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## Beyond Dormancy: A Peek into the Performance of Sleep

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### Abstract

Sleep as a subject of investigation might be recent, but the concept has never been alien. The association of sleep with death, and night is a Greek *mythos* that is also observed in the work of Shakespeare as “death’s counterfeit” (*Macbeth*); Coleridge’s account of “the pain of sleep”, in the art work of Fuseli’s *Nightmare* portraying the vulnerable and painful night. The recurrent image and account of sleep and its associated ‘comatose objects’ or paraphernalia, the in-between states of dreams, anxiety, fear have also created popular imaginations of how sleep is perceived. Despite the myriad forms of thoughts on sleep, it is constantly rendered to the domain of the dormant, nature, inactive, a time of quiescence which is oppositional to action, and performance of waking life. This paper delves into the performance of sleep and its associated nexus through performance art pieces, and artists, whose body is central to the way sleep is performed. The paper intends to highlight the importance of body even in states that have been construed as passive and in-action. The aim is to weave together the bodily activity of sleeping within the nexus of socio-cultural fabric. An intrinsic part of sleep, is how it opens up avenue of peeking into gendered bodies through a lens that is intertwined with the social, cultural and political. The specific instance of sit-in protest against NRC (The National Register of Citizens) and CAA (Citizenship Amendment Act) in Park Circus, Kolkata is used to augment the argument of gendered and marginalized bodies occupying space and time that otherwise cannot be claimed. Sleep offers a lens to look at the performative acts of resistance that these bodies continue to posit.

**Keywords:** Sleep, Performance, Body, Gender.