University of Nevada, Reno

**Between the Pit of Man's Fears and the Summit of his Knowledge:
Rethinking Masculine Paradigms in Postwar America via Television's *The Twilight Zone***

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in
History

by

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MASTER OF ARTS

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Abstract

During the opening credits of the first season of *The Twilight Zone*, Rod Serling defined the Twilight Zone as another dimension located "between the pit of man's fears and the summit of his knowledge." Serling's creative commentary theoretically speaks to the process through which gender paradigms have been constructed and transformed over time. As Gail Bederman explains in *Manliness and Civilization* (1995), gender construction is a historical, dynamic process in which men and women actively transform gender ideals by blending, adapting, and renegotiating older models in conjunction with concurrent modes. Between the summit of knowledge (that which is known) and the pit of fear (that which is unknown) gender is indeed constructed. This study focuses upon one particular aspect, one particular moment, in the constant process of gender construction: masculinity in the postwar era.

Using television's *The Twilight Zone* (1959-1964) as well as viewer responses to the series, this study offers a necessary rethinking of postwar masculinity. The current scholarship on postwar masculinity contends, overall, that male discontent in the postwar period was caused by *conformity* to what Barbara Ehrenreich refers to as the breadwinner ethic—the traditional expectation that men provide for their families in the specific postwar context of corporate work and suburban domesticity. Characterizations of masculinity in *The Twilight Zone* and viewer responses to it, however, suggest something significantly different.

In this study I agree that masculine malaise in the postwar era was due to the problem of *conformity*. I argue, however, that conformity proved problematic *not* because men adhered to the breadwinner ethic, but because of conformity's roots in an earlier, paradigmatic shift from a model of masculinity based upon unyielding virtuous *character* to one focused on malleable, self-centered, and other-determined *personality*. Additionally, *The Twilight Zone* and its accompanying viewer responses reveal that, while men found themselves beleaguered by the problem of personality (conformity), they also advocated a resurrection and renegotiation of that

older model of masculinity based upon moral manly character. In short, this study endeavors to add historicity to our understanding of postwar masculinity.   I endeavor, then, to identify not only *what* was changing in the broader, historical framework of masculine ideals, but also to highlight the vitality of gender construction and its nature as an active process by considering Rod Serling's *The Twilight Zone*, cultural representations of masculinity therein, and individual responses to those representations from ordinary people.

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Finally, I must thank the late, great Rod Serling, for without him the world would not have *The Twilight Zone*. Beyond its being my source material, the series is near and dear to my heart and something I am pleased to say, after years of researching it, still entertains me and makes me think. Much like Henry Bemis in "Time Enough at Last," who laments the solitude of a decimated world as the sole survivor of nuclear war, the thing of it is, without Rod Serling's *The Twilight Zone*, I'm not at all sure I'd want to be alive.

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION
Masculinity in the Fifth Dimension

During the opening credits of the first season of *The Twilight Zone*, Rod Serling, creator

of *The Twilight Zone*, defined as follows the nature *of* this so-called Twilight Zone: "It is a

dimension as vast as space and timeless as infinity. It is the middle ground between light and

shadow, between science and superstition, and it lies between the pit of man's fears and the

summit of his knowledge. This is the dimension of imagination." In some ways, Serling's

creative commentary provides a useful metaphor and framework with which gender construction

generally—both its problematic aspects as well as some of its most basic elements—may be

understood historically.

As Gail Bederman has explicated, gender is a "*historical, ideological process*" and a

"continual, dynamic process."[1] Gender is, as Bederman also points out, "internally

contradictory" just as well as it may be externally contradictory. Significantly, Bederman

explains:

> Because of these internal contradictions, and because ideologies come into conflict with
> other ideologies, men and women are able to influence the ongoing ideological processes
> of gender, even though they cannot escape them. Men and women cannot invent
> completely new formations of gender, but they can adapt old ones. They can combine
> and recombine them, exploit the contradictions between them, and work to modify them.[2]

Thus, Bederman remarks, gender "implies constant contradiction, change, and renegotiation."[3]

David Savran supports Bederman's arguments, observing, "there is no transhistorical essence of

masculinity or femininity." Instead, "masculinity and femininity are always historically

contingent, always in the process of being reimagined and redefined."[4]

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[1] Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1995), 7.
[2] Ibid., 10.
[3] Ibid., 11.
[4] David Savran, *Taking it Like a Man: White Masculinity, Masochism, and Contemporary American Culture* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University, 1998), 8.

Unlike the Twilight Zone, gender, of course, cannot and should not be considered "timeless." Rather, gender should be understood as contingent upon its time or its historical context and upon the milieu in which specific notions of gender have been constructed. Similar to the Twilight Zone, however, it can be useful to conceive of gender as something between light and shadow, science and superstition, knowledge and fear; that is, gender constructs are often reflective of the relatively tangible, knowable, seemingly rational and are founded upon what is known and/or understood—both by those who experience them personally and concomitantly as well as those of us who understand them historically—as is suggested by such things as *light*, *science*, and *knowledge*. Contrarily, implied by the words *shadow*, *superstition*, and *fear*, gender concepts are equally as unrecognizable just as they may be based upon or reflect that which is unknown, that which has been misunderstood, and, in some cases, based upon some element of irrationality. These contradictions, subject to time and, most importantly, to human imagination provide the structure on which gender ideologies may be constructed, expanded, redesigned and/or renovated.

This study aims to treat one relative moment, one part of that perpetual process of change and renegotiation, concerning, more specifically, masculinity in the postwar United States. Indeed, through an interpretive and analytical exploration of television's *The Twilight Zone*, this study endeavors to illuminate the masculine struggle with and ramifications of an earlier shift—a shift identified as having occurred around the turn of the twentieth century—from a model of masculinity based upon unyielding virtuous character to one focused on malleable, self-centered, and other-determined personality. Conceptions of masculinity in *The Twilight Zone* suggest, quite significantly, that the postwar masculine paradigm revolving around personality, the inherent contradictions and problems with personality, as well as the sense of loss associated with character led to a proposed resurrection and advocacy but also renegotiation of the notion of manly character.

This study, thus, involves certain parameters, subjects and concepts included within it as well as some purposefully not included. Most importantly, this is a study of masculinity specifically rather than gender more broadly. While I acknowledge that the genders in many cases are relational, often working with and against one another, and that both contribute to a broader understanding of cultural modes (and vice versa), for the purposes of this study, I leave out discussions of femininity and/or notions of the feminine. That decision is in part due to the amount of space and time allotted. Considering femininity in addition to masculinity could realistically be its own study. More significantly, however, it is part of my aim to show that *The Twilight Zone* is an invaluable—although previously unused—source in the study of postwar masculinity based upon its mostly male characters and undeniably masculine subject matter. Women figured rather sparingly into the series, typically as plot facilitators in depictions of male struggles. Thus, while femininity could surely be analyzed in the series, I interpret it in terms purely of masculinity.

Second, it should be understood that both implicitly and explicitly the treatment of masculinity in the United States is a consideration primarily of white, middle-class modes of masculinity. I assume this positioning in my study of postwar masculinity based upon the broader historiography. Generally, the history of masculinity and/or masculinity studies focus primarily upon white, upper- to middle-class conceptions of manhood. Scholars, of course, do pay some attention to notions of masculinity as they pertain to, say, African-Americans as well as within the working-class community; however, by and large, the history of masculinity and the masculinity studies I utilize treat dominant modes of masculinity which translates into white middle-class models. Thus, when I refer to or explicate the history of masculinity it should be understood that I mean white middle-class masculinity and that this study overall is one centered upon those dominant masculine ideals of the white middle-class.

Finally, while I draw heavily from Gail Bederman's theoretical assumptions, suggestions, and explanations of gender construction, it is not my aim necessarily to focus upon the *ideological* process of gender construction itself. This study acknowledges and duly treats that process (however implicitly), but *ideology* as such and the process by which gender ideology is propagated is neither the purpose nor the concentration of this study. Currently, studies of postwar masculinity in the United States consider the subject without regard for its historical roots and links. Thus, I direct this study—based partly upon Bederman's assertions—toward historicity; that is, I aim to add to our understanding of postwar masculinity the historical consideration and the historical origins of the problems of mid-century manhood as well as of the suggested solutions to those problems. This study does, of course, treat the interaction between Rod Serling and his television show, his characterizations of masculinity in various episodes, and the voices of ordinary viewers which could be considered *ideological* interaction. My endeavor, however, is to illustrate the *dynamic* and, significantly, *historical* process of gender construction more than it is to highlight the ideological process.

In order to understand, then, my study most broadly—and specifically, my argument and my contribution to masculinity studies—what follows is a history of masculinity based upon the historiography of American masculinity, a critique of that historiographical body of literature, and a more precise and detailed discussion of my argument and my source material. Let us venture, now, toward masculinity in the fifth dimension beginning with a central element of my study: the shift from *character* to *personality*.

From Character to Personality

The shift from character to personality—which scholars generally agree occurred in large part between the years 1880 and 1920—has become a, if not *the*, central element within masculinity studies of the turn-of-the-twentieth century era; it is, however, no less important to our historical understanding of masculinity in the postwar era. In fact, representations of

masculinity in *The Twilight Zone* suggest that the transition from character to personality,

developed and implemented between 1880 and 1920, directly affected, even eventuated in

problems with masculinity in the postwar period. In *The Twilight Zone* depictions of the

masculine show a struggle with personality and an advocacy of the resurrection and renegotiation

of character. Requisite, then, to conceiving of postwar masculinity is a thorough understanding

of that momentous turn-of-the-twentieth-century permutation in masculine paradigms from

character to personality.

Most integral to comprehending the character-to-personality concept is Warren Susman's

essay, "'Personality' and the Making of Twentieth-Century Culture," which was the first

scholarly work to identify that such a transformation had, indeed, occurred within broader

American culture. Drawing on Philip Rieff's contention that "as cultures change so do the modal

types of persons who are their bearers," Susman argues that by 1800, "the concept of character

had come to define that particular modal type felt to be essential for the maintenance of the social

order."[5] Susman notes that the idea of character held two functions: to serve as a method for

moral self-mastery and to serve as a method by which that self could be presented to society, thus

ensuring the moral *in* the social.[6] Significantly, Susman lists keywords associated with character

including: citizenship, duty, democracy, work, building, golden deeds, outdoor life, conquest,

honor, reputation, morals, manners, integrity and manhood.[7] Susman, however, argues that the

erosion of the culture of character, especially after 1880, led to "a call for a new modal type best

suited to carry out the mission of a newer cultural order" and a new "vision of self, another vision

of self-development and mastery, [and] another method of presentation of self in society."[8]

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[5] Warren I. Susman, "'Personality' and the Making of Twentieth-Century Culture," *Culture as History: The Transformation of American Society in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 273.
[6] Ibid., 273.
[7] Ibid., 273-274.
[8] Ibid., 274.

Amidst substantial social, economic, and cultural changes, as Susman explains, the modal type requisite to the maintenance of this new order was personality. Generally, Susman says, the question became, "We live now constantly in a crowd; how can we distinguish ourselves from others in that crowd?" The definition of personality, reflective of that question, became "'the quality of being Somebody'," and quite disparate keywords came to be associated with personality as well, including: attractive, magnetic, masterful, creative, dominant, forceful, efficient, and energetic.[9] Thus, the culture of personality encouraged individuals to be positively noticeable; however, rife with contradiction, the method by which one was to build personality and to achieve distinction was to be discerning of others, to pay attention to what others wanted and to give them, then, what they wanted. In this way, personality was the constant performance of various selves founded upon others' expectations.[10]

Masculinity studies considering the turn-of-the-twentieth-century period treat, in large part, the shift from character to personality and, necessarily, the implications and outcomes of what that shift meant to *men* and notions of manhood specifically; however, masculinity studies sometimes refer to the shift utilizing different terminology than that of character and personality. E. Anthony Rotundo and Michael Kimmel, for instance, both employ the term *self-made man* to describe the type of man that would have embodied character.[11] Similarly, *rugged individualism* is as often linked with ideas of manly character as is the notion of the self-made man.[12] How is it, then, that this self-made man, this rugged individual, this man of character came to be, and how is it that he appears to have been, at the very least, threatened, and at most that he became a memory only to be nostalgically remembered by his posterity?

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[9] Susman, "'Personality'," 277.
[10] Ibid., 277, 280.
[11] E. Anthony Rotundo, *American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolutionary Era to the Modern Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1993); Michael Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University, 2006).
[12] John Pettegrew, *Brutes in Suits: Male Sensibility in America, 1890-1920* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 2007).

*A Brief History of Pre-*Modern *Masculinity in the United States*

Because masculinity as represented in *The Twilight Zone* includes the advocacy of a return to the older model of masculinity based upon manly character, a working knowledge of what has been both implicitly and explicitly understood as pre-*modern* masculinity—or conceptions of masculinity, more specifically, as they existed prior to the turn of the twentieth century—is integral to our understanding of postwar masculinity. Michael Kimmel identifies two models of masculinity as having precedence prior to the American Revolution: the Genteel Patriarch (a property-owning aristocrat of taste and refinement, a benevolent and committed man of the community embodying "love, kindness, duty, and compassion") and the Heroic Artisan (an independent craftsman or farmer, diligent and hard-working, honest, proud, and loyal).[13] Similarly, E. Anthony Rotundo refers to a pre-revolutionary "communal man" who derived his identity from his family's name and status as well as from his role—his duties and the fulfillment of them—in his community.[14]

Both Kimmel and Rotundo, however, agree that after the American Revolution and around the turn of the nineteenth century those various models of masculinity gave way to what they both label as the ideal of the self-made man. The self-made man, as his title suggests, did not rely upon either birthright or, alternately, any unfortunate aspects of his birth for his identity as a man; instead, the self-made man built his identity upon his individual achievements as well as upon his successes and the process by which he procured them, typically and ultimately represented by his status, accumulated wealth, and mobility (both social and geographic). The self-made man, thus, fulfilled himself through his work, business, or profession and through his general activity and reputation in the public arena.[15]

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[13] Kimmel, *Manhood in America*, 13.
[14] Rotundo, *American Manhood*, 2.
[15] Kimmel, *Manhood in America*, 13; Rotundo, *American Manhood*, 3-4.

While the model of self-made masculinity supported aggressive and competitive striving for the attainment of wealth and status, the self-made man was also virtuous. In fact, it was the endeavor toward adherence to what appears a virtual check-list of various virtues that would, in the end, make the self-made man a man of *character*. Judy Hilkey most concisely—and in proper fashion—*lists* such virtues: "honesty, industry, frugality, sobriety, punctuality, modesty, tact, loyalty, diligence, determination, initiative, and politeness" as well as "willpower, self-control, and self-discipline."[16] Indeed, the self-made man, as Kimmel notes, enacted his self-control, self-discipline, and willpower as well as, in some cases, self-restraint as the means to achieving the end of virtuous character.[17] Ultimately, attaining and maintaining character ideally required constant willpower toward moral self-mastery. Significantly, it is that aspect of pre-modern masculinity—the attention to virtuous and foundationally moral manly character—to which representations of masculinity in *The Twilight Zone* refer and for which there appears a clear advocacy.

What was it that promoted the birth and growth of the self-made man as a masculine paradigm? Rotundo and Kimmel agree that the self-made man was born at the same moment as the United States itself and, as a model of ideal masculinity, the self-made man would take his first toddling steps right alongside those of his fledgling nation. Both scholars agree it was the advent of independence, the new republican form of government, and the expansion of the United States' market economy that propelled the concept of the self-made man to the fore as the ideal model of masculinity.[18] Taken in conjunction with Warren Susman's acceptance that cultures promote the modal types that best support them, as well as his assertion that character bolstered the cultural needs of the United States during the nineteenth century, it can be safely asserted that the self-made man—a man of both aggressive economic interest and a man of virtuous

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[16] Judy Hilkey, *Character is Capital: Success Manuals and Manhood in Gilded Age America* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina, 1997), 127, 154.
[17] Kimmel, *Manhood in America*, 31.
[18] Rotundo, *American Manhood*, 3; Kimmel, *Manhood in America*, 17.

character—as an *ideal*, as a *concept*, was meant to buttress the new United States' own need to prosper economically, to survive as an independent nation, as well as to fulfill its perceived destiny as a city upon a hill. In order to flourish the United States had to populate itself with self-motivated and driven, aggressive, inventive, entrepreneurial men capable of activating an *American* economy and pioneering a vast wilderness. Simultaneously those men would need to conduct themselves morally and when required, with moderation, thus avoiding any potential chaos, but also conveying a certain superiority to the old world. Replete with contradiction—what with the paradoxical stress upon ruthless aggression and competitive drive as well as a simultaneous exercise of moralistic self-control—the model of the self-made man nevertheless persevered as the ideal masculine paradigm throughout most of the nineteenth century.

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Modern Masculinity and Its Discontents

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Representations of masculinity in *The Twilight Zone* suggest that the masculine concept of personality—developed at the turn of the twentieth century—remained the principal model of masculinity in the postwar era, but that it also proved a most problematic masculine ideal. Thus, essential to comprehending postwar masculinity is an understanding of the masculine paradigm that rose to prominence as the ideal model of masculinity at the turn of the twentieth century: the man of *personality*. Historically, just as the self-made archetype of masculinity supported the cultural atmosphere of the growing United States, so too did the concept of personality aim to better outfit men for their roles in an era of rapid and nearly all-encompassing transition. Michael Kimmel concisely explains that "rapid industrialization, technological transformation, capital concentration, urbanization, and immigration…created a new sense of an oppressively crowded, depersonalized, and often emasculated life." When once masculinity "meant autonomy and self-control,"[19] as Kimmel puts it, the variety of changes that occurred around the turn of the twentieth century induced a sense of dependence and of lost agency. When once men had had the

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[19] Kimmel, *Manhood in America*, 58.

opportunity to develop themselves as individuals through diligence and hard work as well as

constant moral self-mastery, "men no longer worried only about controlling their own passions;

now they were fretting that the new crowds surrounding them would put them in a straitjacket."[20]

The changes that occurred in almost every aspect of American life at the turn of the twentieth

century and the transformations within notions of masculinity proved disconcerting, highly

contentious, and subject to an incredible amount of discourse. Quite significantly, it was not

simply the shift to personality alone that alarmed and frustrated men, but the environment

(cultural and otherwise) that allowed for and perpetuated such a shift.

      Shifting notions of masculinity toward personality proved the attempted antidote to the

malaise caused by the tangibly swift and substantial changes occurring at the turn of the twentieth

century. Out of an atmosphere newly characterized by corporatism, mass production, and

consumerism, Tom Pendergast explains, a new vision of masculinity—what he refers to as

"modern masculinity"—materialized, a vision of masculinity founded upon "personality and self-

creation, wealth and appearances." Further associated with modern masculinity were

"forcefulness, friendliness, adaptability, cheerfulness, neatness, and health habits," a certain sense

of "perfectibility" as well as "glamour, youth, optimism, and a sense of boundlessness tempered

by anxiety."[21]

      If such terms—*self-creation*, *perfectibility*, *wealth*, *optimism*, *boundlessness*—appear

familiar and possibly reminiscent of terms associated with the self-made man of character, it

should be noted that such tenets of personality carried far different meaning and significance

because of the environment that propagated them. Self-creation and perfectibility as elements of

personality, for instance, while suggestive of self-making, spoke to a certain level of adaptability

and malleability; that is, a man's creation of personality was constant, never fixed, never finished.

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[20] Kimmel, *Manhood in America*, 61.
[21] Tom Pendergast, *Creating the Modern Man: American Magazines and Consumer Culture, 1900-1950* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri, 2000), 111, 149, 127.

(By contrast, while building character was also a constant process never finished, character had a fixed purpose such as the maintenance of a particular moralistic virtue, which was only once achieved but which required consistent nurturing.) As Pendergast phrases it, a man's "success lay in molding one's personality to the requirements of the situation."[22] That very notion, of course, implies, to some extent, that in the concomitant milieu the only control a man had over a situation resided in how he altered or modified himself to, at worst, sufficiently and, at best, perfectly handle it. Optimism and a sense of boundlessness, too, suggest qualities of the self-made man; however, Pendergast's statement that they were attributes "tempered by anxiety" implies that uncertainty caused by the concurrent environment may have led to encouragements of such optimism in order that men continue pushing for success despite adversity and abated opportunity for advancement. Wealth, finally, in the context of personality was not so much actual material wealth as it was the *appearance* of material wealth. In an increasingly consumer-centered society, as Pendergast noted, men were encouraged to dress and look the part of the wealthy men they often only wished they could be. William Leuchtenburg explains wealth and personality slightly differently but just as significantly noting that success meant "not merely greater income but the social acceptance necessary to stifle self-doubt."[23]

The shift from character to personality, from self-made, individualistic manhood to this more modern version of pliant, perceptive manhood caused among men the growing fear of masculinity lost. In an effort to combat that sense of loss rampantly devouring men and what had been traditional notions of masculinity, men (and American culture more broadly) duly reacted. Among men themselves as well as the intellectual and medical community, masculine aggression was prized as not only natural to men, but essential and necessary, particularly in childhood, for the successful development of all who would become men. "Masculine primitivism," as John

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[22] Pendergast, *Creating the Modern Man*, 126.
[23] William E. Leuchtenburg, *The Perils of Prosperity, 1914-1932*, 2nd ed., Chicago History of American Civilization (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1993), 199.

Pettegrew refers to it, came to achieve "normative psychological status" around the turn of the century not only as a medically supported subject of scrutiny within the psychological community, but culturally as well, via commodification of the West (in the form of dude ranches and Westerns, for instance), masculine hunting-and-killing literature, the increasing violence but also adoration of organized sports, and a certain exaltation of war and its capacity to make men *men*.[24] Additionally, Michael Kimmel explains, a similar mania surrounding physicality and fitness occurred as a result of shifting notions of masculinity: the United States' modern man "was making over his physique to *appear* powerful physically, perhaps to replace the lost real power he imagined that he—or at least his father or grandfather—once felt." Noting that the male build had come, by the 1870s, to symbolize the hard work and collective virtues of the self-made man, Kimmel explicates further, "If the body revealed the virtues of the man, then working on the body could demonstrate the appearance of the possession of the very virtues that one was no longer certain one possessed."[25]

Despite such overt challenges to the shift to personality and perceptions of its adverse effects upon men, personality appears to have been normalized as the dominant mode of masculinity even during the Great Depression. Scholars seem to have reached a consensus that, regardless of the means by which it was achieved—whether through self-made ideals and virtuous self-control or through optimistic ideals of flexibility and positive superficiality—the economic crisis of the 1930s devastated men's primary role as self-sufficient breadwinners.[26] Michael Kimmel explains that men had not only been defeated in the workplace, but at home, as

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[24] John Pettegrew, *Brutes in Suits: Male Sensibility in America, 1890-1920* (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University, 2007), 20, 1; It must be noted that linking masculinity to war is not unique, of course, to the turn of the twentieth century; however, various scholars—including at least Pettegrew, Gail Bederman, and Sarah Watts (in *Rough Rider in the White House: Theodore Roosevelt and the Politics of Desire*)—have noted the peculiarity of the gendered discourse surrounding the Spanish-American War (1898).
[25] Kimmel, *Manhood in America*, 82.
[26] This is agreed upon by various authors including Michael Kimmel and Tom Pendergast as well as Christina S. Jarvis in *The Male Body at War: American Masculinity during World War II*.

well, as their wives and children viewed them as "impotent patriarchs."[27] Christina Jarvis agrees

and adds that men felt further ill at ease considering that so many, first, lacked employment and

the ability to provide, and, second, that they then became *dependent* upon government aid for

survival.[28] Tom Pendergast explains, however, that despite depression-era affronts to the male

breadwinner, the environment facilitated the entrenchment of personality as the prevailing

masculine paradigm. Ultimately, the Depression created such an atmosphere as to steer men

away from self-made masculinity, because without control of the economy how were individual

men to have control over their roles within it? Further, Pendergast explains:

> After all, modern masculinity did not center around a man's *commitment* to his job or to
> his *reliability* [emphases added] as patriarchal head of the family, elements of manhood
> that the depression had called into question. Modern masculinity allowed men to
> understand themselves through their personality…and men could continue to see
> themselves as successful in these terms despite the difficulties they may have been facing
> in other areas of their life.[29]

Essentially, the Great Depression rendered a man's virtue, a man's will and determination as tools

and as markers of success (self-made masculinity), inapplicable; the adherence to notions of

personality, however, supplied men with other various characteristics with which to bolster their

crushed manliness, whether simply attitude, appearance, or one's ability to adapt to a hostile

environment.

Masculine Redemption through War and the Subsequent Postwar Malaise

Whereas the Great Depression provided an atmosphere in which the principles of

personality could flourish, World War II temporarily sustained a milieu in which manly virtue

took precedence over personality. As Michael Kimmel explains, "men had been able to prove on

the battlefield what they had found difficult to prove at the workplace and in their homes—that

they were dedicated providers and protectors…When the war took on the tone of a moral crusade,

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[27] Kimmel, *Manhood in America*, 132.
[28] Christina S. Jarvis, *The Male Body at War: American Masculinity during World War II* (DeKalb, IL:
Northern Illinois University, 2004), 16.
[29] Pendergast, *Creating the Modern Man*, 163.

saving the world from Nazi genocide and terror, the virtuous tenor of military manhood was enhanced."[30] However, reentry into civilian life proved difficult for postwar men, particularly because notions of pre-war masculinity were so rigidly expected in various areas of American male life.

As soon as World War II soldiers returned from the front it seems they were thrust back into the role of breadwinner in its most traditional sense; that is, men resumed their places within the workplace in order to support their young and growing families. A 1946 film, *The Best Years of Our Lives*, as quoted by Michael Kimmel, perfectly captures the sentiment: "Last year it was 'Kill Japs!' This year it's 'Make money!'"[31] Where returning veterans, these newly *postwar* men, ideally made their money, of course, was in the corporate office; stemming from the earlier changes wrought to the world of work. As Kimmel explains, "modern corporate capitalism had transformed a nation of small entrepreneurs—Self-Made Men—into a nation of hired employees,"[32] and, by and large, men assumed their roles as, hopefully, salaried, white-collar managers or executives. Here in the corporate work space, it has been duly noted, men became part of the (white, middle-class) gray-flannel-suit-donning, suburban-home-owning crowd.[33]

In his sociological study, *The Lonely Crowd* (1950), David Riesman identified in contemporary men the "other-directed" tendency to fit in with the group rather than to adhere to the older, nineteenth-century model of "inner-direction" which prized "individuality of character."[34] Significantly, Riesman explained:

> *What is common to all other-directeds is that their contemporaries are the source of direction for the individual—either those known to him or those with whom he is*

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[30] Kimmel, *Manhood in America*, 147.

[31] Quoted in Kimmel, *Manhood in America*, 148.

[32] Kimmel, *Manhood in America*, 158.

[33] Barbara Ehrenreich (*The Hearts of Men*; 1983), K.A. Cuordileone (*Manhood and American Political Culture in the Cold War*; 2005), James Gilbert (*Men in the Middle*; 2005), and Michael Kimmel all point to and discuss at some length male discontent in the workplace making use particularly of David Riesman's *The Lonely Crowd* (1950) and William H. Whyte's *The Organization Man* (1956).

[34] David Riesman, *The Lonely Crowd: A Study of the Changing American Character* (New Haven, CT: Yale University, 1950), 22, 14-15.

indirectly acquainted, through friends and through the mass media…The goals toward which the other-directed person strives shift with that guidance: it is only the process of striving itself and the process of paying close attention to the signals from others that remain unaltered throughout life. [italics original] [35]

William H. Whyte's *The Organization Man* (1956) targeted the corporate workspace specifically as the root of similar evils, fostering the notion that "what's good for the group is good for the individual."[36] Whyte, with not a little cynicism and sarcasm, ultimately explains that "boiled down, what they [corporations] ask for is an environment in which everyone is tightly knit into a belongingness with one another; one in which there is no restless wandering but rather the deep emotional security that comes from total integration with the group."[37] Whyte points to a certain irony, however, inherent in the very concept of the corporation and the organization man:

> As organization men see it, through an extension of the group spirit, through educating people to sublimate their egos, organizations can rid themselves of their tyrants and create a *harmonious* atmosphere in which the group will bring out the best in everyone…it is only fair to say that most group advocates would be sincerely disturbed at the thought that they are party to anything that would stifle the individual. But they are.[38]

Both Riesman and Whyte, then, point to the fact that a man's individuality could only be determined by and in relation to the group. As Whyte most poignantly expresses, this was hardly true individuality, which seems to have caused men a great deal of anxiety. Adding to that angst was the utter inconsistency of expectations, as well; one was to fit in, but into what exactly, by what standards, and, importantly, by whose standards?

The male tendency or the expectation that men become part of the crowd, part of the group, part of the organization, speaks to the broader problem that confronted men and conceptions of masculinity in the postwar era. Barbara Ehrenreich explains, "The only word he [the postwar male] had to describe the problem was one which, unfortunately, *described everything and explained nothing* [italics mine]. The word was 'conformity,' and in the fifties

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[35] Riesman, *The Lonely Crowd*, 22.
[36] William H. Whyte, Jr., *The Organization Man* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1956), 36.
[37] Ibid., 32.
[38] Ibid., 48.

'conformity' became the code word for male discontent—the masculine equivalent of...'the problem without a name.'"[39] Indeed, *conformity* was regarded as a particularly male problem, if not *the* male problem. Additionally, conformity extended beyond the reaches of the workplace and into altogether more personal areas of men's lives.

If, as Ehrenreich remarked, conformity described everything but explained nothing, what precisely was conformity and why did it prove so problematic? Ehrenreich argues that it was conformity to the "breadwinner ethic"—the ideology that required men to economically support women, to find the perfect corporate post, and buy the perfect suburban home—with which men took issue beginning in the 1950s.[40] Similarly, James Gilbert agrees that it was the extreme emphasis during the decade upon "work, consumption, and domesticity" which men found most dissatisfying.[41] Thus, scholars agree it was not merely the corporate work life that galled postwar men, but the expectation that they participate in the burgeoning suburban lifestyle which implied the additional pressure of supporting a wife and family as well as their consumptive tendencies.

Just as the self-made man of character had embodied particular notions required by nineteenth-century culture and the man of pliable personality was meant to better fit a rapidly changing social and economic milieu in the turn-of-the-twentieth-century United States, so the construction of the post-World War II conformist as a masculine paradigm seems to have been a modal type best fit to maintaining the postwar social order. Most basically, as Elaine Tyler May points out, the Great Depression and World War II—that is, roughly fifteen years of deprivation—had rendered the economic security and logistics of having families and stable family lives difficult; thus, in the postwar atmosphere Americans enthusiastically refocused upon

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[39] Barbara Ehrenreich, *The Hearts of Men: American Dreams and the Flight from Commitment* (New York: Anchor Books, 1983), 30.
[40] Ibid., 11-12.
[41] James Gilbert, *Men in the Middle: Searching for Masculinity in the 1950s* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2005), 61.

domestic bliss.[42] Certainly, the compulsion to provide for one's family (as was a traditionally

masculine endeavor), especially in that environment, was strong, resulting, logically, in men's

general adherence to norms of attaining white-collar employment, a home in the suburbs, and all

the material goods thought necessary to support the family. Similarly, having only recently

emerged from depression and war, the United States, culturally, may have required a modal type

who would keep the economy stable and prosperous—much as had the self-made man in the

nineteenth century—but within the context of changed modes of work-life that had developed

most prominently and permanently at the turn of the twentieth century. That type was the

organization man (as described by William H. Whyte), recognized in other popular culture as the

man in the gray flannel suit, or more generally as the corporate drone. It is also that type of man

who appears in *The Twilight Zone*, but with much critique and criticism.

Scholars have, however, identified several other reasons why the man of the postwar era

conformed. Elaine Tyler May, speaking generally of staunch conformity to the gendered

domestic ideal, argues that both men and women participated so eagerly because—in a Cold War

milieu that had pitted capitalism against socialism and democracy against authoritarianism—

Americans realized suburban family life served as an example, a virtual cultural showcase, of the

superiority of the United States and its capitalistic and democratic values.[43] K.A. Cuordileone

also attributes political justifications to male conformity noting that Cold War politics were

inextricably entwined with notions of masculinity, particularly the cultural ill-will aimed at

liberals whose intellectuality and apparent softness (on Communism) resulted in their effeminate

inability to save the world from going "red." Additionally, McCarthyism—one of the United

States' own internal red scares, during which government employees (mostly within the State

Department) were hunted down and ousted for their subversion—linked communism and/or

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[42] Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era*, Revised and Updated ed. (New York: Basic Books, 1999), 14.
[43] Ibid., 162.

communist leanings with, at best, effeminacy and, at worst, homosexuality.[44] In such a climate,

any deviation from the norm of heterosexual breadwinning proved potentially dangerous to men,

another factor which culturally encouraged conformity.

That is not to say, however, that men did not resist postwar masculine conformity to the

corporate and suburban lifestyle. Barbara Ehrenreich discusses several groups that attempted to

defy the norms of conformity, pointing particularly to the Beats. The Beats—and Beat

philosophy, generally—Ehrenreich explains, joined "the two strands of male protest—one

directed against the white-collar work world and the other against the suburbanized family life

that work was supposed to support" which "came together into the first all-out critique of

American consumer culture.[45] Michael Kimmel agrees, suggesting that the Beats created "the

rhetoric of rebellion" for postwar men, although he notes that "they knew more what they were

against…than what they were for." Still, the Beats were certainly opposed, Kimmel states, to

"the relentless pursuit of happiness through material possession" that had come to be an integral

component to conceptions of masculinity.[46]

Equally important to discussions of postwar masculine resistance, if not apostasy, took

hold via *Playboy* magazine and the lifestyle it promoted. Unlike Beat culture, however, *Playboy*

supported consumerism to the utmost but practically completely rejected the suburban lifestyle;

that is, *Playboy* renounced marriage and the subsequent quaint family home situated outside the

city. Michael Kimmel explains that Playboy "offered up…a new model for manliness" which

was that of the "domesticated bachelor"[47]; the playboy enjoyed his home (ideally an urban

apartment), but he enjoyed it alone (with the exception of the temporary female companion to

whom he exhibited all his fine accoutrements). Barbara Ehrenreich adds that "the notion that the

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[44] K.A. Cuordileone, *Manhood and American Political Culture in the Cold War* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 36, 40, 49.
[45] Ehrenreich, *The Hearts of Men*, 52.
[46] Kimmel, *Manhood in America*, 160.
[47] Ibid., 167.

good life consisted of an apartment with mood music rather than a ranch house with barbecue pit was almost subversive," but that *Playboy* showed one "didn't have to be a husband to be a man."[48]

Situating my Study within the Historiography of American Masculinity

Naturally, this study of postwar masculinity is born as much of my reading of the extant body of scholarship surrounding masculinity as it is from my primary research; that is, during my initial—and, from thence, ensuing—foray into the cultural history of masculinity in the United States I simultaneously viewed *The Twilight Zone* and made connections I perceived to have been disregarded by the current scholarship or perhaps not recognized or adequately treated. Thus, a discussion of the problematic components of the historiography—concerning, in particular, studies of postwar masculinity—seems in order so that my argument may be better understood as it pertains to the broader discourse.

Primarily, I object to the current scholarship's tendency to merely identify conformity as the predominant problem with which men took issue in the postwar era without taking heed of from whence conformity came and where it was that discontented postwar men hoped conceptions of masculinity would settle (even if only temporarily). Barbara Ehrenreich, as previously stated, explained that, as a term, *conformity* described everything but explained nothing; unfortunately, the scholarship of postwar masculinity is guilty of having done the same. Ehrenreich, for instance—whose *The Hearts of Men* (1983) served as virtually the first work in masculinity studies—aimed to reveal the origins of the men's liberation movement of the 1970s; however, Ehrenreich begins her study in the 1950s, marking the decade as the beginning of masculine discontent caused by conformity to the ideology of the male breadwinner and the resistance to that ethic, which spanned from the 1950s through the 1970s. Of course, masculinity studies had to start somewhere; still, Ehrenreich treats the adherence to the masculine norm that

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[48] Ehrenreich, *The Hearts of Men*, 44, 51.

men provide financially for the family as if it had no historical precedents, as if that traditionally male role had not existed before the 1950s and was somehow more pronounced during the decade than in previous eras. In some sense, calling postwar men's adherence to the breadwinner ethic *conformity* seems a misnomer; that is, had not men been breadwinners for centuries, and would not that conventional role render the term *conformity* an exaggeration? Ultimately, the quality of *conformity* as a specific masculine problem (or set of problems) unique to the postwar era is made entirely less significant and wrongly oversimplified when it is considered solely as an adherence to the breadwinner ethic.

Further weakening Ehrenreich's assessment is the fact that her entire study rests upon the concept of economic determination, arguing that marriage in particular was a solely economic arrangement. In fact, Ehrenreich notes that women in the 1950s occupied a position of "disproportionate dependence" while men were simultaneously "conned" by ideology "into undertaking what one cynical male called 'the lifelong support of the female unemployed'."[49] Considering Ehrenreich's work within the context of gender/women's studies of the early 1980s, Ehrenreich's materialist or Marxist approach to masculinity coheres; however, as has since been observed,[50] economic factors cannot be assumed the singular determinant element contributing to any cultural paradigm, which leaves Ehrenreich's analysis of postwar masculine conformity (not to mention her oversimplified and over-general presumptions concerning postwar women) incomplete and only partially explained.

James Gilbert's *Men in the Middle* (2005) is equally as neglectful of the historical roots of conformity as well as the renegotiation of masculine paradigms for which some hoped. Gilbert, in fact, aims to "reread some of the key sources of the 1950s" and to remove "the language of panic and anxiety," arguing that what lay beneath was "an attempt to revive

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[49] Ehrenreich, *The Hearts of Men*, 3.
[50] In particular, Joan Scott's 1986 essay, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," critiques numerous theoretical foundations upon which gender studies up to that point had been based, including the Marxist/materialist perspective.

traditional notions of individualism and older models of masculinity."[51] Despite his argument,

however, Gilbert fails to show that postwar culture or postwar men did indeed advocate or

attempt to resurrect traditional conceptions of masculinity, and, further, Gilbert does not make

explicit what those paradigms actually were. Gilbert begins *Men in the Middle*, for instance, with

a thorough reading of David Riesman's *The Lonely Crowd*. Gilbert asserts that postwar men felt

nostalgic for the older, inner-directed mode of masculinity and concludes that Riesman's study

reflected the "ambiguous and divided feelings" of postwar American men.[52] Gilbert never

effectively identifies what that inner-directed man embodied or to what *inner-directed* really

referred (aside from what Riesman said, himself). Additionally, he never demonstrates that any

actual men attempted to revive the inner-directed man as masculine paradigm.

A similar problem lies in Gilbert's analysis of the domestic situation comedy, *The

Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet*. Although Gilbert analyzes various episodes of the series

spanning from the radio version of the 1940s through to television episodes of the 1960s, Gilbert

merely illustrates that Ozzie Nelson's (mis)adventures in suburbia were "not just a function of the

genre but, rather, a comic vision of a national adjustment to male domesticity and companionate

marriage."[53] Once again, Gilbert does not show an advocacy of or any attempt toward

resurrection of older or traditional masculine ideals. In fact, Gilbert explicitly notes that the

1950s (at least via *The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet*) served as a period of *adjustment*—which

implies acceptance of and adaptation to concurrent notions of masculinity rather than a revival of

any older modes. Gilbert also treats male domesticity and companionate marriage as somehow

novel and unique to the postwar era; however, various scholars have shown that, indeed, both had

been extant and part of the masculine experience since as early as the nineteenth century.[54]

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[51] Gilbert, *Men in the Middle*, 7.
[52] Ibid., 56, 60.
[53] Ibid., 143.
[54] A number of works have identified the advent of companionate marriage (and the inherent struggles of men with it) as having occurred earlier than the postwar period, some arguing it existed as the dominant

Gilbert's work as a whole consistently reflects the same problems I have noted, leaving *Men in the Middle* unpersuasive in terms of having shown that men in fact were advocating or attempting a return to older masculine paradigms. Gilbert, indeed, contradicts his own argument showing rather that men anxiously and self-consciously aimed to *accept* their fates as conformists.

While Cuordileone's *Manhood and American Political Culture in the Cold War* aims to view politics through the lens of masculinity and male sexuality, his study necessarily examines issues of postwar masculinity and tensions that reciprocally colored politics and notions of manhood. Ultimately, Cuordileone traces the transition liberalism underwent from an ideological strand perceived as soft, effeminate, and homosexual—utilizing, for instance, discourse concerning such figures as Alger Hiss and Adlai Stevenson as examples, as well as Joseph McCarthy's tactics and language used in his quest to expose American communists—to one of renewed virile manliness—best embodied by John F. Kennedy and his administration—through an exploration and analysis of the gendered rhetoric surrounding cold war era politics.

Cuordileone's work proves, among the few others devoted solely to postwar masculinity, the best written, most thorough, and most insightful study. In fact, his assessment of the intertwined process of transition shared by politics and masculinity in the postwar era points to the shift (or advocacy of a shift) I aim to identify as having occurred in the late-1950s and early-1960s via *The Twilight Zone*. Cuordileone's study, that is, speaks to, although in entirely different terms, the movement of the postwar masculine paradigm toward one modeling on or at least evoking an older version of masculinity: the man of character. Still, while in his discussion of masculinity itself Cuordileone briefly identifies the historical roots of postwar masculine

marital expectation as early as the nineteenth century and some as late as the 1920s and '30s. Such works include Karen Lystra's *Searching the Heart* (1989), Ellen K. Rothman's *Hands and Hearts* (1984), Steven Mintz's and Susan Kellogg's *Domestic Revolutions* (1988), Margaret Marsh's *Suburban Lives* (1990), John D'Emilio's and Estelle Freedman's *Intimate Matters* (1997), and even Jessamyn Neuhaus's *Manly Meals and Mom's Home Cooking* (2003).

malaise as having begun at the turn of the twentieth century,[55] *Manhood and American Political Culture in the Cold War* is nonetheless centered upon politics and political figures and has, in a sense, almost too narrow a focus, then, to provide an understanding of how such notions may have applied to, pertained to, or been relevant to men *not* involved in politics or outside the specifically political realm.

While similar in that it treats the effects of politics upon the family and gender roles within the family, Elaine Tyler May's *Homeward Bound* (2nd edition 1999) places entirely too much weight upon the political, arguing, ultimately, that the postwar adherence to the domestic/suburban ideal was a political tactic on the part of ordinary Americans to stave off Communism in the United States—this phenomenon she refers to as *domestic containment*. In addition to a lack of effective evidence to prove her argument convincingly, May's assertion that postwar American family life and its conventionally required gender norms served as a concerted effort toward containing Communism ignores myriad other reasons (and more believable reasons, at that) for the era's focus upon the domestic and all it entailed. Simply put, I doubt that many young Americans who were starting their families in the years following World War II were reproducing, relocating to the suburbs, and filling their homes with consumer goods all to show Communists just how pleasant the democratic and capitalistic lifestyle was. Additionally, May treats gender roles in particular (men as breadwinners and women as sexually-contained domestic goddesses) as if they had had no historical precedents and were, overall, unique to the cold war era. As noted concerning James Gilbert's work, scholarship has proven otherwise.

Working with the current literature on postwar masculinity has also revealed another unexpected problem: an undeniable redundancy caused by the use of the same sources. The repetitious and typical conclusions (based upon the usual sources) made by various scholars must explain, in part, why scholars have been, thus far, unable to identify what rendered conformity so

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[55] Cuordileone, *Manhood in American Political Culture*, 135-136.

utterly distressing to postwar men, where it came from, and to what men looked forward as an alternative. Summarily, by utilizing the same sources, scholars have limited their abilities to understand more deeply the state of masculinity during the 1950s and what became of it later.

What are these sources that have been analyzed almost ad nauseam? The first, possibly not surprisingly, is David Riesman's *The Lonely Crowd*. Scholars—including Barbara Ehrenreich (1983), James Gilbert (2005), Michael Kimmel (2006), and K.A. Cuordileone (2005)—have given a great deal of attention to Riesman's study, sometimes entire chapters devoted to his work, but without offering anything particularly novel and usually nothing more than a critical reading. William H. Whyte's *The Organization Man* typically follows readings of Riesman, scholars noting his castigation of the corporate environment for its propensity to thwart the individual in favor of the group. The Beats, their literature, philosophy, and often some biographical information concerning various Beat authors have been employed as evidence of masculine resistance to conformity by several authors including Ehrenreich, Kimmel, and to the greatest extent by David Savran in *Taking it Like a Man* (1998). Similarly, *Playboy*—the magazine, the philosophy, and the proposed lifestyle— and likeminded magazines such as *Esquire*, have been utilized to prove male rebellion by Ehrenreich, Kimmel, Cuordileone, Tom Pendergast (*Creating the Modern Man*, 2000) and especially Bill Osgerby in *Playboys in Paradise* (2001). Ultimately, the consistent use of those same sources—often, it must be stated, sources that Barbara Ehrenreich used in *The Hearts of Men* at the very beginning of masculinity studies—has rendered the literature surrounding mid-twentieth-century masculinity repetitive and stagnant. Scholars rarely reveal new information despite their efforts working with the typical sources, and our understanding of the contentiousness of postwar masculinity has suffered as a result. Conformity has been identified time and time again as *the* problem for postwar men; however, aside from Ehrenreich's original (and flawed) argument that it was conformity to the

breadwinner ethic that precipitated intense masculine discontent, *conformity* is a term used without historical consideration, analytical scrutiny, or sufficient explanation.

My study of postwar masculinity, thus, aims to ameliorate the current situation within the historiography surrounding postwar masculinity. I consider not only the historical roots of conformity and its postwar manifestations, but also the largely neglected transition that masculinity underwent during the late-1950s and early-1960s. Further, this study draws upon previously unused and incredibly rich source material: not only *The Twilight Zone* series (originally aired from 1959 to 1964), but also a partial collection of viewers' responses to *The Twilight Zone*. Utilizing *The Twilight Zone* as a cultural lens through which to view both the implicit and explicit exposition of masculinity, I argue that conformity, first, was *not* problematic because of an adherence to the breadwinner ethic, but rather because of the adherence to the historically established and deeply entrenched principles of personality. Secondly, I argue that, in addition to taking issue with conformity, there existed a broader advocacy of a resurrection as well as a renegotiation of an older mode of masculinity: that dedicated to manly virtue and character.

Reflections on The Twilight Zone *as Primary Source Material*

This study, it must be reiterated, analyzes masculinity. The material I draw on to make my analyses is *The Twilight Zone*. This study, then, is not intended to illuminate *The Twilight Zone* itself. On the contrary, this particular television series enhances our understanding of the state of masculinity in the postwar United States. In fact, an understanding of postwar masculinity is incomplete without an examination of *The Twilight Zone*, and its use as evidence has spurred what is a necessary rethinking of postwar masculinity. Indeed, *The Twilight Zone* serves as essential primary source material in seeking to comprehend mid-century masculinity for a number of reasons. Most significantly, the creator of *The Twilight Zone* was a man incredibly concerned with and attune to the problems of mid-century masculinity, both personally and

philosophically. Serling, then, influenced his show to treat primarily masculine subject matter, rendering *The Twilight Zone* an especially rich and unique—particularly when compared with other concomitant television genres—source of evidence. In addition, Serling received an unprecedented amount of fan mail during *The Twilight Zone*'s initial time on television (and later, in syndication) which lends to the study of postwar masculinity the voices of actual viewers, real men and their own insights on masculinity in postwar America. Such voices are almost entirely missing from current studies of postwar masculinity.

     The Twilight Zone cannot be understood apart from its creator, Rod Serling, who wrote the majority of the episodes and oversaw its production. Serling himself—the man and his career—epitomizes the male caught up in the struggles of postwar masculinity. More precisely, he was a man caught between the contemporary perceptions and problems of personality and conformity and the (apparently) more desirable moral qualities of character.

     According to his biographers—Joel Engel and Gordon Sander—Serling was incredibly and overtly concerned with his own masculinity. Serling seems to have been born with the charm and personality any conformist male of the later postwar era would have envied; Engel notes that "from birth, his energy and personality dominated the home" and describes the child Serling as "outgoing, endearing, and beguiling." Serling's innate attractiveness (both personally and physically), however, while it won him attention and popularity, also entrenched in Serling a psychological need to be liked. As Engel phrases it, Serling "received constant praise, even adoration, and soon found difficulty living without them. He wanted everyone to like him, and virtually all who met him did. So on those occasions when he did not enjoy the type of admiration he had come to expect, he actively pursued it, as though performing for applause."[56]

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[56] Joel Engel, *Rod Serling: The Dreams and Nightmares of Life in the Twilight Zone* (Chicago: Contemporary Books, 1989), 13; Gordon F. Sander's Serling biography, *Serling: The Rise and Twilight of Television's Last Angry Man* (1992), so closely parallels Engel's original biography that at times it can seem as though one has read the same biography twice. Still, both biographies are of use and typically

From birth, then, Serling was a man of personality. That characteristic would prove later in his career somewhat problematic.

While outwardly magnetic and confident, Serling was plagued by insecurity from a young age. At a rather slight five-feet-four-inches tall, Serling—described by Engel as a "bright, passionate, macho, little man"—seemed constantly concerned with proving his masculinity.[57] Serling's height "remained as much of a burden, and sometimes an embarrassment, as it was then a motivating factor," Engel explains. "While some short men prefer to fade into the background, Serling," Engel continues, "chose to be the focal point and constructed a whole personality around that decision."[58] Further, Serling chose to assert his masculinity, despite his stature, for instance, enlisting in 1943, as a paratrooper. Initially rejected *because of* his inadequate height, Serling appealed directly and tenaciously to the appropriate authorities and, as a result of his obstinacy, indeed became a paratrooper of the 511th Parachute Regiment of the Eleventh Airborne Division that would eventually aid in liberating Manila.[59] Similarly, while in the military, Serling aimed to prove his masculinity via boxing. A catchweight, Serling often faced heavyweight opponents. Although pummeled, he at least felt he had sufficiently demonstrated his manliness.[60] Serling's language, too, was littered with what Engel refers to as "homophobic epithets." Engel suggests, "his supermasculine personality was offended by homosexuality."[61] Serling maintained an obsession with the physical elements of his own manliness throughout his life.

The area in which Serling found himself truly beleaguered by the perils of modern masculinity was his career. He began as a writer at Antioch College in the late-1940s. He became manager of the college's radio station, for which he wrote, acted in, and directed

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support one another and what can only be assumed an accurate portrayal of Serling and his life. It may also be assumed that when one biography is cited, the other bolsters a respective statement.

[57] Engel, *Rod Serling*, 219.
[58] Ibid., 24.
[59] Ibid., 33.
[60] Ibid., 35, 40.
[61] Ibid., 202.

numerous productions. By 1950, Serling had moved into the nascent realm of television, writing

primarily public service announcements and advertisements for Cincinnati's local station, WLW.

Bubbling, however, with creative energy, Serling spent his evenings writing thirty- and sixty-

minute television dramas. By 1952, he had experienced sufficient success to quit his post at

WLW to become a freelance television writer.[62]

The years between 1952 and 1959 proved some of Serling's most successful, the years in

which he would not only exhibit his talent but also gain national celebrity. Placing himself within

a heavily experimental new medium that fostered the development of a number of fledgling

television genres, Serling became one of television's most well-known and most lauded

anthology drama writers. Anthology dramas (unlike a television series), typically featured thirty-,

sixty-, or ninety-minute original dramas, written by different and various television playwrights.

Anthology dramas, therefore, contained no standard characters, plotlines, or even themes.

Concisely, while series maintained continuity via the weekly appearance of a set cast of

characters and the process through which they handled their often short-lived, usually comical,

problems, the anthology drama was an original story by a different writer with new characters and

circumstances each week. James Baughman explains that "such programs were thought to

possess a prestige other types of TV fare—the comic variety show or situation comedy—lacked.

Anthologies aspired to the standards of the legitimate theater."[63] Serling and like-minded

anthology drama writers such as Paddy Chayefsky sought to nurture television's capacity for

"culturally ambitious drama."[64] Anthology dramas, thus, typically treated the psychological

struggles of their characters and "'focused down on intimate small stories that dealt with people

in ordinary circumstances.'"[65] Characters, as Baughman explicates, "were struggling to

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[62] Engel, *Rod Serling*, 69, 86-87.
[63] James L. Baughman, *Same Time, Same Station: Creating American Television, 1948-1961* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 2007), 177.
[64] Ibid., 181.
[65] Quoted in Baughman, *Same Time*, 182.

achieve…identity and self-respect" and their writers portrayed them with all sympathy.[66]

Through the anthology drama, Serling wrote such memorable and popular teleplays as "Patterns"

(1955 on *Kraft Television Theater*), "Requiem for a Heavyweight" (1956 on *Playhouse 90*), "The

Comedian" (1957 on *Playhouse 90*), and "The Velvet Alley" (1959 on *Playhouse 90*), for which

he won multiple Emmy awards as well as admiration and fame.

The television industry, however, became increasingly more dependent upon corporate

sponsors. As sponsors advertised their products during television programs, the new medium

became increasingly more subject to their censorship. Television appeared to many

participants—Serling included—to be progressively more concerned with pleasing a mass

audience of somewhat doltish consumers than one of cognizant thinkers. As Serling put it:

"We're developing a new citizenry, one that will be very selective about cereals and automobiles,

but won't be able to think."[67] Situated within such a transition, Serling endeavored, still, to

produce teleplays that would indeed make viewers think; however, Serling faced great odds

against the increasing commercialism of the media itself and the industry of which it was a part.

The years between 1952 and 1959, while the years of some of Serling's greatest

successes, were also the years in which Serling would find himself in the midst of a both external

and internal struggle reflecting the most basic problems of postwar masculinity. Serling not only

faced the external changes and demands of the television industry, but also an *internal*

professional struggle *as a man*, between conformity to those increasingly commercial and

shallow standards in order to achieve financial success and the fame he so craved, or holding fast

to his personal conviction that television should present salient, socially significant commentary.

Ultimately, Serling was confronted in his own career by the choice between personality and

character.

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[66] Baughman, *Same Time*, 181.
[67] Quoted in Gordon F. Sander, *Serling: The Rise and Twilight of Television's Last Angry Man* (New York: Dutton, 1992), 135.

Serling had always attempted to present meaningful drama on television. His scripts almost always contained something between a touch and a heavy dose of moralizing. He consistently aimed to present viewers with dramatized but poignant social commentary. As the medium changed, however, Serling's work was directly affected by sponsor's censorship. One instance affected Serling's 1956 teleplay, "Noon on Doomsday"—which treated in fictionalized form the lynching by whites of a young black man in the South. As a result of the sponsor's censoring, the production was reconfigured to be set in New England with an unidentifiable foreigner as the victim of the lynching in order that the story would not offend Southern viewers' sensibilities so recently after the 1955 murder of Emmett Till. Significantly, in a 1959 interview with Mike Wallace, Serling remarked that "Noon on Doomsday," because of censorship, "became a lukewarm, vitiated, *emasculated* kind of show [emphasis added]." To Serling, certainly, censorship and the problem it presented to writers such as himself—concerned with television as a dramatic and salient art form—was a direct concern to him *as a man*. If his teleplays were to air differently than he had intended them and if they lacked the poignancy he intended, Serling suggested, either as a man he had failed or the medium had failed him. As television became increasingly more commercial, Serling grew more disillusioned with the medium and his role within it.

Thus, Serling struggled against both the trends in his industry and also the effects of those trends on his work and his sense of himself as a man. Externally, he struggled to maintain the integrity of a medium that, as quickly as it was conceived of as a space for artistic and culturally relevant material, was then transformed into a medium of banal entertainment (*entertainment*, of course, meant contemporarily in the pejorative). More personally and as a man, Serling faced a stark choice. He could conform and write simple, irrelevant, but entertaining television in order to remain employed and financially successful, or he could resist

conformity and continue—with great risk and disheartening prospects—writing socially and culturally salient but altogether less popular drama.

What Serling chose to do in 1959, was *The Twilight Zone*. Initially *The Twilight Zone*—a thirty-minute science fiction/fantasy anthology series—appeared to many to be Serling's admission of failure in battling corporate sponsor censorship for socially relevant television. Appearing on *The Mike Wallace Interview* in September 1959, only weeks before the series would first air on CBS, Wallace inquired of Serling whether he was simply "writing easy." Serling responded: "In this particular area, no, because we're dealing with a half-hour show which cannot probe like a ninety, which doesn't use scripts as vehicles of social criticism. These are strictly entertainment." Wallace then asked, "Is it potboilers," to which Serling answered, "Oh no, I wouldn't call them potboilers at all. No, these are very adult, I think high-quality, half-hour, extremely polished films, but because they deal in the areas of fantasy and imagination and science fiction…there's no opportunity to cop a plea or chop an axe or anything." Wallace continued, asking almost to the point of insult, "In essence, for the time being and for the foreseeable future, you've given up on writing anything important for television, right?" With great composure, Serling responded, "Well…this is a semantic thing—*important* for television. I don't know. *If* by *important* you mean am I going to delve into current social problems dramatically, you're quite right. I'm not." While this may seem the last word on *The Twilight Zone* (and has to some extent been treated as such) Serling continued moments later, explaining: "Somebody asked me the other day if this means that I'm going to be a meek conformist…My answer is no. I'm just acting the role of a tired nonconformist. I don't want to fight anymore. I don't want to have to battle sponsors and agencies. I don't want to have to push for something that I want and have to settle for second best. I don't want to have to compromise all the time."[68]

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[68] *The Mike Wallace Interview*, DVD (1959; Chatsworth, CA: Image Entertainment, 2006).

Summarily, *The Twilight Zone* was neither a failure nor a compromise. For Serling, the use particularly of science fiction/fantasy in *The Twilight Zone* was rather a way to creatively and artistically present—exactly as he wished to—themes of social significance without having to fight his sponsors. As a self-proclaimed "tired nonconformist," the science fiction/fantasy genre generally and *The Twilight Zone* specifically provided an arena for Serling's commentary and, often, conscience. He and *The Twilight Zone*, then, did not conform to the standards of the medium so much as they manipulated those standards. As his wife put it (and many who knew Serling similarly confirmed), "Rod felt that drama should be an assertion of social conscience. He found that in *The Twilight Zone*, through parable and suggestion, he could make the same point that he wanted to make with straight drama."[69]

Considering all then, what is it that renders *The Twilight Zone* an efficacious source for understanding mid-twentieth-century masculinity? First and inextricably tied to its creator and his concerns, *The Twilight Zone* treats almost exclusively issues of the masculine. If one spends any time with *The Twilight Zone*, one quickly recognizes that most episodes feature male characters facing particularly male problems, whether in the corporate workplace, at war, or as members of a rapidly changing and often frightening world. Paying attention subjectively and in a focused and interpretive manner and considering the context makes it clear that when episodes refer to *man* and treat male subjects it is truly meant as a treatment of men. Commenting on *The Twilight Zone*'s relatively severe lack of female presence, Serling's former secretary, Virginia Cox said it best, explaining, "I don't think he understood women. I think he was locked into a male vision. I just don't think women interested him that much. I think he loved them, I think he liked them, I think he got along well with them. I just don't think the female experience interested him. That wasn't the genesis of his creativity." Ethel Wynant, a former CBS casting director, agreed: "He didn't write very well for women. He wasn't much interested in women. I

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[69] Quoted in Sander, *Serling*, 154.

think he had some interesting women's parts, but they were only facilitators to move the story along."[70]

The fact that *The Twilight Zone* was a primarily masculine television show, however, does not make it unique. Indeed, television throughout the 1950s and early-1960s included a myriad of Westerns, several crime dramas, and countless domestic situation comedies, all centrally concerned with men and their roles in society. From a scholarly standpoint, what makes *The Twilight Zone* relevant as primary source material, however, is that at least Westerns and domestic situation comedies have been utilized and analyzed in masculinity studies, gender studies, and television studies to the point of stagnation while such a heavily masculine series as *The Twilight Zone* has been ignored. From an analytical standpoint, *The Twilight Zone* and Serling's particular usage of science fiction/fantasy is, in relation to other concomitant shows and genres, somewhat anomalous; that is, while Westerns and domestic situation comedies focused in part upon male roles, they were in altogether idealized circumstances. The Western, for instance, was obviously set in a fictionalized past and, ultimately "offered an escape from the confusing, complex problems of the present to a simpler time when the good guys always won and the bad guys always lost," for "Cold war America was searching for heroes."[71] The domestic situation comedy, of course, portrayed family life in the most idealistic way possible; mothers were forever cooking and undyingly supportive and fathers (strangely contrary to the suburban reality) were almost constantly at home, available for solving problems and offering sage advice.[72] If they were not home fathers were conspicuously absent from the scene or episode, but almost never depicted at work. *The Twilight Zone*, contrarily, idealized nothing. Men were placed in realistic scenarios that were facilitated by the generic conventions of science fiction/fantasy—whether it

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[70] Quoted in Sander, *Serling*, 133.

[71] Gary A. Yoggy, "Prime-Time Bonanza!: The Western on Television," in *Wanted Dead or Alive: The American West in Popular Culture*, ed. Richard Aquila (Chicago: University of Illinois, 1996), 167,165.

[72] Nina C. Leibman, *Living Room Lectures: The Fifties Family in Film and Television* (Austin: University of Texas, 1995), 120.

be time travel, space travel, the presence of aliens, a futuristic world of technological

wonderment, or something else—and which often ended ambivalently and without comfortable

resolution. In *The Twilight Zone* there were no clearly good or bad guys, only the struggles of

men, the choices they made, and the fictionalized consequences.

Finally, and most significantly, viewers recognized *The Twilight Zone* as culturally

meaningful.[73] Commentators have been too quick to assume that "loyal viewers regarded *The*

Twilight Zone as terrifically entertaining and did not always realize that Serling and the other

writers often used the program to examine such contemporary issues as intolerance and

conformity."[74] Such presumptions are ill-founded and false. In fact, viewers were both

entertained by *The Twilight Zone* and appreciative of its salience, particularly amidst

programming that left them yearning for smarter, more relevant television. Viewer Arthur

Isaksen wrote to Serling in 1962, for instance, "Whimsy, intrigue, terror, comedy, and enough

intelligence to help us use the 'gray matter.' I thought it would be impossible for a 'TV' program

to get better, but you did it!"[75]

Viewers were also quick to position *The Twilight Zone*, in relation to other genres and

programs, as superior. One viewer, Joyce Kerr, wrote to Serling in 1961, that the series was

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[73] I visited the Wisconsin Historical Society's Center for Film and Theater Research in September/October 2010, and had the pleasure of viewing a partial collection of Rod Serling's "fan mail," as well as copies of his responses to the letters he received. The collection included hundreds of viewer responses and, in some cases, "fan" letters (it should be noted that Serling received just as many negative responses to his work as positive responses). While the precise number of letters included has not been provided by WCFTR and I unfortunately did not count, a best guess would lead to the estimation that I viewed anywhere between 300 and 600 letters, ranging in date from December 1960, to November 1971, focusing particularly on the letters written during the original airing of *The Twilight Zone* (1959-1964). Comparatively, considering that Serling received anywhere from 100 to 200 viewer letters per week, the collection I sifted through was a mere modicum of the mail he received not to mention the inherent commentary at some point existing (or existing elsewhere) from viewers of *The Twilight Zone*. Still, the collection, presumably, serves as an accurate representation of broader viewer response to the series and to Serling and it serves here as such: an accurate representation of viewer response, but not by any means a *complete* representation. Finally, while such a thing cannot be absolutely determined from the letters themselves, it may be assumed that they represent a viewing public of largely middle-class individuals who would have constituted the broadest cohort of television viewers generally.

[74] Baughman, *Same Time*, 189.

[75] Arthur Isaksen, personal letter to Rod Serling, March 3, 1962.

"most unusual and breathtaking, and truly thought-porvoking [sic]. It is such a clever and

different theme, from the boring and dreary ordinary type of program we viewers of the

Television World are offered. The stupid, brutal, and moronic Westerners, the gory, gruesome,

and repetitious murder mysteries, are just about all we are given…in the way of make-believe and

fiction."[76] Another writer, Winburn Thomas, proclaimed in a 1961 letter, "The nation is indebted

to you for raising the level of television programs. Instead of blasting off at the low quality of TV

presentations you are showing how they can and should be done…I therefore wish to commend

you for the services which your are rendering both to the nation and to the moral and religious

development of our nation."[77] David McNally wrote to Serling in 1961, "Your program does

something which none other does. It makes you think of all the things which could be possible,

not only in the realm of imagination, but in our own material world."[78]

Viewers realized the reality underlying the science fiction/fantasy surfaces of *Twilight

Zone* episodes. Like Mr. McNally, Mary McLaughlin's 1961 letter to Serling notes, "It really is

strange how your fantastic tales emerge as more concrete and plausible than most everyday T.V.

plots."[79] Similarly, but rather more impassionedly, Maxine Wardrop wrote Serling, "What's the

matter with people? Are they afraid to think? Are they afraid to look at themselves? Are they

afraid to believe in the impossible? Are they really incapable of understanding anything deeper

than Top Cat or Ben Casey, with a plot so thin it shows right through the first scene?? [sic]"[80]

Leo McConnell also wrote, in 1963, "We need programs like yours—writing like yours.

Probably by attempting to realize human qualities of Alien creatures, we'll come to appreciate

our neighbors' qualities and break down barriers which alienate us from one another."[81]

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[76] Joyce Kerr, personal letter to Rod Serling, January 3, 1961.
[77] Winburn Thomas, personal letter to Rod Serling, June 12, 1961.
[78] David McNally, personal letter to Rod Serling, February 28, 1961.
[79] Mary McLaughlin, personal letter to Rod Serling, May 23, 1961.
[80] Maxine Wardrop, personal letter to Rod Serling, May 24, 1962.
[81] Leo McConnell, personal letter to Rod Serling, 1963.

This partial collection of letters which accompanies my viewing of *The Twilight Zone* proves extremely significant source material in the study of postwar masculinity. As has been explicated, viewers seem to have understood the deeper meaning behind many of the episodes of *The Twilight Zone*, including some of those I will analyze in the chapters ahead. More importantly, however, viewers' responses lend personal testimony to and commentary on the state of postwar masculinity almost entirely ignored by the current historiography. Rarely in the extant scholarship surrounding postwar masculinity are the voices of ordinary men heard. Rather, typically, studies provide the thoughts of public intellectuals (like David Riesman and William H. Whyte) and figures in popular culture (such as Beat authors and their literature and Hugh Heffner and his magazine, *Playboy*) to explain postwar masculinity; this study employs not only evidence provided by a particular piece of popular culture and its creator, but also the sentiments and commentary of ordinary men who, presumably, *experienced* the problems with masculinity represented in *The Twilight Zone* and felt just as keenly, but more publically, by Rod Serling.

CHAPTER ONE
The Life We Are Often Forced to Lead:
The Problem of Personality in Conceptions of Postwar American Masculinity

The exposition of masculinity in *The Twilight Zone* serves as evidence that conformity was the element of postwar masculinity which appeared most problematic within postwar conceptions of the masculine. Based upon this evidence provided by *The Twilight Zone*, I argue more specifically that the problem with masculine conformity was *not* its concentration on the breadwinner ethic—as scholars of postwar masculinity have generally agreed—but its strict adherence to the principles of personality. In other words, I argue that *the* male problem of the postwar period was *conformity* to the precepts of the personality paradigm. Characterizations of masculinity in *The Twilight Zone* suggest that, contrary to what has been argued in the extant historiography, being breadwinners/providers was *not* what spurred masculine discontent in the postwar period. What precipitated a certain level of malaise was the manner in which men were to go about providing: as men of personality and as conformists to that ideal's principles.

To reiterate, the personality paradigm was a vision of masculinity founded upon, as Tom Pendergast has explained, "self-creation, wealth and appearances." Further associated with modern masculinity were "forcefulness, friendliness, adaptability, cheerfulness, neatness, and health habits," a certain sense of "perfectibility" as well as "glamour, youth, optimism, and a sense of boundlessness tempered by anxiety."[82] Importantly, too, such terms associated with the man of personality imply a certain attention to *others* that Warren Susman posited. A man's personality was not necessarily meant to aid a man in knowing himself or to augment his own estimation of himself; rather, the attributes of personality are suggestive of a man's dependence upon others and their expectations of him.

The episodes of *The Twilight Zone* that best exemplify the problems of personality as the bases of the postwar masculine conformity are those, maybe not surprisingly, that portray men in

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[82] Pendergast, *Creating the Modern Man*, 111, 149, 127.

the workplace or, more specifically, white-collar career men in the corporate office setting.

Indeed, white-collar corporate employment was the ideal setting, the ideal means to achieving

financial success and subsequent provision for a family in the postwar United States, and it is

here—and in *The Twilight Zone*—where we see the truly problematic nature of postwar

masculine conformity and conformity's foundation in the principles of personality.

     The Twilight Zone, in depicting men as employees in the corporate office setting, did

something that almost no other television shows did. Unlike the more numerous Westerns, crime

drama series, and domestic situation comedies that constituted the majority of television fare in

the postwar period, *The Twilight Zone* placed men in an altogether realistic—if not somewhat

stereotypical—work setting. Westerns, of course, could not treat men in such corporate and

realistic work environments simply by virtue of their historical settings in the Old West and their

generic conventions. Crime dramas, while presenting men in the work place still spoke to an

atypical form of employment. And domestic situation comedies—utilized to the greatest extent,

as far as television is concerned, as source material in postwar masculinity studies—regularly

featured men as husbands and fathers who were almost never at work, seen only when at home,

and who were conspicuously more present in the domestic scene than reality would permit.

Michael Kimmel notes, importantly, that the men of postwar domestic situation comedies were

consistently shown at home "partly because their jobs were so unimportant in the overall

depiction of their lives. Who now remembers the occupations of Jim Anderson [of *Father Knows

Best*] or Ward Cleaver [of *Leave It to Beaver*]?" Speaking specifically about Ozzie Nelson of *The

Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet*, but commenting on the state of men in situation comedies more

broadly, Kimmel explains that the depiction of men at home, never at work, and perpetually

present for the trials and tribulations of domestic life "helped American men laugh at their retreat

from heroic masculinity."[83] Kimmel implies that heroism had been stripped of men in or by the

workplace, making it even more significant that *The Twilight Zone* examines men in that setting

purposefully ignored by other contemporary television genres. The workplace, in sum, neglected

as a television setting due to the negative connotations attached to it, was taken up by *The*

Twilight Zone in order to expose and scrutinize some of those negative aspects which in turn

reveal a great deal about postwar masculinity previously ignored or unrealized.

Considering what characterizations of masculinity in *The Twilight Zone* suggest about

postwar masculine conformity—that it was the allegiance to the principles of personality—it is

helpful to revisit the historiographical argument as well. Scholars of postwar masculinity have

generally agreed that the postwar era was marked by a crisis in masculinity. That crisis, it is

argued, was caused by the period's advocacy of masculine *conformity* and, more specifically,

conformity to a set of expectations that required men to provide for their families via white-collar

corporate employment, to support (more specifically) comfortable suburban lifestyles, and to

collect a variety of consumer items for added luxury and status at home. That set of expectations

Barbara Ehrenreich refers to as the breadwinner ethic.[84]

Gail Bederman's cogent insights on gender construction, however—in conjunction with

the evidence presented in *The Twilight Zone*—prove most efficacious to what is a necessary

rethinking of postwar masculinity and the so-called *crisis* identified by various scholars as

centered upon malaise with the breadwinner ethic. Bederman explains that gender construction—

generally and whether involving masculinity, femininity, or both—is a "historical, ideological" as

well as "continual, dynamic process," involving "constant contradiction, change, and

renegotiation." Bederman elaborates that "men and women cannot invent completely new

formations of gender, but they can adapt old ones. They can combine and recombine them,

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[83] Kimmel, *Manhood in America*, 163; also see Nina C. Leibman's *Living Room Lectures*.
[84] See Ehrenreich's *The Hearts of Men* as well as Michael Kimmel's *Manhood in America*, James Gilbert's *Men in the Middle*, and K.A. Cuordileone's *Manhood and American Political Culture in the Cold War*.

exploit the contradictions between them, and work to modify them."[85] Bederman also explicates the notion of crisis so often linked particularly to masculinity:

> To imply that masculinity was in crisis suggests that manhood is a transhistorical category or fixed essence that has its good moments as well as its bad, rather than an ideological process which is constantly being remade. Gender, which we have defined as an ongoing ideological process, implies constant…change…Thus, change in the gender system—even extensive change—doesn't necessarily imply a crisis.[86]

Scholars of postwar masculinity—by, first, asserting that a state of crisis existed within notions of masculinity, and, second, by attributing that crisis to an intense discontent with conformity specifically to the breadwinner ethic—have, indeed, treated postwar masculinity as transhistorical, or even ahistorical, and have ignored the process of constant change that all gender construction is. More concretely, by conceiving of the discourse surrounding postwar masculinity as a sign of crisis and by labeling the cause of that crisis conformity to the breadwinner ethic, scholars have failed to recognize a number of significant points. First, the masculine expectation that men provide financially for their families had been in existence in the United States (according to the broader historiography) as an ideal at least since the pre-Revolutionary era. Scholars of postwar masculinity, thus, imply either that that ideal—the breadwinner ethic—had long been extant but had been accepted without change until the postwar era when it rather suddenly became problematic for men, or that the breadwinner ethic had no historical precedents at all and as a new cultural standard for postwar males proved altogether unacceptable. In a word, that particular aspect of masculine paradigms has been treated as transhistorical or ahistorical.

Second, by focusing upon mid-twentieth-century conformity to the breadwinner ethic as crisis, scholars of postwar masculinity have overlooked the multitudinous changes and renegotiations that occurred within constructions of masculinity revolving around *how*—or the

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[85] Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization*, 7, 11, 10.
[86] Ibid., 11.

manner in which—men should carry out their roles as breadwinners. If it was generally expected throughout much of United States history, as the broader historiography has explained, that men provide for their families, and if that one aspect of masculine paradigm seems to have remained static, then (as the historiography has also explicated) change had to have occurred elsewhere within the notions of the masculine and did. More specifically, men had consistently been expected to provide for their families; however, early masculine paradigms advocated that they do so as self-made men of character, a notion that then shifted to an expectation that men fashion ever-changing personalities to achieve financial success. It is *that* change that has been ignored by scholars of postwar masculinity and which I aim to illuminate as the truly problematic part of postwar masculinity in this chapter.

Connected to that point, and third, scholars of postwar masculinity have consequently— by not recognizing various changes that had already occurred within conceptions of masculinity due to their fixation upon crisis and the breadwinner ethic—neglected the fact that completely new formations of gender cannot be achieved and that gender construction implies a consistent borrowing and renegotiation. Once again, those borrowings and renegotiations that have been left out of postwar masculinity studies will be treated here.

One particular episode of *The Twilight Zone*, "A Stop at Willoughby" (1960) written by Rod Serling, proves most exemplary in understanding masculine disquiet surrounding conformity not as a malaise with breadwinning, but with the precepts of the personality paradigm. "A Stop at Willoughby" effectively evidences what was so problematic about personality, underscoring particularly the superficiality inherent in the personality paradigm, its element of required performativity, the feeling of lost control, and, significantly, the individual's perpetual positioning in relation to others. Importantly, what "A Stop at Willoughby" reveals about postwar masculine conformity is supported by viewer commentary.

Opening tensely in a stereotypically corporate board room, Gart Williams, surrounded by a number of nervous executives, anxiously awaits the arrival of a junior colleague to whom he gave a large account. When Williams finally receives a call, it is revealed that said colleague has intentionally left the firm and taken the account with him. Furious, Williams's boss, Mr. Misrell, lectures: "This is a push business, Williams. A push, push, push business. Push and drive! But personally. You don't delegate responsibility to little boys. You should know it better than anyone else. A push, push, push business, Williams. It's push, push, push all the way, all the time. Push, push, push all the way, all the time, right on down the line!" Williams, however, has clearly been pushed to his limits by the business, not to mention Mr. Misrell's obnoxious speech, and retaliates, shouting at Mr. Misrell himself and storming out of the board room. On his way into his office, Williams's secretary asks if he needs anything to which Williams replies, "Yeah, a sharp razor and a chart of the human anatomy showing where all the arteries are." Williams sits at his desk, engulfed in a depressing sort of shadow as Serling offers his opening narration:

> This is Gart Williams, age thirty-eight. A man protected by a suit of armor all held together by one bolt. Just a moment ago, someone removed the bolt, and Mr. Williams's protection fell away from him and left him a naked target. He's been cannonaded this afternoon by all the enemies of his life. His insecurity has shelled him. His sensitivity has straddled him with humiliation. His deep-rooted disquiet about his own worth has zeroed in on him, landed on target, and blown him apart. Mr. Gart Williams, ad agency exec, who in just a moment will move into the Twilight Zone in a desperate search for survival.

Next, Williams is seen aboard a commuter train, presumably on his way home, while snow falls outside the window. Williams drifts into a sleep only to wake up to a bright summer day. Looking out the window, Williams sees an idyllic turn-of-the-century town. It is July, 1888, in the quaint town of Willoughby. Inquiring of an aged conductor, Williams is informed that this place is "peaceful, restful, [and a place] where a man can slow down to a walk and live his life full measure." Unfortunately, Williams is roused from what has merely been a peaceful dream.

Shortly, Williams arrives home—what appears to be the typical dwelling of an upper-middle-class couple—to his altogether beautiful but extraordinarily callous wife, Janey. Having already got wind of her husband's outburst at work, Mrs. Williams castigates her husband, selfishly worrying he has lost his well-paying job that apparently supports her expensive habits. Williams sarcastically responds: "He [Mr. Misrell] has found it in that great, oversized heart of his to forgive. This somewhat obese, gracious gentleman will allow me to continue in his employ because he's such a human-type fellow…with the small, insignificant, parenthetical, additional reason that if I were to go to a competitive agency I might possibly take a lot of business with me." Williams heavily sits, the invisible burden resting on his shoulders weighing him down as he continues: "I'm tired, Janey. I'm tired and I'm sick…Some people aren't meant for competition, Janey. Or big, pretentious houses they can't afford. Or rich communities they don't feel comfortable in. Or country clubs they wear around their neck like a badge of status." Williams attempts to explain his sentiments further to his wife:

> I would prefer, though never asked before, a job—any job, any job at all—where I could be myself, where I wouldn't have to climb on a stage and go through a masquerade every morning at nine o'clock and mouth all the dialogue and play the executive and make believe I'm the bright young lad who's on his way up, because I'm not that person, Janey. You've tried to make me that person, but that isn't me. That isn't me at all. I'm a not-very-young, soon-to-be old, very uncompetitive, rather dull, quite uninspired, average-type guy…with a wife who has an appetite.

Mrs. Williams remains unsympathetic and retreats upstairs.

Williams, it is assumed, returns to work for a few days, and with every return trip on the commuter train home, he dreams of Willoughby, vowing that he will get off at Willoughby next time. Back at work, however, Williams reaches his breaking point. On an inter-office speaker, Mr. Misrell once again invidiously presses Williams, "Do more than you can. Aspire. Dream big and then get behind it. Push, push, push, push!" Immediately following his conversation with Mr. Misrell, Williams finds himself bombarded by phone calls on multiple of his office telephones and visibly perturbed by the grating voices coming through the wires. Clearly unable

to take the pressure, Williams desperately escapes to his office restroom and looking in the mirror above the sink, is confronted with images of Mr. Misrell push, push, pushing. Williams promptly shatters the mirror with his fist, runs to his phone and calls his wife. Williams pleads with an earnest emotion that cuts to the very heart of the sympathetic viewer, "Listen, please. I've had it, understand? I've had it. I just can't take another day, not another hour. This is it, right now. I've got to get out of here. Janey, will you help me, please? Will you please help me?" Mrs. Williams, however, without a word, hangs up on her husband.

Williams is next seen on the commuter train, dreaming, as usual, of Willoughby. This time, however, as Williams had promised himself, he disembarks the train into the sunshine of the turn-of-the-twentieth-century town square where he may walk at his leisure, fish at a nearby pond with local boys, and where everyone knows his name. Unfortunately, the viewer quickly learns, Williams did not, in reality, reach a town called Willoughby; rather, according to witnesses, Williams jumped from the speeding train and died immediately. In fact, the viewer is shown his dead and frozen body lying in the snow beside the train tracks, as his remains are attended to by a particular funeral parlor: Willoughby and Son Funeral Home. Rod Serling closes the episode with the following commentary: "Willoughby? Maybe it's wishful thinking nestled in the hidden part of a man's mind, or maybe it's the last stop in the vast design of things. Or perhaps, for a man like Gart Williams, who climbed on a world that went by too fast, it's a place around the bend where he could jump off. Willoughby? Whatever it is, it comes with sunlight and serenity, and is a part of the Twilight Zone."[87]

"A Stop at Willoughby" most poignantly reveals not a few of the problematic aspects of conformity and, even further, illustrates the extent to which personality and its rigid regulations placed on men and men's adherence to those restrictions contributed to the problem of the

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[87] "A Stop at Willoughby," *The Twilight Zone*, DVD, directed by Robert Parrish (1960; Chatsworth, CA: Image Entertainment, 2006).

otherwise quite vague term: *conformity* itself. First and foremost, a certain level of superficiality,

inherent in ideals of personality, proves most problematic to the episode's main character, Gart

Williams. Williams implicitly identifies himself as a man plagued by conformity when speaking

with his wife following his first crisis; that is, when Williams explains to his wife that "some

people aren't meant for competition," or for "big, pretentious houses they can't afford," "rich

communities they don't feel comfortable in," and "country clubs they wear around their neck like

a badge of status," he speaks to the fact that he has, indeed, attempted to conform. Williams has

attempted to fit the mold, first, of competitive businessman, but has found himself without

capacity to happily fulfill that sort of prescribed role. Furthermore, Williams has attempted to

conform to the standard of superficiality itself, and, to reiterate, personality required of men

attention to appearances, especially the appearance of wealth. Williams expresses his

dissatisfaction with that particular element of conformity, noting that he lives in the expectedly

large and luxurious (if not ostentatious) home in a wealthy community complete with country

club, despite the fact that, one, he cannot really afford it, and two, he feels entirely ill at ease in

such a setting. Ultimately, Williams admittedly wears all such superficial "badges of status"

around his own neck; however, Williams seems to have finally (if we, as viewers, can assume this

is the first time) acknowledged his personal disgust for his own lifestyle, his own conformity, just

as he has acknowledged his misery as a conformist.

Intricately connected to superficiality, Williams's sense of malaise refers also to the

concepts of performance and artifice so intrinsic to personality and conformity. Personality, of

course, required a certain amount of malleability and adaptability, the constant faculty toward

changing one's outward self in order to fit the needs and/or wants of both general and overarching

as well as specific expectations. Williams expresses his dissatisfaction with the performance

requisite to his financial success in terms both explicit and implicit. Most clearly, Williams

describes his quotidian work life as climbing upon a stage and as a "masquerade," his

participation in which demands that he "mouth all the dialogue and play the executive." Here Williams quite explicitly explains that his work life is complete and utter performance; he is merely an actor, although not untalented, playing or performing the role of corporate tycoon. Rather more implicitly, Williams conveys awareness of himself as an actor by admitting that he only wishes he could be himself because, as he puts it, "I am not that person." In some sense Williams has discovered himself as some artificial, unreal version. Williams has finally acknowledged, too, that in order to meet the standards of corporate employment as well as those placed on him by his apparently avaricious wife, he has pretended a life, played a life, he never wanted. Williams essentially admits, once again, his conformity via a performance he has so long carried out.

Equally as distressing to Williams is the environment in which his conformity has occurred. Deeply associated with personality itself, historically, has been the atmosphere which supports adherence to personality. In the case of Gart Williams, it is the corporate work environment that proves galling enough to provoke his breakdown (if not his demise) as well as his fervent wish for the slow and easy, albeit nostalgically imagined, town of Willoughby (or, as it may be interpreted, his wish for peace through death). For Williams, the corporate atmosphere is one of unyielding pressure under which, while he has clearly been successful, he may well, it seems for most of the episode, collapse and under which he eventually does. The corporate atmosphere that proves, in fact, deadly to Williams is an area characterized by, as Mr. Misrell so insufferably reiterates, a "push, push, push" ideal. Further, as Mr. Misrell also demonstrates, one is to push "all the way, all the time, right on down the line," and to do more than one can, always pushing, always driving. Conversely, it seems that while one is supposed to perpetually push, one can also expect to *be* pushed; unfortunately, Williams is pushed past his limits, he has done more than he actually could. The environment to which he had conformed for years, the

expectations he had so long met and even exceeded resulted only in a desperately mad sense of loss and, in some sense, a push right from a speeding train.

This environment, as noted, and Williams's place in it also speaks to, especially significantly, one of the primary problems associated with the adherence to personality and the resultant state of conformity: loss of control (or, at the very least, a perceived loss of control). For much of the episode it is apparent that Williams has little control over his own life, between the railing Mr. Misrell and Williams's indifferent but demanding wife. It is made clear that Williams feels his life has been merely pretended or played for a particular audience and for particular purposes—again, for Mr. Misrell or basic employment as well as for his wife and the lavish lifestyle she prefers, if not demands. Further, Williams admits his apparent lack of control or even an inability to assert his control by stating that while he would like a job at which he may be himself, he has never asked. Inherent, however, in such a statement is still the underlying suggestion that Williams necessarily must ask permission. Williams feels he cannot make his own decisions or control his own life; rather, he is situated perpetually in relation to others. Suggestive of that, too, is the fact that, looking in the mirror, Williams is not only confronted by his own reflection, but by the face and harping tongue of Mr. Misrell; Williams is a man consistently pitted against himself and subject to others and their preferences, resulting in the loss of control of which he has only recently become so keenly aware.

Additionally, when Williams does, indeed, seem to take control, his efforts go unrewarded if they are not entirely rejected. When Williams, initially, takes some element of control, retaliating against Mr. Misrell and supposedly resigning his employment, Williams is, to some extent, required to counteract his own decision and to remain at Mr. Misrell's advertising agency. Mr. Misrell not only—as Williams facetiously noted—allowed Williams to keep and return to his job, but implicitly *required* that Williams stay, otherwise the advertising agency would have faced a consequential loss of business. Furthermore, the demands of Williams's wife

and the circumstances of their (physically) comfortable life contravene Williams's decision in that employment and salary are essential to support said wife and lifestyle. Similarly, when Williams decides he has "had it" and chooses, once again, to leave the advertising agency, pleading with his wife over the phone for help, Mrs. Williams refuses her husband by hanging up. Mrs. Williams clearly will not even entertain the idea, let alone aid her husband in an, albeit life-changing, but potentially healthy decision made by her husband. Williams and his control are consistently foiled by the desires and expectations of others.

The loss of control so devastating to Williams leads directly, of course, to his demise. Without control, Williams can only dream of respite from the conformist life he has come to despise, in the form of Willoughby. Significantly, however, Williams does not consciously choose to kill himself (although he hints toward it, sarcastically requesting a razor and a map of the arteries from his secretary); instead, Williams dreams he has debarked the train at the peaceful town, unknowingly leaping from the train to his death. Certainly, *The Twilight Zone* and its creators (not to mention television codes and etiquette) would not advocate suicide, but the episode clearly probes into the question of escape from conformity. Can a man choose not to conform? Can a man leave behind the conformist life he has himself created? Does a man truly have any choice or control at all? And what are the consequences for men who must conform but who would rather not? Those questions implicitly posed in "A Stop at Willoughby" mixed with the outcome of Gart Williams suggest that men will have no reprieve. Once a man has given himself over to conformity it is too late, and the only peace he may find will come with death. Unfortunately, death may come sooner for some than for others as a result of conformity and some men's understandable inability to live with it. As Serling himself phrased it, men like Gart Williams "climbed on a world that went by too fast," chose to be part of a world that necessitated the harsh and seemingly unbearable demands of conformity. And like Williams, such men would find their suits of armor crumbled around them and their naked bodies, their naked souls, exposed

to the all the weaponry of contemporary masculine expectations. Men had only the options of either allowing themselves to be "cannonaded" or of jumping off round the bend at a place called Willoughby, a circumstance better known, of course, as death.

Certainly, "A Stop at Willoughby" speaks to what so many scholars of postwar masculinity have identified as *the* problem for postwar men: conformity to the breadwinner ethic. Surely, this episode took into account Williams's responsibility to his wife to provide for her and, further, to support her "appetite" for luxury; however, in the episode, Williams's wife is only a minor component of his discontent. In fact, Williams never considers leaving his wife or starting a completely new life in which he may be himself. Williams actually pleads with his wife to begin anew with him. He asks for her help. Yes, Williams must financially support his wife's lavish lifestyle, but the episode clearly illustrates that what Gart Williams truly despised was his own conformity, his own superficiality, his positioning always in relation to others, and his subsequent lack (or perceived lack) of control. Williams was a man of personality, a conformist, and it was *that* which drove him to his untimely demise.

Significantly, "A Stop at Willoughby" elicited genuine and heartfelt response. At least one viewer of *The Twilight Zone* recognized the significance of "A Stop at Willoughby" and its pertinence to his own life. On December 30, 1960, viewer Greville Bathe wrote Serling, "Tonight (Dec 30th) I had the privilege of once more viewing on your 'Twilight Zone' your presentation of 'Willouby Junction' [sic]. This to my mind, out of many of your good film storys [sic], will always be your masterpiece of dramatic art. Who amongst us in these strenuous times have not wished for such an escape from life that we are often forced to lead. Perhaps even you?"[88] Certainly, Bathe identified with Gart Williams's longing for Willoughby, for that same type of withdrawal or "escape" from the life Gart Williams and presumably Bathe himself felt obligated, "forced" to lead. Bathe implicitly acknowledged, as well, that men in fact did feel a

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[88] Greville Bathe, personal letter to Rod Serling, December 30, 1960.

certain malaise surrounding conformity and all its ramifications. Bathe's honest question and its particular phrasing of "who amongst us" suggests that not only does Bathe feel somewhat discontented with compulsory conformity but that there is an *us*, a tangible collective of men who felt the same.

A 1963 episode of *The Twilight Zone*, "Miniature"—written not by Rod Serling but by Charles Beaumont, a regular contributor to *The Twilight Zone*—further speaks to and supports both the problem of conformity as characterized by adherence to tenets of personality as well as the idea of escape embodied in "A Stop at Willoughby" and noted by viewer Greville Bathe as almost *natural* to the postwar male due to his malaise. "Miniature" also further disproves the notion that conformity to the breadwinner ethic was the primary issue for postwar men.

"Miniature" begins with another typically corporate workplace: rows of desks seated at which are multiple men all dressed exactly the same, all typing vigorously away. It is noon and time for the lunch hour, but, while the other employees all start to lunch—and a presumably amiable outing at a local restaurant—one man remains behind, diligent and determined to finish his work before breaking for lunch. That man is Charley Parks and his colleagues are both unimpressed by and annoyed at his work ethic, poking fun at Parks for remaining behind and hassling him for being a "goody two-shoes." The other employees leave and, alone in the office amidst the empty desks, Parks looks disquieted, sad somehow. Parks, of course, has his own personal tradition—apart from his co-workers'—which entails lunch at a local museum's cafeteria, only on this particular day the cafeteria has been closed. Instead of a meal, then, Parks decides to explore the museum. Here Serling offers his opening narration:

> To the average person a museum is a place of knowledge, a place of beauty and truth and wonder. Some people come to study, others to contemplate, others to look for the sheer joy of looking. Charley Parks has his own reasons; he comes to the museum to get away from the world. It isn't really the sixty-cent cafeteria meal that has drawn him here every day, it's the fact that here in these strange, cool halls he can be alone for a little while. Really and truly alone. Anyway, that's how it was before he got lost and wandered in to the Twilight Zone.

Walking up the stairs Parks is caught in a cacophonous crowd of middle-aged women—

the ladies of the Art Appreciation Society—and swept away with their group. It appears as though

Parks lacks both the physical strength and the gumption to make his way out of the crowd of

ladies until they are stopped in front of an exhibit and he can politely shoulder his way back to the

staircase. From there he enters the Victorian Room (a room it seems he has not visited before)

where he encounters a dollhouse modeled upon a typical turn-of-the-twentieth-century home and

featuring a miniature model woman seated at a piano. Parks is veritably enchanted by the

dollhouse, but it is when he turns to leave that he becomes altogether captivated because the

miniature woman begins to play the piano. Intrigued and quite excited, Parks inquires with the

security guard about the logistics of getting the girl to play, except that the guard not only looks at

Parks with a touch of concern for his sanity but informs Parks that she is only a doll, carved from

a single block of wood. Embarrassed, Parks excuses himself and returns to work.

Arriving back late, Parks is immediately summoned to the manager's office. In his

conversation with his manager, it is revealed that Parks is quite shy, timid, mild-mannered and

reserved to some extent. When asked why he has returned late to work, Parks timorously admits

that he has "no good reason." The manager, surprisingly, replies: "You know, Parks, this is the

first sign of humanity you've shown in almost four years…Up until now you've come and gone

like some kind of wind-up toy. You're never early. You're never late. You're always keeping to

yourself. Don't you like us, Parks?...Do you like your fellow workers?" Veritably perplexed

Parks responds, "Well I suppose so…I never thought about it, sir. I don't *dislike* them." The

manager is not satisfied with that response and informs Parks, "You know, I'm afraid, Mr. Parks,

that isn't good enough. An office is like a team, a platoon. Either it works together or it doesn't.

Here it doesn't, and the reason is you. I knew you were a square peg when I hired you, but you

were bright and, well, I thought we'd wear those edges off. We haven't. None of them. You're

still a square peg." The manager confesses he would have liked to fire Parks on the grounds of his tardiness; however, "the fact is that I'm letting you go because you just don't fit in."

Parks tacitly accepts his fate and makes his way home: an apartment in which he lives with his mother. Parks talks with his mother about the situation and, in fact, this is not the first time Parks has been fired for not fitting in. Mrs. Parks obviously thinks the idea of fitting in is "ridiculous" and notes that her son is "persecuted." Still she wonders, "Why can't you keep a job, son? Why do you always end up making everyone feel uncomfortable around you?" Ultimately, Mrs. Parks only wants her son to have a "normal life," to settle down with a wife and family.

In the days or weeks that follow, newly unemployed Charley intends to seek new employment; however, Charley finds himself day after day drawn into the museum, into the Victorian Room, and into the world of the dollhouse. Each day Charley watches as, inside the dollhouse, the miniature woman plays out a life. Sometimes, the little woman stares listlessly—seemingly waiting for *something*—out the windows of her home, sometimes she plays her piano alone. At other times, she goes out with a male suitor, clearly a rogue (as Parks sees it). On any given day, it is revealed, Parks stares into the world of the dollhouse for periods of up to four-and-a-half hours. Charley Parks, in fact, has fallen in love with the little woman—her simplicity and her innocence—but his captivation with his miniature love soon turns into obsession.

Noticing both that Parks has not obtained a new job and that his mood has changed substantially, Parks's mother and sister, Myrna, conspire to find him out. Myrna follows him and discovers what appears to be simply a strange hobby of visiting the museum day after day. Myrna takes her brother for a cup of coffee and offers her own perspective on his behavior: "You go there because it gives you a chance to be alone. And you want to be alone because you're scared." Myrna, however, also comments that her brother's lifestyle—single and living with mother—is "not natural" and, she says with some certainty and emphasis, "sick." In an effort to

help her brother, Myrna sets him up on a blind date with—the viewer soon sees—a voluptuous blonde, Harriet, who is quite forward, oozing sexuality, but ultimately disappointed as Parks literally pushes her off a park bench when she attempts to kiss him.

Visiting his little love at the museum the next day, Parks tells the story to the miniature woman, except this time, as Parks spends his hours with the little lady, her male suitor arrives and Parks sees that the man's intent is to ravish the little woman. Desperate and mad to save her, Parks breaks the glass case surrounding the dollhouse. Shortly, as a result, the viewer finds Parks in a mental health facility convinced that what he has seen within the dollhouse is real. Parks has had his breakdown.

After an indeterminate but presumably lengthy stay at the institution, Parks is finally *cured* and ready to be released. His family has come to gather him and escort him home. His mother inquires with the doctor, "Is he *really* normal, Doctor?" The doctor replies, "That [*normal*] is a word we try *not* to use, Mrs. Parks…It's meaningless. Normal in the popular sense refers only to the behavior pattern of the majority. Now, that pattern is not necessarily good…What I'm trying to say is don't judge Charley's emotional health by the degree to which he conforms to other people's standards. Don't expect him to, well, be like other people." The doctor continues, attributing Parks's breakdown to "the constant pressure of trying to be something he wasn't, trying to act and feel and think the way you wanted him to instead of the way he wanted to…Charley was unable to cope with this world, so his mind created another world."

Parks himself soon appears and it seems he is perfectly healthy and, importantly, sane, content and maybe even happy. Parks and his family return home, preparing for a welcome-home dinner; Parks, however, decides to take a short nap supposedly to be in top shape for the evening. Of course, when dinnertime arrives and Parks has not emerged rested from his room the family finds his door locked, and once the door is broken open, Parks is nowhere to be found.

Frantic, the family telephones the doctor and they all go together to the only place Parks could have possibly gone: the museum. When they arrive, though, the Victorian Room is empty and Parks has apparently disappeared, never to be found, never to be seen again. In the last moment of the episode, however, the security guard glimpses something peculiar in the dollhouse Parks was so fond of; seated on the sofa with the lovely, tiny woman is Charley Parks, miniature himself, content and locked in love's embrace with his miniature sweetheart. Serling closes the episode with the following commentary: "They never found Charley Parks, because the guard didn't tell them what he saw in the glass case. He knew what they'd say, and he knew they'd be right too, because seeing is not *always* believing especially if what you see happens to be an odd corner of the Twilight Zone."[89]

"Miniature" bears both significant differences from and similarities to "A Stop at Willoughby." Unlike Gart Williams, Charley Parks is a veritable nonconformist, yet the problems associated with personality still plague Parks. First and foremost, Parks is apparently unable to achieve any sort of stability or success because of his nonconformity to the tenets of personality. The first among those tenets to which Parks refuses to conform are superficiality and performance. That fact is made particularly evident by Parks's manager who dismisses Parks from his employment based on Parks's lack of charm (or, the manager goes so far to say, of "humanity"), his lack of affection or even consideration for his coworkers, and Parks's being "a square peg" who presumably will never fit into the round hole of superficial, performative personality in the corporate workplace. Parks simply does not "fit in." He refuses to conform, he refuses to pretend to be anything other than what he prefers, and consequently loses job after job because of it.

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[89] "Miniature," *The Twilight Zone*, DVD, directed by Walter E. Grauman (1963; Chatsworth, CA: Image Entertainment, 2006).

Pointing similarly to Parks's nonconformity and the simultaneous exploration of the superficiality and performativity of personality is the conversation between Mrs. Parks and the psychologist who supposedly restores Parks to sanity. The psychologist tells Mrs. Parks that the term *normal* is "meaningless" and "refers only to the behavior pattern of the majority." *Normal*, then, insinuates, even requires, conformity. The psychologist, though, further explains that Parks's emotional and psychological health should not be measured "by the degree to which he conforms to other people's standards;" however, by the standards of the corporate workplace and even by the standards of his own mother, Parks's defiance against conforming to the superficiality inherent in personality and against performing a more popularly acceptable self for others renders him altogether abnormal and, therefore, undesirable in most capacities. Regardless of the doctor's cogent remarks surrounding normality, the (presumably conformist) majority will hold Parks in contempt for his unwillingness to conform and his perceivably resultant *abnormality*.

Evident too by Parks's nonconformity to superficiality and performativity as well as by the doctor's comments is the fact that, like Gart Williams, Parks is perpetually positioned in relation to others which contributes to his various failures at success. In the corporate work environment, Parks is compared to his coworkers who are decidedly more outgoing and social and who, definitely unlike Parks, "fit in" and act as part of the "team" or "platoon," at least enough to convivially lunch together on a daily basis and to band together in their derision of Parks. Despite the fact that Parks is "bright" and clearly attentive to his work, it is still his lack of charisma and disinterest in camaraderie—his refusal to pretend a superficial geniality—that lands him in unemployment.

In a slightly different way, Parks is also consistently positioned in relation to others in that the people in his life feel it necessary to constantly inform Parks of his problems and their amateur diagnoses of those problems. Surely, Mrs. Parks and Park's sister, Myrna, for instance,

care about Parks as a son and brother, but Parks seems never to elude their observations of and deductions about him and his abnormality. Parks's mother wonders why he does not live a normal life, get married, and have a family, and pressures him to do so. Myrna, her mother's accomplice in the matter, labels Parks "sick" for his sort of reclusive behavior and apparent indifference to women, dating, and marriage, enough so to arrange a date for her brother with Harriet, an indubitable vamp, sure to arouse Parks to normality. Seemingly, Parks cannot avoid his placement in relation to others. He is continually held to the standards of others and encouraged to conform, to be someone he is clearly not. Superficially, then, Parks does not appear normal because he does not perform as normal.

Most importantly, and similar to "A Stop at Willoughby," "Miniature" treats the theme of escape with which viewer Greville Bathe not only identified—and implicitly marked other postwar men as having indentified with—but which he explained was almost natural to postwar men. While Gart Williams dreamed on the train home from work each day of the peaceful (albeit nostalgically imagined) turn-of-the-twentieth-century town of Willoughby, Parks applies dynamism to a miniature, model woman—via what may be assumed to be hallucination—in a display dollhouse depicting, similarly, a nostalgically imagined, turn-of-the-twentieth-century lifestyle. Even before his aberration begins, however, Parks has searched for escape. As Serling noted in his opening commentary to the episode, Parks went to the museum every day "to get away from the world" and to "be alone for a little while. Really and truly alone." Just as Greville Bathe posed the question, "Who amongst us in these strenuous times have not wished for such an escape from life that we are often forced to lead," the psychologist explains that Parks attempted to "act and feel and think the way you wanted him to instead of the way he wanted to" and that he was subsequently under "the constant pressure of trying to be someone he wasn't" and was "unable to cope with this world, so his mind created another world." Like Williams, and more importantly like Bathe, Parks serves as another example of that certain desire for escape, to leave

the world of conformity and adherence to the expectations of others for a world of simplicity, solitude, and the personal liberty to do as one pleases, to live one's life full measure (as it is phrased in "A Stop at Willoughby"). Forced to lead a life for which he cared but little, Parks created his own escape, his own special reality.

One question remains, however: what really happened to Charley Parks? Unlike "A Stop at Willoughby," in which the viewer knows Gart Williams leapt from a train to his death, "Miniature" leaves viewers to wonder whether they should believe that in the Twilight Zone, where anything is possible, Parks actually did transform into a miniature companion to the girl in the dollhouse or whether they should assume otherwise. Viewers, indeed, might also wonder whether Parks simply ran away or whether, possibly, he in some way or another, retreated into his insanity and died. Whatever the case may be, Parks, like Williams, could have no apparent reprieve from the pressures of conformity, the expectations others placed on him. He needed escape and achieved it, even if only as a part of a self-inflicted delusion.

In addition to highlighting the problems of personality as the root of postwar conformity, "Miniature" also, quite importantly, once again disproves the previously held notion that mid-twentieth-century masculine malaise was attributable to conformity to the breadwinner ethic. Different from the situation in which we found Gart Williams, Charley Parks was an awkward, single male apparently unconcerned with women until he encountered and fabricated his miniature love interest in the dollhouse. Parks was a breadwinner for his aging mother, about which he seemed to have no qualms. Never in the episode does Parks wish he were not required to provide for her. More significantly, it is love and domesticity that, in fact, are the solutions to Parks's problems. His mother and sister clearly advocate that he find a good woman and settle down into wedded bliss, thus, becoming the normal man they wish him to be. Those hopes could, of course, be considered merely other elements of masculine conformity and negative aspects at that; however, the fact that Parks ultimately ends up—as he wants to all along—in the arms of the

woman he loves and in a beautiful Victorian mansion (and regardless or, perhaps, because of the

fact that it is a fiction created in his own mind), it appears that the only true contentment to be

found by postwar men disconcerted and beaten by the pressures of conformity in all other areas of

their lives, and especially in the corporate workplace, is the love of a good woman and presence

in their mutual domestic life.

The issue of conformity through adherence to the rules of personality is again addressed

in a 1960 episode, written by Rod Serling, "Mr. Bevis." Not unlike "A Stop at Willoughby" and

"Miniature," the episode treats man in a corporate setting as well as the notion that a man can

have no escape from conformity; however, "Mr. Bevis" handles the topic of conformity far more

light-heartedly but with the same unsatisfying conclusion. In fact, "Mr. Bevis" suggests that

there are consequences for men who do *not* conform to the tenets of personality. Simultaneously,

this episode also lends itself to what is clearly Serling's advocacy of nonconformity and, further,

of manly character as the ideal model of masculinity.

"Mr. Bevis" opens upon the apartment of and Mr. Bevis, himself; messy and cluttered

with all sorts of silly items, Bevis moves about, clearly disorganized but absolutely endearing to

the viewer. Serling's voice-over narration runs during this opening scene:

> In the parlance of the twentieth century, this is an oddball. His name is James B.W.
> Bevis, and his tastes lean toward stuffed animals, zither music, professional football,
> Charles Dickens, moose heads, carnivals, dogs, children, and young ladies. Mr. Bevis is
> accident-prone, a little vague, a little discombooberated, with a life that possesses all the
> security of a floating crap game. But this can be said of our Mr. Bevis: without him,
> without his warmth, without his kindness the world would be a considerably poorer
> place, albeit, perhaps, a little saner.

Leaving for work, Bevis chooses to slide down the banister of his apartment building

rather than to take the stairs. Clumsily, he tumbles off the banister, directly out the door and

lands in a heap, a broad smile upon his face, delighted to have made the children playing in the

street laugh. Gathering himself, Bevis goes to his car—a run-down 1924 Rickenbacker—and,

whistling a familiar call to the children, they push his car in order to start it moving. Serling

offers additional commentary:

> Should it not be obvious by now, James B. W. Bevis is a fixture in his own private, optimistic, hopeful little world, a world which has long ceased being surprised by him. James B. W. Bevis, on whom Dame Fortune will shortly turn her back, but not before she gives him a paste in the mouth. Mr. James B. W. Bevis, just a block away from the Twilight Zone.

Bevis arrives late to work, work that is entirely indicative of the typical corporate office:

rows of desks, all employees drably dressed, seated at bare desks, and typing hurriedly on

typewriters, all uniform. Bevis's desk, however, is covered with all sorts of paraphernalia: a

stuffed squirrel, a vase of daisies, framed photographs, comical statuettes, etc. Bevis himself

looks different from the other employees, wearing a plaid sport coat, bowtie, and solid slacks

rather than the typical suit and tie of the gray-flannel variety.

Upon Bevis's arrival, he is promptly summoned to the manager's office; the viewer is

privy to the manager's terse vituperation: "I'll be brief, Bevis. You keep a ledger like an ape.

Your desk is an affront to any concept of orderly symmetry. Your eccentricities are beyond any

kind of understanding. You're bringing phonograph records of zither music to play during the

afternoon. You're hiring Christmas carolers to come in and serenade the office during our busiest

hour," and the list presumably goes on. Ultimately, however, Bevis is fired and the viewer learns

that this is the sixth time just this year. Bevis, speaking with a sympathetic colleague, remarks,

"The only job I've ever held for more than six months was during the Second World War when I

was in the Navy."

Bevis packs up his things and prepares to leave the office. His luck continues to

deteriorate, however, when a car, parked dangerously close to his, hooks bumpers dragging his

car away, detaching, and then sending Bevis's car, unmanned, to crash beyond repair into a

streetlight. With no job and no car, Bevis returns home only to find out that due to his tardiness

in paying rent he has been evicted. Hopeless, Bevis visits a local bar and proceeds toward

inebriation. In the mirror hanging over the bar, however, Bevis is greeted by the reflection of a man in the booth behind him, only when Bevis turns to see who the man is, no one is in the booth. Again, Bevis looks in the mirror and sees the same man motioning that Bevis join him. Bevis does so, despite the fact that no one is actually in the booth.

Suddenly, though, the man reappears in the booth and introduces himself as J. Hardy Hempstead, guardian angel and assigned to Bevis as he has been assigned to most of Bevis's ancestors since antiquity. Hempstead, looking quite like a regular businessman himself, offers a solution to Bevis; Hempstead informs Bevis that his life can be different and this particular day can be re-done, as it were. Hempstead, however, explains, "We change some aspects. Inevitably, we naturally have to change certain characteristics of your own. Your clothes, for instance, Mr. Bevis…are you serious?" Hempstead magically redresses Bevis, who then wears a typical and professional suit. Bevis reacts, noting, "I look like an undertaker!" Still, Bevis agrees to the experiment, hoping that he may not lose his job, car, and home all in one day.

Bevis and Hempstead return to the morning hours before all Bevis's trouble began. This time, however, Bevis takes the stairs rather than the banister. The landlady adores him while the children in the street ignore him. People that were friendly at the beginning of the episode are now indifferent toward Bevis. Additionally, Bevis's jalopy has been replaced with a hip little sports car. When Bevis arrives at work his desk lays bare—just like all the rest and to which he reacts, "It looks *nude*. It doesn't look *decent*!"—and while his colleagues do not seem to like him, the manager does, even awarding him a raise. Still, Bevis is completely unimpressed with this new version of himself and disenchanted by the personal changes necessary to have all the success he *could* have.

Intuitively, Hempstead realizes something is amiss with Bevis and asks, "Bevis, what do you say we level? Now, what is it that you really want? You know for a fellow like you a ten-dollar raise is the most that even I can get for you. To use the vernacular, Bevis, frankly, I don't

dig you. I'm used to Bevises with big dreams, gigantic hopes, fantastic aspirations." Hempstead

then describes the endeavors of many of Bevis's ancestors: kings, explorers, war heroes all. In

earnest, Bevis replies, "Look, Mr. Hempstead, I don't like to appear ungracious, but the things I

like, the things I believe in, I know they're odd, but they are worth considerably more than ten

dollars a week." Hempstead resigns himself to the fact that Bevis does not want to change and

bids Bevis farewell, returning to Bevis one thing: his car, intact.

Bevis cheerfully drives away once again—the car backfiring and spewing black smoke—

in search of employment and a place to stay. Serling provides the closing narration: "Mr. James

B.W. Bevis, who believes in a magic all his own. The magic of a child's smile, the magic of

liking and being liked, the strange and wondrous mysticism that is the simple act of living. Mr.

James B. W. Bevis, species of twentieth-century male, who has his own private and special

Twilight Zone."[90]

This episode most primarily speaks to the superficiality of conformity, the basic necessity

of appearance over substance so important to the principles of personality exaggerated into

conformity. Mr. Bevis, in fact, and somewhat like Charley Parks, is a regular nonconformist, and

his nonconformity is characterized quite plainly and variously throughout the episode. As it

pertains to the corporate ideal, Bevis does not *look* like the typical corporate employee; he wears

plaid and bowties rather than the usual and recognizable business suit. Similarly, while all the

desks at his office remain virtually without decoration, Bevis's desk is simply covered with

somewhat bizarre knick-knacks, memorabilia, and whatnot.

Similarly connected to the notion of the corporate businessman is the way which Bevis

lives. Significantly, Bevis lives in an urban area—made particularly obvious not merely by the

visual setting provided by the episode but by the addition of black children as habitants of his

[90] "Mr. Bevis," *The Twilight Zone*, DVD, directed by William Asher (1960; Chatsworth, CA: Image Entertainment, 2006).

neighborhood—in an apartment rather than in a suburban home and neighborhood. He does not drive the latest model of any car, but instead a rather aged, sort of anachronistic and nearly obsolete 1920s model. There is no indication during the episode that Bevis could not afford such a lifestyle—he is evicted only because he has absent-mindedly skipped paying his rent—but it seems that Bevis prefers the urban to the suburban and his decrepit automobile to any more popular model. Summarily, Bevis revels in his difference rather than despairing because of it, a fact which is made further evident by Bevis's admission that he has not been able to steadily hold a job since he was released from military duty (where one may assume he was not allowed the freedom to be entirely his nonconformist self). Bevis ultimately, despite the consequences, has not adapted as modes of personality would require. He has not conformed, and he has refused to do so for at least fifteen years.

Also like Charley Parks, however, Bevis's refusal to conform to those superficial standards has resulted in, as Serling remarks, "a life that possesses all the security of a floating crap game." Like Parks, Bevis cannot achieve stable financial success. His nonconformity, or his "eccentricities" as his manager refers to it, has led to his being fired now seven times in the past year. In fact, Bevis's manager has only superficial reasons to give Bevis for his dismissal; rather than inadequate performance in his position or a lack of ability, Bevis is fired because of his desk décor and his propensity for entertaining his coworkers with music.

Further highlighting the superficiality of conformity as well as the idea of performance so integral to personality and, therefore, conformity, are the solutions Bevis's guardian angel, J. Hardy Hempstead, suggests. In order to achieve success and stability, Hempstead explains, "Inevitably, we naturally have to change certain characteristics of your own. Your clothes, for instance, Mr. Bevis…are you serious?" Hempstead's statement proves extremely relevant. That such a thing as Bevis's choice of clothing must *inevitably* be changed suggests that conformity to superficial expectations is the only manner in which a man, particularly in the corporate setting,

may be successful. Never mind a man's capabilities; in that environment it is physical appearance that is requisite to success and there is no avoiding conformity to superficial standards if one wishes to attain any degree of recognizable accomplishment. Similarly significant is Hempstead's explanation that "we naturally have to change certain characteristics." To say that such change to one's appearance is *natural* suggests the indelibility of notions of personality, and those notions, particularly concerning superficiality and mien, had become so culturally ingrained that it was conceived of as highly *natural* that men would be judged on image rather than substance. In fact, this exchange illustrates the point that the principles of personality, centered largely upon superficial appearances, on appealing to others, and adapting one's self as situations required, constituted the basis upon which the masculine problem of the postwar period— conformity—was constructed.

Unlike both Gart Williams and Charley Parks—and even viewer Greville Bathe— however, James B.W. Bevis does not wish for or even attempt to escape from the pressures of the life he might be forced to lead, from the life of conformity. In his happy rejection of conformity, Bevis has become a special "species of twentieth-century male," as Serling notes in his commentary, and "a fixture in his own private, optimistic, hopeful little world" where he may believe "in a magic all his own" and "the strange and wondrous mysticism that is the simple act of living." What is that *magic*? What is it that Bevis has to be optimistic about? What marks Bevis as a somewhat unique *type* of twentieth-century man? In fact, this episode, while revelatory in its treatment of personality and conformity, also provides a first glimpse into just what amendments Serling in particular hoped would be made to concomitant modes of masculinity (amendments which will be discussed in the following chapter). Indeed, Mr. Bevis is an exceptional man amidst the nebulous hordes of postwar conformists because he is a man of character. Bevis—marked as a good man, a moral man, by his love of children, his concern for the happiness and well-being of those around him, and his unwavering ability to be true to that

which he believes in—maintains strength in his convictions. Unlike Gart Williams—who could only *ask* for a different life, only *wish* he had not conformed, and ultimately, who escaped his conformist life through death—and unlike Charley Parks—whose insanity propelled him into a make-believe world and one in which he too could escape from the superficial expectations of conformity—Bevis needs no escape. He is a man who actively defies those superficial expectations and remains steadfast to his principles of nonconformity and goodness. And, Serling remarks, "without him, without his warmth, without his kindness the world would be a considerably poorer place." Certainly, Serling, through the episode, suggests that it is the man of character to whom men should look rather than to escape, for if more men acted with all the genuineness and confidence of Mr. Bevis, the world presumably *would* be a considerably better place.

Speaking especially clearly to the principles of personality that constituted the masculine problem of conformity in the postwar period is a 1961 episode of *The Twilight Zone*, written by Rod Serling, "The Mind and the Matter." Like "Mr. Bevis," "The Mind and the Matter" lends itself to Serling's connected and significant advocacy of the resurrection of manly character that will be discussed in the subsequent chapter.

The episode opens upon an overly crowded subway train conveying Mr. Archibald Beechcroft—dressed in the typical suit of the corporate businessman—to work. Beechcroft is clearly perturbed by the throng of people closely packed into the train. As Beechcroft makes his way from the train and to his urban place of employment, the crowd seems to never end as Beechcroft shoulders through the teeming lobby and is, then, crammed into an elevator full of stereotypical businesspeople much like himself. Serling's commentary explains: "A brief if frenetic introduction to Mr. Archibald Beechcroft, a child of the twentieth century, a product of the population explosion, and one of the inheritors of the legacy of progress…In just a moment

our hero will begin his personal one-man rebellion against the mechanics of his age, and to do so he will enlist certain aids available only in the Twilight Zone."

Entering the offices of Park Central Insurance Company, Beechcroft enters into an atmosphere characterized by the roaring collective noise of typewriters, telephones, and rushed and preoccupied people. Beechcroft sits at his desk, surveying the chaos; disgusted, he takes a few pills presumably to ease the pounding in his head or the psychological burden of the disdain we soon learn he possesses.

Retreating momentarily to the office restrooms as respite from the clamor, Beechcroft unexpectedly meets someone whom the viewer can assume is an office manager or is at least in some position of authority, Mr. Rogers. Rogers, an almost obnoxiously cheerful man, notes that Beechcroft is not looking well and urges Beechcroft, then, to take care of himself: "You know, keeping yourself fit is not only a personal obligation, Beechcroft. Oh no. In a larger sense it's part of your responsibility to your job and to the firm that employs you." Rogers further inquires of Beechcroft whether he is getting enough sleep at night or if his perceived ill-health may be due to a drinking habit. Beechcroft assures Rogers that neither is a problem for him and Rogers continues, "Well, why don't you pull yourself together, man? Get some sleep at night. Eat regular meals. Lots of milk and fresh vegetables. Greens. Oh you can't beat those greens for vitamins. I'm a spinach and lettuce man myself. I'd even have them for breakfast if, well, people wouldn't look at me a little tilt." Amused by his own comments, Rogers laughs. Beechcroft, however, has become, during Roger's exaltation of greens, increasingly vexed.

Beechcroft then explains in earnest frustration to Rogers, "If you'd really like to know precisely why I am so dead tired, you ought to try coming to work on the subway at 7:30 every morning, then *jamming* into an elevator like part of a herd of cattle, then working in that, in that *cacophonous* din you call an office. Always get jostled. Always get shoved. Always get pushed around." Clearly baffled by Beechcroft's outburst, Rogers tells him to "take hold" and

Beechcroft retorts, "I'll take hold when I can achieve that millennium, that absolute perfection that comes with solitude. You read me, Mr. Rogers? People. People, people! If I had my way here's how I'd fix the universe; I'd eliminate the people. I mean, cross them off. Get rid of them. Destroy them. Decimate them. And there'd only be one man left: me, Archibald Beechcroft, Esquire." Rogers concludes from the conversation that Beechcroft is "quite mad" as Beechcroft storms out of the restroom and back to the cacophonous din.

Having reached the lunch hour, Beechcroft sits in the cramped and rackety cafeteria where a co-worker gives him a book called *The Mind and the Matter*, about the power of concentration. Beechcroft begins reading the book and continues reading it until he has finished it that same night in his apartment. Beechcroft reflects on his reading, relating that with concentration anything can be achieved; thus, when the landlady invidiously pounds on Beechcroft's door demanding his rent money, Beechcroft concentrates hard enough that she disappears into thin air. Realizing the real power of concentration, Beechcroft vows to do away with the rest of humanity tomorrow, and he does just that.

Alone in an empty world, Beechcroft works at the office and proceeds with his routine, only without other people Beechcroft finds himself without purpose and altogether bored. Beechcroft even imagines that a version of himself—seen in surfaces with reflections—is speaking to him, and it is Beechcroft's reflection that tells him he is lonely and questions the validity and success of Beechcroft's experiment. Beechcroft, however, stubbornly will not admit his loneliness or his defeat, saying, "I'm content. I'm honestly and truly content for the first time in my life. I've rid myself of the worst scurge there is: the populace."

Still, the next day, in an effort to correct the problem, Beechcroft concentrates into existence a world full of people just like him, because, as he puts it, he would be the only conceivable person that he "can stand." In that world full of Beechcrofts, however, he himself realizes the reality of people just like him. Not only do all the people—including women and all

played by the same actor—look like him, but they have the same negative, cynical attitude toward

everyone around and share Beechcroft's habit of muttering complaints about "people" to

themselves. Beechcroft, of course, understands that "a lot of me is just as bad as a lot of them,"

and he promptly concentrates his original surroundings and colleagues back into being; he returns

all to the way it had been. Only now, Beechcroft is more understanding, sympathetic, and kind.

Serling's closing commentary concludes: "Mr. Archibald Beechcroft, a child of the twentieth

century, who has found out through trial and error—and mostly error—that with all its faults, it

may well be that this is the best of all possible worlds. People notwithstanding, it has much to

offer. Tonight's case in point in the Twilight Zone."[91]

    "The Mind and the Matter" quite efficaciously and clearly depicts the basic problems of

personality associated with masculine discontent in the postwar period. Once again, as in the

other episodes discussed, the superficiality of the tenets of the personality paradigm, adopted and

exaggerated into postwar male conformity, appear most prominent in this episode. Most

revelatory is the exchange between Mr. Rogers and Archibald Beechcroft in the men's restroom.

Rogers has clearly ascertained that something is amiss with Beechcroft and he has made such an

assumption based not upon Beechcroft's attitude—which it may be assumed has been a consistent

one of his attributes and established part of his quotidian behavior—but upon Beechcroft's

appearance; Rogers, in fact, states that Beechcroft is not *looking* well. Even more significantly,

Rogers presumes that whatever it is that ails Beechcroft must be of a superficial, easily cured

variety—Beechcroft must not be getting enough sleep or eating nutritious foods, or, worse, he

may be an alcoholic; but, of course, those ailments could be facilely corrected with only a little

sensibility and effort. Rogers never considers that, indeed, Beechcroft's malaise and ill-health

may be far more chronic, far more psychological than simply a few too many drinks after an

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[91] "The Mind and the Matter," *The Twilight Zone*, DVD, directed by Buzz Kulik (1961; Chatsworth, CA: Image Entertainment, 2006).

unhealthy dinner. Further still, Rogers's excessive promotion of milk, vegetables, and greens as the antidotes to Beechcroft's disquiet speaks to the superficiality of personality and conformity, for it seems as though Rogers suggests a man's deepest malcontent can be remedied, even eliminated, with simple, superficial alterations to oneself. As easily as changing one's diet might improve his physical health, Rogers's statements suggest, a man's emotional health may be as easily and perfunctorily ameliorated.

While this element of the episode will be returned to in that it offers an alternate interpretation, the episode's conclusion highlights the external and superficial solution to the problem of postwar masculine malaise. After having rid the world of people, having populated it with Beechcrofts, and, dissatisfied with both alternative worlds, then having returned it to the way it had existed before, Beechcroft realizes the source of his discontent has not been, as he imagined, "the worst scurge there is: the populace" but, rather, himself. The episode's somewhat heartwarming finish implies that it is simply the power of a friendly and compassionate attitude, the power of positive thinking that will cure a man of his undeniable inquietude. The title of the episode itself, "The Mind and the Matter," lends itself to the easy solution of discontent. What Beechcroft must do to alleviate his malaise is to merely put mind over matter, as the saying goes. The world around Beechcroft may certainly be a frustrating one, but Beechcroft can just as certainly disregard that matter with an open and creative mind, capable of rendering the world as it is a lovely place to reside. This world, "with all its faults," as Serling explains, "may well be…the best of all possible worlds."

"The Mind and the Matter" also effectively highlights the problem of personality of perpetual positioning in relation to others. Not only does Beechcroft resent the fact that he must interact individually with others, but also that he must exist as part of the crowd and part of the abstract masses. As Beechcroft says himself, his discontent is due almost entirely to people, people, people. More specifically, individually, Beechcroft faces the daily annoyance of the

demands and expectations of pushy corporate conformist types such as Mr. Rogers. Rogers patronizingly reminds Beechcroft that he take care of his health as it is "not only a personal obligation," but "part of your responsibility to your job and the firm that employs you." Rogers seems actually to care little for Beechcroft's healthfulness as a human being for whom he has any real sympathy or concern, but rather as an employee whose ill-health could negatively affect the company he may well manage. And even concerning something often as uncontrollable as physical health, Rogers demands conformity to the expectation that employees maintain fitness and vigor.

In terms of the populace that Beechcroft so keenly despises, Beechcroft makes himself perfectly clear. Beechcroft's outward attitude toward others plainly shows his malice for those around him, crowding him on trains and in elevators and agitating him with their constant noise. It is not enough that Beechcroft is already psychologically maddened by the people, but that he is also physically perturbed by them. Beechcroft notes that one "always get[s] jostled. Always get[s] shoved. Always get[s] pushed around." A man, it seems, cannot proceed in any capacity with ease, because, situated in relation to others, he will *always*, invariably be propelled from his own personal path and his own equilibrium. That statement speaks to physical jostling but just as easily may be metaphorical; in relation to others, as it is meant pertaining to personality and conformity, a man is consistently pushed from, once again, his path and his equilibrium, pushed, as it were, from his own self on account of others. Interestingly, the end of the episode appears to conclude that the problems with people cannot be solved. A man such as Beechcroft cannot escape the presence or the effrontery of the people around him.

While "The Mind and the Matter" cogently lends itself to the issues of personality and their contributions to masculine discontent in the postwar era, the episode—like "Mr. Bevis"—also speaks to Serling's apparent advocacy of manly character that will be discussed at more length in the following chapter. If we are to reexamine the episode's conclusion—which seemed

initially to suggest that man can only think positively and put mind over matter, so to speak, if he wishes to be content—it becomes quite clear that what occurred within Beechcroft was not a mere change of heart but a far more meaningful shift from a manhood lacking in character to manhood newly endowed with character, particularly its moralistic precepts. To explain, Beechcroft not only has a lousy attitude and churlish demeanor, but he is quite obviously not a good man, not an entirely morally grounded man. That is most evident in Beechcroft's explanation to Mr. Rogers concerning people: "if I had my way here's how I'd fix the universe; I'd eliminate the people. I mean, cross them off. Get rid of them. Destroy them. Decimate them. And there'd only be one man left: me." Beechcroft's hatred of his fellow man is more than apparent in his tirade and it is no wonder that Rogers stared in disbelief, labeling Beechcroft "quite mad." Beechcroft's condemnation of people and his desire to "decimate them" not only reveals Beechcroft as a potential madman, but as a dangerous, possibly genocidal one at that. Beechcroft, too, reveals himself to be maniacally egotistical, caring for no one but himself and admiring no one but himself.

When given the opportunity, however, to in fact rid the world of people, to destroy them—happily, without violence—Beechcroft is left with the only man he can stand: himself. Significantly, it is during the period in which he is completely alone that he was confronted by his own thinking and talking reflection. Only when the world was relieved of its people could Beechcroft face the true source of his discontent: himself. In facing himself (characterized by his own reflection as well as by the population he concentrates into existence that looks and acts exactly as he does) Beechcroft realizes his own shortcomings, his own immorality, and the utter ugliness he has himself unleashed upon the world. As he explains to his reflection just before he returns the world to normal (or how it was prior to his discovery of power in concentration), "a lot of me is just as bad as a lot of them." In a word, Beechcroft understands that the problem has not been everyone, it has been himself. Beechcroft finally sees that while he may be in constant

relation to others (a primary problem of personality) it is himself, his character that may ameliorate his existence and experience. Thus, Beechcroft's better attitude, kinder ways, and compassion shown at the close of the episode depict a new, improved Beechcroft, a Beechcroft with good, moral character. His transformation has not simply been from pessimism to optimism, but from immorality to morality, and thus, a transformation toward manly character. Serling, via the episode's conclusion, then, suggests that character, and in that sense putting one's *mind* toward moral character in order to improve the extant *matter*, will make this "the best of all possible worlds."

During his 1959 appearance on *The Mike Wallace Interview*, Rod Serling commented on what he believed to be the evils of financial success, listing: "a preoccupation with status, with the symbols of status, with the heated swimming pool that is ten feet longer than the neighbor's, with the big car…all these things—in a sense, rather minute things, really, in context—that become disproportionately large in a guy's mind." Mike Wallace inquired, "What becomes small," to which Serling replied, "I think probably the really valuable things. And I know this sounds corny…to say that things like having a family, being concerned with raising children…being concerned with a good marital relationship. All these things, I think, are of the essence." Serling's statements efficaciously encapsulate what has been reflected in the episodes of *The Twilight Zone* analyzed here as well as what I have argued about postwar masculine conformity. Scholars up to this point have argued and accepted that postwar masculine malaise was caused by conformity to the breadwinner ethic—the set of expectations which required men to provide for their families, to support comfortable suburban lifestyles, and to collect a variety of consumer items for added luxury and status at home. As the episodes analyzed in this chapter show, masculine discontent in the postwar era was not due to conformity to the breadwinner ethic, to the expectation that men provide for their families; in fact, the malcontent surrounding conformity was caused by its roots in and exaggeration of the principles of personality, by the

superficiality, the performativity, and the constant situation of the individual in relation to others inherent in the masculine paradigm surrounding personality that were, thus, central to postwar conformity. Indeed, as Serling expressed, and as the episodes have illustrated, it was the attention paid to, even obsession with, appearance that proved disconcerting. Significantly, Serling regarded the family as the refuge from masculine malaise, not as the cause. Summarily, the problem for postwar men does not appear, as depicted in *The Twilight Zone*, to be with the *role* as breadwinner, as such, but with the *manner* in which men were expected to do so—as conformists, as men of personality.

CHAPTER TWO
The Need to Be What I Am Ashamed I Am Not:
The Advocacy of Manly Character in Conceptions of Postwar Masculinity

The explicit and implicit exposition of masculinity in *The Twilight Zone* has indeed

suggested that conformity was the main problem within conceptions of postwar masculinity.

Additionally, viewers' responses to the issue of masculine conformity as presented in *The*

Twilight Zone support the notion that conformity left postwar men feeling discontented,

particularly in that they believed themselves forced to lead lives over which they had little control

and for which they felt little pride. Conformity, as has been evidenced by *The Twilight Zone*, was

the adherence to a set of expectations grounded in the masculine paradigm of personality. The

ideal of personality and conformity to its particular tenets of superficiality and performativity—as

well as the resultant state of positioning in perpetual relation to others' equally as superficial

exigencies—caused a deep sense of malaise among men, Rod Serling included. However,

characterizations of masculinity in *The Twilight Zone* also reflect Gail Bederman's suggestion

that gender constructs are in constant motion, elements of continuous cultural processes. In other

words, while *The Twilight Zone* makes evident the postwar problem of masculine conformity to

personality, it also conveys an advocacy—specifically Serling's advocacy—of *change* to

conceptions of mid-twentieth-century masculinity. Utilizing his television show as a vehicle,

Serling advocated in *The Twilight Zone* the resurrection and renegotiation of an older mode of

masculinity centered upon the ideal of manly character. Significantly, the broader viewing public

supported Serling's advocacy of that morally-based model of ideal manhood.

As Bederman explains, completely new models of ideal gender constructs cannot be

achieved; rather, men and women draw upon already extant conceptions of gender as well as

upon older modes in an effort to renegotiate concurrent gender paradigms. Accordingly, as

Chapter One has argued, the problem of masculine conformity in the postwar period was not a

new, historically unprecedented adherence to the breadwinner ethic (as the current historiography

would have it), but alternately, conformity to the historically-based masculine expectations of personality. Similarly, faced with the malcontent caused by conformity to personality, representations of masculinity in *The Twilight Zone* suggest that men sought to amend the expectations of the masculine by restoring and incorporating another *historical* model of manhood into postwar conceptions of masculinity. Indeed, men such as Serling proposed to alter the concomitant masculine expectations by reviving and renegotiating the nineteenth-century model of masculinity founded upon moral manly character.

To reiterate, nineteenth-century manly character was based upon the concept of moral self-mastery: the virtual attainment and consistent maintenance of various virtues. The ideal of manly character, as Warren Susman noted, prized such virtues as duty, democracy, work, building, golden deeds, honor, reputation, morals, manners, and integrity. Similarly, Judy Hilkey noted the added virtues of honesty, industry, frugality, sobriety, modesty, tact, loyalty, diligence, determination, and initiative to the list. Men, according to the ideal, would necessarily employ their own will and self-consciousness to achieve those virtues and, having once accomplished them, continuously exercise their willpower and self-control to preserve them. Characterizations of masculinity in *The Twilight Zone* suggest that men generally, and Serling more specifically, advocated a return to many of those virtues. Significantly, however, Serling also promoted a renegotiation which placed particular emphasis on the welfare of the group and men's adherence to virtuous character as a means to achieving it.

An episode of *The Twilight Zone* that simultaneously illustrates the principles of moral, manly character and advocates a resurrection of that older model of masculinity is "The Changing of the Guard," from 1962. Written by Rod Serling, "The Changing of the Guard" points to specific manly virtues inherent in the notion of character such as courage, honesty, conviction, strength, loyalty, duty, patriotism, and general morality. Ultimately, the episode suggests that such virtues are necessary to the broader aim of the betterment of the community, of mankind.

Through "The Changing of the Guard," in fact, Serling clearly advocates the masculine attainment and exercise of the various virtues listed and those virtues' larger purpose in making men aware of, concerned for, and active in their ideal pursuit of humanity's welfare. Indeed, in "The Changing of the Guard" Serling promotes the resurrection of moral manly character and its incorporation into an otherwise floundering conception of masculinity.

The episode opens within the classroom of Ellis Fowler at the Rock Spring School for Boys. Fowler, a certainly elderly gentleman and a teacher of English, is in the middle of a lecture to his teenaged students on poet Alfred Edward Housman. Fowler's students, however, seem disinterested somehow, if not apathetic toward the words of a poet dead before their time, whose words Fowler reads aloud to them: "When I was one-and-twenty / I heard a wise man say, / 'Give crowns and pounds and guineas / But not your heart away; / Give pearls away and rubies / But keep your fancy free,' / But I was one-and-twenty, / No use to talk to me…'The heart out of the bosom / Was never given in vain; / 'Tis paid with sighs a plenty / And sold for endless rue.' / And I am two-and-twenty, / And oh, 'tis true, 'tis true." Fowler then lets his students go early for, what the viewer finds out, is the Christmas holiday. He informs his students they have all passed his class, adding, dryly but comically, "My delight is only exceeded by my sense of shock. It is rare, young men, that in fifty-one years of teaching I have ever encountered such a class of dunderheads." Fowler smiles and continues with a touch of sentiment, "But nice dunderheads and potentially fine young men who will make their marks and *leave* their marks."

Here Serling adds his opening commentary: "Professor Ellis Fowler, a gentle, bookish guide to the young who is about to discover that life has certain surprises and that the campus of the Rock Spring School for Boys lies on a direct path to another institution, commonly referred to as the Twilight Zone." Leaving his classroom for the ensuing holiday break, Fowler is summoned into the office of the much younger headmaster. The headmaster, serious in demeanor, asks Fowler why he has not responded to a letter sent to him by the trustees. Fowler

apologizes, confessing he has not opened any mail for weeks having been so busy. Fowler

assumes, however, that the content of the letter was his formal agreement to continue teaching;

thus, he tells the headmaster he will continue in the school's employ, adding, "I was telling my

housekeeper only the other day I shall very likely go on teaching in this place until I'm a hundred

years old. Why, a few years ago I actually taught the grandson of one of my former pupils. The

grandson, mark you. Upon my word, I think it's not beyond the bounds of possibility that I shall

live to teach a great grandson one of these days." Fowler reminisces, recalling that his original

pupil (the grandfather of the boy Fowler recently taught) was a "rascal" and persisted in calling

him "Weird Beard." Then Fowler adds, "You can tell the trustees from me that old Fowler won't

desert the ship. No sir, he'll stay at the wheel through fair weather and foul, watch the crews

come aboard and then depart."

The headmaster interrupts Fowler. In fact, the letter from the trustees was not a contract,

but rather a "notice of termination." The headmaster explains, "We decided…that, perhaps, a

younger man…" The headmaster pauses uncomfortably and continues, "If you could have been

at that meeting, sir, you would have been proud of the things said about you and your work.

Teacher of incalculable value to all of us. But youth must be served! A changing of the guard,

that sort of thing." Fowler is shocked and promptly turns to leave the headmaster. Walking out

the door he turns saying, "Well, it certainly proves one thing. Upon my word, it does. Proves

that a man should read his mail." He chuckles a little abashedly, "Certainly should read his

mail." Leaving the school, two of Fowler's students greet him and wish him a Merry Christmas.

Fowler earnestly wishes them the same, shedding a tear. The boys worry for, as they put it,

"Weird Beard" was crying.

Next, Fowler is seen at home in his office. Seated at his desk he unlocks a drawer and

reveals a gun. Shortly thereafter, Fowler's housekeeper, Mrs. Landers, comes to inform him of

dinnertime, only Fowler has lost his appetite. Musing aloud he tells Mrs. Landers:

> I gave them nothing. I gave them nothing at all. Poetry that left their minds the minute they themselves left. Aged slogans that were out of date when I taught them. Quotations dear to me that were meaningless to them. I was a failure…an abject, miserable failure. I walked from class to class, an old relic, teaching by rote to unhearing ears and unwilling heads. I was an abject, dismal failure. I *moved* nobody. I motivated nobody. I left no imprint on anybody.

Fowler tells Mrs. Landers he will take a nap, but she quickly discovers that he has left the house, and noticing an open drawer in his desk, she finds an empty holster; Fowler has taken the gun and disappeared. Wandering around the campus in the snow, Fowler comes upon a statue of Horace Mann which has inscribed upon its base the words, "Be ashamed to die until you have won some victory for humanity." Fowler, thinking aloud and taking the gun from his pocket, says he has not won any victories and is, indeed, ashamed to die. He points the gun to his head.

Suddenly, however, Fowler's deed is interrupted by the clanging of the class bells. Confused, Fowler wonders if there might be an emergency of some kind and he proceeds to his classroom. There, most miraculously, Fowler encounters students who have materialized right before his eyes; the students present, however, are not Fowler's current students, but students from his past, students, he and the viewer shortly find out, who have died: ghosts. One Artie Beechcroft stands up from his desk and comes to Fowler. Beechcroft, class of 1941, explains that he was killed at Iwo Jima, but proudly shows the Congressional Medal of Honor he was awarded posthumously to Fowler. Another young man, Bartlett, class of 1928, explains, "I died in Roanoke, Virginia, sir. I was conducting research on x-ray treatment for cancer. I was exposed to radioactivity and I contracted leukemia." Fowler responds, "That was an incredibly brave thing you did, Bartlett." Bartlett adds, "I kept remembering, professor, something you told me. A quote of a poet named Walter." Bartlett recites a bit of Howard Arnold Walter's poem: "I would be true, for there are those who trust me; / I would be pure, for there are those who care; / I would be strong, for there is much to suffer; / I would be brave, for there is much to dare." Bartlett continues, "I never forgot that, professor. That was something that you left me. And I

never forgot it." Beechcroft again speaks up: "I brought this medal to show you, Professor Fowler, because it's partly yours. You taught me courage. You taught me what it meant."

Another young man proceeds to the front of the classroom and reminds Fowler that he was killed at Pearl Harbor on the U.S.S. Arizona in the act of rescuing twelve men caught in a boiler room. He tells Fowler, "You were at my elbow that day, professor. You may not have known it, but you were there. It was something you'd taught me, a poem by John Donne: 'Any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind; and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee'." The remaining four young men tell Fowler how grateful they are to him; the first, "Thompson, sir…class of '39. I died on New Guinea. But you taught me about patriotism;" the second, "Rice, sir…class of 1917. I died of wounds at Château-Thierry. You taught me about courage;" the third, "Hudson, sir…class of 1922. You taught me about loyalty;" and the fourth, "Whiting, sir…class of '51. You taught me about ethics and honesty." Beechcroft concludes their benevolent haunting: "We were grateful. We were forever grateful. Each of us has, in turn, carried with him something that *you* gave him. We wanted to thank you professor." Suddenly, the class bells ring again and the boys, smiling toward Fowler, evanesce as inexplicably as they had arrived. Fowler cries to himself at his desk at the front of the classroom in which he has spent the majority of his days.

Next, we see Fowler at home. He has returned unharmed and jubilant. He smilingly tells Mrs. Lander, "I do believe I may have left my mark…I didn't win the victories, but I helped others to win them…I've had a very good life…a very full life, a very rich life. This particular changing of the guard, I wouldn't have it any other way." Serling concludes the episode: "Professor Ellis Fowler, teacher, who discovered rather belatedly something of his own value. A very small scholastic lesson, from the campus of the Twilight Zone."[92]

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[92] "The Changing of the Guard," *The Twilight Zone*, DVD, directed by Robert Ellis Miller (1962; Chatsworth, CA: Image Entertainment, 2006).

In "The Changing of the Guard" Serling poignantly points to the various characteristics requisite to moral manly character and advocates a resurrection of that older model of masculinity in postwar America. It is through Professor Ellis Fowler that the attributes of manly character are seen; Fowler seems not only to possess and project the components of moralistic character but also to pass them on to others. What are some of these moralistic traits so necessary to the notion of manly character? They are best exemplified by the young men, Fowler's former students—who come to him as spirits—and all that they recognize Fowler as having taught them. Artie Beechcroft, Bartlett, and Rice note that Fowler taught them *courage*. Bartlett, quoting Howard Arnold Walter's poem, "I Would Be True," expresses a few further elements of manly character. Bartlett, via Walter, marks *honesty* and *conviction* (supported by Whiting) as essential manly characteristics, made evident by the line, "I would be true, for there are those who trust me." Similarly, that line speaks to the fact that manly character takes into account the well-being of others, the trust of others. Walter's poem also highlights *purity*—"for there are those who care"—and *strength* "for there is much to suffer." Significantly, the young man who perished on the U.S.S. Arizona, through the use of John Donne's *Meditation XVII*, emphasizes the importance of being "involved in mankind," and, therefore, a concern for mankind, a preoccupation, again, with the welfare of man. Hudson notes *loyalty* as a trait he learned from Fowler, while Thompson learned *patriotism*. And Whiting adds the all-encompassing *ethics* to the list, which speaks to the overarching morality inherent in manly character.

Fowler himself, consistently exhibits quite a few of the traits he teaches. Fowler *is* a man of character. His good manly character is first made evident to the viewer by his rapport with his students and the apparent affection and concern for and with them he quite plainly demonstrates. As early as the opening scene, it is certain that Fowler is both *true* (for there are those that trust him) as well as "involved in mankind." Fowler conducts himself in his classroom with an evident affinity for his students, marked by the twinkle in his eye, the dry sense of humor he employs to

playfully encourage his students toward greatness, and that very encouragement he gives his

students. This care and concern for his students—for mankind, as it were—is further illustrated

during Fowler's discussion with the headmaster. Not only has Fowler in over fifty years at the

Rock Spring School for Boys taught the sons and grandsons of some of his original students, but

he remembers each and every one them. It is with a similar twinkle in his eye and visible

fondness that Fowler talks about the now aged grandfather of a recent pupil, and remembers him

as a rascal who must have first instated the nickname even current students use to refer to Fowler:

Weird Beard. Fowler chuckles upon recalling the boy and his reminiscences suggest a

remarkable attentiveness to his students.

Additionally, Fowler's conversation with the headmaster reflects Fowler's utter sense of

loyalty. Clearly faithful to the charge of his students, Fowler shows his loyalty to them, to the

Rock Spring School, and to his profession as well. When Fowler mistakenly believes he has been

issued a contract by mail to continue teaching he tells the headmaster, "I shall very likely go on

teaching in this place until I'm a hundred years old." Indubitably, Fowler is committed to the

school, his employment there, and, by extension, to his students. Similarly, Fowler continues,

"Old Fowler won't desert the ship. No sir, he'll stay at the wheel through fair weather and foul,

watch the crews come aboard and then depart." His statement implies that despite the ever-

changing atmosphere of the school and, presumably, the nature of his students—whether foul or

fair—he will persevere and assume his duty. Further, his reference to deserting the ship suggests

that, were he to leave, Fowler feels he would be unfairly abandoning his duties to the school and

to his students. Fowler seems never to consider any sort of voluntary resignation or retirement

and appears to enthusiastically welcome teaching at the school for, realistically, the remainder of

his life. He is, in a sense, *undyingly* loyal.

Evident, too, and reflective of Fowler's character is his fervent and unfailing desire to

have "won some victory for humanity" before his death, or at least before the forced end of his

teaching career. Fowler has unambiguously hoped—through his teaching and through the study of literature—to have made a difference in the world by inspiring his students and making of them fine men who would leave their marks, even if he might only do so indirectly. Fowler makes that clear after he has been practically dismissed from his position, ruefully noting that he gave his students "nothing at all," that he neither moved nor motivated anybody, and that he has been an "abject, miserable failure." Fowler resents his own perceived inability to relate to his students, marking himself "an old relic" and the poetry he taught merely "aged slogans that were out of date." Further, it is so distressing to Fowler that he has—in his own estimation—not won any victories for humanity that he judges himself a failure and deserving only of death. Additionally, it appears as though Fowler believes that if he cannot teach, if he cannot continue in his attempt toward achieving, even in small part, humanity's triumphs, there exists no reason to live. Fowler's dedication to the betterment of mankind is obvious and his sense of deficiency so acute as to warrant suicide.

Interestingly, Fowler's contemplated suicide is portrayed rather sympathetically in the episode. While suicide could easily be depicted and treated as a sign of weakness, in "The Changing of the Guard" Serling handles it more as an issue of pride. In other words, Serling could have treated suicide as a point on which Fowler lacked character, but instead the viewer sympathizes with the endearing old man and laments, as he does, the sense of accomplishment and the dignity so cruelly taken from him.

Establishing some of foundational precepts of character and Fowler as a man *of* character through-and-through, then, this episode also lends itself to what I argue is Serling's *advocacy* of the resurrection of moral manly character as a model for postwar masculinity. The spirits of the young men who visit Fowler not only describe what constitutes good character but epitomize good character. For instance, among the young men are at least four who fought and died in either World War I or World War II, at least two of whom were war heroes. Similarly, Bartlett

practically gave his life in service of humanity, conducting research on the x-ray treatment of cancer. Those young men proved themselves men of character in their courage, in their attention to duty, in their conviction, and in their concern for the larger well-being of all. Their lives and their untimely deaths, the episode suggests, were not in vain, for as men of character they contributed to the greater good. Further, it is implied that were those young men not taught the principles of character that Beechcroft notes "each of us has, in turn, carried with him," and had not Fowler instilled in those young men the attributes of manly character they each benevolently utilized, they may have never accomplished any victories for humanity. Serling suggests, then, that character (epitomized by Fowler) must be reincorporated into newer versions of masculinity (represented by the young students) in order to win those victories.

Further pointing to Serling's advocacy of manly character is the general representation of age in "The Changing of the Guard." From youngest to eldest, the viewer first encounters the disinterested and altogether apathetic students in Fowler's current class: the dunderheads. In fact, these young men seem to represent a lack of character; not one of the students is paying any attention, none are even slightly moved or seemingly concerned with Alfred Edward Housman's poem which Fowler reads quite touchingly to them. In comparison to the young men who are the ghosts of Fowler's former students—specifically hailing from an earlier time and generation supposedly more inclined toward manly character—the dunderheads of 1962 pale. The headmaster is the next youngest, a decidedly middle-aged man, and embodies a sort of middle ground of ambiguous character. The headmaster's ambivalent character is displayed by the fact that he (and the board of trustees) have cunningly planned Fowler's forced retirement without Fowler's presence or even knowledge. For all intents and purposes, the headmaster and the trustees have ousted a respected member of the faculty in secret and made no effort toward confronting him by any other means than a letter. Loyalty, duty, and, to some extent, morality seem to have been disregarded by the headmaster and trustees. Furthermore, he and the board

favor "youth" over the "incalculable value" of Fowler; they favor appearance over substance (one of the problems, it should be reiterated here, of personality). Simultaneously, however, it is clear that the headmaster is a caring, perceptive individual. He clearly sympathizes with Fowler and shows, at least on his face, some element of guilt for the manner in which he and the board decided upon Fowler's retirement. He does try to explain the decision in a manner considerate of Fowler's obviously hurt feelings. Indirectly, he seems to acknowledge the lack of character with which he and the trustees acted simply by virtue of the way he discusses it with Fowler. Fowler of course is the oldest of the men in "The Changing of the Guard," and—as has already been illustrated—Fowler is represented as a man of unwavering moral character.

Age depicted as such, Serling acknowledged what Gail Bederman has explained theoretically—that there are several modes of masculinity in existence (varying in the episode by generation) which speak to her assertion that gender constructs are constantly changing and in a state of renegotiation. The young men, Fowler's current students, clearly represent the latest (or youngest) model of masculinity which is apparently unconcerned with the attainment of manly character. Fowler, of course, inserted amidst this new mode of masculinity stands as the older version—the version dedicated to moral character—which, Serling implies, clearly still has something quite valuable to offer. The headmaster's ambivalence suggests that character itself is ambiguous under the current circumstances, operative at times, but often missing altogether which Serling judges quite unfortunate. Juxtaposed with the resolute character of Fowler, as well, both the callow masculinity of the youthful men and the ambiguity of the middle-aged headmaster's manly character highlight the significance of apparently *true* men of character, thus presenting in the episode Serling's advocacy, an undeniable lesson to be learned that it is the man of character who wins the victories of humanity, but that it is he who must be incorporated and given prominence among men in order that they might all become men of character.

Significantly, "The Changing of the Guard" elicited earnest response. Writing to Rod Serling on June 1, 1962, viewer Paul Froemming testified: "My Friend: Nothing that I can say could add or detract from the many honors and high esteem that is so deservedly yours. Yet let me say to you that <u>Changing of the Guard</u> has awakened in me the <u>need</u> to be what I am ashamed I am not—a better human being. Heartfelt thanks."[93] Froemming's letter implicitly suggests, first, an identification with the episode's Professor Ellis Fowler. Inspired by the episode, Froemming had been moved to examine himself and found that he was somehow lacking in character. Froemming also seems to have recognized in Fowler the type of man he should emulate. Fowler, clearly the episode's ideal model of moral manly character, inspired Froemming to be "a better human being." Considering the episode's commentary on masculinity generally and on character specifically, it may be assumed that Froemming meant that he lacked those fundamental characteristics so inherent to Fowler: involvement in mankind and the effort toward winning humanity's victories, even if only indirectly. Describing himself as potentially "a better *human being*" speaks to that same theme—particularly involvement in mankind—because it places Froemming into a broader collective. Froemming does not wish to be a better *man*, necessarily, in the individual sense and standing alone and apart from the whole; rather, Froemming implies, as a better human being, he would be *better* as part of the whole, as a member of the whole. Finally, Froemming's use of the word *better* suggests an attention particularly to effort toward goodness and morality. It appears that Fowler, a morally driven man true to his conviction and forever in pursuit of inspiring others to goodness, served Froemming as a model for the morality central to the notion of manly character.

Possibly the most significant element of Froemming's letter, however, is the fact that "The Changing of the Guard" *awakened* him to the *need* to be a better human being. Froemming was not merely entertained by the episode or simply touched by it; Froemming expresses that he

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[93] Paul Froemming, personal letter to Rod Serling, June 1, 1962.

was inspired to make changes to himself—changes presumably toward the precepts of manly

character. Further, Froemming states that it is a *need*—and he even emphasizes the term "need"

himself—he feels; he *must* change, he must better himself in order to better humanity.

Froemming does not only wish or hope to be a better human being; he believes it somehow

necessary and essential—it is a *need*. Froemming's letter does not reflect the fleeting thoughts of

a man entertained; it is a genuine, solemn vow, in a sense, to improve himself and to ameliorate

the world around him. And it was all inspired by an episode of *The Twilight Zone*. It appears that

a different model of masculinity was in demand and that the manly character depicted in episodes

of *The Twilight Zone* appealed to ordinary men like viewer, Paul Froemming.

A 1960 episode of *The Twilight Zone*, "The Monsters Are Due on Maple Street," treats

manly character as it applies to a pertinent and timely issue of the era and one with which Rod

Serling was particularly concerned: prejudice and civil rights.[94] Written by Serling, the episode

clearly recognizes the extant problems surrounding postwar masculine paradigms, particularly

that the concurrent modes of masculinity lacked manly virtue. Once again, Serling, manifesting

his own conscience (his own sense of morality) in this episode, advocates a resurrection of moral

manly character. Furthermore, Serling's "The Monsters Are Due on Maple Street" promotes the

resurrection of character and the broader incorporation of it into postwar masculine modes as a

means to winning a certain victory for mankind; that is, Serling suggests that it is manly character

in the specific context of prejudice that will curb hatred and bigotry .

"The Monsters Are Due on Maple Street" opens upon an idyllic suburban

neighborhood—Maple Street, as it were—and opens simultaneously with Serling's voiceover

commentary: "Maple Street, U.S.A. Late summer. A tree-lined little road of front porch gliders,

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[94] Serling, in an April 1962, issue of *TV Guide*, described prejudice as that "which I abhor more than anything in the world." Serling, too, was quick to point out in his responses to fan mail, particularly to viewers who castigated him for less than stellar episodes of *The Twilight Zone*, that viewers might better appreciate the various episodes concerning prejudice and would do well to view *those*. Clearly, prejudice was of particular concern to Serling and his work that treated it a source of pride.

barbeques, the laughter of children, and the bell of an ice cream vendor. At the sound of the roar

and the flash of light, it will be precisely 6:43 P.M. on Maple Street." As Serling alluded, a

strange object, unseen by the viewer but looked at in amazement by various inhabitants of Maple

Street, flies overhead issuing a shock of bright light and an inimitable noise. Serling continues:

"This is Maple Street on a late Saturday afternoon, in the last calm and reflective moment before

the monsters came." Shortly, the dwellers of Maple Street, all out and about on this lovely

summer day, discuss what it could have possibly been that flew overhead. Some suppose a

meteor, and the general conclusion is just that: a meteor must have whizzed past, creating the

bizarre light and sound.

　　　The neighbors go about their routines, except that all at once one man discovers that a

new light bulb he has just installed will not turn on. Another neighbor finds out her telephone

will not make a call, and another woman, cooking dinner, finds her stove suddenly inoperative.

On the street the neighbors meet and discuss the odd power outage. One of the residents of

Maple Street, Pete Van Horn, an elderly gentleman who appears to do carpentry as a hobby, tells

his neighbors he will walk over to Floral Street to find out whether they have power. As he walks

away, the camera focuses in on a hammer hanging from a loop on the leg of his overalls. The

other neighbors continue to muse on what might be the problem and one Steve Brand decides he

too will venture out of the neighborhood to go "downtown" to inquire with the proper authorities

about the power outage. Brand, attempting to start his car for the trip downtown, finds, however,

that strangely his car will not start. Confused and somewhat worried Brand and another neighbor,

Charlie, decide they, then, will *walk* downtown. As they turn to leave, though, Tommy, a young

boy of the neighborhood, stops Brand and Charlie: "Mr. Brand, you'd better not. *They* don't want

you to." Brand inquires with Tommy exactly who *they* are and Tommy responds, "Them," as he

points toward the sky. Tommy continues, "Whoever was in that thing that came by overhead…I

don't think they want us to leave here…That's why they shut everything off…It's always that way in every story I've ever read about a ship landing from outer space."

Naturally, the neighbors—by now all gathered around Steve Brand and his dysfunctional automobile and clearly determined to fix whatever the problem may be collectively—laugh at Tommy and assume him to have been reading far too many comic books. The neighbors offer various explanations for the odd occurrences, but Tommy insists: "Mr. Brand, please don't leave here. You might not even be able to get to town. It was that way in the story. Nobody could leave. Nobody except…" Again, the neighbors laugh, but more uncomfortably. They and Tommy's mother urge him to quiet down and to stop worrying everyone with ridiculous fairy stories. Mr. Brand, however, clearly a kind man, respectfully encourages Tommy to finish his thoughts. Tommy obliges: "Except the people they'd sent down ahead of them. They looked just like humans, and it wasn't until the ship landed that…That was the way they prepared things for the landing. They sent four people—a mother and a father and two kids—who looked just like humans, but they weren't."

As Tommy finishes his explanation, the camera pans across all the faces of the inhabitants of Maple Street; despite the utter implausibility of Tommy's alien story, they each look nervous, disquieted somehow, and suddenly a bit suspicious. Brand, noticing his neighbors ill at ease, jokes that the solution, then, is to run a check of the neighborhood in order to see who is "really human," but his neighbors are not amused. Just then, another neighbor, Les Goodman, who had not come out of his home previously, emerges and tries to start his car, of course, to no avail. Goodman joins the group, expressing his astonishment, only as he talks with his neighbors his car inexplicably starts all by itself. Goodman approaches his automobile, certainly shocked by the car's apparent will of its own; his neighbors, however, having presumably been unnerved by Tommy's story, grow increasingly apprehensive about the true identity of Les Goodman. Why, they ask, did *his* car start, and on its own no less? In a whispered conversation, Charlie

adds that Goodman "always was an oddball. Him and his whole family. Real oddball," as he warily eyes Goodman.

The seed of suggestion that Les Goodman and his family may not be human has been planted in the minds of Maple Street's occupants, and they collectively decide to confront Goodman. As the camera focuses upon their feet, the neighbors begin to walk toward Goodman, but their pace quickens to a frantic run. Steve Brand, however—seemingly the only consistent voice of reason among them—stops his rushing neighbors, admonishing them: "Wait a minute! Now let's not be a *mob*." Apparently unable to contain themselves or retain any element of rationality, however, the neighbors rudely accost Goodman who then appeals to the only person present who has not lost his mind (or his manners)—again, Steve Brand. Brand calmly and somewhat sarcastically tells Goodman, "We're on a monster kick, Les. Seems the general impression now holds that maybe there's a family that isn't what we think they are. Monsters from outer space or something different than us." Goodman explains in earnest that he does not understand any more than his neighbors why or how his car started and that the whole thing is "just weird." A neighbor woman suddenly interjects, however, that if, in fact, Les Goodman is really human, then why has she seen him in the "wee hours" of the morning (when she, too, happens to be awake) standing outside his home "just looking up at the sky…as though he were looking for something"?

The neighbors collectively proceed further into suspicious lunacy, supposing Goodman is waiting on the Mother ship, while Goodman defends himself, explicating that he simply suffers from insomnia. Enraged by his neighbors' mistrustful insanity, Goodman castigates them: "You scared, frightened little rabbits, you. You're sick people, do you know that? You're sick people. All of you! And you don't even know what you're starting here, because let me tell you…you're starting something here that…that's what you should be frightened of! God as my witness, you're letting something begin here that's…a nightmare!"

The scene then shifts to a later time that evening—the street has gone dark, candles dimly light a few of the homes' windows, and the neighbors all sit in their respective yards watchfully surveying one another. From his yard, Charlie focuses his indiscreet suspicion upon the oddball, Les Goodman, while his wife questions her husband's behavior, noting that they have known the Goodmans five years and have been "good friends." Charlie responds: "Look, that don't prove a thing. Any guy who'd spend his time looking up at the sky early in the morning, there's something *wrong* with that kind of a person, something that ain't *legitimate*. Under normal circumstances we'd let it go by, but these aren't normal circumstances." Brand, then, approaches Les Goodman on his porch to apologize for the madness that has overcome the group. Charlie, however, begins to shout at Brand that he had better watch who he is seen with. Brand replies: "There's something you can do, Charlie. You can go inside and keep your mouth shut. You can quit sitting there like a self-appointed hanging judge and just climb into bed and forget it." Charlie then retorts obnoxiously: "You seem pretty anxious to have that happen, Steve. I guess we ought to keep an eye on you too." Another neighbor enters the conversation, suggesting that, indeed, Steve Brand is suspect himself; the neighbor has heard tell that Brand is working on some sort of radio in his basement that no one has ever seen.

Brand, appalled by the quickness with which his neighbors accuse one another, once again rebukes them saying with all angry sarcasm, "Let's pick out every idiosyncrasy of every man, woman, and child on this whole street…Now, how about a firing squad at dawn, Charlie, to get rid of all the suspects, narrow them down for you, make it easier?" Meanwhile, all the neighbors have once again gathered in mob-like fashion around Charlie and Steve Brand. The scene gets progressively more heated as Brand continues: "Stop telling me who's dangerous and who isn't and who's safe and who's a menace." Steve turns away from Charlie and points a finger, further reprimanding his neighbors: "You're all standing out here all set to crucify somebody. You're all set to find a scapegoat. You're all desperate to point some kind of a finger

at a neighbor. Well, believe me, friends, the only thing that's going to happen is that we're going to eat each other up alive!"

The group seems to have been moved by Brand's cogent comments; however, just as it appears they may take hold of themselves they hear footsteps from afar. Looking into the darkness, the neighbors assume that the figure walking toward them is one of the supposed aliens. The viewer sees, close-up, a hammer hanging from a loop on the figure's pants. One neighbor obtains a shotgun from his home which is promptly wrenched from his hands by Brand who tells him to "have some sense." Charlie, however, overtakes Brand and the gun and shoots the figure in the night. Not surprisingly, for the viewer at least, it is Pete Van Horn, returned from Floral Street—and he is dead. The neighbors are appalled by Charlie's misdeed and to make matters worse, every light in Charlie's house suddenly turns on. That spurs even Les Goodman to label Charlie the alien and leads the rest of the neighbors to believe that indeed Charlie is the diabolical space creature of the group. They quickly grow violent as Charlie attempts escape into his home. Bricks are lobbed at his head, and in a moment of desperation Charlie pleads that they not harm him for he knows the identity of the real alien: Tommy.

The neighbors, now effectively transformed into a true and bloodthirsty mob, turn toward the boy, ready to attack. Brand shouts, "What's the matter with you people? Now, stop!" But Brand's powers of reason are now lost on the maniacal collective of neighbors. They chase the boy only to find that then the lights have come on in someone else's house and then someone else's and then someone else's. Chaos ensues. Guns are retrieved, bricks and rocks thrown, Molotov cocktails launched. Maple Street has descended into destruction. The view pulls out from Maple Street, and watching the chaos are two alien creatures, one of which comments, "Understand the procedure now? Just stop a few of their machines and radios and telephones and lawn mowers. Throw them into darkness for a few hours and sit back and watch the

pattern…They pick the most dangerous enemy they can find, and it's themselves." Serling

concludes the episode:

> The tools of conquest do not necessarily come with bombs and explosions and fallout.
> There are weapons that are simply thoughts, attitudes, prejudices to be found only in the
> minds of men. For the record, prejudices can kill and suspicion can destroy, and a
> thoughtless, frightened search for a scapegoat has a fallout all its own, for the children
> and the children yet unborn. And the pity of it is that these things cannot be confined to
> the Twilight Zone.[95]

In "The Monsters Are Due on Maple Street," Serling places masculinity within the

specific context of prejudice. Through his episode, Serling suggests that the widespread

application of manly character could, in fact, curb that prejudice. An example of manly character

is provided by Steve Brand; but simultaneously the fact that most of the men lack manly character

in the episode, leads Maple Street into bedlam and hatred. This explicit contrast demonstrates

Serling's advocacy of manly character as a means to insure the welfare of the community (which,

in turn, is a primary concern of the man of character).

Steve Brand serves as the exemplary model of manly character in "The Monsters Are

Due on Maple Street." From the beginning of the episode it is made certain that Brand is a kind,

respectful (and *respected*) man, incredibly concerned with the welfare of his community. Aside

from Pete Van Horn—who volunteers to assess the situation on Floral Street but who serves more

as a plot facilitator in that he later comes back only to be shot and killed due to Maple Street's

derangement—it is Brand who first proposes that some action be taken to correct the inexplicable

power outage in the neighborhood and it is he who offers to go downtown. Concerned for and

loyal to his community, Brand will proactively participate in, if not expedite and supervise,

problem-solving. Suggestive, too, of Brand's respect and concern for others is his rapport with

Tommy. While the science fiction tale Tommy tells to explain the bizarre occurrences on Maple

Street is understandably discounted and rejected by the various (adult) inhabitants of Maple

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[95] "The Monsters Are Due on Maple Street," *The Twilight Zone*, DVD, directed by Ron Winston (1960; Chatsworth, CA: Image Entertainment, 2006).

Street, they also laugh at the boy and openly suggest he is just some dopey kid with an imagination run wild. Brand, however, shows Tommy respect, he lets Tommy talk and encourages Tommy, when the others discourteously deride him.

What marks Brand as the embodiment of manly character, however—and what makes him the most trusted man in his community—is his unfailing morality, his conviction, and his attention to the well-being of his community as well as his willingness to remind his neighbors of their moral responsibilities to one another, especially after the people of Maple Street have been frightened and plunged into self-induced ignominy. Throughout the episode as each and every one of Maple Street's occupants falls into the pattern of suspicion and accusation, Brand remains steadfast in his conviction that, first, none of them is *alien* and, second, that his neighbors would do well to stop the madness they have themselves created. When the neighbors charge toward Les Goodman after his car has unexplainably started without his even touching it, it is Brand who reminds them to act civilly rather than as a mob. Brand also apologizes to Goodman on behalf of their crazed community later in the evening.

Most important, of course, are Brand's remarks as his neighbors become increasingly more engrossed in their suspicion and hostility. As Charlie polices and antagonizes Les Goodman and even Brand himself, for instance, Brand pointedly attempts to make Charlie understand the irrationality and, really, utter ridiculousness of his behavior: "Let's pick out every idiosyncrasy of every man, woman, and child on this whole street…Now, how about a firing squad at dawn, Charlie, to get rid of all the suspects, narrow them down for you, make it easier?" Even with his use of sarcasm, however, Brand's appeal to Charlie's otherwise good sense is lost on Charlie. Brand also passionately and poignantly appeals to the rest of his Maple Street neighbors when he explains to them: "You're all standing out here all set to crucify somebody. You're all set to find a scapegoat. You're all desperate to point some kind of a finger at a neighbor." Brand consistently demonstrates his own morality, his own good sense, his

conviction, and his clear concern for his community.   Additionally, Brand ultimately refuses to

abandon his post as the voice of reason and the voice of morality as chaos ensues on Maple

Street. He is unwavering in his appeals to his neighbors despite the fact that none of them will

take heed and take hold. Even as the residents erupt into violence, it is Brand's voice they and

the viewer hears calling, "What's the matter with you people? Now, stop!"

The fact that Brand is alone in his conviction and morality demonstrates Serling's

advocacy of incorporating manly character into postwar masculine paradigms. While Brand

holds fast to his reason, to his belief that not one of his neighbors should be suspect, and to his

conviction in bringing his community back to sanity, he is only one man amidst so many others

who abandon conviction and morality in favor of fear and spite. Les Goodman serves as a

primary example. At the beginning of the episode it is Goodman who is labeled an "oddball" and

suspected of being an alien among men. It is Goodman who finds himself the victim of mindless

prejudice. Goodman surely at the beginning of Maple Street's troubles evinces good moral

character much like Brand's, especially evident when he delivers his own Brand-like reprimand

of his neighbors, labeling them frightened rabbits , sick people, and warning them that what they

have seemingly started is a nightmare. Certainly, Goodman understands exactly what has

happened. He understands that his neighbors have succumbed to the fear of an unwanted and

nefarious extraterrestrial resident of their neighborhood. Goodman, unlike Brand, however, does

not stay true to that conviction. Instead—when given the opportunity and seemingly out of

spite—Goodman points to Charlie as the alien. Goodman cruelly incites his neighbors to suspect

Charlie who originally cruelly suspected Goodman. Goodman not only falls to the same

thoughtless prejudice of his neighbors, but he does so in a vengeful manner. Goodman gives up

his morality and abandons his conviction, all for spite.

Charlie, unlike both Brand and Goodman, is a man completely lacking character. He is

neither moral nor concerned with the welfare of his community, and his only conviction is of

those around him. From beginning to end Charlie is one of the main instigators of chaos and

hatred. He is one of the first to point to Les Goodman as an "oddball" and to cause the residents

of Maple Street to wrongfully accuse Goodman of being an alien. Charlie keeps careful watch on

the Goodmans despite the fact, as his wife reveals, he has known the Goodmans for at least five

years and that they have been good friends. Charlie similarly turns on his friend and trusted

neighbor, Steve Brand, and attempts to agitate their neighbors into suspicion of him. Charlie is

relentless in his hunt for the alien, whether he has substantiation or not. Even worse is that after

the neighborhood has deserted Charlie and labeled *him* the alien, he convinces his neighbors that

they have got it all wrong, that it is the boy, Tommy, who is the true alien. To avoid danger to

himself, Charlie puts *a child* in harm's way. And, of course, it must not be forgotten that it is

Charlie who kills Pete Van Horn. Regardless of whether the killing was in error or out of fear,

Charlie had in him the capacity to kill. Undeniably, Charlie is the least moral and the most

lacking in character of all the men on Maple Street.

Based upon those disparate characterizations of masculinity and their interactions with

one another, it is clear that Serling advocates for the masculine behavior embodied by Steve

Brand. Further, in portraying three different models of masculinity—one of supposedly *true*

character, one of ambivalent, faltering character, and one of no character whatsoever—Serling

once again seems to have recognized what Gail Bederman has explained about gender

construction theoretically. Indeed, at any given time, gender ideals are in consistent motion and

in various states of change, transition, and/or renegotiation. Not coincidentally the men in the

episode and their respective names serve as further evidence of this fact. Steve Brand, of course,

is the *brand* of men that Serling believes should be emulated. Additionally, his *brand* of

manhood, Serling suggests, bears the mark of quality. Steve Brand is the ideal model of

masculinity and the type in which other men ought to, metaphorically, invest. Les Goodman's

name hardly requires explanation. Clearly, Goodman—who began the episode as a veritably

good man—became *less* good as the episode continued. He was good, moral in the beginning; but his fall from grace, as it were, marks him as certainly less good than, say, Brand. Finally, Charlie, it seems, does not even deserve a full name. In some sense, Serling implies, Charlie is less than a whole man for he is, evidently, lacking an integral component of manhood that Brand (always) and Goodman (sometimes) possess.

Serling's closing commentary is particularly significant as well in the episode's advocacy of manly character. As Serling puts it, "There are weapons that are simply thoughts, attitudes, prejudices to be found only in the minds of *men*… And the pity of it is that these things cannot be confined to the Twilight Zone [emphasis added]." Serling makes explicit that prejudice is propagated and perpetuated *by men*. And the episode's depiction of the accelerated process through which prejudice goes supports Serling's commentary at the end of the episode. Taken all together, certainly, Serling's episode maintains that were men to be men of character, moral men of conviction who lead by example—were men more like Steve Brand, that is—things such as prejudice could absolutely be avoided, if not eradicated. Serling's episode further suggests that, as it is, with men like Les Goodman—who abandons his conviction and morality—and Charlie— who possesses no morality and no conviction at all—in the world, victories for humanity cannot be won. Men like Goodman and Charlie stand in the way of the few men of character like Steve Brand and keep humanity from triumph. The welfare of humanity, thus, Serling implies, will never improve unless men become men of character and/or give way to men of character as ideal models of manhood.

Prejudice most broadly was a theme presented with some regularity on *The Twilight Zone*. Significantly, viewers responded to the theme of prejudice implicitly as an issue of manly character.[96] Viewer Alan Klein, for instance, wrote to Serling in 1963, about a particular episode

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[96] It requires some explanation here that the partial collection of fan letters I viewed began in 1961, *after* the airing of "The Monsters Are Due on Maple Street" (1960); however, innumerable episodes of *The Twilight Zone* treated the same theme: prejudice. Here, thus, I employ viewer letters in response to

Serling wrote, "He's Alive" (1963).[97] Klein began his letter, "It is with great respect and sincere

admiration that I forward this letter to you." Klein noted that he and his family watched *The*

Twilight Zone almost every week but explained, "This presentation, in my opinion, was most

beneficial to the viewing public in this respect; not only was the entire story suspense filled from

beginning to end, but a basic point was driven emphatically home by bravely and patriotically

exposing the American Nazi Party for all they are miserably worth." Klein continues, "I do

indeed commend you wholeheartedly, not only as a glorious writer but mainly as a

man…Thanking you I remain sincerely yours."[98] Similarly, writing on behalf of her husband,

Pastor Roy Ammerman, and herself, viewer Leila Ammerman responded to "He's Alive" writing

to Serling:

> May we take this means to express to you our admiration for your courage, insight and
> intelligence in writing and putting on TV the story 'HE LIVES' [sic] which we viewed
> last evening. We believe that this type of story, which portrays graphically the source
> and the effect of prejudice and bigotry, is perhaps the most effective weapon that we have
> for combating such distortions in the public mind. We feel that your putting this story on
> nationwide TV was a great public service, and we commend you for seeing this duty and
> fulfilling it.[99]

The letters from Klein and Ammerman strongly suggest that in presenting via *The*

Twilight Zone the theme of prejudice and in clearly portraying it as perhaps the greatest social

evil, Rod Serling was a man of good character. Serling implied in "The Monsters Are Due on

Maple Street" that incorporating manly character into the concurrent expectations of the

masculine would eventuate in the amelioration of society, of the community, of humanity.

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episodes other than "The Monsters Are Due on Maple Street," but that comment upon that same theme of
prejudice.

[97] "He's Alive" tells the story of the young Peter Vollmer, a power-hungry American neo-Nazi who, in his
quest to inspire the mainstream to Nazism, is instructed in his efforts by an unidentifiable man, always
drenched in shadow, who gives him all the advice he needs to become the next infamous Nazi leader. After
Vollmer engages in a number of immoral acts—including the murder of his friend and follower—for the
sake of his party, it is revealed that the man in the shadows is Adolf Hitler himself. The episode ends with
Serling's poignant comment, "Anyplace, everyplace, where there's hate, where there's prejudice, where
there's bigotry, he's alive. He's alive so long as these evils exist."

[98] Alan Klein, personal letter to Rod Serling, January 25, 1963.

[99] Leila Ammerman, personal letter to Rod Serling, January 25, 1963.

Similarly, Klein's and Ammerman's letters support the same suggestion. Disparately, however, Serling endowed a fictional character, Steve Brand, with all the qualities of virtue to promote manly character as a means to improving the welfare of mankind; Klein and Ammerman recognized *Serling* as having all those same qualities of virtue, as having an obvious and genuine concern for American society, and as contributing to the larger progress and welfare of the whole.

Both letters, for instance, explicitly mark Serling's manly virtue. Klein's letter, of course, points out Serling's bravery while Ammerman's letter notes Serling's courage in putting out an episode of such consequence. *Courage*, of course, has been identified as one of the many manly virtues both by scholars and by Serling himself in his portrayal and advocacy of manly character, particularly in "The Changing of the Guard." These viewers' acknowledgement of Serling's bravery also suggests that they consider Serling's writing and presentation of a serious story about prejudice and hatred likely against the norm, against what was deemed popular or even appropriate. Indeed, these viewers' labeling of Serling as brave and courageous implies that Serling *dared* to do—as a man of character—what others would not. Rather than acquiescing to the accepted standards of television, Serling held to his conviction and televised a significant issue; in so doing he exhibited his own possession and maintenance of character, his own morality, and his own virtue. Similarly, Ammerman's letter commends Serling "for seeing this duty and fulfilling it." Once again, *duty* serves as an important one of the many virtues inherent in manly character, and one which Ammerman identifies Serling as having achieved, maintained, and exercised.

Both letters from Klein and Ammerman give attention to the significant fact, too, that Serling's presentation concerning prejudice served a larger purpose. Both letters, that is, explicitly mark Serling's episode as a sort of "public service" or benefit "to the viewing public." In this sense, both viewers recognize Serling as a man of character in that—just as Serling

promoted in *The Twilight Zone*—he demonstrated a clear involvement in mankind and an active

concern for winning victories for humanity, even if only indirectly.

Most significant, of course, is Klein's specific admiration for and praise of Serling "not

only as a glorious writer but mainly as a *man* [emphasis added]." Serling, in "The Monsters Are

Due on Maple Street" illustrated through the characterizations of Steve Brand, Les Goodman, and

Charlie what a *true* man, what the ideal man, what the man of character was supposed to be (by

his estimation). Klein, similarly, identifies Serling as a true man and one of great character, to be

admired, respected, and possibly even emulated. This certainly extends far beyond Serling as a

man of character to a broader appreciation and acknowledgement of manly character as an

acceptable, if not necessary, model of masculinity. Considering Serling as a man of character—

who stood by his convictions and utilized his television show as a vehicle with which he might

arouse men to goodness and virtue—and expressing the necessity of men like Serling, these

viewers implicitly support the same resurrection and integration of manly character that Serling

advocated in *The Twilight Zone*.

Viewers responded similarly to another one of the many episodes treating prejudice

entitled "I Am the Night—Color Me Black," written by Rod Serling in 1964.[100] Viewer James

Dixon wrote to Serling:

> Just finished viewing your 'I am the night, color me Black' So very good. And your
> curtain lines 'don't look for it in the twilight zone' etc, are so cogent. Sometimes; you
> feel (as an individual) as though, oh what the hell, where's the world going (In a hand
> basket). And then—just <u>about</u> then, anyway; you come up with a show that makes you

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[100] "I Am the Night—Color Me Black" treats a Midwestern town on the day of a convicted murderer's execution. Mysteriously, despite the time, the sun never comes up and the sky remains dark all day long. As the episode progresses the viewer learns that the convicted man, Jagger, has murdered in cold blood a known and violent racist, but also that his trial was riddled with corruption. Still, Jagger feels no remorse and his guilt is made more evident when an African-American reverend asks him if he enjoyed the killing; Jagger enjoyed it, indeed. The world, thus, will remain in darkness, it seems, as prejudice and hatred on both sides of the racial divide persist. Serling closes the episode as such: "A sickness known as hate…highly contagious, deadly in its effects. Don't look for it in the Twilight Zone. Look for it in a mirror."

feel that 'by god, I'm not alone', tomorrow WILL shine as bright as <u>some</u> days you've known…There's still hope for this old world.[101]

Significantly, Dixon's letter acknowledges the same theme of winning victories for humanity, his wish that such victories may be won, and Serling's apparent role in doing so. Particularly important is Dixon's explanation that, as an individual, he often feels hopelessly alone in his supposed quest for—or at least concern for—the state and betterment of mankind. Closely paralleling Serling's commentary in "The Monsters Are Due on Maple Street," which depicted in part one man of character's struggle against other men *lacking* character, Dixon seems to have recognized that concurrently there *were* men of character in existence and that that model of ideal masculinity also existed and could be achieved; however, Dixon, quite like Serling, implied that character was not the dominant mode of masculinity and, in his estimation, needed to be resurrected and incorporated in order that the world would not go to hell in a hand basket, as Dixon would phrase it. Dixon clearly identifies as a man of character himself (in his admission that he feels alone), and also suggests that Serling is a man of character by virtue of his presentations like "I Am the Night—Color Me Black," which presented maybe controversial, but clearly salient themes such as prejudice and hatred. With men of character existing, not alone, there indeed seemed, to Dixon, "hope for this old world," hope for the amelioration of society.

Serling also demonstrates his advocacy of the resurrection of manly character in a 1959 episode entitled "Time Enough at Last." In this episode, however, Serling portrays a man who neither fits the paradigm of personality nor into the model of ideal manly character. Serling, through the episode suggests, once again, however, that whether or not a man fits in to one or the other paradigm, it is still character which is necessary to the welfare of humanity.

"Time Enough at Last" opens upon a bustling bank, quickly focusing upon Henry Bemis a bank teller—adorned quite conspicuously with thick, coke-bottle glasses which comically

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[101] James Dixon, personal letter to Rod Serling, March 27, 1964.

distort his eyes—simultaneously counting money back to a customer and reading *David*

Copperfield. Bemis is clearly distracted from his work—engrossed as he is in the novel—and

counting the customer's money back quite slowly and, as it turns out, incompletely. Bemis

inquires whether the customer has read the book and describes various characters to her—musing

on and giggling over the cleverness of their names—until she informs him in frustration that he

has shortchanged her. Giving her the full amount, Bemis then continues discussing the characters

in *David Copperfield* only to find that, in his absorption, the customer departed without a word.

Bemis places a sign reading "next window please" in front of his station in order that he

may continue his reading. Shortly, however, a shadow from behind darkens the pages; it is the

bank manager and he demands Bemis's presence in his office at once. Here Serling offers his

opening commentary:

> Witness Mr. Henry Bemis, a charter member in the fraternity of dreamers. A bookish
> little man whose passion is the printed page but who is conspired against by a bank
> president and a wife and a world full of tongue-cluckers and the unrelenting hands of a
> clock. But in just a moment Mr. Bemis will enter a world without bank presidents or
> wives or clocks or anything else. He'll have a world all to himself, without anyone.

In the bank manager's office Bemis receives a harsh lecture from his employer who says,

"What constitutes an efficient member of this organization? It is a bank teller who knows his job

and performs it, i.e. an organization man who functions within an organization. You, Mr. Bemis,

do not function within the organization. You are neither an efficient bank teller nor a proficient

employee. You, Mr. Bemis, are a *reader*." Bemis timidly, but earnestly, explains that he must

read at work for he is desperate; in fact, his wife will not allow him—and will do anything in her

power to prevent him from it—to read at home. Bemis admits he has even taken to reading the

labels of condiment jars on the dinner table just to fulfill his desire to read. The bank manager,

smiling diabolically, responds that surely Mrs. Bemis is a "bright woman" and orders Bemis, "get

back to your cage!"

In the next scene, Bemis sits at home contentedly reading a newspaper only to have it snatched from his hands by his wife, Helen—snide and seemingly cruel. Helen tells her husband, presumably *as usual*, how intolerable she finds his reading habit and how much of a fool her husband is because of it. Helen demonstrates herself a commandeering, over-bearing old harpy and Bemis clearly stands no chance against her; he is timorous, apologetic, and without a metaphorical leg to stand on. Helen orders Bemis to dress for a card game with the neighbors and retreats. In response, Bemis digs to the farthest crevice of his easy chair where he has buried a book of poetry. Pulling it out, however, he realizes even the cleverly hidden book has been discovered by his wife who, then, blacked out each and every page with pencil.

The scene shifts to the following day: Bemis's lunch hour. Closing his teller window, Bemis retrieves a novel and a newspaper and escapes into the bank's vault in order to read in peace. Opening the newspaper the viewer is shown a headline noting the potential destruction of the hydrogen bomb. Bemis briefly glances at the headline, closes the paper, and proceeds to read his novel. At precisely that moment, however, there is an explosion and Bemis is sent into tumult ultimately being knocked to the ground, unconscious.

When he awakes, Bemis ventures out of the vault to find a world almost completely decimated. The hydrogen bomb was dropped and its destructive powers mentioned in the newspaper were not an exaggeration. Walking up and through the bank, Bemis discovers everyone dead. He continues out of the bank and into the devastated landscape that once was a thriving city. As Bemis traverses the rubble, Serling narrates:

> Seconds, minutes, hours. They crawl by on hands and knees for Mr. Henry Bemis who looks for a spark in the ashes of a dead world. A telephone connected to nothingness, a neighborhood bar, a movie, a baseball diamond, a hardware store, the mailbox of what was once his house and is now rubble. They lie at his feet as the battered monuments to what was but is no more. Mr. Henry Bemis on an eight-hour tour of a graveyard.

Bemis calls desperately for Helen, but he quickly realizes that anyone he ever knew is dead: "They're all dead. They must be. Everybody's dead except me. I'm alright. *Why* am I alright?"

Bemis deduces that he is the lone survivor of practical nuclear holocaust because he was in the bank's vault; he muses, however, "The thing of it is, though, the thing of it is, I'm not at all sure that I *want* to be alive."

As Bemis continues his journey through the aftermath, strangely, he seems to grow increasingly more content, happy with the fact that he is alone. He learns that there is still plenty of food, cigarettes, and things to explore (things to keep him occupied), and that, ultimately, he can survive in complete solitude. The only thing that appears to bother Bemis about his new situation as the sole survivor of the hydrogen bomb is the boredom: "Is this how it's going to be? Just sitting around day after day eating, smoking cigarettes, reading the same half of a newspaper over and over again?" In fact, it is the boredom that causes Bemis to start to go visibly insane, wandering the streets childishly crying for help. Once again he reflects on his situation: "If it just weren't for the loneliness. If it just weren't for the *sameness*. If there were just something to *do*."

Bemis, then, stumbles upon the remains of a sporting goods store where he spots a gun. Fleetingly, Bemis considers suicide, but just as he puts the gun meekly to his head he spots something better: the ruins of the public library and hundreds of books strewn about, but miraculously intact. Overjoyed, any anxiety or melancholy Bemis felt disappears as he plans his reading for the next several years, exclaiming triumphantly, "The very best thing of all is there's time now. There's all the time I need and all the time I want. Time, time, time! There's time enough at last!" Just then, Bemis leans over from the step on which he is seated to retrieve a book he had not noticed previously. As he does so, though, Bemis falters slightly and his glasses fall from his face, shattering on the ground. Bemis realizes his misfortune, looking around him blindly, and begins to cry, saying, "That's not fair. That's not fair at all." Serling concludes the episode: "The best laid plans of mice and men—and Henry Bemis, the small man in the glasses who wanted nothing but time. Henry Bemis, now just a part of a smashed landscape, just a piece

of the rubble, just a fragment of what man has deeded himself. Mr. Henry Bemis in the Twilight

Zone."[102]

In "Time Enough at Last," Henry Bemis seems plagued by superficial expectations of the

personality/conformity model of masculinity, by a shrewish wife, and by simply bad luck.

Scrutinizing Bemis, however, reveals that while he may not be a conformist to the superficial

expectations of personality, he lacks character above all. Therefore, Serling implies, he deserves

little sympathy and even less respect or emulation. One of the first things the viewer learns about

Bemis is that he is not an organization man; in other words, Bemis is not a man who could be said

to fit the personality/conformity model of masculinity (previously described in Chapter One). As

the bank manager says to Bemis, an organization man or an "efficient member" of the

organization is someone "who knows his job and performs it" and Bemis proves "neither an

efficient bank teller nor a proficient employee." The bank president is most certainly correct.

Bemis, while he may *know* his job, does not perform it to standard. Instead, Bemis reads his

books when he should be focused upon the requirements of his position, made evident by the

opening scene in which Bemis reads a bit of Dickens when he ought to be focusing on the money

he is counting back to his customer. Furthermore, Bemis's carelessness and preoccupation with

the novel causes him to shortchange his customer, illustrating, again as the bank president

phrased, a lack of efficiency and proficiency.

Most important, however, is not that Bemis does not fit in to the bank's, the

organization's standards, but that Bemis does not appear to possess any of the elements of manly

character he *could* demonstrate in the workplace. Different from such nonconformists as the

similarly named Mr. Bevis (of the episode "Mr. Bevis" discussed in Chapter One)—whose

nonconformity was in favor of conviction, of being true to oneself, and of substance and

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[102] "Time Enough at Last," *The Twilight Zone*, DVD, directed by John Brahm (1959; Chatsworth, CA: Image Entertainment, 2006).

goodness over superficiality—Bemis's nonconformity to the bank's standards is due to nothing more than a selfish, somewhat childish obsession with or, really, *compulsion* toward reading. Bemis maintains no conviction and has no staunch beliefs to which he must be true; he merely *likes* to read, and because he cannot do it at home on account of his wife's prohibition, he does it at work. Furthermore, Bemis demonstrates no sense of loyalty and no sense of duty to his work or to the bank that employs him. Whether Bemis enjoys his work or is passionate about it is immaterial; as a bank teller, naturally, Bemis has certain responsibilities which he consciously refuses to fulfill, all so he may read.

Worse yet, Serling suggests, is that Bemis's passion for the printed page is not a matter of conviction. While Ellis Fowler believes that literature might inspire his young students to be great men, for instance, Bemis's purpose in reading is simply pleasure for himself alone. He does not in any way intend to contribute to the greater good—to the victories of humanity as it were—via the literature that he reads, he only wishes to entertain himself. That is made further evident by the fact that Bemis will admittedly use even condiment labels as reading material; Bemis, it is suggested, is unconcerned with the *material* itself, the ideas contained therein, or its relevance and is rather more concerned with the *act* of reading and his compulsion to do it. In stark contrast to Fowler as well—who reads poetry meant to motivate his students to goodness—when Bemis discusses his reading with his customer, for instance, he merely enjoys the clever names of Dickens's characters and delightedly chuckles to his customer over them. Summarily, Bemis not only shirks his duties and responsibilities as a bank teller in order to read, but he reads greedily for his own *amusement* exclusively. He may not conform to superficial expectations of the organization, but neither does he conduct himself as a man of good character.

Further demonstrating that Bemis lacks character is his clear paucity of concern for the world around him—his obvious noninvolvement in humanity. This flaw is illustrated particularly cogently through his thoughts and actions immediately before and after the hydrogen bomb has

decimated the remainder of mankind. First, of course, Bemis holds in his hand news of the

potential destruction of the hydrogen bomb. Rather than taking an interest in such an item that

has not merely local but worldwide ramifications, Bemis only glances at the article, evidently

unconcerned with the reality facing him and the rest of humankind. Bemis would clearly prefer

to bury his head and his concern in a fictional world for no other purpose, as has been established,

than his own diversion. Significant, too, is Bemis's choice to retreat into the bank's vault in order

to be alone during his lunch hour. In so doing, Bemis shows not only his indifference toward

others but also symbolically renounces his membership in humanity.

Bemis's renunciation of his fellow man is further illustrated by his reaction to the

realization the he is, indeed, the last man left on Earth. Bemis neither laments the horror and the

destruction of nuclear annihilation nor does he seem particularly affected by the discovery that

everyone is dead; he simply takes note that "they're all dead. They must be," and attempts to

explain why he alone is the sole survivor. Bemis's concern with boredom is equally as

revelatory. Again, rather than being even only a little distressed by the fact that everyone has

perished in the face of nuclear war, Bemis is entirely upset by the fact that he has nothing to do;

he is bored when he would prefer not to be and displeased by the dullness of a dead world.

Bemis, of course, demonstrates to the utmost his unconcern for others and his disregard for

involvement in humanity when he finds the remains of the library and hundreds of books for the

taking. Particularly telling are Bemis's exclamations: "The very best thing of all is there's time

now. There's all the time I need and all the time I want…There's time enough at last!" Bemis is

elated that the world has been rid of all the people who took from him his only source of pleasure:

reading. Now, without anyone present to bother him, Bemis has time to read as much as he

would like. Nuclear annihilation has relieved Bemis, in his view, of the basic inconvenience of

other people—other people who previously stopped him from his self-centered and obsessive

immersion in fiction.

It is for these reasons, Serling suggests, that Bemis cannot be rewarded. Left as he is alone in the world with "time enough at last" to read to his heart's content, Bemis has exhibited his utter disavowal of mankind and his place amongst humanity. Bemis has demonstrated a marked and voluntary apathy toward man, and he simply cannot be rewarded. His glasses break, he is left, physically, almost blind, and his blindness seems merely to mimic the blindness he displayed toward humanity, toward his fellow human beings, prior to the decimation wrought by the hydrogen bomb. Serling makes it indubitably evident that the viewer should take no pity on Bemis, for, as Serling pointedly states in his closing commentary, Henry Bemis is "just a fragment of what *man* has deeded himself [emphasis added]." Indeed, had Henry Bemis shown any element of concern for mankind and for that which faced mankind, had Bemis cared for anyone but himself and taken an earnest interest in the world around him, his fate might have been different. Ultimately, Serling suggests, Bemis's blindness, his refusal of involvement in mankind deeded him *a worse fate than death*. Serling suggests that Bemis, in fact, ought to have died alongside his fellow man, but because he retreated from mankind, both literally and symbolically, he has merited the cruel personal fate of the physical inability to read in a world depleted of people and any other source of entertainment that is so important to Bemis. And he certainly would prefer death to such a life. Serling implies that no good will come to the man who neglects humanity, who has no seeming concern for humanity. No victories for mankind were won or even attempted by Bemis, and, thus, he experiences no triumph. His lack of character and the consequences of this lack are duly penalized in the episode, serving as a lesson about and an advocacy of the significance of possessing a manly character.

The episodes of *The Twilight Zone* analyzed here and, additionally, the personal responses from viewers serve as evidence that, indeed, postwar masculinity contained elements of consistent change and renegotiation. While Chapter One has identified masculine conformity as the adherence to the expectations of personality as a problem, in this chapter I have endeavored to

show that Rod Serling (through his television series) as well as ordinary men who viewed *The Twilight Zone*, advocated and supported the revival and reincorporation of manly character into concurrent models of masculinity. Serling as advocate and viewers alike championed the return of the attributes of manly character which included the attainment and maintenance of a variety of often morally based virtues and the integration of those virtues into quotidian behavior. Most significantly, however, Serling and his viewers offered a renegotiation to the concept of character.

As Bederman theoretically asserted, the process of gender norm construction necessarily implies both the conservation of current gender expectations, but also the borrowing of older gendered modes resulting in the cultivation of a disparate—but not entirely *new*—gender ideal. As Serling presented masculinity in *The Twilight Zone*, it appears that he and his viewers accepted at least one aspect of the concomitant model of manhood founded upon personality: the individual's constant positioning in relation to others. Rather than suffering that relation as it was—that is, as it placed men in a position of superficiality, performativity, and inauthentic being—Serling, as an advocate of character, adopted that relation and amended it to carry far different meaning. Ultimately, Serling's advocacy of the resurrection of manly character, as has been evidenced, placed man's attention to, concern for, and involvement with mankind as central to the notion of character itself. Metaphorically bargaining with personality in favor of character, then, Serling and his viewers recognized and accepted that, indeed, they would be situated perpetually in relation to others; but rather than that fact being a negative relationship based upon superficial exigency, it was suggested that that relationship be made seemingly more positive and humanistic and that men ought to care for the genuine welfare of the group of which they were inextricably and constantly a part. The moral self-mastery of the nineteenth-century version of manly character underwent, then, a proposed adaptation into mid-twentieth-century masculine paradigms rendering moral self-mastery not a goal simply of the individual for himself and his

own control, but for the individual as a member of the group and the broader wellbeing of

society.

CONCLUSION

In 1964, sixteen-year-old Chris Wessel wrote to Serling in response to one of the many

episodes of *The Twilight Zone* treating conformity, "Number Twelve Looks Just Like You".

Wessel earnestly testified:

> I want to give you a gift—personally…It is a youthful and meaningful promise: that
> before I act rashly I shall endeavor to 'think twice' (as my father has suggested for years
> but I only now understand) and ask the reason why. I shall consider conformity an unjust
> cause for action and hope I shall have the courage to act only out of sincere good-will. I
> know my efforts shall have been strengthened by my admiration of you and your
> beliefs.[103]

Effectively encapsulated in the words of this remarkably perceptive and eloquent young man is

all I have aimed to argue in the preceding sections of this study. Representations of masculinity

in *The Twilight Zone* exposed conformity as the problematic adherence to, as Wessel's letter

suggests, the irrationally superficial expectations of personality. Simultaneously, those

representations marked Serling's advocacy, founded upon his own beliefs as a man, of a

resurrection of manly character, promoting the attainment, maintenance, and, significantly, the

exercise of various virtues in order to act in the good interest of mankind. Previously unused as

evidence in the study of masculinity in the postwar United States, the characterization of

masculinity in *The Twilight Zone* and the letters from actual viewers that accompany this

particular series make more complete our understanding of conceptions of mid-twentieth-century

manhood.

Most significantly, my study of postwar masculinity—through the analysis of episodes of

The Twilight Zone, its creator/auteur, Rod Serling, and the personal responses to it and him from

viewers—proves evidence for and support of Gail Bederman's theoretical suggestion that gender

construction is a continuous and dynamic process consistently involving change and renegotiation

in men and women's efforts to reimagine and redefine the expectations of their respective

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[103] Chris Wessel, personal letter to Rod Serling, January 24, 1964.

genders. Indeed, this study demonstrates the undeniable vitality of one moment in the perpetual process of gender construction, in this case particularly of postwar masculinity in the United States.

Utilizing *The Twilight Zone* and its viewers' responses as evidence has demonstrated the historical dynamism of gender construction. The explicit and implicit exposition of masculinity in *The Twilight Zone* has suggested, first, that conformity—the most significant problem for postwar men—was historically based in the paradigm of personality, developed and implemented as the dominant masculine ideal around the turn of the twentieth century. Masculine malaise in the postwar era did not arise, as the current scholarship argues, from a sudden awareness of conformity to the long-standing tradition of breadwinning. Further, representations of masculinity in *The Twilight Zone* evidence the historical foundation of postwar conformity just as they suggest the historical process implicit in gender construction. Significantly, the historical dynamism of gender construction has also been highlighted here as depictions of masculinity in *The Twilight Zone* demonstrate that in the postwar era an older, historical model of masculinity— that of manly character—served as a model to be incorporated into concurrent conceptions of the masculine. Serling, specifically, advocated the return of that older model and creatively promoted its virtue and relevance in the contemporary milieu. The process masculinity underwent, as presented in *The Twilight Zone*, proves historically dynamic indeed.

Most important, however, is the demonstration of operative discourse surrounding postwar masculinity itself which has been displayed in this study. Up to this point mid-century masculinity studies have lacked such demonstration. They do not show how men, as Bederman suggests, actively engaged with and altered masculine gender constructions in the postwar period. Drawing on *The Twilight Zone* as a body of evidence, considering Rod Serling as creator and advocate, and employing viewer responses to *The Twilight Zone* and to Serling, however, highlights the actual process of gender construction. Further, having focused on the tripartite

interaction between Serling, his episodes, and responsive viewers, this study illustrates that gender construction—particularly of postwar masculinity—is, as Bederman states, an ideological process. Indeed, this study has endeavored to show not only *what* was changing within conceptions of postwar masculinity, but *how* those conceptions might have been changed. Ultimately, Serling's use of a particular cultural apparatus (the television medium and *The Twilight Zone*), his specific rendering of postwar masculine paradigms, and most significantly, viewers' *interaction with* that apparatus *and* those presentations of masculinity, demonstrate part of the process by which gender norms are amended.

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