NOCTURNAL WRITERS IN IMPERIAL ROME: THE CULTURE OF *LUCUBRATIO*

JAMES KER

> But since it was in the long nights through winter (*longinquis per hiemem noctibus*) in the countryside of the land of Attica . . . that I began to play at making these annotations, for this reason I have given them the title *Attic Nights* (*eas inscripsimus noctium esse Atticarum*).[1]

IN THE SECOND HALF of the second century C.E. the image of the night writer comes into its own: Aulus Gellius, inventing the title *Attic Nights,* places his work permanently under the sign of the nights on which, as he explains in his preface, he had first begun preparing it.[2] But Gellius' idea was not entirely new within the prose literature of imperial Rome.[3] In 62 C.E., Seneca writes in one of his earliest *Moral Letters* how he "claims possession of part of the nights for [his] studies" (*partem noctium studiis vindico, Ep.* 8.1) and describes himself struggling against sleep to keep his eyes fixed on the task of writing the letters for the therapy of those who will live after him. Pliny the Elder, dedicating his *Natural History* to the emperor Titus some fifteen years later, explains that he has written the entire work "in [his] leftover times, in other words, at night" (*subsicivisque temporibus . . . id est nocturnis, HN praef.* 18).

These writers do what Quintilian advises the orator to do when he explains that the best time to develop fluency in writing is at night, in the practice referred to as *lucubratio*. While sporadic mentions of a nocturnal scene of writing occur earlier,[4] the flurry in the prefaces of Seneca, Pliny, and Gellius is our best early glimpse of the grander notion of Martianus Capella, who,

I thank Shadi Bartsch and two anonymous readers for their comments. William Fitzgerald, Thomas Habinek, Leslie Kurke, Tony Long, Josephine Park, and Brian Stock all gave useful advice on earlier versions.

1. Gell. *NA praef.* 4. Translations are mine unless otherwise indicated.

2. Gellius' title has had a long afterlife, inspiring such titles as *Noctes Parisinae, Noctes Brixianae,* and *Vesperae Groninganae,* as well as *Roman Nights, American Nights,* and *Italian Hours*. The first three titles, by H. Stephanus (1585, on Gellius), F. Betera (1601, on a pestilence at Brescia), and J. Gussetius (1688, on theology) are noted by Holford-Strevens (1988, p. 21, n. 7). The three others are by Alessandro Verri (1850, novelistic encounters with Rome's evocative ancient monuments), William Kimberly Palmer and Ernest Fanos (1919, a collection of poems), and Henry James (1909, a collection of occasional reflections on regions of Italy).

3. This paper treats the image of the writer as the most significant connection between the prefaces of Gellius, Seneca, and Pliny. In a recent article, "La prefazione delle *Noctes Atticae:* Gellio fra Plinio e Seneca," Minarini (2000) notes Gellius' connections with the other two, but along different lines (see section 5.3 below).

4. See section 5 below.

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writing in the fourth century, hypostatizes Agrypnia (Sleeplessness) as one of the maidens on whom Philology depends if she is going to ascend to immortality.[5]

What did it mean for a Roman writer to represent himself writing at night, and what power did it draw upon to influence the reception of his text? Tore Janson identifies the nocturnal scene as a prefatory topos connoting "diligence" in connection with "a popular conception of men of learning sitting at night and working by candlelight when the rest of the world was asleep."[6] The topos also illustrates the long-standing tendency for any Roman prose author to present his writing activity as "an incidental, spare-time occupation by way of doing a service for a friend" and as engaging "not . . . more than a small part of his personality"; at the very least, as not detracting from his performance of social duties (*officia*) or public action (*negotia*).[7] Alternatively, the mention of the nocturnal scene is sometimes apologetic, belonging to a self-deprecating preface that seeks to explain why the work is not everything it could have been.[8]

Yet there is something more to say about the conditions of the nocturnal scene, and about how its image might have served to empower the writer in the eyes of an audience. Its power, I will argue, can be seen through comparison with theories of rhetorical training and with traditional constructions of nighttime activity in Roman technical and moralizing discourses. The sources I will invoke, which span a long period of time and a wide range of genres from the agricultural manual of Cato to the antiquarian lexicon of Festus, cannot give us anything more than a fragmentary sense of the realia of Roman nocturnal practices. Besides, the authors of these sources themselves adopt various idealizing or satirical approaches to the representation of persons awake at night that are in line with their own rhetorical agendas. Even so, and especially so, the sources are more than adequate for revealing the codes—cultural, historical, and literary—in relation to which the figure of the nocturnal writer must be understood.

1. Literary Performances in the Early Empire

A useful first step is to consider the nocturnal scene in relation to other types of "performance" in the literary culture of the early Empire. One such performance, the *recitatio,* has been the subject of several recent studies, and I will adopt without dispute the basic picture that has emerged from this work. As it is described in the letters of Pliny the Younger, the *recitatio* involved a reading out loud of the written but as yet unpublished text (whether by the author or by an assistant, with the author close by) in the semipublic interior space of an auditorium or house to which a small audi-

5. Martianus Capella *De nuptiis Mercurii et Philologiae* 2.112; cf. Curtius 1953, 36–39. On the career of *lucubratio* in medieval views of poetic inspiration, see Ziolkowski 1990.

6. Janson 1964, 97–98, 147–48; quote from p. 97.

7. Janson 1964, 30, 29.

8. E.g., Pliny's statement to Titus (*HN praef.* 18).

ence had been invited.[9] It thus constituted a first, oral publication of the text, and its conditions could greatly influence the text's reception.[10] It created an opportunity for evaluation, for example, in the care taken by the author to invite an audience who would affirm the social value (*dignitas*) of the occasion and hence of his text, and to avoid the "chill" (*frigus*) that could result from inappropriate behavior or an unsympathetic response; or in the audience's expression of judgment (*iudicium*) through subtle gestures, which could result in the author making emendations before the next phase of wider publication. The *recitatio* was thus also characterized by a spirit of mutual exchange or reciprocity (*gratia*), and we find that to attend a trying daylong *recitatio* required one to curb one's autonomy (*libertas*) in the service of generosity (*liberalitas*); in some cases this was justified by the observation that someone who is in the present instance a listener (*auditor*) will at some later date be a performer (*recitator*) and thus dependent on the generosity of his listeners in turn.

These aspects of the *recitatio* were enacted in part through its creation of a shared experience of space and time that transcended the merely physical. Emmanuelle Valette-Cagnac has suggested, for example, that the *praefatio* delivered prior to the reading, like the *praefatio* delivered before sacrificial rituals in Roman religion, facilitated a transition from the world outside into what she calls "the space of the *recitatio*."[11] Within the overdetermined temporality of this space, the gradual unfurling of the bookroll through the course of the day measured out the *recitatio* as a time shared together by all; and the author's offer to stop reading was greeted by protests from the audience, whose unanimous shout of "Recite!" (*recita!*) committed them to a collective experience of physical and ritual time measured out by the progression of the text.[12] This performance, then, enmeshes the text within the society of its audience, initiating it as a medium for social communication between audience and author.[13]

The evaluative, reciprocal, and spatiotemporal aspects of the *recitatio* are seemingly dependent on its status as an oral, face-to-face affair. In the model sketched by Florence Dupont, the space of the *recitatio* stands ambiguously poised between the space of oral, public discourse and the space of private,

9. E.g., Plin. *Ep.* 1.13; 5.3.7–11; 7.17. On *recitatio* see Valette-Cagnac 1997, 111–69; Dupont 1997 (who emphasizes amongst other things its semipublicity); Pennacini 1993, 254–67; Quinn 1982, 158–65; Dalzell 1955. Not all communal reading events were *recitationes:* for a characterization of the variety of reading events in this period, see Johnson 2000, 606–24.

10. The gradual nature of Roman publication (distribution of individual copies to friends for annotation, recitations followed by further emendations, controlled distribution of presentation copies, and final distribution beyond the author's control) is discussed by Starr 1987.

11. Valette-Cagnac 1997, 127, 126–28. Dupont (1997, 55) also discusses the function of the *recitatio* more generally as a rite of passage for young debutante authors.

12. For the *recita!* moment, see Sen. *Ep.* 95.2.

13. Dupont (1997, 52–54) emphasizes the social function of the *recitatio* as an expression of *amicitia* and reciprocity: "The *recitationes* . . . comprise a practice that truly realizes the old values of the republican elite, creating a community founded on gift and counter-gift" (p. 53). Johnson 2000 usefully characterizes the culture of reading in this period as "a shared activity deeply involved in the building of elite community" (p. 621) and draws particular attention to the aesthetic status of the bookroll in conditioning this effect.

written discourse evidenced, for example, in epistolary writing.[14] Dupont presents the *recitatio* as an occasion on which, in an age when opportunities for free public speech had evaporated, it was still possible for members of the Roman elite to exercise *libertas* and *dignitas* through the collective experience of oral discourse. To this extent the *recitatio* helped to counteract the distancing effect of writing which, as Thomas Habinek has noted, was a threat to aristocratic power: it allowed an author to "maintain a personal relationship" with his audience.[15]

The image of the nocturnal writer, I contend, has no less potential than the *recitatio* to condition the reception of text by audience. This seems unlikely, if the scene of writing is an unwitnessed stage in the life of the text, and especially if we assign it to the position it would have in Dupont's model, alongside epistolary writing which "implies the absence of the writer during the reading of the letter."[16] The nocturnal writing scene would seem to lack the opportunities for social communication that exist in the *recitatio*. But the nocturnal writer in our examples of Gellius, Seneca, and Pliny is *not* left unwitnessed: the writer uses a gesture of description precisely to bring himself before the eyes of his audience in the process of writing, and thereby to "maintain a personal relationship" with them.[17]

If "the *recitator* is first and foremost the physical presence of a living body,"[18] still the *description* of the writing scene establishes a less directly physical but nonetheless efficacious presence of writer and text before the audience, asking him or her to reflect on the text's conditions of production and especially on the ethos of the writer as a user, or an economist, of time. Further, as in the phenomenon of *praefatio,* by which the audience at a *recitatio* is led mentally into the ritual space of the reading, the mention of the scene of writing *in* the preface of a prose text has the potential to condition the text's entry into the social world by creating for it an additional performative space. The writer uses this occasion to create conditions for evaluation, relations of reciprocity, and a spatially and temporally marked interaction—even, that is, under the sign of a text written in a distant place and by night. It is a performance that the writer can represent and control exactly as he pleases, much more so than in the delicate conditions of the *recitatio,* in which an unscheduled interruption can result in *frigus* for the writer and his text, and whose impact can be amplified by malicious gossip after the fact. In the written description of the scene of writing, nothing is left to chance; the scene embedded in the preface is allowed to last as long as the text itself.

14. Dupont 1997, 45–46, 52.

15. Habinek 1998, 106–8.

16. Dupont 1997, 52.

17. Even in epistolography, the written form least likely to be recited in a *recitatio,* we observe mentions of place, time, and other conditions of writing that seek to bring the writer before the reader's eyes, albeit remotely; the epistolary topos of a fictive soul-to-soul presence between writer and reader adds to this effect. E.g., Ambrose *Ep.* 47.4: in letters "there shines an image of presence between those who are absent, and although separated they are joined together by written discourse" (*in quibus inter absentes imago refulget praesentiae et collocutio scripta separatos copulat*).

18. Dupont 1997, 57.

Beyond this *a priori* case for the image of the nocturnal scene of writing as a type of performance, our next task, and the main purpose of this article, is to determine the influence of *nocturnality* upon the prefatory project. As an approach, I examine representations of nocturnal activity beyond the context of the prose preface: first, Quintilian's theoretical discussion of nocturnal writing in the training of the orator; then, as the cultural and social background to this, an opposition between two different modes of nocturnal activity constructed by many authors. Following this path back into technical and moralizing discourses, I present a model for the precise gesture of bringing the *lucubratio* before the eyes of the audience. These discoveries will aid us in interpreting specific early instances of the image of the nocturnal writer in Cicero, and then in its increasingly prominent function in the prose prefaces of Seneca's *Moral Letters,* Pliny's *Natural History,* and the eponymous *Attic Nights* of Gellius.

2. QUINTILIAN'S ALTERNATIVE TO THE *LOCUS AMOENUS*

In Book 10 of his oratorical training manual, Quintilian emphasizes the role that writing is to have in the education of the ideal orator, the one whom he will define as *vir bonus dicendi peritus,* "a good man skilled in speaking" (*Inst.* 12.1.1). If we wish to become good at speaking in public, says Quintilian, "we must . . . write as carefully and as much as possible" (10.3.2). He goes on (10.3.3):

> This is where the roots lie (*illic radices*), this is where the foundations are, this is where the wealth is stored in the emergency reserves of our treasury (*sanctiore quodam aerario*). (trans. Russell)[19]

Quintilian takes these natural and economic metaphors for the benefits of writing from the rural household and the archaic public treasury.[20] Drawing further on the household metaphor, Quintilian says that the writer who develops his fluency will soon reach the point where "words will come at call, composition will follow, and everything will finally come to play its part, just like a well-run household" (*verba respondebunt, compositio sequetur, cuncta denique ut in familia bene instituta in officio erunt,* 10.3.9). The question that remains in his discussion is what environment is best suited for exercise in writing.

The ideal environment will allow the writer above all to maintain his concentration (*mentis intentio, Inst.* 10.3.20). Such privacy, or *secretum,* is not easy to obtain, even if the writer is away from the distractions of public life. Within the household, for example, Quintilian warns against the use of dictation: not only will a slave-secretary upset our concentration by being too slow or moody, but his mere presence will make us ashamed (*pudet*) to back up and fix an error or to use the gestures of the hand, face, or body that invigorate our thought process but are "ridiculous except when we are alone" (*ridicula . . . nisi cum soli sumus,* 10.3.19–21). In short, "privacy is lost when

19. I follow the Loeb text and translation of Russell 2001 except where indicated.
20. On *sanctius aerarium,* cf. Russell 2001, p. 336, n. 2.

we dictate" (*secretum in dictando perit,* 10.3.22). Concentration, he suggests, is best nurtured in the seclusion of "a place free of spectators" and in "the profoundest possible silence" (*liberum arbitris locum et quam altissimum silentium,* 10.3.22). Yet even this solitude is no guarantee. Disagreeing with those who recommend that the writer isolate himself in a scenic natural landscape, Quintilian points out that pleasant surroundings (*locorum amoenitas*) and the freedom to look around at things (*ipsa late circumspiciendi libertas*) tend rather to distract and relax the mind than to concentrate it (10.3.22–24). That is why Demosthenes used to descend into a place from which nothing could be heard or seen: to shelter his mind from distraction (10.3.25).

This leads Quintilian to recommend writing by night. Busy people, he admits, undertake night work by necessity rather than by choice (*occupatos in noctem necessitas agit, Inst.* 10.3.27). Yet the nocturnal environment has a number of features that make it the best choice anyway (10.3.26):

> ideoque lucubranti silentium noctis et clausum cubiculum et lumen unum velut rectos maxime teneat.
>
> And so one should burn the midnight oil and let the silence of the night and a closed room and a single lamp especially hold one's eyes, as it were, free from swerving.[21] (trans. Murgia)

Every word of Quintilian's simple and elegant description contributes to a picture of insulation and containment—aural (*silentium*), spatial (*cubiculum*), visual (*lumen unum; rectos*), as well as mental and to some extent moral. Clearly this scene of "working by lamplight" (*lucubrantes*) is what he imagines will allow the orator to concentrate on his writing most fully, and to store up the "roots" and "treasury" that will help him to speak well in public. His one proviso is to make sure that in adopting this practice we do not exceed nature's bounds (10.3.27):

> But for all kinds of study, and particularly for this, good health (*bona valetudo*) and the simple life (*frugalitas*) that is its best guarantee are essential, whenever we devote the hours which nature gave us for rest and refreshment to our very demanding work (*cum tempora ab ipsa rerum natura ad quietem refectionemque nobis in acerrimum laborem convertimus*). But the claims of this must be limited to time which is not needed for sleep, or is needed ⟨for the work in hand⟩. (trans. Russell)

Within these limits, however, "working by lamplight, when we come to it fresh and rested, gives the best kind of privacy" (*est . . . lucubratio, quotiens ad eam integri ac refecti venimus, optimum secreti genus,* 10.3.27).

Quintilian's nocturnal retreat draws upon an ethos of environment that is no less complex than the pastoral *locus amoenus* in which natural landscape inspires both the composition and the performance of song. Like the *locus amoenus,* the nocturnal scene is far removed from the public day in the city, and as in the *locus amoenus,* nature can play an active role for the orator:

21. I follow Murgia's emendation to *lucubranti* (1990, 201–9) and his defense of *rectos* (brought to my attention by a reader for *CP*). Compare Russell 2001 (with *lucubrantes* and Herzog's *erectos*): "So, when we work by lamplight, let the silence of the night, the closed room, and the single lamp keep us on our toes."

Quintilian explains how for the disciplined writer who can picture the future speaking scenario for which he is preparing, "nature will prescribe both our beginning and what follows it" (*et initia et quae secuntur natura ipsa praescribet, Inst.* 10.3.15). Thus, even as he forbids the use of a slave-secretary, Quintilian remakes the solitary writer in the form of nature's amanuensis. Yet compared with the *locus amoenus,* the *lucubratio* takes place in an emphatically cultural environment. Whereas nature brings the herdsman's song to a close with the setting of the sun, the *lucubratio* resists nature's demand for sleep in order to prepare public speeches. All of the details of landscape which serve to excite the pastoral singer—glades, streams, birds, sky—for Quintilian are distractions. The *lucubratio* is, if anything, agricultural rather than pastoral: it seeks to establish "roots" and a "treasury" within the institution of the household, and these emerge more through a negotiation with nature, through the exercise of diligence, frugality, and *ratio,* than through straightforward obedience. As we have noted, the *lucubratio* belongs to an ideal practice of writing in which "everything will finally come to play its part, just like a well-run household" (10.3.9).

Quintilian's location of *lucubratio* in the *cubiculum* appeals to the writer's role as paterfamilias. As Andrew Riggsby states in his subtle analysis of the place of the *cubiculum* in the "moral topography" of the house, "[w]hatever the connection between the *domus* and the master of the house, it is centered in a *cubiculum*."[22] Riggsby also focuses on the *cubiculum* in its function as "a room for secret activity," an aspect that could be reinforced by the dismissal of the slaves normally posted there (*cubicularii*).[23] In Quintilian's account, this function is emphasized both by the dismissal of the slave-secretary, which renders the *cubiculum* a "place *free* of witnesses" (*liberum arbitris locum,* 10.3.22) and by the closing off of the space (cf. *clausum cubiculum,* 10.3.26). As we have noted, these measures allow the orator to let go of any self-consciousness, shielding him from the shame and laughter that might have greeted his expressive gestures or fixing of mistakes in the course of writing. And indeed, one of the consequences of the *cubiculum*'s secrecy, as Riggsby observes, is that it is a "low-surveillance" region in which informal dress, indiscreet or obscene speech, and other informalities were allowed: in short, a relaxation of public behavior.[24]

The paradox of Quintilian's *lucubratio* is that while it is the "best kind of privacy," it is still brought before our eyes as a *performance* that lends authority to the hypothetical orator's publicly delivered speech. Even the words of the speech will not seem to be "just being born on the lips" (*verba in labris nascentia,* 10.3.2–3): they bring with them the nature of their private, nocturnal origin. The household's powers of production, and even of sequestration, are made to serve a public goal—as is suggested by the metaphor of the "emergency reserve" of the public treasury. This coordination of private, even secretive, activity with the service of a public good belongs

22. Riggsby 1997, 40.
23. Riggsby 1997, 44.
24. Riggsby 1997, 46.

firmly within the paradigm of *otium* and solitude made famous by Scipio Africanus, who claimed to be never more engaged in public activity than when alone in his leisure time.[25] Quintilian would have it that the orator is never more intent upon day/public speech than in the night/private setting of the *cubiculum*.

Quintilian's sketch already suggests some specific ways in which nocturnality influences the orator's project. The single lamp, *lumen unum,* is an image of frugality and suggests a rustic economic ideology for the writing scene. The dismissal of the slave-secretary for the *lucubratio* suggests a general concern for *libertas*. Further, as we will see, the focus on nocturnal *silentium* may resonate with the terminology of household religious practice. In the following section, we will work toward a more fine-grained account of the various features of nocturnal activity both good and bad.

3. *LUCUBRATIO* AND ITS EVIL TWIN

The significance of Quintilian's nocturnal scene can be most clearly defined by referring not only to the type of activity involved in *lucubratio* but also to the set of nocturnal activities in which he is emphatically not engaging. In the moralizing tradition of Roman literature—if we may compress under this rubric a wide range of technical and evaluative genres—there was a strong tendency to see a person's use of time as an indicator of his or her moral and social identity, similar to what Johannes Fabian has called a discourse on "time and the other."[26] The use of *otium,* for example, could be said to lack accountability (*ratio*) or to detract from a person's social worth (*dignitas*) if he or she was "leisurely in leisure" (*otiosus in otio*),[27] since *otium* needed either to be earned by a prior period of toil or to be devoted to some important task (*otium post labores; otium cum dignitate*)—like the *otium* of Scipio noted above.[28] To give a parallel example from the rural ideology of archaic Rome, *daily* visits to the city were understood to privilege city over country (and by extension *otium* over rustic *labor*), whereas a visit to the city every eighth day (*nundinae*) to attend a market or a meeting of the senate was sufficiently rare not to threaten the hierarchy of country over town.[29] These opposite uses of time, or opposite "temporal perspectives,"[30] illustrated nothing less than a person's relationship to the *mos maiorum* and its privileged institutions, especially the rural household and the *res publica*.

Night activity was no exception to this pattern of moralizing. Perhaps because the deepest part of the night normally dedicated to sleep, *nox intempesta,* could be understood as possessing "no time for action" (*tempus agendi . . . nullum,* Varro *Ling.* 6.6), an activity conducted during the night was treated as something of a marked behavior—certainly more so than in

25. Cic. *Off.* 3.1 = Cato *Hist.* frag. 127 Leo: *numquam se minus otiosum esse quam cum otiosus, nec minus solum quam cum solus esset*.

26. Fabian 1983.

27. Cf. Ennius *Iphigenia* 188–90 Ribbeck = 239–41 Vahlen.

28. Cf. Cic. *Off.* 3.1 (n. 25 above). This topos is discussed by Gross (1980).

29. Cf. Varro *Rust.* 2 *praef.* 1.

30. Cf. Jones 1988.

modern society with its superabundance of artificial light. In this section we will identify two general modes of nocturnal activity across the spectrum of Roman cultural life as these are imagined and interpreted in the moralizing tradition.

3.1 Enhancement and Extension of Day

In one mode of activity, night functions either to enhance or to extend the power of the day. This may be seen, to begin with, in a range of different "prospective" practices that used the night to gain something of a vista on tomorrow. Among the procedures carried out by the overseer on a Roman farm (*vilicus*) was the nocturnal *recognitio,* "inspection," which ensured that the farm equipment was free of faults (*ne . . . vitiatum*) and would be reliable for the following day's work (Columella *Rust.* 11.1.20).[31] The most formal prospective night ritual was the *auspicium* conducted between midnight and morning, in which the technical terms stipulating how the paterfamilias was to rise from bed in ritual silence included *liberatus a lecto, silentium,* and *sine vitio*. While we may not be able to suppose any special connection between the predawn *auspicium* and an account of literary *lucubratio* such as that defined by Quintilian,[32] there is clearly a shared tendency in multiple areas of Roman cultural life to spell out the ways in which the Roman paterfamilias can exploit the aesthetic conditions of night to his own advantage, creating an "auspicious" preparation for the public activities of the day.

This mode also includes the provision of extra time for labor within the economy of the household. Nocturnal labor—that is, *lucubratio*—is the height of frugality. Being conducted by the light of a moderate lamp,[33] it conjures up time for labor where there was none (cf. *nullum agendi tempus,* Varro *Rust.* 6.6), in a temporal equivalent to the precept that advises the farmer to make "good [land] out of bad" (*malis bonis,* Plin. *HN* 18.39). In a famous passage of Virgil, the early rising of the god Vulcan to make the armor of Aeneas is simultaneous with the early rising of a virtuous woman (specifically, an *univira*) who kindles the fire in the hearth and gets her maids to

31. In a different and less clear-cut case of prospective *lucubratio,* Suetonius relates how the emperor Tiberius "would enter into battles with somewhat greater gusto on those occasions when, while he was engaging in *lucubratio* (*lucubrante se*), the light had grown dim and was extinguished suddenly and of its own accord" (*subito ac nullo propellente decideret lumen et exstingueretur*) (Suet. *Tib.* 19). It remains an open question whether the institution of *lucubratio* itself is to be understood as relevant to Tiberius' reception of advice here from his valorous Claudian ancestors.

32. There are tantalizing resemblances between, on the one hand, Quintilian's "profoundest possible silence" (*quam altissimum silentium, Inst.* 10.3.22) and "a mind free on all sides" (*undique liber animus,* 10.3.28), and on the other, the image of the auspice taker who "rose from his bed in silence" (*ex lectulo suo si‹lens surr›exit*) and was "liberated from his bed" (*liberatus a lecto;* Festus, p. 474 Lindsay 1913). Whenever auspices were taken, it was necessary for there to be an expert in attendance who knew "what *silentium* is: for in *auspicia* we define *silentium* as that which lacks all faults" (*omni vitio caret*) (Cic. *Div.* 2.70). There was some dispute over what constituted *vitium,* a fault: was there still *silentium* if a slave made noise in his or her sleep? Cato had insisted that this did not constitute *vitium* (Festus, p. 268 Lindsay 1913, s.v. *prohibere*). On *vitium* see Paschall 1936.

33. The *lucubrum,* lamp, for which the practice was named appears to have given off a very "humble flame" (*modicus ignis,* Isidore *Origines* 20.10.8).

work spinning wool, "adding night to her work . . . to preserve her married life" (*noctem addens operi . . . ut servare cubile . . . possit, Aen.* 8.408–13).[34] The woman's early-morning activity is what Columella, discussing farm labor, refers to as *lucubratio antelucana* (Columella *Rust.* 11.2.12). This practice, together with its evening counterpart *lucubratio vespertina,* is an opportunity to engage in various types of task. For example, to sharpen posts by lamplight makes it possible to save precious daylight for the tasks that truly demand it.[35] Yet night work need not be of lesser importance than day work. At least in examples that we encounter outside the realm of farming, we find the *lucubratio* as an opportunity, say, for Augustus to recline on a "lucubratory couch" to complete the "remains of the day's work" (*residua diurni actus,* Suet. *Aug.* 78), for Pliny the Younger to "subtract from the night" (*de nocte sumere, Ep.* 9.40.2), or indeed for Virgil's virtuous woman to "add night to her task" (*noctem addens operi, Aen.* 8.411). Seneca portrays this gesture most vividly when he advises us to "shorten the night and make some of it over to day's account" (*circumscribatur nox et aliquid ex illa in diem transferatur, Ep.* 122.3). These phrases illustrate how night could be converted into a time for the most important, daytime tasks—that is, as an extension of the day itself.

The *curtailment* of the *lucubratio* is just as much an exercise in frugality as is the *lucubratio* itself: Quintilian's advice on maintaining adequate time for sleep is characteristic of the discourse on *lucubratio* in relation to health and nature. There are warnings about the dangers of literary *lucubratio* for eyes, complexion, and digestion, doubtless due to the use of a meager lamp and a couch. An extreme case is that of the declaimer Porcius Latro: as Seneca the Elder relates in the preface to his *Controversiae,* Latro "often, having stayed up all night (*cum per totam lucubraverat noctem*), would come to declaim straight from a meal," and this habit not only interfered with his digestion but also had given him a "thickened" (*infuscata*) voice as well as "weak eyesight" and "bad complexion" (*oculorum aciem contuderat et colorem mutaverat, Controv.* 1 *praef.* 16–17; trans. Winterbottom).[36] *Lucubratio* was also a negotiation with nature's seasons: while the relative length of winter nights makes it possible and even advisable to burn the midnight oil or to rise before dawn (e.g., Sen. *Ep.* 122.1), the continuation of *lucubratio* through the "more contracted nights" of spring either posed a health risk or allowed for only a limited increase in productivity.[37] The well-conducted

34. The passage is partly an elaboration of Ap. Rhod. *Argon.* 4.1062–65, where an old woman does wool work "all through the night" (ἐννυχίη); cf. Gransden 1976, 138.

35. Cf. Columella *Rust.* 11.2.12 (trans. Forster and Heffner): "One worker can cut down, strip and sharpen a hundred posts stakes a day; . . . and he can complete ten stakes or five props by lamp-light in the evening (*ad lucubrationem vespertinam*) and the same number by lamp-light before dawn (*per antelucanam lucubrationem*)."

36. Cf. Celsus 1.2.5 (digestion); Gell. *NA* 13.31.10 (eyesight). On an extension of *lucubratio* to denote "insomnia," see Langslow 2000, 156 (who explains this as a semantic extension from symptom/cause to disease). Considerations about the need for sleep led Fronto to advise his pupil Antoninus with a mythical story about how Jupiter came to appoint Morpheus (*De feriis Alsiensibus* 3, §9 [p. 224 Naber]; cf. *Ad M. Caesarem et invicem* i.4–5 [pp. 9, 11 Naber]).

37. Cf. Cic. *Paradoxa Stoicorum praef.:* "So take this little work lucubrated on these nights that are now getting shorter" (*accipies igitur hoc parvum opusculum lucubratum his iam contractioribus noctibus*); discussed by Janson (1964, 97–98).

lucubratio, then, is the practice of a household that employs frugality to maximize time and labor, at the same time as cooperating with nature and preserving good health—itself equally an exercise in frugality (cf. Quint. *Inst.* 10.3.25). As in Quintilian's portrayal of the orator who has perfected his fluency in writing, the *lucubratio* is a technology of the well-run household.

3.2 Inversion of Day

While one mode of nocturnal activity may be said to extend and enhance the day, a second mode was understood as exploiting the relative secrecy of night for private gain and for avoiding public norms. Classic perpetrators include most broadly the kind of persons referred to by Tacitus for whom night represented an opportunity to do what they could not get away with during the day;[38] the "nocturnal" (*nocturnus*), who in a Petronian insult is classed together with the "fugitive slave" (*larifuga*);[39] more specifically, the nocturnal thief (*fur nocturnus*), whose choice of time made him eligible to be killed on the spot with impunity;[40] and those engaged in clandestine *circuli* or *coetus nocturni* that were "considered as the nucleus of the independent organization of the *plebs* in the Early Republic."[41] While it is true that the night served as something of a cultural "downtime" at Rome—the temporal equivalent of the *cubiculum* as characterized by Riggsby—and that it provided a mildly Saturnalian license[42] and could even be made to preserve the public good,[43] the more extreme nocturnal agents provoked uniform outrage for taking private advantage of the fact that night makes public norms easier to violate.[44]

The exploitation of nocturnal secrecy reaches a logical and dangerous extreme in the notorious breed of individuals who are described as sleeping all day and living (in most cases revelling) all night.[45] In the most sustained treatment of this satirical topos, Seneca in his *Letter* 122 names Sextus Papinius

38. Tac. *Ann.* 14.20: ". . . that which every worst type had set his desire on during the day, he might dare in the darkness" (*quod perditissimus quisque per diem concupiverit, per tenebras audeat*).

39. Cf. Petron. *Sat.* 57.3. The *lares* were customarily worshipped in the evening (cf. Columella *Rust.* 11.1.19).

40. Cf. Twelve Tables 8.13; Cic. *Mil.* 3.9; *Dig.* 9.2.4.1, 47.2.55(54).2. A daytime thief could be killed on the spot *only* if he carried a weapon or any other item meant to cause harm (*nocendi causa*); stealing at night, it seems, constituted an intent to harm simply by virtue of its temporal conditions.

41. Nippel 1984, 24 (with refs.); as Nippel notes, such gatherings were banned by the Twelve Tables, and had been associated with several notorious conspiracies such as the attempt to restore the Tarquins. On the social institution of *circuli* in its nocturnal manifestation, see O'Neill 2003, 138–39.

42. E.g., Martial's "nocturnal pages" (11.20), which gain something like a Saturnalian license in the context of the nocturnal *convivium*.

43. For example, the "bitter funeral" (*funus acerbum*), reserved for especially premature deaths, which was held at night in order to keep a bitter grief from public recognition, or from affecting the household (*ne . . . domus funestaretur*); cf. Servius *ad Aen.* 11.143 (who remarks also that in archaic Rome all funerals had been at night to avoid "polluting the eyes" of magistrates or priests who accidentally saw them).

44. The opposite of the *nocturnus* was the *micarius,* the man with whom you could safely play *micatio* (a game involving hand signs) even in the dark (Cic. *Off.* 3.19.77: *quicum in tenebris mices;* Petron. *Sat.* 44: *cum quo audacter posses in tenebris micare;* Fronto *Ad M. Caesarem et invicem* 1.5, §4 [p. 11 Naber] *en cum quo in tenebris mices*). Cf. Otto 1890, s.v. *micarius*.

45. Cf. Sen. *Ep.* 122.2: "There are those who have inverted the duties of daylight and night, and do not prise their eyes open (weighed down from last night's hangover) before night has begun to fall" (*sunt qui officia lucis noctisque perverterint nec ante diducant oculos hesterna graves crapula quam adpetere nox coepit*).

and Acilius Buta as infamous for the practice during the rule of Tiberius; it seems highly likely that Seneca also has in mind a contemporary target within the court of Nero: his rival Petronius, whom Tacitus tells us slept by day and lived by night.[46] For the *lucifugae,* "fugitives from daylight," as they are represented by Seneca (*Ep.* 122.15), night takes on the value of a luxury item whose superior value is predicated on the commonness of the public day. "Abandon the public day!" is their cry (*dies publicus relinquatur,* 122.9): "If you desire or scorn things based on whether they are bought at a high or low price, then [day]light, being free, is an object of distaste" (*fastidio est lumen gratuitum*) (122.14). This notion owes much to the ancient tradition on the luxurious lifestyle of the Sybarites, among whom Smindyrides supposedly "said that he had not seen the sun rise or set in twenty years, and to him this was a great and remarkable enhancement of his happiness."[47] The *lucifugae* are represented as aspiring to a similar level of luxury and prestige, yet in the Roman tradition inherited by Seneca their defining phrase is put into the censorial mouth of Cato: "who, as M. Cato says, have never seen the sun either rising or setting" (*qui, ut M. Cato ait, nec orientem umquam solem viderunt nec occidentem,* 122.3).

As uttered by Cato the Censor, this phrase not only criticizes their private luxury but also hints at their invisibility in public life: that is, the fact that they sequester all of their waking hours from the *dies publicus,* which was, for instance, the only time when the law courts and senate held session,[48] or the time when a bad conscience could be piqued by the light of day (*gravis malae conscientiae lux est, Ep.* 122.14). Seneca furthers this impression in his letter by setting the inversion of day and night among the *lucifugae* within the "ever-new declensions" of the vices (*novas declinationes,* 122.17), which include temporal inversions such as mature men submitting to sexual penetration or growing roses in winter (122.7–8) as well as everything else that is contrary to "natural convention" (*contra naturae consuetudinem,* 122.9).[49] These declensions are framed by the image of the *antipodes* who stand on the opposite side of the world from "us" and experience day and night at opposite times;[50] indeed, Seneca asserts, the *lucifugae* are "antipodeans in the same city" (122.3). Since the *antipodes* were a figure problematic both for the uncertainty of their existence[51] and for the absurdity of

46. Sen. *Ep.* 122.10–13 (Acilius Buta); 122.15–16 (Sextus Papinius); Tac. *Ann.* 16.18 (Petronius). On Seneca's *Letter* 122 as critique of Petronius, see Sullivan 1985, 1684.

47. Ath. 273c.

48. E.g., Varro *apud* Gell. *NA* 14.7.8: "a decree of the senate was not valid if passed before sunrise or after sunset" (*senatus consultum ante exortum et post occasum solem factum ratum non fuisse*); cf. Mommsen 1871–88, 3:919.

49. On "natural custom" (*naturae consuetudo*) and the unnaturalness of day-night inversion, see Galen *In Hippocratis prognosticum* 2.18.2: "In the time of Hippocrates the natural and the conventional were not distinct, but now most people act contrarily, especially with regard to sleeping, being asleep by day and awake by night."

50. Cf. Moretti 1994, 35. Note the subtle connnection between the *antipodes* and the declensions of vice: the term *declinationes* can refer to geographical latitudes (i.e., *klimata*; e.g., Columella *Rust.* 1 *praef.* 22 on *declinationes mundi*) as well as to morphological inflections in language (i.e., "declensions, paradigms"; e.g., Varro *Ling.* 8.2).

51. They had an ambiguous "subsistence" (ὕπαρξις) somewhere between certainty and fiction (cf. David *Prolegomena philosophiae* 1.19; Isidore *Origines* 14.5.17: *in cuius finibus antipodes fabulose inhabitare produntur*).

any imagined encounter between us and their inverted language,[52] Seneca's critique may be seen as undermining the social validity of the bodies, speech, and basic identity of the *lucifugae*. While the *lucifugae* apparently seek a prestige that will put them on people's lips (*in sermonibus,* 122.14), Seneca characterizes the results negatively, as the attaining of *infamia*—that is, occupying the position of those who are both improper subjects of public discourse and also ineligible to speak, vote, or represent at law.[53]

It scarcely needs saying that the day-inverting mode of nocturnal activity illustrated by such scare figures as the *fur nocturnus* and the *lucifugae,* exploiting the conditions of night for private gain and for avoiding public norms, contrasts sharply with the function of Quintilian's nocturnal retreat. There is one superficial similarity, in that Quintilian too exploits the relative secrecy of night in order to shield his writer from shame and laughter, and other obstacles posed by more public conditions. For the orator, however, the nocturnal activity itself is reconciled with the public day; indeed, it works toward a public goal in the form of a speech to be delivered in daylight in the forum. The secrecy of Quintilian's *cubiculum* is thus more answerable to Roman public space than is the nocturnal *triclinium* of the *lucifugae*. Quintilian's scene of writing is also antithetical to all the subversions of "natural convention" that characterize the *lucifugae:* conducted properly, the *lucubratio* will ideally involve a harmonious collaboration with nature, in which the writer serves as nature's amanuensis late at night and yet never neglects the natural demands of sleep. In short, Quintilian's nocturnal scene of writing, situated in the well-run household, is meant to perform all those aspects of Roman public authority that are lacking to the *lucifugae* and other *nocturni*.

4. REPRODUCING HOUSEHOLD AND REPUBLIC: THE *LUCUBRATIO* MADE VISIBLE

The significance of the *lucubratio* for the Roman household can be more fully seen through considering how the two nocturnal modes are brought together in a given text or given passage. The preface to Columella's work on farming in which he will eventually discuss the *lucubratio* and other aspects of the well-run household includes a scathing reference to how "we consume our nights in lust and drunkenness, our days in sleep and play, and we judge ourselves to be fortunate if we 'see the sun neither set nor rise' " (*nosmet ipsos ducimus fortunatos, quod "nec orientem solem videmus nec occidentem,"* Columella *Rust.* 1 *praef.* 16)—rephrasing the Sybaritic phrase seen in Cato and Seneca. Horace in an epistle warns his friend Lollius: "Robbers get up in the middle of the night (*surgunt de nocte*) to strangle people; yet won't *you* wake up to save your own *self*?" (*ut te ipsum serves, non expergisceris?, Ep.* 1.2.32–33). In this juxtaposing of the two nocturnal

52. Cf. Diog. Laert. 8.26 on the doctrine of Pythagoras: "There are *antipodes,* and what is up for us is down for them." Servius has transmitted an account of a letter produced by the fourth-century poet Tiberianus, which had been carried up from down under by the wind. It began: "Those above to those below, greeting!" (*superi inferis salutem; apud* Serv. *ad Aen.* 6.532).

53. On *infamia,* see Greenidge 1894, esp. 154–70 on the deprivations involved.

modes we see a case of the wider phenomenon in Roman moralizing discourse in which, given two opposite terms A (positive) and B (negative), the same opposition pertains between versions of each term (i.e., between A1 and A2, and between B1 and B2) so that B *can* be positive but only if it is a form of B that is comparatively like A. This may be formulated as an analogy (A : B :: A1 : A2 :: B1 : B2) or as a recursively branching tree-diagram (fig. 1).[54]

The same logic may be seen in the other moralizing discourses mentioned above (section 3), such as that which privileges *negotium* over *otium* but then in turn privileges hardworking *negotium* over time-wasting *negotium* and "Scipionic" *otium* over *otium* that is truly "otiose" (fig. 2); and that which privileges rural space over urban space but then in turn privileges outside work in rural space over indoor work in rural space and infrequent "nundinal" uses of urban space over everyday use of urban space (fig. 3). The latter set of distinctions is spelled out by an explicit analogy given by Columella (*Rust.* 1 *praef.* 17):

> For as those who kept within the confines of the country houses (*in villis intra consaepta*) were accounted more slothful (*ignaviores habitos*) than those who tilled the ground outside (*foris*), so those who spent their time idly within the walls, in the shelter of the city (*sub umbra civitatis intra moenia desides*), were looked upon as more sluggish (*segniores visos*) than those who tilled the fields or supervised the labors of the tillers.

While formulas extrapolated from such passages are somewhat arbitrary and oversimplified, they illustrate how any given activity tends to be authorized *through* the abjection of a negative version of the same term—something of a Romulus-Remus situation. And the stakes are always high: in most cases the superior term is associated with an idealized Roman self and with somehow recovering or refounding the archaic *res publica*.[55]

That the *res publica* is at stake in the abjection of the *lucifugae* may be illustrated from the most famous juxtaposition of the two nocturnal modes. This arises in Livy's story of Lucretia, where two nocturnal households are spied upon (Livy 1.57):

> They reached the city as dusk was falling; and there the wives of the royal princes were found enjoying themselves with a group of young friends at a dinner-party, in the greatest luxury (*in convivio luxuque cum aequalibus . . . tempus terentes*). The riders then went on to Collatia, where they found Lucretia very differently employed: it was already late at night (*nocte sera*), but there, in the hall of her house, surrounded by her

54. This is an expansion of Bourdieu (1990, 271–83), who comments that "[t]he structure a:b :: b1 : b2 is doubtless one of the simplest and most powerful that a mythico-ritual system could use, since it cannot counterpose without simultaneously uniting, and is capable of integrating an infinite number of data into a single order by the endlessly repeated application of the same principle of division" (p. 277). Applying this to the Kabyle house (just as we will apply it to the Roman house below), he explains that "[e]ach of the two parts of the house (and, by the same token, each of the objects that are put there and each of the activities carried on there) is, in a sense, qualified at two degrees, that is, first as female (nocturnal, dark) in so far as it belongs to the universe of the house, and secondly as male or female in so far as it belongs to one or other of the divisions of that universe" (p. 277).

55. E.g., Reay (1998, 81–83) explains that Varro "defines the ideal Roman *res publica* by the location of the *maiores nostri* in their fields seven out of every eight days" (p. 82).

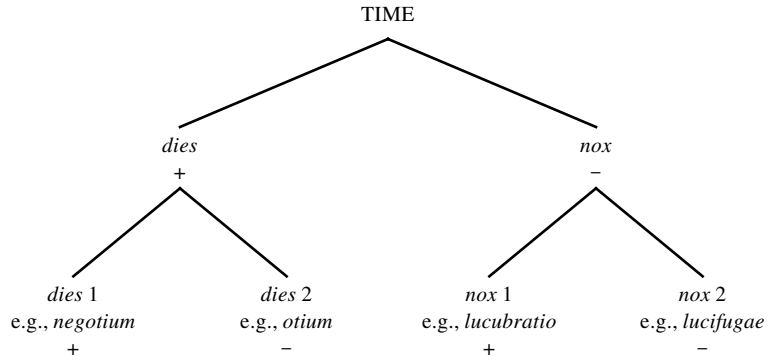

Figure 1

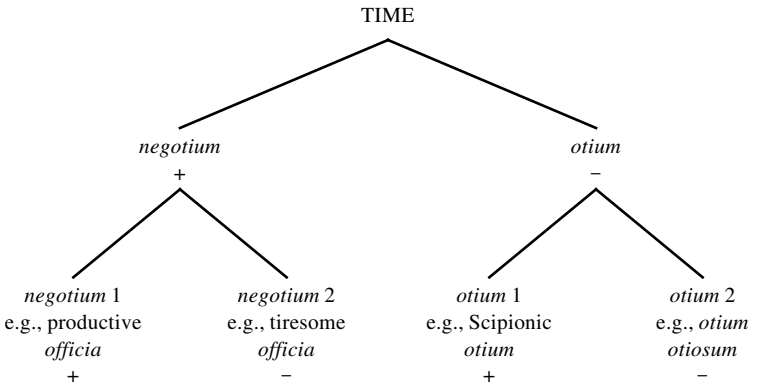

Figure 2

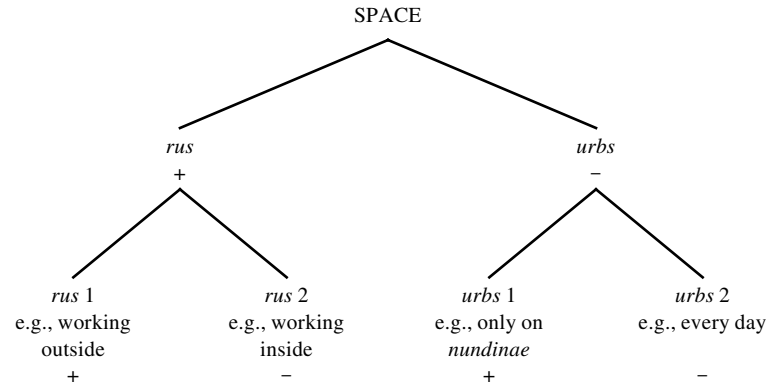

Figure 3

> busy maid-servants, she was still hard at work by lamplight upon her spinning (*deditam lanae inter lucubrantes ancillas in medio aedium sedentem*). (trans. de Sélincourt)

In this passage, the two nocturnal groups of women in the two households, respectively luxurious-licentious-consumptive and frugal-chaste-productive, have the wider significance of "dramatizing" two complex negative and positive paradigms for the *res publica*.[56] The nocturnal banquet of the Tarquiniae suggests an inversion of the *res publica* through its unsustainable consumption of the royal household's resources, and of the public resources that it has appropriated. Lucretia, on the other hand, in addition to being a paragon of feminine virtue and household economy is also to become a sacrificial heroine for the origin of the Roman Republic—just like Virgil's *univira* who "adds night to her work . . . to preserve her married life" (*ut servare cubile . . . possit, Aen.* 408–13) but whose activity is also a model for the god Vulcan, whose shield for Aeneas will be ornamented with the future pageant of Roman history (*Aen.* 8.626–728).[57] Lucretia's exemplary status will derive from a refusal to remain alive—that is, her refusal to coexist with the fact of her rape, in which Tarquin, already stimulated by the nocturnal spectacle of Lucretia's *lucubratio* that he had been able to spy upon, subsequently sought to exploit the secrecy of both *nox intempesta* (temporal) and *cubiculum* (spatial) for the purpose of private gratification and violation of public norms.[58] Thus, the incompatibility of the two modes of nocturnal activity serves also to dramatize the fundamental conflict between two models of the household and two models of the state.

With reference to the individual household, the spectacle of nocturnal activity plays an important role in dramatizing the production, or the loss, of social status and patrimony. While the second mode is apparently concerned with private prestige (and Petronius appears *temporarily* to have done well by it, becoming Nero's arbiter of elegance[59]), from the perspective of the moralizing tradition it always leads to ruin. One of the *lucifugae* named by Seneca, Sextus Papinius, is mocked for his perversion of frugality: "He lived *so* frugally: he consumed nothing but night" (*valde . . . frugaliter vivebat; nihil consumebat nisi noctem, Ep.* 122.16). Tacitus fills out the tale for us (*Ann.* 6.49):

> Sextus Papinius, born from a consular family (*consulari familia*), chose a sudden and ugly departure, throwing himself headlong [from a cliff]. The blame was attributed to his mother: he had for a long time spurned her advances, but in the end through seduction and extravagance (*adsentationibus atque luxu*) she had driven the young man to acts from which he could find no other escape than death.

56. As characterized by Luckmann 1991, temporal "dramatization" is the process by which a short-term temporal scheme takes on added significance through its service to some long-term temporal scheme.

57. As Gransden (1976, 138) notes, this passage "comes at the 'still centre' of the most Augustan book of the *Aeneid*," and may also reflect the importance of Augustus' matrimonial laws.

58. In one historical drama, the character Lucretia says "he came into our house in the dead of night" (*nocte intempesta nostrum devenit domum,* Varro *Ling.* 6.7, quoting Cassius's play *Brutus*); and in Livy's account, the rape takes place in Lucretia's *cubiculum* (Livy 1.58.6).

59. Tac. *Ann.* 16.18.

So much for Papinius. The second *lucifuga* named by Seneca, Acilius Buta, is an ex-praetor whose luxury leads him to squander his patrimony entirely. In the context of the Principate, his habits render him absent at crucial occasions of the public day such as a *recitatio* by a favorite poet of the emperor, or a *salutatio* with the emperor; as Seneca recounts, when Buta pleaded poverty, Tiberius responded with, "Sorry, but you got up too late" (*sero . . . experrectus es, Ep.* 122.11). Tiberius's retort marks Buta as out of sync with the clock of imperial benificence. Further, Buta's nocturnal living not only makes him inaccessible as a client of imperial patronage but also as a patron to potential *salutatores*.[60] As a consequence, Buta exits the system with a massive loss in *dignitas*. Both of Seneca's examples serve as admonitory tales of the early Principate, in which the inversion of day and night leads to financial ruin: the household can no longer support the elite status of its paterfamilias.

By contrast, the first mode is presented not only as a spectacular emblem of household productivity, as in the *lucubratio* of Lucretia witnessed by the spying eyes of the husbands, but also as effecting an elevation in social status. On occasion, the gesture of bringing the *lucubratio* before the eyes of an audience is used strategically for just this purpose. In Book 18 of his *Natural History,* Pliny the Elder tells the story of the freedman Furius Chresimus who was so productive on his tiny farm (*in parvo admodum agello*) that he came under suspicion by his neighbors (*in invidia erat magna*) for supposedly using poisons to seduce their crops onto his own property (*ceu fruges alienas perliceret veneficiis*)—the implication being that he did these things at night. But when the day came for his fate to be voted on by the tribes, Chresimus (*HN* 18.41–43)

> brought all his agricultural implements into court (*instrumentum rusticum omne in forum attulit*) and produced his farm servants, sturdy people and also according to Piso's description well looked after and well clad (*adduxit familiam suam validam atque . . . bene curatam ac vestitam*), his iron tools of excellent make, heavy mattocks, ponderous ploughshares, and well-fed oxen. Then he said: "These are my magic spells, citizens, and I am not able to exhibit to you or to produce in court my midnight labors and early risings and my sweat and toil" (*veneficia mea, Quirites, haec sunt, nec possum vobis ostendere aut in forum adducere lucubrationes meas vigiliasque et sudores*). (trans. Rackham)

Although Chresimus admits that he cannot bring his labor into public view, his actions and words add up to a vivid display, inviting his audience to look at his equipment and his slaves and to picture the work undertaken in his household by both day and night. To this extent his *lucubratio* is rendered visible. It thereby becomes answerable to the public day, and nothing could be further from the secretive and inverted world of the *lucifugae* or nocturnal poisoners. This is just one of Pliny's several tales about freedmen who

60. This is alluded to, perhaps, in the jest of a certain Varus at a *recitatio:* in response to the poet's description of a sunset, Varus quips: "It's night already? I will go and give Buta his greeting!" (*iam nox est? ibo et Butam salutabo!, Ep.* 122.13).

legitimate their freed status through productive farming practices—for, sure enough, Chresimus is acquitted of the charge by a unanimous vote.

The speech act by which Furius Chresimus makes his *lucubrationes* present in the public eye is a cogent comparison for Quintilian's revelation of the orator's *lucubratio,* and for other authors who reveal themselves engaged in nocturnal writing. Brendon Reay has discussed an analogous strategy in the agricultural writings of Varro, in which the agricultural text itself seeks to make the geographically remote farm present in the city—and thus to reunite the paterfamilias with his better self (the farmer, *agricola*) and restore the order of the archaic *res publica* in which city was subordinate to country.[61] In our case, the strategy makes present not only an absent place, bringing the private household into public view, but also an absent time, bringing the nocturnal scene into the light of day. The revelation of the *lucubratio* renders the nocturnal visible to an audience who are present in public daylight—a strategy that builds upon the function we have already observed for the *lucubratio:* of extending, rather than subverting, the day.

Chresimus' success alerts us, among other things, to a difference in voice associated with the two modes of nocturnal activity. Chresimus has the first speaking role in Pliny's history of agriculture (*rura*) or "cultivating life" (*excolere vitam, HN* 18.1.5). This topic stands in contrast with the world of poisons, which Pliny had sketched at the beginning of the same book through the image of nocturnal birds screeching and spoiling the quiet of night (*dirarum alitum modo tenebris quoque suis et ipsarum noctium quieti invidentium gemitu, HN* 18.1.4). In other writers, the nocturnal voice is associated with problematic utterances such as the "it is light, time to sleep" of the *lucifugae* (*"lucet: somni tempus est," Ep.* 122.9) and with a nocturnal "discourse" characterized precisely by *discursus*—the confusion and disorder fostered by conditions of darkness (*tenebrae*).[62] Witness also the popular genre of nocturnal *fabulae* seen in the freedmen's stories in the *Satyricon*, which is concerned specifically with transformations and inversions (e.g., *Sat.* 61–64.5). Thus it is no surprise to find nocturnal communities consisting of "every worst person" (*pessimus quisque*) imagined as conspiring toward social disorder through their nocturnal discussions (*nocturna colloquia*).[63] The *lucubratio,* on the other hand, is closely tied up with the powerful speaking position of the paterfamilias who, simply by virtue of speaking from the position of a night worker (*lucubrans*), takes on great moral and social authority. The case of Furius Chresimus, centering on his rhetorical revelation of the *lucubratio,* is intended by Pliny to illustrate how an archaic

61. E.g., Reay 1998, 91–97; in his account, "[e]tymology is a strategy of return, a journey back to original *places* where words were imposed on things and, thus, where words most closely impinge upon the things that they denote" (p. 83; emphasis in original).

62. E.g., battle scenes in Tac. *Hist.* 1.84; 4.29; 5.22. *Discursus* could be figured as the absence of normal face-to-face encounters (*occursus*) (e.g., Tac. *Agr.* 40.3) with the poor visual conditions of night affecting equally one's "eyesight" and the overall order of the "battle line" (both denoted by the same term, *acies,* Tac. *Hist.* 3.23).

63. E.g., the nocturnal *conloquia* of Percennius during the revolt of the Roman legions at Pannonia (Tac. *Ann.* 1.16). Note the prevalence of *con-* compounds (*conloquium, congregare, conventus, coetus,* etc.) in this and similar nocturnal contexts.

paterfamilias went about defending himself from the sort of charge that could have resulted in his being hanged to please Ceres (according to the Twelve Tables; cf. *HN* 18.12), or at least relegated to a position of *infamia;*[64] specifically, it will show (*HN* 18.41)

> that it was customary to bring before the commons even questions of agriculture, and will exhibit the kind of plea that men of those days used to rely on to defend their conduct (*apud populum etiam de culturis agendi morem fuisse, qualiterque defendi soliti sint illi viri*).

This type of plea illustrated in the speech of Chresimus is also at work, I suggest, in the prefaces of the authors to whom we now turn.

5. NOCTURNAL WRITERS AT WORK

In the foregoing discussion *lucubratio* has emerged as a primal scene of the archaic household, combining various aspects of an idealized Roman self in the figure of the nocturnal laborer: frugality, *libertas,* religious authority, a collaboration with nature, public service, the foundation of the Republic, a change or assertion of status, a powerful speaking position. The cultural significance of this scene is, as we have seen, more clearly defined through opposition to the alternative mode of nocturnal activity illustrated by the *fur nocturnus* or by the antipodal community of the *lucifugae*. But how do these aspects of the *lucubratio* come to be important for the reception of a literary text, in a culture where the "lamp" (*lucerna*) could function as a metonym for "poetry"?[65] Chresimus was at least *present* in person when he evoked the absent scene of his *lucubrationes,* but when a writer brings the image of himself writing at night before the eyes of his reader, the text alone is the medium of interaction. Our task is to discern how the time of writing is rendered significant and efficacious at a time of reading with which it is not simultaneous. In the prefaces we will look at, the answer resembles that given for the *recitatio* performance to some extent. But the evaluative, reciprocal, and spatiotemporal conditions established by the image of the nocturnal writer are manifested in ways which accommodate the disjuncture between the time of writing and the time of reading, and which differ markedly according to the scenario of each writer. Even so, the resulting performance is programmatic for the reception of each given text.

Early mentions of the nocturnal writing scene already allow us some insights into its role in conditioning the reception of a text. An epigram of Callimachus that probably accompanied copies of the *Phaenomena* of Aratus concludes by praising the work as a "token of Aratus' sleeplessness" (Ἀρήτου σύμβολον ἀγρυπνίης, *Epigr.* 27.4 Pfeiffer = 56.4 Page).[66] Gow and Page observe that Aratus' wakeful nights were spent mainly in "versifying Eudoxus" but that "star-gazing" is perhaps also hinted at.[67] The nocturnal

64. Pliny's comment is cited by Greenidge (1894, 66) as an instance centering on *infamia*.

65. E.g., Juv. 1.51: *Venusina digna lucerna* (referring to Horace).

66. I thank Bill Allan for mention of this poem; cf. Janson 1964, 97. A parallel instance cited by Gow and Page (1965, 2:209) is *Anth. Pal.* 9.689 (anon.): τρόπαιον ἐῆς σύμβολον ἀγρυπνίης.

67. Gow and Page 1965, 2:208–9.

scene thus is relevant to the astrological content of the poem to which Callimachus adds his epigram as a supplementary preface. Similarly, in Lucretius' description of himself as "working late through the serene nights" (*noctes vigilare serenas,* 1.142), there is a play on the didactic task of "elucidating" (*illustrare*) obscure doctrines for his friend Memmius and, more widely, on combatting the slumbers of the ignorant.[68]

The earliest reference to a writer's *lucubratio* in a Latin prose preface, as Janson observes, is in the letter to Brutus that prefaces Cicero's *Paradoxa Stoicorum* (written in the spring of 46 B.C.E.): "So take this little work lucubrated on these nights that are now getting shorter, since that gift of more extensive night sessions [sc. Cicero's *Brutus*] has appeared in your name" (*accipies igitur hoc parvum opusculum lucubratum his iam contractioribus noctibus, quoniam illud maiorum vigiliarum munus in tuo nomine apparuit,* Cic. *Paradoxa Stoicorum praef.* 5).[69] At the same time as apologizing for the slightness of the dedicated work, Cicero reminds Brutus of the larger work he has already dedicated to him. In characterizing *both* works as the products of *lucubratio*—as much *lucubratio* as the seasonal conditions had allowed—he adds to their value as *munera,* "gifts," consisting precisely in the greatest possible nocturnal labor. Cicero's nights have their own value in the gift economy of *amicitia*.

The use of *lucubratio* to generate social obligations may be seen in an almost exactly contemporary reference to night writing in a letter Cicero writes to Varro in April 46, seeking to explain why there is another now obsolete letter accompanying the present one (*Fam.* 9.2.1 = 177.1 SB):

> Your (and our) friend Caninius called upon me late one evening and told me that he would be leaving betimes next day to join you; so I said I would give him something to carry, and asked him if he would kindly call for it in the morning. I wrote a letter that night (*conscripsi epistulam noctu*); but he did not come back after all and I assumed he had forgotten. (trans. Shackleton Bailey)

The nocturnal writing is here a device of opportunism, allowing Cicero to squeeze enough time out of the night to compose the letter and (supposedly) have it delivered promptly. (It is worth noting that Cicero's term "wrote up," *conscripsi,* indicates the production of a complete letter, since *lucubratio* is very often associated with the finishing or polishing of a task or or a text, denoted by such terms as *elucubrare*.[70]) But Cicero's subsequent action is noteworthy. A few lines after mentioning this seemingly wasted effort, he then explains how he eventually did send the letter to Varro (*Fam.* 9.2.1 = 177.2 SB):

> Well, a few days later who should arrive at my house early in the morning out of the blue, when I was least expecting him, but Caninius? He said he was just off to join you.

68. The poetics of night are usefully explored by Athena Kirk in an undergraduate thesis on "Lucretius on Dreams, Sleep, and Waking" (Harvard University, 2003).

69. Cf. Janson 1964, 97–98.

70. E.g., Tac. *Dial.* 9: *librum . . . elucubravit*. In *lucubratio* contexts we see such verbs as *terminare* (August. *Ep.* 153.4), *conficere* (Columella *Rust.* 11.2.12, 91) and *consequi* (Columella *Rust.* 11.2.90). Conversely, the term *illucubratus* means "lacking polish."

> My letter was by now out of date, particularly as such important news had come in since I wrote it; but still I did not want my midnight oil to be wasted (*tamen perire lucubrationem meam nolui*), and so I gave it to Caninius as it stood. (trans. Shackleton Bailey)

In sending the letter despite its obsolescence, Cicero appeals specifically to its status as a product of lucubratory writing (cf. *lucubrationem meam*), as an investment in time that he does not want to "go to waste" (*perire*). The value of the *lucubratio* can be redeemed simply by virtue of the text arriving with its addressee, however obsolete. Indeed, if we turn back in Cicero's correspondence to the nocturnal letter *itself,* we find that it was already light on content (*Fam.* 9.3 = 176 SB):

> Although I have nothing to write to you, I could not let Caninius go to you without giving him something. So what *should* I write? What I think you want to read, that I shall be coming to visit you soon.

This lucubratory letter, then, is valuable primarily as a *form* of communication, not for any particular news that it communicates. Its value, which exceeds the normal value that can be generated from daylight, consists primarily in its power to convert nighttime into social contact and obligation. Moreover, Cicero's gesture corresponds elegantly with Varro's own representation of himself as a night worker.[71]

As we approach the prefaces of Seneca, Pliny, and Gellius, it will be useful to focus on how the nocturnal scene of writing is made to dramatize both the topic of the text, as is done by Lucretius' "serene nights," and the social relationship that it establishes with its readers, as in Cicero's treatises and his lucubratory letter. As suggested at the beginning of this article, Gellius' *Attic Nights* is perhaps the climactic moment in the development of the nocturnal scene of writing, but all three authors make their texts inseparable from the image of the writer at work in *lucubratio*.

5.1 A Portal to the Future (Seneca)

Seneca's *Letter* 8, while technically not a preface, occurs in the opening book of the *Moral Letters* and is concerned with the basic conditions of Seneca's writing; as we will see, it introduces the reader to the space of the textual performance. The letter begins by mentioning a letter of Lucilius that has queried Seneca's advice to stay away from the crowd. In response to this letter, Seneca proceeds to explain that it is possible to help a greater number of people precisely in solitude, witnessed only by one's own conscience (*conscientia, Ep.* 8.1):

> in hoc me recondidi et fores clusi, ut prodesse pluribus possem. nullus mihi per otium dies exit; partem noctium studiis vindico; non vaco somno sed succumbo, et oculos vigilia fatigatos cadentesque in opere detineo. secessi non tantum ab hominibus sed a rebus, et in primis a meis rebus: posterorum negotium ago.

71. Cf. *Ling.* 5.9: "I have lucubrated (*lucubravi*) at the lamp (*ad lucernam*) not just of Aristophanes, but also of Cleanthes"; cited by Braund (1996, 88) on Juv. 1.51.

> This is why I shut myself away: so that I could be of profit to more people. None of my days passes by in leisure: I assert possession over part of the nights for my studies, not offering myself to sleep but being overcome by it, and keeping my eyes fixed on my work even when they are tired out from the vigil and half-closed. I have withdrawn not only from people but from things, and especially from my own things: I am doing the work of those who will live after.

In Seneca's evocation of the nocturnal scene we see several of the elements mentioned by Quintilian in the *lucubratio* of the orator: total solitude behind closed doors, a struggle against sleep, the focusing of the eyes on the work in hand. The main difference from Quintilian's scene is that Seneca is not preparing a speech to deliver in a public space, but is writing for a public who will read his letters[72] someday in the future. As he goes on to explain (*Ep.* 8.2–3):

> I am entrusting to writing some healthy pieces of advice (*salutares admonitiones*), like combinations of useful drugs (*velut medicamentorum utilium compositiones*). . . . I am showing to others the straight path that I discovered so late and tired out with wandering (*sero et lassus errando*). . . . I cry: "Avoid whatever things please the mob, which chance has assigned to them. . . ."

The language casts Seneca in a medical role, one that in some instances is subsumed under the evening responsibilities of the paterfamilias.[73] The act of *compositio* also involves something of a compression of time: as he explains, he is seeking to give readers quick access to what took him a long time to discover (cf. *sero et lassus errando*). He goes on to assert that this kind of activity is far superior to the kind of services that he could perform for people in the everyday occasions of public space—more profitable than if he were to use his voice or hand to assist a candidate in the senate.[74] The nocturnal scene thus stands in for other kinds of favors (*beneficia*) or duties (*officia*) that he might extend to specific individuals. This in fact is the overriding goal of Seneca's "moral letters" (the term *epistulae morales* perhaps goes back to Seneca himself[75]): to turn their addressee Lucilius, and by extension all other readers, from a public, materialist life (*homines; res*) toward a philosophical life of moral self-therapy, and more specifically toward a "therapy room" (*valetudinarium*) or a "theater of conscience" (*Ep.* 27.1; 7.11; 8.1). Seneca's night writing, then, enhances and extends the time that he is able to devote to this central *negotium* of the letters.

72. I assume with Russell (1974, 71) that Seneca here refers to the composition of the *Moral Letters* themselves.

73. Cf. Columella *Rust.* 12.1.18: "When twilight has come on . . . and when he has come indoors, . . . if, as generally happens, any one of them has received some hurt in the course of his work and is wounded, let him apply fomentations, or, if anyone is rather ill in some other respect let him immediately convey him to the infirmary (*in valetudinarium . . . deducat*) and order that any other treatment which is suitable to his case be applied" (trans. Forster and Heffner). For Seneca as paterfamilias in his relationship to *posteri,* cf. *Ep.* 64.7: "Let us play the good paterfamilias: we must amplify what we have received, and our inheritance must go to our descendants increased."

74. *Ep.* 8.6: *. . . quam cum ad vadimonium advocatus descenderem aut tabulis testamenti anulum inprimerem aut in senatu candidato vocem et manum commodarem.*

75. The title is first used with direct reference to Seneca's letters by Aulus Gellius, *NA* 12.2.3. On the possibility that the term goes back to Seneca, see Cugusi 1983, 196.

But the nocturnal scene dramatizes the function of Seneca's letters in a still more specific way, which we may see through considering the key term *vindico,* "assert possession over," in the statement "I assert possession over part of the nights for my studies" (*partem noctium studiis vindico, Ep.* 8.1).[76] In the present context, the reader is invited to experience Seneca's *vindicare* action with great vividness, picturing his struggle to keep his drooping eyes fixed on the same work that is now before the reader's own eyes. This is a moment at which something approaching eye contact is established between author and audience, and it is framed as a *vindicatio* of night and sleep. In a second instance of *vindicatio,* in *Letter* 21, Seneca explains to Lucilius that while his public life will never make him famous in future generations, his presence in Seneca's letters *will* bring him lasting fame (*Ep.* 21.4):

> A profound depth of time will come over us, and it is a rare genius (*pauca ingenia*) that will thrust its head above it and—even if it will vanish into the same silence someday—put up a fight and assert possession over itself for a long time (*se diu vindicabunt*).

He then explains this future *vindicatio* that his text (literally, his *ingenium*) will accomplish for itself by appealing to his power to obligate future readers: "I will enjoy favor among people in the future" (*habebo apud posteros gratiam,* 21.5). The mention of *gratia apud posteros* registers precisely the consequence of Seneca's own nocturnal *vindicatio* in *Letter* 8, which as we have seen extends the time he can devote to "work for those who live after" (*posterorum negotium, Ep.* 8.1). Seneca's nocturnal writing performance may thus be seen as dramatizing the service for which future readers will be under obligation to pay by ensuring the survival of Seneca's text "above the deep waters of time." The *lucubratio* thus functions as elsewhere to dramatize the productivity of Seneca's household, or at least the reproduction of his intellectual patrimony, in the future.

Seneca's nocturnal writing performance thus establishes a program for the text, and it conditions its reception by an audience. It provides for an evaluation of the text and reader in which the solitude and confined conditions of the *lucubratio* symbolize the value of the moral project to which the reader of the text is invited to turn. It dramatizes the reciprocal relationship in which a *beneficium* is provided for future readers and will be repaid through their ongoing preservation of the text. One *vindicatio* deserves another. The closed space of Seneca's *lucubratio* not only is a physical image of the space of the moral self on which the reader is invited to focus, but also is pressed into the service of the ultimate space that the text will enjoy above the deep waters of time.

The significance of Seneca's *lucubratio* is further reinforced much later in the *Letters,* when Seneca attacks the *lucifugae* for their inversion of day and night and effectively abjects them from the society inhabited by both author and audience (*Ep.* 122). The antipodal and unspeakable place inhabited by the *lucifugae* could not be further from the space of *lucubratio,*

76. Cf. *OLD*, s.v. *vindicare* 1, 3.

which defines both the moral space to be cultivated by Lucilius and the long-lasting space that the letters are to enjoy.

5.2 Giving Time Back to the Imperial Household (Pliny the Elder)

In his prefatory letter to the emperor Titus, Pliny announces that certain "books of natural history" have recently been "born" in his household (*apud me, HN praef.* 1) and makes it clear that he is dedicating this work to the emperor by name (*nominatim tibi dicantium, praef.* 6). He concedes, however, that he has been very presumptuous in dedicating a work that falls so far short of its dedicatee, and apologizes for the "light work" in his "little books" (*levioris operae . . . libellos*) and for the absence of speeches and exciting events (*praef.* 12). The work's content, he explains, is somewhat dry: "My subject is a barren one—I tell of the world of nature, or in other words, life" (*sterilis materia, rerum natura, hoc est vita, narratur, praef.* 12); that is, he will not be dealing with the *amoenitates,* "pleasantries," that the majority of writers deal with (*praef.* 15). Rather, he says that in "telling the world of nature, life" he will be "bringing light to darkness" (*obscuris lucem . . . dare, praef.* 15). And as regards the title *Natural History,* he insists that he has no regrets about not having invented anything "fancier" (*festiviorem*) than this (cf. *me non paenitet nullum festiviorem excogitasse titulum, praef.* 26). Although he acknowledges such titles as the *Lucubrationes* of the neoteric Furius Bibaculus, Pliny views this title negatively and hints at Bibaculus' tendencies toward nocturnal revelry and drinking (the title is explained in relation to his name: "I supposed because the author was a toper—indeed Tippler was his name" [*puto quia Bibaculus erat et vocabatur, praef.* 24, trans. Rackham]). Already, then, we may partly predict how Pliny's nocturnal scene will work. It will provide a context for his metaphors of bringing the books to birth by maternal labor (a typically nocturnal process), and also of "bringing light to darkness"—a context analogous to night as the best time for Aratus to write his *Phaenomena* because it allowed for stargazing. It will provide a scene for collaboration *with* nature in the manner of Quintilian's *lucubratio*—with special relevance to a work *on* nature. Yet it will also remain distinct both from the *locus amoenus* of pastoral and the *amoenitates* of other genres, as well as from the scandalous nocturnal activity he sees in the *Lucubrationes* of Bibaculus.

Pliny's mention of his having written at night comes just after he has stated that there are twenty thousand facts accumulated in his thirty-six books, but apologizes to the emperor for the inevitable omissions (*HN praef.* 18):

> nec dubitamus multa esse quae et nos praeterierint; homines enim sumus et occupati officiis, subsicivisque temporibus ista curamus, id est nocturnis, ne quis vestrum putet his cessatum horis. dies vobis inpendimus, cum somno valetudinem conputamus, vel hoc solo praemio contenti quod, dum ista (ut ait M. Varro) musinamur, pluribus horis vivimus: profecto enim vita vigilia est.
>
> Nor do we doubt that there are many things that have escaped us also; for we are but human, and beset with duties, and we pursue this sort of interest in our spare moments, that is at night—lest any of your house should think that the night hours have been

> given to idleness. The days we devote to you, and we keep our account with sleep in terms of health, content even with this reward alone, that, while we are dallying (in Varro's phrase) with these trifles, we are adding hours to our life—since of a certainty to be alive means to be awake. (trans. Rackham)

Pliny is less descriptive than Quintilian or Seneca, making no reference to the physical conditions of the scene of writing. Instead, he locates it within a hierarchy of times: he has written the work in the times left over between his important duties during the day (*officia*) and the barest necessities of sleep and health. Pliny borrows heavily from the language of economics in referring to the "expending" of days on the imperial household, his "balancing the account" with sleep, and the "reward" he gets in "living" a few extra hours each night. And indeed, he refers to his books economically as "treasure troves, not books" (*thesauros . . . non libros, praef.* 17), much like the "treasury" (*aerarium*) that Quintilian's orator establishes through night writing (*Inst.* 10.3.3). The famous epigrammatic ending of the passage, "to be alive means to be awake" (*vita vigilia est*), which extends Pliny's life by the number of extra hours he has spent awake at night, takes us back to his description of the *Natural History* as "the telling of life" (*vita . . . narratur, praef.* 12): the more hours spent awake, the more of this "life" can be told.

The most important aspect of nocturnal work for Pliny is clearly that it allows him to integrate his writing into the routine of the imperial household, which works in more than one way. Most basically, it ensures that his writing will not detract from the time he has to spend performing daytime *officia*. In addition, however, Pliny's dedication of the *Natural History* to the emperor makes it clear that he wishes him to have not only his days, but also the fruits of his nocturnal labors as well; as he says, "the very words I am writing to you are supplied by yourself" (*hoc ipsum tu praestas quod ad te scribimus, praef.* 19). An important qualification on this is that Pliny's dedication of such a large work is potentially an imposition on the emperor's time, and therefore a threat to the public good.[77] This is his rationale for providing the emperor with an index (*HN praef.* 33):

> As it was my duty in the public interest to have consideration for the claims upon your time (*quia occupationibus tuis publico bono parcendum erat*), I have appended to this letter a table of contents of the several books (*quid singulis contineretur libris huic epistulae subiunxi*), and have taken very careful precautions to prevent your having to read them. You by these means will secure for others that they will not need to read right through them either (*tu per hoc et aliis praestabis ne perlegant*), but only look for the particular point that each of them wants, and will know where to find it. (trans. Rackham)

Pliny's index is simply a more explicit time compression than that which we noted in Seneca's nocturnal compositions (*compositiones*): Pliny ensures that the end result of his night writing will be a massive time saving for its master reader, the emperor; and in addition, that the *emperor* will be able to

77. As Janson (1964, 100) points out on Pliny's preface, "Previously it had been possible to regard all readers as more or less equal," but now Pliny must be conscious of the emperor as the ideal reader, and in particular must be careful not to impose on his time.

pass on this same gift of time saving to other readers, by showing them the way. The nocturnal scene is thus seamlessly and effectively integrated within the timetable of the imperial household and of the public good, leaving the emperor as both recipient and controller of all time. Where Seneca's nocturnal labor in the household extended and enhanced a transcendent public service, Pliny's nocturnal scene answers directly to the public good of Roman society.

But Pliny, like Seneca, also adds to the significance of his *lucubratio* at a much later point in his text by distancing himself explicitly from a group not unlike the *lucifugae*—namely, in the preface to Book 18 mentioned above, which shortly precedes the story of Furius Chresimus. There he explains why he will not be discussing the topic of poisons or the men who use them (*HN* 18.1.4):

> Their tongue flickers like the serpent's, and the corruption of their mind scorches the thing it touches, maligning all things as they do and like birds of evil omen violating even the darkness that is their own element and the quiet of the night itself with their groaning (*dirarum alitum modo tenebris quoque suis et ipsarum noctium quieti invidentium gemitu*). . . .

Instead, says Pliny (*HN* 18.1.4–5):

> We too then will continue to enrich life (*excolere vitam*) with the value we set on these things [i.e., nature's gifts] and the delight they give us. . . . The subject of our discourse is indeed the countryside and rustic practices (*circa rura . . . agrestisque usus*), but it is on these that life depends (*quibus vita constet*) and that the highest honor was bestowed in early days. (trans. Rackham, adapted)

The stark opposition here between nocturnal poisoners and "life" (*vita*) as it is given by nature and cultivated in agriculture helps lend authority both to the nocturnal farming habits of Chresimus and to Pliny's nocturnal writing scene for writing the *Natural History*—a text in which "life is told" (*vita narratur*)—as a whole.

While Pliny's preface straightforwardly places the *Natural History* and its index in the hands of the emperor as its master reader, this takes an interesting turn in a letter of Pliny the Younger (*Ep.* 3.5).[78] Writing to Baebius Macer, who is an avid reader of Pliny the Elder's works, the younger Pliny is generous with his family knowledge: "I will play the part of catalogue,[79] and will make known to you the order in which they were written" (*fungar indicis partibus, atque etiam quo sint ordine scripti notum tibi faciam,* 3.5.2); and he proceeds to list his uncle's works from a single book *On Equestrian Javelin Throwing* through to the two final works: thirty-one books *From the End of Aufidius Bassus* and thirty-seven books of *Natural Histories* (3.5.3–6). Pliny also takes the liberty of describing his uncle's habits, focusing espe-

78. On the relations between *Ep.* 3.5 and *HN praef.* ("Pliny [the Younger] follows suit"), see Henderson 2002, 274–77.

79. "Catalogue," Henderson's (2002, 25) translation, captures the correspondence between Pliny the Younger's role as *index* and the *index* that Pliny the Elder provides for *HN.*

cially on his extreme *parsimonia temporis* (3.5.13; the following is quoted from 3.5.8–9):

> His talent was keen, his studies unbelievable, his alertness out of this world (*summa vigilantia*). He began working by lamplight on the Vulcanalia [i.e., August 23], not for good luck but for the purpose of study (*lucubrare Vulcanalibus incipiebat non auspicandi causa sed studendi*):[80] [he would rise] immediately in the middle of the night (*statim a nocte multa*), in winter actually from the seventh hour or the eighth hour at the latest; often from the sixth. He was able to sleep at any time: sleep sometimes even visited and departed during his studies. Before daylight he would go to the emperor Vespasian (who also made use of the nights) (*nam ille quoque noctibus utebatur*), and from there to whatever duty was assigned him. Returning home he would devote whatever time was left to his studies.

Beyond the fact that this description illustrates aspects of the *lucubratio* that we have noted above (e.g., seasonal fluctuations), it is remarkable that Pliny the Younger should echo the preface to the *Natural History* so closely: not only has he set out to provide information to aid the reader's navigation of the Elder's works (in this case *himself* as *index,* "catalogue"), but also he follows the preface in evoking the nocturnal scene of writing. But the younger Pliny is redeploying the rhetoric of the preface for his own purposes: although he acknowledges the elder Pliny's harmonization of his work with the *negotia* of the imperial household, the present letter seeks to establish Pliny the Younger's inheritance of and control over the reading of his uncle's texts. Horizontal transmission into the emperor's household is placed in the background, with vertical transmission within the private household foregrounded.

The nocturnal scene of writing plays no accidental role in this transaction. Pliny is especially concerned to emphasize the frugality that allowed his uncle to double his time, for example transforming one day into two by rising from a nap and beginning his studies again "as if it were another day" (*quasi alio die, Ep.* 3.5.11). The same calculus is evident in the material form of some of Pliny's texts: "He left to me 160 books of commentaries on selected topics, indeed written on both sides and in the tiniest writing; which means that this number is multiplied" (*electorumque commentarios centum sexaginta mihi reliquit, opisthographos quidem et minutissimis scriptos; qua ratione multiplicatur hic numerus,* 3.5.17). The double-sided *commentarii* are a physical trace of Pliny the Elder's nocturnal scene of writing: the fact that he used both night and day for his work is echoed in the fact that he wrote on both sides of the papyrus.[81] The subsequent reminiscence that a certain Larcius Licinius had offered to buy the *commentarii* for 400,000 sesterces (3.5.17) emphasizes all the more their status-transforming power for the younger Pliny. The uncle's nocturnal scene of writing becomes tangible

80. On this statement, see Sherwin-White 1966, 223: "Pliny means . . . that his uncle did not wake up in the middle of the night like a consul or augur to take the auspices, which was properly done after a night vigil." A reader for this journal tantalizingly observes that "the feast of the Vulcanalia was the first day lamps were supposed to be lit before sunrise and people got up early to light a lamp for good luck. Pliny may only be alluding, with gentle mockery, to a popular superstition." I regret that I have not been able to find evidence for this practice.

81. I am pleased to find Henderson (2002, 272) in agreement: "his books image PLINY."

in the material patrimony that is preserved by his nephew and heir within the household. It is also replicated in the *lucubratio antelucana* that is a staple for Pliny the Younger's self-representation within his letters.[82]

5.3 Title and Imagined Community (Aulus Gellius)

The preface of Gellius' *Attic Nights* has long been recognized as an adaptation of Pliny's preface to the *Natural History.* Most recently, Alessandra Minarini has shown that there are systematic resemblances between the two prefaces, not least in their reference to the nocturnal labor involved in producing the work.[83] Minarini also acknowledges that Seneca, despite Gellius' general contempt for his writing, is another occasional influence on Gellius; but her observations are limited to certain borrowings or echoes of content, such as an overlapping concern with providing knowledge in the form of practical advice, or *admonitiones* (cf. *NA praef.* 16).[84] As we have seen, however, Seneca has a preface of his own in which he offers *admonitiones* precisely in his persona as a nocturnal writer (*salutares admonitiones, Ep.* 8.2). The nocturnal context, I contend, unites the three authors most closely and explains the emphasis that Gellius places on the title of the *Attic Nights*.

In Gellius' preface as we have it (the very opening is missing), the author explains the purpose and the title of his work, a work that consists of commentaries on Greek and Latin texts excerpted in no particular order and of things he had heard and thought were "worth remembering" (*memoratu dignum; NA praef.* 2).[85] When the text opens, Gellius is explaining that he wanted to make sure his children would have "recreations" (*remissiones*) for "whenever their minds, given some recess from *negotia,* could be induced to relax and give over" (*quando animus eorum interstitione aliqua negotiorum data laxari indulgerique potuisset, praef.* 1). At the same time, his purpose has been to use his extra hours to "stock up" for himself: "I have preserved them for myself to aid my memory like a sort of 'provision' of literature (*quasi quoddam litterarum penus*), so that . . . it would be easy for me to find things in it and to decant from it" (*praef.* 2).[86] We may already see that Gellius' text serves the ends sketched out by Quintilian, who says that the orator's practice of writing will provide him with a "treasury" of speech to draw upon. The only difference is that Gellius does not limit the usefulness of his writing to himself: it will be transmitted vertically to his children and also, he later says, to all of his readers, for whom he hopes to make—the terms are close to those used by Quin-

82. E.g., Plin. *Ep.* 9.36.1–2 (including such elements as closed shutters, *silentium,* darkness, the eyes following the mind rather than the mind the eyes, the dismissal of the secretary, etc.). See also Hoffer 1999, 41, on Pliny the Younger: "Literature will keep one awake at night. . . ."

83. Minarini 2000, 537–43.

84. Minarini 2000, 543–46.

85. On the preface and programmatics of Gellius' work, see Minarini 2000; Holford-Strevens 1988, 20–34; Faider 1927.

86. Gellius later stresses that the time he has spent on the text is *spare* time (*subsiciva et subsecundaria tempora*) and does not impinge upon the effective running of the household (*NA praef.* 23).

tilian[87]—"seeds, minds . . . more energetic, or a memory more reliable, or oratory more clever, or speech more pure, or amusement more worthy of a free man, in times of leisure or play" (*semina*, *ingenia . . . vegetiora aut memoria adminiculatior aut oratio sollertior aut sermo incorruptior aut delectatio in otio atque in ludo liberalior, praef.* 16). Indeed, like Seneca, he will present himself as compressing a large amount of material into a manageable form (*NA praef.* 12):

> Through all of the breaks between *negotia* in which I was able to pilfer some *otium,* I have consistently exerted and exhausted myself. Yet I have taken a limited amount from these, and only . . . what would liberate people entangled in other *negotia* of life (*homines aliis iam vitae negotiis . . . vindicarent*) from a disgraceful and peasantlike inexperience in words and things.

As in Seneca, Gellius' nocturnal labor involves the reader in a *vindicatio* (*NA praef.* 4).

When he first comes to explain why the work as a whole is called *Attic Nights,* Gellius gives the simple answer with which I began this article, referring back to the time when he first conceived of it (*NA praef.* 4):

> sed quoniam longinquis per hiemem noctibus in agro, sicuti dixi, terrae Atticae commentationes hasce ludere ac facere exorsi sumus, idcirco eas inscripsimus noctium esse Atticarum, nihil imitati festivitates inscriptionum, quas plerique alii utriusque linguae scriptores in id genus libris fecerunt.
>
> But since it was in the long nights through winter in the countryside of the land of Attica, as I have said, that I began to play at making these annotations, for this reason I have given them the title of *Attic Nights,* in no way imitating the fancy titles that most other writers in both languages have made in books of this type.

Here the Roman author's *lucubratio* is fused with an exotic Hellenic setting,[88] and the ambiguous term *longinquis* may capture not only the "long" nights of winter but also the "distant" nights of Attica. Yet Gellius asserts that his title is nothing more than descriptive:[89] he has "in no way imitated the fancy titles" of other authors—which strikingly echoes Pliny's claim to be perfectly content with not having thought up a fancier title than *Natural History* (*HN praef.* 16).[90] Also like Pliny, Gellius soon goes on to list the type of fancy titles he is avoiding, both Latin and Greek: "*Lamps* (*luchnoi*) . . . and certain other overly urbane titles that positively reek of too much elegance" (*multas . . . concinnitates redolentia*) (*NA praef.* 6–9); his disdain

87. Quint. *Inst.* 10.3.2–3: "As deep digging makes the soil more fertile for the germination and growth of seeds (*alendis seminibus fecundior*), so progress that is not sought by superficial means yields the fruits of study more generously and retains them more faithfully (*studiorum fructus et fundit uberius et fidelius continet*)."

88. The associations of *Atticae* are beyond the focus of this paper, but as Baldwin (1975, 9) notes, it may include a compliment to Gellius' prestigious friend Herodes Atticus.

89. As Holford-Strevens (1988, 20) remarks, Gellius "affects to find it unimaginative"; cf. Minarini 2000, 536: "con una modestia solo apparente."

90. Cf. Minarini 2000, 539.

for *Lamps* is directly comparable with Pliny's for Bibaculus' title *Lucubrationes*. It is significant, however, that Gellius' list includes the titles *Natural History* and *Moral Letters* (*historiae naturalis; epistularum moralium, praef.* 8–9)—the titles of Seneca's and Pliny's works that Gellius apparently regards as too fancy for him.[91] Gellius thus associates his work directly with the two earlier nocturnal writers of imperial Latin prose and at the same time seeks to distinguish his title as plainer talking.

Gellius clearly has something invested in a title that he claims to be less fancy and *therefore* superior. He protesteth too much (*NA praef.* 10):

> But I, in keeping with the limits of my ability, have used the title *Attic Nights* without care, spontaneously, and almost even rustically (*incuriose et inmeditate ac prope etiam subrustice*), from the very place and time of my night work in winter (*ex ipso loco ac tempore hibernarum vigiliarum*). I have yielded to everyone else in the merit of my title to the same extent as I have yielded in the carefulness and polish of my writing.

At the same time as he so eloquently denies both his eloquence and the title's significance, Gellius draws attention once again to the title's fusion of the initial space and time of production, which he labels "almost rustic" in its simplicity. Yet as we have seen in earlier sections, the rustic *lucubratio* has an ideology in its own right, and Gellius' commentaries, which he will refer to with the evocative term *lucubratiunculae* (*praef.* 14),[92] clearly derive much from this association.

Gellius soon takes a more principled stand behind the nocturnal ideology of his text. He aggressively warns "those who . . . have undertaken no nocturnal undertakings of this sort (*nullas hoc genus vigilias vigilarunt*) . . . but are full of untimeliness and *negotia*" (*intemperiarum negotiorumque pleni sunt*): "Let them *go far away from these nights* and look for other ways to amuse themselves" (*abeant a noctibus his procul atque alia sibi oblectamenta quaerant, praef.* 19). With these words, Gellius gives us the starkest example of what we have already seen less directly expressed in the works of Seneca and Pliny: he abjects an alternative and "unseasonable" group from his community of readers. Gellius and his audience are to have "these nights" to themselves. Moreover, these words reveal the true power of his plain and "descriptive" title: the text of the *Attic Nights* is inseparable from the nights of its initial composition and also inseparable from "these nights" in which its scholarly exchanges between writer and reader are imagined as taking place. In short, the work entitled *Attic Nights* perfectly channels an interaction between the time of writing and the time of reading. This effect is confirmed by Gellius' practice later in the work, where he occasionally refers to a previous chapter as "last night" (*proxima nocte,* e.g., 9.4.5; 15.7.3):[93] the text retains the nights of its origin.

91. Cf. Minarini 2000, 536.

92. Minarini (2000, 550–51) rightly draws attention to *two* programmatic aspects of this term: as a characteristic Gellian neologism (or nearly: it occurs once before in Fronto *Ad M. Caesarem invicem* 1.4, §1 [p. 9 Naber]) and as associated with the work's nocturnal guise.

93. Cf. Faider 1927, 201–2.

That Gellius regards the "nights" of his text as an exclusive and special occasion is made most clear at the end of the preface, where he repels the approach of the "everyday and profane mob" (*neve adeat profestum et profanum volgus, NA praef.* 20)[94] and quotes a passage from Aristophanes' *Frogs* in which the chorus warns the uninitiated and ignorant to keep away from the "nightlong rites" (παννυχίδες) of the initiates.[95] Indeed, Aristophanes is referred to as *ille homo festivissimus,* "that fanciest of men" (*praef.* 20). In other words, after his extended critique of the "fanciness" of others' titles, Gellius' own "nights" tacitly emerge as the fanciest, or most festive, of all.

Gellius' supposedly descriptive title gives him a more direct appeal to the nocturnal writing performance with which he frames the ongoing fiction of his text as "nights." His performance establishes clear conditions for the evaluation of the text through emphasizing the exclusivity and *festivitas* of the nocturnal community of author and audience. Reciprocal relations between them are generated by the service that Gellius claims to be performing: like Seneca, he claims to be compressing material into a form that will save his readers time and will effect a *vindicatio*. Lastly, as we have seen, Gellius' preface establishes a spatiotemporal interaction between author and audience in the "nights" on which the text is imagined as taking place, using the metaphor of religious "initiation" to introduce his readers to these nights. This places Gellius' work, and its entire textual community, permanently under the sign of its "nights."

6. CONCLUSION

Our consideration of the performative aspects of the nocturnal writing performance has been somewhat one-sided. After all, the image of the nocturnal student is often an object of scorn, and Martial's muse tells him he is better off without it (8.3.17–19):

> As for these things [= tragedy, epic], leave them to overly grave and serious writers,
> whom the lantern sees, poor wretches, in the middle of the night (*quos media miseros nocte lucerna videt*).
> But *you*, tinge your charming books with Roman wit. . . .

Instead of spending the night in writing, Martial will be able to enjoy himself: night is not the time when his "nocturnal pages" are being written but when they are being *read* (cf. 11.20). The evening banquet (*convivium*) is a time when "even a stiff Cato will read me" (10.20.21), and night conditions license the lewdness of epigrams.[96] The *lucubratio,* in contrast, is here associated with the grave and serious material of tragedy and epic—though

94. As Minarini (2000, 542) notes, this apotropaic gesture echoes the prefatory announcement of Hor. *Carm.* 3.1.1: *odi profanum vulgus et arceo. / favete linguis.*

95. *NA praef.* 21 = Ar. *Ran.* 354–56, 369–71.

96. Thus nocturnality can be added to the set of connections Sullivan observes as licensing conditions for obscenity in Martial, such as the Saturnalia, the Floralia, and Fescennine jesting; as Sullivan says, "By making all these connections Martial is suggesting that his obscene poetry appears in its *proper place* and therefore is *innocuous*" (1991, 64–70; quote from p. 67, original emphasis).

Martial's muse might usefully have mentioned some of the prose writers of his day, as we have seen.

In the early centuries of Christianity, the identities of *lucifugae* and *lucubrantes* underwent more than one sea change. Christians themselves were sometimes referred to as *lucifugae* (or *lucifugaces*) due to their seclusions from everyday society, but the term was also wielded by Christians themselves, referring to the pagans who fled from the "light" of Christian truth.[97] As for the *lucubratio,* it was used as a term for nocturnal Christian prayer, in which the power of *lucubratio* as a Roman performance of *self-sufficient* authority was now lost: salvation could be obtained not through exertion alone, but only with the assistance of divine grace.[98] Thus, *lucubratio* still possessed a strong religious aspect, but of a wholly different sort from that of the *auspicium* or Gellius' initiation into the mysteries. Jan Ziolkowski has shown, too, that *lucubratio* belonged among a wider array of types of nocturnal inspiration, such as "Christianizing *ruminatio*" and Celtic traditions of nighttime composition in bardic poetry.[99]

Let us return one last time to the imagined nights of imperial Rome. The image of the *lucubratio* played an important role in the texts with which it was associated. Some of its power is evident in the theory of Quintilian that nocturnal writing is the best way to gestate an orator's power to speak in public. More specifically, it puts the writer in the role of a paterfamilias exercising his economic and religious powers, whose night activity serves to extend and enhance the public day or the day of labor rather than to invert the hierarchy of public day over private night. The *lucubratio* dramatizes the reproduction of the ideal Roman household and *res publica,* and it stands in marked opposition to the set of practices by which both household and public resources are squandered. The writer who describes himself in the act of writing at night accomplishes no less than Furius Chresimus did when he brought his *lucubrationes* before the eyes of a public audience and consequently enjoyed an elevation in social status. Thus, while it is less direct than the *recitatio,* involving no context for oral presentation of the text, the *lucubratio* is no less efficacious as a performance of writing. Like the *recitatio,* it creates conditions for a mutual evaluation between author and audience, through situating both within an imagined nocturnal community. It establishes a reciprocal relationship, although in contrast with the *recitatio* it is more likely to leave the reader under obligation, owing a debt of *gratia* to the author's time-saving labors. More generally, it makes possible a shared experience of space and time between author and audience: the space and time of the nocturnal *cubiculum,* or more simply the space of night and all that it stands for in the universe of a given text. All of these aspects make the image of the nocturnal writing scene an auspicious preface to a text's

97. E.g., Min. Fel. *Oct.* 8.4 (of Christians); Tert. *De resurrectione* 47, p. 98.10; Lactant. *Div. inst.* 5.20.2 (of pagan philosophers).

98. Cf. *TLL,* s.v. *elucubro* (exertion, vs. divine inspiration), *lucubratio,* 1.a.β.ii (Christian prayer). On the basic contrast, cf. Foucault 1988a, 62, 1988b, 22, 46.

99. Ziolkowski 1990, 19–21 (quote from p. 20).

entry into the world of its audience, or to the entry of the audience into the world of the text.

This at least was the writer's hope. But Tacitus' character M. Aper seeks to demolish the hope of poets, questioning whether published poetry can ever earn its writer any *dignitas*. Even when a writer has toiled by night to hammer out one book (*unum librum excudit et elucubravit*) and his first recitation is greeted with success (*beatissimus recitationem eius eventus prosequatur*), still he fails to produce any "service that will linger in anyone's mind" (*nec . . . mansurum in animo cuiusquam beneficium,* Tac. *Dial.* 9.3–4).

Harvard University

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