

Episode: "Deaths-Head Revisited"

Aired November 10, 1961

1. Host/Producer Rod Serling conducted a prologue introduction himself for each episode. Is this an important foundation for the story or is it a distraction?
2. Simultaneous with the filming of this episode was the real-life trial of Nazi war criminal Adolf Eichmann in Israel. How do you think this played an influence in Serling’s script?
3. How do the themes of this episode address notions of accountability and justice?
4. Do you think the plot of the episode is reality or a nightmare?
5. Serling was a paratrooper in World Warr II. How might this have affected his outlook during the rest of his career in Hollywood?
6. How did Serling use science fiction/fantasy to tell a parable in this episode? What is the chief lesson he is trying to teach?
7. How is this episode/series a good example of 1960s culture?

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Accompanying primary source:

***Prisoner diary entry on dying inmates in Dachau, 1942***

In the early hours of 19 November [1942] a transport of the infirm, the like of which Dachau prisoners had never seen before, arrived in the camp. Around 350 people in cattle trucks were brought not to Dachau station, as was usual, but by rail to the SS camp. All the trucks were nailed shut with long nails and as a result all the 350 unfortunates had spent eight full days on the journey from the camp at Stutthof near Danzig [Gdansk] to Dachau without food, air or sanitation. Their condition told their story and was a terrible testimony in the heart of Europe to the “new order” that German culture and this fine National Socialism had produced. Living corpses is an inadequate description to convey a clear idea of this to anyone who has not experienced anything similar. Of the 350 people in the trucks fifty-seven were carried out dead […]. When all the living and dead were in the camp, lying in the baths and in front of the baths, even the most pitiless [SS] block leaders, who had experienced and internalized the toughest and cruelest things Dachau could put them through, turned away in disgust.”

Source: S. Zamečnik, “Die Aufzeichnungen von Karel Kašak”, Dachauer Hefte 11 (1995), pp. 167–251.