

## **The Motif of the Night: A Transmedia Perspective in Children's and Young Adult Media**

The night – a time when dreams become reality, when shadowy figures with equally dark intentions frequently roam, when the nameless and unknown prevail, and when morally questionable matters are more likely to surface. At night, the world seems to stand still, leaving more time for reflection on decisions or activities made during the day, sometimes even leading to (self-)realization

This time, which largely escapes human experience, can evoke both comfort and discomfort. Since the night is conventionally associated with rest and relaxation – and, at least predominantly, with dreaming – children and adolescents are particularly fascinated by experiences that lie beyond their usual frame of reference. Nocturnal gatherings, sleepovers, night hikes, as well as mystical and fantastical elements, hold a special appeal for them. It is therefore unsurprising that the night is a popular motif in children's and young adult literature. In these narratives, the night evokes suspense through the unknown and the unfamiliar, creating an emotional connection with the audience.

Using the transmedia model of motif analysis by Kurwinkel and Jakobi (2022), this doctoral project first examines the motif of the night synchronically, with a particular focus on its discursive representation. A subsequent diachronic comparison of the findings provides insight into its development over time and explores whether certain perceptions of childhood and adolescence are culturally influenced. In addition to children's and young adult novels, picture books will also be analyzed, where both textual and visual elements contribute to the meaning of the night. Furthermore, the transmedia model allows for an examination of potential adaptations of print media, offering a broader perspective on the representation of the night across different media forms.