

Avatar Update

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A subscription newsletter
to bring you bits and pieces
that clarify understanding
as I come to learn more
in my own Rabbit Hole
discoveries

Old-World Sleep

Thanks to our present culture, we are losing more than just our brains and wits, and what I am about to add to the list you already know, but there is a little-known facet of it that you probably do not know! “It” is that state so deeply and easily enjoyed by babies and dogs (who do it for some 20 hours a day, I once read), now confoundingly elusive and chronically unsatisfying for adult humans of the industrial age. “It” is sleep.

Some of us can still conk out and be dead to the world until the morning alarm or our own internal clock kicks us awake, but others – many others – have lost this pleasure, tossing and turning as the wee hours tick away and stressful churnings of the mind parade through them instead of blissful dreams. Those who *can* fall asleep go to bed early to bank at least a few hours before that mid-night wakefulness takes hold, and others stay up as late as possible so sheer fatigue can put them out and keep them that way until dawn. Some get up at 3 or 4 a.m. and bake cookies, read, get on the computer, clean the house—all much easier if you live alone. It’s called insomnia, and everyone knows about it; everyone knows there’s an epidemic of sleeplessness today. It’s blamed on everything from stress and busy-ness to our biorhythms being off, to too much WiFi and cell phones. But, lo and behold, there is actually something that seems like insomnia but isn’t ... and is perfectly natural and normal – if you live in moonlight, and I am actually not kidding about that.

Welcome to segmented sleep! I will quote from a compilation article in the August 2013 *Harper’s*, titled “Are You Sleeping?” This particular passage comes from “Segmented Sleep” by a Virginia Tech history professor by the name of A. Roger Ekirch:

[H]uman slumber has a history. Not only sleep but popular perceptions of its value have varied from one era or culture to the next. Before the modern

age, Western households took extraordinary pains to ensure both the quality and the safety of their sleep, which promised to restore withered spirits as well as physical health. To fall asleep, according to an East Anglian saying, was to “forget the world.” Bug hunts, magical amulets, prayers, and potions were just a few of the precautions taken at bedtime—often in vain, according to diaries and medical texts. Threats to peaceful repose, both real and imaginary, lurked everywhere, from frigid temperatures and fleas to the Prince of Darkness, ruler of a shadow government at war with the kingdom of Christ. At no other time did families seem so vulnerable.

More than that, pre-industrial sleep, I came to discover, was segmented. Unlike the seamless slumber we strive to achieve, sleep once commonly consisted of two major intervals, a “first sleep” and a “second sleep,” bridged after midnight by an hour or more of wakefulness in which people did practically everything imaginable. They rose to perform chores, tend to sick children, raid a neighbor’s apple orchard. Others, remaining abed, recited prayers and pondered dreams. ... To judge from textual references as early as Homer’s *Odyssey*, the prevailing mode of slumber for ages was bi-phasic. Virgil’s *Aeneid*, composed in the first century B.C., speaks of the “hour which terminates the first sleep, whe the car of Night had as yet performed but half its course.”

There was scientific support for segmented sleep in a clinical study conducted by researchers at the National Institute of Mental Health in the early 1990s. More than a dozen male subjects, deprived of artificial light at night for several weeks, began sleeping in segments. Moreover, ethnographic evidence indicated that a variety of non-Western cultures, bereft of modern lighting, experienced

first and second sleep—among them the Tiv of central Nigeria and the Surinamese Maroons. In short, far from being timeless, our form of slumber today is remarkably young, with a provenance dating back only two centuries, not to the primeval past.

Not until the late 1800s did segmented sleep arouse medical concern in the West. By then, sleep had become consolidated and compressed, a consequence of both the growing pervasiveness of artificial illumination (first gas, then electric), which reconfigured the human body's circadian clock, and of a heightened emphasis on efficiency and productivity born of the Industrial Revolution. For mounting numbers of people on both sides of the Atlantic, sleep became a necessary evil best confined to a single interval. ... Parents were instructed to mold children into early risers ... [forbidden to] “turn upon the other ear to take a second nap.” ...

Not that this transformation occurred overnight. The evolution of modern sleep was protracted and uneven, spanning the better part of the 1800s. By the century's end, however, the normality of seamless slumber was broadly accepted.

So to reflect a little, it appears that the Industrial Revolution gave us a new productivity/efficiency ethic, which, together with the newfangled nighttime electric lights, caused us to cram our sleep into a single stretch – basically to get it over with. The saying (attributed to Ben Franklin), “Early to bed, early to rise, makes a man healthy, happy and wise,” is the essence, Wikipedia tells us, of a “productivity method ... recommended since antiquity [and now] by a number of personal development gurus. The philosopher Aristotle said, ‘It is well to be up before daybreak, for such habits contribute to health, wealth, and wisdom.’”

But that was before electric lights! What Wiki doesn't tell us is that people had up to 14 hours of darkness to contend with and thus had to pass the time somewhat creatively—and comfortably—which led to a great interest in beds and bedding. It was not yet the age of Sleep Number and Tempurpedic mattresses, but there was much experimentation with blankets, bolsters, stuffings and the like. Beds, Ekirch informs us (<http://www.academicroom.com/article/sleep-we-have-lost-pre-industrial-slumber-british-isles>), were:

typically the most expensive articles of family furniture. Between the 15th and 17th centuries,

English beds evolved from straw pallets on bare floors to wooden frames complete with pillows, sheets, blankets, coverlets, and “flock mattresses,” which were typically filled with rags and stray pieces of wool. Affluent homes boasted elevated bedsteads, feather mattresses, and heavy curtains to ward off dangerous drafts and inquisitive eyes. ... [F]amilies were investing heavily in superior beds not only as a mark of social prestige but also for their greater comfort. ... [B]eds were among the first possessions purchased by newlyweds as well as the first items bequeathed in wills to favored heirs.

Circadian Insomnia

Needless to say, once the word got out by way of Professor Ekirch's research that waking up in the night and not returning to sleep for a number of hours was actually quite natural, he was bombarded with attention. From *Harper's*:

What I had initially thought tangential to a study of nocturnal culture became instead a source of widespread interest. Newspaper reviews and radio appearances invariably became discussions of first and second sleep. I was invited to speak to medical gatherings. ... I also received emails from patients suffering from “middle of the night” insomnia. Most expressed relief when they learned that their wakefulness was not necessarily abnormal – indeed, viewed from the cosmic perch of history, their slumber appeared quite natural. In the view of David Nebauer, a specialist in sleep medicine at Johns Hopkins, consolidated sleep, as an artificial invention of modern life, may be inherently unstable. It also stands to reason that completing the transition from biphasic sleep, preeminent in all likelihood since time immemorial, would take longer than one or even two centuries.

Whew! You don't know how pleased I was to come across this information myself. As one who hates bright overhead lights, my own evening surroundings are always dimly lit, with efforts not to use lights at all (e.g., when talking on the phone). I *love* going to sleep early in the winter, and because of all this have been a biphasic sleeper for a long time. Waking up in the wee hours used to be a source of concern by itself to me, but now I have been completely freed of this anxiety, and use the time for rumination— something our interruption-filled daytime busy-ness definitely shorts us on. There are also endless ways to stretch your muscles in

bed—even with small movements of the shoulders, back, thighs, hips ... just try it, it's amazing! ...and exactly what you would *not* do during the day because stretching requires time and patience and ultimately confers a wonderful state of relaxation, perfect for transitioning right back to sleep. And once you can enjoy the fact that you don't have insomnia, it's much easier to enter the second sleep phase.

Today's sleep experts (who do not appear to know the whole story on sleep, it would appear), recommend a vast array of preparations and aids designed to combat the circadian disruption produced by our lights and computers and schedules. You are to rid your bedroom of blue lights (e.g. electric clocks) and not use the TV or computer or phone or iPad for at least an hour before retiring. Then there are teas and herbs and aromatherapy creams and CDs with music and meditations, to say nothing of \$1000 mattresses and \$4000 pulsed-frequency mats. None of these experts warns you to disconnect your router at night (or go back to wired Internet altogether); the link between our cells being jolted to pieces by microwaves firing throughout the house (let's not forget our 6 Ghz cordless DECT phones) is glossed over or simply not made. You are also, according to the experts (e.g., Dan Pardi, of Stanford University's behavioral-science department) supposed to sleep in pitch darkness. This means using eye-patches (the kind the airlines used to provide) and heavy blinds or curtains, keeping your bedroom cool (under 70 degrees) and taking hot baths or showers 30 minutes before bed. But it all seems so complicated, to say nothing of expensive, when all you really have to do is change a few habits and go back—only a little way—toward the Stone Age.

I will add some more very important things about sleep, from a Dr. Mercola newsletter. It begins with the usual *no-one-seems-to-really-know-why-we-sleep*, and then we learn:

In people carrying the gene for fatal familial insomnia (FFI), a damaged thalamus (which is located in your brain) makes it impossible to sleep. First, the ability to nap disappears, then it becomes increasingly difficult to sleep at night, progressing over the course of a year until, eventually, it kills you. In a healthy person, however, it's estimated that you might be able to survive for two to 10 years without sleep before dying, but the consequences it would have on your ability to function would be another story.

Carrying on:

[E]ven if you're asleep, your brain is likely still awake, which may explain why noises you're

conditioned to respond to—such as the sound of your name or alarm clock—wake you up easily while other noises do not. Among the leading theories on why we sleep is that it's a vital time to recuperate from the damage of daily living. As the Huffington Post reported: "There's substantive supporting evidence, according to Harvard Medical School, in the facts that 'many of the major restorative functions in the body like muscle growth, tissue repair, protein synthesis, and growth hormone release occur mostly, or in some cases only, during sleep.'"

Consider, for instance, that repair cells in your brain double during sleep, while your brain's glymphatic system, which helps to flush out waste, is about 10 times more active when you're sleeping. During sleep, your brain cells actually shrink to facilitate the removal of more waste, and removing these "byproducts of neural activity" may be a key reason why sleep is so restorative. Study researcher Maiken Nedergaard, M.D., D.M.Sc., the co-director of the University of Rochester's Center for Translational Neuromedicine, said: "The brain only has limited energy at its disposal and it appears that it must [choose] between two different functional states—awake and aware or asleep and cleaning up."

Waking Up to SWAT

How would you like it if you were 12 years old and sound asleep doing neural clean-up on a Saturday morning after a hard week of school, and were then rudely awakened to a SWAT team surrounding your bed? This is what happened to Zachary Dortch of Murrieta, California, his parents unable to stop it. In fact, after the SWAT blazed into the house and had a discussion with the family downstairs, the team insisted on tromping up to Zack's room to rouse him. The ordeal did not end there. The Swatters ransacked every room, ate lunch, amused themselves playing pool ... spent seven hours creating havoc, having fun, and holding the family hostage.

It all began with Zack (age 12, remember) creating some graffiti in public places on his way home from school on the days his mother worked and he rode the bus. Because the graffiti was regularly cleaned off by the town, he interpreted that to be an opportunity to renew it, like a freshly washed blackboard to write and draw on. Well, one day Zack and a buddy with whom he did this were arrested. His parents, Kim and David Dortch (nurse and optometrist, respectively),

were horrified that he had been misbehaving this way and assured the town that they would do all that was necessary to remedy any damage. However, good will was not enough for Murrieta agencies, who inflamed the situation to the point that David Dortch has now been criminally charged for running a methamphetamine lab in his home and endangering the welfare of his child.

What? you say. Where did they get that? You can hear the whole spellbinding story for free on Red Ice Radio (146 minutes, at <http://www.redicecreations.com/radio/2014/10/RIR-141027.php>), and it is well worth a listen, because this could have happened to any of us, as the state is definitely exploring all of its totalitarian options, testing the ready compliance of its agencies and courts in proceedings against normal people based on utter, ludicrous fictions. Yes, the Dortches had certain vulnerabilities (e.g., growing some permitted medical marijuana and a child who had defaced public property), but the escalation of the charges and the unrelenting dishonesty of attorneys, police and the courts have reached cartoon proportions that defy not only logic but the very notion that one can expect any reasonable behavior from those involved in “the system” at all. It is clear, in Murrieta, that you can’t.

It occurred to me that the descent of the Swatters (as I call them) and the ensuing criminal charges for possession of illegal substances (not true) and housing a meth lab (absolutely not true) might have been a *drill gone live*, just like the story of “Adam Lanza” opening fire on a school in Connecticut in December 2012. The media ran with stories and details that didn’t add up, and legislation was lobbied for and introduced as a consequence of the event at Sandy Hook. Here, in the Dortch case, we had the addition of the former “Mr. Temecula” to the SWAT team (a local muscular hero) that Saturday ... and what for? except perhaps, literally, to fill it out?

Says Kim Dortch, staggered by the corrupt Riverside County police and its private, corporatized agencies:

I don’t know what kind of test site we’ve been designated to be as far as how far the militarized boots are going to be tolerated by a bedroom suburban community ... but we *are* one of those towns now that has a tank, we *are* one of those towns that has a militarized police department.

...

I [for one] am not going to comply with laws that violate natural law, common law, God’s law – I don’t care *who* wrote it down and said it’s *the law*. That is *not* the law. That is legal code and statute,

and it’s a counterfeit, and it’s man made – and these are your *elected legislators* doing this? ... We’ve got to start there, with these people who are making up laws that say you have to give up your DNA when you haven’t even had a day in court. You’re not *guilty* of anything yet and they want part of your body, your genetic code. Look what they’re doing with genetic engineering on this planet. This is no small thing, folks. You can’t trust law enforcement anymore that that DNA isn’t going to end up at a crime scene somewhere where you haven’t even been! This planet has just gotten completely out of control.

...

This is not okay, to traumatize 12-year-olds over made-up evidence. Even if [Zack] *had* committed another crime and painted on a wall, does this merit SWAT invading an American home and four [humongous] militarized officers waking up a 12-year-old child in his bed sleeping? What has happened to America? ... I want to know, in Riverside County, where are the good cops, because not a single member of law enforcement in Riverside County has stood up in our defense ... and said *this is over-reaching, this is ridiculous*.

Child Protectiveness

I then heard another interview on Red Ice, following the Dortches, in which a former Child Protective Services investigator disclosed that authorities are currently targeting parents who are growing medical marijuana in order to abscond with their children and make them wards of the state. (This show, with Carlos Morales, can be found at <http://www.redicecreations.com/radio/2014/11/RIR-141126.php>; the statement by the guest begins at about 46 minutes). Wow—that strategy certainly fits what has happened to the Dortch family! As I said above, they had certain vulnerabilities, which have clearly been exploited to the max. This “max” includes criminal charges that are entirely made up, with no evidence whatsoever to substantiate them, but does the justice system care? Not a bit. Did the Dortches’ attorneys help? So far two have been incredibly unhelpful, gladly pocketing thousands of dollars (the family’s entire savings) as retainers and then, in the case of the lawyer hired to defend Zack, absolutely refusing to speak with his parents because she was only representing their son. “Get your own attorney,” was her recommendation, despite the fact that Zack was only 12 and had little to offer in the way of case input.

In a follow-up interview I did with Kim, she mentioned

something that stuck in my mind. You can listen to the podcast at AboutTheSky.com/podcasts ... she said that what is happening is a counterfeit re-creation of everything natural that we are operating in and taking for reality. For instance, the codes and statutes that govern our existence, imposed by local governments and courts. This is, as Kim puts it, “man-made law.” Carlos Morales (former CPS worker) begins his interview by informing us that in America, parents don’t have a claim to their children – the government does. In fact, the government owns minor children outright and can seize them whenever it sees fit. This, as Kim would say, goes against “natural law.” Natural law awards children’s protection and children themselves to parents, but the government, Carlos Morales tells us, is continually deeming parents unfit and removing children from their care. Yes, we all know that some parents are unfit, but listening to the Morales interview, you learn the dangers of allowing children to be interviewed by CPS agents without their parents in attendance. The agents will direct the children into making very unfortunate statements by a series of clever questions that are not only leading but generate such pressure and trickery that children ultimately “confess” what isn’t the case.

As for who staffs Child Protective Services, Carlos says:

[When] I started going in for training, I realized they were taking pretty much anyone with a bachelor’s degree. There was a guy with a [music] degree in saxophone from Berkeley. We’re talking about people who are not exactly knowledgeable on the minds of children and, with a whole two months of training, we’re supposed to be able to handle disputes, we have to understand child development, child psychology and forensics. Two months of training. But in actuality, the vast majority of the time we were there, all that we were learning about were ... procedures, ways of getting the answers that we want, and basically being taught that all parents are going to be liars and most of them are just awful individuals.

...

Essentially, all that has to happen is that someone makes a phone call to Child Protective Services headquarters. This person can name themselves or choose to be anonymous. In either case the parent will never know the accuser, which is unconstitutional, but hey, who cares about that ...? The reasons can be that the parents are homeschooling the child, the child is playing outside for too long, the child is too fat or too thin, or in rare cases, that there is actual abuse. It should

be kept in mind that 78% of removals in the United States done by CPS are not for physical or sexual abuse, they’re for something called “negligence.” We’ll get into the negligence thing later, but as we’ll find, the vast majority of CPS cases revolve around the use of ... marijuana.

After the intake, one of these ... investigators goes off to try to decipher fact from fiction. Generally, they try to talk to the child first. The reason ... is that according to Child Protective Services, and according to every state in the United States, the parent does not own the child – the state does. It’s under the auspices of *parens patriae*, the legal term meaning that the government has a mandate to help all minors and those who are legally unfit to take care of themselves.

...

The investigator generally goes out to the public school to speak to the child, [where] the child will be taken to a random room by this investigator [who] will then ask, “Can I record the conversation?” Mind you, a five-year-old is capable of consent in this particular [instance], according to CPS. ... The investigator then asks the child a barrage of vanilla questions like what’s-your-favorite-color, what’s-your-favorite-thing-to-do on any given day, and then you jump into questions like how-often-do-you-touch-your-father’s-genitalia... Whether it’s conscious or unconscious, generally the investigator is just trying to get the answer that they want, because they get this [intake] packet, and what do they see on that packet? ... [T]hey see that it’s alleged that this child is being molested, that the parents are snorting cocaine off hookers’ bums. ... [There] can be allegations of many different things, and all these are playing into the mind of the investigator ... [who] wants to be a hero.

Parens Patriae

So, yes, the CPS agent/investigator wants to confirm what has been alleged in the report and thereby “save” the child. I looked up *parens patriae* and found this at Legal-Dictionary/theFreeDictionary.com:

The *parens patriae* doctrine has its roots in English Common Law. In feudal times various obligations and powers, collectively referred to as the “royal prerogative,” were reserved to the king. The king exercised these functions in his role of

father of the country.

In the United States, the *parens patriae* doctrine has had its greatest application in the treatment of children, mentally ill persons, and other individuals who are legally incompetent to manage their affairs. The state is the supreme guardian of all children within its jurisdiction, and state courts have the inherent power to intervene to protect the best interests of children whose welfare is jeopardized by controversies between parents. This inherent power is generally supplemented by legislative acts that define the scope of child protection in a state.

The state, acting as *parens patriae*, can make decisions regarding mental health treatment on behalf of one who is mentally incompetent to make the decision on his or her own behalf, but the extent of the state's intrusion is limited to reasonable and necessary treatment.

The doctrine of *parens patriae* has been expanded in the United States to permit the attorney general of a state to commence litigation for the benefit of state residents for federal antitrust violations (15 U.S.C.A. § 15c). This authority is intended to further the public trust, safeguard the general and economic welfare of a state's residents, protect residents from illegal practices, and assure that the benefits of federal law are not denied to the general population.

States may also invoke *parens patriae* to protect interests such as the health, comfort, and welfare of the people, interstate Water Rights, and the general economy of the state. For a state to have standing to sue under the doctrine, it must be more than a nominal party without a real interest of its own and must articulate an interest apart from the interests of particular private parties.

preventing you from being a fit parent? ... They're using the medical marijuana license as a license to take away your child.

Because the way he worded this didn't quite flow, I have done my best above to make the sense clear. The way it looks, the "state" seems to be putting out bait in the form of legal marijuana (licenses/permits/regulation for certain people for certain purposes) and then taking advantage of such to exercise seizure from a different angle/argument ("if you use marijuana you are not a fit parent"). Although the legal marijuana plants never made it into the David Dortch criminal case, totally false charges of methamphetamine manufacturing and trafficking were made. All this, when heavily publicized as it has been by local media, makes Dr. Dortch really look like an unfit parent, in spite of the fact that the prosecution, suing on behalf of the People of California, has no evidence at all to prove its case. Is it all a scheme to shape local minds? Or is it a cruel exercise in *parens patriae*, to see how far the tentacles can reach and then to legislate toward widening the scope?

The state is the supreme guardian of all children within its jurisdiction, and state courts have the inherent power to intervene to protect the best interests of children whose welfare is jeopardized by controversies between parents. This inherent power is generally supplemented by legislative acts that define the scope of child protection in a state. "Controversies between parents" is, for instance, a divorce proceeding. While it makes sense that independent advocacy exists for children caught in their parents' disputes, when does intervention go too far? Some states are already seeking to protect unborn children by denying their pregnant mothers the right to medical privacy because their bodies are shared by a helpless other—whom the state by *parens patriae* must look out for. It's in the very words: *Child Protective Services*. Will the state claim its right to our eggs and sperm, subparts of the equation of life? "They want us out of the way so they can get at the stuff in our bodies," an angry friend said when I mentioned this. Will our Sheeple neighbors refuse or welcome such a future, I wonder ...?

Enlarging the Scope

About 46 minutes in his Red Ice interview, Morales says:

They're going after parents in California and in Colorado who have medical marijuana licenses. Here's the thing: Alcohol is legal in the United States, right? But if you're an alcoholic, CPS can go after you. Marijuana is legal, right? But ... who knows if you use your marijuana ... [and it's]