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## The Urban Night

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The night of our cities no longer resembles that howling of dogs of the Latin shadows or the wheeling bat of the Middle Ages or that image of sufferings which is the night of the Renaissance. She is a vast sheet-metal monster pierced by countless knives. The blood of the modern night is a singing night.

Louis Aragon, *Paris Peasant*

In 2010, a group of French anthropologists announced the birth of a scholarly field devoted to the study of night (Becquelin et al. 2010). The object of this field would be something called “nocturnity,” defined as nighttime “transformations induced by internal and external physical changes experienced by the human body, and their cultural interpretations” (Becquelin et al. 2010, 819).<sup>1</sup> With their emphasis on the individual human body, the founders of “nocturnity” were not centrally concerned with the place of night in the life of cities. Nevertheless, their call to study nocturnal phenomena was one culmination of two decades of rich research on the social and cultural significance of night. Most of that research has been concerned with the urban night.

Early milestones in this wave of writing on the urban include suggestive books by Wolfgang Schivelbusch and Joachim Schlör on European cities in the nineteenth and early twentieth century (Schivelbusch 1995; Schlör 1998). These have given way to a series of works written by historians that trace the shifting status of night between the Middle Ages and the nineteenth century (Delattre 2000; Palmer 2000; Ekirch

2005; Cabantous 2009; Koslovsky 2011). Studies of nighttime in the twentieth century have occurred across a wider range of disciplines, as art historians, sociologists, and others use the night as a conceptual field on which to draw together issues as disparate as visual aesthetics, leisure practices, and social relationships within the modern world.<sup>2</sup> While the launch of nocturnity as the focus of a new academic field has met with limited take-up, interest in the urban night cuts across key disciplines in the humanities and social sciences.

In this chapter, I will gather up approaches to the urban night within four broad clusters of theme and method. The first of these is concerned with the changing status of night within Western modernity, and with the emergence of a new public culture of the night. A growing body of historical scholarship has addressed the interplay of technological innovation, urbanization, and democratization in transforming the character of night from the early modern period onwards. A second cluster of approaches to the urban night is of interest more for the models of night that it constructs and employs. These works treat the night as a material form (a veil, for example) or as a territory to be inhabited, traversed, and mapped. In the third section of this chapter, I will examine the status of the urban night within the discourses of public policy. Since the early 1990s, the night has emerged as the explicit focus of government policy at several levels, and of citizen activism aimed at shaping that policy. Finally, I will discuss the place of different artistic forms within the 24-hour daily cycle, with particular attention to those practices that seek to challenge the division between day and night.

#### CULTURES OF THE NIGHT

The passage from day to night in Western cities is gently but insightfully captured in Claude Chabrol's 1960 film *Les bonnes femmes*. The titular characters of this film work in an electrical appliance shop on a Parisian street. The rhythms of work in which they are caught are by now alien to most North Americans, and slowly disappearing from Europe itself. This is a world of long lunch breaks and 7:00 p.m. closings, of the camaraderie that takes shape in small, owner-operated shops. In a familiar pattern, the passage from day to night in *Les bonnes femmes* is marked by the growing sexualization of time. The characters

of *Les bonnes femmes* spend much of the daytime in a languorous boredom that gives way here to the intensity of nighttime encounters desired or resisted. Commercial transactions conducted with distance and formality during the day give way to the more obviously physical, nocturnal activities of swimming, dancing, and embracing. In his study of the Parisian night in the nineteenth century, Delattre describes this transition: “the approach of evening prompts an eagerness, a need for movement whose most obvious signs are clustered in the Boulevard: the pleasures promised by artificial lighting heal the weight of a day devoted to the ordinariness of social obligations” (Delattre 2000, 178).

The world depicted in *Les bonnes femmes* comes very late in a process that Craig Koslovsky (2011), in his study of night in the early modern period, calls the “nocturnalization” of European life. This term designates the movement of more and more social or symbolic practices out of the day and into the night, from the seventeenth century onward. In Koslovsky’s account, sovereigns and court figures of the early modern world were the first to reinvent the night, drawing on its longstanding associations with mystery and the sacred to stage their own power in nighttime spectacles: “Darkness and the night were essential to baroque attempts to articulate and transcend confessional sources of authority: nocturnal darkness intensified the light that represented the Divine or the prince” (Koslovsky 2011, 93). Over the next three hundred years, a number of developments would elicit participation in these nighttime spectacles by a broader range of social groups and classes. These developments included the rise of bourgeois power, the development of nighttime illumination in cities, the growth of nighttime entertainment forms, and the expansion of urban populations.

Throughout these transformations, the night remained a time for the staging of spectacles of authority, but the varieties of this authority expanded beyond those of government or aristocracy. They came to include cultural celebrity, monetary wealth, and more elusive forms of social standing. By the late nineteenth century, the spectacle of nightlife had dissolved within a more general sense of what, in France, was known as *la société mondaine*. The *mondaine* was a worldly, public culture of cafés and bistros, salons and theatrical openings. It was formed, in Guillaume Pinson’s words, by a set of interconnected net-

works – “familial, professional, political, artistic” – that overlapped with the remnants of a courtly society and, to a great extent, absorbed or displaced these remnants (Pinson 2008, 52).

A key event in this “nocturnalization” of European life was the introduction of street lighting in cities. Koslovsky notes that no European city had street lighting in 1660; by 1694, it had been installed in “Paris (1667), Lille (1667), and Amsterdam (1669), followed by Hamburg (1673), Turin (1675), Berlin (1682), Copenhagen (1683), and London (1684–94)” (Koslovsky 2011, 131). By around 1800, Alain Montandon suggests, the popular or bourgeois evening stroll had displaced the military promenade as the most common form of collective movement along a city’s main thoroughfares (Montandon 2009, 13). Mark J. Bouman links the installation of lighting systems to the emergence of a “mercantile society,” in which nocturnal city lighting made possible late-night shopping and 24-hour industrial production (Bouman 1987, 10). It is difficult to disentangle cause and effect here, to separate the increase in demand for nighttime activity from the technological developments that made it possible. Anke Gleber captures the multiple ways in which urban lighting multiplied the variety of urban activities and their spatial extensions, each reverberating with others to produce the general sense of a new culture of the urban night: “The cultural history of every illumination in the street undergoes revolutionary transformations, particularly in the nineteenth century, when an increase in the numbers of pedestrians, the extension of streets that can be passed at night, the amount of time that can be spent in the streets, and the quantities of stimuli that one may expect to experience, multiply to an extent that until then was unimaginable” (Gleber 1999, 31).

It is common, in histories of the urban night, to note the movement of distinct activities forward in the 24-hour cycle. For both Alain Cabantous and Koslovsky, the increased lateness of meals between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries is a key index of the nocturnalization they are keen to trace. Cabantous notes that supper, within upper-class urban French society, took place three hours later in 1740 than in 1690 (Cabantous 2009, 275; Koslovsky 2011, 129). As the activities of day moved into the urban night, we should see such activities as not simply postponed, but as constituting new gravitational poles around which other activities organized themselves. Here, again, Chabrol’s film *Les bonnes femmes* gives us a more recent image of this organization. As the central characters of this film end their workdays,

a variety of plot lines, encounters, and motives converge on the scenes in which the main characters take their mid-evening meals. In these scenes, the compression or overlaying of activities is most intense: characters eat, drink, dance, embrace, laugh, and talk almost simultaneously. As the night goes on, this clustering unravels. Drinking, kissing, or dancing become distinct, unitary ways of concluding a night out; each marks an individual's fate in the games of risk and opportunity that fill their nighttimes. The narrative of the night is one in which multiple activities are layered upon each other, then stripped away.

#### THE NIGHT AS FORM AND TERRITORY

The nocturnalization of Western cities, described so exhaustively by Koslovsky and others, has spurred poetic and moralizing engagements with the night. The key tension around which these engagements turn is that between urban lighting, a product of technological modernity, and a darkness that is no longer natural but given meaning and substance through its interaction with light. In 1850, George Foster spoke of a "thick veil of night" descending on the American city, squeezing the expansive openness of the day into barely visible strata of sinful behaviour (Foster and Blumin 1990, 1). Likewise, in his history of the shadow, Max Milner writes of nighttime darkness as an "enveloping veil, an opaque cloud, an insidious atmosphere annihilating contours and colours" (Milner 2005, 28). These images of night as a veil laid over the modern city may be counterposed to the notion of electrified light as a blanket that gently brings comfort and security to urban life. Writing of the early days of electrification, David Nasaw repeats Theodore Dreiser's claims about the protective character of nighttime illumination, which "welcomed and protected the decent people of the city" (Nasaw 1992, 16). Here, night is rendered less oppressively heavy by light, which dilutes the night and diminishes its opaque weightiness.

In his *Poétique de la Ville*, Pierre Sansot notes that light may come, at those moments of its fullest expression, to banish the night rather than simply dilute it. More commonly, he suggests, "the urban night can absorb lighting and multicoloured neon without ceasing to be night" (Sansot 1971, 146, my translation). Light comes to act, within the night, as the generator of an unease, rendering the night tense and nervous. It does so, Sansot claims, in two ways. In the first, light end-

lessly reiterates the promise of pleasure that has become central to the meaning of night. Then, nighttime lighting nourishes the fetishes of night, fixing our attention on all those objects which, in the night, come alive: “neckties, bracelets, purses, hands, shoes, looks, even revolvers” (Sansot 1971, 147). The enchantment of the night no longer resides in its lingering associations with a pre-modern sense of magic and the supernatural. Rather, the night enchants through practices of illumination, which are distinct from those of the day and whose objects are the accoutrements of nighttime dynamism.

Night and light, in these heterogeneous accounts, become forces or agents capable of defining place and sensibility. A useful conceptual tool is provided by Caroline Renard’s notion of night as a “*matière-temps*” (a matter-time), as both a substance and a unit of time. For Renard, the “matter” of night, at least in its conceptual representations “resides in its capacity to make forms disappear, to erase them from space, to devour them. Tied to an aesthetic of soft erasure and brutal disappearance, night possesses, in the realm of story-telling (musical, literary or cinematic), its own time. It is a *matière-temps* that erodes the real and leads to its loss, to a black hole” (Renard 1999/2000, 49, my translation).

More expansive imaginings of the night will see it less as form or matter than as a kind of territory – not just a period of time, but a place. In the evocative description offered by the Canadian poet and essayist Christopher Dewdney, the urban night is a world with its own populations and activities, an inverted substitute for the day-time city:

A city turns inside out at night. After the outflow of rush hour there is an hour’s pause before the inflow of recreational pilgrims streams back into the city’s core to fill the vacuum. The offices and buildings that teemed during day stand empty while the theatres, bars, discos, casinos, restaurants, opera houses, arcades, and concert halls begin to open. But only the core entertainment districts are active at night. Otherwise, the city is quiescent, and the municipal business of street cleaning and emergency road and transit repairs takes place without the hindrance of traffic (2004, 89).

Twentieth century literature and cinema are full of works that restrict themselves to the night, either as a self-imposed constraint or

in order to highlight the sense of night as an autonomous world. As Evelyne Cohen shows, the theme of “Parisian nights” became a familiar theme in French literature between the two world wars in the work of authors drawn to evocations of a city whose daytime monumentality was missing (Cohen 1999, 273). Literary and cinematic treatments of the night will often organize themselves in relation to two broad tendencies. In one of these, the urban night is the space-time of an itinerary, to be traversed in voyages of discovery or escape. Novels like Philippe Soupault’s novel *Les dernières nuits de Paris* (1928) or such films as *Deadline at Dawn* (1946, dir. Harold Clurman), *La traversée de Paris* (1956; dir. Claude Autant-Lara) and *After Hours* (1985, dir. Martin Scorsese) follow quests or missions through the city as they move towards a resolution that usually comes at dawn. In another pattern, the urban night is captured in more static, anthropological fashion as a world with its indigenous inhabitants and recurring rituals. French picture newspapers of the mid-twentieth century were drawn regularly to documenting the night worlds of those who worked in the night, like taxi drivers or pharmacists.<sup>3</sup> Minor American crime films of the 1940s and 1950s would focus on the typical (rather than exceptional) events that filled the nighttime street or occupied those working night shifts in neighbourhood police precincts. Examples include *Behind Green Lights* (1946, dir. Otto Brower), *The City That Never Sleeps* (1953, dir. John H. Auer), *Between Midnight and Dawn* (1950, dir. Gordon Douglas).

The sense of night as territory finds its most literal expression in visual or informational forms that seek to measure and represent nighttime activity in cities. In *Les nuits de Paris: États généraux*, the 2010 report of a conference organized by the City Hall of Paris, different maps show the clusters of commercial activity typical of different hours of the night. Following the closure of most bars, at 2:00 AM, activities (and the graphic marks representing them) cluster around a few places of continued commerce, like Pigalle, Les Halles, or the Bastille. Later still, the report suggests, nighttime activity retreats to the few active sites of what it calls the “libertine” Paris, that of sex shops and after-hours clubs (Paris 2010). With the deepening of night, successive maps show the convergence of activity-marks towards a few isolated areas, then their almost total disappearance. In 1977, the French art historian Anne Caquelin illustrated her book *La ville la nuit* with almost identical maps, capturing, in successive images, the stages by which Paris shut down: “Hour by hour, the city withdraws.

Sites of culture and sites for the consumption of pleasure reach out along the dividing line of the Seine, then come together to end up in at a few points: the Champs-Élysée in the West, the Latin Quarter and Montparnasse in the south west, Montmartre in the North” (Cauquelin 1977, 23, my translation).

To this sense of a city’s almost natural expansion and contraction we may contrast the renderings of the urban night produced by Montreal’s municipal reform movement of the 1950s, the Comité de moralité publique. Obsessed with the prevalence of nighttime commerce and sociability in a city widely viewed as corrupt, members of the Comité drove around, night after night, noting which restaurants or nightclubs were open and registering the sorts of activity transpiring within or outside them. For the Comité de moralité publique, the extension of entertainment and human intercourse late into the night had nothing to do with semi-natural cycles of invasion and retreat. It was the result of deliberate infractions of urban law and propriety by transgressors who could be identified. This is one excerpt from Comité’s “Rapport de la tournée des Grills et Clubs” for Sunday, 20 January 1952, from 1:30 to 4:30 a.m.

- 3:45 Palermo, rue Iberville coin Mont-Royal  
Centre reconnu de prostitution pour les jeunes ouvriers de l’est, taverne en bas, grille au deuxième et chambres au troisième.  
Fermé
- 3:50 Mocambo – grand ouvert, foule à la porte qui sort et entre, taxis, stationnement dans les environs, ce grill est un endroit bien fréquenté par prostituées pour les jeunes de l’est (rue Notre-Dame & Havre.)
- 4:00 Café de l’Est, rue Notre-Dame  
Gens sortant, c’est la fermeture. Plusieurs automobiles stationnées, lumière à l’intérieur.  
Centre de prostitution important pour Maisonneuve
- 4:01 Rainbow – fermé
- 4:30 De retour à la maison.<sup>4</sup>

As tools for capturing the nightly withering of commercial activity, the lists of the Comité de moralité publique are rich in their relentless specificity, in the levels of empirical detail and moral judgement they provide. (As such, they have proved highly useful to those trying

to reconstruct, albeit in celebratory fashion, Montreal's nightlife during this period.) The night maps of Paris, in contrast, submerge any specificity within the more abstract dynamic by which nocturnal urban energies gather and retreat. In both cases, the nighttime city is a territory occupied by its distinctive populations, then deserted for a time before the populations of the day arrive to fill it again.

The question of the distinctiveness of night as a territory or *matière-temps* has been posed in recent years in relation to new practices of lighting cities at night. Tied to the broader assertion of city-based tourism and urban creativity, strategies for the design of nighttime lighting have gathered strength since the early 1960s at least. Roger Narboni, a leading lighting designer (and historian of his field), notes that the impulse to conceive the overall lighting of urban areas using coherent design principles expanded with the building of new housing developments in the early 1960s (Narboni 2012, 37). The functionality of public lighting, in these cases, was obvious, but modern lighting design was further intended to signify modernity and security, the better to distinguish new residential developments from older, more central parts of a city.

In the twenty-first century, lighting design has followed two broad paths of development. One has involved the ordinary, everyday lighting of street lamps and traffic signals. Here, incandescent and compact fluorescent bulbs have been replaced by solid state (LED) lighting, which has trickled "upwards" from flashlights and consumer electronics to more public and infrastructural uses (California Sustainability Alliance 2012). Raleigh, Virginia, and Toronto, Ontario were the first two cities to subscribe to the so-called LED City initiative, which called for the comprehensive replacement of older lighting systems by those employing solid state technology (Remaking Cities Institute Pittsburgh 2011).

While the impulses behind this embrace of solid state lighting are primarily ecological and fiscal, more theatrical deployments of public lighting have, since the late twentieth century, been part of the broader revitalization of the urban night. Lighting design has emerged as a vibrant field on the margins of architecture and urban planning, its history marked by already-canonical events like the illumination of the Eiffel Tower in 1986 to commemorate the Pope's visit to Paris (Narboni 2012, 37). Elaborate designs for nighttime lighting in Lyon, France, or in Montreal's Quartier des spectacles have raised the question of whether nighttime lighting should

reveal the daytime city, highlighting civic and historical monuments that otherwise recede into darkness, or strive to enchant the city by emphasizing its other features, by casting its nocturnal landscape as distinct. The simplest strategies of nighttime lighting, Narboni suggests (in terms both gendered and anthropomorphizing) do little more than add makeup (*maquillage urbain*) to the buildings and other structures (canals, parks) that dominate the day (Narboni 2012, 9). By dressing up these features, it might be argued, designers strengthen the association of the night with a seductive glamour. However, by highlighting the institutions of daytime civility rather than the distinct zones and practices of nighttime urban culture, these strategies protect the official city from nocturnal distractions that threaten its centrality.

#### THE NIGHT AS OBJECT OF POLICY

In 1995, the Quebec geographer Luc Bureau wrote that “the law hesitates before the night as before a half-open door” (Bureau 1995, 75). This image suggests both the fear of the night, as a territory entered only with caution, and the alterity of the night, as that lifeworld in which the law’s applicability is not certain. As Luc Gwiazdzinski has suggested, “in the nocturnal city, the individual is not able to fully enjoy his or her rights as citizen” (Gwiazdzinski 2005, 197, my translation). The passage from day to night produces, in Gwiazdzinski’s terms, a “discontinuous citizenship” (197) that waxes and wanes throughout the 24-hour cycle on the basis of gender, class, ethnicity, and other markers of identity.

It is not necessary to trace here the long history of social, political, and textual injunctions against the night and its inhabitants: the curfews, closing hours, vagrancy and solicitation laws, journalistic exposés, and other instruments, legal and discursive, that have sought to limit and define the activities of the night.<sup>5</sup> Rather, I will examine, here, some of the more recent ways in which cities and their inhabitants have sought to renegotiate their relationship to the night.

In 1994, urban scholars at Manchester Metropolitan University in the United Kingdom organized a conference whose title contained two terms with ascendant influence in the field of municipal policy: “24-hour city” and “nighttime economy” (Lovatt et al. 1994). This conference brought together representatives of city government, police

officials, cultural entrepreneurs, and a variety of other stakeholders. Among other things, this event was one milestone in the settling-in of ideas that would become foundations of cultural policy during the years of Tony Blair's Labour Government: ideas about creative industries, creative clusters, creative economies, and so on. In 1994, though, and in a massively deindustrialized and culturally vibrant city like Manchester, the novel appeal of these ideas was easy to grasp.

Among the key ideas expressed at the Manchester conference (and at other events with similar agendas) were these: that the urban night is a time of significant and productive economic activity, not just that interval in which the labours of the day are rewarded, through leisure or consumption; that the night is a resource for cities, rather than simply a set of problems to be regulated and controlled; and that those who inhabit and work in the night may claim the rights and privileges of the city just as justly and forcefully as those who occupy the day. With widely varying degrees of concreteness, these ideas have insinuated their way into urban policy and cultural policy across the world since the early 1990s, carried in the laptops of consultants and concretized in the "cultural plans" that even the smallest of cities now commission and debate. In North America, ideas of the nighttime economy and 24-hour city have been interwoven (and often confused) with notions of the creativity class put forward by Richard Florida and others.<sup>6</sup>

Fifteen years following the Manchester conference, we can trace the widespread acceptance of notions of the nighttime economy across an expanding corpus of policy documents or commercial initiatives. In 2009, the Downtown Late Night Task Force of Victoria, British Columbia, released a report entitled *Late Night, Great Night! ... Putting the Pieces Together*. The report began by listing nighttime "behaviours" judged to be tarnishing the image of Victoria: "excessive intoxication, vomiting, spitting," "street crowding after bars close," and so on (Downtown Late Night Taskforce 2009, 2). A decade earlier, the recommended solutions to these behaviours would no doubt have involved restrictions on the sale of alcohol and other measures intended to control the populations occupying Victoria's nighttime. Instead, the 2009 Task Force called for the "Creation of a Welcoming and Diversified Evening and Late Night Economy." More urinals and other facilities were to be built, closing hours for food vendors to be extended, and a wider range of entertainment options made available.

As with the extension of pub closing hours in the UK, which followed discussions like those which took place at the 1994 Manchester conference, the strategy proposed to Victoria's city government involved diluting unwanted behaviours within a rich variety of other ways of occupying the nighttime city.

In the same year, Edmonton, Alberta was chosen by the Responsible Hospitality Institute, a US-based nonprofit organization that services the hospitality industry, as North America's most "Sociable City." These awards are based on a number of criteria – the safety of a city's inner core, for example, and a less easily measurable cultural vibrancy. These criteria cohere through a city's success in developing its nighttime economy (City of Edmonton 2013). While, in the United Kingdom, official uses of the term "night time economy" may be traced back at least as long ago as the 1950s, the sweep of the term through public and industry discourse in North America has been swifter and more recent.

#### THE ARTS OF DAY AND NIGHT

The process of nocturnalization discussed earlier in this chapter has been marked by the clustering and unravelling of nighttime practices, as different sorts of activity have been joined to others and then pulled apart. The expansion of theatre-going in the nineteenth century made late-night suppers (after an evening's performance) common, while the rise of the supper club, in the twentieth century, made public dining and attendance at an entertainment spectacle coincide. Until the 1960s, people would regularly listen to music, dance, drink, and eat in the same place, over several hours of an evening. Since then, these activities have been disarticulated, redistributed across different spaces and blocks of time. The decline of the supper club in the 1960s allowed dancing to move into the far edges of the night, as if dancing was now unmoored and could find more fugitive places and times. Late at night, dancing and dance music have been severed from the sociability of dining, and (perhaps in consequence) become more subcultural and youth-dominated.

This question of the overlaying of practices becomes more complex when we pursue it in relationship to artistic forms and activities. The cycle of culture and entertainment in cities has come, with time, to divide the arts of exhibition and static textuality from those of performance, leaving the former in the day and allowing the latter to multi-

ply at night. Gallery exhibitions typically occur during the day, with a few evenings open during the week, on the model of retail stores. There are any number of seemingly practical reasons for this: daytime openings synchronize the upfront activity of exhibition with the backstage work of gallery professionals, of managers and curators, whose workday follows that of other professionals. For the most part, daytime art events are free of food and drink, and thus avoid those problems of sanitation, propriety, and ambiguous motivation that mark cultural events of the evening or nighttime. Over a hundred years, the withering of daytime variety shows, theatrical matinées, and afternoon film showings has widened the temporal divide between the cultures of exhibition and performance. (The sense of noble accomplishment that comes with seeing foreign or obscure films in a festival is enhanced by the fact that these are often seen during the day, and thus more closely linked to gallery or museum attendance than to recreational film going.)

The arts of performance – classical musical concerts and plays – typically unfold in mid-evening, even if this requires that administrative functions be undertaken by people who are at home by the time a performance has begun. Live rock concerts and dance music nights, as we know, will come even later in the night. In these distinctions, typically, increased movement and exuberance replace stasis as night replaces day. If we chart the typical sequence of cultural events from day to night – through a detailed analysis of the events listings in alternative weeklies, for example – we find an increase in levels of oral (rather than visual or printed) communication, a heightening of the proximity between people, and the joining together of different sense-based experiences (combinations of sight, sound, and touch.)

If the sequencing of cultural events helps to concretize important aesthetic divisions, we might examine those practices designed to transgress the normal divisions of the 24-hour cycle. In their efforts to override the divisions of time, we see cultural communities negotiating the competing values of stasis and exuberance, decorum and vitality, stability and risk. In Montreal, as in many other cities, gallery openings or vernissages typically occur from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m., at a point of transition between day and night. Through their openings, galleries signal their intention to bind the durability of the exhibit to the momentary sociability of the party, before both retreat back into their normal zones within the 24-hour cycle. In *The Creative City*, Charles Landry distinguished between what he calls

the “hard” and “soft” infrastructures of cities: between buildings and institutions, on the one hand, and “the system of associative structures and social networks, connections and human interactions,” on the other (Landry 2008, 5). The gallery opening works quite deliberately to marshal the resources of hard infrastructure in the service of the soft to let people talk and circulate around silent, immobile works of art.

The more revealing moments in the life of urban art forms, perhaps, are those in which textuality and performance are brought together, in practices that seek to endow the former with a vitality or populism that will revitalize it or extend its social reach. Here, the passage of day into night is marked by reworkings of textuality as performativity – reworkings in which new cultural forms take shape. In well-known instances, performance art has moved out of its conceptualist roots to become part of nighttime music scenes, as in New York in the late 1960s or early 1980s. These convergences helped to bring the visual arts to the temporal edges of music scenes, even as they produced problems of distinction or judgment. (Did Lydia Lunch, at one point, become a performance artist? Did Laurie Anderson become a rock star?) “Post-performancism” was the term offered by critic Douglas Davis offered to describe the sorts of art practices that took place, more and more, within nightclubs and on the edges of alternative music scenes (Davis 1981, 6).

Efforts to dissolve or displace the boundaries between night and day often must confront the long-standing and conflicting moral associations of each. The “fantasy city” described by John Hannigan is one which offers hedonistic, morally suspect pleasures typically associated with night (like gambling) around the clock, on the model of the Nevada casino (Hannigan 1998, 3). An inversion of sorts of the fantasy city may be found in the “First Night” celebrations of New Year’s Eve in many American cities (like Burlington, Vermont). In these events, sober activities of the day (like strolling with children or playing outdoor games) are carried forth into the night, pushing conventional year-end revelries onto private spaces or even deeper into the night.

#### CONCLUSION: THINKING ABOUT TEMPORAL COMMUNITIES

In *Times in the City and Quality of Life*, European scholars Jean-Yves Boulin and Ulrich Mückenberger suggest that we “consider the

social links not only on a spatial basis but also on a temporal one, particularly with the introduction of the concept of temporal communities” (Boulin and Mückenberger 1999, 52). The political status of communities defined by their relationship to time may be difficult to grasp, but it is from within distinct regions of urban time that some of the most intense and persuasive claims to recognition, resources, and rights have come in recent years. Movements to extend the hours of public transit, to limit or protect live nighttime music festivals, or to enhance protective measures for women on city streets at night all presume and encourage a politics of temporal community.

At the same time, the long-cherished status of the urban night as a time/place of reinvention, transgression, and aesthetic fluidity finds itself partially challenged by newly installed technologies, which are not merely those of surveillance but of interpellation as well. Solid state lighting, in particular, is marked by two features that enhance its functionality relative to older technologies. In the first place, its emission of light is strictly directional, reducing the sorts of gradations that were a prominent source both of twentieth-century visual effects (as in *film noir*) and of those shadowy nether regions of the urban night in which refuge might be found. Secondly, LED systems make of each light a distinct “address,” linked to computer control systems that may alter the informational content of lighting on the basis of institutional intent or viewer identification (Chen 2008, 36). The increased functionality of LED systems threatens to sever nocturnal lighting from those supplements of enchantment and uncertainty that were key features of nighttime citizenship.

Histories of night from the early modern period onward show the extent to which moves to occupy the night struggled against religious, then aristocratic claims of dominion over the night. Since the mid-nineteenth century, struggles over the night have been more clearly based in the claims of identity-based populations co-inhabiting cities – women, sexual communities, the young, and racially or ethnically marked. These populations move in and out of temporal communities, and their relationship to time is rarely the factor that weighs most heavily upon their political status. Nevertheless, as the flurry of recent reflection on the urban night makes clear, ideals of urban citizenship – of the “right to the city” – must encompass the right to occupy the night.

## NOTES

- 1 Unusually, the launch of “nocturnity” as the focus of an academic field was the lead, front-page news item in the *National Post*, one of Canada’s daily newspapers, in an article entitled “Out of the Darkness.” See Brean 2010.
- 2 See, for example, Cauquelin 1977; Bureau 1997; Dewdney 2004; Talbot 2007; Sharpe 2008.
- 3 See, for example, “La vie des chauffeurs de taxi: Les ‘niteux;” *Faits divers* 47 (12 January 1933): 14–15; “Pharmacies de nuit,” *V* 278 (29 January 1950): 8–9.
- 4 Comité de moralité publique, “Rapport de la tournée des Grills et Clubs,” 20 January 1952, Fonds Comité De Moralité Publique, Centre de recherche Lionel Groulx, Montreal.
  - 3:45 Palermo, Iberville Street, corner of Mont-Royal  
Well-known centre of prostitution for young workers of the east, tavern downstairs, grill on the second floor, bedrooms on the third.  
Closed
  - 3:50 Mocambo – wide open, crowd at the door leaving and coming, taxis, parking in the area, this grill is highly frequented by prostitutes and young people from the east (Notre-Dame Street and Havre.)
  - 4:00 Café de l’Est-, Notre-Dame Street  
People leaving, it’s closing time. Several automobiles parked with inside lights on.  
Major prostitution centre on Maisonneuve
  - 4:01 Rainbow – closed
  - 4:30 Return home (author’s translation)
- 5 See, among many other now classic studies, Boyer 1978; Wilson 1991; Gilfoyle 1992; Walkowitz 1992; Nord 1995; Talbot 2007.
- 6 See, for example, Florida 2005.

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