PART II

SLEEPING REGARD

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The Regressive Thesis

For Proust, nightly slumbers reawaken a dormant self from long ago. The drowsing narrator in the opening pages of *In Search of Lost Time*, although an adult man, finds himself delivered by sleep into the clutches of childhood fears that are now "for ever vanished . . . such as that my great-uncle would pull me by the curls, a terror dispelled on the day—the dawn for me of a new era—when they were cut off."[1] With this portrayal of sleep as a resurgence of bygone impulses and outgrown affects, Proust echoes a host of thinkers in the modern era who cast the nocturnal ritual of slumber as a temporary return to an earlier phase of life. An especially influential formulation comes from his contemporary Freud, who saw dreaming as a temporary relapse into "a primitive state of the psychical apparatus," a state in which the primary processes of infancy, "normally suppressed in the adult's waking life, come forcibly into their own again."[2] Dreaming, he emphasizes in his study of the phenomenon, "*is part of the—surmounted—childhood life of the psyche*."[3]

The path of this psychic reversion passes through sleep, itself defined by Freud as another mechanism of regression, the physiological and ontogenetic counterpart of dreaming. In *A Metapsychological Supplement to the Theory of Dreams*, he writes,

> We are not in the habit of devoting much thought to the fact that every night human beings lay aside the wrappings in which they have enveloped their skin, as well as anything which they may use as a supplement to their bodily organs . . . their spectacles, their false hair and teeth, and so on. We may add that when they go to sleep they carry out an entirely analogous undressing of their minds and lay aside most of their psychical acquisitions. Thus on both counts they approach remarkably close to the situation in which they began life. Somatically, sleep is a reactivation of intrauterine existence, fulfilling as it does the conditions of repose, warmth and exclusion of stimulus; indeed, in sleep many people resume the foetal posture. The psychical state of a sleeping person is characterized by an almost complete withdrawal from the surrounding world and a cessation of all interest in it.[4]

Preparing for rest, human beings enter into an unadorned, primeval state. Falling asleep, they return to an intrauterine condition characterized by warmth, darkness, repose, and the absence of external stimuli. Casting the act of sleep around the bedtime rituals of a highly prostheticized Western bourgeois subject, Freud portrays it as a periodic regression to an even deeper past than that associated with dreaming. As an expression of a recurrent flux in the psyche's ability to sustain its involvements with the external world, sleep is the return to a time before birth, resubmergence in a fetal state of nondifferentiation.

In this striking passage, Freud acknowledges the vital psychophysiological function of sleep as a periodic withdrawal necessary for survival. And in so doing, he breaks with a long-standing conception of sleep as a purely passive process, understood negatively as a cessation of conscious faculties. In contrast, he defines sleep in more assertive terms—as a deliberate withdrawal, an active wish on the part of the ego, and ultimately a state that brings its own "particular form of thinking," one instantiated in the activity of dreaming.[5] Ludwig Jekels argues that Freud thus anticipates the scientific consensus that would emerge several decades later around sleep as a highly active process and an integral complement to the waking state.[6] Jekels situates Freud's ideas about sleep at the juncture of the psychoanalytic study of dreams, inaugurated at the outset of the twentieth century, and the neurophysiological study of sleep, a field that comes into its own in the second half of the century. Modern sleep science approaches sleep as a distinct array of brain activity comprising not the mere interruption of wakefulness, but rather its partner within a complex circadian cycle.

At the same time, even as Freud's comments seem to point ahead to a new scientific paradigm that dislodges previous models of the relationship between sleeping and waking, they also reinscribe these older models to the extent that they posit sleep as a mode of reduced functioning in comparison to the waking state. By defining sleep in terms of periodic regression, Freud casts it as a subtraction from the effective functioning of the fully developed ego. As we fall asleep, there is a "relaxation of a certain deliberate (and no doubt also critical) activity which we allow to influence the course of our ideas while we are awake."[7] In this respect, he notes, sleep has much in common with other psychoneurotic states that involve "temporal regression," such as psychosis (which resembles dreaming in its hallucinatory wish fulfillment) and narcissism (suggested by the sleeper's lack of interest in the world).[8] Like these pathological states, it entails a suspension of the reality principle. For Freud, sleep amounts to a deviation from a norm identified with the fully awake, conscious, and mature mind.

At other moments, Freud considers the temporal flux of sleep in terms that are more ambiguous. Elsewhere he ruminates, "The world, it seems, does not possess even those of us who are adults completely, but only up to two thirds; one third of us is still quite unborn. Every time we wake in the morning it is like a new birth."[9] More than a momentary return to an earlier state, sleep is now conceived by him

as an existential break, by means of a metaphor of rebirth that jars the continuity of biological rhythms. Sleep raises the possibility that a part of the self as yet unborn dwells within the adult self like an alien presence, at times prevailing over it. The passage echoes, with curious precision, moments of *In Search of Lost Time* when Proust refers to another "being which had been reborn in me," an "extra-temporal being" who is released or reanimated by certain fortuitous smells, sounds, and visions.[10] Here Freud posits the idea of a being divided from itself in its existence in time, rather than cohering in a chronology of development. In raising a doubt about the extent to which we are fully in possession of our waking selves, Freud poses a question about sleep that is also a question about waking. At points like these, he gestures beyond the teleological linearity of regression toward a more open-ended conception of the relationship between sleeping and waking. Sleep, rather than presenting a temporary deviation from a norm of wide-awake consciousness, is linked to a more encompassing perspective that deposes this norm.

Jacques Lacan, in his reading of Freud, drives further along the trajectory suggested here to make a counterargument to the diagnosis of sleep as regression. For Lacan, Anne Carson observes, sleep is "a space from which the sleeper can travel in two directions, both of them a kind of waking."[11] Responding to *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Lacan challenges the premise that the illusion of dream and the reality of waking can be placed on opposite sides of a single divide. His reading extracts and makes explicit a key question that hangs over this text, of whether there isn't another reality besides the one to which we awaken. Lacan focuses on the central example discussed by Freud in the book's final chapter, a dream experienced by a man whose child has just died after several days of illness. Leaving the child's bedside, the man goes to sleep in an adjacent room and dreams of the child, who whispers to him reproachfully, "Father, don't you see I'm burning?" The father wakes up to discover that in the next room, a candle has fallen and burnt the dead child's arm. As the most painfully charged of the many anxiety dreams discussed in this text—a dream that has the effect of an alarm rather than the usual function of preserving the continuity of slumber—this example sits uneasily within Freud's theory of the dream as a fulfillment of wishes and desires.[12]

For Lacan, this dream serves as the basis for an alternative theory of dreaming, sleeping, and waking, one that relates to the idea of the real as trauma. The dream shows that consciousness is constituted around not only the encounter with external reality, but also a "psychical real." This psychical real takes the form of trauma in that it eludes us, being by definition unassimilable by consciousness; the encounter with this other reality is always a missed encounter, as he famously puts it. Lacan locates this missed reality inside the father's dream, enveloped in its traumatic core. What is it that rouses the father? Is it not something within the dream itself, contained in the fatal sentence spoken by the child, rather than what is happening in the adjacent room? "Is there not more reality in this message than in the noise by which the father also identifies the strange reality of what is happening

in the room next door?" Lacan asks.[13] The lesson of the father's dream is that "we cannot conceive the reality principle as having . . . the last word."[14] It is not enough to speak of awakening as a reassertion of the reality principle without considering also this other "reality that can no longer produce itself except by repeating itself endlessly, in some never attained awakening."[15] Hence the question he poses, and to which Carson refers: "How can we fail to see that awakening works in two directions," and not just one?[16] Lacan poses the endless repetition of the traumatic real as an interminable, incomplete process of waking into a reality to which one never fully arrives. "Even in absolute awakening," he says, "there is still an element of dream which is precisely the dream of awakening. We never wake up." For Lacan, one might say, "there is always a waking beyond our waking."[17]

These passages from Freud and Lacan represent instances in which psychoanalytic thought intertwines with philosophical speculations about sleep, with the two coming together around the question of whether we are ever completely awake. Lacan points to this shared orientation in an earlier seminar when, in the midst of a discussion of *The Interpretation of Dreams*, he introduces a well-known Daoist parable from the Chinese philosopher Zhuangzi. After dreaming that he is a butterfly, Zhuangzi wakes up and wonders if he is not in fact a butterfly dreaming that he is Zhuangzi.[18] Apropos of Freud's text, Lacan responds, "Philosophers have always been concerned with this—Why isn't the experience one has in sleep just as important, as authentic, as that of the previous day? If he dreams every night that he is a butterfly, is it legitimate to say that he dreams he's a butterfly?"[19] The question (which Freud did not pursue, his primary concern instead being "what the dream means, what it means to someone, who is that someone?") persists in Lacan's subsequent conception of awakening as an always incomplete movement that can happen in more than one direction.[20] Much as Zhuangzi points to the illusoriness and ephemerality of what we take to be real, Lacan in this instance denies the reality principle the final word on awakening.

Zhuangzi's reflections on the dream might call to mind a well-known passage in *Meditations*, in which René Descartes writes,

> How often has it happened to me that in the night I dreamt that I found myself in this particular place, that I was dressed and seated near the fire, whilst in reality I was lying undressed in bed! At this moment it does indeed seem to me that it is with eyes awake that I am looking at this paper; that this head which I move is not asleep, that it is deliberately and of set purpose that I extend my hand and perceive it; what happens in sleep does not appear so clear nor so distinct as does all this. But in thinking over this I remind myself that on many occasions I have in sleep been deceived by similar illusions, and in dwelling carefully on this reflection I see so manifestly that there are no certain indications by which we may clearly distinguish wakefulness from sleep that I am lost in astonishment.[21]

For Descartes, however, the confusion between dream and reality indicates not the unstable nature of reality, but rather the fallibility of the senses that constitute

our only means of access to reality, and thus the threat of misapprehension that shadows—and ultimately deepens—the conscious subject's quest for certainty. In contrast to the Daoist parable, the guiding premise here is that there is in the first place an objective reality that can be—and must be—distinguished from illusion. The story of sleep told by Descartes therefore aligns with D.N. Rodowick's portrayal of the philosopher as "the founding author of the experience of modernity in its doubled aspect: presenting the self as divided from the world by its capacities for perception and thought, and thus wishing for the self to master both itself and the world, and all the objects in it, by assuring their existence through criteria of certain knowledge."[22] Deceived by the dream, lost in astonishment, the subject resolves to find its way back to ontological terra firma and, in so doing, reclaim a position of mastery.

The relegation of dreams to the category of illusion and the conflation of sleep with a state of deception meet a challenge in more contemporary philosophical approaches that interrogate the claims of the Cartesian subject. In these approaches, sleep commands particular interest as a window into those experiential realms—involuntary, unwilled, unconscious—that lie beyond the determining agency of the self-directed subject, frustrating its sovereignty and muddying "the transparency of the 'I think.'"[23] Zhuangzi's construal of the relationship between sleeping and waking as coequal and permeable is affirmed by a host of other Western thinkers besides Lacan who look both ways through the window between them. Among these thinkers are Proust, as discussed previously, who contrasts the plenitude of sleep with the "oblivion" imposed by our conscious faculties; Henri Bergson, who understands sleep as a continuation of sensing and thinking in an even more dynamic register, extending the field of perception and memory; and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, who maintains that "the difference between perception and dream not being absolute, one is justified in counting them both among 'our experiences.'"[24] For them, the waking state is no longer privileged as a point of reference, basis of knowledge, and guarantor of certainty.

Merleau-Ponty troubles the division between sleeping and waking by emphasizing the reciprocal flows that render them pervious to each other. For instance, in *Phenomenology of Perception* he writes, "The sleeper is never completely isolated within himself, never totally a sleeper." There persists, even in the deepest slumber, that "anonymous alertness of the senses" as a link to the sensible world, a half-open door through which the sleeper can return.[25] By the same token, our waking interactions also bear the indelible imprint of the projections and imaginary qualities typically attributed to dreams. Considering sleep in the context of his Collège de France course "The Problem of Passivity," Merleau-Ponty observes, "Our waking relations with things and, above all, with others, have in principle an oneiric character: others are present to us as dreams, as myths, and that is enough to contest the cleavage between the real and the imaginary."[26] Thus, "there is an oneirism of wakefulness and, conversely, a quasi-perceptual character of dreams."[27]

But even as these modalities constantly "encroach upon one another," their relationship has been distorted by an overemphasis on their incommensurability—a distortion perpetuated by those philosophies that insist "sleeping consists in being absent from the true world or present to an imaginary world."[28]

Reading Merleau-Ponty, Claude Lefort argues that the phenomenological lessons of passivity can be distilled in a phrase that the philosopher invokes on multiple occasions: "It is not me who makes me think, no more than it is me who makes my heart beat."[29] In his most sustained engagements with the topic, Merleau-Ponty considers sleep in conjunction with a constellation of phenomena that exclude the exercise of decision or will, such as forgetting, involuntary memory, sexual desire, hysteria, and aphasia.[30] Comparing the last-named condition with sleep, for instance, he remarks that both originate "from a lower level than that of 'will.' . . . Neither symptom nor cure is worked out at the level of objective or positing consciousness, but below that level. Loss of voice as a situation may be compared to sleep."[31] Just as knowing the cause of their symptoms will offer no simple cure for the aphasic, so an informed understanding of the benefits of a good night's sleep will offer no reprieve for the sleepless—indeed to dwell on these benefits while trying to sleep is a surefire recipe for insomnia. One can await or lend oneself to sleep, but one "cannot cause sleep," says Merleau-Ponty; "the will to sleep prevents sleep . . . . I call upon sleep, but it is sleep which comes."[32] Sleep escapes the typical sense of doing in that it is actionable only in an inactive mode, and so he refers to it as a passive modality of being in the world. These passive modalities and behaviors are integral elements of a consciousness that cannot be reduced to the capacities of self-reflection and self-directing activity: "Sleep and the unconscious [are] to be understood not as degradations of consciousness by the absurd mechanism of the body—invasion of the third person into the first—but as internal possibility of what we call consciousness."[33] They are therefore crucial for an apprehension of one's relation to and orientation toward the world, in all of the modalities of this orientation—encompassing the entire human being, taking into account those layers that subsist below the subject's self-awareness, and extending to an existence that is recessed, "anonymous," and "passive."[34] If sleep confronts us with a realization of our passivity, as a reminder of the limits of volitional agency, it also returns us to a recognition of the inescapability of embodiment.

Reflecting on the questions raised by sleep, Merleau-Ponty enters into some of his closest dialogues with Freudian theories of the unconscious. The view of sleep that emerges across the intersecting discourses of philosophy and psychoanalysis acknowledges the persistent uncertainties it brings in its wake—uncertainties concerning subjectivity, the coherence of the self, and the nature of our connection to reality. Such a view, however, has been overshadowed by the thesis of sleep as regression. For the associations among sleep, regression, and psychopathology forged by Freud would persist in the percolations of psychoanalysis throughout the twentieth century. These associations become entrenched by the writings of a

subsequent generation of analysts who build upon Freud's framework to explore the connections between sleep and psychoneurotic states such as schizophrenia and hysteria.[35] The regressive thesis of sleep harbors a suspicion that it inevitably entails not just a momentary subsiding of alert consciousness, but also an undoing of the lessons of reality testing, a compromising of hard-won reason (those "psychical acquisitions" that one lays aside for sleep), and a potentially dangerous undermining of "sovereignty over the realm of thought."[36] It is hardly coincidental that throughout *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Freud maps the effects of sleep onto a series of security metaphors, describing a fraught nocturnal drama of careless night watchmen, psychic citadels exposed to vulnerability, and alarmed awakenings.[37] The regressive thesis reinstates and reinforces a subtractive understanding of sleep, now defined as a state of lowered consciousness. It shares in and hardens the somnophobic disposition that has reigned throughout the modern era.

The following chapters take up the regressive thesis in the domain of cinema reception, constructing a broad historical perspective on the ways that sleep, for better or worse, has been singled out as an inextricable element of the filmgoing experience. I synthesize a host of theories of spectatorship and reception from the classical period to the contemporary in order to trace an enduring perceived affinity between sleeping and watching movies. Various writers throughout the twentieth century, in contending with the conditions of theatrical film exhibition and the resulting state of attention that the medium seems uniquely capable of eliciting from its audience, have pointed to cinema's sedative effects. For them, an artificial somnolence is born of the "artificial darkness" of the movie theater and the isolated luminosity of the screen.[38] On the one hand, many have regarded this effect in a manner consistent with the denigration of sleep in the modern era. For them, the artificial somnolence induced by the cinema attests to its power to involve the audience to such a degree that they lose sight of everything else. It signals an absorption to the point of a total surrender of the senses and relinquishment of any sense of reality, consistent with Freud's definition of sleep as the disabling of a crucial "function of orientating the individual in the world by discrimination between what is internal and what is external."[39] The audience, like the person who sleep and dreams, does not merely behold a spectacle but rather is submerged within it, undergoing all that this suggests about losing one's bearings, passing into an altered state, and vanishing into an elsewhere. Such responses demonstrate that the coding of sleep as a regressive process disarming the conscious subject and diminishing their mental powers leaves a deep imprint upon a broader array of disciplines engaged with Freudian models of the psyche and unconscious. The regressive thesis gains particular traction in the domain of psychoanalytic film theory, harnessed to a critique of cinema's illusionistic and ideological sway.[40]

On the other hand, however, the sedative effects of filmgoing need not automatically call for the corrective of a more critically awakened viewing practice, one that reinstates the transparency of the "I think" against the murky scene of

cinema and restores the light of reason. To move beyond a thesis that restricts sleep to a foreclosure of the functions of waking thought is to attune to the positive role that sleep can play in spectatorship, as a generative difference and not a mere detraction. Following my discussion of the regressive thesis of sleep within discourses on spectatorship, I chart an alternative itinerary that sheds this theoretical legacy in order to compose a different account of reception as it extends into the twilight zones of consciousness. If the darkened theater is a setting where it is easy to lose an orientation to reality, it is also a place where other things are found, rushing in on currents of thought and feeling that are released by the lowering of consciousness. The drowsy disorientation that overcomes the audience inside the theater gives rise to pleasurable and peculiar turns of reflection (recalling Jacqueline Risset), to multiplied pathways and directionalities of response that cannot be subsumed within the linearity of regression. Somnolence, rather than cutting off all exit routes from the film's illusion, creates lines of flight that take off from the projected image in new directions. In giving oneself over to the submersive force of sleep, the filmgoer inhabits a particular disposition in relation to their own body, a place, and the other bodies in it. Sleepy spectatorship can bring into play ways of experiencing films—and other kinds of art and media—that are no less involving, affecting, or memorable for their lack of vigilant focus. Movie theaters, along with other sites of reception, are places where sleep can be brought into conversation with waking life, where the borders and edges between these states can be activated.

Such claims fly in the face of not only theoretical truisms, but also the commonsense meanings of seeing and watching. Yet they find support from illustrious company. For instance, Martje Grohmann, describing her memories of watching films alongside the archivist and film critic Lotte Eisner, recalled that "if it was a good film," Eisner "would watch attentively for some time and then contentedly fall asleep. Toward the end, she would wake up with a start and be ready with her comment: 'A very interesting film.' Inevitably she was right."[41] Eisner's viewing habits were shared by the German critic Michel Althen, for whom "to fall asleep in the cinema means to trust the film."[42] The French cinema legend and artist Agnès Varda's predilection for napping in public has been amply documented by social media. Reflecting on a visit to the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna late in her life, she described sitting in front of a painting by Vermeer: "I felt so good that I fell asleep . . . . The feeling of peace and happiness had been so strong that I wanted to sleep there. So maybe we will find people sleeping in front of my work."[43] The Iranian director Abbas Kiarostami expressed his preference for "the films that put their audience to sleep in the theater. I think those films are kind enough to allow you a nice nap . . . . Some films have made me doze off in the theater, but the same films have made me stay up at night, wake up thinking about them in the morning, and keep on thinking about them for weeks."[44] For the filmmaker and theorist Raúl Ruiz, "the point where we spectators begin to fall asleep, really or metaphorically;

the point where we begin to lose the thread of the story, and yet do not feel ready to leave the room for disinterest" is critical, for it is only then that "we can finally say that we are in the film."[45] And as I will show in greater detail, in Apichatpong we encounter a practitioner who, as well as validating sleeping as a spectatorial response, pursues it in a systematic and structural mode.

The alternative itinerary of narcotic reception traced below takes shape through a close dialogue with Apichatpong's work (including *SLEEPCINEMAHOTEL*) along with that of other artists and thinkers from different places and periods. What they share is an approach to sleep not as a dead end but rather as a starting point for an expansive model of reception, one that takes into account the ragged edges of consciousness, the ebbs and flows of attention, and even those spans of complete perceptual disconnection that can break up the act of viewing. Such modes of distraction, involuntary deviation, and self-absence are more often than not a part of the viewing process, within the theater and elsewhere; zoning out and nodding off can be cinematic experiences in their own right, as these commentators allow. Yet they have been neglected in histories of reception and overshadowed by prescriptive models of spectatorial attention. To admit sleep into the experience of cinema is to contend with the ways the latter is rippled by perceptual flux and bodily rhythms, along with the question of exactly when and where this experience begins and ends (as Kiarostami's comments suggest). The unraveling effects of somnolence can be situated on a continuum alongside a host of corporeal, involuntary, and affective responses that unfold below the threshold of cognitive awareness and self-control. Thus, a consideration of sleepy spectatorship intersects both with avant-garde provocations of the past—such as the Surrealist yearning for "a critical point as captivating and imperceptible as that uniting waking and sleeping"—and with contemporary phenomenological and affect-based approaches to reception.[46] Sleep brings into play an open-ended and permeable conception of spectatorial response that, on the one hand, reframes cinema's history of theatrical exhibition and, on the other hand, meets the challenge of the ongoing relocations and mutations that make an open question of what cinema is and how it is experienced. It answers to a need to rethink and revise our sense of what it means to engage with works and to be a part of an audience.

Finally, to seriously consider the proposition of a dozing viewer is to confront a phantom that has persistently haunted theories of cinema—the passive spectator. The discourse of narcotic spectatorship can be framed within an iterative endeavor to pin down and exorcise this phantom. Even as the study of the reception of moving images has undergone continuous development, expansion, and refinement—building on archival excavations, methodological innovations, theoretical repositionings—it has also been hard-pressed to move past and divest from the problem of passivity, constantly resurrecting the phantom in order to banish it anew. As Abraham Geil observes, even as critical approaches to spectatorship have proliferated—drawing from psychoanalysis, cultural studies, empirical audience studies,

cognitivism, and phenomenology—they converge around a timeworn opposition between a passivity always coded in negative terms and the positive ideal of an active spectator. The breakthrough of a new perspective tends to be staked upon the discovery of an "active particularity," which is differentiated from the background of a generalized passivity. Thus, "whatever else spectators are taken to be, they must in the first instance be understood as *active* agents in their own spectatorship," Geil argues, even as the criteria for determining such agency undergo dispute and revision.[47]

In this respect, cinema inherits from the theater what Jacques Rancière calls the "paradox" of the passive spectator—a spectator who, while needed for the performance to be a performance, is imagined to be "separated from both the capacity to know and the power to act," and who therefore must be remade into an active participant.[48] Film theory, like modern theater, continually rediscovers and reaffirms its mandate in the project of transforming passivity into activity. This mandate holds firm even as moving-image exhibition assumes new forms and enters a plurality of sites. The opposition between activity and passivity grows ever more indelible as it is mapped across viewing locales, reinvested as a means of anchoring and containing the drift of spectatorship across public and private spaces, large and small screens, mobile and immobile platforms. Some attempts have been made to overcome this paradox by redefining passivity as an aspect of spectatorship to be embraced rather than overcome. For instance, Martin Seel argues that in the cinema "we come closest to fulfilling our desire to not have to determine our situation but to *let* ourselves be determined by it. Film grants us the special enjoyments and sufferings of passivity."[49] Nonetheless, this recuperation reaches its limit at the point of sleep: "this state of being captured by film, however, does not come about automatically. After all, cinema is not a sleeping chamber in which we merely follow our own dreams (although that sometimes can be a pleasure in its own right). It surely is necessary that we be awake, aware, and attentive."[50] For the enjoyments of passivity to be redeemed, sleep must be refused. An ideal of spectatorship that places a premium on the active command of the senses and reflexive awareness as the keys to autonomous judgment and critical agency proves its durability. To trace the discourses of spectatorship is to be drawn into a process of interminable awakening, a perpetual program of subjective reconditioning toward this participatory aspiration.

The discussion that follows makes no claim to dispatch with the problem of passivity once and for all by way of a final exorcism. Its objective is to rescue the sleepy spectator from these interminable awakenings, to emancipate them from a recuperative logic that insists upon critical vigilance as its highest priority. For Rancière, the project of emancipating spectatorship levels the hierarchy of activity over passivity and dissolves the ties that bind these terms to preconceived notions of "capacity and incapacity."[51] In the absence of this structuring polarity, it becomes possible to approach the question of spectatorship without prejudice or

preconceptions, allowing that, in the words of Merleau-Ponty, "there is passivity right there in activity . . . activity right there in passivity."[52] The ground is prepared for an inquiry into the active processes underlying the appearance of inaction; to discern the specific forms of feeling, thought, and transmission involved in the most seemingly passive postures; and to recognize the potential of simply letting go and zoning out. The somnolent spectator is also an emancipated spectator; the release of sleep delivers them to, as Apichatpong puts it, "another kind of freedom."[53]