

Intermédialités

Histoire et théorie des arts, des lettres et des techniques

Intermediality

History and Theory of the Arts, Literature and Technologies

Unveiling The Dream: The New Frontiers of Dream Technology and Radical Rest

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Number 41, Spring 2023

dormir
sleeping

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1106551ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7202/1106551ar>

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Publisher(s)

Revue intermédialités

ISSN

1705-8546 (print)

1920-3136 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this article

Imani, M. & Finna, S. (2023). Unveiling The Dream: The New Frontiers of Dream Technology and Radical Rest. *Intermédialités / Intermediality*, (41), 1–26.
<https://doi.org/10.7202/1106551ar>

Article abstract

This article situates the meeting points of dream tech and the radical rest movement, centering on Black creative and community practices to contextualize the emergence of dream tech in academic research labs, tech startups, consumer markets, and artistic incubations. The article describes the rise of the Radical Rest movement, led by Black activists and artists, in response to the need to reclaim sleep and dreams from colonial agendas and capitalist systems of oppression. This movement has developed parallel to the rapid growth of sleep technology, offering new products for sleep-deprived consumers of the global North. The next frontier of this new multibillion-dollar industry is dream neurotech—technology that directly interfaces with the dreaming mind. The article introduces dream tech by unearthing a largely forgotten dream that shaped the trajectory of modern Western science, a trajectory that is contrasted with views about consciousness in sleep espoused by classical Indian philosophers. With this historical and global context for understanding how sleep and dreams are measured and quantified, the article then historicizes racial sleep inequities in the U.S. to frame how systematic oppression continues to have adverse effects on the sleep health of Black Americans. The article examines the aims of commercial dream tech, discerning agendas and assumptions that reverberate with the Cartesian dualism underlying Western scientific views of dreams, selfhood, and consciousness. These views will be complicated by the practices and values of Black activists and artists in the contemporary Radical Rest movement. Their work uplifts physical and emotional rest as a powerful site for healing trauma and resisting the oppressive vectors of white supremacy and capitalism.

Unveiling the Dream: The New Frontiers of Dream Technology and Radical Rest

MIA IMANI AND FINNA SAELYX

Well, feel this, why don't you? Feel how it feels to have a bed to sleep in and somebody there not worrying you to death about what you got to do each day to deserve it. Feel how that feels. And if that don't get it, feel how it feels to be a colored woman roaming the roads with anything God made liable to jump on you. Feel that.¹

We can not dream if we aren't able to sleep.

I was only nine when my mother died. Every night until she got sick, I slept beside her. The cold and damp Pacific Northwest winter nights couldn't compete with her radiating warmth. She would recite improvised bedtime stories that wove in elements from my day: a crush, a fantasy. I would drift into dreams on the hum of her lullabies. My father worked the overnight shift. When he got home, he would go into my room and sleep until we both got up. When she transitioned, he began to sleep in their room again. I would wake up in the middle of the night to peek into the room as if I would see her held up by the golden brass bed—a piece of architecture that I felt mirrored a chariot. Instead, I would hear a crescendo of rumbles that would abruptly quiet to a sound more inaudible than silence. I saw my dad sleeping on his back, his body in the depth of the covers, leaving only his head visible. Even though the duvet was dark, I could see his chest expanding, and the sound exploded out of his mouth

1. Toni Morrison, *Beloved*, New York, Vintage Books, 1987, p. 80.

until there was nothing. I thought he had died until the snoring resumed. I rationalized it by thinking he was trying to contact his wife, sending vibrations that only she could decipher. I tried to bring magic realism to a reality that was increasingly becoming menacing. He had sleep apnea—a medical condition that disproportionately impacts Black Americans, even more specifically Black men.² The most common is Obstructive Sleep Apnea Syndrome (OSAS), which includes repeated episodes of upper airway closure during sleep as well as continuous snoring (loud, disruptive) associated with unrefreshing sleep and excessive daytime sleepiness (EDS) or fatigue.³ Yet, for those who have sleep apnea, it is a silent killer. My dad, much like many Black Americans, was carrying invisible burdens that led to the condition that went undiagnosed for years. Burdens that required him to take No-Doz or 5-Hour Energy supplements so he could stay awake on the job and not appear lazy. Even though sleep apnea is the extreme case, Black Americans still experience a disparity in sleep compared to other ethnic groups in the United States. Referred to as the “sleep gap,” Black people are less likely to get the recommended amount of sleep (6–9 Hours), report waking up more often throughout the night, and spend a smaller percentage of their time in “slow-wave sleep,” the deepest and most restorative phase of sleep that produces the most benefits in healing and cognition.⁴ Getting less sleep increases your chances of developing chronic diseases like diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, and obesity—which already occur frequently within the Black community. My dad didn’t know that his sleep apnea and the Black community’s sleep gap are part of the legacy of intergenerational trauma that he and other descendants of enslaved Africans inherited. A false awakening dream is when you think you woke up from sleep to find that you are still in the middle of a dream. These dreams are so vivid that they leave the dreamer confused or anxious when they finally wake up. The anecdote above serves as a false awakening in this paper. Its function is not to establish the rules of this essay. Instead, it represents a portal. It opens you to the reality of a situation that gets intellectualized

2. A University at Buffalo study discovered that over the past two decades, more Black men have been dying from OSAS than have white people or Black females. Black males are the only group whose deaths from sleep apnea have continued to rise. Whereas rates have flattened for white people and Black females. Ellen Goldbaum, “Study Finds Racial Disparities in Sleep Apnea Mortality,” *University at Buffalo Now*, 4th May 2022, <https://www.buffalo.edu/ubnow/stories/2022/05/sleep-apnea-racial-disparities.html> (accessed 25 July 2023).

3. Christian Guilleminault, *Obstructive Sleep Apnea Syndrome*, Saunders/Elsevier, 2009, p. 319.

4. Brian Resnick, “The Racial Inequality of Sleep,” *The Atlantic*, “Health,” 27 October 2015.

rather than seen as an embodied experience in academia. It is a meditation on why there is a sleep gap between Black Americans and white Americans—a journey that charts the relationship between rest, productivity, and Blackness and traces its roots to the plantation, the beginning of the American nightmare.

INVITATION TO A CO-CREATIVE PROCESS: THE INTERSECTION OF RADICAL REST AND DREAM TECH—IMANI & FINNA

Bridging from past to future, this paper deploys a multi-faceted, multidisciplinary approach to global archives, histories, and technologies to frame our sense of the future stakes for our sleep and dreams. We will explore how historical legacies of slavery, colonialism, and white supremacy shape present realities and future possibilities for everybody's dreams and what it might look like to dream beyond systems of oppression with liberatory dream practices.

To trace the deep vectors of these questions, we offer our experiences and explorations as two artists, collaborators, and friends engaged in intimate creative exchange to map the intersections of our work within Radical Rest and dream neurotechnology. Mia Imani engages with the dreamscape through self-driven research and a mixed-media practice that lives between art, technology, and spirituality. She is a shaper and scholar of Radical Rest:⁵ a Black femme and queer-led social movement that focuses on restorative practices and experimental spaces that aim to close the “sleep gap” within the Black Diaspora. Saelyx Finna maps and produces creative media about the emerging ecosystem of dream technologies. As researchers and practitioners, we operate outside of academia, with work rooted in community, expressed through multiple mediums (film, audio art, performance art) and conducted across sectors. Our work is informed by multiple academic disciplines, including neuroscience, contemplative science, cultural studies, philosophy, art history, Black feminist and queer studies, and media studies. Since we work outside of academia, we do not claim a particular field or institution, and our access to academic publications is limited to sources that are open access, or that we can find through some other means.

This piece is scaffolded by our shared north star belief in the power of collective dreaming for collective healing. For our purposes, “dream technology” means any

5. Radical Rest is capitalized because this is as much an artistic movement as it is a philosophical practice.

hardware device or software application intended to interface directly with processes of cognition during sleep. Radical Rest is a Black-woman and queer-led arts and activism movement that positions rest as a vital part of Black liberation, naming it as both a form of reparations and as an act of resistance against capitalism and white supremacy. Rest is not merely an act of sleep or taking a nap, it is any activity that invigorates one's spirit and includes making space for collective rest, deliberate laziness, and the protection of the dreamscape. In this space, we invite the reader into some of the legacies and modalities informing our co-creative process, which spans millennia and multiple dimensions of self.

To undertake such a vast historical scope, we invoke the Ghanaian concept of sankofa to frame our engagement with the past. Sankofa⁶ is a word in the Twi language of Ghana (spoken by the Akan people) meaning, “to retrieve,” or “to go back and get it.” The word has been adopted in contemporary times by Black Americans who seek to connect to their ancestral and spiritual roots. It is a way to interweave the teachings of the past to build a fortified future. This concept gets illustrated in the famous proverb, “Se wo were fi na wosankofa a yenkyi,” meaning, “It is not wrong to go back for that which you have forgotten.” Sankofa will be the guiding principle as we engage with multiple historical and cultural contexts to understand current and future trajectories of dream tech and Radical Rest. In “From the Dream Seeds of Dualism to Dreamless Consciousness,” Finna unearths a largely forgotten dream that shaped the trajectory of modern Western science and then introduces alternative views about consciousness in sleep espoused by classical Indian philosophers. With this historical and global context for understanding how sleep and dreams are measured and quantified, Imani moves to historicizing “The Racial Sleep Gap” in the U.S. to frame how systematic oppression continues to have adverse effects on the sleep health of Black Americans. Finna then examines “The Emergence of Cartesian Dream Tech,” discerning agendas and assumptions that reverberate with the Cartesian dualism underlying Western scientific views of dreams, selfhood, and consciousness. Imani then complicates these views by diving deeper into “Radical Rest: Collective Dreaming for Collective Healing,” explicating the practices and values of Black

6. The Akan people “believed that the past illuminates the present and that the search for knowledge is a life-long process,” Center for Teaching and Learning at the University of Denver quoted in Sharon Mar Adams, *Seeking the Face Behind the Face: Rosenzweig and Nietzsche Opening to the Feminine Divine*, doctoral dissertation, University of Denver, 2011, p. 18.

activists and artists in the contemporary Radical Rest movement. Their work uplifts physical and emotional rest as a powerful site for healing trauma and resisting the oppressive vectors of white supremacy and capitalism. We conclude by demonstrating how practitioners of Radical Rest point attention to disparities of access to sleep and dreaming and prompt us to consider how rest can be part of racial reparations. Radical Rest offers a framework for illuminating how the nascent goals of consumer dream tech reveal how we value sleep and dreaming as a society.

FROM THE DREAM SEEDS OF DUALISM TO DREAMLESS CONSCIOUSNESS—FINNA

Formative historical roots of the scientific method, the process by which knowledge is scientifically tested and verified, can be traced back to a dream. French philosopher René Descartes is credited for his foundational contributions to the development of the scientific method by insisting upon the need to run all observations about the natural world through a series of reality tests in order to ascertain their factual truth. Specifically, Descartes defined his method as a sequence of “reliable rules which are easy to apply, and such that if one follows them exactly, one will never take what is false to be true or fruitlessly expend one’s mental efforts, but will gradually and constantly increase one’s knowledge till one arrives at a true understanding of everything within one’s capacity.”⁷ Descartes’ approach is frequently described as a means of discerning dream from reality in an analogous sense. However, an incredibly salient and seemingly incongruous detail is almost always left out of the story of the method’s origins: a quite literal and life-changing series of dreams Descartes experienced, at age twenty-three, on the night of November 10th, 1619.⁸ The profound consequences of Descartes’ dreams on the relationship between the institutions of science and the Catholic Church would later lead Bishop William Temple to deem this night “the most disastrous moment in the history of Europe.”⁹ In Temple’s view, the scientific establishment weaponized the method of reality testing born in Descartes’ dream, taking “what we now tend to call objective reality”

7. René Descartes, *Œuvres complètes*, [1900], vol. 10, Paris, Vrin, « Bibliothèque des Textes Philosophiques », 1996, p. 371–372.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 368.

9. William Temple, *Nature, Man, and God*, AMS Press, 1979, p. 57.

and reducing it, “to the ‘Primary Qualities’—that is to the measurable.”¹⁰ According to Temple, thanks to Descartes, science deployed Descartes’ method to discredit the ineffable qualities of faith, instead valorizing quantifiable facts. And yet, as we will see, the personal significance of Descartes’ dream was both misunderstood and effaced from the story of the scientific method.

In Descartes’ final dream on that night in 1619, he sees two books: a dictionary, which he hopes might aid him in his studies, and a collection of poetry. He opens the poetry book and reads the line: “What path in life should I pursue?” A stranger then appears, affirming Descartes’ sense that the poetry book in particular is “an excellent work,” and then shows him a poem that begins with the line, “What is and is not.” Then the stranger says, “the mastery of Nature is to be achieved through measurement and number.” Soon thereafter, the stranger and the books disappear. Still in the dream, Descartes begins to question what just happened and determines that he is dreaming. Now in a lucid dream (a lucid dream is a dream in which the dreamer becomes aware that they are dreaming), he is struck by how much more profound the truths conveyed in the book of poetry are than the sterile dictionary.¹¹ Upon waking, filled with inspiration, Descartes sees the dream as a divine gift, instructing him to unite all the sciences through a method that can distinguish once and for all between “what is and what is not.”¹² Because the internal world of his dream felt so real, Descartes decided that individual perception alone is not to be trusted for discerning “what is and what is not,” and therefore all hypotheses about the external world must be tested with external methods in order to assess their objective truth.

And so, it was the poetic powers of dream and imagination, not rational thought, that spawned the seeds of the modern scientific method. As a lucid dreamer, Descartes’ own border between wake and dream was blurry and at times even irrelevant. Look at how his dreams—ineffable, imaginative, and profound, like the book of poetry—were the source of his scientific insight. In this sense, for the spiritual Descartes, “I

10. *Ibid.*, p. 70.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 61.

12. *Ibid.*

dream, therefore, I am”¹³ is arguably as true as, “I think, therefore I am.”¹⁴ From within his dreams, Descartes received what he felt to be a visitation from a divine being, explored his sense of self, and formed beliefs about the nature of reality. Although he could not quantifiably measure this dream experience, when he awoke he trusted his dream insights to guide his subsequent decisions. Not long after the dream, he left the Bavarian Army and began pursuing his philosophical work to unite all the sciences.¹⁵

Despite its significance, mention of Descartes’ history-altering dream is nowhere to be found in public sources about the origins of the scientific method, such as the Wikipedia page for “History of the Scientific Method,” the Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy page for “René Descartes: Scientific Method,” and the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy page for “Descartes’ Method.”¹⁶ As the subsequent centuries have shown, the ways in which the scientific establishment has taken up Descartes’ dream effaced its spiritual undertones entirely. The story of Descartes’ dream is rarely included in science curricula; the method is divorced from its origins, and its literal dream origins are lost. Instead, the reality testing method birthed by Descartes’ dream became a central tool of science, used time and again to dismiss, devalue, and disprove mental, emotional, and spiritual experiences that could not be captured and codified as quantifiable material. Worse, the scientific method would be weaponized to justify dehumanizing violence, such as in the grotesque experiments on enslaved peoples during North American colonization, and elsewhere in the world.¹⁷

One of the descendants of the Cartesian scientific method is the modern scientific framework for describing and categorizing sleep into four stages, each characterized

13. Mia Imani: Audre Lorde has inspired the ways dream language and poetry enters into my praxis. One quote in particular extends on Descartes’ hypothesis: “The white fathers told us,” “I think, therefore I am.” The Black mother within each of us—the poet—whispers in our dreams: “I feel, therefore I can be free.” The other continues to thread the connection between poetry and dreaming: “Poetry is not only dream and vision; it is the skeleton architecture of our lives. It lays the foundations for a future of change, a bridge across our fears of what has never been before,” *The Selected Work of Audre Lorde*, First Edition, 2020, p. 5.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 62.

15. Michael Keevak, “Descartes’s Dreams and Their Address for Philosophy,” *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol. 53, no. 3, 1992, p. 373–396.

16. R.K. Merton & P. Newall, “Scientific method,” *Wikipedia*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scientific_method (accessed 25 July 2023). Fred Wilson, “Descartes, Rene: Scientific Method,” *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <https://iep.utm.edu/rene-descartes-scientific-method/> (accessed 25 July 2023). Dika Tarek R., Edward N. Zalta & Uri Nodelman (eds.), *Descartes’ Method*, *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Spring 2023, <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2023/entries/descartes-method/> (accessed 25 July 2023).

17. Stephen Kenny, “Power, opportunism, racism: Human experiments under American slavery,” *Endeavour*, vol. 39, no. 1, 2015, p. 10.

by different combinations of neuroelectrical and physiological markers.¹⁸ Changes in brain waves across each state are measured by electroencephalogram (EEG). The development of EEG methods in the 1920s primed the transformation of sleep from a private, subjective experience into a source of objectively measurable scientific data. This model for classifying different periods of sleep based on brain data is now the foundation for clinical diagnostics and scientific study of neurological, cognitive, and physiological occurrences during sleep. As a means of tracking electrical activity in the brain, EEG has limited utility for exploring the range of non-quantifiable phenomena experienced during sleep. Despite its dream-derived origins, the scientific schema for representing sleep offers few inroads to engaging with dreams.

Centuries before Descartes' dream, Indian philosophers described and debated a more nuanced delineation of sleep states than the four stages of the current scientific framework.¹⁹ Neurophenomologist Evan Thompson argues that, "the Indian conception of dreamless sleep suggests that we need a finer taxonomy of sleep states—a taxonomy that is not just physiological but also phenomenological, and that accommodates the ways that sleep may be culturally variable as well as flexible and trainable through meditative practices."²⁰ Whereas Descartes determined that consciousness always entails a thinking "I" (awake or dreaming), the Yoga (3rd-4th Century CE) and Advaita Vedānta (8th Century CE) schools contended that a kind of consciousness persists even in deep, dreamless sleep. In this view, "dreamless sleep» is defined as, "that sleep state in which there are no sensory or mental objects of awareness, that is, no images and no thoughts. Nevertheless, they maintain, there is awareness, so this state is a conscious state; it is a mode of consciousness without an object."²¹ In these traditions, such a non-egoic awareness in deep sleep would be achieved through training in meditation. Cartesian dualism cannot conceptualize a state of dreamless, yet still conscious, deep sleep, and the scientific tools arising from Cartesian dualism have accordingly been ill-equipped for understanding or analyzing such experiences.²² In these Indian philosophical traditions, a pure state of awareness

18. Evan Thompson, Thomas Metzinger, and Jennifer M. Windt (eds.), "Dreamless Sleep, the Embodied Mind, and Consciousness: the Relevance of a Classical Indian Debate to Cognitive Science," *Open MIND*, Frankfurt, 2015, p. 2.

19. *Ibid.*

20. *Ibid.*, p. 3.

21. *Ibid.*

22. *Ibid.*, p. 15.

exists prior to and beyond the confines of an individual psyche. The Yoga and Vedānta philosophers understood the states of deep and dreamless sleep as absent of an object of cognition but nevertheless characterized by an ongoing awareness. Cartesian dualism distinguishes between mind and body in a subject-object relationship; there is no category of conscious experience without an object. In the Western world, the Cartesian hierarchization of mind over body, subject over object, fed a legacy of dehumanization and discrimination that would wreak havoc on the sleep and dreams of entire populations. We turn now to another insidiously literal resonance of the historically constrictive Eurocentric view of sleep.

THE RACIAL SLEEP GAP—IMANI

1619 could be deemed a year of disastrous history across continents; while Descartes dreamed, the first ships of enslaved Africans arrived on the shores of what we now call the United States. We start at a site that is both the beginning of the end—the hold of the slave ship. The ship is where we can begin to trace the architecture of Black sleep by interrogating the spaces, rooms, and objects used for rest. Accounts of the slave ship have outlined the horrific conditions captured Africans endured during that trip across the middle passage. Whether they entered into the collective consciousness via diagrams of the vessels in grade school history books, scenes from the popular slave narrative series *Roots*, or via Black cultural production (art, film, music, performance), they often failed to provide details about the sleeping conditions. In *Saltwater Slavery*, historian Stephanie Smallwood expands the scope of the transatlantic slave trade by examining the colonial project from its entry point on the African continent, the journey across the Atlantic, and the arrival in the “new world.” Smallwood details the voyage of *Edgar* (2007), a slave ship on its way to America, “at the beginning of the Harmattan season, when winds blowing down from the Sahara Desert produced particularly hot, dry conditions on the coast” and cold nights.²³ Smallwood then directs us to the conditions of the hold via the account of Robert Norris, an eighteenth-century slave ship captain who provides a retrospective view (100 years later) of the elements that the captives encountered:

23. Stephanie Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery: A Middle Passage from Africa to American Diaspora*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2007, p. 93.

[He] would obliquely acknowledge the ex-tremes of temperature—whether cold at that point or the excessive heat characteristic of a crowded hold—in observing that “when a Ship had only Half its Complement of Cargo on Board, those Ne-groes then there lay as close to each other, by Choice, as afterwards in a Case of Necessity.” Those confined aboard the *Edgar* during the weeks before the vessel was crowded with captives, therefore, may have found it useful at times to huddle close, even next to a stranger, in search of warmth against the damp, drafty chill of the slave hold. As their number had increased during these three months, however, the heat generated by the growing number of bodies, together with the dry heat of the Harmattan season, made conditions in the hold increasingly difficult. Every new delivery of captives added to the effluvia of sweat, vomit, urine, and excrement that painted the decks where the captives lay; each new body required space where now none was to be had.²⁴

The hold became the portal by which the captured human transformed into an object. Where space became synonymous with the articulation of one body from another, and sleep stood as a memory that briefly hung on the inside of their eyelids before vanishing at the movement of a fellow captive. It became a birth canal that served the opposite role of a mother’s womb, which also holds but nurtures and protects in the dark. Instead, the bottom of the slave ship became a container of death (both socially²⁵ and physically) as the weight of loss collapsed onto their bodies. I like to imagine that they chose to hold each other while they slept—a reminder that they still existed, even as their identities evaporated into the foul odors that filled the room and smothered their spirits.

In her essay “Rest Notes: On Black Sleep Aesthetics*,” scholar Josie Roland Hodson investigates archival and contemporary artistic depictions of Black people sleeping and resting. Two visual accounts help chart the choreography of constraint captives weathered while attempting to sleep in the hold. Both help paint the mythology of “the ontological industry of Black people that play in the story of mod-ern Black sleeplessness.”²⁶ Whether or not they are realistic reproductions of the conditions or imaginings, they both help render the mass consciousness around the slave ship at the time. The first is a diagram that outlines the positions of the slaves as they slept (see Fig. 1).

24. *Ibid.*

25. *Ibid.*

26. Josie Roland Hodson, “Rest Notes On Black Sleep Aesthetics,” *October*, vol. 176, Spring 2021, p. 10.



Fig. 1. Jean Boudriot, *Untitled Image (Sleeping Positions of Captive Africans on the French Slave Ship L'Aurore)*, illustration, 1984. ©<http://www.slaveryimages.org/s/slaveryimages/item/2552>)

The image reads more like a packed container of goods than of a ship full of human beings. The generic and homogenized depictions of the bodies are a direct link to the commodification of Black bodies and ultimately labor. The optimization of products that happens in modern capitalism finds its roots here. For a slave ship to be profitable, it would have to “extend the limits of its carrying capacity”²⁷ as fixed dimensions only allowed for the overcrowding of bodies. It was an insurance issue as the weight dictated how many captives would get transported. In correspondence between a ship captain and the company official, the captain unsuccessfully tried to petition to get a larger allowance of slaves on his ship. However, his attempt got denied because the vessel was too “top heavy” to carry more than 450 people.²⁸ Profits came based on numbers, and the more potential slaves that could be delivered alive equated to higher compensation for the captain. The limited room meant that crews resorted

27. Smallwood, 2007, p. 70.

28. *Ibid.*

to packing people into the hold. The limited room²⁹ meant that captives contorted to their new realities. With their bodies constrained, did they escape in dreams? Did they have collective visions? (See Fig. 2).



Fig 2. Unknown, *Sleeping Position of Africans on Slave Ship*, illustration from *The Illustrated London News*, vol. 30, June 20, 1857, p. 594. © <http://www.slaveryimages.org/s/slaveryimages/item/2764>.

29. A nod to Saidya Hartman's theory called "critical fabulation" in *Venus in Two Acts*, Indiana, University of Indiana, 2008, where you imagine the lives of the marginalized outside of the limits of the archive.

The second image is a featured illustration from *The Illustrated London News* in 1857. It depicts seven Black bodies leaning against each other and is described as the “sleeping position of slaves in the pack.” As Hodson notes, none of the people showcased in the image have their eyes closed; instead, “their eyes are wide open, as if to remind us of their surveilled condition.”³⁰ Although I agree that the captives experienced monitoring and the ship’s crew used technologies of oppression (shackles, chains) to limit their mobility, another reading could seek to equalize the inherent power dynamic between the illustrator, viewer, and subject. The eyes in the drawing are looking directly into the POV of the viewer, which could represent an act of the oppositional gaze, or Black spectatorship in the words of Black scholar bell hooks. According to hooks, who coined the term, “the politics of slavery, of racial-ized power relations, were such that the slaves were denied their right to gaze,”³¹ yet that did not stop them from looking back. The repression of the right to stare back eventually results in disobedience: “Not only will I stare. I want my look to change reality.”³² To me, this agency reverberates through the image. It is a calling card stating that agency can exist subtly. Was the illustrator the object of the gaze, or were they looking through them? Was it a way to communicate to future descendants or an opportunity to daydream without being caught? Although their bodies were in bondage, their minds could escape at night. Similarly to daydreaming, slumber became a gateway to agentic dreaming—a liminal space where the enslaved could experience the liberatory potential of sleep.

Once they reached the plantations, the mechanisms that maintained and policed Blackness changed, but for many, the architecture of sleep continued to rob the enslaved of their rest. In the 1857 memoir *Twenty-Two Years A Slave, and Forty Years a Freeman*, Austin Steward reflects on his journey from enslavement to freeman status and the conditions that governed slavery. According to Steward, who was only a seven-year-old when he became a slave, the cabins were small, the floor was earth, and holes in the sides of the building performed as windows. These spaces went unfurnished by the master, which meant the enslaved, who were “occasionally permitted to earn a little money” after they finished their labor, had to locate and purchase a bed and other

30. Hodson, 2021, p. 11.

31. bell hooks, “The oppositional gaze: Black female spectators,” *Black looks: Race and representation*, Boston, South End Press, 1992, p. 115.

32. *Ibid.*

necessities.³³ Even after working their bodies beyond their capacities, these people had to engineer the human basics, including the very architecture of sleep—the bed.³⁴ Another first-hand account is Frederick Douglass’ memoir where he outlines his own battle with sleep. According to Douglass, “more slaves were whipped for oversleeping than for any other fault.”³⁵ He echoed that there were no beds available to field hands, claiming that children “stuck themselves in holes and corners, about the quarters; often in the corner of the huge chimneys, with their feet in the ashes to keep them warm.”³⁶ Even though they recognized having time to sleep as a necessity, the rationed hours for rest got “consumed by necessary preparations for the duties of the coming day.”³⁷ Even after over 400 years *post-slavery*, Black Americans are five times more likely to get short sleep, defined as less than six hours a night, are more likely to report feeling sleepy in the daytime, and wake up more often in the middle of the night.³⁸ Do we awake because of the traumas that reactivate our blood memory?³⁹ Do they creep into our dreams? Are we too guilty to sleep knowing our ancestors got deprived of it?

THE EMERGENCE OF CARTESIAN DREAM TECH—FINNA

We have called in the racialized history of sleep under capitalism, the dream-derived origins of Cartesian dualism, and the non-egoic sleep consciousness of Indian philosophy to situate key questions about recent developments in dream technologies and subsequently draw connections to the ideologies of the Radical Rest movement. The emergence of dream tech, or neurotechnology intended to interface with the dreaming mind, raises a host of profound questions about the future stakes for our dreams. Issues of access, equity, privacy, and possibility abound, as scientists and technologists, the majority of whom are cis-gendered men affiliated with elite academic

33. Austin Steward, *Twenty-Two Years A Slave, and Forty Years a Freeman; Embracing a Correspondence of Several Years, While President of Wilberforce Colony, London, Canada West*, Rochester, N.Y., W. Alling, 1857, p. 13.

34. Hodson, 2021, p. 12.

35. Frederick Douglas, *Life and Times of Frederick Douglass: His Early Life as a Slave, His Escape from Bondage, and His Complete History: an Autobiography*, New York, Avenel, N.J. Gramercy Book, Outlet Book Co., 1993, p. 64.

36. Frederick Douglas, “Chapter 6: Treatment of Slaves on Lloyd’s Plantation,” *My Bondage and My Freedom* [1855], Lit2Go Edition, <https://etc.usf.edu/lit2go/45/my-bondage-and-my-freedom/1443/chapter-6-treatment-of-slaves-on-lloyds-plantation/> (accessed 25 July 2023).

37. *Ibid.*

38. Resnick, 2015.

39. “Blood memory” refers to Indigenous concept where intergenerational trauma is experienced in one’s body through DNA as opposed to experienced memory, though it is often both.

institutions or startup enterprises, develop wearable devices that induce lucid dreams, attempt to record dreams, design AI tools for dream reporting and analysis, and experiment with therapeutic VR and other interventions for PTSD nightmares.⁴⁰ Meanwhile, corporations are waking up to the possibility of colonizing the cognitive real estate of sleep. A 2021 survey by the American Marketing Association of more than 400 marketers from firms across the U.S. found that 77 percent of them plan to use dream tech for advertising in the next three years.⁴¹ Molson Coors debuted the first Super Bowl dream advertisement marketing stunt the same year.⁴² It would appear that the most mysterious human frontier is now fair game for commercial intrusion.

For now, users of dream tech must opt-in to the experiences; most examples of consumer dream tech today are intended for self-directed entertainment. As cultural anthropologist Aleena Chia points out in “Virtual Lucidity: A Media Archaeology of Dream Hacking Wearables,” such projects can “seem to be spiraling around the same Cartesian desire of overriding corporeal senses and biological functions through an imagined master code to program the mind.”⁴³ The most prevalent examples of consumer dream tech are lucid dream induction devices, which aim to give the user direct control over their dream narrative. Most commonly, lucid dream devices are wearable masks or headbands outfitted with sensors that monitor neuroelectrical and physiological changes in order to track the user’s sleep stages. Once the device gauges that the user may have entered REM sleep, based on brain wave frequency and/or eye movements, a sensory (visual and/or audio) cue is delivered. Ideally, the cue enters the user’s dream, prompting them to become aware that they are dreaming.⁴⁴

The intended functionality of consumer lucid dream wearables is predicated on the Cartesian ego-centric notion of consciousness, in which the thinking self turns “on” when a person is awake or dreaming, and turns “off” in deep sleep. The marketing

40. See T. Horikawa et al., “Neural Decoding of Visual Imagery During Sleep,” *Science*, April 2013, p. 639–642.; Korin Miller, “FDA Authorizes New Device to Treat PTSD-Related Nightmares,” *Verywell Health*, 21 November 2022, <https://www.verywellhealth.com/fda-new-device-ptsd-nightmares-5088185> (accessed 25 July 2023); Jarrod Gott et al., “Virtual reality training of lucid dreaming,” *The Royal Society*, vol. 376, no. 1817, February 2021.

41. American Marketing Association, “AMA New York’s Future of Marketing Study 2021 reveals significant findings,” AMA Future of Marketing Study 2021.

42. Tarpley Hitt, “This Beer Wants to Enter Your Dreams on Super Bowl Sunday,” *The Daily Beast*, “Coors Beer Wants to Invade People’s Dreams on Super Bowl Sunday,” 7 February 2021.

43. Aleena Chia, “Virtual Lucidity: A Media Archaeology of Dream Hacking Wearables,” *Communication +1*, vol. 7, no. 2, p. 6.

44. *Ibid.*, p. 14.

for these devices commonly emphasizes the ability to take back wake-like control of the egoic dream self in order to have lucid dreams for entertainment purposes, as exemplified in the Indiegogo campaign video for the EEG headband iBand+. ⁴⁵ These devices are expensive, ranging from \$300 to €4,000, immediately narrowing the field of potential consumers to those with significant disposable income. ⁴⁶ This impulse to control dreams in such a way that dreams become wake-like experiences reveals how waking egoic consciousness is valorized as the preferred modality of experience—the same state of consciousness in which we are expected to perform capitalist labor. Recall that Descartes relished the ineffably poetic qualities of his dream experiences. As Alexander M. Schultz remarks in *Mind's World: Imagination and Subjectivity from Descartes to Romanticism*, “Even though it asserts itself in its interpretative autonomy, the Cartesian subject still finds itself dependent on divine inspiration.” ⁴⁷

My own favorite lucid dream experience would be anathema to those trying to market lucid dream devices. In the dream, I am standing and talking to a man when I suddenly realize I’m dreaming. I look at the man and say playfully, “I’m dreaming, so I can make you do anything I want!” I think for a moment and realize, “but there’s nothing I want you to do.” Then I think, “I’m lucid, so if I want, I could fly!” But then I think, I don’t really feel the desire to do that, either. Finally, I see a door in front of me and think, “I’m lucid, so I could open that door and go anywhere I want!” Then I think, “but there’s nowhere I really want to go.” Then I woke up, feeling content. Most dream tech presumes that the user wants to bring a wake-like sense of control to the unlimited potential of the dreamscape, turning dreams into self-manipulated entertainment. There are also examples of dream tech being used as “spirit tech,” for self-exploration or consciousness hacking. ⁴⁸ These typically are predicated on the familiarly egoic goals of self-optimization—even when entertainment is no longer the stated objective, lucidity is still “used” for self-directed, individualistic goals. This ideology stands in contrast to the classical Indian philosophers, whose lines of inquiry explored non-egoic experiences in sleep consciousness. While the examples of

45. Arenar, “iBand: EEG headband that helps you Sleep & Dream!,” *Indiegogo*, 9 November 2022, <https://www.indiegogo.com/projects/iband-eeg-headband-that-helps-you-sleep-dream#> (accessed 27 August 2023)/

46. Hypnadyne Corp, <https://hypnodynecorp.com/lineup.png>, (accessed 27 August 2023).

47. Aleksander M. Schlutz, *Mind's World: Imagination and Subjectivity from Descartes to Romanticism*, University of Washington Press, 2010, p. 63.

48. Chia, 2019, p. 20.

consumer lucid dream tech discussed here invite users to experience agency, they do not offer a value proposition to marginalized people who want to gain sovereignty over their lives in the waking world. In the next section, we enter the portal of Radical Rest, where practitioners uplift and open up an entirely different set of non-extractive, anti-consumptive, community-oriented possibilities for engaging with the dreamscape.

RADICAL REST: COLLECTIVE DREAMING FOR COLLECTIVE HEALING—IMANI

I wish you rest today. I wish you a deep knowing that exhaustion is not a normal way of living. You are enough. You can rest.⁴⁹

..it's really the white man's worst nightmare to have a fully rested negro who is fully self-possessed.⁵⁰

Aiyana Mo'Nay Stanley Jones (7). Amir Locke (22). Breonna Taylor (26). Carolyn Edwards (86). Donovan Lewis (20). Fred Hampton (21). Latisha Edwards (50). Rayshard Brooks (27).⁵¹ These are the names of Black folx who lost their lives while they slept. I call them into this article to re-member them—to keep them alive in a country that actively forgets. They don't need a tree to lynch us. They kill us in our sleep. Whether it is police violence, chronic medical conditions connected to systemic

49. Tricia Hersey, *Rest Is Resistance: A Manifesto*. New York, Little, Brown Spark, 11 October 2022., p. 9.

50. Nav Acosta quoted in Michael love Michael, "If You're Black, Rest Is Power," *Paper, "Art,"* 25 January 2019, <https://www.papermag.com/black-power-naps-2626998633.html#rebell-titem18> (accessed 9 July 2023).

51. The numbers in parentheses refer to the age that the named person passed away. See the following tracking of Black sleep related deaths reported by Alia Chugtai "Know their name. Black people killed by the police in the US," *Aljazeera*, 2020, <https://interactive.aljazeera.com/aje/2020/know-their-names/index.html> (accessed 25 July 2023). "7-year-old girl accidentally shot by SWAT team," *Adu*, 5 March 2013. Sebastien Murdock, Legal Gun Owner Amir Locke Was Sleeping Before Minneapolis Police Killed Him," *Huffpost*, 4 February 2022. Marina Lopes, Brittany Shammass and Joanna Slater, "Police shooting of unarmed Black man in bed renews anguish in Ohio," *The Washington Post*, 1 September 2022. Both women mentioned with the last name "Edwards" are Mia Imani's relatives. Carolyn (grandma) passed away in her sleep. Latisha (aunt) passed away in her sleep after a long fight with breast cancer. According to [Cancer.org](https://www.cancer.org), Black women# younger than age 50 had a death rate that was twice as high as White women that age. Plus, Black women are more likely than White women to die of breast cancer at any age.

racism,⁵² or sleep apnea, which leads to cardiovascular disease, if not death,⁵³ who can afford to sleep? During the transatlantic slave trade, tactics were used to disrupt the restorative sleep patterns of the enslaved to extract their labor and prevent them from revolting.⁵⁴ Today, this behavior has not stopped; it has only transformed. Black interdisciplinary projects *Nap Ministry* (Tricia Hersey)⁵⁵ and *Black Power Naps* (Navild Acosta, Fannie Sosa)⁵⁶ use multidisciplinary approaches to bring rest to the Black Diaspora as part of the Radical Rest movement. I define Radical Rest as a Black femme and queer-led social movement that focuses on restorative practices and experimental spaces that aim to close the “sleep gap” within the Black Diaspora. These spaces explore communal rest (Nap Ministry), deliberate laziness (*Black Power Naps*), and the necessity of protecting the dreamscape.

*Our Dream Space has been stolen and we want it back. We will reclaim it via rest.*⁵⁷ Tricia Hersey founded the Nap Ministry out of necessity. Long days of juggling parenthood, work, and seminary school led to Hersey’s “rest resurrection,” a remedy to her exhaustion that used curiosity, experimentation, and self-preservation to reclaim her rest.⁵⁸ Growing up in the Black church (Church of God in Christ) and raised by a pastor, Hersey was no stranger to the power of higher-purpose-driven work. She transformed into the “Nap Bishop” and developed her own scripture: Rest is Resistance. The framework and practice use community activations, performance art, and site-specific installations that offer a safer space for collective rest. The rest is resistance and rest as reparations frameworks crystalized after three years of experimenting with sleep and dreams. Hersey and her creative sister Helen Hale

52. Kara Manke, “Racial discrimination linked to higher risk of chronic illness in African American women,” *Berkeley News*, 5 October 2018, <https://news.berkeley.edu/2018/10/05/racial-discrimination-linked-to-higher-risk-of-chronic-illness-in-african-american-women/> (accessed 9 July 2023).

53. Resnick, 2015.

54. Navild Acosta and Fannie Sosa, *Black Power Naps*, installation, Museum of Art and Design, Miami, 25 October 2019–12 January 2020, <https://moadmdc.org/exhibitions/black-power-naps-siestas-negras> (accessed 9 July 2023), <https://performancespacenewyork.org/shows/black-power-naps/> (accessed 25 July 2023).

55. Founded by artist and theologian Tricia Hersey in 2016, <https://thenapministry.com> (accessed 9 July 2023).

56. Acosta and Sosa, 2019–2020.

57. Hersey, 2022, p. 34.

58. *Ibid.*, p. 5.

started to invite Black folx to collectively rest in public in 2016.⁵⁹ With each iteration, they remind us all that the project is about more than just taking naps.

The Nap Ministry finds its roots in colonial America, where Black and Indigenous people “labored without rest for centuries as the country built its economic power.”⁶⁰ Hersey sees rest as a form of resistance and names sleep deprivation as a public health and social justice issue that can be traced back to escaped slaves, also known as maroons.⁶¹ Maroon communities grew from the refusal to participate in the slavery project. They leaped from ships as they arrived on colonial shores, organized and retreated into the natural landscape as they moved into a “Third Space[s]”—a liminal world that exists within chattel slavery but with no tethers to it.⁶² This history explains why a politic of refusal reverberates throughout the work. Outside of bondage, Maroon communities maintained their heritage and cultivated personhood and rest without the oversight of the overseer. Yet, enslaved captives had to endure the objectification of their bodies and the loss of their dreams. As the Nap Ministry began to activate as a space for healing and ancestral connection, they began to ask: what insight could our ancestors provide when we connect with them in our dreams?⁶³ To which I extend, how might projects like the Nap Ministry use dream tech as a tool to imagine a liberated future? Our documentary will explore this concept by creating opportunities for Radical Rest and dream technology to interact with each other. We see this bidirectional exchange as not only a site of first contact but also a way to ground the intentions of both realms as the possibilities of dream tech will meet the potential of Black dreams.

In October 2022, Hersey published *Rest is Resistance: A Manifesto*—a culminating toolkit that serves as a guide into the rest movement and as a way to navigate the reality of capitalism and white supremacy that is robbing us of our bodies, our leisure, and our DreamSpace.⁶⁴ The text outlines Hersey’s personal and familial histories with sleep and dreams while providing exercises, meditations, and resources to help along your journey to rest. For Hersey, Saelyx, and I, dream work

59. *Ibid.*, p. 97.

60. *Ibid.*, p. 33.

61. “Gullah/Geechee Nation in ‘Exiled from History: America’s Maroons,’” *Gullah/Geechee Nation*, 26 March 2017, <https://gullahgeecheenation.com/2017/03/26/gullahgeechee-nation-in-exiled-from-history-americas-maroons/> (accessed 25 July 2023).

62. Hersey, 2022. p. 141.

63. *Ibid.*, p. 160.

64. *Ibid.*, p. 13.

is abolition work—a tool to dismantle oppressive institutions while simultaneously building the world in a new vision.

Navild Acosta and Fannie Sosa's *Black Power Naps* is a direct response to the sleep gap, which the artists see as a continued form of state-sanctioned punishment born from the ongoing legacy of slavery.⁶⁵ Reclaiming idleness and play as sources of power and strength,⁶⁶ this installation takes over performance spaces and green spaces to invite members of the BIPOC community to slow down and rest. I became aware of their work as I started to connect with other Black artists whose work meditated on rest and serendipitously arrived in Berlin right as they both relocated there. The artist duo's projects *Siestas Negras* (2018) and *Black Power Naps* (2019) were both immersive and interactive exhibitions that featured rest-centric environments and sleep technologies⁶⁷ that invite Black queer people to relax and simply exist in the space (see Fig. 3).



Fig 3. Navild Acosta and Fannie Sosa, *People resting in the Black Power Naps*, installation, MoMa, New York, 2019.

65. Acosta, Sosa, 2019–2020.

66. *Ibid.*

67. Hodson, 2021, p. 23.

Soft. Fluid. Kaleidoscopic. Subverting/altering/augmenting/extending the architectures of sleep (beds, shared rest sites), Acosta and Sosa create a new grammar for Black rest.

Immediately as you enter the space, an atmosphere of rest welcomes you. All the conditions for achieving great sleep are present: there is minimal light except for gentle rays of gold, lapis, and magenta that caress you as you lay on a bed or an alternative platform of rejuvenation (trampolines and sensory baths).⁶⁸ Unlike other immersive art experiences that require the viewer to take individual action, the exhibition invited attendees to extend their bodies and take up space while collectively participating in “unproductive rest,” a type of rest that counters capitalism by allowing the participant to simply exist without the need to perform or occupy space in a specific way.⁶⁹

Soft surfaces weren’t the only offering from Acosta and Sosa. The exhibition introduced sleep technologies, technologies that scholar Josie Hodson claims help Black-diasporic people recuperate lost rest, proposing sleep as an act of queer temporal rebellion against colonial incursion.⁷⁰ Unlike sleep-inducing medicines or the previously mentioned dream tech, the duos’ sleep technologies interface with the sensual to provide somatic healing. One example is the “Atlantic Reconciliation Station,”⁷¹ a multi-person body waterbed for collective sleep. As the name suggests, the waterbed serves as a vehicle to address the trauma of the middle passage.

Underneath the bed, subwoofers send theta waves to the resters as a way to move the healing through a type of spiritual osmosis — our body which predominantly consists of water can receive the message.⁷² *It is time to rest.* Theta waves naturally occur during stage one of the sleep cycle, where we drift into dreams and are associated with relaxation and meditation.⁷³ The undulating motion of the bed with the low-frequency soundscape combine to activate the pelvic floor. The Atlantic

68. Ella Ray, “Black in Bed,” *Variable West*, “Essays,” 17 March 2022, <https://variablewest.com/2022/03/17/essay-black-in-bed-ella-ray/> (accessed 25 July 2023).

69. *Ibid.*

70. Hodson, 2021, p. 23.

71. Niv Acosta and Fanny Sosa, *Atlantic Reconciliation Station*, installation, Museum of Modern Art, Miami, 2011.

72. Finna: Notably, this example of dream tech does not intervene with rapid eye movement (REM) sleep, the stage when cognition looks most similar to waking thought and when most lucid dreams occur. Most consumer dream tech targets REM sleep. Instead, Acosta and Sosa leverage the stage of sleep when the self dissolves, more akin to the collective unconscious.

73. Jay Summer, “Can Binaural Beats Help You Fall Asleep?” *Sleep Foundation*, 26 March 2023, <https://www.sleepfoundation.org/noise-and-sleep/binaural-beats> (accessed 25 July 2023).

Reconciliation Station reidentifies the bed as a chariot of rest and a womb, as it is the vehicle that births us into the next day. It is a technology that incorporates sankofa: it looks back to heal ancestral wounds and opens new dimensions of becoming. Our film charts how radical rest practitioners who research Black sleep and provide spaces for contemplation, exploration, and innovation might influence the development of dream tech to create more equitable applications of this emerging technology. Through interviews with practitioners and immersive, experiential speculative nonfiction, our film explores how the future of dream technology might look if shaped by goals of healing collective trauma rather than individual entertainment.

CONCLUSION: UNDER THE DREAM--FUTURECASTING BLACK DREAM TECH – IMANI & FINNA

If the past few years have taught us anything, we need to dream up new ways of being and becoming, or we will fall victim to the collective nightmare that institutions have woven around us.⁷⁴ In this offering, we explored how dreams and the dreamscape have the potential to transform how we experience our waking reality. They are also at risk as companies are working to commercialize the one space in this world without surveillance. As we bring the threads we have woven to a close, we call back to the concept of sankofa. Looking back at the American history of the extraction of labor, it's not difficult to imagine how dreams could be seen as a final frontier for commercial infiltration. It could be a logical next step in neuromarketing, for example, for companies to mine our dreams for new creative ventures and advertising tactics. Governments and corporations could also weaponize dream tech as a new form of surveillance technology, to monitor the subconscious desires of an individual, community, or nation.

Radical Rest offers searing tools for interrogating commercial dream tech by centering and honoring the dreamscape as an unquantifiable site for collective healing and liberation.

How can Black communities protect their creative and intellectual property against extractive, colonizing surveillance technologies? Especially since contemporary

74. Simone Browne, *Dark Matters: On the Surveillance of Blackness*, Durham and London, Duke University Press, 2015. Mia Imani Harrison, "Dreaming up Radical Resistance," *Contemporary And*, 16 December 2020. <https://contemporaryand.com/magazines/dreaming-up-radical-resistance/> (accessed 25 July 2023).

surveillance can also find its roots on the plantation, as the lineage of technologies like biometrics can be linked to the branding of the enslaved as a way to identify lost property.⁷⁵ If dream tech becomes a tool of liberation, might Black users incorporate the teachings of the American maroons and build collective dream spaces where they can exist in an etheric Third Space?

Ultimately, we find that offerings of Radical Rest (collective rest, deliberate laziness, and the dreamscape as a site of collective healing) provide foundational considerations for building ethical dream tech that respects the dignity and divinity of our dreams. Much like its uses for PTSD nightmare treatment, we see dream tech as a potential site of healing for marginalized groups that have endured collective traumas. Approaching dream tech development from this new lens allows us to imagine liberation as both an embodied and envisioned experience.

75. Browne, 2015.

Unveiling the Dream: The New Frontiers of Dream Technology and Radical Rest

MIA IMANI & SAELYX FINNA, INDEPENDENT SCHOLARS

RÉSUMÉ :

Cet article s'intéresse aux points de rencontres entre le mouvement du repos radical dirigé par les pratiques créatives et communautaires noires et celui de la technologie des rêves qui émerge notamment à travers les laboratoires de recherche académique, les start-ups technologiques, les marchés de consommation ainsi que dans l'incubation artistique. Cette étude s'intéressera plus particulièrement à l'essor du « Radical Rest movement » régi par des activistes et des artistes noirs, un mouvement né de la nécessité de retrouver un sommeil et des rêves libérés des systèmes d'oppression capitalistes et coloniaux. Dès lors, ce mouvement a émergé en réponse à la croissance rapide d'une technologie du sommeil occidentale proposant de nouveaux produits aux consommateurs du Nord global qui souffrent de sommeils défectueux. Cette récente industrie de plusieurs milliards de dollars se développe par ailleurs à la frontière de la « neurotechnologie des rêves » — une technologie qui interagit directement avec l'esprit en train de rêver. Cet article souhaite ainsi étudier la technologie des rêves en éveillant un rêve largement oublié par la science occidentale moderne et qui en a pourtant façonné la trajectoire. Une trajectoire qui, nous le verrons, contraste avec les conceptions de la philosophie indienne classique s'intéressant à l'état de conscience dans le sommeil. À travers le portrait de ce contexte historique et global qui permet de comprendre les façons dont le sommeil et les rêves sont mesurés et quantifiés, cette étude retrace ensuite l'histoire des inégalités raciales en matière de sommeil aux États-Unis pour montrer comment cette oppression systémique continue d'avoir des effets néfastes sur la santé du sommeil des Noirs américains. Enfin, cet article examine les

objectifs de la technologie commerciale des rêves, en discernant les programmes et les hypothèses qui se répercutent sur le dualisme cartésien et sous-tend les conceptions scientifiques occidentales des rêves, de l'identité et de la conscience. Finalement, ces points de vue seront complexifiés et discutés à travers l'étude des pratiques et des valeurs soutenues par les activistes et artistes noirs du « Radical Rest movement », dont le travail fait du repos physique et émotionnel : un lieu puissant de guérison des traumatismes et de résistance aux vecteurs d'oppression de la suprématie blanche et du capitalisme.

ABSTRACT :

This article situates the meeting points of dream tech and the radical rest movement, centering on Black creative and community practices to contextualize the emergence of dream tech in academic research labs, tech startups, consumer markets, and artistic incubations. The article describes the rise of the Radical Rest movement, led by Black activists and artists, in response to the need to reclaim sleep and dreams from colonial agendas and capitalist systems of oppression. This movement has developed parallel to the rapid growth of sleep technology, offering new products for sleep-deprived consumers of the global North. The next frontier of this new multibillion-dollar industry is dream neurotech—technology that directly interfaces with the dreaming mind. The article introduces dream tech by unearthing a largely forgotten dream that shaped the trajectory of modern Western science, a trajectory that is contrasted with views about consciousness in sleep espoused by classical Indian philosophers. With this historical and global context for understanding how sleep and dreams are measured and quantified, the article then historicizes racial sleep inequities in the U.S. to frame how systematic oppression continues to have adverse effects on the sleep health of Black Americans. The article examines the aims of commercial dream tech, discerning agendas and assumptions that reverberate with the Cartesian dualism underlying Western scientific views of dreams, selfhood, and consciousness. These views will be complicated by the practices and values of Black activists and artists in the contemporary Radical Rest movement. Their work uplifts physical and emotional rest as a powerful site for healing trauma and resisting the oppressive vectors of white supremacy and capitalism.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES :

Mia Imani is an international interdisciplinary artist and arts writer. Harrison interrogates the ways communities can heal individual, communal, and societal trauma by creating works that live in-between the worlds of art and science. This “third-way” mixes unconventional methods (dreams, rituals) and science (ethnography, geography, psychoanalysis) to create new ways of being and becoming. She strives to create generative pieces that allow the works of the artist to have a second breath outside of the confinements of an exhibition. Her written work lives in the pages of *Art Papers*, *Cultured Magazine*, *Contemporary And*, *Daddy Magazine*, *Frieze*, *Hyperallergic*, *Vice*, and more.

Saelyx Finna creates audiovisual media about the emergence of dream tech, facilitates community engagement and impact campaigns for independent film releases, and researches the neuroethics of dream tech. They have presented about dream tech at the IxDA Interaction Design Conference, International Association for the Study of Sleep and Dreams, Grinnell College, and the Dream Engineering Seminar Series. Previously known as Courtney Sheehan, Saelyx is the former artistic and executive director for Northwest Film Forum, a comprehensive independent film center in Seattle, Washington. They are the co-founder of Alliance for Action, a national network of film exhibitors and distributors working to make the film industry more equitable. Saelyx is currently developing *Under the Dream*, an experiential documentary about the multiverse of our dreaming minds.