ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: THE FEELING AMERICAN: EMOTION

MANAGEMENT AND THE

STANDARDIZATION OF DEMOCRACY IN COLD WAR LITERATURE AND FILM

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This project examines how strategies of emotion management influenced the development of American literature and film during the Cold War period. Focusing primarily on the High Cold War Period of 1949 to 1962, it argues that a governmentfunded postwar boom in the psychological and social sciences resulted in a "psychological turn" in American culture that sought to solve social problems by teaching Americans to manage their emotions in keeping with scientificallyestablished standards for democratic behavior. Proponents of emotion management believed it could accomplish the Soviet goal of creating a harmonious, classless society without requiring radical social revolution or totalitarian forms of control that would violate American principles of freedom and democracy. To that end, American policymakers used the findings of social scientists to develop narratives that: 1) modeled how to behave in the event of a nuclear attack, 2) equated happiness with the American standard of living, 3) made emotional malleability the foundation for a democratic personality, and 4) linked racism to deviation from the norms of liberal white psychology. The works of several mid-century American authors and

filmmakers provide an important counterpoint to the optimism of this official emotion management narrative as they: 1) challenge the government's sanitized representation of nuclear war, 2) document the unhappy effects of middle-class organization culture, 3) express anxiety over the alienating effects of emotional labor, and 4) reject the equation of mental health and American identity with specifically white cultural standards and forms. In contrast to emotion management's conservative emphasis on individual psychological adjustment, these works suggest that only systemic structural changes can resolve the problems of American democracy.

This historicist approach analyzes propaganda films, government bulletins, popular magazine articles, and period sociological studies alongside close readings of novels (Philip Wylie's *Tomorrow!* (1954) and Sloan Wilson's *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* (1955)), films (Don Siegel's *The Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956) and John Frankenheimer's *The Manchurian Candidate* (1962)), and the story collections of African American authors Langston Hughes and Alice Childress.

THE FEELING AMERICAN: EMOTION MANAGEMENT AND THE STANDARDIZATION OF DEMOCRACY IN COLD WAR LITERATURE AND FILM

by

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Introduction: The Feeling American: Emotion Management and the Standardization of Democracy in Cold War Literature and Film

"Emotion management may be understood as a strategy for the mobilization, administration, and control of emotional life. The creation of those who aspire to the status of authorities and guardians of the soul..."

Guy Oakes *The Imaginary War: Civil Defense and American Cold War Culture*(1994)¹

1. Introduction

On December 8, 1957, CBS television aired a thirty-minute dramatic documentary titled, The Day Called 'X.' Directed by Harry Rasky and produced in conjunction with the Federal Civil Defense Administration (FCDA), the film is narrated by Glenn Ford and stars "the people of Portland, Oregon." It tells the story of "what happened...or could happen" to Portlanders in the event of a nuclear attack on their city. With less than three hours of notice, the entire city of Portland must be evacuated. All hospitals, schools, businesses and homes must be emptied; vital rescue personnel and utility equipment must be relocated to remote staging areas; the city's mayor and other key government officials must move to an emergency operations center located deep in a hillside bunker. Using a combination of staged scenes and archival footage recorded during Portland's 1955 test evacuation drill ("Operation Greenlight") the film explains that Portland has a well-developed nuclear evacuation plan, but "the question is...on the day called X, will it work?" (00:09:54). The answer, according to the images of Portlanders successfully evacuating their city "quietly [and] without panic" (00:10:05), is an unequivocal Yes.

¹ Guy Oakes, *The Imaginary War: Civil Defense and American Cold War Culture*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1994, p. 46.

There are no traffic jams, no looting or shouting. School-children calmly follow their teachers outside, and the only people shown outright running at any point are rescue personnel like firemen, who slide down fire-poles and hurry onto the backs of their trucks as though responding to an ordinary emergency (00:7:30). A police dispatcher blandly reports on the progress of the evacuation, tone and expression no different than when relaying an earlier call about a cat stuck in a tree (00:05:30). A doctor even smiles cheerfully when he tells the mayor that "one boy and twins" were born during the course of the evacuation (00:21:31). Finally, *The Day Called X* reaches its climax when the city's civil defense director announces that enemy bombers are overhead (00:25:31). The assembled personnel silently sit and wait while dramatic music rises, and the scene cuts from the inside of the operations bunker to aerial footage of the forest surrounding the city. But then we fade to black and Glenn Ford takes up the story once more. The film stops short of dramatizing the moment of the attack itself. Instead, viewers are left to contemplate images of self-possessed Portlanders smoothly following their predetermined evacuation plan, their eerily calm demeanor a deliberate contrast to and shield against the extremity of the nuclear threat.

Glenn Ford is only half right when he asserts "there are no actors in this story" (00:01:41). The real-life Portlanders depicted in *The Day Called X* were not professional actors, but they were acting out scripts and roles defined for them by the Federal Civil Defense Administration. When they participated in civil defense drills like "Operation Greenlight" or played out the scenes staged for Rasky's film, they served as examples to the rest of Cold War America. The aura of calm, near-emotionless efficiency Portlanders project as they go about the routines needed to preserve themselves and their families was

precisely the attitude the FCDA wanted other Cold War Americans to adopt when they considered what life in their own towns and cities might be like during an atomic attack. Films like *The Day Called X* set careful limits around the representation of the nuclear threat. Little attention is paid to the material and logistical nightmare of rebuilding bombed-out urban centers and even less is said about the dangers of radioactive fallout. Instead viewers are offered the reassuring message that surviving a nuclear attack depends on planning, practice, and emotional self-control.

Films like this one were an important part of Cold War America's culture of *emotion management*. Historian Guy Oakes describes this concept in *The Imaginary War: Civil Defense and American Cold War Culture* (1994):

A system of emotion management represents the emotional life as framed by three basic parameters: cognitive standards, practical norms, and strategic controls. Emotion management defines standards that tell us what it is possible to feel, how far the horizon of emotional experience extends, and what our feelings mean. It also defines norms that tell us what is expected of us emotionally, what the limits of acceptable emotional expression are, what we ought to feel in specific circumstances, and how these feelings should be expressed. Finally, it defines a technology of emotional control that tells us what we can do with our emotions and how we can use them so that what we feel and the way we express our feelings can be deployed to our advantage. (47)

In the context of civil defense emotion management, this meant that the FCDA was responsible for establishing the standards, norms, and controls that would shape and limit Cold War Americans' emotional relationship to the nuclear threat. In a 1953 *Collier's* magazine article, "Panic—The Ultimate Weapon?," Frederic "Val" Peterson, head of the FCDA, warns that "mass panic may be far more devastating than the bomb itself" (99), and "the first fact we must face is that we, the citizens of the strongest nation on earth, are also the most panic-prone" (102). Films like *The Day Called X* and articles like Peterson's were part of the FCDA's system of emotion management and were meant to

equip Cold War Americans with the "technology of emotional control" they needed to overcome their panic-proneness and win the Cold War.

In addition to teaching Cold War Americans to face their nuclear fears, emotion management was also meant to ensure that the nation could continue deploying its nuclear arsenal as aggressively as it might desire. One keystone of Cold War military and political policy was the strategy of nuclear deterrence and Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD). As Paul Boyer describes it, the premise of deterrence was simple: "If war came, the United States would simply rain all its available atomic bombs upon Russia's urban and military centers...in a nuclear world, security lay in maintaining a retaliatory capacity so powerful and so invulnerable that no nation would dare attack us or our allies" (358). The United States and the Soviet Union were engaged in a high-stakes game of nuclear chicken. As long as each side could convince the other of its readiness to wage massive nuclear warfare on a moment's notice, neither side would actually be willing to launch the first nuclear attack. In keeping with the twisted logic that often characterized the period, massive nuclear arsenals and promises of mutually assured destruction helped keep the Cold War cold by locking the superpowers in a stalemate. But if the Russians developed a way to exploit Americans' nuclear fears or perceived their panic-proneness as a failure of national will, the precarious balance of power would shift in the Communists' favor.

Therefore, it was the duty of the FCDA and its "guardians of the soul" to teach the American people to manage their panic proneness by transforming their "irrational" nuclear panic into a "healthy" and controlled nuclear fear. They sought to do this in any number of ways—by equating the effects of nuclear weapons to those of more

conventional armaments, by emphasizing how people had pulled together during past natural disasters, and by encouraging individuals to participate in civil defense events like the "Clean Up-Paint Up-Fix Up" campaign, which urged homeowners to paint their houses to increase their chances of withstanding a nuclear explosion. Most of all, they stressed that surviving a nuclear attack depended not on one's proximity to ground zero or patterns of radioactive fallout but on emotional self-control. Americans were directed to turn their attention inward, assessing their own propensity for panic with the assistance of experts in social and psychological science. Indeed, Peterson's Collier's article includes a 5-part quiz readers can use to test their emotional stability. He reassures his audience that teams of psychologists from organizations like the RAND Corporation "are slowly but surely removing the guesswork from panic causes and manifestations" (105). He concludes by asserting, "If you are prepared and remain calm you will be performing a service of tremendous value to yourself and your country—and probably the whole free world" (109). Individual emotion management becomes the foundation for global security.

In retrospect, it seems completely absurd that the government organization tasked with preparing American citizens to face the ultimate Cold War nightmare, a nuclear attack on American soil, should offer as its primary strategy just two words: "Don't panic." Where are the stockpiles of radiation-shielded medical supplies? Who is constructing the public shelter system needed to protect apartment dwellers and other urban populations? What about a relief fund for families who can barely afford to feed themselves this week, much less store enough food and water to survive months underground? Where is the acknowledgement that a nuclear attack would not be "just"

like" a conventional bombing or disaster but a brand new phenomenon that would affect national infrastructure and economic systems on an unprecedented scale? Why has the issue of nuclear war, something that is shaped by a complex web of geopolitical factors, including the development and expansion of the national military-industrial complex that President Eisenhower referenced in his 1961 farewell address, been recast as a problem of individual psychology and emotional stability? More importantly, why is emotion management posited as the basis of good Cold War citizenship rather than more public forms of political participation such as voting or protest?

Making emotion management the nation's shield against nuclear destruction certainly seems odd, but it was part of a larger postwar "psychological turn" in which problems that were analyzed in terms of economic inequalities and systems of power and domination in other eras were narrowly reframed as strictly psychological during the Cold War period. As Andrew Grossman argues in Neither Dead Nor Red: Civilian Defense and American Political Development During the Early Cold War (2001), "National security and civil defense planners, as well as political elites, conferred immense prestige on social-scientific analyses of society, placing such analyses on the same plane as, for example, a 'hard' scientific endeavor to develop a new weapons system," and the emotion management strategies they developed "reflected the 'cutting edge' of the behavioralism that dominated the social sciences in the late 1940s and early 1950s" (59). The RAND Corporation, famous for its nuclear war gaming, also devoted resources to studying child-rearing practices, social welfare, suburbanization, organization culture, and segregation. Whether the issue was nuclear survival, the shortcomings of the "American way of life," the labor demands of organization culture,

or racial conflict and inequality, many scientists and policymakers sincerely believed there was no problem social science and emotion management could not fix. Yet the "technologies of emotion control" they developed to address these problems also helped preserve a conservative status quo by encouraging Cold War Americans to view social conflict as arising from personal psychology rather than systemic inequalities.

Broadly speaking then, emotion management as I use it in this project refers to a number of different cultural narratives circulating during the Cold War period that encouraged Americans to "manage" their emotions by adhering to certain "standards" of emotional behavior. Frequently these narratives emerged in response to the demands of the Cold War. Fears of nuclear attack gave rise to official propaganda materials that modeled the ideal way Americans should react during an attack. Policymakers marketed the "American way of life" to audiences at home and abroad, idealizing it not only for its material abundance but also as a standard of living that would bring happiness to all who attained it. When Soviet propagandists began exploiting America's "Achilles heel" racial inequality, segregation, and violence—policymakers responded by "psychologizing" the problem of racism. Once African Americans and racist white Americans were assimilated to the "norms" of liberal white psychology, all Americans would live in harmony. These particular narratives often had the backing of official government organizations such as the FCDA, and they were supported by social scientific research conducted by think-tanks like the RAND Corporation. Through this marriage of government and social science, Americans were offered an idealized vision of American life wherein social harmony depended on the ability of all Americans to

"manage" their emotions in accordance with scientifically established standards of behavior.

These prescriptive emotional narratives enjoyed a great deal of circulation and popularity. Elements of them appear not only in government-sponsored studies and films, but also popular magazine articles, advertisements, and advice columns. They were disseminated by legions of "emotion managers"—educators, child-care experts, psychologists, politicians, and sociologists—who all shared a common faith in the ability of science to cure social problems without resorting to any sort of revolutionary social reorganization. They stressed that Americans were free to choose to deviate from the norms of this standardized "American way of life," implicitly and sometimes explicitly contrasting that freedom of choice with the repressive regime of the Soviet Union. Instead, they relied on a combination of expert authority, peer scrutiny, and internalized social controls to encourage Americans to "choose" to adhere to their norms. Even though these norms were derived from the psychology, lifestyle, and emotional culture of a single segment of the population—the white, middle-class "organization man" and his family—emotion managers considered them representative of the population as a whole. Learning to adjust one's personality and emotional behavior to comply with these norms was considered the foundation of both psychological maturity and modern American citizenship.

These official narratives of emotion management form a major component of the "emotionology" of Cold War America, but the perspective they offer is incomplete. Emotionology, as Peter and Carol Stearns explain, refers to "the attitudes or standards that a society, or a definable group within a society, maintains toward basic emotions and their appropriate expression; ways that institutions reflect and encourage these attitudes in human conduct, e.g., courtship practices as expressing the valuation of affect in marriage, or personnel workshops as reflecting the valuation of anger in job relationships" ("Emotionology" 813). Whereas the *management* aspect of *emotion management* privileges the authority of government experts and scientists, the term *emotion* reminds us that "the personal is political"—a point feminists would later emphasize in response to just this type of institutional authoritarianism. Therefore it is important to distinguish between the prescriptive ideals of emotion management and the way Cold War Americans actually felt about their lives.

For this reason, I have chosen to incorporate a variety of different types of texts into this project to offer multiple perspectives on the emotional life of Cold War America. Alongside the government propaganda films, RAND Corporation reports, and psychological studies that promote the official emotion management narrative and its particular image of American life, I include a number of popular novels, films, and works of social criticism that offer a less optimistic perspective. These works, including Sloan Wilson's *The Man in the Gray Flann el Suit* (1955), Don Siegel's *The Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956), and William H. Whyte's *The Organization Man* (1956), reveal that many Americans were wary of the changing postwar world. They felt the American psyche had become a playground for "depth" psychologists, advertising gurus, and human relations managers to such an extent that many people were becoming alienated from their own emotions. In addition to registering general anxieties over modernization and technological advancement, these works often exhibit a profound sense of nostalgia for a period of emotional authenticity and simplicity that has been lost.

In terms of its critical heritage and field of study, my project draws on the work of cultural historians of emotions like Peter and Carol Stearns, Jan Lewis, and William M. Reddy rather than affect theorists like Silvan Tomkins or Brian Massumi. As anyone who delves into the subject soon learns, it is difficult to distinguish between *emotion* and related concepts like *affect*. Affect is commonly considered a pre-conscious, pre-personal state that exceeds linguistic representation. Any attempt to put affect into words necessarily limits it, depriving it of its critical potential by imbedding it within narrative, ideology, and the social. As Sianne Ngai writes in *Ugly Feelings* (2005), quoting both Brian Massumi and Lawrence Grossberg,

The former [emotion] designates feeling given "function and meaning" while the latter [affect] remains "unformed and unstructured"...As Grossberg puts it, "Unlike emotions, affective states are neither structured narratively nor organized in response to our interpretations of situations." Similarly, Massumi argues that while emotion is "a subjective content, the sociolinguistic fixing of the quality of an experience which is from that point onward defined as personal," affect is feeling or "intensity" disconnected from "meaningful sequencing, from narration." (25-26)

Or, to rephrase this distinction in the language of my own project, true affect is something that would forever escape any attempts at management. As Ruth Leys argues, "affects must be viewed as independent of, and in an important sense prior to, ideology" (437). Yet my entire project revolves around uncovering the ideology behind the supposedly "neutral" practice of emotion management. I examine how American policymakers used civil defense films to redefine *fear* and *panic* in the face of nuclear war (Chapter 1). I analyze how a standardized "American way of life" was marketed to audiences at home and abroad as the key to *happiness* even though many popular novels equated standardization with *unhappiness* (Chapter 2). These emotional narratives are not

pre-social or apolitical; they both shaped and were shaped by the specific historical and cultural environment of the Cold War.

Although American emotion managers would have considered themselves guardians of freedom and democracy, they actually had much more in common with the Russian social scientists who were tasked with engineering the "new Soviet man" than they would have liked to admit. Joseph Stalin was known for regularly referring to psychologists, educators, propaganda workers, and writers as "engineers of the human soul" (Cheng 23). But renowned American behaviorist, B. F. Skinner, adopts a similarly mechanical view of human nature and democracy in "Freedom and the Control of Men" (1955): "Although it is tempting to assume that it is human nature to believe in democratic principles, we must not overlook the 'cultural engineering' which produced and continues to maintain democratic practices" (64). This new, scientific method for managing American society meant rejecting "the so-called 'democratic philosophy' of human behavior" (47) that believed in and therefore valued human agency and free will. It also meant relying on cultural and psychological "standards" that did not accurately represent the nation as a whole. As psychologists Abram Kardiner and Lionel J. Ovesey assert in their study of African American psychology, "Our constant control is the American white man. We require no other control" (11). Both women and African Americans were expected to perform types of emotional labor and emotion management from which the "American white man" was exempt. So even though American policymakers found emotion management appealing precisely because it promised to offer scientific solutions to existing social problems that would be free of political or ideological influence, it nonetheless exhibits many anti-democratic tendencies.

Cold War Emotion managers had much in common with Progressive Era reformers like John Dewey and Walter Lippmann, particularly in their shared belief in the plasticity of human behavior. As Jonathan Auerbach writes of Progressives in *Weapons of Democracy: Propaganda, Progressivism, and American Public Opinion* (2015),

At the heart of their work resided a belief in the pliability of citizens, their openness to shaping by others. Against earlier models of moral character that assumed certain individuals and groups to be inherently flawed, these social scientists emphasized how environment profoundly molded behavior, which in their view was almost infinitely malleable. This is not inevitably a top-down model of coercion or manipulation as much as a horizontal process of mutual interpenetration among persons assumed to be always already social, members of a larger organic whole that is constantly making and remaking itself. (11)

Technologies of social control could play a positive role in a democratic society by directing a disorganized public opinion in ways that enabled citizens to participate in their own governance, influencing the social and political environment that shaped them in turn. Even between Dewey and Lippmann whose social theories diverged in other ways, there was agreement upon this point: "The question became not whether the American public needed to be directed, but how and who would guide it...How should information be organized and disseminated to allow citizens to freely and openly interpret, deliberate, and act upon knowledge?" (95). Yet it was precisely during the Cold War period—when "brainwashing" famously entered the American lexicon—that social control began to assume a more sinister formation.

In comparison to Progressive Era notions of social control, however, the Cold War system of emotion management was more interested in maintaining the form and authority of existing social systems. On the one hand, emotion management was ostensibly meant to "define a technology of emotional control" that would show Cold War Americans how their feelings could be expressed and "deployed to [their]

advantage" (Oakes 47). On the other hand, Americans were meant to express those feelings within the limits of existing social systems. As historian James H. Capshew writes of postwar psychology and social engineering, "Personal 'adjustment' was the catchword as the individual was fitted to his/her social environment, whether the environment was the family, the school, the corporation, the prison, the hospital, or the clinic" (50). While Cold War emotion managers continued to believe in the pliability of human behavior, they no longer saw the social environment itself as something open to "constant making and remaking." Rather they believed social conflict resulted when people failed to successfully "adjust" themselves to their environment. Teaching Americans how to successfully manage their emotions would lead to greater individual satisfaction and would also reduce conflict and disorder within the environment as a whole. It was the job of the emotion manager—in conjunction with the social scientist—to determine the "realistic" norms and "democratic" standards that would guide the adjustment process.

Cold War emotion management is also opposed to interpretation in a way that Progressivism was not. Part of the eeriness of a film like *The Day Called 'X'* comes not just from the Portlanders' unnatural calm in the face of their potential annihilation but from the way this day unfolds so very smoothly, as Guy Oakes notes:

There is no evidence of the commonplace need to interpret instructions in order to understand them. The plan has been designed so precisely and operates so faultlessly that there is no logical space between the rule and the behavior that constitutes its correct application. The place for interpretations has disappeared. Since civil defense instructions do not require interpretation, the conflicts that typically result from incompatible interpretations do not arise. Because no interpretation can intervene between a rule and its application, the friction produced by the process of interpretation and the possibility of conflicting interpretations also disappears. (103)

Cold War emotion management functioned, in large part, through narrative domination and through appeals to the authority of the experts who developed these narratives. Cold War emotion managers, like Nicholas Rescher of the RAND Corporation, largely believed that the American people were incapable of taking "stock of their lives...in a realistic and actionable manner" (12). More importantly, they asserted that dissatisfaction and disagreement with their judgments regarding American society could occur only as a result of individual idiosyncrasy. It is this attempt to control and delimit "the place for interpretations" that makes emotion management a valuable object of study in a project on the literature and culture of Cold War America.

The rest of this introduction is devoted to outlining the origins and implications of emotion management in more detail. I will begin by linking the rise of emotion management to Progressive Era fears of democratic irrationality and the subsequent belief that a social-scientific elite was the key to stabilizing society. Then I will explain why the postwar "psychological turn" appealed to American policymakers as part of the ongoing ideological war with the Soviet Union. From there I will explore the political implications underlying official narratives of emotion management and how they influenced the way Americans perceived themselves and their society, limiting opportunities for progressive social critique. Finally, I will conclude with a brief description of the works and themes analyzed in each of the four chapters that make up this dissertation.

The time period covered by this project focuses primarily on the High Cold War period of 1949 to 1962. All of the primary works of fiction and film I analyze fall within this period, and only a few psychological studies or social essays come from earlier in the

century and none from later than 1969. The reason for this is two-fold. First, although emotion management is tied to long-term trends in Western cultural development that linked modernity and civilization to increased emotional restraint, I do not believe emotion management would have attained the status it enjoyed as a "cure-all" for midcentury America's woes without the endorsement—financial and theoretical—of Cold War policymakers and an anti-Communist climate that encouraged non-economic forms of social critique. The rise of emotion management is inseparable from the decline of Marxism as a viable political ideology in the United States. This predominately psychological focus limited the terms by which Americans understood themselves and their relationship to society. As these limitations made themselves known, American authors and intellectuals turned to new forms of social analysis and adopted new forms of artistic expression that firmly rejected the "American way of life" promoted during the immediate postwar years. In time these stylistic and theoretical changes led to the rise of postmodernism, particularly its rejection of "metanarratives." The Cold War authors I analyze are in the midst of this transition. Unfulfilled by the postwar "American way of life," these authors are not yet able to fully reject it or envision how a plausible alternative might be realized.

Secondly, the events of the late 1960s and '70s, particularly the Vietnam War and the protest and counterculture movements it spawned, represent a major breakdown in the postwar prestige of social science. As Nils Gilman writes in *Mandarins of the Future:*Modernization Theory in Cold War America (2003):

The way the Vietnam War was fought caused some to question whether the elites in charge of the war were really rational, while others accepted the war as the sinister apotheosis of instrumental rationality. For Noam Chomsky, modernization theory would be Exhibit A in what he called "the double myth of the social

sciences": the myth of political benevolence and the myth of scientific omniscience. (250)

Postwar social science had promised to provide scientific solutions to complex social problems that would be rational, efficient, and free of ideological bias. The inability of McNamara and his "Whiz Kids" to successfully "modernize" Vietnam and the subsequent publication of the Pentagon Papers made a mockery of this simplistic equation of scientific information with political neutrality and democratic nation-building. Meanwhile, movements like feminism began questioning the dominant role played by emotional experts in American culture. Emotion management was no longer considered a value-neutral process, as psychologist Abraham Maslow protested:

Clearly what will be called personality problems depends on who is doing the calling. The slave owner? The dictator? The patriarchal father? The husband who wants his wife to remain a child? It seems quite clear that personality problems may sometimes be loud protests against the crushing of one's psychological bones, of one's true inner nature. What is sick then is *not* to protest while this crime is being committed. (qtd. in Herman 273)

Widespread emotional disturbance suggested that maybe it was society that needed adjustment, not the individual citizen.

But the problems and promises of emotion management have not disappeared entirely; they have simply assumed new forms. The explosive growth of psychopharmacology over the past few decades, the use of "emotional intelligence" (EQ) as a measure of career potential, attempts to explain the psychology behind drug abuse and mass-shootings, and the recent, success of Donald Trump's demagogic political campaign suggest that many of the same emotional problems and anxieties that beleaguered Cold War Americans, particularly as they relate to questions of alienation and equality in a democratic society, remain with us today.

2. Rational Democracy and the Problem of Control

As the events of the twentieth century unfolded, and America found itself embroiled in two World Wars and the Great Depression, some political scientists and social critics came to believe that a certain degree of social control was necessary to maintain a stable democracy. Their chief object of concern was one of the pillars of classical democratic theory—the capacity of individual citizens to make rational political choices. As Edward Purcell notes in *The Crisis of Democratic Theory* (1973), "Detailed empirical studies of American voting behavior made it clear that a very high percentage of citizens had little accurate knowledge of issues, that they failed to participate or even vote, and that their decisions were generally the result of prejudices, group affiliations, or simple habit rather than rational reflection" (259). These doubts about the rationality of the American electorate intensified as society became more complex. Some Progressive Era reformers, particularly John Dewey, believed that effective public education was one key to developing a stable, rational democracy. Education would foster good citizenship, which Dewey defined as the "ability to judge men and measures wisely and to take a determining part in making as well as obeying laws" (Democracy and Education 120). Without such a bulwark, citizens would be "overwhelmed by the changes in which they are caught" and "a few will appropriate to themselves" the power to control and direct public opinion (88). Education was also necessary to foster the intellectual flexibility required to live harmoniously in a diverse and changing society.

In contrast to Dewey's position, Walter Lippmann was far less positive with regard to the public's capacity for rational action, even with the support of education.

Lippmann believed that American society was too complex and—thanks to the rise of the mass media—too information-saturated for individuals to absorb and correctly interpret the information needed to make informed political decisions. What was needed instead was an organized group of educated elites—"intelligence bureaus"—that would mediate between the public, government officials, and the pressing issues of the day. The purpose of these bureaus, Lippmann noted, "is not to burden every citizen with expert opinions on all questions, but to push that burden away from [them] towards the responsible administrator" (*Public Opinion* 399). The public at large was ultimately a poor judge of its own political and economic interests. It was also easily manipulated by outside influences. The manipulation of public opinion, which Lippmann called "the manufacture of consent," was "supposed to have died out with the appearance of democracy. But it has not died out. It has, in fact, improved enormously in technic, because it is now based on analysis rather than on rule of thumb" (158). For Lippmann, stability in a democratic society depended on the existence of a group of educated elites who could guide public opinion and use it to shape government policy without themselves succumbing to antidemocratic despotism—a process he believed could be accomplished using social science.

During the Progressive Era scientific rationality and the scientific method were seen as offering a way of overcoming not only the irrationality of the public but also the inefficiencies and political partisanship that had undermined previous attempts at social reform. As Auerbach writes, "Both Dewey and Lippmann firmly believed in science and the experimental method, not in any narrow sense of technocratic instrumentality, but rather as a broad means to rationally solve social and political problems in a communal

setting that encouraged the collective accumulation of knowledge" (95). Science itself was assumed to be non-ideological, with empirical investigation replacing the absolutist moral theories, such as Marxism, that shaped the development of fascist societies. A 1936 education bulletin issued by the U.S. Department of the Interior went so far as to declare:

Democracy is the political expression of the scientific method. The great scientists necessarily demand freedom to inquire into the problems of the physical universe and to publish and exchange their experiments, research, and theories. Their successful challenge to the authoritarianism of the Middle Ages opened up the road to the new era of invention and science. Close on the heels of the scientist followed a school of thinkers in the field of government who demanded freedom to inquire into the problems of public welfare. ("A Step Forward" 27)

Because science could only exist in a society in which the free exchange of ideas and open investigation of social problems was possible, science and democracy were considered mutually constitutive. Cold War social scientists would criticize the Soviet Union for the way "artificial barriers and censorships now limit the diffusion of scientific information" (Christmas v), creating an environment hostile to both scientific advancement and social progress.

Despite their faith in social science as a tool for collective problem-solving, some Progressives worried that it could be employed negatively as well. In *Democracy and Education* (1916), Dewey warned that "what is sometimes called a benevolent interest in others may be but an unwitting mask for an attempt to dictate to them what their good shall be, instead of an endeavor to free them so that they may seek and find the good of their own choice" (121). For Dewey, democracy was inherently participatory, with citizens working collectively towards a common good. It would be impossible to define for others "what their good shall be" since that good could only be realized by incorporating the individual into the collective. Lippmann was similarly worried that

social science could be used to undermine the American public's authentic participation in its own governance. As Auerbach explains, Lippmann's fears regarding "the manufacture of consent" were about more than simple misinformation; the problem was "not just that certain opinions may be produced in others, but that 'consent' or agreement can be produced, so that people not only believe, but come to accept these beliefs as their own in a mockery of the consent of the governed" (117-118). The problem was not just that manipulation of public opinion was *possible*, but also that proliferating technologies of mass communication and social and psychological analysis made it increasingly difficult to determine *when* such forms of manipulation were being used and by whom. Relying on the tools of social science to enhance American democracy raises an important question—how much "engineering" can a society and its citizens sustain before the process ceases to contribute to democracy and instead becomes a new form of social-scientific totalitarianism?

This was no idle question for American policymakers in the wake of World War II. For many, the development of Nazism in German proved that few things were more dangerous than misdirected public opinion. In the eyes of many critics, Daniel Bell notes, Nazism was "characterized not as a reaction against, but the inevitable end-product of, democracy. Hitler is seen as a replica of the classical demagogue swaying the mindless masses" (29). Hitler's rise to power undermined the longstanding association between democracy, rationality, and ethical society. Instead, it seemed to confirm Gustave Le Bon's earlier assertions regarding the mindless violence of the crowd whose simultaneous longing for destruction and subjugation meant that it could be easily exploited and controlled by a charismatic leaders, "especially those who understand how

to deploy spectacle" (Auerbach 29). The pageantry of Nazism, the horrors of the concentration camps, and the willingness of the German people to support a regime dedicated to mass murder and enslavement defied rational justification, so many midcentury social scientists began to consider whether fascism itself might not originate from the maladjustments of individual psyches that were somehow predisposed to find its totalitarian controls appealing.

Using the logic and rhetoric of psychoanalysis and psychopathology to explain social phenomena influenced the way American scientists and policymakers conceptualized political power. Writing in the 1930s, Harold Lasswell, inspired by Freudian psychoanalysis, was one of the first American political scientists to suggest that "the growth of various patterns of political life" should be linked to turning points in "the development of the human personality as a functioning whole" (*Psychopathology and Politics* 8). Following his lead, numerous scholars over the next few decades produced works devoted to examining national character, child-rearing practices, and sexual habits to determine which personality types led to certain forms of government and how best to prevent or foster their development. A number of works, including Erich Fromm's *Escape from Freedom* (1941), Theodore Adorno's *The Authoritarian Personality* (1950), and Gordon Allport's *The Nature of Prejudice* (1954), suggested that the American psyche was rife with latent fascist tendencies, something Sen. Joseph McCarthy's fearmongering rise to power seemed to make all-too-clear.

As historian Ellen Herman argues, this marriage of politics and psychology meant that "widespread social conflicts like war and revolution were simply considered examples, on a large scale to be sure, of the problems that plagued individual

personalities and inharmonious interpersonal relationships" (24). Yet one important consequence of tying social conflict to personal psychology would be "to blur the boundary between the individual and the collective, the personal and the social, and to create the potential for camouflaging clear political purposes as neutral methods of scientific discovery or therapeutic treatment" (22). Nations did not have "psyches" that could be analyzed and treated. Instead, it was the mental health of the American people themselves that was placed under scrutiny. This "psychological turn," as I call it, differed from Progressive Era social science in the way it sought to make personal psychology the primary determinant of social organization.

When other economic and social factors were brought into consideration—such as the post-World War II economic boom, the expansion of the American middleclass, the growth of white-collar organization-based occupations, and the shift from local communities built around kinship to generic suburbs of unrelated "nuclear" families—they were often evaluated in terms of their psychological and emotional effects. In *The Lonely Crowd* (1950) David Riesman posited the development of a new "other-directed" American character that prioritized group standards and expectations over individual achievement. Other critics feared America was becoming a "mass society" in which

The old primary group ties of family and local community have shattered; ancient parochial faiths are questioned; few unifying values have taken their place...Instead of a fixed or known status, symbolized by dress or title, each person assumes a multiplicity of roles and constantly has to prove himself in a succession of new situations. Because of all this, the individual loses a coherent sense of self. His anxieties increase. (Bell 21-22)

And while the postwar period marked a time of increased prosperity and upward mobility for many (white) Americans, this prosperity existed alongside the threat of a nuclear-powered Cold War in which the same scientific advancements enabled both better

that Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. felt prompted to declare, "Western man in the middle of the twentieth century is tense, uncertain, adrift. We look upon our epoch as a time of troubles, an age of anxiety" (*Vital Center* 1). Whether Cold War Americans as a whole truly felt as anxious as critics believed was ultimately less significant in relationship to the development of emotion management than the belief that such anxieties could have dangerous political consequences.

Many Cold War social critics feared that Americans might turn to fascist ideologies to give their lives coherence during these uncertain times. The appeal of totalitarianism, according to Hannah Arendt, lay in its ability to give "the masses of atomized, undefinable, unstable and futile individuals a means of self-definition and identification which not only restored some of the self-respect they had formerly derived from their function in society, but also created a kind of spurious stability which made them better candidates for an organization" (346). Totalitarianism solved the problem of a people's psychological and social incoherence by imposing control and direction externally. This caused something of a dilemma for American policymakers since democracy was ostensibly opposed to all such forms of external, authoritarian control. Yet, in the wake of two World Wars and many disheartening studies of American political behavior and psychology, it seemed that democracy could not exist without some sort of check against the irrationality of the people. They turned to emotion management to overcome both of these dilemmas by making democratic freedom from external, authoritarian controls contingent on the successful internalization of standards of emotional self-control.

In American Cool: Constructing a Twentieth-Century Emotional Style (1994),
Peter Stearns describes an important shift in the emotional culture of the United States
that distinguishes the "emotionology" of the twentieth century from that of the Victorian
Era. Rather than equating Victorianism with blanket emotional repression and the
twentieth-century with an ethic of emotional freedom, Stearns argues that both cultures
considered emotion management to be a key component of social harmony. Where they
differed was in terms of the specific emotions they sought to manage and the techniques
they used to control them:

The new emotional culture called for new abilities in emotion management. Victorian standards had also urged management, as in controlling the use of fear and anger, but they had also recognized certain emotional areas in which regulation was not necessary, either because individuals were not considered to have certain emotions (as in the case of women and anger) or because restraint was not appropriate (as in spiritualized love). Twentieth-century culture, on the other hand, called for management across the board; no emotion should gain control over one's thought processes. (184)

Customs regulating courtship, dress, and sexual relationships relaxed, but the pressure to maintain smooth relations with others and maintain group harmony increased, particularly as America's labor culture changed to become more organization oriented. Yet it was not just for the sake of harmony with others that twentieth-century Americans were encouraged to manage their emotions. An adequate degree of emotional control was actually necessary to preserve individual autonomy: "Control over fear or anger protected the individual's rational power to decide, while immunity from overweening love was explicitly portrayed as an essential step in the process of individuation" (190). By learning to successfully manage their emotions, Americans would overcome their inherent irrationality and also develop the sort of stable personality needed to resist the temptations of totalitarian de-individuation. But this successful psychological and

emotional development could not be left to chance. As many Progressive Era social scientists had already concluded, expert intervention was needed to ensure American personalities developed along "healthy" democratic lines rather than succumbing to the pathologies of fascism.

What made the development of Cold War emotion management unique, however, was its extensive integration into America's military-industrial-scientific complex. As historian Ellen Herman writes in The Romance of American Society: Political Culture in the Age of Experts (1995), "Between 1945 and the mid-1960s, the U.S. military was, by far, the country's major institutional sponsor of psychological research" (126). Driven by new opportunities for government funding and increased professional prestige, membership in organizations like the American Psychological Association (APA) "grew by more than 1,100 percent, from 2,739 in 1940 to 30, 839 in 1970" (3). These new scientific experts and their government backers replaced other cultural authorities—such as churches or family tradition—as the new arbiters of emotional behavior. The mental and emotional health of its citizens was a valuable national resource, and the American government could not afford to let it to develop without proper guidance. Like nuclear physicists, Cold War emotion managers had an important role to play in the nation's ongoing conflict with the Soviet Union. Emotion management offered American policymakers a crucial advantage as they fought for control of the "hearts and minds" of audiences at home and abroad.

However, tying emotion management to the exigencies of the Cold War and the resources of its military-industrial-scientific complex threatened to bring about the very form of social control Dewey and Lippmann had decried—manufactured consent. Their

opposition to manufactured consent was, Auerbach argues, a legacy of the First World War and the wartime propaganda work of George Creel and the Committee on Public Information (CPI):

Creel in his teaching, preaching, and selling of war pioneered a kind of voluntary compulsion whereby proper patriotic attitudes seemed to come from within rather than be imposed on citizens from without. For the first time in US history, the previously competing interests of press, government, and business were fused into a single centralized bureaucracy, disseminating information that penetrated virtually every aspect of American daily life and leading to a 'conscription of thought,' as Dewey called this saturation, which paralleled the government's large-scale mandatory marshaling of soldiers to fight the war in Europe. (13)

The problem with repeating this pattern in the context of the Cold War was that the diffuse nature of that conflict made it difficult to limit emotion management's ability to "saturate" American society. The Cold War would not be fought by soldiers in Europe but by the average American citizen. And its chief strategists were not just military and political elites but a new generation of social scientists who considered themselves *managers* of emotion rather than *reformers* of systems.

3. The Cold War Takes a Psychological Turn

If the American government had not already been investing a great deal of money in psychological and sociological research programs for both civilian and military applications, it would have been forced to do so once the Korean War introduced a terrifying new word into the Cold War lexicon—*brainwashing*. The term was initially coined by journalist (and CIA agent) Edward Hunter in 1950 "to describe the thought reform methods being used by the Communist authorities on Chinese citizens and was then applied to the treatment of U.S. captives in the North Korean prison camps set up along the Manchurian border. By the end of the decade it had become associated with all

Communist efforts to extract confessions and indoctrinate captive audiences, as well as with their internal educational and propaganda efforts" (Seed *Brainwashing* 27). In the eyes of American policymakers, brainwashing was an unholy mix of Pavlovian psychological techniques and Oriental despotism. Using a combination of isolation, sleep-deprivation, torture, and psychotropic drugs, Communist mind-control experts "murdered" the independent mind of the individual before beginning a process of indoctrination that transformed the subject into a puppet of the regime, fully committed to and capable of reciting the prevailing ideological dogma. It spurred a flurry of research into various methods of mind control as American scientists worked to ensure there would be no "brainwashing gap" between the United States and its Communist rivals.

While brainwashing was something of an extreme example, it embodied everything that Americans believed was wrong with Soviet social science—it was corrupted by Communist ideology, it perverted psychological development, and its only use was as a tool of political control. In the eyes of American policymakers, science and ideology were inherently incompatible, as Marxist literary critic Raymond Williams explains:

The notion of "science" has had a crucial effect, negatively, on the concept of "ideology." If "ideology" is contrasted with "real, positive science," in the sense of detailed and connected knowledge of "the practical process of development of men," then the distinction may have significance as an indication of the received assumptions, concepts, and points of view which can be shown to prevent or distort such detailed and connected knowledge. (64)

Ideology distorted science, interfering with efforts to form a detailed, objective knowledge of the world. This meant that any science practiced under ideological pressure must itself become corrupted, moving away from the purity of "real, positive science" into the realm of ideological puppetry. Nowhere was this clearer for American critics of

Soviet science than in what became known as the "Lysenko Affair" when anti-Mendelian agronomist Trofim Lysenko was able to oust his scientific rivals after securing the backing of powerful Communist officials, including Joseph Stalin. The results were devastating for the development of genetic science in the Soviet Union, since any scientific theories that contradicted Lysenko's (mistaken) beliefs regarding the inheritance of acquired traits were strictly forbidden and their proponents were subject to imprisonment or even execution.

The overweening influence of Communist ideology on scientific study in the Soviet Union was enabled by state-sponsored patronage. As historian Nikolai Krementsov explains, "The key feature of Stalinist science was the total dependence of science on its sole patron, the party-state bureaucracy. With the 1917 Bolshevik revolution, science was 'nationalized' and became a 'property' of the state. This made the scientific community hostage to the ever-changing agendas of its patron" (4). As a result, Soviet scientists were expected to follow the party line when it came to scientific research, which held that "science was a mere instrument of the party, and its ultimate goal was not 'a search for objective truth,' but rather service to party objectives" (48). In extreme cases like the Lysenko Affair, this meant that the validity of scientific theories was not determined by independent truth-value or peer-review but by state dictate. While Soviet scientists worked in a hierarchical environment under the direction of the USSR Academy of Sciences, which was itself overseen by the Central Committee of the Communist Party. Krementsov and a number of other historians of Soviet science, including Loren R. Graham, Jeffrey L. Roberg, Peter Kneen, and Slava Gerovitch, caution against any simplistic dismissal of Soviet science as party-controlled. Communist Party bureaucracy in the Soviet Union was riven with conflict and factionalism. Soviet scientists learned how to strategically cultivate party patronage for their own protection. They developed "specific rhetoric and rituals to demonstrate the scientific community's conformity to party policies and to justify its research and institutional agendas in the eyes of the party bureaucrats in charge of science" (32), but they did so primarily as a smokescreen, a way of cloaking their own research interests in an aura of party respectability.

The merging of the scientific community with government institutions and the subsequent influence of government patronage on research interests was hardly unique to the Soviet Union. As Slava Gerovitch observes,

The domination of a single patron—the government—in the most promising scientific fields, the skewing of research priorities in the direction of political goals, the funding of disciplines in proportion to their utility for national defense, the encouragement of fierce international competition, harsh security restrictions and intrusive loyalty checks, are often cited by historians studying American government-sponsored research during the Cold War. (278-279)

One undeniable product of this Cold War marriage between government sponsorship and scientific research was the RAND Corporation. Established in 1946 by General Henry H. Arnold, commander of the United States Army Air Forces, RAND was initially created to maintain a close relationship between military planning and scientific research and development, particularly in the area of future warfare. Shortly after its foundation, RAND reorganized to become a private, non-profit organization dedicated to "improv[ing] policy and decisionmaking through research and analysis." RAND became famous for sponsoring interdisciplinary studies on nuclear warfare, including the research

² RAND Corporation website: "History and Mission" < http://www.rand.org/about/history.html>

of "game theorists" like Herman Khan, who helped develop the doctrine of nuclear deterrence through Mutually Assured Destruction (Cravens 125).

Although "hard sciences" like nuclear physics were obvious contenders for government sponsorship, the social sciences and psychology also received their share of government attention. World War II saw psychologists and social scientists involved in every aspect of the war effort, ranging from psy-war and propaganda to clinical treatment, human relations research, and man-machine engineering. As James Capshew notes, this relationship continued into the Cold War era where, "just as protecting national security provided the rationale and context for research in physics in postwar America, so the achievement of human potential served as the basis for the reproduction of scientific knowledge in psychology" (11). America's conflict with the Soviet Union was being waged in sociological terms as well as nuclear ones, with each nation professing to have developed the ideal social-political-economic system for creating a "classless" society. The war would be won, they professed, not by the nation with the superior nuclear arsenal but the nation whose "way of life" attained the highest degree of happiness and human fulfillment.

As Yinghong Cheng argues in *Creating the 'New Man': From Enlightenment Ideals to Socialist Realities* (2009), the primary goal of Soviet social science was the creation of the "new Soviet man." Like American emotion managers, Soviet ideologues believed in the malleability of human nature. What was distinctive about the "new Soviet man" in comparison to his Western counterparts was the critical role that class consciousness and the Communist Party played in this process of enlightenment:

To indicate the difference between the new man in the context of the Soviet society and a common "good man" in any other society, the party's propaganda

always emphasized that class awareness, political consciousness, and faith in the revolution, rather than a spontaneous impulse of beneficent acts of a good and moral human, were the motivations behind these morally superior acts. (33)

The new Soviet man—or woman—did not think and act as an independent individual but rather with keen awareness of membership in a particular economic class that was devoted to achieving certain political ends. One major tenet of Soviet social science was the dominance of "nurture" over "nature" and the belief that "surrounding Soviet citizens with a social environment favoring those forms behavior deemed appropriate in 'Soviet socialist society" (Graham 62) would subsequently result in the development of citizens who would be freely devoted to the maintenance of that society and its goals. Since the "new Soviet man" did not yet exist, however, the restructuring of Soviet society was guided and controlled by the Communist Party.

Even the Soviet aviator and cosmonaut—heroic models Soviet citizens were encouraged to emulate—was less an active participant in than a dehumanized subject of the Soviet political and scientific system:

On the surface, the "man" controlled the "machine," to show the power, strength, and intelligence of the new Soviet man. But in reality the Soviet system often made the operation as automatic as possible, so much so that the human factor was in general regarded as a backup and pilots jokingly summarized the content of the spacecraft manual in four words: "Do not touch anything!" Some cosmonauts labeled this tendency "the domination of automata" and attributed it to the "general ideological attitude toward the individual as an insignificant cog in the wheel." (Cheng 46)

What began as a plan to bring about class consciousness and enlightened collectivism, critics of the regime would later assert, resulted instead in dystopian automatism.

Unsurprisingly, American critics characterized Soviet social science as pessimistic and domineering. It violated the individuality and unique psychology of its citizens, reducing them to emotionless, cold-hearted automatons. As Arthur M.

Schlesinger, Jr. described them, Soviets were "the tight-lipped, cold-eyed, unfeeling, uncommunicative men, as if badly carved from wood, without humor, without tenderness, without spontaneity, without nerves" (57). In Soviet Leaders and Mastery Over Men (1960), American psychologist Hadley Cantril wrote, "the view of human nature held by Soviet leaders is an odd and dangerous blend of utopianism and cynicism" (23). The cynical perspective held that the overwhelming majority of people "are incapable of making political decisions and acting effectively on them" (26). The utopianism came from faith in the plasticity of the human personality and the belief that reengineering society would subsequently engender radical, positive changes in human personality. Cantril's chief objection to Soviet social science was the way it privileged an exclusively socioeconomic interpretation of human nature and social relations (35). As a result, the personal history and psychology of the individual were deemed irrelevant. This led to a system of social reengineering that operated at the level of class relations without regard for individual needs, goals, or interests. While each individual is "made to feel that he is *independently* active in the interests of society" (71), in reality he was only operating as a cog within the machinery of Soviet society.

Probably the most curious aspect of Cantril's critique of Soviet social science is the extent to which it echoes the very same criticisms that American social scientists had been levying against the American people for decades—they were irrational, incapable of making satisfactory political decisions, better off being "managed" by a social scientific elite than ruling themselves. Indeed, Cantril had contributed enormously to the discourse surrounding the "irrationality" of the American people when he published his landmark study of the 1938 *War of the Worlds* radio broadcast panic, *The Invasion from Mars: A*

Study in the Psychology of Panic (1940), just a few decades earlier, asserting that significant segments of the American population lacked the "standards of judgment" needed to distinguish between fiction and reality. Cantril asserted that the Soviet Union and the United States held "two very different conceptions of the nature of man and the purposes for which societies exist" (Soviet Leaders xx), but in reality the two nations differed mostly in terms of how they structured their critical frameworks—primarily in terms of socioeconomic factors or primarily in terms of psychological factors. Both sides embraced "nurture" over "nature," assumed human nature was malleable rather than static, and used social science to develop plans for "human engineering" to improve society. What distinguished one ideology from the other was whether the direct focus of scientific intervention was society or the individual psyche and whether reforms were accomplished overtly or through more subtle forms of coercion.

What made this "psychological turn" in Cold War discourse so appealing to American policymakers was the way it supported the status quo. American psychology, particularly as it was practiced in the Cold War period, was by no means a radical science. As historian Nathan Hale argues in *The Rise and Crisis of Psychoanalysis in the United States* (1995), postwar psychoanalysis downplayed "the iconoclastic, rebellious aspects of psychoanalysis which had so appealed to the intelligentsia of the 1920s...[reconciling] psychoanalysis with morality, religion, and received social values, particularly in its treatment of sexual roles and the issue of homosexuality" (299). It also offered an optimistic "vision of therapy as a tough, painful exercise that resulted as a rule in marital happiness, personal equilibrium, and vocational success." In this it differed greatly from Freud's own pessimistic perspective of both American society and the

interminable nature of psychoanalytic treatment. Making psychology the primary scientific framework through which social problems were analyzed and addressed also had the advantage of displacing and delegitimizing other more radical forms of social critique. American social scientists no longer debated what form society should take, particularly in terms of its economic relations; instead they sought to ensure that American personalities developed in accordance with the needs of existing social systems. Radical revolution, they believed, would not solve social conflict because the sources of that conflict originated in the psyche not in any particular social or economic system.

On December 27th, 1951, members of the American Association for the Advancement of Science gathered in Philadelphia to discuss the current status of social science in the Soviet Union. Most of the attendees lamented the censorship that restricted the free circulation of ideas in the Soviet Union. Others reported that "the whole field of Soviet science and technology is being forced into the same ideological strait jacket" that had strangled Soviet genetics research (Christmas iii). But one attendee, Russell L. Ackoff, broke with this consensus, confidently asserting that social science in both countries was functionally the same because both fields had become toothless and conservative: "Though Soviet and American ideals differ, both support the principles of progress verbally; verbally, but not in practice" (55). It would be unfair to say that American social scientists were simply paying lip service to progress rather than genuinely attempting to solve social problems. Yet few seemed to have stopped to consider the full political and ideological ramifications of their work. As Ellen Herman writes, "During the 1950s and early 1960s, few doubts surfaced that U.S. policy-makers

would see fit to use behavioral expertise exclusively in the interests of freedom, just as there was correspondingly little skepticism about the repressive reach of the Soviet psychological and psychiatric professions" (161). Later, after information surfaced on government mind-control programs (like Project MKUltra) and counterinsurgency initiatives (like Project Camelot), attitudes would change. But in these early years most social scientists still seemed to believe it was possible to "manage" the psychological and emotional behavior of the American people without compromising their scientific integrity. Yet as Michel Foucault would later argue in *Power/Knowledge* (1980), inspired in part by the revelations of the Lysenko Affair, knowledge and power are inseparable. And the more power presents itself as nothing more than objective knowledge, the more dangerous, pervasive, and coercive it becomes.

4. Stories of Standardization—the Limitations of Emotion Management

In The End of Ideology: On the Exhaustion of Political Ideas in the Fifties (1960)

Daniel Bell writes,

One might say, in fact, that the most important, latent, function of ideology is to tap emotion. Other than religion (and war and nationalism), there have been few forms of channelizing emotional energy. Religion symbolized, drained away, dispersed emotional energy from the world onto the litany, the liturgy, the sacraments, the edifices, the arts. Ideology fuses these energies and channels them into politics. (400)

But what happens when one lives in a culture where the prevailing ideology—or at least a prevailing cultural style—is specifically premised on the restraint of emotion and its redirection away from politics? How did living under a regime of emotion management change the way Cold War Americans perceived themselves and their society? How did they measure up against the standards established by emotion managers? What effect did

this restraint and redirection of emotion have on literary and cultural production, especially as authors grappled with the shortcomings of modern American life? At its most fundamental level, emotion management is about storytelling. It tells Americans what they should fear and when they should feel happy; what they should aspire to and what unites them all in a common national identity. But stories—like science—have a purpose. They increase our knowledge of the world, but they also set limitations on that knowledge by turning our attention away from other avenues of thought, and the story of emotion management is no exception.

In their quest to establish emotional and psychological standards that could be used to shape and evaluate the American way of life, Cold War emotion managers made psychologists, social scientists, and other "experts" the chief arbiters and interpreters of American emotional culture. This created a system in which the interpretive authority of experts was often privileged over the emotional evidence supplied by the American people themselves. This is especially apparent in the case of the emotion management of (un)happiness addressed in Chapter 2. Near the end of his RAND Corporation report "On Quality of Life and the Pursuit of Happiness" (1969), Nicholas Rescher admits that "a society in which many or most [people]" live according to his formula for happiness "may yet fail to be by and large happy" (27). He attributes this failure not to the formula itself but to the fact that "social engineering" tactics "cannot as easily lay hands to the idiosyncratic issue of personal happiness" (27-28). The "idiosyncratic happiness of its members"—whether individuals actually feel happy or not—is dismissed as a "poor measure" of whether or not a society has done what is necessary to enable their happiness (6). The process of emotion management and the authenticity of the standards it generates are not called into question. Instead, the actual feelings of the American people are deemed "idiosyncratic" and therefore excluded from consideration. This shifts the balance of power in favor of the existing political order, as political theorist Peter Lyman explains. When negative emotions like fear, unhappiness, or anger are "taken seriously as a communication, rather than as psychological disorder or uncivil behavior, a spirited but ultimately constructive public dialogue about the justice of the dominant political order is possible" (133). Emotion management stifled these critical voices by treating them more like noisy variables to be managed or dismissed than legitimate communication.

This pressure to conform to the social and psychological status quo was especially problematic for African Americans. Although emotion management claimed to be based on norms of emotional behavior that were universal and therefore applied equally to all Americans, in reality these norms derived from the culture and psychology of one particular segment of the population—white, middle-class men. That this group forms the standard against which all others are measured is abundantly clear in twentieth-century studies of "the Negro problem" like Abram Kardiner and Lionel J. Ovesey's *The Mark of Oppression: Explorations in the Personality of the American Negro* (1951). Unsurprisingly, when African American psychology and emotional behavior were measured against that of the white man, they were found wanting. More than that, they were labeled "pathological"—unnatural deviations that could be cured only by teaching African Americans to assimilate to the norms of white culture. Such assessments blame African Americans for their own disenfranchisement and suffering. They also thoroughly undermine the role of difference in a democratic society. At no point is there any suggestion that African American culture might have positive qualities of its own that

could be of benefit to the rest of society. Nor is there any suggestion that the ideal "American way of life" might assume different forms for different people.

For women, the postwar psychological turn was also particularly limiting thanks, in large part, to its fixation on family dynamics and early childhood as the major determinants of adult personality development. It may have been William Wordsworth who originally proposed that "the child is father of the man," but it was a position that postwar emotion managers—many of whom were strongly influenced by Freudian psychoanalysis and its emphasis on the Oedipal family model—readily adopted as well. As one anti-Freudian critic, Richard LaPiere wryly observed, if American mothers would only "shower their offspring with love and affection and demand nothing at all in return, the American population will be composed within a few generations of people who are happy, content, co-operative, and, presumably, also prosperous" (5). The route to successful emotion management and stable social development began in the home, where the focus was on ensuring women supplied the emotional labor needed to "prepare [their] offspring emotionally for living a productive life on an adult social plane" (Strecker 30). Of course American policymakers would never go so far as to outlaw women working outside the home; such a radical restriction would make them akin to their Soviet rivals, as Secretary of Labor James P. Mitchell protests in a 1958 article in Ladies' Home *Journal*. Instead, the article relies on a combination of peer pressure, expert testimony, and guilt to encourage women to choose to labor inside the home rather than seeking employment and satisfaction outside of it. As one of the article's experts, the evangelist Billy Graham, claimed, "A woman working during the early period of motherhood has psychological problems of her own. She cannot give herself fully to her work, and so her

employer has problems. Her husband also has his own psychological reaction, and the children theirs, and none of these reactions, it seems to me, are in the positive" (156). This focus on maternal labor and psychology meant ignoring all other factors that might contribute to adult satisfaction with the "American way of life"—such as opportunities for education and employment, freedom of individuality and self-realization, and position within hierarchies of race, gender, and class.

One of the most damaging aspects of emotion management therefore, was the way it disavowed its own status as an instrument of control and obscured the true operations of power in American society. Soviet authoritarianism operated primarily through force and under the aegis of ideologues like Stalin, which gave opponents of the regime a clear set of targets that could be identified and attacked, albeit with deadly consequences for those living under the regime. Emotion management operated in a far less centralized fashion, however, not clearly linked to any one figure, government department, or philosophical treatise. Indeed, it would perhaps be better to think of the term *emotion management* as describing a shared *technique* or *cultural style* than a single, unified ideology. Unlike the more familiar Cold War concept of "containment," which originated in diplomat George Kennan's "Long Telegram" of 1946, emotion management emerged organically, out of the "Americanizing" movements of the nineteenth century, the early Progressive Era efforts at "scientific management" and social reform, the successful use of psychoanalytic techniques in the treatment of shellshock and war neuroses, and pop-culture experts promoting more "democratic" forms of childrearing and personnel management. Cold War emotion managers did not so much impose a new form of control on the American people as lend new scientific authority and government

backing to existing "common sense" beliefs about how Americans should be taught to behave.

For the many American authors and intellectuals who disagreed with aspects of this widespread culture of emotion management and its standardized "American way of life," it was therefore difficult to identify exactly what had gone wrong with American society or explain how that society might be changed to become more equitable and fulfilling. Some famously turned away from Cold War society altogether, like the Beats, preferring life on the road to living within a stifling system of emotional repression and artificiality. Others romanticized the rich emotional life and freedoms they believed other groups enjoyed, such as Norman Mailer's fetishization of African American culture in "The White Negro." For the authors and texts I analyze in this project, however, typically the focus is not on developing such alternative lifestyles but on trying to restore or secure an existing ideal they believed was slipping away. Often their perspective is either nostalgic (longing for a return to some nebulous period in American history that was characterized by emotional authenticity, social simplicity, and personal freedom) or it is fantastic (skipping ahead to a "happy ending" in which the American way of life has somehow been stripped of its negative qualities while remaining structurally unchanged). Keenly aware of their own dissatisfaction with the current American moment, these authors nonetheless struggle to articulate a realistic way forward.

One common theme throughout the works I analyze concerns the perceived decline in the power and independence of the American character. Although the 1950s are sometimes thought of as an era of mass conformity and consensus, the period saw an outpouring of works by sociologists, authors, and filmmakers who latched onto

metaphors of nuclear apocalypse, alien invasion, and brainwashing as a way of critiquing Cold War society, including Michael Condon and John Frankenheimer (*The Manchurian Candidate*), Don Siegel and Jack Finney (*The Invasion of the Body Snatchers*), Philip Wylie (*Tomorrow!*), and William H. Whyte (*The Organization Man*). The works of these authors and directors reveal a strong reaction *against* emotion management running alongside the official emotion management narrative, although that does not mean these authors lacked their own prescriptive beliefs regarding American emotional culture and psychology. But they primarily focused on rejuvenating the American character, a process often explicitly described as a restoration of American masculinity. Drawing on many of the same themes emphasized by Fredrick Jackson Turner's "Frontier Thesis" and Theodore Roosevelt's "Strenuous Life," they argue that modern American society had become "overcivilized," resulting in a weakening of individual independence and initiative.

Some, especially author and social critic Philip Wylie, are highly critical of the changing role of women in American society. When Wylie published *Generation of Vipers* in 1942, he attacked numerous aspects of American society: Congress, educators, businessmen, religion, and popular culture. But he was best remembered for his chapter on American women and his coining of the term "Momism" to describe what he saw as a particularly pernicious form of American womanhood, a parasitic development in which mothers deliberately emasculated their sons, rendering them forever immature and dependent as a way of usurping male authority and making America "matriarchy in fact if not in declaration" (53). *Generation of Vipers* was enormously popular, going through twenty reprintings by 1955 when an updated edition was issued. Similar works followed,

with psychologist Edward Strecker's *Their Mothers' Sons* (1946) supplying the psychological and scientific justification for this anti-Momist position that Wylie's work had lacked. Even when authors and critics assumed a less hostile attitude towards women, their attention remained fixed on the American organization man and his emotional and psychological liberation. As Schlesinger phrased it in "The Crisis of American Masculinity" (1958), "For men to become men again, in short, their first task is to recover a sense of individual spontaneity. And to do this a man must visualize himself as an individual apart from the group, whatever it is, which defines his values and commands his loyalty" (301). However they formulate their critiques, through fiction or film, attacking women or organization culture, the narratives I examine reject all attempts to standardize the American way of life by teaching Americans to manage away their individuality.

"Don't Panic!—Civil Defense, Popular Culture, and the Emotion Management of Fear"

Chapter 1 deals with the emotion management of fear and panic in the context of nuclear war. As America's nuclear arms race with the Soviet Union accelerated and the power of atomic weapons increased, postwar celebration of America's scientific prowess gave way to fear over what apocalyptic changes this new technology might unleash. Civil defense propaganda films like *You Can Beat the Atomic Bomb!* (1950) and *The House in the Middle* (1954) stressed that a nuclear attack would be survivable and that survival depended on maintaining a "healthy" degree of nuclear fear. The goal of civil defense emotion management, I argue, was not to protect the American people but to promote a (false) sense of security that would prevent them from opposing pro-nuclear policies. In a

pattern that will be repeated in later chapters, Americans were taught to "interiorize" and "psychologize" social problems, policing their own psyches for signs of weakness rather than scrutinizing the specific systems of power underlying Cold War society. In contrast to the sanitized narrative put forward by FCDA emotion managers, Philip Wylie's nuclear attack novel *Tomorrow!* (1954) aimed to inoculate Americans against the contagion of nuclear panic by exposing them to graphic depictions of the violence and mutilation that would result from an attack. Despite these gory elements, *Tomorrow!* concludes on an optimistic note, imagining a new era of freedom and frontier openness emerging in the wake of nuclear annihilation. Wylie's lurid nuclear morality tale serves as a scathing condemnation of "overcivilization," blaming urbanization, materialism, mass media, and "Momism" for corrupting the American character, themes that reappear throughout this study. Although progressive in some respects, Wylie's anti-modernism is also anti-democratic, and his neo-frontier fantasy comes at the cost of racial and ethnic diversity.

Unhappy Americans: Emotion Management and the Standardized "American Way of Life"

In Chapter 2 the threat of nuclear war fades into the background as the everyday life of the middle-class "organization man" and the emotion management of his (un)happiness assume center stage. As American policymakers competed with the Soviet Union in the ideological war for the "hearts and minds" of citizens at home and abroad, they praised the "American way of life" as the pathway to a free, "classless" society. This way of life, they argued, was not just materially rich, it promised greater overall happiness than any

other lifestyle. They commissioned RAND Corporation studies, including Nicholas Rescher's "On Quality of Life and the Pursuit of Happiness" (1969), to prove that happiness could be quantified and standardized without compromising notions of American independence. Yet at the same time policymakers were celebrating this "American way of life," which they equated with the lifestyle of the suburban organization man, many pop-sociological studies, like William H. Whyte's *The* Organization Man (1956) and David Riesman's The Lonely Crowd (1950), suggested this life was far from idyllic. Novels like Sloan Wilson's The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit (1955) and Vance Bourjaily's *The Hound of Earth* (1955) echo this critique, featuring unhappy organization men as their protagonists. Both novels take issue with Cold War America's attempts to standardize happiness and "smooth out" social conflict by encouraging individuals to adjust themselves to the expectations of society. Both works also demonstrate that individual unhappiness alone is not enough to spark social change; for happiness to become effective, individuals must be able to draw connections between their unhappiness and the social and economic hierarchies structuring American society. They must also be able to envision ways of collectively modifying these relationships to create a society that is both equitable and individually fulfilling. But as I will argue, the postwar psychological turn silenced the structuralist discourses that would make this type of critique possible.

"Alienation and Emotional Labor in *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* and *The Manchurian Candidate*"

Chapter 3 does not focus on the management of a specific emotion. Instead, it explores what we might call scenarios of emotion management "gone wrong." Beginning

with Jack Finney's 1955 novel, *The Body Snatchers*, and Don Siegel's 1956 film adaptation and then continuing with Richard Condon's *The Manchurian Candidate* (1959) and John Frankenheimer's 1962 film, I argue that these works use metaphors of body-snatching and brainwashing to dramatize a profound state of emotional alienation they believed was afflicting American society. Each narrative offers a slightly different explanation for the origins of this alienation and its consequences, but some familiar themes soon emerge. Frankenheimer highlights the irrationality of the American electorate and their susceptibility to manipulation and televised spectacle. Siegel and Condon both raise the specter of "Momism" and lost masculinity as fundamental threats to American society. And while Finney's novel exhibits the most nostalgia for the "simpler, more peaceful feeling of a generation ago" (45), all suggest that some original state of emotional authenticity, freedom, and simplicity has become corrupted. This sense of loss, I argue, stems from changes in twentieth-century America's emotional economy, especially the increased demand for emotional labor brought about by the rise of organization culture. But it also serves as an indictment of the culture of emotion management as a whole, particularly the way it made the individual psyche an object of public concern, granting emotion managers the right to remake American personalities in the name of social cohesion and national security.

"Social Problems and "Simple" Heroes: The Pathology of Race Psychology"

Chapter 4, the final chapter of this project, stands in deliberate and necessary contrast to the chapters that precede it. Up until this point, all of the novels, films, and essays I have analyzed have been created by white authors and authorities. Their protagonists have all been white, and when they speak of the "American" psyche and

"American" society, it is always the white postwar experience they are referencing. Nonwhite characters rarely appear in these works and when they do, the context is usually negative—the nuclear eradication of the "Negro District" at the heart of Wylie's apocalyptic fantasy; John Stag the "mad Osage" Bourjaily mentions in passing; Billy the black shoe-shiner whose suffering becomes a metaphor for Miles Bennell's personal alienation. Reading these works, one could easily forget that the Cold War coincided with the Civil Rights movement and all the atrocities and achievements that period entailed for African Americans. But African Americans were by no means exempt from the emotion management narrative, and the twentieth century saw a flowering of psychological studies of "the Negro problem," particularly as Soviet propagandists attempted to use it to their advantage. Works like Gunnar Myrdal's An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem in Modern Democracy (1944) and Kardiner and Ovesey's The Mark of Oppression (1951) "psychologized" the problem of racism, attributing it to the "backwardness" of Southern whites who then found their racist views confirmed by the "pathological" qualities of black culture. They portrayed black psychology and emotional life as deeply alien even as they promised that time and the appropriate psychological guidance could help African Americans assimilate to the norms of white society.

Yet it is precisely in the works of black authors and intellectuals—especially those affiliated with the Left—that we find the most sustained, detailed rejection of emotion management's idealized "American way of life" and its attempts to standardize American democracy. Drawing on Langston Hughes' "Simple" stories and Alice Childress' *Like One of the Family* (1956), I will argue that black authors and intellectuals exploited postwar psychological discourse to highlight the irrationalities underlying white

supremacy, but they rejected the overall postwar "psychological turn" and its antistructuralist approach to solving social problems. As Childress' Mildred angrily tells her racist white employers, "I know who makes trouble for me!" (122), and Hughes and Childress use their work to advocate for specific reforms relating to housing, schooling, and labor. This gives their critique of American society a practical focus that is missing from the works analyzed previously. They also challenge one of the key assumptions at the heart of emotion management itself: the notion that standardization is the key to preserving democracy. As Simple repeatedly protests, there is no "THE Negro" who represents the needs and desires of all African Americans, so how could one personality or lifestyle ever represent all Americans? And while Cold War emotion managers present a middle-class life in the suburbs as the end-goal of American identity, Childress and Hughes view this lifestyle as an obstacle. The suburbs are where white Americans go to get away from politics, particularly the politics of race relations. Ultimately, what these stories reveal is that democracy cannot be managed at a distance by objective scientific experts. It requires the active material and emotional investment of Americans of all classes, races, and genders working across community lines to promote equality while also respecting individual difference and diversity. The closer policymakers believe they are to "standardizing" and "rationalizing" democracy, the further they are from realizing its true potential.

Taken together, the works analyzed in this project reveal that many Americans still longed for the happiness promised by emotion management's idealized "American way of life" even as they became increasingly disillusioned with the realities of life in Cold War America. They describe a widespread sense of cultural disorientation and catalogue

a number of postwar promises that remained unfulfilled. But aside from the final set of works I analyze in chapter 4, the solutions they offer are insular and idiosyncratic, deriving more from authorial deus ex machina than from some deeper insight into how the limitations of American democracy might be overcome. Individual protagonists sometimes gain happiness, but for the rest of society life remains unchanged. To this extent, we can consider official emotion management a success. It may not have provided the happiness it promised and thankfully Americans never needed to put their nuclear "panic-proneness" to the test, but for a time emotion management's discourse of psychological adjustment helped stifle alternative modes of critique. Yet even at the height of its power, emotion management could not fully contain or control the critical energies of the American people. Like the giant ants that emerge from the radioactive sands of Nevada's proving grounds in Gordon Douglas' *Them!* (1954), these stories suggest the return of something repressed, some disturbance in the foundation of American society that was tied to Cold War America's careless attempts to separate scientific power from its moral consequences. Despite their shortcomings, they laid the foundation for a critical reassessment of the American way of life. But it would fall to later generations and the populations for whom that original dream was never in reach to undertake the radical political work of fighting to create an American society where respect for individuality and difference might one day be realized alongside equality.

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Chapter 1: Don't Panic!—Civil Defense, Popular Culture, and the Emotion Management of Fear

"In a war, the whole country's survival could depend on your reaction to disaster . . . because mass panic may be far more devastating than the bomb itself."

--Frederic "Val" Peterson "Panic—The Ultimate Weapon?"

"They must ridicule those who show fear's symptoms...To act otherwise would be to admit the inadmissible, the fact of their repressed panic."

--Coley Borden in Philip Wylie's *Tomorrow!*

1. Introduction

On August 6, 1945, the United States of America dropped the first atomic bomb on the Japanese city of Hiroshima. In his speech announcing the bombing, President Harry S. Truman told the American people and the world,

It is an atomic bomb. It is a harnessing of the basic power of the universe. The force from which the sun draws its power has been loosed against those who brought war to the Far East...We have spent two billion dollars on the greatest scientific gamble in history—and won...What has been done is the greatest achievement of organized science in history. ("Announcing the Bombing of Hiroshima")

By harnessing the power of the sun, Truman asserts, America has not only guaranteed the defeat of Japan, it has also brought a new form of warfare to the world: atomic warfare. "Even more powerful forms" of these bombs are in development, Truman promises, confident that America alone possesses the knowledge and resources needed to create these atomic weapons. Truman concludes his announcement with the belief that "atomic power can become a powerful and forceful influence towards the maintenance of world

³ Frederick "Val" Peterson "Panic—The Ultimate Weapon?" Collier's 21 August 1953 (99)

⁴ Philip Wylie, *Tomorrow!* (124)

peace." America had clearly won the nuclear lottery, and the triumphal rhetoric of Truman's speech heralded America's entry into the Atomic Age.

This triumphalism is reflected in films like *The Atom Strikes!* (1945), which was produced by the War Department and U.S. Army Signal Corps using footage gathered by the United States Strategic Bombing Survey (USSBS) in Japan. Using a combination of omniscient voiceover narration and documentary footage, the film introduces Americans to the destructive power of this new weapon. The perspective adopted by the film is overwhelmingly American. American military personnel stand front and center in several scenes, using their own bodies to provide a measure of the scale of the destruction. The Japanese appear only in the background of certain high-angle shots that reduce them to indistinct, ant-sized figures scurrying around the rubble of their city (00:07:30). The only eye-witness testimony provided by a survivor of the blast is supplied by a German-born Jesuit priest, Father John A. Siemes. When asked about Japanese attitudes towards Americans, Father Siemes replies, "Neither I nor our fathers have heard any outbursts of anger towards America" (00:20:31). The Atom Strikes! is less an account of the destruction of two Japanese cities than it is an homage to America's monopoly on nuclear weapons technology, an attitude present throughout the film but particularly in the decision to open and close with extensive footage of atomic test explosions recorded at Los Alamos.

At no point during the film is there any suggestion that Americans themselves might have anything to fear from atomic weaponry. The narrator speaks confidently and repeatedly of the "tremendous destruction" and "complete devastation" wrought by the atomic bomb. Describing the destruction of the mile-long Mitsubishi Steel and Arms

Works in Nagasaki, the narrator notes that the buildings "were modern and typical of American industrial construction" (00:25:57), a contrast to later trends that attributed the extensive bombing damage to "primitive" and "flimsy" Japanese construction. The destructive power of the atomic bomb is assessed almost entirely in terms of its impact on architectural structures with one telling exception. While describing the effects of the bombing on a bridge in Hiroshima, the narrator says, "Outlined on the surface of the bridge is the shadow of a pedestrian which tells its own meaningful story" (00:09:58). A man in U.S. military uniform steps forward to stand in the shadow's footprints (which he outlines with chalk), indicates the direction of the blast, and steps away again. While the shadow of the pedestrian might tell its own "meaningful story," that story has only one interpretation for the Americans of *The Atom Strikes!*—America alone possessed the power to reduce its enemies to nothing more than shadows.

While such triumphalism was typical of early discussions of nuclear technology and what it meant for America post-World War II, not everyone shared it. In a January 1946 *Collier's* magazine article titled "I Am a Frightened Man," Dr. Harold C. Urey adopts a very different attitude. Chemist, winner of the Nobel Prize, and a member of the Manhattan Project, Urey begins, "I write this to frighten you. I'm a frightened man, myself. All the scientists I know are frightened—frightened for their lives—and frightened for *your* life" (18). Urey describes how he and other scientists had been caught in an atomic arms race as they sought to capture the secret of nuclear technology before

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⁵ Michael Yavenditti recounts how the idea that most of the bomb's destructive impact could be attributed to "flimsy" Japanese construction and that comparable destruction would not be possible in modern American cities originated from a 1946 *Reader's Digest* article by Maj. Alexander P. de Seversky, "Atomic Bomb Hysteria." De Seversky's position was strongly challenged by military officials, scientists, radio officials, and *Reader's Digest* editors, but the idea continued to circulate.

Germany. They had succeeded in beating Germany, but the fear had not abated, particularly not as they were called to Washington to advise diplomats and politicians concerning the potentialities of the atomic bomb. Urey worried about the eagerness of politicians to wage nuclear war and of a return to a nuclear arms race that had never truly ended. More than that, Urey lamented the creation of a world ruled by fear:

There is evidence of a new nationalism based, as always, on fear. Smaller nations are enfolded by the larger powers, whether swallowed whole or merely "protected" or huddled together through fear. If you—the people—let things drift, we will perhaps see a world divided into two great spheres of interest, east and west, afraid of each other, *afraid of one unguarded word*. Freedom from Fear? We will eat fear, sleep fear, live in fear, and die in fear. (51, ital. in original)

In order to prevent the advent of a world divided by fear, Urey tried to turn fear to a more productive use. An advocate of world government, Urey believed that a preemptive fear of nuclear war might encourage "the people" to support the international control and monitoring of nuclear technology. Urey recognized that fear could be a powerful weapon, and what he proposed was a sort of emotional arms race, hoping that nuclear fears could be harnessed and used to defuse the growing international tension before they could become the basis for it. Unfortunately it was an arms race that Urey and the other supporters of international nuclear control would lose.

On September 23, 1949, President Truman again took to the airways this time with a much more sober announcement: "We have evidence that within recent weeks an atomic explosion occurred in the U.S.S.R" ("Statement by President Harry S. Truman Announcing the First Atomic Explosion in the USSR"). The fear that had so worried Harold Urey three years earlier had finally "come home" to America. The transformation of the Soviet Union into a nuclear power in 1949 marked an important turning point in American politics and culture post-World War II. Once the Soviet Union gained the

atomic bomb, Americans could no longer take their nuclear security for granted, stepping casually into and out of the footprints of a shadow burned on a bridge. Instead, as Urey said, they had to eat, sleep, and live with the fear that they could, at any moment, become the victims of an atomic attack. As I will argue over the course of this chapter, fear took on an important cultural role during the Cold War period as different political and cultural authorities used strategies of *emotion management* to define how Americans should feel about the nuclear threat and their relationship to it.

The concept of *emotion management* comes from the work of historian Guy

Oakes in *The Imaginary War: Civil Defense and American Cold War Culture* (1994). In

it Oakes writes.

Emotion management may be understood as a strategy for the mobilization, administration, and control of emotional life. The creation of those who aspire to the status of authorities and guardians of the soul, a system of emotion management represents the emotional life as framed by three basic parameters: cognitive standards, practical norms, and strategic controls. Emotion management defines standards that tell us what it is possible to feel, how far the horizon of emotional experience extends, and what our feelings mean. It also defines norms that tell us what is expected of us emotionally, what the limits of acceptable emotional expression are, what we ought to feel in specific circumstances, and how these feelings should be expressed. Finally, it defines a technology of emotional control that tells us what we can do with our emotions and how we can use them so that what we feel and the way we express our feelings can be deployed to our advantage. (46-47)

As subsequent chapters of this dissertation will show, I use *emotion management* to refer to a number of different cultural narratives circulating during the Cold war period that encouraged Americans to "manage" their emotions by adhering to certain standards for emotional behavior. Instead of being driven by a particular political ideology (such as Marxism), mid-century America's fascination with emotion management emerged alongside widespread growth in the popularity and authority of the social and

psychological sciences. Government-sponsored think tanks like the RAND Corporation—established in 1948—drew together scientists and researchers from a variety of fields as they sought to solve America's social problems. For its advocates, there was no dilemma emotion management and social science could not fix, whether the issue was nuclear survival, the shortcomings of the "American way of life," the labor demands of organization culture, or racial conflict and inequality.

In the context of nuclear civil defense, which is the focus of this chapter, emotion management refers to the work of government officials like Val Peterson, head of the Federal Civil Defense Administration (FCDA), who sought to allay Americans' nuclear fears by downplaying the destructive material effects of this new technology in favor of narratives that focused almost exclusively on Americans' psychological stability. Destruction in the event of an atomic attack, they asserted, would not come directly from the bomb itself but rather from the way Americans reacted to it. Peterson and other civil defense emotion managers hoped to safeguard the future of the nation by establishing "limits of acceptable emotional expression" around the issue of nuclear war that would help Cold War Americans transform their "unhealthy" nuclear panic into a "responsible" nuclear fear, and the primary "technology of emotional control" employed in this process was narrative. A variety of popular magazine articles, propaganda films, and advertisements taught Cold War Americans what would be expected of them emotionally in the event of a nuclear attack and modeled appropriate ways to behave leading up to and following such an event. By participating in civil defense programs and learning to control their emotions, Americans could help ensure their survival and that of the nation should a nuclear attack ever occur. It was also a matter of good Cold War citizenship. As

subsequent chapters will demonstrate, the capacity to successfully "manage" one's emotional behavior in keeping with certain social-scientific standards was not only crucial to surviving an atomic attack; it was also considered the key to creating a stable and egalitarian American society.

Official civil defense authorities like Val Peterson were not the only "guardians of the soul" interested in showing Americans what life would be like in the event of an atomic attack. Novelists like Philip Wylie (Tomorrow! 1954) and Pat Frank (Alas, Babylon 1959) and directors like Stanley Kramer (On the Beach 1959) and Stanley Kubrick (Dr. Strangelove 1964) produced popular and sometimes award-winning works of fiction that showed Cold War Americans "how far the horizon of emotional experience" might extend in the event of an atomic attack. Unlike official civil defense narratives, which downplayed the destructive aspects of the nuclear threat in favor of a message of calm reassurance and survivability, these fictional works take the nuclear scenario to apocalyptic extremes as a way of critiquing American society. The films especially offer an anti-nuclear message that aligns them more with Urey's activist emotionalism than the FCDA's emphasis on emotional control and political stability. The novels still offer optimistic portrayals, suggesting that Americans—when properly prepared—could survive a nuclear attack. Yet as my analysis of Philip Wylie's Tomorrow! will show, Cold War authors draw on different emotion management strategies than those endorsed by the FCDA. Taken together, these official and unofficial narratives offer a compelling account of the way emotion management shaped Americans' perception of both the nuclear threat and the current state of their society.

In the first half of this chapter I delve into the political and social implications of civil defense emotion management, arguing that such strategies were not realistically meant to save Americans in the event of an atomic attack but instead helped stifle popular opposition to pro-nuclear policies like deterrence and Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD). By over-emphasizing the psychological aspects of the nuclear threat and making individual emotion management the "key" to survival, civil defense emotion managers undercut fear-based anti-nuclear protest by framing it as an unreasonably hysterical response to the issue. Drawing on a variety of civil defense publications, including popular magazine articles, internal bulletins, and the massive *Project East River* report (1952), I begin by analyzing the so-called "problem of panic" and outline some of the strategies civil defense policymakers developed to help Americans manage their nuclear fears. I then examine how these strategies were presented to the American public through educational films like You Can Beat the Atomic Bomb! (1950) and The House in the Middle (1954). In these narratives, deviation from established emotional and behavioral standards is framed as both an embarrassing sign of personal instability and an unpatriotic threat to national security. Overall I will show how emotion management was "deployed to [the] advantage" of protecting the Cold War status quo, preemptively blaming Cold War Americans for their own nuclear destruction while obscuring the political and military machinations underlying it.

The second half of the chapter turns to Philip Wylie's *Tomorrow!* (1954), a best-selling nuclear apocalypse novel with a pro-civil defense message. Unlike previous interpretations of the novel that consider its politics synonymous with that of official civil defense narratives, I argue that Wylie's approach to emotion management differs

significantly from that of the FCDA, particularly in his use of graphic imagery. Wylie believed that Cold War Americans were "over-civilized," a state that not only left them vulnerable to emotional collapse in the event of a nuclear attack, but was also weakening the very character of the nation. Whereas official civil defense narratives promised continuity between a pre- and post-attack America, Wylie's novel imagines a nation rejuvenated in the wake of the attack, freed from the stultifying problems of modernity, many of which are inextricably linked to issues of race, gender, and sexuality. Although progressive in some respects, Wylie's neo-frontier fantasy exposes the biases inherent in civil defense policy and highlights the way emotion management served to reinforce a socially and politically conservative status quo.

Finally, I will conclude with a brief summary of the ideological and structural features of emotion management described in this chapter. Using emotion management to prepare Americans to face the threat of a nuclear attack represents only one especially acute instance of what was a much more commonplace cultural practice. Later chapters will show how strategies of emotion management functioned in other areas of life, drawing on the same mix of social-scientific expertise, government authority, and popular media to "manage" a variety of Cold War social problems.

2. Civil Defense and the Problem of Panic

Articles in popular magazines and newspapers asking readers to imagine their own cities and towns as targets of atomic attack and to place themselves in the position of bewildered, frantic survivors were common fare during the High Cold War period (1949-1962). Nearly every major national publication and most local newspapers put out similar

special editions featuring coverage of "Our City Under Atomic Attack." One of the first and most famous was John Lear's "Hiroshima, U.S.A.: Can Anything Be Done About It?" published in the August 5, 1950, issue of *Collier's* magazine. Half short story, half critical assessment of America's atomic readiness, "Hiroshima U.S.A." uses fictional teletype notices, detailed illustrations, and a dramatic narrative to place readers at the epicenter of a New York City under atomic attack. Lear takes his readers through a city in the midst of disintegration, rendered eerie and unfamiliar by the obliteration of landmarks and the breakdown of established systems of mass transit and communication. He follows frantic Manhattanites down into the city's subway system as they seek to escape the inferno raging above:

Panic swept down from the shattered streets and an emotional chain reaction burst on the subway platforms. At first, there was pushing and shoving. Then clawing and screaming. Women fainted and were trampled underfoot. Those on the edges of the platforms tried to push back, but were toppled over. Wriggling mounds of human forms blocked the tracks in a half-dozen stations, and only the everyday miracle of split-second subway timing prevented a massacre. (60)

Lear's description of a maddened crowd trapped by a raging inferno, pushing and shoving along the edge of a dangerous precipice graphically illustrates the challenge facing civil defense policymakers. Somehow they needed to stem the spread of panic and stop the "emotional chain reaction" that would transform ordinary American citizens into "wriggling mounds" of irrational, self-destructive humanity.

Early civil defense theory held that in the event of an atomic attack—or even in the face of a threatened or rumored atomic attack—the American people would panic.

Terrified by the destructive power inherent in weapons capable of annihilating not just individual lives but the American way of life itself, the American people would lose all sense of rationality and emotional control. As a 1955 FCDA bulletin reports,

Many of the forecasts and discussions concerning panic which have received wide publicity assume that it will not be too difficult for an enemy nation to strike terror into the hearts of Americans—especially through the use of atomic and thermonuclear bombs. To the enormous loss of life and property—so runs the theme—panic or mass hysteria will add devastating disorganization and paralysis, a weapon more horrible in its effects than any known to man. ("The Problem of Panic" 1)

The authors of this particular bulletin are interested in "debunking" this myth of panicproneness, but the FCDA was not always so reserved. Just two years earlier, the first head of the FCDA, Val Peterson, published "Panic—the Ultimate Weapon?" in Collier's magazine. In it he writes: "The first fact we must face is that we, the citizens of the strongest nation on earth, are also the most panic-prone. The record amply demonstrates this characteristic" (102). The potential of the American people to react irrationally and destructively in the face of a nuclear threat became known as the "problem of panic" because it represented a serious problem for American policymakers. Not only could the Soviet Union exploit this weakness using psychological warfare, but it also threatened to undermine America's ability to use its own nuclear weapons effectively. The strategy of nuclear deterrence, wherein the United States maintained a balance of power with the Soviet Union by threatening to engage in nuclear warfare, remained effective only as long as the US was able to convince the Soviet Union that its people were willing to engage in nuclear war. If the USSR doubted the credibility of this threat, then nuclear deterrence could no longer be part of American foreign and military policy, effectively "disarming" the US. But why were American policymakers so convinced of the psychological weakness of their own citizens?

For some, the problem of panic was a disease of modernity, a consequence of the social and material changes that began with the industrial revolution and the closing of

the frontier, and came to full fruition with America's post-war economic boom. The country was becoming a land of decadence, materialism, and "over-civilization." George Kennan, author of the 1946 "Long Telegram" that inspired the Cold War policy of containment, warned, "Much depends on health and vigor of our own society. World Communism is like malignant parasite which feeds only on diseased tissue...Every courageous and incisive measure [must be taken] to solve internal problems of our own society, to improve self-confidence, discipline, morale and community spirit of our own people" ("Telegram" 17). Far from exhibiting the self-discipline, courage, and morale needed to oppose the Soviet Union, Kennan felt that Cold War Americans inhabited a state of perpetual "childhood without the promise of maturity" (qtd. in Oakes 28). Author Philip Wylie attributed this immaturity to the "over-protection" of American children. Rules, regulations, and safety devices penned them in at every turn, shielding them from danger but also denying them the opportunity to attain true maturity. "The cost, as any good psychologist would expect," Wylie wrote in a 1948 article for *The Atlantic*, "is to be found in the national pall of adult infantilism and regression. Most adults remain children all their lives, often even those who are known as statesmen, senators, generals, admirals, and industrial tycoon" ("Safe and Insane" 91). This complaint would have been quite familiar to everyone who had read Wylie's enormously popular collection of social essays, A Generation of Vipers (1942), where he famously coined the term "Momism" to denote a specifically maternal corruption of the American character. ⁶ Whether one blamed materialism or "Momism," however, many agreed that Cold War Americans

⁶ I will return to *A Generation of Vipers* in chapter three where I will discuss it alongside possibly the most "Momist" text in American literary history—Richard Condon's *The Manchurian Candidate*.

were mentally and emotionally unprepared to face the stresses required to win the Cold War—particularly when facing the threat of an atomic attack.

The idea that the American character had been weakened as modernity's overcivilized softness replaced the frontier's rugged individualism was not a new one. Theodore Roosevelt made the same point at the beginning of the twentieth-century in *The* Strenuous Life (1900), saying, "No country can long endure if its foundations are not laid deep in the material prosperity which comes from thrift, from business energy and enterprise, from hard, unsparing effort in the fields of industrial activity; but neither was any nation ever yet truly great if it relied upon material prosperity alone" (9-10). So while criticism of American modernity was not new, it was a significant challenge for Cold War policymakers. As the military and economic victors of World War II, Cold War Americans enjoyed and a higher standard of living than the generations before them. The material richness of the so-called "American way of life" was a powerful weapon in America's ongoing propaganda war with the Soviet Union. More importantly, the last thing a generation of war- and Depression-weary Americans wanted to hear was that they would have to return to a life of "hard, unsparing effort." Whereas Wylie pursued a harsh message of nuclear-survivalism to cure the nation's over-civilization—as my later analysis of *Tomorrow!* argues—civil defense emotion managers created a different narrative. They may have privately despaired over the nation's materialism, but officially they devoted themselves to assuring the American people this "good life" would continue unabated. This split led Wylie and the FCDA to develop different strategies for managing the problem of panic, although both believed popular media like film, radio broadcasts, novels, and magazine articles were the key to successful emotion management.

Over-civilization was not the only reason Cold War policymakers worried about the problem of panic. Some believed that recent history had already provided definitive proof of Americans' panic-proneness on the night of October 30, 1938, when Orson Welles' radio adaptation of H.G. Wells' *The War of the Worlds* sparked a panic among certain portions of the population. The radio drama presented itself as a series of news bulletins offering "live" coverage of a Martian invasion of Grovers Mill, New Jersey, interspersed with weather reports, musical performances, and a lecture from fictional astronomer and Princeton professor, Richard Pierson (played by Welles). Although the drama was bracketed with disclaimers notifying viewers it was a work of fiction, some listeners tuned in partway through the broadcast, believed the invasion was real, and panicked. As Joanna Bourke writes in Fear: A Cultural History (2005), not all listeners were taken in by the realism of the drama, but a significant number were: "Out of six million listeners, 1.2 million believed that there really had been an invasion from Mars, home of the God of War. The panic was nationwide, although its intensity varied...Some listeners closest to Grovers Mill and New York hallucinated, actually believing that they could see the flames or feel the heat of the fires consuming the city" (180-181). The episode became a cultural touchstone. When David Bradley published No Place to Hide (1948), a memoir based on his work as a US Army medical officer during the Bikini Atoll atomic tests that detailed the dangers of radioactive fallout, Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) officials worried that it "could lead to 'an Orson Welles-like panic," should an atomic attack ever become imminent" (Boyer 308). Admiral William S. Parsons, a member of the Manhattan Project, warned that Americans' atomic anxieties "could make the United States vulnerable to a war of nerves that would make the Orson

Welles Mercury Theater episode pale by comparison" (qtd. in Boyer, 317). Somehow—despite its disclaimers and outlandish subject matter and without any material evidence to support its claims—a single radio broadcast seized control of the emotions of its listeners, overriding their rational judgment and reducing them to a state of terror.

In the event of an atomic attack—or even the rumor of one—many feared radio broadcasts would be even more damaging. As Jackie Orr reports in *Panic Diaries: A* Genealogy of Panic Disorder (2006), the United States Strategic Bombing Survey (USSBS) concluded that civilian panic was uniquely limited in the case of the atomic bombings of Japan: "The USSBS attributes this finding to 'the lack of understanding of the meaning of the new weapon' among civilians who did not experience its effects, while hypothesizing that if 'the channels of mass communication [were] as readily available to all the population as they are in the United States,' the effects on morale would have been much greater" (76). The Japanese people had been protected from panic on two levels: first, by their ignorance of the true nature of the nuclear threat, and secondly, by their (comparatively) limited communications networks. In the event of an attack on US soil, Americans would not be so fortunate. In a 1954 article, Philip Wylie wryly observed that "the general population has been subjected, for nearly nine years, to a 'war of nerves' unwittingly waged against it by its own leaders" ("Panic, Psychology, and the Bomb" 63), who had disseminated so much incomplete and contradictory information about the bomb, it was impossible for the average citizen to distinguish between science fact and hysterical fiction. He went on to say that the effects of a nuclear attack would be far more devastating for the US than for the Soviet Union since "[W]e have the roads, cars, and communications to make panic into chaos, irremediable and

absolute. They do not" (63). Much like the bomb itself, technologies of mass communication possessed their own dangerous "radio-activity" that could act as an amplifier of destruction, broadcasting news of an atomic attack to distant cities that would become as demoralized and panic-stricken as those that had been bombed directly

Yet the very same panic episode that made Welles' name synonymous with hysteria also offered civil defense emotion managers new insight into how the problem of panic might be overcome. While the fictional Professor Pierson may not have resided at Princeton that critical night in October 1938, Hadley Cantril—professor of psychology did. Cantril was part of a growing body of psychologists interested specifically in social psychology and public opinion polling. He was well-versed in the theories of crowd psychology put forward in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries by men like Gustave Le Bon, Wilfred Trotter, and William McDougall. These crowd psychologists likened panic to a "contagion" that spread according to the "principle of primitive sympathy" which held that "each instinct, with its characteristic primary emotion and specific impulse, is capable of being exited in one individual by the expressions of the same emotion in another... the expressions of fear of each individual are perceived by his neighbours; and this perception intensifies the fear directly excited in them by the threatening danger" (qtd. in Bourke 66). Alone, individuals might respond to a stimulus with a mild degree of fear, anger, or excitement. In the shared space of a crowd, however, they amplified each other's emotional reactions. Cantril drew on crowd theory as he studied the Welles panic, eventually producing the definitive report on the subject, *The Invasion from Mars: A Study in the Psychology of Panic* (1940).

However, Cantril concluded that crowd theory alone could not adequately explain the Welles panic, which had occurred among a group of radio listeners who were not part of a shared spatial environment. Existing panic theories were too reliant on vague suppositions regarding the crowd's supposed psycho-biological sympathies to effectively explain modern panic episodes. Instead, Cantril together with the staff of the Princeton Radio Research Project conducted two nation-wide surveys and interviewed 135 residents in and around Grovers Mill to collect empirical evidence that would pinpoint the specific social causes of the panic. As a 1940 TIME magazine review of The Invasion from Mars phrased it, "Dr. Cantril and associates went after known survivors of the Sunday nightmare with a questionnaire many times as nosy as a census blank. In addition to straightforward questions about the incident, the project's interviewers asked people about Mars, rocketships, religion, superstitions, job security, education, year and make of car" ("Anatomy of a Panic," 58). Cantril's survey reveals an important shift away from thinking of panic as primarily the product of universal unconscious instincts to theories that situate individual psychology within a specific social context. Cantril eventually concluded that certain individuals panicked during the Welles broadcast because they were immersed in an anxious social environment, suffered from a lack of critical judgment, and were ultimately unable to distinguish between fact and fiction.

Jackie Orr's analysis of Cantril's work in *Panic Diaries* reveals that his interest in the Welles panic was not abstractly scientific or ahistorical. Cantril believed his work could be used to alter Americans' psyches, preventing future panic episodes:

While acknowledging the unique contributions surrounding this episode of panic, Cantril also wants to identify what "from a psychological point of view, might make this the prototype of any panic." The study's significance rests, then, not only on its theorization of panic and its demonstration of new "research tools" for

social psychology but also on its "educational implications" for average citizens: "If they can see why some people reacted unintelligently in this instance, they may be able to build up their resistance to similar occurrences." When people are caught in a real crisis, "the information recorded here may help them make a more satisfactory adjustment." (47)

Unlike earlier panic theories that focused on the irrationality of the unconscious mind, Cantril's sociological approach made panic more accessible. If panic could be fostered by social factors, then it should also be possible to use social tools to counter its spread and development. Cantril was one of a growing number of social scientists and psychologists who believed that human psychology could be shaped and molded at the social level and who felt they had a civic obligation to develop the tools needed to make such "satisfactory adjustment" possible. In other words, Hadley Cantril was one of the earliest proponents of the Cold War practice of emotion management.

In the context of civil defense, emotion management meant using a combination of social-scientific expertise, government authority, and popular media to standardize, limit, and control Americans' emotional responses to the threat of nuclear war. As Guy Oakes notes, a system of emotion management "regards emotions not so much as private or inner states...but as cultural artifacts" that "can be intentionally, even self-consciously, formed, molded, manipulated, worked at, and worked upon" (47). Americans' nuclear feelings were not private psychological property but a potential threat to national security and public policy. Too much fear would not only be disastrous in the event of an attack, it would undermine the everyday morale of the American people. Too little fear and people might lapse into apathy, failing to take Russian threats seriously. The Cold War was unlike any conflict the nation had faced previously. It would not be won by troops overseas but by the willingness of all American citizens to confront Russian nuclear

aggression on a daily basis for years to come. The bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki had proven that atomic weapons were most effective, materially and psychologically, when wielded against civilian centers of manufacturing and commerce. The Cold War was as much a contest of wills as of weapons, so for the sake of preserving national security and ensuring America's eventual defeat of its communist enemies, policymakers felt justified in intervening in their citizens' emotional affairs, taking an active role in shaping and managing the way they perceived and responded to the nuclear threat.

The Federal Civil Defense Administration was the entity primarily responsible for developing the "cognitive standards, practical norms, and strategic controls" needed to set new "limits of acceptable emotional expression" on the issue of nuclear war (Oakes 47). A nationwide program of nuclear emotion management was by no means a simple undertaking. It would first require a massive amount of data collection and analysis as the FCDA sought to identify the social and psychological factors influencing Americans' perception of the nuclear threat (cognitive standards). Then it would require the creation of a new set of emotional and behavioral standards consistent with the needs of American nuclear policy (practical norms). Finally, the FCDA would need to find an effective means of getting the American people to manage their emotions within these new limits while also discrediting any competing emotional narratives (strategic controls).

Fortunately for the FCDA, the Cold War military-industrial-scientific complex provided ample resources to support such a project.

In 1951, Associated Universities, Inc.—a think-tank sponsored by several Ivy League universities as well as Johns Hopkins and MIT—was commissioned by the FCDA, Department of Defense, and National Security Resources Board (NSRB) to

evaluate what non-military measures could be taken to minimize the destruction caused by an atomic attack on US soil. The project employed dozens of nuclear scientists, political scientists, sociologists, psychologists, city planners, businessmen, and technical specialists. It was headed by Otto L. Nelson, Jr., Vice President of the New York Life Insurance Company, and in 1952 its personnel produced a massive ten-volume report detailing their findings. *Report of the Project East River*, as it was called, became the "bible" for American civil defense policy. It outlined official findings on a number of different nuclear attack issues, including the problem of panic, and identified various strategies the FCDA could use to manage Americans' nuclear fears.

Broadly speaking, *Report of the Project East River* recommended addressing the problem of panic by controlling the *socio-linguistic predefinition* of the nuclear threat. In *Panic Diaries* (2006), Jackie Orr argues that a type of "linguistic turn" took place during the Cold War with regard to panic theory. Instead of relying on psycho-biological notions of primitive sympathy to explain panic behavior, theorists adopted an outlook that was almost poststructuralist in nature, with the word *panic* creating and calling into being a set of irrational behaviors rather than describing an independent, pre-existing psychological state (131). Managing the problem of panic therefore meant controlling when and how words like *panic* and *fear* were used to describe the nuclear threat. To do so, the FCDA created a highly-circumscribed definition of *panic* that tried to render the term inapplicable to any description of post-disaster behavior. They also drew heavily on historical precedent, using studies of past disasters to "conventionalize" the nuclear threat by equating the effects of atomic weapons to those of regular bombs and natural disasters. In essence, Americans were told they had already faced and overcome similar

threats in the past, so to panic now would be unreasonable, primitive, and even un-American.

These emotion management techniques are clearly outlined in "Panic Prevention and Control," an appendix to volume IX of the *Report of the Project East River*. Here panic is defined as "highly excited individual or group behavior characterized by aimless, unorganized, unreasoning, nonconstructive activity" that "results from sudden, extreme, and often groundless fear" (56). This definition emphasizes the disorganized nature of panic, characterizing it as an emotion taken to extremes. *Panic* is then explicitly contrasted with *fear*, which is the normal emotional response, as the appendix explains:

[C]ivil defense education must make people aware that a considerable degree of fear under attack is normal and inevitable. As with the development of healthy attitudes among combat troops, civil defense must, in effect, tell people: "You will feel afraid when the first attack comes. So will everyone else, for attack is dangerous. There is no abnormality and no cowardliness in such justified fear. It is not whether you feel afraid, but what you do when you are afraid that counts. The fear you experience will make you more alert, stronger, and more tireless for the things that you and your neighbors can do to protect yourselves...." (61)

Whereas panic is described in strictly negative terms—aim*less*, *un*organized, *non*constructive—fear becomes a positive emotion, something that allows American civilians to be "more" than they could otherwise be.⁷ A similar technique is at work in "The Problem of Panic" (1955) where the FCDA calls panic "highly emotional behavior" that "results in increasing the danger for the self and for others rather than in reducing it

⁷ Anxiety is also closely related to panic and fear, and in *States of Suspense: Postmodernism and United States Fiction and Prose* (2008), Daniel Cordle uses it to disrupt the panic/fear binary created by Cold War emotion managers: "[Anxiety] suggests a more subtle and less obviously overwhelming response to Cold War nuclear contexts than the 'panic' or 'terror' early Cold War planners wished to avoid, or the 'fear' they wished to instill…It is more broadly expressive than are other terms of the drawn out impact of the nuclear context, something explicitly present but more frequently hovering on the edges of consciousness or slipping into the background of everyday life" (54). Whereas emotion managers wanted to harness Americans' nuclear anxieties and direct them towards manifestations of fear rather than panic, Cordle is interested in how anxiety influenced the lives of Cold War Americans in subtle, unanticipated ways.

(1, ital. in original). This concept of panic is desirable, the authors explain, because it makes overall results rather than specific behaviors the basis for defining what constitutes panic. Flight, for example, "is not necessarily panic, for flight may result in reducing the danger." Instead of attributing panic to a specific predetermined event (such as a nuclear attack) or set of behaviors (such as flight), the FCDA offers strategies for defining panic that rely on retroactive interpretation. Panic is essentially read back into an event based on individual behavior and an assessment of whether that behavior constituted an aimless increase in the danger to self and others.

We can see this interpretive definition of panic at work in "If H-Bombs Fall..." a 1957 Saturday Evening Post article by Donald Robinson. In this article, Robinson reports on the findings of the National Research Council's Committee on Disaster Studies, which attempts to anticipate how people would behave during a modern atomic attack by studying historical disaster events like tornados, floods, and the Texas City oil refinery explosion. True to its commitment to conventionalization, the article posits that there is no qualitative difference between being a victim of a conventional disaster versus an atomic attack. As one member of the committee phrased it, "A man buried alive in a burning house is a man buried alive in a burning house regardless of whether it was a gas-main explosion or a hydrogen bomb that set the house afire" (105). Similarly, the article asserts that most people misinterpret what they are witnessing in the wake of a disaster: "They see the confusion that inevitably accompanies a disaster, with victims going hither and yon, and they term this panic. In reality, most of the disaster-struck persons are acting quite rationally, doing whatever they humanly can to protect themselves" (111). Although the article admits that these historical studies can only

approximate what would happen during a modern nuclear attack, "there is good reason to hope that the strength and resiliency which Americans have repeatedly demonstrated in disaster would come through" (113), allowing the nation and its citizen to survive and fight on.

The majority of the article describes historical panic behavior, but Robinson includes two examples specifically related to the modern nuclear threat that are then carefully contained within the limits of the FCDA's desired narrative. The first describes the reaction of US military and civilian personnel during a Nevada test event:

Not long ago, the wind suddenly shifted during an A-bomb test at the Government proving grounds near Las Vegas, Nevada, and a radioactive cloud started moving right at a throng of military and civilian observers. Frantically, they ran for their lives, piled into cars and raced off in all directions. Many of them didn't even use the roads; they drove off cross-country. Dispatches to the Pentagon spoke of "panic." They were wrong. Not a single fender was dented in all that gasping flight. (111)

The linguistic gymnastics of this passage strain the credulity of the post-Cold War reader. People react to a cloud of radioactive dust by running "frantically" for their lives, but "all that gasping flight" does not constitute panic because no fenders were dented in the making of this atomic test? Panic is wrong, only "panic" (now safely contained within scare quotes) is allowed? It is difficult to imagine how an actual attack on a crowded city could fail to produce panic, since—using such a definition—more than few fenders would be dented. The second example talks about a civil defense drill in Mobile, Alabama, where a rumor started in "the Negro districts" that the area was really going to be bombed to prevent school desegregation. "A large number of Negroes," readers are told, "accepted this as truth. They took to the roads, carrying their most precious belongings with them" (110). Whereas the Nevada example uses linguistic tricks to

attributes this behavior to the "gullibility" of African Americans, drawing on the longstanding association of blackness with superstition, intellectual weakness, and blind obedience. It also alludes to the racist caricature of the runaway slave, who was depicted as "taking to the road" with a bag full of belongings in minstrel shows and on wanted posters. The racial context of the example allows Cold War authorities to admit to the possibility of a nuclear panic while simultaneously disavowing it since white readers would be unwilling to align themselves with "gullible" African Americans.

There is more at stake in the FCDA's efforts to control the socio-linguistic predefinition of the nuclear threat than "just semantics." Techniques like conventionalization deliberately downplayed the nuclear threat. A man "buried alive in a burning house" during a nuclear attack would not be in the same position as someone suffering due to a gas main explosion. In a conventional disaster, victims can rely on outside help from firefighters and physicians. In a nuclear attack, emergency personnel would be overwhelmed or themselves stricken by the disaster. Radiation would continue to poison and affect people long after the initial blast event. Systems of transportation and communication would be disrupted and critical supplies destroyed or diminished on a much greater scale than in any previous natural or man-made disaster. And Americans would have to face the fact that this was not a natural event, not an accident, nor a poignant tragedy, but a deliberate act of violence meant to destroy them and their nation. Life in the wake of an atomic attack would be far from conventional. But it was precisely this bigger picture perspective of the grandiosity of a nuclear attack and its probable effect on the nation that civil defense emotion management was meant to obscure.

The primary goal of nuclear emotion management was to encourage Cold War Americans to narrow their focus, turning their attention inward to scrutinize their own mental and emotional shortcomings rather than questioning the government's role in preparing for (and perpetuating) a state of nuclear war. Oakes calls this process the "subjectification of the nuclear threat" (62). Essentially, the FCDA encouraged Americans to see themselves as the true source of danger in a nuclear attack. By predefining the nuclear threat around the problem of panic, the FCDA shifted attention away from the material source of destruction (the bomb) to its psychological and emotional effects. They further downplayed the need for large-scale material preparations at the national level through conventionalization. Instead, articles like Peterson's "Panic—The Ultimate Weapon?" provided readers with a five-part quiz—supposedly based on the latest social science research techniques—they could use to assess their own susceptibility to panic, and a list of "Panic Stoppers" readers should employ to "keep from becoming a victim of panic" (108). In terms of the logistics of civil defense planning, the advantages of this psychological approach are clear: "The forbidding technological, political, and economic problem of devising plausible strategies for surviving a nuclear attack was translated into a much more tractable personal, psychological, and therapeutic problem for which the individual was finally responsible" (Oakes 62). Yet making Americans personally responsible for their own nuclear survival was not the same as empowering them to effectively protect themselves.

As I will argue in the section below, civil defense films like *You Can Beat the Atomic Bomb!* (1950) and *The House in the Middle* (1954) were never intended to be authentic representations of the nuclear threat. Instead, they helped disseminate and

idealize a particular "American way of life" by making nuclear survival synonymous with the values and practices of the white, suburban, middle-class family. This overly-optimistic narrative reassured viewers that nuclear survival was entirely within their control and would come from steps as simple as basic home maintenance and—above all—"patience, calm patience." Furthermore, emotion management's emphasis on self-control and its repeated attempts to distinguish between "healthy" (fear) and "unhealthy" (panic) emotional responses to the nuclear threat helped insulate this optimistic narrative from critique. Questioning the FCDA's optimistic survival narrative in favor of opposing America's pro-nuclear policies or failing to comply with the FCDA's emotional and behavioral standards were symptoms of emotional instability, proof that "you" might one day become "a victim of panic."

3. Coming Soon to a Home Near "You": The Rhetoric of Civil Defense Films

If, as civil defense emotion managers believed, the prevention of panic was tied to the social predefinition of the nuclear threat, then civil defense films were one of the most important weapons in the FCDA's anti-panic arsenal. The FCDA *Annual Report for 1955* reveals that in that year alone, the FCDA produced fifteen new civil defense films for TV broadcast and screening within schools, churches, and civil organizations. "Based on past experience," the report estimates that "each picture will be seen by a minimum of 20,000,000 persons, giving an anticipated aggregate audience of more than half a billion for the civil defense film program of 1955" (78). Such films predefined the nuclear threat for the American people, provided them with behavioral and emotional models to follow, and reassured them that they could take simple steps to ensure their survival. They also

commonly employed conventionalization to reassure Cold War Americans that they could draw on established practices to protect themselves. According to these films, Americans had every reason to believe that with the help of a few sensible precautions, they could survive an atomic attack.

One of the first civil defense films produced for circulation to the general public was *You Can Beat the Atomic Bomb!* (1950), an RKO Pictures film. As its title suggests, the film approaches the troubling subject of atomic warfare with confidence and cheer. Released shortly after the Soviet Union successfully tested its own atomic bomb, the film sets out to debunk a number of the "old wives tales of this atomic era" (00:04:15), among them the belief that radiation could impact the fertility of those exposed to it or that it could leave places uninhabitable. The film explains that the three destructive effects of the atomic bomb are flash, blast, and radiation. These first two are "therefore but a tremendously magnified version of any simple explosive" (00:05:19). As for radiation, viewers are told it can be stopped by six feet of earth, three feet of concrete, or one foot of steel, even for people very close to the center of an explosion (00:05:35). From here the film segues into several fictional attack scenarios showing how various American families are able to react to the warning of an atomic attack and safely "beat" the bomb.

In the first scenario, Jim, Elsie, and their two children receive warning of an atomic attack. Jim orders his wife to "close all the windows, draw the blinds, and pull the drapes in front of them" to keep out "fire sparks and glass splinters" (00:06:14). The family then retreats to the cellar to wait out the attack, which the radio informs them was an "air burst," meaning—as Jim explains—that all of the radiation goes straight up into the air where it presents no danger (00:09:39). A later scenario has them enduring a

"water burst," which creates a radioactive mist. In this scenario Jim is exposed to a "nice cool breeze of radioactive mist" while tacking a blanket over the broken cellar window, much to his daughter's horror (00:16:48). "Now folks," Jim says, a salutation that slips between addressing his family and addressing the viewer, "watch while I give a demonstration of how to defend yourself against lingering radioactivity" (00:16:55). Jim explains that radiation can only do its "dirty work" if you let it. Simply removing any contaminated clothing and scrubbing any contaminated skin with soap and water will eliminate radiation. "This man knows the best defense against lingering radioactivity is patience, calm patience," the narrator concludes with obvious approval (00:18:08). Indeed, Jim is so calm and the narrator so approving of his attitude, viewers could easily come away from the film with the impression that shards of flying glass are a far more serious threat than radioactivity. If radiation can be washed away with soap and water, then survival is—quite literally—just a matter of window dressing.

A similarly cosmetic approach to the problem of nuclear preparedness is the focus of *The House in the Middle* (1954), produced by the FCDA in association with the National Clean Up-Paint Up-Fix Up Bureau. Unlike *You Can Beat the Atomic Bomb!*, which used actors to create fictional scenarios, *The House in the Middle* takes footage from actual experiments conducted at the Nevada Proving Grounds and intersperses it with shots of a civil defense official—seated at his desk with the CD logo displayed prominently on a nearby filing cabinet—who proceeds to explain the significance of this test footage to his viewers (00:01:51). This footage, the narrator explains, comes from the Nevada Proving Grounds where three miniature houses were subject to the heat effects of an atomic explosion. The three houses are positioned next to one another and are an equal

distance from the explosion, but they exhibit variable exterior conditions. The house on the right is an eyesore. Dead grass and litter "simulate conditions you've seen in too many alleys and backyards in slum areas" (00:02:24). The house on the left is the "product of years of neglect" and "has not been painted regularly" (00:06:45). The house in the middle, however, has a clean, litter-free yard and has been painted with "ordinary good quality house paint"—light paint, the narrator explains, reflects heat as well as protecting against weathering and moisture damage (00:07:13).

Dramatic music rises as viewers wait for the atomic blast that will soon engulf all three houses. The blast wave races over the houses, raising a dense cloud of dust (00:07:34). After the dust clears, viewers can see that the house on the right has burst into flame, and the house on the left soon joins it. But the house in the middle is untouched save for a "slight charring of the painted outer surface" (00:09:47). At the close of the film, the narrator holds up a large, printed photo of the three houses and concludes: "The dingy house on the right, the dirty littered house on the left, or the clean white house in the middle. It is your choice. The reward may be survival" (00:11:27). The narrator might claim to be allowing viewers a choice, but really there is no choice to be made. Not only are the houses on the left and right completely destroyed in this image—leaving the "clean white house" to dominate the picture—they are also associated with "the slums." The film suggests that for the price of a few buckets of paint, homeowners can not only fulfill their civil defense responsibilities, they can also avoid social ridicule. The FCDA has transformed the complex issue of nuclear safety into a simple matter of housekeeping, and the National Clean Up-Paint Up-Fix Up Bureau—a branch of the

National Paint, Varnish, and Lacquer Association—can use the nuclear threat to market its products.

Unlike You Can Beat the Atomic Bomb!, The House in the Middle ignores the question of how people should behave during an atomic attack. The only people who appear in the test site footage are the civil defense personnel shown inspecting the houses before and after the blast. Instead, this film focuses on "you" and the choices you can make now, ostensibly to protect yourself in the future. Near the end of the film, a montage unfolds showing children cleaning up litter, wives weeding their flowerbeds, and husbands repairing broken steps and painting weathered siding. All over the country, the narrator explains, communities are organizing clean up-paint up-fix up campaigns because "beauty, cleanliness, health, and safety" are the principles "we" live by today (00:10:53). Such appeals to "our" values and community spirit were quite common in civil defense narratives as Tracy C. Davis notes in Stages of Emergency: Cold War Nuclear Civil Defense (2007): "Membership, belonging, and fellowship were the ancillary benefits of taking part in the civil defense effort. Wherever individuals felt most comfortable—within exogenous communities, reaching out to coordinate with differently articulated portions of their community, or functioning reciprocally across communities—a role for them could be found" (35). Films like You Can Beat the Atomic Bomb! and The House in the Middle created models of appropriate behavior ("now folks") that they could then distribute within communities of critical observers ("You've all seen"). Under the guise of promoting national security and civic responsibility, Americans were encouraged to scrutinize their own behavior and that of their neighbors to ensure it met the standards established by the FCDA's version of nuclear reality.

The goal, then, of civil defense films was not to produce material security but to ensure their own narrative domination and eliminate the space for alternative interpretations of the nuclear threat. Jim and his family calmly follow civil defense recommendations and survive; the house in the middle is painted and escapes destruction. Within the worlds of these civil defense films, everything unfolds precisely as planned, implying that the principles underlying civil defense are flawless, as Oakes writes:

There is no evidence of the commonplace need to interpret instructions in order to understand them. The plan has been designed so precisely and operates so faultlessly that there is no logical space between the rule and the behavior that constitutes its correct application. The place for interpretation has disappeared. (103)

Moreover, the psychological and social dimensions of these civil defense narratives help ensure their interpretation of the nuclear threat remains unchallenged. Counter narratives that questioned the effectiveness of official civil defense policy could be dismissed as hysterical. Unlike Jim, such individuals were not facing the nuclear threat with "patience, calm patience." Such individuals were failing to manage their own emotions properly. They were alarmists who would only incite an "unhealthy" degree of fear among their peers.

To the post-Cold War viewer, the recommendations made in these films—keep calm, wash your hands, and paint your house—seem too superficial to offer true protection in the event of a nuclear attack. Civil defense narratives downplayed the threat posed by radiation, likened nuclear bombs to conventional explosives, and reduced nuclear safety procedures to a set of simple, easy-to-follow behavioral and material practices. Such practices were unlikely to protect the American people in the event of an actual attack. They did, however, produce tangible goals Americans could easily

accomplish, providing them with the *feeling* of security, which was sufficient to meet the political goals of civil defense emotion management. Civil defense, as the superficiality of films like *The House in the Middle* reveals, was a sort of elaborate shell game. Viewers kept their eyes fixed on the houses on the left, right, and middle, "chose" the behaviors likely to win them their survival, and overlooked what was (literally, in the case of *The House in the Middle*) taking place in the background—namely the ongoing manufacture and testing of nuclear weapons by the U.S. government.

Other representations of the nuclear threat, even those that promoted civil defense, were far less sanguine. As my analysis of *Tomorrow!* (1954) shows, Philip Wylie rejected the FCDA's highly-sanitized nuclear attack scenarios. Like the FCDA, Wylie worried about the problem of panic and feared that modern over-civilization had rendered the American people uniquely vulnerable to this new threat. While the FCDA responded to this problem with a message of calm reassurance, Wylie's emotion management techniques were quite different. He sought to shock Americans into awareness of the graphic bodily and psychological destruction that would accompany a nuclear attack. Unlike Urey, Wylie wasn't interested in alarming Americans to the point of anti-nuclear protest; instead, he hoped his gruesome aesthetic would "inoculate" people against the problem of panic by restoring the mental and emotional fortitude that had been damaged by "Momism" and modernity. Although Wylie's novel is quite different stylistically from the civil defense films analyzed in this section, it too is ultimately more interested in promoting a particular "American way of life" than in engaging realistically with the material and political dimensions of the nuclear threat. For Wylie, the nuclear threat offered the perfect opportunity to take his longstanding critique of mid-century American society to apocalyptic extremes.

4. Philip Wylie's Tomorrow!—A Post-Nuclear Frontier Fantasy

In 1954 Philip Wylie—popular science fiction author, social critic, and a regular contributor to publications like Collier's and The Saturday Evening Post—published Tomorrow!, a nuclear apocalypse novel that depicts life in two fictional Midwestern cities in the months leading up to and immediately following a surprise nuclear attack on the United States. Written and set during the High Cold War period of the early 1950s, the novel centers around three families—the Conners, the Sloans, and the Baileys—using each to illustrate different attitudes towards civil defense. The citizens of Green Prairie, led by Henry Conner and his family, take pride in their well-developed civil defense program. The citizens of River City scoff at civil defense, considering it an unnecessary waste of time and money. They are dominated by Minerva Sloan whose physical and moral corpulence and possessive emasculation of her son, Kit, identify her as one of Wylie's hated "Moms"—that legion of corrupted modern women who were transforming America into "matriarchy in fact if not in declaration" (Generation of Vipers 53). At the center of this conflict are the Baileys. Lenore Bailey must decide if she will bow to the expectations of her money-grubbing mother, Netta, by marrying Kit Sloan and thus perpetuate the cycle of "Momism" and materiality Wylie believed would be the downfall of the nation. Or she could choose to marry her childhood sweetheart, Charles, joining the somewhat old-fashioned Conner family and adopting the simplicity and upright selfsufficiency Wylie believed was a legacy of their frontier ancestry.

The somewhat cliché romance and debates over the necessity of civil defense that make up the first half of the book give way, starting with the section titled "X-Day," to gruesome depictions of mutilated bodies, burning cities, and rampaging mobs after the Soviets launch a surprise nuclear attack that destroys Washington, D.C., along with most of America's major cities. Thanks to their civil defense training, the citizens of Green Prairie and the Conner family are much better prepared to face this threat compared to River City and the Sloans. By the end of the novel, Kit Sloan is dead, Minerva Sloan is crippled, and the Conners, all alive and healthy, assemble for a community cookout where Lenore (now married to Charles) announces her first pregnancy. Henry Conner reflects—without any suggestion of irony—that the bombing "had proved an ultimate blessing by furnishing a brand-new chance to build a world brand-new—and infinitely better" (367). Civil defense, according to Wylie's novel, will not only enable Americans to survive a nuclear attack but will also allow them to rebuild Cold War America in the image of an idyllic frontier past.

Given *Tomorrow!*'s nakedly pro-civil defense message and Wylie's decision to dedicate it to "the gallant men and women of the Federal Civil Defense Administration, and those other true patriots, the volunteers, who are doing their best to save the sum of things" (1), it is no surprise that most readings of the text have focused on its overt political message. Daniel Cordle calls it a "clunky, propagandist polemic" (5), and Guy Oakes writes, "Although Wylie's novel is a nuclear fantasy, it reproduces without significant exaggeration the basic assumptions of Cold War emotion management" (77). Oakes assumes that *Tomorrow!*'s politics are identical to those of the FCDA and that Wylie employs the same strategies of emotion management to achieve the same ends.

Indeed, Wylie worked closely with the FCDA for three years as a consultant while writing *Tomorrow!* (Grossman 57), and the Mutual Broadcasting System put on a dramatization of the novel as part of Civil Defense Week in 1956 ("All Asked to Aid in Civil Defense" 30).

However, such interpretations are ultimately incomplete. Although Wylie worked as a consultant for the FCDA and was, initially, an avid proponent of civil defense, he disagreed with official assessments of the problem of panic. In "Panic, Psychology, and the Bomb," an article written two years after the publication of *Tomorrow!*, Wylie opposes the predominantly optimistic assessment of the problem of panic put forward by Val Peterson and the FCDA:

It was my conclusion (based on the same data seen from a different point of view) that the American people undoubtedly *would* panic under such a bombing *in their present state of mind...*I further held that a study of familiar disasters could furnish little valuable insight into expectable reactions to an atomic disaster, which, owing to the general dearth of understanding of A-bombs and their effects (both physical and psychological) would be entirely different from usual responses to understood catastrophe. (37-38; ital.in original)

Wylie rejects both the conventionalization hypothesis—which held that the effects of nuclear weapons would be like those of conventional weapons—and the belief that surveys of past panic behavior could accurately model behavior during a nuclear attack. Wylie also believed that the FCDA's attempts to control panic by developing nuclear narratives that emphasized survival, reassurance, and self-control would actually be more likely to foster panic than to forestall it. As *Tomorrow!*'s Henry Conner argues, "I suspect the *worst* thing you can do, sometimes, is to keep patting people's backs. Keep promising them they're okay because they'll do okay in a crisis. Makes 'em that much more liable to skittishness, to loss of confidence, if the crisis rolls around and they find they're *not*

doing letter perfect" (118). Instead of presenting the American people with carefully controlled and sanitized representations of atomic attack, Wylie believed he needed to confront them with nuclear narratives that were as gruesome and horrific as possible. Exposing Americans to stimuli that evoked strong, primitive emotional responses would allow them to build up a resistance to panic and make them more aware of—and therefore better able to manage—their darkest fears and desires.

Tomorrow! enjoyed a significant degree of popularity following its initial publication with reviews of the text appearing in major newspapers and magazines across the nation. Although literary critics were largely unimpressed with the novel's clichés and two-dimensional characters, it nevertheless rose to number eight on the New York Times' Best Seller list of February 1954 (Nichols BR12). In a 1953 article for the Chicago Daily Tribune, Wylie explains what inspired him to write the novel:

In asking myself why the great bulk of the country didn't even bat an eye over its peril, I decided it was because people hadn't really felt—visualized, imagined, and sensed—the nature of such an event. What was required was not so much more factual data as something to touch human emotions—a sort of 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' of the atomic age. ("How Government Helped Wylie Write a New Novel" 114)

Wylie wanted to make a powerful sensory and emotional impression on his readers, wanted to force them to experience—as much as possible—the psychological and emotional stressors they would face in the event of an actual atomic attack. Wylie believed that doing so would inure Americans to panic-causing stimuli and inspire them to more actively engage in civil defense preparations. For these reasons, and because he hoped to reach "that audience of millions of people," Wylie initially wanted *Tomorrow!* to be a movie, an idea that studios apparently considered unprofitable (Nichols BR12). Although Wylie found no market for his screenplay, his initial aspiration to make

Tomorrow! a film helps explains the emphasis on sound and graphic visual imagery that characterizes much of the novel, particularly the second half that focuses on the nuclear attack.

Tomorrow! thrives on sensationalism and gore in its depictions of a population under atomic attack, bombarding readers with numerous gruesome scenes like the following:

Ruth Williams still carried her dead baby. Its insides had come through its back, slowly, as she walked, and finally they'd jiggled so loose and slack that she stepped on them now and again. Jim came along behind her, his face clotted up in the cold, his hand on her back—because he couldn't see. Behind Jim, holding onto a length of clothesline, came the rest of the family. People who saw Ruth leading, walking, tripping a little, slipping now and again—for visibility was good in the torchy night—said things and were sick or they screamed, and Ruth always smiled a little at their discomfiture. (297-298)

Ruth Williams—sister to Henry Conner's wife— and her family embody Wylie's fears of maternal overprotection and the over-civilization of children. Believing that civil defense was an elaborate sham that made children unduly alarmed and anxious, they refused "to look at the hard and horrible face of *tomorrow yonder*" (91). As punishment for their blind rejection of civil defense and stubborn refusal to look at the "hard and horrible" face of nuclear war, Jim Williams is literally blinded during the atomic attack and Ruth is forced to watch as her husband and children are abducted, trampled, and killed. She survives but is driven mad by what she witnesses and is confined to a mental institution. Her irrational belief that not engaging in civil defense protects her family results in the total destruction of that family and sentences her to an even greater state of irrationality.

In a 1954 review of the novel, Val Peterson writes that his "professional sympathy as a Civil Defense official" is reserved for the Williams family, concluding, "One closes this brilliant, scarifying novel with the conviction that it was written for people such as

these. It is for them that the rest of us may well pray that this "Tomorrow!" will never come" ("They Said It Would Never Happen..." BR4). Although Peterson claims to sympathize with the Williams family, his closing statement creates distance between his readers and Wylie's characters. Rather than viewing the Williams family's fate as potentially aligned with their own, Peterson assures his readers that people such as Ruth and Jim Williams are distinct from "the rest of us." Federal civil defense officials were not entirely willing to embrace Wylie's "scarifying" aesthetic as their own.

Numerous other horrifying scenes populate Wylie's novel—a disemboweled woman tries to stuff her squirming fetus back into her abdomen, a footless man runs down the street on his exposed shin bones, the arm of a beautiful blonde is reduced to a gritty pulp that repulses her would-be rescuer. Many individuals, like the unfortunate Ruth Williams, are driven mad by what they witness following the attack. Others, better prepared to face such psychological shocks, are able to withstand even the most tremendous horrors. Interestingly, it is the youngest member of the Conner family—and the only one not directly involved in civil defense—who best demonstrates the desired outcome of Wylie's "scarifying" approach to the problem of panic. Early in the novel, a bored Nora Conner considers "climbing on the trunk and scrutinizing the objects her father kept in a locked garage closet" but decides not to because "that had lost its shock" (72). Over a hundred pages later, readers discover what these "objects" are when Henry Conner is arrested after an incredibly realistic (and naked) civil defense casualty dummy falls out of his trunk. Nora's snooping allows her to build up a tolerance to panicinducing stimuli that serves her well during the attack. When Nora along with a party of adults must cross the bomb-ravaged streets of River City, facing mutilated bodied, violent mobs, and an enormous firestorm, Nora alone remains calm: "Since she had expected [the firestorm], she took it for granted exactly as she did all other A-bomb phenomena: it impressed her without unduly astonishing her. But she could observe that Jeff and Willis were simply appalled" (293). Jeff later runs away in terror and Willis dies of a panicinduced heart attack leaving Nora to complete the journey on her own.

There is a type of emotion management at work in Wylie's novel, but it differs markedly from that of the FCDA. When FCDA emotion managers sought to add realism to their depictions of atomic attack, they often did so in a carefully controlled and highly sanitized fashion. For instance, in Stages of Emergency (2007), Tracy C. Davis describes the practice of "faking" whereby civil defense officials developed elaborate make-up techniques that could be used to transform dummies and volunteers into realistic atomic bomb casualties. One guide explains how to replicate the flash-burn kimono patterns seen on Japanese victims in Hiroshima and Nagasaki using a mix of "vermillion and brown grease paint diluted with cold cream" (qtd. in Davis 205). Such guides effectively aestheticize the atomic threat, transforming the messy business of treating radiation burns into a matter of delicate artistic control. The FCDA used similar techniques to replicate injuries at its civil defense school in Olney, Maryland, and during some casualty drills, but none of the characters in civil defense films like You Can Beat the Atomic Bomb! exhibit injuries any worse than a few minor scratches. Wylie's suggestion that the FCDA "mount a series of public displays to acquaint the public with nuclear casualties from burns to decapitation" was never acted on (Seed 15). The FCDA still sought to protect the public from the ugly reality of nuclear warfare whereas Wylie sought to strip away those protections. Wylie believed that *Tomorrow!*'s gruesome imagery could act on his readers

much as the civil defense dummies acted on Nora, effectively deadening their emotional sensitivity and thereby "inoculating" them against panic.

While *Tomorrow!*'s graphic bomb-ravaged bodies are one of its most memorable features, the novel is interesting also as a portrait and critique of Cold War American culture at large. Long before the publication of *Tomorrow!*, Wylie's *Generation of Vipers* (1942) and other social essays established him as a staunch critic of American society. Wylie firmly believed the nation had entered a period of degenerative over-civilization that was destroying the American character and replacing a tradition of rugged individualism with one of gross materialism. The corruption of the American character by modernity and materialism is represented in *Tomorrow!* by Beau and Netta Bailey, Lenore's parents and the Conners' neighbors. Netta is a woman whose "personality was identical with her ambition which had been formed, delineated and defined to the utmost detail by American advertising" (32). The Baileys, readers are told, "were not intentionally evil people...to them, as to millions of other American families, not only 'keeping up' but 'getting ahead' have priority over conscience" (38). They are also slaves to mass culture, particularly TV culture. Although Wylie believed mass culture could be used to educate the American people by distributing works like his own *Tomorrow!*, the medium was only as good as the message it carried.

One of the eeriest moments in the novel occurs long before the atomic attack when "the lunging, sepulchral explosion" of televised laughter interrupts the peace of the previously quiet Conner home (29). The Conners, like the Baileys, have tuned in to *Tootlin' Tim*, but whereas the Conners actively watch the program, a sleeping Beau unconsciously responds to its cues: "[W]henever the TV set gave forth its collective

guffaw, its mechanical replica of the mechanical mirth of morons...whenever this rockslide cacophony struck his ears, Beau's belly jiggled in cadence, his snoring ceased and a
miniature replica of the audience noise escaped him" (28-29). The television has the
power here to take control of Beau's body, interrupting the soundtrack of his snoring with
its own audio programming. The Baileys neatly encapsulate several of Wylie's favorite
American maladies—materialism; spoiled, shrewish women; and a mass culture devoted
to mindless entertainment rather than meaningful education. By the end of the novel,
Beau abandons his family and disappears, and Netta is horribly mutilated and airlifted
away to Florida. Lenore alone benefits from the atomic attack, which conveniently does
away with both her parents and her unwanted fiancé, Kit Sloan, leaving her free to marry
Charles Conner. But the atomic attack that strips away the "modernized" façade of the
Baileys' house does more than resolve romantic loose ends.

Although the first section of the novel is titled "X-Day Minus Ninety," meaning that it takes place ninety days before the atomic attack, the first paragraphs of the section address a much earlier time in American history. The novel opens with the following line: "When the pioneers came across the plains to the place where the Little Bird River flowed into the Abanakas, they halted" (3). Subsequent lines describe the settlement and renaming of the area, attacks on settlers by Native Americans, the Civil War, and the development of interstate trade and modern industry. The Conners are "natives"—

meaning descendants of the original white pioneers—in contrast to the "immigrants" who "created lichenlike slums, went to school, entered politics, became the gangsters of the twenties and some, the heroes of the Second World War" (4). Charles Conner gloomily reflects that urban growth and development mean that "no good places were left where

boys on rafts could play Lewis and Clark, or Mark Twain steamboating" (85). Such nostalgic sentiments reveal Wylie's belief that American society had declined following modernization and the closing of the frontier. Americans could no longer take pride in their cities and their accomplishments because they were largely divorced from their environment and from a sense of frontier community.

Henry Conner and his compatriots engage in civil defense less because of an immediate and overwhelming conviction that nuclear war is imminent than because of "a certain civic pride" that allows them to "forget they were middle-aged businessmen, middle-class householders" (9), and "a private pride in private occupations...concerning the special skills of the community" (80-81). Henry Conner, an accountant for a hardware company, is valued not for his mathematic skills but for his knowledge of how to use various tools and small machines. These civil defense participants possess and celebrate the sorts of "hands on" masculinity Wylie imagines the aforementioned pioneers possessed, skills related primarily to taming the land (farming, landscaping, surveying) and creating settlements (home construction and repair, knowledge of infrastructure upkeep, and light manufacturing). These skills take on renewed significance and status in post-attack America. When women's skills are addressed at all, they are restricted to throwaway mentions of nursing, cooking, home canning, and housekeeping. Lenore Bailey alone holds a non-traditional, nuclear-specific occupation, serving as a "Geigerman" thanks to her science degree. Even this, however, is only temporary, and Lenore gleefully reveals that her work as a "Geigerman" has not negatively affected her far more important status as a reproductively mature *woman* by rendering her infertile: "Can't you imagine how I feel, to know that I can have them [babies]? And does this

country need babies *now!*" (371). More importantly, Lenore can now have her babies with Charles Conner. His previously inglorious career as a beginning architect is rendered both respectable and highly profitable by the atomic attack, which has created new, wide-open spaces for development.

Despite rejecting the FCDAs optimistic aesthetic as an appropriate model for emotion management, Wylie nonetheless ends *Tomorrow!* on a thoroughly positive note. Lenore is pregnant, the Conners' cat has fathered a litter of kittens, and Henry Conner asserts, "Everywhere catastrophe had struck, something other than rank weeds grew in the ash, the crumpled walls: opportunity. Opportunity for young men like his son who were able to dream and able to put the dreams on paper so other men could turn them into substance" (369). The nuclear nightmare that Wylie describes in horrifying detail for over a hundred pages gives way in the final chapter to a pastoral restoration of the American Dream. *Tomorrow!*, is an essentially conservative and backwards-looking text. Rather than focusing on the future and the positive qualities that could be derived from modern Cold War culture, the novel seeks to turn back the clock, erasing modern America and replacing it with a post-nuclear frontier land that has more in common with the (fantasied) eighteenth century than the twentieth. Wylie might describe his post-nuclear frontier as a land of opportunity, but that opportunity comes at a price, and Wylie's desire to turn back the clock has important racial implications.

As Kit Sloan flees River City following the attack, he becomes caught up in a crowd of refugees, which he describes thusly: "So they were on the move, on the way out of town, Polaks and Hunkies and Latwicks, Yids and Guineas and Micks. Not many nigs. He even thought, racing past a bleeding family, there was a reason for the dearth of

shines in the stampeded mobs: Niggertown was right on Ground Zero" (295). Present-day readers cannot help but cringe at the litany of racial and ethnic slurs contained in these lines. Kit Sloan is a coward and a boor; the novel depicts him as morally bankrupt and lacking in any redeeming characteristics. The racially-charged language used here signals his negative character. Elsewhere in the novel "colored people" are described positively, particularly Alice Groves, a nurse and director of one of River City's few surviving hospitals who helps Nora Conner when she becomes trapped in River City and who even saves the life of the racist Minerva Sloan. It is difficult, however, for a positive portrait of a single named African American character to outweigh the fact that Green Prairie home to the pastoral Conner family—was a slave state during the Civil War, and that "immigrants" were responsible for creating River City's "lichenlike slums." Furthermore, although the novel ends with Ted Conner becoming infatuated with a girl who has moved in next door, Rachel Brown, she has "freckles, blue eyes and the prettiest red hair" (361), suggesting there are Browns but no brown-skinned people joining the Conners for a cookout on the post-nuclear frontier.

The conservative characteristics of *Tomorrow!*'s fantasized post-nuclear frontier draw attention to the equally conservative and racist practices underlying official civil defense policy. As Jacqueline Foertsch notes in her reading of the novel, Wylie's cities capture the demographic changes taking place during the early years of the Cold War (122). Thanks to the post-war economic boom and G.I. Bill benefits, white Cold War Americans largely possessed the financial means necessary to relocate away from urban centers to suburban single-family homes that could—in theory—be supplied and fortified as necessary to withstand a nuclear attack. Low-income and unassimilated ethnic and

racial populations, on the other hand, were often deterred from relocating away from urban centers during the early Cold War period due to racist housing and loan practices. The fact that post-nuclear survival would break down along racial and class lines was something that the FCDA was well aware of: "[P]lans in the early 1950s wrote off the inner cities and high density residential areas, inequitably imperiling African Americans, Jews, and Catholics. Creating sufficient [public] shelter spaces would cost \$5.5 billion, and such appropriations were never going to be forthcoming" (Davis 30). Ironically, official federal civil defense policies—designed with primarily white suburban families in mind—perpetuated the very materialism, racism, and blind conformity that Wiley despised.

White Americans used the nuclear threat to help justify a flight from diversified cities where the Civil Rights movement was beginning to take hold as African Americans gained economic power and "invaded" traditionally white-only residential and business areas. But even for those Americans who fit the demographic and geographic mold of the FCDA's target audience, surviving an atomic attack was becoming increasingly unlikely. In a series of letters from 1951 exchanged with Millard Caldwell, Truman's administrator of the FCDA, Wylie expressed his doubts about the FCDA's approach to the problem of panic, believing its excessive optimism would only help increase the potential for panic. Caldwell responded by comparing the American public in the Cold War with the predicament of a cancer patient: "Sometimes, when a situation is utterly hopeless, it may be better not to say so" (qtd. in Oakes 147). Although Wylie initially supported civil defense as his dedication of *Tomorrow!* to the FCDA indicates, over time he grew increasingly wary not only of Russia's stockpile of H-bombs but also of his own

countrymen's naïve belief in post-nuclear survival. In a 1962 *Redbook* interview with Walter Goodman titled "The Truth About Fallout Shelters," Wylie asserts the American public should think carefully "before it lays a block or spends a dime or invests idiot feelings of security in possessing little, sham shelters that won't save it in an H-war anymore than a paper sack would spare a mouse floating into it, in the middle of a gasoline pool on fire!" (qtd. in Rose 48). Wylie readily recognized that the feelings of security promised by the FCDA's optimistic narrative were a "sham" and eventually came to reject civil defense as passionately as he had once supported it.

Never one to tolerate deception, even self-deception, Wylie published another nuclear apocalypse novel in 1963, which he named—with characteristically bitter irony—*Triumph*. The nuclear firestorms, radioactive debris clouds, and rampaging mobs rage even hotter in this novel, which refutes the pastoral conclusion of his earlier work. The entire Northern Hemisphere is reduced to a radioactive nuclear wasteland, leaving only a small collection of fourteen American survivors. Racial and class conflict further deplete the group until only a handful remain to be "rescued" by an Australian helicopter, which takes them away to face an uncertain future in an overcrowded, unstable Southern Hemisphere.

5. Conclusion

Wylie's unwillingness to pull the wool over the eyes of the American people distinguishes his approach to emotion management, which he viewed as a tool to increase public activity and awareness, from that of the FCDA, which continued to use emotion management to pacify Americans' nuclear fears. It was not until near the end of the Cold

War that the FCDA—now renamed and absorbed into the Federal Emergency

Management Agency (FEMA)—finally admitted to the purely psychological dimensions

of civil defense policy, with a psychiatrist testifying before FEMA in 1982 that,

Civil defense is a psychological defense. Its most important function is to contribute to the system of belief that allows most citizens, including public officials, to deny the realities of nuclear war, and to avoid the anxiety of thinking about the deaths of ourselves and our families, the destruction of our Nation and of our civilization, the possibility of extinction of humanity, and even the possibility of the end of all life. (qtd. in Davis 125)

The goal of civil defense was not material security but the psychological illusion of security, and this "psychological defense" had real political implication in the way it encouraged Cold War Americans to internalize and psychologize the nuclear threat.

Instead of confronting the realities of nuclear war and perhaps assuming a more active anti-war stance that might have derailed some of the belligerent policies the US adopted as the Cold War began spawning its various proxy wars, Americans were encouraged to see themselves as the primary source of danger and destruction. Even Wylie's less dogmatic approach to civil defense nonetheless replicates aspects of this inward turn. The true threat is not the bomb itself or America's pro-nuclear policies but a society of men and women too emotionally weakened to withstand this new way of life. "Moms" are the ultimate Cold War threat, not the military-industrial war machine.

According to Guy Oakes, the Eisenhower Administration recognized very early in the Cold War that true nuclear survival and panic management would be impossible but set out to convince the American public otherwise:

Civil defense was a fraud. But because of the importance of convincing the public that a nuclear war was tolerable, it was an indispensable fraud. If Americans could be persuaded that the risks of World War III were acceptable, they would also accept the dangers of nuclear deterrence...But if the illusions of nuclear crisis mastery were exposed, the emotion management strategies developed to solve the

problem of national will would lose their credibility as well. The public would panic and refuse to live with the uncertainties of deterrence. As a result, the Cold War would be lost, and the American century would come to a premature and ignominious end. This was the cynical ontology, which became the unofficial view of the Eisenhower national security establishment. (160)

No matter how benevolent or integral to national security it might have been, Oakes frames the FCDA's promotion of civil defense and emotion management as a deliberate act of deception. Yet such an interpretation seems unfairly harsh. While there were undoubtedly some Cold War politicians who considered civil defense a futile but necessary way of "managing" the American public into agreement with the establishment's pro-nuclear policies, Oakes' "cynical ontology" underestimates Cold War America's faith in the curative powers of modern social science. In doing so, it overlooks a deeper contradiction at the heart of emotion management itself.

The FCDA's ambitious Project East River study and the report it produced were the products of a marriage between government authority (and funding) and social-scientific expertise that blossomed in the decades following World War II. As Andrew Grossman writes in *Neither Dead Nor Red: Civilian Defense and American Political Development During the Early Cold War* (2001),

The multivolume Project East River research study is a fascinating artifact not only as a source for understanding the genesis of a particular kind of home-front mobilization but also because it precisely represents how national security organizations and the top bureaucrats within them conceptualized the importance of postwar social science. National security and civil defense planners, as well as political elites, conferred immense prestige on social-scientific analyses of society, placing such analyses on the same plane as, for example, a "hard" scientific endeavor to develop a new weapons system. The Project East River analysis of civilian defense and its theoretical connection to fear management and panic prevention reflected the "cutting edge" of the behavioralism that dominated the social sciences in the late 1940s and early 1950s. (59)

Faith in the ability of sociological and psychological sciences to quantify and solve modern military and social problems was at an all-time high during the 1940s and '50s. It even survived into the 1960s for a few years before the growing anti-war and counterculture movements began to defy the establishment's best attempts to manage and discredit them. When Robert McNamara and the "Whiz Kids" failed to effectively "manage" the war in Vietnam, however, Americans lost faith in social-scientific theories like "behavioralism" and "modernization." Yet for a time, America seemed to embrace this new social-scientific approach to solving the problems of modern democracy. But did Cold War emotion managers actually believe what "bibles" like *Project East River* preached?

As stated previously, theories of crowd psychology put forward in the latenineteenth and early-twentieth centuries by men like Gustave Le Bon, Wilfred Trotter,
and William McDougall relied on notions of psycho-biological contagion to explain
crowd behavior. This was precisely the conceptualization of panic that Hadley Cantril
and the Cold War emotion managers were ostensibly moving away from in their
emphasis on predefinition and behavioral modeling. However, several civil defense
articles and bulletins use language that highlights the volatile, un-containable nature of
panic. Philip Wylie writes, "Panic feeds on panic, it is a contagion" ("Panic," 40), and
Val Peterson calls panic "the most contagious of all diseases" ("Weapon," 109). Volume
IX of *Report of the Project East River* speaks of panic being "passed from person to
person" (22). Peterson also compares panic to the destructive power of the bomb itself:
"Like the A-bomb, panic is fissionable. It can produce a chain reaction more deeply
destructive than any explosive known" (100). These metaphors speak to the enduring

appeal of contagion as a means of describing panic even as contagion-based models of panic transmission were supposedly losing their theoretical authority. At least subconsciously, emotion managers were aware that the psychological techniques and social scientific barriers they were developing to manage Americans' emotions might prove inadequate to the task.

Whether or not strategies of emotion management could have successfully halted the spread of panic in the event of a nuclear attack remains, thankfully, an unanswerable question. What does linger, however, is a different question—what effect, if any, did civil defense emotion management narratives have on American society? Tracy C. Davis argues that the impact of civil defense on American culture should be measured in terms of participation rather than material production. Although only a relatively small portion of the population applied for permits to build fallout shelters, "millions in the United States and Canada participated in the 'Operation Alert' (OPAL) and 'Alert' exercise series—as many as a quarter of the U.S. population in 1960—by running to shelters, listening to the heads of government give instructions over the radio, or complying in evacuation exercises" (33). This number increases even more dramatically if we expand participation in civil defense to include the viewing of films like *The House in the Middle* or the reading of popular novels like *Tomorrow!*. While Americans may not have universally accepted the need for civil defense measures or believed in their effectiveness, they did—by and large—desire what civil defense purported to protect. Civil defense helped enshrine a particular idealized conception of American life that took the nuclear family and the white, suburban, middle-class home as its focus. Writing of the civil defense film *This is Your Civil Defense*, Oakes describes the family securely protected within the confines of their homemade shelter:

[T]he shelter was furnished with upholstered chairs and a sofa. The family—smiling, purposeful, serenely confident, and equipped with enough supplies to survive for two weeks—practiced first-aid exercises in their well-appointed refuge. The wife, who wore open-toed shoes with two-inch heels, did not appear to contemplate ultimate disaster. Perhaps it is not necessary to add that the inhabitants of this shelter were white middle-class householders. (121)

Elaine Tyler May's Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era (1990) explores in detail the relationship that emerged in Cold War America between the nation's foreign policy and an idealized suburban domestic ideology. The white, suburban, middle-class home became both the space of family values (like patriotism, honesty, hard work, and loyalty) and of the family's valuables—the latest cars, televisions, appliances, and fashionable clothes. This home and its contents were represented as the "norm" of American identity, a bulwark intended to shield Americans from threats both foreign (Russians) and domestic (homosexuals, feminists, anticonsumer capitalists, and non-white races), and civil defense reinforced the value of this ideal. If, in the parlance of Cold War culture, joining a Communist or "fellow traveling" organization made one un-American, then surely adhering to the emotional and behavioral standards laid out in civil defense narratives was a sign of unimpeachable citizenship. It might even offer a formula for achieving a happier "American way of life." Cold War Americans may have moved to the suburbs to escape the bomb, but that only placed them even more firmly in the sights of the emotion managers.

For this reason, it is impossible to divorce the strategies of emotion management employed by civil defense policymakers from sociological, psychological, and narrative practices at work elsewhere in American culture. In the next chapter I argue that Cold

War America was equally invested in the emotion management of happiness as it was fear. For many Americans, the threat of losing their idealized way of life to an atomic bomb was less realistic and less damning than the possibility of failing to achieve the happiness promised by that ideal. And rather than viewing their unhappiness as the product of systemic social, political, and economic inequalities, emotion management encouraged Americans to "psychologize" and internalize their unhappiness, framing it as a product of individual emotional estrangement from the "American way of life." At its most fundamental level, emotion management is driven by a desire for mastery over the messiness of human life. Numerous cultural authorities were interested in managing and standardizing Americans' emotions in an effort to solve a variety of mid-century social problems, an approach that has its roots in earlier Progressive Era social movements but that also drew strength from a post-war America's domestic anti-Communism and the expanding military-scientific complex. While this chapter explores how civil defense emotion management used popular media to disseminate narratives that helped stifle critique of America's pro-nuclear policies, subsequent chapters address more mundane forms of emotion management that encouraged Americans to "manage" their discontentment with Cold War society in politically and socially conservative ways.

Yet no matter how pervasive or appealing the promises of emotion management might be, the messiness of human life and the problems of American society are not so easily overcome. Novels like Wylie's *Tomorrow!* and Sloan Wilson's *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* (Chapter 2), films like John Frankenheimer's *The Manchurian Candidate* and Don Siegel's *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (Chapter 3), the short-stories of African American authors like Alice Childress and Langston Hughes (Chapter 4) all

expose various cracks in Cold War America's optimistic façade. Time and again these authors and filmmakers assess Cold War society and find it wanting. There are very few truly happy endings in these works, and those that do appear, like Wylie's post-attack frontier fantasy, are forced and unconvincing. What these works of fiction reveal, I will argue, is that emotion management alone cannot solve the problems of American society. Doing so assumes that it is possible to "mold" cultural artifacts (i.e. emotions) into a more democratic configuration without altering the cultural status quo. Happiness and freedom from fear will not come from "managing" our emotions according to the standards of some idealized "American way of life" but rather from a critical framework that teaches us how to realistically use our emotions to challenge and change the racial, sexual, and economic systems that continue to limit American democracy.

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Chapter 2: Unhappy Americans: Emotion Management and the Standardized "American Way of Life"

"[B]ack in 1939, they had been children, and their happiness had been the pale, fragile happiness of children...And after the war, there hadn't really been time for happiness—there had been budgets and bills from obstetricians and frantic planning for the future."

The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit8

"Where did we ever get this petty notion that happiness is any kind of fit goal for a grown man's life?" The Hound of Earth⁹

1. Introduction

In 1959 Vice President Richard Nixon traveled to the American National Exposition in Moscow where he and Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev toured a model six-room, ranch-style American home, stopping by the kitchen where they debated the merits of their different political and economic systems. In what became known as the "Kitchen Debate," Nixon argued for the superiority of American democracy and capitalism on the basis of consumer goods, stating, "Would it not be better to compete in the relative merits of washing machines than in the strength of rockets?" Nixon proposed that America should be evaluated on the basis of the large number of consumer goods—especially houses, household goods, and leisure equipment—it produced and the widespread availability of these goods to both working-class and white-collar Americans. It was not the goods themselves that were worthwhile, however, but what they could accomplish. "What we want to do," Nixon assured Khrushchev and his audience of spectators and reporters, "is make easier the life of our housewives." By making life

⁸ Sloan Wilson, The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit (1955), 175

⁹ Vance Bourjaily, *The Hound of Earth* (1955), 245

¹⁰ For a full transcript of the "Kitchen Debate" see "Khrushchev-Nixon Debate, July 24, 1959":

http://astro.temple.edu/~rimmerma/Khrushchev_Nixon_debate.htm

easier for housewives, these appliances would presumably also make those housewives happier. In a curious but—I will argue—common series of equivalencies, democratic freedom was associated with the freedom to consume, and Cold War America's political worth was assessed in terms of its standard of living, which was lauded for its ability to produce happy citizens. Happiness became not just a private emotion but a public gauge of America's ideological superiority.

The model American kitchen erected in Moscow—like the "clean white house in the middle" built on the nuclear test grounds in Nevada—created a material and ideological link between Cold War foreign policy and the domestic sphere of the average, middle-class American family. Last chapter I analyzed how civil defense emotion managers used images of the suburban family home to manage Americans' nuclear fears and ensure support for nuclear deterrence. In this chapter, I examine how an idealized image of the white, middle-class suburban family came to represent the quintessential "American way of life" to audiences abroad and at home. By equating political freedom with the freedom to consume and by making the lifestyle of the white, middle-class "organization man" the key to both social stability and individual happiness, this narrative created a close and sometimes problematic association between happiness and American identity. In numerous propaganda campaigns, magazine advertisements, and newspaper articles audiences were told that the "American way of life" was something all Cold War Americans could pursue and enjoy regardless of their exact position within the postwar labor force. And while this lifestyle was materially rich (without being decadent), its true value lay in its ability to promote something that was both morally

good and individually desirable—happiness. But why did happiness come to occupy such a prominent place within Cold War discourse?

During the earliest years of the Cold War, when the horrors of Nazi fascism were still fresh in European minds and Joseph Stalin's purges had alienated even long-time supporters of Communism, fear was the emotion that America used to bind its citizens and allies together against the threat posed by the Soviet Union. However, as the Cold War dragged on, and the nuclear arms race accelerated, fear ceased to work solely in America's favor, especially following Stalin's death in 1953. With Stalin dead, Soviet officials began publicly touting their willingness to pursue a state of "peaceful coexistence" alongside their Cold War rival, recasting the United States as a belligerent power unwilling to accept the USSR's peaceful overtures. This presented American policymakers with a serious public relations problem, as Kenneth Osgood writes in *Total* Cold War: Eisenhower's Secret Propaganda Battle at Home and Abroad (2006): "Because Soviet peace gestures muddled free world perceptions of a Soviet threat, as Nelson Rockefeller explained in a letter to Eisenhower, 'the U.S. must find some other motivation than fear with which to inspire the efforts of free men for the long pull'" (69). Rockefeller's remark echoed an earlier observation made by William B. Benton, President Truman's Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs, who noted that "a good many people in other countries think of us as the nation with the atom bomb, the B-29 planes, the huge navy and air forces. This impression is liable to give rise to misunderstanding, fear, and hatred if we don't make our aims clear, and convince people that ours is a peaceful way of life" (qtd. in Belmonte 13). Unable to rely on fear alone, American policymakers turned to happiness as a means of clarifying what America stood for and what it hoped to accomplish by uniting the free world behind the banner of American-style democratic capitalism.

Yet happiness itself is something of a nebulous concept. It is difficult to define, locate, and universalize, although most people would generally agree that it is something we all desire. As Sarah Ahmed writes in *The Promise of Happiness* (2010), we frequently relate to happiness indirectly through objects (meaning values and beliefs as well as material objects) that become "happiness pointers, as if...in directing ourselves towards this or that object, we are aiming somewhere else: toward a happiness that is presumed to follow" (26). In the case of Cold War policymakers, this meant directing attention towards the "objects" that made up the "American way of life," especially material objects like houses, cars, and appliances, luxury experiences like vacations, and other markers of financial status and security, such as a wife who does not need to work, children who are well-supported and educated, and a job with a steady income and reasonable hours. As early as 1947, Dwight Eisenhower argued that the best way to make America intelligible to audiences abroad was "in terms of ice boxes, radios, cars, how much did [Americans] have to eat, what they wear" (qtd. in Osgood 217-218). This object-oriented approach to defining both happiness and American identity was appealing to Cold War policymakers for obvious reasons. As historian Lizbeth Cohen notes in A Consumer's Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America (2003), due to a combination of wartime savings, GI Bill benefits, and a rapid increase in the value and availability of consumer credit, the early decades of the Cold War period marked "an historic reign of prosperity, longer lasting and more universally enjoyed than ever before in American history" (121). From 1946 to 1973 mean and median family

income doubled, 62% of Americans could claim they owned their own homes, billions of dollars were transacted in the sale of household appliances, and three-quarters of American households owned at least one car (121-123). There was no question that Americans had access to a greater variety of consumer goods than their Soviet counterparts, but did this "object-filled" lifestyle and increased standard of living truly lead to greater happiness?

Advertisements for consumer goods and images of happy suburban families filled the pages of popular magazines like Collier's, Good Housekeeping, Life, House Beautiful, and Fortune. Yet even in the midst of such abundance, some social critics began to wonder if postwar America's economic prosperity and the pressure to meet and maintain a particular, consumerist standard of living were taking a toll on the American psyche. In 1955 the first "happy pill"—the minor tranquilizer Milltown—was developed, and by 1957 over 36 million prescriptions for the drug and its generics had been filled in the United States alone. 11 Sociologists like William H. Whyte, David Riesman, and C. Wright Mills began to document the rise of the so-called "organization man," someone who had exchanged his individuality for a steady salary and a secure place within the organization for which he worked, absorbing and conforming to the values of a spiritually-bereft middleclass. And if the goal of the "American way of life" was, as Nixon argued, "to make easier the life of our housewives," then the publication of Betty Friedan's The Feminine Mystique in 1963 further undermined the straightforward equation of consumption with happiness. For every article that celebrated Cold War

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¹¹ See David Herzberg's *Happy Pills in America: From Milltown to Prozac* (2009) for an excellent analysis of the history, use, and popular perception of anti-depressants, anti-anxiety medications, and other "happy pills" over the course of the twentieth-century.

America's growing middleclass and expanding suburbs as proof of its worth, another followed that declared those same elements proof of mindless mass conformity and stifled desire.

Despite what some neo-conservative critics would later claim, the 1950s were not an idyllic period of pure happiness, unsullied by the deprivations, worries, and conflicts of other eras. Instead, happiness and unhappiness existed side-by-side, often arising from the same idealized "American way of life" promoted to Cold War Americans. On one level, I will argue, Cold War Americans were told that happiness would be found "here and now" once they attained the standard of living embodied by the idealized "American way of life." On the other hand, maintaining a certain degree of distance between what Americans had and what they desired was the key to sustaining the cycle of production and consumption driving postwar America's economic growth. Emotion managers responded to this tension between what Cold War propaganda promised would come from the "American way of life" (happiness) and what it actually produced (unhappiness) by encouraging Americans to "internalize" and "psychologize" their unhappiness. Unhappiness was framed as an idiosyncratic product of personal desires that needed to be managed individually rather than a sign of economic and social inequalities inherent in the "American way of life" itself. Ultimately, I will argue, properly managed unhappiness (like a "healthy nuclear fear") was used to strengthen the Cold War status quo in socially and politically conservative ways.

I will begin by analyzing the happiness narrative that was created by and disseminated through official propaganda initiatives like President Eisenhower's 1956 "People's Capitalism Campaign," in RAND Corporation social-scientific studies of

happiness, and in popular magazine articles advising readers on the best way to live a happy, "American" way of life. This materialist way of defining the "American way of life" freed Cold War policymakers from needing to prove the nation's ideological superiority on the basis of such sticky subjects as race relations and social welfare programs or through abstract ideals like democracy. Instead political and personal freedom were equated with Americans' freedom to consume. Critics of this consumerist model of democracy (both Soviet and otherwise) decried it as nothing more than an empty materialism. But proponents argued that the standard of living enjoyed by American consumers was a direct result and reflection of the American political system. Whereas standardization was considered wholly negative in the Soviet context—proof and product of a *lack* of choice and freedom—standardization was considered the key to happiness in American society. The increased postwar standard of living, proponents argued, proved that America had achieved the dream of creating a classless, happy society without needing to rely on violence, state power, or the redistribution of wealth.

To support this argument, they turned to organizations like the RAND Corporation, which attempted to develop social scientific formulas for measuring happiness that proved the "American way of life" was the most equitable, happiness-producing social formation possible. Key to this portion of my analysis is "On Quality of Life and the Pursuit of Happiness," a RAND Corporation report published by Nicholas Rescher in 1969. As I will argue, the goal of such studies was to "standardize" happiness by first, defining a set of "generally recognized requisites for happiness" (10), and secondly, by proving that the American standard of living provided access to these things. They encouraged Americans to internalize and depoliticize their unhappiness by

arguing that American citizens were both directly responsible for creating their own (un)happiness and unqualified to realistically assess its social origins. Standardization was also represented as protecting individual freedom by restricting government authority. It was the responsibility of the government to ensure people had reasonable access to the "requisites for happiness" but they could not (in the strictest sense) legally compel people to live according to these standards. Instead, both Rescher's report and popular magazine articles like Jean Murray Bangs' "How American is Your Way of Living?" (1950) assert that Americans are free to reject standardization in favor of more idiosyncratic ways of living, but they advise that doing so means voluntarily choosing exile from the many benefits of the "American way of life," possibly including happiness itself. In other words, various cultural authorities encouraged Cold War Americans to "manage" their unhappiness by locating it in their failure to conform to the standards set by the "American way of life" rather than seeing these standards as inherently flawed and limited.

In the second half of this chapter, I analyze two novels that struggle to manage the tension created between the happiness promised by Cold War America's idealized "American way of life" and the unhappiness that resulted from pursuing that same standard of living—Sloan Wilson's *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* (1955) and Vance Bourjaily's *The Hound of Earth* (1955). In *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit*, World War II veteran Thomas Rath tries to adjust to life as a civilian "organization man." A product of both World War II and the Great Depression, Tom represents Americans' desire for the happiness and material security promised by the idealized "American way of life." However, this ideal is more easily dreamt of than realized, and the unhappy legacies of

Tom's wartime past (an illegitimate child and the trauma of lives taken and friends lost) and the stresses of his postwar present (the long work-hours and "yes-man" persona needed to achieve the standard of living he desires) repeatedly threaten to ruin his happiness. Despite all this drama, the novel concludes with what one reviewer called "an unsensational happy ending" (Balakian BR17) and another deemed "a bit of rigging of circumstances" (Sullivan B1). Wilson justified this sentimental ending in an introduction to the 1983 edition of the text (subsequently published as an afterward), saying of Tom Rath, "He'd had a hard life and deserved the euphoria so many people felt in 1955" (279). While I agree that postwar Americans in a sense "deserved" happiness, including the material security promised by the postwar ideal, I question the unrealistic way unhappiness is handled in the text. Instead of "managing" unhappiness in a constructive fashion by transforming it into a tool for mapping and moving beyond the limitations of the idealized "American way of life," Wilson's novel, I argue, attempts to reject unhappiness while also refusing to modify the ideal itself.

In Vance Bourjaily's *The Hound of Earth*, former nuclear scientist Allerd Pennington walks away from his comfortable place in the postwar middleclass to live an itinerate existence in which he deliberately avoids "the things that make happiness" (245)—such as stable employment, homeownership, material possessions, and family life. Pennington subsequently ends up working at a Mainways Department store during the Christmas season where he witnesses the many unhappy struggles of his coworkers. By and large, they already possess "the things that make happiness," but they are still deeply unhappy people, often because some aspect of the "American way of life" is itself inimical to their happiness. The postwar emphasis on heteronormative domesticity, for

instance, is something several characters find fundamentally unsatisfying. Rather than suggesting that postwar Americans "deserve" to live the idealized "American way of life," Bourjaily argues that this ideal is actually a trap. People pursue it without considering whether it will truly make them happy. Fortunately, the overall message of the novel is more complex that Pennington's radical rejection of happiness suggests. While Pennington personally rejects happiness because of his guilt over his involvement in the Manhattan Project, he sympathizes with his coworkers and tries to help them escape the "things" that cause their unhappiness. In doing so he (re)discovers and eventually accepts a place in postwar society (albeit an unconventional one). Instead of treating unhappiness like an obstacle to be overcome individually (as Wilson does) or like an idiosyncratic deviation from a happy norm (as Rescher does), Bourjaily's novel "manages" unhappiness, I will argue, by transforming it into a tool for social progress. Although Bourjaily stops short of offering a clear pathway forward, he suggests that true happiness comes from acknowledging the unhappy limitations of the postwar ideal and working collectively to develop new "ways of life" that are more flexible and fulfilling.

My intention in this chapter is not to castigate Cold War Americans for desiring the happiness and material security the idealized "American way of life" promised.

Rather I intend to show that a great deal of political, psychological, and narrative work—what I call emotion management—went into maintaining this ideal even though many Cold War Americans struggled to attain it. Narratives that encouraged Cold War Americans to manage their unhappiness by internalizing it or by asserting that true happiness was just one more promotion away, robbed unhappiness of its radical potential by divorcing it from the systemic inequalities that were preventing Cold War Americans

from realizing the true potential of the postwar ideal. Even the organization man—ideal representative of the American standard of living—was only living half the dream, forced to compartmentalize his life in ways that made it difficult to find and sustain true happiness. Even so, Tom Rath and his fellow organization men were also far closer to living this idealized way of life than many other Americans.

Although white women, African Americans, LGBT+ Americans, and many racial and religious "Others" were part of the emotional, economic, and cultural landscape of American society, it was the white, middle-class organization man that social scientists and "emotion managers" used to establish the standard used to measure happiness. This means that the ideal analyzed in this chapter offers a biased and rather limited reflection of what life was really like in Cold War America. As many scholars have argued, most notably Mary Dudziak in Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy (2000), racism was Cold War America's "Achilles heel." Stories of lynching, segregation, and Jim Crow offered a shameful alternative to the message of happiness and abundance put forward by American policymakers. Many advocates for racial equality believed the Cold War offered an excellent opportunity to force Americans to make substantive legal, economic, and social changes that would give African Americans equal access to the same standard of living and happy "American way of life" enjoyed by middle-class white Americans. Nevertheless, Soviet exploitation of America's "Achilles heel" was not enough to overcome ingrained racial prejudice. When the U.S. pavilion at the 1958 Brussels World's Fair opened the "Unfinished Business" exhibit, which acknowledged the existence of ongoing social problems including segregation, it was

dismantled following protests from Southern legislators. ¹² The unhappiness of racist white Americans took precedence over the unhappiness of African Americans even in the international sphere. For this reason, Chapter Four of this project deals explicitly with the African American experience, highlighting the racist assumption underlying Cold War strategies of emotion management and analyzing works by African American authors and intellectuals that offer very different perspectives on the subjects analyzed in each of the previous chapters. The purpose of this chapter, however, is to show that even for the white, middle-class organization man, the Cold War "American way of life" was far less happy than advertised.

2. Happiness is the "American Way of Life"

Throughout history human beings have pursued happiness in a variety of ways, and the "pursuit of happiness" is, of course, enshrined in the Declaration of Independence, making happiness a key component of American democracy and identity almost from their inception. Happiness in the Cold War period, however, is distinct from happiness in other periods in American history. Whereas earlier eras in American history had emphasized the promissory nature of happiness and the freedom to pursue it, the transition from World War II into the postwar period was premised on the *presence* rather than the *postponement* of happiness. Americans no longer needed to wait for or put off their happiness due to war or economic depression; they could secure it "here and now." More specifically, they could secure it in the form of a single-family suburban home. Suburban housing developments were erected in large numbers during the Cold War

¹² For a detailed account of the exhibit controversy see Michael L. Krenn's "'Unfinished Business': Segregation and U.S. Diplomacy at the 1958 World's Fair," *Diplomatic History* 20 (Fall 1996).

period in response to the needs of returning servicemen and their families. Many, like the famous Levittown developments, emerged outside of established urban centers like New York and Philadelphia, but suburban communities were soon erected in less denselypopulated areas of the country like Colorado, New Mexico, Washington, and California due to the expansion of the aviation, aero-space, and electronics industries into these areas. Many American suburbs grew out of and alongside the hubs of the Cold War's military-industrial complex and their associated transportation and communication networks. 13 Social critics like William H. Whyte, David Riesman, Vance Packard, and C. Wright Mills saw in these houses and suburbs a dangerous trend towards conformity and mass-ification, but for consumers they were proof of financial and social success. While the suburbs had their critics, there were others who saw in this standardization and mass production of housing the basis for something even bigger. In his memoir, Six Crises, Richard Nixon asserted that this was the point he most wanted to make during the "Kitchen Debate": "The United States, the world's largest capitalist country, has from the standpoint of distribution of wealth come closest to the ideal of prosperity for all in a classless society" (259-60). If the necessary components of happiness could be clearly identified and made available to all Americans, then America could claim to have beaten the Soviet Union at its own game by creating a classless "American way of life" that all could aspire to and attain.

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For more information on the relationship between suburban growth and the Cold War military-industrial complex see Andrew Friedman's *Covert Capital: Landscapes of Denial and the Making of U.S. Empire in the Suburbs of Northern Virginia* (2013) and Ann Markusen's "Cold War Workers, Cold War Communities" in *Rethinking the Cold War* (2001) Peter J. Kuznick and James Gilbert Eds.

For this reason, America's political and economic superiority was often "sold" to audiences abroad through an emphasis on the private ownership of property and the wide variety of goods available to consumers of both the working and upper classes.

Propagandists equated the freedom to consume with political and personal freedom and added meaning to materialism by presenting this consumerist "American way of life" as the ultimate source of happiness. This interplay of consumption and citizenship formed what Lizabeth Cohen calls the "Consumer's Republic," an "elaborate, integrated ideal of economic abundance and democratic freedom, both equitably distributed, that...provided the blueprint for American economic, social, and political maturation" (209). The rise of the "consumer's republic," according to Cohen, coincided with and was influenced by America's involvement in World War II and the ensuing Cold War. From the 1940s into the 1970s, attitudes towards consumption became increasingly intertwined with notions of good citizenship:

Out of the wartime conflict between citizen consumers, who reoriented their personal consumption to serve the general good, and purchaser consumers, who pursued private gain regardless of it, emerged a new postwar ideal of the purchaser as citizen who simultaneously fulfilled personal desire and civic obligation by consuming. (196)

Whereas World War II Americans were encouraged by rationing and fears of inflation to restrict and delay their purchases as a sign of their patriotism, Cold War Americans were encouraged to demonstrate their good citizenship through mass consumption. Tying freedom and happiness together with consumption and making them part of America's ideological conflict with the Soviet Union allowed Cold War Americans to transform the simple act of consumption into a political statement.

We can see this mix of consumption, democracy, and American identity neatly reflected in a 1957 *Washington Post* newspaper article from Malvina Lindsay titled "Midcentury Status of 'American Way." Lindsay begins by saying that although people frequently refer to an "American way" of life, few can adequately explain what the concept means. She then proceeds to quote from the findings of a joint Yale University and Ad Council forum that defined the "American way of life" as:

"A system of private capitalism that has come closest to the socialist goal of providing abundance for all in a classless society." It provides the people "a chance to vote with their dollars in the market place, thus deciding for themselves what is to be produced instead of taking what the Government decides to provide for them." (A10).

The appeal of such a definition for American policymakers was clear. First, America's standard of living was undeniably greater than that of the Soviet Union, especially when measured in terms of the variety of consumer goods available. Secondly, pointing to mass consumption as a sign of America's classlessness made it easy to distribute "proof" of this equality in the form of demonstration models, catalogs, and images of appliances, cars, and televisions in use. Among the most popular items in the USIS libraries abroad were mail-order catalogs from stores like Sears and Roebuck. More importantly, encouraging Americans to "vote with their dollar in the marketplace" meant that American consumers could view themselves as Cold Warriors. A new car was not a self-indulgent purchase but a crucial contribution to the ongoing conflict. Whether it was through advertising at home or through propaganda abroad, the message of this consumerist "American way of life" was the same—to be American was to consume; to consume was to be American. Freedom based on mass consumption was America's gift

to its own people and to the world, and perhaps nowhere is this clearer than in the "People's Capitalism Campaign."

The "People's Capitalism Campaign" was a U.S. Information Agency (USIA) exhibit developed by Ad Council President, Theodore S. Repplier in 1956. The purpose of the exhibit was to "combat communist propaganda about the American economic system" ("Capitalism Show" 13), specifically the perception that American capitalism allowed only a small portion of America's population to enjoy a lavish, commodity-filled lifestyle while the majority of its people struggled to make ends meet. Repplier hoped to counteract such "Communist falsehoods" by showing that modern American capitalism—unlike its decadent European and Gilded Age predecessors—truly belonged to and benefited all American people equally. As the exhibit's motto declared: "It is in truth people's capitalism—capitalism 'of the people, by the people, and for the people.' It is man's newest way of life. It is bright with promise as a way of the future" ("Ike's Suggestions" 25). What is most interesting about the exhibit, however, is how it was developed and edited prior to its tour abroad. The 7,000-square-foot exhibit was initially displayed in Washington, D.C.'s, Union Station, where it was viewed by more than 25,000 visitors including journalists, foreign nationals, government officials, President Eisenhower, and thousands of "average Americans," all of whom were encouraged to leave their feedback on the exhibit in a suggestion box.

The display initially consisted of side-by-side replicas of two different American homes: a two-room Colonial cottage from 1776 and a modern, pre-fab steel house full of the latest labor-saving household appliances. The models were intended to depict the evolution of the "American way of live" and the increased standard of living brought

about by capitalism's 180-year reign in America. But initial feedback was mixed regarding how "representative" these models actually were. Frank E. Klapthor, curator of the Daughters of the American Revolution Museum, called the 1776 house with its Victorian furnishings and modern cellar door "just a conglomeration of erroneous ideas" (White 36), and Smithsonian curators were similarly unimpressed. In the final version of the exhibit, the 1776 house was replaced with a replica of Abraham Lincoln's log cabin, which was by implication—if not in actual fact—more accurate. Along with the two model homes, the Union Station exhibit also showcased the "average American" in the form of Pennsylvania steelworker Jim Barnes and his family, who attended the debut. Although the model 1956 house was not a recreation of the Barnes' family home, photographs depicting their daily life and a breakdown of the family's budget were included as part of the exhibit.

The budget especially drew keen interest from American housewives, and as reporter Malvina Lindsay noted, "to some visitors Barnes' income seems above average—and statistically this is true" ("Average American" 14). Others found it unlikely that the family actually managed to save ten percent of their income annually. Some Americans found the 1956 model home—meant to be representative of the way they were living "now"—unconvincing. It possessed an unreal, two-dimensional quality: "The spanking new family house of three bedrooms, costing around \$14,000 may seem just too perfectly equipped and kept, too much like a magazine picture." In response to these complaints, the USIA replaced the brand new appliances and furnishings with used counterparts to give the exhibit a "less 'slick' and 'more lived-in'" feel ("USIA Changes Exhibits" 22). Others felt that the exhibit did little to generate optimism and appreciation

for capitalism and the American way of life. Stephen L. Freeland, a Washington resident, did not find in the exhibit the same "bright promise" that the USIA hoped to convey: "[T]he exhibit does not promise any change in the future...[it] shows us going nowhere" (E4). Another resident, Julian Stein, Sr., wrote a letter to the editor of *The Washington Post and Times Herald* complaining that "this sort of propaganda does us no good; the only emotion it generates is one of envy" (28). But even these negative elements—envy and disagreement—could be managed and made into fuel for positive propaganda.

Although criticism of the exhibit by American visitors revealed that the way Americans actually lived in 1956 did not perfectly correspond to the life of abundance and steady consumption promoted by the USIA and the Ad Council, that criticism itself could be seen as a sign of the health and success of American democracy. Just as Americans were free to choose from a greater variety of goods than those produced under standardized forms of Soviet manufacturing, so too were they free to criticize, disagree with, and deviate from the "American way of life" projected by this exhibit. By publicly soliciting feedback from its citizens, publishing visitor remarks, and subsequently revising the displays, the USIA and the Ad Council also staged a small-scale demonstration of the democratic process at work. Within the limits of this exhibit at least, capitalism truly did belong to the people, who were free to criticize and change it. In this way, officials were able to contain and make use of visitors' dissatisfaction with the exhibit without needing to address what such critiques revealed about Americans' attitudes towards capitalism at large and whether or not it actually belonged to and benefitted "the people" as a whole. However, just because Americans would not face official rebuke (in most cases) for deviating from and criticizing the "American way of

life" modeled in this exhibit did not mean that they could escape scrutiny entirely. The court of public opinion exerted considerable influence over the way Americans viewed themselves and their relationship to the "American way of life," using social and emotional pressures to limit Cold War Americans' freedom of expression without requiring official intervention.

A particularly interesting example of this practice comes from a 1950 *House Beautiful* magazine article by Jean Murray Bangs titled "How American is Your Way of Living?" This home-and-garden magazine article asks readers to evaluate the Americanness of their home in terms of its stylistic features but also by constructing an emotional profile that both house and homeowner are expected to emulate. In terms of architecture, an American home should look American instead of "masquerading as an Andalusian stable, a Cotswold cottage, or a Spanish fort" (80). It should have all the modern appliances and amenities that "permit you to live the efficient, easy, drudgery-free life that our times and our American inventive genius have made possible" (80). Even more important than these stylistic elements, the article asserts, is what the house reveals about the homeowner's character:

Does your house express the serenity and self-assurance of a person living in a democratic society where Everybody is Somebody? Does it show that you are sure of yourself as a person of character and importance, or does it show you are worried because you're not somebody else? Does it form a suitable background for you, your manners, your ambitions, and values? Or does it make you looks slightly ridiculous, as if you didn't quite belong, as though you had strayed onto a stage set? (80)

Alongside advertisements for china and advice for selecting the best curtains to match your home, the article creates an image of the American homeowner as someone who is serene, self-assured, and happy, suggesting that to feel otherwise is to be out of touch

with the emotional tenor of Cold War America. The article at once preys on its readers' domestic and status insecurities—qualities that the growing pool of first-time home owners would have undoubtedly possessed—and derides those worries and insecurities as un-American.

The article closely links homeownership and democracy, and like much Cold War propaganda, it emphasizes the freedom of choice that American citizen-consumers enjoy: "In a democratic society such as ours, our houses do more than mold our way of living they reflect our ideals about the good life, because we own our houses, we can build them as we wish. We need not have their form determined by what someone else decides for us—unless we are renters. (That is why home ownership has always been the American Ideal)" (81). Although the Soviet Union is never directly named in the article, it is clear that Americans' freedom to design, construct, and own their own homes is meant to stand in contrast to the mass-produced, quasi-institutional, State-owned housing complexes in the Soviet Union. Precisely because Americans live in a democratic society where they are free to construct homes that reflect their beliefs and values, they are under even more pressure to ensure their homes send the right message. Given this rather propagandistic view of American homeownership, it is no wonder that some Americans might feel anxious about the image of American life projected by their home. Fortunately, readers are assured that by following the advice and ideals outlined in magazines like *House* Beautiful, they too can "achieve an American way of life."

While the article is primarily concerned with helping readers who may have been "misled" as to what makes a proper American home and American way of life, it also

acknowledges that Americans are free to decline its advice and deviate from the lifestyle it models:

Perhaps you haven't been misled at all, but are really protesting against our times. Perhaps the house of your choice is saying that you don't really like being an American at all, that you would rather have been something else—perhaps the mistress of a French king, or a British nobleman. Now of course there is no law against your feeling that way if you wish, for this is America. But if you allow your house to proclaim the fact, don't be surprised if the news is met with raised eyebrows and amusement and you are pitied as an 'escapist' who can't cope with life today. And don't be surprised if your family shows a distaste for such a home. (81, 161)

To deviate from the lifestyle modeled in this magazine is to divorce oneself from American-ness altogether. It is framed as a fundamentally immature attitude, like a child escaping into a fantasy world where they can be a princess or a knight. Difference and deviation are not legally prohibited, but their emotional consequences (mockery, pity, and even the disdain of one's own family) are themselves prohibitive. Even though readers are told that America is a land of freedom and Americans are free to choose whatever style of housing they desire, the article itself effectively proves that there was only one acceptable "American way of life"—the one designed, marketed, and arbitrated by the authors, designers, and manufacturers featured in magazines like *House Beautiful*.

I have analyzed this article at some length for several reasons. First, it shows that even something as simple as an article in a home-and-garden magazine could be endowed with ideological significance, and it echoes many of the same messages present in official Cold War propaganda. Secondly, it exposes America's paradoxical attitude towards standardization. Standardization in the Soviet context is presented as something negative, the product of a lack of choices and resources and proof of unwarranted government interference in the lives of its citizens. Standardization in the American context, however,

is a positive. It meant using social science expertise to evaluate what Americans needed to live a recognizably "American way of life," and then making access to these things possible, which would, policymakers asserted, ultimately alleviate the economic impetus for political conflict. Finally, this article highlights the role emotion management played as a technology of political and social control. Rather than relying on laws to ensure compliance with this standardized way of life (of course there is no law against), emotional pressure is exerted in the form self-scrutiny and public opinion. Americans are free to deviate from the "American way of life," but only if they are willing to live with the unhappy consequences that would befall them and their families.

But what, precisely, was meant by the phrase "American standard of living"? The "American standard of living" emerged as an important concept in organized labor ideology beginning in the late 1800s, but supplying a clear definition for it is a task that has long baffled economists, sociologists, and historians. Economist Edward Devine wrote of the standard of living in 1924, "Elusive and kaleidoscopic though it may be, nevertheless the conception represented by the phrase is a definite and powerful reality," and in 1934 Carl Brinkman wrote in *The Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* that "the concept of the standard of living has yet to be worked into definitive form" (qtd. in Moskowitz 3). Writing for *The North American Review* in 1934, Elmer Leslie McDowell finds it easier to define the term by distinguishing it from the cost of living. The cost of living, he argues, is designed to quantify the bare minimum of goods and services needed to maintain a worker and his family at "the 'minimum comfort' level, and it is to escape from that un-American level that the new standard has been set up" (73). As McDowell implies, national identity played an important role in shaping and defining the American

standard of living as something that exceeded any pre-existing living standards. Labor activists like B.W. Williams used the phrase "American standard of living" during organized labor debates in the 1880s to distinguish (white male) American workers from immigrant laborers, arguing that "the American laborer should not be expected to live like the Irish tenant farmer or the Russian serf. His earnings ought to be sufficient to enable him to live as a respectable American citizen" (qtd. in Glickman 82). While they might not be able to clearly define the exact elements that made up the American standard of living, these early economists and activists were certain that it represented something exceptional, something beyond the basic elements needed to keep body and soul together, something that was uniquely American.

Perhaps one of the most useful definitions of the term is supplied by Frank Hatch Streightoff in *The Standard of Living Among the Industrial People of America* (1911) where he writes:

Satisfactorily to define the standard of living is extremely difficult. Professor Charles H. Bullock, for instance, writes, "Each class of people in any society is accustomed to enjoy a greater or less amount of the comforts or luxuries of life. The amount of comforts or luxuries customarily enjoyed by any class of men forms the 'standard of living' of that class." That is to say, the standard of living, as the expression is usually understood, consist simply of what men actually do enjoy. On the other hand, there always are felt but unstated wants that prompt men to struggle for higher wages; these reasonable unfulfilled desires are the motive power of progress...An inborn spirit of emulation prompts each to envy the pleasures of his more fortunate neighbor; thus there is an "ideal" standard of living which is always in advance of achieved satisfaction. (2)

Here Streightoff argues that different standards of living emerge from different classes of people but also, like McDowell, distinguishes between the standard of living as a measure of what people actually possess and the "ideal" standard of living that exists in advance of what people currently have and primarily serves as a motivator for class

progress. Writing several decades later, Lawrence B. Glickman, author of *A Living Wage:*American Workers and the Making of Consumer Society (1997), also emphasizes the immaterial aspects of the American standard of living: "Many workers...defined the standard of living qualitatively rather than quantitatively. The American standard, in their view, did not refer to a monetary figure but rather to a type of character that would make American workers insist upon a certain level of consumer comfort; it was a mindset rather than a particular wage level" (82). It is this aspirational quality, I believe, that makes the "American standard of living" truly American. It ties national character and economic development to the desire of individuals to exceed the limits of their current standard of living. The pursuit of an ever-increasing "ideal" standard of living fuels class mobility and national progress.

While the American standard of living grew out of the social and labor conflicts of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era, it gained even greater currency during the Cold War period thanks to the postwar expansion of the American middleclass where standardization could now extend beyond the widespread availability of mass-produced goods to include many other aspects of American life. Whereas economists in earlier periods had spoken of the possibility of there being a plurality of standards of living depending on one's class position, by the middle of the twentieth-century, a largely-coherent, singular "American standard of living" had emerged as a national ideal for most Americans. As Marina Moskowitz writes in *The Standard of Living: The Measure of the Middle Class in Modern America* (2004):

Just as a standard weight or measure is the example against which all others are evaluated, so too is the standard of living an ideal rather than real measure. Americans might live on a variety of planes of living, but they could aspire to a national standard. This aspiration was not the pinnacle of material life—

Americans still shied away from the luxurious ways of living believed to abound in European capitals—but a high degree of comfort that became associated with the American middle class...That the standard of living was often considered to be set, and most often met, by the middle class was in fact also why it was considered representative of the nation. (11)

One important element distinguished the post-World War II standard of living from those ideals that had preceded it. It was (ostensibly) something that large numbers of Cold War Americans were actually living, not a standard "which is always in advance of achieved satisfaction" as Streightoff had earlier written, but something they had now "met" and found satisfying in the present moment. Indeed, mass attainment of this standardized way of living is a well-documented phenomenon in the work of mid-century social critics like David Riesman (*The Lonely Crowd* 1950), Vance Packard (*The Status Seekers* 1959), and William H. Whyte (*The Organization Man* 1956), to name just a few. Whereas these critics often viewed the standardization of American society warily as something to be avoided or resisted, others saw it as the key to achieving classlessness and increasing happiness in American society.

One organization to take an interest in questions of standardization, happiness, and American society was the RAND Corporation. Alongside dozens of reports on economics, engineering, and war gaming, the RAND Corporation was also interested in defining, quantifying, and analyzing the strategic, economic, and social potential of happiness. Reports like "Quality of Life" (1968), "What is the 'Social Responsibility' Problem?" (1965), "Social Interaction" (1954), and "The Possibility of a Universal Social Welfare Function" (1948), all turn an analytic eye on the concept of happiness. Of particular interest is Nicholas Rescher's "On Quality of Life and the Pursuit of Happiness" (1969). Rescher never uses the phrase "American standard of living" in his

report—preferring rather more nebulous terms such as "quality of life," "climate of life," and "the public welfare." However, he is interested in determining how a standardized set of criteria might be established and used to evaluate social policies and programs. It is the responsibility of a democratic society, he argues, to develop social programs that increase the overall "quality of life" available to its citizens. Within this broad concept of "quality of life," Rescher includes such factors as employment and education, income and leisure time, political freedom, and status recognition and self-esteem. Since he also sees these qualities as closely linked to America's democratic tradition (as I will show momentarily) I believe it is fair to assert that when Rescher speaks of using the "quality of life" as a "yardstick for the evaluation of social policies and programs" (9-10), he is speaking of the "American standard of living" and the ability of programs to contribute to it.

What is even more interesting about Rescher's report is that he proposes that the quality of life itself be assessed in terms of its ability to promote happiness. That is, social programs and policies should be evaluated on the basis of their ability to increase access to those "qualities" of life that are considered necessary for the attainment of happiness. More importantly, Rescher not only proposes that it is possible to create a standardized conception of happiness but that doing so is what creates a basis for evaluating the quality of life in the first place. Rescher classifies the "factors that augment the quality of life into two groups: the excellence-conducive and the happiness-conducive" (2-3). He quickly dispenses with the category of "excellence-conducive" factors, likening them to Kantian "works of duty," something that one feels obligated to do for the betterment of self or society even though it does not make one any happier. Instead, he focuses the bulk

of his report on determining which "happiness-conducive" factors can be used to form a "standard" for evaluating the quality of life.

Happiness itself, Rescher goes on to argue, consists of three separate components: consensus happiness requisites, idiosyncratic happiness factors, and hedonic mood. Hedonic mood refers to the feeling of happiness itself as an ephemeral state. Idiosyncratic happiness factors refer to those very particular elements that each individual considers necessary for their happiness. Consensus happiness requisites, on the other hand, include such factors as.

Biologico-medical well-being, possession of assets and access to services, the quality of the environment (physical, social, and even political), status-recognition-esteem, satisfaction of work-life, freedom to pursue one's interests, availability of leisure...what by general agreement people of a given group by and large need to achieve happiness in the environment (physical and social) in which they operate. (5)

Since these "consensus happiness requisites" emerge from a group's shared sense of what is necessary for happiness instead of being restricted to individual psychology, they are what form the basis for a standardized conception of happiness. Rescher further distinguishes between the "socially actionable" consensus requisites that society is responsible for—such as health, property, economic well-being, personal freedom, individual opportunity, political freedom, good government, leisure, and privacy—and those for which the individual is responsible—like love, friendship, self-esteem, and family life.

One could certainly take issue with Rescher's taxonomy. It is difficult to imagine, for instance, how an individual's self-esteem could be considered separately from opportunities for employment and social advancement. Of more interest, however, is the explanation offered for why such a taxonomy is necessary:

Health, prosperity, freedom in social <u>modus operandi</u>, and availability of leisure, are examples of factors with respect to whose attainment it can plausibly be argued that state action should facilitate individual effort. But status, love and friendship, self-esteem, and family life—in sum, pretty much the whole gamut of interpersonal social interrelationships—are centrally important happiness-conditioning areas into which the democratic tradition is justifiably reluctant to see the long grey arm of the state intrude itself. (19)

And elsewhere Rescher writes:

In point of happiness, it is the individual himself who, for better or worse, must bear the entire responsibility for his own fate. A world in which the responsibility for individual happiness lay with the state directly—and not merely indirectly, within the confines of the creation of incentives, the opening up of opportunities, the facilitation of individual efforts, and the like—such a condition of things would be not a Utopia but a horror. (16-17)

A democratic society is responsible for ensuring that opportunities for advancement in the quality of life are available to all of its citizens and not just those in the most privileged class. However, it can only do so indirectly by facilitating access to those "socially actionable" consensus happiness requisites it has the authority to influence. Rescher's happiness standard is meant to ensure that the state assumes responsibility for those elements of happiness within its purview while also setting a limit on how far state influence over happiness is meant to extend.

As in the case of the *House Beautiful* article analyzed earlier, the Soviet Union is never directly named, but it is clear that Rescher's references to the "long grey arm of the state" and the transformation of a supposedly utopian world into a horror are meant to remind readers of how Soviet officials turned the "workers' paradise" into a nightmare of state control and totalitarian intervention. We also see another example of Cold War America's rather paradoxical attitude towards standardization. In the Soviet context, a standardized "happy" lifestyle is imposed on the people regardless of their individual preferences when, for example, Soviet women are restricted to a limited style of dress

and are forced to labor under the "double burden" of raising a family and working outside the home. The American standard of living, in contrast, increases happiness by facilitating people's access to happiness requisites without forcing them into unwanted roles. American women can choose from a variety of different clothing styles just as they are free to "choose" to forego careers in favor of motherhood. ¹⁴ Soviet standardization means an overreaching of state power into the life of the individual, and such forced standardization can only result in unhappiness. American standardization, it is claimed, restricts state power while increasing individual access to the elements that make happiness possible.

Rescher's observation that the state should not be held directly responsible for the actual happiness of every individual is certainly fair, but his formula unfairly insulates the state from criticism while also disempowering the individual. The state is responsible for facilitating the pursuit of happiness, but it is "the individual himself who, for better or worse, must bear the entire responsibility for his own fate." Responsibility for (un)happiness is unevenly distributed between the individual and the state. If individuals in a society are happy, then the state has done its duty by adequately facilitating access to happiness; if they are unhappy, then it is because they have failed to take advantage of these opportunities or they are being held back by their idiosyncratic happiness requisites. More importantly, although happiness is made the "yardstick" by which quality of life is to be assessed at the macro level of social programs and policies, individuals are unable to use their own unhappiness as a basis for social critique. According to Rescher, even

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¹⁴ For specific examples of the representation of American and Soviet women in US propaganda, see Chapter 5 of Laura A. Belmonte's *Selling the American Way: US Propaganda and the Cold War* (2008) and Chapter 1 of Elaine Tyler May's *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (1988).

the most cool-headed of individuals cannot take stock of their emotional lives in a "realistic and actionable manner" (12), which makes "the idiosyncratic happiness of its members...a poor measure of the attainments of a society in the area of social welfare" (6). This blanket insistence that state organizations and entities are capable of accurately assessing (un)happiness whereas individuals are not, seems to fly in the face of Rescher's professed commitment to democracy and individual freedom. Making individuals "directly responsible" for their own <u>happiness</u> while not allowing them to use their <u>um</u>happiness as grounds for social critique suggests a "quality of life" that is designed to maintain the status quo without actually increasing people's happiness.

At the end of his report, Rescher admits that a situation could arise in which a society has established a standard for happiness, has granted its people access to that standard, and yet those people are still unhappy:

The prospect remains that a society in which many or most achieve what people-in-general regard as the basic requisites of happiness may yet fail to be by and large happy. From the present standpoint, it is entirely possible (if unlikely) that one could improve the quality of life of people without in fact making them any happier. (The climate and quality of life are amenable to 'social engineering' tactics which cannot easily lay hands to the idiosyncratic issue of personal happiness.) (27-28)

Rescher's parenthetical addition is particularly suggestive since it essentially claims that once a certain level of standardization has been achieved, unhappiness could only occur as a result of individuals' idiosyncratic happiness needs. Yet, if a society exists "in which many or most" of its members are unhappy, is unhappiness truly idiosyncratic at that point? Or would it be more accurate to say that unhappiness has occurred *as a result of standardization*—either because the standard involved does not truly represent the needs

of the community or perhaps because happiness itself is somehow antithetical to standardization?

Rescher's report ends without addressing any of these provocative questions, but it unwittingly exposes two fundamental problems with Cold War emotion managers' attempts to standardize happiness via the postwar "American way of life" and its increased standard of living. First, while studies such as Rescher's may have been able to define a range of "basic requisites of happiness" and may have been able to prove that the American standard of living provided substantial access to these requisites, they still provide no means of directly measuring whether possessing these things actually makes people happy. Even if we accept Rescher's taxonomy as an accurate measure of things people need to be happy, it does not necessarily follow that these things alone are sufficient to make people happy (as Rescher himself admits). Secondly, and even more problematic, is Rescher's failure to factor unhappiness into his equation. He assumes that pursuing an improved quality of life is a process that only generates happiness. Unhappiness has to come from outside the standard formula in the form of individual idiosyncratic variables no social scientists can account for. Yet would it not be more accurate to say that pursuing (and maintaining) a particular standard of living is a process that produces both positive (happy) and negative (unhappy) products and that happiness results when the positives exceed the negatives? And would an excessive degree of unhappiness not suggest that some "basic requisite of happiness" has been omitted from the equation?

The fundamental problem with such attempts to standardize happiness is that they treat unhappiness as though it could only ever be an *obstacle* to happiness, a variable that

must be omitted or safely "managed" if true happiness is to be achieved. As I will argue throughout the rest of this chapter, unhappiness itself may be a "basic requisite of happiness," something that—to return to Sara Ahmed's terms for a moment—serves as a "happiness pointer," something that is not happiness itself but has the potential to lead us there. If "a society in which many or most achieve what people-in-general regard as the basic requisites of happiness...[fails]...to be by and large happy," perhaps the solution to this dilemma can be found by paying closer attention to what unhappiness reveals about the limits of standardization. Doing so, I will argue, means acknowledging the positive social function of <u>un</u>happiness and using it to identify the limitations standardization imposed on American life.

Because the popularity of novels like Sloan Wilson's bestseller, *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* (1955), and Vance Bourjaily's *The Hound of Earth* (1955) suggests that many Cold War Americans found themselves living a postwar "American way of life" that was far less happy than they had anticipated. As one reviewer wrote of Wilson's protagonist, his story "could be your next-door neighbor[s]...or your own...his doubts and fears, small triumphs and larger blunders, are all so recognizable that the reader has the feeling of uncanny familiarity" (Merlin E6). Even as they busily acquired all the "things that make happiness," as Bourjaily's Allerd Pennington phrases it, Americans found that unhappiness was one Cold War commodity they could not quite manage to shake.

Published only a year apart, both novels are essentially about unhappy Americans. Wilson focuses his novel around the character of Tom Rath, a World War II veteran and quintessential middle-class "organization man." Despite their membership in postwar

America's growing middleclass, Tom Rath and his family find happiness is in short supply, as wife Betsy complains: "There seems to be something hanging over us, something that makes it hard to be happy" (129). While Wilson describes life in postwar American from the perspective of a single organization man, Bourjaily takes a very different approach. *The Hound of Earth* is set almost entirely within the confines of a Mainways Department store, where Allerd Pennington, a former nuclear scientist who willfully eschews "the things that make happiness," temporarily works as a stock clerk. Instead of focusing on the motivations behind Pennington's voluntary unhappiness, the novel asks us to consider why so many of Pennington's coworkers are such deeply unhappy people, even though most of them (like Tom Rath) are living the postwar "American way of life."

What truly distinguishes these two novels, I will argue, is how each manages the unhappiness created by Cold War Americans' pursuit of the idealized "American way of life." Although Sloan Wilson uses his novel to document many of the challenges returning servicemen faced as they traded in their military uniforms for gray flannel suits, his critique is severely limited by his unwillingness to accept that unhappiness might be an unavoidable consequence of pursuing an idealized way of life built around a materialist standard of living. The Raths, as reviewer Orville Prescott observed, have "champagne tastes and beer pocketbooks" (19). Wilson attempts to resolve this conflict between expectations and reality by rejecting unhappiness rather than acknowledging its social function, giving Tom Rath an idiosyncratic "happy ending" that effectively ignores the many sources of postwar unhappiness he spends most of the novel documenting. Bourjaily's response to postwar Americans' unhappiness is almost exactly the opposite of

Wilson's. Instead of rejecting unhappiness, he rejects happiness itself, especially its equation with the standardized lifestyle and material security of the postwar middleclass. Pursuing such a standardized form of happiness locks Americans into unsatisfying and self-destructive patterns of behavior instead of allowing them to discover what makes them happy on their own terms. Yet this initial philosophy of rejection gives way in the end to an ethic of cooperative problem solving. Bourjaily manages unhappiness by embracing it, arguing that happiness can only be found when Cold War Americans work collectively to solve the problems created by the postwar ideal. Whether one chooses to reject unhappiness or embrace it, both novels make it clear that Cold War Americans' unhappiness was beginning to outweigh their faith in the postwar ideal.

3. A Novelist Peers into the Heart of the Organization Man

The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit describes Tom Rath's return to civilian life following World War II and his quest to secure an idealized middle-class lifestyle for himself and his family. At the beginning of the novel, Tom enjoys what would have been for many in Cold War America an enviable position. He is employed in a white-collar occupation with a fixed yearly salary. His job is secure and promises modest opportunities for promotion and pay increase over the long term. His wife, Betsy, stays at home to care for their three children. They own their own home, a car, a television, a washing machine, and Tom frequently brings home gifts for his children. The Raths, in other words, are already established members of the Cold War middleclass. They are also deeply unhappy with their current circumstances. This unhappiness motivates Tom to quit his job and accept a new position in public relations at the United Broadcasting

Company, which promises him an immediate raise in pay, even though the responsibilities and longevity of the position are uncertain. Soon after Tom begins his new job, he is confronted with a number of unexpected challenges. His mother dies, and Tom must figure out how to dispose of her estate, including a large parcel of undeveloped land. He discovers that he fathered an illegitimate child with an Italian woman he had an affair with during the war. And he quickly realizes that although his new position pays well, he dislikes the long hours and "yes-man" culture that go along with being an organization man.

Each of these challenges—financial and occupational instability, infidelity, a lawsuit, wartime flashbacks—seems poised to ruin Tom's happiness forever. Despite this focus on conflict and resolution, however, Tom undergoes relatively little character development, and each subsequent crisis—from the perspective of the reader—becomes less convincing. Problems arise but are easily overcome, often requiring little or no effort on Tom's part. Edwards, the servant suing Tom's mother's estate, quickly abandons his lawsuit after a meeting with Judge Bernstein and Tom's lawyer. When Tom declines a promotion on the grounds it will require him to spend too much time working, his boss calmly accepts this rejection and tells Tom it should be easy to find him another position that will still pay him more while requiring fewer hours. The final, most dramatic conflict of the text, which takes place between Tom and Betsy over Tom's infidelity, is equally anti-climactic. Betsy speeds away in the dark on a dangerously twisting road (echoing a series of events in the past that led to the death of Tom's father), only to call Tom somewhat sheepishly a few hours later to report that the car broke down as she was on her way back home.

Perhaps it is not surprising that this novel, otherwise so preoccupied with unhappiness, ends on a rather mawkish note: "[Judge] Bernstein watched as Tom hurried toward [Betsy]. He saw them bow gravely toward each other as she transferred the bundles to Tom's arms. Then Tom straightened up and apparently said something to her, for suddenly she smiled radiantly. Bernstein smiled too" (276). All of Tom's cares and worries have been swept away, and he and Betsy are embarking on a second honeymoon. Although the novel concludes with what is, by all conventional accounts, a happy ending, it is not a satisfying ending. Tom has taken little direct action over the course of the text, and those he does take (leaving his job, declining his promotion, admitting to his affair) yield positive results far too easily. When questioned about some of the contrived aspects of this ending, Wilson replied, "That is how things happen...It's not being sentimental...The world's treated me awfully well and I guess it's crept into my work. But it is generally true of the Nineteen Fifties. These are, for the most part, pretty good times. Yet too many novelists are still writing as if we were back in the depression years" (Balakian BR17). While the postwar 1950s were a far better decade for many Americans than the lean years of the Great Depression, entering a new decade did not guarantee freedom from the problems of the past, and "pretty good times" were not always enough to satisfy Americans who had been promised the postwar "American way of life" would allow them to satisfy their "champagne tastes." After spending much of the novel showing how precarious Tom's postwar way of life really is, Wilson's final attempts to divide the world into the unhappiness of the past and the total happiness of the present is less than convincing.

Indeed, Tom Rath spends most of the novel feeling like a man whose emotional life is divided against itself, with the unhappiness of his past and his exacting workplace constantly threating the happy life he wants to lead with his family at home. At one point Tom reflects on the divisions that structure his life:

There were really four completely unrelated worlds in which he lived...There was the crazy, ghost-ridden world of his grandmother and his dead parents. There was the isolated, best-not-remembered world in which he had been a paratrooper. There was the matter-of-fact, opaque-glass-brick-partitioned world of places like the United Broadcasting Company and Schanenhauser Foundation. And there was the entirely separate world populated by Betsy and Janey and Barbara and Pete, the only one of the four worlds worth a damn. There must be some way in which the four worlds were related, he thought, but it was easier to think of them as entirely divorced from one another. (22)

Tom's reflections reveal a desire to divide his life along two lines—spatial and temporal. The first two worlds belong to the past, which Tom views negatively as something that haunts or disrupts the present. This is most apparent when Tom's affair with Maria resurfaces and threatens his marriage to Betsy. But Tom is haunted by the trauma of the war more generally, by the soldiers he killed as a paratrooper and by the accidental death of his best friend in a friendly fire incident. Tom deals with his wartime trauma by repressing it and further fragmenting his sense of temporality: "The past is something best forgotten; only in theory is it the father of the present. In practice, it is only a wildly unrelated dream, a chamber of horrors. And most of the time the present is unrelated to the future. It is a disconnected world, or it is better to believe it that way if you can" (97). Of course, simply willing oneself to forget the past does not mean that it will no longer influence the present. Ironically, Tom's new job with the United Broadcasting Company involves promoting greater public awareness of and support for mental health initiatives. However, there is never any suggestion that Tom's wartime trauma—which we would

now consider to be a textbook case of post-traumatic stress disorder—falls under the purview of mental illness or that Tom himself would benefit from mental health counseling. Instead Tom copes by ignoring his wartime trauma and rejects the demands of his new job and turns inward, immersing himself in the fourth, domestic "world" of his family.

As Herbert J. Gans reveals in his foundational study of postwar suburban culture, *The Levittowners: Ways of Life and Politics in a New Suburban Community* (1967), the single-family suburban home was more than just a dwelling or a piece of property, it was a marker of identity that "provides a public symbol of achievement, 'something to show for all your years of living,' as one Levittowner pointed out" (278). In addition to providing individuals with "something to show" for their years of living, suburban homes also contributed to the dream of a classless society promoted by Cold War propaganda's emphasis on the American standard of living by making the home—rather than the workplace—the marker of middle-class identity. According to Rosalyn Baxandall and Elizabeth Ewen's *Picture Windows: How the Suburbs Happened* (2000),

In a place like Levittown, whether a household's breadwinner was a mechanic, factory worker, low-level engineer, white-collar employee, salesman, or small business man hardly mattered; who cared what Mr. Kilroy did during the day? What mattered was that his home bore the trappings of a middle-class life—a new house, new car, new television. It was what one consumed—not what one produced—that was important. (147)

Of course the extent to which homeownership actually helped to eliminate class (self)-consciousness is debatable. Both Vance Packard, in *The Status Seekers* (1959), and William H. Whyte, in *The Organization Man* (1956), noted that although the suburbs created an expanded middleclass, a sense of class difference could still linger within the middleclass itself, especially for those who had only recently attained that status. As

Whyte writes, "the more that [class] distinctions are broken down, the more exquisite they become" (298), and the popularity of magazine articles like the one from *House Beautiful* analyzed earlier reveal that homeownership could foster feelings of anxiety and failed assimilation rather than pride and happiness.

Even so, the suburban home played a very important role in the organization man's ability to manage his unhappiness by allowing him to split his emotional life between the workplace and the home. Perhaps one of the most well-known students of organization culture is William H. Whyte whose *The Organization Man* provided one of the most enduring analyses of the effects of mass organization on American culture. The question of happiness and how it shaped the life of the organization man entered into Whyte's writing in 1951 when he began publishing a series of articles that took a close look at the role of the corporate wife in relationship to her husband's role in organization. It was important for the wife of an organization man to possess the social sophistication necessary to help her husband advance by networking and hosting dinner parties, and for her to understand and accommodate her husband's need to travel and spend long hours away from home. The most important job of the corporate wife, however, concerned her husband's emotional life, as Whyte's interviews reveal:

Above all, wives emphasize, they have to be good listeners. They describe the job somewhat wryly—they must be "sounding boards," "refueling stations," "wailing walls"—but they speak without resentment. Nurturing the male ego, they seem to feel, is not only a pretty good fulfillment of their own ego but a form of therapy made increasingly necessary by the corporation way of life. Management psychologists couldn't agree more. "Most top executives are very lonely people," as one puts it. "The greatest thing a man's wife can do is to let him unburden the worries he can't confess to in the office." ("The Wives of Management" 87)

The corporate wife must provide emotional support for her husband through a passive listening process that allows him to express the doubts, worry, anger, and other negative

emotions that he is not free to reveal to the organization itself. Like the housewife anxious about what her curtains and tableware say about her insecurities, the organization man must maintain an image of contentment, competence, and happiness within the organization workspace. Wives help their husbands "manage" their unhappiness by letting them bring it home, allowing the organization man to return to work with a smile on his face.

Encouraging the organization man to split his emotional life between his home and work environments carried with it important implications for the "here and now" happiness promised by Cold War propaganda narratives like the "People's Capitalism Campaign." If Cold War Americans were meant to be happier than ever before, and if the organization man was truly the best representative of that happiness, then where was the organization man's happiness to be found—at home or at work? According to Whyte, this was the crucial question that the wives of organization men did not like to ponder:

Where, the awful question comes up, does the man find his major satisfactions? A common feminine observation is that, of course, the man's major satisfactions come from the home; if he's happy there, why, then he can be happy in his work—and if he is happy in his work, then he is happy in his home, too. The belief is probably necessary. Is it correct as well? ("The Wives of Management" 206)

Whereas corporate wives believed that their husbands derive happiness from the home, the husbands surveyed reluctantly offered a different point of view: "Even those who duck the question do so on the grounds that one alternative is not realistic. They simply can't conceive, they say, of a home life being happy if the job isn't" (206). The circularity of the wife's perspective—he is happy at work if he is happy at home, and is happy at home if he is happy at work—raises serious questions about whether the organization man's happiness truly resides in either location. This instability is

exacerbated by the opinion of the organization man himself, who can only be certain about his <u>unhappiness</u>—if he is unhappy at work, he will be he unhappy at home.

Indeed, the unstable spatiality of postwar happiness is highlighted at the very beginning of *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit*, which opens with the following observation about the Raths' feelings towards their home:

By the time they had lived seven years in the little house on Greentree Avenue in Westport, Connecticut, they both detested it. There were many reasons, none of them logical, but all of them compelling. For one thing, the house had a kind of evil genius for displaying proof of their weaknesses and wiping out all traces of their strengths. The ragged lawns and weed-filled garden proclaimed to passersby and the neighbors that Thomas R. Rath and his family disliked "working around the place" and couldn't afford to pay someone else to do it. The interior of the house was even more vengeful. In the living room there was a big dent in the plaster near the floor, with a huge crack curving up from it in the shape of a question mark. (1)

Tom and Betsy's home reflects their shortcomings and failures, particularly those related to money. The crack in the shape of a question mark, for instance, was created when Tom threw an expensive vase against the wall during an argument over household finances.

Tom finds it impossible to believe that this house with its oddly-shaped crack could be "the end of their personal road" (3), and he is driven to seek a way of life that will be more satisfying materially and emotionally. Yet what Tom fails to realize is that he playing straight into the hands of the Cold War emotion managers. By accepting the idea, prevalent among the residents of Greentree Avenue, that "contentment [is] an object of contempt" (109), Tom is buying (literally) into a cycle of increasing consumption that he must work harder and harder to support.

Tom's unhappiness with his home on Greentree Avenue and the "end of the road" it represents for him and his family ultimately convinces him to accept a new, better-paying position at the United Broadcasting Corporation. However, Tom's new job does

more to endanger than to increase his happiness. The family's plans to move into a new suburban home are derailed by the death of Tom's mother, which forces them to move into her outdated and dilapidated manor home. Working in the UBC building also brings Tom into contact with an old war buddy, who reveals that Tom's wartime affair produced an illegitimate child who needs his assistance. More importantly, Tom's new job and workplace are associated with a sort of false or insincere happiness that Tom finds increasingly distasteful. When he goes for his interview he notices that "everybody in this building smiles...it must be a company rule" (40). When Betsy asks him what his new job will entail, he replies, "I'll write copy telling people to eat more corn flakes and smoke more and more cigarettes and buy more refrigerators and automobiles until they explode with happiness" (163). But Tom's job is not to promote widespread happiness—or even to promote mental health as he initially believes. "Your profession," Tom is told, "will be pleasing Hopkins [the president of the UBC]" (36). In terms of Tom's new job, only his boss' happiness is relevant.

Ultimately Tom's unhappiness with his work-life proves unmanageable. It requires him to spend far too many hours away from his family with too little gain, so when he is offered a promotion to a better-paying but travel-intensive position, he refuses it. The scene between Tom and his boss, Hopkins, where Tom declines his promotion reveals the nature of membership in organization culture:

"It's just that if I have to bury myself in a job every minute of my life, I don't see any point to it. And I know that to do the kind of job you want me to do, I'd have to be willing to bury myself in it, and, well, I just don't want to."

^[...]

[&]quot;Of course," Hopkins said kindly, getting up and pouring himself another drink. "There are plenty of good positions where it's not necessary for a man to put in an unusual amount of work. Now it's just a matter of finding the right spot for you."

 $[\ldots]$

Suddenly Hopkins whirled and faced him. "Somebody has to do the big jobs!" he said passionately. "This world was built by men like me! To really do a job, you have to live it, body and soul! You people who just give half your mind to your work are riding on our backs!"

"I know it," Tom said. (252)

Tom easily admits to surviving by riding on the coattails of men like Hopkins and the hardworking business pioneers who came before him. This is the essence of the organization man, someone who belongs to an organization and can benefit from its power without having to do the work of creating the organization and accumulating power himself. The organization men, according to Whyte, were not simply people who worked or clerked for an organization: "The ones I am talking about belong to it as well. They are the ones of our middle class who have left home, spiritually as well as physically, to take the vows of organization life, and it is they who are the mind and soul of our great self-perpetuating institutions (Organization 3). Becoming part of the "mind and soul" of the organization requires the organization man to make numerous personal sacrifices in order to meet the organization's needs. Tom, although he wants to benefit from membership in the organization, also wants to set limits on the extent of his "belongingness." Unlike earlier in the novel, when Tom believed "a man's work should be his pleasure—I shouldn't expect anything more" (233), he now believes that pleasure and happiness are to be found primarily at home.

Tom's desire to restore what we today might call a better work/life balance is perfectly understandable. What is less realistic is his desire to continue reaping the rewards of organization life (the ability to provide his family with an above-average standard of living) without having to also partake of its difficulties and disappointments. Instead of accepting that a certain degree of unhappiness might be an inevitable fact of

postwar life, the spiritual "cost" that accompanies a materially-rich standard of living, Tom attempts to escape it entirely. This conversation with Hopkins marks an important turning point in the novel as it begins to enter what I would call an "unreal"—or at least "unrealized"—space. Aside from initial scenes focused around Tom's dissatisfaction with his house on Greentree Avenue, the majority of the novel takes place outside of the home in Tom's workplace. Following Tom's conversation with Hopkins, however, the workplace disappears from the text. Readers are told that Hopkins lives up to his (somewhat unrealistic) promise to find Tom a job that will pay as well as the one he turned down while allowing him to put in fewer hours. Additionally, instead of commuting to the UBC building, Tom will now work from Hopkin's lavish mansion, which is located within sight of Tom's own home. The distance between Tom's work and home "worlds" has diminished (both spatially and emotionally) but this time the home takes precedence. Along with the increased income from his new position, Tom also stands to make a great deal of money from the land he inherited from his mother, which will be turned into a new suburban development, finally giving Tom and Betsy their long-desired new home. But at the very end of the novel, Tom is neither at home nor at work; he is on vacation, about to embark on a second honeymoon with his wife. If happiness is truly to be found in the home as Tom believes, then why is the novel's "happy ending" located neither in the home nor in the workplace?

One reason why the novel ends with Tom and Betsy heading out of town on vacation is because their home—the much anticipated upgrade from Greentree Avenue and all it represents—does not yet exist. In many ways, Tom is in the same position as he was at the beginning of the novel: living in a house he does not like and getting ready to

start a new job. The new subdivision the Raths plan to build on the land they inherited has yet to materialize so neither have the problems envisioned by the area's native residents: overcrowding, increased taxes, and the "wrong sort" of people moving in. What guarantee is there that Tom and Betsy's new home will not turn into another Greentree Avenue? In the introduction to the 1983 edition of the text (published as an afterword in subsequent editions), Sloan Wilson writes about the Raths' future:

At the end of *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit*, I made Tom Rath feel a good deal more confident about his future than much which has happened in the twenty-eight years since now seems to justify...I've often wondered what happened to Tom Rath after he thought all his problems had been solved. Over the years, a lot of publishers have asked me to write a sequel, and I have finally decided to try, but one thing is sure: in the sixties, seventies, and eighties, Tom Rath would grow into a different kind of individual. (279)

This sequel, unfortunately, was never written, so readers are left with the original "confident" impression that happiness will continue to follow Tom and his family after he returns from vacation. But Wilson's retrospective insights are interesting in that he acknowledges that the novel's euphoric "happy ending" was ultimately unrealistic, emerging as it did from Tom Rath's past desires rather than his future prospects.

The ending of *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* is unsatisfying in part because even though Wilson understands the problems inherent in Cold War America's fascination with happiness and its equation of happiness with the American standard of living, he cannot envision a realistic way of overcoming these difficulties. Many of the things that make Tom unhappy—wartime trauma, anxiety over homeownership, distance from his wife and family, dissatisfaction and alienation in the workplace—are systemic problems. As Tom himself observes, he is not alone in his experiences but is part of a crowd:

I really don't know what I was looking for when I got back from the war, but it seemed as though all I could see was a lot of bright young men in gray flannel suits rushing around New York in a frantic parade to nowhere. They seemed to me to be pursuing neither ideals nor happiness—they were pursuing a routine. For a while I thought I was on the side lines watching that parade, and it was quite a shock to glance down and see that I too was wearing a gray flannel suit. (272)

Here, unlike in Cold War propaganda narratives, standardization is represented as antithetical to happiness. The solution that finally brings Tom happiness is not routine but escape from it. It is also highly idiosyncratic. After all, can all those other "bright young men in gray flannel suits" expect to inherit valuable tracts of land or to be rewarded with cushy jobs after rejecting their promotions? Or will they continue to struggle to balance their emotional lives, putting their own happiness second to the "mind and soul" of the organization?

In the 1983 introduction Wilson also writes, "Underneath the bland exterior which the business world demanded of him, Tom Rath was of course a very angry man...but Tom's manners in the book were so good that very few readers picked that up. Men in gray flannel suits hide their emotions all too well" (279). For Wilson, anger is the emotion most characteristic of Tom and the novel (hence his decision to make Tom's last name (W)Rath). Tom, he says, is angry because of his wartime experiences but also because he comes back from the war to a world that is "driving him to become a workaholic in order to succeed at business enough to support his family well" (279). While Tom does exhibit anger at times, I believe it is more accurate to say that the novel—instead of producing an intense feeling such as anger—brings together a number of different negative affects—anger, frustration, discontentment, stress, anxiety, cynicism—to produce a more diffuse feeling of unhappiness that stems not from a single source or event but rather results from Cold War America's failure to live up to its own

propaganda. Pursuing the American standard of living, as Tom and his many of his grayflannel brethren discover, was no guarantee of happiness. Instead it produces anger and other unhappy emotions they must manage and conceal in order to remain effective workers.

The type of unhappiness exhibited in *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* is fundamentally conservative. Instead of using his unhappiness as a basis for making changes to existing economic and social systems, Tom Rath "manages" his unhappiness by making it a mark of social and class distinction. In White Diaspora: The Suburb and the Twentieth-Century American Novel (2001), Catherine Jurca argues that the expansion of the postwar middleclass and the rise of the professional and managerial occupations home of the organization men—led to an "affective dislocation by which white, middleclass suburbanites beg[an] to see themselves as spiritually and culturally impoverished by prosperity" (7). This affective impoverishment was premised on the "disavowal of the very real privileges that the suburb has offered those who live there" (6). Even as unhappiness becomes a marker of middle-class privilege, Tom Rath also draws on it to maintain a sense of superiority and individual exceptionalism. Unhappiness, after all, is what sets Tom apart from his neighbors on Greentree Avenue who give up happiness and ambition for contentment. But Tom also uses unhappiness to justify limiting his own ambitions by asserting his moral superiority over his workaholic boss. Unlike Hopkins, whose family life has just imploded, Tom is willing to put his family's happiness ahead of the organization's needs.

Tom's unhappiness allows him to maintain a sense of superiority, and he looks down on organization culture even as he reaps its benefits, which might account for

William H. Whyte's critical attitude towards the novel. In *The Organization Man* Whyte writes, "As Rath implies so strongly, when the younger men say they don't want to work too hard, they feel they are making a positive moral contribution as well. In this selfennobling hedonism, furthermore, they don't see why they shouldn't have the good life and good money both. There doesn't have to be any choice between the two" (132). The end of the novel is essentially a retreat into a fantasy world where Tom and his family can live separately from the problems of postwar America. But if meaningful happiness is to be realized for more than a single (fictional) organization man and his family, change must occur on a societal scale. By giving Tom Rath his happy ending—without requiring him to work or make sacrifices for it—Wilson inadvertently reinforces the values of the same routinized way of life he spends the novel criticizing. Tom, after all, has not left the organization nor abandoned the standards imposed by the "American way of life"; he has simply found the perfect "spot" for himself within the existing framework of that narrative. Personal happiness secured, he withdraws from further critical engagement with the social and economic structures he once found so crushing.

Tom Rath's solution to the problem of trying to achieve happiness in Cold War America is to turn away from the rest of society and focus his emotional life around his home and family. Meanwhile, Allerd Pennington, the protagonist of Vance Bourjaily's *The Hound of Earth* (1955), responds to unhappiness very differently. Unlike like *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit*, Bourjaily's *The Hound of Earth* spreads its crises among the staff of a San Francisco department store rather than confining them to a single character or family. Pennington is also quick to assert that he is "no Grey Flannel Man...he did not think the world owed him a living" (19). And whereas Tom Rath

responds to his unhappiness by turning away from work and society to focus on his family, Pennington's journey begins with his decision to walk away from his wife, family, and comfortable middle-class life, deliberately eschewing happiness and emotional attachment. Why does Pennington leave his old life as a nuclear scientist to become, as he calls it, a "living suicide"? This is the question that leads FBI Agent Casper Usez to pursue and interrogate Pennington. For readers, who learn of Pennington's capture at the beginning of the novel, another question follows—what is Pennington's real crime? Even after Pennington is tried and convicted, there is still "some confusion over the extent of his criminality" (12), since he is neither guilty of nuclear espionage (as originally suspected) nor of assault, murder, or theft (crimes other characters commit). Pennington's real crime, I will argue, has nothing to do with any legal infraction but rather stems from his radical rejection of happiness and his deliberate refusal to conform to the standards of the postwar "American way of life."

4. Escaping the Things that Make Happiness

The Hound of Earth begins by telling readers that in August 1945, a few days after the first atomic bomb was dropped on Japan, a young nuclear scientist named Allerd Pennington¹⁵ walked away from his job at a nuclear research laboratory and disappeared. Ten years later he is found working under an assumed name at a Mainways department store in San Francisco where he is arrested on Christmas Eve. He is imprisoned in

¹⁵ A note on names: Bourjaily's protagonist goes by two different names in the novel: his real name (Allerd Pennington) and an alias he uses after he abandons that life (Alvin Barker). He refers to himself as "Al" but is referred to as Al, Pennington, and Barker at various points throughout the text. For the sake of simplicity, I have chosen to refer to him as Pennington throughout my analysis.

Leavenworth Penitentiary and is a model prisoner. This straightforward opening eliminates any element of suspense that might otherwise accompany the novel's fugitive plotline. From the outset readers already know when and where FBI Agent Caspar Usez will catch up with his quarry. What they—and Usez—do not know is what motivated Pennington's peculiar disappearance. Pennington's old life was quite comfortable: "[H]is work record on the project [was] brilliant; he had been due for separation from the Service in four months, and there had been talk of offering him either a double promotion, if it could be obtained, or re-employment as a civilian at a salary increase of close to a hundred percent" (10). Such a salary increase would undoubtedly have provided his wife and two children with whatever they might need. On track to "make a success of it" in Cold War America, Pennington instead literally walks away from his life and his family. He sends a letter instructing his wife to think of him as a "living suicide," encouraging her to divorce him, and providing her with several thousand dollars in savings and insurance. Bourjaily takes pains to show that Pennington does not simply abandon his wife and family without also taking some measures to provide for them. Despite this, he never quite lets Pennington off the hook for this decision. Agent Usez's wife, who serves as a sounding board for her husband's theories, maintains that Pennington's desertion of his family is the only unforgiveable crime that he has committed. And Pennington's wife and children repeat his rejection by changing their last names and refusing to ever visit him in prison. Agent Usez can find no conventional explanation for Pennington's desertion, and there are no ties between him and any known nuclear espionage rings. The FBI is baffled but not unduly alarmed, and only Usez's

personal curiosity about the case keeps Pennington's name on official radar over the ensuing decade.

Pennington's desertion is motivated, at least initially, by his feelings of guilt over his role in the Manhattan Project: "Pennington could not accept himself, or ask that he be accepted, as a useful human being with the knowledge of what end his work had been directed toward...he felt he must remove...himself from the training, professional circumstances and relationships within which he had been happy doing it" (89). But Bourjaily takes this initial guilty impulse and transforms it from a simple act of selfpunishment into a complete lifestyle change based on a critical understanding of the role of happiness in Cold War America. Pennington does not simply walk away from his old life; he refuses to build a new one in any conventional sense. He takes menial jobs, moves frequently, and refuses to form lasting relationships of any sort. Whenever it seems he might be offered a promotion or a more permanent attachment to a particular location or individual, he pulls up roots and moves again. Whereas Tom Rath seeks an appropriate "end of the road" for himself and his family, Pennington takes his life on the road, deliberately refusing spatial fixity. He lives as detached from traditional society as possible while still living and working within that society.

This nearly ascetic lifestyle is neither masochistic nor rebellious in the conventional sense. When asked why—if he felt he needed to be punished—he didn't simply turn himself in sooner Pennington replies:

[S]ociety has punished me by pursuing me. As a pursued man, I have been kept in poverty and insecurity; as a kid I knew poverty, Usez, and I hated it. I grew to be a man who loved comforts, and good food and being settled; I was a man who dreamed of building certain sorts of homes and owning certain sorts of cars; I was a man who wanted the respect of his profession, the earnings of his work as well as its joys. And in prison I would have been only a man separated from the

possibility of attaining those things by a few more years, and not a man cut off from them at all...(216)

Pennington's philosophy changes the context in which we consider pursuit in relationship to happiness. Pennington deliberately sacrifices—as much as it is possible to do so—his own "unalienable right" to the pursuit of happiness. By making himself into the *object* being pursued rather than the *agent* doing the pursuing, Pennington gives up happiness as a personal goal. He reiterates this point when asked if walking away from his old life made him happy: "'Happy to be free of relationships, free of work, free of commitment, free of the things that make happiness?' He shook his head. 'Happiness was something I neither wanted nor deserved'" (245). Pennington's personal philosophy is based on the rejection of happiness, specifically the rejection of the idea that happiness is something Cold War Americans deserve.

Pennington's problem is not with happiness itself but with the disproportionate role it plays in American society. As he remarks to Nickie, one of his coworkers: "Where did we ever get this petty notion that happiness is any kind of fit goal for a grown man's life?" (245). Fixating on happiness in this fashion, Bourjaily suggests, is fundamentally immature. Americans become so wrapped up in the pursuit of happiness they fail to consider whether "the things that make happiness" are truly desirable and whether a standardized path to individual happiness is feasible. In this he echoes George Kennan's observation (discussed in Chapter One) that Cold War Americans lived in a state of "perpetual childhood without the promise of maturity." While Pennington is initially motivated by his nuclear guilt, Bourjaily's focus on Pennington's life post-Hiroshima suggests that the nuclear connection is just a vehicle for a more wide-ranging social critique. After all, not all Americans bore direct responsibility for the advent of nuclear

weapons, but they were all—presumably—searching for happiness, however imperfectly. The erroneous assumptions behind the unthinking pursuit of happiness are what Bourjaily wishes to expose. All Cold War Americans, he suggests, are guilty of taking happiness for granted. They are so obsessed with obtaining "the things that make happiness" they never stop to truly consider whether this single-minded pursuit of the American standard of living will make them happy.

It is the pursuit of happiness that brings the customers and employees of Mainways department store together. Mainways is essentially a distillation of postwar, middle-class consumerism: "Mainways was dedicated to solid, middle-class family goods and a steadily controlled volume. It did enormous business with low-advertising, moderate charge accounts and heavy time payments" (15). Like most department stores, it provides a variety of goods and services, but the events of the novel are restricted to the staff of the toy department. Although this decision makes sense given the narrative's focus on Christmas, it also provides an excellent opportunity to observe how Americans learn to pursue a standardized American way of life. The toys sold at Mainways are simply child-sized versions of what adult Americans sought themselves: (doll) babies and houses, (toy) cars and appliances. Children are taught to replicate in miniature their parents' desires and develop a materialist, object-oriented attitude towards happiness. Despite the fact that adult homeownership carries with it a complex web of associations and responsibilities, it is still associated with the simple joy a child experiences at receiving a new toy. The ephemeral nature of happiness and the desire to hold onto it from childhood to adulthood is highlighted when Pennington watches a stream of bubbles drift towards the actor playing Santa Claus:

"The extremities of our magic world are in fine shape," Al said. "At one end we have Mrs. Kelsner blowing bubbles; and at the other, John Charles Evans, promising the children that they'll never break." (133)

The "magic world" referred to here is an apt description not only of the store's Christmas display, but of the logic of Cold War consumerism as a whole. Mainways and stores like it use bright lights and flashy advertising to blot out the "dust and hardness of the real world" (27), promising that purchasing this or that object will finally allow consumers to satisfy their long-held desires.

Almost as soon as he is hired on at Mainways, Pennington becomes a source of conflict. Mr. Finn, the boisterous senior manager likes him, but M'Nerney, the assistant manager, is suspicious. He dislikes the blanks that Pennington (using the name Al Barker) has left on his employment application: "Say he's thirty. Where was he during the war? 4-F? In jail? This form can't be right. He must have done something. Maybe he's one of those world-owes-me-a-living guys, Hub. I don't like it" (18). The blanks on Pennington's application form are enough to convince M'Nerney that he "must have done something," a particularly suggestive turn of phrase. M'Nerney means that Pennington must have been employed or otherwise occupied during the war, but the ambiguity of having "done something" also suggests guilt or criminality. M'Nerney can tell that Pennington is educated and has prior work experience, so his refusal to reveal these accomplishments must mean he has something to hide. Readers know that this is actually the case, but it is the silence itself that is viewed as criminal. By leaving blanks on his application, Pennington refuses to display his credentials and accept his position as a member of the Cold War middleclass. Pennington creates a personal history that violates M'Nerney's expectations, and the manager's suspicions spark the chain of events that eventually leads to Pennington's arrest. M'Nerney has no reason to suspect what Pennington has truly done; his condemnation is based entirely on Pennington's refusal to provide a "standardized" narrative of his life.

The conflict between Finn and M'Nerney goes beyond their disagreement over Pennington's hire and sheds light on the changing nature of the postwar workplace. Loud, energetic Finn is first and foremost a "seller," a handler and mover of goods. He selfconsciously admits that his standing at Mainways is in jeopardy because he can't "handle the people right...personnel problems" (28). In *The Organization Man*, Whyte argues that the growth of bureaucracy and the move away from independent entrepreneurship led to a paradigm shift in postwar managerial philosophy: "Because the rough-andtumble days of corporation growth are over, what the corporation needs most is the adaptable administrator, schooled in managerial skills and concerned primarily with human relations and the techniques of making the corporation a smooth-working team" (134). This modern style of management is reflected by M'Nerney, who is described as a "worrier and smoother-out" (15). Unlike Finn, M'Nerney is the perfect example of an organization man. He is a graduate of Mainway's "Executive Training Program" who used his G.I. Bill benefits to earn an M.B.A from Harvard. Despite working in a department store, he views life there as having little to do with goods: "You don't need that heavy selling approach of [Finn's] anymore...Clerks are what these people are and should be treated as—not salespeople. Customers buy for their own reasons, not because they're sold" (192). M'Nerney's attitude towards customers is like his attitude towards employment forms—both are full of blanks that need to be filled. Customers come to Mainways not to be sold on the merits of a specific product but because they want

something. Whether that want can actually be satisfied by the products that Mainways sells is—from the perspective of the organization—irrelevant. All that matters is that customers continue to believe in the promise of satisfaction that Mainways provides. This is happiness in its emptiest and most material manifestation.

Nowhere perhaps are the inadequacies of the American standard of living and its promise of happiness clearer than in the character of Dolly Klamath, the toy department floor manager. Her very name is a testament to her perpetual immaturity. Dolly can find no clear place for herself in Cold War America. Her vanity and desire for material things drive her away from the convent where she was schooled, and she ends up working at Mainways, using her pay to purchase numerous stylish outfits, which she wears alone in the isolation of her luxury apartment. But even Mainways cannot satisfy Dolly's true desires. Unable to find an outlet for her sexuality—which seems to be exclusively homosexual—Dolly becomes frustrated and sadistic. She bullies her staff, abusing one poor girl specifically in hopes of attracting the attention of Sally Malinkrodt, whose subsequent sexual liaison with Finn enrages her. Her immaturity manifests itself not only in her bullying behavior but also in a habit of dressing up in costumes and the practice of drinking milk from a baby bottle whenever she needs to calm her nerves. Pennington, who is the only character privy to Dolly's secrets, recognizes the depths of her mental maladjustment and encourages her to return to the convent for care. Dolly contacts the convent but commits suicide via a drug-laced baby bottle before she can return.

While Dolly's psychoses certainly have origins in her personal history and psychology, it is difficult to overlook the fact that she is both the unhappiest of all the characters in the novel and the one most closely associated with the "freedom to

consume" promoted by Cold War propaganda. She dies surrounded by dozens of brand new dresses suggesting that whatever Dolly and others like her need to be happy it cannot be found on Mainways' shelves. It is even more important to note that despite her sadistic and repugnant qualities, Dolly is not the villain of the novel. Instead, it is Mainways' very own "organization man," M'Nerney, who inspires in Pennington a desire for conflict and confrontation. Perhaps this is because M'Nerney seems so devoid of desires, ambitions, and frustrations of his own. M'Nerney, who was "an excellent weapons company commander in the infantry," is "a young man for whom there were high expectations" (29). But whose expectations are these? Does M'Nerney expect things of himself outside of what Mainways wants of him as a manager? It seems unlikely, and M'Nerney is—in his own way—more alienated from happiness than Pennington aims to be.

Unlike Tom Rath, whose closest relationships are restricted to his immediate family and unlike M'Nerney, who "smooths out" personnel conflicts but otherwise leaves the door to his office closed to avoid unwanted contact, Pennington becomes a counselor and problem-solver for almost everyone who crosses his path, many of whom seem especially trapped by the heteronormative lifestyle embodied by postwar America's idealization of the so-called "nuclear family." Dolly, as previously mentioned, is a frustrated homosexual whose sexuality is treated with a surprising degree of sympathy. The problem is not Dolly's sexuality itself but the fact that she can find no acceptable outlet for it in postwar society; her only recourse is to lapse into maladjusted sadism or to retreat into the homosocial world of the convent. A similar problem of sexual incompatibility exists in Sally Malinkrodt's sexless, loveless marriage to a husband who isn't "man enough" for her (206). Lonely and hoping to drive her husband to divorce

court, Sally deliberately engages in a workplace affair with Finn. Although sexually satisfying, the liaison is emotionally sterile, and Sally's husband still refuses to divorce her. Even the subject of abortion is treated with acceptance rather than ridicule. When Nickie confesses that she took the job at Mainways to pay back the money she used to terminate a pregnancy and asks Pennington if she did the right thing, he replies, "Life is a very dubious gift to any child, and no gift at all to an unwanted one" (66). In general, the novel responds to matters of sexual transgression by condemning neither the sin nor the sinner but rather the social systems that entrap and stigmatize them.

Despite his anti-social philosophy of detachment, Pennington is deeply sincere and compassionate, something Bourjaily—via a letter "written" by Pennington—suggests is lacking in Cold War society:

There must be reckoned, among the costs of war, the damage to the nervous tone of a people. The fighting of two major and two minor wars in half a century has drained our national character incalculably; from expansiveness, drive, naïve generosity and unquestioning warmth we have been reduced to pettiness, caution, meanness and suspicion. We live ungraciously, turn conservative; we have surrendered our bravery and freedom for what is, finally, nothing more than the right to over-eat. Somehow, as the new half-century gets underway, everything which seemed to have gone wrong temporarily because of the wars is staying wrong; we have no more resilience. (33)

Bourjaily is clearly disillusioned with the "good life" that Americans had looked forward to during the war. Unhappiness, a temporary inconvenience according to wartime propaganda, has proven to be longer-lasting and more deeply entrenched than advertised. The temporal boundaries between wartime America and Cold War America that Tom Rath tries so hard to maintain have become completely unsustainable. Like many other mid-century social critics—such as Philip Wylie, whose best-selling collection of essays, *A Generation of Vipers* (1942), reappears next chapter—Bourjaily looks back on the

history of the twentieth-century and sees a marked decline in the American character, but his assessment of America's future is not wholly pessimistic.

After Hiroshima, Allerd Pennington gives up happiness—or at least "the things that make happiness"—and lives his life according to a philosophy of detachment and flight. At Mainways he discovers that it is impossible to eschew human connections entirely and is finally caught by the "hound" of his own humanity:

He had tried to run and, weary of running, had rested; and resting, had been unable to reject for ever and ended by accepting them all: his love for Nickie, his pity for Finn, his responsibility to Tom, his fascination with and compassion for the horror of Dolly, the impulse to oppose M'nerney—the need to take his stand. These things had held him involved him, chased and trapped him, deprived him of his freedom to live alone with guilt—the hound of earth had caught him. No man, no matter what his time, his country, his condition, training, heredity or philosophy, forever escapes that hound, his own humanity. (252)

What Pennington ultimately learns is that he cannot live without other people. The relationships that he forms at Mainways—although he initially resists them—bring him happiness (despite resulting in his arrest and incarceration). They are also uniquely *selfless* relationships. Pennington listens to his coworkers' dreams and frustrations, validates their desires, and helps them overcome their difficulties.

Crucially, the last collaborative problem-solving enterprise that Pennington was part of was the Manhattan Project, so perhaps it is no wonder that he/Bourjaily feels that America has "used up its citizens' energy—the only national resource worth calculating—in too short and bright a flash" and will now "finish its course as a place of curious unhappiness, history's first neurotic nation" (213). Bourjaily's "solution" to the problem created by Cold War America's fixation on happiness is by no means perfect. The philosophy of detachment that Pennington practices for much of the novel smacks of privilege. For many Cold War Americans, exclusion from the American standard of

living was not a voluntary act but a result of prejudice and discrimination. His rejection of the space of the family and of emotional ties is no more feasible than Tom Rath's attempt to divorce himself and his family life from his workplace. But the idea that Americans could find happiness through cooperative problem-solving and the formation of relationships beyond those of the nuclear family could, indeed, lead to progressive social change. More importantly, unlike Philip Wylie or Sloan Wilson, Bourjaily is neither nostalgic nor fantastic. He recognizes that materialism has corrupted American society, particularly as it applies to the standardization of happiness, but he does not imagine that such problems can be overcome by a return to an idealized frontier past. ¹⁶ Too much individualism, isolation, and self-centeredness is already part of the problem. Individuals will not find happiness by pursuing it directly, particularly not in a standardized form. But neither is happiness to be found in isolation and the rejection of society. Instead, happiness comes indirectly when people work collectively to solve problems and improve their own society.

John Stuart Mill expressed an idea similar to Bourjaily's in his *Autobiography* (1873): "Those only are happy...who have their minds fixed on some object other than their own happiness; on the happiness of others, on the improvement of mankind, even on some art or pursuit, followed not as a means, but as itself an ideal end. Aiming thus at something else, they find happiness by the way" (142). This exact passage is quoted in

¹⁶ Bourjaily provides few glimpses into Pennington's life as an aimless wanderer pre-Mainways. Curiously, he does recount Pennington's stint as a guard and caretaker for a "mad Osage," John Stag. Stag describes his elaborate fantasy of military conquest wherein the indigenous and mixed-race populations of North America unite with blacks to destroy white civilization and reclaim the continent. "What else is a man to do as he watches his race die?" Stag asks. To which Pennington replies, "I don't know...Different men protest in different ways" (187). The episode suggests that Bourjaily acknowledges that Pennington's approach to (un)happiness would not work for non-white Americans who faced very different obstacles to happiness than their white counterparts.

"On Quality of Life and the Pursuit of Happiness," the RAND Corporation study analyzed earlier. Yet Rescher entirely misses the connection between Mills' autobiography and his own present moment. The problem for so many Cold War Americans was that they had been told time and again in propaganda, TV shows, movies, and advertisements that happiness should be their object and fixation and that this happiness was to be found by pursuing the American standard of living. Certainly an improved and more widely-available American standard of living helped Cold War Americans better satisfy their fundamental financial and material needs, but meeting these basic needs is not the same as making people happy. Indeed, as both *The Hound of* Earth and The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit amply demonstrate, becoming too wrapped up in the pursuit of an "ideal" standard of living is itself inimical to happiness. Read together, these novels reveal that collective efforts to improve the quality of American life in a standardized fashion must be accompanied by the recognition that individual happiness is not reducible to a single standard. Within each individual is something that will always exceed and escape standardization. For Cold War Americans, happiness required the freedom to deviate from the American standard of living as well as the ability to pursue it.

In both of these novels, unlike Philip Wylie's apocalyptic *Tomorrow!* (1954) analyzed last chapter, the Cold War is largely allowed to lapse into the background. At one point during Tom's commute to work, readers are briefly reminded of the ongoing Cold War conflict:

Tom opened his [newspaper] and read a long story about negotiations in Korea. A columnist debated the question of when Russia would have hydrogen bombs to drop on the United States. Tom folded his paper and stared out the window at the suburban stations gliding by. He wondered what it would be like to work for

Ogden and Hopkins, and he wondered whether Betsy's scheme could possibly turn out successfully. What would happen if he got fired by Hopkins and Betsy's real-estate deals turned into a fiasco? (67)

There is no room for the Cold War in any of Tom's "worlds." It makes a brief appearance during his morning commute, when Tom is in a liminal space, neither at home nor at his workplace, but is quickly squeezed out of awareness by Tom's immediate personal and financial concerns. Allerd Pennington's previous life as a nuclear scientist and his presence at Mainways Department store remind readers that Cold War America's material prosperity was purchased at the cost of sparking the nuclear arms race. Likewise M'Nerney's suspicion towards Pennington for his "non-standard" history, and his decision to spy and inform on Pennington to the FBI calls to mind McCarthy's red-scare witch-hunts and blacklists.

Yet, as have argued over the course of this chapter, even something as seemingly benign as happiness could become a weapon in America's ongoing conflict with the Soviet Union. American propagandists may have outmaneuvered the Soviet Union by demonstrating the economic and material superiority of the American standard of living, but their equation of happiness with standardization created problems of its own. Social scientists like the RAND Corporation's Nicholas Rescher saw standardization and emotion management as a way to improve Americans' happiness and quality of life without creating a Soviet-style dystopia. Others, however, were not as sanguine about attempts to "manage" the American psyche. In my next chapter I will analyze two quintessentially Cold War texts—Don Siegel's *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956) and John Frankenheimer's *The Manchurian Candidate* (1962)—and examine what these films (and their source material) reveal about fears of standardization and emotion

management gone awry. As I will argue, even though the threat in both films originates outside of the United States, these works deliberately blur distinctions between "Us" and "Them" in such a way as to suggest that Cold War America's social scientists and emotion managers were far more akin to Soviet "brainwashers" than they would have liked to admit.

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Chapter 3: Alienation and Emotional Labor in Invasion of the Body Snatchers and The Manchurian Candidate

"It's not that Raymond Shaw is hard to like. He's IMPOSSIBLE to like!" Maj. Bennett Marco in *The Manchurian Candidate* (1962)

"In my practice, I've seen how people have allowed their humanity to drain away. Only, it happens slowly instead of all at once. They didn't seem to mind."

Dr. Miles Bennell in *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (dir. Siegel 1956)

1. Introduction

In 1953 renowned behavioral psychologist B.F. Skinner published *Science and Human Behavior* in which he wrote,

Man's power appears to have increased out of all proportion to his wisdom. He has never been in a better position to build a healthy, happy, and productive world; yet things have perhaps never seemed so black. Two exhausting world wars in a single half century have given no assurance of lasting peace. Dreams of progress toward a higher civilization have been shattered by the spectacle of the murder of millions of innocent people. The worst may still be to come. Scientists may not set off a chain reaction to blow the world into eternity, but some of the more plausible prospects are scarcely less disconcerting. (4)

The Manhattan Project, which President Truman had hailed as "the greatest achievement of organized science in history" ("Announcing the Bombing of Hiroshima"), was proving to be something of a mixed blessing. On the one hand, it had ended the war, allowing American servicemen to return home to their families to begin their new lives as civilian workers and "organization men." It had demonstrated that enormous scientific and technological advancements could be made when a nation pooled its intellectual and financial resources. On the other hand, it also marked the beginning of a nuclear arms race that threatened to bring the world near to extinction. Many of the factors contributing to the outbreak of World War II—aggressive nationalism, totalitarian

violence, racial and religious prejudice, economic inequality, and ideological conflict—remained unresolved. Humanity's mastery of the natural world had greatly increased, but its own darker nature threatened to transform these new scientific creations into instruments of self-destruction.

In response to this ominous state of affairs, Skinner proposed solving the problems created by the nuclear/physical sciences using the knowledge and skills produced via the psychological and social sciences. What was needed was a new science of human nature that could be used to predict and guide human behavior and positively contribute to "the management of human affairs" (10). A more advanced body of social science could "rescue" humanity from itself and bring about a social order free of the conflicts that currently characterized it. As Skinner was a staunch behaviorist, it was not surprising that he believed human behavior could be rationalized and directed, but numerous other scientists—including functionalists, psychoanalysts, Freudians, political scientists, economists, and sociologists—also saw the years immediately following World War II as a time of tremendous possibility. Their work, they argued, offered new explanations for human behavior that could be used to resolve social conflicts without requiring revolutionary social reorganization. And unlike Marxist ideology, social science was grounded in an objective understanding of the world, so using it to guide public policy would result in realistic, unbiased solutions to real-world problems. Historian Ellen Herman calls this optimistic mindset "the romance of American psychology." Nor were scientists alone in their optimism. Impressed by the contributions social science had made to fields like psychological warfare, clinical treatment, human relations, and man-machine engineering during World War II, the US government

invested significantly in the social sciences "on the theory that, however speculative in the short run, their potential military payoff was large enough to justify the investment" (128). This rapid expansion of and investment in the social sciences and their intermingling with issues of public policy led to a mid-century "psychological turn" in American politics and culture.

Yet the psychological and social sciences brought with them their own "disconcerting" effects. Edward Hunter, journalist and CIA agent developed the term "brainwashing" to describe the methods of thought reform and indoctrination Communist authorities used on Chinese citizens and American POWs during the Korean War. American officials responded by pursuing "with increasing urgency research into every aspect of mind control, fearful that there might be a 'brainwashing gap' between East and West" (Seed 45). But the term quickly migrated beyond the realm of international conflict and was used by scientists, laymen, and social critics to describe "an everexpanding array of psychopathologies that purportedly rendered Americans suggestible, listless, and inclined to 'give-up-itis'" (Carruthers 18). No longer strictly a Communist weapon, "stories abounded in American magazines and newspapers concerning henpecked husbands brainwashed by their wives, students brainwashed by their school texts, and felons claiming to have been brainwashed into making false confessions by police interrogators" (231). America's earlier optimistic faith in the benevolence of social science waned, and by 1969 previously ardent supporters of the "psychological turn" like political scientist Harold Lasswell had to admit that the plan to cure the problems of one science using the tools of another was a failure: "If the earlier promise [of science] was that knowledge would make men free, the contemporary reality seems to be that more

men are manipulated without their consent for more purposes by more techniques by fewer men than at any time in history" (qtd. in Herman 172). Like nuclear weapons, the "weapons" social science had proliferated beyond mankind's ability to contain them, and everywhere Americans turned it seemed they were confronted with someone ready to invade their psyches.

We see these anxieties over fears of mind-control and dehumanizing transformation reflected in many of the works of science fiction produced during the 1950s, particularly in the two sets of works analyzed in this chapter—The (Invasion of the) Body Snatchers and The Manchurian Candidate. Jack Finney initially published "The Body Snatchers" as a three-part serial in *Collier's* magazine in November/December 1954 and then quickly published an expanded novel with Dell in February 1955. Finney introduced Americans to the small town of Santa Mira, CA, where Dr. Miles Bennell discovers that his friends and patients are slowly being replaced by alien "pod-people." Using giant, extraterrestrial seed pods, the invaders transform hapless humans into alien *doppelgangers* while they sleep. These pod-people are identical to their human counterparts in nearly every way, distinguishable only by their complete lack of emotion and their hive-like dedication to overtaking the entire planet. According to historian Al La Valley, producer Walter Wanger was so intrigued by the premise of Finney's serial, he immediately brought it to the attention of director Don Siegel, who released a film adaptation—titled *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*—in February 1956 (La Valley 3). With its iconic image of Kevin McCarthy as Dr. Miles Bennell shouting "You're next!" into the camera, Siegel's film helped popularize Finney's "pod-people"

and the use of the term as a way of describing sudden, inexplicable changes in the behavior of one's closest friends and companions.

The Manchurian Candidate explores similar themes of mental invasion and transformation. Originally published as a novel by Richard Condon in 1959 and later released as a film by John Frankenheimer in 1962, the story revolves around Raymond Shaw, a Sergeant in the U.S. Army who—unbeknownst to anyone but his mother, Eleanor, who is also his American "handler"—has been brainwashed by a cabal of Russian and Chinese communists who plan to use him to assassinate a Presidential candidate and assume control of the White House. The story capitalized on fears of "brainwashing" that emerged during the Korean War when American POWs were held in prison camps across the Manchurian border and subject to intense indoctrination, but it also proved eerily prescient. Just over a year after the film's release, President Kennedy was assassinated by Lee Harvey Oswald, who some speculated had been programmed to be a real-life "Manchurian candidate" during his three-year stay in the Soviet Union.

Both *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* and *The Manchurian Candidate* created a unique visual and verbal language for describing the process of discovering that something or someone has suddenly been rendered emotionally inhuman. In her reading of the film versions of these narratives, Vivian Sobchack writes,

The major recurrent image in these films is that of a loved and trusted person staring coldly into the camera or into off-screen space, ignoring the protagonist's distastefully human, emotional display of love. Visually, then, the films are heretical. The familiar characters we see on the screen and to whose roles we respond with complacency are not what they appear to be. And, because the image attempts to deceive us, no familiar person or activity finally escapes our scrutiny and our suspicion. (128-129)

What the popularity of such narratives of radical emotional transformation and widespread inter-personal suspicion suggest is that many Cold War Americans felt they were living in a time marked by intense existential uncertainty. Close companions could suddenly become cold and distant. The customs regulating expectations for emotional support and intimacy were being upended. Systems of emotional exchange were being flooded with counterfeit gestures whose authenticity was suspect. That Cold War Americans feared their lives were becoming a minefield of psychological threats and dehumanizing relationships seems clear. But what were these authors and filmmakers trying to communicate exactly? What was the exact threat or process they were trying to warn against?

Critics have traditionally offered interpretations of these works that emphasize their connection to the geopolitical culture of the Cold War.¹⁷ The image of extreme dehumanization offered by Finney's pod-people or by Laurence Harvey's chilling performance as Raymond Shaw is attributed to the stultifying assimilation demanded by totalitarian Communism. In *The Vital Center* (1949), Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. wrote that totalitarian citizens are "tight-lipped, cold-eyed, unfeeling, uncommunicative...as if badly carved from wood, without humor, without tenderness, without spontaneity, without nerves" (57), and thanks to Cold War films like *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, this image of a wooden, affectless, quasi-human figure became emblematic of both alien transformation and Communist indoctrination. It is impossible to ignore the historical

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¹⁷ For readings of this nature see: Michael Bliss' *Invasions USA: The Essential Science Fiction Films of the 1950s.* Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2014; M. Keith Bookers *Monsters, Mushroom Clouds, and the Cold War: American Science-Fiction and the Roots of Postmodernism, 1946-1964.* Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001; David Seed's *Brainwashing: The Fictions of Mind Control A Study of Novels and Films Since World War II.* Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2004.

events that directly inspired *The Manchurian Candidate*. Not only does it address fears of brainwashing that emerged during the Korean War, but Raymond's right-wing, anti-Communist step-father, Senator Johnny Iselin, is a clear caricature of Senator Joseph McCarthy, right down to his inability to remember exactly how many Communists were supposedly working in the State Department. The twist, of course, is that Iselin is actually a front-man for the Communist conspiracy, making his radical anti-Communism nothing more than a convenient political platform from which to launch a secret totalitarian invasion. When analyzed in such geopolitical terms, the threat originates with some external enemy and the emotional transformation becomes a sign of one's collusion with or subversion by this enemy.

Others located the inspiration for these narratives of emotional transformation much closer to home, arguing that Communism itself was not the cause of Americans' dehumanization but was instead a type of secondary infection that had taken advantage of native weaknesses in the American psyche. In his "Long Telegram" of 1946, George Kennan warned that Communism was like a "malignant parasite which feeds only on diseased tissue" (17). Priscilla Wald elaborates on this "viral" perception of Communism in her analysis of the body-snatchers narrative in *Contagious: Cultures, Carriers, and the Outbreak Narrative* (2008). Mapping the rhetoric of virology onto the spread of Communism, Wald argues, tapped into conservative fears regarding degeneration and miscegenation that were inspired by the Civil Rights and sexual liberation movements. Such a formulation implied that Americans needed to "inoculate" themselves against the threat of Communism by identifying and eliminating the native sources of their psychic degeneration. The notion that Americans as a people were somehow becoming

emotionally and psychologically weaker was not a new one. Theodore Roosevelt had made a similar suggestion in his arguments about the value of "the strenuous life." The idea increased in popularity during the twentieth-century after large numbers of American men were disqualified or discharged from service during World War II on the basis of psychological dysfunction (Herman 89), and after the publication of Eugene Kinkaid's *In Every War But One* (1959), which used US Army research data to argue (rather hyperbolically) that American POWs in Korea had readily submitted to their Communist enemies. But if foreign Communists were simply savvy opportunists, who were the true architects of America's psychological transformation?

According to a number of mid-century social critics blame could be laid squarely at the feet of American women, specifically American mothers. In interviews many loyal Korean War POWs were quick to attribute the weaknesses of those who collaborated to maternal influence. In an interview with a *Saturday Evening Post* reporter, Sgt. Lloyd W. Pete said, "These spoiled and pampered kids—and there were lots of them, believe me—died like lice in prison camps...Too much mamma" (Ulman 64). Sgt. Thompson Morse agreed with him, saying, "What would I do if it was my Army? I'd kick the Red Cross and the women off the post. I'd cut down on leave and tell the families to go soak their heads until their man finished his hitch and got hard enough inside and out" (67). In the opinion of these soldiers, it was no longer "this man's army" but "Mom's" army, a softer, weaker, neurotic version of itself. Several years earlier, author and social critic Philip Wylie (whose nuclear apocalypse novel *Tomorrow!* I analyze in Chapter 1) published his best-selling essay collection, *Generation of Vipers* (1942), in which he criticized many different aspects of American culture, politics, and society. What many readers latched

onto in this critique of modern American life, however, was Wylie's coining of the term "Momism" to describe what he believed was an unnatural growth in and perversion of maternal power and influence that was undermining American masculinity and threatening the future of the nation.

Calling America "a matriarchy in fact if not in declaration" (53), Wylie asserted that "Moms" were deliberately emasculating their husbands and perverting the natural Oedipal development of their sons to ensure that every aspect of American life from local politics and international warfare to the production of radio entertainment and consumer goods was ultimately in the service of their own interests rather than the best interests of the nation. "Mom" dominated every aspect of her son's psyche, including "that part of her boy's personality which should have become the love of a female contemporary" (208). As a result of "Mom's" pernicious influence, generations of American men were being trapped in a state of virtual serfdom and perpetual immaturity, and—lacking mature partners of their own—generations of American women were becoming "Moms" themselves. For Wylie, Momism was like a virus. It corrupted existing social, psychological, and economic systems, weakening the overall health of the nation and producing nothing but more copies of itself.

In his landmark study of American culture and Cold War cinema, Michael Rogin argues that Don Siegel's *The Invasion of the Body Snatchers* and John Frankenheimer's *The Manchurian Candidate* were part of a body of science fiction films thank linked Cold War America's fears of Communist invasion to anxieties over excessive maternal influence. In these films, Rogin argues, "Indifferent female reproductive power...proliferates interchangeable identities. The aliens of cold war science fiction are

deliberate stand-ins for Communists. The films suggest, however, that the menace of alien invasion lay not so much in the power of a foreign state as in the obliteration of paternal inheritance and the triumph of mass society" (245-6). According to the logic of traditional domestic ideology, the mother "made her son feel loved by sacrificing her identity to his" (265). But the rapacious "Mom" turned that love into a trap that forced her son to sacrifice his individualism to her own power. The alien pods in *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* possess uncanny reproductive power, but "the creatures they create are interchangeable parts, members of a mass society," they "lack the stamp of individuality" (265). Ultimately, what made Momism so threatening was the way it corrupted (masculine) identity formation, resulting in the development of the same kind of dependent, interchangeable, submissive personalities characteristic of a totalitarian regime. "Moms" were creating a type of mass society in which imitation and submission were replacing difference and individualism. But were "Moms"—that is, the actual women of Cold War America—the true authors of this change?

As I will argue over the course of this chapter, the body-snatchers and Manchurian Candidate narratives are best understood as arising from mid-century anxieties over the reproduction of *emotional labor*. The concept of emotional labor comes in part from sociologist Arlie Russell Hochschild's *The Managed Heart:*Commercialization of Human Feeling (1983), where it is used to describe "the management of feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display" performed by service sector employees like airline stewardesses. Employees in these types of service positions must "induce or suppress feeling [in themselves] in order to sustain the outward countenance that produces the proper state of mind in others" (7).

This type of labor requires employees to transform intimate aspects of themselves—their personalities and feelings—into commodities that others are able to consume. Service sector employees, Hochschild argues, are forced to modify and instrumentalize their own emotions according to standards established by the "feeling rules" of their particular employer or occupation. But "when we succeed in lending our feelings to the organizational engineers of worker-customer relations—we may pay a cost in how we hear our feelings and a cost in what, for better or worse, they tell us about ourselves" (21). Just as individuals could become alienated from the products of their hands in a goods-producing society, so too could they become alienated from the products of their own hearts. Therefore the more emotional labor an individual is called on to perform, and the less they are able to control the "feeling rules" that manage that behavior, the more they come to feel estranged and alienated from their own emotions.

I use emotional labor to refer to a much broader range of practices and relationships that does Hochschild. Her study refers primarily to the labor of women (and some men) in low-prestige service positions (i.e. stewardesses and debt collectors) whereas I also use it to refer to the emotional exchanges between lovers, the maternal labor of childrearing, and the professional personas required of doctors and "organization" men. Indeed, emotion management itself is a type of emotional labor; or rather, emotional labor describes a scenario in which one person manages their emotions in order to produce an emotional product that someone else consumes. Sometimes this exchange is explicitly performed for a client or customer in exchange for a wage, but much more frequently it is attached to a particular social role (wife, mother, doctor), and who consumes and who produces is influenced by each party's position within mid-

century hierarchies of race, class, and gender. Classifying romantic and maternal love as types of emotional labor is not meant to divorce such relationships and emotions from their natural human origins or to imply that they are necessarily insincere. Instead, I have categorized them as such to highlight the way various cultural authorities sought to regulate and exploit the production and circulation of emotion. As I have argued over the course of this project, the postwar period witnessed tremendous growth in the authority of psychologists and other social scientists whose expertise was used to "standardize" various aspects of American emotional culture. As this culture of emotional standardization increased in scope, so too did the demand for emotional labor and its associated risk of emotional alienation.

Unlike previous chapters, which each dealt with the emotion management of a specific emotion, this chapter examines scenarios of emotion management "gone wrong." The body-snatchers and Manchurian candidate narratives use metaphors of alien "podification" and brainwashing to dramatize processes of emotional alienation that were far more mundane in origin. In *American Cool: Constructing a Twentieth-Century Emotional Style* (1994) historian Peter N. Stearns argues that significant changes in the social and economic institutions structuring American society led to corresponding changes in the nation's emotionology:

The growth of managerial bureaucracies, particularly in corporations but also in sectors such as school administrations and other public agencies, called for new qualities that were different from the real or imagined virtues of the Victorian entrepreneur...at the same time, the rise of the service sector, with a growing number of jobs in sales, clerical work, and the like, called for what came to be known as "people skills," which had received far less emphasis in the production-oriented nineteenth century. (214-5)

This changing social and economic environment forced Cold War Americans to adopt new emotional roles that clashed with traditional assumptions regarding the gendered division of emotional. The men who joined the ranks of these new professional and managerial organizations were still producers of a sort, but they were now producers of emotion, a type of labor traditionally associated with women, and their membership in the postwar middleclass came at the cost of their own emotional subordination. ¹⁸

American women were expected to contribute to this new emotional economy as well, sometimes as members of organizations themselves, but most frequently as emotional "refueling stations" for their husbands ¹⁹ or as the nurturing mothers of future organization men. Either way, it was the organization that was the ultimate beneficiary and consumer of the products of Americans' emotional labor.

The rest of this chapter is devoted to examining how the body-snatchers and Manchurian candidate narratives arose from and responded to this increased demand for emotional labor and its alienating effects. I will begin by analyzing how the postwar "psychological turn" created a link between childrearing practices and "democratic" personality development that was especially critical of American motherhood. "Momist" social critics and psychologists like Philip Wylie and Edward Strecker, I will argue, believed that American women were failing to perform the emotional labor of raising democratic children. Instead, they produced emotionally immature offspring who were incapable of fulfilling the emotional duties expected of Cold War citizens. The only way

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¹⁸ Think, for instance, of the case of *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* discussed last chapter. When Tom Rath takes a job at United Broadcasting Corporation he is told, "You won't have any real profession—your profession will be pleasing Hopkins [his boss]" (36). And this new position requires him to perform such feminine-coded work as ordering flowers for Hopkins' hotel room and (suggestively) testing the firmness of his mattress.

¹⁹ See William H. Whyte's articles "The Wives of Management" *Fortune* (October 1951): 86-88, 204-213; and "The Corporation and the Wife" *Fortune* (November 1951): 109-111.

to correct this defect in the American character—which was frequently framed as a "crisis of masculinity"—was to ensure women fulfilled their "natural" feminine roles as nurturers and producers of emotional labor. Such "Momist" critiques of American society were strongly influenced by the dynamics of the Freudian Oedipus complex, so they made for very dramatic storytelling, but like many such attempts to "psychologize" social problems, they diverted attention from the structural and economic sources of America's changing social dynamics, a point Michael Rogin raises in his own analysis.

To overcome this limitation, I will draw on the work of mid-century social critics like C. Wright Mills and Erich Fromm to show that such attempts restore a "natural" emotional order were ultimately unable to solve Americans' emotional anxieties because those problems did not originate in the home or in changing gender relations themselves. "Momism" was part of a much more widespread problem of emotional inauthenticity plaguing Cold War society. Whereas Hochschild locates emotional alienation in the service occupation itself, Mills believed that "the salesman's world has now become everybody's world" (White Collar 161). The problem with emotional labor was that it was no longer confined just to a single occupational field or even to the workplace at large. Instead relationships of all sorts—including intimate emotional relationships were built around a culture of psychological adjustment that encouraged Cold War Americans to think of themselves and their emotions as commodities to be modified in keeping with the demands of an ever-changing "personality market." The result, Fromm warned in *The Sane Society* (1955), was the creation an "alienated personality" in which the individual loses "almost all sense of self, of [themselves] as a unique and induplicable entity" (142-3). The ultimate source of this rapidly-expanding feeling of alienation, I will

argue, was the postwar culture of emotion management itself, which equated "mental health" and "emotional maturity" with the ability to "adjust" one's personality and emotions to meet America's increasing demand for emotional labor.

The second half of this chapter analyzes how the body-snatchers and Manchurian candidate narratives both reproduce aspects of the dynamics described above and try to overcome them. I have chosen to analyze both the novel and film versions of these narratives because each emphasizes different emotional themes and offers a slightly different political message based on the possibilities offered by its particular medium. I begin with Jack Finney's 1955 novel, which is a nostalgic lament for a lost period of emotional authenticity. Finney offers readers direct access to Miles' thoughts and feelings, exposing his emotional exhaustion, and offering podification as a tempting (and understandable) escape from his taxing emotional responsibilities. In the end, Finney becomes trapped within the limits of Miles' perspective, and the novel can only offer readers a fantasy of idyllic small-town domesticity as an antidote to the problem of emotional alienation. From the outset, director Don Siegel wanted his film to offer a more activist message, so he displaces Miles' temptation onto Becky who—in a radical departure from Finney's original story—succumbs to podification. Her transformation destroys Finney's original happy ending and forces the narrative outward as Miles (Kevin McCarthy) flees Santa Mira, eventually turning towards the camera, shouting, "You're next!" In this moment responsibility for fighting against "podification" slips from Miles' shoulders onto those of the audience. Even though Siegel's dramatic call-to-arms implores viewers to assume individual responsibility for defending their emotional vitality, the exact sources of this alienation and the means for combating it remain

frustratingly vague. Instead the film's representation of women as agents of "podification" reproduces the dissatisfying logic of "Momism." In both versions of the body-snatchers narrative, I argue, emotional freedom is implicitly associated with a restoration of white masculine authority, so attempts to escape emotional alienation are contingent on the ongoing exploitation of "natural" emotional laborers like white women and African Americans.

The Manchurian candidate narrative shares many themes with the body-snatchers narrative, particularly in its use of "brainwashing" as a device for representing a state of extreme emotional alienation. However, by shifting the locus of action from a small town in California, to an international conspiracy involving the nation's political elite, Richard Condon offers a much more pointed critique of the relationship between emotional labor and American politics. As in Finney's novel, Condon links emotional alienation to a breakdown in gendered expectations of emotional labor. According to Condon, the novel "tends to point out that life without love is pointless" (qtd. in Seed 114), and "the love of a good woman" becomes a key element in Condon's vision of emotional development and democratic citizenship. Without such love, men remain in a state of emotional immaturity, unable to meet their own emotional responsibilities as vigilant, organizationminded Cold War citizens. Instead, they become incredibly susceptible to emotional manipulation, particularly via mass media, a theme that John Frankenheimer's film explores quite vividly. Although the Oedipal elements of the narrative remain, the film suggests that what makes Eleanor truly threatening is not her perversion of femininity but the way she is able to cleverly subvert and control technologies of mass communication. For Frankenheimer, the visual aspects of film offer a unique opportunity to teach viewers

to examine their own psyches. He creates deep-space, deep-focus compositions that deliberately juxtapose familiar political symbols with scenes of murder, corruption, and abuse that draw explicit attention to the artifice behind both filmmaking and politics. Viewers are forced to confront their own susceptibility to propaganda and emotional manipulation.

In the end, readers and viewers are left with more ambiguities than answers. The novels offer definitive endings, although the conclusion of *The Manchurian Candidate* is far more violent than Finney's pastoral retreat. Even so, Condon assures readers that Raymond, Eleanor, and all the negative qualities they represent have been thoroughly eradicated to the point where there is nothing, not even "the faintest rustle" to indicate that they had ever lived (358). Like several of the works analyzed in previous chapters, these endings are less than convincing. The films are more honest, concluding with a strong sense of insecurity and urgent need for future action (even with the studio's optimistic framestory added to Siegel's film)²⁰. The filmmakers have done their part to try to increase viewers' critical awareness of the social forces contributing to their own creeping alienation, but what comes next is unknown. It might be the "healthy, happy, and productive world" Skinner imagined social science could create, or else the dystopian nightmare of emotional exploitation and alienation could simply repeat itself, using cutting-edge psychological tools to ensure Americans remain well-adjusted emotional laborers. There are heroic emotion managers in these works, but they are minor,

²⁰ For the sake of convenience and simplicity I have chosen to refer to the film adaptations of these narratives using the names of their directors (i.e. "Siegel's film," "Frankenheimer's film") in order to clearly distinguish when I am discussing the film vs. the original text. But I want to pause here to acknowledge that these films are the products of various parties and influences, so their aesthetic qualities and political messages (both intended and otherwise) should not be considered the products of the director's labor and intention alone.

ineffectual figures in comparison to their villainous counterparts, who are far more compelling. The film asserts that the American people must play an active role in the fight against their own emotional alienation. Precisely how this is to be accomplished, is unclear, but what is certain is that solutions will not be found by restoring a "natural" gendered emotional order or by trying to withdraw from America's emotional economy but by becoming a savvier and more compassionate consumer of emotional labor. Freedom from the exploitative legacies of America's culture of emotion management requires a more equitable distribution of emotional labor for all members of American society.

2. Alienation and the Emotional Labor of Democracy

As I have already stated, "Momism" is something of a red-herring when it comes to explaining the sources of mid-century Americans' emotional alienation and the changes social critics believed were weakening the character of the nation. Fears of Momism were quite prominent during the Cold War period, however, thanks to the same postwar "psychological turn" that gave rise to emotion management and increased America's demand for emotional labor. Examining the origins of Momism illuminates the relationship between emotional labor and democracy since maternal emotional labor was considered the foundation for democratic personality formation. As I will explain momentarily, the exact components of a "democratic personality" were somewhat unclear, but psychologists and social critics were certain than mothers played a major role in its development. Writing in the 1930s, Harold Lasswell, inspired by Freudian psychoanalysis, was one of the first American political scientists to suggest that "the

growth of various patterns of political life" should be linked to turning points in "the development of the human personality as a functioning whole" (*Psychopathology and Politics* 8). Following his lead, numerous scholars over the next few decades produced works devoted to examining national character, child-rearing practices, and sexual habits to determine which personality types led to certain forms of government and how best to prevent or foster their development.

Since mothers performed the majority of the daily work of caring for children, Cold War social scientists focused their attention on the mother-child bond, almost to the exclusion of any other factor. One critic of postwar America's obsession with Freudian psychology, Richard La Piere, wryly observed that some scientists and policymakers seemed to believe "that if American mothers will shower their offspring with love and affection and demand nothing at all in return, the American population will be composed within a few generations of people who are happy, content, co-operative, and, presumably, also prosperous" (2). Making American mothers the progenitors of America's current social woes (as well as its potential social riches) was appealing for a number of reason. As feminist film critic Janet Walter notes, it "enabled an otherwise unavailable expedient: individual therapeutic rehabilitation; and rehabilitation fell within the purview of psychiatry" (2). If social problems originated in the emotional maladjustments of citizens who were themselves the products of maladjusted mothers, then such problems could be solved by treating them at their maternal source. This not only meant that social problems could be solved through individual therapy rather than large-scale social reforms, it also resonated with postwar efforts to "contain" and

domesticate women's sexual and economic energies following the disruptions of World War II.

It is somewhat curious that so many American critics focused specifically on the role of mothers in personality formation given that other scholars—especially those who were working in or had recently emigrated from Europe—believed that overbearing fathers were the dominant factor in authoritarian personality formation. In his 1933 treatise on Nazism, *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*, Austrian psychoanalyst Wilhelm Reich proposed that the family—specifically the patriarchal, middle-class family formed the "germ cell" for the formation of a fascist society. The father becomes the first authoritarian and creates in his children the disposition towards future submission; as Reich wrote, "the sons develop, in addition to a submissive attitude toward authority, a strong identification with the father which later becomes identification with any kind of authority" (46). These findings were echoed after the war in *The Authoritarian* Personality (1950), whose authors found that "above all, the men among our prejudiced subjects tend to report having a 'stern and distant' father who seems to have been domineering within the family. It is this type of father who elicits in his son tendencies toward passive submission, as well as the ideal of aggressive and rugged masculinity and a compensatory striving for independence" (259). They went on to highlight the role of the Freudian Oedipal cycle in the development of an "authoritarian personality," arguing that the rigidity of the authoritarian father's control over the sexuality and independence of his children—especially his sons—led to the development of "a particular kind of superego" in which "part of the preceding aggressiveness [towards the father] is absorbed and turned into masochism, while another part is left over as sadism, which seeks an

outlet in those with whom the subject does not identify himself" (361). The authoritarian father disrupts the natural development of the Oedipal cycle through excessive repression, creating an immature personality in his son who seeks relief and belonging through submission to future authority figures.

So why did so many mid-century social critics and scientists focus on American mothers rather than fathers? Part of the problem was that American men—and therefore fathers—simply were not as powerful and domineering as they used to be. This, at least, was what some people claimed when they spoke about "the crisis of American masculinity," as Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. wrote in his 1958 essay of the same name:

What has happened to the American male? For a long time, he seemed utterly confident in his manhood, sure of his masculine role in society, easy and definite in his sense of sexual identity. The frontiersmen of James Fenimore Cooper, for example, never had any concern about masculinity; they were men, and it did not occur to them to think twice about it. Even well into the 20th century, the heroes of Dreiser, of Fitzgerald, of Hemingway remain men. But one begins to detect a new theme emerging in some of these authors, especially in Hemingway: the theme of the male hero increasingly preoccupied with proving his virility to himself. And by mid-century, the male role had plainly lost its rugged clarity of outline. Today men are more and more conscious of maleness not as a fact but as a problem. The ways by which American men affirm their masculinity are uncertain and obscure. (293)

I have quoted this passage at some length in part because it is very curious that Schlesinger chooses to search for examples of American manhood not in the records of historical figures but in the works of American authors. There are very few fathers in the narratives I am analyzing. Miles' father died some unspecified time before the events of the body-snatchers narrative begins. Becky's father makes a brief appearance, but Wilma was raised by her uncle, who is only "like a father." Raymond's father, we are told, commits suicide after being "cast off by that bitch before Raymond could begin to love him" (24), and Raymond harshly corrects anyone who tries to call her second husband,

Johnny Iselin, his father. Jocie's father begins to serve as a surrogate just as Raymond is ordered to kill him. The only other father we learn much about is Eleanor's "magnetic, pleasing, exciting, generous, kind, loving, and gifted father" who becomes the standard by which she measures all other men and finds them wanting (69), but since he sexually abuses her from the time she is ten until his death when she is fourteen, he is hardly a positive exemplar of American manhood.

According to the Manichean logic that structured so much Cold War discourse, including the discourse of "Momism," mid-century Americans were fixated on their mothers because America's Oedipal father was already "dead" and "Mom" had been the one to kill him—or so critics liked to claim. While Schlesinger admitted that it was "fashionable" to respond to the "crisis of American masculinity" by declaring that male anxiety was "simply the result of female aggression" (295), it was not a position he shared. Instead, he argued that the "key to the recovery of masculinity does not lie in any wistful hope of humiliating the aggressive female and restoring the old masculine supremacy...the key to the recovery of masculinity lies rather in the problem of identity. When a person begins to find out who he is, he is likely to find out rather soon what sex he is" (300-301). Schlesinger believed that mid-century American men were experiencing a masculinity crisis precisely because they were already suffering from an identity crisis, and this larger identity crisis was not being caused by women (who were experiencing their own identity problems) but by ongoing changes in the structure of American society that had begun back in the nineteenth century. As historian K. A. Cuordileone writes in Manhood and American Political Culture in the Cold War (2004):

For better or worse, the sources of an older nineteenth century male identity—based on individual achievement and initiative, self-discipline and self-denial,

autonomy and mastery, male prerogative in public life and patriarchal authority in the home—were eroding. By the 1950s, the shift in middle-class values that had begun in the nineteenth century—from self-denial to self-indulgence, from self-discipline to self-realization, from the Protestant ethic to the social ethic—was nearly complete. The older ideal of manhood no longer corresponded with the realities of men's lives. (135)

Numerous mid-century social critics documented this change in American identity, notably David Riesman in *The Lonely Crowd* (1950) where he names this new personality "other-directed" in comparison to "inner-directed" which was not so strongly built around group harmony. The important phrase to keep in mind when discussing the changing nature of the American character and American masculinity is "for better or worse." Change is not inherently bad. Gender identities and roles are not static. A growing group orientation is not—in itself—a threat to one's personhood. The problem with Momism is that it treats social power like a zero-sum game divided by a gendered line in the sand. According to such a formulation, if men were losing power then it must be the case that women were taking it, so to regain their power, men would have to take it back from women.

Of course this completely ignores that fact that large-scale social changes like those described in the passage above were the products of an exchange of power between individuals and institutions, not between individuals of different genders. That is part of the reason why the various attempts to "solve" the problem of emotional alienation by restoring a "natural" division of emotional labor is so very unsatisfying. The other reason is that the older nineteenth-century model of masculine identity no longer corresponded with the identities and duties American men were expected to perform in the twentieth-century. Trying to turn back the clock on their own masculinity simply left men even more adrift that before. To regain their power, American men—and women—needed to

reconsider how different institutions influenced and gained power from their emotional exploitation. Some of the works I analyze in the next two sections of this chapter do this better than others. The least adaptive would be Finney's novel with its nostalgic longing for the "simpler, more peaceful feeling of a generation ago" (45). The most adaptive would be Frankenheimer's film, which is clearly interested in training viewers to become more critically aware of the manipulative power of media institutions. Condon and Siegel fall somewhere in between, aware of some institutional sources of their alienation but relying heavily on the emotional exploitation of others (particularly women) as a corrective.

To be fair, not all Momist critics of American society were quite so wedded to romanticized notions of nineteenth-century individualism. Some, like psychiatrist Edward Strecker were grappling with the larger crisis of American identity Schlesinger described. More specifically, they were trying to define the parameters of the American "democratic personality." Admittedly, when they spoke of this democratic personality they still had American men foremost in their minds more often than not. This twentieth-century version of democratic masculinity was, however, more "feminine" than its nineteenth-century counterpart in some ways. And there were certain traits—such as the ability to successfully manage one's emotions and the capacity to perform emotional labor in an organization culture—that were considered necessary for both men and women. But the fact remained, Strecker wrote in *Their Mothers' Sons: The Psychiatrist Examines an American Problem* (1946), that "the capacity to live democratically and constructively is acquired only in childhood. Only reasonably mature parents, and particularly mature *mothers*, are competent to teach their children these lessons of democracy" (148). These

lessons revolve around the management of emotion, and the primary labor of motherhood is the practice and teaching of emotional restraint. Unlike the emotionally immature "Mom" who either coldly withholds her love or carelessly overindulges her child's emotional whims, the mature mother "sympathizes with the child but does not descend into maudlin sympathy...she blocks attempts to retreat into babyish immaturity and further soothes the ego by suggesting maturity—'I know it hurts, but it will be better soon and a man like you isn't going to cry about it." By carefully regulating her own emotional responses, the mother teaches her son that he too is meant to exhibit and practice emotional restraint. While emotional restraint is explicitly coded masculine with regard to the child's ability to suppress his hurt feelings (a man like you...isn't going to cry), his lack of restraint is equated with "babyish immaturity" rather than femininity. So the "mature man's" opposite is not the aggressive woman but his own undeveloped self.

For Strecker, the most essential quality required of the "democratic personality" was emotional maturity, which he defined as

The ability to see a job through, no matter what. It is the inherent desire to always give more than is asked for or required in any given situation...It is independence of thought and action. Maturity represents the capacity to cooperate, to work with others, to work in an organization, and to work under authority. The mature person is pliable and can alter his own desires according to time, persons, and circumstances. (22)

We can see a clear connection here between Strecker's notion of a "mature democratic personality" and the new emotional standards of twentieth-century organization culture. Maturity is tied to the organization man's workplace where it shapes his relationship to others, including authorities to whom he must submit. He is explicitly a producer rather than a consumer of emotional labor—someone who must "give more" to others and whose personal emotions must give way as circumstances demand. Such a definition of

maturity is, at times, quite confusing since it is not clear how this democratic conformity to organization and authority differs meaningfully from the submission demanded by Soviet totalitarianism. Nor is it clear how one simultaneously practices "independence of thought and action" and "pliability" of desires. Elsewhere Strecker stated that the only way to become "a wise and constructive non-conformist in adult life...is by early practice and experience in conforming" (163), a statement that is doubly confusing because he also maintained that childhood personality patterns were almost impossible to change in adulthood. In the eyes of social engineers like Strecker, contradictions and confusions like these simply confirmed the need for psychological experts to assist mothers with the delicate work of raising democratic children. If even the experts were confused, how much worse would it be for the unguided layman?

Not all social scientists agreed with Strecker's equation of democracy with a maturity based on emotional malleability. Some, like Erich Fromm, believed that this type of "maturity" was the very thing that was destroying American society. In *The Sane Society* (1955), Fromm explicitly rejected Strecker's formulation:

It is quite clear that what Strecker here describes as maturity are the virtues of a good worker, employee or soldier in the big social organizations of our time; they are the qualities which are usually mentioned in advertisements for a junior executive. To him, and many others who think like him, maturity is the same as adjustment to our society, without ever raising the question of whether this adjustment is to a healthy or a pathological way of conducting one's life. (73-4)

What Fromm objects to here is not organization culture itself but rather the assumption that the modern "American way of life" was capable of satisfying the "the deepest needs of human nature" such that "adjustment to this way of life means mental health and maturity" (73). It is only individuals who are being adjusted in Strecker's formulation, not cultural or social systems. For Fromm, the adjustment process needed to work both

ways otherwise individuals would be fitted into social systems that could not meet their needs, resulting in conflict and dehumanization. Fromm faulted Strecker and other agents of "adjustment" culture for failing to perform the civic and psychological duty of ensuring existing social systems were meeting Americans' needs. Instead of helping people live more fulfilling lives, this anti-critical ethic of adjustment was causing rather than curing alienation.

C. Wright Mills shared many of Fromm's concerns and was especially worried about the many different aspects of American life that were coming within the reach of adjustment culture. Originally the adjustment, commodification, and potential alienation of emotional labor were elements specific to certain forms of employment, like selling. In *White Collar* (1953) Mills argued that a new culture-wide personality market had emerged, thanks in part to the work of adjustment psychologists, success gurus, and other emotion managers:

And from the areas of salesmanship proper, the requirements of the personality market have diffused as a style of life. What began as the public and commercial relations of business have become deeply personal: there is a public-relations aspect to private relations of all sorts, including even relations with oneself. The new ways are diffused by charm and success schools and by best-seller literature. The sales personality, built and maintained for operation on the personality market, has become a dominating type, a pervasive model for imitation for masses of people, in and out of selling. (187)

The problem, of course, was that what people were being asked to "sell" in this market were not material goods (although they might do that as well) but pieces of themselves. This commodification of emotion encompassed not just professional or customer-service exchanges, but more personal relationships as well. The result, Mills and Fromm feared, would be a pandemic of alienation as the commodification and instrumentalization of emotion began to affect not just relationships between individuals but also the

individual's own self-conception. "Alienation as we find it in modern society," Fromm wrote, "is almost total; it pervades the relationship of man to his work, to the things he consumes, to his fellow man, and to himself" (124). Unfortunately for Cold War Americans, it seemed that more people were invested in their ongoing alienation than were interested in their liberation.

In essence, many Cold War Americans found themselves forced to labor beyond their emotional means. The increased demand for emotional labor coincided with postwar America's rapid modernization and the breakdown of traditional social and psychological frameworks for establishing and maintaining one's sense of self. This meant that as greater numbers of Americans began experiencing the alienating effects of emotional labor, there were fewer places they could turn to stabilize their identities. One direction some feared they might turn was towards the rigid structures of totalitarianism. "Man," Joost Meerloo warns in *The Rape of the Mind* (1956), "has two faces; he wants to grow toward maturity and freedom, and yet the primitive child in his unconscious yearns for complete protection and irresponsibility" (107). As Americans' emotional responsibilities increased, so did the temptation to escape from them by seeking absorption into the group. For many, however, stress on their emotional resources resulted in division not absorption. Cold War Americans had to create even more "faces" to meet the changing demands of the personality market. The result is not Schlesinger's "tight-lipped" totalitarian but Fromm's "automaton whose artificial smile has replaced genuine laughter; whose meaningless chatter has replaced communicative speech; whose dulled despair has taken the place of genuine pain" (16). In such a state of emotional artificiality and selfdivision man "experiences himself as alien" (120). This is not to say that individuals who

perform emotional labor are necessarily acting insincere. Emotional labor only functions by virtue of drawing on deep sources of one's emotional selfhood and ability to empathize with others. However, each emotional persona expresses only a small portion of an individual's identity while other traits, desires, and emotions must be suppressed. So it is no surprise that many Americans turned to stories of alien invasion and brainwashing to give expression to the feeling that they were leading emotional "double lives" besieged by forces that were destroying their selfhood and emotional authenticity.

3. The "Simpler, More Peaceful Feeling" of Podification

Jack Finney first published "The Body Snatchers" as a three-part short-story in *Collier's* magazine in November and December 1954 and then republished it as an extended novel (also titled *The Body Snatchers*) with Dell in February 1955, almost a year before Don Siegel's film was released. Finney then published a second, slightly revised and updated version of the novel (now titled *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*) in 1978 to coincide with the release of Philip Kaufman's new film version. Although it was the short-story that originally inspired the film, I have chosen to analyze the 1955 novel because its extended form offers richer material for exploring the emotional and social themes of the body-snatchers narrative. In the novel Finney spends more time developing his story-world by adding additional characters, including a kindly town librarian (Miss Wyandotte) and a black shoeshine man (Billy), whose emotional and social roles I will analyze in some detail. He also elaborates on Miles' romantic history and his feelings towards the town of Santa Mira. These changes have relatively little impact on the

narrative's plot, but they do enhance the relationship between the alien invasion plotline and Miles' emotional state.

The events of the body-snatchers story are narrated by Dr. Miles Bennell, a recently-divorced physician who was born and raised in Santa Mira and who has lived there for most of his life. Miles inherited both his father's medical practice and his parents' house, which he says "still retains...some of the simpler, more peaceful feeling of a generation ago" (Finney 45). 21 Miles' longstanding relationship with Santa Mira is somewhat unusual, as he himself notes: "I don't know how many people still live in the town they were born in, these days. But I did, and it's inexpressibly sad to see that place die" (106). Although Miles is reflecting specifically on the changes that have come to Santa Mira as a result of the alien invasion, more mundane changes have disturbed his sense of order and normalcy as well. The decision to replace human telephone operators with automatic switchboards, for instance, causes Miles to wryly remark, "Sometimes I think we're refining all humanity out of our lives" (44). Miles' attitude reflects a more widespread anxiety of the period—the fear that advances in technology, particularly technologies of automatization and mass-communication were destroying the fabric of human relationships. As Joost Meerloo lamented in 1956, "Technical intrusion usurps human relationships, as if people no longer had to give one another attention and love anymore" (210). Technology was viewed as inhibiting rather than enabling emotional engagement, destroying relationships, and transforming individuals into automatons who lacked sincere emotions. Therefore, while the alien-invasion storyline suggests the arrival of something new and threatening, the body-snatchers narrative is actually driven by fear

²¹ Unless otherwise indicated, all textual citations come from the 1955 version of Finney's novel.

that established systems of relationships and identification were being irreparably transformed by the forces of modernization.

Miles' fears arise from the loss of the familiar emotional relationships of his childhood that helped him define his own identity and his place within society. These fears are neatly illustrated by Miles' encounter with Miss Wyandotte, the town librarian. When Miles goes to the library to research the mysterious events occurring around town, he is initially reassured by Miss Wyandotte's presence: "She was wonderful with children—she had an enormous natural and interested patience—and as a kid, I always remembered, you felt welcome there, and not an intruder. Miss Wyandotte was one of my favorite people, and now as we stopped by her desk and greeted her, she smiled, a bright, really pleased smile that made you glad you were here" (113-114). Miss Wyandotte is a defining figure of Miles' childhood, and the visit to her library offers Miles a muchneeded opportunity to reorient himself in the midst of the bewildering changes that have been reshaping Santa Mira. Miles takes comfort in Miss Wyandotte's smile as something that connects him to the "simpler, more peaceful" feelings of his carefree childhood, but this moment of security is short lived. Moments later Miles catches a different expression on Miss Wyandotte's face and is terrified to discover "there was nothing there now, in that gaze, nothing in common with me" (116). Miss Wyandotte has become a pod-person, and the loss of her warmth and affection means not only her own destruction but also a crucial blow to Miles' sense of self. He is no longer a cherished patron, someone who "belongs"—properly speaking—to the community of Santa Mira and can define himself through it.

Miles' encounter with Miss Wyandotte raises important questions about the practice of emotional labor and how Miles' social position influences his perception of the changes he sees taking place in Santa Mira. When Miles realizes that Miss Wyandotte has become a pod-person, he tells her, "I know you... I know what you are." But is this actually true? How well did Miles ever truly know the real Miss Wyandotte? Miles defines Miss Wyandotte by the strong sense of welcome he experiences whenever he visited the library, going so far as to consider her the complete opposite of a conventional librarian for this very reason. He attributes this to Miss Wyandotte's "enormous natural and interested patience," a turn of phrase that acknowledges her exceptional emotional abilities while also denying any suggestion that her "kindly librarian" persona might be the result of sustained and deliberate effort. Miles only experiences this persona as "natural" because of Miss Wyandotte's ongoing efforts to make it seem so and also because Miles would have first encountered her as a child with a child's limited awareness of the complexities of emotional life. The "naturalness" of Miss Wyandotte's emotional labor is also closely linked to her gender because women, as Hochschild notes, "are seen as members of the category from which mothers come [so]...the world turns to women for mothering, and this fact silently attaches itself to many a job description" (170). This is not to suggest that Miss Wyandotte was secretly a hateful person, but she was a human being and therefore possessed of the same range of emotions as Miles himself. But for Miles, Miss Wyandotte ceases to exist beyond the limits of his childhood image of her. He defines her solely in terms of the emotional role she performs, so any failure of emotional labor on her part—whether pod-induced or not—upsets their relationship and along with it, an important component of Miles' self-identification.

The Miss Wyandotte scene is followed by another moment of alienation and awakening that is also closely tied to Miles' expectations regarding the distribution of emotional labor. In this scene Miles is eavesdropping on a conversation between the podversions of people familiar to him. As he listens, the pod-people begin performing a sort of masquerade, repeating stock phrases from conversations they have had with him ("How's the business, Miles? Kill many today?" "Bagged the limit."). They replicate the dialogue perfectly but without even the pretense of the emotions that would ordinarily accompany the exchange. As Miles watches, he is viscerally reminded of a similar event from his past. While away at college, Miles visited the shoeshine stand of a middle-aged black man named Billy. Billy always called his patrons by prestigious titles—Professor, Colonel, General—and complimented the quality of their shoes. The flattery was obvious, but "they liked it just the same," and it was possible to walk away from a visit to Billy "feeling a little glow, as though you'd just done a good deed" (119). As Miles goes on to explain, "With Billy, the shoeshine man, you had the feeling of being with that rarest of persons, a happy man. He obviously took contentment in one of the simpler occupations of the world, and the money involved seemed actually unimportant." This belief is completely destroyed when Miles accidentally overhears Billy talking to himself in a "vicious jeering imitation of his familiar patter... 'That's all I want, Colonel, just to handle people's shoes. Le'me kiss 'em! Please le'me kiss your feet!'...the pent up bitterness of years taint[ing] every word and syllable he spoke" (120). This moment reveals that there are really two versions of "Billy"—the "happy man" who cheerfully shines shoes and doles out compliments, and a much darker, pained version who bears the scars from years of performing such abased physical and emotional labor.

More than any other character in either version of the body-snatchers narrative, Billy embodies the alienating effects of emotional labor and its inequalities. Billy provides his patrons with far more than a shoeshine. His compliments and deferential service affirm their own social prestige. His cheerful patter reinforces stereotypical assumptions about doting "Mammies" and amiable "Uncle Toms," confirming—as does Miss Wyandotte—the perception that lower status individuals are "natural" performers of emotional labor. In return for his emotional labor, Billy receives money but also happiness—or so his patrons believe. Their investment in Billy's status as "that rarest of persons, a happy man" denies both Billy's emotional suffering and the purely economic nature of their relationship. Miles *needs* to believe that Billy's work is motivated by happiness because doing so is the basis for his own happiness. Even if he only halfbelieves the exaggerated compliments Billy bestows, he does genuinely walk away from Billy's stand feeling better about himself. He believes that theirs is an authentic emotional relationship in an increasingly depersonalized and commercialized world. The revelation that Billy is not really a cheerful servant but rather an angry and humiliated human being destroys Miles' perception of himself as a benevolent patron, and he can no longer continue to patronize Billy—in either sense of the word—without feeling ashamed. Miles stops visiting Billy's shoeshine stand in an effort to prevent causing himself further emotional damage, but for Billy there is no escape from the emotionally damaging labor his social position requires.

Billy's emotional labor and alienation are inherently tied to his racial identity. In her analysis of this scene, Priscilla Wald draws on the work of post-colonial theorist Homi Bhabha to link both Billy's masquerade and Miles' discomfort with it to the

practice of racial mimicry, which "is disturbing because it exposes the performative dimensions of the colonizer's identity as well as the racialized hierarchies that exclude the colonized from the full terms of personhood" (*Contagious* 194). However, Billy's uncanny duality also recalls W.E.B Du Bois' notion of "double-consciousness":

It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness,—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder. (*Souls* 3)

Billy does not need to be duplicated by alien invaders; he already lives a double-life brought about by his existence as a black man within America's white-dominated culture. Miles fundamentally misunderstands the nature of Billy's alienation when he references it as a way of interpreting his own identity fears. Billy's estrangement occurs at the moment he becomes conscious of his racial difference. It is exacerbated by the stringent restrictions placed on his freedom of emotional expression. Hiding his anger and disgust by showing his white patrons deference and good humor is more than a matter of economic necessity for Billy when the wrong sort of look could lead to a beating or even a lynching. The Billy scene suggests that the "pod-people" were created to give white Americans—especially middleclass, white-collar men like Miles—a means of expressing a state of alienation and self-division that was already quite familiar to African Americans. Yet, no matter how much Miles fears his own alienation, no amount of emotional labor or social dislocation could ever make his dehumanization as complete as Billy's.

Even though Miles enjoys a considerable degree of social and personal security thanks to his privileged status within what Katrina Mann calls "postwar America's

hegemonic white patriarchy" (49), that does not mean that he is exempt from the demands of emotional labor. As a doctor especially, Miles is expected to maintain a certain professional persona. Excess emotionality of any sort could damage his prestige within a social system that prizes rationality and equates it with both masculinity and authority. A doctor, Miles realizes, is required to lead an emotional "double life." On the one hand, a doctor worries about his patients, but he also learns "because he has to...[that worries] have to be walled off in a quiet compartment of the mind" (Finney 21). Handling frightened, hysterical patients, especially during middle-of-the-night emergencies, requires steady nerves "and underneath it all, to hide from the patient and his family, are your own night-time fears and doubts about yourself to beat down; because everything depends on you now and nobody else—you're the doctor" (48). Patients are allowed to be fearful and insecure, to give expression to the full range of their emotions; doctors are not.

Miles is a good doctor, but he is also human, and at one point he cruelly chides himself: "You are weak. Emotionally unstable. Basically insecure. A latent thumbsucker. A cesspool of immaturity, unfit for adult responsibility" (77-78). The pod-people prey on these anxieties and exploit Miles' reliance on rationality. When he tries to convince Mannie Kaufman that he found a pod-duplicate of Becky Driscoll, Kaufman quickly corrects him, attributing the incident to Miles' overwrought emotional state: "Hell you're a doctor, Miles," Mannie chides him with a frown, "you know something about how this sort of thing works" (66). The rebuke carries with it all the weight of Kaufman's position—he is not only a doctor himself but a psychiatrist, and his censure

leaves Miles feeling sheepish and ashamed of his wild claims. Miles accepts this rational explanation, unaware that Mannie has already been transformed into a pod-person.

Thanks to the demands of his job and the trauma of his recent divorce, Miles is mentally and physically exhausted from the very beginning of the novel, but his fortunes seem to improve when he receives a surprise visit from his childhood sweetheart, Becky Driscoll, who is also recently divorced. Becky—like Miss Wyandotte and Miles' parents' house—serves as a connection between Miles and the "simpler, more peaceful" feelings of his past. Over the course of the novel she becomes his emotional touchstone, somewhere he can turn for unchanging comfort and stability, prompting Miles to defensively infantilize Becky and his feelings for her. When they share a bed, he sleeps, "not touching Becky, except for an arm around her waist, tight, like a child" (102). When he kisses her, he calls it "a gesture of comfort, like kissing a child, no sex in it" (138-9). And when Becky confesses that she loves him, he dismisses her feelings with a joke about an old family curse that would turn him into an owl if he ever married her (107). In reality, Miles is utterly terrified of his feelings for Becky, going so far as to compare falling in love with her to a type of mind-control: "Something like this had happened to me before, and I'd suddenly found myself married one day. And not too long afterward I'd found myself standing in a divorce court. It seemed to me that I was turning into some sort of puppet who had no control over what was happening to him" (103). 22 Miles' reaction to Becky is deeply misogynist. He portrays heterosexual marriage as

²² Curiously, this passage only appears in the 1955 version of the novel. In the 1978 version, Miles and Becky consummate their sexual relationship with no such reservations on Miles' part. This difference presumably reflects the more relaxed social mores of the 1970s where a novel depicting unmarried sexual relations between two divorced individuals could be published without controversy.

fundamentally antagonistic, with women emotionally and sexually entrapping and controlling men before carelessly discarding them. In this respect, it recalls mid-century fears of "Momism"—a theme that appears more prominently in Siegel's film adaptation.

Not only is Miles tempted by Becky, he is also tempted to give in and accept the pod transformation as a way of finally easing his exhaustion and escaping from his emotional responsibilities. When the pod-people trap Miles and Becky in Miles' office and try to persuade the couple to sleep and submit themselves to the transformation, Miles considers it: "[T]he idea of sleep, of just dropping my problems and letting go; letting sleep pour through me, and then waking up, feeling just the same as I did now, still Miles Bennell—it was shocking to realize how terribly tempting the idea was" (159). Of course Miles realizes that he would not, in fact, wake up "feeling just the same," since the pod-people cannot experience human emotions. But as pod-Kaufman astutely replies, losing positive emotions also means losing "the strain and worry that goes along with them" (162). Miles' nostalgia, his childish desire for an immature relationship with Becky, and his constant appeal to the "simpler, more peaceful" feelings of his childhood are all driven by this same impulse—the desire to escape from the emotional responsibilities of living, particularly of living within the complex emotional culture of Cold War America. Miles longs to return to a child-like state where he was a consumer rather than a producer of emotional labor and where his emotional needs could be simply and easily fulfilled.

In Miles' moment of temptation, the pod-transformation reveals its true nature as a manifestation of the Freudian death drive. It is, at its most fundamental level, a desire to return to the untroubled Nirvana of the womb. Finney's pod-people are identical to us in every way, save for the fact that they never need to manage, repress, worry, or labor over their emotions. They represent a perfect—albeit horrifying—realization of the death drive's search for absolute emotional equilibrium. But their form of emotional surcease is still a form of death-in-life that no living human being could hope to replicate. "Living," Joost Meerloo wrote, "requires mutuality of giving and taking. Above all, to live is to love. And many people are afraid to take the responsibility of loving, of having an emotional investment in their fellow beings. They want only to *be* loved and to be protected; they are afraid of being hurt and rejected" (300). A certain amount of emotional labor, risk, and strife will always be part of a vital, emotionally engaged life, however unpleasant it may be. To deny this is not only to deny reality and retreat into fantasy, but also to remove oneself from a system of equal emotional exchange. To expect to be loved and protected without risking emotional investment in return is to selfishly consume the emotional labor of others at the cost of their ongoing alienation.

The body-snatchers narrative as it unfolds in Finney's novel is a lament against change—life isn't as simple as it used to be; relationships and feelings don't seem to last; people change; and for many, life offers more emotional exhaustion than fulfillment. It stops short of truly engaging with the forces that render modern emotional life so alienating. We can see in the figures of Miss Wyandotte and Billy that this alienation is tied to assumptions regarding what constitutes "natural" emotional behavior for people of specific races and genders. Likewise Miles' emotional "double-life" is tied to midcentury conceptions of masculinity that force him to disavow his "weaker" emotions and vulnerabilities. Instead of turning this combined experience of emotional exclusion into a full-fledged critique of the relationship between emotional labor and other systems of

exploitation and oppression, Finney allows Miles to retreat into the hyper-idealized world of his childish fantasies. Miles and Becky fight back against the alien invaders, successfully forcing the undeveloped pods to flee the planet. But the pod-people themselves remain in Santa Mira, living right alongside the town's remaining human inhabitants. Yet now that he is married to Becky, Miles seems remarkably blasé about the whole alien adventure, finally saying, "I don't much care; we're together, Becky and I, for better or worse" (190). This is the sentiment of a conventional happy ending, but it is also a withdrawal from further critical engagement built on highly-gendered expectations of emotional labor. Miles' emotional detachment from the world at large is possible because he now has Becky's emotional labor to sustain him. The pods may be gone and Miles may be happily married, but for people like Billy, the more mundane forces of alienation continue to exact their toll.

According to historian Al La Valley, screenwriter Daniel Mainwaring finished his first draft of the screenplay for Don Siegel's *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* on February 10th, 1955, a few weeks before Finney's expanded novel was published (3). Although Finney was not involved in the drafting of the screenplay, Siegel's film lifts whole scenes and portions of dialogue directly from Finney's story. But the film's ending differs radically when—instead of defeating their enemies and living happily ever after—Becky is transformed into a pod-person and Miles flees Santa Mira. Siegel originally intended to end the film with a shot of Miles wandering the highway, shouting madly about the threat, but Allied Artists found this too pessimistic. A frame-story element was subsequently added so that the film opens with Miles being taken to a hospital where he begins telling his story to a psychiatrist. After Siegel's original ending concludes, the

scene dissolves back to the hospital where the psychiatrist—convinced by a timely accident involving a truck full of pods—mobilizes the police and FBI while Miles collapses alone and helpless. Unlike the novel, Siegel's film version of the body-snatchers narrative is forward-looking. The addition of the frame-story ending, as I will argue, undercuts Siegel's message of individual responsibility by appealing to the expertise offered by institutional systems of power and authority. Nevertheless, the film is a more activist version of the body-snatchers narrative—in the sense of issuing an immediate call for viewers to take action.

Instead of lapsing into nostalgia, Siegel strips away all of Miles' familiar sources of emotional support and comfort as a warning to viewers that they must assume responsibility for fighting their own creeping apathy and the stultifying forces of real-life "podification." Overall the film demonstrates less awareness of and sympathy for the effects of emotional labor on groups like women and African Americans than does Finney's novel. It relies on the podification of women—specifically Miles's nurse, Sally (Jean Willes), and Becky (Dana Wynter)—to convey the horrifying effects of alienation. The intention is to highlight the horrifying difference between an ordinarily nurturing, loving human being and a coldly emotionless pod-person, but the effect is to suggest that women have caused the contemporary breakdown of American emotional character by failing to perform the emotional labor expected of them. The restoration of individual emotional nerve that Siegel calls for is implicitly gendered masculine, and the restoration of this masculinity is premised on the restoration of women's "natural" emotional labor. Although Siegel intended for his film to inspire Americans to fight against the forces that

were contributing to their emotional disenfranchisement, he ultimately reinforces many of the restrictions that were contributing to their emotional alienation.

Unlike Finney's novel, Siegel's film includes no Billy characters and no Miss Wyandotte—likely because neither character was in the original short story. Instead, it greatly expands the role of Miles' nurse, Sally, who is barely mentioned by Finney. In the opening scene of the film, Sally picks Miles up from the train station where he greets her warmly with an inquiry about her new baby and a joke that he would have seduced her long ago if she weren't married. Sally is described in Mainwaring's script as "one hundred and fifteen pounds of yellow, wind-blown hair and prime flesh poured into sweater and skirt" (La Valley 113). And in a letter to Wanger regarding editing changes to this scene, Siegel laments "alas we shall no longer see Sally's bosom joggling up and down" (La Valley 129). Such comments make clear Sally's status as an object of both sexual desire and the cinematic "male gaze," something that becomes even more apparent in a later scene where Miles spies on her through her living room window. In Finney's novel, this voyeuristic moment actually involves Becky's house and a different female character, Wilma Lentz, and is what inspires the Billy flashback sequence. Here Miles observes as Sally carries on a conversation with Becky's father, who is holding one of the enormous seed pods:

BECKY'S FATHER: Is the baby asleep yet, Sally?

SALLY: Not yet, but she will be soon...and there'll be no more tears.

BECKY'S FATHER: Shall I put this in her room?

SALLY: Yes, in her playpen...No, wait, maybe I'd better take it.

Sally's callous disregard for her daughter's tears stands in pointed contrast to earlier moments in the film where she is shown to be a very nurturing, emotionally sensitive person. It is Sally who teasingly tells Miles that Becky Driscoll is back in town, and she is the one who hugs and comforts a crying Jimmy Grimmaldi while he hysterically protests that his mother isn't really his mother. Sally is defined by her emotional labor; she is a constant source of desire and mothering for Miles and viewers alike. Her transformation into a cold, pitiless pod-person is meant to strike viewers as a horrifying perversion of her natural emotional essence. It is meant to inspire fear—both at the horrifying effects of the transformation and by suggesting that even that most intimate of relationships, the mother-child bond, was undergoing a dangerous transformation.

Even more clearly than in Finney's original story, Siegel's film reflects fears of "Momism" and its deleterious effect on society. When Sally coldly transforms her infant child into a pod-person, she renders literal and immediate the process whereby "Moms" withhold their maternal love, failing to perform the emotional labor of childrearing.

Strecker stressed that a "real" mother's "major purpose is to produce a proper balance of give-and-take in her children, so that they may attain full-statured personal and social maturity" (37). However, the give-and-take of emotional labor is balanced differently for women and men. The emotional labor of women is primarily expressive; they are expected to nurture others, to mother children, and to give themselves emotionally (and sometimes sexually) to the men who rely on them for comfort. This is shown repeatedly in the body-snatchers narrative when Miles turns to various women for support only to be denied the emotional labor he is used to receiving. When these women withhold their emotional labor, they are seen as betraying not only Miles but also their "natural"

femininity and—potentially—their nation. The emotional labor of men is primarily repressive; they are expected to conceal emotions that are considered weak, feminine, or irrational. Masculine authority and maturity are equated with emotional self-control. A man without the proper emotional control risks being deemed irrational, feminine, or a "sissy." These emotional roles deny both men and women the full freedom of emotional expression and self-determination. Women, however, are held disproportionately responsible for maintaining the "proper" distribution of emotional labor. When a man lapses into immaturity or is unable to perform his emotional duties, Momist critics attribute it to an earlier failure of feminine emotional labor—a notion that Siegel's film perpetuates.

The theme of female betrayal that begins with Jimmy Grimaldi's claim that his mother is not his mother and reappears in Sally's podification of her child reaches its climax along with the rest of the film as Miles and Becky struggle to escape Santa Mira. As in the novel, Becky is Miles' emotional touchstone, and he relies on her emotional labor for comfort and stability. When he is reunited with Becky near the beginning of the film, he jokes that he hopes never "to wake up one morning and find out that you weren't you." Fortunately, he knows she's the real Becky Driscoll. When Becky asks how he can tell, Miles pulls her into a passionate kiss, taking her physical and emotional affection as "proof' of her identity. This move comes back to haunt Miles at the end of the film when he leaves Becky alone in an abandoned mine and returns to find her nearly asleep on the ground. He draws her into a tight embrace and kisses her once more. Only this time Becky does not return his kiss, and he quickly draws back. An extended shot/reverse shot sequence highlights the contrast between Becky's eerily flat expression and Miles'

exaggerated display of shock and horror. Siegel describes this scene with obvious relish: "What I thought was quite delicious was the fact that pods feel no passion. So after he comes back to her in the cave and kisses her awake, a delicious, non-pod kiss, he knows she's a pod because she's a limp fish" (Kaminsky 155). According to the terms of Siegel's body-snatchers narrative, a woman's humanity is dependent on her sexual and emotional availability; withholding these things makes her a "limp fish" at best and a monster at worst.

Becky's transformation utterly emasculates Miles; his emotional self-control is destroyed, and he flees Santa Mira a broken man. In a voiceover Miles confesses: "I've been afraid a lot of times in my life, but I didn't know the real meaning of fear until...I kissed Becky. A moment's sleep and the girl I loved was an inhuman monster bent on my destruction...I ran as little Jimmy Grimaldi had run the other day." In this moment of flight Miles resembles nothing so much as a frightened, sexually and emotionally immature little boy, a comparison he himself makes. Even the pod-people are unconcerned and calmly cease their pursuit because they expect no one will ever believe anything Miles tells them. Miles stumbles onto the highway outside Santa Mira where he frantically tries to wave down passing cars, calling for help and shouting for people to listen to his warnings. No one does, and Miles climbs onto the back of a large truck only to discover that it is full of the same alien seed pods he saw being grown in Santa Mira. He stumbles back and turns, shouting, "They're here already! You're next! You're next! You're next!" Kevin McCarthy delivers these lines directly into the camera, creating a clear link between Miles and the audience. This is the dramatic call to arms that Siegel had envisioned for his film all along. "I don't care where you are," Siegel says of the

ending, "whether you're sitting in a theater or reading a magazine, whether you are in the United States or another country. There are pods and they are going to get you" (Kaminsky 156). No one is safe and no one can be trusted. One by one Miles' friends fail to withstand the alien menace until even Becky betrays him. Finally, Miles proves unequal to the task of defending himself, much less anyone else, so it becomes the responsibility of each individual "you"-the-viewer to take up the fight against the forces of podification.

In the end Siegel's body-snatchers narrative suggests that real-life podification results when people abdicate their emotional responsibilities. Rather than pursuing their own dreams and passions, rather than confronting their fears and emotional responsibilities, people are increasingly turning away from them. They lack the emotional fortitude necessary to preserve their emotional richness and individuality and so ultimately seek emotional fulfillment through conformity with the directives of the group, whatever group that might be. Utterly unwilling to reproduce Finney's nostalgic retreat into small-town domestic bliss, the film reveals that even love and romance can be deeply dehumanizing if you trust your heart to the wrong person. It is a cynical and rather bleak message to be sure, so perhaps it is no surprise that Allied Artists wanted to give the film a more positive ending.

Ironically, the message delivered by the frame-story ending is almost entirely the opposite of a call for individual resistance. When Miles is brought to the hospital and placed under the care of a psychiatrist, Dr. Hill (Whit Bissell), he is placed firmly back within the clutches of organization culture and institutionalized authority. Miles has lost his emotional equilibrium and with it his social standing. His disheveled appearance

contrasts sharply with Dr. Hill's unruffled calm, and Miles eventually recognizes his own impotence, saying despondently, "What's the use..." before lapsing into silence. Those are the last words he speaks, and the conversation is taken up by Dr. Hill and a colleague, who naturally conclude that Miles is "mad as a March hare." At the last minute, word arrives of an accident involving a truck carrying giant seed pods, and this corroborating physical evidence (somewhat improbably) convinces Dr. Hill of the truth of Miles' story. He immediately issues orders to mobilize the local law enforcement agencies and FBI, suggesting that this is what Miles should have done all along—turned the matter over to the experts. But "experts" like Dr. Hill are the very embodiment of the stultifying, conformist emotional culture that Siegel used his film to rail against. Nor does the ending deliver the closure the studio desired as it remains unclear if the pod-invasion has spread far enough to stymie even Dr. Hill. He might be successful or he might end up just as disgraced and maddened as Miles, assuming he isn't another pod-person posing as a psychiatrist. Viewers are left just as bewildered as Miles, wondering where we could possibly go from here in such an unreliable, emotionally-disorienting world.

4. The Resentful Counterfeiter of Emotions

The Manchurian candidate narrative explores many of the same emotional themes as the body-snatchers narrative—the problem of emotional alienation and immaturity, the loss of emotional authenticity, changes in the gendered division of emotional labor, and fears of Momism. However, the Manchurian candidate narrative draws a much clearer connection between fears of emotional alienation and fears of mass emotional manipulation. In *Propaganda: The Formation of Men's Attitudes* (1965), Jacques Ellul

argued that modernization has greatly increased the standard of living but has not eliminated political conflict and warfare because it is also a deeply alienating form of life that leaves modern man "a victim of emptiness—he is a man devoid of meaning. He is very busy, but he is emotionally empty, open to all entreaties and in search of only one thing—something to fill his inner void" (147). As emotional alienation increases so does one's psychological malleability and susceptibility to political propaganda, a fact that was equally true for citizens of democratic and totalitarian societies. Indeed, Edward Bernays argued that psychological manipulation forms the heart of a successful democracy:

The conscious and intelligent manipulation of the organized habits and opinions of the masses is an important element in democratic society. Those who manipulate this unseen mechanism of society constitute an invisible government which is the true ruling power of our country. We are governed, our minds molded, our tastes formed, our ideas suggested, largely by men we have never heard of. This is a logical result of the way in which our democratic society is organized. Vast numbers of human beings must cooperate in this manner if they are to live together as a smoothly functioning society. (37)

For Bernays, propaganda is an inescapable but ultimately necessary aspect of modern life. He argued that in democratic societies, those who form this "invisible government" ultimately have the public's best interests in mind and so this manipulation of individual psyches is not inherently a violation of democratic selfhood—at least not a malevolent one. The Manchurian candidate narrative rejects this assumption by suggesting that democratic propaganda is a form of psychological manipulation just as coercive and dehumanizing as Communist brainwashing.

Unlike the body-snatchers narrative where Siegel's film dramatically changes the ending of Finney's original story in order to create a different political message, both Richard Condon's 1959 novel and John Frankenheimer's 1962 film adaptation present largely the same set of implications—Americans are becoming increasingly susceptible

to psychological manipulation, a fact that foreign powers and domestic politicians are equally likely to exploit. Both attribute Americans' psychological malleability to their growing emotional alienation, which has been fostered by domineering "Moms." And both expose the mass media as a tool for disseminating propaganda and mass manipulation. However, each emphasizes a different aspect of this dynamic, so I have chosen to focus my analysis around those elements of each work that best illustrate its particular point of concern. Condon's novel delves more deeply into the psychology of the Oedipal cycle, explicitly positing the "love of a good woman" as an antidote to the poisonous effects of "Momism" on the male psyche. But his repeated use of economic language to describe emotional relationships suggests that such genuine love is becoming scarce within Cold War America's increasingly mercenary and insincere emotional economy. According to Condon, the novel "tends to point out that life without love is pointless" (Seed 114). However, as I will argue, this "love of a good woman" is nothing but a fantasy built entirely on the exploitation of women's emotional labor and the denial of female subjectivity.

It is impossible to truly appreciate the emotional and psychological dynamics of the Manchurian candidate narrative or its political message without first considering it in relationship to mid-century America's obsession with Freudian psychology and the melodrama of the Oedipal cycle. As Janet Walker notes in *Couching Resistance: Women, Film, and Psychoanalytic Psychiatry* (1993), postwar America's obsession with Freudian psychology yielded a ready-made cast of characters and a familiar set of cultural myths that could "be thoroughly marketed and packaged in popular formats, including film narratives" (1). In fact, early in Condon's novel, Major Bennett Marco humorously

compares Raymond complaining about his mother to "Orestes griping about Clytemnestra" (25-26). Whereas the body-snatchers narrative offers "podification" as an extreme example of emotional alienation and a manifestation of the Freudian death drive, Raymond Shaw and his mother Eleanor embody a nightmarish vision of what happens when the Oedipal cycle is disrupted and the son fails to attain his natural psychological development.

There is more behind Condon's fascination with the Oedipal cycle than a simple love of tragedy and melodrama. In "Having and Being: The Evolution of Freud's Oedipus Theory as a Moral Fable" (1998), John E. Toews argues that Freud's Oedipus theory fascinated American psychologists and social critics precisely because it offered a template for understanding the development of democratic selfhood. In its earliest manifestations, Freud's Oedipal theory linked the development of civilization to the son's acceptance of the father's prohibition against incest and his renunciation of the mother as his primal object of sexual desire. Subsequent iterations of the Oedipus theory, both in Freud's own work and particularly in the work of his American followers, downplayed the sexual elements of the myth. The son's desire is not truly for the mother but rather "to be recognized as the subject or agent of the laws that governed his relations to the object and not just as a passive 'object' on whom the law was imposed by force or threat of force" (74). "From this perspective," Toews goes on to say, "the model of a successful conclusion of the oedipal story shifted as well, from an acceptance of renunciation of the object to a transformation of the prohibitive, punishing external will of the father into an internalized moral conscience and culturally representative 'superego'" (75). Without the

development of an appropriate superego—as in the case of the authoritarian personality in Nazi Germany—a democratic organization of society is not possible.

In the case of Raymond's relationship with his mother, the successful conclusion of the Oedipal cycle is disrupted. Eleanor replaces the father as the source of authority while also retaining her position as Raymond's primary object of desire. As a result, Raymond's psychological development is stunted, and he is unable to integrate himself into democratic society where the "responsibilities of living...demanded mutual recognition and regulation of a plurality of subjects" (Toews 74). More specifically, Raymond is utterly incapable of forming emotional connections with others. He lives his life at a distance from others, even going so far as to avoid directly participating in monetary transactions:

Raymond believed the exchange of money was one of the few surviving methods people had for communicating with each other, and he wanted no part of it. The act of loving, not so much of the people themselves but of the cherishment contained in the warm money passed from hand to hand was, to Raymond, intimate to the point of being obscene so that as much as possible he insisted that the bank take over that function, for which he paid them well. (Condon 121-122)

Raymond is just as alienated from the production and consumption of emotional labor as one of Finney's pod-people. Like his mother, Raymond is someone who can "think but not feel" (18). Instead, he is—according to Major Marco—a "counterfeiter of emotions" (205), someone who can imitate the outward performance of happiness, but who is not capable of feeling that emotion himself, much less of experiencing sympathy or empathy for others. The renders him unfit for service within American organization culture where increasing numbers of men were expected to become producers of emotional labor. When Marco tries to motivate Raymond to fight back against the Communist conspiracy, he realizes that Raymond lacks the ability to feel fear as well since "a man needs to have

something to lose to become frightened...but Raymond had nothing" (260). As I shall discuss later, Raymond does for a brief moment possess something that he values and fears losing—the "love of a good woman"—but even this is not enough to free him from his mother's psychological control.

Raymond's emotional detachment and lack of affect are so extreme it is difficult to keep in mind that they are *not* the products of his Communist brainwashing. If anything, Raymond's brainwashing is designed to create the very sorts of connections that he would otherwise refuse to form, as Dr. Yen Lo—the Chinese psychologist who oversees the brainwashing program—explains to his audience of Russian and Chinese officials:

Although paranoics make the great leaders, it is resenters who make their best instruments...The resentful man is a human with the capacity for affection so poorly developed that his understanding for the motives of others very nearly does not exist...This weakness of will is compounded by his constant need to lean upon someone else's will, and now, at last, that has been taken care of for the rest of Raymond's life. (47-48)

Raymond is at once unfit for and ideally suited to organization life. His poor psychological development means he is unable to contribute to the network of emotional relationships that bind the members of an organization together. Even Bennett Marco, who is the closest thing Raymond has to a friend, asserts that Raymond is "impossible to like," lacking anything that "was warm or, in any human way, attractive" (28). In the right hands, however, Raymond's extreme emotional isolation and immature psychological development make him the perfect "instrument" for carrying out the will of others, something his Communist controllers are quick to exploit.

The Manchurian candidate narrative does offer one possible antidote to Raymond's psychological deficiencies—love. If, as Condon asserts, the novel suggests

that a life without love is pointless, the love in question is of a very particular kind. He begins his fifteenth chapter with a paragraph asserting the incomparable value of the "love of a good woman," saying:

There is an immutable phrase at large in the languages of the world that places fabulous ransom on every word in it: The love of a good woman. It means what it says and no matter what the perspective or stains of the person who speaks it, the phrase defies devaluing...The phrase may be used in sarcasm or irony to underscore the ludicrous result of the lack of such love, as in the wrecks left behind by bad women or silly women, but such usage serves to mark the changeless value. The six words shine neither with sentiment nor sentimentality. They are truth; a light of its own; unchanging. (227)

One cannot help but note the starkly economic language Condon uses to describe this sort of love. The traits he assigns to it—value, shine, light, immutability—are the same attributes that have traditionally made gold so appealing as a form of currency. He also repeatedly emphasizes the unchanging nature of this "fabulous ransom." The love of a good woman remains "true"—which is a clear comment on the value and purity of the woman herself. If this love should lose its shine over time, then it must be because the woman was really a "bad" or "silly" woman all along.

Raymond's "good woman" is Jocelyn "Jocie" Jordan, the daughter of Senator Tom Jordan, who is Johnny Iselin's chief political rival. Raymond first encounters Jocie at his family's summer cottage when she finds him alongside the road, suffering from a snakebite. Jocie immediately begins sucking the venom from Raymond's wound, a clear metaphor for the way her love is supposed to "cure" the poison of Eleanor's "Momism." The distribution of emotional labor within their relationship is decidedly one-sided, as this passage illustrates:

Jocie showed him how she felt. She told him how she felt. She presented him, with the pomp of new love, a thousand small and radiant gifts each day. She behaved as though she had been waiting an eternity for him to catch up with her

in the time continuum, and now that he had arrived with his body to occupy a predestined place in space beside her, she knew she must wait still longer while he tried desperately to mature, all at once, out of infancy until he could understand that she only wanted to give to him, asking nothing but his awareness in return. (110-111)

All of the work in this relationship is performed by Jocie. She shows, tells, gives, and waits, making gifts of her love to Raymond, helping him mature to the point where he can grant her "his awareness." In return for performing the emotional labor of both lover and mother, it is unclear exactly what Jocie receives in return. Jocie herself acknowledges that Raymond's mother had so thoroughly corrupted his psychological development he could only offer her "spoonfuls" of love, having lost his full capacity for emotional exchange (327). When Eleanor discovers Raymond's relationship with Jocie, she resorts to the techniques of brainwashing to bring Raymond back under her control, launching a "filibuster" against their relationship in which she first subjects Raymond to sleep deprivation accompanied by a tirade against Senator Jordan's supposed Communist ties (oh the irony) and then doses him with sleeping pills when he begins to waver (113-114). The result is a false confession—Raymond denies his love for Jocie and Eleanor writes a letter in his name in which he rejects Jocie's affections on the basis of his "homosexuality" and degeneracy.

Eleanor must eliminate Jocie precisely because she threatens to displace her as the primary object of Raymond's psychological fixation. This fact is pointedly illustrated when Jocie reappears in Raymond's life dressed as the Queen of Diamonds—the symbol that triggers Raymond's brainwashing and allows his handler (Eleanor) to give him commands. This inspires Raymond to elope with Jocie, enjoying a brief honeymoon abroad, before returning to the United States where Raymond plans to join Senator

Jordan's campaign to impeach Johnny Iselin. When Raymond learns of the ongoing conflict between Senators Jordan and Iselin, he fantasizes about beating Jonny Iselin senseless and shaving his mother bald, acts that symbolize his liberation from their authority and control. In their place, Senator Jordan and Jocie offer Raymond an opportunity to resume a more natural pattern of oedipal development with Senator Jordan serving as a father figure that Raymond can use as a model for his own subjectivity. Jocie provides the nurturing maternal love Raymond never received as a child, but since she is not actually his mother, he never has to renounce this object of desire. When Raymond moves to confront Johnny, however, Eleanor intercepts him, using her own deck of cards to bring him back under control. Under its influence Raymond confesses that he eloped with Jocie because of "his total, eternal obedience to the queen of diamonds" (314). In a sense he has simply traded one master for another, never developing an appropriate "superego" of his own. Whether further exposure to Jocie's love would have broken this conditioning, restored Raymond's psychological independence, and allowed him to finally develop into a mature, democratic subject remains unknown. Under the influence of Eleanor's commands, Raymond kills Senator Jordan and Jocie, an event that destroys any possibility of future subjectivity—in Condon's novel at least. The ending of Frankenheimer's film differs slightly, with a bereaved Raymond choosing to kill Eleanor, Johnny, and himself in a final act of destructive self-assertion, a point I will return to in my conclusion.

Eleanor Iselin is the undisputed controller of Raymond's psyche and—as my analysis of Frankenheimer's film will show—the primary architect of Johnny Iselin's political campaign, a combination that very nearly gives her and her Communist

conspirators control of the White House. But what motivates Eleanor's actions? Condon explicitly links her psychological abuse of Raymond and her desire for political power to an incestuous relationship with her father, who abuses Eleanor from the time she is ten years old until his death when she is fourteen. Because of their incestuous relationship, Eleanor worships her father and resents her brother's assumption of his place as the head of the family. Her brother attempts to force Eleanor to accept his discipline and authority by beating her, something—Condon reports—that,

[Beat] a deep distaste and contempt for all men since her father into her projective mind, and, right then, when she was fourteen years old, she entered her driving, never-to-be-acknowledged life competition with her only brother to show him which of them was the heir of that father and which of them had the right to say that he should stand in that father's shoes and place and memory. She vowed and resolved, dedicated and consecrated, that she would beat him into humiliation at whatsoever he chose to undertake, and it was to the eternal shame of their country that he chose politics and government and that she needed therefore to plunge in after him. (82-83)

Condon's representation of this abuse is largely unsympathetic, depicting 10-year-old Eleanor as an "equal" participant in the sexual relationship she "shares" with her father. Her subsequent political rivalry with her brother and her explicitly sexual relationship with Raymond are explained away as extensions of her original fixation on her father. One might fairly call Eleanor a "sociopath," who is "incapable of healthy relationships" and so "manipulates in order to control her world" as Priscilla Wald does ("Hidden Tyrant" 122), but we must also consider how Eleanor's psychology is shaped by the limits imposed on her by a patriarchal society.

In *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), Betty Friedan asserted that the Oedipal cycle resolves itself very differently for daughters than for sons:

"Normal" femininity is achieved, however, only insofar as the woman finally renounces all active goals of her own, all her own "originality," to identify and

fulfill herself through the activities and goals of husband, or son. This process can be sublimated in nonsexual ways—as, for instance, the woman who does the basic research for her male superior's discoveries. The daughter who devotes her life to her father is also making a satisfactory feminine "sublimation." (189)

Whereas "normal" Oedipal development for sons in a democratic society entails the achievement of a subjectivity like the father's, daughters are unable to assume the same type of independent selfhood. Instead they must set aside their misplaced "phallic" longing to assert their own subjectivity and seek fulfillment through their status as a passive object of male desire (or else risk developing into rapacious Moms). For Freud, women developed a "lesser" superego that was "never so inexorable, so impersonal, so independent of its emotional origins as we require it in men" (qtd. in Toews 78). For this reason they are considered less "civilized" and less capable of full participation in society. As Friedan well understood, the restrictions of the daughter's Oedipal development stem from patriarchy, not any sort of inherent limitation in the female psyche, and we can see their consequences in Eleanor. When Eleanor's brother tries to beat her into submission following the death of their father, he assumes the role of the Oedipal father who must be displaced if Eleanor is to achieve her own subjectivity. However, patriarchy denies Eleanor the right to face this rival on equal terms, so she must work through male surrogates—primarily her husband and son—attaining the goal of beating her brother only at the cost of eliding her own subjectivity. We see this very clearly reflected in the fact that throughout the novel she is almost exclusively referred to as "Mrs. Iselin" or "Raymond's mother" to the point where one has to search the text carefully to learn her first name. Eleanor's perverse transformation of her husband and son into vessels for her own will is not a sign of matriarchy run amok but a direct consequence of the restrictions patriarchy places on female subjectivity.

This is why Condon's "love of a good woman" is so unsatisfactory as a solution to the problem of emotional alienation. As Condon's description of Jocie's devotion to Raymond clearly illustrates, male emotional development and psychological stability are purchased at the expense of female emotional labor. The "good woman" devotes herself entirely to meeting the emotional, sexual, and psychological needs of the man who is able to claim the "fabulous ransom" that is her love. The "good woman" remains constant and unchanging, which means that she has no opportunity to develop an identity outside of her status as an object of male desire and control. Indeed any attempt to develop her own subjectivity would likely be perceived as an attack, since her status as a passive object rather than an independent subject is the foundation on which male subjectivity is built. The simplistic division of women into the nurturing "good woman" and the rapacious "Mom" reveals the essentially immature and fantastic nature of the emotional economy Condon creates. It recalls Joost Meerloo's claim that "Living requires mutuality of giving and taking. Above all, to live is to love. And many people are afraid to take the responsibility of loving, of having an emotional investment in their fellow beings. They want only to be loved and to be protected; they are afraid of being hurt and rejected" (163-4). The fantasy of the "good woman," like Miles' idyllic retreat at the end of Finney's novel is ultimately an evasion of responsibility and social engagement. Instead of addressing the underlying social and economic causes of Americans' emotional alienation and psychological insecurity, these fantasies turn to the reinstatement of narrowly-defined gendered forms of selfhood as the only possible solution, a point I will return to in my conclusion.

Although the Oedipal melodrama and romantic storylines feature prominently in John Frankenheimer's adaptation as well, the film version of the Manchurian candidate narrative devotes more attention to exposing processes of media manipulation. In interviews Frankenheimer reports that he was inspired to create the film thanks to widespread fears of brainwashing and media manipulation:

On another level we believed that we lived in a society that was brainwashed. And I wanted to do something about it. I think that our society is brainwashed by television commercials, by advertising, by politicians, by a censored press (which exists in this country whether you want to admit it or not) with its biased reporting. More and more I think that our society is becoming manipulated and controlled. (Prately 40)

And no one embodies the power to manipulate the American media and control its consumers better than Eleanor Iselin (Angela Landsbury). According to Edward Bernays, "the political leader must be a creator of circumstances, not only a creature of mechanical processes of stereotyping and rubber stamping" (120), and Frankenheimer repeatedly shows Eleanor creating just those circumstances needed to advance her political agenda. Whereas Condon tells readers that Eleanor is the mastermind behind her husband's political campaign, Frankenheimer foregrounds her media expertise, often in very literal ways. In many of the scenes she appears in, including a press conference scene I will analyze in some detail, Frankenheimer shows her literally directing much of the onscreen action. This theme of political manipulation and brainwashing carries over into the film's visual environment as a whole, with Frankenheimer repeatedly inundating his viewers with a stream of political symbols, hoping that such blatant repetition and artificiality would encourage viewers to think more critically about their own susceptibility to manipulation.

The film downplays the less palatable aspects of Eleanor's character—drug use and incest—in favor of emphasizing her control over different forms of mass media, particularly television. Frankenheimer saturates the film with TV sets, cameras, microphones, recorders, political symbols, and newspaper headlines to drive home the highly-mediated nature of life in Cold War America. Many of the film's scenes are set in theatrical spaces, notably the press conference where Senator Iselin (James Gregory) launches his rise to power, and the final stage at Madison Square Garden where Raymond (Laurence Harvey) commits his assassinations. The effect is to suggest that mass media—especially political media—is itself a form of brainwashing that conditions citizens to automatically respond to candidates and slogans without thinking too closely about what they represent. Frankenheimer's fear that Americans were being brainwashed by "television commercials, by advertising, by politicians, by a censored press" was one shared by many mid-century critics of mass culture. In "Mass Culture in America" (1957), Bernard Rosenberg wrote, "Before man can transcend himself he is being dehumanized. Before he can elevate his mind, it is being deadened. Freedom is placed before him and snatched away. The rich and varied life he might lead is standardized. This breeds anxiety, and the vicious circle begins anew, for as we are objects of manipulation, our anxiety is exploitable" (5). If Frankenheimer spends less time explicitly delving into Eleanor's history and motivations, it is because she is not the true focus of his film, however much she may dominate it. Rather, Eleanor is an instance of a type, a prime example of the sort of savvy media manipulator Frankenheimer wanted his viewers to learn to be wary of.

The film divides characters according to their ability to manipulate America's political-media machine, and no one is more of a master of this technology than Eleanor Iselin. We first meet her at the homecoming parade she has organized for Raymond, where she expertly chivvies Raymond and Johnny into place for the photo-op. Eleanor does not step in front of the camera herself; instead, she crouches just behind the photographer's shoulder, testing the framing of the shot. This is emblematic of Eleanor's relationship to media throughout the film. She is constantly portrayed as the *director* rather than the *object* of the camera's gaze, as Priscilla Wald explains:

She continually displays mastery over words and images worthy of a writer or filmmaker, as she manifests the classic personality of the totalitarian leader. Both Condon and Frankenheimer instill in Ellie a deep knowledge of their respective expertise. She is an advertising genius and a brilliant cinematic director with a deep understanding of political iconography and a breathtaking sense of style. ("Hidden Tyrant" 122)

Eleanor is the embodiment of the expert media-manipulator who has the power to manipulate the American public through technologies of mass communication. More threatening than even an overt demagogue because her power and role in the democratic process remains hidden. She is the "invisible government" that Bernays viewed as necessary but harmless, but which in Frankenheimer's hands takes on a wholly negative connotation as she thoroughly violates the premise of rational democracy.

Nowhere is Eleanor's status as a filmmaker clearer than in the televised press conference scene where Senator Johnny Iselin makes his anti-communist debut. The scene begins as a press conference focused around the Secretary of Defense (Barry Kelley), who is assisted by Major Marco (Frank Sinatra) as his public relations advisor. But within minutes, Iselin hijacks the press conference, waving a sheaf of papers and announcing, "I have here a list of the names of 207 persons who are known by the

Secretary of Defense as being members of the Communist Party!" The scene is a direct reference to Senator McCarthy's infamous Lincoln Day speech given in Wheeling, WV, in 1950, and it also recalls McCarthy's downfall during the televised Army-McCarthy Hearings of 1954. As Jacobson and González argue, *The Manchurian Candidate* simultaneously evokes McCarthy's rise to power and his decline:

Joseph McCarthy emerged in the twilight of the hegemony of print; he began as a creature of the news wires, and he ended, sputtering and shuffling, as one observer put it, the wretched, slain monster of the television exposé. Hence, when Eleanor Iselin refers to Johnny's sweeping in to take charge of "a nation of television viewers," she is referencing a very specific aspect of McCarthy's moment, and not just the general, mass-mediated civic malaise of the latter twentieth century: a nation of newspaper readers may have watched McCarthy's rise, but indeed something very like "a nation of television viewers" witnessed his fall. (87)

The press conference splits these different aspects of McCarthy's history across three different characters: McCarthy the showman riding public sentiment and mass media to fame and glory (Iselin); McCarthy the faltering incompetent experiencing his downfall in the televised Army-McCarthy Hearings (The Secretary of Defense); and McCarthy the savvy, string-pulling, manipulator (Eleanor Iselin).

One of the most striking aspects of this scene is the way it renders the apparatus of television production visible. The room is saturated with people, most of whom are operating spotlights, microphones, cameras, and other recording equipment. The scene is so crowded with equipment and people, that—at least initially—viewers must rely on the on-screen cameras to determine who the major actors are and where they are located in the scene. Positioned primarily in the middle of the room, the cameras are all initially pointed forward towards the table where the Secretary and Major Marco are seated. Then, after Senator Iselin begins his speech, they turn to focus on the back of the room where

he is standing. The Secretary's loss of power and control becomes clear partway through the sequence when the majority of the cameras are pointed away from him, effectively excluding him from his own press conference. The drama of the left-right orientation of this scene is then enhanced, as Charles Ramírez Berg notes, by Frankenheimer's staging in depth composition, which "added dynamism by stretching out the drama from foreground to background" to allow for "two stories going on at the same time" (33). The majority of the press conference unfolds in the midground and background planes as the Secretary and Senator Iselin question and shout at one another, but Frankenheimer carefully constructs this scene to give viewers access to another layer of action taking place in the foreground, and he uses the interplay of these different planes to make his critique of Cold War America's mediated culture.

In the foreground at the front and the back of the pressroom are two television sets broadcasting footage from the press conference as it unfolds. The positioning of these TV sets allows viewers of the film to occupy two subject positions simultaneously: the position of a spectator at the live press conference who can watch the action as it unfolds in its entirety; and the position of someone watching the televised press conference as it is broadcast to their home. The televised version of events offers a much simpler visual narrative. Instead of featuring a mass of bodies and recording equipment, each shot is primarily rendered in close-up—especially the shots of Iselin. These close-ups make Iselin's televised image much larger than its live counterpart, rendering him more powerful and authoritative as a result. Unlike the Secretary, Iselin never turns or speaks away from the cameras. He dominates the televised narrative even more thoroughly than the live version of the scene, where his status as an upstart intruder into

the action is far more apparent. Frankenheimer's layered cinematography draws attention to the artificial nature of television. What appears to be the "big picture" based on the television broadcast is only a small portion of a much more complicated and nuanced narrative. Eleanor attends the press conference but remains seated in the foreground, which means that she is never recorded by the in-scene cameras and so never appears as part of the television narrative. Instead she watches the televised version of events intensely, glancing up from the screen only when she needs to cue Johnny to begin his speech and make his exit. Frankenheimer makes her the true "director" of this televised coup, someone who understands the capacity of televised spectacle to fascinate viewers and voters alike. Viewers of the film, on the other hand, are invited "behind the scenes" in a way that allows them to feel as though they are "in" on the televised deception that Eleanor has orchestrated.

By exposing the artificiality of television production in the press conference scene, Frankenheimer hopes to encourage his viewers to become more critical consumers of political media. He repeats this theme throughout the film by posing his characters against backgrounds that are full of political iconography. In the amphitheater where Dr. Yen Lo (Khigh Dhiegh) explains how he has brainwashed Raymond into complete obedience, large portraits and Stalin and Mao are clearly visible on either side of him. When Raymond later shoots Bobby Lembeck (Tom Lowell), the camera abruptly cuts away to a shot of blood spattering across the Stalin portrait. Similarly, when Raymond shoots Senator Jordan (John McGiver), he is filmed at an extremely low angle so as to make the stylized American eagle hanging on the wall behind him clearly visible. Even the American flag makes an appearance in a highly debased form as a cake made out of

Polish caviar at the Iselin's party. The Iselin's themselves are the subjects of a recurring visual motif that repeatedly shows them surrounded by *kitschy* reproductions of Abraham Lincoln—a bust, a Lincoln lamp complete with a shade shaped like a stove-pipe hat, and Johnny dresses up as Lincoln during the masquerade party. By juxtaposing such familiar political symbols against scenes of violence, corruption, and buffoonery, Frankenheimer performs his own sort of "counter-programming." It becomes impossible to view such images unproblematically; instead, they become symbols of the mass-market unification of political corruption and media manipulation.

Whereas Edward Strecker argued that "the capacity to live democratically and constructively is acquired only in childhood" (148), Frankenheimer uses his film to suggest something quite different: the capacity to live democratically, to be a thoughtful, engaged, democratic citizen, is something that people must work to maintain throughout their lives. And perhaps no skill is more important in our increasingly media-saturated society than being capable of consuming and viewing such narratives critically. The entire apparatus of Frankenheimer's film—the carefully crafted press conference scene, the stream of corrupted political symbols, even the device of brainwashing itself—all are designed to encourage viewers to look for the man (or woman) behind the curtain of the media narratives they are consuming. While Frankenheimer might have believed that Americans were being "brainwashed" by mass culture, he also clearly believed that same culture—in the form of works like his film—could be used to teach people to be more critically-astute Cold War citizens.

In Condon's novel, Raymond is never able to break free of his programming.

Instead, after he kills Senator Jordan and Jocie, he is picked up by Maj. Marco who uses

the Queen of Diamonds to force Raymond to reveal the exact details of the final assassination that the Communists have planned. He then issues new orders for Raymond to follow. Instead of killing the Republican presidential nominee as originally ordered, Raymond is told to assassinate his stepfather and his mother. After he carries out these killings, Marco once again uses the Queen of Diamonds to give Raymond orders, this time directing him to commit suicide. Marco appeals to the sanctity of America's patriotic heritage and its patriarchal institutions to justify his actions, thinking "of his father and his grandfather and of their Army" (347), which Raymond and Eleanor have defiled and corrupted. In the end Marco does not simply want to kill Raymond, he wants to erase his very existence, and the novel closes with Marco's satisfied reflection that there is now no sign of Raymond Shaw "ever having lived" (358). Many critics have interpreted Raymond's death as an attempt to stamp out the immature, neurotic form of masculinity he represents, something that would be in keeping with the hyper-masculine politics of the rest of Condon's novel.

Frankenheimer objected to this ending because he felt it was immoral, refusing to "do anything where the hero was a killer" (Armstrong 68). Instead of using Raymond's brainwashing against him, Marco attempts to override it entirely. "The wires have been pulled," he tells Raymond, "They can't touch you anymore. You're free." In the end, Raymond himself chooses to kill Iselin and Eleanor, telling Marco, "You couldn't have stopped them. The Army couldn't have stopped them. So I had to." Raymond's force of personality in this final speech, his insistent "I," is startling. As Greil Marcus describes it, "he speaks as a human being, as a man possessed—as a man possessed, finally, by himself" (36). But this self-possession leads immediately to an act of self-destruction as

Raymond turns the gun on himself. Whereas Condon ends with the complete obliteration of Raymond's selfhood at Marco's hands, Frankenheimer has Marco attempt to restore that selfhood and set Raymond free. It is, in many ways, a far more romantic ending, asserting as it does that anyone—no matter how enslaved—can eventually be liberated. In either case, with the emotionally compromised Raymond Shaw and his perverse, manipulative "Mom" eliminated, the natural order of things is restored—or is it?

The Manchurian candidate narrative shares with the body-snatchers narrative the quality of having a somewhat ambiguous ending. Although Condon views the deaths of Raymond, Eleanor, and Johnny Iselin as having solved the problem, what is to prevent another political demagogue or Communist conspirator from exploiting the same emotional alienation and psychological weaknesses that made Raymond, Marco, and their fellow platoon members so easy to brainwash? While Raymond was raised in a particularly toxic emotional environment, his alienation and psychological malleability are simply a much more extreme version of a problem that many critics of the period viewed as an endemic feature of American Life. In 21 Stayed: The Story of the American GIs Who Chose Communist China (1955), journalist Virginia Pasley traveled to the hometowns of the twenty-one Korean War POWs who (in)famously elected to remain with their Communist captors. She interviewed families, teachers, and friends, seeking to understand why these Americans chose as they did, ultimately attributing their desertion to deficiencies in upbringing, including poverty, scanty education, abuse, and absentee or overly-smothering mothers. She concludes her analysis with the warning that "millions of American boys are growing up under circumstances that would make them just as vulnerable, were they exposed in the same way as were the twenty-one" (227). Pasley is

at least broad-minded enough not to blame mothers exclusively for this phenomenon of psychological weakness, but her analysis does accept the same basic premise as that advanced by "Momism"—namely the assertion that one's personality is defined during childhood.

Obviously this claim comes from Cold War America's fascination with Freudianism and other forms of developmental psychology. However, it radically oversimplifies the relationship between individuals and society by assigning too much weight to the family and childhood as the primary determinants of personality and psychological experience. As Patrick J. Mahony argues in "Freud's World of Work" (1998), Freud himself was a great believer in the therapeutic value of work, saying "No other technique for the conduct of life attaches the individual so firmly to reality as laying emphasis on work; for his work at least gives him a secure place in a portion of reality, in the human community" (32). Likewise Freud said of his own relationship to work, "I cannot face with comfort the idea of a life without work; work and the free play of the imagination are for me the same thing, I take no pleasure in anything else. That would be a recipe for happiness but for the appalling thought that productivity is entirely dependent on a sensitive disposition" (35). While "Momist" critics blamed Americans' emotional alienation on "Moms" who failed to rear their children appropriately, many other critics saw the problem as stemming from the work-lives many Americans were leading. Drawing on Erich Fromm's work in Escape from Freedom (1941), Arthur Schlesinger observes that "our modern industrial economy, based on impersonality, interchangeability and speed...has failed to develop an organizational framework of its own within which self-realization on a large scale is possible" (51). Modernization had

simplified manual and material labor requirements, making it easier to mass produce good of all sorts, vastly raising the standard of living, but also forever altering the relationship between work and identity.

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Chapter 4: Social Problems and "Simple" Heroes: The Pathology of Race Psychology

"It is only partially true that Negroes turn away from white patterns because they are refused participation. There is nothing like distance to create objectivity, and exclusion gives rise to counter values."

Ralph Ellison (1944)²³

"Then, Marge, I looked full at Mrs. B. and said, 'That is all to the story but the object of this tale is simply this: *I know who makes trouble for me!*"

Mildred in *Like One of the Family* (1956)²⁴

1. Introduction

A cursory glance at the indices of some the major scholarly works on American Cold War culture reveals very few references to race. Taking into account terms like *race*, *racism*, *Civil Rights*, *African American*, and *segregation* and major authors like W.E.B. DuBois, Langston Hughes, and Ralph Ellison, Paul Boyer's *By the Bombs' Early Light* (1985) includes only 7 unique page references; Alan Nadel's *Containment Culture* (1995) has 10 references; Kenneth D. Rose's *One Nation Underground* (2001) has just two references; and Tracy C. Davis' *Stages of Emergency* (2007) has 14 references. Of the works I surveyed, Kenneth Osgood's *Total Cold War* (2006) has the greatest number of references at 25, and Allan M. Winkler's *Life Under a Cloud* (1999) has none. While this brief review is far from exhaustive, it is very telling since the Cold War period overlaps with some of the most significant events in twentieth-century African American history, including school desegregation, the murder of Emmett Till, race riots in Harlem, the integration of the American military, the Civil Rights movement, and the

²⁴ Like One of the Family: Conversations From A Domestic's Life by Alice Childress, p 22.

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²³ "An American Dilemma: A Review." (1944) Shadow and Act. New York: Random House, 1964, p. 316

assassinations of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X. It was also a period of considerable literary output from authors, playwrights, and poets ranging from Hughes and Ellison to James Baldwin, Alice Childress, and Lorraine Hansberry, many of whom were also active political essayists, commentators, and occasional Communist Party members.

Fortunately, in recent years a number of scholars have begun to rethink the relationship between the Cold War, race, and African American literature. Mary L. Dudziak's Cold War Civil Rights (2000) provides an excellent analysis of how Civil Rights leaders turned "the Negro problem" into an international publicity problem, using the Cold War to facilitate domestic race reforms. Both Patrick B. Sharp's Savage Perils: Racial Frontiers and Nuclear Apocalypse in American Culture (2007) and Paul Williams' Race, Ethnicity, and Nuclear War: Representations of Nuclear Weapons and Post-Apocalyptic Worlds (2011) revisit the genre of nuclear apocalypse literature, specifically examining how these texts reveal deep-seated anxieties over white racial authority and the technological advancement of the non-white "Third World." While Cold War scholars are likely aware of the official government harassment that Paul Robeson and W.E.B. Du Bois experienced due to their race activism and ties (real or imagined) to the Communist Party, Mary Helen Washington's The Other Blacklist: The African American Literary and Cultural Left of the 1950s (2014) and William J. Maxwell's F.B. Eyes: How J. Edgar Hoover's Ghostreaders Framed African American Literature (2015) use FBI records to compile an extensive catalog of the numerous African American authors who were also subject to intense personal and political scrutiny by the Cold War national-security state.

Even with these admirable additions to the field, approaches to the literature and culture of the Cold War period remain strongly skewed in the direction of assuming an exclusively white perspective and experience. This is reflected in the works I have analyzed thus far, all of which are written by white authors and which feature very few named African American characters or other characters of color. When such figures do appear, they are often at the margins of the narrative—in flashbacks (such as John Stag the "mad Osage" in *The Hound of Earth*), in menial, service-oriented positions (Billy the shoe-shiner in Jack Finney's novel version of *The Body Snatchers*), or subject to the whims of adaptation. In John Frankenheimer's *The Manchurian Candidate*, for instance, Corporal Allen Melvin is played by a black actor (James Edwards) even though his race is never specified in the novel. This lack of racial diversity is equally apparent in the other primary materials I have examined. Works like William H. Whyte's *The* Organization Man (1956) and the Federal Civil Defense Administration's nuclear preparedness programs were specifically directed towards mid-century America's suburban middleclass. Therefore, by virtue of racist housing, lending, and employment practices, issues like civil defense, organization culture, and middle-class alienation were framed specifically in terms of the needs, desires, and psychology of white Americans.

2. The Psychological Turn in American Race Relations

In 1944 Swedish economist Gunnar Myrdal, at the behest of the Carnegie

Foundation, published *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern*Democracy, a lengthy treatise that would shape the study of American race-relations for

decades to come. Despite his own economic training and his close ties with Sweden's Social Democratic Party, Myrdal framed his analysis in largely moral terms:

Though our study includes economic, social, and political race relations, at bottom our problem is the moral dilemma of the American—the conflict between his moral valuations on various levels of consciousness and generality. The "American Dilemma," referred to in the title of this book, is the ever-raging conflict between, on the one hand, the valuations preserved on the general plane which we shall call the "American Creed"...and, on the other hand...group prejudice against particular persons or types of people... (xlvii)

The "American Dilemma," according to Myrdal was a psychological dilemma of white Americans whose belief in the fundamental equality of all people contradicted their racist treatment of African Americans. The conflict between these two elements created a "volcanic ground of doubt, disagreement, concern, and even anxiety—of moral tension and need for escape and defense" (31). White Americans reacted to this tension by lashing out at African Americans, forcing them into a state of social and economic inequality, and then blaming them for their own debasement as a way to justify keeping them in their "place."

This white psychological dilemma in turn had a profound impact on the cultural, psychological, and emotional development of African Americans. In a section titled "The Negro Community as a Pathological Form of an American Community," Myrdal writes,

He [the Negro] imitates the dominant culture as he sees it and in so far as he can adopt it under his conditions of life. For the most part he is not proud of those things in which he differs from the white American...In practically all its divergences, American Negro culture is not something independent of general American culture. It is a distorted development, or a pathological condition, of the general American culture. (928)

Although Myrdal attributes the "pathologies" of African American culture—such as its "matriarchal" family structure—to the devastating effects of slavery and white supremacy rather than viewing them as inherent racial traits, he nonetheless defines African

American identity in wholly negative terms: it is an imitative, incomplete, distorted, and pathological version of white identity. The goal of African Americans as individuals and as a group should be "to become assimilated into American culture, to acquire the traits held in esteem by the dominant white Americans" (929). Even though Myrdal argued for cumulative forms of intervention in a number of different areas of American society—including measures to increase the educational opportunities and economic status of African Americans—"by defining the 'Negro problem' as a conflict in the minds of white Americans, [Myrdal] helped to focus postwar research on psychological issues at the expense of social structural and economic analysis" (Jackson 279). This focus on the psychodynamics of race relations was also encouraged by the persecution, isolation, and silencing of leftist critics like Robeson and Du Bois who argued that racism must be eradicated via economic and political reforms that addressed the inequalities inherent in capitalism and America's tacit endorsement of colonialism.

It is this mid-century "psychological turn" within the study of American racerelations that aligns this final chapter of my dissertation with those that have come before
it. Myrdal's emphasis on psychology and social engineering as methods for addressing
the problems of racism were driven by the same expansion of post-war social science that
made the organization man and his potential for psychological "adjustment" such a
frequent object of study for mid-century social critics. A focus on the psychological
causes and effects of racism also closely resembles the FCDA's emphasis on nuclear
emotion management as a way of allowing policymakers to divert attention away from
criticism of pro-nuclear strategies like nuclear deterrence and mutually assured
destruction. As William Jackson argues in *Gunnar Myrdal and America's Conscience*

(1990), "the steering of social science research on race...[toward]...the psychodynamics of prejudice [came] at the expense of analyses of how ethnic discrimination was rooted in institutions, social structure, and the economic system" (282). Rather than viewing racism as an integral element of American political, economic, and social organization, Cold War policymakers reframed it as a pathology of "backwards" Southern whites that created a corresponding pathology in African Americans. Much of the subsequent study of racism focused on cataloging the harmful effects of racism on black identity, especially in the areas of gender and family relations. This rejection of systemic explanations for racial conflict is evident in the so-called "Moynihan Report" published in 1965, which blamed "matriarchal" black families for ongoing racial violence and poverty, arguing for the restoration of black patriarchy to combat the alienation of African American youth and promote the peaceful assimilation of the races.²⁵

It is important to distinguish between the psychological portrait of race and racism described above—which was developed by sociologists and policymakers, most of whom were white—and the psychological understanding of race developed by African American authors and intellectuals. Black authors were well-aware of the psychological dimensions of racial conflict and turned to concepts like psychoanalysis, emotion management, and alienation to explain the origins of racism and its impact on African Americans. However, they never fully embraced psychology as a viable solution to the problem of American racism, particularly when addressing issues related to economic exploitation and material insecurity. As I will argue, it is precisely within the works of

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²⁵ For a detailed account of the arguments of the Moynihan Report as well as other psychological approaches to the problem of race that emphasized the damaging effects of black "matriarchy" see Chapter 7 of Ellen Herman's *The Romance of American Psychology* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1995).

these black authors and intellectuals that we find the greatest criticism of the project of emotion management itself, particularly its equation of happiness and Americanness with the values and culture of white America's suburban middleclass. At its heart, emotion management was meant to assimilate Americans *to* existing standards and social systems without questioning the value *of* those systems. What these black authors and intellectuals call for is an ethic of collective critical engagement that would finally address the systemic inequalities undermining the advancement of American democracy.

White Americans interested in the social engineering of race relations viewed African Americans as deviating from the "normal" (white) American in terms of their psychological, emotional, and cultural development. The solution to "the Negro problem" lay in getting African Americans to conform to the standards established by the white middleclass. In *The Mark of Oppression: Explorations in the Personality of the American Negro* (1951), Kardiner and Ovesey unabashedly assert,

Our constant control is the American white man. We require no other control. Both he and the Negro live under similar cultural conditions with the exception of a few easily identifiable variables existing for the Negro only. This means that we can plot the personality differences of the Negro in terms of these variables against the known personality of the white. (11)

Black authors and intellectuals recognized that many of the damaging effects of racism stemmed from the poor socio-economic position of African Americans within a culture that believed the standard-of-living of the white middleclass was the ideal towards which all Americans—indeed, all peoples—should aspire. But advocating for an increase in their own standard of living did not mean that African Americans automatically endorsed the idealized (white) "American way of life."

In addition to fostering a pathological conception of African American personality and downplaying the institutional and economic facets of racism, psychological studies of racism often equated blackness with victimization and disempowerment. This attitude also extended to white perceptions of African American literature, as we can see in the original introduction to Richard Wright's novel *Native Son* (1940), which was written by Dorothy Canfield Fisher, a white Quaker liberal. Of Fisher's introduction, Mary Helen Washington writes,

In an attempt to psychologically diagnose the black underclass, she compared Bigger Thomas and his family to sheep and rats in a psychological experiment, concluding that "Negro minority youth," frustrated and angered by American racism, exhibit similar behavior patterns—becoming either a neurotic rat like Bigger or, like his mother and sister, acquiescent and downtrodden sheep. (60)

Although Wright draws a powerful portrait of the systemic pressures—particularly poor housing—that drive Bigger to finally take violent action, white critics and psychologists found in his novel further confirmation of their belief that African Americans were victims of their own aberrant psychology. Langston Hughes had *Native Son* specifically in mind when he wrote "The Need for Heroes" for *The Crisis* in June 1941 saying, "If the best of our writers continue to pour their talent into the tragedies of frustration and weakness, tomorrow will probably say... 'No wonder the Negroes never amounted to anything. There were no heroes among them" (184). Instead, Hughes asserts that "it is one of the duties of our literature to combat—by example, not by dictate—the caricatures of Hollywood, the Lazy Bones of the popular songs, the endless defeats of play after play and novel after novel" (185). He urges writers and readers to "look around you for the living heroes who are your neighbors—but who may not look or talk like heroes when they are sitting quietly in a chair in front of you" (185). According to Hughes, in order to

combat the dehumanizing stereotypes of Hollywood, the patronizing sympathy of white liberals, and the painful losses recorded in black-authored fiction, what was needed was not a larger-than-life tragic hero but a character who affirmed the basic humanity and power of the average African American. And it was precisely such a "living hero" Hughes developed when he created his Harlemite Everyman, "Simple."

3. A Black Author's Perspective on Cold War America

"Simple"—full name Jesse B. Semple—initially began life as "My Simple" Minded Friend," a one-dimensional fictional interlocutor that Hughes incorporated into his "Here to Yonder" column with *The Chicago Defender* in February 1943. Over time, and especially as Hughes collected and revised his columns for publication as freestanding novels, Simple began to take on a character and life all his own, becoming a full-fledged and tremendously popular figure. Hughes quickly removed himself as Simple's explicit partner in conversation, creating a fictional foil for Simple he eventually named Ananaias Boyd. As Donna Akiba Sullivan Harper writes, Hughes sets up a contrast between "the voice of Simple, a man of the black masses with provincial concerns, and the voice of the foil, an educated black man with a more global awareness" (Not So Simple 40). It is truly the dialogue and exchange of ideas and perspectives between the characters that generates the message Hughes conveys in each story. Typically, neither Simple nor Boyd represents "the right" point of view, so to speak, and neither voice serves as an exact equivalent for Hughes' own opinions. Instead, Simple—a proud "race man"—offers the more logical, down-to-earth, and passionate point of view, which is simultaneously enhanced and limited by the day-to-day pressures of living,

working, and loving in Harlem. As the more educated of the two, Boyd offers the global connections and big-picture understanding that Simple often lacks, for instance taking the initiative in chiding Simple for his "old-fashioned" views regarding women. But Boyd also plays the naïve "straight-man" whose idealism occasionally needs to be punctured by Simple's street-smart wisdom.

In addition to Boyd and Simple, Hughes' Simple series includes a cast of supporting characters, many of them women. Joyce plays the role of Simple's primary romantic interest and is the woman Simple eventually marries in the second novel, Simple Takes a Wife (1953). Joyce is a "respectable woman," and Simple loves her deeply, even if her emphasis on manners and social-mobility occasionally puts the couple at odds. Two of Simple's relatives, Cousin Minnie and Franklin D. Roosevelt Brown, come to Harlem from Virginia, bringing with them their own dreams and tribulations. A number of other figures—landladies, girlfriends, ex-wives, bar-buddies, and even the occasional Puerto Rican immigrant or Irish cop—offer their own perspectives on life in Harlem, although they are typically filtered through Simple as he and Boyd are usually the only ones who speak directly. Hughes used his Simple stories to educate his readers on current events ranging from global warfare and atomic technology, to high rents in Harlem, school desegregation, voting rights, and the value of education. Some of the stories, particularly those collected in Simple Stakes a Claim (1957) and Simple's Uncle Sam (1965), are more explicitly political than others. Throughout the series, however, Hughes makes Simple, an average Harlemite and representative of the black masses, someone who is both relatable and heroic. Simple reflects on the racist realities of life for African Americans in the Cold War period, and while he "never becomes blind to the problems

surrounding him...he never surrenders to the power of oppression" (*The Early Simple Stories* 7). Within the pages of these "Simple" stories, we find the depth, humanity, pride, and optimism often missing from the psychological studies conducted by postwar social scientists.²⁶

Alice Childress, who helped adapt the Simple stories into a play, *Just a Little* Simple (1950), created her own Simple-equivalent—named Mildred—as part of a column titled "Conversations From Life" for Paul Robeson's short-lived Freedom magazine in 1951 and continued writing them as "Here's Mildred" with The Baltimore Afro-American into the 1960s. Sixty-two of the columns were collected and published as a novel titled Like one of the Family: Conversations from a Domestic's Life in 1956. Mildred lives in Harlem and works as a black "domestic" doing housekeeping and day-work in the homes of affluent white Americans. The Mildred stories are based in part on Childress' own history as a domestic, a job she held while apprenticed with the American Negro Theater in the 1940s, as well as the personal experiences of her Aunt Lorraine and other women of Childress' acquaintance (Jennings 8). The format of the Mildred stories is similar to Hughes' Simple series, but the characters are not as numerous or developed. Mildred's conversational foil, Marge, is named, but her dialogue never appears in Childress' text. Instead, readers must fill in the ellipses that represent Marge's comments based on Mildred's reactions. In some ways this allows Mildred to dominate the text, but it also

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²⁶ All of the Simple citations in this chapter come from one of two collections: *The Collected Works of Langston Hughes Vol 7: The Early Simple Stories*, which includes the stories collected in the first two novels, *Simple Speaks His Mind* (1950) and *Simple Takes a Wife* (1953); and *The Collected Works of Langston Hughes Vol 8: The Later Simple Stories*, which includes the novels *Simple Stakes a Claim* (1957) and *Simple's Uncle Sam* (1965) as well as miscellaneous Simple stories that were not collected in any of the novels. Both works were edited by Donna Akiba Sullivan Harper and published by the University of Missouri Press in 2002. For the sake of simplicity (ha!) I will designate these collections *The Early Simple Stories* (TESS) or *The Later Simple Stories* (TLSS) in future citations.

incorporates readers into the dialogue by requiring them to supply the other half of the conversation.

Since Mildred works as a domestic, she interacts far more frequently with white Americans, particularly her middle- and upper-class employers, than does Simple. So the Mildred stories offer a different perspective on the dynamics of American race relations. Childress is keenly aware of both the emotional politics of race and the racial politics of emotional labor. In "Ain't You Mad?" Mildred reflects on the different standards of emotional behavior expected of white and black Americans on the issue of school segregation. In "Like One of the Family" and "Aren't You Happy?" Mildred realizes her employers are emotionally-invested in her labor as a way of enhancing their own "benevolence" but have little regard for her actual happiness. As Trudier Harris writes in her introduction to the novel, "Mildred is a combination of lady in shining armor charging off to attack insensitive racist infidels and the black woman of flesh and blood who knows that a direct confrontation with her white employers could lead to physical violence against her as quickly as it could lead to her dismissal" (xvii). Mildred can protest the unfair, racist conditions of her employment, lecturing, tricking, and yelling at her employers in ways her real-life counterparts might hesitate to risk. Like Simple, Mildred is a "living hero," defiantly exploding and exceeding the limitations of the crude stereotypes imposed on black women. In a world of Hollywood Mammies and stigmatized "matriarchs," Childress' Mildred stories document the rich emotional, political, and social lives of African American women.

Hughes and Childress originally developed Simple and Mildred for publication within mid-century America's widely-circulated African American newspapers before

their stories were collated and published as novels. Since these characters were initially designed to speak to a mass audience of black newspaper readers of various classes about real-world events—like the atomic bombing of Japan, school desegregation, and the lynching of Emmett Till—they offer a very different perspective on the life and culture of Cold War America than that found in the books and films I have analyzed thus far. As these characters continued to develop in the public eye, both authors received constant feedback not only from authors and publishers but also from the readers who read their columns every week, passing judgment on the opinions and authenticity of these "Everyman" figures. The Simple stories especially take on a kind of poly-vocality that keeps the series from being dominated by any one opinion or individual perspective. In these stories, far more emphasis is placed on inter-personal relationships built around neighborhoods, apartment buildings, and kinship networks than on the individual nuclear family. The white-collar workplace and suburban family home are virtually inaccessible when viewed from Harlem, leading—as I will argue—to a very different interpretation of "the American standard of living" and identity established by the white middleclass.

In the following sections I will briefly revisit the major works and themes discussed in previous chapters, focusing specifically on their racial implications. In the case of representations of nuclear attack scenarios in novels and civil defense materials, I will argue that these narratives are fundamentally fantasies of white racial regeneration through violence. Built around the implicit—and sometimes explicit—removal of African Americans from the national landscape, they allow white Americans to imagine themselves suffering through cataclysmic social upheaval without endangering their privileged social position. Instead of romanticizing the nuclear attack scenario, African

American authors used it to draw attention to the irrational inequalities of Jim Crow and to make connections between the violence of nuclear war and the domestic violence of white supremacy. What white Americans should fear, they suggest, is not nuclear war but the explosive potential of an "apocalyptic" revolution in racial equality. The novels examined in Chapter 2 portray a suburban, middle-class lifestyle as both the key to postwar happiness (*The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit*) and as a materialist trap from which (white) Americans must escape (*The Hound of Earth*). African American authors expose the race and class privilege underlying this (un)happy view of suburban living, repeatedly drawing attention to the segregationist practices excluding black urbanites from the world of white suburbia. In their pursuit of happiness, white Americans were free to either accept or reject fantasies of suburban retreat, but African Americans found it impossible to escape from the unhappy realities of racism.

As I have already discussed in my analysis of *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* and *The Manchurian Candidate*, African Americans were seen as "natural" performers of emotional labor, and black authors and intellectuals were quick to recognize the important role that emotional labor played in keeping African Americans in their "place" by forcing them to cater to the emotional expectations of white Americans. While devices like brainwashing and alien invasion were needed to articulate a new problem of emotional alienation among white Americans, white race psychologists automatically designated African Americans emotional "aliens," fundamentally immature, disaffected, and two-faced in their emotional presentation. Within this pathological formulation of African American psychology, the family came under the greatest degree of psychological scrutiny. Treated as a scapegoat for largescale social problems, the black

"matriarch" was similar in many ways to Philip Wylie's dreaded "Mom," but black women were excluded from the protective "cult of motherhood" that anti-Momists decried and instead found themselves repeatedly exploited and disempowered to support both black patriarchy and white supremacy. Finally, I will conclude with a closer look at specific objections raised by African American authors and intellectuals in response to the psychological study of racism and what their perspectives and opinions mean for the entire mid-century project of emotion management and psychological standardization.

4. African Americans in the Atomic Age

When the United States dropped its first atomic bomb on Japan on August 6, 1945, the African American press took note. In addition to celebrating the end of the war, black authors and intellectuals also pondered what this new technology might mean for the future of relations between white Americans, African Americans, and the other non-white peoples of the world. According to historian Abby J. Kinchy, there were two predominant strains of thought within the African American press regarding the atomic bomb. One was largely negative and viewed the decision to use the bomb against the Japanese as a racially-motivated decision. In a September 1954 article for *The Chicago Defender*, W.E.B. DuBois lamented the defeat of Japan, "the greatest colored nation which has risen to leadership in modern times," and warned that "we have seen in this war, to our amazement and distress, a marriage between science and destruction...We have always thought of science as the emancipator. We see it now as the enslaver of mankind" ("The Winds of Time" 15). The second strain of thought Kinchy identifies was far more positive and patriotic. These articles celebrated the accomplishments of African

American scientists, noting "that at one stage of the project fifteen percent of the key scientific workers were Negroes" (Durham, 1). In an article for the *Pittsburgh Courier*, George S. Schuyler writes, "the war has given the Negro scientist better opportunity to enter industrial plants and research projects, and…the future is bright for colored men who are well grounded, academically prepared, and have the industry and determination to get ahead in the technical field" ("Negro Scientists" 17).²⁷ As some saw it, the nuclear age promised a new era for advancement and equality for African Americans.

However, the nuclear future envisioned by white Americans, especially in nuclear apocalypse novels like Philip Wylie's *Tomorrow!* (1954), was far bleaker where the role of African Americans was concerned. The only illustration included in the entirety of Wylie's novel is a detailed, two-page map of the fictional cities of Green Prairie and River City where the novel is set. Major roads, landmarks, bridges, and houses are listed on the map, including the home of Wylie's protagonists, the Conner family. Imprinted overtop of this map are a series of concentric circles. The smallest, almost at the very center of the map, denotes the exact point where the Soviet nuclear missile was detonated. Surrounding this point in a 2,000-yard radius is a darkly shaded area labeled "Total Destruction—Fire Storm." In a roughly 4,000-yard radius from the center is the final circle, shaded in a lighter color and labeled "Severe Damage—Fires Only Local."

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²⁷ Schuyler offers a very different opinion in his "Views and Reviews" column which was published in the same paper on the same day (August 18, 1945) as his pro-nuclear "Negro Scientists" article. In it he writes, "Controlling this tremendous power for evil are second-rate and small-minded men filled with racial arrogance...who believe in racial segregation and color discrimination with religious fanaticism and have not the slightest intention of lowering the color barrier their forefathers established" (7). Perhaps it is no surprise that this editorial, unlike his article, is prefaced with a disclaimer that reads "This column represents the personal opinion of Mr. Schuyler and in no way reflects the editorial opinion of The Pittsburgh Courier—The Editors."

the immediate and most devastating effects of the nuclear blast. Just to the north of the centermost circle denoting ground zero are two large, clearly typed words: "NEGRO DISTRICT." Because they reside in a single district within the urban center, virtually at the point of detonation, the nuclear attack is uniquely devastating for Wylie's African American population, something the racist Kit Stone makes explicit when he remarks, "there was a reason for the dearth of shines in the stampeded mobs: Niggertown was right on Ground Zero" (*Tomorrow!* 295). The Conner family, in contrast, live along the furthest reaches of the map, outside of the reach of the concentric circles, and so survive the nuclear attack.

Wylie's map accurately reflected Cold War America's population demographics. The processes of African American migration into urban centers and "white flight" to outlying suburbs that had begun in the pre-war period accelerated during the Cold War thanks to G.I. Bill loans and racist housing practices that barred African Americans from moving to the newly-constructed suburbs. Trapped within their highly-concentrated urban neighborhoods, African Americans were in a precarious position within the nuclear attack landscape, since urban city centers were presumed to be the primary targets for Soviet nuclear attack. Cities also lacked the space necessary for individuals to construct personal fallout shelters, and the FCDA deemed a public shelters system too costly to pursue, as Tracy C. Davis notes:

FCDA plans in the early 1950s wrote off the inner cities and high density residential areas, inequitably imperiling African Americans, Jews, and Catholics. Creating sufficient shelter spaces would cost \$5.5 billion, and such appropriations were never going to be forthcoming. Besides, building shelters was a zero sum game: Edward Teller estimated that \$50 billion would be needed to cover the cost of "digging deeper" as the megatonnage of bombs increased. (30)

Paradoxically, those Americans most at risk during a nuclear attack—those at the urban center—were those least served by civil defense policy. In "The Whiteness of the Bomb," Ken Cooper argues that the racial segregation of America's nuclear future was imbedded in the landscape of the Manhattan Project itself. Noting that new towns were built in locations like Oak Ridge, Tennessee, to house reactor facilities and the project's personnel, these "Atomic cities" were celebrated in (white) newspapers as the wave of the future:

[T]the uncompromising security measures of the Atomic Cities seems to have been an intrinsic part of their appeal, in some ways prefiguring the course of postwar suburbanization better than mass-produced tracts such as Levittown. Safeguarded by the U.S. military and substantial private police forces, here was security not only from communist spies but from "inner-city crime," "bad schools," "unhealthy neighborhoods," and similar code words for racial conflict. (83)

Large numbers of black laborers were brought in to build these new Atomic Cities—and their suburban counterparts—but once the work was done, they were exiled back to the city center.

Langston Hughes used his "Simple" stories to draw attention to the racism inherent in civil defense planning, particularly the construction of fallout shelters. In a piece titled "Bomb Shelters," Simple—full name Jesse B. Semple—highlights the utter absurdity of proposing to build a bomb shelter in Harlem:

Our landlord last week came talking to me about he was going to have to raise our rent in order to build us a bomb shelter out in the back yard. Now you know, Harlem landlords have no intentions of building no bomb shelters for their roomers. With 50-11 people living in each and every rooming house, even if the law required it, how could landlords build enough shelters for every roomer? (*The Later Simple Stories* 175)

Harlemites were already living in overcrowded conditions, paying exorbitant rent to white landlords while living in sub-par housing. The prospecting of being offered

additional shelter was simply out of the question. Even if it were possible for Simple and his wife, Joyce, to build their own shelter, the existence of such a structure would be deeply divisive, and Simple spends the rest of the conversation contemplating who—among their less fortunate neighbors—they would be willing to allow into their shelter (176). In another piece, "Bones, Bombs, and Chicken Necks," Simple notes that even if the individuals inside a shelter survived, they would emerge to find the rest of their community destroyed (*TLSS* 220). What Hughes is rejecting here is not just the feasibility of a shelter as a way of preserving life, but the entire premise around which such shelters were built and marketed—the belief that the (white) suburban nuclear family was the primary unit of society, and that the preservation of this family in the event of a nuclear attack was all that would be needed to rebuild America.

Hughes also used the threat of a nuclear attack to highlight the absurdity of the racist practices that many African Americans were subject to on a daily basis. In "Radioactive Redcaps," Simple and Boyd discuss the segregation of public fallout shelters with Simple, who complains that he would be "Jim Crowed" out of shelters in the South. Boyd—playing the naïve Northern straight-man to Simple's seasoned Southern wit—protests that bomb shelters would be for everybody, to which Simple replies, "Down there they will have some kind of voting test, else loyalty test, in which the will find some way of flunking Negroes out. You can't tell me them Dixiecrats are going to give Negroes free rein of bomb shelters" (*TLSS* 51). The scenario is a fantasy but it has its basis in the real-world restrictions (poll-taxes, complicated literacy and citizenship tests, restrictive ID laws) that were used to keep African Americans from voting in Southern elections. If Southern whites were already willing to deny African

Americans the right to vote, something that flies in the face of Gunnar Myrdal's vaunted faith in the "American Creed," then of course they would also place legal restrictions on black nuclear survival. Simple eventually concludes that the only reason white Americans would allow African Americans into fallout shelters would be to secure a supply of cheap, disposable labor that could be used to clean up radioactive waste and do the hard work of rebuilding the world.

Whereas Walter White and the NAACP celebrated a pro-nuclear future that would engender new job opportunities for African Americans, Hughes quickly recognized that revolutions in nuclear technology were likely to deepen rather than alleviate employment disparities. In "Atomic Age" Simple remarks that he never hears about any black atomic scientists being put to work and warns that even peaceful applications of atomic power could have devastating consequences for African American labor:

They gonna stop making bombs in the United States and start making all kinds of little old small machines for peace that will do more work than a thousand big machines like we got now. And all you will have to put in them new baby machines will be just a little old grain of an atom. A handful of mens can run them. They won't need hardly anybody much no more to work. So who do you think will be the first to be throwed out of work? Negroes! (*TLSS* 69-70)

For African Americans, racist employment practices included not only where they worked but also the type of work they were allowed to do, which was primarily unskilled. They were the "last hired and first fired" during work shortages, something Simple repeatedly experiences over the course of the series whenever the factory where he works is retooled. The NAACP lobbied the Truman Administration and the AEC to ensure equal employment at the nation's new nuclear facilities—many of which were built in the South—but to little avail: "Although the Savannah River plant did hire a relatively

greater number of African Americans than did other AEC plants, jobs there remained segregated, with black workers assigned to only the most menial and low-paying positions" (Kinchy 310). The fantasy of an integrated atomic future powered by the work of African American atomic scientists that White and others dreamed of never materialized. Even if it had, it would not have relieved the employment needs of the majority of African Americans, who were not part of the scientific "Talented Tenth" but everyday working men, menial laborers, maids, cooks, and domestics. This was something Hughes—writing in the black press for a significant working-class population—was acutely aware of when he created Simple to give voice to the desires and concerns of ordinary African Americans.

There is something more insidious, however, than racist housing, employment, and civil defense practices separating African Americans from the white Americans depicted in nuclear apocalypse novels like *Tomorrow!*—violence. Both Patrick B. Sharp in *Savage Perils* (2007) and Paul Williams in *Race, Ethnicity, and Nuclear War* (2011) argue that these novels are a form of nuclear "frontier" fantasy that imagines an American nation reborn through the regenerative power of violence:

The white atomic bomb survivors of American future-war stories were not simply thrust into a degrading struggle for survival, however; the nuclear frontier allowed them to shed their civilization-induced weaknesses and be reborn. Like the storied colonists of old, the white frontiersmen and the white frontier families of nuclear fiction came to embody "American" virtues as they fought to overcome the corruption of modern civilized life and the savagery of the nuclear frontier. (Sharp 171)

One of Philip Wylie's perpetual complaints about modern American society was that it was over-civilized, with mothers stifling and overprotecting their children by isolating them from anything that could possibly injure, frighten, or upset them. The result was a

nation of citizens that were weaker than ever before and dangerously prone to panic in the event of a nuclear attack. In an article titled "Panic, Psychology, and the Bomb" (1954)—filled with his characteristic vitriol and graphic imagery—Wylie writes,

We Americans shun bloodshed; we wrap every accident case in a blanket and whisk it away in an ambulance... Burned cases—hideous and ambulatory—would abound [in a nuclear attack], along with every other imaginable slicing, gutting, and mangling. Will our tenderminded people stand firm in the presence of such a novel, horrible black-bloody shambles of human flesh? Less-prissy Japanese were stunned near to coma. (40)

Part of Wylie's goal in writing *Tomorrow!*, and part of his particular philosophy of emotion management involved describing, in graphic detail, the mutilated bodies of nuclear attack victims: a man with no feet running down the street on the bloody ends of his shinbones, a mother carrying her disemboweled infant and stepping in its entrails. Wylie believed such images would help prevent his readers from panicking in the event of a nuclear attack by deadening their delicate sensibilities and building up their tolerance for mutilation.

Wylie's assertion that "we Americans shun bloodshed" is deeply, arrogantly unaware. For many African Americans—and the racist whites who lynched them—nothing could be further from the truth. The violent murder of 14-year-old Emmett Till occurred less than a year after Wylie published the article above. Till was abducted by a group of white men who stripped off his clothing, viciously beat him, shot him in the head, tied a heavy metal fan to his body with barbed wire, and then dumped him in the river. When Till's body was recovered, it was so badly mutilated that he was missing one eye and could only be identified by the ring he was wearing. Till's mother, Mamie Till Bradley, had her son's body displayed in a glass-topped casket for the express purpose of showing people the extreme brutality that had been visited on him. Photos of Till's

corpse were published in *The American Negro, Jet*, and *The Chicago Defender*, but none ran in mainstream white publications. ²⁸ African Americans, especially those living in the South, were no strangers to violence and mutilation. They were dreadfully aware of the fact that they could be shot, stabbed, eviscerated, hanged, castrated, branded, or burned alive by violent white Americans. Violence against black bodies—and the public display of those violated bodies (or their parts)—was a favored tactic of white supremacists who used it to send a message of fear and vulnerability to African Americans as a way of keeping them in their "place." Wylie's naïve belief that Americans were too "tenderminded" to handle violence and thus needed works like *Tomorrow!* to desensitize them, highlights the privileged role that violence plays within such nuclear fantasies. Wylie and his white readers are able to playfully fetishize such violence, imagining themselves reborn through it, without ever risking real exposure to it. African Americans lacked any such guarantees.

Alice Childress plays with this very disparity in experience and expectation of violence in her own discussions of nuclear war. In one scene, Mildred's employers and their dinner guests spend time playfully debating what a future war might entail and, as a joke, ask Mildred her opinion. Mildred initially demurs but when forced to respond, pulls no punches:

I looked at those young men in their fancy dinner jackets and the ladies in their strapless evening gowns and I went on, "I do not want to see you folks baked in oil and fire...No, and I do not want to see your bodies stacked like kindlin' wood...I don't want to see mothers and fathers screamin' in the streets...I don't want to see blood flowin' like the Mississippi...I don't want to see folks shakin'

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²⁸ For a more detailed account of the press coverage surrounding Emmett Till's murder and the subsequent trials, see Chapter 16 of Ethan Micaheli's *The Defender: How the Legendary Black Newspaper Changed America* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2016); for more information on the circulation of the Till photos, see Shaila Dewan's Aug. 28, 2005, *NYT* article, "How Photos Became Icons of Civil Rights Movement" http://www.nytimes.com/2005/08/28/us/how-photos-became-icon-of-civil-rights-movement.html

and tremblin' and runnin' and hidin'...but I *do* want to see the KINGDOM COME on *earth* as it is in Heaven and I do not think that bombs and blood and salty tears is a *Heavenly* condition." (160-161)

Mildred takes what is a moment of amusement for her white audience and turns it deadly serious, reminding them of their own mortality and the fact that they will be held accountable for the sins they have committed against African Americans. In another scene Mildred remarks to Marge, "Don't it give you the goose pimples when you realize that white people can kill us and get away with it? Just think of it! We are walkin' targets everywhere we go—on the subway, in the street, everywhere" (25). This radical sense of vulnerability, of potentially becoming a target at any moment, echoes the language of atomic attack scenarios, which typically depicted people being caught unawares in the midst of their daily routines. But it was an all-too-real experience for African Americans who were frequent targets of fire-bombings and dynamite attacks, like the 1963 bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama, that killed four young girls (Michaeli 384). Given this history, it is no surprise that many African Americans (including Hughes' Simple) considered the atomic bomb to be a white-man's weapon.

Still African Americans found in the atomic bomb a powerful symbol for racial revolution. In numerous articles throughout the Cold War period, black journalists turned to nuclear metaphors as a way of explaining the "explosive" anger of America's black population and the "apocalyptic" changes a race revolution could have for white Americans if racial injustices went unchecked. A 1950 editorial suggesting *The Chicago Defender* might shift support to the Republican Party was likened to "an A Bomb dropped from peaceful skies" (Michaeli 298). An article on Emmett Till's murder suggests that another such incident could set off "a chain reaction in every ghetto and

black belt in America" (327). A report on *Brown v. Board of Education* remarks, "Neither the Atomic bomb nor the hydrogen bomb will ever be as meaningful to our democracy as the unanimous declaration from the Supreme Court that racial segregation violates the spirit and the letter of our Constitution" (313). This nuclear symbolism appears in fiction as well. Hughes' poems "Lunch in a Jim Crow Car" and "Harlem," Lorraine Hansberry's play *A Raisin in the Sun* (1959), and James Baldwin's novel *The Fire Next Time* (1963) all combine allusions to nuclear explosions with references to black anger, frustration, and a revolutionary change in America's race dynamic. Philip Wylie and other white authors suggested that the regenerative properties of violence would ultimately be worth suffering when (white) Americans were able to recapture the hardy values of their frontier past. Black authors, on the other hand, made it clear that such violence—whether it came in the form of a nuclear attack or a race revolution—was nothing to be toyed with and should it come, white Americans would hardly go unscathed.

5. The Privilege of Unhappiness

In Selling the American Way: U.S. Propaganda and the Cold War (2008), Laura Belmonte writes,

Drawn together by a collective vision of American national greatness, public and private individuals crafted propaganda that claimed the United States not only could but should lead the world to modernity, liberalism, democracy, and capitalism. Through linking the social, spiritual, and political benefits of capitalism to its economic advantages, they offered a powerful alternative to communism. Propagandists, advertising executives, and modernization theorists worked separately to achieve the shared goal of global order governed by American standards of freedom, productivity, and rationality. (117)

Throughout the Cold War period, American propagandists "sold" the "American way of life" to audiences abroad (and at home) by emphasizing the benefits of capitalist consumption. The political freedoms of democracy and a "classless" society were often equated with the freedom to consume and the purchasing power of "average" American workers. The average Soviet citizen, they argued, worked and lived in conditions akin to slavery, residing in drab, mass-produced housing and wearing drab, indistinct clothing, all while the party bosses indulged in all manner of luxuries. In America, they claimed, there were millions of people like Thomas Beckett (the subject of an eponymously-titled USIA pamphlet released in 1957), who worked at Ford Motor Company, "owned a car and a house stocked with appliances...planned to send his four children to college," and whose "high wages enabled his wife to remain at home" (123). To combat criticism of this materialist portrait of American life, they argued that it actually promoted a higher good—happiness. To be an American, or to follow this model of American life, they asserted, was to be happy.

In my second chapter I argue that this equation of the lifestyle of the white, middle-class, American family—especially the so-called white-collar, "organization man"—with both "Americanness" and happiness carried with it tremendous ideological power despite the fact that so much literature from the Cold War period was devoted to detailing the organization man's <u>unhappiness</u>. In Sloan Wilson's *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* (1955), Tom Rath spends most of the novel resenting the pressures of being middle-class—upgrading his house, buying new appliances, traveling for work, and pleasing his boss. Contentment, readers are told, is an object of contempt among the Raths' social set, a lesser form of happiness none of them are willing to settle for (109).

In Vance Bourjaily's *The Hound of Earth* (1955), nuclear scientist Allerd Pennington walks away from his comfortable, middle-class life, deliberately rejecting "the things that make happiness"—good food, homeownership, professional respect, and community—as penance for his work on the atomic bomb project. Instead, he embraces a radical form of detachment, living on the fringes of society, constantly on the move, and refusing to form any permanent emotional attachments or relations. "He needed freedom," he tells readers, "not happiness, because freedom was all he deserved" (114). In this they join a large body of sociological criticism—*The Lonely Crowd* (1950), *White Collar* (1951), *The Organization Man* (1956)—that made the emotional, psychological, and spiritual unhappiness of the American middleclass a major topic of social-scientific concern during the Cold War period. Such a maneuver obscured the very real racial privileges underwriting this "unhappy" lifestyle.

In White Diaspora: The Suburb and the Twentieth-Century American Novel (2001), Catherine Jurca outlines a tendency within twentieth-century representations of the suburb to convert the rights and privileges of living within a suburb into a type of "sentimental dispossession...by which white middle-class suburbanites begin to see themselves as spiritually and culturally impoverished by prosperity" (7). This sentimental sleight-of-hand allows white suburbanites to assume a position of victimization that disavows their race privilege and obscures the housing practices that were deliberately designed to exclude African Americans from the suburban environment. White Americans might have been "miserable" living in the suburbs, but it was still better than going back "there"—to the urban centers that were becoming the primary population centers for African Americans migrating in from rural areas. This aversion to interracial

living is hinted at in Wilson's novel when the Raths feel pressured to move on from their house on Greentree Avenue, "rising in the world" rather than succumbing to contentment (109). William H. Whyte in his study of the organization man argues that for families migrating outward from the inner city, the "prime fear is the fear of 'going back'" (309), largely an unfounded fear given the affordability of the new suburbs. But it is a fear driven by something sinister: "the influx of Negroes into the houses they left behind is a specter they do not for a moment forget" (306). If outward movement towards the suburbs is associated with one's success in attaining "the American way of life," then the closer one resides to the center and its African American population, the closer one is to failure. Ultimately, to be African American becomes in itself a symbol of personal and economic failure.

Since he intended for Simple to be a sort of Everyman figure for the black working class (with other characters, like Boyd, Joyce, and Mrs. Maxwell-Reeves representing a more middle- or upper-class position), Hughes was keenly aware of the economic, social, and spatial lines separating the white suburban middleclass from the average black Harlem resident. One frequent subject of discussion throughout the Simple stories is the segregated and exploitative relationship between Harlem's black residents and its white landlords and shopkeepers. In "Color of the Law," Simple bluntly says,

Weekdays you see plenty of white folks in Harlem, since they own most of the stores, bars, banks, and number banks. But they do not live with us. On Saturday nights, these white folks take their money they have got from Negroes and go on home to big apartments downtown, or nice houses with lawns out on Long Island—and leave me here in Harlem. They do not ever invite me to their homes for Sunday dinner—yet it's me what pays for their dinners. They make their money out of me. Then they want to tell me not to vote for Adam Powell or listen to Malcolm X because they raises too much hell! (*The Later Simple Stories* 298)

The divide between the two groups is not just spatial but also a separation of sympathies. The suburbs are repeatedly characterized by Hughes and others as the place where white Americans go to forget about the very existence of African American. In *The Organization Man*, Whyte reports that when the subject of integration was raised in a suburb he was studying, the people most offended by it were not ultra-racist conservatives but moderates who were upset by the disturbance the ensuing disagreement created (311). Tellingly, the only time Harlem is referenced in any of my white-authored novels occurs when Tom Rath is commuting between his suburban home and his Manhattan office. Troubled by various personal concerns, he briefly focuses his gaze on "the littered streets and squalid brick tenements of Harlem" as a way of avoiding thinking about his own problems (Wilson 45). The moment passes along with the scenery, and Tom gives no further thought to Harlem and never to the problems of its residents.

The configuration of the suburbs as a space antithetical to the politics and lives of African Americans is so complete that Hughes chose to end the Simple series by having Simple move to the suburbs. In his final column, published in the *New York Post* on December 31, 1965, Simple reports that it is Joyce, his upwardly-minded wife, who has made this decision, which is specifically motivated by the suburbs' association with whiteness: "Joyce says it is our duty to show white folks we can keep a house up as well as anybody else. I know Joyce will work me to death keeping that house spick-and-span inside and out, just to show white people Negroes are not tramps" (*The Later Simple Stories* 340-41). Joyce, who is less of a "race man" than Simple, idealizes this new suburban home precisely because it represents "the American way of life" and is the antithesis of the negativity associated with blackness. Proving they can keep a home

according to the standards established by middle-class white Americans proves, in Joyce's mind, their right to middleclass status and full American citizenship in spite of their race.

For Simple, who is a creature of the masses and the inter-personal world of Harlem, a move to the suburbs is akin to death:

Life to me is where *peoples* is at—not nature and snow and trees with falling leaves to rake all by yourself, and furnaces to stoke, and no landlords in earshot to holler at downstairs to keep the heat up, and no next-door neighbors on your floor to raise a ruckus Saturday nights, and no bad children drawing pictures on the walls in the halls, and nobody to drink a beer with at the corner bar—because that corner in the suburbans has nothing on it but a dim old lonesome streetlight on a cold old lonesome pole. (*TLSS* 342)

As was the case with the earlier rejection of fallout shelters, Hughes' equation of the suburbs with lonesomeness and death is a rejection of the conception—popular throughout novels, television, sociology, and politics—that the (white) suburban nuclear family was the primary social unit of society and the one towards which political action and psychological intervention should be directed.

Alice Childress offers a similar critique of the white middleclass and its isolation from the rest of the American population in her Mildred stories. Because Mildred works as a domestic within the homes of white Americans, she is in a unique position to observe and comment on the worries, habits, and interests of her employers. Childress also makes Mildred a keen observer of human nature with a particularly refined understanding of the politics of emotion. When one of Mildred's employers continuously bemoans the many worries in her life (all of which are fairly petty) Mildred muses "perhaps their troubles are as real to them as ours are to us. I don't know about that though" (92). The larger issue, however, is not the relative "smallness" of such middle-class troubles but the lack

of productivity that stems from such unhappiness. In another story, Mildred argues passionately for the political value of discontentment:

Discontented brothers and sisters made little children go to school instead of workin' in the factory. A whole lot of angry, discontented women fixed things so that we womenfolk could vote. All these different denominations of churches were set up because folks were discontented with one or another of them. Look at these housing projects—they were built because some folks were fightin' mad about livin' in slums. And you get paid a certain amount of money per hour 'cause folks were discontent with less, and if you belong to a union you know full well it wasn't started by folks that loved their bosses. (175)

Childress, like Hughes, argues for a conception of American identity that is interpersonal, rather than family-oriented and that recognizes the structural (especially economic) origins of individual problems. Political change might be inspired by individual unhappiness, but the change itself could only be accomplished through collective action. Unfortunately, it was precisely this sort of Leftist critique of American capitalism that was silenced by Cold War America's virulent anti-Communism. The African American Left was especially hard-hit as policymakers and social scientists shifted their attention away from critiques of racism that tied it to economic structures in favor of a predominantly psychological formulation.

The point of this section has not been to argue that the spiritual impoverishment and unhappiness of the white American middleclass was of no concern. Many critics, including African American Leftists, argued for a reorganization of America's economic system as a way of alleviating the capitalism-induced miseries of all classes of Americans. Yet there is a distinct difference between spiritual impoverishment brought about by dull work routines and status pressures in a middle-class context and the material poverty of African Americans who worked longer hours for lower wages while also paying sky-high rents for tiny, over-crowded, poorly equipped tenements. More

importantly, African Americans were not without their own spiritual impoverishments. In the wake of America's massive economic investment in the Manhattan Project, the black press had hopefully speculated that "it should not stagger the imagination to picture thousands of social scientists and other experts financed by the same two billion dollars that went into the atomic bomb at work in America to isolate and destroy the venom of race hate" (qtd. in Kinchy 297). Yet as DuBois had suggested when he worried about science becoming "the enslaver of mankind" ("The Winds of Time"), turning the lens of social-scientific scrutiny on "the Negro problem" would prove to be a mixed blessing for African Americans. Time and again psychologists and sociologists—most of them white—published books and articles that labeled the black psyche "pathological" in comparison to standards derived from white counterparts. So even those African Americans who moved to the suburbs and attained a middleclass standard of living remained mental and emotional "aliens" in the eyes of Cold War America.

6. The Pathologizing of African American Psychology

Whereas the suburban novels examined in Chapter 2 are notable for their complete lack of any named African American characters, the works I discussed in Chapter 3, *The Invasion of the Body Snatchers* and *The Manchurian Candidate*, are notable for going out of their way to include African American characters—depending on which version of the story is under consideration. Billy the shoe-shine man only appears in Jack Finney's 1955 novel and not in the earlier short-story or in Don Siegel's film adaptation. Similarly, John Frankenheimer's 1962 adaptation of Richard Condon's *The Manchurian Candidate* casts an African American actor (James Edwards) in the role of

Cpl. Allen Melvin, although Melvin's race is never specified in Condon's novel. ²⁹ This decision is all the more noticeable given that Melvin is the only member of Raymond's platoon, aside from Major Bennett Marco, whose brainwashing begins to slip, leading to a dream sequence like Marco's that combines images from implanted memories (a meeting of a ladies garden club) and authentic memories (Dr. Yen Lo's lecture on brainwashing). What makes Melvin's dream sequence so remarkable is that Frankenheimer—while keeping all other aspects of the two dream sequences the same—chose to use a cast composed entirely of black women for the members of the garden club. One seemingly-minor casting decision (who plays Cpl. Melvin) creates fundamental changes elsewhere within the film.

While these additions may be notable for their unexpected racial diversity in an otherwise all-white landscape, they are far from positive. Billy is a deeply marginalized figure, not only in his role as a shoe-shiner but also because his mental and emotional suffering is exploited by Finney, who appropriates it to convey the extreme self-alienation Miles faces. Likewise Allen Melvin's dream-sequence serves as the corroborating evidence Marco needs to convince his superiors of his own psychological stability. Reputation restored, Marco can go on to be the film's hero while Allen Melvin is never featured again. Billy and Melvin are not full-fledged human characters whose stories and experiences readers and viewers are encouraged to identify with; they are one-off examples of psychological abnormality. Within the culture of Cold War America,

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²⁹ While I have not found any secondary documentation explaining why Frankenheimer made this casting decision, it may have been inspired by speculation within the brainwashing controversy that suggested African American POWs were more resistant to Communist influence than their white counterparts, thanks to having been disillusioned by different forms of Communist persuasion and organization in the U.S. For a more detailed discussion of the racial differences among the Korean War POWs, see Virginia Pasley's *21 Stayed: The Story of the American GIs Who Chose Communist China—Who They Were and Why They Stayed* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Cudahy, 1955).

which prided itself on establishing standards by which quality of life, emotional maturity, and psychological development could be measured, they are misfits. Both *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* and *The Manchurian Candidate* are narratives deeply invested in the preservation and restoration of individuality, perceiving its development as something that was increasingly under attack by the forces of "Momism," psychological adjustment, emotional labor, and organization culture. Yet to the extent that either of these narratives is able to envision a solution to this creeping problem of alienation—often through the restoration of "traditional" gender roles and notions of masculinity—the subsequent return to normalcy is still a return to a state of absolute "abnormality" for African Americans.

Nowhere is this equation of racial difference with psychological deviance clearer than in the work of the social scientists that turned their attention to mapping the "dark continent" of the African American psyche. As Gunnar Myrdal wrote of African American culture, "it is a distorted development, or pathological condition, of the general American culture" (928), and this "pathological" perspective came to dominate white discussions of black psychology and emotional life. One of the most popular and influential of these works was Abram Kardiner and Lionel Ovesey's *The Mark of Oppression: Explorations in the Personality of the American Negro* (1951). Using the latest in psychodynamic investigatory techniques, including Rorschach tests, the authors of the study undertook examinations of 25 African American subjects to define a "basic Negro personality," which they then compared to their control—"the American white man" (11). Personality, they argue, is formed adaptively, through the interaction of individuals with their social environment. Personality is defined by environmental factors

not an inborn race psychology. Therefore, African Americans, who share the experience of living within a racist, white-dominated society, also share common personality traits that are products of their oppression. Because "institutional changes proceed from dynamic resources within the personality," they go on to say, "a knowledge of the composition and structure of the personality in specific groups is a basic preliminary to social engineering" (10). Like many postwar social scientists, Kardiner and Ovesey proceed from the assumption that personalities are fundamentally moldable and that the solution of social problems begins with the diagnosis of problems that are primarily psychological.

The "basic" African American personality that Kardiner and Ovesey outline over the course of their study is painfully, unrelentingly bleak. Time and again they describe subjects who are unhappy, alienated, self-loathing, immature, and virtually incapable of developing positive affective relationships with others. It is worth noting that most of the subjects they study are paid volunteers and not individuals undergoing psychiatric treatment. They are deemed representative of the African American population as a whole, including men, women, adolescents, and members of the lower-, middle-, and upper- classes. Only one of the twenty-five is labeled "neurotic," and even then she is considered a particularly acute manifestation of a more widespread phenomenon. So when they describe individuals who are "unhappy, anxious, and aggression-ridden" (294), whose "potential for loving people is very low" (119), who are "burned out and [have] no emotion left to expend on any relationship" (146), they are describing features common to "all" African Americans. Moreover, these "common" features gain their negative character in light of their deviation from the "control" established by white

psychology. To their credit, the authors repeatedly stress that the negative aspects of African American personality are not inborn but rather develop as a result of white supremacy and the negative perception of blackness within American society.

The most devastating consequence of this negative personality formation is its impact on the individual's capacity to form positive emotional relationships with others. As Kardiner and Ovesey write,

We must stress the point from this inventory that the emotions most conducive to social cohesion are those that pertain to the categories of love, trust, and confidence. All creatures are natively endowed with the capacity for fear and rage. The positively toned feelings of love and trust, and confidence, however, must largely be cultivated by experience. Hence, when we refer to the affectivity potential of an individual, we do not mean the emergency functions of fear and rage. We mean rather the capacity for cooperative and affectionate relatedness to others. (306)

Here we see a clear link between self-alienation and a more wide-ranging alienation from the rest of society. Within any society the capacity to form lasting emotional relationships and to work cooperatively with others is a key component of social integration, and this was especially true within the organization-oriented culture of Cold War America. African Americans are doubly-excluded from full participation in society. First, by discrimination itself and then by their own personalities, which have been forever "marked" by their oppression. With such a poorly developed capacity for emotional engagement, African Americans become something less than human an "automaton or robot...the perfect slave" (147). Despite condemning the dehumanizing effects of discrimination, Kardiner and Ovesey nevertheless perpetuate it by assigning African Americans a lower level of psychological and emotional development.

Even though their reduced "affectivity potential" supposedly made them unsuitable for full participation in American society, African Americans were still

expected to perform a tremendous degree of emotional labor, particularly with regard to managing their own negative emotions so as not to violate the norms of behavior imposed on them by white society. In contrast to white Americans, who are allowed to express their emotions much more freely, African Americans "must exercise controls of which the white man is free...the necessity to exercise control, is distinctive and destructive of spontaneity and ease...it diminishes the total social effectiveness of the personality, and it is especially in this regard that the society as a whole suffers from the internal stresses under which the Negro lives" (81). Kardiner and Ovesey recognize that African Americans bear a distinctive burden with regard to their own emotion management. Aggression—particularly towards white oppressors—is something they are not allowed to display, yet their constant humiliation, frustration, and unhappiness inevitably generates a great deal of aggression. These "internal stresses" result in the development of fractured personalities, imperfect coping mechanisms, and masks of apathy or cheerful obedience worn to face the slights and expectations of white society.

It is impossible to read *The Mark of Oppression* without being reminded of the portraits of extreme alienation offered in *The Invasion of the Body Snatchers* and *The Manchurian Candidate*. One subject, "G.R.," even works as a shoe-shine man, a position he says taught him to manipulate his own personality: "To make money on personality like that you got to laugh with them—jokes—tell something funny. As long as you seem regular and nice, they won't bother you, but if you figure you're a wise guy, they'll always try to put the hook on you—treat you pretty rough" (103). Likewise the descriptions of African Americans as "automatons" and "perfect slaves" recalls Raymond Shaw, whose lack of emotional development and isolation from others makes him the

perfect candidate for Communist brainwashing. The difference, however, is that Raymond's extreme emotional alienation and inability to form emotional attachments with others is depicted as an exceptional state, something that has befallen him as a result of his upbringing at the hands of a cruel "Mom" who deliberately destroys his "affectivity potential." He is a warning of things to come if America does not restore the "natural" gendered order of emotional labor, but his excessive resentment has not (yet) become characteristic of the American population as a whole. According to Kardiner and Ovesey, on the other hand, all African Americans exist in a bleak world of alienation, unhappiness, and unloveability.

The work of Kardiner, Ovesey, Myrdal, and other anti-racist social scientists and psychologists sometimes inadvertently coincided with the "logic" underlying white supremacy. Take, for example, an article like "The Channeling of Negro Aggression by the Cultural Process," which was written by anthropologist Hortense Powdermaker and published in the *American Journal of Sociology* in 1943. In it Powdermaker writes, "Behind the loyalty of the faithful slave and behind the meekness of the deferential, humble, freed Negro may lie concealed aggression and hostility" (750). She goes on to describe one woman "who presents with an appearance of perfect meekness [then] laughs with a kind of gleeful irony when she tells me how she really feels, as her meekness drops away from her as if she were discarding a cloak," finally concluding that "these people enjoy wearing their masks because they do it so successfully and because its success makes them feel superior to the whites whom they deceive" (756). Powdermaker invokes this imagery of masks and deception to highlight the cleverness and adaptability of African Americans in the face of their suffering (also vaguely alluding to the Trickster

tradition in African American folklore). Yet white supremacists also asserted that African Americans were expert deceivers whose outward behavior belied an inner aggression and lust for violence (and white womanhood). Racists invoked this idea to justify their own aggression, claiming that violence against African Americans kept the social order in check. In a 1956 interview with *Look* magazine, J.W. Milam, one of the men tried and acquitted of Emmett Till's murder, confessed to the crime with the following justification: "I like niggers—in their place—I know how to work 'em. But I just decided it was time a few people got put on notice. As long as I live and can do anything about it, niggers are gonna stay in their place...And when a nigger gets close to mentioning sex with a white woman, he's tired o' livin'. I'm likely to kill him."³⁰ Behind every smiling black face these men fantasized the existence of a vicious beast and so justified the indiscriminate use of violence against African Americans, a position that was inadvertently supported by liberal scientists who repeatedly emphasized their capacity for emotional deception.

Yet, as I argued in my analysis of Billy the shone-shiner, the ability to don various emotional personas was not so much an act of deception for African Americans as a matter of necessity and, ultimately, an inescapable reality of life within a white-dominated culture. Billy in his "happy man" persona wears a mask that successfully deceives his white patrons as to his true personality and emotional state. But Billy's adoption of this mask is far from voluntary. While it undoubtedly provides some economic benefit and helps to shield Billy's authentic emotional self from the demeaning

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³⁰ The article titled "The Shocking Story of an Approved Killing in Mississippi" was written by William Bradford Huie and published in the January 24, 1956 issue of *Look* magazine. A transcript of the article can be found online at < http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/till/sfeature/sf_look_confession.html>.

labor of his job, the true purpose of such outward performances for African Americans was compliance with the expectations of white Americans. As Hochschild asserts in her formulation of emotional labor, higher-status individuals not only consume the emotional labor of lower-status individuals as a way of enhancing and maintaining their position within the social hierarchy, they also have "greater access to the means of enforcing claims" (84). In the case of white Americans, this meant using violence against African Americans who either deviate from the emotional role expected of them (ex. by demonstrating aggression) or who failed to conform to its demand for cheerful deference and obedience. As Simple describes when he recounts being threatened by a white acquaintance for failing to doff his hat (*The Early Simple Stories* 140), inaction can elicit a rebuke as much as overt action. This need to maintain a socially-determined outward persona contributes towards the feeling of "two-ness" Du Bois describes in his discussion of double-consciousness. It also means that African Americans must manage their emotions almost constantly when in the presence of white Americans.

Although the secondary characters in Alice Childress' Mildred stories are not as well-developed as those in Hughes' work, Mildred herself is a very compelling figure, particularly because Childress makes her keenly aware of the emotional dynamics of black-white relations. Mildred's job as a domestic primarily requires *physical* labor, but her white employers also consume her *emotional* labor as a way of confirming their own "benevolent" self-conception. They profess they want her to be happy with her work and claim a sense of intimacy and fellow-feeling with her, yet withhold true equality. In one story "Mrs. C" tells her friends, "We just *love* [Mildred]! She's *like* one of the family and she *just adores* [us]!" (1). Mildred is quick to offer a rebuttal: "I am *not* just like one of

the family at all. The family eats in the dining room, and I eat in the kitchen" (2). The way Mrs. C claims to feel about Mildred does not correspond to how Mildred herself feels or is treated.

Indeed, the more passionately an employer claims to care about the feelings of a black employee, the less likely they are to acknowledge them in reality. When one domestic quits—to care for her sick child after her husband earns a raise—her employer bursts into hysterical tears saying, "Has anyone hurt your feelings? Aren't you happy?" (52). For this white woman, it is incomprehensible that anyone, regardless of circumstances, could ever leave a role that makes them "happy." And while most of Mildred's stories involve women's experiences, black men are also expected to perform this type of supplemental emotional work. In a piece titled "Be Happy-Or Else!"—which was published in *The Baltimore Afro-American* in 1956 and not as part of the novel— Mildred talks about the younger brother of a friend who was working as a waiter until he was let go because "the management felt he wasn't enjoyin' his job 'cause he didn't laugh and smile too much," wryly adding, "No, they weren't really worried 'bout him enjoyin' himself; they were more concerned with him grinin' and makin' over the diners" (A3). Playing the role of the "happy slave/servant" is the unspoken job expected of all African Americans, and it is an expectation that disregards both the individual's actual emotional state and their right to act independently of this degrading characterization.

Childress makes clear that both racist and liberal white Americans are apt to engage in the emotional exploitation of African Americans. In "Let's Face It," a racist Southerner named Billy, who is visiting Mildred's Northern employers, tells Mildred with teary eyes and a trembling voice, "I resent, yes, deeply resent anybody who dares to

say that I don't have a warm spot in my heart for the Nigras!" (188). His fondness, of course, only extends to the "good sort," meaning those who keep in their place and don't agitate for civil rights. Mildred, gleefully and with sadistic relish, confirms her status as the wrong sort. Even liberal white Americans working to uplift poor African Americans frequently expect an emotional return on their charitable investment. In "More Blessed to Give," Mildred takes a little girl to a settlement party for "underprivileged" children, where numerous speeches are given thanking the charity's benefactors until "it seemed that there must have been at least a hundred folks that these little ones owed a debt of gratitude to" (85). All this charity carries a high price tag, "especially when folks keep addin' up the list and askin' you to carry a load of gratitude that gets a bit too heavy sometimes" (88). The problem, according to Childress, is not that white Americans consume the emotional labor of African Americans; such exchanges are a fundamental component of human society. The problem is that such cross-racial exchanges are often predicated on inequality. White Americans are willing to grant certain benefits to African Americans—employment, freedom from violence, charity, kindness, respect—but only if African Americans "prove" their worthiness by displaying the appropriate degree of happiness, gratitude, friendliness, etc. A relationship based on racial equality would recognize that African Americans are thinking, feeling human beings and deserve to be treated as such without having to constantly reaffirm their worthiness by maintaining a particular standard of behavior. Civil rights and freedom of emotional expression were actually interdependent.

It is precisely over the issue of civil rights, specifically school segregation, that Mildred grows the angriest with her employers. In "Ain't You Mad?" Mildred's

employers are eating breakfast and discussing Autherine Lucy's efforts to enroll in the University of Alabama:

Mrs. B. swashes down her bacon with a gulp of coffee and says, "Tch, tch, tch, I know *you people* are angry about this. What is going to be done?"

I hollered at her, "What the hamfat is the matter with you? Ain't you mad? Now either you be mad or shame, but don't you sit there with your mouth full of 'tuttuttin' at me! Now if you mad, you'd of told me what you done and if you shame, you oughta be hangin' your head instead of smackin' your lips over them goodies!" (171)

What Mildred objects to is the emotional double-standard underlying her white employer's treatment of the issue. Not only does she chide African Americans for their (wholly justifiable) anger, she acts as though white Americans are detached from it, with no emotional investment in the maintenance of segregation or its resolution. African Americans are ruled by their emotions; white (Northern) Americans are dispassionate observers. Mildred's employer refuses to either align herself with African Americans (mad) or to condemn the behavior of racist white Americans (shame). Instead, she makes African Americans (you people) responsible for both provoking and resolving matters. When Mildred snatches the newspaper out of the woman's hand and is reprimanded for it, she once again draws attention to the privileged relationship between whiteness and violence; the woman gets upset at Mildred's behavior but not that of the racists "shootin' at little children ridin' school buses" and "draggin' people out of their beds in the middle of the night and burnin' them with oil and fire" (173). Later Mildred imagines what it must feel like to be a black child caught in the maelstrom of integration and says, "Is there any grown person that can put themselves in that child's place without feelin' angry and ashamed that this can be done to children?" (214). As was the case with discontentment, Childress repeatedly emphasizes the political power of emotion and the

importance of individual emotion leading to collective political action. In the case of school desegregation especially, the failure of empathy and lack of emotion on the part of white Americans signals a lack of political as well as moral engagement.

Childress' Mildred stories are not nearly as numerous as the Simple stories, but they provide unparalleled insight into the lives of working-class African American women. Simple's world is very much divided between men and women with women further divided into "respectable women" (like Simple's wife, Joyce) and "good time girls" (like Simple's girlfriend, Zarita). Simple is quick to assert that he "believe[s] in a woman keeping her place" (The Early Simple Stories 36), and that the ideal relationship for a man is one in which "a woman loves you, [so] she will take care of you, and you won't have to take care of her" (261). Hughes' decision to conclude the series by having Joyce force Simple's move to the suburbs perpetuates the motif that attributes Simple's personal woes to women almost as much as to racism. It often falls to Boyd, by virtue of his modernity and more extensive education, to chide Simple for his "old-fashioned" ideas about women. It is not until the arrival of Simple's cousin Minnie—who is in many ways a female version of Simple, sharing his love of drinking and socializing especially—that the stories truly begin to consider the unique challenges that black women face, with Boyd observing, "Gentle ladies in the days of antiquity never had to face the problems Minnie has to face. In fact, the whole conventional concept of the word 'lady' is tied up with wealth, high standing, and a sheltered life for women. Minnie has to face the world every day, in fact, do battle with it" (*The Later Simple Stories* 204). And Simple agrees, "It is not always easy for a colored lady to keep her ladyhood" (205). In the Mildred stories, on the other hand, the lives of working class women are rendered in

rich detail with considerable attention paid to issues ranging from household budgeting, child rearing, dating, aging and beauty, political engagement, relationships with employers, kinship networks, drug use, religion, and housing. Such a rich portrait of black womanhood cannot help but bring into sharp relief the one-dimensional representation of black women in mainstream popular media and social science discourse.

In the war of propaganda waged between the US and the Soviet Union, women were popular subjects of discussion. American policymakers emphasized the "feminine" lifestyle of American women who embraced their "natural" roles of wife and mother, arguing that the representative American woman was "a happy housewife living comfortably, but not luxuriously; working hard, but with time for leisure" (Osgood 258). Crucially, the primary site of labor for American women was the family home, not the industrial or corporate workplace. Soviet women, in contrast, were forced into "unfeminine" occupations such as heavy manufacturing while their children "languished in state-run daycare" (Belmonte 126). American women were free to choose to work in any occupation they might wish, of course, but they "preferred" the more rewarding working of devoting themselves entirely to their own families. African American women were only rarely featured in such propaganda, and when they did appear, their narratives were carefully circumscribed by the limits of Cold War liberalism:

In a program devoted to African American housewives, [Voice of America] profiled three black women from Spencerville, Maryland. But the interviewer focused on the women's public activities in their sewing and canning clubs, not their private efforts to take care of their families. Listeners learn nothing about how racism and segregation affected many black Americans. Instead, they are assured that "Negro women share this country's efforts to improve the life of the average American family striving towards economic prosperity of everyone regardless of origin, race, or religion." (Belmonte 164)

Indeed, America's Cold War propagandists would have preferred to disregard the issue of race entirely, but the Soviets were quick to exploit this "Achilles heel" whenever possible, and the international publicity surrounding Emmett Till's murder, the violent protests against school integration, and the slights suffered by visiting African dignitaries made complete silence impossible. Instead, as Mary Dudziak has amply documented, American policymakers disseminated an optimistic narrative of racial equality and economic progress that differed greatly from the reality that most African Americans experienced.

Claudia Jones, a black activist, journalist, and Communist Party member wrote "An End to the Neglect of the Problems of Negro Women" for publication in *Political* Affairs in 1949. In it she protests the re-segregation of the postwar labor market that excluded African American women from jobs in the manufacturing industries (58). As a result, black women typically found work as domestics and in other service positions. The work was steady thanks to the increased affluence and purchasing power of white women. But it was difficult to unionize such dispersed workers, who were often subject to demeaning treatment, withheld wages, heavy-labor add-ons, or substitute payment in donated food and clothing. This undervaluation of black female labor and humanity was reflected in American popular media where "the Negro woman is not pictured in her real role as breadwinner, mother, and protector of the family, [but] as a traditional 'mammy' who puts the care of children and families of others above her own" (55). African American women were largely excluded from the "representative" narrative of American womanhood that identified a woman's own family as the proper recipient of her labor. Rather than addressing the economic and racial underpinnings of black women's

oppression, Jones concludes, much discussion has "obscure[d] the main responsibility for the oppression of Negro women by spreading the rotten bourgeois notion about a 'battle of the sexes'" (61). This emphasis on gender roles, rather than economic enfranchisement, is most apparent in postwar America's scrutiny of "black matriarchy."

In *The Romance of American Psychology* (1995), Ellen Herman briefly summarizes the longevity of "black matriarchy" as a subject of critical interest among American social scientists:

Beginning with E. Franklin Frazier's landmark study of the black family in 1930 and continuing with Abram Kardiner's and Lionel Ovesey's psychoanalytic theory and Mamie Clark's and Kenneth Clark's research in the 1950s and 1960s, "matriarchal" gender relations within the black family were analyzed and discussed as significant defects in their own right, immediate sources of personality and social problems (from warped self-esteem to juvenile delinquency to school failure), and appropriate targets for policy designed to improve race relations by enhancing masculinity and bolstering patriarchal authority. By 1965 a report on the state of young urban criminals that appeared in the *New York Times Magazine* simply stated that "the welfare world of New York is a fatherless world" in which "people infect one another with the virus of failure." (187)

Among the most famous of these studies was *The Negro Family: The Case for Action* (1965), otherwise known as the Moynihan report after sociologist and Assistant Secretary of Labor, Daniel Patrick Moynihan. In it Moynihan asserts: "At the heart of the deterioration of the fabric of Negro society is the deterioration of the Negro family. It is the fundamental source of the weakness of the Negro community at the present time" (5). By deterioration, Moynihan meant the growing percentage of households that were headed by women, the frequency of unwed motherhood, the absence of strong masculine figures in the upbringing of black children, the superior earning power of black women vs. black men, and the devaluation or perversion of black masculinity. Myrdal had earlier identified "family disorganization" as an instance of black deviation from the standards

of white culture (933), and Ovesey and Kardiner noted that "the unhappy economic plight of the Negro male not only contributes to the economic dominance of the Negro female, but also makes her psychologically dominant. Such a situation does not enhance family cohesion" (60). Where Moynihan differed was in his identification of the matriarchal black family as the primary source of racial suffering—issues ranging from riots, to poor school performance, chronic unemployment, criminality, drug use, and poverty could be laid squarely at the feet of black women.

Even though black women were frequent objects of sociological scrutiny, they were marginalized even within this psychological narrative. The ultimate subjects of concern for social scientists like Moynihan were not black women themselves but the detrimental effect of their "matriarchal" power on the development of black men and black masculinity. Since American culture was "naturally" a patriarchal culture, by virtue of the standards established by the white middleclass and further enhanced by the postwar emphasis on the nuclear family, the failure of black families to conform to patriarchal standards "impose[d] a crushing burden on the Negro male" (Moynihan 75). Unable to establish their masculinity at home, black men were forced to find other outlets for self-assertion, and race rioting was considered "proof that black families had twisted the masculinity of their sons to the point of extreme irrationality and violence" (Herman 207). Throughout the Cold War period, policymakers and social scientists asserted that correcting the power imbalance between black men and black women was crucial to correcting the "distorted masculine image" (193) that was impeding black racial progress. Within such a narrative, there was no room for alternative, non-patriarchal family

structures, and the financial independence of African American women took on a largely negative connotation.

The black "matriarch" has much in common with Philip Wylie's dreaded "Mom." In both cases mothers are identified as the progenitors of a whole host of social problems, and the restoration of "traditional" gender roles and forms of masculinity is posited as the only solution. But there are important differences that separate the two, particularly in terms of the "cult of motherhood" that Wylie and other Momist critics felt had long insulated women from critique. As Claudia Jones writes, "The so-called 'love and reverence' for the mothers of the land by no means includes Negro mothers who, like Rosa Lee Ingram, Amy Mallard, the wives and mothers of the Trenton Six, or the other countless victims, dare to fight back against lynch law and 'white supremacy' violence" (52). This was sadly evident in the case of Mamie Till Bradley. In September 1955, J.W. Milam and Roy Bryant were acquitted of the murder of Emmett Till, despite the fact that both admitted to abducting him. The justification offered was that the mutilated body recovered from the river was not actually Till's—even though it was wearing an heirloom ring with the initials of Till's father on the inside. When a white juror was asked how the jury could possibly reach such a conclusion, he attributed it to Mamie Till Bradley's insufficiency of grief, saying, "If she had tried a little harder she might have got out a tear" (qtd. in Michaeli 331). Meanwhile numerous *Chicago Defender* articles covering the trial—including the one for which the juror was interviewed—make note of Bradley's tears during her testimony. The complete inability of the white jurors to feel sympathy for or even acknowledge her grief speaks volumes about America's lack of sentimental regard for black motherhood.

The other major difference separating the two types of women is that of economic power and productivity. Wylie railed against "Moms" in large part because he considered them economic parasites. They did not work for themselves, instead consuming men's wages, "the crystallization of human energy" (Generation of Vipers 60), so "Moms" came to have economic power all out of proportion to their actual labor or level of economic production. The problem with black "matriarchs" was that their earning potential was too high, at least in comparison to that of black men. As Kardiner and Ovesey reported, in comparison to white women "the Negro female starts work earlier and works until later in life" and her "chances for employment are better and more constant than those of the Negro male" (54). This also distinguishes the black matriarch of the middle of the twentieth century from the quasi-mythical black "welfare queen" of later decades who was vilified for her laziness, drug use, neglectful parenting, and fraudulent exploitation of hardworking (white) taxpayers. In both case—white Momism and black matriarchy—the nuclear family became the primary object of social reform, a position encouraged by the funding of psychoanalytic and behavioral approaches to psychology during the postwar period. These sciences emphasized early childhood and the role of the Oedipal family in adult personality development, arguing that any hope of racial progress or social reform must begin in childhood before the formation of "pathological" personalities could become complete.

In *Inventing the Psychological: Toward a Cultural History of Emotional Life in America* (1997) Joel Pfister writes, "It may be politically advantageous for more reasons than I can go into here for those who hold power to assign bodies 'psychological' characteristics if the subordinated occupants of those social bodies (women in various

groups, African Americans, immigrants) come to accept ideological ascriptions of 'psychological' determinism as naturally emerging from within them" (39). In other words, much of the postwar reliance on psychological explanations for the "pathologies" of African Americans and women smacked of "blaming the victim." Indeed, the Moynihan Report is literally a textbook case of the phenomenon. William Ryan coined the phrase in his 1971 book *Blaming the Victim*, which he wrote specifically in response to the Moynihan Report, arguing that it diverted responsibility for poverty and racism from social structural factors to family behaviors and individual psychology. One could fairly say that the entire project of Cold War social science and its turn towards psychological explanations for problems ranging from nuclear panic to white middleclass unhappiness to African American poverty was intended to divert attention away from a structural analysis of American society, particularly economic analyses that might threaten the authority of American capitalism. Both well-meaning social scientists and savvy politicians encouraged Americans to look for psychological solutions to their discontentment instead of seeking collective reform. Fortunately for African Americans—and for the nation more generally—there were many black authors and intellectuals willing to reject the postwar "psychological turn" in favor of other forms of critique, in spite of Cold War America's rampant hostility towards anything and anyone even peripherally associated with Communism.

7. Democracy, Heroism, and the Limits of the Psychological Turn

I chose to focus this final chapter around the works of African American authors not only because their voices and experiences are so conspicuously absent from the

preceding chapters but also because as black authors and intellectuals scrutinized psychological studies of American racism, they exposed problems inherent in the entire postwar project of emotion management. Following the rise of fascism in Nazi Germany and the spread of Soviet Communism during the Cold War, American social scientists—many of whom were heavily influenced by the theories and experiences of Jewish emigres—sought to uncover the psycho-social formula necessary to ensure the successful development and maintenance of democracy both in the United States and in numerous "Third World" and de-colonizing nations around the world. For many, like psychologist Gordon Allport, who wrote *The Nature of Prejudice* (1954), the difference between democracy and fascism depended on personality:

Democracy, we now realize, places a heavy burden upon the personality, sometimes too great to bear. The maturely democratic person must possess subtle virtues and capacities: an ability to think rationally about causes and effects, an ability to form properly differentiated categories in respect to ethnic groups and their traits, a willingness to award freedom to others, and a capacity to employ it constructively for oneself. All these qualities are difficult to achieve and maintain. It is easier to succumb to oversimplification and dogmatism, to repudiate the ambiguities inherent in a democratic society, to demand definiteness, to "escape from freedom." (515)

Yet many African American critics—especially those with a background in Marxism or other ties to the Left—recognized that anti-democratic practices like racism were also economic in origin. A purely psychological focus on personality did not address the systemic inequalities contributing to African American poverty and degradation.

Furthermore, the more that social scientists and policymakers attempted to define and foster a "maturely democratic" American personality, the more they deviated from the democratic principles they sought to protect.

When Gunnar Myrdal published An American Dilemma in 1944 his work was well-received, especially among liberal white social scientists and policymakers, and it helped set the tone for future approaches to American race relations. Within the African American press, initial reception of Myrdal's text and its psychological approach to "the Negro problem" was also positive, but it is doubtful that An American Dilemma circulated much within African American circles. Even some reviewers give the impression of being only distantly acquainted with the text, with Du Bois writing, "I shall from time to time turn to its pages" ("As the Crow Flies" 1), and Hughes noting, "If you can afford the \$7.50 which it costs, and if there is a serious and scholarly person in your family...[it] is the two volume set to slip beneath a Christmas tree. I wish somebody would give it to me!" ("Here to Yonder" 12). Not only was the book a daunting and expensive read at just over 1,000 pages in length, it was a work written primarily with the education of white Americans in mind. The dilemma it identified was one within the minds of white Americans, whose psyches were caught between their faith in the "American Creed" and their racist treatment of African Americans. It was the eventual resolution of this dilemma that most interested Myrdal, who was optimistically convinced that "social engineering" and education would eventually eliminate prejudice. African American observers were not so sanguine, and Ralph Bunche, who worked closely with Myrdal during the project, took issue with the idea that white Americans experienced any great degree of mental conflict over their racist beliefs, much less that these "foolproof" beliefs could be overcome through corrective education (Jackson 129). While acknowledging that white psychology was a significant source of "the Negro problem," black authors doubted that psychology alone could provide an effective solution.

Langston Hughes tapped into the popularity of psychological approaches to racism, using the language of psychoanalysis to describe the causes and effects of racism, and even sending a copy of his first Simple novel to the *American Journal of Psychiatry*, as a "study of the urban Negro and his daily problems" (Harper 140). He published a series of three articles (none feature Simple) in *The Chicago Defender* in February and March of 1944 that derided the "domination-complex" and "abnormal behavior" of white Americans, inverting the portrait of black pathology that would later come to dominate race psychology. In one such article, "Doc, Wait, I Can't Sublimate," Hughes writes,

[P]rejudiced whites should be treated for what ails them. Until we correct the racial defects in our current social system, psychoanalysis might make a study, with a view toward correcting, the symptoms of pre-riotitis. Nobody likes riots, but when an over-zealous white Jim Crower collides with a too-much Jim Crowed Negro, hysteric sparks might fly capable of lighting dangerous emotional fires. (52)

Hughes exploited psychological discourse as a way of exposing the personal impact of racism on black emotional life, but he very firmly identifies these personality elements as "symptoms" of "defects in our current social system." Using psychological techniques to treat personality problems would not prevent the dilemmas of American race relations from repeating themselves. Nor would they solve the most immediate concerns of Harlemites, which were primarily material in nature—poor housing, overpriced food, overcrowded schools, and insufficient public services. He criticized Americans' willingness to invest in military development and in foreign aid when they refused to contribute to the financial advancement of African Americans (*The Later Simple Stories* 309-10, 101). While psychology might contribute to the problems of American racism, solving those problems would require large-scale social reform, including reforms that addressed America's longstanding class inequalities. Unsurprisingly, Hughes'

willingness to critique America's labor and employment practices saw him summoned before HUAC in March 1953 (Harper 158), which seems to have done little to stifle his critical output since the Simple stories published in *Simple Stakes a Claim* (1957) and *Simple's Uncle Sam* (1965) are among his most overtly political.

Although many African American activists, notably Walter White and the NAACP, mobilized Cold War rhetoric as a way of advocating for racial equality, the anti-Communist hysteria of the period placed considerable limitations on civil rights discourse. The international press brought global attention to lynching and Jim Crow, but this publicity was a double-edged sword, since "to the extent that the nation's commitment to social justice was motivated by a need to respond to foreign critics, civil rights reforms that made the nation look good might be sufficient" (Dudziak 13). Alice Childress echoes this complaint when she has Mildred angrily remark, "I suppose that if we was real chummy with all the countries in the world then it would be all right to kill our people!" (202). Bad publicity motivated American policymakers to bring an end to more overt forms of racial discrimination—such as school segregation—but such gains came at the cost of a more thoroughgoing reform of the inequalities of American society and so did not resolve issues like urban poverty or the prison-industrial complex. The psychological turn exacerbated this problem through the "rewriting of racism as an anachronistic prejudice and a personal psychological problem, rather than as a systemic problem rooted in specific social practices and pervading relations of political economy and culture" (Von Eschen 157). With so much emphasis being placed on "black matriarchy" and the "pathologies" of white racists, institutionalized racism and the economic origins of inequality went largely unacknowledged. Making racism a

psychological subject offered critics a less-fraught platform for political advocacy, but from there it was only short step to depoliticizing the issue entirely by reframing it as a purely "personal" problem.

In addition to failing to address economic and structural sources of racism, the psychological turn also devalued cultural diversity. Critics objected to Myrdal's characterization of black culture as a "pathological" version of white culture and his assumption that African Americans desired assimilation with the values and lifestyle of middleclass white Americans. Ralph Ellison praises Myrdal's recognition that many "innate" African American personality traits were actually socially conditioned, but he rejects the idea that African American culture itself is derivative or that assimilation is inherently good:

It does not occur to Myrdal that many of the Negro cultural manifestations which he considers merely reflective might also embody a rejection of what he considers "higher values." There is a dualism at work here. It is only partially true that Negroes turn away from white patterns because they are refused participation. There is nothing like distance to create objectivity, and exclusion gives rise to counter values. (316)

Making the values the white middleclass the "standard" by which African American culture was evaluated allowed those values to escape critique. Trying to solve the problem of "black matriarchy," as Claudia Jones astutely observed, meant endorsing the values of "bourgeois" patriarchy and white masculinity without examining the limits of those (white) cultural formulations. "What is needed in our country is not an exchange of pathologies," Ellison goes on to write, "but a change of the basis of society...In Negro culture there is much of value for America as a whole" (317). White sociologists and psychologists established "standards" for behavior, social formation, and personality that were intended to safeguard American democracy by weeding out bad behaviors (like

racism), but in doing so they also excluded any possibility of positive deviation. They overlooked the possibility that African American culture could be a source of race pride as well as a source of alternative values and social changes that could benefit Americans as a whole.

Perhaps nowhere are the shortcomings of "standardizing" African American culture according to the values of middleclass white Americans clearer than in E. Franklin Frazier's *The Black Bourgeois* (1957). In an effort to escape their feelings of inferiority (which are linked to their racial identity), Frazier argues, the members of the "black bourgeois" emulate as much as possible the values and lifestyle of the white middleclass: "In seeking escape in the delusion of wealth, middle-class Negroes make a fetish of material things or physical possessions. They are constantly buying things houses, automobiles, furniture and all sorts of gadgets, not to mention clothes" (230). But this rampant materialism cannot cure their feelings of inferiority, and it comes at the cost of rejecting African American folkways and any association with the black masses, and "as a consequence of their isolation, the majority of the black bourgeoisie live in a cultural vacuum and their lives are devoted largely to fatuities" (112). Frazier particularly laments the black bourgeois' rejection of the artists and art-forms of the Harlem Renaissance and their censorship and stultification of the black press. As Penny Von Eschen writes, "the years of World War II and its immediate aftermath were a golden age in black American journalism. Newspapers with national circulation such as the Pittsburgh Courier and The Chicago Defender more than doubled in size between 1940 and 1946" (8), and "the black press was the main vehicle through which public intellectuals spoke to one another and to their main audiences" on a variety of subjects

ranging from African American society to domestic racism and international liberation movements. During the later 1940s, however, circulation decreased markedly and the black press ceased to critique American foreign policy or other sensitive issues. Frazier accused the black press of being unwilling "to challenge white opinion on fundamental economic and social issues" (192). For the "black bourgeois," conforming to the standards of white American culture also meant political disengagement—a position fundamentally at odds with the needs of the majority of African Americans.

In addition to diverting attention away from economic critiques of racism and devaluing the diversity of African American culture, the psychological turn has yet another shortcoming that is especially problematic for a practice intended to promote and protect democracy—it disregards individuality. One of the harshest critics of race psychology, especially Kardiner and Ovesey's *The Mark of Oppression*, was Lloyd L. Brown. In a piece written for Masses and Mainstream titled "Psychoanalysis vs. the Negro People" (1951), Brown dismisses the findings of this particular approach to racism saying, "[T]he discovery of a 'basic personality' of the Negro people is a self-evident absurdity. Common sense—and the nearest dictionary—say that the concept 'personality' pertains to the individual" (22). Brown acknowledges that African Americans share a common history and experience of oppression, factors that contribute to a "common psychological makeup," but denies that this is equivalent to sharing a basic personality, insisting that "as individuals, Negroes vary widely in all respects; in this, of course, they are like all other peoples" (23). Brown rejects not only the use of the white American as the "standard" by which black personality is evaluated and the equation of blackness with self-loathing but also the existence of any such thing as a singular "black personality."

Kardiner and Ovesey proposed that before the solution social problems could begin, "a knowledge of the composition and structure of the personality in specific groups [was] a basic preliminary to social engineering" (10), a position shared by social scientists grappling with a variety of other social issues, including the problem of nuclear panic and the adjustment of organization men to their corporate environment. But building solutions around "standardized" personalities overlooks the different needs and desires that are not shared among all individuals within a given social group.

One constant complaint throughout the "Simple" stories concerns the refusal of white Americans (including white liberals) to acknowledge the individuality of African Americans. The following exchange between Simple and his boss provides a good example:

"[B]eing white and curious, my boss keeps asking me just what does THE Negro want. Yesterday, he tackled me during the coffee break, talking about THE Negro. He always says 'THE Negro,' as if there was not 50-11 different kinds of Negroes in the U.S.A.," complained Simple. "My boss says, 'Now that you-all have got the Civil Rights Bill and the Supreme Court, Adam Powell in Congress, Ralph Bunche in the United Nations, and Leontyne Price singing in the Metropolitan Opera, plus Dr. Martin Luther King getting the Nobel Prize, what more do you want? I am asking you, just what does THE Negro want?'

'I am not THE Negro,' I says. 'I am me.'

'Well,' says my boss, 'You represent THE Negro.'

'I do not,' I says. 'I represent my own self.'" (*The Later Simple Stories* 207)

What Hughes is arguing here is not that racial solidarity is unimportant but is instead pointing out that progress for African Americans as a whole is often purchased at the expense of individuality. Not only are they treated as some monolithic whole (THE Negro) by white Americans, but they are judged on the basis of how their behavior reflects on their race as a whole. When Simple argues with Boyd that he "should have the same right to get drunk as white folks," which Boyd protests on the grounds that it would

be "disgracing the race," Simple is quick to reply, "If I was was white, wouldn't nobody say I was disgracing no race!" (*The Early Simple Stories* 166). Hughes' point is that African Americans are constantly viewed as representatives of their race first and as individuals second (if at all), even among fellow African Americans.

For Hughes racial equality is indistinguishable from one's ability to act and be recognized as an individual human being. Simple most often equates this acceptance of individuality with manhood, such as when he says, "Me, I feel like a man anywhere in this American country, because I feel like a man *inside* myself. But some folks are not made like that. Some black men do not feel like men when they are surrounded by white folks who look at them like as if blackness was bad manners or something" (The Later Simple Stories 195). To be black was to have one's individuality replaced by standards of behavior and emotional control that were not applied to white Americans, as even white race psychologists recognized. The solution, however, was not to be found in the erasure of racial difference—however such a thing might be accomplished—but in the recognition of racial difference alongside individuality. As Mildred protests when she sees a sign celebrating the way New Yorkers get along "regardless of race," "Why on earth does anybody have to disregard what folks are in order to like them? I never disregard people!" (48). But it is precisely this combination of difference and individuality that is adds with the practice of emotion management.

One of the most striking qualities of the "Simple" series is its polyvocality.

Despite most of the dialogue being filtered entirely through Simple, his opinions do not dominate the text. As Donna Akiba Sullivan Harper argues, it is the dialogue and exchange of ideas and opinions between Simple and Boyd that gives structure and

meaning to the narrative. Boyd "with questions challenges, interventions, and frequently with agreement, helps to voice readers' doubts and concessions regarding Simple's narrations" (204). Hughes was tremendously attentive to the interests of his audience who were, despite what Frazier may have asserted regarding the black press, composed of many different individuals with a diversity of opinions. Hughes received a great deal of fan-mail related to his Simple column—largely but not always positive—and he "express[ed] his appreciation to his readers by giving them a voice in the column" through the figure of Simple (95). Therefore Simple was a product not only of Hughes' conversations with himself and with his editors and publishers but also the feedback he received from readers across the country. There is an inter-personal quality to the "Simple" stories that is absent from the singular perspectives offered by texts like Tomorrow! or The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit where the opinions of a one character become authoritative with any dissenters taking on a strawman quality that makes them easy to dismiss. These authors are far more interested in disseminating a particular point of view than in engaging their readers in an ongoing conversation.

I would argue that this issue of representative authenticity—the need to develop a character or cast of characters who are recognizably "American" without also formulating that identity in ways that are biased or exclude large segments of the American population—is one of the ongoing crises of American literary and cultural production. In *Turncoats, Traitors, and Fellow Travelers: Culture and Politics of the Early Cold War* (2008) Arthur Redding writes,

The modernist "crisis of representation" can be understood to stem from the fragmentation and democratization of audiences for cultural works and the collapse of authorial privilege within the imagined community of a national literature. This is acutely the case in an immigrant and racially divided society

like the United States; middlebrow books that stubbornly continue to posit an American "melting pot" are either symptomatically anxious or hysterically conservative. (70)

This anxiety and conservatism are readily apparent in *Tomorrow!*, *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* and both novel and film versions of *The Manchurian Candidate* and *The Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, all of which reflect varying degrees of xenophobia, distrust of the "masses," and the anxious realization that American identity—which is typically derived from nineteenth century notions of white supremacy and patriarchal authority—is not quite what it used to be. They are inextricably linked to Cold War America's paranoid policing of identity boundaries, but they also share with Hughes and Childress a heartfelt belief in the sanctity of individuality.

It is the responsibility of American authors to identify those points where, to borrow Gunnar Myrdal's terms, the realities of American life fail to agree with the principles of the "American Creed." This includes not only literal disenfranchisement but also exclusion from cultural narratives (like novels and films) and moments when the "American Dream" proves less fulfilling than advertised. All of the works I have analyzed critique America for failing to live up to its postwar promises. Peace, prosperity, happiness, and equality were all qualities Americans were told would follow the end of World War II, but they remained elusive, even for those Americans who could afford to live according to the middleclass standards established as the quintessential "American way of life." They often tie these feelings of discontentment to a lack of individuality and a sense that Americans were being forced to conform to "standards" of behavior and emotional life that were at odds with their actual needs and desires. They differ in terms of who or what they blame for these shortcomings and how well they are able to sustain

their critical engagement. The improbable "solutions" and unconvincing "happy endings" offered in texts like *The Hound of Earth* and *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* signal frustration. Time and again these works identity problems they cannot effective resolve. In this African American authors had something of an advantage since they could imagine problems being resolved on the basis of specific political reforms—desegregation, civil rights, the punishment of racially motivated violence and crime. Yet, as our present moment so painfully illustrates, racial equality continues to be one of America's unfulfilled promises.

Despite its moments of bias and foreshortened imagination, it is within American literature that we find something crucial to the progress of democracy that is missing from Cold War America's psychological turn and its theories of "emotion management"—faith in individual human agency. Much of postwar America's psychosocial research was devoted to identifying the psychological weaknesses that could incline Americans to sacrifice their individuality and submit en masse to the direction of totalitarian demagogues. To combat these inclinations, American's needed the guidance of social science experts who could "manage" their anti-democratic tendencies. The contradictions inherent in "standardizing" a democratic personality never seem to occur to the social scientists themselves, despite the obvious limitations of such a project. Instead of turning to social scientific experts to come up with the secret formula for creating democracy, we would be better served by recalling Langston Hughes words in "The Need for Heroes": "We know we are not weak, ignorant, frustrated, or cowed. We know the race has its heroes whether anybody puts them into books or not. We know we are heroes ourselves and can make a better world" (206). Of course we are sometimes

"weak, ignorant, frustrated, or cowed"—individually and collectively—but rather than waiting to be "cured" of these problems, we must defend democracy by embracing collective action. Ultimately we will make a better world only by becoming better versions of ourselves and to do that, we need authors who can help us believe in our own heroism.

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