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| Nota di contenuto | Frontmatter -- Acknowledgments -- Contents -- Preface -- A Note on Translations and Abbreviations -- Introduction: Locating the Romantic Performative -- 1. Of Promises, Contracts, and Constitutions: Speech-Act xi xvii I Philosophies and Practices in Britain, 1775-1800 -- 2. Kant, German Idealism, and Philosophies of Language in Action -- 3. The Performative Humboldt -- 4. The Performative Coleridge -- 5. Subjective and Intersubjective Speech Acts in Holderlin's Work -- 6. Kleist and the Fragile Performative Order of the World -- 7. Godwin's Philosophy and Fiction: The Resistance to Performatives -- Conclusion -- Bibliography -- Index |
| Sommario/riassunto | The Romantic Performative develops a new context and methodology for reading Romantic literature by exploring philosophies of language |

from the period 1785-1835. It reveals that the concept of the performative, debated by twentieth-century theorists from J. L. Austin to Judith Butler, has a much greater relevance for Romantic literature than has been realized, since Romantic philosophy of language was dominated by the idea that something happens when words are spoken. By presenting Romantic philosophy as a theory of the performative, and Romantic literature in terms of that theory, this book uncovers the historical roots of twentieth-century ideas about speech acts and performativity. Romantic linguistic philosophy already focused on the relationship between speaker and hearer, describing speech as an act that establishes both subjectivity and intersubjective relations and theorizing reality as a verbal construct. But Romantic theorists considered utterance, the context of utterance, and the positions and identities of speaker and hearer to be much more fluid and less stable than modern analytic philosophers tend to make them. Romantic theories of language therefore yield a definition of the "Romantic performative" as an utterance that creates an object in the world, instantiates the relationship between speaker and hearer, and even founds the subjectivity of the speaker in the moment when the utterance occurs. The author traces the Romantic performative through its diverse development in the moral, political, and legal philosophy of Reid, Bentham, Kant and the German Idealists, Humboldt, and Coleridge, then explores its significance in literary texts by Coleridge, Godwin, Hölderlin, and Kleist. These readings demonstrate that Romantic writers mounted a deeper investigation than previously realized into the way the act of speaking generates subjective identity, intersubjective relations, and even objective reality. The project of the book is to read the language of Romanticism as performative and to recognize among its achievements the historical founding of the discourse of performativity itself.
