoir. Rather, his insight finds expression in the mode of perception I call *hypnaesthesis*, constituted by the noctuarial grammar and affective intuitions that are specific to the memoirs of a sleepwalker.

The Politics of Somnambulism as an Aesthetic Category

The critique of vigilance contained in *Edgar Huntly* can be understood with a brief reconstruction of how the trope functions in narratives of political awakening in the American context. One revolutionary narrative is particularly relevant for understanding *Edgar Huntly* in this regard. In the rousing call to national self-assertion contained in his 1776 pamphlet *Common Sense*, Thomas Paine implicitly links the threat of English violence to the vulnerability of the night and a long history of fear generated by reports of nighttime attacks by Indians to differentiate American revolutionary vigilance. Paine writes: "I mean not to exhibit horror for the purpose of provoking revenge, but to awaken us from fatal and unmanly slumbers, that we may pursue determinately some fixed object" (27). The horror Paine exhibits features an imaginary nighttime raid resulting in a home burnt, property destroyed, and family lost. Would it be natural for "the ruined and wretched survivor" (26) in such a case, Paine asks, to forgive the assailing party? Posing this question in light of the gothic scene of destruction wrought by anonymous bands of marauding English soldiers in the night, Paine draws on familiar scenes of Indian

frontier violence to underscore the uncivilized and hence unforgiveable nature of English assaults on American property and liberty.

Likening forgiveness of such atrocities to a politically-deadened state of nocturnal indifference, Paine evokes the fear of being caught off guard while asleep to shock his readers into an intensified mode of ceaseless attention. In transferring the threat from nocturnal, quasi-demonic Indians to the menace of foreign invasion, Paine promotes the ideal of American vigilance in the pursuit of "some fixed object" as the defining trait that differentiates and protects wakeful Americans from dangerous nocturnal elements on either side of the Atlantic. Addressing his pamphlet to "the inhabitants of America" (5), Paine advocates not for sovereign punishment or revenge but for awakening to establish national identity. Only a new form of revolutionary vigilance, Paine suggests, can produce the absolute "separation" from noxious others that would guarantee Americans the "security" they desire. Political awakening for Paine thus virtually forecloses any chance of discovering natural "connexion" or achieving cultural "reconciliation" with those who subsist in somnolent states, since such connectedness can only appear as a phantom in a "falacious [*sic*] dream" (27) that is made possible by the slumber of unfree others.[11]

Read as an extended dramatization of the fundamental political logic advanced in *Common Sense, Edgar Huntly* functions as a striking critique of Paine's gothic vision of manly national awakening. Indeed, Brown's novel self-consciously fails to reproduce Paine's proposed state of unsurpassed vigilance. Edgar, like Paine's imagined representative victim of English/Indian violence, has lost his home and family in a deadly nighttime raid, one that was

[11] Like Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin, Paine deploys the rhetoric of awakening to articulate white male national identity, in the name of differentiating American vigilance from European and indigenous somnolence.

carried out not by English soldiers but by Delaware Indians seeking revenge for the theft of their lands. Edgar also confronts the question of forgiving such acts of violence, which he takes to be an enlightened duty after he (wrongly) believes he has discovered the murderer of Waldegrave, his recently slain best friend who has died in a mysterious midnight attack. In his effort to ascertain the true identity and motive of his friend's killer, Edgar encounters the problem Paine's narrative of awakening attempts to resolve by projecting an image of manly American vigilance, namely, the difficulty of distinguishing Americans from non-Americans.

One of the primary functions of the early novel was to encode narratives of awakening in the early American social imaginary, registering a demand for vigilant attention to buttress the problem of sleep. Thus narratives of awakening like Paine's functioned not to justify the spectatorial power of an exceptional sovereign, as with Hobbes, or to nominate the unmediated performance of the general will, as with Rousseau, but to shock individual readers into the restless activity of bare attention requisite for performing national citizenship. In making this claim I am of course drawing on Michael Warner's influential account of the role of print and letters in the early republic. In his reading of Brown's 1799 *Arthur Mervyn*, for example, Warner notes how this text suggests a causal connection between the uptake of enlightened "letters" and "vigilant thinking" (156). Tellingly, Warner's subsequent theorization of the formation of (counter) publics, the "being of the sovereign" ("Publics and Counterpublics" 52), incorporates the possibility of sleep by granting apriority to volitional acts. Warner argues that we should "understand someone sleeping through a ballet performance as a member of that public" because a prior conscious choice to attend the event must be assumed ("Publics and Counterpublics" 61). Predicating the sovereignty of the public on voluntary association in a civil society, Warner

concludes that "some kind of active uptake—however somnolent—is indispensable" ("Publics and Counterpublics" 61).

Edgar Huntly presents a contrasting case to *Arthur Mervyn* because the letters circulated within its narrative horizon flow from and engender not vigilance but the paradox of a somnipathic public forged in the sharing of sleeplessness. Reading *Edgar Huntly* as a "search for modes of political embodiment," Elizabeth Maddock Dillon has decisively shown how Edgar's narrative drift, expressed through his sleepwalking and subsequent awakening in the cave, represents the failure of republican ideology, given the property relations in place in the early-American political environment, to find a generalized, genderless form of corporeality suitable for white, republican men. Thus Dillon argues that "the circulation of written ideas [in *Edgar Huntly*] functions less to spread reason and enlightenment than disease" (171). The affective contagion circulated through letters in *Edgar Huntly* is of course somnambulism ("one of the most common and most wonderful diseases or affections of the human frame"). The threat of communication in letters operates beneath the level of intentionality as the letters that Clithero and Edgar "circulate" while sleepwalking establish a somnipathic bond between the two that neither of them consciously understands.

While it is true that Edgar's futile pursuit of inter-corporeal intimacy with Clithero, coupled with his rejection of Mary, his apparently pregnant and soon-to-be ex-fiancé, underscores the inexorable force of emergent "liberal models of racialized and gendered subject ratification" (Dillon 174) in the early national era, it is important to note how Edgar's scene of writing not only frames but effectively doubles, on a structural level, the somnambulant content of his narrative. From a mimetic standpoint, *Edgar Huntly* underscores liberal models of

subjectification. However, it is not quite accurate to conclude for this reason that *Edgar Huntly* "corresponds more to the norms of a liberal than republican culture of print as it is encoded in the form of the novel" (Dillon 173). From a formal, diagetic perspective, Edgar's performance of relating through letter writing problematizes vigilance as the ideal form of (trans)national identification for republican and liberal ideology alike.

Edgar Huntly symbolizes the formal interruption of vigilance in the unconscious circulating and burying of letters in the night, revealing the material limit of Enlightenment intentionality. Edgar and Clithero form a somnipathic public in part through the somnambulant circulation of letters, including Mrs. Lorimer's manuscript "vindicat[ing]...her conduct towards her brother" (115) and Waldegrave's metaphysical letters. When Edgar observes Clithero burying Mrs. Lorimer's letters, he observes the absence of volitional uptake: "The deed was neither prompted by the will, nor noticed by the senses of him, by whom it was done" (268). Edgar's witnessing of Clithero's burying of the letters entangles the two men in a dream-like state of telepathic, unconscious communication. The somnipathic bond that the letters establish between Edgar and Clithero suggests an alternative to Dana Luciano's assessment that letters in the novel function as "privately fetishized objects rather than texts for rational discussion" ("Perverse Nature" 19). On my reading, what passes between Clithero and Edgar is the unshareability of sleep in somnambulism, with the letters signifying not on the life-death dyad (in which the buried manuscripts transmit only a corpse-like silence), but rather on the inversion of the day-night dyad, according to which somnipathy finds expression through nocturnal and noctuarial exchange.[12] *Edgar Huntly* implies the unique status of this communication in contrast

[12] Warner's account reveals how sleep is no longer associated with the passivity of death in liberal modernity. Understood as an active participant even when unconscious, the sleeper has

with Sarsefield's normalizing belief that such circulation represents merely "a freak of Noctambulation" (250).

The elm tree under which Clithero and Edgar bury their letters suggests a strange form of vegetable life constitutes the nocturnal materials required for their somnolent social binding. Indeed, the tree acts on Edgar with a strange agency. "This object," Edgar explains, "had somewhat of a mechanical influence upon me" (29). The tree calls to Edgar, inciting him to remark upon the distinctiveness of its "bulk and shape of its trunk, its position in the midst of the way, its branches spreading into an ample circumference" (9). As the object-cause directing the steps of the novel's noctivigators, inciting Edgar's "pulse [to] throb…" (9), the "fatal elm" (7) represents a gothic inversion of the mesmeric view of magnetic healing trees. As John Bell explains, "nothing represents a chain of motion more calm and gentle, and more relative to the reparation of the Animal Oeconomy, than a healthy tree in summer time" (Bell 12). Inspired by the work of Benjamin Rush's student Samuel Conover, in his 1791 dissertation for The College of Philadelphia, titled *On Sleep and Dreams*, we might ask whether it would be "unphilosophical to infer, that vegetables, in time of morbid sleep, are disturbed with dreams peculiar to themselves" (14). What the tree brings our awareness to, in socio-political terms, is evidence that the Lockean self is not self-sufficient and that social relations depend on the material bonds of embodied life, including the bodies of non-human entities such as boxes and plants.

In postrevolutionary America, narratives of awakening and figurations of sleep and the night in print performed political functions as reflections on the material conditions for individual and communal continuity, life, happiness, and self-presence. The long-standing

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been assimilated into modern liberal subjectivity following the Lockean tradition of accounting for the self through acts of volitional attention and memory.

association of death with sleep and the night, "death's second-self," cannot explain the sudden emphasis on vigilance and the gothic fascination with somnipathy, the night, and noctuarial form in the eighteenth-century novel. Despite the fact that physicians like Benjamin Rush continued to classify sleep as a tendency toward death, popular representations had begun associating sleep with life, at least implicitly, as in the following 1792 anecdote from *Beers's Almanac and Ephemeris*: "Two sailors passing by a church yard, observed the following Epitaph, 'I am not dead, but sleeping here.' *Zounds,* says Jack, *what a lie! When I'm dead I'll own it fast enough.*"

Edgar Huntly draws the boundary between sleep and death most clearly in the vital "paroxysm" (60) that forms the material substratum of the somnipathic relation between Edgar and Clithero. The substance of Clithero's communication with Edgar lies not in the story of woe Clithero relates, but rather in his transmission of the traumatic interruption of the sleep drive. Thus when relating how he learned of Wiatte's treacherous return, Clithero reports: "On hearing of my arrival, Sarsefield hastened to see me. He came to my bed-side, and such, in his opinion, was the importance of the tidings which he had to communicate, that he did not scruple to rouse me from a deep sleep..." (60). In the midst of this recounting, Clithero's speech is seized by a "severe constriction" of his "brain," opening onto the transmission of somnipathy in somniloquy and sleepwalking. Here we observe a double-interruption, not only of Clithero's sleep when Sarsefield awakens him, but also of his narrative to Edgar.

Ellipses constitute the formal typography of Sarsefield's disruption of the sleep drive, somnipathically expressing a bodily resistance to the wakefulness upon which he insists. The recollection and repetition of this forced awakening by the man of vigilant reason shatters Clithero's desire to sleep, exacerbating the nocturnal penetration of his waking concerns, which

had already begun "incroach[ing] upon [his] sleep" (49). "I could no longer resign myself to slumber with the same ease as before," Clithero explains. The hypnotactic syntax of Clithero's recounting of Sarsefield's forced awakening, the onset of the incapacity to fulfill his wish to sleep, marks the passage from the sleep drive to the death drive, the origin of Clithero's determination to end his own life.

On three crucial occasions Sarsefield also attempts to involve Edgar in the finality of his narrative of awakening, drawing Edgar nearer to death in each instance. Upon returning to America, Sarsefield wistfully reports imagining the "opening of [Edgar's] eyes" and the surprise his former pupil might experience at his unexpected appearance in the night, only to be thwarted by the discovery of an empty bed: in a subversion of Sarsefield's design, Edgar's "restless and romantic spirit" had driven him sleepwalking on "some phantastic errand" (238). When Sarsfield does subsequently encounter Edgar unconscious in the woods, his head resting on the "detestable pillow" (189) formed from the co-mingling of Edgar's blood with that of a slain Delaware foe, he mistakes the still-living body for a corpse and fails to recognize it as Edgar's. Finally, after a wearisome night and day spent pursuing Indian adversaries, Sarsefield stumbles upon Edgar sleeping awkwardly upon the ground. Noting that "no domestic animal would wander hither and place himself upon this spot," Sarsefield again fails to recognize Edgar, concluding that the slumbering creature is either a beast or "a savage and a foe." In recounting this event, Sarsefield retroactively affirms his desire to awaken Edgar with the second-person pronoun: "I determined therefore to rouse you by a bullet" (248).

Brown further deploys sleep to draw the boundary between life and death when Clithero mistakenly believes that Mrs. Lorimer and Arthur Wiatte were "linked together by a sympathy

whose influence was independent of sensible communication" (74). Despite Clithero's fears, Mrs. Lorimer survives perfectly well after the death of her twin. The "sympathetic" and "[in]sensible communication" that Clithero imagines as possible after death is only available to the living in *Edgar Huntly*, through somnipathy. Momentarily mistaking slumber for death when he discovers Clithero in the pit, Edgar reflects on the depths of sleep:

> [Clithero] had not been roused by my approach…. This reflection gave birth to the fear that he was dead. A nearer inspection dispelled my apprehensions, and shewed me that he was merely buried in profound slumber. Those vigils must indeed have been long which were at last succeeded by a sleep so oblivious. (105)

What Clithero's death would not have afforded Edgar, but what slumber does, is a sleep rhythm that enables Edgar's unfolding of wakeful reason: "His slumber enabled me to pause, to ruminate on the manner by which his understanding might be most successfully addressed…" (105). "How should I attempt to reason with him?" (106) Edgar wonders, and so he seems, at first, to double Sarsefield, in his plotting to inject wakeful reason into Clithero's unconscious slumber. Realizing, however, that "I had no inclination to awaken him. This respite was too sweet to be needlessly abridged" (107), Edgar withdraws from the sleeping Clithero, reenacting the bedside scene between Clithero and Sarsefield with one crucial difference: Edgar permits Clithero to persist in his wish to sleep.

Despite appearances, Brown's novel does not simply rehash the Enlightenment critique of a society based on revenge or of sleepwalking as a dangerous state of irrationality. Operating at a level of affective relationality below the question of conscious revenge or forgiveness, the somnipathic connection that Edgar forges with Clithero allows him to recognize the sleep drive as the origin of their commonality. The aesthetic category of somnambulism thus functions in *Edgar Huntly* to disclose sleep as the liminal state differentiating national sovereign power from

the life of the individual. *Edgar Huntly* probes the limits of the postrevolutionary politics of insomnolence by casting a noctilucent gaze on the legacy of Protestant and Enlightenment ideas about vigilance as a moral and political state of mind. In doing so, Brown provides a critique of the moral image of wakeful national identity emergent in the narratives of awakening shaping the political mood of the era.

Chapter 2: Nightmare Aesthetics from Macnish to Poe

> By a route obscure and lonely,
> Haunted by ill angels only,
> Where an Eidolon, named NIGHT,
> On a black throne reigns upright,
> I have reached these lands but newly
> From an ultimate dim Thule—
> From a wild weird clime that lieth, sublime,
> Out of SPACE—Out of TIME.
>
> —Edgar Allan Poe ("Dream-Land")

"The modifications which nightmare assumes are infinite," Robert Macnish observed in his 1830 *Philosophy of Sleep*, "but one passion is almost never absent--that of utter and incomprehensible dread" (24). The first author to cast a systematic gaze on sleep and its disorders, Macnish was also a crucial literary progenitor of both the tale of terror and what Megan Coyer calls "medico-popular" writing in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* (37). That Macnish's literary contributions made a lasting impression on Edgar Allan Poe has already been established, but there remains a fundamental connection to be drawn between Macnish's theorization of nightmare and Poe's nocturnal aesthetics. Nowhere is this connection more obvious than in the significance each writer accords to the phenomenology of nightmare. Following Macnish, Poe not only populates his poetry and fiction with somnolent bodies and sleep-deranged points of view but also formally experiments with the generic limits of nightmare to explore what the Scottish physician identified as its limitless potential for generating "incomprehensible dread."

In tales like "The Fall of the House of Usher" (1839) and "The Man of the Crowd" (1840), Poe formally experiments with a new state of sleeplessness that informs the nightmare

visions that characterize much of his later gothic fiction. Combined with his later work, these texts helped establish the generic preconditions for what Michael Greaney calls the "writer-as-insomniac school of modern literature" ("Sleep and Sleep-watching" 80). Writing at the dawn of the classification of sleep disorders, Poe joins the ranks of Robert Macnish, Charles Dickens, Washington Irving, and others as an early literary geographer of the nineteenth-century night.

In "The Man of the Crowd," discussed in Chapter 3, Poe effectively diagnoses how the Enlightenment dream of transparency, mastery, and consumption, expressed in the narrator's enthusiasm for physiognomic reason, leads to sleepless nightmare and horror. To grasp how Poe developed the nightmare affection of sleeplessness and unfreedom in this and subsequent gothic tales, it is necessary to examine the medico-literary source material for his work in Macnish's "The Man with the Nose" (1826) and "Who Can It Be?" (1837). Careful consideration of these short stories along with *The Philosophy of Sleep* reveals Poe's debt to early sleep science and Macnish's unique contributions to the "infinite modifications" of nightmare, sleeplessness, and the flaneur in modern literature.[13]

Macnish suffered from nightmares himself, and he was clearly dissatisfied with contemporary representations of the phenomenon, including Henry Fuseli's famous 1781 painting *The Nightmare* (see fig. 2). Contrasting Fuseli with Ann Radcliffe, Macnish implies that the former evinced little first-hand experience with sleep-borne horrors due to his dietary efforts to avoid them: "… Mrs. Radcliffe, who, for the purpose of filling her sleep with those phantoms of horror which she has so forcibly embodied in the 'Mysteries of Udolpho,' and 'Romance of the Forest,' is said to have supped upon the most indigestible substances; while Dryden and

[13] For more on Macnish's influence on Poe, see Coyer 36-88.

Fuseli, with the opposite view of obtaining splendid dreams, are reported to have eaten raw flesh" (57). The fact that Macnish omits *The Nightmare* from his discussion of the aesthetics of horror underscores his disagreement with Fuseli's method.

Fig. 2: Fuseli, Henry. *The Nightmare.* 1781, Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit.

In *The Philosophy of Sleep*, Macnish sketches a theory of nightmare as a new aesthetic category, a variation of sublime terror and unrepresentability affectively bound together with existential (sleep) paralysis and hallucinatory imagery. Indeed, Macnish offers a definition of horror in this text that provides a rationale for why sleep phenomena make excellent material for tales of terror: "Horror is intense dread, produced by some unknown or superlatively disgusting

object. The visions of sleep, therefore, being frequently undefined, and of the most revolting description, are apt to produce this emotion…" (72). And nothing is more apt to produce the feeling of horror than "the sleep of disease," which Macnish describes in Hobbesian fashion as "short, feverish, and unrefreshing" (2). In this condition, "nightmare presses like an incarnation of misery upon the frame—imagination, distempered by it connexion with physical disorder, ranging along the gloomy confines of terror, holding communication with hell and the grave, and throwing a discolouring shade over human life" (2-3).

Though Macnish does not explicitly develop the logic connecting diseased sleep and nightmare to the aesthetics of horror, it is possible to reconstruct his reasoning in several steps. From the beginning Macnish defines sleep in liminal terms, like Aristotle, as "the intermediate state between life and death" (1), and in subsequent editions he substitutes "wakefulness" for life, explaining in the 1842 edition that it is the "active state of all the animal and intellectual functions" (3). Following Locke, he views sleep not only as that which demarcates life from death but also as a passage in the flesh dividing between two forms of death: "In sleep unaccompanied by dreaming, consciousness does not exist; at least, there is not the slightest proof of its existence. We are, therefore, justified in asserting that such sleep is a temporary metaphysical death, although not an organic one" (1-2). Between metaphysical and organic death, sleep operates as a category of reduction. It suspends the intermediate functions of sentient life that "bring it [the sleeping body *qua* animal life] into communication with the surrounding world" (4 [1842]). "Sleep is the suspension of animal life," Macnish argues, "and during its continuance the creature is under the influence of organic life alone" (4 [1842]).[14] Macnish

[14] To elaborate on this distinction, Macnish draws on the work of Marie-François-Xavier Bichat in his second edition of *The Philosophy of Sleep*, writing, "organic life applies to the functions

outlines "the conditions of nightmare" (124) in the following way: "1. An active state of the memory, imagination, etc. 2. An impaired state of the respiratory functions. 3. A torpor in the power of volition; and in this respect night-mare differs from simple dreaming, where that faculty is suspended" (124). From this reconstruction of Macnish's point of view, the horror of nightmare phenomena can be explained as the result of an awakening of the "metaphysical" faculties of "memory, imagination, etc." to the "undefined" and "superlatively disgusting" form of organic life unmediated by *aesthesis,* an encounter made possible by the suspension of animal life in sleep.

Macnish's invention of nightmare as an aesthetic category might be understood fruitfully in comparison with Kant's articulation of the beautiful and the sublime. Kant explains these aesthetic feelings in terms of the transcendental relations that obtain between the faculties of imagination, understanding, and reason. He explains the feeling of the beautiful as the result of a relationship between imagination and understanding, in which the free play of the imagination harmonizes with the mere concept of objective unity provided by the understanding. The feeling of the sublime, in contrast, arises out of a relationship between imagination and reason, in which the imagination is driven to a painful encounter with its natural limit by reason's demand to represent the infinite. Nightmare, both as Macnish outlines it and as Poe later develops the category in his fiction, can be understood as a feeling of horror arising from a relation between imagination and memory, in which the imagination discovers the indeterminate domain of organic life (a materialist substratum of historical consciousness), prior to animal sentience, as the condition for the appearance of the metaphysical self. Out of this encounter the imagination

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which nourish and sustain the object—animal life to those which make it a sentient being" (13-14 [1842]).

is driven to intuit the past of personal experience in general, a transcendental form of memory intimating that which can only be remembered. In short, the aesthetic feeling of nightmare in the writings of Macnish and Poe may be considered, in transcendental terms, as the result of a relationship between the imagination and what Deleuze calls the power of memory to grasp "that which from the outset can only be recalled, even the first time: not a contingent past, but the being of the past as such and the past of every time" (*Difference* 140).

This experience exposes the metaphysical Lockean self to the indefinite domain of pre-sentient, material existence that is the condition for the emergence of waking consciousness. Such a relation potentially accounts for the sensation of (sleep) paralysis in combination with the feelings of terror and ugliness due to an infinite free play of the imagination conditioned only by the indefinite form of a transcendental memory. In this condition, the imagination lacks both the harmony with the understanding present in the beautiful and the demand and hope of the infinite given by reason in the sublime. What emerges instead are feelings of crushing paralysis in an encounter with the limit of subjective genesis: the pre-subjective domain of material existence.

Throughout *The Philosophy of Sleep*, Macnish repeatedly suggests that nightmare phenomena hold the potential to greatly surpass all previous attempts to depict horror but must remain unrepresentable in aesthetic terms: "This affection, the Ephialtes of the Greeks, and the Incubus of the Romans, is one of the most distressing to which human nature is subject. Imagination cannot conceive the horrors it frequently gives rise to, or language describe them in adequate terms" (124-25). Despite the claim to unrepresentability, Macnish experimented with his own approach to portraying the affections of nightmare in his tales of terror. Indeed, the conclusion of the passage quoted above includes an outline of Macnish's method:

> They are a thousand times more frightful than the visions conjured up by necromancy or *diablere*; and far transcend every thing in history or romance, from the fable of the writhing and asp-encircled Laocoon to Dante's appalling picture of Ugolino and his famished offspring, or the hidden tortures of the Spanish inquisition. The whole mind, during the paroxysm, is wrought up to a pitch of unutterable despair: a spell is laid upon the faculties, which freezes them into inaction; and the wretched victim feels as if pent alive in his coffin, or overpowered by resistless and immitigable pressure. (125)

Incantation as a literary form or device ("a spell is laid upon the faculties") aimed at arresting the attention of the reader ("which freezes them into inaction") on a series of events calculated to generate the feeling of live burial ("the wretched victim feels pent alive in his coffin")—this is the formula Macnish developed for representing nightmare in his tales of terror for *Blackwood's*.

"The Man with the Nose," which was published in *Blackwood's* in August 1826 under the pseudonym "A Modern Pythagorean," presents a clear case of Macnish's nightmare aesthetics. While the story functions on the surface as a parody of popular tales about persons with mysterious identities, its experimental illustration of nightmare borders on the absurd.[15] Focusing on a nose that defies all interpretation, the narrative relates how the landlord of an inn becomes enchanted by an inscrutable lodger over the course of a night. Speaking for the landlord and all other guests at the inn, Macnish's omniscient narrator observes: "Such a snout had never

[15] In several instances, Macnish delightfully anticipates how dream phenomena and somnolent states would inform surrealist and absurdist aesthetics. For example, Macnish observes in *The Philosophy of Sleep* that "there are no limits to the extravagancies of those visions sometimes called into birth by the vivid exercise of the imagination. Contrasted with them, the wildest fictions of Rabelais, Ariosto, or Dante, sink into absolute probabilities. I remember of dreaming on one occasion that I possessed ubiquity, twenty resemblances of myself appearing in as many different places, in the same room; and each being so thoroughly possessed by my own mind, that I could not ascertain which of them was myself, and which my double, &c. On this occasion, fancy so far travelled into the regions of absurdity, that I conceived myself riding upon my own back--one of the resemblances being mounted upon another, and both animated with the soul appertaining to myself, in such a manner that I knew not whether I was the carrier or the carried" (86-7). It bears remarking that Macnish mentions E.T.A. Hoffman's 1815 *The Devil's Elixirs* as the most likely inspiration for this remarkable dream.

been presented to the eyes of these worthy characters, nor perhaps of anybody else. It was neither an aquiline nose, nor a Roman nose, nor a snub nose--nor, in truth, could it be reduced to any classification whatever" (57).

In response to the obvious curiosity generated by his "snout," the man with the nose offers the onlookers a singular explanation:

> 'Yes, my nose is certainly somewhat singular in its dimensions, I confess,' replied the proprietor of this remarkable feature; 'but yet, my friend, you must know,--you must know,--you must know, that it--that it is--that it is still--.' 'That it is still what?' said the clerk, his curiosity excited to the highest pitch. '*That it is still a nose*,' concluded the other, putting the pipe once more into his mouth, and smoking with the most imperturbable gravity. (58)

The stuttering repetition of the stranger's speech ("you must know,--you must know, that it--that it is--that it is still") has a hypnotic effect on the crowd. Anxiously anticipating some impending revelation, they become fixated on the unfathomable nature of his nose and sit "staring at the smoker as if fascinated by the gaze of a basilisk" (60).

Sound plays an important role in the laying on of this spell-like effect. In addition to the repetition of words, ambient noises carry the narrator into a nightmare state as he passively absorbs the incomprehensible reverberations of the stranger's pipe and the surroundings of the inn:

> The whiffs sounded like a blast of wind through the fanners of a mill. He not only heard them with vicious distinctness, but thought that he felt them blowing upon his face. Add to this, the echo of the striking hour and of the cuckoo, which still hovered dream-like over his imagination—the ticking of the clock, as its unwearied pendulum went from side to side, with the crackling of the coal as it blazed merrily in the huge grate, and we have him saluted with a concert of strange sounds, such as never before haunted the fancy of an innkeeper. (63)

What appear at first glance to be the sounds of a modest tavern are transformed by the weak narcotic effect of the tobacco into noises suggestive of industrialization in the nineteenth century:

the sounds of mechanized milling and time-keeping amplify the "crackling of the coal" behind the "huge grate" beyond the comfortable recognizability of domestic space, constituting the din of an industrial age nightmare ("a concert of strange sounds, such as never before haunted the fancy of an innkeeper").

As the evening wears on, the guests disperse leaving the landlord to face the man with the nose alone. "Never was human nature placed in such a predicament" (60-1), Macnish writes, catachrestically identifying the landlord with humanity in general and signaling the world-historical import of the aesthetic experience he is about to depict:

> A shudder now came over his heart, but his limbs were so rigidly immovable that they did not partake of it. He was fettered to his seat by a talisman, and sat victim-like upon it, as if to undergo persecution from some dreadful demon. It would be vain to relate the efforts he made to rise; not a limb would move--the powers of volition seemed totally suspended. He was cramped, paralyzed, spell-bound, or whatever we choose to call it…. He was wide awake, yet he labored under a nightmare. (62)

Here is the practical application of the formula that Macnish recorded in *The Philosophy of Sleep*, an aesthetics of horror predicated on the calculated effect of drawing his audience into the phenomenology of nightmare.

The experience of the landlord is worth quoting at length as it reveals Macnish's attempt to combine the irony of social ridicule with the sincerity of visceral terror in the presentation of a waking nightmare, a unique combination that should appear familiar to readers of Poe:

> All at once, in the landlord's imagination, the room grew gloomier--the ticking of the clock more loud--the puff--puff--puff, more fearfully distinct, while the tremendous nose stretched itself out--a yard in length. This, indeed, was almost the only object to be observed…. At the same time horrid forms were seen floating in the tobacco smoke--imps of darkness--snakes--crocodiles--toads--lizards, and all sorts of impure things. They leaped, and crawled, and flew with detestable hisses around--while the stranger grinned, and shook his head, and jabbered in an unearthly voice--his long nose, in the meantime, waving to and fro like a banner, while black demons, with tails and green eyes, sat astride

> upon it, screeching hideously. The spectacle was more than the landlord could endure, and he fell into a faint. (67)

Upon awakening the next morning, the landlord is greatly relieved to discover that his mysterious guest has departed and "handsomely discharged his bill" (68). "The Man with the Nose" ends here, revealing virtually nothing about the tale's eponymous stranger, only that he seems to be generous with money and that he is "a tall, meagre figure, dressed in a complete suit of black, a cocked hat, and silver knee and shoe buckles" (56). In his black attire the man with the nose conjures the evils of nocturnal encounters with unknown others and obscure wealth.

Macnish's tale shadows forth social anxieties about the anonymity of modern life and the possibility of deciphering character along with racial or ethnic traits in the faces of strangers. Stories about such chance encounters were "greedily sought after" in the 1820s, Washington Irving observed, precisely because they updated, for a modern reading audience, accounts of "mysterious personages that have figured at different times, and filled the world with doubt and conjecture; such as the Wandering Jew, the Man with the Iron Mask, who tormented the curiosity of all Europe, the Invisible Girl, and late, though not least, the Pig-faced Lady" (587). Macnish would certainly have understood Irving's point about the aesthetic and historical significance of the stimulating effects of stranger encounters. In a telling passage in *The Anatomy of Drunkenness*, Macnish compares the mildly intoxicating quality of Irving's fiction to the narcotic power of Lord Byron's poetry, suggesting that the former is to the latter as tobacco is to opium (74-5). In visions generated by tobacco, as in Irving's stories, Macnish observes that there is "an air of delightful homeliness" (75). Completing the analogy, Macnish implies that a reader whose "fancy be unusually brilliant … may see thousands of strange forms floating" therein (75). "He may people it," Macnish continues, "according to his temperament … with reptiles,

serpents, and the whole host of *diablerie*, skimming, like motes in the sunshine, amid its curling wreaths" (75).

It is noteworthy that Macnish may have drawn inspiration for the smoking scene in "The Man with the Nose" from Irving's 1822 "The Stout Gentleman: A Stage Coach Romance." Regardless of whether Irving's satirical tale of terror directly inspired Macnish, such overlap should not be surprising since Irving was no stranger to the aesthetic potential of somnolent states for expressing revolutionary forms of experience. In "Rip Van Winkle" Irving depicts sleep as a power of negation that is historically determined. The slumber that dislocates Rip from pre-revolutionary America fails to convey any sense of duration, lapsed time, or intimation of the social and political upheaval he has missed. Awakening solitary upon a "green knoll" to find the sun already risen, Rip disbelieves that he could have slept there "all night" (58), let alone for twenty years. The punctuality of Rip's sleep marks it as distinctly modern, a Lockean narrative strategy designed to secure the continuity of Rip's identity over the gap of revolutionary rupture, foreclosing the potentiality of sleep to generate phenomenological and aesthetic intuitions.

In "The Stout Gentleman," Irving's convalescent but "still feverish" (112) narrator begins his tale in a state of *ennui*, staring out the window of a room in a "small-town inn" onto "a stable-yard on a rainy day" (113). As he gazes on the yard, strange figures begin to emerge from the dreary atmosphere, floating up through the mist, to borrow Macnish's words, "like motes in the sunshine amid its curling wreaths." There are:

> half-drowned fowls … a miserable, crest-fallen cock … a half-dozing cow … a wall-eyed horse … poking his spectral head out of a window … an unhappy cur … a drab of a kitchen wench … looking as sulky as the weather itself; every thing, in short, was comfortless and forlorn, excepting a crew of hard-drinking ducks, assembled like boon companions round a puddle, and making a riotous noise over their liquor. (114)

The bleak panoply outside his window leaves the narrator feeling unrefreshed; he reports that he found himself "lonely and listless, and wanted amusement" (114).

Searching for other entertainment, Irving's narrator becomes obsessed with discovering the identity of a mysterious "stout gentleman" lodging at the same inn. After several unsuccessful attempts to ascertain the stranger's identity, night falls and the suspense escalates. The narrator soon finds himself alone after dark with a sleeping drunk in "the travellers'-room," a "public room" for a new class of wayfarer identified as "a kind of commercial knights errant" (114). Spellbound by the eerie isolation of this space, the narrator listens with dread to the uncanny sounds of the object of his pursuit:

> The gloom that now prevailed was contagious. Around hung the shapeless, and almost spectral, box-coats of departed travellers, long since buried in deep sleep. I heard only the ticking of the clock, with the deep-drawn breathings of the sleeping toper, and the drippings of the rain, drop--drop--drop, from the eaves of the house. The church bells chimed midnight. All at once the stout gentleman began to walk over head, pacing slowly backwards and forwards. There was something extremely awful in all this, especially to one in my state of nerves…. I could bear it no longer. I was wound up to the desperation of a hero of romance. 'Be he who or what he may,' said I to myself, 'I'll have a sight of him!' (131)

This scene contains many of the key ingredients that Macnish would combine in his hypnological literary formula for capturing the feeling of nightmare, in which he applies his philosophical analysis of the experiential logic of aberrant sleep states, anticipating how the phenomenology of nightmare could be deployed to transform nocturnal encounters with strangers in modernity into the "extremely awful" affections of horror.

Like "The Man with the Nose," Irving's tale creates a proto-nightmare aesthetic by drawing attention to the alarming coincidence of the mechanical and the organic, represented by the merging of modern time-keeping with bodily and natural rhythms ("the ticking of the clock,

with the deep-drawn breathings of the sleeping toper, and the drippings of the rain"). These sounds and movements transport Irving's narrator into a state of dread comparable to live burial, surrounded as he is by "the shapeless, and almost spectral, box-coats of departed travellers, long since buried in deep sleep." The feeling of "something extremely awful" generated by the "pacing slowly backwards and forwards" of the stout gentleman overhead, as well as the narrator's "desperation" to break out of this state of enchantment, are the aesthetic effects produced by audible intimations of entombment.

Macnish developed and expanded this recipe for nightmarish dread in his tales of terror for *Blackwood's* by deploying his knowledge of somnolent states to push the aesthetic category of nightmare to its natural limit in the experience of "daymare." Defined by Macnish in *The Philosophy of Sleep* as a waking nightmare "accompanied by no aberration of the judgment" (148), daymare is a phenomenon Macnish claims to have experienced first hand.

The Philosophy of Sleep contains a revealing account of an attack of daymare that Macnish suffered in the summer of 1825, the year before "The Man with the Nose" was published. Macnish recalls:

> Immediately after dining, I threw myself on my back upon a sofa, and, before I was aware, was seized with difficult respiration, extreme dread, and utter incapability of motion or speech. I could neither move nor cry, while the breath came from my chest in broken and suffocating paroxysms. During all this time, I was perfectly awake: I saw the light glaring in at the windows in broad sultry streams; I felt the intense heat of the day pervading my frame; and heard distinctly the different noises in the street, and even the ticking of my own watch, which I had placed on the cushion beside me. I had, at the same time, the consciousness of flies buzzing around, and settling with annoying pertinacity upon my face. During the whole fit, judgment was never for a moment suspended. I felt assured that I laboured under a species of incubus. I even endeavoured to reason myself out of the feeling of dread which filled my mind, and longed with insufferable ardour for some one to open the door, and dissolve the spell which bound me in its fetters. (150)

This incident clearly informed Macnish's literary illustrations of nightmare, especially, as I will show, in his 1837 "Who Can It Be?" On my reading, the portrait of daymare that Macnish develops in this tale of terror decisively sheds new light on how Poe imagines modern insomnia as a waking modification of nightmare, first in "The Fall of the House of Usher," and then subsequently, and perhaps most significantly, in "The Man of the Crowd."

As in Macnish's own account of daymare, the narrator in "Who Can it Be?" finds himself spellbound by a distinctly urban combination of the "glare of sickly light" streaming through his window on a "hot" summer evening, the ticking of his personal time-piece, and the noises of the street outside (168). And just as in "The Man with the Nose" and Irving's "The Stout Gentleman," the appearance of a mysterious stranger sends the narrator into a nightmare state of incomprehensible dread. Lazily gazing out the window after a heavy meal, the somnific narrator of "Who Can It Be?" is startled by an uncanny figure in the street. The face of a stranger shakes him from his half-dozing state and confronts him with an enigma: "His face--it was impossible to analyse its expression" (170). The narrator determines that the stranger "'must be a *bon vivant*'" (170) because his face is "plump and rosy" (170) and he carries an unusual "orange stick, shod with brass, and capped with silver" (170). Macnish's narrator surmises that this walking stick "'must be to support his dignity'" (170); and he speculates on its unique nature. He "call[s] to mind the rod of Moses, and the wand of Esculapius" before finally deciding that the stick's mysterious aura likely lies in its manufacturing origin in "St. Michael or Jamaica" (174).[16] With this observation Macnish's text registers how commodities produced by slave economies in the West Indies functioned to materially and symbolically prop up European dignity. Echoing and

[16] For an account of the history of dreams and sleep medicine beginning with the cult of Asclepius, see Kroker 22-5.

enhancing the spell-like power of obscure wealth introduced in "The Man with the Nose," Macnish here connects his nightmare phenomenology of the modern urban street to the cultural legacy of slavery.

Satisfied by his initial observations about the stranger, and feeling "languid, heavy, and disposed, if not absolutely to sleep, at least to doze" (169), Macnish's narrator tries to enjoy a post-meal nap. Closing his eyes, however, only thrusts him into a nightmare state of sleeplessness conditioned by sound:

> A slumber! it was but the shadow of one—the reflection of a dream. I was neither asleep nor awake; for though my eyes were sealed in oblivion, my ears were not--and I heard, as in the depths of nightmare, the distant and confused noise of the street … the voices of fishwomen--the ticking of my own time-piece, and the sound of my own breath. All these things I heard; but they were as nothing to the tread … of the stranger. There was something about this man which scared slumber away, and I was obliged to open my eyes, which were once more fixed upon him with increased curiosity. (171)

This passage generates a terrifying hypnotic effect through a contrapuntal composition of bodily and mechanical rhythms: the "tread" of the stranger outside synchronizes with "the no less monotonous tick—tick—tick of his brazen-shod baton" (176); and this forms the polyphonic background for the discordant synchronization of the narrator's "time-piece" with the sound of his "breath." As his attention and bodily rhythms become hopelessly absorbed in the sounds of the street and the passage of mechanical time, the narrator describes the onset of a parasomniac state combining daymare with insomnia: "Altogether I was perplexed. My corporeal and mental functions were clearly opposed to each other, the former inspiring me to sleep, the latter striving to keep me awake. I felt a weight fall upon my spirit" (172).

In *The Philosophy of Sleep* Macnish reflects on the causes of sleeplessness, concluding that "whatever stimulates the external senses, however slightly, may prevent sleep" (178). He

identifies the "ticking of a clock" as a potent stimulant of the "external senses" in "very sensitive people" (178). And it is clear from his representations of daymare that Macnish understood the sounds of urban life and the tempos of modern society as insidious psychotropic rhythms operating in concert with clock time. Along with heightened sensitivity to external sounds, Macnish points out that those suffering from nightmare phenomena frequently become more sensitive to bodily sensations, observing that attacks are often accompanied by vertigo and "ringing in the ears" (132).[17] In addition to these sensations, Macnish identifies "certain stimulating agents, such as tea or coffee, taken shortly before going to bed" as potent psychostimulants that "suppl[y] the brain with fresh sensorial power, enabl[ing] it to carry on uninterruptedly all its functions longer than it would otherwise do, and consequently prevent it from relapsing into slumber at the usual period" (179). Deploying the concept of relapse, which in the nineteenth century could designate either a return of disease after a brief period of recovery, as when Edmund Burke writes of "a slow fever with frequent appearances of amendment, and frequent relapses," or a fall back into error or sin following an experience of enlightenment or grace, as when Milton writes of "a worse relapse / And heavier fall" ("Relapse, n.2"), Macnish marks sleep as a pathological state measured against the emergent norm of wakefulness conditioned by increasing exposure to psychotropic agents within and without.

Macnish explicitly warns about sleeplessness developing into a state of "constitutional restlessness" (179). "Chronic wakefulness, originating from any mental or bodily affection," Macnish observes, "sometimes degenerates into a habit, in which the sufferer will remain for

[17] In *The Anatomy of Drunkenness,* Macnish explains ringing in the ears, for both drunkenness and nightmare, as the result of "the generally increased action within the head, and more particularly by the throbbing of the internal carotid arteries which run in the immediate neighbourhood of the ears" (93).

weeks, months, or even years, if authors are to be believed, awake" (179).[18] He concludes that "nothing is so hurtful to the mind and body as want of sleep. Deprived of the necessary portion, the person gets wan, emaciated and listless, and very soon falls into bad health" (182).

In *The Sleep of Others and the Transformation of Sleep Research,* Kenton Kroker argues that "sleeplessness, not insomnia, was the topic of Macnish's discussion" (76). In fact modern insomnia would not appear as a scientific object until the end of the nineteenth century, when it was determined, Kroker explains, by "a technical interface of psychiatric, psychological, and physiological dimensions," which rendered the condition intelligible as "a dangerous aberration of night-time norms" (79). From the standpoint of the history of medicine and science, Kroker is certainly correct. Macnish does not use the word insomnia let alone develop a concept of it in scientific terms. From a cultural perspective, however, Macnish's original contribution to the modern image of insomnia should be acknowledged. While his focus is on individual cases in his scientific and medical writings, Macnish often observes the myriad ways in which modern society engenders the habit of sleeplessness, especially in his fiction. On my reading Macnish's

[18] Macnish may have had the case of Robert Gourlay in mind. Gourlay was a Scottish-Canadian agrarian radical reformer who presented one of the most famous cases of insomnia in the nineteenth century, claiming to have slept only a handful of hours over the course of a five year span. His work to support the rural poor, whose interests were harmed by Poor Laws, enclosure acts, and restricted suffrage, found expression in 1809 with the publication of a pamphlet in London demanding "reform independent of parliament." The case of Gourlay illustrates how the economic and political forces of modernity could result in the "habit of living without sleep" (296). For more on Gourlay, see "Remarkable Case of Protracted Watchfulness." A satirical note in the section "Medical Intelligence" from the same journal seems to reference Gourlay in 1843, observing that "neurology has taken so well in Boston that a committee have invited the discoverer to visit Boston again in September, say the papers. It has been quite the go, and would have been more profitable, were it not for a more exciting discovery announced by a Scotchman, relative to going without sleep. The idea of always being wide awake is beginning to have admirers, and a committee may, perhaps, report upon the propriety and feasibility of dispensing with beds, sleeping-rooms, night-caps and nurse-lamps, in all time to come" (245).

tales of terror effectively diagnose nightmare sleeplessness as a foundational experience of modernity, phenomenologically probing the limitations of dominant clinical narratives in the nineteenth century, including his own account of "wakefulness [as] a constant symptom" in many cases of disordered sleep (*Philosophy of Sleep* 175).

In fact Macnish's combination of the hallucinatory imagery of nightmare with constitutional restlessness anticipates William Alexander Hammond's important 1854 identification of insomnia as "a symptom of an underlying mental disorder" (79). Hammond's *Sleep and Its Derangements* (1869) would mark the beginning of a new epoch in sleep science, outlining "the necessity for sleep" in the first chapter and defining the problem of sleep in terms of the modern concept of fatigue. At the beginning of his crucial reflections on "The Pathology of Wakefulness," Hammond observes the cultural causes and consequences of insomnia. Hammond writes:

> As nations advance in civilization and refinement, affections of the nervous system become more frequent, because progress in these directions is necessarily accompanied by an increase in the wear and tear of those organs through which perceptions are received and emotions excited; and, in addition, the mode of life, as regards food, clothing, occupation, and habits, is being constantly removed farther from that standard which a regard for hygienic considerations would establish as most advantageous. If, as we have every reason to believe, each thought involves the destruction of a certain amount of nervous tissue, we can very well understand why, as we go forward in enlightenment and in all the elements of material and intellectual progress, we are at the same time, unless we also advance in the knowledge of the laws of our being, hurrying ourselves with rapid strides to a state of existence in which there is neither waste nor repair. (222)

Remarking on the newness of this condition, Hammond observes that, "at present there are, probably, but few physicians engaged in extensive practice in any of our large cities who do not in the course of the year meet with several cases of obstinate wakefulness, unaccompanied, in the early stages at least, by any other prominent disorder of the system" (225).

In a noteworthy passage, Hammond reflects on an exceptional example of sleep deprivation predating the ubiquity of mass insomnia as a feature of urban modernity:

> Damiens, who attempted the assassination of Louis XV. of France, and who was sentenced to the most infamous tortures, with red-hot pincers, melted lead, burning sulphur, boiling oil, and other diabolical contrivances, yet he slept on the rack, and it was only by continually changing the mode of torture, so as to give a new sensation, that he was kept awake. He complained, just before his death, that the deprivation of sleep was the greatest of all his torments. (15)

The torture and execution of Damiens would be made even more infamous of course by Foucault's deployment of the event as an exemplar of the public display of sovereign power.

In connecting Hammond's astonishing claim that Damiens complained foremost about sleep deprivation with Macnish's theory of nightmare, I do mean to invoke and perhaps draw a contrast with Foucault's theoretical positioning of the execution of Damiens at the beginning of Discipline and Punish. Whereas the public spectacle of the execution, from the standpoint of the history of sovereign power, contrasts in Foucault's account with the relatively hidden operations of disciplinary society, as exercised in governing institutions, there is a definite continuity between the breakdown of Damiens's person through sleep deprivation, found in Hammond's account, and the nightmare phenomena occasioned by sleeplessness that Macnish and Poe theorize as intrinsic to modern life. In my analysis, Poe develops insomnia as an aesthetic category, at the limit of nightmare, to capture the internalization of what was formerly an exceptional case inflicted from without, namely, routine sleeplessness.

Reading "The Man of the Crowd" with this connection in mind reveals the transfer of systematic sleep deprivation from a sovereign state of exception to the generalized condition of modern insomnia. It must be recalled how Foucault observed the invention of detective fiction as a new literary genre: "The literature of crime transposes to another social class the spectacle that

had surrounded the criminal" (69). In addition to constituting the criminal mastermind as a new type of bourgeois anti-hero, the genre of detective fiction, as it was imagined first by Macnish and later developed by Poe, helped establish the fundamental phenomenological framework on the basis of which the modern image of insomnia as a relentless state of waking nightmare could appear.

While Macnish did not explicitly consider the problem in terms of managing the health of urban populations, as Hammond would, his tales of terror provide an astute cultural theorization and phenomenology of modern insomnia.[19] In his fiction, Macnish captures Hammond's "state of existence in which there is neither waste nor repair" as a slide from daymare into the constitutional restlessness of a waking nightmare. He renders Hammond's pathological wakefulness as a nightmare form of stasis, a sleepless state of exception in which the nightly interruption and repair of waking life (sleep) is permanently suspended. Modifying nightmare, Macnish combines the suspension and paralysis of sleep phenomena to depict a new form of sleeplessness, generalizing, in the aesthetic category of daymare, the somnolent affection of live burial. The nightmare collapse of the mechanical and the organic in Macnish's fiction anticipates the expansion of sleep-managing and -disrupting pocket technologies and the paralyzing affection produced by the binding of tick and breath, clock and lung, as a decisive somaesthetic effect of modern time consciousness.

Moving beyond his medical writings, which explore the external causes of sleeplessness in individual cases, Macnish's tales of terror outline a nightmare phenomenology of things and

[19] Macnish's tales of terror appeared shortly before the development of what David Hamilton identifies as "the first signs of the growth of power of central government in health matters" became observable in the fiction of *Blackwood's Magazine* (197).

provide a framework for the modern problem of insomnia in the aesthetics of daymare. As Macnish's narrator in "Who Can It Be?" returns his attention to the man in the street, he is baffled by his inability to determine any property that could define his uncanny nature: "What could be the meaning of this? there was something unfathomable about him; his name was Mystery, and the longer I looked at him the more miraculous did his whole appearance seem" (173). The narrator expends a great deal of mental energy attempting to guess the stranger's identity, even speculating at one point that "he must be a contributor to Blackwood, and certainly a celebrated one" (173). The narrator is ultimately unable to sleep; he declares: "I was in a state of fascination, from which I found it impossible to liberate myself. I was in a trance; an incubus hung equally upon my body and spirit…" (176). Expressing deep frustration and confusion, he throws himself onto his couch and bursts into tears, eventually emerging with new resolve: "'I must discover him. There is something about the man, which cannot be allowed to remain in obscurity; and, if I die the moment after, I shall have the secret out of him'" (181).

Unable to bear the mystery, the narrator launches into immediate action:

> I no longer sat like a fixture at the window: my agitation was too great to admit of so sedentary a position, and I got up in a paroxysm of intense anxiety, and walked about the room--rummaging every nook of my brain to find out some way of coming at the object in view. I was literally haunted--I could not drive the strange man from my head. If I looked out, I saw him walking with my bodily eye: if I turned away, I beheld him equally well with the eye of the mind. Nor did the sound of his footsteps for a moment escape me. I heard them creaking upon the court, accompanied by the attendant and ghostlike responses of the everlasting walking-stick. (182)

The spectral appearance of the stranger with his ominous walking stick leads Macnish's narrator to a single conclusion: "'He must be a villain,' I exclaimed in the bitterness of my soul, 'thus to tamper with the agonies of a fellow being. Notwithstanding his dignity, he is neither more nor less than—a villain'" (183). In a final desperate act, he rushes into the street to confront his

sleep-destroying malefactor only to find it empty: “Horrible to relate—the man was gone, and I never saw him more!” (183).

Macnish operates with something like a projection theory of nightmare in both “The Man with the Nose” and “Who Can It Be?” In each tale the mysterious stranger vanishes before any further investigation can be carried out. A succinct explanation of this theory is contained in the essay “Of the Nightmare,” published in *The Living Age* in 1845, which summarizes the metaphysical mechanics of nightmare projection in the following terms:

> Our own phantasy projects the apparition into the outer world, wherein it illudes us like a magic-lantern image … but that which mockingly thus, as spectre, appears to us from without, has in reality its site in the medial (not the central) region of our being; and the phantasy, behind it, is as a lamp, and the outward sense is as a glass before it, whereby its image is thrown out, and appears, huge and threatening, on the wall of the phenomenal. (500)

While Macnish’s tales of terror ultimately fail to move beyond this theory, they contain the basis for Poe’s extension of Macnish’s nightmare aesthetics into an ontological and aesthetic form of horror irreducible to subjective projection.

In “The Fall of the House of Usher,” published the year prior to “The Man of the Crowd,” Poe offers a direct critique of Fuseli’s style while developing his own variation on Macnish’s nightmare aesthetic. With the paintings of his host Roderick Usher in view, Poe’s narrator marvels at the power of “vaguenesses at which I shuddered the more thrillingly, because I shuddered knowing not why …” (225). Echoing Macnish’s claims about the challenges of depicting nightmare and the limitations of Fuseli’s style, Poe imagines a visual representation that would be adequate to the undefined and superlatively disgusting objects of nightmare:

> From these paintings (vivid as their images now are before me) I would in vain endeavor to educe more than a small portion which should lie within the compass of merely written words. By the utter simplicity, by the nakedness of his designs, he arrested and over-

> awed attention. If ever mortal painted an idea, that mortal was Roderick Usher. For me at least—in the circumstances then surrounding me—there arose out of the pure abstractions which the hypochondriac contrived to throw upon his canvass, an intensity of intolerable awe, no shadow of which felt I ever yet in the contemplation of the certainly glowing yet too concrete reveries of Fuseli. (225)

While his description of Usher's suggestive vaguenesses and abstract lines, contrasted with Fuseli's "too concrete reveries," anticipates modernist attempts to express ideas in paint, Poe's seeming dismissal of the power of words to produce the "intensity of intolerable awe" that he desires is belied by his tireless search to achieve such an effect in literary form.

"The Fall of the House of Usher" in fact contains Poe's first complete attempt to formalize a literary method for developing nightmare as an aesthetic category. Upon viewing the titular structure of the tale for the first time, Poe's narrator reports feeling that "a sense of insufferable gloom pervaded [his] spirit" (216). The house itself weighs upon him, generating sensations of "iciness, a sinking, a sickening of the heart -- an unredeemed dreariness of thought which no goading of the imagination could torture into aught of the sublime" (216). Moving beyond Kantian and Burkean categories of the sublime, which allow for pleasurable self-recovery in the safety of spectatorial distance, as well as the projection theory of nightmare that Macnish could not escape, Poe's nightmare aesthetic collapses the subject of contemplation into the object contemplated. The House of Usher literally collapses, enfolding the subjectivity of its occupants at the end of the tale. Prior to this metaphorical fall, however, Poe materially collapses the narrator's point of view into the object-House of Usher. To generate a nightmare affection of horror, Poe meticulously deconstructs the relation between the narrator-subject and the house-object, effectively elevating the Macnishian nightmare object to an ontological effect in which the mode of perception belonging properly to sleep itself, the shattering gaze that sleep or

hypnaesthesis returns to *aesthesis*, like Macnish's basilisk, reveals the a priori interdependence of subject and object, waking life and sleep.

Reflecting on the unfathomable nature of the house, Poe's narrator records being drawn into his contemplation of it, signaling his initiation into the Macnishian phenomenology of nightmare:

> What was it -- I paused to think -- what was it that so unnerved me in the contemplation of the House of Usher? It was a mystery all insoluble; nor could I grapple with the shadowy fancies that crowded upon me as I pondered. I was forced to fall back upon the unsatisfactory conclusion, that while, beyond doubt, there are combinations of very simple natural objects which have the power of thus affecting us, still the analysis of this power lies among considerations beyond our depth. (216-17)

As with Macnish's nightmare objects in "The Man with the Nose" and "Who Can It Be?" it is possible to say that the House of Usher exists as an object of horror only when viewed from the perspective of a transcendental intuition of the inseparability of subject and object. Developing the Macnishian nightmare object to its theoretical limit, Poe's work on the aesthetics of nightmare has had a lasting influence on modern theory, including literary applications of notions like Lacan's *objet petit a*, particularly as defined by Slavoj Žižek: "[T]o put it in Lacanese, the subject's gaze is always-already inscribed into the perceived object itself, in the guise of its 'blind spot,' that which is 'in the object more than object itself,' the point from which the object itself returns the gaze" (17). By inscribing the subject of contemplation in the object contemplated, Poe's tales of nightmare move beyond the projection theory that ensnared Macnish to theorize an ontological grounding of nightmare aesthetics in modernity.

Inscribing the narrator's singular perspective into his observation of the house, Poe's tale operates the metaphysical short-circuit that Macnish theorized at the core of nightmare experience. A crack in the transcendental structure of the subject-house, with its "vacant and eye-

like windows" (217), opens onto a direct encounter with the horror of material existence: "a barely perceptible fissure, which, extending from the roof of the building in front, made its way down the wall in a zigzag direction, until it became lost in the sullen waters of the tarn" (219). With its natural-historical combination of "decayed trees" (219) and crumbling walls, the House of Usher confronts and enchants the narrator. Inhaling its "pestilent and mystic vapour, dull, sluggish, faintly discernible, and leaden-hued" (219), he becomes intoxicated by the precipitous proximity of life in decay.

As the fatality of the imminent collapse of the metaphysical self into the natural processes of (in)organic matter turns transfixing, Poe's narrator bears witness to the "undefined" and "superlatively disgusting" contours of a Macnishian nightmare object. The house, which ultimately proves indistinguishable from its owner, arrests the narrator's faculties with "the potency of a spell" (237) and buries its occupant(s) alive. Indeed, the motif of live burial transpires thematically in two instances: first, with the live burial of the lady Madeline (Roderick Usher's sister); second, with the narrator's subsequent experience of a unique form of waking nightmare. Moreover, these thematic instances are redoubled on a structural level: first, with the allegorical collapse/live burial of the moribund House of Usher; second, with the narrator's discovery of the inclusion of his own gaze within the object-house itself.

I will briefly discuss the thematic level and then show how Poe's structural sense informs his phenomenology of nightmare. After helping Roderick entomb the yet-living Madeline, the narrator reports feeling "terrified" and "infected" by the "hurried, unequal, and objectless" wandering of his restless companion (231). Somnipathically absorbing Madeline's catalepsy and

Roderick's sleeplessness, the narrator suffers an attack of incubus that proves decisive for understanding Poe's modification of classic nightmare experience:

> Sleep came not near my couch—while the hours waned and waned away. I struggled to reason off the nervousness which had dominion over me…. But my efforts were fruitless. An irrepressible tremor gradually pervaded my frame; and, at length, there sat upon my very heart an incubus of utterly causeless alarm. Shaking this off with a gasp and a struggle, I uplifted myself upon the pillows, and, peering earnestly within the intense darkness of the chamber, harkened…. Overpowered by an intense sentiment of horror, unaccountable yet unendurable, I threw on my clothes with haste (for I felt that I should sleep no more during the night), and endeavored to arouse myself from the pitiable condition into which I had fallen, by pacing rapidly to and fro through the apartment. (231-32)

Crucially, the influence of the incubus persists, as with Macnish, even as Poe's narrator attempts to free himself with frantic nightwalking.

Indeed, the nightmare sense of live burial, the "intense sentiment of horror, unaccountable yet unendurable," only intensifies as the prematurely-buried Madeline returns from the grave and collapses "heavily inward upon the person of her brother" (237), killing both instantly. Decisively, the conclusion of "The Fall of the House of Usher" contains an image that connects this tale both with Macnish and with "The Man of the Crowd," by way of an allusion to Thomas De Quincey's 1821 *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater*. Bearing witness to the fall of the House of Usher, Poe's narrator hears "a long tumultuous shouting sound like the voice of a thousand waters" (238). These waters, which devour the House of Usher, the metonymical portrait of "the ancient race of the Ushers," with its "vacant and eye-like windows," undoubtedly flow from the same source that feeds "the tumultuous sea of human heads" that cascade past the D--Coffee-House in London at the beginning of "The Man of the Crowd." They are the same waters that animate a passage quoted by Macnish in *The Philosophy of Sleep* extolling the

unrivalled power of narcotic dreams, in which De Quincey describes what he calls "the tyranny of the human face":

> Perhaps some part of my London life might be answerable for this. Be that as it may, now it was that upon the rocking waters of the ocean, the human face began to appear; the sea appeared paved with innumerable faces, upturned to the heavens: faces imploring, wrathful, despairing, surged upwards by thousands, by myriads, by generations, by centuries: —my agitation was infinite—my mind tossed and surged with the ocean. (qtd. in Macnish 90)

These waters and the faces in them accumulate temporal force across Poe's texts, constituting a specific image of insomnia as a quintessentially modern object of nightmare experience in "The Man of the Crowd."

Chapter 3: "'Er lasst sich nicht lesen'": "The Man of the Crowd" and the Face of Insomnia in Nineteenth-Century America

> The economic conditions under which society exists are expressed in the superstructures—precisely as, with the sleeper, an overfull stomach finds not its reflection but its expression in the contents of dreams, which, from a causal point of view, it may be said to 'condition.' The collective, from the first, expresses the conditions of its life. These find their expression in the dream and their interpretation in the awakening.
>
> —Walter Benjamin (*Arcades Project*)

Sleep and its disorders became visible as objects of cultural and epistemic scrutiny in part because writers like Macnish and Poe invented new aesthetic categories to explore the night as both critique and condition of modern subjectivity. Each may be numbered among the nineteenth century's most astute and influential "hypnocritics," as Benjamin Reiss puts it, authors who "reveal that the social organization of sleep and wakefulness has political, economic, spiritual, and aesthetic consequences" (6). While literary critics have focused on Poe's interest in dreams, mesmerism, and hypnagogia, scant attention has been paid to his fascination with a wide range of other somnolent states, especially the historic emergence of insomnia. This oversight is surprising because Poe's obsession with darkness, in all its literal and metaphorical senses, forms a decisive condition of his writing. From early poems like "A Dream" (1827), questioning the reality of the waking world, to gothic and proto-detective short fiction like "Murders in the Rue Morgue" (1841), featuring the calculated insomnia of C. Auguste Dupin, Poe draws on "the true Darkness" of the night to elicit nightmare sensations ("Murders" 277). Poe's protagonists frequently endure sleeplessness, suffering in pitch black conditions from fears of live burial, catalepsy, hallucinations, nightmares, night terrors, and other proto-parasomnias. In crafting

these nocturnal affects, Poe develops insomnia as a specifically modern aesthetic category revealing the extreme limit of nightmare aesthetics.

Recent scholarship on Victorian literature has shown the extent to which Charles Dickens, Poe's transatlantic contemporary and a known reader of Macnish's *Philosophy of Sleep*, rendered sleep visible, including "hypnic jerks, restless leg syndrome, sleep paralysis, obstructive sleep apnea," well before the advent of sleep science and medicine as we know it (Greaney, "Sleep and Sleep-watching" 1-2). Despite obvious parallels between Poe and Dickens in this regard, scholars of American literature have tended to neglect Poe as one of the key authors of nocturnal modernity. A long tradition of Poe scholarship, running from Charles Baudelaire and Walter Benjamin to the present, has implicitly recognized the singularity of "The Man of the Crowd" in this regard, without however addressing the problem of dormitivity, or the relation of the dormitive (that which causes or necessitates sleep) to the normative regulation of sleep as a social state of inactivity, which I take to be central to this text.[20] Opening in the D-- Coffee-House in London, a psychotropic flashpoint in the advent of modernity, "The Man of the Crowd" paints a vivid portrait of sleep deprivation *in extremis*.

I borrow the term "psychotropic" here from Daniel Lord Smail, who defines "psychotropic mechanisms" from a neurohistorical perspective as "human cultural practices that

[20] Two notable exceptions here are the original but brief discussions of "The Man of the Crowd" contained in Eluned Summers-Bremner's *Insomnia: A Cultural History* and Matthew Beaumont's *Nightwalking: A Nocturnal History of London*. In the former, Summers-Bremner observes in passing how Poe "delivers a kind of phenomenology of insomnia" *avant la lettre* (118). In the latter, Beaumont argues that, "Poe imparts a renewed mythopoeic significance, in the conditions of the industrial capitalist city, to the descendant of a centuries-old metropolitan archetype: the common nightwalker" ("Conclusion: The Man of the Crowd*"*). In *The Politics of Sleep*, Simon J. Williams uses the term "dormativity" and the dyad "*dormative-normative*," without precisely defining these terms, to indicate a similar methodological approach.

alter or affect brain-body chemistry" (155). My interest in the term lies in analyzing how Macnish and Poe rendered the affective life of modernity's most prominent psychotropic mechanisms apparent in the tropes and aesthetic categories of nightmare and sleeplessness. From his perch inside the coffee-house, the unnamed narrator of Poe's tale convalescently consumes advertisements and gazes alternately at the "promiscuous company in the room" and, through "smoky panes," at passersby in the street (262-63). Steeping in an atmosphere of neural stimulation (coffee, tobacco, and newspapers), Poe's text enters into the phenomenology of mass society and consumer culture that Walter Benjamin identified, reading Baudelaire reading Poe, as the mode of perception underlying the commodity form, the basis of the "mere armature" of detective fiction (*Charles Baudelaire* 48). Finding his "strength" returning after a long illness, the narrator enters into "one of those happy moods which are so precisely the converse of *ennui*--moods of the keenest appetency, when the film from the mental vision departs and the intellect [is] electrified" (Poe 262). This is the aestheticizing disposition of the *flaneur*-detective, Poe's signature character type: he "descend[s] to details, and regard[s] with minute interest the innumerable varieties of figure, dress, air, gait, visage, and expression of countenance" (263).

What appears as a lifting of the "film from the mental vision" from the perspective of Poe's narrator, becomes, from Benjamin's genealogical vantage point, the *flaneur* witnessing the hellscape of the modern metropolis as through a veil. "This veil is the mass," Benjamin explains, and "because of it, horrors have an enchanting effect upon him" (*Charles Baudelaire* 60). In "The Man of the Crowd," the onset of enchantment coincides with the onset of the night: "As the darkness came on, the throng momently increased; and, by the time the lamps were well lighted, two dense and continuous tides of population were rushing past the door. At this particular

period of the evening I had never before been in a similar situation, and the tumultuous sea of human heads filled me, therefore, with a delicious novelty of emotion" (263). In stark contrast with the deductive awakening of Ralph Waldo Emerson's "transparent eyeball" (10), Poe's analytic of "electrified" or aesthetico-inductive reason, which searches for new social types in the "innumerable varieties" of the crowd, performs a materialist deduction of the nocturnal elements of modernity. As I will show below, Poe's *flaneur* discovers a nightmare form of insomnia that reveals not only a new social type but the horizon of sleeplessness against which the modern crowd moves as a recognizable form.

The twilight brings "noblemen, merchants, attorneys, tradesmen, stock-jobbers" (Poe 264), businessmen from all classes and trades behaving in strange mechanical fashion:

> Others … were restless in their movements, had flushed faces, and talked and gesticulated to themselves, as if feeling in solitude on account of the very denseness of the company around. When impeded in their progress, these people suddenly ceased muttering; but redoubled their gesticulations, and awaited, with an absent and overdone smile upon their lips, the course of the persons impeding them. If jostled, they bowed profusely to the jostlers, and appeared overwhelmed with confusion. (263)

Noting the absurd "servility" of those jostled in the crowd, Benjamin dwells on Poe's deployment of what he calls the "repertoire of clowns:" the "abrupt movements" of passersby simultaneously resemble "half-drunken wretches" and mimic the machinelike machinations of capitalist production, consumption, and speculation. In concluding that Poe's masses "behave as if they could no longer express themselves through anything but a reflex action" (*Charles Baudelaire* 53), Benjamin highlights without remarking on the somnolent dimension of this passage.

Reading with Robert Macnish in mind helps bring Poe's nocturnal aesthetics into focus. In *The Anatomy of Drunkenness* (1828), which contains many entries on the sleep of drunkards,

Macnish observes "a strange mixture of folly and rationality" in drunken somnambulism (137). The unique combination of clown-like reflexes and self-imposed discipline on display in Poe's crowd perhaps resemble nothing more than popular comedic descriptions of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century sleepwalkers. The comedic-yet-rational, automatic-yet-spontaneous, movements observed in public displays of somnambulism in the nineteenth century may be considered the medico-aesthetic precursors to surrealist notions of "psychic automatism" and the "automatized" bodies Rey Chow has identified in twentieth-century film and television.[21] In non-fiction like "Snoring for the Million" (1842), Dickens was perhaps the first to make satirical use out of imagining a regimentation of somnolent behaviors applied to the masses; and in fiction like *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1840), which very likely influenced Poe's view of the night as an emerging domain of literary exploration, the repertoire of somnolent states provides, as Michael Greaney has it, a "fantasy of irresistible readability" ("Sleep and Sleep-watching" 9), a window into the moral life of society. Like Macnish and Dickens, Poe registers a specific moment in the modern history of sleep, when spectacular hypnological stagings of natural and artificial somnambulism were establishing the epistemic conditions for mapping the wakeful boundaries of moral life and a new class consciousness was emerging in struggles over the length of the working day.[22] And like Macnish and Dickens, Poe combines satire and epistemology in his critique of somnolent sociality.

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[21] In Chow's words, "Being 'automatized' means being subjected to social exploitation whose origins are beyond one's individual grasp, but it also means becoming a spectacle whose 'aesthetic' power increases with one's increasing awkwardness and helplessness" (61).

[22] The modern possibility of articulating the right to rest, it must be recalled, appeared on the historical stage in Marx's analysis as the natural limit of capitalist production, as Marx writes: "In its blind and measureless drive, its insatiable appetite for surplus labour, capital oversteps not only the moral but even the merely physical limits of the working day. It usurps the time for growth, development and healthy maintenance of the body…. It reduces the sound sleep needed

As night thickens in "The Man of the Crowd," Poe's narrator grows ever more fascinated by the nocturnal makeup of the crowd passing before his window. He observes: "not only did the general character of the crowd materially alter … but the rays of the gas-lamps, feeble at first in their struggle with the dying day, had … at length gained ascendancy, and threw over every thing a fitful and garish lustre. All was dark yet splendid" (266). Pressing against the window pane, his "brow to the glass" and his pupils dilating, the convalescent discovers "darker and deeper themes for speculation" (267). The twilight throngs of the middle class give way to "pic-men, porters, coal-heavers, sweeps; organ-grinders, monkey-exhibitors, and ballad-mongers, those who vended with those who sang; ragged artizans and exhausted laborers of every description" (266). Enchanted by this spectacle of exhausted labor, the narrator engages in a fantasy of sartorial and physiognomic legibility: "The wild effects of the light enchained me to an examination of individual faces; and although the rapidity with which the world of light flitted before the window prevented me from casting more than a glance upon each visage, still it seemed that, in my then peculiar mental state, I could frequently read, even in that brief interval of a glance, the history of long years" (267). Crucially, Poe's convalescent narrator registers the illumination of the urban night, one of the signature accomplishments of technological and cultural modernity, as a source of unfreedom ("the light enchained me").

The material factors that contributed to the emergence of insomnia in Poe's time included the intensification of international shipping routes funded by speculative finance and slavery; the

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for the restoration, renewal and refreshment of the vital forces to the exact amount of torpor essential to the revival of an absolutely exhausted organism. It is not the normal maintenance of labour-power which determines the limits of the working day here, but rather the greatest possible daily expenditure of labour-power, no matter how diseased, compulsory and painful it may be, which determines the limits of the workers' period of rest" (395).

colonial production, circulation, and consumption of neural stimulants such as coffee, tea, and sugar; the rise in popularity of sensational forms of print media; the emphasis on productivity and efficiency in labor practices integral to colonial slave economies and the Industrial Revolution, new lighting technologies, and concomitant transformations in time-consciousness. These factors intensified the normative devaluation of sleep as a sinful waste of time and money, a dangerous bodily temptation that self-governing Anglo-Saxon men were enjoined to resist. As the conditions for "our modern 'twenty-four/seven' society" (Ekirch xxvii) and the phenomenology of insomnia as a new social condition emerged in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the ability to master one's own sleep as well as the sleep of others became a crucial ingredient of national identity. By the end of the nineteenth century, insomnia would come to designate a somnolent state of exception, a simultaneous transgression and confirmation of the norms defining healthy sleep in relation to the well-being of laboring populations. "The Man of the Crowd" figures modern insomnia on the cusp of these developments.

With his affinity for gothic tropes and especially his analysis of the origins of class-consciousness as a struggle against the reduction of the laborer to personified labor-time, Marx provides an account of how the drive to erase the need for sleep in an endless cycle of production generates a nightmare form of sleeplessness. "The prolongation of the working-day beyond the limits of the natural day, into the night," Marx explains, "only acts as a palliative. It quenches only in a slight degree the vampire thirst for the living blood of labour. To appropriate labour during all the 24 hours of the day is, therefore, the inherent tendency of capitalist production" (367). A cognate story could be told from the standpoint of consumption, using the language of fantasy, desire, and leisure, and would include among other things the rise of the Early Closing

Association that formed in 1842 and persisted for decades without much success. Explaining the logic of this movement to protect evenings and weekends from encroaching consumerism in 1858, an article in the *Daily Telegraph* (2 April 1858, p. 5) provided the following observations: "health is better than chiaroscuro; the relaxation and recreation of thousands of over-worked young men and women are better than effects rivalling the canvases of a Rembrandt or a Schalker, which every shop-front in a crowded street presents by night" (qtd. in Nead 86).

Analytically absorbed in the chiaroscuro of the street, Poe's narrator bears witness to the sublimity of darkness in the sea-like crowd passing his coffee shop window, observing the phantasmagoria of the night in all its "noisy and inordinate vivacity which jarred discordantly upon the ear, and gave an aching sensation to the eye" (266). "Dark yet splendid," Poe's night is the source of physiological pain and ontological anxiety, the origin of an ocular ache and the "darker and deeper themes" emerging specter-like from the sublimity of all-encompassing darkness. Darkness produces terror and conditions the discourse of the sublime, in Edmund Burke's influential account of modernity's definitive aesthetic category, because of human physiology: blackness causes pain and is the origin of horror because it strains the muscles and nerves of the eye. In making this argument, Burke aimed to refute John Locke's view that the association of darkness with terror arose historically from stories linking "ghosts and goblins" to the night (274). As Simon Gikandi and others have shown, such debates about the nature of perception established "the necessity of the black as the counterpoint to white visuality" in modern aesthetics (42).

Poe's focus on the visibility of white labor in a transatlantic metropole and his metaphorical allusion to slavery ("the light enchained me") only reinforce Toni Morrison's claim

that, "even, and especially, when American texts are not 'about' Africanist presences or characters or narrative or idiom, the shadow hovers in implication, in sign, in line of demarcation" (46-7). Poe's use of chiaroscuro in "The Man of the Crowd" limns racial anxiety as well as desire in the nocturnal discourse of the sublime as a key ingredient of modern insomnia. From this point of view, sleep and the night acquire new significance as signifiers not only of sin but also of the nocturnal obscurity or unconsciousness at the core of modern life. In *Night Passages: Philosophy, Literature, and Film,* Elisabeth Bronfen outlines the logic behind the conceptual overdetermination of darkness: "enlightened reason can only assert its hegemony by discovering a piece of night located both within its epistemological system of ordering the world and outside, residing on the very margins that are also interwoven with its conceptual fabric" (66). Thus Burke's claim that darkness is the cause of the sublime and that fear of the night is not arbitrary is correct in this respect: blackness, the onto-epistemological limit of modern reason, is the material condition for the sublime feeling of limitlessness. Or in Toni Morrison's analysis, the limitless universality of the rights of man was historically conditioned by the internalized limit of blackness, the excluded element of humanity that justified racial hierarchy, and "inevitably yoked to Africanism" (38).[23]

In the context of Atlantic world slavery, capitalism, and the biopolitical construction of race, the modern night became a domain of sleepless terror. The slave trade, colonial expansion,

[23] The ahistorical or "lazy existence" that Hegel ascribed to Africans and all similar stereotypes of laziness and the inability to properly discipline sleep ascribed to non-European, non-white others may be understood in terms of this historical constellation. It is relevant to recall that, in his *Philosophy of History*, Hegel likens Africa's existence to a sleep-like state: "Africa, as far back as history goes, has remained closed and without links with the rest of the world. It is the country of gold that is closed in on itself, the country of infancy, beyond the daylight of conscious history, wrapped in the blackness of night" (247).

and the slave economies of the New World formed the dark background that enabled the light of modern reason to shine through the unprecedented growth and development of metropolises like London, the beacons of commerce and culture. In *Insomnia: A Cultural History*, Eluned Summers-Bremner observes an important structural parallel: "like insomnia, the slave trade was an actively dark state – dark because unseen, often distant from the site of investment and dealing – as well as a lack: the inability to see how to run an economy without it" (12). Benjamin's analysis of the experience of shock (*Chockerlebnis*) characteristic of modern urban life, which finds its most extreme expression in the anonymity of the metropolitan crowd, must be updated to include the role of the slave plantation as the prototype of rationalized factory production in the determination of economic forces operating at an ungraspable distance from everyday life. In this context modern allegories of the night or noctuaries allow us to theorize the sleep-dream-awakening continuum not only in relation to capitalist production and consumption but also with respect to race and aesthetics.

When, out of the shadows of the urban night, the face of a "decrepid old man" flashes through the glass in "The Man of the Crowd," the narrator is confronted by the pure form of a Macnishian nightmare object, a face that sublimely resists and demands his gaze. The face of the old man shatters the narrator's fantasy of physiognomic transparency with the "absolute idiosyncrasy of its expression" (267). The man of the crowd exposes the narrator to a blind spot, as his seemingly transcendent ability to classify types encounters an enigmatic limit. What appears here is not the limit of legibility, an epistemic boundary separating the knowability of waking life from the obscurity of sleep, but the legibility of the limit, an abyss of representability giving form and expression to the face of the modern crowd. The unreadable face that Poe's

narrator encounters presents an aesthetic challenge to the *flaneur* because withdrawal and absence, like sleep and insomnia, define its mode of expression. "'Er lasst sich nicht lesen,'" the narrator informs us, "it does not permit itself to be read" (272). In the ensuing action, a decisively modern image of insomnia appears fully formed for the first time. Poe's narrator spends the rest of the tale frantic and sleepless, chasing the uncanny old man through the streets of London possessed by a "craving desire" (267) to comprehend him as a new social type. Over the course of a twenty-four-hour period, night encompasses day, absorbing diurnal order into an indefinite stretch of gas-lit darkness and shared solitudes.

An essay published in *The Living Age,* titled "Of the Nightmare" (1845), sketches a critique of Enlightenment reason as one of the historical factors in the transformation of modern sleep that is helpful for understanding Poe's development of nightmare aesthetics. The essay poses the rhetorical question of whether it is reasonable to believe that "'I myself am the abyss'" (504) out of which nightmare phenomena proceed. Criticizing the prevailing wisdom of disenchantment, the essay asks in conclusion: "Have we within us the true 'devil's ladder,' or well-staircase, winding down into bottomless gulfs and the 'blackness of darkness,' by which all shapes of night, all hellish spectres, all monstrous and malignant things, come and go between their world and ours? If we will not be afraid of ghosts, have we to be afraid of ourselves? To *this* has the march of intellect brought us?" (504). The "'blackness of darkness'" appears in Poe's work as the abyssal feeling of terror at the heart of Enlightenment reason that causes modern insomnia. To read this power of blackness as the feeling of modern reason without also accounting for the material threat it poses, the sense in which terror is linked to the intimation

that we now have to become "afraid of ourselves," would be to miss the ethical and political implications of this feeling.

In viewing the face, we are told, "Retzsch … would have greatly preferred it to his own pictural incarnations of the fiend" (Poe 267). Friedrich August Moritz Retzsch became a household name in the nineteenth century for his illustrations in popular editions of the works of Goethe, Schiller, and Shakespeare. Poe's reference to Retzsch both "reveals his familiarity with contemporary bourgeois culture" (Hayes 32) and indicates several important things about his nocturnal aesthetics. To understand how the man of the crowd expresses "the hideousness of mysteries which will not suffer themselves to be revealed" (Poe 262), it is necessary to further unpack this reference. The figure of the flaneur had been associated with the fiend and the revelation of invisible vice since the early eighteenth century. This tradition probably began with Alain René Le Sage's novel *Le Diable Boiteux* in 1707, in which Asmodeus, the so-called limping or halting devil, allows readers to observe the corruption taking place under the reputable rooves of urban society in Madrid. During the 1840s, the flaneur as fiend became a common trope in American newspapers and popular fiction, elevating "the urban sketch into a moral, religious, and even supernatural dimension that ordinary sightseeing lacks" (Sharpe 67).[24]

Dickens comments on the prevalence and influence of this figure in *American Notes,* just prior to a significant description of the wretched sleeping conditions in New York's infamous Five Points. Dickens invokes the flaneur as fiend in a complaint about the quantity of stimulating

[24] In *New York Nocturne: The City After Dark in Literature, Painting, and Photography, 1850-1950*, William Chapman Sharpe goes so far as to suggest that, "the original flaneur was perhaps the Black Man, Satan himself" (66). This conclusion seems correct with the caveat that the image of the devil in perpetual, sleepless motion, stalking the night and rebelliously disclosing the hypocrisy of noble illusions represents a decidedly post-Miltonic bourgeois construction.

but empty amusements available for consumers like Poe's narrator: the "suckers of cigars and swallowers of strong drinks" who read "the fifty newspapers" that are sold by "precocious urchins … bawling down the street" (210). These papers contain "good strong stuff," Dickens satirically observes, for they are engaged in "pulling off the roofs of private houses, as the Halting Devil did in Spain; pimping and pandering for all degrees of vicious taste, and gorging with coined lies the most voracious maw; imputing to every man in public life the coarsest and the vilest motives; scaring away from the stabbed and prostrate body-politic, every Samaritan of clear conscience and good deeds (210).[25] The hidden "dagger" (Poe 268) carried by the man of the crowd metonymically stabs the prostrate body-politic by impugning the nature of mass society, which gives rise to a new social type in the man of the crowd: "the type and the genius of deep crime" (272).

Poe presents this "deep crime" as the origin of modern insomnia. Suggestively, critics have noted that the dagger likely alludes to *Macbeth*, and perhaps even to Retzsch's acclaimed illustration of Macbeth murdering Duncan in his sleep with a dagger.[26] Regardless of whether Poe actually had Macbeth in mind, each text draws a decisive line between guilt and sleeplessness in the form of insomniac night- or sleep-walking. In *Macbeth* of course the sleep-killing crime is regicide.[27] But in "The Man of the Crowd" the crime-cause of insomnia is

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[25] Dickens of course participates in the tradition that he critiques, signaling that it is time for his urban tour to leave the middle class scene with the classic form of invitation that defines the flaneur-fiend trope: "Let us go on again; and passing this wilderness of an hotel with stores about its base, like some Continental theatre, or the London Opera House shorn of its colonnade, plunge into the Five Points" (211).

[26] For more on the likely influence of Retzsch's illustrations of *Macbeth* on Poe, see Hayes 35-38.

[27] Racked with the guilt of his crime, Macbeth laments, "Methought I heard a voice cry, 'Sleep no more! / Macbeth does murder sleep'—the innocent sleep, / Sleep that knits up the raveled sleave of care…" (2.2.45-7).

formally unrepresentable. “The worst heart of the world is a grosser book than the ‘Hortulus Animae,’” Poe concludes, “and perhaps it is but one of the great mercies of God that ‘er lasst sich nicht lesen’” (272). To be precise, this heart does not hide any particular crime. Rather, it presents a new type of criminality: in it “the essence of all crime is undivulged” (262). With this affirmation of a non-predicate (is undivulged), Poe forms an infinite judgment in the Kantian sense, an ascription of nocturnal negativity at the core of daytime normality.

He thus raises the figure of the flaneur-fiend, and sleep-destroying guilt, to the level of a transcendental problem: eternal vigilance for the sake of liberty appears indistinguishable from insomnia as a purely formal gesture for its own sake. In the nightmare face of insomnia, Poe discovers the most fitting expression of what Kant called diabolical evil, “a desire to transgress for the sole purpose of transgression,” as Rebecca Comay explains, “unperturbed by pathological incentives, uncontaminated by self-regard or self-gratification, indifferent to consequences, undistracted by temptation, clear-eyed, unsentimental, scrupulous in its honesty, unswerving in its commitment—in other words, the very image of moral purity and rigor” (43). It is not the revelation of corruption hiding behind the appearance of respectable society that interests Poe but the indistinction of crime and norm that finds expression in the insomniac posture of the man of the crowd.

Poe would theorize this idea further in 1845 with “The Imp of the Perverse,” identifying “an innate and primitive principle of human action, a paradoxical something, which we may call perverseness” (473). Ascribing diabolical evil to a “primitive principle,” Poe provides one of the earliest theorizations of an impulse that has since become associated with the Freudian concept of the death-drive, as he explains that “beyond or behind this there is no intelligible principle:

and we might, indeed, deem this perverseness a direct instigation of the Arch-Fiend, were it not occasionally known to operate in furtherance of good" (476). At the end of this tale, Poe also deploys the insomniac nightmare motif of a nocturnal pursuit through a crowd and the revelation of an unspeakable secret.

While the essence of all crime remains optically inaccessible in "The Man of the Crowd," the diabolical properties of the old man provide a Retzschian sketch of an expression of perverseness:

> As I endeavored, during the brief minute of my original survey, to form some analysis of the meaning conveyed, there arose confusedly and paradoxically within my mind, the ideas of vast mental power, of caution, of penuriousness, of avarice, of coolness, of malice, of blood-thirstiness, of triumph, of merriment, of excessive terror, of intense- of supreme despair. I felt singularly aroused, startled, fascinated. 'How wild a history,' I said to myself, 'is written within that bosom!'" (267)

Driven to endless nocturnal wandering by the wild history concealed within the darkness of his heart, the man of the crowd effectively allegorizes a formal insomnia specific to Western modernity, a wild history hidden within the bosom of Poe's nightmare object that perhaps can only be read contrapuntally, in relation to insights by other hypnocritics, such as Martin Delany, who observes that "a dreamy existence of the most fearful apprehensions, of dread, horror and dismay … continually pervade the community…. A sleeping wake or a waking sleep, a living death or tormented life is that of the Cuban and American slaveholder" (305).[28] The legacy of

[28] The concept of contrapuntal analysis that I draw from here is indebted to Simon Gikandi's methodological development of the term in *Slavery and the Culture of Taste*. Gikandi explains his method in the following terms: "slavery and the culture of taste were connected by the theories and practices that emerged in the modern period; but I will not argue that they expressively enabled each other in a synchronic structure. On the contrary, I intend to show that these two experiences, though occupying opposite ends of the cultural spectrum, were, in their functions and affect, processes that took place at the same time in the same space and hence need to be studied in what Edward Said has called a 'contrapuntal manner' and considered within the economy of what Fredric Jameson terms 'expressive causality,' the process by which 'two

sleep deprivation begun under slavery extended to free northern states in the form of an unequal distribution of sleep for African Americans, especially the poor and the working class.

As I alluded to above, Charles Dickens was able to record urban sleeping conditions, in *American Notes*, that no white American flaneur was willing to relate. Accompanied by "two heads of the police" for safety (211), Dickens entered New York's infamous Five Points district to engage in one of the earliest recorded instances of nocturnal slum tourism:

> Ascend these pitch-dark stairs, heedful of a false footing on the trembling boards, and grope your way with me into this wolfish den, where neither ray of light nor breath of air, appears to come…. The match flickers for a moment, and shows great mounds of dusty rags upon the ground; then dies away and leaves a denser darkness than before, if there can be degrees in such extremes…. Then the mounds of rags are seen to be astir, and rise slowly up, and the floor is covered with heaps of negro women, waking from their sleep: their white teeth chattering, and their bright eyes glistening and winking on all sides with surprise and fear, like the countless repetition of one astonished African face in some strange mirror. (213-14)

The racist associations on display in Dickens' "strange mirror," the fantasy of mechanical reproducibility in the Black woman's face, expressing the colonizing catachresis that reduces heterogeneity to a stereotype, obscures the gothic reality of sleep deprivation on display: "From every corner, as you glance about you in these dark retreats, some figure crawls half-awakened, as if the judgment-hour were near at hand, and every obscene grave were giving up its dead. Where dogs would howl to lie, women, and men, and boys slink off to sleep, forcing the dislodged rats to move away in quest of better lodgings" (215).

The true surrealist face of "The Man of the Crowd" begins to become visible through such nocturnal illuminations ("And no face is surrealistic to the same degree as the true face of a city" [Benjamin, *Selected Writings* 211]). In a re-reading of Marx's analysis of the commodity

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distinct regions of social life,' even when structurally unconnected, can still be considered to be part of 'some general identity' especially at the phenomenological level" (xiii).

form, by way of an analysis of Aunt Hester's scream in Frederick Douglass' *Narrative,* Fred Moten performs an improvisation on the discourse of the glance that is suggestive for updating Benjamin's method (*Augenblick*) to account for the hypervisibility of race in the flaneur's vision of urban modernity, which critics of "The Man of the Crowd," following Benjamin following Baudelaire, have tended to elide. Moten asks: "What if the beholder glances, glances away, driven by aversion as much as desire? This is to ask not only, what if beholding were glancing; it is also-or maybe even rather-to ask, what if glancing is the aversion of the gaze, a physical act of repression, the active forgetting of an object whose resistance is now not the avoidance but the extortion of the gaze?" (Moten 233). Between the illegible face of Poe's man of the crowd and the reductive hyperlegibility in Dickens's observation of "the countless repetition of one astonished African face in some strange mirror," there flashes a moment of hypnaesthetic recognizability in which the necessity of sleep becomes perceptible at the limits of nightmare phenomena, in a composite image of modern insomnia.

Baudelaire perhaps had Poe's illustration of insomnia as the natural limit of nightmare aesthetics in mind when writing "The Chasm" (1861), a poem that effectively translates the logic of Poe's noctuary into poetic form. In Baudelaire's words:

> On the backdrop of my nights God's knowing finger
> Draws an unceasing nightmare with many faces.
> I am afraid of sleep as one fears a huge hole
> Full of vague horror, leading no one knows where;
> I see only infinity from every window,
> And my spirit, ever haunted with vertigo,
> A numb feeling yearning for nothingness. (343)

Insomnia understood as a waking, "unceasing nightmare," animated by the fear of sleep as "a huge hole / Full of vague horror, leading no one knows where," would become a familiar face of

the urban night by the end of the nineteenth century. Sleep, however, did not miraculously appear as an ontological site of terror. It was historically overdetermined to appear as such; interpreting the significance of that appearance requires a new constellation of historical imagining.

In *The Fall of Sleep* Jean-Luc Nancy provides a reading of Baudelaire's "The Chasm" that I find suggestive for thinking about sleep as a critical category. Identifying an ethical commitment in the resistance of sleep to phenomenology, Nancy writes: "seeing sight clinging to itself as to its sole object, that is like seeing the invisible, surely, but is only like its other side or its negative. To sojourn in just that other side, not to try to discern the invisible, that is the blind task of sleep" (48). The word that Nancy uses is "tâche," translated as task here, a homonym of *tache* or spot, with the implied double meaning of a blind spot that also represents some kind of task. In my view Nancy's sense of the task of sleep uncritically repeats the flaneur's desire to "sojourn in just that other side" of things that does "not try to discern the invisible" (the historicity of sleep) but only its "negative" or abstract form ("infinity from every window"). But his approach to the problem invites other alternatives. What would it mean to think the historical origins of the blind spot of sleep as an ethical task, to perceive the necessity of sleep (*hypnaesthesis*) as an ethical and political task? This it seems to me is precisely the task that "The Man of the Crowd" calls for.

In his analysis of awakening as a critical concept for understanding the meaning of sleep and dream phenomena in surrealism and Proust, Benjamin theorizes the passage leading from dreaming to waking consciousness as an *Augenblick* or the blinking/glancing of an eye. The passage that is awakening is central to Benjamin's methodology. As Benjamin explains in *The*

Arcades Project: “Just as Proust begins his life-story with awakening, so every historical presentation should begin with awakening, indeed, should be concerned with nothing else. Thus, this one is concerned with awakening from the nineteenth century” (464). Summarizing this point, Sam Weber argues that Benjamin’s approach “involves a relationship of awakening to the dream in which separation itself becomes the constitutive factor: awakening relates to the dream precisely in being separated from it. It is this relating through separation or as separation that characterizes what he calls the ‘constellation’” (168). Awakening in the Benjaminian sense thus forms a movement or method that constitutes a genealogical time of knowability in an historical image.

A literary constellation disclosing an historical image of insomnia may be formed at this time by reading Poe’s “The Man of the Crowd” alongside two other crucial authors of nocturnal modernity, Walt Whitman and W.E.B. DuBois. Like Poe, both Whitman and DuBois are frequently overlooked in this regard, but both fit Benjamin Reiss’s description of hypnocritics, as “thinkers who recover the social dimensions of the sleeping-waking continuum that tend to be ignored by science and medicine” (6).

Walt Whitman is of course recognized as an important representative of the nineteenth-century *flaneur*. Reading his poem “The Sleepers,” which inscribes the nocturnal territory of nineteenth-century American within an overarching narrative of awakening in “Song of Myself,” sheds helpful light on Poe’s “The Man of the Crowd.” Both Poe and Whitman made literary careers out of exploring the dark matters that Ralph Waldo Emerson deemed “not only unexplained but inexplicable,” namely “language, sleep, madness, dreams, beasts, sex” (2). Each author locates such “inexplicable” phenomena at the heart of problems of identity formation in

democratic society. As Adam Bradford has shown, Whitman viewed Poe's "nocturnal themes" in contrastive terms, illuminating his work "to 'brilliant and dazzling' purposes" (8). In Whitman's assessment, such comparison elevated Poe's otherwise morbid texts, making them "'belong among the electric lights of imaginative literature'" (Bradford 8). Even in his recognition of the contrastive power of the nocturnal, Whitman was eager to dispel the specter of darkness and gloom in his own blaze of electric celebrity. Writing in *Specimen Days and Collect* (1882), he declared: "I wanted, and still want for poetry, the clear sun shining, and fresh air blowing—the strength and power of health, not of delirium, even amid the stormiest passions—with always the background of the eternal moralities" (157).

"The Sleepers" represents one of the few exceptions to this rule in Whitman's poetry because it expresses the delirium of a nocturnal *flaneur* rapt in a peripatetic dream:

> I WANDER all night in my vision,
> Stepping with light feet …. swiftly and noiselessly stepping and stopping,
> Bending with open eyes over the shut eyes of sleepers;
> Wandering and confused …. lost to myself …. ill-assorted …. contradictory,
> Pausing and gazing and bending and stopping. (70 [1855])

Whitman's flaneur engages in sleepwatching rather than window shopping. The 1855 edition of "The Sleepers," which will be the focus of this analysis, was of course untitled, but in subsequent editions Whitman provided highly suggestive titles. In the 1860 *Leaves of Grass,* for example, the poem is called "Sleep-Chasings," indicating a unique restlessness animating the narrator's insomniac vision.[29]

Roving "from bedside to bedside," Whitman's narrator becomes infected by the dreams of others, dreams that decenter the subjectivity of the speaking voice: "I dream in my dream all

[29] In the 1856 edition, the title was "Night Poem"; it would not become "The Sleepers" until 1871.

the dreams of the other dreamers, / And I become the other dreamers" (71). Whitman's dream-life is communal and pre-Freudian, it is not restricted to the confines of an individual unconscious. In a passage that remained relatively unchanged across all iterations of the poem, near the conclusion, Whitman writes: "The diverse shall be no less diverse, but they shall flow and unite …. they unite now. / The sleepers are very beautiful as they lie unclothed, / They flow hand in hand over the whole earth from east to west as they lie unclothed" (76). "The Sleepers" thus represents one of Whitman's grand attempts at imagining social unification, of developing a poetics of relatedness on the basis of sleep as the inactivity capable of uniting the multitudes.[30]

Notably absent from Whitman's dreamscape are references to nocturnal labor. Whitman pays almost no heed to the problem of night work or the extension of the working day into the night, themes which can be found in other works from the 1860s such as Rebecca Harding Davis' *Life in the Iron Mills* (1861). Nor is he particularly interested in "night-life," a term coined by Melville in *Pierre* (1852) to describe the garishly illuminated, noisy, and vast thoroughfare that Pierre encounters in New York after dark (25). Rather, Whitman leaves the nocturnal spectacle of urban life to authors like Dickens, Melville, and Poe in favor of developing an image of healthy or normative dormativity.

Casting his all-encompassing gaze on the subject of collective somnolence, Whitman provides one of the earliest literary topographies of what Matthew Wolf-Meyer calls the

[30] Whitman of course experimented with innumerable ways of imagining such a unity: in "Song of Myself" it is through death or the affect of becoming grass; in "A Song for Occupations" it is through work; in "I Sing the Body Electric," it is the human body itself; in "There Was a Child Went Forth," it is the child; in "Who Learns My Lesson Complete?" it is the idea of immortality; in "Great Are the Myths," it is language; in the Calamus poems it is comradeship, adhesiveness, or adhesive love; and in "The Sleepers" it is the common act of sleep that presents a potential for imagining collectivity.

"slumbering masses" (89). Whitman's imagining of slumbering multitudes anticipates the shift in clinical perspective from personal hygiene to the observation and management of somnolent populations that would emerge in the 1860s, with the publication of William Whitty Hall's *Sleep* in 1861 and William Hammond's *Sleep and Its Derangements* in 1869. Hall saw the need for sleep science to protect the health of laboring populations in the midst of the industrial revolution; Hammond laid the groundwork for the modern notion of fatigue by theorizing sleep as a process of mental rejuvenation. What is decisively new in Whitman's treatment of sleep is his naturalistic approach, his rendering of the slumbering multitudes as a matter of concern for the health of society: "The swelled and convulsed and congested awake to themselves in condition, / They pass the invigoration of the night and the chemistry of the night and awake" (76). In "The Sleepers," the healthy sleep of the individual finds its measure in the concept of society as a collective body of sleepers: "I swear they are averaged now …. one is no better than the other, / The night and sleep have likened them and restored them" (75).

"The Sleepers" ultimately represents one of modernity's key narratives of awakening, a passage from the night and sleep to the light of reason and diurnal order, subordinating the former to the latter. Thus at the end of the poem the speaker prophecies a triumphant awakening in the language of rebirth:

> I will stop only a time with the night . . . . and rise betimes.
> I will duly pass the day O my mother and duly return to you;
> Not you will yield forth the dawn again more surely than you will yield forth me again,
> Not the womb yields the babe in its time more surely than I shall be yielded from you in my time. (77)

The speaker's confidence that he "shall be yielded" from the night is belied by his eagerness to "rise betimes," to tarry with the darkness no longer than he must.

Indeed, “The Sleepers” functions as an incantation against a fear of the dark that is specific to nineteenth-century America. For Whitman sleep and the night harbor, as Betsy Erkkila puts it, “not only democratic dreams of an equable and loving order but nightmare visions of separation and loss, guilt and rage, dredged out of his own and the nation's psyche” (124). Thus prior to his final vision of awakening/rebirth, Whitman explicitly attempts to dispel his fear of the night, with only nominal success: “Why should I be afraid to trust myself to you? / I am not afraid …” (77).

To better understand this nocturnal anxiety, a careful consideration of the much-remarked Lucifer passage is required. This passage represents the first and only time Whitman allowed a revolutionary Black voice not only to speak but to actually become the narrator of one of his poems. Lucifer represents the “wronged” and “oppressed,” who now lies “so sleepy and sluggish” but whose “vast dusk bulk” threatens to suddenly turn deadly like the flukes of a whale (74). In unpublished drafts, Whitman imagines a transfer of his own tongue to Lucifer and seems to draw on the West African notion of spirit possession: “I lend him my own tongue; / I dart like a snake from your mouth” (Whitman, “The Changing Shape”). Analyzing this striking use of serpent imagery, Matt Sandler has convincingly connected the passage to Whitman’s knowledge of voodoo from his time in New Orleans. “His vocal and bodily metempsychosis in the snake-tongue simile,” Sandler shows, “draws unmistakably on the voodoo concept of spirit possession” (73). Most intriguing for my purposes is Whitman’s possible knowledge that New Orleans voodoo worship centered on Damballah, “a deity drawn from Haitian vodou and Dahomeyan cosmology whose signature, or maidservant, is a snake” and whose name “plays on the Ki-Kongo word for ‘sleep’” (Sandler 73).

Linking slave revolt and the revolutionary tradition to the terrifying power of sleep to dissolve the bonds of mastery, Whitman's restless and fearful attempt to reconcile the heterogeneous dreams of the slumbering multitudes sheds new light on the political life of sleep in antebellum America. The connection between sleep, slavery, and revolution in fact had a long history for Whitman to draw from. Thomas Jefferson helped establish this tradition in *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1787), for example, when he links his dread of the apocalyptic implications of American slavery to darkness and the night in the metaphorical sleep of divine justice: "Indeed I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just: that his justice cannot sleep for ever" (169). A society in which justice sleeps must become a sleepless society. As Benjamin Reiss points out, the night became a terrain of surveillance, control, and rebellion: "a great deal was at stake in controlling the sleep-wake cycle of an enslaved people: economics, control of an unwilling labor force, psychological domination, and physical security. To throw off the bonds of slavery was to retake control over one's body at the most elemental level, that of its daily and nightly rhythms" (*Wild Nights* 128). Thus Nat Turner's rebellion, the best-known attempt to realize Jefferson's intimations of divine violence, began as a nocturnal insurrection in 1831. Turner's revolt exploited blind spots in the regime of sleepwatching instituted by slave masters to control the somnolent bodies of enslaved populations. In 1845 Frederick Douglass underscored the apparatus of nocturnal oppression developed in American slavery, declaring that the "want of time to sleep" was a far greater "privation" than the "want of beds" (*Narrative* 10). In *My Bondage and My Freedom* (1855), Douglass added the heading "Deprivation of Sleep" to his earlier account (*My Bondage* 89).

If Whitman did have knowledge of Haitian vodou from his time in New Orleans, he probably would have also been aware of popular legends about the nocturnal vodou ceremony at Bois Caiman that purportedly sparked the Haitian Revolution in 1791.[31] Because Whitman leaves Lucifer's identity racially unmarked, his speech signifies an idealized form of revolutionary universality frequently associated with Toussaint L'Ouverture, the leader of the Haitian Revolution. "To invoke Toussaint," Eric Sundquist has shown, "was to lay bare the paradoxical way in which slavery and revolution were linked throughout antebellum history, dark twins of a national ideology riddled with ambiguities and tension" (34). The Lucifer passage is also certainly evocative of the West Indian proverb figuring the indomitable nature of sleep, which was recorded in Bryan Edward's well-known *History...of the British Colonies* (1793) and later appeared in Henri Gregoire's *An Enquiry Concerning the Intellectual and Moral Faculties, and Literature of Negroes* (1810): "Sleep has no master."[32]

Writing from the perspective of the twentieth century, Du Bois was able to clarify how Africanism, blackness, and sleep function in the colonial imaginary while simultaneously imagining Africa as a site of somnolent counter-modernity:

> The spell of Africa is upon me. The ancient witchery of her medicine is burning my drowsy, dreamy blood…. It is a great black bosom where the spirit longs to die…. One longs to leap against the sun and then calls, like some great hand of fate, the slow, silent crushing power of almighty sleep--of Silence, of immovable Power beyond, within,

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[31] "With only slight exaggeration," David Geggus explains, "one can say that the reputation of vodou as a unifying and revolutionary force begins with the ceremony of Bois Caiman" (91).

[32] In *History…Of the British Colonies,* Edwards describes an enslaved and sleeping man whose companion attempts to awaken him by saying, "Don't you hear Master call you?" Before "returning composedly to his slumbers," the sleeping man replies, "Sleep has no Master" (Edwards 101). In 1810, Gregoire cites Edwards' account, summarizing it as follows: "[A] slave was suddenly awaked by his master, who said, *Dost thou not hear thy master who calls thee?* The poor negro opens his eyes, and immediately shuts them, saying, *Sleep has no master"* (Gregoire 159). I further explore the potential of claiming the right to sleep as an interruption of sovereign authority in chapter four.

> around…. Africa is the Spiritual Frontier of human kind…. There will spring in Africa a civilization without coal, without noise, where machinery will sing and never rush and roar, and where men will sleep and think and dance and lie prone before the rising suns, and women will be happy. The objects of life will be revolutionized. Our duty will not consist in getting up at seven, working furiously for six, ten, and twelve hours…. No--We shall dream the day away and in cool dawns, in little swift hours, do all our work. (131-2)

In his critique of the Victorian stereotypes of Africa as the "dark continent" and the heart of darkness, DuBois develops a utopian vision of laziness, sleep, and darkness that sheds new light on "The Man of the Crowd" and the origins of modern insomnia.

Writing undoubtedly with Hegel's infamous claim that Africa has remained outside the restless motion of Western history and therefore represents "lazy existence," Du Bois argues: "In Africa the swift, the energetic are the dead. In Africa the 'lazy' survive and live. This African laziness is several things; it is shelter from the penetrating rain; it is defense from malaria. And it brings with it leisure and dreams and human intercourse" ("What Is Civilization?" 379). In Poe's allegory of nocturnal modernity in "The Man of the Crowd," night falls with the descent of "a thick humid fog" and the onset of "a settled and heavy rain." "This change of weather had an odd effect upon the crowd," Poe's narrator observes, "the whole of which was at once put into new commotion, and overshadowed by a world of umbrellas. The waver, the jostle, and the hum increased in a tenfold degree. For my own part I did not much regard the rain--the lurking of an old fever in my system rendering the moisture somewhat too dangerously pleasant" (268). Lacking what DuBois calls "shelter from the penetrating rain" and "defense" from "an old fever," the narrator is swept away by the "waver," "jostle," and "hum" of the crowd. In his feverish pursuit of the old man, who effectively "plunges into the crowd as into a reservoir of electric energy" (Benjamin, *Charles Baudelaire* 132), he loses all capacity for leisure, dreams, and human intercourse: the illusion of leisure vanishes after exiting the coffee house; the

sleepless pursuit of the old man through the crowd forecloses dreaming; and the desire for human intercourse founders upon finding no sign of recognition after gazing "steadfastly in the face" (Poe 272) of the old man at the end his twenty-four-hour pursuit.

"The Man of the Crowd" forms a conceptual bridge between sleep science at the beginning of the nineteenth-century and at the end. By the end of the nineteenth century, insomnia would designate a somnolent state of exception, a simultaneous transgression and confirmation of the norms that would define healthy sleep. Poe's narrative moves from the physiognomic attempt to comprehend types in the appearance of individual cases to an intuitive presentation of insomnia, a nightmare form of sleeplessness, as the diabolical face of normativity. The insomnia on display in "The Man of the Crowd" anticipates both a transgression of the emerging norm of consolidated sleep and the new normal: a sleepless state of exception. "The man of the crowd," the narrator concludes, "is the type and genius of true crime" (272). His deviance from the norms of daytime reason, diurnal order, and waking life coincides with his total assimilation to the sleepless rhythms of urban life and the insomniac demands of capitalist production and consumption.

In his analysis of the flaneur's discovery of horror at the heart of bourgeois reason, Benjamin provides essential insight into the phantasmagoric logic of the coincidence of norm and exception in the commodity form of identification: "the nightmare that corresponds to the illusory perspicacity of the … physiognomist [flaneur] consists in seeing those distinctive traits-traits peculiar to the person-revealed to be nothing more than the elements of a new type; so that in the final analysis a person of the greatest individuality would turn out to be the exemplar of a type" (22). In developing the man of the crowd as the exemplar of the type of modern insomnia,

"The Man of the Crowd" presents little hope of awakening or finding an exit from the nightmare wandering of the modern *flaneur*. Ultimately, Poe's narrator grows "wearied unto death" (272) and must relinquish his pursuit of Enlightenment in an endless state of nocturnal displacement. The legibility of the abyssal relation between norm and exception in the insomniac nightmare that comes into view in Poe's narrative is not arbitrary, for it enables the perception of insomnia in *hypnaesthesis* as the negation of the necessity of sleep, forming the natural limit of nightmare aesthetics.

Chapter 4: "With kings and counselors": "Bartleby," *Moby-Dick*, and the Right to Sleep

> For here, millions of mixed shades and shadows, drowned dreams, somnambulisms, reveries; all that we call lives and souls, lie dreaming, dreaming, still; tossing like slumberers in their beds; the ever-rolling waves but made so by their restlessness.
>
> —Herman Melville (*Moby-Dick*)

> The funeral ritual represents something else besides an act of conjuration or compensation. It does not put to sleep the wounded sensibility of the survivors, but it procures for the dead the sleep that comes back to them; that is why it is necessary for tearful survival.
>
> —Jean-Luc Nancy (*The Fall of Sleep*)

In the margin of his copy of Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*, Herman Melville observes a general theme in Claudio's remark that "he that drinks all night, / and is hanged betimes in the morning, may sleep the / sounder all the next day" (4.3.47-49). The person addressed by Claudio in this passage is Barnadine, a minor character whose resolute intoxication, indolence, and obstinacy force the authorities to grant him a stay, as he is determined to be "a creature unprepared, unmeet for death" (4.3.72).[33] In effect, Barnadine asserts his right to sleep against the state's right to the death of its citizens, claiming his need to sleep as a natural condition warranting exception from sovereign rule. In Melville's words, we should "take this, and other texts with the one comprehensive one in *The Tempest* … 'Our little life is rounded with

[33] When Barnadine is awakened for his execution, he replies, "Away, you rogue, away; I am / sleepy" (4.3.30-1) and he goes on to explain how he has been "drinking all night" and is thus "not fitted" to die. In refusing death at the time appointed by the state, Barnadine insists that he "will have more time to prepare" (4.3.57) and that he "will not die to-day for any man's / persuasion" (4.3.63-4).

a sleep'" (397).[34] This idea, conveyed by Claudio and made famous by Prospero, is what Barnadine resists, prefiguring the type of resistance to authority that Bartleby has come to represent in Melville's *oeuvre*. Melville's seemingly observational annotation of this scene affords a new perspective on his unique literary contributions to post-enlightenment philosophy and political theory. Indeed, Melville's work can be decisively distinguished from the Shakespearean proposition that sleep is an isolating boundary, analogous to and perhaps indistinguishable from death, by which "our little life is rounded," precisely by extrapolating from Barnadine's claim. Melville invites us to wonder what it would mean if sleep were understood not as a limit or an end but as an opening to further life.

There has been no shortage of literary critics, philosophers, and political theorists who have turned to Melville to formulate a logic of resistance, and of community, for a politics of the future. For the most part, Bartleby, the character perhaps more than the story, has emerged as the avatar of this trend.[35] What philosophers like Jacques Derrida, Gilles Deleuze, Gorgio Agamben, and Jacques Ranciere, to name a few, find in Bartleby is the expression not merely of a limit (to phenomenology, consensus, capitalism, fascism) but of an inoperative potential, or in Agamben's words, "a point of indifference between potentiality and impotentiality" (*Potentialities* 270). Agamben deciphers Bartleby's revolutionary potential in the ending of

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[34] Transcribed from Melville's handwriting in his copy of *Measure for Measure*, contained in the Houghton Library's copy of *The Dramatic Works of William Shakespeare*. Boston: Hilliard, Gray, 1837.

[35] For a comprehensive overview of the significance of Bartleby for political theory, see Kevin Attell, "Language and Labor, Silence and Stasis: Bartleby Among the Philosophers," in *A Political Companion to Melville,* ed. Jason Frank (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2013).

Melville's narrative, when the narrator discovers the scrivener apparently "sleeping in the yard" of the prison (92).

The inoperative potential of Bartleby coincides, for Agamben, in the indistinction between sleep and death in Melville's text. In the end, Bartleby, like Barnadine, assumes his right to rest by laying down inside the prison, where the narrator discovers him:

> Strangely huddled at the base of the wall, his knees drawn up, and lying on his side, his head touching the cold stones, I saw the wasted Bartleby. But nothing stirred. I paused; then went close up to him; stooped over, and saw that his dim eyes were open; otherwise he seemed profoundly sleeping. (93)

For Agamben, Bartleby's withdrawal contains the possibility of rebirth: "Palingenesis, *apokatastasis pantōn*, in which the new creature—for the new creature is what is at issue here—reaches the indemonstrable center of its 'occurrence-or-nonoccurence'" (*Potentialities* 271). This indistinction is registered by the grub-man who notices Bartleby's uncanny condition and asks, "He's asleep, aint he?" to which Melville's narrator replies, "with kings and counselors" (93). The moment of undecidability, in which Bartleby is either asleep or dead but properly neither yet, manifests the inoperative potential of (human) life.

To better understand how Bartleby's repose lays claim to the right to sleep, both as a potentially political act and a philosophical intervention, it is helpful to consider how the inoperative potential at stake in Bartleby finds expression, in Jean-Luc Nancy's terms, as the "interminable disappearance" that manifests in sleep. As Nancy puts it, "this interminable disappearance, which preserves in it the eternal emergence of each person one by one … as perfectly anonymous as it may be, cannot help but sketch out a strange, unsettling, indecipherable sign, the sign without signification of an inconsistent but insistent complicity with no other analogy than that of a common sleep, shared since unshareable" (46). Bartleby's final

sleep displaces or defers death by inscribing the interminable disappearance that sleep imparts. This departing, which harbors in itself "the eternal emergence of each person one by one," is what singularizes Bartleby and constitutes his political potential as the paradigmatic thinker of the inoperative community of the future.[36]

By performing his resistance to the law and to capitalism in various somnolent states, ranging from reverie to sleep as a form of occupying his former workplace to the interminable withdrawal of his final sleep that interrupts sovereignty, *tout court*, Bartleby demonstrates the political capacity of sleep as a claim to existence. The fact that the difference between sleep and death, and thus between life and death, becomes undecidable in Bartleby is a sign of extreme suffering, which registers an expression of protest against the unlivable life of a society that would deny its people the right to sleep. Bartleby thus shows that, in Aristotle's terms, "sleep belongs of necessity to each animal," and that by enacting his right to sleep he possesses it. In Bartleby sleep expresses the freedom of life in its (im)potentiality to be or not to be ("being as it were a boundary between living and not living, a sleeper neither fully is not nor fully is" [Aristotle *Generation* 164]). Bartleby actualizes the potentiality of sleep and affirms the right of that potentiality over every sovereign injunction, demonstrating how the perception of the necessity of sleep, *hypnaesthesis*, may become a political act.

The relevant contrast here is Hegel. In his *Philosophy of Mind*, Hegel defines the necessity of sleep for rational waking life in the following terms:

> The waking state includes generally all self-conscious and rational activity in which the mind realizes its own distinct self. Sleep is an invigoration of this activity—not as a merely negative rest from it, but as a return back from the world of specialization, from

[36] The logic of *inoperativity* forms the basis for what Nancy calls the *inoperative community* and Agamben, following Nancy, calls the *coming community*. See Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Inoperative Community* and Giorgio Agamben, *The Coming Community*.

> dispersion into phases where it has grown hard and stiff, a return into the general nature of subjectivity, which is the substance of those specialized energies and their absolute master. (18-19)

We know that another name for subjectivity qua absolute master in Hegel's master-slave dialectic is death (absolute negativity), and this negativity is the condition of possibility for rational life in Hegel's system.[37] Thus sleep might be said to serve, for Hegel, the function of securing, by invigorating, the rational activity of individuals in the "world of specialization," which is to say that it guarantees the life of work predicated on the modern division of labor that Bartleby "would prefer not to." This is sleep in the service of unlivable life. Bartleby thus represents the potential for moving beyond the view of sleep as a limit, by which our little life is rounded, serving the individualizing purpose of death or of capitalism, to imagine sleep as a site of political potential beyond the rational subjectivity outlined by Hegel.

The reading I have provided thus far represents both a summary of why Agamben thinks Bartleby gives expression to the "strongest objection against the principle of sovereignty" (because he "resists every possibility of deciding between potentiality and the potentiality not to" [*Homer Sacer* 48]) and a rerouting of Agamben's argument into the terms of my own project. While Agamben focuses primarily on Bartleby's fulfilment of the law with the formula "I would prefer not to," I want to draw attention to how Melville develops *hypaesthesis* into a broader critique of sovereignty over the course of several of his texts, beginning with *Mardi* in 1849, which I analyze in the introduction, and continuing with *Moby-Dick* in 1851 and "Bartleby" in 1853. While I agree in substance with Agamben's reading of Bartleby, which itself follows and extends a long philosophical tradition of deciphering the politics of Melville's scrivener, I find

[37] See G. W. F. Hegel, *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*.

the critical interpretation of Bartleby to be somewhat limited and limiting in perspective. The inoperative potential that Agamben and others praise often feels overly abstract, metaphysical, and vaguely fetishistic. Agamben for example risks denying the obvious, going so far as to conclude that Bartleby's story ends in comedy: "This is the irrevocable end of the letter's journey, which, on errands of life, sped towards death. And it is here that the creature is finally at home, saved in being irredeemable. This is why in the end, the walled courtyard is not a sad place. There is sky and there is grass. And the creature knows perfectly well 'where it is'" (*Potentialities* 271).

For Agamben, the site of Bartleby's end is not sad because Bartleby's withdrawal into sleep inaugurates a finality without end in which his interminable disappearance calls out for ethical and political contemplation, in the name, perhaps, of a coming community of fellow inoperative beings. In Agamben's words: "There is politics because human beings are *argos*-beings [workless beings] that cannot be defined by any proper operation—that is, as beings of pure potentiality that no identity or vocation can possibly exhaust" (*Means* 1). While not all critics agree completely with Agamben's reading, the attention to Bartleby as a model of resistance has been one-sided, so much so that Bonnie Honig has recently argued for the need "to seek out Melvillean resources" (142) for political theory in his other texts.

As a way of correcting the overly metaphysical focus on Bartleby sketched above, I would like to propose treating "Bartleby," with Barnadine in mind, as a lens that allows us to read sleeping bodies in Melville's other narratives as sites for imagining new kinds of political and perhaps even legal subjectivity. To be specific, reading *Moby-Dick* with Bartleby's politics of sleep in mind, from the perspective of *hypaesthesis*, reveals more livable examples for

imagining and affirming the potentiality of sleep, provides a stark warning about the fate of sleep in modernity, and suggests the possibility of theorizing a positive right to sleep.

Claiming the Right to Sleep, or the Paradox of Bartleby

The significance of the claim to sleep that Bartleby registers can be understood in terms of post-enlightenment interpretations of sovereignty. To suggest, as Melville's narrator does, that Bartleby sleeps "with kings and counselors" is to invoke the biblical figure of Job, the righteous man who rails against the seemingly arbitrary nature of God's justice, who prefers the possibility of not-being to being, evoking a possible world in which he was not born and insisting on his right to rest as a superior state of equality:

> For now should I have lain still and been quiet, I should have slept: then had I been at rest,
> With kings and counsellors of the earth, which built desolate places for themselves;
> ……
> There the wicked cease *from* troubling; and there the weary be at rest.
> *There* the prisoners rest together; they hear not the voice of the oppressor.
> The small and great are there; and the servant *is* free from his master. (*Authorized King James,* Job 3.13-19)

Job's complaint goes to the heart of theodicy by challenging God to justify the world that is in contrast with a (more just) world that could have been otherwise. As Job challenges the justice of divine law, so Bartleby challenges the perpetuation of secular law by withdrawing from his work as a legal copyist with the declaration that he "would prefer not to" perform any further copying.

With Bartleby, Melville contributes his own interpretation of Job's revolutionary legacy to the Romantic reinterpretation of Job begun by Blake and Goethe.[38] What Melville adds to the

[38] For more on the significance of Melville's reading of Job for nineteenth-century aesthetics, see Pardes 99–122.

Romantic view of Job's rebellion against sovereign authority, in alignment with Shakespeare's Barnadine, is an emphasis on sleep as the involuntary withdrawal of complicity with the (unjust) world, which Bartleby's formula ("I would prefer not to") renders possible and his "dead-wall reveries" (68) along with his final rest in the fetal position, itself an echo of Job's wish not to have been born, render concrete.

Bartleby's withdrawal, from copying into sleep, not only interrupts sovereign authority, earthly and divine, but also heralds an invigoration—not of the subjectivity of specialized labor (as in Hegel's version of theodicy) but of the past and the (more just) world(s) that could have been. Agamben explains that, from the standpoint of the philosophy of history, the traditional image of sovereignty condemns the present to an eternity in which "God's mind is the Piranesi-like prison or, rather, the Egyptian mausoleum that, until the end of time, guards the image of what was not, but could have been" (*Potentialities* 266). If Bartleby's sleep is to prove capable of unlocking the prison house of history, freeing the present for a future that could be otherwise, we may need to focus more on the significance of Bartleby's claiming of a right to sleep that he not only did not have according to the sovereign authorities of his time but which had previously seemed impossible for political theory to even imagine.

The reason the right to sleep has remained largely unthinkable for political theory is because the traditional image of sovereignty denies sleep as a positive possibility, suggesting that insomnia might be understood as the pathology that is specific to sovereignty itself.[39] In the introduction I outlined how Descartes attempted to secure the sovereignty of the modern subject

[39] For insight into how Asian and Western political traditions have similarly approached the problem of sleep as relevant, see Steger and Brunt, *Night-Time and Sleep in Asia and the West* 14. In this same volume, see also Richter 31.

by positing the *Cogito* as the impossibility of sleep, and I recounted how Locke revised the Cartesian thesis in empiricist terms, paradoxically securing the sovereignty of the self from the exposure and vulnerability of sleep by insisting that sleep is a metaphysical extinction, a sovereign oblivion protecting the authority of waking consciousness. In what follows I will provide a brief overview of how theories of political sovereignty have historically aimed to manage the problem of sleep by creating idealizing fictions that present sovereign insomnia as an inherent presupposition securing the authority of sovereignty as a principle of rule. This historical review is meant to show both how Bartleby's claim to sleep presents an objection to the ideal of sovereign insomnia and set up my reading of Melville's exploration of the potentiality of sleep as a common right belonging to each (political) animal in *Moby-Dick*.

In his foundational work on medieval political theology, Ernst Kantorowicz focuses on the problem of death (succession), but he occasionally mentions sleep as a related if not entirely parallel problem, referencing for example the emergence of the ideal of "the king who has no rest (*rex exsomnis*)" (922) in relation to the demand for vigilant justice or *vigilans justitia* (331). Kantorowicz begins his study in the Elizabethan era, with the following juridical speculations from Edmund Plowden's *Reports*: "For the King has in him two Bodies, viz., a Body natural, and a Body politic" (60). Sleep, like illness and death, must be included among the "natural Defects and Imbecilities" that befall the natural body and thus excluded from the operation of the body politic, which is "constituted for the Direction of the People, and the Management of the public weal" (Plowden 60).

Plowden's articulation of the body politic implies the impossibility of sleep, and this assumption holds equally whether sovereignty is constituted by divine or by natural right, among

thinkers as diverse as Francis Bacon, Thomas Hobbes, and John Locke. In *Of Empire*, for example, Bacon connects the operation of sovereignty to the unceasing motion of the celestial sphere: "Princes are like to heavenly bodies, which cause good or evil times; and which have much veneration, but no rest. All precepts concerning kings, are in effect comprehended in those two remembrances: *memento quod es homo*; and *memento quod es Deus*, or *vice Dei*; the one bridleth their power, and the other their will" (379). In *Leviathan*, Hobbes grounds the right of sovereignty in the common vulnerability of the state of nature, which is nowhere more evident than in the nightly need for sleep that makes it all too possible for the weakest to kill the strongest (183-4). It thus could be said that, for Hobbes, it is the common peril of sleep, more than any other natural vulnerability, that unites the social body in the interest of contracting the security promised by a vigilant sovereign.

The interesting implication here is that Hobbesian subjects might thus be said to exchange their freedom for access to untroubled sleep, which the sovereign forfeits in return. But if there are resources in Hobbes, and perhaps elsewhere in political theory, for imagining a right to sleep, the path to articulating such a right has been occluded by the influence of Locke on theories of the self, agency, and legal personhood.[40] Because the Lockean self is the theoretical basis for the sovereign citizen-subject of liberalism, and because that self ceases to exist in sleep

[40] For more on Hobbes's use of the image of sleep is relevant for understanding modern democracy, see Tuck ix-xi. Tuck develops Hobbes's suggestive speculations on the election of a temporary in *De Cive* to unpack the meaning of sleep regarding the operation of modern democracies, including, in his final chapter, how this Hobbesian legacy informs politics in the American context. For more on how vigilance was overdetermined in the founding literature of American political thought, see my analysis in chapter one.

according to Locke, it has been impossible for liberalism to imagine a positive right pertaining to a state of existence in which the liberal self is metaphysically absent.[41]

Sleep, like death, thus presents the challenge of accounting for temporal discontinuity in political and legal terms: the withdrawal of sovereign authority in sleep must be supplemented and managed, often with metaphorical substitutions or metonymic displacements, to secure the uninterrupted vigilance necessary for the fiction of legal authority and the durability of social power. Indeed, the sleep of kings and counselors has historically posed the spectacle of sovereign incontinence. In *The Beast and the Sovereign*, Jacques Derrida provides a brief survey of this uncanny terrain in the French rituals and practices aimed at maintaining, with the supplement of a medical gaze, the vigilance of the sovereign in sleep:

> The king's doctors looked after the king's body as two bodies at once. They were looking after the king's body both as the body of a respected, admired, venerated, feared, all-powerful, and omniscient God, and as the objective, objectified, coldly regarded and inspected body of an animal with irresponsible reactions…. When I say that they were looking after and over the body of the king, I mean it literally since they kept vigil even over his sleep, when the king, supposed to see and know everything, to have all power and have everything, could no longer see them, his own doctors, seeing him. (286)

To sleep "with kings and counselors," in Melvillean terms, means not only to prefer the (im)possibility of what might have been but also to occupy, to lay claim to by means of sleeping in, a vexed political territory in which nothing less than the question of temporal authority itself is at stake.

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[41] In chapter one, I analyzed how Locke's conception of the self founders on the problem of sleep as an interruption to waking consciousness, presenting an obstacle to the continuity of personal identity. Locke's solution to this problem is to assert the non-existence of the self in sleep. For more on the political and legal consequence of Locke's view of sleep, see Goldberg-Hiller 951–83. As Goldberg-Hiller puts it, "the lack of a right to sleep seems an apt expression of this division: the legal person as the rational kernel is distinguished and separated from the sleeper whose critical supplement to rationality is bound within another extra-legal dimension such as medicine, public health discourse, biology, or policy" (959).

Bartleby's challenge to sovereign vigilance is twofold: his withdrawal from copying threatens to interrupt the continuity of legal authority; and his withdrawal from all alternative occupations, combined with his insistence that he is "not particular" and his preference to remain "stationary," threatens to undermine what Marx calls the "silent compulsion of economic relations" (899).[42] Bartleby's occupation of the law offices in which he had been formerly employed thus generates a fear of rebellion. "He now persists in haunting the building generally," one of the lawyers complains, "sitting upon the banisters of the stairs by day, and sleeping in the entry by night. Every body is concerned; clients are leaving the offices; some fears are entertained of a mob" (86).

The fear resulting from Bartleby's dual threat results in his imprisonment as a vagrant in "the Tombs, or to speak more properly, the Halls of Justice" (89), setting the stage for his final withdrawal into sleep "with kings and counselors." Bartleby engages in what Jonathan Goldberg-Hiller calls a "civil sleep" (971). Drawing on Colin Dayan's work on the concept of civil death, Goldberg-Hiller suggests that civil sleep may be understood as a kind of "distortion of civil death" that is "dependent on the vitality of a flesh only imperfectly captured by law but not without its capacity to be affirmed as a right that cannot be individually claimed but must be collectively extended" (971). Bartleby's sleep has the potential to become political only in the collective extension of this claim.

An article titled "The Tombs" that appeared in the *New York Tribune* in 1848 helps make the collective potential of Bartleby's sleep a little clearer by illustrating the abject sleeping

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[42] For Marx's analysis of how primitive accumulation turned vagrancy into a crime punishable by imprisonment and even death, see "Chapter 28: Bloody Legislation against the Expropriated since the End of the Fifteenth Century. The Forcing Down of Wages by Act of Parliament," in *Capital: Volume 1: A Critique of Political Economy*.

conditions of the prison and, indirectly, American society itself. Beginning with lines that resonate with the conclusion of Melville's narrator ("Ah Bartleby! Ah humanity!" [93]), joining the conditions of life in the Tombs with those of society at large, the reporter for the *Tribune* apostrophizes: "Grim mausoleum of Hope! Foul lazar-house of polluted and festering Humanity!" "If you would know what is the extreme of human degradation and misery," the reporter continues, "visit the Tombs, and take a walk through its various ranges and cells and apartments." Waiting to be discovered there in the dark are not one but many Bartlebys, "thieves and vagabonds, of every age and quality, to be 'taken care of,' in that tender and affectionate manner in which Society is in the habit of providing for such of her children as cannot take care of themselves."

The narrative continues with a descriptive account of the nocturnal inequality of the Tombs, as the *Tribune* reporter reflects on the absurdity of imposing a state of sleeplessness on those whose only crime was to have no place to sleep:

> We enter and grope our way with difficult, stumbling here and there over a sleeping Watchman, and making slowly toward a dim and distant glimmering light. Approaching, we see a dark lantern held so that its single ray may illuminate the corrugated face and ghastly spectacles of the Police Magistrate, who is doing up the loafers and the loaferesses in squads. The recesses of the damp and unwholesome apartment are filled with drunken men and women found helpless in the street, with night-brawlers and disturbers of the public peace, and with young boys and girls who have been caught asleep on cellar doors or are suspected of the horrible crime of stealing junk bottles and old iron!

In the dark, the reporter observes scenes of unruly unrest: "The women are crammed into a long lampless corridor, and lie huddled up in their rags against the bare stone walls, or rave in hideous fury to and fro, until their strength is exhausted and they fall prone upon the floor." The shadow of a rhyme with the daytime gloom of Bartleby's final sleep ("Look, there is the sky, and here is

the grass" [91]) is too obvious to pass over, as we have seen that Melville's narrator discovers the scrivener in essentially the same position ("strangely huddled at the base of the wall, his knees drawn up, and lying on his side, his head touching the cold stones").

Bartleby's final sleep is itself apostrophic—not merely an allusion to Job and to the many other sleepers in the Tombs but a material appeal not unlike the one made by the reporter to the reading public ("Humanity!"), a higher order ideal of equality beyond the inequality represented in the dyadic relationship of Bartleby to the lawyer, who stands in for the law in general.[43] Bartleby's final sleep might thus be said to apostrophize what Maurice Merleau-Ponty calls "the anonymous vigilance of the senses," a vitality common to all sleeping bodies that is the material condition for intersubjective waking life. In the *Phenomenology of Perception,* Merleau-Ponty writes:

> I lie down in my bed, on my left side, with my knees drawn up; I close my eyes, breathe slowly, and distance myself from my projects. But this is where the power of my will or consciousness ends. Just as the faithful in Dionysian mysteries invoke the god by imitating the scenes of his life, I too call forth the visitation of sleep by imitating the breathing and posture of the sleeper…. Sleep "arrives" at a particular moment, it settles upon this imitation of itself that I offered it, and I succeed in becoming what I pretended to be: that unseeing and nearly unthinking mass, confined to a point in space and no longer in the world except through the anonymous vigilance of the senses. This last link is surely what makes waking up possible: things will return through these half-open doors, or the sleeper will return through them to the world. (167)

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[43] For more on apostrophe as a legal concept, see Greenhouse 252-76. As Greenhouse puts it, "In turning aside to voice an appeal to agents who stand outside the problematic relationship, the plaintiff sets the outsider—the lawyer, the policeman, the judge—above his neighbor. The embarrassment of apostrophe in social relations deemed to be already legal is the sudden overturning of a supposed relation of equality by a relation of hierarchy and authority. From this perspective, it is the possibility of equality's transformation into hierarchy that makes litigiousness seem to be the very unmaking of the Revolution" (270). Compared to traditional legal appeals, Bartleby's apostrophe moves in precisely the opposite direction, from the hierarchy of the Tombs to the "anonymous vigilance of the senses" and the natural equality of the sleeping body (politic).

In phenomenological terms the possibility of collective awakening, the return of things and people to the world, hinges on the claim lodged in Bartleby's performance of sleep and the perception of sleep that his performance makes perceptible.

Sleeping in the Jaws of Leviathan, or the Guide-Fish

If the appeal of Bartleby's sleep can unlock the potential of the past that was not to be, in which the collective right to sleep has been foreclosed, then perhaps the first prison/mausoleum door to open would be the one that sealed the fates of the many Jobs, the "meanest mariners, and renegades and castaways" (*Moby-Dick* 196), aboard Captain Ahab's doomed *Pequod*. Indeed, Melville describes the slumber of the whalers on the *Pequod*, like Bartleby, in Jobian terms:

> Had you descended from the Pequod's try-works to the Pequod's forecastle, where the off duty watch were sleeping, for one single moment you would have almost thought you were standing in some illuminated shrine of canonized kings and counsellors. There they lay in their triangular oaken vaults, each mariner a chiselled muteness; a score of lamps flashing upon his hooded eyes. (627)

This passage illustrating the technological modernity contained in the sleeping quarters of the whaler, from "The Lamp" (ch. 97), expresses the core of the neo-Jobian chronotope connecting "Bartleby" and *Moby-Dick*. According to Mikhail Bakhtin's well-known formulation, in the chronotope, "time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history" (84), and this constellation defines the work's "relationship to an actual reality" (243). The actuality illuminated by the lamplight harbors the potentiality of a collective right to sleep rooted in the common vitality of the sleeping body (politic).

Indeed, the phantasmagoria of sleeping (and sleepless) bodies on display in *Moby-Dick* discloses a politics of illumination specific to the nineteenth century, the historical period in which sleep itself emerged as a new source of fascination and vexation not only for modern science and medicine but also for social and political theory. In the very next paragraph of "The Lamp," Melville introduces a distinction between whalers and merchantmen that highlights the socio-political conditions of sleep:

> In merchantmen, oil for the sailor is more scarce than the milk of queens. To dress in the dark, and eat in the dark, and stumble in darkness to his pallet, this is his usual lot. But the whaleman, as he seeks the food of light, so he lives in light. He makes his berth an Aladdin's lamp, and lays him down in it; so that in the pitchiest night the ship's black hull still houses an illumination. (627)

Like the burgeoning cities of nineteenth-century Europe and America, where the rapid development and increasing availability of new technologies made it possible for the lights to burn incessantly through the "pitchiest night," the *Pequod* is a vessel of Enlightenment and modernity. The rarity and rarefied nature of the whale oil ("more scarce than the milk of queens") indicate its proximity to what Eric Santner calls the "endgames of sovereignty" (xxii) and the significance of rituals of illumination for understanding post-enlightenment politics. The sailors aboard the *Pequod* irradiate their sleeping bodies ("in some illuminated shrine of canonized kings and counsellors") not merely as a means to worldly ends (not merely for the sake of dressing and eating as the merchantmen would) but as a form of glorifying their (un)common rest.[44]

[44] Americans adopted illumination as a sign of political dignity with some hesitation in the nineteenth century precisely because glorious lighting had long been associated with monarchical displays of authority in Europe. For more on the history of illumination(s) in connection with political splendor and sovereignty in America, see Nye.

From beginning to end, *Moby-Dick* is structured by what Freud would term the "wish to sleep" (220) as a primary problem for understanding modern subjectivity, society, and political theory. Suffering from what he calls "hypos" (36) at the beginning of the novel, Ishmael, the protagonist in *Moby-Dick*, seems to believe that going to sea "as a simple sailor" (40) will afford him relief by granting him access to forms of rest and enjoyment that are not available to passengers. His preference not to go as a passenger, Ishmael explains, is owing not simply to a lack of money but because "passengers get sea-sick—grow quarrelsome—don't sleep of nights—do not enjoy themselves much, as a general thing…" (39). Like Bartleby, Ishmael not only seeks a break from the repetitive rhythms of labor as well as the unceasing shocks of consumer life in the modern city but he abjures vocations in general: "nor, though I am something of a salt, do I ever go to sea as a Commodore, or a Captain, or a Cook. I abandon the glory and distinction of such offices to those who like them. For my part, I abominate all honourable respectable toils, trials, and tribulations of every kind whatsoever" (40). Unlike Bartleby, however, he discovers the possibility of escaping, or at least rendering tolerable, the indignity of capitalist labor in the life of the simple sailor at sea.

In a rather unconvincing but highly memorable first attempt to explain his preference for life at sea, Ishmael addresses his audience directly with a startling second-person interrogative:

> Who ain't a slave? Tell me that. Well, then, however the old sea-captains may order me about—however they may thump and punch me about, I have the satisfaction of knowing that it is all right; that everybody else is one way or other served in much the same way—either in a physical or metaphysical point of view, that is; and so the universal thump is passed round, and all hands should rub each other's shoulder-blades, and be content. (41)

This strident explanation fails to convey why Ishmael would prefer the life of a sailor to any other form of modern labor or "slavery." Later in the novel, however, his preference begins to

become more understandable. “Nowadays,” Ishmael explains in “The Mast-Head” (ch. 35), “the whale-fishery furnishes an asylum for many romantic, melancholy, and absent-minded young men, disgusted with the carking cares of earth, and seeking sentiment in tar and blubber” (255). It is not only the “sentiment in tar and blubber,” however, that attracts Ishmael but the possibility of enjoying glorious forms of rest.

“A dreamy meditative man” may find the life of the whaler “delightful” (151), in Ishmael’s words, because it presents ample opportunities for sublime repose, especially when assigned the job of standing watch:

> There you stand, a hundred feet above the silent decks, striding along the deep, as if the masts were gigantic stilts, while beneath you and between your legs, as it were, swim the hugest monsters of the sea, even as ships once sailed between the boots of the famous Colossus at old Rhodes. There you stand, lost in the infinite series of the sea, with nothing ruffled but the waves. The tranced ship indolently rolls; the drowsy trade winds blow; everything resolves you into languor. For the most part, in this tropic whaling life, a sublime uneventfulness invests you; you hear no news; read no gazettes; extras with startling accounts of commonplaces never delude you into unnecessary excitements; you hear of no domestic afflictions; bankrupt securities; fall of stocks; are never troubled with the thought of what you shall have for dinner—for all your meals for three years and more are snugly stowed in casks, and your bill of fare is immutable. (251)

Safe from the jolts and shocks of modernity’s “unnecessary excitements” and free from the typical anxiety of a wage laborer in a capitalist system prone to “bankrupt securities” and the “fall of stocks,” Ishmael prefers the life of the sailor because it offers him access to a kind of repose that is impossible to find anywhere else, in which “everything resolves you into languor” and “a sublime uneventfulness invests you.” Ishmael’s apostrophic appeal (“resolves you”; “invests you”), like Bartleby’s sleep (“Ah, Humanity!”), invites the reader to partake in his hypnaesthetic vision, creating the possibility for establishing a somnipathic public.

Staring out across the ocean, Ishmael describes the experience of losing himself in a state of contemplation that seems to capture the metaphysical quality of Bartleby's dead-wall reveries:

> lulled into such an opium-like listlessness of vacant, unconscious reverie is this absent-minded youth by the blending cadence of waves with thoughts, that at last he loses his identity; takes the mystic ocean at his feet for the visible image of that deep, blue, bottomless soul, pervading mankind and nature; and every strange, half-seen, gliding, beautiful thing that eludes him; every dimly-discovered, uprising fin of some undiscernible form, seems to him the embodiment of those elusive thoughts that only people the soul by continually flitting through it. In this enchanted mood, thy spirit ebbs away to whence it came; becomes diffused through time and space; like Crammer's sprinkled Pantheistic ashes, forming at last a part of every shore the round globe over. (256)

Just as Bartleby's daydreaming only make sense as a mode of resistance to the inhumanity of capitalist labor, Ishmael's wish to rest cannot be grasped in Transcendentalist or Emersonian terms, as the expression of an individualistic encounter with the absolute. Thus Ishmael (Melville) warns:

> There is no life in thee, now, except that rocking life imparted by a gently rolling ship; by her, borrowed from the sea; by the sea, from the inscrutable tides of God. But while this sleep, this dream is on ye, move your foot or hand an inch; slip your hold at all; and your identity comes back in horror. Over Descartian vortices you hover. And perhaps, at mid-day, in the fairest weather, with one half-throttled shriek you drop through that transparent air into the summer sea, no more to rise for ever. Heed it well, ye Pantheists! (256)

The "Descartian vortices" that threaten to shatter Ishmael's repose reveal that the truth of his dreamy wish fulfillment lurks beneath the surface, in the mechanized or capitalist form of laboring subjectivity that he seeks to escape by going to sea, as Jonah sought to escape the wrath of God. From this point of view, the sea functions for Melville's Ishmael much as it does for Conrad's Lord Jim in Frederic Jameson's analysis. According to Jameson, the sea is the privileged space from which to "contemplate that dreary prose of the world which is daily life in

the universal factory called capitalism" (210). We might thus say that the sea in Melville is, as Jameson puts it of Conrad,

> both a strategy of containment and a place of real business: it is a border and a decorative limit, but it is also a highway, out of the world and in it at once, the repression of work—on the order of the classic English novel of the country-house weekend, in which human relations can be presented in all their ideal formal purity precisely because concrete content is relegated to the rest of the week—as well as the absent work-place itself. (210)

This much seems correct, but I want to suggest that there is perhaps even a little lower layer of truth animating Ishmael's utopian impulse, to be found in Melville's materialist rendering of the sleep drive itself.

Ishmael's Pantheistic reverie serves the purpose of keeping him asleep to the political nature of his desire to escape land-based work, but that does not mean that the fundamental wish underlying his daydream is itself ideological. Indeed, there are crucial passages in *Moby-Dick* in which the wish to sleep manifests not in the ideology of romantic or individualist escapism but as a social drive. This distinction is decisive for understanding how Melville presents an alternative politics of sleep prior to the advent of the Freudian model that would circumscribe both dreaming and sleeping within the limits of individual wish fulfillment. In *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Freud claims that "dreams are the guardians of sleep" because "they serve the purpose of prolonging sleep instead of waking up" (219). Crucially, Freud isolates the wish to the conscious ego: "Thus the wish to sleep (which the conscious ego is concentrated upon, and which, together with the dream-censorship and the 'secondary revision' which I shall mention later, constitute the conscious ego's share in dreaming) must in every case be reckoned as one of the motives for the formation of dreams, and every successful dream is a fulfilment of that wish" (220).

As Jonathan Crary explains in *24/7: Late Capitalism and the Ends of Sleep*, rethinking Freud's interpretation of dream and sleep phenomena opens the possibility of imagining the future otherwise:

> Throughout the twentieth century, it was generally unthinkable that wishes could be for anything other than individual needs—wishes for a dream house, a dream car, or a vacation. Freud was one of many for whom the group or community played only a regressive part in an economy of desire, and his work is merely one instance of a bourgeois horror of the crowd, or the horde, whose group actions were inevitably unthinking and infantile repudiations of mature individual responsibility. But the psychoanalytic reduction not only prohibits wishes and needs that transcend individual desire and acquisitiveness; it also refuses the possibility of dreaming as a ceaseless and turbulent convergence of the lived present with ghosts from a fugitive and still indiscernible future. It categorically binds all dreaming, all wishes, within a closed field of forgotten events in the earliest years of one's life, and disempowers the dreamer further by restricting the ability to understand them to the analyst. Dreams may well be the vehicles of wishes, but the wishes at stake are the insatiable human desires to exceed the isolating and privatizing confines of the self. (108-9)

From this point of view, we can begin to better understand the social nature of sleep that Ishmael discovers in his initial encounter with Queequeg, his future shipmate and soon-to-be new "bosom friend" (107), in bed together at the Spouter Inn.

But before analyzing Ishmael and Queequeg's common sleep, it is vital to note how Ishmael's journey to find his bed(mate) takes readers on a brief tour of the nocturnal geography of modern American life. Having made up his mind to go to sea, Ishmael sets out to find a safe, affordable place to sleep prior to departure, which leads him to seek shelter in the unlit streets of the waterfront district: "Such dreary streets! blocks of blackness, not houses, on either hand, and here and there a candle, like a candle moving about in a tomb. At this hour of the night, of the last day of the week, that quarter of the town proved all but deserted" (46). Ishmael's night rambling sheds light on the social and political conditions that led to an unequal distribution not only of lighting but of access to quality sleep in nineteenth-century cities, revealing a dreary

correspondence between the Tombs in which Bartleby claims his final rest and the "blocks of blackness" that contain the occasional "candle moving about in a tomb." As Peter Baldwin explains, in *In the Watches of the Night: Life in the Nocturnal City, 1820-1930,*

> Urban slums were proverbially dark from the colonial era through the early twentieth century. Indoor illumination was very expensive in the era before gaslight. Poor people in preindustrial America saved money by burning as little light as possible: a sputtering tallow candle usually sufficed. Wealthier people burned beeswax and spermaceti candles or whale-oil lamps, displaying their wealth to the world by the glow from their windows. (15)

Poverty and racial inequality defined the politics of illumination in nineteenth-century America. It is no accident that, wandering in the deserted night, Ishmael is drawn by the appeal of "a smoky light proceeding from a low, wide building, the door of which stood invitingly open" (46), only to find himself stumbling inside a Black church, in which" the preacher's text was about the blackness of darkness, and the weeping and wailing and teeth-gnashing there" (47). The immediate social conditions informing Ishmael's decision to go to sea are doubly shaped by the lack of a right to sleep: Ishmael's material motivations for going to sea must include access to sublime, oceanic repose as an escape from labor as well as access to the whale oil and lamps that grant sailors the dignity of enjoying illuminated or glorified sleep, as the wealthy are able to enjoy on land, and thus of feeling like kings and counselors in seeming possession of a common right to sleep.

In a twist that is as politically and philosophically revealing as it is humorous, the bed that Ishmael finally secures for himself must be shared with Queequeg, the extravagantly tattooed harpooner who goes about town selling "'balmed New Zealand heads" (60). Reluctant at first, Ishmael explains that "no man prefers to sleep two in a bed…. I don't know how it is, but people like to be private when they are sleeping. And when it comes to sleeping with an

unknown stranger, in a strange inn, in a strange town, and that stranger a harpooneer, then your objections indefinitely multiply" (56). Ishmael's initial revulsion at the idea of bed-sharing and the eventual comedic resolution of the dramatic tension involved betray a class bias and an ambivalence about the social nature of sleep that were, during the first half of the nineteenth century, still relatively recent historical developments. While communal sleep was already frowned upon by the upper classes in the eighteenth century, it nonetheless remained true that, according to Roger Ekirch, "often, even in middle-class households, bedfellows were thought a blessing. Sleeping beside a familiar soul, whether a family member, a fellow servant, or a friend brought advantages beyond enjoying another's warmth or saving the cost of an extra bed" (279-80). Ishmael's communal sleep with Queequeg harkens back to a prior moment in sleep history, before the normalization of individualistic sleep practices, and offers a glimpse of nocturnal sociality and intimacy among strangers that would increasingly disappear in the second half of the nineteenth century: "How it is I know not; but there is no place like a bed for confidential disclosures between friends. Man and wife, they say, there open the very bottom of their souls to each other; and some old couples often lie and chat over old times till nearly morning. Thus, then, in our hearts' honeymoon, lay I and Queequeg—a cosy, loving pair" (108).

Awakening after his first night of slumber with Queequeg, Ishmael is struck by an involuntary memory in the form of a nightmare from his childhood, a memory of having been unfairly confined to solitary sleep by his "stepmother who, somehow or other, was all the time whipping [him], or sending [him] to bed supperless" (71). He recalls how he had been caught "trying to crawl up the chimney, as [he] had seen a little sweep do a few days previous" (71), and then sent to bed, as punishment, at "two o'clock in the afternoon of the 21st June, the longest day

in the year in our hemisphere" (71). Locked away in his own domestic version of the Tombs, the young Ishmael experiences perhaps his first encounter with the injustice of the world, and he cries out, like Job, only to be met with the cruelty or indifference of a sovereign will above his own:

> I lay there dismally calculating that sixteen entire hours must elapse before I could hope for a resurrection. Sixteen hours in bed! the small of my back ached to think of it. And it was so light too; the sun shining in at the window, and a great rattling of coaches in the streets, and the sound of gay voices all over the house. I felt worse and worse—at last I got up, dressed, and softly going down in my stockinged feet, sought out my stepmother, and suddenly threw myself at her feet, beseeching her as a particular favour to give me a good slippering for my misbehaviour; anything indeed but condemning me to lie abed such an unendurable length of time. But she was the best and most conscientious of stepmothers, and back I had to go to my room. (72)

After returning to his room, little Ishmael slips into a nightmare state that leaves a lasting impression on his childhood psyche:

> For several hours I lay there broad awake, feeling a great deal worse than I have ever done since, even from the greatest subsequent misfortunes. At last I must have fallen into a troubled nightmare of a doze; and slowly waking from it—half steeped in dreams—I opened my eyes, and the before sun-lit room was now wrapped in outer darkness. Instantly I felt a shock running through all my frame; nothing was to be seen, and nothing was to be heard; but a supernatural hand seemed placed in mine. My arm hung over the counterpane, and the nameless, unimaginable, silent form or phantom, to which the hand belonged, seemed closely seated by my bed-side. For what seemed ages piled on ages, I lay there, frozen with the most awful fears, not daring to drag away my hand; yet ever thinking that if I could but stir it one single inch, the horrid spell would be broken. I knew not how this consciousness at last glided away from me; but waking in the morning, I shudderingly remembered it all, and for days and weeks and months afterwards I lost myself in confounding attempts to explain the mystery. Nay, to this very hour, I often puzzle myself with it. (72)

Remarkably, Ishmael connects this traumatic childhood memory with the feeling he has of awakening with Queequeg:

> Now, take away the awful fear, and my sensations at feeling the supernatural hand in mine were very similar, in their strangeness, to those which I experienced on waking up and seeing Queequeg's pagan arm thrown round me. But at length all the past night's events soberly recurred, one by one, in fixed reality, and then I lay only alive to the

> comical predicament. For though I tried to move his arm—unlock his bridegroom clasp—yet, sleeping as he was, he still hugged me tightly, as though naught but death should part us twain. (73)

From the perspective of his present, the rediscovery of communal sleeping with Queequeg, Ishmael seems to associate the nightmare of his childhood sleep punishment with the wish for a common sleep, expressed by "the nameless, unimaginable, silent form or phantom" whose hand reaches out for him and whose name may as well be Bartleby (or Barnadine or Barnaby or Barnabas), holding open "the possibility," to borrow Jonathan Crary's words, "of dreaming as a ceaseless and turbulent convergence of the lived present with ghosts from a fugitive and still indiscernible future."[45]

The ghost of the future, which Ishmael glimpses in his nocturnal relation with Queequeg, grants him insight into a somnipathic ontology of bodily entanglement or interconnectedness. Melville spells out this ontology in "The Monkey-Rope" (ch. 72), when Ishmael finds his bodily self again entangled with Queequeg's body and realizes that the monkey-rope, like sleep, necessitates a pause in his sovereign conception of the world:

> So strongly and metaphysically did I conceive of my situation then, that while earnestly watching his motions, I seemed distinctly to perceive that my own individuality was now merged in a joint stock company of two; that my free will had received a mortal wound; and that another's mistake or misfortune might plunge innocent me into unmerited disaster and death. Therefore, I saw that here was a sort of interregnum in Providence; for its even-handed equity never could have so gross an injustice. And yet still further pondering—while I jerked him now and then from between the whale and ship, which

[45] In "Bartleby, or On Contingency," Agamben argues that Bartleby's formula ["I would prefer not to"] "inscribes whomever utters it in the line of *aggeloi*, messengers," observing that "one of these messengers is Kafka's Barnaby, who, we read, 'was perhaps simply a messenger, one who knew nothing of the content of the letters entrusted to him,' one whose 'gaze, smile, and walk seemed to be those of a messenger, although he himself was not aware of it" (*Potentialities* 257). Perhaps parapractically, Agamben translates Barnabas, the messenger from Kafka's *The Castle*, into Barnaby, the name that Charles Dickens used to create his foundational literary meditation on sleep and society. For more on Dickens's 1841 *Barnaby Rudge* as a central text for understanding the politics of sleep in nineteenth-century literature, see Greaney 1-19.

> would threaten to jam him—still further pondering, I say, I saw that this situation of mine was the precise situation of every mortal that breathes; only, in most cases, he, one way or other, has this Siamese connexion with a plurality of other mortals. (481)

By introducing the idea of an "interregnum in Providence" here, Melville invokes the Jobian problem of theodicy and links the wish for a more just world to the acknowledgment of bodily interdependence, the truth of which is rarely as obvious in waking life as it is in sleep. Thus Ishmael's bond with Queeqeug runs deeper than any waking, conscious thought: "From that hour I clove to Queequeg like a barnacle; yea, till poor Queequeg took his last long dive" (120).

It is strangely fitting then that Queequeg's "final bed" (701), the coffin that he prepares for himself at sea, should become the "life-buoy" (761) that rescues Ishmael from drowning in the end. And perhaps even stranger fitting still that Ahab himself should propose a reading of Queequeg's coffin-bed that anticipates Agamben's reading of Bartleby by well over a century: "Oh! how immaterial are all materials! What things real are there, but imponderable thoughts? Here now's the very dreaded symbol of grim death, by a mere hap, made the expressive sign of the help and hope of most endangered life. A life-buoy of a coffin! Does it go further? Can it be that in some spiritual sense the coffin is, after all, but an immortality-preserver!" (766) But I am getting ahead of myself. For first it must be shown in what sense Ahab's authoritarian compact offers Ishmael and the rest of the crew aboard the *Pequod* the promise of glorious repose unburdened by sovereign insomnia.

We have seen how Ishmael's desire to go to sea is determined in part by his wish to sleep, which is denied by "the universal factory called capitalism" and the indignity of miserable sleeping conditions that the unsleeping poor must suffer. What the whaling compact offers him is access to "an opium-like listlessness of vacant, unconscious reverie" at sea and the glorious,

illuminated sleep of kings and counselors below deck in exchange for surrendering his freedom to an "absolute dictator" (171), who assumes the burden of sovereign vigilance for the duration of the voyage. The whaling ship is thus effectively a Hobbesian state in miniature: in the authoritarian compact between captain and crew, the captain assumes the burden of sovereign insomnia like Hobbes's monarch, partially shielding the crew from the relentless pressure of the invisible hand of the market that would effectively turn all citizens of the modern liberal state into sleep deprived somnambules.

Hence the special caution with which even the "grand, ungodly, god-like man, Captain Ahab" (147) treats the sleep of his sailors, despite the generalized madness with which he otherwise pursues his sovereign mandate of "monomaniac revenge" (295) against Moby-Dick, the whale that took his leg:

> So, almost every twenty-four hours, when the watches of the night were set, and the band on deck sentinelled the slumbers of the band below; and when if a rope was to be hauled upon the forecastle, the sailors flung it not rudely down, as by day, but with some cautiousness dropt it to its place for fear of disturbing their slumbering shipmates; when this sort of steady quietude would begin to prevail, habitually, the silent steersman would watch the cabin-scuttle; and ere long the old man would emerge, gripping at the iron banister, to help his crippled way. Some considering touch of humanity was in him; for at times like these, he usually abstained from patrolling the quarter-deck; because to his wearied mates, seeking repose within six inches of his ivory heel, such would have been the reverberating crack and din of that bony step, that their dreams would have been on the crunching teeth of sharks. (211)

To dream of sharks, Ahab seems to intuit, would not only disturb the slumber of his crew but remind them of the unsleeping mechanisms of capitalism (political economy) from which his form of sovereign authority (political-theology) offers them some reprieve by granting them more leisure time for daytime reveries and more dignified sleeping conditions than most factory work or merchant ships would afford them.

Indeed, on more than one occasion Melville likens the money-making proposition of the whaling industry to the undead quality of sharks. As Ishmael observes, "a sort of generic or Pantheistic vitality seemed to lurk in their very joints and bones, after what might be called the individual life had departed" (456). The activity of the whalers above the water is mirrored by the sharks below, such that,

> while the valiant butchers over the deck-table are thus cannibally carving each other's live meat with carving-knives all gilded and tasselled, the sharks, also, with their jewel-hilted mouths, are quarrelsomely carving away under the table at the dead meat; and though, were you to turn the whole affair upside down, it would still be pretty much the same thing, that is to say, a shocking sharkish business enough for all parties. (443)

Ahab's authority thus depends upon protecting the slumber of his crew from the activity of sharks, which menace his dominion with the specter of a sovereign mechanism decoupled from human willing:

> thousands on thousands of sharks, swarming round the dead leviathan, smackingly feasted on its fatness. The few sleepers below in their bunks were often startled by the sharp slapping of their tails against the hull, within a few inches of the sleepers' hearts. Peering over the side you could just see them (as before you heard them) wallowing in the sullen, black waters, and turning over on their backs as they scooped out huge globular pieces of the whale of the bigness of a human head. (443)

The beheadings that the sharks symbolically enact on the dead leviathan all too easily convey the decoupling of sovereign authority from the will of "a human head" and threaten to replace it with an inhuman mechanism (the market).

Many critics have analyzed how Ahab anticipates what C. L. R. James calls the "totalitarian type" (15), but little attention has been paid to the political significance of Ahab's assumption of sovereign sleeplessness and his concomitant promise to safeguard the sleep of his crew as the decisive factors for understanding his magnetic appeal. In the standard analysis, established by James, Ahab procures loyalty to his mad mission by offering his men access to, as

James puts it, “feelings common to all humanity in its greatest moments” (71) and by representing himself as a man singularly consumed by a sublime purpose, in full control of the science of navigation and the political strategies of his day (21). While James notes that “Ahab cannot sleep at all, or when he does, he sleeps standing straight up or in his chair, shouting about the blood spouting from Moby Dick” (29), he does not consider the unique appeal of Ahab’s assumption of the sovereign burden of somnambulism, insomnia, and night terrors together with his implicit promise to ensure his crew’s access to relatively peaceful slumber as integral to the social compact aboard the *Pequod*.

In the standard reading of Ahab, the novelty of his totalitarian appeal lies in his promise to grant the crew access to the bygone glory of heroic action, in hunting Moby-Dick, which enchants them with the possibility of a meaningful life that is not determined by capitalism, or the quantity of barrels of oil that they return. But we should not forget that Homer was not Kant, that heroic action was never an end in itself but found its sublime purpose fulfilled in the repose of Elysium, its *summum bonum* in the bed of Odysseus. More important than the glory of the hunt, on my reading, is the promise of sleep that Ahab’s compact harbors.

The *Pequod* is thus a metonymic vessel revealing a specific relation between capitalism, sovereignty, and the (sleeping) body (politic). In *The Politics of Sleep,* Simon Williams outlines how sleep in the late modern age “doubles as both a problem and prism, a site and source, of political power relations and investments” (xi-xii). I read Melville’s portrait of the sleeping sailors aboard the *Pequod* as a neo-Jobian or Bartlebean problem-prism of this kind to better understand the genealogy of the modern politics of sleep, revealing new Melvillean resources for post-enlightenment philosophy and political theory.

Ahab's political power stems from his ability to harness the sleep drive, using the sleep science of his day to serve his sovereign purpose. Melville's many references to animal magnetism—from the "something shot from [Ahab's] dilated nostrils" and "inhaled … in [Starbuck's] lungs" (265) to Ahab's attempt "by some nameless, interior volition, [to] shock[ ] into [the crew] the same fiery emotion accumulated within the Leyden jar of his own magnetic life" (267)—illuminate the politics of sleep in *Moby-Dick*. Indeed, the doubloon that Ahab fixes to the mast to seal his sovereign compact, which serves as "the white whale's talisman" (633), effectively fixes his crew in a somnipathic state of magnetic sleep, as Emily Ogden has shown, by drawing on the work of electrobiologists like John Bovee Dods, who used galvanic batteries, Leyden jars, and electro-magnetic coins to effectively hypnotize his subjects.[46]

From this point of view, the white whale is neither a myth nor a symbol but the daymare binding the crew to Ahab's sovereign dream in a collective state of artificial somnambulism. Indeed, Melville seems to encourage this understanding of the whale, which, like a nightmare, presses down on or "heaps" (264) Ahab, with his description of a dark and mysterious painting in "The Spouter-Inn" (ch. 3). Participating in the tradition of nightmare aesthetics begun by

[46] For more on Melville's references to the nineteenth-century (pseudo-)sciences of animal magnetism, mesmerism, and hypnotism, see Ogden, "The Science of Error." For more on the role of animal magnetism in modern political history, see Darnton. For the significance of animal magnetism in political theory, see Santner, *The Royal Remains*. In Santner's analysis, "the mesmeric fluid represents not so much a pseudoscientific condensation of the multiple invisible forces of *nature*; it functions rather as one of the names of the flesh at the point at which the matter and charisma of the King's sublime body—his 'strange material and physical presence,' to use Foucault's formulation—becomes dispersed into the new locus of sovereignty, the people. Mesmerism represents, in other words, the adumbration of the 'new physics' that Foucault would posit as the *dispositif* of modern governmentality" (98). On my reading, Ahab attempts to colonize the somnipathic sensibility of his crew, their shared wish to sleep, through the hypnotic deployment of the doubloon, forming a somnolent community, or a community of civic sleep ideally susceptible to the "*dispositif* of modern governmentality," that is constitutionally unable to awaken.

Macnish and continued by Poe, which I analyze in chapter two and chapter three, respectively, Melville describes how Ishmael falls under the spell of the leviathan as a Macnishian nightmare object in contemplation of the painting:

> But what most puzzled and confounded you was a long, limber, portentous, black mass of something hovering in the centre of the picture over three blue, dim, perpendicular lines floating in a nameless yeast. A boggy, soggy, squitchy picture truly, enough to drive a nervous man distracted. Yet was there a sort of indefinite, half-attained, unimaginable sublimity about it that fairly froze you to it, till you involuntarily took an oath with yourself to find out what that marvellous painting meant. Ever and anon a bright, but, alas, deceptive idea would dart you through.—It's the Black Sea in a midnight gale.—It's the unnatural combat of the four primal elements.—It's a blasted heath.—It's a Hyperborean winter scene.—It's the breaking-up of the icebound stream of Time. But at last all these fancies yielded to that one portentous something in the picture's midst. That once found out, and all the rest were plain. But stop; does it not bear a faint resemblance to a gigantic fish? even the great leviathan himself? (49-50)

Proposing a "final theory" (50) of his own, Ishmael proclaims that "the picture represents a Cape-Horner in a great hurricane; the half-foundered ship weltering there with its three dismantled masts alone visible; and an exasperated whale, purposing to spring clean over the craft, is in the enormous act of impaling himself upon the three mast-heads" (50). Ishmael's interpretation reimagines the classic image of the nightmare—which Fuseli, Macnish, and Poe had rendered from individual, subjective, and phenomenological perspectives—as a collective experience, identifying the whale in the act of heaping down on an entire ship.

For a visual approximation of Melville's whale as nightmare phenomenon, the best source may be J. M. W. Turner's 1845 painting *Whalers,* which Melville was likely aware of but probably had not encountered firsthand at the time of writing *Moby-Dick* (see fig. 3). In Turner's painting, a whale breaches the field of representation with, to use Melville's words, "such unaccountable masses of shades and shadows, that at first you almost thought some ambitious

young artist, in the time of the New England hags, had endeavored to delineate chaos bewitched" (49).

In this composite image, we see the problem of sovereign vigilance "spring" or explode from the surface of Turner's canvas to take flight in Ishmael's terrifying perception of a nightmarish leviathan performing the "enormous act" of crushing a ship, for the problem of the leviathan in Melville is no more reducible to cetology than the phallus is reducible to anatomy in Freudian terms. Viewed hypnaesthetically, Melville combines the feelings of sleepless terror and nightmarish horror in the "unaccountable masses of shades and shadows" that "bewitch" and shatter the surface of Ishmael's waking consciousness attention.

Fig. 3: Turner, Joseph Mallord William. *Whalers*. c.1845, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

The doubloon may thus be understood not only the “ship's navel” (639), as Pip puts it, but the *navel* of Ahab’s sovereign dream in the Freudian sense, as it binds the crew’s collective wish to sleep in the mast of the *Pequod* and thus materially secures the nightmare aesthetics of the white whale. As each sailor interprets the “strange figures and inscriptions stamped on it” (632), the interpretation of the doubloon acquires the ontological significance of the interpretation of dreams in Freud’s analysis. The interpretation of the whale/doubloon, in Melville’s words, assumes the ontological weight of meaning in general in capitalist society: “And some certain significance lurks in all things, else all things are little worth, and the round world itself but an empty cipher, except to sell by the cartload, as they do hills about Boston, to fill up some morass in the Milky Way” (633).

Hence we might consider the white whale, which bodies forth “a dumb blankness, full of meaning” (306) capable of indefinite symbolization and interpretation (“And of all these things the Albino whale was the symbol” [306]), the dream content or superstructure and the doubloon the material substratum or base in the nightmare economy of sleep(lessness) in which Ahab invests the crew’s interest. For we must recall that it is the wish to sleep, according to Freud, which makes the interpretation of dreams, and so perhaps also literature, necessary: “The correct interpretation, which the sleeping mind is perfectly capable of making, would involve an active interest and would require that sleep should be brought to an end; for that reason, of all the possible interpretations, only those are admitted which are consistent with the absolute censorship exercised by the wish to sleep” (220).

It is Pip who discloses the truth of the sleep drive from a hypnaesthetic perspective, as he hypnotically conjugates the subjectivities of viewer and viewed together, inviting a somnipathic

feeling: “I look, you look, he looks; we look, ye look, they look” (639). Like Bartleby, Pip extends an apostrophic invitation to the perception of sleep, creating an opening to a somnipathic public with the critical potential of subverting Ahab’s authoritarian capture. With Pip, Melville combines Job’s critique of sovereignty (theodicy) or insight into the injustice of the world and the meaninglessness of suffering with Jonah’s vocation to speak the truth. For my reading, it is important to emphasize that Pip, like Bartleby, is a Jobian figure who communicates the potentiality of sleep in hypnaesthetic form.

As we learn in “The Castaway” (ch. 93), Pip resembles Bartleby, or *vice versa,* in more ways than one, as he is an “unduly slender, clumsy, or timorous wight” (608) who “love[s] life, and all life's peaceable securities” (609) and simply prefers not to participate in the “panic-striking business in which he had somehow unaccountably become entrapped” (609), the sharkish business of whaling. Thus in the midst of a chase, “the involuntary consternation of the moment cause[s] him to leap, paddle in hand, out of the boat” (611), which results in opprobrium from Stubb, the second mate, who reminds him that “man is a money-making animal” (611) and that he should not forget his extreme precarity as a Black man in America: “‘a whale would sell for thirty times what you would, Pip, in Alabama. Bear that in mind, and don't jump any more’” (611). “But we are all in the hands of the Gods,” Ishmael ironically comments, “and Pip jumped again … and … when the whale started to run, Pip was left behind on the sea, like a hurried traveller's trunk” (612). Like Bartleby in the Tombs, Pip is left for dead as Ishmael explains that the “sea had jeeringly kept his finite body up, but drowned the infinite of his soul” (613).

Like Jonah, whose “prodigy of ponderous misery drags him drowning down to sleep” (*Moby-Dick* 97), Pip encounters the divine in the depths of the sea, in a vision that suspends the

difference between sleeping and waking: he sees the "multitudinous, God-omnipresent, coral insects" (613) and "God's foot upon the treadle of the loom, and spoke it; and therefore his shipmates called him mad. So man's insanity is heaven's sense; and wandering from all mortal reason, man comes at last to that celestial thought, which, to reason, is absurd and frantic; and weal or woe, feels then uncompromised, indifferent as his God" (613). Pip returns from this hypaesthetic vision a second self, awake to the interconnectedness of life, having discovered the materialist anarchy of "coral insects," a hypnaesthetic intuition, in place of the security of Lockean oblivion in sleep, and he is gifted with penetrating historical insight and the power of prophecy, as he tells Ahab: "Pip jumped from the whale-boat. Pip's missing" (757).

By reading Pip and Bartleby in this way, I aim to present them as prophets of inoperativity but not as witnesses to what Donald E. Pease calls, following Derrida and Agamben, the "untranslatable source of human utterance" (15). My reading does not aim to recover the metaphysical void at the heart of language but to reveal a specific moment in the nineteenth century when the cross-pressures of capitalist labor and political sovereignty gave rise to explorations of feelings of sleep(lessness) in literature and art.

Thus it is when other characters go missing from their places in sleep that they become most capable of perceiving, speaking, or otherwise revealing how the sleep drive structures *Moby-Dick*. For example, Starbuck's lone opportunity to overthrow Ahab comes when he discovers him unconscious and, while contemplating killing him in his sleep, gains insight into Ahab's sovereign dream: "'Stern all! Oh Moby Dick, I clutch thy heart at last!' Such were the sounds that now came hurtling from out the old man's tormented sleep, as if Starbuck's voice had caused the long dumb dream to speak" (748). But Starbuck is unable to strike Ahab's body

natural, perhaps because the aura of his sovereignty persists in the dream like the king's body politic, leading Starbuck to declare paradoxically that "he's too sound asleep" (748). And so the wish to sleep also prevents Starbuck from capturing Ahab because he is afraid that "all comfort, sleep itself, inestimable reason would leave me on the long intolerable voyage" (748). Indeed, Tashtego is only able to communicate the unspeakable crime of mutiny in a somniloquy, as he "rambled in his sleep" (372). Or consider how "the first man of the Pequod that mounted the mast to look out for the White Whale, on the White Whale's own peculiar ground; … was swallowed up in the deep" because, Ishmael speculates, "he was not yet half waked from his sleep (for sailors sometimes go aloft in a transition state)" (761).

Finally, Ishmael acquires insight into the imminent danger he and the crew are facing aboard the *Pequod* when he falls asleep at the helm and intuits that he is heading away from safety—not towards it:

> But that night, in particular, a strange (and ever since inexplicable) thing occurred to me. Starting from a brief standing sleep, I was horribly conscious of something fatally wrong…. Nothing seemed before me but a jet gloom, now and then made ghastly by flashes of redness. Uppermost was the impression, that whatever swift, rushing thing I stood on was not so much bound to any haven ahead as rushing from all havens astern. A stark, bewildered feeling, as of death, came over me…. Lo! in my brief sleep I had turned myself about, and was fronting the ship's stern, with my back to her prow and the compass. In an instant I faced back, just in time to prevent the vessel from flying up into the wind, and very probably capsizing her. How glad and how grateful the relief from this unnatural hallucination of the night, and the fatal contingency of being brought by the lee! (626)

To understand the specificity of the threat posed by Ahab's dream compact and whether *Moby-Dick* provides any insights into how to prevent the modern ship of state from "rushing from all havens astern," a more detailed analysis of Ahab's sovereign insomnia is required.

In addition to harnessing the science of sleep and offering to protect the slumber of his crew from the sharkish business of capitalism, Ahab exhibits insomnia as a crucial political term for understanding the development of political-theology in modernity. Throughout *Moby-Dick* Melville characterizes Ahab as a man defined by his unsleeping vigilance in the pursuit of revenge against life, in the form of the white whale that "dismasted" him (262). In "Moby Dick" (ch. X), we learn that Ahab's tyrannical transformation occurs not immediately with the loss of his leg but as he lies in bed recovering:

> For long months of days and weeks, Ahab and anguish lay stretched together in one hammock, rounding in mid winter that dreary, howling Patagonian Cape; then it was, that his torn body and gashed soul bled into one another; and so interfusing, made him mad. That it was only then, on the homeward voyage, after the encounter, that the final monomania seized him, seems all but certain from the fact that, at intervals during the passage, he was a raving lunatic. (292)

Transformed by the heterogenous mixture of his "torn body and gashed soul," Ahab forswears the whaling industry and the logic of the profit motive. In wounded slumber ("…his mates were forced to lace him fast, even there, as he sailed, raving in his hammock" [292]), Ahab discovers the porousness of self and world that Locke attempted to foreclose in sleep and he repudiates it.

The intermixing of "torn body and gashed soul" opens Ahab's eyes to the "interregnum in Providence" that Ishmael finds in his somnipathic connection with Queequeg, but Ahab sees in the radical interdependence of life only the infinite potential for suffering without any guarantee of Divine or metaphysical justification or safety, the destruction of theodicy. In response, Ahab turns Jobian antihero and takes up the vocation of sovereign insomnia. Early in his narrative, Ishmael observes Ahab's uncanny nocturnal animation but mistakes it for a natural sign, commenting on how "old age is always wakeful; as if, the longer linked with life, the less man has to do with aught that looks like death" (*Moby-Dick* 209).

Initially, readers are given few indications of the terrifying quality of Ahab's sleeplessness. It is not until "The Chart" (ch. 44) that Melville begins to reveal Ahab's sovereign aversion to sleep:

> Often, when forced from his hammock by exhausting and intolerably vivid dreams of the night, which, resuming his own intense thoughts through the day, carried them on amid a clashing of phrensies, and whirled them round and round and round in his blazing brain, till the very throbbing of his life-spot became insufferable anguish; and when, as was sometimes the case, these spiritual throes in him heaved his being up from its base, and a chasm seemed opening in him, from which forked flames and lightnings shot up, and accursed fiends beckoned him to leap down among them; when this hell in himself yawned beneath him, a wild cry would be heard through the ship; and with glaring eyes Ahab would burst from his state room, as though escaping from a bed that was on fire. (315)

With this portrait of Ahab's "exhausting and intolerably vivid dreams of the night," Melville combines the terror of insomnia with the horror of nightmare, climactically connecting nightmare aesthetics to sovereign insomnia and providing insight into how life itself comes to feel like "insufferable anguish" through the negation of sleep.

Ahab's quest to kill Moby-Dick may thus be understood as a quest to kill the source of his insomnia, the state of exposure that he finds intolerable, in which his sense of individual identity and, concomitantly, Providence dissolves. The white whale for Ahab looms like Bartleby's "dead-wall[s]" (68) in the Tombs, harboring his final sleep with an "amazing thickness, [which] kept off all sounds behind them" (93). "How can the prisoner reach outside," Ahab asks, "except by thrusting through the wall?" (264). "To me," he continues, "the white whale is that wall, shoved near to me. Sometimes I think there's naught beyond. But 'tis enough. He tasks me; he heaps me; I see in him outrageous strength, with an inscrutable malice sinewing it. That inscrutable thing is chiefly what I hate; and be the white whale agent, or be the white

whale principal, I will wreak that hate upon him" (264). A little later, Melville elaborates on the distinctive genesis of Ahab's sovereign insomnia:

> As the mind does not exist unless leagued with the soul, therefore it must have been that, in Ahab's case, yielding up all his thoughts and fancies to his one supreme purpose; that purpose, by its own sheer inveteracy of will, forced itself against gods and devils into a kind of self-assumed, independent being of its own. Nay, could grimly live and burn, while the common vitality to which it was conjoined, fled horror-stricken from the unbidden and unfathered birth. (315)

In his battle against the breach in providence introduced by Moby-Dick, like sleep, Ahab tortures the "common vitality" of his flesh, which harbors the infinite (im)potentiality of suffering as well as the "common vigilance of the senses" in sleep, with night terrors.

While it was considered one of the infinite modifications of nightmare in the nineteenth century, the night terror was distinct enough to garner its own classification. As John Waller, Surgeon of the Royal Navy, explained in his 1816 *A Treatise on the Incubus, or Night-Mare: Disturbed Sleep, Terrific Dreams, and Nocturnal Visions*:

> I mean that undescribable terror which some persons feel in their sleep, and which frequently obliges them to vociferate loudly, and generally to start with violence, or sometimes even to jump out of bed. This terror is often, perhaps mostly, accompanied by some really terrific dream. This is not always the case, however, and when it does happen, the dream is rather to be considered as the effect of the terror, than the cause of it…. I have always observed in my own case, as well as in all those I have had the opportunity of investigating, that this kind of affection is universally accompanied with a sensation called shivering; not precisely of that kind which accompanies the paroxysm of ague, but that momentary sensation of shivering which people are apt to feel on hearing any tale of horror related, or frequently indeed, without any evident cause whatever…. The cause of it is not very easy to explain; it evidently belongs to that class of sensations and affections which we call nervous, and appears in this case to be the immediate cause of that terror which invades us in sleep, by inducing some idea of great horror. (58-61)

Upon viewing Ahab for the first time, Ishmael somnipathically registers the uncanny vitality of Ahab's night terrors with "foreboding shivers" (206), as Melville combines the terror of

insomnia with the horror of nightmare to craft a new character type out of the power of blackness.

Drawing on the nascent sleep science of his day, Melville renders the terrifying logic of Ahab's sleep disorder to illustrate the internal connection between the totalitarian type and sovereign insomnia:

> The tormented spirit that glared out of bodily eyes, when what seemed Ahab rushed from his room, was for the time but a vacated thing, a formless somnambulistic being, a ray of living light, to be sure, but without an object to colour, and therefore a blankness in itself. God help thee, old man, thy thoughts have created a creature in thee; and he whose intense thinking thus makes him a Prometheus; a vulture feeds upon that heart for ever; that vulture the very creature he creates. (315)

Here we see Melville updating Hobbes's reading of Prometheus in *Leviathan,* in which Hobbes seems to suggest that a specific type of insomnia could result in feeling the need for the sovereign protection of the Divine in sleep: "For as *Prometheus* … was bound to the hill *Caucasus* … where, an Eagle feeding on his liver, devoured in the day, as much as was repayred in the night: So that man, which looks too far before him, in the care of future time, hath his heart all the day long, gnawed on by feare of death, poverty, or other calamity; and has no repose, nor pause of his anxiety, but in sleep" (169). In the Promethean figure of Ahab, the totalitarian type is barred from repose in sleep and thus appears as *rex exsomnis* in the flesh, the production of a minimal form of existence evincing, like Giorgio Agamben's "bare life" (*Potentialities* 233), a "blankness in itself."

Melville presents the new image of political-theology in Ahab's two-in-one form, with a mysterious scar externally disclosing the unholy unity of his sovereign body ("torn body and gashed soul"):

> Threading its way out from among his grey hairs, and continuing right down one side of his tawny scorched face and neck, till it disappeared in his clothing, you saw a slender rod-like mark, lividly whitish. It resembled that perpendicular seam sometimes made in the straight, lofty trunk of a great tree, when the upper lightning tearingly darts down it, and without wrenching a single twig, peels and grooves out the bark from top to bottom, ere running off into the soil, leaving the tree still greenly alive, but branded. (207)

Like a perverse correspondence, Ahab's scar suggests that the new totalitarian type, in the American context, might best be understood as an Emersonian corporation sole, a modification of the legal understanding of the king's two bodies as comprising a single office (body politic) occupied by a single person (body natural).[47]

To say that Ahab is an Emersonian corporation sole is to suggest that he embodies a prescient critique of a specific type of authoritarianism in the American political tradition, which Christopher Newfield has analyzed in great detail in terms of the relationship between Emerson's philosophy and the rise of corporate individualism. As Newfield puts it, "when liberal U.S. culture rejects the ideal of individual self-determination, it usually replaces it not with a notion of public, 'democratic,' collective self-determination but with individual obedience to the determination of larger or higher powers" (64). In Melville, the Emersonian submissive individual represents a compromise formation, placating the collective wish to sleep by reimagining the form and function of political theology as an attempt to short-circuit or at least alleviate the unrelenting, insomniac pressure of the market. With Ahab, Melville anticipates the advent of "liberal authoritarianism" as a solution to the impasse of political economy and political-theology, in which civic sleep may be considered the new norm, as the "Emerson Effect

[47] For more on the history of the corporation sole in political theory, see Kantorowicz's "Introduction" in *The King's Two Bodies*.

… makes the ceding of sovereignty to some higher or more automatic power seem like emancipation and progress" (209).

For a more concrete illustration of the connection between Ahab, Emerson, and the politics of sleep in *Moby-Dick*, one need only consider, in its philosophical complexity, Ahab's full response to Starbuck's final attempt to convince him to relinquish his sovereignty. Realizing the futility of his previous attempt to convince Ahab of the madness of his mission by appealing to the profit motive ("How many barrels will thy vengeance yield thee even if thou gettest it, Captain Ahab? it will not fetch thee much in our Nantucket market" [263]), Starbuck invokes the summum bonum of capitalism, the nuclear family and the sovereignty of a man in his home or castle, encouraging Ahab to return to his wife, child, and, not insignificantly, his bed in Nantucket: "Oh, my Captain! my Captain! noble soul! grand old heart, after all! why should any one give chase to that hated fish! Away with me! let us fly these deadly waters! let us home!" (787). As he momentarily considers Starbuck's plea, Ahab ponders the sweetness of domestic rest in the somnific image of his boy dreamily awakening from a nap to hear of his father's return: "About this time—yes, it is his noon nap now—the boy vivaciously wakes; sits up in bed; and his mother tells him of me, of cannibal old me; how I am abroad upon the deep, but will yet come back to dance him again" (787).

Ahab responds to Starbuck's request as if it were an invitation to relinquish his sovereign insomnia and allow himself to sleep:

> But it is a mild, mild wind, and a mild looking sky; and the air smells now, as if it blew from a far-away meadow; they have been making hay somewhere under the slopes of the Andes, Starbuck, and the mowers are sleeping among the new-mown hay. Sleeping? Aye, toil we how we may, we all sleep at last on the field. Sleep? Aye, and rust amid greenness; as last year's scythes flung down, and left in the half-cut swaths—Starbuck! (788)

Like Shakespeare, Ahab views sleep as a limit to life and, like Emerson, as something that must be resisted or overcome through a will to power that is inseparable from a will to truth.

As Emerson puts it in "Nature," "Whenever a true theory appears, it will be its own evidence. Its test is, that it will explain all phenomena. Now many are thought not only unexplained but inexplicable; as language, sleep, madness, dreams, beasts, sex" (2). Sleep, like beasts or Moby-Dick himself, is counted by Ahab, like Emerson, among life's "inscrutable" things, which need to be gripped fast by the epistemological vice of theory, as Ahab indicates when fingering the carpenter's vice: "No fear; I like a good grip; I like to feel something in this slippery world that can hold, man" (688). With Ahab, Melville provides an astute critique of Emersonian sovereignty, underscoring an internal connection between the will to power and the will to truth, between "self-reliance" and submission to the "Over-Soul."

Thus, in his final response to Starbuck, Ahab refuses to relinquish his claim to absolute authority ("Who's over me? Truth hath no confines" [264]) and insists that he is possessed by absolute authority:

> Is Ahab, Ahab? Is it I, God, or who, that lifts this arm? But if the great sun move not of himself; but is as an errand-boy in heaven; nor one single star can revolve, but by some invisible power; how then can this one small heart beat; this one small brain think thoughts; unless God does that beating, does that thinking, does that living, and not I. By heaven, man, we are turned round and round in this world, like yonder windlass, and Fate is the handspike. And all the time, lo! that smiling sky, and this unsounded sea! Look! see yon Albicore! who put it into him to chase and fang that flying-fish? Where do murderers go, man! Who's to doom, when the judge himself is dragged to the bar? (788)

In this uncanny confrontation, Ahab overcomes Starbuck, who withdraws in horror, by asserting and abdicating his sovereignty in a single gesture. Like Odysseus bound to his mast, Ahab wards

off the siren song of sleep with a maneuver that simultaneously suspends and preserves his sovereignty.

It is as if Melville were providing us with an Emersonian reworking of the well-known scene in Shakespeare's *Richard II*, analyzed by Ernst Kantorowicz because of its centrality for articulating the logic of the king's two bodies, "in which Richard 'undoes his kingship' and releases his body politic into thin air" (100). In Kantorowicz's analysis, Richard moves from "king body natural" to "kingly fool" before finally transitioning to what he calls "the twin-born deity as an even lower estate" (98). Kantorowicz observes how "the 'Fool' marks the transition from 'King' to 'God,' and nothing could be more miserable, it seems, than the God in the wretchedness of man" (98-9). Except Ahab or *rex exsomnis*, by this Janus-faced fiat, does not resign but redoubles his authority.

If the story of the *Pequod* offers any hope of escaping the fate of the leviathan in the age of *rex exsomnis*, it may be because of the path indicated in the lone "extract," among the many epigraph-like passages with which Melville begins *Moby-Dick*, that seems to indicate how to survive the endgames of sovereignty. Quoting a passage from Montaigne's "An Apology for Raymond Sebond," Melville suggests that survival depends on learning to sleep like a marvelous fish, in the jaws of the whale: "And whereas all the other things, whether beast or vessel, that enter into the dreadful gulf of this monster's (whale's) mouth, are immediately lost and swallowed up, the sea-gudgeon retires into it in great security, and there sleeps" (qtd. in Melville). This image of the sea-gudgeon suggests a new direction for political theory to steer between the Scylla of political economy and the Charybdis of political-theology, represented in

Moby-Dick by Starbuck and Ahab respectively, and indicates that a social compact securing the fundamental right to sleep may be the Odyssean maneuver necessary for survival.[48]

A closer examination of Montaigne's essay on Sebond is helpful for understanding the political insight contained in the example of the whale and the sea-gudgeon. In his most famous essay, Montaigne considers the merits of Sebond's natural theology by reflecting on the superiority of some social compacts formed by beasts in comparison with those invented by human societies. Montaigne begins the thought leading up to the sea-gudgeon image by describing allegiances of mutual aid compacted in non-human societies:

> As touching the confederations and alliances which animals make to league themselves together for mutual succour, oxen, pigs and other animals can be seen rushing in to help when one of their number is being attacked and rallying round in its defence. If a scar-fish swallows a fisherman's hook, its fellows swarm around and bite through the line; if one of them happens to get caught in a wicker trap, the others dangle their tails down into it from outside while it holds on grimly with its teeth. In this way they drag it right out. When a barbel-fish is hooked, the others stiffen the spine which projects from their backs; it is notched like a saw; they rub it against the line and saw it through. (44)

Melville takes up this Montaignean proposition in "The Grand Armada" (ch. 87) to suggest that the leviathan may indeed be capable of covenanting after all:

> But here be it premised, that owing to the unwearied activity with which of late they have been hunted over all four oceans, the Sperm Whales, instead of almost invariably sailing in small detached companies, as in former times, are now frequently met with in extensive herds, sometimes embracing so great a multitude, that it would almost seem as if numerous nations of them had sworn solemn league and covenant for mutual assistance and protection. (565)

Having introduced the idea of "mutual assistance" covenants in the animal kingdom, Montaigne develops his political speculation further by focusing on unique trans-species

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[48] It may be a purely speculative tangent to recall here that Odysseus is only able to safely cross Poseidon's sea in a state of slumber aboard the Phaeacian ship that returns him to Ithaca. For an excellent reading of Starbuck and Ahab as avatars of political economy and political-theology, see Honig 143-5.

compacts involving the mutual exchange of two modes of sovereignty, one pertaining to the protection and the other to the direction of the covenanted body politic:

> As for the special duties we render to each other in the service of life, there are several similar examples amongst the animals. The whale, it is said, never travels without a tiny fish like a sea-gudgeon swimming ahead of it (for this reason it is called a 'guide-fish'). The whale follows it everywhere, allowing itself to be directed and steered as easily as a rudder turns a boat. Everything else – beast or ship – which falls into the swirling chaos of that creature's mouth is straightway lost and swallowed up: yet that little fish can retire there and sleep in its mouth in complete safety. While it is asleep, the whale never budges, but as soon as it swims out, the whale constantly follows it; if it should chance to lose its guide-fish it flounders about all over the place, often dashing itself to pieces against the rocks like a rudderless ship. Plutarch testifies to having seen this happen on the island of Anticyra. (44)

The kind of compact Montaigne illustrates here is perhaps not too different from the one Hobbes theorizes when considering the constitution of a temporary monarch in *De Cive*:

> What we have spoken of … a *people* electing a *temporary monarch*, will be more clearly explained by comparing them with an *absolute monarch* who hath no heir-apparent. For the people is lord of the subject in such a manner, as there can be no heir but whom itself doth appoint. Besides, the spaces between the times of the subjects' meeting, may be fitly compared to those times wherein the monarch sleeps; for in either the *acts* of commanding cease, the *power* remains. Furthermore, to dissolve the convent, so as it cannot meet again, is the death of the *people*; just as sleeping, so as he can never wake more, is the death of a man. As therefore a king who hath no heir, going to his rest so as never to rise again, that is, dying, if he commit the exercise of his regal authority to any one till he awake, does by consequence give him the succession; the *people* also electing a *temporary monarch*, and not reserving a power to convene, delivers up to him the whole dominion of the country. Furthermore, as a king going to sleep for some season entrusts the administration of his kingdome to some other, and waking takes it again; so the people having elected a *temporary monarch*, and withal retaining a right to meet at a certain day and place, at that day receives its supremacy again. And as a king who hath committed the execution of his authority to another, himself in the meanwhile waking, can recall this commission again when he pleaseth; so the *people*, who during the time prescribed to the *temporary monarch* doth by right convene, may if they please deprive the monarch of his authority. (201-2)

What is notable about this passage is that Hobbes turns to the problem of sleep in one of the only instances that he theorizes the maintenance and transfer of sovereign power in democratic terms,

explaining how "the people" may elect a "temporary monarch" without giving up their sovereign authority by analogy with a sleeping king.

Montaigne's example of the guide-fish and the whale does not present an allegory of the democratic relationship between the people and the state but a vivid illustration of a social compact drawn from the natural world evincing a form of symbiotic sovereignty. The power sharing between the whale and guide-fish is predicated on preserving the essential steering function of the more vulnerable guide-fish by protecting its right to sleep. If we perceive in the sleep of the guide-fish a condition in which "the *acts* of commanding cease, [but] the *power* remains," then Montaigne's example may contain the potential for articulating the right to sleep as a fundamental right of the democratic body (politic). In analogical terms, Montaigne observes, "the whale never stirs; but so soon as ever it [the sea-gudgeon] goes out he immediately follows it," indicating that the sovereign direction or path chosen by the guide-fish should not be deviated from during sleep.[49]

From this point of view, we can see how Ahab offers his crew only a semblance of the safe harbor afforded by the jaws of the leviathan to the guide-fish. While he seems to protect his slumbering crew from the "sharkish business" threatening to devour them above and below the sea, he offers them no possibility of awakening from their "'grave-dug berth'" (210). Their

[49] As if to cover the Biblical image of the leviathan, and so to address the critique of sovereignty in Job directly, Montaigne adds: "There is a similar companionship between the tiny wren and the crocodile: the wren stands guard over that big creature; when the crocodile's enemy, the ichneuman, closes in for a fight, this little bird is afraid that its companion may be caught napping, so it pecks it awake and sings to warn it of danger. The wren lives on the leftovers of that monstrous crocodile, which welcomes it into its jaws and lets it pick at the meat stuck between its teeth. If it wants to shut its mouth it warns the wren to fly out by gradually closing its jaws a little, without squashing it or harming it in any way" (44).

slumber is, like Bartleby's, a distorted form of civic death, or a civic sleep, made to serve Ahab's preternatural case of *ressentiment*.

Nonetheless, the civic sleep of the crew and the hypnaesthetic invitations extended variously by Ishmael, Pip, and, of course, Bartleby, the ghost of their "fugitive and still indiscernible future," present a glimpse, however indiscernible, of something like what Bonnie Honig calls the "third body" of democratic sovereignty. As Honig puts it:

> if in Kantorowicz the King has two bodies with which to cover the worrying gap left by the evacuations or attenuations of metaphysics, in Melville the king is shown to have always had a third body: the supplement of whale (flesh) that both secures and attenuates the sovereignty that Hobbes meant only to re-secure with the figure of Leviathan. That third body, the oft-invoked Leviathan from Job to Hobbes and more, is sovereignty's supplement. (155)

On my reading, the third or democratic body of sovereignty can be affirmed in the natural compact that allows the guide-fish to escape the sharkish-insomniac dialectic that comprises "Fast-Fish" and "Loose-Fish" in Melville's terms (583). Neither a "Fast-Fish" caught in the insomnia inducing mechanisms of political-economy or political theology, nor a "Loose-Fish" subject to the sleepless precarity of the state of nature, "the sea-gudgeon retires into [the jaws of leviathan] in great security, and there sleeps." In *The History of Animals,* Aristotle observes that the sea-gudgeon prefers the seasons as men do, noting that, "as a general rule what is good for men is good for fishes also" (Book VIII, Part 19). The Melvillean proposition is that the reverse may also be true. If what is good for fishes might also be good for men, then it may be time to supplement the theory of the Leviathan with that of the guide-fish, or the right to sleep.

In the Book of Job, God rhetorically poses the question of whether a covenant can be made with the leviathan. Melville's reading of Montaigne seems to suggest that he takes this

question literally rather than rhetorically, as Ishmael dedicates himself, in “Cetology” (ch. 32), to the possibility of this very compact:

> But it is a ponderous task; no ordinary letter-sorter in the Post-Office is equal to it. To grope down into the bottom of the sea after them; to have one's hands among the unspeakable foundations, ribs, and very pelvis of the world; this is a fearful thing. What am I that I should essay to hook the nose of this leviathan! The awful tauntings in Job might well appal me. Will he the (leviathan) make a covenant with thee? Behold the hope of him is vain! But I have swam through libraries and sailed through oceans; I have had to do with whales with these visible hands; I am in earnest; and I will try. (221)

If this is truly a task that “no ordinary letter-sorter in the Post-Office is equal to,” then perhaps we may consider it the solitary task which Bartleby, that extraordinary “subordinate clerk in the Dead Letter Office” (93), would prefer us to.

Conclusion: Americanitis and the Modern American Sleeper

> The man who does not sleep, worships sleep until all life seems sleep, and no life any importance without it. He fixes his mind on not sleeping, rushes for his watch with feverish intensity if a nap does come, to gloat over its brevity or duration, and then wonders that each night brings him no more sleep.
>
> —Annie Payson Call (*Power of Repose*)

Observing the development of the American "national type" at the end of the nineteenth century, William James posed a question that remains as relevant today as ever: "Now what is the cause of this absence of repose, this bottled-lighting quality in us Americans?" (58). James concludes that Americans lack repose because their bodies are overwrought with cultural signs, that the "overtension and jerkiness and breathlessness and intensity and agony of expression are primarily social, and only secondarily physiological, phenomena" (59). We have been riddled by normative injunctions to vigilant exertion.

By the end of the nineteenth century, many Americans believed that they had introduced a new disease into world history: *Americanitis*.[50] In her 1891 guidebook *Power Through Repose*, Annie Payson Call addresses this novel social pathology, supplementing what she describes as the abundant literature of her age aimed at "the care of the human body" with a much-needed training manual "for the better use of the nervous force" (9). In this work, which William James

[50] Uncertainty surrounds the origins of the term in the nineteenth century, with sources attributing it variously to the French, the Germans, and the English. The earliest occurrence may be found in the October 1882 *The Gentleman's Magazine*. *Americanitis* designated simultaneously an American national type and a contagious social, or imitative disease that threatened to infect traveling Europeans. As James explains, the category of "imitative impulse" was groundbreaking at the time in both sociology and psychology (59). Helen Watterson Moody, in her 1897 essay "The Health of College Women," defined *Americanitis* as "the desire to 'get on,' regardless of everything else" (482).

thought "ought to be in the hands of every teacher and student in America" (66), Call provides a provenance for *Americanitis* and observes its effects throughout American society:

> Extreme nervous tension seems to be so peculiarly American, that a German physician coming to this country to practise [sic] became puzzled by the variety of nervous disorders he was called upon to help, and finally announced his discovery of a new disease which he chose to call 'Americanitis.' And now we suffer from "Americanitis" in all its unlimited varieties. Doctors study it; nerve medicines arise on every side; nervine hospitals establish themselves; and rest-cures innumerable spring up in all directions. (13)

The primary casualty of *Americanitis*, according to Call, is undisturbed sleep, the condition of "most perfect rest," which makes perception and action possible by restoring "new power for use" in waking "voluntary activity" (15).

Call suggests that we should understand the disrupted sleep resulting from *Americanitis* as an unprecedented form of self-inflicted torment. Her description of the affliction is worth quoting at length:

> Few who pretend to rest give up entirely to the bed, a dead weight, letting the bed hold them, instead of trying to hold themselves on the bed. Watch, and unless you are an exceptional case (of which happily there are a few), you will be surprised to see how you are holding yourself on the bed, with tense muscles, if not all over, so nearly all over that a little more tension would hardly increase the fatigue with which you are working yourself to sleep.
>
> The spine seems to be the central point of tension—it does not give to the bed and rest there easily from end to end; it touches at each end and just so far along from each end as the man or woman who is holding it will permit. The knees are drawn up, the muscles of the legs tense, the hands and arms contracted, and the fingers clinched, either holding the pillow or themselves.
>
> The head, instead of letting the pillow have its full weight, holds itself onto the pillow. The tongue cleaves to the roof of the mouth, the throat muscles are contracted, and the muscles of the face drawn up in one way or another.
>
> This seems like a list of horrors, somewhat exaggerated when we realize that it is of sleep, 'Tired Nature's sweet restorer,' that we are speaking; but indeed it is only too true. (16–17)

Call's description of the body racked by the pains of sleeplessness underscores the genealogical connection I have been drawing between the familiar gothic and dark romantic

imagery of grotesque suffering, premature entombment, and the horrors of normative insomnia. Her analysis echoes and generalizes the extremities of sovereign vigilance, the negation of the necessity of sleep, captured by Brown, Poe, and Melville in the aesthetic categories of somnambulism, nightmare, and insomnia. The difference between the anonymous, unexceptional case of Call's insomniac body, habituated to self-inflicted fatigue and the exceptional aesthetic examples that we have seen (the somnambulism of Edgar Huntly, the insomnia of the man of the crowd, and the insomniac night terrors of Ahab) is crucial for grasping the normalization of sleeplessness in nineteenth-century America. The routine nocturnal restlessness described by Call evinces the development of a somatic, habitual attachment to a specific fantasy of sovereign (self)control over the sleeping body (politic).

The development by which more and more Americans became habituated to the nervous restlessness described by Call, James points out, involves a long history in which "we, here in America, through following a succession of pattern-setters whom it is now impossible to trace, and through influencing each other in a bad direction, have at last settled down collectively into what, for better or worse, is our own characteristic national type" (60). Benjamin Franklin may perhaps rank foremost among the prominent representatives who helped institute the national antipathy to sleep, for his example and advocacy of reducing individual sleep time in the name of increasing productivity has undoubtedly contributed more than any other to what James calls the "cultivation of false personal ideals" (60). At the end of the nineteenth century, Thomas Edison assumed Franklin's mantle of sleepless self-making, styling himself as a tireless inventor and entrepreneur capable of working around the clock with his Insomnia Squad. In "Edison's Prophecy," Edison not only declared that "sleep is an absurdity, a bad habit," predicting that we

would one day "throw off the thraldom of the habit" (967) but insisted that "everything which decreases the sum total of man's sleep increases the sum total of man's capabilities (966).[51] From Edison's point of view, "nothing in the world is more dangerous to the efficiency of humanity than too much sleep," and "the average man who sleeps seven or eight or nine hours daily is continually opprest by lassitude" (967). In the type of celebrity entrepreneur stylized by Franklin and Edison, we observe the coalescing of the American ideal of eternal vigilance as the price of economic, spiritual, and political liberty.

The abject apotheosis of this ideal may be observed, together with its authoritarian tendency, in the presidency of Donald Trump. Like Franklin and Edison, Trump has stylized himself a sleepless pursuer of success, recommending that aspiring billionaires should forgo sleep ("Don't sleep any more than you have to") and claiming to need only "four hours" of sleep each night (xix). As his biographer Gwenda Blair explains, Trump "has made a big deal of saying he never sleeps and that people who sleep are lazy" (qtd. in Smith). Promising to put his sleepless work ethic to use for the profit and protection of the country, or at least white America, Trump gave political expression to the Ahabian promise to assume the burden of insomnia for his followers. Trump directed his preternatural *ressentiment* not against a white whale but against Barack Obama, the first Black president of the United States, and the perceived threat to white

[51] For an historical analysis of the impact of Franklin and Edison, see Derickson, *Dangerously Sleepy*. Derickson tracks the development of this pattern into the twenty-first century, arguing that "prominent elite men, especially celebrity entrepreneurs from Thomas Edison to Donald Trump, have aggressively propounded the notion that sleep is not only a waste of valuable time but a sign of unmanly weakness. The evolution of public policy has reflected changing gender roles, with supposedly weak female employees initially meriting the solicitude of the state and then joining their male counterparts in the freedom to work endlessly. Accordingly, regulations setting real limits on hours affect only a very small number of occupations whose practitioners may pose a danger to the general public" (12).

maleness posed by the rising political power of women and minorities. From this perspective, it is no coincidence that the country witnessed a disturbing proliferation of fliers from the "Traditionalist American Knights of the Ku Klux Klan" in the fall of 2016, featuring the slogan, "You can sleep tonight knowing the Klan is awake" (qtd. in Hawkins). Antipathy to sleep, accompanied by a dialectical, sharkish-insomniac tendency toward authoritarianism, forms a cornerstone of the right-wing politics of *ressentiment* that William E. Connolly has analyzed in terms of the "spiritual connection between cowboy capitalism and evangelism across creedal distance" (62) and must certainly be considered among the unique expressions of modern American political life.

While American literature has perpetuated stereotypes of negative sleep hygiene, it has also explored somnolent affects and feelings of somnipathy not only to critique the ideal of sovereign vigilance but potentially to imagine new modes of corporeal interdependence, identification, and agency in *hypnaesthesis*. Thus we can find not only examples like Franklin's inveterate "early rising" or Emerson's unblinking "transparent eyeball" or Whitman's predilection for the "clear sun shining" but also, to indicate a few possibilities for further research, Harriet Jacob's discovery of the expressive potential of extreme stasis, Charlotte Perkins Gilman's critique of the gendered assumptions behind the rest cure, Kate Chopin's suggestion that freedom may be found not in reading Emerson but in falling asleep while doing so, and W. E. B. Du Bois's striking aphorism, "'If the contact of Life and Sleep be Death, shame on such Life'" (*Souls* 62). In my analysis of Brown, Poe, and Melville, I have aimed to show both that sleep has been a central aesthetic concern in American literature and that a specific strain of thought focusing on the problem of sleep has constituted one of the most original

critiques of sovereignty in modernity, demonstrating the need for further scholarly attention to the history of somnolent states in the humanities.[52]

The proximity of sleep to death, and thus to the possibility of gothic horror, has of course been a theme for literature and art since Hesiod and Homer identified Hypnos and Thanatos as the twin offspring of Nyx, the primordial goddess of the night. As a final illustration of the unique contribution of American literature to the history of this aesthetic relationship, a brief contrast in the visual arts will hopefully prove helpful.

In 1874 John William Waterhouse captured and updated the classical relationship with a romantic sensibility in *Sleep and His Half-Brother Death*, a painting that uses chiaroscuro to illustrate how sleep marks the boundary between life and death (see fig. 4). Depicting Hypnos and Thanatos side by side, Waterhouse's painting requires viewers to differentiate between the living and the dead, revealing how sleep may bring our attention to the perception of life itself. In the foregrounded body of sleep, the foundation of perception, Aristotle's "condition" of *aesthesis*, comes into view in phenomenological terms. We gain insight into how the sleeping body makes the perception of life possible in the difference between the lived bodily space of the sleeper and the mere externality of the dead body as an object in space. As Merleau-Ponty explains:

> Bodily space can be distinguished from external space and it can envelop its parts rather than laying them out side by side because it is the darkness of the theater required for the clarity of the performance, the foundation of sleep or the vague reserve of power against

[52] For more on why the history of sleep has recently become urgent in the humanities, now that science and technology and the 24/7 ideal of continuous consumption and production in the modern era of globalization have introduced a host of new sleep problems and proposed new pharmacological and technological solutions to alter the modern sense of the (sleeping) self, see Wolf-Meyer, *The Slumbering Masses*; Crary, *24/7*; and Reiss, *Wild Nights*.

> which the gesture and its goal stand out, and the zone of non-being in front of which precise beings, figures, and points can appear. (102-3)

Behind the back of sleep in Waterhouse's painting, the romanticist fantasy of unencumbered repose resting on the shoulder of death, the hand of Thanatos extends like a gothic specter to trouble the boundary separating the living from the dead.

Fig. 4: Waterhouse, John William. *Sleep and His Half-Brother Death.* 1874.

Despite the threat of gothic transgression, Waterhouse's sleeper presents the strongest possible contrast to the "list of horrors" plaguing the typical American sleeper described by Call. With legs gently crossed and neck, shoulders, and arms relaxed, nestled hands clasping poppies, symbols of medicinal comfort and dreaming, Hypnos presents the potential of perceiving life in

its barest form as a natural good, or as Aristotle puts it, "a natural sweetness and happiness" (4010). Regarding whether this view of life could inform political thought, in consideration of the "purpose of a state" (4009), Aristotle observes that "mankind meet together and maintain the political community also for the sake of mere life (in which there is possibly some noble element so long as the evils of existence do not greatly overbalance the good)" (4009).[53] If sleep is the necessary condition for *aesthesis* and as such forms a "boundary between living and not living," as Aristotle has it, it may now become more apparent how *hypnaesthesis*, the perception of sleep, could become salient in American literature. The internalization of a series of unrelenting sovereign injunctions to maintain vigilance, the price of liberty, likely contributed to an emergent feeling in the nineteenth century that "some noble element" inherent to life itself was in danger of being overwhelmed by the "evils of existence."

I argued in chapter four that Bartleby allows us to perceive this feeling, when paired with *Moby-Dick*, as the insomniac nightmare intrinsic to capitalist modernity. I suggested that the difference between sleep and death, and thus between life and death, becomes undecidable in Melville's scrivener, at once registering the suffering of a society that would deny its people the right to sleep and demonstrating how the perception of the necessity of sleep, *hypnaesthesis*, can be viewed as a political act. Perhaps no visual artist has captured this dimension of Melville's

[53] J. M. Bernstein brought my attention to these passages in Aristotle's *Politics* with his article "Bare Life, Bearing Witness" 2–16. In Bernstein's dialectical account of bare life, which informs my reading of normative insomnia as a state akin to living death, "the good life depends upon its excluded other, the sweetness of [mere] life (with its infinite potential for suffering, for becoming bare life)" (14). The related or perhaps parallel argument that I have been making regarding Aristotle's understanding of sleep is that waking life (*aesthesis*) depends upon sleep (*hypnaesthesis*). Because the necessity of this dependence has been increasingly denied in modernity, the perception of sleep in aesthetic, philosophical, and political terms has become more relevant than ever for reimagining the good life.

text better than Leonard Baskin, whose 1959 *Bartleby the Scrivener* presents the finality of unvanquished sleep in the face of a broken Bartleby (see fig. 5).

Fig. 5: Baskin, Leonard. *Bartleby the Scrivener,* 1959. Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco.

Baskin's engraving captures how Melville's Bartleby collapses and internalizes the difference between Hypnos and Thanatos, which remained distinct for Waterhouse, rendering the boundary between life and death undecidable. It is an image of Bartleby on the boundary of death as his eyes strain shut with the wish to sleep, prior to being discovered by Melville's narrator: "Strangely huddled at the base of the wall, his knees drawn up, and lying on his side, his head touching the cold stones, I saw the wasted Bartleby. But nothing stirred. I paused; then went close up to him; stooped over, and saw that his dim eyes were open; otherwise he seemed profoundly sleeping" (93). While his open mouth reveals the nightmare void of death, Bartleby's eyes are not yet open in Baskin's portrait. His right brow holds itself to the concrete of the prison

yard with the horrific effort of repose described by Call as typical of the modern American sleeper: “The knees are drawn up, the muscles of the legs tense, the hands and arms contracted, and the fingers clinched, either holding the pillow or themselves. The head, instead of letting the pillow have its full weight, holds itself onto the pillow. The tongue cleaves to the roof of the mouth, the throat muscles are contracted, and the muscles of the face drawn up in one way or another.” As this experience of the “horrors” of sleeplessness became representative of the “national type” in the nineteenth century, *hypnaesthesis*, the perception of (the necessity of) sleep, gained critical potential in literature and the arts. From this perspective, Bartleby’s protest emerges in the contorted muscles of his face, where the suffering of life on the verge of sleeplessness appears as the interminable vanishing of the tension between sleep and death.

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