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Nota di contenuto	Front matter -- Acknowledgements -- Table of Contents -- Introduction: Dark Nights, Bright Lights / Degenring, Folkert / Bach, Susanne -- City Nights, City Lights in London Literature of the 1890's / Goetsch, Paul -- "The Hours of the Day and the Night Are Ours Equally": Dracula and the Lighting Technologies of Victorian London / Peker, Maria -- "Light of Life": Gender, Place, and Knowledge in H.G. Wells' Ann Veronica / Mildorf, Jarmila -- The Literary Realisation of Electric Light in the Early 20th Century: Artificial Illumination in H. G. Wells and E.M. Forster / Leahy, Richard -- Public and Private Light in Virginia Woolf's Night and Day / Ludtke, Laura E. -- Serenading the Night in Benjamin Britten's Opus 31 / Gillett, Robert / Wagner, Isabel -- Darkness Visible: Night, Light, and Liminality in Arthur Conan Doyle's The Hound of the Baskervilles and Jed Rubenfeld's The Death Instinct / Heiler, Lars -- The Blackout of Community: Charlotte Jones' The Dark / Butter, Stella -- Genre, Gender, Mythology: Functions of Light and Darkness in Terry Pratchett's Feet of Clay and Thud! / Sezi, Murat -- Twenty Thousand Lights Hanging from the Ceiling: Ecocatastrophe in Karen Thompson Walker's The Age of Miracles / Bach, Susanne -- On Behalf of the Dark? Functionalisation of Light Pollution in Fiction /

Sommario/riassunto

Light and darkness shape our perception of the world. This is true in a literal sense, but also metaphorically: in theology, philosophy, literature and the arts the light of day signifies life, safety, knowledge and all that is good, while the darkness of the night suggests death, danger, ignorance and evil. A closer inspection, however, reveals that things are not quite so clear cut and that light and darkness cannot be understood as simple binary opposites. On a biological level, for example, daylight and darkness are inseparable factors in the calibration of our circadian rhythms, and a lack of periodical darkness appears to be as contrary to health as a lack of exposure to sunlight. On a cultural level, too, night and darkness are far from being universally condemnable: in fiction, drama and poetry the darkness of the night allows not only nightmares but also dreams, it allows criminals to ply their trade and allows lovers to meet, it allows the pursuit of pleasure as well as deep thought, it allows metamorphoses, transformations and transgressions unthinkable in the light of day. But night is not merely darkness. The night gains significance as an alternative space, as an 'other of the day', only when it is at least partially illuminated. The volume examines the interconnection of night, darkness and nocturnal illumination across a broad range of literary texts. The individual essays examine historically specific light conditions in literature, tracing the symbolic and metaphoric content of darkness and illumination and the attitudes towards them.

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