



Notes on the Sociology of Sleep

Author(s): Barry Schwartz

Source: *The Sociological Quarterly*, Vol. 11, No. 4 (Autumn, 1970), pp. 485-499

Published by: Blackwell Publishing on behalf of the Midwest Sociological Society

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4104790>

Accessed: 10/12/2009 21:57

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>. JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use provides, in part, that unless you have obtained prior permission, you may not download an entire issue of a journal or multiple copies of articles, and you may use content in the JSTOR archive only for your personal, non-commercial use.

Please contact the publisher regarding any further use of this work. Publisher contact information may be obtained at <http://www.jstor.org/action/showPublisher?publisherCode=black>.

Each copy of any part of a JSTOR transmission must contain the same copyright notice that appears on the screen or printed page of such transmission.

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



Blackwell Publishing and Midwest Sociological Society are collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *The Sociological Quarterly*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

Notes on the Sociology of Sleep

BARRY SCHWARTZ, *University of Chicago*

Sleep as a Periodic Remission

EVERY social organization exhibits structural features which both guarantee the regular performance of duties and insure release from such performances. As Philip Rieff (1966:232-233) points out, all groups must "(1) organize the moral demands men make upon themselves . . . [and] (2) organize the expressive remissions by which men release themselves, in some degree, from the strain of conforming to the controlling symbolic. . . ." As the term implies, "expressive remissions" have two functions: (1) to insulate the individual from the pressure of normative demands and (2) to enable him to express such aspects of his nature and character as would be inhibited in the absence of such insulation. By providing relief from the discipline of social life, remissions make that life more bearable and are for this reason important modes of social control.

Two modes of "expressive remissions" are distinguishable. First, there exist such "bands of remission" as surround or give latitude to the role prescriptions governing current activities. The scope of such latitude is quite variable, ranging from mildly remissive "side involvements" (Goffman, 1963a:43)¹ to the outrightly deviant "institutionalized *evasions* of institutional rules" (Merton, 1957:343).² Secondly, we may designate as "periodic remissions" those which admit of total emancipation from the imperatives which are merely mitigated by the permissiveness that is built into them. Among the periodic remissions we find holidays, vacations, weekends, and nights-out, as well as orgies, debaucheries, and binges of varied sort. Less dramatic remissions of this type include coffee

¹ For Goffman, "A main involvement is one that absorbs the major part of an individual's attention and interest, visibly forming the principal current determinant of his actions. A side involvement is an activity that an individual can carry on in an abstracted fashion without threatening or confusing simultaneous maintenance of a main involvement. Whether momentary or continuous, simple or complicated, these side activities appear to constitute a kind of fuguelike dissociation of minor muscular activity from the main line of an individual's action. Humming while working and knitting while listening are examples" (1963a:43).

² Merton writes: "Some measure of leeway in conforming to role expectations is presupposed in all groups. To have to meet the strict requirements of a role at all times, without some degree of deviation, is to experience insufficient allowances for individual differences in capacity and training and for situational exigencies which make strict conformity extremely difficult. This is one of the sources of what has been elsewhere noted in this book as socially patterned, or even institutionalized, *evasions* of institutional rules" (1957:343).

breaks, lunch hours, lavatory visits, and similar "role releases" or (what Goffman would call) "subordinate involvements."³

Sleep is perhaps the most important form of periodic remission. If it were not forced upon us by nature, we would be obliged to find some functional equivalent for it, for social coexistence would cease to be gratifying—or even bearable—if men could not regularly renounce their consciousness of it. It would be difficult to imagine anyone with the capacity to abandon himself to an incessant wakefulness without becoming overwhelmed by the cumulative demands and irritations to which he would then be subject.⁴ Parsons (1951:396), for example, writes:

It is inherent in the view of social action taken here that all such action involves tensions and the necessity of the imposition of frustrations and disciplines of the most various sorts. This fact underlies the occurrence of a variety of rhythmic cycles of effort and rest, of discipline and permissive release and the like. Sleep is clearly one of the most fundamental of these tension release phenomena, which though it has biological foundations is nevertheless profoundly influenced by interaction on socio-cultural levels.

We would amend Parsons by designating sleep as *the* fundamental tension release phenomenon, for it is emancipating not merely with respect to the social world outside of us but also (as Cooley would put it) with respect to the "society within" (1964:119–122); it admits of withdrawal from all that is subjectively as well as objectively social. Because it circumvents consciousness itself,

³ Everett C. Hughes' concept of "role release" is discussed, along with the notion of "involvement shield" by Erving Goffman (1963a:38–42). Both concepts are similar to the "subordinate involvement" (Goffman, 1963a:44). Intermittent subordinate involvements are sustained by an individual "only to the degree, and during the time, that his attention is patently not required by the involvement that dominates him. Subordinate involvements are sustained in a muted, modulated, and intermittent fashion, expressing in their style a continuous regard and deference for the official, dominating activity at hand." Thus, while side involvements may accompany dominant involvements, subordinate ones are periodic remissions from them. As such, subordinate involvements, unlike side involvements, may be engrossing. "Thus, while waiting to see an official," writes Goffman, "an individual may converse with a friend, read a magazine, or doodle with a pencil, sustaining these engrossing claims on attention only until his turn is called, when he is obliged to put aside his time-passing activity even though it is unfinished." As we have seen, however, periodic remissions may also constitute dominant involvements, as in the case of sleep.

⁴ Thomas Mann (1933:270; 275) made the same point when he wrote: "I know what it was that . . . fanned my latent fondness [for sleep] to a conscious love. It was the tale of a man who did not sleep, who was so abandonedly committed to time and affairs that he invoked a curse on sleep, and an angel granted him the awful boon of sleeplessness, breathing on his eyes till they became like grey stones in their sockets, and their lids never closed again. Now this man came to rue his wish; what he had to bear as a sleepless solitary among men, dragging out his doomed and tragic life, until at last death released him and night, that has stood inaccessible before his stony eyeballs, took him to and unto herself. . . . [Thus], precisely as morals function to correct and discipline the free possible into the limited and actual, so perhaps morals in their turn need a corrective, a ceaseless admonition, never quite to go unheeded, a call to withdrawal and communion. If this be wisdom, then its opposite will be the folly of the man who cursed sleep and clung with blind eagerness to time and day."

sleep is a total⁵ release from the frustrations and disciplines to which Parsons refers. Sleep thus achieves its sociological significance as the most radical form of institutionalized periodic withdrawal.

The Institutionalization of Sleep

Sleep is such an important aspect of life, so socially and biologically necessary, that social organizations must see to its protection. Indeed, one of the most important questions facing the sociology of sleep is, "How do groups insure the sleep of their members when sleep is itself so unstable, so vulnerable to immediate external stimuli?"

For Freud, also, sleep was problematical. However, his conception of the problem differs from our own. Freud sought to clarify the dilemma posed to sleep by its *internal* adversaries. His solution illuminated the manner in which personality defended sleep against the menace of forbidden wishes pressing for conscious recognition. The dream, as we all know, plays the key part in this process. For Freud (1950:424-426; 430-432), the dream protects sleep.

Addressing ourselves as we do to the *external* threats to sleep, we are concerned with the social arrangements by which it is regulated and defended. This involves us in the problem of how sleep is institutionalized as a role within social systems. Institutionalization thus plays the same part in the sociology of sleep that the dream plays in its psychology.

Schedules and Their Default

"One of the primary functions of institutionalization," writes Parsons (1951:302), "is to help order . . . different activities and relationships so that they constitute a sufficiently coordinated system, to be manageable by the actor and to minimize conflicts on the social level." One aspect of such ordering is the "time schedule" whereby certain times are set aside for specific activities (see, e.g., Moore, 1963). The coordination within a collectivity of the timing of sleep is one of the most important senses in which it is institutionalized. It is because

⁵ There is some question as to whether dreams violate the totality of sleep's remission. One function of the dream is to provide symbolic fulfillment of desires whose very existence is prohibited in waking life (Freud, 1950:33-69. See especially 67-68). The dream is thus remissive with respect to normative constraints. It may therefore be argued that while dreamless sleep denies the discipline of wakefulness by closing off consciousness of it, the dream-filled sleep achieves this same objective by neutralizing the *content* of such discipline. Even the nightmare may perform a remissive function. Viktor Frankl (1963:45), for example, describes the following concentration camp experience: "I shall never forget how I was roused one night by the groans of a fellow prisoner, who threw himself about in his sleep, obviously having a horrible nightmare. Since I had always been especially sorry for people who suffered from fearful dreams or deliria, I wanted to wake the poor man. Suddenly I drew back the hand which was ready to shake him, frightened about the thing I was about to do. At that moment I became intensely conscious of the fact that no dream, no matter how horrible, could be as bad as the reality of the camp which surrounded us, and to which I was about to recall him."

persons must have one another at their disposal in waking life that they sleep simultaneously.⁶ But simultaneity serves an additional function. Because most of us engage in sleep during approximately the same hours, we are—within generally tolerable limits—automatically insulated against sleeplessness and/or premature awakening caused by the activities of others.

The coordination of sleep becomes more imperative as the possibilities for its disruption increase. The mere number of individuals in a social unit has a direct bearing upon this probability. Among married couples, for example, the arrival of a new child so compromises their sleeping schedule (and, thereby, the order of their daily lives) as to make the earliest possible synchronization of his sleep with theirs an imperative. This feat requires such tactics as keeping the child awake late enough so that sleep throughout the night becomes necessary for him. In this way, the prerequisite of sleep synchronization hastens and insures the youngster's integration into the family's pattern of activity. Individuals therefore sleep simultaneously not only to have one another at their disposal in waking life, but they may also interact with one another in order to synchronize their sleep.

In urban life, where the density of population heightens the possibility of collisions between the sleeping and the wakeful, the phenomenon of the sleep-schedule is of greater moment as a condition of life-in-common than it is in the more sparsely populated areas. Especially in apartment living, where neighbors reside in very close proximity to one another, any de-synchronization of activity schedules is liable to be disruptive to the sleep of neighbors. Apartment landlords make provision for such difficulties in their leases, which generally prohibit the use of radios, TV's, and phonographs before and after certain hours. This specific rule is an instance of a general principle set down by Simmel (1950:413): "the technique of metropolitan life is unimaginable without the most punctual integration of all activities and mutual relations into a stable and impersonal time schedule."

The effective scheduling of sleep requires the regulation of not only those activities which *inhibit* sleep but also of activities which *facilitate* it. Endeavors which promote drowsiness must be fitted into those parts of the day during which the individual is unengaged in work or serious activity. Eating is one example. In modern societies, for instance, "dieticians seem unanimous that the last should be the big meal of the day. It is thought to be the only time of day when sleepiness would not hinder important activity" (deGrazia, 1962:171).

The Sleep Role and its Transition Phase

If every member of a community retired and awoke at precisely the same time the question "How is sleep brought under institutional control?" would be satis-

⁶ It is true that sleep scheduling is more dependent upon such cosmic variations as night and day in non-industrial communities than in industrial ones, for many activities, including agriculture and hunting, can only be carried out in daylight. Similarly, sleep patterns must adjust themselves to climate. Siestas, for example, are a routine part of the daily activity structure of many societies situated in hot climates. However, cosmic factors affect the *timing* of sleep more than they do its *functions*. Even where cosmic limitations are overcome by artificial light and temperature controls, people continue to tend to sleep simultaneously. But these artificial resources do admit of more flexibility in the scheduling of sleep and wakefulness. Such flexibility raises problems to which we shall attend later.

factorily answered. But the most interesting aspect of schedules is their inability to coordinate social life *perfectly*. We need not go into the many individual differences which compel one to begin or terminate sleep a little early or late to recognize the problems which such variability present to the social unit. Because of this variability, the sleeper must be placed in a socially categorized or institutionally defined framework which evokes the deference and support of the wakeful. Were those first awake not inhibited by a set of institutionalized expectations (and therefore subject to certain evaluations and sanctions) the repose of the group would much more frequently end for all because it had ended for one. The body of rights and obligations that surround the sleeper thus *supplement* the controlling function of schedular integration.

The fundamental right of the sleeper is obviously that which forbids his awakening within a specific time period.⁷ In our society this interval is of course far more ambiguous on weekends than it is on weekdays. However, an individual need not give up the rights of the sleep role, even if he is physically awake, until its (variably defined) limits are reached. He who chooses to remain awake in bed is, up to a certain point, *socially* asleep and entitled to all the benefits attending such a status.

Deference to the sleeper is not required merely of those in his intimate circle; outsiders must show the same consideration. They must refrain, for example, from making social calls or even telephone calls at a late hour in respect for his desire not to be bothered by anything that might disturb the state of mind or mood necessary for sleep. The reason for this convention is that the sleep role, like all roles that require substantial physical and/or mental preparation, cannot be abruptly taken on and cast off; its assumption must be preceded by an institutionalized "transition phase" wherein the individual may gradually adapt himself to it. Because the transition phase hardens the boundaries between the prospective sleeper and a potentially disruptive outer-world, the sleeper is able to easily disattend or suppress this world. He is thus protected by an "interaction membrane" (Goffman, 1966:121)⁸ which reliably filters out disturbing communications.

The transition phase which lessens the difficulty of moving into the sleep role also facilitates its abandonment. This function is indispensable to the just-awakened, who must be protected from public demand until he is capable of responding to it. He must warm up, so to speak, by first attending to the self-imposed rituals of leaving bed, bathing, and dressing before he confronts the demands of his family. These rituals mediate his transition from unconsciousness to interaction. Such a difficult passage is facilitated architecturally. "When asleep in bed," writes Goffman (1959:121), the individual is also immobilized, expressively speaking, and may not be able to bring himself into an appropriate position for interaction or bring a sociable expression to his face until some moments after being awakened, thus providing one explanation of the tendency to remove

⁷ One of the most radical definitions of this right is to be found among the Navaho, for whom misfortune flows from the act of even stepping over a sleeping person (see Kluckhohn, 1946:47).

⁸ This concept was introduced by Erving Goffman (1966:65). It is also possible to find individuals who take advantage of the interaction membrane by doing work that might be disturbed during other parts of the day.

the bedroom from the active part of the house." Moreover, the sleeper may not only be *unable* to immediately assume the obligations of waking life; he may also be *unwilling* to do so. The principle laid down by Becker and Strauss (1956:259) in reference to *status passages* may therefore be relevant to *role passages* as well. "Transition periods are a necessity," they write, "for a man often invests heavily of himself in a position, comes to possess it as it possesses him, and suffers in leaving it. If the full ritual of leavetaking is not allowed, the man may not pass fully into his new status."⁹

The just-awakened is thus confronted by a reality with which his ego has not yet made complete contact and which his unconscious impulses might therefore offend, for the ego, upon awakening, does not immediately reassert its control over them, but does so only gradually (Bettelheim, 1950:95). Thus, among emotionally disturbed children, notes Bettelheim (1950:95), the re-establishment of ego control requires that social contact after awakening be mediated by a pleasant representative of the reality to be confronted. In helping such children to engage an heretofore painful world, then, the world must be made as congenial as possible. "Therefore, first and foremost, the counselor must be there when the children awake, and he must not try to waken them before they are ready." Thus, in this special setting—and in this particular sense—the individual is spared some of the burden of adjusting to the world; to a degree, the world adjusts itself to him. (For a concrete instance of this process, see Bettelheim, 1950:93–94. For a discussion of class differences in modes of awakening, see Bossard and Boll, 1950:113.)

In some total institutions, however, such transition mechanisms as those which we have described are conspicuously absent. Very much unlike the civilian, or Bettelheim's patients, the newly-awakened prisoner is subject to sudden and uninsulated external demands, as Hassler (1954:155) shows:

At 5:30 we were awakened and had to jump out of bed and stand at attention. When the guard shouted 'One!' you removed your nightshirt; at 'Two' you folded it; at 'Three' you made your bed. (Only two minutes to make the bed in a difficult and complicated manner.) All the while three monitors would shout at us: 'Hurry it up!' and 'Make it snappy!'

It is perhaps the default of protection against sudden shifts in or impositions of normative demand that best sensitizes us to the benefits of such insulatory modes as the transition phase. It also appears that the transition phase serves the same function in respect of *role shifts* that anticipatory socialization (Merton, 1957:165) does with reference to *status shifts*. Whereas the former mechanism eases passage from one role to another during movement through the daily activity cycle, the latter lubricates the passage from one status to another in movement across the life cycle. Both mechanisms, then, facilitate movement to new social "locations" and ease adjustment once the shift has been made; in their absence, shifts in roles and statuses become, in effect, social shocks.

⁹ The similarity of the terms "transition phase" and "transition period" is coincidental. Similar to both is Bettelheim's (1950:115–132) concept of "in-between time."

The Reciprocity of Motive and Action in the Sleep Role

In considering the successful assumption or abandonment of the sleep role it would be misleading to overemphasize the functions of the transition period. This is because many roles possess an internal compulsion which helps insure proper conduct by setting up predefined and self-sustaining grooves for it. This process is conspicuous in the bedtime preparation ritual.

The bedtime ritual is generally initiated by a familiar cue such as the face of a clock or the end of a TV program. This cue sets into motion the ceremony of undressing, putting aside the clothes in a certain way, washing, donning the sleeping costume, and so forth. These habituations [or obsessions (Freud, 1963: 18), as the case may be] are not only carried out in response to sleepiness, but they also produce it. This paradox reveals an interesting convergence of role theory and conditioning theory. As is known, the natural stimulus of fatigue almost always becomes associated with a particular mode of preparation, a certain time, a familiar bed, darkness, and quiet. The individual may be so well conditioned by these stimuli that he will fall asleep when they are operative even though he is not particularly tired. "Exactly in the same manner," writes Pavlov (1960:263) "extra stimuli and conditioned stimuli which upon repetition bring about a state of sleep, with practice bring about this state more and more easily." Thus, the more the bedtime ritual is repeated the more inexorable it becomes as a conditioning stimulus. Note that what is conditioned is motive. The individual, as we have seen, does not simply prepare for bed because he is tired; he also grows tired *because* he prepares for bed. While the motive to assume the sleep role may exist before it is assumed, the assumption itself acts back upon the motive and strengthens it. This reciprocal effect between motive and action, between, let us say, "inside" and "outside" constitutes the control dynamic that, according to Berger (1963:98), is inherent in all roles. As Berger notes, "Each role has its inner discipline. . . . The role forms, shapes, patterns both action and actor. It is very difficult to pretend in this world. Normally, one becomes what one plays at."

The ritualized movements which condition sleep take place during the nightly transition phase; another set of movements conditions wakefulness in the morning. Note, however, that different functions are served in the two cases. At bedtime the transition phase, via insulation from external demand and ritualized, conditioning actions, helps to relax ego control and diminish its watchfulness so as to permit sleep; in the morning, however, the transition phase helps to re-establish ego control (Bettelheim, 1950:350).

Anomic Sleep Roles

We have seen that sleep is facilitated by institutionalized transition periods and a built-in dynamic that strengthens the motive of the role incumbent; but, we have also observed that sanctions are required in order to deter those who might interfere with either the preparation for or the actual undertaking of sleep. The sleep role may therefore be designated as anomic when sanctions fail to correspond to abuses of its expectation system. Such a condition, which renders the sleep role oppressive, is exemplified by the night-shift worker.

We know that sanctions regarding sleep include, in their negative forms, (1) formal punishments for disturbance of the (public) peace and (2) informal household punishments. Both forms of sanction happen to be less binding during daylight hours than they are at night. This is because the sleep role is "mis-situated" (or imperfectly institutionalized) during the day and therefore evokes less deference. Since almost the entire community must be active (and often disruptively so) during the day, it is unlikely to back up a complaint that *particular* expectations of sleep-deference have been violated. This fact presents a problem for those who routinely sleep during the day and who lack the sleep-protection nightly afforded by political authority to the more conventional folk.

Even within the home, the controls of the sleep role may fail to operate. Children of the night-shift worker often have difficulty defining the daylight hours as a time for the self-restraint elsewhere reserved for the night. Therefore, "the demand for daytime sleep," writes Mott (1965:12),¹⁰ "can generate friction in the family. Very often the husband's sleep, the children's play, and the wife's housework must be carried out at the same time. If the worker cannot adapt to the noise level created by these activities, he may become irritable with both wife and children, or they with him, and family relations may become strained." The case of the daytime sleeper thus highlights for us the contagiousness of marginality. Those whose activities fail to "fit in" with the interests of those around them in one sphere soon find themselves to be misfits with respect to others as well.

The Obligations of the Sleep Role

Through his own inability to fulfill them and by way of the problems with which he is thus confronted, the night worker introduces us to the *obligations* of the sleep role in the more conventional life. The presence of the sleeper, as we have seen, opens up and closes off certain possibilities of action among the wakeful; therefore, specific rules must defend individuals against the impositions to which the sleeper might otherwise subject them.

The central obligation of the sleeper is not to demand more deference than he is due. Above all, he must segregate himself physically so as not to needlessly intrude upon the conscious world, lest his relation to this world lose the respect that it requires. Family members, for example, justly resent another's napping in such public areas as the parlor insofar as they are deprived of their right to undertake the social relations which require access to this room. Moreover, many individuals feel that they have the right *not* to be exposed to the "creature release behavior" of the sleeper. For Goffman (1963a:68),¹¹ "creature releases . . . consist of fleeting acts that slip through the individual's self-control and momentarily assert his 'animal nature'." Among sleepers these acts may include grunting, scratching, squirming, snoring, flatulence, and the like. Such behavior may compromise the dignity of not only the sleeper but of the wakeful as well. A

¹⁰ "All of the 'worker-oriented' studies to date," explains Mott (1965:10), "have cited difficulties in sleep as a frequent source of complaint, and two studies single this out as the central problem of shift work."

¹¹ Gross and Stone (1964:10) refer to such phenomena as "signs of the animal."

slight amendment must therefore be made to the well-known term "information control" which, as used by Goffman (1963b:41-104), refers to the manner in which individuals (by the selective granting and withholding of data about themselves) supervise the impressions they make upon others. We have found this usage to be too restricted, for the individual must also shield himself against "noxious information" *emitted* by others; one may contaminate oneself by the receipt as well as the transmission of demeaning information. Thus, to keep oneself uninstructed is an important aspect of information control. This point bears directly upon Goffman's correlative concept of "back region." The "back region" refers to a physical area within an establishment, bounded by barriers to perception, wherein individuals and groups prepare themselves for or relieve themselves from public display in "front regions" (1959:106-140). But we have observed the back region being used as a quarantine device by which members of a social unit preserve its dignity by temporarily isolating other members who are engaged in such creature release behavior as sleep. The back region may thus be imposed as well as appropriated; it may be employed to close in as well as to close out.

Sleep, Residence, and Identity

The sleeper has also an obligation to do his sleeping within (rather than outside of) the home. This rule is obvious but not trivial and has certain implications for identity. As Aubert and White (1959:1) point out, "The component of a person's status known as residence, which identifies the person with a definite spatial location, is given by the normal sleeping location. A person 'lives' where he sleeps." Even more, a person *belongs* where he sleeps; sleep establishes where the person is in social as well as spatial terms; it situates him in accordance with membership rather than mere presence and, thereby, generates an identity for him. Furthermore, residential membership is solidified when an individual is officially assigned to the same sleeping place that he emotionally "appropriates" for his own. This coincidence of assignment and appropriation is carefully supervised. A crisis exists when it breaks down. Aubert and White (1959:13-14) write:

What needs to be emphasized here is that a very rigid system of social control operates to enforce the norms of sleep location. It is dramatically demonstrated when the question of 'alibi' is being put, and the suspect fails to show that he slept at the proper time at the proper place. Viewed from an entirely different angle: for a youngster to stay out overnight without parental approval of alternative sleeping place is a kind of deviance which may lead to extensive control measures. These are intimately related to other norms, against sexual activities and against gang delinquency. But whatever the motives behind the invoked sanctions are, they function so as to emphasize the strict normative rules governing sleep location. They may be viewed as a counter-measure against a threat to family solidarity, an attempt to eliminate a disturbance of its most sacred ritual.

Clearly, to sleep "under another roof" is one of the most powerful denials of intimacy. However, the disintegration of social bonds is perhaps nowhere seen or felt more vividly than in the practice among failing marriages of sleeping in the same house but in separate rooms. This is because the *physical* intimacy of common life under a single roof sets in bold relief the *emotional* distance sepa-

rating the couple, making such distance all the more striking precisely because it is concealed in the physical, i.e., residential sense.

As regards extra-residential sleeping, it might be useful to distinguish between sleeping in private and public places. The former mode of deviation is exemplified in extra-marital sexual arrangements. These unions are often referred to by the expression "sleeping with another woman (or man)." Such terminology suggests that the sexual intercourse which precedes sleep constitutes only one aspect of marital infidelity. The second element is given in the lovers' decision to share a single sleep location, a decision which (particularly when repeated) lifts the relationship beyond a purely physical basis and stamps it with an intimacy that cannot be claimed when the termination of the *social* relationship coincides with the termination of its *sexual* component. Whereas the strictly erotic union subtracts from the sexual aspect of marriage, the act of sleeping together undermines the status and identity embodied in the common residence of a married couple. Purely lustful relations are therefore more likely to leave the performers' visible status and identity intact. These relations may eventually lead to the breakdown of a marital status, but they do not symbolize it as well as when a common sleep residence is superimposed upon them.

Extra-residential sleep is designated as a private matter as long as it is practiced in private places. Those who make use of public places (e.g., parks, transportation facilities, alleys, etc.) for sleeping, however, offend the collectivity and bring down upon themselves the stigma of public condemnation. Like conventional folk, then, "the bum" is recognized and labelled in terms of his sleep location. It follows that one of his problems is to avoid being assessed as such and to thereby retain his sleeping place. Techniques of so doing have been sampled by Edmund G. Love (1957:17-33).¹²

The Vulnerability of Sleep

During the hours of sleep the members of a social unit share not only a common residence and activity but also a common vulnerability. Thus, the solution to the question, "How is sleep protected and brought under society's control?" creates a new question: "How does the sleeping society cope with its absence of control?"

The situation of sleep places the group in perhaps the most marginal position conceivable. A collective separation from consciousness strips the social unit of its orientation in experience and, thereby, of its reality and identity. As Simmel (1959:338) suggests, the very principle of society negates itself when it relinquishes self-consciousness, for "the consciousness of constituting with . . . others a unity is actually all there is to this unity." It is in this particular sense that a society whose entire membership is asleep is, at that moment, no society at all.¹³

The unconscious collectivity lacks not only a *sense* of location in but also an effective control over its social and physical environment. Therefore, no society could afford to permit sleep to overtake its entire membership. Thus, at night,

¹² These techniques may be subsumed under Goffman's (1969:12-17) concept of "control moves."

¹³ Cooley (1964:119-122) makes this same point in his implication that society is dead when individuals cease to serve one another as objects of imagination.

wakefulness itself becomes a scarce and therefore marketable commodity. The phenomenon of "the night watch" introduces itself as the most important mechanism for coping with the vulnerability created by collective unconsciousness. Aubert and White (1959:14) explain that "society must know, from its registers, who and where a person is, when he is incapable of knowing it himself. When people sleep some of the responsibility they have for taking care of their own and society's interests is transferred to others. Watchmen and guards who stay awake when others sleep symbolize this transfer of protective functions."

The insecurity of sleep applies to individuals as well as groups. Nightly, the individual must face the possibility that, because of predatory contingencies, his world may appear altogether differently on the morrow. He needs therefore to find some method of sufficiently mitigating his apprehension so as to be able to willingly give himself up to unconsciousness. It is well known that obsessive, ritualistic preparations for sleep (or any other activity) is a widely-used technique of coping with anxiety (Freud, 1963:18).

During sleep, of course, the individual not only reduces his control over external predators but also relaxes his control over himself. According to Bettelheim (1950:341-374), the default of ego control results in a breakthrough of impulses which were hitherto repressed leading, in turn, to anxiety in the person about what he might do while he is asleep. A moderate amount of such anxiety seems to be quite general. In public places or conveyances, for example, individuals are reluctant to give themselves over totally to unconsciousness for long periods of time, fearing always the compromise of the public bearing that has come to be expected of them. The unsegregated sleeper may commit acts having biographical or reputational consequence precisely at that point where his control over such acts is at a minimum. Even in the privacy of the bedroom, however, there exists the possibility that uncontrolled utterances will betray some secret aspect of self and make what was hitherto private information food for thought for at least a public of one.

In some total institutions the bedroom is a public place whose occupants must make themselves available for constant monitoring and inspection. For example, Rule 42 of the Iowa State Penitentiary (1962:89) reads: "When the lights go out at the designated hour go to bed at once and remain quiet. . . . Sleep with the head uncovered to enable the officer to see you." Thus, while the institutionalized sleeper may be minimally vulnerable to external predators, he is maximally subject to the mortification of giving *public* vent to his lower physical and psychological impulses. In general, sleep locations may be characterized in terms of their position on the two dimensions of vulnerability to which we have just drawn attention.

Incidentally, it is precisely because of the vulnerability of sleep that the feigning of sleep places the wakeful in the defenseless position that might otherwise be attributed to the sleeping person. Such modes of impression management as "playing possum" reverse the great difference that normally exists between the power of those sleeping and those awake.

Sleep and Social Rank

In the first section of this paper I tried to indicate the manner in which sleep subserves "horizontal order" by providing a total release from social relations

when they have accumulated to such an extent as to be irritating. I have also tried to show how the sleep remission is institutionalized as a role within social systems. Several aspects of this role have been considered. I shall now treat briefly of one further aspect of the sleep role, namely, the manner in which its regulations reflect and, in reflecting, stabilize the "vertical" or hierarchical order. (For further discussion of "horizontal" and "vertical" order see Schwartz, 1968: 774.)

In family life, individuals are normally associated with a sleeping place that corresponds to their authority. Among the Yakut of Siberia, for example, sleeping alcoves are uniformly assigned to family members with a clear prestige value attached to each particular alcove (Aubert and White, 1959:15). Similarly, in America, the authority of the parents is affirmed by their appropriation of the "master" bedroom. Sleeping arrangements may also be employed to *level* status differences. In total institutions, for example, the assignment of diverse inmates to identical wards, dormitories, cell blocks, etc. accentuate (from the official point of view) their equality with respect to one another as well as the equivalent inferiority of their status *vis à vis* their caretakers.

There is much evidence to show that high occupational status and social honor are related to later bedtimes and awakenings (for a brief summary see Aubert and White, 1959:12). Indeed, temporal and spatial sleep patterns may be employed as an index of life style.¹⁴ Moreover, even within the family, it is generally true that older children, by dint of their age, are ascribed with the privilege of remaining awake longer than younger ones. This particular practice has implications which merit extended comment. Aubert and White (1959:12-13) note:

The permission to stay up longer and longer with increasing age, and also as rewards for meritorious behavior, links bedtime to prestige. For children there is a 'career line' within the family; and one of the most significant rewards in this career line is the promotion to a later sleep time. This is, of course, also one of the main reasons why parents' decisions on what is the proper bedtime often are so hotly contested by the children, usually with references to playmates enjoying a more privileged position in this respect.

Sleep patterns do not only reflect the status arrangements within a social unit, but they are also part of a network of power and are employed or imposed (within certain physiological limits) in accordance with an individual's position in this network. At the edge of every power relationship, of course, hangs the possibility of exploitation. Instead of going to sleep themselves, for example, parents may attain some relief from public demand by commanding their public to sleep. Children may therefore be put to bed at an early hour not only by reason of their age and need for sleep but also because they must be gotten rid of. (For a case history in which this practice is routine see Senn and Hartford, 1968:29-83.)

¹⁴ By spatial sleep patterns we refer, of course, to variations in privacy during sleep: whether the individual has his "own room" or is a member of a sleeping unit composed of two or more people.

Sleep is also frequently used in early childhood as a mode of control. In many places, children are sent to bed early for misbehavior and rewarded for virtuous conduct by being allowed to stay up a little longer. Either the stratification of bedtime in accordance with status or its delay as a mode of reward may induce children to (correctly) perceive in it many perjorative connotations. So far as they define the sleep role in negative terms, as either status-degrading or punitive, instrumental uses of sleep schedules perhaps contribute (along with the anxieties of which Bettelheim [1950:341-374] has much to say) to the reluctance with which children go to bed. The child is understandably hesitant to retire when he has learned to define his bedtime as a status degradation ceremony.¹⁵ Relatively early bedtimes are therefore unpleasant because they entail not only a separation from a protective social circle but also because they symbolize an inferior status within it.

Summary

If sleep is to serve as an effective periodic remission, the sleeper must be placed in a socially categorized framework. Such categorization, embodied in the sleep role, is scheduled in order to avoid conflicts with other (waking) activities; this role is further insulated from those which precede and follow it by a transition phase and is rendered more compelling by an internal control dynamic that is based on the conditioning process. I have tried to emphasize that the sleep role must be part of a fairly stable authority structure, for it remains institutionalized only so far as sanctions exist to protect the sleeping and the wakeful from one another. When this sanction system breaks down, the remissive opportunity structure is endangered. As was seen in the case of the night-shift worker, such breakdown acts back to further undermine the authority structure of the social unit in which it occurs. Put differently, authority and remission from it are instrumental with respect to one another: remissions reinforce authority by making it more bearable; on the other hand, the remissive opportunity structure is protected by the very authority against which it provides intermission.

Finally, although sleep provides periodic release from the demands and irritations of social life, it also creates problems for the individual who, in temporarily taking leave of the world, relinquishes his control of it and of himself. On the other hand, that aspect of sleep which pertains to its location and timing helps define the individual's identity by symbolizing his position in the world. The individual thus takes leave of society in a framework that defines his relation to it.

REFERENCES

Aubert, V. and H. White

1959 "Sleep: a sociological interpretation." *Acta Sociologica* 4 (Fasc. 1):46-54; (Fasc. 2):1-16.

¹⁵ On the other hand, status degradation is by definition an inherent feature of all processes which contribute to hierarchy. Because differential rank is indispensable to social order we are forced to recognize degradation as an inevitable component of all social life; therefore, its acceptance by the child must be inculcated not only through the socialization of his sleep but of his other drives as well. The reference of status degradation, then, cannot be limited, as Garfinkel (1956) suggests, to formal *shaming* ceremonies. It would be more correct to view the latter as a particular instance of the former.

- Becker, H. S. and A. Strauss
1956 "Careers, personality, and adult socialization." *American Journal of Sociology* 62 (November):253-263.
- Berger, Peter
1963 *Invitation to Sociology*. Garden City: Doubleday and Company.
- Bettelheim, Bruno
1950 *Love Is Not Enough*. Glencoe: The Free Press.
- Bossard, J. H. S. and E. S. Boll
1950 *Ritual in Family Living*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Cooley, Charles Horton
1964 *Human Nature and the Social Order*. New York: Schocken Books.
- de Grazia, Sebastian
1962 *Of Time, Work and Leisure*. New York: Twentieth Century Fund.
- Frankl, Viktor
1963 *Man's Search for Meaning*. New York: Washington Square Press.
- Freud, Sigmund
1963 "Obsessive acts and religious practices." Pp. 17-26 in Philip Rieff (ed.), *Character and Culture*. New York: Collier Books.
1950 *The Interpretation of Dreams*. New York: Modern Library.
- Garfinkel, H.
1956 "Conditions of successful degradation ceremonies." *American Journal of Sociology* 61 (March):420-424.
- Goffman, Erving
1969 *Strategic Interaction*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
1966 *Encounters*. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, Inc.
1963a *Behavior in Public Places*. New York: The Free Press.
1963b *Stigma*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc.
1961 *Asylums*. Garden City: Doubleday and Company.
1959 *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. Garden City: Doubleday and Company.
- Gross, E. and G. Stone
1964 "Embarrassment and the analysis of role requirements." *American Journal of Sociology* 70 (July):1-15.
- Hassler, Alfred
1954 *Diary of a Self-Made Convict*. Chicago: Regnery.
- Iowa State Penitentiary
1962 "Rules for inmates." Pp. 87-91 in Norman Johnston, Leonard Savitz, and Marvin E. Wolfgang (eds.), *The Sociology of Punishment and Correction*. New York: John Wiley and Sons.
- Kluckhohn, Clyde
1946 *The Navaho*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Love, Edmund G.
1957 *Subways are for Sleeping*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World.
- Mann, Thomas
1933 *Past Masters*. London: Martin Secker.
- Merton, Robert
1957 *Social Theory and Social Structure*. New York: The Free Press.
- Moore, Wilbert E.
1963 "The temporal structure of organizations." Pp. 161-169 in Edward A. Tiryakian (ed.), *Sociological Theory, Values, and Sociocultural Change*. Glencoe: The Free Press.
- Mott, Paul
1965 *Shift Work*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.
- Parsons, Talcott
1951 *The Social System*. New York: The Free Press.
- Pavlov, Ivan
1960 *Conditioned Reflexes*. New York: Dover.
- Rieff, Philip
1966 *The Triumph of the Therapeutic*. New York: Harper and Row.

Senn, Milton J. and Claire Hartford

1968 *The Firstborn*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Schwartz, Barry

1968 "The social psychology of privacy." *American Journal of Sociology* 73 (May):741-752.

Simmel, Georg

1959 "How is society possible?" Pp. 337-356 in Kurt H. Wolff (ed.), *Essays on Sociology, Philosophy and Aesthetics by Georg Simmel et al.* New York: Harper and Row.

1950 "The metropolis and mental life." Pp. 409-424 in Kurt H. Wolff (ed.), *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*. New York: The Free Press.