to be done on a local scale, the expansion of gay and lesbian histories into an international scope remains relatively underdeveloped. As Wolfenden50 showed us all with its multiple and often conflicting readings (and uses) of the Wolfenden Report, a comparative and transnational approach to gay and lesbian history offers remarkable insights and suggests exciting further possibilities for the study of international networks, markets, campaigning and religion.

Throughout the conference, speakers repeatedly returned to the model and chronology outlined by Jeffrey Weeks. While most sought to fit their own work into one of Weeks's 'fateful moments', others questioned whether the model was too developmental and linear. Some asked if younger gay men and lesbians are in fact experiencing a 'Moment of Citizenship' or whether they are not instead largely divorced from activist concerns, no longer feeling the need to proclaim their sexuality and demand visibility. Have the critical struggles and long battles of earlier generations been in fact so successful, and are younger men and women so comfortable with their place in society, that these categories no longer hold the same resonance or even relevance?

This question remains a heated one both inside and outside the academy. And the heat did sometimes rise at Wolfenden50. While some guest speakers like Allan Horsfall had been important early campaigners in Weeks's 'Wolfenden Moment', many participating scholars had been most influenced by the difficult struggle for visibility and acceptance in his 'Identity Moment' when they first became politically active. Indeed, at times, the proceedings seemed inflected by a need to commemorate this key historical period in which many scholars participated. And some asked whether younger gays and lesbians suitably appreciate the past struggles that afford them their present comforts.

This phenomenon is itself however something we can historicize and recognize by further interrogating our own investment in this history we tell. And in few areas of study are scholars themselves so complicit in the material they research as in gay and lesbian history. Even now, it remains an area where the line between scholarship and activism remains blurred. As a young gay scholar, I never participated in the hard years of activism that my older colleagues remember but, in an era when many of us believe that visibility remains important, I am still convinced that producing my academic work is itself a political act. And with our own unique relationships to the history we tell, younger scholars are approaching this subject with new methods and questions. It is perhaps a profoundly difficult task, and one fraught by disciplinary boundaries and generational differences, but gay and lesbian scholars must further interrogate their own positions in the histories they tell, which we continue to tell. This is no indictment against the scholars who inspired me to enter this field, but instead a declaration of impassioned optimism for the future of our field as it continues to grow, mature and change.

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SLEEPING AND DREAMING, Exhibition, The Wellcome Collection, London, November 2007 to March 2008

Arriving to see The Wellcome Collection's *Sleeping and Dreaming* exhibition before it closed in March 2008, you might have thought yourself already

too late. The lights behind its glass doors were set so dim they seemed to be off. Once in, however, and past the giant projected images of heads napping placidly, you in effect entered those very heads – entered the dark, mysterious and oft-neglected space of dormancy.

Sleeping and Dreaming, part of The Wellcome's collaboration with Dresden's Deutsches Hygiene-Museum, was a curio cabinet evincing our most intimate, unguarded, and precarious selves. Some 300 objects from medicine, psychoanalysis, art, literature, pop culture and music illuminated the unconscious state that we inhabit – as the exhibition claimed – for roughly a third of our lives.

The exhibition made ancient Greece its historical starting point: 'The first person to consider sleep in a methodical way was Aristotle', who attributed it to the heart 'cooling down'. Yet earlier Greek writers, whom Aristotle synthesized and expanded on, explored sleep in ways that are still relevant and that resonated through the collection's five major themes. Alcmaeon of Croton, more than a century before Aristotle, equated sleep with tides and light-cycles and other natural periodicities. Hippocrates, too, paired sleep cycles with diurnal phases, and suggested they should stay in synch: 'the patient should wake during the day and sleep during the night . . . but the worst of all is to get no sleep either night or day' (*Prognostics*, part 10). Alcmaeon claimed sleep was caused by a kind of tidal ebbing, a retreat of blood from the skin's surface towards the 'larger vessels' of the body's interior. Empedocles and Diogenes of Apollonia thought sleep was caused by the rise and fall, not of the blood itself, but of its temperature (Plutarch, *Sentiments concerning Nature*). Following such lore, Aristotle imagined sleep as a state determined by a network of superimposed, coalescing, oppositional pendulums of circulation, respiration, cognition and especially digestion. Eating, like adding fuel to a fire, momentarily heated the body, until the consumed matter rose through to the brain, the body's coolest region, causing 'fits of drowsiness'. The exhibition cited Galen and displayed drawings by London-based Swiss artist Beate Frommelt to evoke this Aristotelian line of thinking, illustrating sleep's link with digestion and other natural processes.

The Wellcome Collection's exhibition could thus be read as a story that starts with the tradition that informed Aristotle's cooling heart, in which the body's functions follow the rhythmic vacillations in nature, and ends with post-industrial society's tampering with such rhythms. The thematic grouping 'A World Without Sleep?' described the onset of shift-work and night-work, and the mid to late nineteenth-century technologies that facilitated nocturnal activity and altered our sleep patterns: 'The sleep of modern workers is regulated by alarm clocks, electric lights and artificial stimulants.'

'Traces of Sleep', another thematic grouping inspired by the Greeks, explored sleep's relation to death, and described other sleep-like states caused by mesmerism and anaesthesia. Access to this chamber was across a threshold flanked by Johan Gottfreid Schadow's sculptures 'Thanatos, the Genius of Death' and 'Hypnos, the Genius of Sleep', brother deities from Hesiod's *Theogony*. But sleep's mythological connections with death survived the onset of Greek rational medicine, beyond the terms 'hypnosis' and the less-known 'thanatosis', which refers to feigning death to avoid a predator. Empedocles and Diogenes characterized death as little more than sleep taken one step further, where 'sleep is a moderate cooling of the warmth in the blood, death a complete cooling' (Hermann Diels, *Doxographi Graeci*, 1879, 437, verse 25).

The 'Traces of Sleep' chamber displayed evidence of human investigations into the boundaries between sleep and death. A 1930s marionette from Kuno Ossberger's folk theatre, which depicted Snow White's deathlike sleep in her glass coffin was juxtaposed with a physician's resuscitation kit from the height of the apparent death hysteria of the eighteenth century, comprising bellows and tubes for blowing tobacco into the patient's nose or rectum. The room also showcased our fears and fascinations with sleep and sleep-like conditions as states in which we are relatively helpless, more easily manipulated by alien agencies. Sascha Schneider's 1904 photogravure 'Hypnosis' and Robert Tennant Cooper's 1912 watercolour, 'A naked man lying on table being attacked by demons', showed humans falling into trancelike stupors via the 'suggestive power of the hypnotist', or experiencing the 'violation of the integrity of the body that takes place under narcosis'. References to such drugged-up and psyched-out states provoke questions: How does sleep differ from what is merely sleep-like? How much or how little are we 'ourselves' when we sleep?

In contrast to this perceived lack of volition or selfhood, creativity – normally seen as a hallmark of individuality – arises out of slumber, too. Frederike Hauffe's preposterous, monolithic 'nerve tuner' stood nearby to show what inventions might come 'while in a trance'. A more famous, more fortuitous invention is Dmitri Mendeleev's periodic table of the elements, which allegedly appeared to him in a dream on 17 February 1869, and which incredibly remains useful today, even after new elements have been discovered. An impressive array from the arts also represented the creative fruits of sleep: a vinyl single of McCartney's 'Yesterday', copies of Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, and Coleridge's 'Kubla Khan' – all allegedly deriving from kernel ideas that came during sleep.

I insist on allegedly because, as the exhibition emphasized, we have no proof; we have no direct access to the dreams of others. For all our science, for all our means to monitor heartbeats and brainwaves, we still cannot stick a wire into a person's head and get an audio-visual feed on a screen somewhere. We only have the second-hand account of the dreamer, via a painting, a song, or an entry in a dream journal. This hermeneutic process and the theories that surround it informed the exhibition's 'Dream Worlds' section. In the exhibition catalogue Daniel Pick indicates that in psychoanalysis this process of dream discovery in is often a two-way street between analyst and analysand, whose dreams can be much imbued by the personal anxieties and narcissism of the former. The exhibition catalogue also describes Georg Elias Mueller and Alfons Pilzecker's preservation-consolidation hypothesis of 1900, which claimed that in sleep the brain performs basic maintenance operations. Electroencephalogram readings by the 1920s showed that brain activity doesn't cease, but simply shifts to another, less outwardly manifested register of operation and organization. Such discoveries roughly coincided both with Surrealism and with Freudian and Jungian dream investigations, and the exhibition drew powerfully on the constellation of the dream-centred medical, psychological, and artistic activity of this period. The 'Dream Worlds' section could thus be taken as a more multifaceted companion piece to the *Poetry and Dream* permanent collection at Tate Modern. The Wellcome provided a looped screening of Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dalí's seminal Surrealist film 'Un chien andalou', with all its Freudian free associations of weird imagery adapted from Dalí's nightmares. Martin Johann

Schmidt's engraving of Füssli's late eighteenth-century masterpiece 'The Nightmare' and Goya's 'El Sueno de la Razon Produce Monstrous' were a reminder that Romanticism, over a century before Surrealism, was similarly spearheaded by dark dreams. These iconic images were juxtaposed with the work of contemporary artists: Jane Gifford's efforts to capture her dreams through diaries, paintings, drawings and installations, and Catherine Yass's 'paradoxical undertaking', in 'Sleep (Mask)', of the attempt to capture a dream's surreal effect via superimposed photographic exposures. Such art represents a kind of EEG of our subconscious lives.

Yet much of the exhibition actually dealt with *not* sleeping, either wilfully or against one's desire. The 'Dead Tired' section explored sleep deprivation in publicity stunts, torture techniques and medical experimentation. Images of the wreck of the *Exxon Valdez* testified to the frequent antinomy between sleep as a fundamental human need and the exigencies of the modern world. This tension was further explored in 'A World Without Sleep?' and 'Elusive Sleep', sections where a fin-de-siècle advertisement for 'Maxim Lamps' reminded us how the advent of electric lighting or earlier the urban gas-lamp facilitated a new era of nocturnal activity. Of course other nineteenth-century technological innovations might have been referenced here. The transatlantic telegraph cable of 1866 forced news organizations to stay cable-vigilant round the clock to stay competitive. By 1877, the main telegraphic offices in New York and London had become like self-contained cities devoted to twenty-four-hour communication, where 'operators working in shifts ensured that the whole system worked around the clock'. Placed near the 'Maxim Lamps' ad, a 'Burke Bundy' factory clock stood solemnly at attention with alarm clocks from the same period lined up like tin soldiers, parading us into consciousness of twentieth-century time management and mechanically regulated sleep patterns.

The exhibition thus depicted humans at a kind of crossroads, one we have been crossing since the mid nineteenth century, when many people started seeing such restless activity and such a mechanized relation to time as both a boon and bane of civilization. Though it was nowhere referred to in the exhibition, the 'further reading' section on the exhibition website refers to Richard Freiherr von Krafft-Ebing's nineteenth-century research into 'sleep and neurasthenia'. In 1869, the same year that Mendeleev was devising his periodic table, the American neurologist George Miller Beard began establishing neurasthenia as a kind of catch-all diagnostic term for various nervous conditions caused by the automated, speeded-up and electrified environment of urban America. Among the chief symptoms (and causes) of neurasthenia, according to Beard, was insomnia. Interestingly, Edison and some of Edison's rival inventors experienced horrific insomniac episodes whilst developing the very inventions that were often blamed for causing insomnia and neurasthenia. One such rival, a Mr Fuller, an early developer of the electric light for home use, was an unfortunate casualty in this regard. 'In the act of tightening up the last screw', according to the London *Times* on 22 March 1879, 'he fainted and fell to the floor of his shop, entirely exhausted, completely worn out with intense mental application and lack of sleep.' He died the next day.

Although this may seem extreme, it might, ironically, bring us solace. For of course the pace of life and invention has only increased since the nineteenth century, and people aren't dropping like flies or Mr Fullers from over-exertion. And yet according to the exhibition, recent research has shown that even

something as simple as sleeping in a bed of one's own, another modern phenomenon usually thought to be a hallmark of progress, can bring about 'not only a loss of intimacy, but also serious sleep disorders'. Meanwhile, 'in spite of intensive research and a broad range of medications, universally effective sleeping tablets have still not been found'. Considering these developments, and looking to the future, we are asked to ponder if sleep will one day be a luxury few can afford in a globalized twenty-four-hour economy.

Through such ideas and artefacts, the exhibition made us pause, amid London's bustle, to consider the precious and precarious state of sleep.

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