Proposal: In my final essay, I am interested in researching how American culture causes insomnia. Insomnia is a major problem in America. There are many medical conditions that can cause insomnia, but often it is due to anxiety and stress. Anxiety and stress have also been linked to nightmares which is apparent in Robert Florey’s Twilight Zone episode, “Perchance to Dream.” Monsters are commonly thought to be in nightmares, but in “Perchance to Dream”, the Monster isn’t your typical. The monster is a beautiful woman who follows Edward, the man who hasn’t slept for days, from dream to dream. She is also very provocative which in Cohen’s essay, Monster Culture, theses six is based around the idea that the monsters are our desires. In this episode we learn that Edward is a very simple man, who has been confined to himself his whole life. It makes sense that one of his desires is a woman, yet he is unwilling to indulge in whatever it is with her because it is so unfamiliar to him. Freud’s Uncanny touches on the process of creating uncanny effects and that one of the easiest ways is to “leave the reader in uncertainty that a particular person is a human being or automation” which is what happens with the mysterious woman who keeps appearing in Edward’s dreams.

Annotated Bibliography

Cohen, Jeffrey. “Monster Culture (Seven Theses).” Monster Theory: Reading Culture, by Cohen, University of Minnesota Press. 1996. 3-25.

In this source it discusses the presence of an alter ego in regards of the Jekyll and Hyde effect and this correlates to the episode of The Twilight Zone “Perchance to Dream”. The connection to the two pieces is that in the episode Edward fears a beautiful woman which can be seen as being the human part of the Jekyll and Hyde aspect of terror. Although the monster turns out to be a representation of his desire of a woman it is still a monster that is created by Edward and is questioned of truly existing which was another topic of this source. Thirdly, a larger theme of the source was the looming feeling of fear and this directly relates to Edward who is afraid of the entity that takes the form of a beautiful woman. These two sources of literature and media have many connections that are shown through the presence of fear and entities that take forms of different types of monsters.

Florey, Robert, director. The Twilight Zone “Perchance to Dream.” Cayuga Productions, 1959.

This episode of The Twilight zone is based around an insomniac, named Edward, who hasn’t slept for many days. Edward is afraid that if he goes to sleep he will die, so he goes to see a psychiatrist. We learn in the show that Edward is very to himself and doesn’t get out that much. We also learn that Edward has a heart problem, and any surprise he may receive could kill him. Edward explains his nightmares which involve a seducing woman who seems to chase him from dream to dream. This woman, who is viewed as Edward’s desire can be seen as a monster after reading Cohen’s essay, Monster Culture.

The complexity of the word uncanny is what drives Freud’s writing of “The Uncanny”. The word comes from the German word “Unheimlich” which means unfamiliar. Freud does state that the main catalyst in producing uncanniness is “intellectual uncertainty.” The word in this source is one that relates to everything terrible and fearful which shows the theme of the source. Another topic that is very prevalent in this source is the research on the word “uncanny” itself and the meaning behind the word throughout the years of its use and the culture of the word. Deciphering and then breaking down a word in order to analyze the definition relates to Cohen’s paper in regards to the analysis of the culture of a word and the definition associated with it.


This passage from a piece of literature focuses on a session and conversation that focuses on the dreams of Mrs. A. The majority of the dreams focused upon can be related to the episode of The Twilight Zone where Edward is having issues with his dreams and seeks help in order to stop having nightmares. Although Mrs. A had notable dreams in regard to the appearance of the Queen and the Queen’s thoughts on being bombed if she lived in a grand palace, her dreams did not revolve around the fear of demonic figures but instead had only been concerned about a lump. The fear of the lump also relates to the constant presence of fear in many of the sources under analyzation and it lends a hand into the better understanding of the inner workings of the human mind. The thought process of a person especially someone like Mrs. A is shown through the conversation between her and an analyzer because they can break down her subconscious.

Sleep and the maintenance of memory

While this source is more scientific than the other sources it related to a majority of the articles due to the broader topics discussed. The largest focus of this article are the studies done in regards to REM sleep and the brain’s activity while in this scenario. Scientists that studied this phase of the sleep cycle discovered that the brain is actually not at rest while sleeping but is instead working at a very high level which enables the ability for the brain to produce frightening images during dreams. The images such as the monsters experienced by Edward in the episode of The Twilight Zone are created by the brain during REM due to its ability to create images that connect to recent memories that may terrify the observer. Finally, another connection to the other sources is that in this article they discuss the effect of sleep deprivation on dreams and the negative effect it has on the images of your dreams.

Distortion of dreams

In this source it breaks down the distortion of dreams and also discusses the likelihood of having a pleasant dream compared to having a dream full of fear. This excerpt can be related to the episode of The Twilight Zone that revolves around the story of Edward who is consistently experiencing night terrors and is undergoing a psychological evaluation. These two sources connect on the fact that within them both the interpretations within dreams are focused upon in such senses like the beautiful woman in Edward’s dreams. In this source it displays the fact that there are known cases of fear that torture the dreamer to the point of waking up and losing the ability to sleep which is what had happened to Edward. Ultimately, in
this section of the article it mentions the analysis of this topic by many different specialists and had come to the conclusion that the presence of tortuous figures are all up to interpretation of the dreamer and the mindset they are in while entering REM sleep.

Jonathan Crary Book title: 24/7: Late Capitalism and the Ends of Sleep

Although this article focuses on the discussion of military effective ways of making soldiers less dependent on sleep, this article also brings attention to the lack of sleep citizens of today's society are receiving. As this source goes on it writes about how sleep has evolved over time as well as the social expectations over sleep in general. This article delves into the psychology of the sleep process in general and this may be able to be related to the article that focused on the REM sleep cycle. Another main topic of this part of this source is the difference between the exhaustion of a human and then the regeneration process that takes place during sleep. While this article is one that is connected to the others in a more loose manner it can still be viewed as similar through the overall and broad study and analysis on all aspects of sleep itself.