

Night Entities in *Orion and the Dark* (2024) as Representation of Children's Nyctophobia: A Semiotics Analysis

Nurul Irmah Agustina¹, Ajeng Rahma Puspita², Mia Fitria Agustina³✉, Ririn Kurnia
Trisnawati⁴

^{1,2,3,4}Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Jenderal Soedirman, Indonesia

Article Info

Article History:

Received

18 August 2025

Approved

31 December 2025

Published

30 April 2026

Keywords: children literature, night
myth, Nyctophobia, representation,
semiotic

Abstract

Nyctophobia is a fear of the dark that is common among children, especially at night. Stereotypes of night as a quiet, lonely and mysterious time of day reinforce this fear. This study examines how the night entity characters in *Orion and the Dark* (2024) represent Orion's fear of darkness. While most previous studies have focused on main character or narrative structures, few have explored how supporting characters symbolically shape children's emotional development. Addressing this gap, the present study interprets the night entities as semiotic representations that influence Orion's perception of darkness during his childhood. Using a qualitative approach and Barthes' semiotic theory, the analysis shows that denotatively, the night entities are shown in a variety of colors that explicitly describe their behaviors and characters. Connotatively, these colors and behaviors form symbolic meanings related to emotions such as fear, tranquility, and anxiety. These meanings have developed into a myth that night is synonymous with scary things. However, Dark's character who is portrayed as protective becomes a turning point for Orion, showing that night through other entities can also bring serenity and beauty. Hence, through the analysis of signs and meanings based on Barthes' semiotic framework, this study suggests that positive representations and supportive interactions contribute to reshaping children's perceptions of darkness, thereby helping to overcome nyctophobia and improve their mental health and well-being.

© Copyright 2026

INTRODUCTION

Fear is a fundamental emotion that is triggered in reaction to perceived danger (Schimmenti et al., 2020). Fear of something can be felt by children and adults. In the case of the children, who are the focus of this study, many of them have a fear of the dark. As stated by Ardiyanto et al. (2024), a fear of the dark is prevalent in both children and adults. Watt (2015) in his book page 240 explained that, "fear of the dark or also known as nyctophobia, comes from

the Greek words *nyctos* means night and *phobos* means fear, is a natural environment type specific phobia." In general, children's nyctophobia is caused by their own strange thinking, or paranoia. The paranoia makes children feel that someone is watching, that there is a ghost in their room, and that something will happen while they sleep. The cause of fear is often personal, Miao et al. (2025) examined that ghost stories and media, uncertainty due to lack of lighting, and loneliness enhance the nyctophobia. Hence, nyctophobia in children is a common phenomenon, being shaped by

✉ Corresponding author:

Email: mia.agustina@unsoed.ac.id

p-ISSN: 2252-6323

e-ISSN: 2721-4540

imagination, environmental factors, and social influences.

The issue of nyctophobia can be found in literary work, such as the film *Orion and the Dark* (2024). It is an animated film that features adventure and comedy elements as directed by Sean Charmatz. Orion, as the main character, is depicted as a child who has many fears, especially of the dark. The sudden presence of Dark as one of the night entities in Orion's room, which scares him, is the beginning of an adventure for Orion and the other night entities to prevent Orion from being afraid of the dark. The night entities carried out a task that represented Orion's nyctophobia. Dark is responsible for extinguishing all light sources. Sleep is in charge of making everyone sleep in an uncommon way. Sweet Dreams as the controller of everyone's dreams. Quiet is dedicated to absorbing all noise and creating the silence of the night. Insomnia is a distraction for people's minds while they are sleeping, so that they are awake again because of these thoughts. Finally, Unexpected Noises is responsible for making sudden strange noises that can frighten people. These representations of night entities and the tasks they do give Orion a different view of darkness and night.

To study deeper the issue about nyctophobia, semiotic theory by Roland Barthes is used. Semiotics is a branch of science that pursues the sign, the function of the sign, and the production of meaning (Wijayanto & Iswari, 2021, p. 103). Barthes introduced the concept of "Order of Significations", which consists of three levels of meaning: denotation referring to the literal meaning of a sign; connotation referring to the emotional meaning that is connected to a sign; and myth referring to constructed cultural messages (Nasution & Juanda, 2025). This framework is relevant to explore how visual and narrative signs in the film construct and redefine the fear of darkness.

Several studies have examined *Orion and the Dark* (2024) from various perspectives and theoretical approaches. Pamungkas & Prihandini (2024) applied Edgar V. Roberts' intrinsic approach to analyze the characterization of the

protagonist, Orion, revealing him as a timid, caring, and loyal character. In contrast, a study by Dama & Idrus (2024) examined students' ability to apply translation techniques from English to Gorontalo based on the movie's text. Additionally, Rasool et al. (2024) used semiotic theory to examine symbols, colors, signs, and meanings in a number of movie scenes. However, none of these studies specifically highlighted the supporting characters. Therefore, this study focuses on six night entity characters who each play an important role in shaping Orion's perception as a young child towards the fear of darkness at night.

Hence, this study aims to examine how "night entity" characters represent Orion's fear of the dark. By using the Barthes' semiotics theory, this study analyzes the signs and meanings constructed through these characters to reveal how darkness is symbolically depicted. Moreover, this research is expected to offer understanding of human responses to fear and highlight the potential role of positive representations in supporting children's mental health.

METHODS

This study utilized a qualitative method, which emphasizes a deep understanding of the context, existence, experience, perspective, meaning, and subjectivity of social phenomena (Lim, 2024). Due to its interpretive focus, this method relies on non-numeric data such as words, images, and videos. In this context, the research data consists of visual scenes and dialogues from the film *Orion and the Dark* (2024), which represents children's nyctophobia. The choice of this method was considered appropriate as it allows researchers to interpret the symbols and meanings hidden in visual and narrative representations. There are 14 key scenes and 6 significant dialogues that feature these night entities. These scenes and dialogues were selected based on their thematic relevance, particularly how they illustrate Orion's interactions with the night entities and his fear of the dark.

Based on interpretive descriptions and analyses linking nyctophobia with Barthes'

semiotic theory, the data processing in this research involved several systematic steps. First, the researchers watched the film *Orion and the Dark* (2024) repeatedly to comprehensively understand the film's narrative and identify scenes related to the fear of darkness. Next, notes and screenshots of scenes featuring night entities were collected as primary data. Each scene is then coded based on the influence of the night entities on Orion's fear—whether the entity increases nyctophobia through threatening or tense actions, or reduces Orion's fear through positive interactions and emotional support. This coding process aims to distinguish how each night entity contributes to the representation of fear and comfort in the film's narrative. In addition, secondary data such as books, journal articles, and online sources relevant to semiotics theory and the representation of fear were also collected to support the interpretation of meaning. After that, irrelevant data were excluded to maintain analytical focus.

The analysis then focused on six selected night entity characters using Roland Barthes' semiotic framework, which consists of three levels of meaning: denotative, connotative, and myth. The denotative level identified literal elements such as appearance, color, and gestures of each entity. The connotative level explored the emotional and cultural meanings behind these visual signs—for example, how certain figures evoke feelings of fear, warmth, or calm. Finally, the myth level examined how these representations connect with broader cultural myths about childhood fears and the personification of darkness. In this context, nyctophobia is positioned not merely as a personal experience, but also as a more universal symbolic narrative.

To ensure the validity of the interpretations, several measures were taken. First, triangulation was applied by comparing the results of the analysis with other references, including credible secondary literature, to ensure the consistency and reliability of the findings. Second, the analysis and interpretation of the research results were reviewed by experts in semiotics and children's literature as a form of external validation, ensuring alignment with the theoretical framework and empirical data

support. After the entire analysis process is complete, the findings were summarized in the conclusion as a synthesis of the results of the data interpretation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study identifies six types of night entities in *Orion and the Dark* (2024), each defined by their specific roles during the night—Dark, Quiet, Sleep, Insomnia, Sweet Dreams, and Unexpected Noises. These entities symbolically represent different aspects of nyctophobia and its psychological dimensions. To interpret their meanings, this study employs Roland Barthes' semiotic framework, which consists of three levels of meaning: denotation, connotation, and myth. Through this approach, the analysis explores how each night entity reflects and reshapes Orion's perception of darkness and fear.

Dark

Darkness has long been symbolically constructed as a source of fear and uncertainty. Fredericks & Bradfield (2021) explain that darkness often signifies conditions of potential danger, demanding heightened vigilance. This cultural association aligns with McCready et al. (2024) who state that fear of the dark is the most prototypical of childhood fears. In *Orion and the Dark* (2024), this fear is represented through the character Dark, who embodies two aspects—the fear itself and the potential to change children's perception of the night.



Figure 1. The depiction of Dark (18:50)

Based on the picture above, denotatively, Dark is portrayed as a large, shadowy figure with a deep yet calm voice. At the connotative level, this appearance evokes anxiety in Orion, an eleven-

year-old boy, as large figures and dark shadows are often associated with threat. This representation reinforces the social myth that darkness and monstrous forms are linked to danger and evil, aligning with Zhao's (2023) argument that monster figures contribute to the development of children's fears. From a psychological perspective, fear of imaginary monsters is considered a rationalization for humans' fear of darkness (Bowlby, as cited in McCready, 2024). At the myth level, this meaning is emphasized through the dialogue of Hypatia—Orion's future daughter—who states that nyctophobia is an evolutionary adaptation designed to protect humans from nocturnal predators. This statement reflects how cultural narratives normalize darkness as a natural and unchangeable source of fear.

However, the characters Orion and Dark reverse this myth. This is evident in the scene where Dark embraces Orion—a gesture symbolizing safety and emotional warmth. Hugging has long been associated with psychological comfort and has been shown to reduce depression, anxiety, and pain (Bhusal, 2020; Fields, 2022). In this context, the gesture shifts the connotation of darkness from threat to protection. Through semiotic contrast, the film redefines darkness as the essential counterpart of light, emphasizing its natural role as a source of calm, beauty, and self-acceptance. When the scene shows Dark's disappearance and the endless daylight causing chaos, the narrative reinforces the reversal of myth in Barthes' semiotic framework; the sign of darkness, which was previously "demonized," is transformed into a symbol of balance and serenity.

Unlike the study by Pamungkas and Prihandini (2024), which highlights Orion's personality as the protagonist, and Rasool et al. (2024), which explored the meaning of fear and courage through visual and narrative signs without examining the symbolism of each night entity in depth, this study reveals the role of the supporting character, Dark, as a semiotic mediator who reconstructs the cultural meaning of darkness. These findings confirm the originality of the research in linking semiotic reinterpretation with

mental health recovery, showing that redefined representations of darkness can promote a healthier understanding of children's emotional resilience.

Quiet

Quiet is generally used to describe a peaceful atmosphere without sound or noise. Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary described that quiet might be defined as making very little noise and peaceful or without being interrupted. The nighttime situation always feels calm without noise from human voices or activities as humans need time to rest after a long day of activities. Noise at night can cause awakenings and a transition to lighter, less peaceful sleep, which can disrupt the organization of sleep (Basner & McGuire as cited in Smith et al., 2022). In addition, nighttime quiet is a key factor that promotes uninterrupted, peaceful sleep, emphasizing the significance of reducing noise to preserve sound sleep habits. In *Orion and the Dark* (2024), Quiet represents this stillness, but for Orion, it triggers anxiety by highlighting the absence of activity and human voices, contributing to his fear of the dark or nyctophobia.



Figure 2. The depiction of Quiet (30:15)

As depicted in the picture above from the film *Orion and the Dark* (2024), Quiet is described as a small and mouse-like night entity based on Barthes' denotative perspective. On the other hand, Quiet connotatively symbolizes the calm and soothing aspect of darkness, helping to change the perception of night from something frightening to something that can also offer rest and reflection. The silence it creates can evoke not only feelings of silence but also restlessness or loneliness, as silence in the dark often increases fear or anxiety. As stated by Kojić (2021), many people confront their

underlying worries in silence and solitude. People often strive to avoid quiet since it can be difficult to deal with. It is therefore simple to comprehend the fear of quiet. Hence, the myth or perception that the quietness of the night is frightening.

The character Quiet reveals Orion's inner battle with fear and anxiety, showing how silence can both trigger distress and offer healing. This dual role highlights that fearing silence and darkness is a natural part of emotional growth toward acceptance and bravery. As depicted in 30:27 to 30:38, Orion's anxiety surfaces as he notices the surrounding silence and exclaims, "It is too quiet." This moment illustrates the way myth from Barthes' theory is applied in the film, where silence, though usually calming, can feel disturbing depending on someone's emotions. Then, the perception of quiet as a form of intimidation (Curhan et al., 2022) and scary (Vu & Fan, 2022) is initially considered true because it happened to Orion. However, it is revealed at 42:20 to 42:40 that Orion, who flies with Quiet to accompany her to work, begins to feel calm. This shift connotatively explores the complex relationship between silence, darkness, and childhood fears, showing how confronting these fears can lead to emotional growth. In comparison to previous studies that discuss fear of silence and solitude from a psychological perspective (Kojić, 2021). This study focuses more on discussing semiotics in film characters, thus providing a new perspective in connecting scientific understanding to an issue in a literary work.

Sleep

Sleep is biologically defined as an active state of unconsciousness in which the brain rests while maintaining responsiveness to internal stimuli (Brinkman et al., 2023). However, from a psychological perspective, sleep can trigger anxiety and fear, particularly in children who associate nighttime with danger or separation from safety figures. Research by Kopcsó et al. (2022) links night-related fears to internalizing and externalizing problems, as well as sleep disorders. Around 2% of children are even estimated to have a phobia of the dark, which is usually

demonstrated through refusal to sleep without lights (Mendez & Garcia, 1996; Orgilés et al., 2008). This is reflected in *Orion and the Dark*, when Orion is unable to sleep in the dark, a symbolic act that reflects childhood fears which, to a certain extent, also represent human anxiety about losing control during sleep.

The depiction of fear related to the darkness of night and sleep in *Orion and the Dark* is not only conveyed through character behavior, but also through the personification of various entities associated with nighttime. One such entity is Sleep, a character symbolizing the state of sleep itself, visualized in Figure 3 below.



Figure 3. The depiction of Sleep (28:22)

Based on the picture above, Sleep is depicted with a pale blue body, a soft stature, and a sleeping cap, which visually builds a sense of peace and comfort. As noted by Al-Ayash et al. (2016), the color pale blue psychologically signifies calmness, happiness, relaxation, comfort, and peacefulness. Sleep's large, padded stature also gives the impression of a safe figure to lean on, reinforcing the association to physical and emotional comfort. In the movie, Sleep also closes his work by gently kissing those he helps to sleep, resembling parental affection before a child falls asleep. According to Delgado (2023), such gestures play a crucial role in helping children achieve more restful sleep while reinforcing their sense of being loved, valued, and appreciated. However, behind these soothing visuals, Sleep's methods—such as inducing sleep through suffocation with pillows or the use of chloroform—undermine the anticipated sense of safety. This contradiction creates tension between visual comfort and behavioral threat; suggesting that sleep, while commonly associated with rest, also symbolizes loss of control and vulnerability.

Through Barthes' semiotic framework, Sleep denotatively represents the process of calming sleep through its visual display. Meanwhile, connotatively, his extreme actions create an ambiguous meaning—between comfort and threat. In this context, the myth of sleep transforms from a seemingly harmless activity into an ambiguous state, in which safety and fear can be experienced simultaneously at the subconscious level. This duality reflects a broader cultural anxiety about the unconscious and the unknown. As Budson & Paller (2025) assert, “conscious experiences, both while awake and while dreaming, are not read-outs of external reality even though they are typically experienced as such.” Thus, sleep is not merely a space of rest, but a liminal condition between consciousness and unconsciousness that represents comfort and loss of control.

Compared to a previous study that examined children's fear of sleep from a psychological perspective (Kopcsó et al., 2022). This study uses a semiotic approach that visualizes abstract emotions through character personification. *Orion and the Dark* (2024) transforms internal psychological processes into interpretable symbols, expanding the discussion from clinical observation to cultural representation. The narrative redefines the myth of sleep—traditionally associated with comfort—as a dynamic negotiation between fear and acceptance. Through Orion's gradual journey of trusting Sleep and other nighttime entities at 38:46, the film shows that true comfort arises not from avoidance, but from the courage to face fear. Therefore, this study offers a new perspective on the emotional complexity of nighttime and the symbolic meaning of sleep itself.

Insomnia

Insomnia has been known as a condition in which a person has difficulty falling asleep. Insomnia is generally defined as a problem of being unsatisfied with sleep, both in quality and quantity (Patel et al., 2018). As stated by Chigome et al. (2018), external factors that can cause this sleep problem include noise, temperature, light, electronic devices, and uncomfortable sleeping

positions where this problem may also occur in children as well as adults. Sleep problems that occur in children, as the focus of the study, may occur because they experience problems when they want to sleep without the help of their parents (Dewald-Kaufmann et al., 2019). Human beings need time to sleep after a long day of activities so that their bodies can rest. In the film, Insomnia's ability to keep humans awake looks frightening to Orion as he whispering embarrassing events or people's deepest fears, Insomnia keeps them awake while thinking about it.



Figure 4. The depiction of Insomnia (29:09)

Insomnia as a night entity character is denotatively described as a mosquito that disturbs sleep with its buzzing sound, symbolizes the literal experience of insomnia. Besides, Insomnia is based on the broader concept of night as a complex form where fears and worries occur, as well as a place where acceptance and understanding can flourish. Insomnia has connotations of internal conflict with anxious thoughts that get in the way of peace and rest. Based on the Fear of Sleep hypothesis, as explained by Werner as cited in Kelly (2024) that there are two main processes, namely the fear of losing control and security and the fear of re-experiencing nightmares. Thus, the character of Insomnia causes anxiety and wakes people up, acting as a “megaphone” for the anxious thoughts people already have by being the representative of Orion's own anxious and fearful behavior, showing how insomnia adds to his worries and anxiety at night.

Additionally, Insomnia acts as a “myth” that transforms ordinary sleep difficulties into a broader cultural symbol of mental unrest and fear. Its green color, associated with envy in Tham et al. (2020), adds another layer of meaning, implying envy of others' peaceful lives. This depiction of

Insomnia's character is explained by Dark at 28:37 that, "Insomnia is the best impersonator I've ever met. He becomes the person he keeps awake and whispers worrying things." Fear of sleep, which entails dysfunctional beliefs about a person's perceived safety during sleep, fear of nightmares, and other maladaptive behaviors, is one such factor. It is shown from 29:03 to 29:45 where Insomnia said, "I'm just a megaphone for people's thoughts." Which means that he is just triggering humans' suppressed feelings or anxieties. However, at the minute 41:28 Orion begins to accept what Insomnia does to humans and helps him to whisper worries to someone. Orion's gradual acceptance of Insomnia further clarifies Barthes' idea of myth as a process open to reinterpretation. In this case, Insomnia shifts from a threatening figure to a mediator of inner struggle, symbolizing the complex relationship between fear and self-awareness. The use of this semiotic layer deepens the film's exploration of childhood anxiety, showing how fear, represented as a nocturnal entity, embodies culturally constructed meanings that shape emotional experiences. This analysis, which discusses insomnia as a character with meaning that is denotative, connotative, and mythical based on semiotics theory, contrasts with a previous study by Kelly (2024) that discusses insomnia as a symptom resulting from fear of sleep.

Sweet Dreams

Dreams are an essential part of human life that occur in the subconscious state during sleep, reflecting an individual's real-life experiences and emotions. They not only serve as a form of imagination but also influence one's emotional balance and cognitive processing. Olsen et al. as cited in Kumar (2024) showed that positive dream attitudes correlates with an optimistic outlook on life, as well as influencing decision-making, emotional problem solving, and the emergence of creative inspiration. In this context, sweet dreams can be a means to deal with various fears, including the fear of the dark at night. This is represented in the film *Orion and the Dark* (2024) through the character Sweet Dreams—an entity who

symbolizes the creation of pleasant dreams. This character shows how dreams are influenced by an individual's mind and impact their anxiety at night.



Figure 5. The depiction of Sweet Dreams (33:08)

Based on the picture above, visually, Sweet Dreams is depicted with a body resembling a long, layered dress in a dominant purple color, combined with blue, pink and white sparkles. The accompanying glitter effect reinforces the magical and calming impression, reflecting the imaginative feel of dreams. Diwakar (2014) claims that the color purple symbolizes wisdom, sound judgment, and suggests free ideas, breaking away from the usual way of life. Hence, Sweet Dreams personifies the imaginative potential of dreams as a restorative mechanism against the anxiety often associated with the darkness of night.

The significance of Sweet Dreams' role becomes evident in the scene at 33:00, when she attempts to create a joyful dream for a woman worried about his job. However, Orion's intrusive thoughts about "evil cucumber," unexpectedly turn the dream into a nightmare. This incident shows that dreams are deeply influenced by one's inner thoughts and emotional state. Sweet Dreams' statement at 35:19, "anything you say, or even think, could influence the dream," reinforces the psychoanalytic view that dreams reflect the workings of the unconscious mind. Rather than merely depicting fantasy, this scene illustrates the mind's vulnerability to negative thinking before sleep, suggesting that maintaining positive thoughts can alleviate nighttime fears. In this sense, Sweet Dreams serves as a symbolic guide toward emotional self-control and personal growth.

In Barthes' semiotic framework, Sweet Dreams has a denotative meaning as a night entity

with a purple body combined with blue and pink sparkles, and a dress-like shape. Her appearance marks her symbolic role in creating beautiful dreams, as well as representing the magical world of the night. Connotatively, Sweet Dreams embodies Orion's internal process of managing fear through imagination. Thus, the movie uses the character to reject the conventional myth that the night is filled with negative things such as darkness, strange sounds, or invisible monsters that trigger fear. Instead, it tries to provide an understanding that the night is a space for introspection and recovery. Kumar (2024) emphasizes that dreams are reflections of the subconscious mind that foster self-awareness and psychological well-being.

A study by Zhang et al. (2024) shows that dreams play an active role in emotional memory processing, where positive dream content enhances next-day emotional reactivity and regulation. Although their study focuses on the psychological mechanisms behind this process, this study interprets it from a semiotic perspective, viewing dreams as symbolic entities that represent emotional regulation through imaginative visualization. The analysis of Sweet Dreams describes how subconscious imagery transforms fear into self-awareness, expanding the findings by Zhang et al. into the realm of meaning-making. Therefore, this study makes an original contribution by bridging scientific understanding of dreams with symbolic interpretation, revealing dreams as active mediators in emotional resilience.

Unexplained Noise

Unexplained noises are one of the reasons children are frightened at night. Noise refers to sounds that cause discomfort and have an impact on human mental health (Tao et al., 2020). In a later study, Wang et al. (2024) stated that noise is identified as a trigger for a stressful environment that has a negative impact on well-being and quality of life that can lead to emotional reactions. It is crucial for humans to be able to rest at night, hence the presence of noises that they are uncertain of the source could disturb them. In the film, Unexplained Noises is responsible for disturbing people or scaring children with the mysterious

sounds she makes when the atmosphere is quiet. Because of this, children become afraid of the atmosphere at night.



Figure 6. The depiction of Unexplained Noises (31:21)

The denotative meaning of Unexplained Noises as a night entity character is a character described as robotic-like with yellow as the dominant color. The picture above shows Unexpected Noises who is doing her job to make mysterious sounds with her own mouth. The mysterious sound she produced immediately made the child who heard it report to her parents. Henry et al. (2022) explained that being in a quiet environment can worsen the problem of those who fear unexpected sounds. On the other hand, Unexplained Noises connotatively symbolizes children's fear of the invisible and mysterious noises at night that trigger their imagination and anxiety. Where it is the opposite of what the color yellow represents, which is positive emotions such as happiness (Hanada, 2018).

As seen in the movie at 31:35 where Orion says "This is so messed up," when Unexpected Noises succeeds in its task. Orion as a child who knows the truth tells her that it is not real. But he is immediately prevented by Unexpected Noises who does not agree and considers Orion a "disturber of the balance of nature" because she feels that her job is important even though her job is to sneak around and scare children. This serious attitude towards her work reflects how unexplained noises are often perceived as threats or ominous signs by children.

Unexplained Noises also contains myth or is believed by many to be associated with the night filled with mysterious noises as a sign of the presence of invisible entities. This contributes to children's nyctophobia by giving them the idea that night is a time when unknown and potentially

threatening things happen. However, as a night entity it also helps Orion to be braver. As shown at 42:06, Orion surprises Unexpected Noises as he suddenly makes a sound from two trash can lids. Therefore, Orion's interaction with Unexplained Noises subverts this myth, revealing a process of decoding and reinterpreting the sign. By confronting and mimicking the noises, Orion reclaims agency over his fear, turning the unknown into something familiar. This shift aligns with Barthes' idea that myth is not fixed but can be renegotiated, allowing the film to explore how reinterpretation of fear-inducing signs can foster courage and reduce children's nyctophobia. By focusing on the meaning and symbolism of unexplained noise as a character in literary works, this study differs from previous studies that focused on the audiology of Henry et al. (2022). This can add to the understanding of sounds from another perspective by linking it to the scientific perspective.

CONCLUSION

Orion and the Dark (2024) is a film that focuses on the story of a child who is afraid of the dark and his journey to overcome that fear with the night entities. The six subs discussed how the characters Dark, Quiet, Sleep, Insomnia, Sweet Dream, and Unexplained Noises as night entities symbolize the nyctophobia through denotative, connotative, and myth symbolic based on Roland Barthes' semiotic theory. In which the denotative meaning explains the physical appearance of the night entities as they are depicted with various colors in the film to provide a clear understanding of their appearance and behavior. The connotative meaning explains that the night entities have symbolic meanings and the colors that each character represents can be interpreted as various feelings related to the night, whether positive or negative, in the sense of fear, calmness, and anxiety. Myth, then, explains that the symbolic meaning is connected to cultural beliefs and stories that people have about night and darkness, where night is depicted as a time of fear and mystery.

Therefore, through the interpretation of the various characters of the night entity, this research provides an understanding to resist assumptions or myths about the night. Furthermore, by portraying the night entities not as a threat but as a friendly and protective figure, this study highlights an approach to shifting fear into a source of comfort. The characters' role in helping Orion confront and understand his nyctophobia can be seen as a metaphor for a medical process that helps individuals manage and reduce anxiety about the unknown or unseen, which often occurs at night. This suggests that reimagining fear through positive representations and supportive interactions can contribute to overcoming phobias, improving mental health and enhancing well-being in children and adults who face similar fears in everyday life.

REFERENCES

- Al-Ayash, A., Kane, R. T., Smith, D., & Green-Armytage, P. (2016). The influence of color on student emotion, heart rate, and performance in learning environments. *Color Research & Application*, 41(2), 196–205. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1002/col.21949>
- Ardiyanto, E. R., Alexander, P., Putra, E. N., & Ramdhan, D. (2024). “Nyctophy”: Assessing the effectiveness of serious game for nyctophobia based on virtual reality by usability and heart rate monitoring. *Procedia Computer Science*, 245, 185–192. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.procs.2024.10.242>
- Bhusal, S. (2020, June). *The Power of Hugs*. ResearchGate. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/342167271_The_power_of_hugs
- Brinkman, J. E., Reddy, V., & Sharma, S. (2023). *Physiology of Sleep*. Treasure Island (FL): StatPearls Publishing; StatPearls Publishing LLC. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK482512/>
- Budson, A., & Paller, K. A. (2025). Memory, Sleep, Dreams, and Consciousness: A Perspective Based on the Memory Theory of Consciousness. *Nature and Science of Sleep*, 17, 1957–1972.

- <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.2147/NSS.S522975>
- Chigome, A., Nhira, S., & Meyer, J. C. (2018). An overview of insomnia and its management. *SA Pharmaceutical Journal*, 85(2), 32–38. <https://doi.org/10.10520/EJC-E54A979B5>
- Curhan, J. R., Overbeck, J. R., Cho, Y., Zhang, T., & Yang, Y. (2022). Silence is golden: Extended silence, deliberative mindset, and value creation in negotiation. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 107(1), 78–94. <https://doi.org/10.1037/APL0000877>
- Dama, I., & Idrus, A. (2024). Students' Ability in Translation Techniques (English-Gorontalo): Subtitle of Orion and The Dark Film. *IDEAS: Journal of Language Teaching and Learning, Linguistics and Literature*, 12(2), 1681–1702. <https://doi.org/10.2456/ideas.v12i2.5766>
- Delgado, J. (2023). *End the day with love, the power of goodnight kisses to children*. Psychology Spot. <https://psychology-spot.com/goodnight-kisses-parents-children-benefits/>
- Dewald-Kaufmann, J., de Bruin, E., & Michael, G. (2019). Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Insomnia (CBT-i) in School-Aged Children and Adolescents. *Sleep Medicine Clinics*, 14(2), 155–165. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsmc.2019.02.002>
- Diwakar, S. (2014). Symbolism of the colour “purple” in the novels of Alice Walker’s *The Color Purple* and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s *Purple Hibiscus*. *International Journal of English Language, Literature and Humanities*, 2(4), 135–143. <http://www.ijellh.com>
- Fields, J. (2022, June 13). *A hug may help women ward off work stress, but men might need to find another way to relax*. The American Institute of Stress. <https://www.stress.org/news/a-hug-may-help-women-ward-off-work-stress-but-men-might-need-to-find-another-way-to-relax/>
- Fredericks, B., & Bradfield, A. (2021). ‘I’m Not Afraid of the Dark’: White Colonial Fears, Anxieties, and Racism in Australia and Beyond. *M/C Journal*, 24(2). <https://doi.org/10.5204/mci.2761>
- Hanada, M. (2018). Correspondence analysis of color-emotion associations. *Color Research and Application*, 43(2), 224–237. <https://doi.org/10.1002/col.22171>
- Henry, J. A., Theodoroff, S. M., Edmonds, C., Martinez, I., Myers, P. J., Zaugg, T. L., & Goodworth, M. C. (2022). Sound Tolerance Conditions (Hyperacusis, Misophonia, Noise Sensitivity, and Phonophobia): Definitions and Clinical Management. *American Journal of Audiology*, 31(3), 513–527. https://doi.org/10.1044/2022_AJA-22-00035
- Kelly, S. J. (2024). *An Exploration of Fear of Sleep and Experiential Avoidance in the Context of PTSD and Insomnia Symptoms* [Doctoral dissertation, University of Oregon]. <https://search.proquest.com/openview/da8d43b95be780730c008d6fee8b2e3b/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=18750&diss=y>
- Kojić, J. (2021). THE FEAR OF SILENCE AND SOLITUDE. *Religija i Tolerancija*, 19(36), 207–216. <https://www.ceeol.com/search/article-detail?id=983843>
- Kopcsó, K., Láng, A., & Coffman, M. F. (2022). Reducing the Nighttime Fears of Young Children Through a Brief Parent-Delivered Treatment—Effectiveness of the Hungarian Version of Uncle Lightfoot. *Child Psychiatry and Human Development*, 53(2), 256–267. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10578-020-01103-4>
- Kumar, M. (2024). Exploring Dreams and Analyzing Its Impact on Behaviour. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 12(1), 2478–2484. <https://doi.org/10.25215/1201.226>
- Lim, W. M. (2024). What Is Qualitative Research? An Overview and Guidelines. *Australasian Marketing Journal*, 33(2), 199–229. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14413582241264619>
- McCready, M., Wiseman, M., Armstrong, J., & Witherington, D. (2024). How Children Make Sense of Fear of the Dark: A Qualitative Study of Russian Preschoolers. *Early Child Development and Care*, 194(11–12), 1153–1167. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/03004430.2024.2404009>
- Mendez, F. J., & Garcia, M. J. (1996). Emotive Performances: A Treatment Package for Children’s Phobias. *Child & Family Behavior Therapy*, 18(3), 19–34. https://doi.org/10.1300/J019V18N03_02
- Miao, J., Zhou, Z., Wu, Y., Rao, F., & Meng, F. (2025). The Immersive Art Therapy Driven by AIGC: An Innovative Approach to Alleviating Children’s Nyctophobia. *Proceedings of the Extended Abstracts of the CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems*, 1–5. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3706599.3720312>
- Nasution, A. S., & Juanda. (2025). Denotative and Connotative Meanings in The Truman Show: A

- Semiotic Analysis Based on Roland Barthes' Theory. *Mahadaya: Jurnal Bahasa, Sastra, Dan Budaya*, 5(1), 137–148. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.34010/9kbhmm35>
- Orgilés, M., Espada, J., & Méndez, X. (2008). Assessment instruments of darkness phobia in children and adolescents: A descriptive review. *International Journal of Clinical and Health Psychology*, 8(1), 315–333. <https://www.redalyc.org/pdf/337/33780120.pdf>
- Pamungkas, R. I. K., & Prihandini, A. (2024). CHARACTERIZATION OF THE MAIN CHARACTER IN THE MOVIE ORION AND THE DARK (2024). *Proceeding of International Conference on Business, Economics, Social Sciences, and Humanities*, 33–43.
- Patel, D., Steinberg, J., & Patel, P. (2018). Insomnia in the elderly: a review. *Journal of Clinical Sleep Medicine*, 14(6), 1017–1024. <https://doi.org/10.5664/JCSM.7172>
- Rasool, Sabrina. A., Bukhari, M., Sagheer, I., Ahmed, F., & Aslam, H. (2024). A SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS OF THE MOVIE "ORION AND THE DARK." 8(2), 1394–1414. https://www.academia.edu/download/117273981/A_SEMIOTIC_ANALYSIS_OF_THE_MOVIE_ORION_AND_THE_DARK_.pdf
- Schimmenti, A., Billieux, J., & Starcevic, V. (2020). The four horsemen of fear: An integrated model of understanding fear experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Clinical Neuropsychiatry*, 17(2), 41–45. <https://doi.org/10.36131/CN20200202>
- Smith, M. G., Cordoza, M., & Basner, M. (2022). Environmental Noise and Effects on Sleep: An Update to the WHO Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis. *Environmental Health Perspectives*, 130(7). <https://doi.org/10.1289/EHP10197>
- Tao, Y., Chai, Y., Kou, L., & Kwan, M.-P. (2020). Understanding noise exposure, noise annoyance, and psychological stress: Incorporating individual mobility and the temporality of the exposure-effect relationship. *Applied Geography*, 125, 102283. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.apgeog.2020.102283>
- Tham, D. S. Y., Sowden, P. T., Grandison, A., Franklin, A., Lee, A. K. W., Ng, M., Park, J., Pang, W., & Zhao, J. (2020). A Systematic Investigation of Conceptual Color Associations. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, 149(7), 1311. <https://doi.org/10.1037/xge0000703>
- Vu, M. C., & Fan, Z. (2022). Sounds of silence: The reflexivity, self-decentralization, and transformation dimensions of silence at work. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 31(3), 307–325. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10564926211007942>
- Wang, W. J., Zhou, S. P., Liang, Y., Ma, C. J., & Wan, X. C. (2024). Psychological Effects of Noise Exposure on Personnel in Central Sterile Supply Department in China. *Psychology Research and Behavior Management*, 17, 4221–4235. <https://doi.org/10.2147/PRBM.S473194>
- Watt, M. C. (2015). Nyctophobia (Fear of the Dark). *PHOBIAS: The Psychology of Irrational Fear*, 240. <https://www.torrossa.com/gs/resourceProxy?an=5531909&publisher=FZ0661#page=257>
- Wijayanto, C. S., & Iswari, F. (2021). Semiotics Analysis of Roland Barthes' Theory on Pocari Sweat's "Sweat for Dream" Advertisement. *Cultural Syndrome*, 3(2), 100–108. <https://doi.org/10.30998/cs.v3i2.804>
- Zhang, J., Pena, A., Delano, N., Sattari, N., Shuster, A. E., Baker, F. C., Simon, K., & Mednick, S. C. (2024). Evidence of an active role of dreaming in emotional memory processing shows that we dream to forget. *Scientific Reports*, 14(1), 8722. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-024-58170-z>
- Zhao, Q. (2023). *Monsters in children's picture books and childhood fears* [Thesis (Masters), Waikato Institute of Technology]. <https://researcharchive.wintec.ac.nz/id/eprint/8006/>