

THE NIGHT IN THE MODERN ERA: INTERPRETATIONS, CONFLICTS, AND CHANGES

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The nighttime holds both symbolic and practical meanings, representing a space of negotiations, conflicts and changes in societies. It has its own rhythms and customs (Cabantous 2019). This special issue aims to explore the theme of the night in the Modern era, with particular attention to the social, cultural and political dynamics characterised by their occurrence at



nightfall. What experiences, actors, and practices transpass the boundaries between legality and subversion in nightlife? Or what metaphorical meanings has the night taken on?

The fascination and complexity of nightlife lie in its polysemic and sometimes oxymoronic nature. While it can be a moment of apparent tranquillity, it serves at the same time as a stage for both regulation and transgressions, a condition of exploitation and a space of vindication, a time of rest for some and a time of work for others. The dynamism of nightlife is shaped by a multitude of factors, including age, gender, social class, occupation, and historical context (Chaniotis 2018: 183). This has resulted in a rich body of studies on the night, examining its various forms in urban and rural contexts across the 19th and 20th centuries.

Since the publication of Melbin's *Night as Frontier* (1978), the onset of darkness has attracted the attention of scholars working on different historical eras. For instance, authors have highlighted its spiritual and ritual significance (Ginzburg 1989), its vitality and dangers (Zarinebaf 2010; Wishnitzer 2021), its role as a the time of labour (Bertucelli 2000), its gender dimensions (Infante Vargas 2021), its transformation with the spread of public lighting (Delattre 2000; Rodríguez Martín 2021) and the expansion of the global concept of time, marked by the widespread adoption of clocks (Conrad 2018).

At the same time, the symbolic value of the night has led contemporaries and the historiography to make extensive use of it. It stressed the significance of specific events, (such as the “Night of the Long Knives” or the “Kristallnacht”) and, in a metaphorical sense, it has embodied the sense of darkness. This is evident in controversial terms such as “Notte della Repubblica” (Zavoli 2014) or in controversial attributions, including the expression “darkest hour” to Churchill. The night has been deployed to evoke deep crises, moments of uncertainty and transition, as well as times of violence, waiting, and struggle. Conversely,

such imagery has been frequently juxtaposed with metaphors of light and awakening, as in the case of the Enlightenment and the reformist movements of the 18th and 19th centuries in the Middle East and Central Asia (DeWeese 2016; Kermāni 2008).

The aim of this call for papers is to collect contributions that explore both nocturnal events and phenomena, as well as the use of the metaphor of night in the Modern era in different geographical contexts. The proposal seeks to encourage reflections developing themes, including:

- Night work, both formal or informal;
- Leisure activities conducted at night;
- The night as a time for political and social contestation;
- The night in the context of conflict (military, espionage, or clandestine activities);
- Darkness and its implications in the management of natural disasters;
- Crime occurring at night;
- Attempts to govern the night (e.g. lighting, control, and police activities);
- The metaphor of the night as a time of crisis, trauma, and liminality;
- The dark-light contrast in the historiographical debate.

The interconnection between these themes, as well as the role of space - urban and non-urban - in shaping specific manifestations of nocturnal time, is intended to be the common thread that enriches the debate. The aim is to foster an interdisciplinary dialogue that illuminates the multiple dimensions of nocturnal life in the Modern Time.

How to submit an article

Authors are invited to submit an abstract of no more than 1.500 characters (including spaces) by **15 June 2025**. Notification of acceptance or rejection will be sent by **25 June 2025**.

Upon acceptance, the deadline for submission of full papers is **28 February 2026**. The issue will be published in March 2027 (this date is subject to postponement for editorial reasons, however publication is expected no later than summer 2027). Articles will be double-blind peer-reviewed.

Submissions should count between 35,000 and 55,000 characters (including spaces), and comply with the editorial standards and instructions for authors (<https://www.studistorici.com/en/instructions-to-authors/editorial-and-bibliographical-guidelines/>).

Authors can send abstracts and articles in Italian, English, French, and Spanish.

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