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August 5, 2005

Experiencing the Night in Rural Early Modern Europe

On the night of Thursday, January 13, 1603, "early in the morning, roughly between two and three o'clock," the innkeeper Barthel Dorfheilige of the Hessian town of Wanfried awoke to the sound of splintering wood.¹ He quickly discovered two young noblemen, Hans Werner von Eschwege (c. 1581 - c. 1624) and his cousin Eberhard von Alten (c. 1583 - ?), smashing in the window of the main room of his inn. Dorfheilige reported that he "hastily lit a lamp and ran into the room in his nightshirt, and shined his light out the broken window to see the malefactors." He recognized "Hans Werner, son of Reinhard von Eschwege zu Aue" and then Eberhard von Alten. Hans Werner greeted him and apologized for the broken window while Eberhard demanded that Dorfheilige open the door. Hans Werner said he would vouch for his cousin's good conduct, so Dorfheilige let them in and called for one of his servants to see to their horses.²

Inside, the two young "Junkers" (as Dorfheilige called them) continued their harassment of the innkeeper, breaking another window from the inside and assaulting Dorfheilige's wife, children, and servants. The two young men then forced the

1 Hessisches Staatsarchiv Marburg (HStAM), Bestand 17d Reg Cassel Familienrep. von Eschwege, Paket 5 ("Causa Criminalis"), fo. 1: "Morgens fruhe vortage ungefehr zwischen zwey undt drey Uhr..."

2 HstAM, Bestand 17d Reg Cassel Familienrep. von Eschwege, Paket 5, fo. 1: "Gleichwol habe ich uff die Eyle, ein Licht ehrgrieffen deshalb angezundt, mit Reuerenz, In bloßem Hembt, zu die Stuben gelauffen, Zum aus geschlagenen Fenster hieraus geleuchttet, undt die freveler zu erkennen mich umbgesehen.... "

innkeeper to accompany them on a similar visit to awaken the local miller, then returned to the inn for more wine and a meal. When the servants of the noblemen began to beat one of Dorfheilige's children, the innkeeper defended his son with a bread knife: the two noblemen and two more of their servants joined the fray and Dorfheilige fled into the streets of the town. Hans Werner and Eberhard mounted their horses and followed him. Several neighbors came out of their houses to aid the innkeeper, but paid the price as the young noblemen fired at them, broke out more windows and screamed threats. "Finally the *Schultheiss* (village administrator) and soldiers came to town and sounded the bell," and the noblemen and their servants rode off, shouting abuse behind them.³

This violent incident, in which the "Junkers" shoved Dorfheilige's pregnant wife into a pile of manure, beat one of his children bloody, and unleashed terror on his "house and home" can acquaint us with several of the themes I will discuss in this paper on the early modern rural night. We see, for example, the association of violence with the night, and importance of the public house to the day and evening life of a town or village. But the assault on the inn led by the young Hans Werner von Eschwege was no random act. His father Reinhard von Eschwege zu Aue (d. 1607) was entangled in several bitter legal disputes with the peasants of Wanfried over grazing, hunting, and fishing rights.⁴ Early modern German law, one should note, insisted on the daytime character of all legal proceedings. One could not convene a court, prepare a will, or pronounce a verdict at night.⁵ Parallel with the legal disputes of the day, this rural

3 HstAM, Bestand 17d Reg Cassel Familienrep. von Eschwege, Paket 5, fo. 2-4

4 Hermann Grebe, "Ein Erbvergleich zwischen den Adelshäusern von Eschwege zu Aue und Reichensachsen," *Zeitschrift des Vereins für hessische Geschichte und Landeskunde* 95 (1990): 233-258, here 233-34.

5 Alois Niederstätter, "Notizen zu einer Rechts- und Kulturgeschichte der Nacht," in *Das Recht im kulturgeschichtlichen Wandel. Festschrift für Karl-Heinz Burmeister zur Emeritierung*, ed. Bernd Marquardt and Alois Niederstätter (Constance, 2002), pp. 173-90, here p. 177.

conflict was carried over into the night by the actions of the young men. Hans Werner said as much while drinking in Barthel Dorfheilige's inn in the middle of the night. The complaint recorded his words in direct discourse, indicating their importance:

In particular he [Hans Werner von Eschwege] said: "You peasants of Wanfried or *Bürger* - whatever you want to be - last summer you gave my father some trouble. If I had known, I had some good fellows with me back then... You'll get very little out of it [i.e. the lawsuit], and I'll pay back each one of you, one after the other. It's your *Vogt* [county administrator] who's leading you into this. If I run into him, I'll fire a bullet through his hat."⁶

By day the lawsuits worked their way through the courts; at night - which as we will see is the domain of young men - other pressures were brought to bear. Despite attempts to regulate all manner of nocturnal disorder, in the villages of early modern Europe the night remained a reserve of the young "guardians of disorder"⁷ until the end of the Old Regime.

The assault in Wanfried in 1603 illustrates several aspects of the early modern night. But how can one approach the history of the night? Like histories of death or of sexuality, the history of the night can examine the surprising and significant

6 HstAM, Bestand 17d Reg Cassel Familienrep. von Eschwege, Paket 5, fo. 2: "... undt sonderlich sagt er: 'Ihr Bauren von Wanfried oder Burger was ihr sein wollet. Ihr habt meinem vatter vehrgangenen Sommer durch das seine Eine franz gegangen, undt da ich es gewust, so hatte Ich eben damals, in meinem anzuge :: Naheren Niderland Meinendt:: guthe gesellen bey mihr, Ihrer sollten wenigk darauskommen sein, undt ich wil auch noch einen nach dem andern bezallen, undt es ist eben euer voigtt, der euch darzu anreizet, undt wo ehr mihr auffstöst, weil ich ihme eine Kugel auff die huden Brennen,'..."

7 The phrase is from Norbert Schindler, "Guardians of Disorder: Rituals of Youthful Culture at the Dawn of the Modern Age," in *A History of Young People in the West*, ed. Giovanni Levi and Jean-Claude Schmitt, trans. Camille Naish (Cambridge, Mass., 1997), 1: 240-82.

range of responses to an ineluctable natural phenomenon. For the people of early modern Europe, the night imposed fundamental limits on daily life while serving as a powerful and evocative symbol. By connecting these two contexts, I am writing a history of the night in early modern Europe at the intersection of the history of daily life and cultural history.⁸

In the Christian tradition darkness and the night have borne strongly -- though not exclusively -- negative associations. The letters of Paul repeatedly contrast light with darkness, as in 2 Cor. 6:14: "For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness?" or 1 Thess. 5:5: "For you are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness." This association of darkness and the night with evil or separation from God had lost none of its power at the beginning of the early modern period.⁹ The literature of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is especially rich in descriptions of the terrors of the night, cited by Jean Delumeau in his study of fear in the West.¹⁰ The Elizabethan essayist Thomas Nashe (1567-1601)

8 In this project I use daily life as a category of historical analysis, rather than simply as the subject of study. This is analogous to the development from women as the subject of "women's history" to gender as a "useful category of historical analysis" - drawing on the landmark article of Joan W. Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *American Historical Review* 91, 5 (1986): 1053-1075. Hans Jürgen Teuteberg provided an valuable intellectual history of "daily life," including criticism of the concept from representatives of the "historischen Sozialwissenschaften," in his "Alles das - was dem Dasein Farbe gegeben hat. Zur Ortsbestimmung der Alltagsgeschichte," in *Methoden und Probleme der Alltagsforschung im Zeitalter des Barock*, ed. Othmar Pickl and Helmuth Feigl (Vienna, 1992), pp. 11-42.

9 The influence of Neoplatonism on Christian spirituality, in contrast, helped generate a set of ideas centered on "ascent", "light and darkness", and "oneness with God" (as Denys Turner has described them) that allowed darkness and the night to serve as paths to God, and created a rich and complex mystical vocabulary of darkness. Pseudo-Dionysius largely invented this negative or apophatic theology, which reoriented the meaning of "darkness" in the Christian tradition, in the late fifth century CE. See Denys Turner, *The Darkness of God: Negativity in Christian Mysticism* (Cambridge; New York, 1995).

10 Jean Delumeau, *La Peur en Occident (XIVe - XVIIIe siècles): Une cité*

presented a traditional view of the night as a time of sin and fear in his 1594 tract on *The Terrors of the Night*.¹¹ "Well have the poets termed the night the nurse of cares, the mother of despair, the daughter of hell," Nashe asserted. It was a diabolical time: "the devil is the special predominant planet of the night, and... our creator for our punishment hath allotted it to him as his peculiar seigniory and kingdom." The night was the receptacle of vivid fears: "The phantoms fly about at night; / with beaks that loudly clack and fright / My soul with dreadful hisses," as Pierre de Ronsard (1524-1585) pronounced.¹² For German Baroque poets like Simon Dach (1605-1669) and Andreas Gryphius (1616-1664) as well, the night meant "terror, silence and dark horror": Gryphius spoke of "the hours of sad loneliness," when "black cold covers the land / and now sleep all, from labor and pain exhausted."¹³ In Dach's words:

Fear I bear before the night
 I keep myself awake with fright
 My sleep is pain and sorrow,
 I long so much
 as no other
 night watchman, for tomorrow.¹⁴

assiégée (Paris, 1978), esp. pp. 87-97, "La peur de la nuit."

- 11 Thomas Nashe, *The Terrors of the Night, or A Discourse of Apparitions*, in *Selected Writings*, ed. Stanley Wells (Cambridge, MA, 1965), pp. 141-75.
- 12 From the poet's *Odes*: "La nuit des fantômes volans / Claquetans leurs becs violans / En sifflant mon âme espovantent," as translated in Lucien Febvre, *The Problem of Unbelief in the Sixteenth Century, the Religion of Rabelais*, trans. Beatrice Gottlieb (Cambridge, Mass., 1982). Also cited in Robert Mandrou, *Introduction to Modern France 1500-1640. An Essay in Historical Psychology*, trans. R.E. Hallmark (New York, 1976), p. 56.
- 13 "Schrecken und Stille und dunkles Grausen, finstere Kälte bedeckt das Land, / Izt schläft, was Arbeit und Schmerzen ermüdet, diß sind der traurgien Einsamkeit Stunden." Andreas Gryphius, *Lyrische Gedichte*, ed. J. Tittmann (Leipzig, 1880), p. 25.
- 14 "Ich trage grauen für der nacht
 Und habe gantz mich außgewacht,
 Mein schlaff ist pein und sorgen,
 Ich sehne mich

"The night is no man's friend," as a French proverb put it: the unfortunate innkeeper of Wanfried might agree.¹⁵

Historians of popular culture and daily life such as Norbert Schindler and A. Roger Ekirch have suggested, however, that far too many common people were active at night – by choice or necessity – to allow us to characterize the early modern night as universally threatening.¹⁶ Early modern women and men did much more at night than sleep or fear for their lives and goods. The literary formula of nocturnal fear and insecurity must be balanced by an understanding of actual nocturnal activity – although this kind of "night life" is much more difficult to assess.

What do we know about the night in the villages of early modern Europe? Scholars of early modern Europe have only begun to investigate the night in daily life or popular culture.¹⁷ Specific developments in courts, cities and villages have been documented in a wide range of research, with references to nocturnal activity and attitudes toward the night scattered in articles on topics ranging from Caravaggio and astronomy to witch persecutions and youth culture. This research offers a fascinating but conflicting series of images: we see a diabolical night, an intimate night, a night of devotion, and a

So sehr, als sich
Kein wächter, nach dem morgen." Simon Dach, "Hertzliche klage....," 1641.

- 15 Robert Muchembled, "La violence et la nuit sous l'Ancien Régime," *Ethnologie française* 21, 3 (1991): 237-42, 238.
- 16 Norbert Schindler, "Nächtliche Ruhestörung. Zur Sozialgeschichte der Nacht in der frühen Neuzeit," in *Widerspenstige Leute: Studien zur Volkskultur in der frühen Neuzeit* (Frankfurt/M., 1992), pp. 215-57.
- 17 As Corinne Walker has commented, "L'histoire de la vie nocturne sous l'Ancien Régime reste à écrire." See her "Du plaisir à la nécessité. L'apparition de la lumière dans les rues de Genève à la fin du XVIII^e siècle," in *Vivre et imaginer la ville XVIII^e - XIX^e siècles*, ed. François Walter (Geneva, 1988), pp. 97-124, 99, and "Esquisse pour une histoire de la vie nocturne. Genève au XVIII^e siècle," *Revue du vieux Genève* 19 (1989): 73-85.

night of excess and indiscipline.¹⁸ The references to the night in the work of scholars like A. Roger Ekirch, Carlo Ginzburg, Norbert Schindler, and Elisabeth Pavan are like unconnected "snapshots" of an unknown terrain.¹⁹

When brought together, these glimpses do reveal a few features of the nocturnal landscape. A distinct shift of daily activities into the evening and night began in European cities and courts in the early modern period. These developments were concentrated (and are most visible to historians) in years 1650-1750. Descriptive and normative sources show mealtimes, the beginning of theatrical performances and balls, and the scheduled closing of city gates moving ever later.²⁰ At the same time, the stimulants tobacco, coffee, and tea became popular -

18 On the sinister aspects of the night in early modern popular culture, see Piero Camporesi, *Bread of Dreams* (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 93-102, and Wolfgang Brückner, ed., *Volkserzählung und Reformation. Ein Handbuch zur Tradierung und Funktion von Erzählstoffen und Erzählliterature im Protestantismus* (Berlin, 1974), pp. 195, 227, 301, 317. See also Carlo Ginzburg, *The Night Battles: Witchcraft and Agrarian Cults in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, transl. John & Anne Tedeschi (Baltimore, 1983).

19 A Roger Ekirch presents an enormous amount of material in *At Day's Close: Night in Times Past* (New York, 2005). In an essay proposing a "social history of the night" Norbert Schindler describes the attempts of court nobles and the church of the Counter-Reformation to "colonize" the night in early modern Bavaria. The authorities' attempts to control the nocturnal disorder of youths, apprentices and tavern visitors had little success before the second half of the eighteenth century. Based on legal sources Schindler examines the night in village life and concludes that the common people viewed it with a mixture of fear and opportunism. The expanding symbolism of the night is examined by Paulette Choné, who argues that new and positive depictions of the night at the end of the sixteenth century arose from the crisis of established symbols of spiritual and political sovereignty. See Schindler, "Nächtliche Ruhestörung," and Paulette Choné, *L'Atelier des Nuits. L'histoire et Signification du Nocturne dans l'Art d'Occident* (Nancy, 1992).

20 See Roman Sandgruber, "Zeit der Mahlzeit. Veränderung in Tagesablauf und Mahlzeiteinteilung in Österreich im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert," in *Wandel der Volkskultur in Europa. Festschrift für Günter Wiegelmann*, ed. Nils-Arvid Bringéus et al. (Münster, 1988), pp. 459-72; 462 and Peter Reinhart Gleichmann, "Nacht und Zivilisation," in *Soziologie: Entdeckungen im Alltäglichen. Festschrift für Hans Paul Bahrdt*, ed. Martin Baethge and Wolfgang Essbach (Frankfurt and New York, 1983), pp. 174-194.

and coffee houses, notorious for their late hours, appeared in all major European cities by 1700.²¹ Of all these developments, the swift rise of public street lighting is the most distinct: in 1660, no European city had permanently illuminated its streets, but by 1700 street lighting had been established in Amsterdam, Paris, Turin, London, and Copenhagen, in French provincial cities, and across the Holy Roman Empire from Hamburg to Vienna. By the early eighteenth century moral commentators like the *Tatler* editor Richard Steele (1672-1729) and the German Pietist Phillip Balthasar Sinold (1657-1742) were condemning as new the hedonist "night life" of courtiers and townspeople, thereby documenting the spread of new uses of the night.

In my work on the night at courts and in cities I have examined both the use of the night in political displays (through theater, fireworks, and illuminations, for example), and the increase in the scope and legitimacy of everyday nocturnal activity (through public street lighting, for example). I describe these seventeenth- and eighteenth-century developments as a process of "nocturnalization", by which I mean an ongoing expansion of the symbolic and social uses of the night. In cities, nocturnalization evoked significant resistance from the young people to whom the night streets had traditionally belonged.

Did the struggle over nocturnalization unfold in early

21 See the articles by Jordan Goodman, "Excitantia: or, how Enlightenment Europe Took to Soft Drugs," and Woodruff D. Smith, "From Coffeehouse to Parlour: the Consumption of Coffee, Tea and Sugar in North-Western Europe in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," in *Consuming Habits: Drugs in History and Anthropology*, ed. Jordan Goodman, Paul E. Lovejoy, and Andrew Sherratt (London; New York, 1995), pp. 126-47 and 147-64, and the work of Peter Albrecht, "Coffee-Drinking as a Symbol of Social Change in Continental Europe in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* 18 (1989): 91-103, and "Kaffee und Kaffeehäuser in der Universitätsstadt Helmstedt vom Ende des 17. bis zum Anfang des 19. Jahrhunderts," *Braunschweigisches Jahrbuch* 72 (1991): 95-118.

modern villages as well? Did the outcome differ from that in the cities? This paper will survey the rural night and offer some preliminary conclusions. Nocturnal activities in the early modern countryside were understood in terms of necessity and leisure, and order and disorder. In this paper I will consider the necessities of sleep and labor, then survey a range of activities extending from leisure and sociability to disorder and crime. Village spinning bees and taverns, youth culture, and the contrast between the night in the city and in the countryside have emerged as my main themes. My research on the night in general - court, city, and village - focuses on the Empire, France and the Low Countries, and the British Isles.

I. Necessity

Sleep is the first necessity of the night. Its history in pre-industrial times has recently been examined in an innovative article by A. Roger Ekirch.²² Contrary to assumptions that pre-modern people "fled to their beds soon after sunset" and generally stayed there until sunrise, Ekirch has uncovered an age-old pattern of segmented sleep, arguing that "until the close of the early modern era, Western Europeans on most evenings experienced *two major intervals of sleep* bridged by up to an hour or more of quiet wakefulness."²³ Ekirch describes a first sleep starting after sunset and lasting several hours, followed by a short waking interval and then a second sleep until dawn. The division of the night into a "first" and "second" sleep is supported by a wide range of sources, from diaries and depositions to poetry and prose literature, and the experience of segmented sleep seems to have been familiar to all walks of

22 A. Roger Ekirch, "Sleep We Have Lost: Pre-industrial Slumber in the British Isles," *American Historical Review* 106, 2 (2001): 343-85.

23 Ekirch, "Sleep We Have Lost," p. 364.

medieval and early modern Europeans.²⁴

Ekirch's discovery raises further questions. The varying length of the night at northern European latitudes would seem to leave little time for two intervals of sleep in a summer night lasting only eight or nine hours. This fact is not directly discussed by Ekirch: the sleep studies he cites examined responses to a fourteen-hour night, but did not examine sleep patterns when darkness was limited. In any case, the implications of segmented sleep are many. The interval of wakefulness provided time for prayer, reflection, conversation, intimacy, or activities ranging from housework to petty theft. Segmented sleep reveals a field of nocturnal activity in the midst of long nights. If the feeling of well being some described during their wakeful interval was widespread, then the baleful accounts of night's terrors must be qualified.

In general, the comment in the Gospel of John 9:4 - "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work" (King James Bible) - held true in the early modern centuries. When darkness fell over the countryside, most outdoor labor ceased. Blacksmiths worked at night, in part because they could.²⁵ Indoors, the hearth might provide enough light for some tasks (in winter); otherwise common people might use rush lights or oil lamps, the rich candles.²⁶ In either case, scholars have assumed that the expense of domestic lighting limited its use, although recent studies of colonial North America and eighteenth-century Paris suggest widespread use of lamps and candles to light evening work and

24 Ekirch provides more evidence in *At Day's Close*, pp. 261-323.

25 Cornelius Novelli, "Sin, Sight, and Sanctity in the *Miller's Tale*: Why Chaucer's Blacksmith Works at Night," *The Chaucer Review* 33,2 (1998): 168-75.

26 See Renate Müller, *Licht und Feuer im ländlichen Haushalt: Lichtquellen und Haushaltsgeräte* (Hamburg, 1994).

leisure.²⁷

The regulation of labor and rest was recognized as an important aspect of estate management. The Protestant Austrian nobleman Wolfgang Helmhard von Hohberg (1612-1688) explained in his well-known *Georgica curiosa* (1682, editions through the eighteenth century) that "The father of the house is like the clock of the house, which everyone must follow when rising, going to sleep, working, eating and all other business."²⁸ The Tyrolean priest Hippolyt Guarinoni (1571-1654) recommended that adults wake at five a.m. and retire between eight and nine p.m.²⁹ The immensely popular *Five Hundred Points of Good Husbandry* (1557, editions through the eighteenth century) of Thomas Tusser (1524?-1580) advised masters to "Declare after supper, take heed thereunto / what work in the morning each servant shall do." This guide gives us some idea what hours of sleep were expected in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries:

In winter at nine, and in summer at ten
to bed after supper, both maidens and men.
In winter at five a clock servants arise,
in summer at four it is very good guise.³⁰

27 Monta Lee Dakin, *Brilliant with Lights: A Reexamination of Artificial Lighting in Eighteenth Century America* (M.A. Thesis, George Washington University, 1983); Annik Pardailhe-Galabrun, *The Birth of Intimacy: Privacy and Domestic Life in Early Modern Paris*, trans. Jocelyn Phelps (Philadelphia, 1991).

28 "Ein Hausvater gleicht einer Hausuhr, darnach sich jedermann mit Aufstehen, Schlafengehen, Arbeiten, Essen und allen Geschäften richten muß." As cited in Otto Brunner, *Adeliges Landleben und europäischer Geist; Leben und Werk Wolf Helmhards von Hohberg, 1612-1688* (Salzburg, 1949), p. 285. See also Heimo Cerny, "Wolf Helmhard von Hohberg (1612-1688). Ein niederösterreichischer Landedelmann, Schriftsteller und Agronom," *Jahrbuch für Landeskunde von Niederösterreich* NF 54/55 (1988/89): 59-84.

29 See Jürgen Bücking, *Kultur und Gesellschaft in Tirol um 1600: des Hippolytus Guarinonius' Grewel der Verwüstung menschlichen Geschlechts (1610) als kulturgeschichtliche Quelle des frühen 17. Jahrhunderts* (Lübeck, 1968), pp. 153-54.

30 Thomas Tusser (1524?-1580), *Five hundred points of good husbandry as well*

As we will see below, however, when the household of John Wright of Brixworth, Northhamptonshire was thrown into confusion by an errant dog at "eleven or twelve o'clock" on the night of December 13, 1672, the servant maids were still awake washing dishes, though the master of the house was already in his nightshirt and most rooms were no longer lit.

II. Sociability

Two locations emerge as especially important for "night life" in the village: the spinning bee and the public house. Both were subject to official regulation and condemnation, producing many of our sources on the two institutions.

When a fire broke out in the Normandy village of Basly late on the evening of February 4, 1684, we learn that most of the women of the village were at a spinning bee, including the unmarried Le Petit sisters and Anne Jouvin, whose houses were destroyed by the blaze.³¹ Such spinning bees (*Spinnstube*, *veillée*) combined labor with sociability on long winter evenings. Evidence from the Basel countryside suggests a fixed season for spinning bees, roughly from Advent to Carnival, with special celebrations on the first and last gatherings of the season; in other areas the winter gatherings appear much less formal. The form of the spinning bee varied across early modern France and Germany: women young and old would gather to spin wool or flax, knit, or sew by candlelight.³² While sharing light,

for the champion or open countrey, as also for the woodland or several, mixed, in every moneth, with huswifery, over and besides the book of huswifery: corrected, better ordered, and newly augmented... (London: Printed by J.M. for the Company of stationers, 1663) (Wing / T3368), pp. 133-34.

31 John Cashmere, "Sisters Together: Women without Men in Seventeenth-Century French Village Culture," *Journal of Family History* 21,1 (1996): 44-62.

32 See Albert Schnyder, "Lichtstuben im alten Basel. Zu einer von Frauen geprägten Form frühneuzeitlicher Geselligkeit," *Schweizerisches Archiv für Volkskunde* 92, 1 (1996): 1-13 and Edward Shorter, "The 'Veillée' and the

heat, and conversation, they might be visited by the young men of the village. (See illustrations 1 and 2.)



1. *Die Spinnstube*, engraving, Hans Sebald Beham, 1524

Great Transformation, in Jacques Beauroy, Marc Bertrand, and Edward T. Gargan, ed. *The Wolf and the Lamb: Popular Culture in France, from the Old Régime to the Twentieth Century*. Stanford French and Italian studies 3 (Saratoga, Calif., 1977), pp. 127-40.



2. *La Veillée*, engraving, Pierre Mariette II, seventeenth century

This - in the authorities' view - is where the trouble began. In Calvinist Guernsey in 1637, the Royal Court forbade the "vueilles" "because of the regular and scandalous debauchery which is committed at the assemblies of young people... during the night." Marriageable young people met and courted at the spinning bee, and "from these meetings many marriages are contracted."³³ German authorities also focused on the sexual aspects of the spinning bee, "in which all kinds of immorality and fornication are carried on," as Hans Medick has documented.³⁴ Scholars have argued that the spinning bees were denounced by

33 Guernsey Royal Court decree of January 16, 1637; comments from the travel journal of Charles Trumbull (1677), as cited in Darryl Ogier, "Night Revels and Werewolfery in Calvinist Guernsey," *Folklore* 109 (1998): 53-62, here p. 54.

34 Hans Medick, "Village Spinning Bees: Sexual Culture and Free Time among Rural Youth in Early Modern Germany," in *Interest and Emotion: Essays on the Study of Family and Kinship*, ed. Hans Medick and David Warren Sabean (Cambridge, 1984), pp. 234-57.

pastors and administrators not simply on moral grounds, but also because the gatherings were centered around women or young people and sustained countercultures of laughter, youth, or women. Despite the many local variations on the spinning bee, which might be more or less structured, more or less focused on productive work, or more or less tolerated by the local authorities, all the evidence scholars have assayed thus far agrees that the gatherings were always nocturnal.³⁵

Public houses, on the other hand, served the village throughout the day and evening. Even in a single region they showed tremendous variety, including alehouses, taverns (originally associated primarily with the sale of wine), and inns authorized to provide meals and lodging. Subject to licensing and regulation in all European polities, public houses were of tremendous economic importance locally and served as centers of communication and travel.³⁶ For the men (and in most cases women) of a village, much of their leisure time was spent there, and public houses were at their busiest on Sundays, feast days, and in the evenings.³⁷ The main light in the evening came from the hearth, but inventories from seventeenth-century

35 As a nocturnal gathering, the spinning bee overlapped with the *Heimgarten*, the evening gathering of unmarried young men and women at the house of a married couple, and with village dances held in the evening. See Niederstätter, "Notizen zu einer Rechts- und Kulturgeschichte der Nacht," p. 182-85; Stefan Breit, "*Leichtfertigkeit*" und ländliche Gesellschaft: voreheliche Sexualität in der frühen Neuzeit. Ancien régime, Aufklärung und Revolution 23 (Munich, 1991) (on Bavaria); and Thomas Paul Becker, *Konfessionalisierung in Kurköln: Untersuchungen zur Durchsetzung der katholischen Reform in den Dekanaten Ahrgau und Bonn anhand von Visitationsprotokollen 1583-1761*. Veröffentlichungen des Stadtarchivs Bonn 43 (Bonn, 1989), pp. 176-79 (on village dances in the Cologne region).

36 See Beat Kümin and B. Ann Tlusty, "Introduction," in *The World of the Tavern: Public Houses in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Beat Kümin and B. Ann Tlusty (Burlington, VT, 2002), pp. 8-9, and Susanne Rau and Gerd Schwerhoff, ed. *Zwischen Gotteshaus und Taverne. Öffentliche Räume in Spätmittelalter und Früher Neuzeit*. Norm und Struktur. Studien zum sozialen Wandel in Mittelalter und früher Neuzeit 21 (Cologne, 2004).

37 Michael Frank, "Satan's Servant or Authorities' Agent? Publicans in Eighteenth-Century Germany," in *The World of the Tavern*, ed. Kümin and Tlusty, p. 31.

English public houses, for example, mention great and small candlesticks as well.³⁸ Regulation of closing time was universal: in the north German county of Lippe, for example, public houses were to close at eight p.m. in the winter and nine p.m. in the summer, although infractions were constant.³⁹ As we will see below, the evening hours of the public house correspond with the higher incidence of violent crime in the evening rather than late at night.

III. Disorder

"Disorder" is of course in the eye of the beholder; here it refers to a category used by church and secular authorities. Some of nighttime practices classified by these authorities as disorder, such as the charivari, were seen by the participants as in fact reaffirming a village order that had been upset by a problematic marriage. At night, the contrast between the order of the authorities and the order of the village became especially sharp.⁴⁰

As Norbert Schindler has observed, in the town or the village the disturbers of the nightly peace fell into two distinct groups: young men and tavern visitors.⁴¹ For the young

38 Janet Pennington, "Inns and Taverns of Western Sussex, 1550-1700: A Documentary and Architectural Investigation," in *The World of the Tavern*, ed. Kümin and Tlusty, p. 125.

39 Frank, "Satan's Servant or Authorities' Agent?" in *The World of the Tavern*, ed. Kümin and Tlusty, p. 36, and Hans Heiss, "The Pre-modern Hospitality Trade in the Central Alpine Region: The Example of Tirol," in *The World of the Tavern*, ed. Kümin and Tlusty, pp. 170-71, citing a complaint about "raucous and reckless games, boozing, and dancing until late in the night hours" from Brixen, 1785.

40 As Norbert Schindler has commented in "Guardians of Disorder," in *A History of Young People in the West*, ed. Levi and Schmitt, 1: 240-82.

41 Schindler, "Nächtliche Ruhestörung," p. 230. On brawls after tavern visits, see p. 233. On the nocturnal excesses of young men, see also Eva Lacour, "Faces of Violence Revisited. A Typology of Violence in Early Modern Rural Germany," *Journal of Social History* 34, 3 (2001): 649-667, here 657.

men of the village, the sheer disruptive exuberance of making noise under the cover of darkness sometimes bursts out of the records, in this case from a 1732 church council report from Gruorn, a Württemberg village in the Swabian Alps:

The servants from the Aglishardt farm raced through the village at eleven-thirty at night with bellowing cries, which greatly angered the residents.⁴²

Singing also could disturb the relative peace of the village at night. The 1732 church council report from Gruorn mentions "Johannes Grießinger, mason" who "almost every night, and especially on Sundays, sings improper street songs."⁴³

For priests, pastors, and preachers the impropriety of all this nightlife was also clear by its fruits: unwilling churchgoers who fell asleep during services. Among the published sermons of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, sleeping in church was a familiar topic. In 1709 the Swiss Reformed pastor Conradin Riola published a "spiritual trumpet" against the habit of sleeping during services. Riola, pastor in the village of Sent, explained that God had ordained the night for rest and the day for labor. Those who roamed about at night like wild animals and slept during the day disturbed the divine order.⁴⁴ Catholic preachers in Bavaria repeated his condemnations, as did the Reformed Scottish kirk sessions studied by Margo Todd.⁴⁵

42 "Die Knechte vom Aglishardter Hof sind nachts halb zwölf Uhr mit brüllendem Geschrei durch das Dorf gezogen, was die Innwohnerschaft sehr geärgert hat." Peter Lahnstein, ed., *Das Leben im Barock: Zeugnisse und Berichte 1640-1740* (Stuttgart, 1974), p. 148.

43 "Johannes Grießinger Maurer singt fast jede Nacht besonders auch Sonntags unanständige Gassenlieder." Lahnstein, *Barock*, p. 148.

44 Jon Mathieu, "In der Kirche schlafen. Eine sozialgeschichtliche Lektüre von Conradin Riolas 'Geistlicher Trompete' (Strada im Engadin, 1709)," *Schweizerisches Archiv für Volkskunde* 87, 3/4 (1991): 121-43.

45 Elfriede Moser-Rath, *Predigtmärlein der Barockzeit: Exempel, Sage, Schwank und Fabel in geistlichen Quellen des oberdeutschen Raumes* (Berlin, 1964), Urs Herzog, *Geistliche Wohlredenheit: die katholische Barockpredigt*

All these attempts to limit nocturnal disorder are familiar from urban life. I suspect that in the villages, the noisy youth culture of the night was much harder to repress than in the cities, where street lighting and the general process of nocturnalization were opening the night up to more respectable activity.⁴⁶

IV. Violence and Crime

Sociability at night could flow into nocturnal violence. On December 9, 1666 in the Hessian village of Ebersdorf, two men emerged from a house "in the evening in the twilight."⁴⁷ Andreas Keiser, a Lutheran, and Hans Caspar Hägelich, "calvinisch" had been drinking beer in the house of Hans Kiß. They had begun to argue about religion and had already come to blows. They each left the alehouse to go home but met up outside, where the dispute continued. Hägelich, the Calvinist, pulled a hatchet out from his tunic and swung; Keiser, unarmed, tried to flee but received a deep wound in the back, from which he died two days later.

The victim Keiser was the husband of the niece of Caspar Preis of Stausebach, a Catholic peasant whose diary has recorded a typical outburst of "one-on-one" nocturnal violence.⁴⁸ Based on

(Munich, 1991), and Margo Todd, *The Culture of Protestantism in Early Modern Scotland* (New Haven, 2002), pp. 39-40.

46 The establishment of village night watches by central authorities in the eighteenth century opens up another aspect of this question. See David Warren Sabean, *Property, Production, and Family in Neckarhausen, 1700-1870*. Cambridge Studies in Social and Cultural Anthropology 73 (Cambridge; New York, 1990).

47 Wilhelm A. Eckardt and Helmut Klingelhöfer, ed. *Bauernleben im Zeitalter des Dreissigjährigen Krieges: die Stausebacher Chronik des Caspar Preis, 1636-1667*. Beiträge zur hessischen Geschichte 13 (Marburg, 1998), pp. 100-101.

48 [1666] "In diesem Jahr ist ein grausamer Todtschlag und Mord geschehen zu Ebistorff ahn meines s(eligen) Bruders Tochtermann mit Nahmen Andereass Keiser. Ist geschehen den 29./9. Tag Novemberis [d.h. Dezember] zu Abend

a study of judicial records in Artois from 1401-1660, Robert Muchembled has argued that dusk, rather than the late night, was the critical time for violent crime in the countryside. Surveying cases of homicide that indicate the time of the violence (37% of the total cases), we see about 17% of these deadly encounters in the afternoon, 22% at night, and 55% in the evening.⁴⁹ The majority of homicides in Muchembled's sample probably occurred during the day, but violence was more common in the evening than later at night.

Rural court records confirm the real potential for violence in any encounter involving young men in the evening or after dark. In the Artois village of Lorgies in 1602, on March 17 at around eight in the evening, the young Pierre Soix mistakenly attacked Philippe Carpentier, "maréchal" of the village, mortally wounding him. Their exchange captures some of the tension of these nocturnal encounters. Soix was walking along, singing, when he heard someone approaching and called out "Qui va là?" Carpentier, well known to Soix but unrecognized in the dark, responded with "Que veux-tu avoir?" Soix responded hopefully "Amis," but Carpentier replied "Je ne cognois nulz amis" and knocked Soix to the ground. In defense, Soix fatally

in der Tömerung. Es hatt sich also zugetragen. Es seind ihrer etliche eines Mans Hauß mit Namen Kiß Hans in Ebistorff und trinken Bier. Komen zusahmen zu disputieren. Der Ermordte war luterisch, der Todtschläger calvinisch und der war ein[es] Sallpettersieders Sohn mit Nahmen Hanß Caspar. Sie zanken sich; ein ider will der Beste sein. Gehet solang biß zun Schlägen. Wie sie nun auß dem Bierhauß komen und nach Hauß gehen wöllen, so komen sie wider zusahmen. So hatt der Mörder eine scharpfe Axt under seinem Rock, der ander mit bloßen Händen..., so haubt der mit der Axt dem andern in seinen Rück... stirbt den 11. Tag Novemberis [d.h. Dezember]." Eckardt und Klingelhöfer, ed. *Chronik des Caspar Preis*, p. 100. Malcolm Greenshields describes a remarkably similar incident from the rural Haute Auvergne in 1654; see his *An Economy of Violence in Early Modern France: Crime and Justice in the Haute Auvergne, 1587-1664* (University Park, Pa., 1994), pp. 80-83.

49 Robert Muchembled, *La violence au village: sociabilitié et comportements populaires en Artois du XVe au XVIIe siècle* (Paris, 1989), pp. 20, 29-32; Muchembled, "La violence et la nuit," p. 237.

stabbed him.⁵⁰ In 1616 in the upper Bavarian village of Siegsdorf, a certain "Wolf, servant of Pämer" stabbed another young servant in the armpit "for no other reason" than that they came together in the lane and did not recognize each other. Earlier that year in the same village Adam Aufhaimer attacked the weaver Stephan Peutner "at night in the street," breaking one of his ribs with a stone.⁵¹

In addition to this interpersonal violence, the rural night also saw communal violence that enforced group identities or village boundaries. The young Thomas Isham of Lamport kept a diary of country life in Northhamptonshire in 1671-73, recording on April 30, 1673 a particularly brutal encounter between the young men of two villages:

Last night the servants of four farmers, with Mr. Baxter's man and Henry Lichfield, went to Draughton [about a mile northwest] to bring home the first drawing of beer, which they bought from Palmer. On the way back sixteen or seventeen Draughton men met them with stakes and began to lay about them; but being few and unarmed against a greater number of armed men, they were easily beaten, and Mr. Baxter's man has had his skull laid bare in several places and almost fractured.⁵²

The diarist does not explain what score the Draughton men had to settle with the six young men of Lamport; a slight to village pride, or perhaps the visitors were courting the young women of Draughton. The chronicle of Dötschel brothers of Mitwitz, a

50 Muchembled, *La violence au village*, pp. 122-23.

51 Schindler, "Nächtliche Ruhestörung," p. 229.

52 Thomas Isham, *The Diary of Thomas Isham of Lamport (1658-81), kept by him in Latin from 1671 to 1673 at his father's command*, trans. Norman Marlow, with introduction, appendixes and notes by Sir Gyles Isham (Farnborough, 1971), p. 207. Eva Lacour describes a similar encounter in the village of Onse (Rheinland-Pfalz) in "Faces of Violence Revisited," pp. 655-56.

village in rural Franconia, recorded violent brawls after their village's church fair (kermes, *Kirchweihfest*) on August 31, 1628 and in 1670: "Anno 1670 year [sic], at our church fair in the night, Erhart Bauer... became unruly with Attam and Michael, two brothers.... And it became a great brawl." Each of these "battles," as the Dötschels described them, ended with several men seriously injured.⁵³

Nocturnal crimes against property were associated with nightwalkers, suspicious persons who might eavesdrop, "cast men's gates, carts or the like into ponds, or commit other outrages or misdemeanors in the night, or shall be suspected to be pilferers, or otherwise likely to disturb the peace..."⁵⁴ In seventeenth-century London the term, which had been applied primarily to men, came to refer to "lewd and idle women." Magistrates feminized the crime, accusing single women of "being common nightwalkers." In the provinces the term retained its masculine associations through the eighteenth century, where it was prosecuted alongside poaching, a widespread nocturnal crime issuing from deep social tensions.⁵⁵

Whatever the actual level of nocturnal crime in the countryside, early modern villagers were quick to defend themselves against perceived nocturnal threats. The countless

53 See Rainer Hambrecht, "'Das Papier ist mein Acker...' Ein Notizbuch des 17. Jahrhunderts von Handwerker-Bauern aus dem nordwestlichen Oberfranken," *Jahrbuch der Coburger Landesstiftung* 29 (1984): 317-450, 350, 388

54 Paul Griffiths, "Meanings of Nightwalking in Early Modern England," *The Seventeenth Century* 13, 2 (1998): 212-38, here p. 213.

55 See J.H. Porter, "Crime in the Countryside, 1600-1800," and John E. Archer, "Poachers Abroad," in *The Unquiet Countryside*, ed. G.E. Mingay (London; New York, 1989), pp. 9-22, 52-64. Poaching is one example of the rural nocturnal activities that unfolded outside the village, such as the secret gatherings of Anabaptists and other spiritual or political nonconformists, the wanderings of lone travellers, and groups travelling by post-coach. A survey of these activities will form another section of this text.

ordinances that required anyone out at night to carry a light - not to see, but to be seen - took into account the risks of defensive violence at night.⁵⁶ Thomas Isham recorded an "uproar" on the night of December 13, 1672:

About eleven or twelve o'clock tonight a noise was heard in Mr. Wright's yard. The maids, who were washing dishes, heard someone beating on the window, breaking it as if trying to get in. They were terrified...

The entire household, and the village, sprang into action:

... one beat on the bell, another blew a horn, a third put candles in every room. Meanwhile Wright, clad only in a nightshirt, ran through the house like a madman, and his son waited in the hall with a sword and holding a gun, ready to receive them with a volley... the neighbors, aroused by the horn and thinking that the house was being attacked by thieves, assembled with forks, sticks, and spits.

Armed and ready, when the villagers investigated the yard they found "a dog that had been shut out and had broken a window." Isham notes that "this sent them away with roars of laughter,"⁵⁷ but the situation could be dangerous. In the Bavarian town of Traunstein in 1698 the apprentice carpenter Ruepp Jähner lost the fingers on his right hand when he took an ill-considered shortcut over a neighbor's fence late one night: He was attacked without warning by his neighbor Sylvester Schneiderpaur. In the dark villagers tended to attack first, assuming that anyone whom they did not recognize had shadowy intentions.⁵⁸

56 Schindler, "Nächtliche Ruhestörung," p. 244.

57 Isham, *Diary*, p. 180.

58 Schindler, "Nächtliche Ruhestörung," pp. 242-45; Muchembled, *Violence*, p. 122.

V. Country folk, city nights

By 1700 a new literary formula was emerging. Authors embellished the age-old comparison between urban and rural life with a new contrast between the nights of the city and the countryside. In 1714 Alexander Pope (1688-1744) penned an "Epistle to Miss BLOUNT, on her leaving the Town, after the CORONATION." Addressing "some fond Virgin, whom her mother's care / Drags from the town to wholesome country air," Pope describes the fate of Miss Blount in the country:

She went, to plain-work, and to purling brooks,
Old-fashion'd halls, dull aunts, and croaking rooks:
She went from Op'ra, park, assembly, play,
To morning walks, and pray'r three hours a day:
To part her time 'twixt reading and bohea,
To muse, and spill her solitary tea,
Or o'er cold coffee trifle with the spoon,
Count the slow clock, and dine exact at noon:
Divert her eyes with pictures in the fire,
Hum half a tune, tell stories to the squire;
Up to her godly garret after sev'n,
There starve and pray, for that's the way to heav'n.⁵⁹

The daily rhythms of country life seem especially deadening here, with dinner at noon and bedtime not long after seven.

Were the urban and rural nights truly drifting apart? Pope's comments clearly reflect a literary theme, but might also reveal a real shift in patterns of daily time. In the *Tatler* of December 12, 1710, Richard Steele mentioned "an old friend... being lately come to town" from the countryside. "I went to see him on Tuesday last about eight o'clock in the evening,"

59 Alexander Pope, *The Works* (London, 1736), vol. II, Epistles, book 3, "To Several Persons," Epistle V, TO Miss BLOUNT, With the Works of VOITURE. Written at 17 years old. Epistle VI. To the same on her leaving the Town, after the CORONATION.

continued the author, "with a design to sit with him an hour or two and talk over old stories":

but upon inquiring after him, his servant told me he was just gone up to bed. The next morning, as soon as I was up and dressed, and had dispatched a little business, I came again to my friend's house about eleven o'clock, with a design to renew my visit; but upon asking for him, his servant told me he was just sat down to dinner.

Clearly, London and the country are out of step in this case.

Steele continued:

In short, I found that my old-fashioned friend religiously adhered to the example of his forefathers, and observed the same hours that had been kept in his family ever since the Conquest.⁶⁰

When the Newcastle curate Henry Bourne published his thoughts on *Antiquitates vulgares; or, the antiquities of the common people* (Newcastle, 1725) he sought to give "an account of several of their opinions and ceremonies." The common people are in his understanding country folk (and there is nothing new in this assumption), but Bourne's comments suggest that he sees a different daily rhythm in the countryside. Discussing the belief that the evil spirits of the night are banished by the cockcrow, he notes

that in Country-Places, where the Way of Life requires more early Labour, they always go chearfully to Work at that time [i.e. cockcrow]; whereas if they are called abroad sooner, they are apt to imagine every Thing they see or hear, to be a wandring Ghost.⁶¹

60 The essay is "... Minimâ contentos Nocte Britannos," *The Tatler* 263 (December 14, 1710).

61 Henry Bourne, *Antiquitates vulgares; or, the antiquities of the common people. Giving an account of several of their opinions and ceremonies*

Rural folk also spend their long winter evenings differently, as Bourne notes in his tenth chapter, "Of the Country Conversation in a Winter's Evening: Their Opinions of Spirits and Apparitions..." Bourne claims that "Nothing is commoner in Country Places, than for a whole family in a Winter's Evening, to sit round the Fire, and tell stories of Apparitions and Ghosts."⁶² Physician and poet Mark Aikenside's *The Pleasures of the Imagination* (1744) presents a similar scene:

Hence finally, by night
The village-matron, round the blazing hearth,
Suspends the infant-audience with her tales,
Breathing astonishment! of witching rhymes,
And evil spirits;...

of shapes that walk
At dead of night, and clank their chains, and wave
The torch of hell around the murd'rer's bed.⁶³

Leaving aside the stereotype of rustic superstition, these commentators may be responding to a new divergence of daily schedules between city and village.

The spread of street lighting and festive illuminations in cities also created a new contrast with the night in the countryside. In a 1745 pamphlet celebrating the birth of a Habsburg prince, two "peasants from the highlands" view the illumination of Vienna (See illustration 3).

(Newcastle: printed by J. White for the author, 1725), p.38.

62 Bourne, *Antiquitates vulgares*, p. 76

63 Mark Akenside (1721-1770), *The Pleasures of Imagination. A Poem. In Three Books* (London: printed for R. Dodsley, 1744), p. 24.

Curiosos Gespräch
 Zwischen Hansel und Pippel
 Zweyen
 Oberländischen Bauren /
 Bey der
 Den 14. Märken 1745. in der Königl. Haupt- und
 Residenz- Stadt Wienn
 Solenniter gehaltenen Illumination,
 Ueber die so glücklich- als höchst- erfreuliche Geburt eines
 Zwenten Königl. Prinzen und Erb- Herzogen
CAROLI JOSEPHI &c.



Wienn / gedruckt bey Johann Jacob Zahn / Universitäts- Buchdruckern / im
 Pfeifferischen Haus untern Tuchläden.

3. Two Peasants at an Illumination in Vienna, 1745

The first is astounded: "wherever I look, wherever I go, lights shine without end / and the houses all around are like the heavens." The other adds "In our village there's never been a church fair ("kermes") like this."⁶⁴

Ekirch has suggested that the age-old pattern of segmented sleep was disrupted by artificial light beginning in the late seventeenth century (coincident with the rise of street lighting, better domestic lighting, and coffeehouses). "Divided sleep," he argued, "would grow less common with the passage of time, first among the propertied classes in the better-lit urban neighborhoods, then slowly among other social strata..."⁶⁵ References to segmented sleep are absent from the diaries of men like Samuel Pepys and James Boswell because their daily life was extended well past sunset by artificial lighting, indoors and out. If this hypothesis is valid, then the nights of townspeople, compressed by artificial light into a single sleep of seven or eight hours, began to diverge from the age-old pattern of segmented sleep found everywhere else.

Summing up these developments in 1786, the German *Journal des Luxus und der Moden* (*Journal of Luxury and Fashion*; Weimar and Gotha) published an essay on "fashions concerning the uses and divisions of the day and the night in various ages".⁶⁶ The author of the article and editor of the *Journal*, Friedrich Justin Bertuch (1747-1822), described "an entirely new order of things" that had replaced the traditional rhythm of daytime for

64 *Curioses Gespräch: zwischen Hänsel und Lippel zweyen oberländischen Bauern bey der den 14.Märzen in... Wien... gehalten Illumination* (Vienna: J.J. Jahn, 1745), fo. 2.

65 Ekirch, "Sleep We Have Lost," p. 383.

66 "Moden in Gebrauche und Eintheilung des Tages und der Nacht zu Verschiedenen Zeiten, und bey verschiedenen Völkern," *Journal der Moden* [after 1786 *Journal des Luxus und der Moden*] 1 (May 1786): 199-201. See Gerhard Wagner, *Von der Galanten zur Eleganten Welt. Das Weimarer Journal des Luxus und der Modern (1786-1827)* (Hamburg, 1994).

work and night for rest and sleep. Bertuch regarded the change as self-evident and presented several examples drawn from the courts and cities of northern Europe. "In the fourteenth century" the merchants' stalls of Paris opened at four in the morning, "but now hardly at seven o'clock"; then, the French king retired at eight in the evening, but "now plays, visits and all social pleasures hardly even begin at that hour." From the time of Henry VIII to Bertuch's own day the English had shifted their mealtimes and sleeping times later by about seven (!) hours.⁶⁷ Bertuch claimed that "all these observations, which could easily be multiplied, prove clearly that the occupations of the day begin ever later, the more society is refined and luxury increases."⁶⁸ This refinement was urban and European: "the king of Yemen, ruler of Arabia Felix, dines early at nine for a midday meal, at five for the evening [meal], and goes to sleep around eleven," whereas "the pleasures of the evening and night are the ruling fashion in France and England, and indeed in every great city..."⁶⁹ The shift to later hours does not seem to

67 "... Im vierzehnten Jahrhunderte öffnetten sich die Boutiquen und kaufmanns-Gewölbe zu Paris des Morgens um vier [!], und jetzt kaum um sieben Uhr. Der König speište um acht Uhr des Morgens zu Mittag, und gieng Abends um acht Uhr zu Bette. Jetzt beginnen Schauspiele, Visiten und alle Gesellschaftlichen Vergnügungen kaum erst zur nemlichen Stunde da man sich sonst schlafen legte.... Unter Heinrich VIII. frühstuckten die Engländer von bon ton früh um sieben Uhr, und aßen um zehn Uhr zu Mittag. Unter der Königin Elisabeth speište der Adel, die Reichen, und die gelehrte Welt um eilf Uhr zu Mittag, und Abends zwischen sechs und sieben Uhr. Unter Carl II fiengen die Schauspiele Nachmittags um vier an; und jetzt speišt alles was irgend zur vornehmer Welt gehört in Londen nie vor Abends fünf Uhr zu Mittag. [Bertuch], "Moden", p. 200.

68 "... die Geschäfte des Tages allenthalben und immer desto später anfangen, jemehr sich die Societät verfeinert und der Luxus steigt..." Ibid., p. 200.

69 "Der König von Yemen, Herrscher des glücklichen Arabiens, speišt früh um neun Uhr zu Mittag, um fünf Uhr zu Abend, und legt sich um eilf Uhr schlafen.... Daher sind die Abend- und Nacht-Plaisirs so sehr in Frankreich und England, so wie überhaupt in jeder großen Stadt wo Luxus und Bedürfniß der Vergnügungen steigt und sich aufs höchste verfeinert, herrschende Mode..." Ibid., p. 200.

include the rural population.

VI. Conclusions

When darkness fell over the early modern countryside, the characteristic ambivalence of the night emerged. Fear waxed alongside pleasure, rest alternated with frenzy, and limitations created opportunities. Unlike early modern courts or cities, where converging factors promoted a process of nocturnalization in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, early modern rural society was too varied to present a single set of themes in the history of the night.

The absence of nocturnalization may have distinguished early modern rural society from city life. It seems that by the eighteenth century the temporal markers of daily life - the traditional times for labor, meals, and sleep - were slipping out of step as townspeople used artificial lighting, indoors and out, to shift their daily schedule into the night. In the *Tatler* essay quoted above Steele investigated the development:

For this reason I desired a friend of mine in the country to let me know, whether the lark rises as early as he did formerly? and whether the cock begins to crow at his usual hour? My friend has answered me, that his poultry are as regular as ever, and that all the birds and beasts of his neighborhood keep the same hours that they have observed in the memory of man..."⁷⁰

The issue is still not entirely resolved, as rural resistance to daylight savings time today indicates.

Another aspect of nocturnalization, the expansion of respectable nightlife at the expense of the nocturnal elements

70 Steele, "... Minimâ contentos Nocte Britannos," *The Tatler* 263 (December 14, 1710).

of traditional youth culture, also seems less apparent in the countryside.⁷¹ Attempts to "colonize" the rural night were fewer and less successful: the spinning bees endured, rural publicans and customers continued to ignore closing hours, and the night remained a time and place for youth, especially young men.⁷²

71 Schindler, "Nächtliche Ruhestörung," pp. 216-21.

72 Is it useful to speak of the "colonization" of the night in early modern Europe? For the purposes of this discussion at least, I think it is. Any critical definition of colonization recognizes the violence necessary to the project. Both logically and historically, the colonization of inhabited spaces is the attempt to exercise power, or authority, or both, over indigenous people. Of course, many myths of colonization posit a physically "empty space" devoid of indigenous people, or natives so culturally "empty" that they embrace the cultural authority of the colonizer. Myths aside, however, the colonial exercise of power and authority is never far from violence or the threat of violence.

If we apply this understanding to the early modern night, then who is the colonizer and who colonized? Clearly, young men (and in some cases young women) of all estates were the "indigenous people" of the medieval and early modern night, from young maids at spinning bees to young men like Hans Werner von Eschwege. Early modern elites, from princes and courtiers to town councils and wealthy merchants, expanded their activities, privileges and authority into the hours after sunset, seeking to secure and regulate this part of the day. As Bertuch observed, "the occupations of the day begin ever later, the more society is refined and luxury increases." As is often the case in a colonial ideology, Bertuch does not mention any inhabitants of the space that is being colonized. The night is depicted as an "empty space" into which "society" expands. In my work on the night I consider the history of the conflicts between the young people of the night and the authorities who seek to colonize it.