

Ayten Tartici

SLOW CONSUMABLES

*In 2015, the London-based German composer MAX RICHTER released **Sleep**, his longest and most enterprising album to date. Containing thirty-one compositions of varying lengths totaling almost eight-and-a-half hours of music, **Sleep** is based on repetitive variations of only a handful of musical themes. These variations are played by a small ensemble of piano, cello, organ, viola, violin, synthesizer, and soprano vocals. In putting together the intentionally soporific album, RICHTER collaborated with DAVID EAGLEMAN, a neuroscientist, to capture the sounds most conducive to shut-eye. As RICHTER explains:*

There's a sleep stage called "slow wave," where all your neurons go into a roughly 10 Hz kind of phase—this is when memory happens and learning and structuring. . . . That's the beneficial part of sleeping for our brains. People have been experimenting by trying to induce this sleep stage with repetitive sounds that are not too loud, not too bright, sounds that have recognizable architecture or structure.¹

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AYTEN TARTICI is a doctoral candidate in Comparative Literature at Yale University. Her current book manuscript explores the aesthetic and political stakes of slowness, starting with the modernist novel and extending through the emergence of recent movements, such as "slow food" and "slow cinema." She is interested in how form and temporality influence representations of expertise, class consciousness, and personal autonomy as well as audience engagement. Her articles and reviews have appeared in *Samuel Beckett Today / Aujourd'hui* and *Critical Inquiry*. She has also written cultural criticism and essays for publications such as *The Atlantic*, *The New York Times Book Review*, *The New York Review of Books Daily*, *the Los Angeles Review of Books*, *Slate*, and *The Yale Review*.

Consistent with the biological purpose of slow-wave sleep—the period during which our neocortical neurons rest—Richter invites his listeners to drift off during *Sleep* should they wish to do so. Although *Sleep* can be enjoyed as an album in the convenience of one's home, Richter has also staged several performances as sustained overnight events. The first live concert took place in 2015 in the reading room at the Wellcome Collection, an eclectic museum-library dedicated to the history of science in central London. Among old

facsimiles of anatomical drawings, glass flasks, outdated birth extraction tools, and a now defunct X-ray machine, listeners nestled into blue sleeping bags instead of seats.² Subsequent performances occurred in equally offbeat venues: outdoors in Grand Park in Los Angeles and indoors at the recently restored Kraftwerk, an industrial power station in Berlin. Gesturing toward the political nature of his composition, Richter has described his project as “a piece of protest music,” “a deliberately political piece” that could serve as “a roadblock in the information super highway.”³ *Sleep* was composed, in other words, to serve as a brake on the attention-draining quality of twenty-first-century life, a context in which the piece’s intentionally protracted length becomes an act of critique. Despite that positioning, attendees were generally allowed to use their phones, and no one was expected to make it through the entirety of the piece.

It is exactly that lack of expectation, the permission to be sometimes inattentive, that ensured listeners were actually exposed to *Sleep*, despite its length. In not just allowing but encouraging listeners to sleep through the performance, Richter—whose work bears the aural imprint of, among others, Philip Glass’s experimental minimalism—seems to be aware of the imposition that a complete listening experience of eight-and-a-half hours would entail. Richter shrewdly avoids trying our patience with the duration of his work by offering listeners an escape valve; even when the piece is performed live, listeners can simply choose to absent themselves from parts of the performance.⁴

I call works such as Richter’s *Sleep* “slow consumables.” These are works that embrace slowness as a political act of anticapitalist ideology, but that also mitigate the aesthetic risks of using performatively lengthy forms to communicate that political position. Their dual nature stems from a tension between a professed mission to counter the speed of life under late capitalism and a latent eagerness for the artwork itself to be engaged with. This tension results in

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adaptations of aesthetic form—such as not requiring full attendance—in a way that is cognizant of not imposing on the audience’s time. One of the principal ways slow consumables negotiate this tension is through the environment in which they are encountered: a concert at which you can sleep or a museum installation you can flit in and out of. Although my use of the term “consumables” may sound derogatory with its suggestion of ethical compromise, these works actually display a sophisticated understanding of their relationship to their intended audience, one that is conceived of less as a simple exchange of artistic goods than as a negotiation over the allocation of time and attention to the art work. Importantly, this article’s approach to the consumption of art differs from how other theorists have sometimes conceived of it. For instance, Pierre Bourdieu defines artistic consumption as “a stage in a process of communication” that both reveals and reinforces hierarchies of social difference, an act whereby the consumption of art becomes a means of displaying one’s “cultural competence.”⁵ By contrast, the works I discuss are consumable in the sense that they are designed to be interacted with and do not insist on completion, given the various difficulties of form that result from their aesthetic engagement with slowness. Richter’s *Sleep* recognizes the issue of its own length and permits listeners to enter and exit its soundscape as a mitigating strategy.

I first offer a brief history of “slow” as an artistic and social phenomenon that visibly gained momentum in the late twentieth century. I then distinguish slow consumables from the larger category of slow art by discussing examples drawn from classical music, video art, durational installations, and television. Through the taxonomy I develop, I investigate how slow consumables permit fragmentary or incomplete participation. While I examine the ideological and institutional contexts of certain slow consumables in depth, I also push beyond the outward politics of these works to meditate on how they negotiate their own form as they adapt to different aesthetic spaces. In order to encourage individual audiences to buy in, a slow consumable will often tailor itself to that audience’s preferences, resulting in customization, and, therefore, the multiplication of distinct aesthetic experiences. For example, by permitting listeners to fade in and out of *Sleep*, Richter essentially allows each individual’s own phenomenal experience of the piece to become a different work of art, the audience members in effect composing idiosyncratic variations of the full theme through selection and shifts or lapses in attention. I conclude with a meditation on novelistic representations of slow art, specifically how Don DeLillo’s late novellas could be classified as

a different species of slow consumables through their self-conscious engagement with the aesthetics of slow art in a highly condensed format. I ultimately argue that the way in which slow consumables make compromises in their self-presentation as artistic products, such as by diluting the line between artist and viewer or between complete and fragmentary performance, challenge us to rethink those aesthetic categories, including traditional ideas about narrative.

Slow consumables such as Richter's *Sleep* emerge from a larger historical trend. Over the past thirty years, the label "slow" has been enthusiastically appended to an increasing number of social, cultural, and artistic practices, with little critical consensus as to what that modifier actually means. What started in 1987 as a fiery manifesto in the leftist culinary magazine *Gambero Rosso* against the planned construction of a McDonald's near the Spanish Steps in Rome blossomed into a series of self-described slow movements. Comparing speed to a virus against which the populace should be inoculated, the original Slow Food manifesto's crusading tone galvanized others, from sex therapist Nicole Daedone's *Slow Sex: The Art and Craft of the Female Orgasm* (2011) to Maggie Berg and Barbara Seeber's "Slow Professor Manifesto," to sleeper hit Norwegian television series *Slow TV*.⁶ *Slow TV*'s protracted episodes, to which Netflix purchased the streaming rights in 2016, include a seven-hour train ride from Bergen to Oslo as well as a twelve-hour overnight knitting session. On November 1, 2013, millions tuned in to watch docile sheep being gently held and sheared as their wool was spun into yarn.⁷

At the same time, there has been an embrace of the moniker "slow" by critical theorists and cultural historians alike in reference to artists who themselves do not necessarily identify with any particular slow movement. At the 2003 San Francisco International Film Festival, Michel Ciment coined the term "cinema of slowness" to refer, not to the aesthetics of ever-lengthening comic book action movies, but to a certain kind of international auteur film often characterized by minimal camera cuts and lengthy run times.⁸ Representative directors include Nuri Bilge Ceylan, Béla Tarr, Abbas Kiarostami, Tsai Ming-liang, and Bruno Dumont. The deliberately unhurried pace of these directors' films can try even the most dedicated of audiences. In a somewhat different vein, Stockholm's Nationalmuseum curated an exhibition entitled *Slow Art* in 2012 focusing on works that required a significant amount of time to make, such as Helena Sandström's *Egg Shell Necklace* (1997). A seemingly simple piece of



Figure 1.

Helena Sandström, *Egg Shell Necklace* (1997). 24-kanat gold and sweet water pearls (2.2 × 33 × 30 cm).
Photo: © Hans Thorwid/Nationalmuseum.

jewelry, *Egg Shell Necklace* is in fact made of fragile hen eggs that were painstakingly broken and reattached to a gold wire (Fig. 1). The piece's origin story thus trains our attention on issues of vulnerability, tempo, and artisanship.

Yet contemporary slow art is not merely interested in the labor involved in artistic production. Take, for example, Scott Billings's *A Risky Jump* (2015), a video art piece that stretches a recording of the artist falling thirteen feet through a trapdoor in his studio through the use of slow motion (Fig. 2). What was originally a matter of seconds comes to last over seven minutes. Bringing to the fore minute gestures and changes in facial expression, Billings's work recalls and expands on prior installation art from the 1990s, such as Douglas Gordon's *24 Hour Psycho* (1993).

Unlike Sandström's *Egg Shell Necklace*, *A Risky Jump* does not emphasize the duration of the labor preceding the artwork's final form, but instead the capacity



Figure 2.

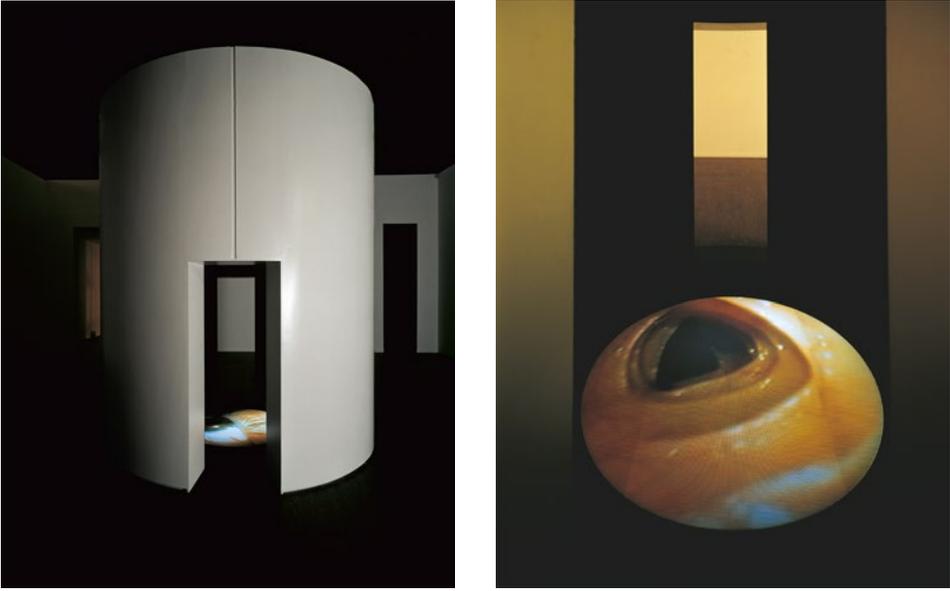
Scott Billings, *A Risky Jump* (2015). Still image from video installation (7:30 minutes). Image courtesy of the artist.

of technology to manipulate the duration of the experience of the art itself. If the former is about the temporality of craftsmanship and the risks inherent in investing prodigious amounts of time in one artwork, the latter is about creating an altered temporal experience that defamiliarizes our aesthetic expectations. As the video draws to a close, Billings safely lands on top of a thickly padded mattress, making us wonder what was so hazardous about his “risky jump” after all. That sense of relief as he finally reaches the floor, however, takes a full seven minutes to arrive. Billings’s work suggests that the phenomenal experience of slowness is as important as a work’s raw length in clock time. Although seven minutes pales in comparison to Richter’s eight-hour-plus production, *A Risky Jump* still forcefully communicates the feeling of slowness through its extreme dilation. As one can see, slowness in contemporary culture has been freighted with so many different meanings that it almost seems to defy generalization.

Given the malleability with which this word has appeared in our critical discourse, as well as the vehement defense of its indeterminacy by some of its practitioners, criticism on slowness has often struggled to pin down both its origins and its place in modern culture.⁹ Lutz Koepnick’s *On Slowness* (2014) finds links between slowness and modernism, specifically in Walter Benjamin’s

discussion of slow motion in cinematography and its capacity to unveil what is unexpected.¹⁰ Mark Goble, in his wide-ranging observations on slow motion as a technique in the Western film genre, attempts to dismantle the cliché that slowness is alien to modernity's culture of acceleration by examining how technology actually permits us to indulge in the fantasy of slow motion.¹¹ Although the abovementioned studies are valuable in their own right, the goal here is not to provide answers to issues of periodization or definitional questions such as whether slowness refers to an artwork's form, its content, or both. Rather, I hope to complicate the implied value judgments about whether slowness, as conceived by these artists, serves as a solution for treating a larger, unjust state of affairs by showing how changes in artistic form both bolster and undercut that message. By making a long work easier to interact with, the artist may end up spreading his or her political understanding of slowness more effectively, but at the risk of jeopardizing that very message.

What divides slow practices more generally from the works I have identified as slow consumables, and how is that distinction driven by how such works interact with the public on a formal level? Whereas slow art generally tries its audience's patience with either its length or its dilation, a slow consumable adjusts itself to our attention span while still adhering to slowness as its principal theme. For example, in British Palestinian artist Mona Hatoum's twelve-minute-long installation *Corps étranger* (1994), a video of an endoscopy of the artist's own body was projected onto the ground of a white, cylindrical structure at the Centre Pompidou (Fig. 3). The museumgoer could easily access its extended, and intentionally discomfiting, subject matter but also just as easily escape from it if the experience proved to be too much. This logic of spatial interaction contrasts even with a traditional theater or cinema space where friction results from getting up and leaving halfway through the show. It is also unnecessary to take in the video's narrative from beginning to end. Compare that with the "cinema of slowness," in which an audience's full participation is generally required to achieve narrative meaning and where social expectations structure an uninterrupted viewing experience. In Turkish auteur Nuri Bilge Ceylan's over-three-hour-long *The Wild Pear Tree* (2018), missing certain parts of the narrative would render the concluding sequence of the film, and the symbolism it depends on, incoherent. Slow consumables are less constrained in that respect. Hatoum's staging allows her to communicate a graphic invasion of privacy, with its slow, probing medical eye, independent of whether the spectator



Figures 3A and 3B.

Mona Hatoum, Corps étranger (1994). Video installation with cylindrical wood structure, video projector and player, amplifier and four speakers (350 × 300 × 300 cm / 137¾ × 118 × 118 in.). Installation view at Centre Pompidou, Paris. © Mona Hatoum. Courtesy Centre Pompidou, Mnam-CCI / Dist RMN-GP. Photo: Philippe Migeat.

arrives at the beginning of the twelve-minute run or catches some combination of seconds in-between. In the next section, I dwell in greater detail on how that fragmentary aesthetic contributes to a work's consumability by anticipating disparate and uneven levels of attention and focus.

ALLURE OF THE FRAGMENTARY

Richter is not the first composer to test the limits of musical length. Erik Satie's *Vexations* (1893) is arguably the longest piece of classical music that exists. Yet Satie's score is also his shortest: a mere four lines of notes taking up no more than half a sheet of paper. Performance instructions in the manuscript, scribbled in black watered-down ink, read, "In order to play this motif 840 times in succession, it would be advisable to prepare oneself beforehand, and in the deepest silence, by serious immobilities," with a tempo marked as "très lent," or "very slow."¹² Satie neither performed the piece publicly nor talked about it to friends. Baffled as to which "motif" had to be repeated during the performance,

or whether the composer's notation was just a suggestion, posthumous interpretations of the score have varied wildly. Steve Whiting has observed how, "[i]n the best of avant-garde traditions, *Vexations* reflects no apparent urge for communication with a public; if anything, it resists realization in sound by leaving formidable barriers to divining its author's intentions concerning interpretation."¹³ *Vexations* is, true to its title, intentionally vexing and taxing on the listener who partakes in it.

On September 9, 1963, the composer John Cage, along with nine other pianists, staged the first complete performance of *Vexations* at the Pocket Theatre in New York, which clocked in at approximately 18 hours and 40 minutes. The piece's extravagant length evoked a spiritual pursuit of transcendence through repetition in which the material quality of different sounds revealed their own "interpenetration," the metaphysical term that Cage had adapted from Zen Buddhism.¹⁴ Cage hoped listeners would stay as long as they could, a wish reinforced by an incentive built into the price of admission: for every twenty minutes a brave listener stayed, he or she would receive a refund of twenty cents.¹⁵ Running the numbers, admission would have been gratis to anyone who stayed for just over eight hours. "In this way," Cage concluded, "People will understand that the more art you consume, the less it should cost."¹⁶ Of Cage's crusade here against the public's short attention span, Matthew Mendez has written, "[r]ailing against time treated as a commodity to be doled out conservatively, the Cagean 'aesthetic of wastefulness' works to sever the bond between time and capital."¹⁷ One of the unintended consequences of the cover-fee rebate structure was an emphasis on the virtue of a concertgoer's endurance, which was worth more than even the artist's own compensation. Refunding listeners more the longer they stay also implicitly conceded that some attendees were likely to give up mid-performance, and that a fragmentary experience was therefore a lesser experience. In a subsequent interview with the art critic David Sylvester, Cage reiterated his conviction that subjecting oneself to a long, slow piece of art aids in learning an immanent kind of attentiveness: "[I]f one began such a listening period in a state of non-discipline, one could move into a state of discipline, simply by remaining in the room and being subjected to this activity which eventually one finds interesting."¹⁸ There is a resonant ambiguity in Cage's words here, namely whether the consumption of slow art is about an individual's own self-discipline or a vision of the artist as akin to a didactic authority, subjecting his or her pupils to art for their own good. Despite Cage's best efforts,

very few of *Vexations*' 1963 audience remained for the duration of the performance. The repetitive nature of the piece itself seemed to essentially render it into a slow consumable; that is, it was possible for an audience to perceive its conceptual essence without having to partake in all of it. In fact, listeners left the room at different intervals.

As Cage's work evolved, so too did his understanding of the relationship of his work to the fragmentary. For example, a work such as *HPSCHD*, a Cage collaboration with Lejaren Hiller, embraces the logic underlying slow consumables even more explicitly. *HPSCHD* was composed of seven solo pieces for harpsichord and fifty-two tapes of computer-generated audio. The first performance was in 1969 in Assembly Hall at the University of Illinois and lasted around five hours. James Pritchett notes that "although each tape and each harpsichord solo had a duration of twenty minutes, they could be repeated as many times as desired, with pauses of any duration between repetitions, thus allowing the performance to last for hours."¹⁹ Seven thousand individuals attended and were encouraged to move freely around the performance space. As Jason Freeman notes, "movement through the *HPSCHD* performance venue transforms the listener's relationship to the sound sources: which musical elements are foregrounded, which are backgrounded, and which are indistinguishable as independent elements at all. It is up to each audience member to discover his or her own meaning in the evening's performance."²⁰ In intentionally designing this slow musical composition to be partially consumed, Cage permitted his audience to generate their own idiosyncratic self-contained versions of *HPSCHD*; each performance, as refracted through the individual listener's subjective experience, was irreducibly unique.

Subsequent interpretations of Cage's work have carried on the tradition of slow consumables in other directions. John Cage's composition, *ORGAN²/ASLSP* (*As SLOW as Possible*) never specified an ideal length. While the original 1987 premiere lasted twenty-nine minutes, posthumous performances have interpreted Cage's imperative title on a completely different scale. In 2001, taking advantage of an organ's ability to play notes indefinitely as long as its pedals are depressed, the John Cage Organ Foundation began a performance of *ASLSP* at the St. Burchardi chapel in Halberstadt, Germany that is scheduled to go until 2640.²¹ Human operators only intervene at intermittent periods to adjust the weights on individual pedals when note changes in the score take place. The

first note change took place in 2013, twelve years after the original performance began. Because of the extreme dilation of this version, all a listener hears for years at a time is the sustained sounding of a single chord. Conceptually, the work seems to combine two of the previously discussed flavors of slowness—Scott Billings’s interest in dilation and Richter’s interest in length—but at a more extreme level.

Unlike Cage’s 1963 interpretation of Satie, in which the musical logic was based on repeating a particular sequence, the St. Burchardi chapel *ASLSP* leaves listeners inside a truly monotonous moment of suspended time. Any concept of productive repetition disappears. Christian Wolff, one of the nine pianists that performed *Vexations* with Cage in 1963, once observed how the variance among the pianists, the texture of their differing approaches, at least betrayed their personalities, generating a memorable aesthetic experience that stuck in his mind.²² By contrast, the St. Burchardi chapel performance of *ASLSP* emanates from an automated organ, flattening out all musical personality perceptible on a human timeline. The choice to stretch the piece to 2640 obviously makes it physically impossible for any one individual to listen to the piece from beginning to end, but there is, in that sense, also less to miss out on. A fragmentary experience is the only option available.

If the dilated version of *ASLSP* has so little to offer to the listener in the present, then what is its purpose? Why stretch it out if no one will be able to enjoy it? Jeffery Byrd and John Fritch note that “[t]he use of a temporal medium to create a monumental multigenerational experience is grounded with the hope that someone will be there to hear the end of the song,” implying that this rendition transcends the immediate effect of its being perceived as music, instead becoming a historical and political idea about the continuity of the human race.²³ Yet, at the same time, the St. Burchardi chapel performance of *ASLSP* is essentially about a rupture from that continuity, an absence. A live-feed website allows listeners to tune in at their leisure.²⁴ And by giving us permission to tap in and out of the performance at will, its physically impossible length actually makes it more accessible, both in the sense of entering and exiting its space and in its ability to be readily understood. One is reminded of Christian Marclay’s *The Clock* (2010), a twenty-four-hour video montage cut from Hollywood films in which the clock in each scene matches the actual time in the video itself; a viewer need not watch *The Clock* in its entirety to enjoy it. All of which is to

say that *ASLSP*'s concert organizers are not indifferent to their audience; on the contrary, the pomp and circumstance of each note change ceremony, the courting of journalists and pilgriming tourists, both digital and in the flesh, all signal an intense desire to be engaged with.

As a slow consumable, *Slow TV*'s programming represents a similar dynamic, particularly the intermingling of sporadic digital and physical attendees. In "Hurtigruten minutt for minutt" ("Hurtigruten minute by minute"), one of *Slow TV*'s most popular episodes, an uninterrupted 134-hour-long recording tracks the voyage of the cruise ship *MS Nordnorge* along the fjords from Bergen to Kirkenes. Whereas thirty percent of the Norwegian population tuned in to the train journey from Bergen to Oslo, almost half of Norway connected to the live broadcast of the *MS Nordnorge* on the internet at some point during the weekend it aired.²⁵ The principal camera mounted on the front of the ship tracks the gradual passage of day into night, the vicissitudes of weather, and the changing of the natural environment around the ship. There is little action to speak of. The cruise ship stops intermittently along the journey, perhaps to replenish fuel or to drop off the unedited footage from all of its cameras. These stops quickly became attractions unto themselves, as viewers who knew the ship's next stop could anticipate its arrival and become part of the record of this immense undertaking. Recalling the chord change ceremonies in Halberstadt, these were moments in which the audience was permitted to interact with a slow consumable at a discrete interval in its epically long narrative.

These episodes operate as a new genre of experiential travel narrative, one that can be enjoyed from the comfort of one's chosen platform, be it a TV, an iPhone, or a laptop. By refusing to make human actors the main attraction of their storyline, most of *Slow TV*'s episodes are also impersonal, repetitive, and predictable. We know that the shorn wool will spin on the wheel into yarn, that the Bergensbanen train will pass through 182 tunnels on its way to Oslo, and that the *MS Nordnorge* will reach Kirkenes at journey's end. Because of that quality, one is able to tune out and return at will, making *Slow TV* more accessible, open, and consumable.

Some of that openness to partial exposure may also reflect trends distinct to television and popular entertainment. As early as 1981, Douglas W. Smythe, in his analysis of "audience commodity," noted a shift in the viewing habits of North

American television viewers. Television, he argued, has become “aural-visual wallpaper: the set is left on and audience members either attend to it or drift between the television room and adjacent (or remote) rooms, ‘glimpsing’ the television set in passing and monitoring it auditorily all the while.”²⁶ That trend has only accelerated in the digital age, in which viewers have complete control over, and therefore the power to scroll, rewind, or manipulate, all kinds of media.²⁷

NEGOTIATIONS OF FORM

Slow consumables such as the St. Burchardi chapel *ASLSP*, *Slow TV*, and Richter’s *Sleep* share a common orientation toward consumability, a friendly amenability to the person who might be tempted to embrace them. However, these three can be further distinguished by the degree to which they are commercialized. At the end of the day, *ASLSP* is a more or less public product. Run by a foundation in an old German church, it might draw attention but not dollars. Though now part of Netflix’s catalog, *Slow TV*’s origins lie in the public, uncommercialized space of Norway’s version of PBS. Compare that with the evolution of Richter’s live performances of *Sleep*. The initial Wellcome Collection performance, due to the small size of the reading room, allowed for only twenty audience members. Attendees were asked to bring along their own sleeping bags and the performance was broadcast live on Radio 3 (Fig. 4). By contrast, the 2016 Kraftwerk Berlin performance, arguably the first truly public performance of *Sleep*, had around 400 attendees with undiscounted tickets sold at €45 a piece. In May 2018, Richter performed *Sleep* for 560 listeners at Spring Studios in New York City. Despite sponsorship from a mattress manufacturer, tickets cost \$250 per head. As blue ambient light poured over a sea of mattresses, the neat cursive of the Beautyrest logo could be seen imprinted in black letters on both pillow and sheet.

The choice to weave advertisements into a performance designed to combat information overload is no small irony, especially given Richter’s frequent positioning of his project as opposing the proliferation of ads in daily life. Richter noted that “[o]ur lives are very data-saturated now. We’re always on our screens, and mostly we’re being sold stuff. It squeezes out a lot of richness of what we are” and that “[w]e’re on that production-consumption hamster wheel all the time.”²⁸ Despite those remarks, the Beautyrest logos, replicated like the musical variations in *Sleep* they are meant to accompany, do not seem to be meant as



Figure 4.

Still image of Max Richter's Sleep (2015) as performed at the Wellcome Collection, London. Photograph courtesy of Mike Terry and Studio Richter Mahr.

satire. That commingling of art and product placement may partially emerge from a larger trend in contemporary aesthetics that is not unique to slow consumables. In his 1982 Whitney Museum lecture, Fredric Jameson observed how:

many of the newer postmodernisms have been fascinated precisely by that whole landscape of advertising and motels, of the Las Vegas strip, of the late show and Grade-B Hollywood film. . . . They no longer “quote” such “texts” as a Joyce might have done, or a Mahler; they incorporate them, to the point where the line between high art and commercial forms seems increasingly difficult to draw.²⁹

At the same time, Chin-Tao Wu has remarked on how corporations in America and Britain began in the 1980s to exercise significant influence on high culture, whether in the form of “niche marketing” to cultural elites, art acquisitions, or museum sponsorships.³⁰

Yet that blurring of lines between art and product is perhaps more dissonant with respect to slow consumables, which frequently pit themselves as a reaction against the ad-saturated speed of late capitalism. In another interview, Richter, after noting that “[w]e’re living in our neoliberal, sort of late-stage capitalist culture,” describes *Sleep* as an “invitation to stop that for a while.”³¹ While ironic then, *Sleep*’s incorporation of Beautyrest in its New York performance was likely an act of necessary sponsorship to stage a concert of this length and scale. If so, it is certainly a less pessimistic account than Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer’s view that advertising is the “elixir of life” propping up the entire culture industry.³² Still, this aspect of the New York performance of Richter’s *Sleep* returns us to the tension at the heart of slow consumables: outwardly wanting to resist the market economy, while at the same time also catering to it.

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Similarly, Slow Food, whose origins lie in elite circles of the Italian left, has long billed itself as anticapitalist in tenor if not in practice. Lauren Berlant describes Slow Food as a “movement that recognizes in a practice of ordinary inefficiency a way to counter the speeds with which capitalist activity destroys its environments while at the same time it makes living possible.”³³ Slow Food has often struggled, however, to navigate between social activism on behalf of an anticapitalist culinary way of life and its status as a lifestyle brand in which “organic” and “single origin” have become bourgeois badges of authenticity restricted to consumers of means. In *Slow Food Nation* (2005), one of the movement’s founders, Carlo Petrini, relates the story of visiting a California farmer’s market that he first describes negatively as a “boutique” before rationalizing the cost of its luxury foodstuffs: “The prices were astronomical, twice or even three times as high as those of ‘conventional’ products. But how hard it is to produce things so well, and what costs are involved in obtaining certification!”³⁴ Selling expensive produce to willing, wealthy buyers was a necessary compromise with economic reality given that the production of slow food as well as its consumption was costly.

This is not to cast aspersions on the sincerity of Slow Food's intervention. What interests me more are the various *forms* Slow Food has chosen to communicate its message. No Italian reader of the original Slow Food manifesto could miss the unmistakable shadow of the Italian Futurist poet, Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, on its verbal texture. Petrini even alludes to Marinetti without naming him: "It happened that, at the dawn of the century and all the way down, manifestos, written in a synthetic, fast style, were declaimed and shouted, on the teaching of velocity as a dominant ideology."³⁵ Both the Slow Food crowd and the Futurists share a rhetorical urgency, compressed into a format suitable for rapid consumption. Yet, while Marinetti's rapid-fire verbiage ("we wish to free our country from the stinking canker of its professors, archaeologists, tour guides, and antiquarians") matches his conceptual and political purpose—that is, the worship of fast—Petrini's verbal gambit is more internally in tension with itself.³⁶ His goal is to persuade us of slow's value but in a fast format; a long, dry treatise on European agricultural politics will not do.

Notably, the various international translations of Petrini's manifesto, as agreed by the local chapters formed in different countries, either tone down or completely elide the high-literary style of the Italian original. One could chalk that up to Slow Food's avowed interest in regionalism, but one also wonders whether the watered-down international versions were also about aiding in the diffusion of the organization's message by making it resonate outside of elite Italian cultural circles. This move bears similarities to Richter's own release of a shortened, one-hour version of *Sleep*, entitled *From Sleep*. These negotiations of form do not mean that either Slow Food or other slow consumables are fatally compromised. Rather, these works reveal the aesthetic trade-offs inevitably faced by proponents of slow in all its mutations.

THE FALLACY OF IMITATIVE FORM

The late novellas of Don DeLillo constitute a distinct species of slow consumable as short forms that *represent* the aesthetic paradoxes of slow art, including its implications for audience participation, or lack thereof. After 1997's gargantuan, 800-plus-page novel, *Underworld*, DeLillo's work took a turn. He began publishing compact texts marked by a clipped, staccato style. First came *The Body Artist* (2001) at barely over a hundred pages; *Cosmopolis* (2003), *Falling Man* (2007), *Point Omega* (2010), and *Zero K* (2016) quickly followed. In an oft-quoted PEN

interview, DeLillo explained that this change was not entirely under his control: “A novel determines its own size and shape and I’ve never tried to stretch an idea beyond the frame and structure it seemed to require.”³⁷ Besides their obvious interest in brevity, these late works also share a consistent, borderline-fanatical preoccupation with the philosophy of time, which has generated mixed reactions among critics. On the one hand, Donatella Izzo has called late DeLillo “postmodernism for dummies.”³⁸ Michiko Kakutani similarly concluded that *Cosmopolis* was a “major dud, as lugubrious and heavy-handed as a bad Wim Wenders film.”³⁹ On the other hand, Sam Jordison has noted the complex relationship between the time of reading and comprehension, suggesting that these tightly packed novellas, which at first glance can feel confusing or underwhelming, may simply “need to be read more than once to be understood.”⁴⁰

Complicating DeLillo’s turn to short form, *The Body Artist* and *Point Omega* both represent and dwell on artists who produce slow art and the reactions of the audiences who are subjected to their long durational form. For example, *The Body Artist* chronicles Lauren Hartke’s transformation of her bereavement into a long, bewildering piece of experimental theater that expects its audience to remain in the theater for the full performance. Her 75-minute, dialogue-free piece, “Body Time,” tracks her on-stage transformation from a mute Japanese woman into an older man resembling her late husband. A video feed of a Finnish highway and a prerecorded voicemail message play in the background on a loop.

The Body Artist differs in important ways from the other slow consumables discussed in this article. While slowness is its theme, the novel does not match that subject matter in terms of length, nor does it necessarily encourage its readers to dip in and out of the text (e.g., Julio Cortázar’s *Hopscotch* [1963]). Nevertheless, by explicitly *representing* the creation and performance of contemporary slow art in a format that is meant to be consumed quickly, *The Body Artist* draws attention to the issue of length and attention span. DeLillo’s work shares with Richter’s *Sleep* and *Slow TV* a self-conscious awareness of the way in which excessive formal length can become an imposition. Readers can enjoy a critical analysis of slow without being forced to march through a massive tome. DeLillo’s lyrical and hypercompressed meditations on slow art thus function like slow consumables in their metatextual theorization of slow in short form. Moreover, those who do want to take their time with lyrically compressed passages can, as Jordison notes, always re-read.

The common critique that some examples of slow performance art can be tedious is openly acknowledged in *The Body Artist* through an interpolated art review. The review is a genre marked by its ability to deliver punchy sound bites in a shortened format for those who may or may not have the time to take in the full performance. Of Hartke's slow-moving show, the reviewer notes:

The piece, called *Body Time*, sneaked into town for three nights, unadvertised except by word of mouth, and drew eager audiences whose intensity did not always maintain itself for the duration of the show. Hartke clearly wanted her audience to feel time go by, viscerally, even painfully. This is what happened, causing walkouts among the less committed. They missed the best stuff.⁴¹

There is in the reviewer's words an echo of what in aesthetics is sometimes called the fallacy of imitative form where to communicate her long period of grief, the artist must inflict that duration on her audience. Tellingly, the subtitle of the review is "Slow, Spare and Painful."⁴² Some viewers clearly rebel against that logic by walking out of the theater, but it is not with the artist's blessing that they do so. Or as Hartke herself puts it afterward: "I know there are people who think the piece was too slow and repetitious. . . . It ought to be sparer, even slower than it is, even longer than it is. It ought to be three fucking hours."⁴³ Yet, as the text elsewhere notes, Hartke settles for a 75-minute performance, a nod to the difficulty of commanding a sitting audience's attention within the closed environment of the theater for any longer.

The sympathetic reviewer's conclusion that those who did not stay "missed the best stuff," a judgment predicated on staying for the whole time, also preaches not missing the complete package, and therefore privileges the complete over the fragmentary. It valorizes the epistemological power that has been invested in slowness by some of its practitioners, in exposing what is hidden, in making the viewer, reader, or consumer aware, awakened if you will, to an unperceived state of affairs. If they would only wait it out, theatergoers at Hartke's show would "see" something deeper and more meaningful emerge. That power of slowness is both ocular and oracular. For example, after her husband's death, Hartke begins to pass her time at home watching a live feed of a highway in Finland, which she finds "interesting" instead of boring because of the contemporaneousness of the feed unfolding at a location far away from her own: "The dead times were best. . . . Kotka was another world but she could see it in

its realness, in its hours, minutes and seconds.”⁴⁴ There is a hypnotic, obsessive quality to these solitary viewing sessions. Eerily anticipating viewers’ positive reactions to *Slow TV*’s drowsy Scandinavian settings, the protagonist seems to derive a soothing pleasure and a higher meaning from simply letting her mind go blank in front of the computer screen.

Yet, in *The Body Artist*, looking long does not necessarily produce epistemological truth for everyone; while Hartke derives meaning from the live feed of the Kotka highway and, like Helena Sandström, invests significant physical labor in the production of her own slow art, it is left somewhat ambiguous what kind of value the audience actually draws from looking at her work for so long. While the reviewer claims that “[her art] is about who we are when we are not rehearsing who we are,” it is not clear whether DeLillo is parodying the art review genre or offering such a lofty, one-liner takeaway in earnest.⁴⁵

As readers, we are also often put in a parallel position to Hartke’s audience, left confused or disconnected by the slow-motion syntactical uncertainty of DeLillo’s prose. While *The Body Artist* is one of DeLillo’s shortest novels, it often feels intentionally slow on a phenomenological level. The entire first chapter is devoted to the banality of a couple’s breakfast in the kitchen. Take, for instance, the frame by frame description of Hartke’s comatose morning routine:

She ran water from the tap and seemed to notice. It was the first time she’d ever noticed this. . . . She noticed how water from the tap turned opaque in seconds. It ran silvery and clear and then in seconds turned opaque and how curious it seemed that in all these months and all these times in which she’d run the water from the kitchen tap she’d never noticed how the water ran clear at first and then went not murky exactly but opaque, or maybe it hadn’t happened before, or she’d noticed and forgotten.⁴⁶

It is not clear what observation is being privileged here, the water’s changing physical states or Hartke’s perception and memory of those changes. The verb “seem” plays a critical role, recalling not just the first sentence of the novel, “Time seems to pass,” but also the sense of a sensation as opposed to a confirmable truth. Keeping with this uncertainty, the novel takes place at an unnamed coastal rental house so far out of the city that Hartke regularly confuses the days of the week given the slow pace of life. DeLillo’s syntax gestures at the

shapeless temporality of the hallucinatory slowness in which his protagonist is submerged by relying on constant variations of similar sentence structures, in a way recalling the repetitive nature of Richter's musical minimalism. Because of these stylistic choices, DeLillo's attitude toward the value of slowness remains inconclusive, an ambivalence also echoed in *Point Omega*.

The frame narrative in *Point Omega* follows an unnamed speaker obsessed with Douglas Gordon's *24 Hour Psycho*, a video installation piece first displayed at MoMA in 1993 that dilated Hitchcock's classic film to twenty-four hours. Early on in the text, a stranger derides the middle-brow museumgoers around him who give up too quickly on Gordon's two-frames-per-second interpretation of Hitchcock: "They walked out. What, bored? They went past the guard and were gone. They had to think in words. This was their problem. The action moved too slowly to accommodate their vocabulary of film."⁴⁷ For this character, a slow consumable is an aesthetic betrayal. Truth comes to those who wait, to those who are willing to embrace the images on screen, however slowly they progress. Not appreciated until long after one has finished this compact novella is how this stranger, who takes *24 Hour Psycho* too seriously, soon becomes the Norman Bates he watches, the party likely responsible for the disappearance and possible murder of another character in the novel. By giving narrative space to a fictional character who has been corrupted, as it were, by slow art, DeLillo brings into question the value of such works. In representing that conflict of slow art in a short form, as exemplified by both *The Body Artist* and *Point Omega*, DeLillo dramatizes, but never succumbs to, the disciplinary tendencies of slow, even as he is clearly syntactically and thematically taken by it. He intentionally forgoes the novel's breadth in favor of the novella's compression, while still clinging to the representation of slowness. It is an irony that lingers in the mind long after these texts have already been consumed.

CONCLUSION

At its core, the slow consumable is a work that is self-consciously engaged with the theme of slowness, generally as a critique of late capitalist life. Yet, when a piece of art that, like Richter's *Sleep*, is positioned as a reaction to commercialized hyper-acceleration allows itself to be consumed more conveniently by a mass audience, that aesthetic compromise has ripple effects on form. One such consequence is that slow consumables often forgo any kind of narrative shape

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Rather than demanding an audience’s full engagement for the totality of their often extreme length, slow consumables short-circuit that logic, instead permitting viewers, listeners, and readers to consume them partially and at their own leisure. [. . .] As a result, slow consumables also lead to a dilution of the traditional border between artist and viewer.

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in favor of an aesthetic that is intentionally amenable to fragmentation.⁴⁸ Rather than demanding an audience’s full engagement for the totality of their often extreme length, slow consumables short-circuit that logic, instead permitting viewers, listeners, and readers to consume them partially and at their own leisure. The narratological structure of beginning, climax, and end begins to lose its meaning.

As a result, slow consumables also lead to a dilution of the traditional border between artist and viewer. For example, during the 1969 performance of *HPSCHD*, listeners became performers in their own right as they had command over which sounds they took in. Similarly, it was viewers who decided which parts of “Hurtigruten minutt for minutt”’s 134-hour journey to tune into, what images and sensations to absorb and when. The attendees of Richter’s overnight concerts composed their own lullabies, based on when they fell asleep and what was playing when they woke.

Don DeLillo’s late novellas represent an interesting wrinkle to this paradigm. As extremely compressed texts that nonetheless dwell narratively on the aesthetics of slow art from other mediums, they ultimately raise similar questions as the other slow consumables examined in this paper, particularly in terms of length of performance versus anticipated attention span. They also syntactically experiment with dilating a moment and, in so doing, permit the reader to experience phenomenological slowness, not via number of pages, but at the level of the sentence. Admittedly, DeLillo’s works differ from other slow consumables, as one cannot hop in and out of them at will. Nonetheless, their lyrical compression and aversion to imposing excessive length on their readers potentially gesture in that direction by encouraging acts of recursive reading.

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Slowness is not always an endurance run, but a remarkably malleable formal concept.

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The idea of “slow consumables” proves useful for understanding how contemporary artists have interpreted slowness and how the attention economy continues to shape our shared conceptions of aesthetic form. Slowness is not always an endurance run, but a remarkably malleable formal concept, one that can be consumed, sometimes rather quickly in the end.

/ Notes /

¹ Max Richter, “Interview: Max Richter on His Sleep-Inspired Album,” interview by Emma Robertson, *Red Bull Music Academy Daily*, September 11, 2015, <http://daily.redbullmusicacademy.com/2015/09/max-richter-interview>.

² See Hannah Ellis-Petersen, “Sleep—The Eight-hour Live-Broadcast Lullaby for a Frenetic World,” *Guardian*, September 28, 2015, <https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2015/sep/27/sleep-the-the-lullaby-for-our-frenetic-world>.

³ Linda Laban, “Exploring the Science of Sleep with Max Richter,” *SXSWorld*, February 1, 2018, <https://www.sxsw.com/world/2018/exploring-science-sleep-max-richter>; Max Richter, “Interview: Max Richter Puts Us to Sleep, and That’s the Point,” interview by Will Schube, *Vinyl Me, Please*, April 13, 2018, <http://www.vinylmeplease.com/magazine/max-richter-from-sleep>.

⁴ As an instructive contrast, Bach’s final work, *Mass in B minor*, was never performed during his lifetime as its two-hour run was considered by the Catholic church to be too long, too elaborate, to use for mass. It was only a century after Bach’s death that the first full performance took place in Leipzig. According to Anselm Hartinger, the *Mass* was likely considered “too long and too complex even for the splendid and highly professional musical establishment at the Baroque Dresden court, in an era that promoted a simpler and more edifying church music.” See Anselm Hartinger, “‘A really correct copy of the Mass’? Mendelssohn’s Score of the B-minor Mass as a Document of the Romantics’ View on Matters of Performance Practice and Source Criticism,” in *Exploring Bach’s B-minor Mass*, ed. Yo Tomita, Robin A. Leaver, and Jan Smaczny (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 245.

⁵ “Consumption is, in this case, a stage in a process of communication, that is, an act of deciphering, decoding, which presupposes practical or explicit mastery of a cipher or code. . . . A work of art has meaning and interest only for someone who possesses cultural competence, that is, the code, into which it is encoded.” Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste* (New York: Routledge, 2015), xxv.

⁶ See Maggie Berg and Barbara K. Seeber, *The Slow Professor: Challenging the Culture of Speed in the Academy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), 29–32.

⁷ See Nancy Tartaglione, “Slow TV: Norway’s ‘National Knitting Evening’ Spins Big Ratings & Calls for More,” *Deadline Hollywood*, November 4, 2013, <https://deadline.com/2013/11/slow-tv-norways-national-knitting-evening-spins-big-ratings-calls-for-more-626476/>.

⁸ Michel Ciment, “The State of Cinema,” 46th San Francisco International Film Festival, 2003, <http://web.archive.org/web/20040325130014/http://www.sfiff.org/fest03/special/state.html>.

⁹ In *Slow Living*, Wendy Parkins and Geoffrey Craig suggest that indefiniteness is itself an inherent part of the identity of slowness: “There is no prescriptive checklist of activities which comprise slow living. . . . Slow living is, however, best exemplified in all those practices that invest the everyday with meaning and pleasure through a mindful use of time.” Wendy Parkins and Geoffrey Craig, *Slow Living* (Oxford, UK: Berg Publishers, 2006), 4. Carlo Petrini, one of the original founders of the Slow Food movement, described his now global organization in similarly open terms: “The cultural goals of the international Slow Food movement are to defeat all forms of chauvinism, to reappropriate diversity, and to indulge in a healthy dose of cultural relativism.” See Carlo Petrini, preface to *Slow Food: Collected Thoughts on Taste, Tradition, and the Honest Pleasures of Food* (White River Junction, VT: Chelsea Green, 2001), xii.

¹⁰ See Lutz Koepnick, *On Slowness: Toward an Aesthetic of the Contemporary* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), 31–34.

¹¹ “[S]lowness itself emerges and comes to flourish, from Henry James, Virginia Woolf, and Marcel Proust, to William Faulkner, DeLillo, and Tom McCarthy, as an aesthetic that is entirely ‘native’—a loaded term for sure on this occasion—to a culture of technology that would otherwise have us think that speed is so thoroughly a given in contemporary life that to move slowly, almost by definition, is to resist and stand against its default velocity and the economies it structures.” Mark Goble, “How the West Slows Down,” *ELH* 85, no. 2 (Summer 2018): 308.

¹² “Pour se jouer 840 fois de suite ce motif, il sera bon de se préparer au préalable, et dans le plus grand silence, par des immobilités sérieuses.” Quoted in Robert Orledge, “Understanding Satie’s *Vexations*,” *Music & Letters* 79, no. 3 (August 1998): 387; my translation.

¹³ Steven M. Whiting, "Serious Immobilities: Musings on Satie's *Vexations*," *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft* 67, no. 4 (2010): 310.

¹⁴ See James Pritchett, *The Music of John Cage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 74–76. Austin Clarkson has also noted how "Cage focused on a music of *satori*-like presentational states because he found they generate experiences in which individual and social meanings interpenetrate." Austin Clarkson, "The Intent of the Musical Moment: Cage and the Transpersonal," in *Writings through John Cage's Music, Poetry, and Art*, ed. David W. Bernstein and Christopher Hatch (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 103.

¹⁵ See John Cale and Victor Bockris, *What's Welsh for Zen: The Autobiography of John Cale* (London: Bloomsbury, 1999), 57.

¹⁶ Harold C. Schonberg, "A Long, Long, Long Night (and Day) at the Piano: Satie's 'Vexations' Played 840 Times by Relay Team," *New York Times*, September 11, 1963, <https://www.nytimes.com/1963/09/11/archives/music-a-long-long-long-night-and-day-at-the-piano-saties-vexations.html>.

¹⁷ Matthew Mendez, "History, Homeopathy and the Spiritual Impulse in the Post-war Reception of Satie: Cage, Higgins, Beuys," in *Erik Satie: Music, Art and Literature*, ed. Caroline Potter (New York: Routledge, 2016), 219.

¹⁸ Quoted in David Sylvester, "John Cage (1966)," in *Interviews with American Artists* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001), 124.

¹⁹ Pritchett, *Music of John Cage*, 160.

²⁰ Jason Freeman, "Movement at the Boundaries of Listening, Composition, and Performance," in *Thresholds of Listening: Sound, Technics, Space*, ed. Sander van Maas (New York: Fordham University Press, 2015), 108.

²¹ Why 640 years, and not a 1,000 or some other number? In this case, the performance length was chosen to match the age of the chapel's existing twelve-key Blockwerk organ, which was 639 years old in 2000. See Jeffery Byrd and John Fritch, "Forever Ephemeral: John Cage's *ASLSP*," in "On Duration," ed. Edward Scheer, spec. issue, *Performance Research* 17, no. 5 (2012): 5–8.

²² See Gavin Bryars, "Vexations and Its Performers," *Contact* 26 (Spring 1983): 12–20.

²³ Byrd and Fritch, "Forever Ephemeral: John Cage's *ASLSP*," 8.

²⁴ The live feed can be accessed from the website of the John Cage Orgel Kunst Projekt Halberstadt at <https://www.aslp.org/de/home.html>.

²⁵ See "'World's Longest TV Show': Norway Captivated by Ship's Journey," *Der Spiegel*, June 22, 2011, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/zeitgeist/world-s-longest-tv-show-norway-captivated-by-ship-s-journey-a-769826.html>.

²⁶ Dallas W. Smythe, "On the Audience Commodity and Its Work," in *Media and Cultural Studies: KeyWorks*, ed. Meenakshi Gigi Durham and Douglas M. Kellner (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2001), 238.

²⁷ *Slow TV* is arguably the cousin of YouTube phenomena such as the five-hour-long “Darth Vader Yule Log,” an extended cut of the Star Wars villain’s funeral pyre, or the so-called “800% slower” videos, which stretch and deform common melodies to eight times their original length. These are all works that can be placed in the background of the audience’s attention, to be consumed in whole or in part at one’s discretion. See Sami Yenigun, “How It Works: The Art of Time-Stretching Bieber,” *NPR*, August 18, 2010, <https://www.npr.org/sections/therecord/2010/08/18/129283985/the-art-of-a-time-stretch>.

²⁸ Joshua Barone, “On the Mattress for Sleep, an 8-Hour Lullaby,” *New York Times*, May 7, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/07/arts/music/max-richter-sleep-new-york.html>; Scott Timberg, “Composer Max Richter Wants Fans to Spend the Night in Grand Park,” *Los Angeles Times*, July 26, 2018, <https://www.latimes.com/entertainment/music/la-et-ms-max-richter-sleep-grand-park-20180726-story.html>.

²⁹ Fredric Jameson, “Postmodernism and Consumer Society,” in *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*, ed. Hal Foster (Seattle: Bay Press, 1983), 112.

³⁰ Chin-Tao Wu, *Privatising Culture: Corporate Art Intervention since the 1980s* (New York: Verso, 2002), 8–9.

³¹ Christopher R. Weingarten, “Composer Max Richter to Perform Overnight L.A. Concerts with 560 Beds,” *Rolling Stone*, June 7, 2018, <https://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-news/composer-max-richter-to-perform-overnight-l-a-concerts-with-560-beds-629532/>.

³² Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. John Cumming (New York: Continuum, 1988), 162.

³³ Lauren Berlant, *Cruel Optimism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 115.

³⁴ Carlo Petrini, *Slow Food Nation* (New York: Rizzoli International, 2013), 130.

³⁵ “È accaduto così che, all’alba del secolo e giù giù, si siano declamati e urlati manifesti scritti in stile sintetico, ‘veloce,’ all’insegna della velocità come ideologia dominante.” “Il manifesto dello Slow-food,” *Gambero Rosso*, November 3, 1987, <http://www.slowfood.it/chi-siamo/manifesto-dello-slow-food/>; my translation.

³⁶ Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, *Critical Writings: New Edition* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007), 14.

³⁷ “An Interview with Don DeLillo,” *PEN America*, September 15, 2010, <https://pen.org/an-interview-with-don-delillo/>.

³⁸ Donatella Izzo, review of *Point Omega* by Don DeLillo, *Italian Americana* 29, no. 1 (Winter 2011): 112.

³⁹ Michiko Kakutani, “Headed Toward a Crash, Of Sorts, in a Stretch Limo,” review of *Cosmopolis* by Don DeLillo, *New York Times*, March 24, 2003, <https://www.nytimes.com/2003/03/24/books/books-of-the-times-headed-toward-a-crash-of-sorts-in-a-stretch-limo.html>.

⁴⁰ Sam Jordison, “Zero K and Making Sense of ‘Late Period’ Don DeLillo,” review of *Zero K* by Don DeLillo, *The Guardian*, May 24, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2016/may/24/zero-k-and-making-sense-of-late-period-don-delillo-white-noise>.

⁴¹ Don DeLillo, *The Body Artist* (New York: Scribner, 2001), 110.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 103.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 106.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 38.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 116.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁴⁷ Don DeLillo, *Point Omega* (New York: Scribner, 2010), 7.

⁴⁸ Compare that sentiment to Proust’s insistence in a letter to his upstairs neighbor in Paris that no volume of his work could be skipped without risking the value of its totality: “But when one writes a work in 3 volumes in an age when publishers want only to publish one at a time, one must resign oneself to not being understood, since the ring of keys is not in the same part of the building as the locked doors.” For Proust, nothing less than a complete reading, despite the length that such reading imposes on its audience, will suffice. Even the idea of seriality is to him a disruption of continuity, and, therefore, comprehension. Marcel Proust, *Letters to His Neighbor*, trans. Lydia Davis (New York: New Directions, 2017), 36.