

Insensate Intimacies

The triangular relationship at the center of *Cemetery of Splendor* finds an echo in one of Apichatpong's earlier feature films. *Blissfully Yours* follows a trio comprising a man suffering from an affliction (Min) and two women who care for him, one younger (Roong) and one older (Orn, played by Jenjira Pongpas in her first collaboration with the director). It also begins in a clinical setting, a doctor's office where the two women attempt to procure medicine for Min's painful skin inflammation without divulging his status as an illegal immigrant from Burma. Min remains silent so that he is not betrayed by his accent, while Roong and Orn respond on his behalf to the doctor's suspicious interrogation with a string of convoluted deceptions. From this opening scene, *Blissfully Yours* proceeds toward an ending that fulfills the promise of its title. After a series of fraught exchanges with other figures of authority—the manager of the factory where Roong works and Orn's husband—the trio leaves town and escapes into the jungle for an afternoon of sensual indulgence. They wander among the trees, take in the views, and enjoy a dip in a stream. Orn meets up with her lover for a tryst, while Roong gives unreined expression to her passion for Min. In the film's final scene, the three characters recline lazily by the water, Orn to one side and the young couple to another. In an extended static shot of nearly four minutes, the camera looks down on Roong and Min as they doze off. Roong lies on her side, her face framed in a close-up and hovering at the edge of sleep, while next to her, Min remains still, only his chest rising and falling in a regular rhythm.

At the endpoint of their pursuit of bliss, the lovers discover sleep as a terminal destination and ultimate pleasure. Having already shed their clothing, obligations, and inhibitions, they lay claim to this final experience of release, a vacation in every sense of the term. In pausing on this surrender to sleep and lingering in the slowdown that it brings about, the film draws its viewers into a profound sensorial identification with the characters.¹ In the wake of the harried negotiations required to extricate themselves from the demands of work, and after speeding



FIGURE 37. *Blissfully Yours* (Apichatpong Weerasethakul, 2002).

from place to place to arrange the terms of their truancy, the frenetic activity of the day unwinds into languorous relaxation. Following the characters into the liminal zone of the jungle—a place where, in the words of the director, “any reference to time is removed”—we are called upon to give ourselves over to the digressive streams of reclaimed and newly freed time.² To stay with this extended image of sleep is to let go of the expectation of movement or progression, instead becoming absorbed in the patterns of sunlight and shadow playing across their skin, along with the lushly hypnotic sounds of birds, insects, and lapping water that permeate the jungle. In its duration, the close-up magnifies the subtle actions of pulsing breath, fluttering eyelids, and twitching muscles. At the end of exhausting exertion comes the fall of sleep; but if tiredness exists as a “threshold,” as Gorfinkel writes, “always at the edge of something else,” so too does the phenomenality of sleep manifest most vividly in its incomplete coming and going.³ This coming and going is registered in the involuntary tremblings of the bodies of Roong and Min, such that the portrayal of sleep shares in the stilled, concentrated micro-drama of *photogénie*.⁴ The corporeal signs of wavering consciousness simultaneously point inward, to an interior transformation, and open outward, in connection with a natural landscape of transience. The extended close-up of the two lovers is followed by a shot of clouds undulating in the sky, then one of the mountains covered in foliage stirred by the wind.

The final shot in this sequence, and the very last in the film, returns to the close-up of the lovers, catching Roong as she opens her eyes, turns her head toward the camera, and blinks confusedly. While her position remains unchanged from the



FIGURE 38. *Blissfully Yours* (Apichatpong Weerasethakul, 2002).



FIGURE 39. *Blissfully Yours* (Apichatpong Weerasethakul, 2002).

previous close-up, the lighting of the image is noticeably different, suggesting the passage of a longer interval of time than represented by the actual length of the shots. Roong seems genuinely startled as she turns and looks directly at the camera, as if she had forgotten its presence during her repose. The gaze of the film viewer is mirrored in Roong's look, such that we sense ourselves caught looking. In this moment of heightened situational awareness, a question arises: has Roong been performing the drift of sleep, or has she indeed fallen asleep and woken up during the shoot? The ambiguity is reinforced by the quality of this "performance," composed chiefly of the minute corporeal effects of autonomic processes that typically escape conscious notice and the camera's gaze. The manifestations of the somnolent body derive from a realm beyond deliberate control, voluntary expression, or even the most basic sense of acting, enacting, and doing. To perform sleep is paradoxical in way that performing walking, eating, or kissing is not. The

paradox stems from the location of sleep at the point where embodied existence slips free of volition, as Merleau-Ponty observes. Pondering the question of how we willingly enter a state defined by the absence of self-directed agency, he finds the answer in role-playing. Merleau-Ponty writes, "I lie down in bed . . . I close my eyes and breathe slowly, putting my plans out of my mind. But the power of my will or consciousness stops there. As the faithful, in the Dionysian mysteries, invoke the god by miming scenes from his life, I call up the visitation of sleep by imitating the breathing and posture of the sleeper. The god is actually there when the faithful can no longer distinguish themselves from the part they are playing There is a moment when sleep 'comes,' settling on this imitation of itself which I have been offering to it, and I succeed in becoming what I was trying to be."⁵ If Roong's sleep is real rather than emulated, this is precisely what makes it a successful performance.

The portrayal of sleep here, as in other films by the director, dissolves its usual associations with absenting, withdrawal, and immersion within radical solitude. "In order to fall asleep I sever my social and perceptual involvements," Drew Leder writes in considering sleep as a phenomenon of the absent body.⁶ Apichatpong's work, however, formulates a counterproposition insofar as acts of drifting off and waking up compose the relational webs that bind his characters together. Sleep intensifies the bonds of intimacy rather than relegating them to obscurity. The soporific scene with which *Blissfully Yours* ends is but one of a host of sensory delights exchanged among the characters, integrated into a tableau of pleasures that circulate from body to body—as when they feed each other berries picked from a tree, lead one another to hidden spots overlooking spectacular vistas, and pull each other into the water for a cooling dip. The nap shared by Roong and Min comes in the wake of an afternoon of lovemaking; as the token of an easy familiarity, it is coterminous with their other sexual acts. As Roong relaxes by Min's side, just before sleep overtakes her, she reaches over, unzips his shorts, and fondles his penis. Min is not roused from his repose by her touch, except for developing an erection, an involuntary response on the same order of Roong's sleepy tremors and stirrings. The image of their dormant bodies, absorbed in a condition that is "thoroughly woven of trust," conjures an idyllic if ephemeral mode of togetherness; to sleep in the company of another, Barthes argues, is to attain a momentary utopia.⁷ Or as Risset succinctly puts it: "Sleeping together—absence doubled, and its opposite."⁸

For Nancy, too, sleep readily evokes the intimacy between lovers, particularly insofar as it marks the denouement of erotic fulfillment. "The happy, languid sleep of lovers who sink down together prolongs their loving spasm into a long suspense," he writes.⁹ The fall of sleep follows directly from the orgasmic climax experienced by lovers, extending its pleasurable release and demarcating a postcoital reflux in the rhythm of sex. The positioning of sleep in a sequence of arousal and release is repeated in more explicit terms in another passage: "Cadence, caress,

pendulum motion, to-and-fro of hands, of lips, tongues, and moist genitals, rising and falling of swells, rises and jerks of spasms before return to the long rollers, the deep waves.”¹⁰ The substitution of marine entities for human figures in the course of describing this vital choreography, thereby casting the fall of sleep as a return to oceanic depths, is significant in the context of his discussion. For the topic of the sleep of lovers comes up at the precise point when Nancy redirects his focus from the problem of the sleeping self (as a conundrum, or aporia, for the thinking subject intent on producing an account of his sleep) to the question of sleep in the world. With this redirection, he turns from the dormant consciousness to the slumbering body at the same time that he expands the corpus of sleep to include all earthly existence, from the human being to “animals, plants, rivers, seas, sands, stars . . . and ether.” All in this chain of being participate equally in sleep, and in this regard, its darkness implicates the awakening of the “first day,” Nancy writes, when God made the world and then rested.¹¹ “Sleep is divine”: thus the rocking bodies of lovers echo a “cosmic rhythm,” and their rising and falling reprises “the initial beat between something and nothing, between the world and the void.”¹² The alternations of sleeping and waking are woven into a biblical origin myth of creation. The lovers to which Nancy refers are not just any lovers. They embody an Adam and Eve, and their sexual coupling represents an act of procreation that Nancy relates to the story of Genesis (appropriately, a baby makes an appearance as he wraps up this line of thought). After asserting the impossibility of a phenomenology of sleep, Nancy proposes in its place a theology of sleep.

The scene of drowsy lovers in *Blissfully Yours* also relates the flows of energies across bodies to the currents that animate the physical world. The cut from Roong’s face as her consciousness fades to shots of the sky and the mountains invites an analogy between body and landscape, positioning sleep on the order of natural forces—like a cloud momentarily passing by or a wind that suddenly stirs. But for Apichatpong, these analogical relationships are shaped by an animistic cosmology and structure of experience, as May Adadol Ingawanij points out; the “movement of *anima*” engenders unpredictable flows that disrupt the linearity of time and erode the stability of forms and identities.¹³ Thus, the onset of sleep is not situated in the direct aftermath of sexual consummation. Rather, a sleepy feeling suffuses the erotic haze in which the lovers are surrounded. Roong’s caresses are slow and languid, while Min barely stirs in response to the touch of her hand. Waves of pleasure rise to the surface, but instead of building to an ejaculatory climax that hearkens back to a mythic origin of life, they reactivate the memory of other moments of sensual contact that have transpired throughout the film, rippling outward and taking their time before they dissipate. To the extent that bliss spreads through multiple channels, sleep itself carries an erotic charge.

Desiring and pleasuring assume multifarious forms in Apichatpong’s films—as innumerable as the shifting shapes of *anima*—connecting male bodies, female bodies, and the bodies of different species. While *Blissfully Yours* depicts the rendezvous of heterosexual couples, *Tropical Malady* centers on a romance between

two men, Keng and Tong. The first half of the film narrates Keng's courtship of the younger man, and in the second half, Tong transforms into a tiger spirit who, in turn, pursues Keng while the latter patrols the jungle. The two lovers, soldier and tiger, come face to face in the final scene, as a voice-over belonging to the tiger declares, "Once I've devoured your soul, we are neither animal nor human." As Arnika Fuhrmann argues, this ending "is the film's most dramatic sex scene," presenting at once an "obliteration," a "fusion," and a "fulfillment of desire."¹⁴ The motif of interspecies coupling is picked up in *Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives*, during an episode in which a lonely princess is brought to the heights of sexual rapture by a catfish. The sense of "polymorphous desiring," of ubiquitous attraction and possibility that Fuhrmann identifies in *Tropical Malady*, also pervades the director's larger corpus. The queer sexual universe that comes into being across this corpus is constituted by not only expressions of same-sex desire, but also heightened transferences and "communicability across genders and sexual orientations of affective, sensory, and material pleasures."¹⁵ As much as sleep builds new relational networks in his films, it infuses this exchange across bodies, genders, and orientations, giving rise to queer modes of intimacy.

Such effects frame another reading of the journey of sleep in *Cemetery of Splendor*. The walk through the trees taken by Jen and Keng/Itt concludes with what can likewise be described as the film's most dramatic sex scene—an exchange of extraordinary intensity that also detonates all previous definitions of a sex scene, as affecting as it is ambiguous. Their tour of the royal palace that once stood on the grounds comes to an end with the two characters resting on a bench in a secluded corner of the park. Jen continues to address Keng as if she is no longer herself, having become possessed by Itt's spirit while he sleeps. She hikes up her pant leg to reveal the deep scars running across her right thigh, the result of a traumatic motorcycle accident sustained by Pongpas in 2003, and says, "My right leg is 10cm shorter than the left." Keng/Itt looks around and says, "Here, Jen, I can sense every smell," an inexplicable repetition of a comment made by Itt in an earlier scene at which Keng was not present. Jen mixes a medicinal herbal powder into a bottle of water and hands it her companion, to help with his malady, and the feeling that motivates this gesture of offering is emphasized by her words: "You know, when you're asleep, even the bright city lights feel dull." Keng/Itt responds, "No one has said that to me before." S/he comes to her knees in front of Jen, massaging her exposed leg and pouring the tonic over her skin. "What are you doing?" Jen asks in bewilderment, to which Keng/Itt replies, "It's therapy . . . trust me." Crouching on the ground, s/he proceeds to lick Jen's leg. The camera maintains its position of discrete distance during this long single take, as Keng/Itt licks up and down her ankle, calf, and thigh. Jen's reaction shifts from self-conscious discomfort to gratification to, finally, an outburst of emotions that are difficult to parse precisely. A sob wells up from inside her and breaks through in an outburst of weeping. She regards Keng/Itt lovingly as her body is wracked by surges of grief and anguish.



FIGURE 40. *Cemetery of Splendor* (Apichatpong Weerasethakul, 2015).

What we witness here is a coupling and a profound release, but of what kind, and who exactly does it involve? Despite his physical absence from the scene, Itt nonetheless seems to be present, not only in Jen's perception but also in the words and thoughts spoken by Keng. Therefore, what transpires is a sex scene between Jen and the sleeping soldier, a communion that dramatically caps the friendship, amorous feelings, and "synchronicity" between the two characters. The tactile language through which this communion finds expression, although in many respects perplexing, refers back to and builds upon their very first meeting earlier in the film. Lying in his hospital bed, Itt visibly awakens while Jen rubs a cleansing cream on one of his legs, his pant pulled up to expose his calf and thigh just as Jen's is in the later scene. The conjoining of pleasuring, healing, and bathing in the motions of pouring the tonic and licking Jen's leg is mirrored in this earlier episode, in the deliberate care with which Jen massages the cream into Itt's skin and the eroticism that infuses her gestures of care. She derives discernible sensory gratification from the feel of his bared flesh, so absorbed in her actions that several moments pass before she even notices that he has regained consciousness. The parallels between the two scenes include the characters' exposure to each other in their most vulnerable aspect: Jen in the disability that results from her accident, and Itt in his incapacitating illness. The image of Itt in his hospital bed, moreover, echoes a set of photographs made by Apichatpong in the aftermath of Pongpas's accident, documenting the treatments she endured.¹⁶

In this regard, these encounters instantiate the "crip seduction" that Brian Bergen-Aurand identifies in Apichatpong's films, residing in their ongoing engagement with "nonnormate embodiments" that sex disability and disable sex.¹⁷ Following Bergen-Aurand's prompt and viewing these scenes through the lens of



FIGURE 41. *Cemetery of Splendor* (Apichatpong Weerasethakul, 2015).



FIGURE 42. *For Tomorrow, For Tonight* (Apichatpong Weerasethakul, 2011). Courtesy of Kick the Machine.

crip theory, we can articulate their queering effect as explorations of the avenues of arousal emerging across an “open mesh of possibilities . . . when the constituent elements of bodily, mental, or behavioral functioning aren’t made (*or can’t be made*) to signify monolithically.”¹⁸

The unusual gestural vocabulary of *Cemetery of Splendor* also draws from Apichatpong’s earlier films, in which pleasure is often conducted by oral means and ingestive processes. In *Tropical Malady*, Tong ravenously licks Keng’s hands and arm, foreshadowing the devouring that will later transpire. The rectangular tub of cream that Jen applies to Itt in the clinic is identical to the container of medicinal

lotion that Roong and Orn apply to Min's inflamed skin in *Blissfully Yours*, bizarrely concocted by them from moisturizer and chopped-up vegetables—in an interview, Apichatpong even refers to it as “the same cream.”¹⁹ It contains ingredients intended for oral consumption, like the herbal mixture Keng/Itt pours over Jen's injured leg. Communication between bodies is mediated by the assimilation of substances and supplements. If lines get crossed in this process, leading to a confusion between digestive and topical modes of incorporation, so too can bodies substitute for one another and exchange positions. Even while emphasizing the traces of Itt's presence, *Cemetery of Splendor* simultaneously presents a sex scene that literally involves two women. If Keng seems to speak in Itt's voice at certain moments, she also appears exactly as who she is—a young woman who, along with being a professional psychic, supports herself by means of other side hustles. Her sexuality is as hard to pin down as her backstory: at several points it is implied that Keng lacks a basic familiarity with male anatomy. The sex scene does not relegate her to the role of a vanishing mediator between the other characters. In this respect, it portrays a *ménage à trois* as well as a coupling. The sleep under whose shadow the scene unfolds allows these different relational configurations to coexist without canceling one another out. The conjunction of sleep and sex marks a zone of undecidability, unstable embodiment, and queer transferences. These dynamics find their cause and origin in Itt's insensate state, and his sleeping body serves as the unseen nexus of this affective circuit.

Is Jen drawn to Itt's bed when she first enters the clinic because of her memories of her time as a student when the building operated as a schoolhouse, as she claims, or for other reasons? Itt's attractive physicality, in addition to having a clear effect on her in the caretaking scene described above, is remarked on by the other characters, who refer to him as “the handsome soldier.” *Blissfully Yours* contains a portent of their relationship: at one point Pongpas's character Orn says of Min, “he's so handsome when he sleeps.” Sleeping men are presented as beautiful bodies, figures of love, and objects of desire throughout Apichatpong's work, and not only in his feature films. Returning to *Teem*, which presents its titular subject asleep on three video channels, we find another example of this mode of portrayal. Jen's regard of the narcotic soldier in his hospital bed is supplanted by the camera's perspective on Teem as he sleeps in the bedroom previously shared with the artist. This perspective is subjective, embodied, and affectively animated, generated by means of a mobile phone camera that registers the hand in which it is held and the presence of the filmmaker's body. The shots are shaky and restless, in contrast to Teem's stillness, constantly changing their angle as they track over his figure from head to toe. Like Jen's hands, the camera caresses Teem's body; at one point, Apichatpong's hand enters the frame and their fingers intertwine.

The three videos of the installation suggest an abundant fascination with the sleeping figure of the beloved, a fascination that is redolent of certain moments in *In Search of Lost Time*, when Marcel fixates on his lover Albertine while she



FIGURE 43. *Teem* (Apichatpong Weerasethakul, 2007). Courtesy of Kick the Machine.

sleeps in a bedroom in his house. In *The Albertine Workout*, Anne Carson points out that Albertine “is present or mentioned on 807 pages of Proust’s novel” and that “on a good 19% of these pages she is asleep.”²⁰ Marcel indulges a seemingly insatiable desire to absorb every inch of Albertine’s face and body, detailed by the author in long descriptive passages. Likewise, Apichatpong’s camera moves restlessly around and over Teem, exploring his body like a landscape, shifting its focus from one detail (his left eye) to another (a hand or foot poking out from under the covers). Considered alongside each other, these two works show how sleep intensifies the mechanisms of desire by bringing out an alien part of the beloved, an opaque aspect that subsists beyond the scope of waking interactions. In her unconsciousness, Albertine seems to withdraw to somewhere distant from the place that she and Marcel currently occupy, and this absence-in-presence increases the narrator’s feelings of love. “She was animated only by the unconscious life of plants, of trees, a life more different from my own, stranger, and yet which I possessed more securely.”²¹ Suspecting that Albertine prefers women to men, consumed by jealousy and the compulsion to control, Marcel transmutes this distance and difference into the very possibility of intimacy. He identifies the otherness of sleep with a condition of insentient thingness that gratifies his wish to overcome the resistance of Albertine’s subjectivity: “Watching her, holding her in my hands, I felt that I possessed her completely, in a way I never did when she was awake.”²² The desire aroused by the sleeping woman sets into motion a fantasy of total power over this figure, a point to which this chapter will return.²³

Like Marcel, Apichatpong's camera stares and stares, while Teem neither looks back nor betrays any awareness of being filmed, absorbed entirely in something that eludes capture by the camera. But Apichatpong does not construe the opaque otherness of the sleeper in such fetishistically possessive terms. Teem's lack of responsiveness signals not a retreat into objecthood so much as a condition of inaccessibility, of having left his nonsleeping partner behind on a journey to somewhere the latter cannot access. The asymmetrical relationship between the watcher and the sleeper resides less in a belonging to than a waiting for. To watch the sleeping beloved is to wait through the dead time of slumber, anticipating the return to a shared reality. Apichatpong bides this time by recording Teem. When Teem wakes up in one of the videos, the effect is like "the end of a journey," and the two greet each other affectionately as if reunited after a separation.²⁴

Apichatpong's portrayal of the dormant male body connects with a larger group of works that frame this figure within a queer gaze. As a video portrait of the filmmaker's partner at the time, *Teem* readily calls to mind Andy Warhol's *Sleep* (1964), a silent film composed of footage of the artist's then-lover John Giorno asleep. *Sleep* was the first film project undertaken by Warhol, shot by him with a handheld Bolex on black-and-white low-light film stock. The view of the camera again stands in for the intimate gaze of the lover, a gaze that is also "the caress that does not awaken."²⁵ It admires the handsome sleeper—"His face. Oh it's so beautiful," says Warhol—with a stamina that draws from the deepest wells of ardor.²⁶ The film's extreme length of five hours and twenty minutes offers a reminder of the fascination that the sleeping body holds for someone in love, a fascination that perhaps can only be sustained in love. But *Sleep* is at once much more and much less than what its running time suggests. As Giorno recalls in his memoir, Warhol came up with the concept during a summer weekend with friends in Connecticut, and the actual shooting took place over many nights spanning the period of July, August, and October 1963. Giorno, a heavy sleeper, describes leaving his door unlocked for Warhol, who took amphetamines in this period, to enter in the dead of night and shoot for several hours. "The process had an empty and caressing quality," he recalls, and his own experience of it consisted of waking up in the morning to find empty yellow Kodak boxes scattered on the floor.²⁷ This process resulted in 47 original reels of film footage.²⁸ The final cut of *Sleep* was assembled from only nine of these reels, cut into sequences of repeating patterns, projected at silent speed, and distilling many nights into a single continuous performance of sleep (and obversely, a record of the filmmaker's drug-induced insomnia).

Like *Teem*, *Sleep* ranges over the geography of the sleeping body, breaking down its familiar appearance into a multitude of defamiliarizing angles and cropings, a compendium of part objects each given its minutes in the spotlight. The film's first shot is a close-up view of Giorno's stomach as it rises and falls with his breath, an image that evokes a warm and lazy eroticism. *Sleep* similarly establishes an uncanny orientation to a subject who is at once very near and far removed,



FIGURE 44. *Sleep* (Andy Warhol, 1963). The Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh, PA, a museum of Carnegie Institute. All rights reserved. Courtesy of The Andy Warhol Museum.

in a state that renders him both fully available for close inspection and obdurately inaccessible. It also heightens the contradiction between the stillness and monotony of a “recurrent visual constant” and the dynamism of an image set into motion at many levels by “minute, fleeting, and unpredictable perceptual changes,” as Branden Joseph has observed.²⁹ While the individual shots are static—in contrast to *Teem* where the camera never stays still, an extension of the filmmaker’s restive body—a complex pattern of shifting views emerges in the film’s editing. This generates a highly destabilized perspective and, as many have noted, makes it hard to look away from the screen. The viewing of *Sleep* is often recounted as a perceptual experience that reverses one’s initial expectations, an encounter with a startling play of difference rather than sameness. And even the viewers who eventually tire of sleep might find themselves fascinated all over again by the granular effects of the slowed projection, their attention re-aroused by the mesmerizing dance of elementary particles that never pause. In *Sleep*, Juan Suárez writes, “Grain works as an undertow against the general stasis . . . it animates the sleeping body and the surrounding space, it heightens the abstractions of many of the frames.”³⁰

Apichatpong has pointed to Warhol as an influence on his filmmaking (along with the fact that they share the same initials), although without mentioning specific works.³¹ Even if it remains unclear whether *Teem* was inspired by *Sleep*, a comparison between the two films illuminates their divergent approaches to a queer erotics of sleep. Considered alongside the tight cropping, selective views, and intricate editing of *Sleep*, the casual, playful, and diaristic quality of Apichatpong’s footage emerges in stark contrast.³² Despite their similarity as durational portraits of sleeping lovers, *Teem* betrays little interest in the formal study of light and shadow that occupies its counterpart. Rather than the realm of abstraction, it locates sleep in a concrete setting that incorporates the textures and rhythm of everyday life. With its display of three separate videos shot on three different mornings, *Teem* unfolds in the temporal framework of the quotidian; as a “daily portrait,” it is embedded in the stream of ongoing time rather than, like *Sleep*, abstracted from it. Apichatpong’s casual attitude extends to his positioning of himself in the work and in relation to his slumbering partner. While *Sleep* is marked by a hushed reverence for its subject, or at some points even a stealthiness that suggests the filmmaker tiptoeing around *Giorno* in an effort not to disturb his sleeping beauty, such consideration is not offered to *Teem*. The making of the video interrupts his rest. In an email exchange with the historian Benedict Anderson, who late in his life befriended the filmmaker, Apichatpong confesses to having woken

up Teem by felling him in one of the videos.³³ For the viewer armed with this information, it is difficult to resist scanning the installation for evidence. In one of the videos, Teem opens his eyes and closes them again; his jaw muscles tighten as the shot becomes even wobblier.

Sleep incorporates a visual allusion to the same sex act, as Jonathan Flatley points out. In its longest-running shot, the camera hovers in space above Giorno's groin area to frame his upper torso. "Our longest view is the one [we] might have of Giorno if we looked up at his face while felling him," Flatley writes, an act "that Giorno describes Warhol performing on him with enthusiasm and skill."³⁴ Notwithstanding this encoding of corporeal memory, no oral sex transpires in *Sleep*; the blow job must wait for a time, place, and film of its own, which Warhol would indeed deliver later in the same year.³⁵ The collocation of sleep and sex, and the contrast between allusive and actualized eroticism, shed light on the complex relationship between looking and touching in *Sleep*. On the one hand, the camera's gaze enacts a kind of caress and expresses a tactile yearning. On the other hand, its caress is "empty," to recall Giorno's description; the body has been subtracted, the hand displaced by the eye, and physical contact forestalled. A distanced perspective comes to reign over *Sleep*, along with a coldness that crosses over toward deathliness, as Joseph discerns.³⁶ *Teem*'s affinity thus resides less with *Sleep* than with another filmic portrait of the unconscious Giorno that hibernates unseen in Warhol's archive. This footage, from an early "rehearsal" shoot in Connecticut of Giorno napping outside in a hammock, "was beautiful—loving, very gay, the classic Greek and Roman god, male beauty. Everything that Andy would make sure not to include in the final cut of *Sleep*, which was about light and shadow."³⁷ Given the opportunity to view this footage fifty years later, Giorno describes a tactile sensation and another kind of caressing look: "The curators gushed over the shadows of the leaves as they moved with the wind on my skin, an abstract painting. But I got a different rush. It felt like Andy was kissing or licking my skin with the camera, which is what he liked to do. Andy was making love to me with the camera while I slept!"³⁸

The work of the Taiwan-based filmmaker Tsai Ming-liang is also replete with quietly sleepy moments and somnolent figures, from feature films like *Vive L'Amour* (1994) and *I Don't Want to Sleep Alone* (2006) to experimental shorts like *No No Sleep* (2015). *Vive L'Amour* centers on another trio of thieves of time: a real estate agent; a street hawker she meets for occasional hookups; and Hsiao Kang, a young man who shares the same nickname of the actor who plays him, Tsai's longtime collaborator and muse Lee Kang-sheng. The place where their paths crisscross is situated in the center of the concrete jungle of Taipei, an uninhabited luxury apartment to which they steal away to escape their everyday lives and indulge in their fantasies and cravings. The realtor and the street hawker use the apartment as a trysting place; Hsiao Kang, who cuts a poignantly lonely figure in this film, also uses it as a private retreat for self-experimentation, where he can cross-dress and dance in front of the mirror away from prying eyes.



FIGURE 45. *Vive L'Amour* (Tsai Ming-liang, 1994).

At the end of the film, Hsiao Kang finds himself in the comically awkward position of being stuck under the bed while the other two have sex. After the woman leaves, he ventures out to find the man, Ah Rong, supine and fast asleep. Hsiao Kang tiptoes out of the bedroom, pauses, then doubles back to fix a gaze of painful yearning on Ah Rong. From this point, time slows down, movement shifts into a delicately hesitant register, and a wordless romance ensues. Hsiao Kang carefully drapes himself at the edge of the bed. He slowly draws closer, never tearing his eyes from Ah Rong's face, and assumes a supplicating pose. He closes his eyes, as if to share in a few moments of this transfixing sleep, when Ah Rong suddenly shifts position and faces him. Hsiao Kang inches closer, lays the lightest of kisses on Ah Rong, and gives him one last longing look before pulling himself away. The message of the kiss is deflected by the impenetrable wall of slumber, rebounding from an absence that does not communicate. Like so many overtures to connection in Tsai's films, this one ultimately results in failure. But at the same time, Ah Rong's sleep is the lure that draws Hsiao Kang's feelings into the visible open, the precondition for acting them out. For Tsai, desire assumes its most tangible expression in suspended moments of inactivity, in missed connections and encounters, and in the gaps of attention and contact. Even as sleep enables the release of inchoate desires, it is also a reminder of the radical solitude from which these characters obtain only temporary release (unlike Apichatpong's characters).

The kiss in *Vive L'Amour* represents the first explicit expression of same-sex desire by Hsiao Kang. His character embarks on other sexual adventures and misadventures in the films that follow. Unconscious states continue to be woven into a finely tuned choreography of tentative yearnings, bad timings, and unreciprocated gestures. In later films, Hsiao Kang comes to occupy the position of the

reclining sleeper rather than that of the alert watcher. He becomes an increasingly immobilized figure who elicits both a desiring gaze and a caring touch, a body that displays its beauty but also the abrasions of age, exertion, and illness. Thus, the positions of sleeper and watcher set forth in *Vive L'Amour* are reversed in *No No Sleep*, the seventh installment in the suite of short films known as the Walker series. The titular “walker” refers to Lee’s incarnation as Xuanzang, a Chinese monk from the seventh century whose pilgrimage to India played a crucial role in the transmission of Buddhism to China. While all the Walker films show Lee dressed as a monk and walking in very slow motion in various cities around the world (Taipei, Hong Kong, Kuching, Marseille), this installment affords him a pause in his journey. *No No Sleep* begins with Lee walking in the streets of Tokyo and ends up with him in a capsule hotel with a sauna, where he takes the opportunity to shed his heavy robes, bathe, and rest his weary body.

The sight of Lee as he lies in a soaking tub and settles into a lethargic stupor offers a visceral reminder of the physical labor entailed in his performance as the walker, along with the corporeal tolls inflicted by his highly controlled manner of extreme slow motion. *No No Sleep* anticipates Lee’s appearance in the feature film *Days* (2020), in which the actor is similarly flattened by painful exhaustion, barely able to maintain an upright position as he seeks relief from his ailments, and ultimately finds such relief in a touch that gives both pleasure and care. In the sauna, the only other bather present is a young man, of about the same age as Hsiao Kang in *Vive L'Amour* and giving off a similar air of antsy loneliness. He takes a seat next to Lee in the soaking tub and lingers by his side. Attraction whispers and the anticipation of contact is sparked; below the surface of the water that distorts and refracts the contours of their bodies, their arms even seem to touch, as Nicholas de Villiers observes.³⁹ But while Lee clearly notices the young man’s presence, he cannot be moved to respond. In contrast to his incarnation from twenty years ago, he is now too tired to rouse himself from his stupor. The film ends with a pair of two identically framed static long takes (of more than three minutes each) of the two men, together in the bathhouse but alone in separate resting chambers, the young Japanese man tossing restlessly and Lee sound asleep.

With *I Don’t Want to Sleep Alone*, Tsai returned to his birth country of Malaysia, shooting in Kuala Lumpur and composing a story around a trio of characters who reflect this particular setting—a homeless man, a migrant construction worker, and a domestic worker, all figures of economical marginalization and displacement. Lee plays a double role: the homeless man, who is beaten into unconsciousness at the beginning of the film, and a man with a paralyzing medical condition under the care of the domestic worker. Once again the state of slumber is situated in adjacency to injury and disability. The homeless Hsiao Kang sleeps excessively in order to heal from physical trauma, while in contrast, restorative rest seems out of reach for his counterpart, who is frozen both in his body and in time, his eyes staring without blinking in an interminable wakefulness. Hsiao Kang meets his



FIGURE 46. *No No Sleep* (Tsai Ming-liang, 2015).

watcher in a Bangladeshi migrant worker named Rawang. After dumpster-diving an old mattress, Rawang and his roommates come across Hsiao Kang passed out on the street, like one more discarded object. They bring him back home wrapped up in the mattress, which in the course of the film becomes “the entire world,” in the words of Yvette Bíró; “wretched and torn, clearly condemned to death, the mattress can nonetheless be temporarily revived and made useable with devotion.”⁴⁰

Along with reviving the mattress, Rawang nurses Hsiao Kang back to life and develops feelings for him in the process. The relationship of the sleeper with the one who watches over him is formed around an ethics and erotics of care, breaking the association of sleep with solitude in Tsai’s earlier work and anticipating *Cemetery of Splendor* in its commingling of looking at with looking after. Here, too, the touch that heals is one of desire. The tenderness with which Rawang ministers to Hsiao Kang contrasts with the brutal efficiency with which the domestic worker attends to the paralyzed double who is under her charge. This character (played by another of Tsai’s longtime collaborators, Chen Shiang-chyi) seems herself numbed by the mistreatment of her employer, the paralyzed man’s mother: after a disturbing episode in which the latter sexually abuses her, she cries herself to sleep in the attic crawl space that serves as her bedroom. When Hsiao Kang and Shiang-chyi become amorously entangled, drama ensues, along with a battle for possession of the mattress. *I Don’t Want to Sleep Alone* resolves the conflict with its hauntingly beautiful final shot of Rawang, Hsiao Kang, and Shiang-chyi slumbering peacefully on the mattress as it drifts in a black pool of water. Theirs is a utopic sleep that stands for the antithesis of solitude, envisioning a queer intimacy among this threesome. It is a reversible image that joins together, on the one hand, “the sense of displacement and impermanence”

FIGURE 47. *I Don't Want to Sleep Alone* (Tsai Ming-liang, 2006).FIGURE 48. *I Don't Want to Sleep Alone* (Tsai Ming-liang, 2006).

that defines these characters and, on the other hand, the bliss of finding a place together and a hope for world-making.⁴¹ Their sleep presents an instance of the “utopian aperture” that Rey Chow identifies in Tsai’s films, in which “the obvious destitution and deviance of his characters—lonesome, inarticulate, mysteriously ill, sexually perverse, morally anarchic—[become] elements of a different sensorium and sociality.”⁴²

The slumbering trio of *I Don't Want to Sleep Alone* finds an echo in the love triangle of *Cemetery of Splendor*. In both films, the desiring dyad of the couple makes way for other assemblages of bodies, pleasures, and objects. And as this ending suggests, for both Tsai and Apichatpong, somnolence lays the ground for the unforeseeable connections, eccentric mediations, and redirected attachments that emerge to coalesce a queer imaginary. This imaginary is as evanescent as the blissful unconsciousness in which Rawang, Shiang-chyi, and Hsiao Kang cohere, drifting in the void and borne aloft by the precious beaten-up mattress. Here sleep seems to provide protection and repair, delaying for one more minute the bursting

of the bubble of togetherness, much as sleep provides a sort of refuge for Jen, Keng, and Itt. Nonetheless, the similarities between the two filmmakers only go so far. Notable differences also distinguish their respective approaches to sleep as an element in a tableau of queer intimacy, differences that bear upon sex and gender. Turning to another of Tsai's films, one that features yet another ménage à trois, I consider how the unconscious woman calls into question the ready equation of sleep with utopic relationality.

In *Cemetery of Splendor*, narcosis spreads like a fog, gradually encasing everyone in its fold. But in Tsai's films, as we have seen, sleep more commonly operates as a basis for asymmetrical pairings that bring together an exhausted, oblivious body with an intent observer who is alert with desire. Encounters between sleepers and watchers take their place in a spreading web of strange corporeal geometries, without necessarily reflecting clearly on the orientation and identity of the bodies caught within this web. In what is perhaps Tsai's most controversial film, *The Wayward Cloud* (2005), Hsiao Kang and Shiang-chyi are brought back together after having haunted each other's thoughts and vainly searched for each other in two previous films. Roaming around a park under the blazing summer sun, Shiang-chyi discovers Hsiao Kang asleep on a swinging bench. She takes a seat and stares at him while waiting patiently for him to awaken. In the hiatus of sleep, time again slows down and Shiang-chyi nods off herself. She comes back to as Hsiao Kang stirs, shakes off his grogginess, and returns her gaze. His awakening marks a miraculous reunion and a mutual recognition, paving the way for an emotional and erotic bond between them that develops in the course of the film. Shiang-chyi plays the active role in their relationship, initiating sexual contact, while Hsiao Kang demonstrates a reluctance or inability to follow through, his desires remaining somewhat opaque. Perhaps he defers because he is too depleted by his work as a pornographic actor. Unbeknownst to Shiang-chyi, he spends his days shooting films in the same apartment building where she lives, working on another floor with a small crew and a co-star who is played by the Japanese porn star Sumomo Yozakura. *The Wayward Cloud* incorporates numerous pornographic scenes of Hsiao Kang at work, often from a behind-the-scenes perspective that emphasizes the monotonously grueling nature of his job.

The situation comes to light when Shiang-chyi discovers Yozakura on the floor of the building's elevator, passed out and completely unresponsive. While the story is launched by an awakening from sleep that is also an awakening of desire, it veers toward closure with this sudden unexplained onset of coma. As Vivian Lee notes, in contrast to Shiang-chyi's sexual agency and desiring gaze, Yozakura is "increasingly objectified and silenced" until she is finally reduced to a wholly passive state.⁴³ Despite her lack of consciousness, she plays a crucial part in the final act of *The Wayward Cloud*, which presents a long-awaited consummation of a romance (as well as the completion of a failed attempt at fellatio from earlier in the film). Shiang-chyi and one of the men from the crew carry Yozakura back to the



FIGURE 49. *The Wayward Cloud* (Tsai Ming-liang, 2005).

apartment that serves as a film set. They carry on with their work, manipulating her like a rag doll on the bed while Hsiao Kang pounds her with manic energy and the camera rolls. Shiang-chyi watches them through an opening in the wall above the bed, with a look of dismay that turns into fascination, and Hsiao Kang watches her in turn. The film cuts back and forth between their faces as they become increasingly aroused by this exchange—a purely visual contact that is mediated by Yozakura as a third party, also visible in the frame and positioned between them—and begin to vocalize their pleasure. Hsiao Kang grunts and groans, while Shiang-chyi emits ecstatic whimpers and screams that seem to ventriloquize the unconscious woman. Yozakura's inert body is the visible nexus of this affective circuit. On the verge of orgasm, he dashes over to the window and inserts his penis into Shiang-chyi's open mouth. The final four minutes of the film linger on this climax and long-deferred sexual fusion.

The Wayward Cloud's graphic depictions of intercourse, oral sex, and masturbation (along with some other sex acts that resist succinct definition) account for the film's divided critical reception. While Tsai's previous films did not shy away from transgressive portrayals of sexuality, *The Wayward Cloud* goes even further in its interjection of the defining elements of the most culturally devalued of film genres, pornography, into the arena of international art cinema. To a large degree, negative reactions to the film have focused on its ending, described by many as misogynistic in its treatment of the female body. This response is encapsulated in a widely circulated anecdote about the first screening of *The Wayward Cloud* at the Brisbane International Film Festival. As Hsiao Kang appears to ejaculate in the final scene, an audience member stood up, yelled "FUCK YOU!" at the screen, and stormed out, followed by a few others in the theater. The incident is recounted by Helen Bandis, Adrian Martin, and Grant McDonald in an essay that defends Tsai from the charge of misogyny and closely analyzes this admittedly shocking ending in light of the film's unique symbolic economy and the structure of alternation and repetition established throughout his filmography.⁴⁴

The detour performed by these critics, from a literal reading of the film in its mimetic appropriation of pornographic content to a formal reading of its self-conscious deconstruction and recombination of cinematic codes, is repeated by others who have defended the film from its detractors. Lee analyzes *The Wayward Cloud* as a critique of, rather than an exercise in, pornography, one that vacates the patriarchal and sexist values commonly attributed to the genre. On the controversial ending, she writes, "Instead of being a reconfirmation of heterosexual union as the norm and solution to the characters' identity crises, hence the fulfilment of phallic fantasy, the *pathos* of Hsiao-kang's performance of masculine sexuality is a sign of its exhaustion."⁴⁵ Song Hwee Lim also makes the case that this ending "illustrates forcefully and critiques unequivocally the exploitation of the sexed-up female body."⁴⁶ Furthermore, to equate penetrative sex acts with a performance of domination that reinscribes hierarchies of power is to overlook the queer corporeal-relational matrix in which these acts are embedded. Gorfinkel argues, "To suggest that the extended final scene . . . is somehow misogynistic is to entirely miss the point of the film's queer formalist allegory." Heterosexual relations are rendered as an impossibility by the film, such that they "cannot exist or reproduce themselves, but can only be produced through a mediating form, a third term, an act of projection or displacement."⁴⁷ Or conversely, the realization of love in a world defined by alienation, loss, and deadened affect relies upon a defamiliarized gestural language of intimacy that reimagines what a body can do, how it can express, and how it can connect with other bodies. Weihong Bao observes that throughout *The Wayward Cloud*, Hsiao Kang and Shiang-chyi "are often framed in a constricted space to exercise intense, mutually interactive acts that result in bodily reassembling and mismatch."⁴⁸ These acts, or biomechanical exercises, achieve at once a scrambling of normative gender roles, a reorganization of their bodies, and a redefinition of sexuality and love, Bao argues.⁴⁹ Drawing on the director's background in avant-garde theater while also integrating the hyperbolic physicality of body genres like pornography, these exercises constitute an innovative "performance practice" that queers the display of sex.⁵⁰

With careful attention to *The Wayward Cloud's* modes of bodily display and performance, these critics offer an important counterargument to those who have read the film's pornographic scenes at face value. As they persuasively demonstrate, to collapse these explicit depictions of sex within the category of pornography is to overlook Tsai's project of queer world-making. My own understanding of *The Wayward Cloud* has long been informed by the insights of these and other feminist and queer thinkers, sharing in their conviction of the director's significant interventions in the politics of sexuality. Revisiting the film at this moment in time, some fifteen years after its release, however, I find that these arguments do not sufficiently account for the part played by Yozakura in its culminating scene of three-way sex. Feminist and queer readings of this scene have tended to abstract her role by emphasizing her allegorical function—whether as a caricature of the

exploitation of women's bodies by commercial media, illustrating their reduction to passive objects to be consumed (a reading encouraged by Yozakura's status as a real-life porn star), or as just another of the inanimate things onto which Hsiao Kang and Shiang-chyi project their attraction to one another. Yozakura becomes the vanishing mediator of their sexual apotheosis, not only manipulated like a human-sized sex toy, but in the last instance ejected from the frame altogether. If the gendered hierarchies that structure heterosexual coupledness can be set askew by queer triangulations, in *The Wayward Cloud* they recover their force at the point of the objectified female body.

Yozakura, unlike the other sleepers discussed throughout this chapter, resists the attribution of queer possibility, and not only because her unconsciousness lacks the responsiveness of natural sleep. Literal reference thwarts allegorical function when her body is framed by a contemporary context in which incidents of sexual assault on unconscious women have received unprecedented public scrutiny, through the channels of news media as well as firsthand accounts of the victims of these assaults.⁵¹ This public scrutiny goes hand in hand with a legal and social struggle to define sexual assault in terms of the absence of consent on the part of the victim, as opposed to the exercise of brute physical force by the assailant. It also stems from the role of cameras and social media in many of these incidents, with the assailants recording their deeds and recirculating them through digital platforms. Such actions produce a body of evidence that calls greater attention to these crimes, although without necessarily leading to prosecution. At the same time, as Cressida Heyes argues, "that very evidence is the medium of a new kind of pornographic violence against the person."⁵² Rape while unconscious entails a particular mode of violence, as she demonstrates—beyond the violation of bodily autonomy, also an infringement on "the deepest place of anonymity, the part of one's life when one's existence is most dangerously yet crucially suspended," Heyes writes.⁵³ The trauma of inescapable exposure that victims experience is "exaggerated and extended when that assault is recorded, and extended even further when a community of voyeurs is created around the images."⁵⁴ In some of these cases, the victims took their own lives.⁵⁵

While for some viewers the unwieldy physicality embodied by Yozakura in the film's ending evokes exaggerated caricature or even physical comedy, the passage of time brings more disturbing implications to the forefront. In turning to real-life incidents, my aim is not to insist upon a purely documentary interpretation of a fictional scenario. Rather, it is to trace the particular resonance of the unconscious female body and to resume (from chapter 3) a discussion of the ambivalent legacy of the sleeping woman. In this figure, the vulnerability that comes with sleep is augmented by the perils of a misogynistic society, such that postures of rest become difficult to disentangle from effects of physical harm, and sleep becomes readily conflated with other unconscious states. Yozakura's mysterious condition has been variously described as a coma, blackout, or even death; no matter which,

it registers as a reduction to inert matter and “mere body.” The sleeping woman marks the point at which the utopia of open-ended intimacy collapses back into the dystopia of gender, returning to a realization that, in the words of Iris Marion Young, “an essential part of the situation of being a woman is that of living the ever-present possibility that one will be gazed upon as a mere body, as shape and flesh that presents itself as the potential object of another subject’s intentions and manipulations, rather than as a living manifestation of action and intention.”⁵⁶ If sleep can be defined as a requisite periodic retreat from self-directed agency into a place of anonymity, a vital remission from the exercise of action and intention, what does this imply for those whose access to agency and autonomy is already constrained?

In the examples of beautiful sleeping men discussed above, sleep is frequently situated in the ambit of injury, illness, and disability. For the sleeping woman, however, sexual violation can be added to this list of terms. The suggestion enters the scene even in the absence of explicit signs of violence or sex, as Ara Osterweil demonstrates in her analysis of Yoko Ono and John Lennon’s 1970 film *Fly*. Like *Sleep, Fly* presents a series of views of a single unconscious nude figure—that of the actor Virginia Lust, who was not exactly sleeping but knocked out on heroin for the shoot. The film displays an “enthralment with the corporeal part object” that recalls *Teem* and *Sleep*. It performs an up-close dissection of the body, from the “gentle folds and creases” of its surfaces to the tiny quivers attesting to “the seismic volition of cognizant flesh.”⁵⁷ Guiding its exploration is a fly, a “consummate lover” who tenderly ministers to every inch of his sleeping giantess. But as the camera begins to pull back from the tight framing of body parts, the euphoric mood of polymorphous eroticism evaporates. With the transition to a wider view of Lust’s body, on which multiple flies can now be seen crawling, Osterweil writes, we find ourselves confronted with “a crime scene.”⁵⁸ While the flies connote filth and decay, the change of perspective is ultimately what precipitates this tonal shift: “It is the sight of the woman’s entire body that initiates the sense of violation. When portrayed as an assortment of corporeal fragments—a body without organs—the body seemed safe from scopic violence. Yet as the focus of the film changes from part to whole object, hierarchies that had been suspended are re-implanted.”⁵⁹ And so now, Lust “suddenly seems the victim of a sexual assault.”⁶⁰

What Osterweil terms the initiation of a sense of violation can also be described as the reactivation of a representational lineage. Lust’s supine body evokes the iconography of the reclining nude in Western art, to which Osterweil alludes when she compares one of *Fly*’s shots to Gustave Courbet’s 1866 painting *L’Origine du monde*.⁶¹ But it also summons persistent visual constructions of the sleeping female nude as prey in a scenario of sexual violation. In contrast to the sleeping male nudes whose significance could range from melancholy to divine inspiration, the coding of the unconscious woman hews closely to notions of eroticism and passion.⁶² One of the oldest tropes of the reclining nude, and a staple of

the “grand tradition of art,” in Leo Steinberg’s words, consists in the pairing of the sleeping nymph with “an alerted male.”⁶³ These scenes weave together looking and longing, Steinberg writes, while also identifying the erotic appeal of the sleeper with her state of naked defenselessness. In the encounter between the “somnolent nymph” and the “lewd satyr” (or god or man; Steinberg illustrates his argument with an image of Jupiter discovering a sleeping Antiope), a “whole plot” takes shape and overdetermines the pictorial imagination of the dormant female nude. In these scenes, the asymmetrical pairing of the sleeper and watcher sets the stage for “the opportunity of the intruder” and, conversely, the rape of the sleeper.⁶⁴ The imaginary of the sleeping woman extends from the visual to the narrative realm. Thus, in European fairy tales, hibernating princesses are awakened by the act of giving birth after having been impregnated in their sleep. A more modern example comes from Yasunari Kawabata’s 1961 novella “House of the Sleeping Beauties,” which describes a brothel offering the experience of spending the night with a young woman who is guaranteed to “sleep on and know nothing at all.”⁶⁵

The very phrase “sleeping beauty” refers to more than just another beautiful sleeping body and reveals what is at stake in the fantasy of somnolent femininity. It is specifically in sleep that beauty emanates, in her nonwaking that she appeals to desire; for this figure, to be unconscious *is* to be desirable. While the broader cultural imagination of sleep endows it with a range of meanings and associations, in this instance, it hardens into a gendered trope of passivity. If the sense of violation always hovers close by the sleeping woman, it is because she already embodies a condition defined by complete availability. In *Fly*, Lust is tasked with enacting this state, performing unconsciousness while making her body available for use, by the flies and by the filmmakers. In Lust’s role, Osterweil detects a parallel with Ono’s own embodiment of extreme immobility and controlled passivity in her performance work *Cut Piece* (1964), which similarly “involves the viewer in troubling forms of violence directed against women’s bodies.”⁶⁶ Lust also calls to mind Yoza-kura from *The Wayward Cloud*, as another somnambulant laboring woman. In contrast to the character with which this chapter began, Roong, who enjoys her sleep as a reprieve from her job and a spoil of reclaimed time, these figures are a reminder of the representational work extracted from the sleeping woman.⁶⁷