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Residues of the Cold War: Emergent Waste Consciousness in Postwar American Culture and Fiction

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Graduate Program in English

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree in Doctor of Philosophy

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RESIDUES OF THE COLD WAR: EMERGENT WASTE CONSCIOUSNESS IN
POSTWAR AMERICAN CULTURE AND FICTION

Emergent Waste Consciousness in Postwar American Fiction

Thesis format: Monograph

by

Thomas James Barnes

Graduate Program in English

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

The School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
The University of Western Ontario
London, Ontario, Canada

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**Residues of the Cold War: Emergent Waste Consciousness in Postwar
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Abstract

Residues of the Cold War: Emergent Waste Consciousness in Postwar American Culture and Fiction argues that garbage, trash, junk, detritus, and waste of the post-World War II period can be read as indexes of the Cold War cultural landscape and its structure of feeling. This dissertation treats these remainders as archival materials, documents with a kind of textuality, and suggests that when rendered legible their function as crucial sites of conflicting ideologies and discourses can be recognized. Employing the interdisciplinary methods of ecocriticism and cultural materialism, I read Cold War trash to provide a new account of American Cold War culture and literature by tracing the emergence of household garbage as a significant trope in varying cultural contexts. While waste was traditionally seen as material symbolic of the past and marginalized in dominant, Cold War discourses, new readings of postwar authors Robert A. Heinlein, Walter M. Miller Jr., Philip K. Dick, (and later Don DeLillo and A.R. Ammons) suggest they recognize the prevalence of new synthetic materials and toxic, non-biodegradable wastes inseparable from the Cold War project implicates garbage in complicated material futures. In providing such a perspective, these authors demonstrate that while waste will embody the material effects of the American Cold War project on future American landscapes, the work of elucidating garbage's role within Cold War matrices of spatial organization can provide grounds for a critique of dominant Cold War discourses of gender, consumption, and politics. In analyzing the ways waste is represented in different Cold War spaces in literature—the kitchen, the fallout shelter, public urban and suburban spaces, the sanitary landfill—my project argues that proto-ecological conceptualizations of waste concurrently emerged alongside, and challenged, the dominant discourses of Cold War waste management.

Keywords

Garbage Studies, American Studies, Cold War Studies, Ecocriticism, Speculative Fiction, Waste Consciousness, Philip K. Dick, Don DeLillo, Nuclear Criticism, Archive Theory

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INTRODUCTION

“Say goodbye to garbage forever!”

In April 1947, the deaths of two eccentric Harlem recluses became a national news story in the United States. Brothers Homer and Langley Collyer, notorious in the New York City neighbourhood for hoarding miscellaneous objects, curious artefacts, and daily ephemera,¹ were found dead in their home after police followed up on a neighbour’s report of suspicious noises emitting from the building. When they first entered, officers were shocked to find that, as a subsequent *Life* magazine article noted, the “front hallway was filled to the ceiling with trash” (“Strange” 49). Confronted next by “a solid mass of newspapers, cartons, old iron, broken furniture” (“New York”) as they ventured in further, policemen encountered many more piles of other such garbaged materials. In fact, police would soon find that almost all of the Collyers’ domestic space had been littered with garbage and that “[t]he building was packed almost solid from top to bottom with incredible masses of junk” (“New York”). It soon became clear that the Collyers had over the course of three decades amassed an astounding collection of belongings and neglected to dispose of any trash. Police later surmised that in order to even move about the home, the brothers had to install a network of “tunnels in trash” (“Strange” 52), some set with booby traps to “release[] avalanche[s] of debris” (52) upon unwanted guests.

After finding the dead body of blind brother Homer, police sent out an all-points bulletin for brother Langley, whom they suspected had fled the scene following his brother’s death. A few days later, however, after clearing out much of the debris,

authorities located Langley's body only a few feet from where Homer's body had been found, killed and covered by a collapsed pile of garbage. Without witnesses, the police were left to conclude that in Langley's absence, without any care or assistance, Homer had been left alone to helplessly waste away. As the police emptied the home of its contents throughout the week, onlookers witnessed the emergence of "hundreds of tons of garbage" (Bryk). After the contents had been systematically documented, the home was found to have yielded among other things, "five pianos, several guns, thousands of empty bottles and cans, some 1910 pin-up pictures, dressmaker's dummies, machinery" ("Strange" 49), a full Model T Ford, thousands of books and newspapers, and various and sundry miscellany. Consequently, while certainly the nation's attention had been drawn to the story because of the brothers' well-known eccentric and reclusive behaviour and the general public's love of a bizarre death narrative, the Collyers' bodies soon became overshadowed by the hoards of objects that had been amassed in their name. Indeed, garbage became the real spectacle.

Since the brothers' deaths, their incredible story has been taken up by numerous authors of fiction: it has been the subject of two novels—American author Marcia Davenport's *My Brother's Keeper* (1954), and over half a century later, American author E.L. Doctorow's *Homer and Langley* (2009)—and no less than six stage plays.² With this array of narratives, we might ask why fiction beyond the 1940s has displayed such interest in the brothers. Perhaps on a cultural level each generation keeps developing new ways to repackage and consume the Collyer brothers because their story continues to resonate—in other words, we are somehow unable to dispose of them entirely.

Doctorow, for instance, sifting through the trash and clutter of their lives, retells the Collyers' story in an era when hoarding has become both a media phenomenon and a pathological condition,³ and situates the Collyers as originary figures in this cultural narrative. Narrated by the disembodied voice of blind brother Homer—Doctorow undoubtedly plays with Homer's connection to the ancient Greek literary figure—the novel fictionalizes the Collyers' story by depicting their beginnings in New York high society of the 1920s and tracing their subsequent turn to a reclusive and eccentric lifestyle. But in addition to humanizing them, Doctorow's novel does something curious: he has the Collyers live decades beyond the time of their deaths in 1947. In fact, the entire second half of the novel allows them to experience, from their home of course, events they had missed, such as the Korean War and the American moon landing. Doctorow thus alters history as only fiction can do and projects the brothers' legacy into these later decades by effacing their garbage-inflicted deaths, the very events that engendered their mythic status. This paradox mirrors American culture's (and Doctorow's and fiction's) continual interest in the brothers, whose story still retains its cultural currency to this day. Moreover, with Homer as narrator, the narrative does not end with his death, but instead resists closure and leaves the brothers' story open for its continual recycling in popular culture, a recognition of its purchase as a kind of modern fable passed down from generation to generation.

At the same time, perhaps literature's fascination with the Collyers concerns not only their story but also our own curious relationship to the transient and ephemeral materials we engage with intimately on a daily basis only to subsequently dispose. Perhaps, then, the Collyers' story not only resonates with future generations, but *haunts*

them as well by foregrounding human beings' own relationship to their trash. If this is so, not only is it the brothers and their reclusive hoarding, but also *garbage itself* that lingers to haunt modern society.⁴ Perhaps, that is, those materials we discard retain some kind of power over us. For instance, as we constantly produce garbage only to immediately dispose of it, sending it away from our personal spaces and bodies to massive zones we never see on the fringes of our municipalities, perhaps garbage's absent presence seems to demand some kind of recognition from us.

To address waste's lingering presence in our culture despite the systems of modern management in place to continually remove it from our sight, I would like to highlight an assumption about garbage embodied in Langley's feverish attempts to catalogue and organize his objects of junk and ephemera in Doctorow's novel. While he is depicted as mentally unstable, permanently affected by mustard gas during his tour in the First World War, he is also figured by Doctorow as "an archivist" (Doctorow 37): although certainly crazed, Langley does not merely hoard but also diligently maintains a "collection of artefacts from...American life" (24), which consists of trash, junk, and detritus. He is thus afflicted with *archive fever*, Jacques Derrida's term for the manic yet hopeful desire to catalogue and organize the materials and documents of culture that is underwritten with an anxiety surrounding the impossibility of such a task.⁵ Langley's attitude suggests there is indeed something *textual* about garbage, and that it is made up not only of the material remainders of consumption, but cultural, social, and even ideological artefacts—in other words, something to be archived. If this is so, what exactly can garbage tell us? How can it be read? How has the American nation chosen to read its garbage?

Residues of the Cold War: Emergent Waste Consciousness in Postwar American Culture and Fiction argues that despite (and perhaps even because of) an organized and systematic imperative during the Cold War to dispose of the nation's excessive amounts of garbage, trash, and waste, American literature of the postwar period had begun to note and represent the important political role and curious archival possibilities of garbaged materials. Postwar authors like Judith Merrill, Richard Yates, Philip K. Dick, Robert A. Heinlein, and later Don DeLillo and A.R. Ammons, began to compensate for the ways garbage was culturally ignored and marginalized in central discourses of convenience and American liberal democratic freedoms—consolidated in a cultural consensus of affluence and consumption in direct opposition to the privations associated with the Soviet Union⁶—by bringing it into the space of fiction. In doing so, these authors attempted to see garbage both textually, as artefacts that can act, as Gay Hawkins would later note, as a “social text” (Hawkins 2), and ideologically, as items that linked the individual to the nation within a Cold War cultural matrix of order. As a largely *unread* archive, Cold War garbage can potentially allow us to reconstruct the culture of waste at the time, and even the ideological implications of Cold War domestic life, the mundane and banal daily realities for the newly emerging middle class in the United States.⁷ Within this system, trash is not just a symbol for social marginalism, but also comes to represent the disavowed center of the accepted world—the materials and process that maintain not only economic and social organization, but also the national culture as well. This project thus seeks to make Cold War garbage legible by revealing the ways these authors attempted to make it readable in their fiction, while also accounting for the ways Cold War waste has subsequently left an indelible mark on the American landscape in the Cold War's wake.

Why do social and literary attitudes toward waste change at this particular cultural moment of American history? The archive of garbage itself can provide an answer to this question. The public ordeal of the Collyer Brothers pinpoints, I argue, a moment when the American nation began to see trash in a way that came to affect subsequent generations' conceptualizations of waste materials: it became common to view garbage not in terms of its materiality—its form, its texture, its textuality—but within a renewed cultural imperative of vigorous disposal. What became fascinating, unbelievable, and grotesque even to the American public about the Collyer Brothers story was the idea that they had chosen *not* to dispose of these garbaged materials.⁸ As accounts of the Collyers' neglectful domestic waste management habits flooded the media, and images of the piles of trash were featured in newspapers, magazines, and newsreels across the country, their story played out as a kind of warning to the American public of the dire consequences of failing to dispose of household waste materials. To document the reclusive brothers' long-deferred exit from the home, *Life* magazine even featured a morbid photograph of Homer's body in a black plastic body bag as it was lowered to the ground from an upper-story window as a crowd looked on below.⁹ The image, an appeal to readers' curiosity and irony, suggested that Homer himself had become a piece of trash, bagged and disposed of like the objects he and his brother had collected. Their entire story was thus underwritten with a curious anxiety: is it possible to be consumed by the remainders of what one has already consumed? In prompting such questions, the Collyers provided the American public with a frightening and symbolic (if exaggerated) example of what could happen should one's garbage remain unmanaged.

Effectively disposing of the residual paradigms of depression-era hoarding and World War II domestic privation, the Collyer Brothers' story can be seen as a parable for new attitudes towards waste materials. While the events of their deaths were hardly responsible for ushering in these new attitudes towards waste, their story certainly galvanized an emerging discourse in which, as I argue in this dissertation, waste was figured as dangerously *undomestic* within a Cold War cultural matrix of order, normality, and conformity. Thus, while the build-up of the Collyers' trash cannot be related to the Cold War, its public release, and the media's stressing the importance of disposal, can.¹⁰ We might even say the Collyer Brothers' story was the primal scene of Cold War waste management, as the same emphasis on disposal as a crucial act in the establishment of domestic space surrounding the brothers' story conditioned Cold War discourses of waste management and organization. Indeed, while the policy of containment defined the nation's foreign and domestic policies,¹¹ waste and its management functioned as a vital component of the ideological establishment of a so-called Cold War "cultural containment" (Nadel 27).¹² For the American nation to manage its cultural production and consumption during the Cold War, these discourses had to treat waste as an important problem and simultaneously provide strategies for its quick and easy disposal. An advertisement from the 1940s for a General Electric garbage disposer sums up the emerging attitude towards waste in the facetious headline, "Say goodbye to garbage forever!" (Scanlan 86). With this kind of rhetoric, waste was discarded with new vigilance, but also with new neglect: waste, garbage, trash, rubbish, refuse, and junk, were systematically disposed and framed in the discourse of Cold War cultural containment as unsightly, unseen, undomestic, and ultimately illegible.

At the same time, something was happening with the material make-up of waste. The mid-twentieth century is important in the social history of waste because it represents a time when the ontology of garbage underwent significant changes; as the chemical revolution of the 1930s began to make its way into industrial production for domestic use, non-biodegradable, toxic, and hazardous waste—the plastics, the chemicals, the synthetic materials—along with a burgeoning electronics industry and its nascent electronic waste, began to co-mingle with organic waste, household junk, and domestic trash in the municipal waste streams. As a result, household garbage's role in American culture's material relationship with the environment rendered even household garbage a potentially toxic and hazardous material. As modern sanitary landfills began to emerge as a response to these new toxic wastes,¹³ garbage materials became objects with extended future trajectories. Nuclear waste, the Cold War's particular legacy, symbolized waste's new staying power, as its radioactivity implicated it in new toxic ecologies for future American landscapes. Indeed, there is thus a bitter irony in GE's promise that consumers could say goodbye to garbage forever. Science or speculative fiction's recognition that waste would indeed persist into the future, due to its emphasis on representing possible future landscapes, presented a view of waste which directly challenged the popular Cold War discourses of disposal. For these reasons, as Cold War discourses were intent on immediately moving garbage to landfills, a select group of American literary figures of the period attempted to articulate an alternate, ecological way of looking at garbage. As a direct challenge to the dominant attitude towards waste, authors began to see waste within a different framework: as a future archive of Cold War toxicity and wastefulness.

Reading trash: methodologies

In some sense, garbage's management has always been a part of larger American cultural meta-narratives of *the new*, progress, and manifest destiny, for in order for an individual, a community, and indeed a nation to continually embrace the future or expand into new geographical areas, not only do cultural and social paradigms have to be disposed of, but *materials* must be discarded as well. In noting that the past "is the foe of mankind," and the future "the Bible of the free" (qtd. in McWilliams 137),¹⁴ Herman Melville expresses an attitude towards ideological and material phenomena falling out of use as things to be disposed of. In the Emersonian tradition of self-making, any American who continually refashions him- or herself must, similarly, leave behind refuse—here literally what has been refused—in their wake. In R.W.B. Lewis's study of American fiction *The American Adam: Innocence, Tragedy, and Tradition in the Nineteenth Century* (1955), for example, which follows Crèvecoeur's characterization of the American male as a new man without a past, Lewis implies that whatever made up the "old" would have to, necessarily, continually be disposed of, whether abstract or material. In terms of the nation at large, while Leo Marx famously argued in *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America* (1964) that the tension between technology and "the pastoral" structured American culture (and its literature revealed the paradox of such structuring), the increasing presence of technological production should necessarily leave its mark on the spaces of the American landscape with its waste products. And yet despite the prevalence of discourses of disposal in American cultural narratives, just as garbage was omitted from popular modern American discourses, it has also been, for the most part, eerily absent in American literature.

Though my project is not primarily concerned with taking up the impasses of the modernist/postmodernist debate, my research reveals what I believe to be a moment of structural change in the postwar period in terms of how authors conceptualized trash in their fiction. As I will make clear in the body of this dissertation, such a shift occurs precisely because, as I suggest above, the material nature and make-up of waste begins to change around the middle of the twentieth century in the United States. For instance, when trash makes significant appearances in modernist fiction and poetry, it tends to function figuratively and in ways which foreground its symbolic resonance instead of any implications regarding its physical material relationship to the landscape.

Wallace Stevens' 1938 poem "The Man on the Dump," for example, negotiates with garbage directly, as its title suggests. But while garbage is a central motif in the poem—its main metaphor—trash remains simply a figure or narrative device, a way of talking not about material garbage itself, but about the art of poetry. As Laurence Buell notes, for Stevens, "a dump was a symbolic location, merely: a repository of used-up images" (Buell 664). The speaker in the poem uses the dump to articulate the ways representations of reality in literature (like, in a self-reflexive orientation toward itself, Stevens' own poem) are necessary in seeing reality anew, but ultimately become useless in the face of the real (the "the the" (Stevens 164) in the poem). A call for the continual creation of poetry, which must remain novel, fresh, and new or else suffer the same fate as the trash in the poem, merely falling out of use and value, the poem links garbage with poetry, but only to meditate on the latter. The speaker explains "The dump is full / Of images" (163) primarily, and neither he nor Stevens consider the material stakes of the remainders and fragments of cultural production and consumption. Garbage, then, is a

material, but only in so much as it represents the immaterial; as remainders of significance and possibility, trash is, for the modernist aesthetic, symbolic of cultural memory and things of the past. Similarly, the famous ash heaps of F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* (1925), consisting of the residues of incinerated garbage, work to symbolize the cultural decay of American aristocracy in the post-World War I era, and not environmental degradation, by providing a symbolic manifestation of the fragmentation of a never fully-disposed residual past.¹⁵

My project intervenes in discussions of postwar fiction by stressing literature's interest in the material stakes of production, consumption, and waste management practices within a Cold War framework.¹⁶ While the major critics of postmodernism have been influenced by what Richard Rorty (by way of Gustav Bergman) calls the linguistic turn of theory,¹⁷ and have stressed postmodern fiction's obsession with linguistic play,¹⁸ self-conscious representation,¹⁹ and its representational relation to post-industrial simulacra,²⁰ my project attempts to articulate a growing concern in fiction for human interrelationships with the environment, particularly through explorations of the materiality of garbage. As ecocritic Michael J. McDowell argues, in postmodern theory's preoccupation with language and representation, critics have consequently ignored the material world²¹; similarly, Greg Garrard argues that the explosion of deconstruction and poststructuralism embodied the ways culture has been prioritized and privileged over nature.²² Consequently, I situate my interpretation of these texts within a reading of emergent postmodernism by arguing that new literary concerns with the remainders and detritus of cultural production is part and parcel of the following three attributes of postmodern fiction: its assimilation of trash or low culture,²³ or what Dwight Macdonald

calls “midcult” cultural production²⁴; its affirmation of marginal and micronarratives instead of what Jean-François Lyotard calls grand or metanarratives²⁵; and its self-conscious negotiations with what Fredric Jameson refers to as a “crisis in historicity” (Jameson 22), our inability to orient ourselves in a linear progression of history due to, among other things, late-capitalist privileging of space over time and the particularly postmodern fascination with recycling the cultural forms, artefacts, and narratives of the past.

As theorists like Jameson and Andreas Huyssen have assigned a collapse between high and low culture aesthetics to the ethos of postmodern fiction, I notice a related preoccupation with the material trash and detritus from which the so-called low or mass forms of cultural production—the various pulp literatures, films, and publications—originally received their (initially derogatory) epithet. Thus, as ‘trashy’ forms of literature are incorporated into mainstream and even high-brow literary production, so too is material waste embraced in the space of literature. Thus, I am also interested in the those forms of literature associated with “trash,” the marginal pulp science fiction novels and short stories so prevalent during the Cold War. An erosion of the distinction between high and low culture outlined by Jameson and Huyssen meant an explicit embracing of many midcult and trash culture forms, genres, and aesthetics, and these novels are an apt place to trace the emergence of garbage as a significant literary trope in the Cold War because their self-conscious awareness of themselves as schlock was mirrored by an interest in garbaged materials. While many American science fiction narratives were oriented towards a future that would be devoid of waste, authors like Dick, Heinlein, and Miller depicted landscapes either of post-nuclear ruin marked by the detritus of the

culture that had disposed of itself, or future landscapes defined by the urban accumulation of massive amounts of litter and garbage. Thus, at a time when it was crossing over into the mainstream, science fiction took its trash with it. Moreover, as a genre, speculative fiction also intersects, though fictively, with discourses of futurity. It is precisely this fictive quality of the genre's perspective on futurity that allows it to speculate upon the effects of the Cold War's weapons build-up and the build-up of its massive amounts of industrial and municipal waste. In making such claims, I adopt the position outlined by both David Seed²⁶ and David Dowling,²⁷ who argue that, in the words of Seed, "science fiction novelists made constant interventions in the debates that were raging throughout the Cold War on such matters as civil defence, foreign policy and internal security" (Seed 9); I add to this list a new perspective on science fiction's interventions into Cold War ecological matters.

Moreover, as postmodern fiction negotiates with an increasing "incredulity toward metanarratives" (Lyotard xxiv) by foregrounding those micronarratives traditionally discarded from centralized discourses and cultural paradigms, junk, and the heaps into which such discarded materials coalesce, become symbolic of those voices, narratives, and subject positions once forced to recede into the background and now given new purchase and representation in postmodern fiction's pluralism. In addition, literary preoccupations with litter and garbage also evince an interest in fiction's new relationship to representations of history. In the wake of our new understanding of the narrativization of the past thanks to Hayden White's reading of History as a narrative phenomenon defined by its own textuality,²⁸ literature sees garbage (as well as itself) as another document through which one can access the past, however indirectly. As new

modes of historical archaeologies emerge, to use Michel Foucault's language for discontinuous readings of the past as an alternative to previous claims of continuity espoused by the discipline of History,²⁹ literary figures begin to see the layers of flotsam and jetsam of society as important textual remainders of past events and actions, archival sites of documentation.

And yet, postmodern theory seems hesitant to address the ecological and materials stakes of late capitalist cultural production. Notably, Fredric Jameson's central claims about postmodern representation is its implication in the so-called crisis in historicity plaguing the postmodern period, whereby cultural and literary production has mired us in an endless recycling of previous genres, modes, and forms, dominated by pastiche as the pre-eminent postmodern form, and effaced any available orientation in the present moment.³⁰ But in his discussion of the endless, nostalgic recycling of past cultural narratives in cultural production—in particular his astute distinction between the 1950s as a decade, its actual events and realities, and the cultural concept of “the fifties” as a (nostalgic) representation of that decade (even during the time, it most be noted)³¹—he does not consider the residual material legacy of those decades we continually reproduce. Thus, I aim to locate (and to show how some fiction notes) what *materially* lingers from these periods: while the cultural narratives of the “fifties” are revisited, restaged, and repackaged for our consumption, the material detritus, the refuse, and the trash deposited into modern sanitary landfills and dumps across the American nation in the postwar period, persist as well.

Moreover, while Jameson's notion of postmodernism relies upon technology's effects upon our subjectivities, he does not address the ecological effects of technology's

central role in the industry standard of planned obsolescence, “techniques used to artificially limit the durability of a manufactured good in order to stimulate repetitive consumption” (Slade 5)—for these new media technologies are junked as often as they are replaced by the innovations which make simulacral and digital (postmodern) representations possible. Similarly, Jameson’s figuration of the postmodern subject as a paranoid or schizophrenic anxious of the networks associated with fiber-optic cables, cyber-information, and technological surveillance—all phenomena associated with the Cold War technologization of society³²—must also take into account a recognition of the networks of trash which transport urban and suburban refuse to unseen areas of management. Thus, as Jameson cites Thomas Pynchon’s paranoid novel *The Crying of Lot 49* (1965) for its representation of the networks of conspiracy,³³ he overlooks the double-meaning of Pynchon’s acronym for the underground movement of information in the secret Tristero postal service: W.A.S.T.E., as a signifier, implicates not only networks of information that cannot be seen,³⁴ experienced, or fully known (the secret underground postal system known as the Tristero), but the networks which make all other networks possible: those of modern waste management. Main character Oedipa Maas sees the W.A.S.T.E. acronym everywhere because waste management receptacles, and thus waste materials, *are* everywhere. While certainly the problems of cultural representation and subjectivity are indeed vital to our understanding of postmodernism and postmodern fiction, cultural norms instigated during the Cold War have also left a material legacy of toxicity, excess, and waste, which I conceptualize as a material archive of these aspects of Cold War culture.

Although literary critic Patricia Yaeger has similarly suggested that garbage can function “as archive or catalogue of trauma” (Yaeger 105) in fiction, her formulation is limited to strictly naming the ways ethnic minorities construct garbage within the space of literature. She theorizes a postmodern literary preoccupation with trash as only an ethnic subject’s negotiation with the marginalized status of themselves and their ancestors. Consequently, Yaeger sees “[d]ebris as vision, as violence, and as an alternate site of reading history and what it demands become[ing] a surprisingly constant theme in postmodern American literature” (106), and argues that in these texts waste prompts the question: “how do you reorganize a past that has been marginalized, buried, or bestowed by state formations and not your own?” (109).

With Yaeger’s insight, this project could well be subtitled “white trash,” so significant is the unmarked dimension of whiteness in the cultural garbage of the Cold War period (or what I call Cold War garbage). To address this, I would like to consider another curious aspect of E.L. Doctorow’s novel of Homer and Langley Collyer. While I have noted that Doctorow has altered the brothers’ lives in *Homer and Langley* by having them live on decades beyond their death in 1947, he also does something interesting with their home’s geographic location: he supplants them from their Harlem neighbourhood brownstone building on 5th Avenue at 128th Street and transports them farther down 5th Avenue to situate them opposite Central Park. This is a significant move, for it takes them from Harlem into a more affluent and *whiter* urban area. Perhaps because Harlem was developing into an exclusively black neighbourhood by the time of the Collyers’ death, Doctorow felt that if these two eccentric white males were to fictionally persist beyond their real-life deaths, they might not fit the cultural and social demography of

late-twentieth-century Harlem. I should say that I do not want to suggest that Doctorow's move is a form of racism; in fact, perhaps it is his way of keeping the Collyers' extensive cultural detritus and garbage *out* of the black neighbourhood of Harlem (perhaps it is even a literary form of environmental justice). What I am trying to suggest is that the novel suggests that the Collyer brothers' story speaks to a particularly *white* kind of trash.

Thus, the literary archives I interrogate and the landscapes I analyze are primarily marked by a white presence, notable for its peculiar unmarked quality. In fact, I am interested in the spaces of production and consumption responsible for creating the conditions for what has become known as "environmental racism" (Chavis 3), which includes among other things, "racial discrimination in the deliberate targeting of communities of color for toxic waste disposal" (3). It is well-known that suburbia, and in particular its profusion in the postwar period, has notably been described in terms of "white flight" (Avila 8), a collective (though not organized) social move from the urban centers to suburban neighbourhoods not typically inhabited by people of colour. I am thus interested in, for example, Richard Yates' domestic portrayal of emerging white middle-class couple Frank and April Wheeler's struggle with the dull, banal, and mundane suburban reality in *Revolutionary Road* (1961) precisely for its negotiations with white spaces and their mundane, everyday details, of which garbage and waste (and particularly its management) play a significant role: these kinds of domestic novels of the postwar period take up the question of garbage because they are interested in the banal.

Thus, as the networks of white trash run through the urban and suburban landscapes during the Cold War period, white individuals rarely witnessed the effects of either their waste's movement throughout the city, or those neighbourhoods that did not

receive adequate waste management infrastructures. For example, in Sloan Wilson's novel of the suburban "organization man's"³⁵ attempt to resist corporate determinism, *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* (1955), main character Tom Rath takes his train to work, from the suburbs and into the city, and is surprised when "the train emerge[s] into the bright sunlight and [is] surrounded by the littered streets and squalid brick tenements of Harlem" (Wilson 45). While he has "passed them twice a day for years...usually he [doesn't] look at them" (45). My project thus focuses on where waste is produced, in the predominantly white spaces of the suburbs, which are usually located, in a most overt form of environmental racism, furthest from the landfills and dumps of modern society.³⁶

While acknowledging Yaeger's formulation of trash as an archive and the racial implications of this citing of trash, I nevertheless also want to broaden her scope by linking garbage to a more mundane social phenomenon—daily life in early Cold War America—and introducing an ecological element to her perspective. Thus, I also take issue with her celebratory, if ambivalent, approach to garbage and the ways she suggests authors can "grant the trash in their fictions a surprising incandescence" (Yaeger 109), for while it can indeed document marginalized or suppressed histories—such a claim is crucial to my own thesis—waste must also be seen from an ecological perspective as a potential hazard to the environment. At the same time, I take issue with her decision to leave the concept of garbage as archive undertheorized: how does it specifically embody these traumatic pasts?

In fact, we might even ask the broader questions, what exactly is an archive? How does garbage embody its characteristics? How can we read garbage as an archival material or document? Poststructural readings have stressed the archive's role in

conditioning discourses, and thus our perception of history and culture, while at the same time emphasizing its vulnerability and failure to truly compensate for the limitations of human memory.³⁷ For Jacques Derrida, the archive, which strives to achieve some form of totality, must always fail, for there is always some form of external substrate. As a result, the archive can only structure the way it will be accessed and read, and thus *produces* as much as records events: it is therefore unreliable, fragmentary, discontinuous, and marked by lack, aporia, and disorder. The acts of searching or maintaining the archive are thus feverish negotiations with the cultural forces of hope and the death drive, for the very act of instituting the archive embodies an optimism that it might endure, mixed with an acknowledgement that it must necessarily be destroyed.³⁸ I suggest this anxiety is in some sense also inflected with an anxiety of waste, for if the archive is intent on collecting everything of value, it is equally intent upon jettisoning those objects considered to have no value—thus, garbage and trash are the very materials that are denied archival status, ignored in the fury of archive fever. As such, my project argues that these materials are precisely what allows the archive to pose as continuous, total, and organized, for if the archive constitutes at least the attempt at ordering cultural information, the very process of archiving is conditioned by the method of distinguishing the useful from the useless (in archiving the former and disposing of the latter). I thus argue that not only do these discarded materials constitute their own archive, but condition traditional archives by producing the illusion of their order and totality through their very absence. (The modern sanitary landfill, I argue in chapter four, is itself a kind of anti-archive and an archive simultaneously). In other words, the archive I am trying to posit is located *outside* traditional archives and exists in opposition to them.

In addition, Derrida's conception of archive fever is predicated on the very real fear of the archive becoming destroyed—in other words, turned to waste. For Derrida, as expressed in his essay “No Apocalypse, Not Now (Full Speed Ahead, Seven Missiles, Seven Missives),” the perfect embodiment of or metaphor for the archive's vulnerability to destruction is the trauma of nuclear apocalypse. An offshoot of deconstruction, the so-called nuclear criticism spawned by Derrida's essay presented a decidedly totalizing assessment of the Cold War's narratives of nuclear destruction, and explicitly named nuclear holocaust as the most pressing threat to humanity's archive—of knowledge, of literature, of culture. Interestingly, in his version of apocalypse Derrida does not allow for any remainders: his figuration of nuclear holocaust constitutes nothing less than the “total and remainderless destruction of the archive” (Derrida “Apocalypse” 27).³⁹ My project takes a different approach to both nuclear holocaust and the archive: on the one hand I argue that there would be remainders after nuclear war: important cultural leftovers, though scorched and burned by the flames of atomic deluge—namely what we have come to categorize as garbage and waste. In fact, in post-nuclear science fiction like Miller's *A Canticle For Leibowitz* (1959) and Heinlein's *Farnham's Freehold* (1964), garbage materials left over from before the nuclear war become archival materials vital to the reconstitution of a post-nuclear culture, and to the reconstitution of its archive. For this reason, I do not abide by a fully deconstructive reading of the archive in this study.

On the other hand, my project is also interested in the ways garbaged materials outside of a nuclear annihilation paradigm such as the one outlined by nuclear criticism, embody not a total apocalypse, but instead a gradual entropy that leads to a kind of eco-apocalyptic scenario. While the Cold War indeed cannot be divorced from its inherent

apocalypticism, I am interested not in the moment of nuclear Armageddon, its relationship to literary representation or the ways it conditions discourse,⁴⁰ but in the ways in which the slow, monotonous, and routine grind of daily waste disposal and management conditions American Cold War discourse. Interestingly, while the project of nuclear criticism, as outlined by its manifesto-like call for such approaches to literature, was to “read[] other critical or canonical texts for the purpose of uncovering the unknown shapes of our unconscious nuclear fears, and that which aims to show how the terms of the current nuclear discussion are being shaped by literary or critical assumptions whose implications are often, perhaps systematically ignored” (“Proposal” 2), a discussion of the effects of nuclear waste is conspicuously absent from this (by no means intentionally exhaustive) list. As nuclear waste and even household garbage linger, they accumulate to such massive proportions that they too come to have lasting effects on the American landscape.

In contrast to what Frances Ferguson has called the nuclear sublime, a twentieth-century version of the “alternative and counterpoise to the beautiful” (Ferguson 5) that dates back to the thinking of Longinus but is predicated on “the nuclear unthinkable” (5),⁴¹ I am more interested in a nuclear “stuplime” (Ngai 277). The stuplime, according to Sianne Ngai, is an affect related to the sublime that opens us up to new feelings through our holding together of ambivalent responses of shock and tedium; I find this concept helpful in understanding the affective registers of Cold War waste. Following Ngai, I contest Fredric Jameson’s notion that there has been a so-called “waning of affect” (Jameson 10) in the period of late-capitalism, a significant lessening of the responses to aesthetic representation. For Ngai, the ugly feelings with which we respond to grotesque,

distasteful, and appalling phenomena mark important and overlooked emotional responses in critical theory. While nuclear annihilation was certainly a centralized anxiety in Cold War discourses, my project instead focuses on the ways the horrid, disfigured and discarded materials of cultural consumption came to influence national psychologies. While nuclear anxiety held sway in political, social and cultural discourses, my project suggests we look to the marginalized detritus for a new understanding of the habits and logic of the Cold War subject.

In order to find the cultural logic of the Cold War period in its garbage, I have taken as my objects of study literary *and* cultural artefacts, for I find it is crucial to cross-reference between these two forms of cultural expression to locate a moment of structural change in the Cold War “structure of feeling” (Williams 55), Raymond Williams’ shorthand for the common code of cultural values of a particular historical moment. I have thus taken throughout this dissertation a multifaceted approach to garbage, cultural production and literature, interrogating the sociological, aesthetic, formal, and ecological aspects of these phenomena.⁴² To take into account all of these phenomena, I employ a methodology of cultural materialism, following Raymond Williams’ method of analyzing cultural artefacts for moments of conflict between cultural discourses. While traditionally, cultural materialists have studied cultural production, dissemination, and consumption, I find waste itself to be a site of competing discourses—not merely a site of trauma and subjection and marginalization, as Yaegar does, but a site where dominant discourses were expressed and also challenged. (I find the following sentiments of Martin V. Melosi to be quite apt and astute: as American “[I]andfills become ‘monuments to a disposable culture’[...] garbage becomes text” [Melosi 32].) As such, my project

considers garbage an important material nexus of the forces of production, consumption and waste management. For Williams, cultural artefacts are always marked by competing discourses, namely dominant, residual, and emergent ideologies. In my framework, the so-called Cold War cultural consensus acts as the dominant cultural discourse during the Cold War, as its consolidation of liberal democratic values came to define the social milieu of the 1950s. Working against such a dominant paradigm, I find also an emergent waste consciousness as waste materials are brought into the space of literature. Because the management and disposal of waste during the Cold War also significantly altered the nation's (and thus the subject's) dynamic relationship between human society and its environment, I also want to position this study within an ecocritical framework by considering not just the ideological dimension of Cold War garbage, but also the ways these material remainders became implicated in the American landscape in new ways.

While ecocriticism began to emerge until the mid-1990s as a discipline in the humanities (ecocritics traditionally focused on nature writing and representations of the environment in literature)⁴³ it has since broadened its scope. Simon Schama's *Landscape and Memory* (1995) for instance called for a more interdisciplinary approach in ecocritical circles, and Richard Kerridge and Neil Sammells's collection *Writing the Environment: Ecocriticism and Literature* (1998) inaugurated a broader form of cultural ecocriticism. My ecocritical interest lies in the ways urban and suburban spaces are represented in postwar fiction, and the ways future American landscapes are depicted in speculative and science fiction from the Cold War era. While many environmentalists and ecocritics have already written on the relationship between the Cold War and the environment, they have done so primarily in relation to nuclear waste and the Cold War's

inherent radioactivity.⁴⁴ While of course hazardous, toxic and nuclear waste have dominated discussions of Cold War waste (and I too cannot omit such a discussion of the by-products of nuclear arms and power production), I intervene by considering the unexpected form of household garbage in its relation to the Cold War.

Archival spaces and times

While in recent years, garbage theory has emerged as a response to both the growing popularity of ecocriticism as a mode of literary methodology, and the increasing urgency surrounding waste—its management, its transnational movements, its recycling, its reduction—garbage has been theorized in many forms: from its use in economic value,⁴⁵ its role in ethical identity creation,⁴⁶ its function in epistemological formulations,⁴⁷ its relation to technology,⁴⁸ to its function as a material critique of capital.⁴⁹ Also, I want to acknowledge psychoanalytic readings of trash as an embodiment of the return of the repressed and the uncanny,⁵⁰ but not to dwell on such an interpretation. Certainly a psychoanalytic dimension to garbage's affect is apparent; but rather than looking at how we deal with our repression of garbage, I would instead like to focus on reading garbage itself to articulate how such frameworks of repression were instituted—namely, through the American Cold War project. I take up these myriad frameworks—it is important to acknowledge that waste has many dimensions and cultural functions—but shift them into unexpected motifs, as my intervention into garbage studies considers the archival and ideological dimensions of garbage. Specifically, I look at two aspects of garbage to interrogate its archival dimension: its temporality and spatiality.

I have already remarked upon waste's temporal dimension—with its new ontology, waste is no longer merely an object which refers back into the past, but also an object with future implications. In terms of its spatiality, waste was defined by its spatial existence during the Cold War, as discourses of waste management desired to keep waste moving toward the spaces organized for its management. As Cold War capital spread into new spheres and dominant ideological institutions began to organize social spaces according to new logistics defined by military strategizing—which, as I will discuss in chapter two, disturbed the very separation of public and private in the Cold War period—spaces were increasingly influenced by what Henri Lefebvre calls “representations of space” (Lefebvre 14), industrial and corporate conceptions of space organized according to dominant ideological interests. These capitalist Cold War spaces worked to keep waste in motion as a means of discouraging its ability to mark these pre-sanitized spaces, for clutter, mess, and garbage would obstruct consumptive practices by virtue of its mere presence. At the same time, these spaces can be read as archives of the interrelationships between Cold War subjects and the nation, for they can be seen to bear the traces and marks of the conflict between hegemonic and alternative forces, especially through the creation and disposal of waste materials. But just as the archive requires the spaces of disposal to accept its detritus, so too do these spaces depend upon the feverish expulsion and flow of waste materials. In fact, because of waste's relationship to spatial organization—the term *dispose*, the Oxford English Dictionary reminds us, is semantically linked with the creation of spatial order—it assumes different ideological dimensions according to its differing spatial contexts. Thus, because these traces can be mapped through specific sites, my chapters are accordingly organized around the spaces

where they are most legible yet remain unarticulated: the spaces of the kitchen, the fallout shelter, and the marginal spaces of urban and suburban public areas. These are the mundane, the banal, and the routine spaces of Cold War daily life—I find them important precisely because there is nothing exceptional about them. Here, we can identify the ways garbage, in some ways, define the boundaries of these spaces by its movement across and through them, and by its absence. The space of my final chapter, the modern sanitary landfill, embodies the very external substrate Derrida uses to define the archive's own limitations, for they were designed to accommodate all that was expelled, devalued, and disavowed by American citizens in their daily lives, no matter how toxic or hazardous.

In the first chapter, I interrogate the function of the kitchen in the American domestic mobilization of the 1950s and argue that Cold War organizations of social spaces made household waste disposal a crucial act in the establishment of American normality. Reading the tropes of disposal and waste management in Judith Merrill's *Shadow on the Hearth* (1950) and Richard Yates' *Revolutionary Road* (1961), I reveal ways the daily management of waste became vital also to the Cold War construction of femininity: as waste was engendered in kitchen spaces, it was also gendered. Yet, as *Revolutionary Road* in particular suggests, waste also becomes a material through which female Cold War subjects might contest the gender roles ascribed to them by the forces of Cold War consumption.

In the second chapter, I turn to a space unique to the Cold War period: the backyard fallout shelter. While later cultural critics like Elaine Tyler May and Sarah Lichtman have figured the family fallout shelter as a space of excess consumption, Robert A. Heinlein's speculative science fiction novel *Farnham's Freehold* (1964)

inadvertently reveals how the shelter can embody instead an implicit critique of disposable culture by forcing occupants to alter their regular consumptive and waste management patterns: it can introduce sustainable practices—an ecology—to nuclear discourses. But because fallout shelters never became operational—the much-speculated nuclear holocaust did not occur—their critique of disposable culture could then best, perhaps *only*, take place within the space of literature. At the same time, Walter M. Miller Jr.'s *A Canticle For Leibowitz* (1959) reveals the fallout shelter becomes, paradoxically, a vital means of preserving artefacts of Cold War material culture after nuclear Armageddon—evidence of the very practices its critique attempts to subvert.

In the third chapter, I follow waste as it moves outside of domestic spaces by comparing the literary depictions of future waste-laden landscapes in the fiction of Philip K. Dick with a somewhat unlikely source: the post-World War II photographs of American photojournalist Charles Fenno Jacobs. I argue that both figures attempted to ecologize public litter by employing and promoting what I call a postwar *waste gaze*: a way of acknowledging waste's existence and futurity by recognizing the presence of waste in marginal and eccentric places in the case of Jacobs, and in dominant public and private (future) spaces in Dick. Transposing litter from public American geographies and into the spaces of literature and photography, both figures decontextualize (*despatialize*) waste so that its environmental, ecological, and political implications might emerge.

In chapter four, I investigate the ways American author Don DeLillo seeks to understand the Cold War and its end through the American landscape, and specifically the modern sanitary landfill in his novel *Underworld* (1997). In the wake of the Cold War's anti-climactic end with the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s (which

was not a nuclear holocaust), DeLillo reads landfills and the garbage within them as material embodiments of the cultural and environmental stakes of the mobilization of American society during the Cold War. Interestingly, DeLillo's novel also reveals a certain homology between literature and the landfill: both spaces act as archival repositories for cultural objects and narratives of the past. And yet, not unlike Derrida's use of atomic holocaust—a (if not *the*) central narrative in the Cold War—as a metaphor for the vulnerability of literature to time and the elements,⁵¹ landfills also confront literature with the eventuality of its own material destruction. At the same time, outside the space of literature, literature's material presence in postwar sanitary landfills implicates it in new and dangerous toxic ecologies. To work through such uncomfortable implications, DeLillo's *Underworld* and A.R. Ammons' long poem *Garbage* figure landfills as sites of recovery instead of wastelands where textual remainders are degraded and deteriorated. In doing so, both texts erect compensatory fantasies to speak in place of their unarticulated shame at literature's material contribution to the landscape.

CHAPTER ONE

(EN)GENDERED WASTE IN THE COLD WAR KITCHEN

1.1 The Nuclear Domestic

In July 1959, U.S. Vice President Richard Nixon and Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev discussed their states' competing household technological advances in an impromptu, public conversation at the American National Exhibition in Moscow, Russia.⁵² In what became known almost immediately as the "Kitchen Debate,"⁵³ Nixon explicitly associated American victory in the Cold War with domestic freedoms and comforts made possible by emergent, space-age technologies. While Nixon's rhetoric did not mean to suggest that putting a roast in the oven was comparable to positioning a satellite over the Soviet Union, it implied that the pushing of both buttons triggered effects in both spaces.⁵⁴ In doing so, Nixon conceptualized the American household within an ideological framework critic Amy Kaplan refers to as "manifest domesticity" (581), a feminized, domestic supplement to the American project of manifest destiny. A century before the Cold War, the notion of domesticity—a term that can refer to, as Kathleen Anne McHugh notes, "home, family, maternity, warmth, hearth, to the creation of a private place where we can be who we really are, [and] to a set of experiences, possessions, and sentiments that are highly symbolically valued in our culture" (McHugh 6)—had become, Kaplan argues, an important reference point in the discourses of American nationhood. By conceptualizing the national domestic through the American household, as Nixon would later do, the discourse and project of American imperialism in the nineteenth century conflated the household and national domestics while obscuring

their connection in promoting an “ideology of the separate spheres” (Kaplan 583)—a gendering of the private domestic realm as feminine and the public domestic realm of the nation as masculine. As a kind of feminized “manifest domesticity” (581) worked to anchor the project of manifest destiny, the very process of *domestication* became important for policing the boundaries of the American and the foreign, the domestic and the *undomestic*.⁵⁵

Picking up where Nixon’s rhetoric in the Kitchen Debate left off, this chapter presents a new perspective on Cold War domesticity and gender by arguing that the practices of waste management had many important and overlooked implications in terms of Cold War spatial politics and nascent postwar feminism. Through an analysis of postwar advertisements and films, a cultural history of the modern fitted kitchen, and close readings of Judith Merrill’s speculative Cold War novel *Shadow on the Hearth* (1950), Ray Bradbury’s science fiction short story “August, 2026: There Will Come Soft Rains” (1950), Richard Yates’ suburban novel *Revolutionary Road* (1961), and Ira Levin’s science fiction thriller novel *The Stepford Wives* (1972), I reveal the ways waste materials—garbage, trash, rubbish, junk, refuse—as objects that regularly permeated the divisions between inside and outside, policed and defined the boundaries between Cold War public and private spaces, and between the American individual and nation. During the Cold War, American domestic policies intensified the flow of information, discourses, and materials across the boundaries of the national and household domestic spheres, and, quite intentionally, perpetuated a continual influence of military, corporate and institutional interests into private spaces.⁵⁶ As the United States adopted a foreign policy defined by the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan, and George F. Kennan’s

mandate of geopolitical containment in the immediate post-World War II period,⁵⁷ American postwar imperialism⁵⁸ relied heavily on mobilizing the household domestic realm, and promoting such mobilization in the popular social imaginary.⁵⁹

Within a matrix of American domesticity where “normal domestic routines such as the preparation of dinner take on military importance” (Newell 427), managing waste became a vital act in the establishment of the home and the space of the nation. Because they were a threat to spatial order—as John Scanlan notes, garbage, in its status as the stuff whose very disposal *creates* order, “helps to organize the boundary between order and disorder across various aspects of experience” (Scanlan 42)—waste materials were conceptualized not according to their own materiality, but their methods of disposal. One can indeed recognize in the discourses of convenience a relationship between waste management and what Alan Nadel refers to as Cold War cultural containment—media-presented social categories of strict binary oppositions from which observers might detect threatening or dangerous deviations to normal, ‘American’ activities⁶⁰: garbage, as an obstruction to consumption,⁶¹ had to be figured as *undomestic* in the national discourses of not only waste management but also Cold War consumption in order to maintain the sanctity of the American (household) domestic sphere and the perceived order of the nation itself.

In its attempt to dramatize domestic nuclear scenarios, American speculative fiction of this period provided an important forum for authors to explore the mobilized conditions of nuclear war. In such depictions of nuclear chaos, some texts of this genre exposed the connections between waste management and Cold War normality, particularly through their depictions of feminine negotiations with the space of the Cold

War kitchen. While waste management is hardly a central focus of Judith Merrill's speculative Cold War novel, *Shadow on the Hearth* (1950), the novel narrates the effects of a nuclear attack on a suburban housewife to reveal the ways waste management intersects with Kaplan's manifest domesticity as a vital component of Cold War discourses of the nation, gender, and Imperialism. Main character Gladys Mitchell's reliance on her kitchen space and the disposal of garbage before and during her time of crisis inadvertently reveals the ways that waste materials, as objects of regular disposal, were imbued with important ideological dimensions as critical points of contact between the household and the national domestics, and vital to the establishment of the Cold War cultural consensus.⁶² As the boundaries of (household) domestic space became more permeable—vulnerable to influence from an American military industrial complex and the threat of Soviet attack—Gladys's movement of waste from inside to outside the home becomes an important act in sustaining and even defining the boundaries of the domestic and foreign, of normal routines and abnormal disruptions to them.

At the same time, to consolidate the connection between the Cold War and the American kitchen, the rhetoric of American futurism framed Cold War kitchens as sanitized sites of space-age technology, free from waste and grime, and oriented towards a future dominated by American convenience. Postwar kitchen designers brought innovative technologies into kitchen design while implementing a systemocentrist logic—what Brandon Hookway describes as a cybernetic relationship between humans and machines in which larger systems at work are also beneficiaries of individual human labour—into kitchen spaces. This cybernetic arrangement of the kitchen reasserted the connections between household activities and national systems of exchange and

circulation associated with the Cold War by making domestic waste materials flow faster through (and out of) the home. A close reading of science fiction author Ray Bradbury's short story "August, 2026: There Will Come Soft Rains," reveals the ways Bradbury self-reflexively implicates his own genre in the framing of Cold War kitchens in popular discourses.⁶³ Satirizing the home appliance industry's emphasis on technological innovation in kitchens of the 1950s—evident, I will show, in the advertising and in the packaging of home appliances and products—Bradbury meditates on a fictional future in which kitchen spaces operate themselves without human presence. Ultimately, Bradbury's story collapses Cold War discourse, science fiction, and kitchen technologies as the story narrates the persistence of a fully automated home after a nuclear war has wiped out all human presence from the future.

As cybernetic, systemocentrist logic revamped the American kitchen, it also changed the ways the female body negotiated with waste materials. Subsequently, waste's new movements in the Cold War kitchen affected sexual identity politics as well: as waste was engendered in kitchen spaces, it was also *gendered*. But as waste became technologized through new mechanical methods of disposal—home incinerators, electric vacuums, and mechanized waste disposal units—and acted out by female waste managers, not only do waste materials undergo a technological erasure from the domestic space, but so too do female bodies. While Donna Haraway would later adopt the figure of the cyborg to challenge essentialist conceptions of gender (and especially femininity),⁶⁴ my texts of study do not equate a cyborgian disruption of binaries with liberation; on the contrary, technological appliances in these narratives efface both feminine labour and the bodies that carry it out. Thus, speculative and science fiction ultimately reveals waste

management to be nothing more than a motif of pacification in the discourses of domesticity during the Cold War. While the domestic sphere—especially the kitchen—is constructed as a space of futuristic fantasy and compensation for the terrors of nuclear war, the continual disposal of unwanted materials provides phony psychic relief for nuclear anxieties, and perpetuates an endless effacement of the feminine body in the establishment of normality.

While Richard Yates' novel *Revolutionary Road* (1961) is not a speculative nor science fiction novel by any means (it looks six years into the past even), its hindsight perspective gives us in fact a better glimpse at the ways the postwar kitchen worked with the discourses of disposal. To dramatize main character April Wheeler's negotiations with her sharply defined Cold War gender role—she wrestles with what Betty Friedan called “[t]he problem that has no name” (Friedan 57)⁶⁵—the novel stages many key scenes of her fruitless contestation of such influence within the family's kitchen—the primary site of waste production and management in the home. To reclaim control over her body, effaced by the technologies of disposal, April attempts to turn the act of waste management into an act of agency by aborting her expected child. Ultimately, however, her act of “revolution” is reincorporated by the actions of waste management: due to complications in disposing of her child, she kills (or disposes of) herself as well. In having April's story conclude this way, the novel reveals the ways the Cold War kitchen is an archival space of Cold War feminine gender struggle, and that both the former and the latter are inseparable from the discourses and materials of garbage disposal.

1.2 Undomestic

In Judith Merrill's speculative Cold War novel *Shadow on the Hearth* (1950), a suburban housewife attempts to protect her family after the detonation of a nuclear bomb in the urban center of nearby Manhattan. Taking place almost solely in the claustrophobic setting of main character Gladys Mitchell's home, the novel depicts a feminine response to nuclear war as husband and patriarch Jon Mitchell is notably absent, trapped in the city on his way to work by the bomb's explosion. Embodying a Cold War version of the "ideology of the separate spheres" (Kaplan 583)—Jon's story, told intermittently throughout the text, is set in the middle of the action near ground zero while Gladys's takes place in her domestic sphere on the periphery of the attack—the novel aims to reveal the ways women and particularly housewives were asked to assume the role of "domestic soldier[]" (Newell 427) by maintaining domestic order and normality not only during Cold War peace time, but also in times when the Cold War should become hot during a nuclear strike.⁶⁶ Notions of order were an important component of the Cold War consensus, and to maintain an illusion of domestic (both national and household) safety, Cold War discourses constructed the household domestic sphere as a bastion of stability in direct opposition to the potential chaos of nuclear explosion. Before news of the bomb's explosion penetrates the Mitchell's home, for example, the idea of a nuclear strike affecting the family's daily lives is unimaginable. Reading the morning's newspaper, Jon trivializes reports of Soviet "threats of war and disaster": in "the shaded room" of the kitchen, "the warnings were ludicrous" (Merrill 5) and represent "another world, not [Jon's] home" (5). Yet the novel collapses the divisions between nuclear security and destruction—the title itself metaphorizes the influence of the nuclear threat on domestic household space—to dramatize the ways main character Gladys attempts to

re-establish a normalized domesticity as a kind of compensatory fantasy in the face of nuclear attack.

To reassert the notion of manifest domesticity from within a uniquely Cold War context, the novel aims to show American women that, as Nancy A. Walker has argued, the very definition of *domestic* had “widened in scope” (Walker viii) during the Cold War because domesticity now included nuclear preparedness and crisis management as new provinces of concern. *Shadow* was indeed “directly designed to be propaganda” (Weiss 8), in Merrill’s own words, and “specifically address[ed to] a female readership” (Seed 57). Thus, the construction of protagonist Gladys Mitchell and her domestic femininity in the novel relies heavily on a Cold War performance of mobilized femininity. For example, as Gladys and her two daughters attempt to protect and maintain their home, it is not surprising that they make the kitchen the main site of the family’s intelligence-gathering and strategizing: when the nuclear attack occurs they utilize its function as the home’s axis of information circulation to form a kind of command center. For example, after the initial shock of the news, daughter Barbara listens for civil defense information on the radio while Gladys “issue[s] brisk orders” from the kitchen, delegating regular domestic tasks to her daughters, who “obey[] swiftly, happy to seize on a pattern of behaviour that they [know]” (Merril 37). In this way, the space of the kitchen, due to its familiarity and its status as a site of feminine control and power within the home, becomes fully utilized by Gladys Mitchell during her time of nuclear crisis. As such, the kitchen is also a place of solace for the Mitchell women in *Shadow* during their time of crisis, as activities of food preparation and consumption comfort the women and serve to buffer the anxiety and panic they are forced to endure. Attempting to come to terms with

the attack report, for instance, Gladys enters the kitchen to find “[t]he hiss and sizzle of cold water hitting the bottom [of a stove pot]...familiar, reassuring” (Merril 20). As Cold War domestic space becomes fully mobilized in the novel, consumptive practices, as reminders of pre-nuclear attack daily activities, provide Gladys and her daughters with a sense of normality.

This reliance on kitchen space reveals the extent to which Gladys, as a Cold War housewife, has been influenced by the ways the Cold War had entered American domestic spaces. Indeed, having evolved into a technological site of production during the Second World War, organized around a cybernetic exchange between man and machine, the postwar kitchen changed the ways consumers negotiated with kitchen spaces.⁶⁷ Following the modular home furnishings trend of the 1910s and 1920s, kitchen designs emerging in the late 1930s were increasingly defined by their overt modularization of appliances and spatial geometrics.⁶⁸ While fitted kitchen designs—modularized to *fit* all kitchen spaces—reached levels of mass appeal during the Second World War, they found their greatest niche in the postwar years, exploding in popularity due to the considerable economic boom in the United States and the affluence that spread to the middle classes in the 1950s.⁶⁹ To the extent that modular furnitures were meant to be grouped with other like-designed appliances, designers and users began to “conceive[] of the kitchen space as a single coordinated design unit” (Freeman 44), and, perhaps more importantly, market them “to be bought as a unit” (Packard 121). As such, the fitted kitchen is “characterized by matching units and appliances built to standardized measurements compatible with the dimensions of the units” (Freeman 56), marked by long continuous workspaces and countertops, and rows of cupboards of various but

complementary surfaces, materials, and colours. As a result, home kitchens were now framed in popular discourse not as a space to be filled with appliances, but as a conglomeration of appliances acting together as a unit, a system of integrated machines. Electrical appliance companies were now advertising not individual appliances, but full concept kitchens with names like the “Westinghouse Kitchen,” the “American Kitchen,” and the “Frigidaire Kitchen”—each designed by and associated with a production manufacturer.

Cold War kitchens also epitomized the ways the “marketplace assimilated military logic and tactics developed through the establishment of the military-industrial complex” (Brennan 56).⁷⁰ Kitchen designs of the postwar period employed what Brandon Hookway calls a systemocentric organization of space, a type of organizational configuration whereby relationships between machine and human are organized to benefit not only the user but also any larger systems of operation.⁷¹ In other words, the infusion of systemocentrism into corporate and public spaces (and kitchen spaces, I argue) meant that the negotiations between individuals and technologies were conceptualized by industry in ways so that it could quantify the exigencies of such actions in terms of how they would benefit larger Cold War systems of organization.⁷² Industry designers intent on integrating the uses of different products and appliances in collaboration with each other thus created a spatio-temporal system of technology within the kitchen, where information and commodities could circulate effectively, providing the most conducive atmosphere for continual consumption. Systemocentrism “cast[] the human being as a raw material subject to training and discipline, to be molded into part of a larger organizational whole” (Hookway 26), for in this environment the kitchen worker

is not the singular or primary “locus of control” (Hookway 26), but rather a “switching point[.]...in the information flow circulating throughout the system” (Ghamari-Tabrizi 180).⁷³

This systemocentrism thus conceived of kitchens as being embedded in the suburban networks of commodity circulation. During the immediate post-World War II period, as the American National Housing Agency accommodated and supported a rapid suburban expansion,⁷⁴ housing companies like Levitt and Sons promised potential homeowners a peaceful and affordable environment free of the problems associated with inner-city living, including and perhaps most importantly, garbage. In *Shadow on the Hearth*, Gladys’s neighbourhood is figured as a waste-free environment, and often described in the text in opposition to her former home in the city. The narrator states of Gladys,

[w]ashing up the breakfast dishes, she opened up the casement window over the sink. She could never look out this way, across the green sweep of the broad back yards, hers and her neighbor’s, without a sharp contrasting memory of crowded dim-lit flats and furnished rooms in the city. (Mitchell 7)

From her vantage through the kitchen window, Gladys recognizes the kinds of spatial freedoms the suburban space affords her and her family, and speaks of the neighbourhood as a space of order, free of waste and refuse. Indeed, the postwar expansion of urban geography into exurban zones, while necessitated by social and economic changes after the Second World War, were also bolstered by promises of freedom from the city’s triple threats: pollution, overcrowding, and garbage.

To help keep suburban spaces clean and to maintain the fantasy of waste-free existence in the postwar period, waste management industries mechanized practices on a municipal level. As Martin V. Melosi notes, “by World War II, motorized trucks became the standard” (Melosi 179) mode of waste transportation, and waste materials were often sent to “[t]ransfer stations,” which were “used to centralize wastes for more economic hauling to the final disposal destination. These were points at which collection trucks could unload into larger vehicles or temporary storage facilities” (Melosi 179). A kind of geographic systemocentrism, this centralization of waste materials allowed city organizers and planners to ship garbage from suburban spaces (and back into the city in many cases), until they could be sent to landfills, which by mid-century often lay beyond suburban and exurban areas. Thus, the vision of postwar suburban life could later be described by John Scanlan “as being characteristically neat, safe and clean, from the implied domestic comfort of the world promised by consumer product advertising to the calm, ordered and largely indistinguishable streets and homes constructed from factory produced components” (Scanlan 138), precisely because of advances in municipal waste management. In fact, families, couples, and even individuals flocked to the suburbs because of their promise of a waste-free existence, where, situated between the urban and the rural, the American citizen would find the “best of both worlds” (Clark *Home* 100).

The ways homes themselves were designed came to affect the ways consumers negotiated with the products they consumed and the by-products of such consumption. Indeed, *Shadow on the Hearth*, while being a speculative look at a suburban nuclear attack, was also an exploration of what Lizabeth Cohen describes as a transition from government conceptualizations of members of the American public as citizens to “citizen

consumer[s]” (Cohen 19), a paradigm shift which is implicitly embodied and imbricated in the architecture adopted by the new class—the mass-produced and pre-fabricated ranch houses which typified postwar urban planning⁷⁵—and the technological advances in the kitchen. With a modular approach to housing, as Renee Chow notes, the “Levitt house sought to economize by mass-producing what was considered the minimum set of activity spaces required for a family” (Chow 23). By reducing domestic space to mere essentials, home-dwellers like the Mitchells in *Shadow on the Hearth* were influenced by what Henri Lefebvre calls industrial “representations of space” (Lefebvre 14)—official, state or corporate-sanctioned abstract conceptualizations of public and private spaces, organized and operated according to hegemonic or dominant interests—when conceiving of and using their interior spaces. As such, negotiating with appliances and products within the home meant adopting methods of labour and production generated by industry. In fact furniture firms and interior decorating accessory companies had begun to think not just of producing products for the home, but also of how they could create for the consumer what contemporaneous interior designer Douglas Kelley called a “manner of living” (Brennan 84), a set of daily activities and organizations of space that would determine the ways they conceptualized the uses of their products, technologies, and spaces. Indeed, the Cold War period had become the age of *space*, a time when agents of production and capital had begun to spread into private areas with new ease and little resistance.⁷⁶ In effect, such a process disrupted distinctions between public and private spheres; to borrow Beatrice Colomina’s phrase, “everything in the postwar age was domestic” (Colomina, “Hothouses” 12).

Everything except, perhaps, those materials disposed in the name of order. As Cold War systemocentrism worked to move commodities and products into the home, the process of disposing waste materials became important in establishing a rhythm of in- and outflux of materials. The kitchen, as main site of the production of garbage, saw the continual outflux of waste play a vital role in the continual constitution of domestic space. In fact, the kitchen is so intimately linked with garbage that, as Rathje and Murphy point out, the word garbage, though “etymologically obscure...probably derives from Anglo-French, and its earliest associations have to do with working in the kitchen” (Rathje 9). Dependent upon the continual circulation of goods and waste materials, Cold War consumptive practices required the absence of waste; discourses of domestic maintenance subsequently framed waste as undesirable by figuring it as *undomestic* and anathema to national imperatives of order and routine. As such, an activity as mundane and banal as household waste disposal became an important act of normalcy, implicitly linking nuclear crisis management with waste management.

Because *Shadow on the Hearth* takes place after the nuclear attack has disrupted the community’s infrastructural processes, the novel reveals the importance of waste management to the suburban neighbourhood in its absence. With her daily domestic routines now disrupted by the nuclear attack, Gladys starts to find the absence of routine material practices disquieting and unnerving. The narrator tells us that during her maintenance of the home after the attack, Gladys

went back to the kitchen and waited once again for the water to boil. But now the sun was beginning to stream through the window. The white enamel was shining and familiar, and the porch was empty. All outdoors was empty of any sound.

There was nobody outside this morning—no one emptying a garbage can or trying to start a recalcitrant car. (Merril 85)

While she is able to sustain hygienic cleanliness in her kitchen space and the rest of the home, the preparation for neighbourhood garbage collection, usually symbolic of normality, is eerily absent. A vital part of daily activities, taking out the garbage becomes an important symbol of order and domestic maintenance; yet this day, without a civil infrastructure to empty the neighbourhood garbage cans, the absence of waste management practices embodies and reflects the family's anxieties about the nuclear attack that has already occurred.

In the television version of *Shadow on the Hearth*, “Atomic Attack” (1954), produced as an episode of *The Motorola Television Hour*, kitchen garbage becomes a focal point of the post-nuclear narrative. As the home's kitchen window faces the site of the explosion in New York, the flash of the nuclear bomb enters the domestic sphere through its frame. Disrupting the normal activities, the bomb changes the kitchen space into a domestic front in the galvanized hot war between the Soviets and the Americans. Prior to the attack, Gladys describes her home as being “normal as oatmeal and apple pie” (“Atomic”); this characterization of her suburban home is soon contrasted with the militarization of the home, and particularly the kitchen, when her duty as a Cold War housewife involves her attempt to maintain domestic normality in the home despite the chaos going on in the community outside her door. While the civil defense representative who visits the home after the attack tellingly states, “[I]et's face it Mrs. Mitchell, we won't know what regular is again for a long, long time to come” (“Atomic”), Mrs. Mitchell's duty is to try to regain and reassert as much of the “regular” as she can. Not

surprisingly, waste management becomes an important part of her institution of home order. After the film fades to black as Gladys screams when news of the attack on the radio confirms her fears, the film jumps two hours into the future to show her scraping food off leftover plates from the fridge into the garbage, a gesture supposed to show her calm return to domestic normality.⁷⁷ Possibly contaminated, the food has become useless, and the only normal course of action to take is to dispose of it. In a later scene, daughter Ginny is shown throwing food into the garbage in a similar manner. But whereas Gladys disposes of the food as a means of keeping the space organized, Ginny, exposed to the bomb's radiation while at school, disposes of the food as a means of hiding her radiation sickness; her appetite affected by the sickness, she cannot finish her meal and attempts to dispose of the evidence. Her disposal of the food, though different than Gladys's, is thus her own attempt to maintain an appearance of normality in the home.

In having daughter Ginny perform the same waste management tasks as her mother, the film shows household garbage was also a material through which Cold War gender roles—specifically Laura McEnaney's figure of the Cold War housewife⁷⁸ or the Federal Civil Defense Administration construction of the female “deterrence soldier” (Eisenmann 14)⁷⁹—were performed, and played a vital part in what Elaine Tyler May referred to as “domestic containment” (May 16). In May's conceptualization of postwar domesticity, “‘traditional’ family roles” (8) were established in the home not to reassert outmoded separations between the sexes, but to “create a home that would fulfill virtually all its members' personal needs through an energized and expressive personal life” (14) by “adher[ing] to traditional gender roles and prized marital stability” (15). Waste

management, though May does not reference it, plays a key role in defining gender expectations to members of the atomic household.

Depending upon its spatial context, garbage can be gendered in different ways. Women, as producers of consumables and meals in the kitchen, are most often framed as the primary producers of waste, and are therefore seen as its primary managers. Indeed, feminine waste management was an extension of the decidedly feminine role as home hygiene specialist or domestic cleaner. And yet once waste had been managed through feminine labour, taking the garbage out of the home was typically a masculine responsibility: male muscle was responsible for moving the managed waste materials out beyond the divisions between the private, typically feminine space of the domestic sphere, to the public and masculine curb space. Thus, while women are responsible for private waste disposal, men, on their walks to the curb, publicly act out the role of waste manager. Waste materials and the varied activities undertaken in the name of disposal and management were thus simultaneously a physical embodiment of the ways gender roles were supposed to be articulated—a source of feminine and masculine containment and performance.

While Jon Mitchell, a returning G.I. of the Second World War and a civil engineer at Mitchell and Associates, works in Manhattan while living in a peripheral suburb and epitomizes what William Whyte has famously called the “organization man” (Whyte 3)—a middle-class, corporate individual whose everyday ethos embodies an ideology of order, normality, and, as the epithet suggests, organization⁸⁰—Gladys observes discourses of cleanliness impeccably (or feels compelled to do so). Thus, while Whyte’s figure was obviously gendered masculine,⁸¹ waste management discourses

implied that housewives should act as “organization women” responsible for domestic waste management. In fact the verb “to dispose,” the Oxford English Dictionary tells us, did not originally mean *to throw away*, but “[t]o place (things) at proper distances apart and in proper positions with regard to each other,” or “to place or arrange in a particular order” (Oxford). With disposal as an imperative, Cold War women were supposed to assume the gendered role of the home’s chief manager⁸²—of the space, of waste, and chief of the family’s practices of consumption.⁸³

With organization as an imperative, the central paradox of the Cold War kitchen is that it was also the site where the most waste and garbage was produced. To put it another way, if the American homeowner had “transformed the lowly scullery into a beautiful glamour spot” (Forester 43) in the postwar period, as an article from *The American Home*, “Surrounding the Kitchen,” of 1958 argues, how could it also be the site of the home’s primary waste production and management? In contrasting the kitchen of the 1930s with that of the 1950s, *Industrial Design* magazine contributor Jane Fisk Mitarachi argued that the latter was different in that it had begun to embody the “social values” (Isenstadt 311) of the time by virtue of its new use for activities other than food production and preparation. Brought into the center of the American home by builders like Levitt and Sons, the kitchen was becoming a hub of domestic activity. To emphasize the space as a new site of communication and gathering, kitchens were opened up to other rooms of the house, sometimes “built in a U-shape [and] separated from other rooms only by a low counter” (Clark “Ranch-Houses” 178). Moreover, “[k]itchens were no longer relegated to the back of the house,” Clark notes, “but were now placed to the front, often at the end of the house, where they could be entered directly from the garage”

(178). Thus, where kitchens were once spaces of privacy—private production, consumption, and waste management—they were now spaces of communication, entertainment, and even familial intimacy.

To better accommodate the new influx of people and materials into kitchen space, interior decorating in the 1950s turned kitchens into fashionable spaces where individuals could feel comfortable and homeowners could express themselves through the ways they decorated. As well as being functional and sanitary, fitted kitchens were also adorned with aesthetic elements to adapt to its new status as site of interpersonal contact. While kitchens had been, traditionally, visually defined by white and grey palettes of metal and plastics, the Cold War kitchen broadened its colour palette. The International Harvester company, for example, began offering a decorator fridge for the 1953 season—providing consumers with a selection of dozens of different pattern stylings for the refrigerator door—and had been advertising colour-coordinating surface applications for kitchen appliances since the mid-1940s. Soon other companies fell into the fold, and “[n]ew tile and linoleum designs, pastel colors for stoves and refrigerators, and the use of brick walls and natural wood cabinets all helped to soften the austere lines inherited from the turn-of-the-century room” (178). Garbage facilities were also hidden behind cupboard doors, while garbage disposal units sucked waste materials out of sight and down into neighbourhood and municipal systems of retrieval and dissemination. Even the products themselves, once open to view in doorless cupboards found in kitchens of the past, were covered by stylish and colourful cabinetry. In fact, Mitarachi argued that aside from the refrigerator (the new focal point of the American kitchen) the concept of a kitchen as a space of separate divisions of labour was disappearing altogether in favour of a “visual

whole” (qtd. in Isenstadt 316).⁸⁴ Architectural modernism, in its use of streamlining, particularly influenced what became a visual effacement of the mechanics of kitchen construction as the space itself was redistributed for familial and social activities.⁸⁵ Coupling uniformity with the process of streamlining emphasized surface unity and postwar kitchen aesthetics made the outside of appliances, counters, sinks, and cupboards visually pleasing and uniform, transferring attention away from the mechanical processes at work beneath the surface.

Kitchen waste, as its visual and material presence in kitchen space was conceptually antithetical to its function as an aesthetic and social consumption unit, was an undesirable presence. Lupton and Miller expose the ways waste’s presence as a material object (or material objects) by articulating how these materials are set up to move through these spaces through a “process of elimination” (Lupton 41). In doing so, they imply that waste, in these configurations, cannot remain still; an obstacle to optimal conditions for consumption by their sheer physical presence in kitchen space and time, waste must always be *en route* to a space external to the kitchen (and to the home itself). As Lefebvre notes, “[t]he dominant form of space, that of the centers of wealth and power, endeavours to mould the space it dominates...and seeks often by violent means, to reduce the obstacles and resistance it encounters there” (Lefebvre 49). Though Lefebvre does not mention it specifically, waste is certainly an obvious material and conceptual resistance to order. Ideologically, then, waste materials have no place within domestic spaces that have been conceived of as spaces of consumption, and the routine and habitual expulsion of waste eradicates potential disruptions to social interactions within the logic of capitalism.

But what Lupton and Miller do not discuss are the ways this ideology brings about consumer attitudes towards waste materials—so wrapped up in waste’s patterns of rhythmic movement in kitchen (and bathroom) spaces, they too, like those operating in the kitchens they speak of, neglect the material consequences of waste’s rapid disposal in their study. “Like a biological organism,” they write, “the continuous kitchen supports a rhythmic cycle of ingestion and waste: *a process of elimination*” (Lupton 41). The process of elimination promoted in the home in fact does more: in adopting such a habitus, to use Pierre Bourdieu’s term for the ways individuals internalize environments through habitual bodily behaviours and movements,⁸⁶ when waste materials are eliminated from domestic (household) spaces, individuals also eliminate them from social imaginaries.

1.3 Cyborg Trash

As the 1950s came to represent the *space age* in a more literal fashion—both the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. had begun a competition to take their respective ideologies into outer space—the link between the national and household domestics also became material, as new space age technologies like automated electronics and nascent computing hardware infiltrated home spaces in the form of mechanical and electronic home appliances.⁸⁷ Specifically, conceptualizations of Cold War kitchen space were buttressed by the incorporation of new Cold War technologies, where technological appliances working together as a coordinated unit emphasized the systemocentric organization of postwar domestic (household) spaces. New technological apparatuses and automated buttons alleviating human labour promised housewives could “cut [their]

kitchen work [by] as much as HALF!” (“American Kitchens”), as one American Kitchen ad from the decade tantalizingly put it, and further changed the ways individuals conducted activities of household production, consumption, and waste management.

Noting a distinct difference in mechanics technologies “[s]ince the end of World War II” (Wiener 15), Norbert Wiener found that while early mechanics operated according to a traditional kind of clockwork, “the modern armory of automatic machines which perform military or industrial functions, possess sense organs; that is, receptors for messages coming from the outside” (22-3). (His examples include photoelectric cells used in some advanced television sets, conductive wires, and scientific instruments.) In anthropomorphizing machines with sense organs at play in the relationship between human and machine, Wiener initiated the study of cybernetics. That Cold War technologies and kitchen spaces were cross-pollinated in the postwar period suggests the Cold War kitchen can be read as a kind of cyborg space. While Donna Haraway has famously used the figure of the cyborg to deconstruct the humanist binaries of nature and culture, human and machine, and the body and the world for a feminist critique of essentialism, I employ the cyborg concept to reveal not only the ways waste materials and their management were gendered through applications of technological labour, but how the changing materiality of waste in the postwar period codified postwar garbage as evidence of new posthuman modes of being. As materials of disorder (and order only through their disposal), waste and trash become objects which bind human bodies to technological machines, and materials through which the interactions between them depend; at the same time, these technological interfaces with waste materials have the effect of effacing female bodies as they dispose of waste. Thus, in my reading, cybernetic

relationships in the kitchen do not liberate women from but subject them to Cold War constructions of femininity.

Kitchen spaces have traditionally been linked to the female body throughout the social history of the domestic sphere.⁸⁸ As a space of home production—of food and consumables—the kitchen was linked to the feminine body’s capabilities of biological (re)production. In *Shadow on the Hearth*, Gladys tempers her husband’s absence during the aftermath of the nuclear explosion by making her kitchen a site of nostalgia, memory, and desire, linking it directly with her own body.⁸⁹ As the kitchen radio emits the romantic melody of “Stardust,” Gladys thinks to herself, “Jon wasn’t in the kitchen. He might never be in the kitchen again” (Merril 61). Substituting the kitchen for her own body, Gladys implicitly employs the notion of being inside the kitchen as a euphemism for sexual intercourse and reveals the ways that kitchen spaces and activities have become ingrained in consumer desire—even the intimate sexual relationship between married partners has been incorporated by the Cold War kitchen’s influence.

If the feminine body can be overlapped onto the space of the kitchen, the mechanization of the postwar kitchen then implicates the female body in new technologies. An extension of the female body, almost a kind of feminine exoskeleton, the Cold War kitchen challenged conceptions of women as technologically inept (and men as technologically adept) while bolstering their role as the home’s primary agent of production and waste manager. Advertising copy of the time flattered women by constructing them as sophisticated engineers of ultra-modern appliances: women made sense of the coded data of recipes, turned data into information as they completed meal preparation outlined in cookbooks, interpreted the mechanical read-outs of oven dials and

refrigerator control devices. In fact, in a polemic directed toward the industry strategy of planned obsolescence,⁹⁰ industrial designer Walter Dorwin Teague interrogates the increasing innovations in home technologies and makes a connection between the kitchen space and the airplane cockpit: “[i]f three or four push-button controls appear useful on kitchen ranges, let’s put on a dozen or more, until madam must qualify as a flight engineer before she can roast a leg of lamb” (Teague 58). While Teague’s sentiments are merely hyperbolic rhetoric, he anticipates in a sense Hookway’s mapping of the military jet cockpit onto corporate and domestic spaces, and correlates the logic of systemocentrism onto the Cold War kitchen explicitly. Indeed, as Clark notes, “[i]n extolling the benefit of the newly designed kitchen, some magazine writers, using terminology developed during the debate over the cold war, likened it to a military command post” (Clark “Ranch-Houses” 180).

It is no surprise then that the kitchen becomes a literal Cold War battleground in *Shadow on the Hearth*. When individuals affected by radiation sickness and/or geographic displacement due to the bomb’s detonation begin roaming the Mitchells’ neighbourhood to loot for commodities in the area’s time of crisis, a number of them target the Mitchells’ home. As they enter through the back door into the kitchen, Gladys and her family must beat them off using knives, rolling pins, skillets, and food choppers, creating a “chaos of flying fists and kitchenware” (Merril 170). After the brouhaha, Gladys finds herself “standing in the middle of what had been a clean, orderly kitchen, looking down at a motionless body on the floor in front of her” (170). To stress the usual order of her kitchen space connects waste management to Cold War imperatives of organization, here literally disrupted due to her mobilized defense of her home and

kitchen space. Earlier in the novel, the narrator even refers to Gladys in military terms: in reference to a military visitor to the home, the narrator remarks, “[a] soldier off to the wars! It was funny, until she realized that was just exactly what she was” (59).

But while the militarization of the kitchen emphasized the importance of feminine labour to Cold War ideologies, the systemocentric organization of kitchen space had the effect of effacing the female body, forcing it to recede into the background while its effects on larger systems were privileged. Under the conditions of systemocentrism, the body of the user—here the kitchen worker—“would become mechanized, or rather systematized—visible only in its reactions with and against a technologically mediated environment” (Hookway 37). Ghamari-Tabrizi similarly notes (without using Hookway’s terms) that in corporate and business spaces of the post-war period,

[r]ather than observing the individual...the group was primary—that team of human operators who no longer laboured intimately with industrial production machinery, but now functioned as nodes, dams, channels, conduits—as switching points—in the information flow circulating throughout the system. (Ghamari-Tabrizi 180)

The housewife, at her post amidst the technoscape of the Cold War kitchen, now worked as a *switching point* in a larger system of exchange, her material routine interactions with home technologies contributing to the movements of commodities and waste materials. In some sense such a conceptualization of technologized feminine work accords with the ways female labour has always been depicted in representations of feminine domesticity. Kathleen McHugh, for instance, has argued that the American narrative of the “cult of domesticity” (McHugh 40) had always relied on the premise that “the domestic feminine

body must appear to be a body that does not labor, that is not useful” (44). While the technologization of the feminine body was certainly taking place in the home, in the public imaginary “the housewife and home [could not] *appear* to be a mechanized worker and workplace” (74, her emphasis). Instead, the technological appliance, and technology in general, became personified as a kind of artificial intelligence that could perform these duties almost by itself. A film promoting the Frigidaire company’s “Kitchen of Tomorrow,” for example, includes a fantasy sequence in which the female character is promised overdue respite thanks to her kitchen’s autonomous actions. The song which accompanies the fantasy explains that thanks to “push-button magic...whether you bake or broil or stew / The Frigidaire kitchen does it all for you” (“Design”). In other words, with the female body effaced in its integration with technology, feminine labour becomes technological labour.

At the same time, the effacement of the feminine body was also linked with the effacement of waste materials. As waste manager in this new kitchen technoscape, roboticized feminine bodies submitting garbage to the process of elimination would become integrated with technology at the expense of their own body. A Cold War-era advertisement for a household kitchen-sink trash compactor, the “Saturn Garbage Disposer,” nicknamed the “In-Sink-Erator,” (the “Saturn” connotation a reference to domesticated space-age technologies and the nickname a play on “incinerator,” a waste disposal technology) asserts the disappearance of waste materials as it concomitantly asserts the disappearance of the female body and its labour: the ad broaches the gender issue through its address to male consumers, while framing the technology as an appliance to be used in lieu of feminine work. Rife with the language of absence, the ad

promises nothing less than the obsolescence of waste and its management itself: the “In-Sink-Erator” is described as “[t]he *one* gift that *quietly* ends garbage ‘trudgery’” because it “frees the little woman from disagreeable trips to the garbage can” (“Saturn”). Framed within a gift economy, the ad obscures the transaction’s benefits to the housewife by clearly bolstering masculine income and purchase power at the expense of the feminine: the feminine body becomes consumed by both the disposal unit (it subsumes her labour as its own) and the male figure. The tagline, whilst a reference to regular meal preparation and clean-up, in fact, implies sexual gratitude: “[s]he’ll want to thank you THREE TIMES A DAY!” the text reads; the accompanying cartoon emphasizes this sexual interpretation by depicting the husband on his back reading, (a leisurely activity), as his wife approaches in clothing of sophistication (pearl necklace, green dress), appearing ready to initiate a sexual act as a means of appreciating his purchase of the garbage disposal unit.

Yet while garbage disposal units made the impossible promise of, as another disposal unit advertisement states, “[n]o more garbage...ever!” (Scanlan 86), waste must still, of course, have a material existence as part of the waste stream or sewage system. However, waste only exerts its materiality when it is masculinized in its transition from inside to outside: waste’s material presence returns as the masculine body affirms its public status by taking it outside the home to the trash cans or the curb. In fact, masculine waste management has the effect of materializing the male body as well. In *Shadow on the Hearth*, Gladys, while standing in the kitchen in her time of need during the aftermath of the nuclear attack, recalls her husband Jon taking out the trash. Thinking of him, “[s]tanding there alone, in the middle of the room, she could feel his arms around her,

and the still firm length of his body against hers” (Merril 60). As the memory continues she “managed to keep him in the room” (60), thinking of him “in his leather jacket...; he had just taken the trash can outside and a gust of cool night air came in before he locked the back door again” (60). Thus, Gladys’s memory of his waste management practice has the effect of materializing his masculine body, as his task of moving waste out of the home gives him presence and substance—even in his absence during the nuclear attack. As Jon finishes off her feminine task of domestic waste management by taking it across the threshold between private and public, Gladys becomes sexually aroused—the masculine movement of trash constitutes Jon’s body, the kitchen space, their intimacy, and, like the Saturn “In-Sink-Erator” ad, his consumption of her through sexual union—all linked with his simultaneous affirmation and alleviation of her role as waste disposer.

Greg Kennedy’s ontological distinction between trash and waste might provide another way of articulating the links between trash, the female body and effacement. In Kennedy’s theorization, *trash* names a specific type of waste by signifying only the remainders of modern, disposable products, whereas *waste* retains its traditional conceptualization as leftover bio-organic materials. The emergence of the disposable product has produced, he argues, a significant cultural change in the ways we see not only disposable products themselves, but also all waste materials. Because disposable products “exist...to be consumed, which means they are a priori waste” (Kennedy 53), the continual production and disposal of trash has the effect of obscuring what Michael Thompson, John Scanlan, and Gay Hawkins have all argued about waste and garbage: deciding what constitutes waste has historically been a subjective process and a culturally relative question (the materials in question can either be reclaimed for value or dismissed

as waste).⁹¹ Trash's ubiquity in the modern world, Kennedy argues, has the effect of making *all* waste seem objective, natural, and unavoidable. I want to add to Kennedy's theorization of trash by suggesting that disposability obscures not only the practice of determining waste, but a type of feminine subjectivity as well: if all modern trash skews perspectives of waste materials as irreclaimable, the feminine task of deciding what constitutes waste is replaced with a wholesale disposal of any materials resembling trash; trash makes garbage mere bags of throwaways awaiting masculine labour to take it out of the home. Moreover, as trash, along with technological mechanisms of mass production and consumer culture in general, "distract[] us from our bodies" (Kennedy 23), the technologized and effaced human body Kennedy's trash obscures is in this framework not just the human body, but particularly the feminine body.

The disappearance of both waste and women through technology and trash coalesced at the time in a common sci-fi trope in which visions of the future are defined by technology's replacement of both women and waste. In harnessing space-age technologies for their homes, kitchen advertising discourses of the 1950s emphasized a reduced feminine labour and engagement with waste materials, and promised through the language and images of scientific and technological futurity, a future America in which both feminine labour and household waste would no longer be a problem. Slogans like Frostair Duplex's "Years Ahead...for years to come" ("Frostair"), accompanying a 1947 refrigerator advertisement in the *Saturday Evening Post*, called upon the discourses of the Cold War, science fiction, and futurity in claiming for their products a place at the frontier of scientific technology. Due to such rhetoric in the discourses of home technologies, consumer culture began to be defined by what Julian Myers calls a general

“dizzying temporal vertigo, where the past and the present were physical objects that one could own, or throw away, where every harbinger of the future was a relic in reverse” (Myers 76)—if consumer items embodied future technologies and materials of the past, concepts of the present and the future were indistinguishable, obscure in a technological hall of mirrors.⁹² Playing on such a skewed perspective of technological temporality, kitchen producers took the rhetoric of futurity to its logical conclusion by designing hypothetical kitchens of the future, where designers and forecasters would combine their anticipation of consumer desires and wishes with potential future technologies. The “Whirlpool Miracle Kitchen,” the “Monsanto Kitchen of the Future,” and Frigidaire’s “Kitchen of the Future,” to name just a few, all sought to depict fantastical appliances and arrangements that would be available ten, twenty, or thirty years into the future. In a film documenting (and of course advertising) the opening of the “Monsanto House of the Future” exhibit in Disneyland, 1957, the voice-over narration explains that Monsanto plastics in the kitchen layout, as designed by the “Plastics in Housing Research and Development Plan,” have “in all their colourful, functional, and beautiful versatility...transformed a work area, have stepped it years ahead” (“Monsanto”). As a subtext for these spectacular marketing gimmicks, forward-looking was only half projection: advertising campaigns for contemporary kitchens implicitly argued that the kitchens of the future (styled according to 1940s and ‘50s fashion trends in terms of finishings, colours, and materials, and functions) were already available in the kitchens they already had on the market: the Cold War kitchen *was* the kitchen of the future.

Science fiction literature of the 1940s and 50s often satirized the advertising promises of freedom and convenience by depicting home kitchens as almost autonomous,

computerized units, sometimes completely effacing the need for feminine bodily labour, and, in the case of Ray Bradbury's short story "August, 2026: There Will Come Soft Rains" (1950), even human presence altogether. Set seventy-five years in the future, the short story tells of one full day in the life of an automated house after a nuclear war—the "radioactive glow" (Bradbury 167) of the town and Hiroshima-like silhouettes of people impressed upon the buildings tip readers off to the nuclear events preceding the narrative—has wiped out all human presence in the area. While the entire house is automated—each room has its own automated voice and performs household tasks mechanically—the kitchen becomes the focal point of the story, underscoring America's cultural conceptualization of the kitchen as the paramount site of technological advancement in the postwar home. Parodying both the modular kitchens of the 1950s, and those speculative kitchens of the future that had become a vogue of the period, Bradbury's fully automated kitchen continues to perform all of the preparations for consumption without the presence of a single human being. As the day begins in this literal post-human space, the futuristic appliances and technologies—the "voice-clock" (166), the remote control lawn mower, the front-door weather box—perform their tasks so well they do not even acknowledge or recognize the absence of the home's occupants. The narrator tells us that despite a lack of household occupants, "[i]n the kitchen the breakfast stove gave a hissing sigh and ejected from its warm interior eight pieces of perfectly browned toast, eight eggs sunnyside up, sixteen slices of bacon, two coffees, and two cool glasses of milk" (166). While humans are absent and the machines continue to produce household foods, the story becomes, through hyperbole, a satire of the popularity of labour-saving household appliances in the postwar period, as push-

button efficiency, taken to its logical conclusion, does not here even require the hand of humankind to set it into operation—the buttons push themselves in this vision of the future. (The narrator of the Monsanto film suggests of its own product, “this kitchen almost gets dinner itself” [“Monsanto”], a notion eerily similar to Bradbury’s.) At the same time, linking household buttons with the nuclear button, humans have literally been erased from the earth by an unspecified atomic holocaust, which also reinforces the ways Cold War tech, materials, and mobilization have affected kitchen spaces.⁹³

In fact, in Bradbury’s house of the future, feminine domestic labour is redundant: while the computerized home is responsible for production, it is also responsible for waste management practices. After “the eggs were shriveled and the toast was like stone” because no one was there to consume these items, the narrator tells us “[a]n aluminum wedge scraped them down a metal throat which digested and flushed them away to the distant sea,” and “[t]he dirty dishes were dropped into a hot washer and emerged twinkling dry” (167). Household incineration takes care of waste disposal, as items of rubbish are deposited in opening points throughout the home, a network of tubes all leading down to a basement incinerator. With regard to domestic cleaning, “tiny robot mice” made of “all rubber and metal” vacuum the entire home automatically, in a process resembling the *Roomba* automatic vacuum devices of today (167). The continual actions are stopped and the house destroyed only by a completely random act, as a falling tree bough crashes through the kitchen window, throwing cleaning solvent onto the stove, which ignites into flames. Personified in its moment of crisis—the narrator notes, “[t]he house tried to save itself” (170)—the mechanical home is said to have “die[d]” (170) still functioning: “[i]n the kitchen, an instant before the rain of fire and timber, the stove could

be seen making breakfasts at a psychopathic rate, ten dozen eggs, six loaves of toast, twenty dozen bacon strips, which, eaten by fire, started the stove working again, hysterically hissing” (172). In fact, to show how naturalized the discourse of home convenience has become, the automated house selects Sara Teasdale’s 1920 poem of humanity’s extinction due to war to read to the (absent) children at night; it outlines nature’s persistence in the event of humankind’s destruction, ending with the lines, “Not one would mind, neither bird nor tree, / If mankind perished utterly; / And Spring herself, when she woke at dawn / Would scarcely know that we were gone” (qtd. in Bradbury 170). In other words, mechanical devices, like nature, persist indiscriminately beyond human activity. Ultimately, the story is a parable about becoming posthuman: it implies that while these kinds of labour-saving technologies now available in Cold War kitchens reduce human beings, specifically feminine beings, to their bodily movements in the systemic production of goods for consumption, they also obscure the separation of human/technology, here by anthropomorphizing machines and eliminating humans and waste altogether.

While Richard Yates’ suburban novel *Revolutionary Road* (1962) is certainly not a novel of speculative fiction, it reveals the importance of establishing order and normality through waste management in the cybernetic techno-space of the kitchen during Cold War peace time, while, at the same time, narrating a feminine attempt to challenge such gendered spatial politics. Set in a typical suburban community in 1955—six years earlier than the time of its publication—the novel seems upon first glance, even as early as 1961, to posit 1950s suburbia as a post-World War II American golden age of normalcy and prosperity. Appearing to fall into what Stephanie Coontz calls a *nostalgia*

trap with its hindsight perspective,⁹⁴ the text describes an “[i]nvincibly cheerful” (Yates 340) neighbourhood, “a toyland of white and pastel houses” (340) where driveways are dotted with “ice-cream colored automobiles” (340). Yet Yates’ nostalgic portrait is intentionally dubious, quickly undermined and supplemented by a critical perspective of suburban conformity evocative of cultural criticism that had been emerging in popular and academic discourse almost as soon as the decade had begun.⁹⁵ Anticipating and acting out Fredric Jameson’s distinction between the perceived social realities of the decade of the 1950s and subsequent rose-coloured representations of “the fifties,”⁹⁶ Yates peels back the layers of sitcom sentimentality to study a married couple’s gradual loss of agency in their new suburban environment. Frank and April Wheeler, late-twenties exemplars of what Alvin Gouldner referred to as “the New Class” (Gouldner 11)—an emerging post-World War II American middle-class defined by new affluence and liberal democratic political leanings—are objects of a relentless irony in the text: rankled and haunted by their compromises, the Wheelers come to realize they are no different from their neighbours in dull suburbia dealing with the “absurdities of deadly dull jobs in the city and deadly dull homes in the suburbs” (Yates 21).

With this critical tone, the novel explores the ways both April and her kitchen become Cold War capital, sites where the reproduction of American bodies and the ideologies which contain or define them can take place and maintain the American Cold War effort. Part of her suburban depression stems from the ways the kitchen has integrated with her body by colonizing it—making her a switching point, an agent of capital and circulation—incorporating her physicality into its mechanistic fold through her waste management practices. To counteract the forces effacing her body, April tries

to turn disposal and management practices into a defiant act of gender politics through the method of abortion: because April's body is informed by the kitchen she tends to, her abortion is narrated within the framework of disposal. While Anna Krugovoy Silver notes that women's "reproductive freedom... [was] linked by second wave feminists to larger issues of sexual choice and pleasure and to a woman's ability to shape her own life" (Silver 69), the act of abortion would also prove detrimental to the national imperatives of bio-production, consumption, and familial values. Disposing of her prospective child by aborting it could potentially invert the discourse of disposal, for a new American child would prove useful as an embodiment of the reproduction of national ideologies; throwing out a potentially useful material, even a biological entity, is therefore a mode of contestation.

In fact, abortion is linked with garbage in many popular discourses. In an essay from *Diacritics'* special issue inaugurating nuclear criticism in 1984, Zoë Sofia compellingly articulates links between both abortion and garbage, and abortion and the Cold War technology of nuclear armament. Citing the "cult of fetal personhood" (Sofia 47) promoted by the emerging American New Right in the 1970s as a move to "distract [Americans] from the extremist practices of the military-industrial complex" (47), Sofia argues that Cold War technologies were reframed as productive instead of destructive.⁹⁷ Sofia's argument thus locates a paradigm shift in the American cultural imaginary whereby technology's relationship to forms of disposal—of waste, of fetuses, of the human race—was finessed as a cultivating force. Looking to an anti-abortion flyer "containing graphic depictions of dead fetuses and sensational descriptions of unborn life" (55) published by Dr. J.C. Wilke from the National Right to Life Committee, Sofia

finds in the flyer's middle panel, titled "Human garbage" (55), depictions of aborted fetuses and dead babies disposed in garbage cans. In suggesting that the text and images together can be read as "symptomatic of anxiety over the wastage of life which would result from a nuclear war" (55), Sofia links not only abortion with waste management practices, but also exposes the ways abortion was vilified as a means of obscuring the nuclear fears engendered by the Cold War atomic weapons program. Abortion thus, in some frameworks, exposed through association the potential dangers of technologies, and therefore had to be dismissed and degraded by the very discourses which worked to make the U.S. technologically capable of destroying the world a number of times over.

In fact, April Wheeler's intent to abort the child is always linked with her Cold War kitchen space,⁹⁸ as it is the home's primary site of technology and constant disposal. To fool husband Frank into thinking she will not perform the abortion, the clean, technologized kitchen, free of waste, becomes the prime agent of April's illusion of domestic bliss—she makes him believe she will continue performing the role of Cold War housewife by replacing the notion of disposing their baby with the action of disposing of the kitchen's garbage. As her façade of perfect housewife begins to crumble, April recognizes her only solution is to perform the abortion in spite of the dangers now inherent in the act. As April dies during the procedure she performs upon herself, the novel provides its final commentary on the pervasiveness of Cold War gender roles and the discourses of home maintenance: April's only means of challenging the control of her body at her disposal is, literally, the act of disposal: she is thus, in both her and her unborn child's deaths, completely circumscribed by the discourses that define her. In other words, her final act of revolution merely re-enacts her role as waste manager and

therefore the *revolution* of the title of the novel refers not to the rebellious disruption of traditional, stagnant cycles, but to the continuance of the cyclical revolutions of their circular habits and routines: the influx of consumable goods and the outflux of waste materials. In the end, her adopted surname becomes a reference to the circular loop she cannot liberate herself from.

When Frank finds her blood-soaked towels in their bathroom he imagines April instructing him on managing the by-products of the procedure, foregrounding the ways April's life has been determined by the systemocentric logics and patterns of her kitchen (and home). His vision of April tells him, "I thought you could just wrap the towels up in newspaper and put them in the garbage, and then give the tub a good rinsing out" (341). Despite April's attempt to remove herself from the cycles of consumption and waste management, Frank's imagination imbues his phantasmal constitution of her with the qualities she had come to despise—the constant need for waste management and cleaning that drove her to her abortive act. Ignoring the meaning of her act—its sources of desperation and her need for liberty—he even imagines her telling him, "[t]here; now that's done" when "he pressed the newspaper bundles deep into the garbage can outside the kitchen door" (341). His disposing of the remainders of her life-ending abortion outside the kitchen door also symbolizes his inability to take her drastic measure and make something out of it—any potential for him to entertain a creative or subversive impulse (perhaps they were always only hers) is thrown out with the trash and he slips back into his suburban existence of consuming and disposing. Frank, left alone to take care of the splintered nuclear family, becomes the new waste manager of the home in this moment—only in the complete absence of a feminine body. The systemocentrism of the

kitchen and home moves him to discard the evidence of her disruptive act, so as to make the home, once again, a place fit for continued consumption.

1.4 Robot Housewives

As the heightened modularization and innovation in kitchen design and technology in the 1950s continued well into the 1970s, so too did the technologization of the feminine body and the infiltration of national and corporate interests into (household) domestic spaces.⁹⁹ But, at the same time, as the Cold War cooled down by the 1970s, with Détente and the end of the Vietnam War,¹⁰⁰ second-wave feminism, inspired by Friedan's polemic of the previous decade, began to counter the quaint and outmoded versions of femininity and domesticity as they had been advertised and packaged for consumption in the 1940s and '50s. Pat Mainardi's influential book, *The Politics of Housework* (1970), for instance, tells of her attempt to equalize home domestic duties with her husband, and, in doing so, argued for equal recognition for feminine labour in the home.¹⁰¹ Clearly, as the 1970s began, domesticity had become, as Beatrice Colomina notes in her essay "Domesticity at War," "a scene of conflict" (Colomina "Domesticity" 15) between the genders as well.¹⁰² Published more than a decade after *Revolutionary Road*, Ira Levin's novel, *The Stepford Wives* (1972), reveals that the very same concerns with the feminine body and waste management were still prevalent in the 1970s, and perhaps even more crucial as second-wave feminism was actively challenging the national tropes of feminine domesticity. While the novel and subsequent film version are intentionally hyperbolic, they nonetheless intensify the Cold War housewife's thematic plight by staging a science fictional dramatization of the domestic battle between

femininity, masculinity, kitchen hygiene, waste management, robotics, and even national ecology.

A throwback to 1950s science fiction films in which robots assisted or endangered human beings, *The Stepford Wives* is a science fiction horror/thriller that mixes anxieties about the female body with the merging of the human body and technology, chemical contamination and pollutants, suburban banality, and the need to manage waste—and all within a context of a Cold War industrial conspiracy. The novel is told from the perspective of protagonist Joanna as she uncovers a devious plot undertaken by the male inhabitants of a fictional suburban development in Connecticut to replace all of their wives with fully autonomous robots. As substitutes, the new gynoid wives, significantly, find their greatest uses in cleaning—being expert waste managers—and pleasuring the men sexually. Having the robot women excel in these areas literalizes the anxieties surrounding both the dematerialization of waste and femininity, and the materialization or confirmation of the masculine body through sexual acts. While the genre of the novel (and its accompanying film of 1975) is ambiguous (and debatable¹⁰³), both versions represent the feminine entanglement with technology as a literal erasure of their bodies through robotic substitution. Seen as satire, the novel and film depict a parody of the effects of domestic technology on the female body in order to present a critique of misogynist constructions of housewives as mere systemocentrist switching points.

In an analysis of the *The Stepford Wives* film and its relation to feminist concerns of the time, for example, Anna Krugovoy Silver suggests that it successfully articulates a *cyborg mystique*, arguing a most applicable description of the plot would denote the film as a kind of science fiction rewrite of Friedan's feminist tract. In fact, second wave

feminists, such as Beverly Jones and Friedan herself, Krugovoy Silver points out, used the figure of the robot to analogize the housewife's plight: in Silver's words, the second wave argued that "fetishizing housework turns women from individuals with goals and ambitions into cleaning appliances: robots" (qtd. in Silver 66). (Friedan herself apparently walked out of a post-screening discussion about feminism soon after the film's theatrical release, disappointed in the film's depiction of women¹⁰⁴). On the other hand, seen as science fiction horror, the film creates drama out of an exaggeration of a kind of masculine wish-fulfillment—the creation of a world where women only prepare meals, pleasure their husbands, and take out the garbage. Either way, both the novel and film present a view of suburbia where material waste and the female body are anathema to social structures of domesticity.

In the film version, Joanna has not been able to keep up with the domestic cleanliness standards of the other townswomen, and new friend and Stepford resident housewife Bobbie remarks on Joanna's disordered home: she says to her, "[a] messy kitchen. How beautiful" (*Stepford*). From Bobbie's perspective, Joanna's messy home counters the pristine and ordered spaces of the families in which a gynoid wife has become domestic waste manager—a bit of garbage lends a sense of reality to the home, and its presence is linked to the presence and labour of Joanna's human female body. In the other homes, where the kitchens are maintained by robot women, devoid of human hand, waste is virtually non-existent. After seeing the ways the other homes have become waste and rubbish-free, Joanna's husband asks in the film version, "[w]hen are things gonna start sparkling around here?" (*Stepford*). The answer can only be when Joanna's female body is replaced by a technological surrogate, suggesting once again, in

hyperbolic form of course, that the physical materiality of garbage and women are often effaced at the same time.

Disturbed by her husband's insinuations and her neighbours' increasingly strange behaviour—at a feminist consciousness-raising meeting, the robotic women discuss cleansers instead of gender politics—Joanna accepts Bobbie's help in a clandestine investigation into the matter. Soon Bobbie entertains the notion that the women are so docile and vacant because they have been affected by chemical pollution. The suburb is, Bobbie argues, adjacent to a strip of defense industry headquarters and plants, Cold War corporate sites, which she tries to link to the women's drone-like behaviour. In the film version, driving down the industrial road, Bobbie describes the firms as relating to “[e]lectronics, computers, aerospace junk. And labs. Who knows what?” (*Stepford*). “They must all be dumping their chemical garbage in the Stepford river and it could be making its way to us,” (*Stepford*) she speculates to Joanna on their tour of the area. In fact while Bobbie's suggestion that chemical waste emitting from the companies can be attributed to the cause of Stepford's feminine behaviour is off the mark, the link she articulates between the suburb's women and these enterprises proves accurate: many of Stepford's husbands work for these companies, and, Joanna finds out in the end after it is too late, have pooled their Cold War technological resources in order to create the robot women.

Bobbie eventually succumbs to the plot against her, replaced by a female, robotic version of herself. Interestingly, the men, in replacing their wives with mechanical substitutes, give up their chance at procreation, as erasure of the feminine body acts out a kind of pre-emptive abortion of future generations. Interested instead in consumption, the

film ends in the supermarket, where all of the robot housewives vacantly shop for consumable items. Purchasing products to bring into the home ultimately signifies the gynoids' involvement in the continual circulation of domestic commodities and mass Cold War consumption. While we watch the technological replacements for the effaced feminine body undertake traditional feminine labour activities, we also see the products, the instant consumables and disposables of Kennedy's trash, efface in advance the presence of the waste they will ultimately become once consumed and disposed of.

CHAPTER TWO
SUBTERRANEAN GARBAGE:
THE FALLOUT SHELTER'S CRITIQUE OF DISPOSABLE CULTURE

2.1 Shelter discourse

In science fiction author Philip K. Dick's short story, "Foster, You're Dead" (1955), young child and main character Mike Foster is the only boy in his community without a fallout shelter. A possible nuclear war is on the horizon in this fictional future of 1971, and as a sign of the government's commitment to its citizens, it has promoted and maintained the institution of a privately funded, civilian fallout shelter infrastructure. Because of his father's political views—he is the lone ideological dissenter to the national governing party on the grounds (at least partially) that its shelter policy is merely exploiting its citizens' fears and anxieties for profit—Mike's family is singled out for not being "registered in Civic Defense" (Dick 222). Deprived of the security of a home shelter and ostracized by his schoolmates, Mike is obsessed with the potential dangers of nuclear Armageddon. To compensate, he spends much of the story pondering the possibility of coming nuclear destruction and trying to impress upon his family the imperative of investing in a proper shelter. When Mr. Foster is finally swayed by the rhetorical appeals of young Mike, the Foster family purchases the latest fallout shelter model only to have it repossessed when they cannot afford to keep up with the payments. Emotionally crippled by the family's loss, Mike attempts to stow himself away in a floor model fallout shelter at the local sporting goods store, and the story ends as employees attempt to remove him from his only sanctuary.

Having the military industrial complex hijack nuclear discourse in the story in order to promote the home shelter as a necessary domestic product, Dick effectively satirizes the sociopolitical climate of the early 1950s. By then, the average American citizen had witnessed what Beatrice Colomina regards as a widespread “movement of military logic in the private sphere” (16).¹⁰⁵ For instance, the Conelrad program (Control of Electromagnetic Radiation) and the Federal Civil Defense Administration (FCDA), both created to organize American society in preparation for a possible nuclear attack from the Soviet Union, were established in 1951. With nuclear fear as a common default condition and paranoia as a cultural paradigm,¹⁰⁶ the fallout shelter emerged as an embodiment of citizens’ hope that they—and the nation—might somehow survive a nuclear attack. Consequently, the fallout shelter became a key motif in the discourse of nuclear preparedness and was specifically framed as a product through which individuals might exercise their own preparation for nuclear war. The Eisenhower administration even promoted a “do-it-yourself” (Rose 34) shelter initiative, whereby citizens were urged to take responsibility for their own nuclear preparedness instead of relying on a national, governmental infrastructure. The acts of building, stocking, and testing shelter spaces through nuclear-strike simulations were supposed to provide individuals grounds for private nuclear crisis management.

Through the eyes of young Mike Foster, however, we get a different sense of the ways the shelter worked psychologically on the public: we see the shelter not only as a product and a commodity designed to diffuse nuclear anxieties, but also as a dualistic space associated with the dichotomous emotions of anxiety and comfort, paranoia and hope, and panic and faith. While the introduction of discourses of nuclear preparedness

were intended to reassure the public, they could also, as evidenced in the story, engender public anxiety; in fact, they anticipated and capitalized on it. As a cultural artefact, the fallout shelter straddled the line between being an object of complete uselessness and a valuable and essential mode of national defense and civilian protection—no one was sure whether the architecture would be an effective refuge from the spread of nuclear fallout.¹⁰⁷ In fact, the notion of duality (of contradiction, of paradox even), came to define the fallout shelter in all of its multifaceted dimensions: it was simultaneously a space of comfort and anxiety,¹⁰⁸ self-reliant survivalism and domestic normalcy, masculine industry and feminine domesticity, and the private citizen and the nation. That is to say, the fallout shelter functioned as a nexus of cultural discourses in which consumption, convenience, domesticity, national protection, nuclear preparedness, and even waste management coalesced around the possibilities of nuclear holocaust. As such, shelter discourse fielded a pluralistic approach to the shelter's social meanings.

As Dick's short story, Robert A. Heinlein's novel *Farnham's Freehold* (1964), and Walter M. Miller's novel *A Canticle For Leibowitz* (1959) reveal, because all of the symbolic and mythic dimensions ascribed by Cold War ideologies to the shelter's social role, the fallout shelter also had the potential to disrupt and even subvert these discourses. While cultural historians like Elaine Tyler May and Sarah Lichtman have figured the backyard fallout shelter as the epitomized site of Cold War consumption, an enclosed space in which occupants would be "protected against impending doom by the wonders of modern technology," and, importantly, "cushioned by [material] abundance" (May 1), the fallout shelter, as a space and an architecture, instead had the potential to express an implicit critique of consumer culture. In this chapter, I argue that the unique convergence

of these competing discourses in the fallout shelter—particularly the increasingly inter-related discourses of convenience and national security—provide grounds for a deconstruction of the space as a site where consumers, sequestered from the outside world of chaos and devastation, would supposedly have nothing to do but take part in “consumption in the name of civil defence” (Lichtman 49).

Through close readings of “Foster, You’re Dead” and *Farnham’s Freehold*, I articulate the ways shelter discourses left open the possibility of an implicit critique by obscuring shelter deprivation and the significant alterations to daily activities such deprivation would entail. These texts make it clear that in spite of the ways shelter space was set up as one of abundance, the fallout shelter’s spatial limitations would render the practices of consumption associated with disposable culture—the excess, rapid consumption of consumables¹⁰⁹—impossible. Changes in consumptive habits and waste management would moreover force dwellers to consider new conceptualizations of waste materials, and even encourage them to engage in the practices of resource management. In the final analysis, the fallout shelter is represented in these texts as a peculiar site that does not bolster a number of the core cultural values associated with American Cold War ideology, but instead undermines them. In doing so, it promoted a kind of waste consciousness that anticipated ecological movements of the 1970s.

Later in the chapter, I continue my analysis of *Farnham’s Freehold* in order to reveal the ways its uses of the fallout shelter subvert the associations of frontier life ascribed to shelters in the discourses of nuclear preparedness. While the discourses surrounding shelter advocacy depicted life in a fallout shelter as domestic, suburban bliss, devoid of any evidence of panic, to supplement these narratives of feminized shelter

domesticity they also figured the shelter as a site through which American men could restage the frontier narratives of the nation's past. As Sarah Lichtman notes in her essay, "Do-It-Yourself Security: Safety, Gender, and the Home Fallout Shelter in Cold War America," incorporating the frontier narrative was important in the discourses of shelter responsibility, for it reaffirmed a kind of masculine self-reliance through its harnessing of the emergent D-I-Y discourses in the 1950s. Situating shelter construction within this American tradition helped sell the shelter—materially and psychologically—to the nation's men by relating backyard shelter-building projects to the building of a log cabin on the borderlands of frontier wilderness. In other words, situating nuclear survivalism within the larger tradition of American survivalism was meant to provide a reliable historical context for the ambiguities and uncertainties of nuclear proliferation. Of course such rhetoric was disingenuous, for framing the shelter as a return to American frontier individualism obscured the fact that should a nuclear attack occur what awaited shelter dwellers, no matter how prepared they were, was not a wild west frontier, but a nuclear frontier, a radioactive wasteland defined by material and psychological hardships. In reality, the shelter policed a temporal frontier, delineating a pre-nuclear era of American affluence and plenty, and a post-nuclear era of waste and lack.

Subverting the norms of the post-nuclear narrative in science fiction, Heinlein's novel is meant to bolster shelter advocacy, depicting shelter life as a new form of frontier survivalism. Yet it actually reveals the ways life in a shelter would promote a kind of ecological ethos. In its reconceptualization of waste materials, the novel in effect subverts its own agenda by having the shelter and its ecological premises deconstruct the paradigm of the fallout shelter as a last bastion of attack and a survivalist precaution

within a tradition of American individualism. And yet Walter M. Miller's *A Canticle For Leibowitz* (1959) reveals a crucial irony involved in the fallout shelter's social role: as a space of physical containment across the threshold of pre- and post-nuclear landscapes, the fallout shelter becomes, paradoxically, a vital means of preserving artefacts of Cold War material culture—evidence of the very practices its critique attempts to subvert. In this context, garbage takes on new social meaning and importance in a post-nuclear world as potential remainders of Cold War culture and a way of reestablishing an archive.

2.2 “Not lacking, not fearing”

In 1952, *Popular Mechanics* profiled science fiction author Robert A. Heinlein's custom built home in an article entitled, “A House to Make Life Easy.” Part human interest piece, part architectural spotlight, the article's discussion of the science fiction author's unique dwelling is interesting because it reveals the ways the Heinleins associate domestic comforts with the diffusion of anxiety. In fact, this relationship is the defining characteristic of the custom home's premise and design. A designer himself, Heinlein built the home in Colorado Springs according to his family's need for the conveniences associated with postwar affluence. A constructive embodiment of their desired lifestyle, the home “runs itself with a minimum of maintenance and housework” (Stimson 67), the Heinleins note, making it “a comfortable, pleasing residence that would just about take care of itself” (67).¹¹⁰ Yet while the euphemism “taking care of itself” stands in for the notion of making household chores easier, it also refers to protection for the Heinleins, and the idea of domestic comfort connotes not only ease of living, but security as well. Indeed, the article foregrounds the ways the home was not only convenient for its

dwellers—it featured built-in furniture (making floor-cleaning easier), modern appliances, advanced heating and cooling measures, a “radio and phonograph-control center” (228), and an indoor garden area to name a few examples—but also the ways it was secure from various potential crises: it was “[w]ithin reason...fireproof, termiteproof and earthquakeproof” (67), “built of steel reinforced concrete blocks” (68) to withstand many structural threats, and possessed “no movable furniture in the house” (67) in the event the home’s reinforced stability was compromised. Because Heinlein was an author of speculative and future histories in his science fiction, the article plays up his science fiction associations by asking readers, does the home’s emphases on convenience and protection make it “[t]he house of the future?” (65). But, aside from Heinlein’s science fictional associations, the article’s (and Heinlein’s) linking of convenience and protection—and notably through a discourse of futurism—echo and embody the era’s twin and entangled phenomena: consumption and anxiety.

Taking home amenities and domestic precautionary measures into the nuclear age in 1961, Heinlein went a step further and built his own backyard fallout shelter. While his Colorado Springs home featured many of the characteristics associated with the fallout shelter—its small and almost subterranean design, the way it combined rooms to save space (see the “combination living-dining room” [67]) and its emphasis on protection—the geopolitical tensions between the U.S. and the Soviet Union which defined the Cold War had prompted the author to take the next logical step. As his science fiction during the Cold War had fictionalized Cold War events—in *Revolt in 2100* (1953) a communist state rules the globe, and in *Assignment in Eternity* (1953), a post-World War III form of communism figures heavily in a future political environment—Heinlein decided the

climate was threatening enough to warrant the implementation of real-world measures to protect himself and his family. Indeed, fallout shelters began to emerge in earnest after the Soviet Union detonated its first atomic bomb in 1949, but intensified once the USSR began to mass produce Inter-Continental Ballistic Missiles with nuclear capabilities in 1957, *before* the U.S. With the so-called Berlin Crisis peaking in the fall of 1961 and tensions with the Soviets escalating,¹¹¹ a fallout shelter craze hit the nation, and shelter speculation became a hot topic in the national media. From within this tense sociopolitical climate, Heinlein explained in a letter to fellow speculative fiction writer and anthology editor (and chapter one's *Shadow on the Hearth* author) Judith Merrill his decision to build a shelter was an "act of faith" (qtd. in Seed 32). In referring to his undertaking with such language, his comment belies an important ambiguity surrounding the fallout shelter's effectiveness in the event of nuclear war.

The variables involved in nuclear attacks—proximity to the explosion, the number of bombs, the direction of spreading fallout¹¹²—rendered each fallout shelter in the nation subject to many different nuclear scenarios, and the efficacies of fallout shelters became a topic of intense debate not only in the popular imagination, but the American scientific community as well. Though community and backyard bomb shelters had been around for decades at the beginning of the Cold War—a commonplace, for example, in European cities prone to bombing and air raids during the Second World War—the fallout shelter was constructed not to withstand nuclear or even conventional bombardment, but rather to house citizens for a prolonged period—about two weeks according to most government-produced pamphlets and educational films¹¹³—as a means of protection against radioactive fallout in the event of atomic explosion.¹¹⁴ Despite the

prevalence of fallout shelters in national discourses of nuclear preparedness, there were no guarantees that a shelter would help its occupants survive; and if it did, the question of whether or not the atomized or post-nuclear world they would emerge into would be navigable (let alone livable), was also uncertain.

Fallout, a kind of residue, is made up of radioactive particle remainders of the nuclear explosion, and was categorized as dangerously ambiguous materials in the popular media. Valueless and even biologically harmful, fallout was a threat because of its radioactivity and framed within what Laurence Buell calls “toxic discourse” (Buell 639), a rhetoric of contamination; but, in addition, its status as a by-product related it to waste materials and made it doubly suspect. A glossary at the back of the pamphlet “Fallout Protection: What To Know and Do About Nuclear Attack” (1961) describes fallout as “[t]he radioactive debris of a nuclear explosion which eventually falls to earth in particles” (“Fallout” 8) and further notes that after the nuclear fireball has diffused into a mushroom cloud, “[h]igh in the sky, radioactive elements are incorporated into the earth particles, which are scattered by winds and in time fall to the ground” (8). Fallout, in other words, consists both of the remainders of that which has been destroyed—material, man-made objects—and natural, earth-born particles—dirt, soil, rock—that have become radioactive in their exposure to radiation released in the bomb’s detonation and explosion. A kind of minute waste product, fallout was linked with common, household dust in the popular media.

The short animated educational film produced by the Office of Civil and Defense Mobilization titled, “Fallout: When and How to Protect Yourself,” links fallout with

domestic dust in such a way that it implicates even daily household dust as suspicious materials. Rendered as falling snow in the animation, fallout is defined as ambiguous since its harmful nature—and the fact that it is indeed fallout—is not visible to the naked eye. As a consequence, after a nuclear explosion any dust-like particles become suspect—is it radioactive or is it just dust? When encountering dust in this scenario, viewers of the film are advised to “[t]reat it as fallout” (“Fallout: When”). They are even told to “[k]eep dust out” of any space they might inhabit after a nuclear attack, and make sure to always “[k]eep the dust off [their] skin” (“Fallout: When”). In fact, if one is close to a nuclear explosion, they are told to “watch any unusual accumulation of dust” (“Fallout: When”) and are further instructed to use a white plate to check for any unusual build-up. In suggesting that fallout can be conspicuous but ambiguous, the discourses of nuclear crisis played upon the connections between domestic (household) order—maintained through the constant expulsion of undesirable and useless materials—and the threat of nuclear after-effects. As such, both discourses mutually reinforced one another and psychologically link the presence of dust, dirt, grime, and other nasty household build-ups with the radioactive aftermath of a nuclear explosion. In other words, fallout was figured as the dust that kills. Such rhetoric thus reinforces the idea that the Cold War consensus, and the spaces this ideological construct informs, must be continually (re)constituted through the expulsion of any materials which obstruct consumptive practices.

To compensate for the undecidability of fallout shelter effectiveness, shelter discourses emphasized the domestic aspect of the shelter space, and specifically in relation to the domestic sphere as being a place of normality.¹¹⁵ In fact, since their

introduction into the American cultural imagination in the 1950s, fallout shelters figured significantly in the discourses of consumption. Cultural historians like Elaine Tyler May and Sarah Lichtman have since figured the backyard fallout shelter as being the epitomized site of Cold War consumption because major magazine publications like *Life* depicted underground shelter living as normal, daily, and average American. While Lichtman is right to argue that the fallout shelter was a “paradoxical space that domesticated war by militarizing the family home” (Lichtman 51), she overlooks the ways the suburban home and domestic (household) space, as I argued in chapter one, had already been implicitly militarized. Shelters only “placed the suburban home and family on the front lines of national defense” (Lichtman 40) in a way that reflected, confirmed and literalized the ways Cold War national agendas had penetrated private spaces. As such, the fallout shelter served to supplement what had already become a mobilized domestic space and publicly acknowledge the ways American citizens had become entangled in the Cold War even in their private and domestic lives.

One of the fallout shelters profiled in *Life* magazine’s 1961 special issue on fallout and fallout protection published during heightened tension between the superpowers,¹¹⁶ for example, is described as a condensed double of the family home. In an image accompanying a how-to article for building a backyard shelter, patio stones leading to the door of the shelter connote a suburban backyard setting with its manicured lawn and pastoral imagery. To complement the suburban landscape, the cutaway depiction of the inside of the shelter reveals a middle-class, suburban domestic scene: mother makes the bed as the youngest child reads to pass the time. The father’s

position in the doorway, however, suggests he is about to shut the door in preparation for a nearby nuclear bombing, as his gaze upwards towards the sky is almost certainly a reference to the direction of the attack.¹¹⁷ While the masculine hand of the father secures the space from the outside world, supposedly to protect the family, inside, the domestic routines of the family continue on as if nothing were amiss.¹¹⁸ The fully-stocked supply shelf awaits the family's consumptive whims, and their underground location promises to seal them off from any radiation contamination.

What the cautionary and preparatory rhetoric of *Life's* entire twelve-page spread reminds us is that shelter spaces were based solely upon speculation.¹¹⁹ Since fallout shelters, by their very design, were only to have become operational in the event of a nuclear attack, and since no such event occurred, we will never know the actual material, psychological, and social realities of life in a fallout shelter. We must instead think about fallout shelters as speculative spaces. While some Americans indeed built, stocked, even tested their shelters, they were always only encountered and negotiated in speculative and theoretical ways. In fact, almost every aspect of the fallout shelter was predicated on speculation: from structural or architectural questions (What amount of fallout can it withstand?), to psychological questions (How would individuals behave in a fallout shelter knowing the world as they know it had been drastically altered by nuclear war?), to questions of the future (What would await fallout shelter dwellers in the post-nuclear world they would be stepping out into?). Employing the Cold War military techniques and strategies of forecasting,¹²⁰ citizens took part in their own version of wargaming scenarios and simulations on a domestic level.

In being only speculative—with regard to its real-world application—the space of the fallout shelter is also linked with the space of literature. As social spaces whose full realization could only be achieved during an event that had yet to occur, fallout shelters were as “fabulously textual” (Derrida “Apocalypse” 23) as Jacques Derrida categorized the very event which precipitated fallout shelters: real-world nuclear holocaust.¹²¹ Life in a fallout shelter, then, finds its best—or perhaps only—viable representation and function within the space of literature. In relating literature (specifically fiction) and nuclear apocalypse, Derrida also teases out a link between literature’s mode of fictional representation and the possibilities of representing the *unrepresentable* phenomenon of nuclear holocaust. Thus, the so-called textuality of the bomb, as David Seed has argued, raises the status of literature, and particularly science fiction literature, on par with other disciplinary speculation, “[f]or if nuclear war can only be approached speculatively, then literature—and particularly science fiction—can occupy a space equal to sociological, strategic and other modes of speculation” (Seed 4). Indeed, the genre of speculative science fiction became an important expression of Cold War concerns—its ways of fictionalizing and anticipating post-nuclear apocalyptic landscapes became vital ways of conceptualizing nuclear and post-nuclear scenarios.¹²² To reflect this new position for science fiction, science fiction novelists “made constant interventions in the debates that were raging throughout the Cold War on such matters as civil defense, foreign policy and internal security” (Seed 9).

One such intervention that has been traditionally overlooked in the critical theory surrounding Heinlein, Dick, and Miller Jr. and cultural analyses of the fallout shelter as a Cold War space, is the way fallout shelter life in speculative fiction can actually embody

not Cold War consumptive norms, but a subversion or critique of consumer and disposable cultures. In Robert A. Heinlein's *Farnham's Freehold* the discourses of shelter advocacy and consumption are supposed to converge as a means of bolstering the idea that the fallout shelter is a vital American space in which citizens could enact their own individualistic survivalism by recreating their domestic sphere inside and continuing their normal activities; and yet, conversely, the novel reveals that shelter life would require many significant changes to the domestic activities of consumption and waste management. In fact, the novel reveals that shelter life would necessitate (and anticipate) a kind of ecological practice that would not become a popular cultural ethos until the 1970s. Only speculative fiction could represent the shelter in action; in doing so, it becomes a medium through which the shelter—a space whose real-world applications could not be understood without a nuclear war—could be seen to directly counteract the discourses which try to define its uses.

Three years after undertaking his backyard fallout shelter project (and two after the Cuban Missile Crisis, a high point of nuclear tensions during the Cold War), Robert A. Heinlein published *Farnham's Freehold* (1964), a novel in which a fallout shelter plays a significant role in the survival of its characters through a nuclear attack. Intended to advertise the importance of American nuclear preparedness, the novel explores the ways main character Hugh Farnham and his family respond to a Soviet nuclear strike by seeking refuge in their backyard fallout shelter. Inside this space, the family—Hugh, wife Grace, son Duke, daughter Barbara, her friend Karen, Joseph the butler, and the family cat—like other shelter families during a nuclear explosion, would try to go about their daily lives waiting for the day they could re-emerge. Despite being fully enclosed and

sealed off from the outside world, the shelter space at first appears to be comfortable, full of resources, and amenable to the lifestyle to which the Farnhams are accustomed.

Gradually, the novel shows that being fully enclosed, buried beneath the horizon of the suburban lawn, the backyard shelter was subject to a logic that would differ significantly from regular daily activities and practices: a fallout shelter family would have to restrain the impulses that had been naturalized by the discourses of convenience. While consumption is still possible and indeed necessary—patriarch Hugh Farnham remarks early on, “we’ve got to eat even if it is Armageddon” (45)—their consumptive choices have been considerably reduced by the limitations of this Cold War architecture. As a sarcastic acknowledgment of this predicament, when they finally decide to eat, daughter Karen makes the impossible and facetious request of “Crêpes Suzettes” (45), the meal they had been preparing when the attack occurred; instead, they must settle for Spam and crackers. While they are thankful for what sustenance they have, they are also made aware of what they do not and the luxuries of their world before the nuclear attack press in on them as absent presences. Thus, the group has to adopt an attitude toward consumption mindful of resource and waste management predicated on considering the ratios of resource to waste and of product to trash.

Sealed within the shelter, residents would have to ration their consumption of whatever consumables had been stocked. Without the ability to exit the shelter to replenish these non-renewable resources, shelter dwellers would have to consider these items (though commodified and not natural) in relation to an extension of their present moment and into the future from the moment they entered the space. They would also have to consider the most efficacious ways these materials could be distributed,

consumed, and managed in terms of their material make-up—including and especially as by-products. Without access to replenishing resources for consumption, shelter practice would then be predicated on the strict and disciplinary need to contemplate the notion of efficiency. Crucially, the shelter version of efficiency would not be framed within the discourses of modern convenience—i.e., cutting meal preparation time, using automated technologies for ease, etc.—but in terms of the efficient *use* of commodities and materials.

In exposing the ways consumption and resource management must change in the shelter, Heinlein's fiction in effect challenges the ways discourses of nuclear preparedness conceptualized shelter life as a site of excess patriotic consumption. Moreover, the novel's critique of shelter life goes beyond an undermining of shelter discourse and challenges the larger cultural discourses of consumption and disposable living as well. In fact, the way the Farnhams are asked to curb their consumptive urges, the novel's shelter life promotes a lifestyle not dissimilar from the kind espoused by the era's critics of suburban culture. In his book *The Waste Makers* (1960), for example, cultural anthropologist Vance Packard criticized the era's penchant for excess production in the industry strategy of planned obsolescence and called for a complete overhaul of the production industry and consumer habits, defined by restraint and the conservation of resources. In other words, while promoting private shelters was also a way for the sellers of American goods to increase market share—one who purchased a shelter contributed to the economy in numerous ways, including the act of personally stockpiling goods—actual shelter living would only undermine disposable and consumer culture norms. To

compensate for these kinds of privations, shelter discourses emphasized the importance of stockpiling non-perishable consumable items.

Thus, while “[t]he well-stocked larder became a central metaphor for shelter preparedness” (Lichtman 49), a stockpile of consumables was also meant to serve a secondary, psychological function: to buttress the anxieties engendered by the loss of freedom to consume on one’s own terms. With the space full of consumables and ready for consumption, the fallout shelter also attempted to recreate the home on a smaller scale. But it was instead a kind of parody of domestic space by virtue of its miniaturized embodiment of daily life. In provoking a contrast between the two spaces, the fallout shelter had the potential to defamiliarize the ways daily routines in the home had been influenced by Cold War ideologies and the networks and forces of production and exchange. The shelter’s very inefficiencies, especially where consumption and waste management were involved, would bring the efficiencies and conveniences of the suburban home into illuminated relief in a way that embodied an implicit critique of 1950s consumerism. While the on-hand reserves available to the kitchen are often figured in the discourses of convenience as being endless, and the kitchen cupboards, ostensibly, an extension of the supermarket shelves, the shelter’s supply would necessarily dwindle away as the days progressed. John Scanlan, for instance, cites the ways consumer products seem to continually appear and reappear in the market and in household kitchen pantries: the “experience of a necessary part of everyday life (the purchasing of food and other household essentials)” he says, is one of “a succession of *ends*” but “ends that are nonetheless concealed by the appearance of new versions and different products” (Scanlan 49). Such concealment is impossible in a space that cannot accommodate the

influx of replenishables and the outflux of waste. The illusion of superabundance that kitchen space promotes dissipates in the shelter, as goods and commodities, which are unable to circulate, have to be rationed and conserved.

Dick's story perfectly encapsulates the idea that while the shelter may appear to restage home space, it in fact subverts it. When the Fosters finally purchase the latest fallout shelter model in "Foster, You're Dead," Mike climbs down inside it by himself to take in its contours and feel the security and comfort he has been dreaming of. As it is described in detail during Mike's first rapturous experience within it, Dick provides the reader with a tongue-in-cheek perspective of the shelter and its amenities. He presents it as a highly effective means of survival, but only to reveal the ways shelter discourse emphasized consumption and protection as a means of taking focus away from the horrific realities of nuclear war. Like *Farnham's Freehold* and the shelter pamphlets above, Foster's shelter is framed as a virtual double of the family's domestic space; yet the shelter functions in the short story as not just an extension of the family home, but its very replacement: for Mike it is "actually, a home below the ground," where "[n]othing was missing that might be needed or enjoyed" (Dick 224). While "mostly a big tank" and "completely self-contained," the shelter is "a miniature world that supplied its own light, heat, air, water, medicines, and almost inexhaustible food...everything that made up the above-surface home" (224). In fact, Mike has been persuaded by the government and the rest of his community that inside, he and any shelter dweller, would exist in a state of "[n]ot lacking, not fearing" (231). Touting the shelter's conveniences, amenities and ability to sustain life for an extended period of time—a neighbour notes of the new 1972 model, "you can stock it for a whole year. Live down there twelve months without

coming up once” (Dick 230)—Dick’s narrator states that “[a] family would be safe, even comfortable, during the most severe H-bomb and bacterial spray attack” (224). Dick’s satire here exposes the ways the desire for protection and consumption had become entangled in the Cold War period, and the ways the government in the story sells shelter living with the promise of fulfilling both desires.

The notion of a cornucopian array of consumables and a time-bound enclosure in the shelter was not only supposed to make any shelter livable, but also sexy. In 1959, Melvin and Maria Mininson agreed to spend their entire two-week honeymoon inside a fallout shelter.¹²³ Part journalistic gimmick, part shelter experiment, the story was supposed to show the American citizen that if a couple could spend their honeymoon in the shelter, that life in the capsule might not be that bad. Indeed, the event serves the purpose of allaying the fears that the shelter would stifle any regular activities—including and especially sexual intercourse. That even procreation—a process begun in earnest with the consummation of the new marriage—could take place in the shelter meant it must be a space conducive to normality—normal (re)production, and normal consumption. Interestingly, a photograph accompanying an article on the Mininsons in *Life* magazine pictures the newlyweds seated in front of all the supplies the two of them will need for their two week stay—large jugs of water, cans and cans of non-perishables, a chemical toilet, and various entertainment articles, to name a few. This reassuring display of products (and product variety) is meant to supplant visions of deprivation with images of abundance—images persuasive enough to make individuals like Mike Foster in “Foster, You’re Dead” believe that it was impossible to lack anything in a shelter. But, of course, as I have shown, consumptive norms would certainly have to be altered. For example, if

one notes the garbage can in the upper-left hand corner that flanks the bountiful and deliberately expansive arrangement of consumer items, a quick visual arithmetic reveals the potential issue of waste management: how could that one simple garbage can accommodate the bulk of all the packaging implicated in such a collection of consumable and disposable products?

Garbage and waste management issues in fact provide the most productive grounds for a deconstruction of the paradigm of the shelter as a space of unrestrained Cold War consumption. When constructing their fallout shelter, or even merely speculating on what life in a shelter might be like, a family would have to consider both where products come from and how they might be consumed efficiently instead of flagrantly. Moreover, shelter dwellers would be forced to ask themselves, where would the waste products—both human and packaged remainders of consumption—go? Since they could not be immediately disposed of, jettisoned from the space without a second thought to its existence beyond the space, waste materials would have to be managed and preserved in different ways in the sequestered space. Shelter dwellers would have to address in detail the relations between such a quantity of packaging and a low-volume disposal receptacle. As a consequence, garbage materials would have to be reconceptualized in shelter space. In suburban domestic spaces, household garbage and waste management was structured upon what Lupton and Miller have called a “process of elimination” (Lupton 41): domestic spaces were technologically and spatially streamlined so that waste materials could move in constant flux from interior to exterior spaces. Sequestered from the world for at least a two week period, American fallout shelters simply could not facilitate the familiar and naturalized movements and circulations of

materials—in and out—stifling, in effect, the very impulses of disposable culture to dispose.

Deferring the out-flux of waste means pausing these materials in their movement and circulation, and keeping them close, making them immediate and visceral. As it contests the widespread American practice of consumption “with restraint thrown to the winds” (Horowitz 8) that “promoted a celebration of democratic affluence as a basis for American superiority” (Horowitz 7) in the Cold War, shelter life, in some curious way, would anticipate a kind of waste-consciousness that emerged in the 1970s and 1980s. Waste theorist Gay Hawkins makes a claim about the practice of recycling which I think bears mentioning in relation to shelter waste management practices. She states that “[i]n making us handle waste differently recycling has made us open to the materiality of waste in ways that chucking it in the bin denies” (Hawkins 115). In a similar fashion, alternative waste-handling measures in the fallout shelter would force individuals to think about the kinds of things they were attempting to throw away and consider the implications of their own involvement in their material production and distribution. The fallout shelter, in other words, would domesticate those materials ascribed the status of *undomestic* by the discourses of American postwar convenience.¹²⁴ Critical of the social spaces it reflected in distorted mirror image, fallout shelters could not reproduce domestic, consumptive bliss, but reflect back onto society visions of an alternative space from within which alternate modes of practice might be available (or, in this case, necessary).

However, as mentioned above, the fallout shelter never became operational—it was a speculative and textual space, one born of war-gaming, forecasting, and simulation.

As a consequence, any critique of disposable culture the fallout shelter might embody could not find any meaningful real-world expression. Only within the space of literature, and particularly speculative fiction, could the fallout shelter's implicit critique take shape. In the next section, I present a further analysis of Heinlein's *Farnham's Freehold*, but also Walter M. Miller's *A Canticle for Leibowitz*, in order to draw out the ways shelter space and the space of literature converge in these texts to embody the fallout shelter's implicit critique of disposable culture within the space of literature. At the same time, there is a striking irony at work in these texts. While speculative fiction allows the shelter's critique to emerge, the fallout shelter's archival potential to store the remainders of consumer and disposable cultures—in the form of garbage, waste, and trash—as traces of these cultures, can nullify the shelter's critique of these habits.

2.3 Shelter, Garbage, and the Nuclear Frontier

On the surface, the discourses surrounding the fallout shelter and postwar convenience both shared a similar futurity. An amorphous concept, the notion of *futurism* had found articulation in *avant-gardes* modernist sub-sects of architecture and art in the early twentieth century—most notably its Russian and Italian versions—but had become in 1950s and 1960s America an important component of industrial strategy and design. Julian Myers states of 1950s technological production, there was a general “dizzying temporal vertigo, where the past and the present were physical objects that one could own, or throw away, where every harbinger of the future was a relic in reverse” (Myers 76); in other words, designers were consciously trying to anticipate the kinds of products and styles of the future and produce them for popular consumption, promoting them with

a kind of fictional narrative of *a priori* availability.¹²⁵ But this futurism in industrial design also constructed the American future as it tried to anticipate it. With the various houses and kitchens of the future, industrial designers projected a particular kind of future and from within a Cold War context: it was a future in which the American nation had prevailed, victorious in the Cold war against the Soviet Union, and able to enjoy the spoils of victory—including consumer technological satisfaction and unbridled consumption.

But while the discourses of convenience were framing the future as a time when American technology would satisfy the every whim and desire of its citizens—a perspective embodied in the futurism of the Cold War kitchen¹²⁶—shelter discourses presented a future where those American citizens who had prepared for nuclear attack would be safe, protected, and buttressed by an abundance of consumable items. But just as many civil defense pamphlets had chosen to obscure the realities of shelter living in terms of the deprivations shelter limitations would necessitate, shelter discourses also chose to forgo any real speculation about the post-nuclear landscape. This was because the fallout shelter anticipated a different and unique kind of future. While experts and studies were predicting various nuclear disaster scenarios¹²⁷—especially after the U.S. and the Soviet Union had enough nuclear weapons to assure mutual destruction—shelter pamphlets instead focused on building, stocking, and living in the shelter space, falling back on the discourses of convenience and consumption to allay any anxieties of a bleak American future. What the pamphlets intentionally overlooked was the fact that in the event of an all-out nuclear war, the fallout shelter would become, when in operation, a kind of spatial and temporal threshold between an American past before the nuclear war

and a future, post-nuclear world defined by destruction and chaos—if, that is, it even managed to work as an effective shield against radiation and fallout. Acting as a kind of passageway between the modern American landscape of the 1950s and a post-nuclear wasteland—a veritable nuclear frontier—the fallout shelter would introduce survivors to an American nation in ruins.

Perhaps because Robert A. Heinlein's *Farnham's Freehold* was meant to bolster support for taking a leap of faith in the face of nuclear conflict with the Soviet Union in the form of a fallout shelter, the novel at first similarly obscures direct references to the post-nuclear landscape and falls in line with shelter discourses. When the family emerges from the shelter, they discover that through some cosmic accident the shelter (and they themselves as its occupants) have been transported thousands of years into America's future. The future American landscape in the novel is not that of a radioactive wasteland, but instead an Edenic wilderness, a "vision of lush greenness where there should have been blasted countryside and crater glass" (Heinlein 54). While the norm for post-nuclear science fiction was to show a post-nuclear wasteland, ravaged physically and ecologically by the bomb's impacts and after effects, the cosmic time-warp in *Freehold* subverts this post-nuclear paradigm as a means of linking the shelter and shelter living to the traditional narratives of American frontierism. The family's trip to a *post*-post-nuclear future gives the Farnham family a chance to experience not the atomic wasteland of nuclear holocausts, but a fresh and fertile new America, which provides the Farnhams with the opportunities (and hardships) of living off the land. Consequently, the Farnhams are able to avoid any confrontation with the immediate aftermath of nuclear war, and

instead the family restages the American frontier narrative in a wild, untamed future American landscape.

While the time travel element takes the novel into pure (science) fantasy, Heinlein's linking of the fallout shelter with frontierism is not completely accidental: to compensate for the warranted fears that emerging from a two-week fallout shelter stay meant navigating an uncertain world devastated by the chaos of a nuclear aftermath, the discourses of shelter preparedness actively figured shelter life within the larger narrative of American survivalism associated with the nation's cultivation of the landscape during its westward expansion in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.¹²⁸ Indeed, as a rhetorical strategy, shelter discourses employed the tropes of individualism and taming the wilderness specifically to harken back to the frontier mythology of the nation's past. One reason for such an approach to shelter life is that while the U.S. had increased its civil defense measures in the 1950s with Conelrad and the FCDA,¹²⁹ and actively considered national shelter initiatives (a national fallout shelter infrastructure like the one in "Foster, You're Dead"), home shelter responsibilities were ultimately foisted upon American citizens. As mentioned earlier, the official stance of the Eisenhower administration was tellingly "dubbed the 'do-it-yourself' shelter policy (Rose 34),¹³⁰ and starting in the 1950s, construction businesses, architectural designers, and even backyard pool companies capitalized on the intensifying currents of nuclear anxiety by producing shelter-related products and artefacts. As well as being a play on the popularity of the emerging home renovation industry, itself a kind of appeal for the postwar suburban male to renegotiate his masculinity, the official suggestion of doing it oneself invoked the American obsession with self-reliance. Shelters were even associated with the image of

the log cabin as “bastion against attack” (Lichtman 40), and shelter discourses thus promised domesticated American males¹³¹ they could exercise individualist muscle and construct their masculinity through shelter preparedness by echoing the American ideal of Emersonian individualism from within a Cold War context.

Consider, for example, the *Life* magazine shelter image discussed above. While it certainly depicts a suburban, domestic scene beneath the contours of the backyard lawn, the shelter is notably set in an environment similar to that of a rural American homestead. The wooden fence and the farm-like division of the landscape give off a general agrarian atmosphere, and the space of the suburban plot here becomes not only a section of American land in need of protection and maintenance, but one reminiscent of the virgin landscape domesticated by the American pioneer. In fact, shelter discourses intervened directly in the discourses of suburbia by supplementing the notion that “[s]uburbs were the latest American frontier, the promised land where the middle class could realize the American dream” (Stich 58) with the shelter’s own development as an artefact and architecture of rugged individualism. Indeed, suburbanism was also a discourse which consciously harnessed the traditions of the frontier in its simulation of American pastoralism. Located between the urban and rural areas, the suburban zone was a tamed, domesticated borderland between the city and the country.

But in the same way *Farnham’s Freehold* subverts the popular paradigm of the shelter as a space of excess Cold War consumption, the novel’s depiction of new American frontierism is influenced by the kinds of practices the family undergoes in their fallout shelter: curiously, the Farnhams embark on a kind of frontierism defined by an ecological sustainability. While we might expect the family to tame the renewed

American continent according to the narrative of manifest destiny, the novel's insistence upon sustainable practices undermines its assertion of frontier heroism. At the time of the novel's publishing, the American culture and consumption industries were engaging in a heightened form of consumption, predicated on a new "ethos of disposability" (Hawkins 29), where rapid consumption meant a continual turnover of waste materials. And yet while they claim the land as an American zone—the family makes a patriotic spectacle of rigging an American flag from the tallest tree in the vicinity—the loss of modern conveniences forces them to adhere to strict rules in terms of resource allocation and waste management. Thus, as the future becomes an unexpected representation of the American past, the family restages the American project of taming the natural landscape, but this time in an ecological context—resources and waste materials become conceptualized in terms of their material interrelationship between humans and their environment. Garbage specifically plays an important role in the family's future landscape ecology and in the ways the shelter dwellers conceptualize objects of value and utility.

For example, the Farnhams' shelter experience, and their subsequent attempt to start a new life in the wild and natural earth of the future, changes their perspective on packaging materials, leftovers, and by-products. While they have technically emerged from the shelter space, their dependence on it as a dwelling links it to their new modes of sustainable living. In the Edenic space of America's future, because there is no infrastructure they might (re)enter, they are careful to consider the relations between consumption, recycling and reusing materials, and conserving what few resources they have brought with them in the fallout shelter. An exchange between Hugh Farnham and

Joe, the family's servant, reveals how new conceptualizations of waste materials in the shelter have extended into the exterior environment. When Hugh states they need to "conserve canned goods," he asks of his servant, "[w]hat was done with the dirty cans?" (72). After Joe tells him they were buried, a leftover impulse of their time's waste management practices, Hugh tells him to "[d]ig them up and wash them" with the reasoning that a "tin can is more valuable than gold" and that they could "use them for all sorts of things" (72). In a world devoid of modern production and distribution capabilities, they quickly realize they must conserve raw materials instead of forgoing any potential usefulness in disposing of them. The question of what objects necessitate disposal must be reconceptualized in terms of the material's durability and utility. In effect, the family, in employing these kinds of ecological practices, founds a new American nation upon the principles of sustainability.

For instance, with only a few supplies left from the shelter, and an uncertain world they must navigate, the freeholders gain not only a new perspective on their previous modes of consumption and material practices, but also on their previous modes of exchange. The material remainders and residues of late capitalist production held over from their previous life take on use-values beyond those ascribed to them under the former systems of value and exchange: tin once used for the mere packaging of food, is, as Hugh Farnham states, worth more than gold in a social economy that gives post-consumer resources new uses and values. Daughter Karen, in awe of the green paradise around them, states that they "[m]ight as well be [on] another planet" because it is so different from their Earth of the 1960s, which "was getting used up" (58). Thus, their new perspective on consumption extends beyond their immediate environment and back into

the past; being forced to consider new modes of living has led to a critical interrogation of their previous material practices—and the text suggests, by implication, that waste materials could take on these uses and meanings in the time of the novel’s publication as well. To get the best use of their materials, the Farnhams implement an “austerity program” (79), and Hugh Farnham deems his son Duke rationing officer “responsible for everything that can’t be replaced: liquor, tobacco, ammunition, nails, toilet tissue, matches, dry cells, Kleenex, needles” (76). After rationing the “rolls of Scottissue” (72) that had been stored in the fallout shelter, the narrator categorizes simple toilet tissue as one of the “many, many things they had always taken for granted.” Farnham astutely acknowledges that “[t]he hardest thing to drill into [the others] will be saving every scrap of metal and paper and cloth and lumber, things Americans have wasted for years” (77). Confident in their renewable resources, such as fruit and vegetables, Farnham suggests it is nonetheless imperative they “note what can’t be replaced” (77). In this new social infrastructure, discarding material leftovers they would have considered mere garbage in their old lives is now viewed as a *wasting* of resources.

Farnham and his folk even begin to interrogate the very meaning of consumption when they consider the multifarious ways some materials can be consumed. In their new space, “[e]very box, every scrap of lumber” the narrator tells us, is “used and reused and re-reused in endless make-do building” (125). Farnham and the others soon begin to distinguish, as Jean Baudrillard would, between consumption as the *consummation* of an object’s utility, and “the destructive sense of consumption as the ‘using up’ of material resources” (Clarke 24). As Clarke further notes in his discussion of Baudrillard,

[c]onsumption is always destructive and creative... This duality is itself internalized within the modern system of consumption. Yet the potency of this ambivalence is all too frequently hidden behind the view that consumption is merely a concrete operation, concerned with using up goods to satisfy needs. (24)

Heinlein's novel reveals the ways fallout shelter living—and sustainability in general as well—necessitates a privileging of consumption as consummation, the consumption of an object's utility, which does not necessarily mean the complete *using-up* of that object. Cans, tin, aluminum, steel, plastic, consumed in utility and not mindlessly destroyed or thrown away, all have intrinsic value in a world in which the flagrant consumption of materials is an unsustainable option. The novel's commentary, by extension, exposes the ways consumer culture of 1950s America has privileged the destructive type of consumption, amenable to and in accord with an ethos of disposability.

Yet despite their progressive attitude towards materials and their uses in this new world, because these material remainders contain traces of a previous system of exchange, and all of the social implications associated with that system, Heinlein cannot completely reset a social economy. Farnham and the others cannot help but privilege the products and commodities produced by the industries of culture and production of the mid-twentieth century that have made the journey with them. While they collectively decide to conserve and recycle “anything manufactured, a scrap of paper, a dirty rag, a pin” (Heinlein 72), this mandate is, ultimately, founded in an attempt to recover or achieve a type of convenience they were used to in their previous lives. There are, thus, also residual elements of the systems and cultures of convenience and the discourses which promoted these kinds of lifestyles. While the survivors stick to their initiative, the

ethos of disposability effectively disposed of, this emphasis on reinstating modes of convenience with the leftovers of Cold War production marks the Edenic space with the systems of the past and shadows their concerns with the anxieties of losing convenience. They are thus not able to transcend the remainders of the late capitalist world. In telling moments, many of the survivors express the desires of being able to consume in excess of what they need to survive, and long for the prelapsarian days of unfettered and unrestrained consumption. There is always the expressed wish that they are, as Farnham states, “going to find that I failed to stock endless things we’ll be miserable without” (77).

Discussions of the “toilet space” (25) in *Farnham’s Freehold*, for example, at first reflect the proclivity of nuclear discourse to cross the American hobby of camping with shelter life: the narrator explains the shelter bathroom facilities are really nothing more than “a camp toilet...and a small area where a person might manage a stand-up bath” (26). Once they have arrived in the future, and turn their fallout shelter into an all-purpose living shelter—from the weather and elements—one of their top priorities is to modernize their toilet set-up. Running water and the need to foster “a bath and kitchen” (77) is described as a “luxury that will mean most to our women folk” (94). Following a discussion about plumbing, irrigation, and gardening, they note the need to “[f]igure out a way to get plumbing and running water with no pipe and no lead and no water closets and no portland cement” (87). Working only with the resources from the mid-twentieth century they have brought with them, they force water through an air-vent in the roof to bring in a systematic network of flowing water, creating a “sanitary toilet. Running water for cooking and washing” (94). And yet even still, with their modernization taking shape,

Hugh laments the fact that it was “[n]ot a flush toilet, it’s too complex. But a constant-flow toilet, a sort that used to be common aboard warships. It’s a trough with seats. Water runs in one end, out the other” (94). When they are finished, the narrator tells us “[t]heir bathroom was no longer a joke. Water flowed in a two-stall trough toilet partitioned with deerhide; tile drainpipe ‘leaded’ with clay ran down the manhole, out the tunnel into a cesspool” (129). These passages show that Farnham and the others need to get the waste flowing again, even outside the shelter, to give them a sense of civilization. Moreover, their desire to manage waste as it was managed in the 1950s and 1960s is linked with their desire to consume—if they are going to be able to consume as they once did, while somewhat restrained, they must import the technological tools of waste management from their own era. To get the circulation of materials flowing again as they once did is the first step in providing them with a space amenable to consumption, and marks the residual presence of the ethos of disposability. In other words, what *Farnham’s Freehold* reveals is that any kind of wholesale disposal of the American past upon emerging from a fallout shelter after a nuclear holocaust is not possible: there are always remainders.

When Hugh Farnham and Karen, who have struck up a relationship, are sent back to their regular time period, they witness up on a mountain side the explosion of the very bomb that had sent them into the future, and thus avoid the destruction of its initial impact. After the radiation has subsided, they begin to re-enter society by opening a trading post and restaurant bar. As the text presents their list of items available for purchase—a catalogue of all the items they had longed for in their post-nuclear lives—the novel itself underscores the continual modern need for consumption and convenience.¹³²

In fact, the notion that traces of disposable culture *can* exist beyond the event of nuclear destruction is a primary concern in many post-nuclear fictions. Specifically, the fallout shelter itself becomes not only an architecture built to remain, but is also a space that embodies the hope that material things, ideas, knowledges—or *culture*—might persist beyond a nuclear holocaust. In this way, the shelter is similar to Derrida’s formulation of the archive as a place structured by the tension between hope that the archived materials might exist into the future and an acknowledgement that it must necessarily be destroyed. In Heinlein’s novel, Farnham muses on his shelter library in a quiet moment. He recognizes that these volumes—from *The Encyclopedia Britannica* to Burton’s *Anatomy of Melancholy* to *The Hobo’s Cookbook*—must be the “last books in the world” (84) (assuming that he and his family are the only survivors). To further suggest, as he does, that the survival of texts beyond the nuclear threshold would be more efficacious—sacred even—than the survival of the human race belies his interest in the material remainders of Western culture. Provocatively, he states that “the burning of millions of books felt more brutally obscene than the killing of people” and that while “[a]ll men must die...a book need never die and should not be killed” (84); after all, “books were the immortal part of man” (84). Farnham’s meta-commentary about literary texts and his fixation on preserving literature not only makes the fallout shelter a kind of fragmented and partial library of human knowledge, but in keeping literature alive after a nuclear war, the fallout shelter allows Farnham and the human race to resist the notion that, as Derrida suggests, an all-out nuclear war scenario would mean the “remainderless and a-symbolic destruction of literature” (Derrida “Apocalypse” 28).¹³³ Moreover, the notion of preserving literature past nuclear apocalypse in a fallout shelter crystallizes the

spatial and conceptual entanglement of fallout shelters and literature itself—shelter space might preserve a literary archive while the space of literature contains the only embodiment of shelter life. Farnham’s archive fever in this post-nuclear setting christens the shelter itself as a new, post-nuclear version of the archive.

In fact, in potentially getting occupants and contents through nuclear conflict and the effects of its radioactive aftermath, fallout shelters are thus often figured as an archive of artifacts of a pre-nuclear war world. While Derrida uses nuclear annihilation to foreground literature’s (and, in general, text’s) complete vulnerability to the elements in “No Apocalypse, Not Now (Full Speed Ahead, Seven Missiles, Seven Missives)” he later figures the archive in *Archive Fever* as a spatial and architectural embodiment of human hope and the desire for persistence into an unknown future—humanity builds (and builds upon) archives in spite of the fact that the very construction of an archive necessitates its eventual destruction. Thus, fallout shelters embody the same kind of dualism—these spaces are created with the intention of survival despite the potential for nuclear destruction. Dick’s Mike Foster, as the only child without a shelter knows that “[w]hen the bombs came he’d be killed instantly” (Dick 222), but reserves hope in the form of the latest fallout shelter; when the shelter is taken away, he is emptied of hope and resigns himself to the fate ascribed to him in the story’s bleak and ironic title—“Foster, You’re Dead.” *Farnham’s Freehold* addresses the hope of survival by taking great pains to revalue the mundane objects that had been brought along in Farnham’s shelter—whether intentionally or accidentally—due to their new status as remnants of a former culture: all of the contents of Farnham’s shelter are immediately transformed into valuable artifacts representing American culture of the 1960s. Products, commodities, objects contained

within the fallout shelter mentioned above—tin, aluminum, and even packaging—take on cultural importance as materials that have managed to survive into the post-nuclear future, and can play the important role of referring back to a culture that has ostensibly been destroyed.

The shelter dwellers (and the novel *Farnham's Freehold* itself) recognize that even those materials that had not been considered inherently valuable by the culture that produced them—those garbaged and trashed materials the group now considers post-consumer resources instead of waste—assume the same cultural importance. Shelter garbage, preserved from atomic destruction within the shelter space, comes to take on a greater importance as evidence of the consumptive patterns of the disposable culture: for the post-nuclear world outside the shelter would be a world not only of destruction, fallout, and devastation, but (to dispute Derrida) a world of debris, detritus, remainders (even the remainders of cultural remainders), consumed not by regular material practices, but the flames of atomic deluge. As the teacher in “Foster, You’re Dead,” explains to the class, “[w]hen the war begins the whole surface will be littered with debris and rubble. If we hope to survive we’ll have to dig down” (222). In fact, that which is valuable is figured in the story as being underground as well: “[w]e’ll all have to learn to dig down in the rubble and find the good things, because that’s where they’ll be” (222). With American architecture and infrastructure in ruin, the only material remainders of American culture become valuable—even if they have been made useless. Instead, they act as signs, important textual signifiers of the culture that had nearly made itself obsolete.

Walter M. Miller's *A Canticle For Leibowitz* (1959) similarly figures the shelter's ability to archive the articles of a pre-nuclear nuclear world—even and especially garbage—but on a much larger scale. The novel tells a multi-millennial tale in which the cycles of human progress and destruction are told through the narrative of technological development. Over the course of the novel's three sections, which each jump ahead hundreds and thousands of years, human civilization rises from the ashes of a nuclear war—known in the novel as “the Flame Deluge” (Miller 23)—only to find itself once again involved in the same earth-destroying conflict that precipitated the original nuclear deluge of centuries past. What is significant for this study is that the technological knowledge which survives the deluge into the post-nuclear world in which the story takes place survives nuclear destruction by virtue of its being mere detritus accidentally found in a fallout shelter from the 1960s. In the first section, which takes place centuries in the future, a member of an order of monks finds the ancient fallout shelter in the middle of what had become a desert wasteland, scorched and made infertile by the atomic flames and nuclear destruction centuries earlier. Inside the space he discovers artifacts which take on religious importance when they are linked to a twentieth-century man named Leibowitz, a figure who is about to be canonized by the order. Among these artifacts are mere garbaged materials, bits of paper, which soon become material traces of the past and its culture.

As Brother Francis stumbles onto the shelter, buried in the desert near his monastery, the narrator notes “[t]he place seemed haunted by the presences of another age” (23) and “might well be teeming with rich relics of an age which the world had, for the most part, deliberately chosen to forget” (23). The shelter thus is marked by the time

of the world before the nuclear holocaust, and is shown as a threshold space into the past. Any artefact from the pre-deluge era—a time before the nuclear war that destroyed the planet—is ascribed historical value by the order, which has established a museum of memorabilia, an archive, of pre-deluge specimens. Coming across a “rusty box” (26), Brother Francis is excited it “might contain a scrap or two of information for the Memorabilia” (26). Inside he finds strange and enigmatic things: papers and “scattered tidbits” (27), “small tubular things with a wire whisker at each end of the tube” (27). The museum has not identified these latter objects, which we know as transistors, but displays them nonetheless, “connected together...as a complex and rather disorderly maze in the bottom of a small metal box, exhibited as: ‘Radio Chassis: Application Uncertain’” (27). While the uses of these artifacts and objects are unknown, the order assumes that these ancient objects must have had uses and purposes in ancient times; the leftover relics of a culture that has been destroyed are valued for their historicity, and serve the archival purpose of referring back to the civilization that had produced them.

Even Leibowitz’s shopping list, an object of cultural ephemera, assumes material importance, regardless of its textual meaning (which is indecipherable to the monks and cultures of the future). While the paper simply reads, “[p]ound pastrami...can kraut, six bagels—bring home for Emma” (29), the fact that it has not been disposed of—by the culture that produced it, by the deluge itself—gives what is essentially a piece of garbage a new power and significance. Moreover, that its content refers to consumer plans and consumer products identifies—to the reader and not the characters in the narrative—the culture of the past as a consumer culture of disposability, a dramatic irony which implicates the culture’s ideological framework in the deluge itself. It is of course meant

to be comical that Leibowitz's shopping (or to-do) list is taken as religious scripture; but the implication here is also that the kinds of attitudes associated with 1950s and 1960s consumer culture have found a way to persist into the future. Indeed, the shelter is also responsible for preserving the technologies that made nuclear destruction possible, and, inadvertently, introduce them to the burgeoning and modernizing societies of the future, still developing after the nuclear war centuries earlier that set the planet back to a pseudo-medievalism. Brother Francis retrieves a "diagram of white lines on dark paper" from the shelter, which he figures is "clearly a blue-print!" (29). An ancient blue-print, the representation of technological spaces or structures, is significant because it becomes a point of reference *and* departure for the earth's future society, like the fallout shelter space itself—the fallout shelter's archive in fact leads to the restaging of nuclear destruction centuries later at novel's end. The double-bind of Miller's assessment of nuclear war and the cultural impulse to preserve is such that the society that has made itself capable of total destruction has also made itself capable of preserving an archive beyond its own self-destruction, but it is an archive that contains the seeds to destroy itself. It is, thus, a cycle predicated on waste: that which is left behind after processes of consumption has the frightening potential to consume the culture that has produced it.

Perhaps, then, the recognition of waste materials becomes, for the nuclear subject, an unconscious confrontation with nuclear apocalypse, a material metonym of this scenario. Or, perhaps it is more complicated than this. In speculating that a culture capable of nuclear annihilation can indeed leave remainders even centuries into the future, *A Canticle For Leibowitz* implies that a Cold War culture obsessed with consumption, puts a certain nuclear purchase on waste materials, and ultimately evinces

an ambivalent attitude towards waste: the thought of turning society to garbage with the push of a button is at once disturbing (the loss of civilization as we know it) *and* comforting (something *will* persist). John Scanlan writes that waste materials are horror-inducing “because of the presumed harmful effects it has on the bodies of personal and social order, indicating their fragile and transient nature” (Scanlan 36), symbolic ultimately of our own mortality; and yet faced with the possibility of consuming itself, a culture optimistic that it might somehow reestablish itself in a post-nuclear world finds hope in the notion of cultural remainders. As a spatial attempt at remaining, and as a site of archival potential, the fallout shelter embodies these contradictory cultural fears and aspirations, and links them with waste. Moreover, while the fallout shelter produces new ways of looking at garbage, its ultimate critique of consumer culture is its function as a spatial threshold between a modern, consumer society of convenience and disposability, and a post-nuclear future this culture has engendered, which can only be a wasteland littered with the trashed and garbaged remainders of its own cultural production.

2.4 Wasted and Recycled

In 1994, Tim Howey of Fort Wayne Indiana donated a full-sized fallout shelter to The Smithsonian National Museum of American History, Kenneth E. Behring Center. Installed in 1955 and updated in 1961 during the heightened period of the Berlin Crisis, Howey’s shelter, which came with the property when he purchased the home, was a typical backyard style, submerged fifteen feet into the ground. After the Cold War had ended in the early 1990s, Howey was sure he was “sitting on a piece of history” (Bird Jr. 52) and decided, he tells us, “[t]he only thing to do...was to cover it up or get rid of it”

(qtd. in Bird Jr. 52). In other words, the shelter had become useless, a quaint artefact of a bygone era—a piece of waste itself. That he donated the shelter to a museum is ironic considering the shelter's function in science fiction literature as a kind of archive of consumer culture. In fact, the fallout shelter space, now inside the museum, is set up as a kind of museum itself. An article on Howey's donation reveals that the fallout shelter was refurbished with "1960s board games, canned goods, sleeping bags and water purification tablets" (52). I see in the photograph accompanying the article even more: books, Dixie cups, a chemical toilet (with privacy curtain), magazines, blankets, a table, a flashlight, boxes, a radio, Ajax cleanser, a macaroni dinner, water, boxed goods—and even a garbage can. While the exhibit may be attempting to expose the droll innocence of the shelter concept, the shelter is presented as a space of consumption, domesticity, and material abundance.

Since nuclear war never came, and fallout shelters were never used in real life situations, they themselves became wasted cultural artefacts. After the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962 and the "sudden fading of the nuclear-weapons" (Boyer 824) from the popular imagination, fallout shelters and fallout protection issues fell into the background. The potential for domestic (household) Cold War simulations to evolve into daily material practices in times of non-crisis disappeared; as shelters did not become operational, their critiques of disposable culture remained unarticulated. Instead, fallout shelters went from being status symbols of protection and civil defense, to quaint artefacts from the Cold War era, campy remainders of the age of anxiety and paranoia as naïve as the duck and cover drills of the period (at least from a twenty-first century perspective). Robert Ruark, commenting on the fate of the fallout shelter, observed as

early as the fall of 1962 that “whiskey once again replaced the iron rations on the fallout shelter shelves. Junior parked his busted bicycle in the first-aid room which rapidly became overstuffed with sister’s decapitated doll babies.” (qtd. in Rose 136). Gradually, the home reintegrated fallout shelter space, reducing its duality to a singular use—consumption.

But that was not all for the fallout shelter. There was in fact a resurgence of the space’s popularity as the turning of the millennium approached near the end of the 1990s. The so-called Y2K crisis prompted a widespread return to the modes of survivalism not seen since the mid 1980s when the Cold War entered a heightened period of tensions between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. After Y2K, the events in New York on September 11, 2001 brought back a new Cold War rhetoric and terminology adapted to post-911 anxieties about terror, and accelerated the resurgence in nuclear preparedness. As a result, the fallout shelter went from being kitsch to serious, camp to operational. The same discourses of anxiety and consumption were also intensified during this period, as many commentators noted; some even figured the climate as a restaging of the early Cold War, comparing it to the McCarthy-era paranoia of the 1950s.¹³⁴ Shelter advocacy even continues to this day as the so-called *economic meltdown* legitimized the anxieties of a society on the brink of collapse. The nuclear metaphors are not accidental (the *fallout* from the *meltdown*) and are meant to call upon the Cold War discourses of nuclear preparedness. As fallout shelters remain viable options for global and international conflict, they act as persistent cultural signifiers, reminders that Cold War paradigms remain in our current era of post-911 globalism.

CHAPTER THREE

CHARLES FENNO JACOBS AND PHILIP K. DICK:

THE PHOTOGRAPHIC AND LITERARY *WASTE GAZE***3.1 *Unscenery***

There is an interesting photograph in the *Life* magazine archives of a postwar American urban landscape in Elizabeth, Union, New Jersey circa 1950, that depicts a small town, main street, commercial district scene—a locksmith shop is prominent in the left foreground, cars are parked in front of it, and a group of individuals can be seen approaching from the photograph's vanishing point where the street disappears. Because it is so typical in its depiction of the town center, we might even say that this particular photograph stands in as a representation of *the* American postwar landscape. If this is the case, the other focal points in this picture are also significant. Notably, two empty trash can receptacles stand at the picture's left, open-lidded, ready to receive discarded objects or tossed-away refuse; and yet despite the cans' obvious social role as a receptacle for most kinds of public trash, piles of litter take up large portions of pedestrian walking space, strewn out on the pavement sidewalk in front of the stores and entranceways. While these littered materials will undoubtedly move about, either by human hand or natural forces, they have here been frozen in time, stilled by the photograph. Capturing this contrast between the trash cans' openness to receive waste materials, including and especially those heaps of paper litter present in the photograph, the image hinges upon a narrative evident in its *mis-en-scène*: the individuals who have jettisoned these paperish waste materials—who have also, we can assume, long since departed—have made the

choice to litter in this public space instead of placing their refuse in these two trash cans. As it foregrounds the relationship between these empty cans and the littered materials upon the ground, the picture reflects a growing problem with inner-city trash, as urban landscapes littered with garbage represented an increasing ghettoization of these spaces. At the same time, it tells a curious story about attitudes toward personal waste management and the visibility of public litter on the postwar urban landscape.

The photographer responsible for this photograph is Dutch-American photojournalist Charles Fenno Jacobs. Known mostly in academic circles for either his large and small scale portraits of World War II industrial factories and machinery,¹³⁵ or his depiction of a Japanese soldier bathing on the deck of an American aircraft carrier,¹³⁶ Jacobs has been virtually forgotten as an important documenter of everyday postwar American landscapes. Regularly appearing in *Fortune* and *Life* magazines from the 1930s to the late 1950s, his photos provide stunning and candid glimpses of urban and suburban Americana, which often identify startling relationships between industry, consumer, and landscape. As evidenced by “Route 1 running past trash littered street with Locksmith shop prominent in foreground” (1950), Jacobs displays a prescient interest in waste materials by making them a prominent and recurring motif in his oeuvre, for the majority of his catalogue of photographs was taken and published before the emergence of the environmental movement in the 1960s.¹³⁷ Many of Jacobs’ photographs were even taken before the emergence of *Keep America Beautiful*, a national group of industry professionals formed in 1953 to combat, as one of its own commercials deems it, “America’s litter problem” (“Every Litter”).

In this chapter, I reveal how Jacobs' photographs represent in picture the emergent waste consciousness my project seeks to locate in popular American culture, for they employ, embody, and promote what I call a postwar *waste gaze*, a way of seeing which accepts the presence of waste in marginal and eccentric places. At the same time, this critical gaze acknowledges the implications of waste's futurity by recognizing its indelible material relationship to its surroundings. Because the presence of waste on the postwar American landscape was first identified and framed as a *visual* problem¹³⁸ (and not an ecological one) with the introduction of *Keep America Beautiful*, I turn to the photographic archive and photography as a mode of representation in order to assess the visibility of waste: photographic records of the postwar period are a valuable resource from which to reconstruct the field of postwar vision in relation to the landscape and its material existence.¹³⁹

Seeing waste in the Janusian terms of, on the one hand, industry's conceptualization of disposable products as somewhat immaterial because of their disposability—the illusion that, as Greg Kennedy puts it, “when consumed, disposable items are supposed to vanish” (Kennedy 154)—and, on the other, the evident and extensive accumulation of masses of litter, citizens of the 1950s saw waste as ghostly materials existing somewhere between absence and presence.¹⁴⁰ This dual perspective on waste materials figures trash as part of what we might call an *unscenery*: while waste was certainly visible to the Cold War subject, it neither registered as a concern nor provoked any action.¹⁴¹ With such a confused response to public litter, we can turn to Sianne Ngai's formulation of an affect she calls the “stuplime” (Ngai 277), a kind of emotional or affective paralysis prompted when one experiences both “shock and exhaustion” (271)

simultaneously, a kind of “tension that holds opposing affects together” (271).¹⁴² This concept should be brought to bear on public litter because the “indeterminate affective state that lacks the punctuating ‘point’ of an individual emotion” (284), a kind of “neutral” (284) and thus stupefying openness, encapsulates the response I am trying to articulate with regard to waste’s unscenery: one is perhaps shocked to notice the disarray of public spaces, but litter’s utter tedium—it consists of countless fragments of the random and disparate articles we have no use for—can bog one down in its sheer profusion. Even with the organizing power of K.A.B., how could society, let alone an individual, ever begin to take care of such messes? As a photojournalist whose objects of study were suburban and urban settings, Jacobs views the landscape not as a disinterested pedestrian, but as a documentarian, and one who is willing to acknowledge the proliferation of trash as an important aspect of the American Cold War landscape and incorporate it into his images. Freezing these landscapes for his viewer, he provides them an opportunity to move beyond the mire of litter, for the photographs present these materials to their spectators as an identifiable phenomenon, while at the same time they give waste a sense of permanence its ephemeral and transient nature does not usually afford it. Jacobs’ waste gaze thus focuses our attention on the build-up of public litter, and implicates it in future American landscapes.

But what kind of landscapes could someone in the 1950s reasonably expect in the future? At the same time that Jacobs was taking photos of public waste, science fiction author Philip K. Dick was speculating on garbage’s relation to future American landscapes. Taking up Jacobs’ insistence upon the futurity and materiality of waste evident in his photographs (taking up the concept and not necessarily Jacobs’

photographs specifically), Dick provides critical glimpses at the long-term topographical effects of waste's existence in public spaces. Implicating the American production cycles of planned obsolescence in a future-historical trajectory in which waste must eventually (indeed inevitably) consume human society, he figures modern garbage as a self-replicating mass of junked materials in many of his novels, what he calls *kipple* in his novel *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (1968). As Dick's anxieties about posthumanism¹⁴³ are grounded in his anxieties about waste, and vice versa, a merging of the human body with technology becomes, within Dick's matrices of representation, essentially, a merging of the human body with garbage, for waste is shown to occupy the ground between, and police the boundaries of, nature and culture, human and environment, consumer and landscape, the present and the future. Thus, as the worlds of the future are littered with waste and junk, the landscape comes to symbolize not only an ecological crisis—the *junking* of human society—but also the junking of the (post)human body.

While the pairing of an establishment photojournalist and a science fiction author may seem an unlikely approach, I find it productive to consider their differing (and similar) approaches to litter and the landscape. In photographing trash as he does, confronting the viewer with the unseen and unrecognized detritus of modern America, Jacobs exposes not only the materials themselves, but the ideologies at work which attempt to keep these materials hidden. Capturing litter in place as phenomena “having-been-there” (Barthes 44) but also having been ignored, Jacobs implicates not only the ways the physical landscape has been affected by disposable attitudes, but the ways these attitudes have been conditioned by the psychological landscape of the Cold War period.

Thus, the power of his photographs, as documents of the accumulation of public waste, stems from, and forms, what might be deemed an aesthetics of ecology—a compositional logic which highlights conceptually the interrelation of human beings and their environment. Similarly, as Dick transposes public waste into the space of his speculative fictions, he also reasserts waste’s materiality by foregrounding its ubiquity in future landscapes while rooting it within a Cold War ideological framework. The burgeoning Cold War electronics industry and the changing material make-up of disposable products—consisting of petrochemical plastics such as Polyethylene, polyurethane, polypropylene, and Styrofoam, for example—initiate an entropic timeline in Dick’s fiction which is structured upon the philosophy that everything must and will turn to garbage. As a consequence, not just the environment but the human body has become vulnerable to new ecological threats. Ultimately, in comparing visual culture’s representations of the American Cold War landscape with those of contemporaneous fiction, I trace the emergence of public litter as a trope not only in literature and photography, but American postwar culture as well.

3.2 Keeping America Beautiful

In Philip K. Dick’s *Time Out of Joint* (1959), the emotional climax of the novel involves the protagonist’s recognition of and subsequent disregard for a pile of public litter. On a future earth of 1997, the American government has created a simulation of an American suburban village evocative of the American 1950s to exploit the pattern-discerning talents of main character Ragle Gumm, a former American code-breaker. The narrative follows the brainwashed Gumm as he unravels the simulation and eventually

becomes fully aware of the falsity of the last few years of his life. Newly re-integrated into the future world of the 1990s, Gumm begins to collate and re-cognize a flooding of memories from his childhood in the real America of the 1950's, the "Golden Age" (Dick, *Time* 248) of American life according to the narrator (though Dick does not employ this phrase without irony). Interestingly, the childhood experience which stands out as his favourite involves a routine Saturday afternoon trip with his parents to their hometown supermarket. A child still excited by modernity's American sheen, Ragle's vision explodes with information: he recalls, through the narrator's free indirect discourse, that his childhood self is "still wondering, still seeing everything, unwilling to let it all go by him" (248). The first thing his innocent eyes apprehend lies "[i]n the corner of the parking lot" and is described as "heaps of colourful paper that had blown there, wrappers and cartons and paper bags" (248). The narrator tells us further of his memory, "[h]is mind made out the patterns, the cigarette packages crumpled up, the lids to milkshake cartons" (248). While the scene is supposed to mark Ragle out as being gifted in his discerning of patterns at an early age (getting useable data from flows of visual information), here the specific pieces of garbage—their contours, identities as former products and product packages, their differentiated formal beginnings and ends in what is, from a distance, an indistinguishable mass of objects—also speak to Cold War structures of visibility with respect to public garbage and waste. Dick's scene here suggests that despite the Cold War ideological imperatives of order—social, political, economic—and containment culture's aversion to ambiguous signs,¹⁴⁴ waste, a material symbolic of disorder and ambiguity, assumes a peculiar kind of cultural role.

The garbage in Gumm's parking lot consists, notably, of containers of consumable products, former material vessels made mostly of paper products. As such, they are provocative visual remainders of Cold War consumption, settled in this space according to random patterns of weather, disposal, and chance. As if to re-establish this mass of garbage's status *as* garbage, as *waste*, young Gumm notices that "in the debris lay something of value. A dollar bill, folded. It had blown there with the rest" (248). "[S]ort[ing] it out" (249) of the garbage mass, Gumm plucks the paper product of value from out of the waste materials, leaving the latter to remain part of the tar-macked landscape. Allowing him to keep the dollar bill, his father points out they would "[n]ever be able to locate the owner" (249), displaying a wholesome propriety fit for an episode of *Leave it to Beaver*; but the members of Ragle's family are not moved to action, reaction, or discussion regarding the waste materials which dominate the space and from which the money has been withdrawn. Though the notion of ownership has been invoked in the name of the dollar bill, such contemplation does not involve a claim on these waste materials. That the garbage does not provoke shock, disgust, or any reaction except a stuplime dismissal, is emphasized by the discovery and care of the dollar bill: in contrast with paper garbage, paper of symbolic value does not belong to the detritus of society, for it retains an exchange-value and is therefore separated from the landscape. The waste materials on the other hand, while noted, examined, and negotiated as objects in the random noise of landscape ephemera by young Gumm, are once again relegated to the status of background phenomena, and assume the position of un-owned, unvalued material.

In his later novel *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (1968), published almost a decade after *Time Out of Joint*, Dick figures modern garbage not as a simple background phenomena, but a full-fledged, landscape-dominating, self-replicating mass of used up materials. The future earth in the novel of 1992 has been ravaged by the radioactive fallout of “World War Terminus” (Dick *Androids* 12), an obvious Cold War parable, and its landscape is not only ecologically decimated by the after-effects of the nuclear war but blanketed by junk and trash. He calls this muck of exponentially-growing trash “kipple” (17) and makes it a major thematic motif. Kipple is described throughout the novel in different ways, but it consists of “useless objects, like junk mail or match folders after you use the last match or gum wrappers or yesterday’s homeopape” (57), or common, everyday items, which turn to garbage and accumulate with a viral rapidity. Kippled materials are said to almost spontaneously erupt in this future environment because the concept is a parody of the ways products, objects, and things so quickly become useless and valueless within a disposable culture or a paradigm of planned obsolescence. Indeed, the satire of kipple if one is to be found is that kippled garbage does not even have to wait for an individual to determine whether an object is useful or useless; instead, kipple is an active agent of entropy. The “First Law of Kipple” (57), for instance, is that kipple “drives out nonkipple” (57). It does so by contaminating any useful objects around it and turning them into garbage: “[w]hen nobody’s around, kipple reproduces itself. For instance, if you go to bed leaving any kipple around your apartment, when you wake up the next morning, there’s twice as much of it. It always gets more and more” (57). Kipple can and does in the novel sweep through spaces converting once-useful materials into useless garbage. With such a vision of a future,

Gumm's quaint memory in *Time Out of Joint* is transformed into a nightmarish vision of a future society mired in its own waste.

Where did this trash-inspired, entropic vision of future America originate? In 1953, fifteen years before *Androids* (and four decades before the future landscape of the novel's 1992), a significant number of American "corporate and civic leaders" ("Keep America") had begun to centralize a new discourse of vigilance surrounding the kinds of public waste addressed in Ragle Gumm's (and Dick's) flashback by founding the organization *Keep America Beautiful*.¹⁴⁵ While their agenda currently includes the sustainable practices of waste reduction and recycling—they are still active in the first decades of the twenty-first century¹⁴⁶—the organization first coalesced around the twin mandates of "bringing the public and private sectors together to develop and promote a national cleanliness ethic" ("Keep America"), and raising public awareness with regards to what it deemed a glut of litter and trash in American public spaces. Their primary target was America's new highway system, whose "[b]road and scenic expanses...ha[d] become trails of discarded paper, beer cans and soft-drink bottles" (Stengren 31), according to a *New York Times* article of 1954. Soon after its inception, K.A.B. also considered the ways that waste's unpleasant and disagreeable presence visibly defiled the spaces of American consumerism (public shopping areas), leisure (parks, forests, and beaches), and inner-city transit (streets and walkways). As public trash would not become an environmental issue until the next decade,¹⁴⁷ from K.A.B.'s earliest perspective litter was, at root, an *aesthetic* problem: it worked to obstruct the appearance of order, cleanliness, and (cultural *and* natural) beauty. Ragle Gumm in Dick's novel embodies

precisely the attitude towards public garbage K.A.B. worked to discourage—disinterest and dismissal, marked by a kind of curious blindness to waste’s presence and materiality.

While K.A.B. was generally praised for its concern,¹⁴⁸ some commentators soon recognized that behind its public rallying for American scenic purity, their formation in fact represented a pre-emptive move on the part of the production industry to disassociate itself from the escalating heaps of accumulated public litter. A *New York Times* article of 1955, just over a year after K.A.B. was formed, rightly suggested that “[r]oadside trash is, of course, bad advertising for the products whose names appear on the discarded wrappings” (Grutzner 22): discarded cigarette packages and soda pop lids like those involved in Gumm’s encounter in the parking lot can become emblems of a collective industrial attitude of public negligence and American wastefulness and overproduction. Industry officials were astute in recognizing that products in their trashed and garbaged forms could enable, as Julian Stallabrass would argue fifty years later,¹⁴⁹ myriad critiques of the modes and motives of materialism and the culture industry at large. Thus, to account for the tons of trash and litter that had accumulated in American public spaces during the decade since the end of the Second World War, K.A.B. foisted the responsibility for public cleanliness on the major participants in postwar affluence: the American consumer. As part of their strategy, K.A.B. created the deviant figure of the *litterbug*, a catch-all, derogatory term for any careless individual uninterested in the effects of discarding their refuse in public spaces. A play on *jitterbug*, the rapid and flailing swing dance from previous decades (or one who engages in these dances), the term invoked images of individuals tossing waste and garbage here and there in animated, dance-like motions.

Framing the litterbug as a derelict citizen, one who thoughtlessly discarded material according to their own whims, K.A.B. pointed to the American consumer as both the source of and solution to the litter problem. In doing so, K.A.B. reasserted the modernist separation of nature and culture by figuring the American landscape as a passive recipient of the effects of human agency.¹⁵⁰ Aestheticizing the various American landscapes—urban, rural, suburban—and *deaestheticizing* waste materials, K.A.B. made waste an undesirable and unwanted material from a purely spatial and visual context. Calling waste out from the landscape in this manner had the effect of eliding its ecological role, deeming it, erroneously, a material outside any dynamic or effectual relationship with its surroundings. In insisting that waste proliferated and existed *in* public spaces, K.A.B. attempted to assert what Alan Nadel calls a “nuclear gaze” (Nadel 24) where waste was concerned, a way of seeing centered around hegemonic readings of cultural signs designed to meet the approval of the Cold War consensus whereby ambiguous cultural or social meanings—ambiguities of sexual orientation, political persuasion, or moral opinion were a threat to the image of the American nation as a consolidated, and unified state—were neutralized by discursive emphasis in American media on harsh and strict binaries. As the nuclear gaze worked to contain proliferation—ideas, phenomena, opposition to American liberal capitalist paradigms—waste emerged as the very symbol of proliferation, accumulating in massive volumes in public and open areas.

Since public litter was framed as a visual problem, I want to turn to the photographic archive in order to reconstruct the Cold War landscape from a visual perspective. In particular, the photographs of Dutch-American photojournalist Charles

Fenno Jacobs, which document the American postwar experience by representing its various urban and suburban landscapes, will help us contextualize the visibility of public waste (or what I will suggest is its curious *invisibility*). Such a turn, I believe, is crucial to our understanding of the ways public waste was conceptualized during the period.

While he is now known mostly for his work as part of Edward Steichen's Naval Aviation Photographic Unit active during the Second World War, Jacobs spent the immediate postwar period documenting for *Fortune* Magazine European reconstruction.¹⁵¹ In Germany, Italy, and other recovering nations, Jacobs captured with his lens some of the ruinous aspects of postwar urban settings and emphasized the perseverance of the European peoples through the ongoing continuance of their daily activities. Returning from his European sojourn in the late 1940s, Jacobs continued his tenure at *Fortune* and over the next decade would document the American side of postwar experience, most notably by providing photographs of the impressive spaces of American industry for the magazine. Yet while his photographs of industrial plants, factory floors, urban settings, suburban picturesques, highway scenes, city slums, and even refuse disposal sites—published (somewhat surprisingly) in magazines like *Life* and *Fortune*—perfectly illustrate the presence of industry on the American landscape, they also engage in a critique of industrial ecologies by foregrounding the presence of waste in the backgrounds, recesses, and corners of his *mis-en-scènes*. Though his body of work has not been approached within an ecocritical context,¹⁵² his photographs provide a wealth of images of postwar public litter and trash, and numerous insights into the ways waste functioned as part of the postwar American landscape.

One possible problem with this line of research and the type of documentation it is founded upon is that litter, in then being considered largely an aesthetic problem, may have been marginalized by the postwar pictorial impulse, excised from photographic representations of urban landscapes as they were in the discourses of Cold War consensus and normality.¹⁵³ As a case study, I have chosen Jacobs precisely because much of his body of published work is premised on the very issue of waste's marginalized and semi-visual status in American Cold War culture. In fact, Jacobs' insistence on documenting the junked and littered American landscapes embodies what I call a *waste gaze*, a way of seeing that does not ignore waste, but instead understands litter's complicated and symbolic entanglement with the landscape. Trash does not for the most part take center stage in his American postwar photographs (though there are important exceptions I will discuss) because in order to represent waste's ecological role as industrial by-product, it is crucial to depict waste as a material that was integrated with the landscape it occupied—present and apparent but not the focus of attention.

In small-scale cityscape photographs like “Quaint street in Weehawken with deli occupying first floor of building near entrance to Lincoln Tunnel (not visible)” and “Workers brick-facing house on Emma Street,” for example, Jacobs's iris stands in for both the eye of the average American citizen, knowledgeable of but disinterested in public waste, while simultaneously directing a critical eye towards the increasing and overwhelming presence of waste on the American landscape. These neighbourhood shots of Weehawken, a Township of New Jersey, and Elizabeth, a city in Union County, New Jersey, epitomize typical, small-town postwar Americana, and the relationship illustrated between waste and space embodied here is, first, indicative of waste's ubiquity in open

areas. The collections and deposits of white, papery waste materials along the fence-lines featured in both photographs argue litter proliferates in Cold War America, as thrown-away debris clutters up spaces of labour, transport, and leisure, but does not threaten to become a focal point of any scenic field of vision. As such, trash occupies a precarious relationship to the landscape—it is distinguishable from the buildings, green spaces, and concrete areas of transport, but also entangled in the spatial fabrics of these areas. Waste in both photographs occupies liminal areas, niches of connection and division between properties, as these random papers and packaging having apparently been caught by the fenced boundaries of land divisions, pushed there by the winds or casually cast off by passing consumers. Occupying these divisionary spaces of property and the abandoned or disowned spaces between properties, waste assumes a marginalized position in the photographs; and yet, these materials are quite visible to the passerby as much as the viewer of the photograph. Waste thus becomes the very symbol of ambiguity, policing the boundaries between public ownership and private responsibility, between public and private spaces—between seen and not seen. What these images show is how much waste materials had become an accepted part of the landscape. The critical capacity of Jacobs' photographs thus relies almost solely upon his use of framing, a technique which emphasizes speculations about what might be just beyond the borders of the frame.

While the photographic medium had early in its infancy been praised for its ability to capture things as they were—John Szarkowski reminds us “[t]he nineteenth century believed—as perhaps at bottom we still believe—that the photograph did not lie” (Szarkowski *Photographer* 3)—photographs have since been conceptualized by critics like John Berger and Roland Barthes in ways which acknowledge their cultural and

historical constructedness.¹⁵⁴ But even the notion of a landscape—outside of its relation to the photographic medium—“is a construct” (Jussim xiv). Jussim and Lindquist-Cock define the concept of a landscape as such:

[i]t is our contention that landscape construed as the phenomenological world does not exist; landscape can only be symbolic. In this, we are sustained by most critics, who assert the symbolism of landscape, both as a *construct* of the ‘real’ world and an *artifact* communicating ideologies about it. As both construct and artifact, landscapes are so saturated with assigned meanings that it is probably impossible to exhaust them. (xiv)

The landscape as concept therefore is already informed by an ideological framework, even before it is photographed and framed. Crucially, their definition suggests that a landscape “encompasses both scenery and environment but is equivalent to neither” (xiv) and it is “by no means synonymous with *nature*, but it does include nature and offers a wide latitude of description and definition” (xiv). Thus, for Jussim and Lindquist-Cock the array of landscape photographs can include “stereographs, calendars, postcards, and all other formats where nature by itself, or in combination with human artifacts and the human presence, was used as the basis for picture making” (xiv). In photographs like “Weehawken” and “Emma Street” Jacobs self-consciously *scapes* the land through his framing techniques, forming its particular contours for presentation. In choosing what details to include (waste and litter) and what to omit by the positioning of his framing, Jacobs fixes on his objects of study to reveal the ways these landscapes have been increasingly infiltrated by waste and trash. In doing so, he situates himself as an intervener into the history of American landscape photography.

Traditionally, landscape photography followed painting in its interest in the natural landscape, pastoral and rural scenes, or vast picturesque. However, in contrast to European landscape art, which depicted these vistas as tamed by the hands of civilized men, early American landscape paintings and photographs represented a decidedly American figuration of the natural world as a vast, untamed wilderness.¹⁵⁵ Mostly “explorers, adventurers, technicians, and entrepreneurs” (Szarkowski *American* 6) and “not...educated as artists” (6), the first generation of photographic documenters of the American westward expansion like William Henry Jackson, Timothy O'Sullivan, William Bell, John Hillers, and Eadweard Muybridge, in fact played an important role in not only documenting the movement of the American frontier in its expansion Westward, but also in domesticating the landscape for the nation and the American people as well. Indeed, as the trek across the continent was fully underway, the photographic medium was coming of age as well, and the two phenomena mutually reinforced one another.¹⁵⁶ American landscape photography significantly helped American industry to convert these expansive spaces to units of spatial capital by circumscribing them within the bounds of photographic representation. William Henry Jackson's commission by the Union Pacific Railroad, for instance, involved his documentation of the American scenery along its routes, and his photographs amounted to a pictorial commodification of the American landscape. Following the networks of exchange and consumerism as they expanded throughout the nation, Jackson effectively demarcated the landscape for American national consumption in his photographs.

In fact, because the expansive plains of the North American continent had been colonized by the American photographic impulse, photographers like Edward Weston

began to fragment the vast natural and rural landscapes in the 1920s, taking close-up pictures of isolated portions of the landscape. Having tired of this approach to landscape as well, in the 1930s he revisited expansive landscapes, but this time within an urban or metropolitan context, capturing modern highways, transportation vistas, and other twentieth-century phenomena.¹⁵⁷ While these cityscapes were predominantly defined by their cultural dimensions, photographers like Weston suggested they were important landscapes indicative of the American and modern experience. Edward Steichen (Fenno Jacobs' colleague and mentor at *Fortune* during the Second World War), Clarence White, and Alvin Langdon Coburn also began to turn their camera lenses toward the emerging metropolitan and urban landscapes in the twentieth century precisely because the American natural landscape had “become instead a part of the known habit and syntax of art” (Szarkowski *American* 11)—naturalized, in other words, as decidedly American spaces. Jacobs too finds the American psychological landscape can be found not in the natural landscapes of the nineteenth-century photographs, but the urban and inner-city spaces.

This turn to the city centers is crucial not only to the history of American landscape photography, but Jacobs' place within it. Like these photographers, Jacobs too is not a visual art photographer, to make the same distinction Szarkowski makes, but a documentarian. In his documentary photographic engagement with the American landscape, Jacobs intervenes in the long history of American landscape photography, and specifically the history of documentary or expeditionary photography, by engaging the viewer in recognizing waste as a sign of industry and consumer interrelation with the environment. In doing so, he challenges the ways American landscape photographic

traditions have neglected waste materials. In fact, other American photographers contemporaneous with Jacobs in the journalistic sphere, and even in the art world, appear apprehensive or reluctant to bring garbage and litter into their photographs.¹⁵⁸ The depression-era imagery of Walker Evans' photos of small-town American societies, like "Gas Station Reedsville West Virginia 1936" or "Main Street in Pennsylvania Town 1935," for example, focus on social and economic deterioration (and admirable human perseverance in the face of such tribulation), but do not feature the urban arabesque present in Jacobs' photographs: the background landscapes of Evans' photos appear pristine and litter-free. Bernice Abbott's architectural studies of urban landscapes, like "El at Columbus Avenue and Broadway 1935-39" and "William Goldberg - 1935-39," depict similarly clean and dusted streets and walkways, even in the center of America's consumer district. Another photographer of the Great Depression, Dorothea Lange, shot landscape photographs in the 1930s, but they are also lacking in waste materials. In addition, Harry Callahan's formalistic and minimalist portraits and landscape photos (Chicago's urban center of the 50s and Providence of the 1960s for example) are also bereft of litter, trash and waste materials. All of these photographers seem to adhere to classical American landscape standards by keeping their images waste-free. Jacobs' photographs provide ecological critiques of urban American spaces by revealing the fraught and complicated relationship between postwar citizens and their urban and suburban environments, and specifically within a Cold War climate, where military industrial forces were mobilizing spaces of production, consumption, and leisure, and littering them with their trashed remainders.¹⁵⁹

3.3 Industry, Consumer, Litter

While it is true that in the Jacobs photographs we have looked at so far waste materials and public litter might simply *be there*, present, unnoticed by Jacobs as he took photographs of urban scenes (in other words just part of the landscape), it could also be argued that these waste materials were an integral part of his decision to represent these specific views of these specific landscapes. Though I read Jacobs' photographs as directly and intentionally commenting on the presence of these waste materials in his photographs, *both* possibilities suggest waste has the same important function in the figuring of the landscape: trash and litter are there, present, and visible in either case. Moreover, this (potential) impasse in terms of waste's role in the composition of these photographs, perfectly reflects the structure of seeing employed by the postwar subject—waste is (either) recognized (or) and ignored as merely being part of the scenery. It is, thus, precisely photography's cultural constructedness that allows us to read these photographs as representatives of an emergent waste gaze.

In representing waste's accumulated existence within a public domain, Jacobs restages a limited engagement with waste, for the boundaries of photographic representation prevent any magazine viewer from potentially picking up the trash: because one cannot of course enter the photograph to engage directly with the scene and can only experience its *re*-presentation, Jacobs' images stress the visual aspect of waste and highlight the ways its materiality is often overlooked. As John Szarkowski notes, there are many different facets of the concept of *landscape*: aside from referring to the material geographies of the actual world, it is often used metaphorically and can be interchanged with "culture, overview, geography, or prospect" (Szarkowski *American* 5).

Throughout this project for instance, I have been referring to not only the physical landscapes of the Cold War, and waste's lingering effects on it, but also the psychological landscape of the Cold War. I want to suggest that in *scaping* the physical landscape as he does, Jacobs also hopes his photographs can alter the psychological landscape of Cold War America, or, more accurately, the psychology of waste at work during the Cold War period.

Waste theorists arguing from a psychoanalytic foundation have made the obvious connection between the human need to separate waste materials from our physical spaces, our bodies, and our sight—on the whole, our very psychological conceptualizations of ourselves—in suggesting that waste's place in the social imaginary—both physical and mental—is structured upon repression. John Scanlan, for example, argues that since waste is a physical manifestation of the uncanny (discarded by but inseparable from human action) we intuitively repress our production, handling, and dispersal of waste materials.¹⁶⁰ Within a paradigm of disposable culture, waste becomes simply a thing disposed, a mass of objects we have jettisoned from our bodies, generally removed from our concern and our consciousness. Gay Hawkins, in contrast, argues that psychoanalytic theories of waste reduce it to a phobia at the expense of its materiality and its (potential) ethical role in identity construction; waste provokes us, moves us to make decisions, choices, and movements that can serve as self-defining actions.¹⁶¹ Hawkins' insistence on the provocative nature of waste materials and Scanlan's recourse to Freudian repression have thus put the act of cognizing public waste materials at two opposite (and irreconcilable) extremes—either we make waste invisible and escape its effects on our psyches, or we actively encounter waste because we allow it to provoke us.

It is, Hawkins argues, a choice: we can actively engage with waste and confront the ethical and ecological implications of our psychology of disposal, or we continue to ignore it. Unfortunately, while Hawkins insists that waste makes a claim on us, public litter is more often than not routinely ignored precisely because we do not recognize it as provocation. Or, if we do see it, we *choose* to ignore it and acknowledge it as an unavoidable component of the public spatial fabrics we navigate on a daily basis (as evidenced in these two Jacobs photos). At the same time, for Scanlan to emphasize the ways waste is generally repressed by our culture, it is clear that waste is seen, encountered, and recognized, as Jacobs reminds us, as part of our material landscapes.

That my objections to both of these polarized views of public waste argue the same point—that litter is an unavoidable and yet easily ignored part of the American landscape—invokes the very duality of public waste I am trying to articulate that defines its ambivalent structure of visibility, as exemplified in Ragle Gumm's simultaneous recognition and dismissal of the littered materials in his childhood parking lot. To counter such a perspective on public litter, Fenno Jacobs' central and perhaps implicit thesis, evident here in these two photographs and constant throughout his body of work, seems to be that litter takes place by invading the marginal and eccentric spaces of urban landscapes, while occupying a similar space in the mind of the postwar consumer. As the American social and cultural paradigm of a disposable lifestyle and the industry paradigm of planned obsolescence condition the psychological landscape of the American environment, it also leaves its mark on the physical landscape. These photos attempt to show that while garbage is relegated to the corners of our consciousness, it is also relegated to the niches of spaces *between* spaces in our physical environment. Here, it is

easy to notice, and yet just as easy to pass by. In these no-man's-lands, waste, we might say, is *unscenic*, a material whose *site* and *sight* are not necessarily overlapping and mutually reinforcing phenomena. The active aesthetic revitalization of the neighbourhood taking place in the second photograph for instance—the workers repairing the façade of the housing—provides a stark and telling contrast between the need to refurbish the building and the lingering trash below, between the solidity of the brick and the ephemeral papers on the ground. In such moments, Jacobs' photographs mirror the tension between a recognition of waste and a perceived apathy toward it.

In direct contrast with Jacobs' subtle depictions of litter in these two photographs, *Keep America Beautiful* instead used a strategy of exaggeration. K.A.B.'s 1963 commercial, "Every Litter Bit Hurts" for example, depicts typical American scenes of the beach, the park, and small-town suburban areas as being overrun by litter in such a way that I simply cannot accept their depiction of these areas as being fully accurate—the commercial evinces such a marked exaggeration of littered materials in comparison with Jacobs' photographs that these landscapes appear to have been staged with litter props, simulated through a kipple-like blanketing of the areas with trash before the film was shot. As the narrator says, "[y]ou can hardly see the forest for the trash" ("Litter Bit") as garbage encroaches on natural and cultural spaces "bit, by bit, by *litter* bit" ("Litter Bit"). To stress citizen responsibility, the commercial makes it abundantly clear that "America's litter problem" ("Litter Bit") is an epidemic, and can only be contained with the active participation of consumers in cleaning it up. Litter quite simply "is in your hands," says the narrator to the American public, and his or her job is to "stash every bit of trash" ("Litter Bit"). As the images and narration mutually reinforce the notion of crisis, K.A.B.

frames garbage as materials which are out of place and only in need of the hand of the American consumer to send them on their way to the landfills and dumpsites across the nation.

Jacobs' photographs, in contrast, invoke the proliferation of waste to challenge K.A.B.'s insistence on conceptualizing litter as merely existing overtop of the physical landscape, for such a framework for understanding public waste denies the presence of the networks of circulation in which litter is embedded—namely, the interrelated movements of products, materials, and by-products circulated between industrial production, commercial exchange, and consumer consumption. A reference to the deli and the Lincoln Tunnel in the caption of “Weehawken” implicates both production and consumption with the trash that exists behind the fence—it argues that consumables when sold are packaged in materials that have to be discarded. Moreover, the tunnel that connects Weehawken to Manhattan, under the Hudson River, links the space in the photograph (Weehawken) with the economic and advertising center of America—while Manhattan is not visible in the photograph, like the tunnel that links these two spaces, its symbolic presence informs and haunts the scene, and the trash, nonetheless.

While the classical modernist photographers saw the natural landscape as “a lumber room of universal form” (Szarkowski *American* 13),¹⁶² Jacobs aimed to reveal the ways the American landscape had instead become merely a natural warehouse of resources—not a lumber room, but mere lumber—tamed, domesticated, and abused by American industry. In his photograph titled “Sign reading Jersey City: Everything for Industry on the side of a street and garbage and abandoned vehicle in foreground,” for example, waste does not merely exist within the interstices of spatial organizations, but takes center stage to

become a visual focal point and material nexus of the forces in flux between industry and the environment. The 1954 photo-essay in *Fortune* magazine titled “A Landscape of Industry’s Leavings” offers a somewhat shocking indictment of industrial influence on urban, suburban and rural spaces of the American landscape for a magazine devoted to the dissemination of industry news and information. Improvising on Jacobs’ startling images, the author of the piece¹⁶³ describes the ways the Cold War-era American landscape—New Jersey in particular—is shaped and produced by American industry in a give-and-take relationship between consumer, producer, and landscaper. The composition of this photograph accordingly emphasizes the ecological implications of a stark contrast between the foregrounded refuse in a vacant lot—mulched paper packaging, paper cups, bags, unidentifiable slop, broken beams and wood, the front of an abandoned car—and the signs of business and industry which populate the site of a gas station. The most prominent sign, a municipal declaration, “This is Jersey City – Everything For Industry” provides Jacobs with his angle in its apparent and bitter irony in relationship to the wasted and trashed remainders of industry, which are rendered unmistakably in the photograph and central to the photograph’s concerns. “As the motorist emerges from the Holland Tunnel,” the accompanying *Fortune* caption tells its reader, the town has “put[] its worst foot forward...including evidence of what Industry has done to Jersey City” (“Landscape” 87); that “Free Road Maps and Tourgide [sic] Service[s]” are offered by the sign in the photo’s right background, provides a stunning contrast between the notion of presenting the landscape as tourable, and its obvious degradation due to the flagrant discarding of old materials—notably absent are the supposed tourists who were once (indeed they cannot *still* be) encouraged to visit.

Indeed, the article, which features nine other photos of industrial waste and trash by Jacobs (including “Quaint street in Weehawken with deli occupying first floor of building near entrance to Lincoln Tunnel (not visible)” discussed above) suggests that not only this geography, but all of America is “ripe in what the Germans call *dreck*” (“A Landscape” 87)—rubbish or trash. In performing such a blatant critique of industry within the tradition of the American landscape photograph, Jacobs effectively disrupts those spaces claimed and affected by American industry. Revealing the ways waste itself spreads along with the industries which produce it, Jacobs attempts to show how waste can thus provide a means of following the material interrelations between production, consumption, and the landscape. Moreover, Jacobs disrupts as well the storied space of the American landscape photograph, bringing such concerns into the tradition of representing of American places and spaces. Capturing an interplay between industry, consumerism, and environment through depictions of waste materials, photographs like “Sign reading Jersey City: Everything for Industry on the side of a street and garbage and abandoned vehicle in foreground” simultaneously express “an apprehension of the difference between our social human concerns and the earth's own compulsions” (Szarkowski *American* 5), a chief attribute of American landscape photography according to John Szarkowski, while arguing such a difference in concerns also explicitly recognizes networks of interrelations.

In 1953, as *Keep America Beautiful* obscured litter's function as an important locus of interrelation between industry, the consumer, and the environment, the new scientific discipline of ecology was emerging. Eugene Odum's textbook, *Fundamentals of Ecology* (1953), represented the first collation into one volume of the various

ecological practices, theories, and strategies that had emerged since Ernst Haeckel had coined the term in 1866. Defined within Odum's pages as the "study of the relation of organisms or groups of organisms to their environment, or the science of the interrelations between living organisms and their environment" (Odum 3), ecology approached the environment not as a reified and passive object, but a dynamic network of relations involved in complex systems of influences—ecosystems in negotiations with each other and ecosystems in relationships with the organisms which inhabit them. While Odum's text conspicuously omits a discussion of garbage, and such discussions would not appear until subsequent editions, Jacobs had already begun to see waste materials as a new lens through which he could document the relationship between human organisms and their environment. Moreover, besides his photographs of urban trash, most of his images of industry focus on pollution, smog, behemoth industrial landscapes on the fringes of towns and cities—the inter-relationship of waste as a material interplay between consumption and disposal. Capturing the continual build-up of public waste in the spaces of commerce, leisure, labour and transit, Jacobs presents a picture of a postwar America where industry and consumer neglect has begun to forge an unsustainable ecological relationship with the natural environment.

While the photographs of Jacobs' oeuvre I have discussed so far have been (nearly) devoid of human presence, human subjects are often depicted in many of his images; when they do happen to negotiate the scenes as Jacobs snaps his pictures, they are usually represented in ways which emphasize, or at least represent, their refusal to engage with the materials that have already been refused by cultures and taken in by the landscapes. "View of distant factory as man passes building plastered w. product ads on

the waterfront,” for example, sets up the possible negotiation of subject and waste. In it, a well-dressed man walks by a waterfront building, factories looming in the background influencing the space with their presence, and a green space littered with what appears to be paper waste materials. Though it is possible the nameless man might encounter the waste, the forward gaze and positioning of his stride suggest he will merely continue on his way, toward the right of the frame, past the piles without giving these materials a second thought, let alone his time and energy to participate in some kind of clean-up act. As a counterpoint to both the waste that has accumulated along the edge of the green space and the factories in the distance, the building represents the advertising world, as its façade is littered with the slogans and images of products responsible for producing consumables packaged in throw-away or disposable forms. That the man walks through this triangulated relationship—industry, advertising, waste—produced directly by Jacobs’ framing of the scene, is indicative of the man’s attitude within this cultural structure, and the kind of relationship postwar subjects have with the waste-littered spaces around them. If the narrative of the photograph marks a linear trajectory from a past to a future (the man’s walking from left to right signifying the progression of time), the subject is about to emerge from a space of signage, not only of products but industry and consumption, and into a space of waste, litter, and degradation.

In creating the litterbug figure, *Keep America Beautiful* used a clever and cutesy epithet to define this new category of delinquent citizen worked to temper (or perhaps even disguise) the interpellative and disciplinary dimensions of this new subject. K.A.B. and other anti-litter movements worked to alter consumer habits not at the level of consumption, where attitudes about excess and flagrancy might be usefully changed to

reflect concerns of sustainability, but the consumers' attitudes towards waste materials and their relation to spatial contexts. These initiatives taught the public that garbage could be created in mass volumes, but that it belonged in landfills and dumps, where it could either sit out the rest of its physical life or be incinerated. Facing disciplinary strictures of personal responsibility for limiting public litter, the Cold War subject further internalized the nuclear gaze which separated nature and culture—littering was something done *to* the environment—as K.A.B. foregrounded the aesthetics of public spaces instead of the interrelations between human and environment. In fact, to officially sanction the litterbug as a social deviant, municipalities and states in the U.S. either made the discarding of litter in public places illegal,¹⁶⁴ or began “enforcing existing anti-trash ordinances once regarded as dead letters” (Grutzner 22). Articles appearing in the *New York Times* with titles such as “What Makes a Litterbug?” “Crackdown On Litterbugs,” and “Litter Increased In Crowded Cities” began to publicize the intensified presence of trash and litter in American public spaces, and promote a new kind of consumer guilt, breeding a culture of litter surveillance. Through guilt and shame, citizens would be forced to stash their trash in public receptacles at the behest of industry officials, instead of environmental ecology.

While Jacobs' camera indeed also partakes in landscape surveillance, his motive is to capture and arrest in representational terms, not in those of law and order. To my knowledge, there are no photographs in Jacobs' oeuvre in which littering is captured in progress. Indeed, we are only afforded the whim of Jacobs' perspective, and either he has simply decided not to take a photograph of an active human engagement with litter, or he has simply not come across such a scenario on his photographic excursions and

assignments. Whatever the case, photographic representation becomes an effective means of raising awareness and is for Jacobs the key gesture in removing littering from K.A.B.'s framework of guilt and landscape aesthetics. Re-presenting ignored waste intensifies waste's *unscenic* qualities and its *in-visibility*. As Henri Lefebvre has argued, to diffuse opposition and naturalize space as unchanging, and therefore fixed to its role in the accumulation of capital, capitalist discourses suppress the ways space is dynamic and process-oriented, thus employing a kind of nuclear gaze, I would argue.¹⁶⁵ Waste, in its continual flux, movement, and generation, seems to remind consumers of space's unfixed and fluent dimensions. As waste is apt to be contingent, always in flux, a dynamic and "immensely complex collage" (Stallabrass 407) of the city streets and spaces, to borrow Stallabrass's phrasing, photographs can work to fix waste in place, so as to make it presentable in ways unavailable within the fields of daily visual perception. Moving beyond Ngai's affect of "stuplimity" (Ngai 3), a shock and boredom which, when held together as ambivalent responses to stimuli produces a kind of paralysis, Jacobs isolates pockets of waste from its tedium and centralizes it for the viewer's consumption.

As if with Jacobs in mind, Julian Stallabrass suggests that the very act of photographing trash can make it allegorical "of contemporary capital" (417) simply because there are no expectations of reading in the real.¹⁶⁶ Photographs of trash therefore afford litter and public waste a kind of power to "unmask[] the symbolic pose of the commodity as a sham" (417). These photographs highlight waste in terms of what Barthes calls a quality of "having-been-there" (Barthes 44), while also providing the symbolic message of environmental degradation. Turning the waste-covered streets of American urban centers into landscape photos his photographs are, in short, a move to

recognize waste—its materiality, its psychology, the culture of waste—rendering it visible by presenting its *unscenic* qualities through a medium of *visual* representation. Standing out from the landscape, pieces of waste can always be conceptualized according to a structure of synecdoche: garbage is always a piece of a larger mass of garbage—capital ‘G’ Garbage—a fractured and broken fragment of cultural production at large. Photography “freezes the temporal unfolding of allegorical decay producing dialectics at a standstill, a snapshot of a conflicting process under way, revealing past, present and future. In its rarest and very best moments, photography may also indicate a point in the historical process where the tensions are greatest, the point of phase change” (Stallabrass 423)—in other words, an emergent culture.

3.4 Waste landscapes of the Future

American cities are like badger holes, ringed with trash—all of them—surrounded by piles of wrecked and rusting automobiles, and almost smothered with rubbish. Everything we use comes in boxes, cartons, bins, the so-called packaging we love so much. The mountains of things we throw away are much greater than the things we use. In this, if in no other way, we can see the wild and reckless exuberance of our production, and waste seems to be the index. Driving along I thought how in France or Italy every item of these thrown-out things would have been saved and used for something. This is not said in criticism of one system or the other but I do wonder whether there will come a time when we can no longer afford our wastefulness—chemical wastes in the rivers, metal wastes everywhere, and atomic wastes buried deep in the earth or sunk in the sea. When an Indian village became too deep in its own filth, the inhabitants moved. And we have no place to which to move. (John Steinbeck, *Travels With Charley: In Search of America* 25)

In the above passage, American author John Steinbeck describes American postwar cities as suffering from a kind of donut-syndrome of public litter, in which the unused and unvalued objects of city life that have been discarded have come to litter the landscapes

surrounding the metropolitan core. On his search for America, the aging author finds myriad examples of the rusted and wasted remainders of postwar consumer culture, the residues of the packaging industry—a real-world landscape reminiscent of the photographs of Charles Fenno Jacobs. A travelogue, and not fiction, the book aims to document its author's impressions of the places and scenes as he encountered them. This landscape of trash becomes for Steinbeck a multifarious sign of a particularly American excess, and waste an index of reckless production and consumption habits. As he brings these garbaged landscapes and mountains of trash into relief, he gestures towards an American future in which the continual accumulation of waste materials, including and perhaps especially nuclear waste, will eventually overcome American spaces. Pointing to a view of material accumulation similar to later concepts of sustainability, he notes that while the Native Americans had the ability to move on when accumulations of waste and rubbish reached unlivable levels, modern Americans have no place left to go. With the American geographical frontier all but exhausted, the piles of waste and trash begin not only to represent a current era wrought with a public litter crises and organizations like *Keep America Beautiful* mobilized to clean it up, but a coming future in which waste begins to consume those forces that have produced and attempted to dispose of it.

In the 1950s and 1960s, science fiction author Philip K. Dick found garbage and its build-up important enough to depict waste's profusion in the fictional future societies of his many speculative novels, for they are often overrun with litter and garbage. Critical glimpses at the possible long term topographical effects of waste's existence in public spaces make waste and garbage a central trope in Dick's fiction that has gone surprisingly unrecognized among critics.¹⁶⁷ In fact, Dick's preoccupation with waste anticipates the

paradigmatic shift in depictions of futuristic societies critics have located in the 1970s—a transition from the Cold War-era narratives of post-nuclear holocaust in which global nuclear destruction (and an ensuing nuclear winter) reset human civilization and its technological progress (by virtue of the latter’s inability to function), to depictions of future societies featured in the emerging subgenre of cyberpunk in which the landscape is ravaged by slow environmental apocalypse because inhabitants are indifferent to environmental degradation and urban decay.¹⁶⁸ Due to his mounting interest in the phenomenon of garbage as his career progresses from the 1950s into the early 1980s before his death, Dick thematically bridges these two sub-genres of science fiction, and specifically through his symbolic use of garbage and junk as materials which come to not only litter the future landscapes he depicts, but define them as well. In this way, Philip K. Dick’s fiction expounds upon the themes of the photographs of Charles Fenno Jacobs and projects them onto the landscapes of America’s future.

We can in fact map out Dick’s transition from his engagement with modernist science fiction tropes of post-nuclear scenarios of Cold War science fiction (along with the likes of Heinlein and Miller) in novels like *The World Jones Made* (1956), *The Game Players of Titan* (1963), and *Deus Irae* (written 1964; published 1976) to his intervention in new visions of eco-dystopian futures specifically through the ways he treats garbage as a cultural phenomenon in *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, which, while being a post-apocalyptic novel, focuses more attention on the state of the environment as after-effects of the war than on the war itself. As garbage and kipple figure heavily in his representation of the environmental decay of the future of 1992, the novel anticipates (and directly influences¹⁶⁹) the “decayed yet vitalized [through the possibilities of virtual

space] cityscape[s]” (Sponsler 254) of cyberpunk’s eco-dystopian realities. Providing a conceptualization of garbage which takes into account its materiality and its futurity, Dick’s interest in waste materials culminates in not only depictions of garbage and their relationship to societal decay, but also the ways it might be implicated in the future’s significant environmental problems.

The first story Dick sold for publication (written in 1951 and published in 1953),¹⁷⁰ “Roog,” relates the story of a family’s typical daily garbage collection from the point of view of the family dog. From the dog’s disengaged perspective, the ritual of garbage pick-up is defamiliarized to the point of not making sense, as its owners’ stockpile of materials (kept in containers in the backyard) is taken away weekly by strange men in costume. Wracked with anxiety due to the garbagemen’s immanent arrival, the dog barks the call *roog* incessantly until and after they approach to raid its owner’s yard. Labouring “under the delusion that his owners considered the garbage valuable” (Dick *Collected Stories* 402), the dog in effect inverts the value of garbage—after all, his owners take great care to keep it contained and on hand in receptacles on site—and trash collection is presented as a bizarre cultural event. The story thus calls into question the nature of determining garbage’s value by suggesting from a completely removed perspective that the act of defining waste is a purely subjective and cultural act.¹⁷¹

In another early short story “The Father-Thing” (1954), garbage and waste become linked with human anxiety, and symbolize a threatening foreignness. A young boy named Charles, who suspects his father has been replaced by alien invaders, finds evidence that such a plot has been successfully carried out when he locates “the remains

of his father” (Dick “Father” 103), his father’s emptied-out form—skin, mostly—in the “big trash barrel” (103) in the garage. The father-thing that has replaced the boy’s father has disposed of the latter’s material remains among the “old leaves and torn-up cardboard, the rotting remains of magazines and curtains, rubbish from the attic his mother had lugged down here with the idea of burning someday” (103), and his recognition of his father’s remainders confirms Charles’s worst fears. As the story continues, Charles also realizes that new *thing* versions of himself and his mother are being grown in the area between the garage and the yard fence, a space the family has been using to dump “discarded debris” (106). While the story employs the common 1950s science fiction trope in substituting aliens invasion for neighbourhood communist subversion and disruption,¹⁷² the story also exploits waste’s connection to repression and the uncanny. John Scanlan notes that “garbage represents also the psychological ‘underneath’ that, if still unburied or unsorted, returns to connect us to the past we though we had trashed” (Scanlan 140). Waste’s ambiguous status as an unknown material makes it an appropriate signifier for any foreign and shapeless undecidability. Garbage is thus simultaneously related to the father’s liquidation and take-over, and the site of the aliens’ production of multiple, synthetic copies of the family. Both notions are, moreover, linked with the formulation of waste as embodiment of anxiety and the familiar unknown.

From this point onward as his writing career progresses, garbage becomes an increasingly crucial concern in his fiction. Quite often the ubiquity of waste is a key feature of many of Dick’s early representations of future American societies—as a topographical phenomenon within the space of the fictional environment and the space of fiction itself, Dick litters his future landscapes with waste and employs its presence as a

spatial testament to the decay and degradation of civilized societies. Two of his earliest novels, *Vulcan's Hammer* and *Dr. Futurity* (both written in 1953 but not published until 1960), for example, begin to introduce to his corpus the subject of waste materials as an integral, if undesirable, part of the future landscape, and emphasize the phenomenon of its accumulation. For instance, in a world controlled by the corporate entity Unity Organization, in *Vulcan's Hammer*, the scenery of 2029 CE is littered with waste as “[r]ubbish lay piled up in alleyways” in the “dark, overpopulated, older section of the city” (Dick *Vulcan's* 72). Like a Charles Fenno Jacob image, the marginal alley spaces of the futuristic city become spaces of accumulation. In *Dr Futurity's* setting of 2045, trash moves into the open as the urban pavement is strewn with refuse, and even some of the “waste-cans” (Dick *Futurity* 14) put in public spaces to “consum[e] trash as fast as it was put in” (14) are “overflowing” (14) because the automatic mechanisms have failed. Even while new and futuristic waste management procedures have been invented to deal with it, waste is an intractable problem. Significantly, then, the same year that *Keep America Beautiful* was mobilizing popular support against the litter problem, Dick was anticipating a future society in which the technologies put in place to manage waste routinely fail.

Not so much an ecological problem in these early fictions, trash instead is used to accentuate futures in which technology's exponential growth and disposable consumption produces an alarmingly disproportionate amount of waste. Dick's commentary on such practices can be read as a critique not only of the workings of the future societies he depicts, but also a commentary on his present time of the 1950s.¹⁷³ In the future world of *The Man Who Japed* (1956, written 1955), for instance, historical discourse refers to the

American postwar period as the “Age of Waste,” (Dick *The Man* 56) both in terms of its squandering of the world’s resources, and its accumulation of garbaged materials and junk. Fredric Jameson in fact makes use of *Time Out of Joint*, the novel of Ragle Gumm’s unraveling of a simulation of the 1950s in a future setting of 1997 that opens this chapter, to discuss his perceived crisis of historicity in the postmodern period within a context of the novel’s critique of its publishing period. According to Jameson, the novel employs what he calls “a trope of the future anterior” (Jameson 285), an effect which involves “the estrangement and renewal as history of our own reading present, the fifties, by way of the apprehension of that present as the past of a specific future” (285). As a result, the novel’s social and critical eye is focused not only on representing the American Cold War landscape from within (as a Cold War science fiction novel from that time-period), but because its speculative narrative is premised on the recreation of the American Cold War landscape in its fictional future of the 1990s, it also adopts the (fictional) perspective of critique from without (i.e., a look back from a fictional futuristic 1990s). Dick’s (re)creation of American Cold War suburbia thus performs the work of a double-visioned cultural critique, as it aims to see and represent what, perhaps, a Cold War culture does not (can not?), in a way that is different, representationally, than a fiction of the time, like *Revolutionary Road* for example. This particular novel’s treatment of garbage, then—how garbage is figured, how it is represented—can be enlightening in terms of its portrayal of a Cold War perspective on garbage. As I discussed earlier, the novel argues in part that American Cold War culture recognizes and ignores waste materials; it represents in the scene Gumm re-cognizes his childhood memories of the 1950s the very structure of waste’s visibility and unscenic qualities.

But, in *Time Out of Joint*, it is also precisely the remainders of the culture of the 1950s that play an integral role in Gumm's eventual disruption of the American government's simulation of the suburban environment of the 1950s in the 1990s. The simulated world of 1950s America features many cultural staples of the real American postwar era: roadside diners, the *Book of the Month Club*, teenage-sex films, James Dean, "cars...freeways and hydrogen bombs" (Dick *Time* 12), and the magazines "Better Homes and Gardens," (46) *Consumer's Digest*, *Life* and *Look*. Yet in a seldom-visited area of town there exists a place the inhabitants call "[t]he ruins" (52), a waste of a municipal lot which consists of partially buried waste materials. A kind of archaeological site, the ruins contain old magazines and cultural products that have not been incorporated into the simulation—these artefacts serve to tip Gumm off to the history he has no memory of. In acting as material evidence of a disguised and hidden historical past, garbage functions as a textual referent to Cold War culture, and a catalyst for Gumm's personal memory and his subsequent psychological reconstruction of his submerged identity. More importantly, for this discussion at least, the novel marks a turning point in Dick's fictional use of garbage, for these garbaged materials are shown to persist decades beyond the era that produced them. That is, these trashed materials located in the ruins are by-products not of the future world—i.e., not magazines published in the 1990s and discarded after being consumed—but lingering remainders of cultural artefacts produced some forty years earlier. In other words, the narrative hinges upon a realization that waste of the 1950s has not gone away. On the contrary, it has persisted in such a way that its presence, materiality, and signifying powers have come to influence the future landscape and culture.

Indeed, after Dick's symbolic use of waste in *Time Out of Joint*, he begins to make the futurity of waste more of a central concern during his middle period of the 1960s. In subsequent novels he points his speculative lens toward the future by implicating his own period of the 1950s as the beginning of significant escalations in waste production and accumulation. While organizations like K.A.B. were seeking to eradicate, or at least minimize, the visibility of public garbage in the time of Dick's early period of the 1950s, the discourses of disposability continued to encourage the rapid and flagrant use of disposable products for their ease and efficiency. The irony is that these competing discourses emanated from the same source: industries responsible for producing millions of tons of throwaway packaging and beverage containers each year asked consumers to engage in disposable habits, only to vilify them as litterbugs and the paramount source of the litter problem. Environmental groups in the 1960s would later challenge organizations like K.A.B. by insisting excess, one-way packaging contributed to throwaway attitudes, and that the production industry needed either to reduce these materials at their source—the lines of production—or make them renewable; Dick's fiction had already begun to strike at the ways industry chose to walk a fine line between promoting the use of their disposable products under the illusion that these materials were somehow *immaterial*—as John C. Rose, first executive director of K.A.B., was quoted as saying, “[w]hen we throw an empty cigarette package out of a moving car, we don't see it land; it has disappeared, so for us it ceases to exist” (Stengen 31)—and promoting responsible consumer habits so the remainders of their products ended up in waste streams to the landfills and incinerators.

A now infamous *Life* magazine article of 1955 titled “Throwaway Living,” for example, championed the efficacies of “frozen food containers, paper napkin[s], disposable diaper[s]...throwaway water wings, foil pans...guest towels...all-purpose bucket[s]...throwaway draperies, ash trays, garbage bags, hot pads, mats” (“Throwaway” 43), and featured a provocative photograph of a family throwing the remainders of these items into the air, as if without concern for where they might happen to land. In freezing these disposable objects in mid air, a supposed testimony to the elation of consumer freedom from material responsibility, the photograph cleverly elides the fact that those products thrown away, tossed out of car windows, dropped in public parks or dumped in agrarian spaces, must indeed land, and, in landing, become a part of the physical landscape of postwar America (as both Dick’s and Jacobs’ respective oeuvres testify). The waste gaze employed by Charles Fenno Jacobs was also picked up by Dick, who attempted to combat the prevailing paradigm in which the competing discourses of disposability and anti-littering campaigns that emerged in the late 1950s and early 1960s forced the Cold War subject to internalize the nuclear gaze employed by K.A.B. Waste’s disruptive powers, as expressed in the way it subverts the simulation of the 1950s in *Time Out of Joint*, become a central theme in Dick’s fiction of the 1960s in response to what he sees as a flagrant and wasteful attitude toward materials, resources, packaging, and consumer and industry lack of interest and care for these materials; the kind of lifestyle promoted in the *Life* article becomes a subject of intense critique throughout much of his fiction for the rest of his life.

Moving beyond a mere mapping of future wastelands, Dick begins to meditate on the environmental consequences of material excess and disposable living in

the early 1960s. In the opening scene of 1964's *Clans of the Alphane Moon*, which is set not on earth but on the second moon of Alpha III, Dick introduces the concept of a city built entirely on a waste dump. The "single shopping centre in Gandhitown," consisting of a "dome-shaped wooden structure with...peeling paint," is surrounded by "stacks of dented cans, heaps of discarded cardboard cartons littering the entrance and parking area" (Dick *Alphane* 170), an image right out of an exaggerated *Keep America Beautiful* campaign. The rest of the city is even worse. Gandhitown can incite "pure terror" (6), in one of the characters (and in the reader) because the "dilapidated shacks" (6), and "cardboard dwellings" (6) amidst and on top of the garbage engender "a sense of almost infinitely vast exposure among the most flimsy of human constructs" (6). The idea that this society has not discarded their refuse (is it even refuse if it has not been refused?) foregrounds the transience of human culture. Moreover, the city's refusal or inability to discard their waste calls into question the boundaries between what defines the valuable and what defines the valueless, and the very notion of order. The inhabitants, called The Heebs, all suffer from hebephrenia, a form of schizophrenia in which the vice of disorganization is heightened to psychological neuroses. The Heebs thus "dwel[l] among their own refuse" but "in tranquil equilibrium" (6). But even beyond these disruptions of normality, Gandhitown, despite its rather hyperbolic conception of urbanity, represents, in its status as a social space founded upon the garbage of its forebears, a potential telos for future American cities and spaces. At the same time, going back in history like Steinbeck's reference to the native American method of dealing with their waste materials (moving on), a character in the novel remarks of Gandhitown, "[i]t's like going back four thousand years; that's the way Sinanthropus and Neanderthal must have lived.

Only without the rusted machinery” (92-3). In making such a contrast, Dick transfers ancient social waste management norms into the future as a way of disrupting our sense of linear technological progress: like the mechanical trash cans of *Dr. Futurity*, modern technological innovations have not solved the waste management issue. Moreover, Dick transfers ancient social waste management norms into the future as a way of alluding to cavalier postwar American attitudes toward waste and public litter.

(That 1954’s “Shell Game,” the short story the novel was based on, does not feature waste or any mention of Gandhitown might speak to Dick’s increasing awareness of the trash problem, and his growing concern for the consequences of a potential trash build-up; as trash accumulates on the American landscape, so too does it accumulate in the space of Dick’s fictions.)

In a similar change of focus in terms of scale, Fenno Jacobs takes his camera’s point of view to what seems like the next logical step from featuring littered waste in public by taking his camera, and the gaze of his audience, to follow waste to the spaces where it is supposed to belong—the dumps and landfills of America. “Burning trash” is a black and white, medium long shot of a dumping ground. While Gay Hawkins rightly argues that waste “simply gets taken ‘away,’ and while we know generally where it goes, the invisibility of these places, their location underground or on the margins of cities, facilitates denial or active not knowing” (Hawkins 16), in this photograph, Jacobs takes the consumer to these unseen away spaces as if to confront them with the knowledge of their existence. That Jacobs has chosen to include in the background the distant vision of industry once again provides a kind of narrative to the image, a cause and effect relationship between the existence of industrial buildings of production and product

dissemination, and the final resting point of trash, the dump. Piles of accumulated waste threaten to subsume these distant sources of production, by virtue of their very volume; inverting the relationship between industry and waste established in the previous photographs, this photograph critiques industrial modes of production and the spread of capital, by going to the source of its perceived ends—the archives of Cold War toxicity. The plumes of smoke link trash with ecological pollution, and as the smoke leaves the frame of the photographs, it implicitly extends into spaces not captured by the frame's boundaries. Moreover, with this landfill photograph as a framing device for his entire body of work, each piece of litter then becomes not just its own thing, but also a kind of metonym for these spaces of official and sanctioned garbage accumulation which exist in reality.¹⁷⁴

Dick's *Alphane Moon* takes readers to the same space. The contrast in the novel between Gandhitown's rusted machinery as a distinctly modern form of waste and the idea of biotic or organic waste also serves the purpose of implicating technology itself in the increasing accumulation of waste materials on the American landscape. Specifically, Dick's fiction designates the American production cycles of planned obsolescence as a primary agent in the instigation of a future-historical trajectory in which waste (and in large part technological waste) must eventually (indeed inevitably) consume human society. Referring to the twentieth-century practice of "manipulat[ing] the failure rate of manufactured materials" (Slade 5), Dick cites planned obsolescence's mandate of "artificially limit[ing] the durability of a manufactured good in order to stimulate repetitive consumption" (5) as a source of much waste material. As an industry paradigm since the 1920s,¹⁷⁵ planned obsolescence has become synonymous with disposable

culture,¹⁷⁶ and was a popular source of attacks made by critics of postwar excess¹⁷⁷: any economy organized around the deliberate junking of its technological appliances and products necessitates the continual production of not only the products themselves (in their new forms) but waste materials as well. The Cold War corporatization, militarization, and technologization of society¹⁷⁸ only intensified planned obsolescence, and crystallized the relationship between American ideologies of affluence with the production of massive amounts of waste materials.¹⁷⁹ As Slade notes, “[d]eliberate obsolescence in all its forms—technological, psychological, or planned—is a uniquely American invention” (Slade 3) because, in some ways, “the very concept of disposability itself,” he argues further, is “a necessary precursor to our rejection of tradition and our promotion of progress and change” (Slade 4).

Dick adopts this view and stages American futures where such continual disposability becomes materially impossible not only due to the glut of technologically useless materials, but the changing material make-up of disposable products. The burgeoning electronics industry emerged in tandem with the chemical industry, which created enumerable petrochemicals in the form of plastics such as Polyethylene, polyurethane, polypropylene (the *poly* prefix a signifier of their status as conglomerations of materials), and Styrofoam, for example, cleansers, and other materials and products. While cyberpunk’s “at-homeness in urban ruin” (Sponsler 262) suggests an indifference to environmental degradation (in place of nuclear holocaust’s resetting of society and often technology itself¹⁸⁰), Dick’s fiction makes great use of garbage and waste to make the point that because of the technologization of American society begun during the Cold War, the American future—its landscape—is haunted by a potential future-historical

timeline in which everything must turn to garbage. Because 1968's *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, for example, is set on a future earth ravaged by the radioactive fallout of "World War Terminus" (Dick *Androids* 12), it is a post-apocalyptic narrative. At the same time, its focus lies not in the immediate aftermath of the war, but the not too distant future and describes, instead, the ecological effects of the war.¹⁸¹ In *Androids'* fictional 1992, everything is irradiated and animals are scarce.¹⁸² The environment has become so toxic that only a small fraction of the population has remained on earth, and the bulk of humans (those with the means and opportunity at least), have relocated to a colonized Mars. With the human population significantly and conspicuously absent, the metropolises have been left vacant and in ruin, the technological and architectural wonders of the modern era now bulking masses of useless materials, wastes of space and resources.

This kind of "entropic ruin" (17) has made garbage a ubiquitous material and phenomenon in this world. In fact, the narrator provides exposition in terms of waste management: "garbage collecting and trash disposal had, since the war, become one of Earth's important industries. The entire planet had begun to disintegrate into junk, and to keep the planet habitable for the remaining population the junk had to be hauled away occasionally...or...Earth would die under a layer—not of radioactive dust—but of kipple" (76). Here the nuclear annihilation narrative is explicitly swapped for an ecological one. Such a process of environmental degradation engenders a fatalism in character J.R. Isidore, for kiplization is ceaseless and unstoppable: "no one can win against kipple...except temporarily and maybe in one spot...a stasis between the pressure of kipple and nonkipple" (58). The cybernetic and robotic innovations American industry

and science fiction had predicted would become the norm for future American societies are mocked and derided in the notion of kipple, as any systems of equilibrium—social, cultural, natural even—are exposed in kipple as being inadequate and incomplete notions of interactions—there are always remainders, whether physical or conceptual. Near the very end of the novel, another character looks out across the city, and describes the panoramic view only in terms of the waste which litters its topography: “[i]n the early morning light the land below him extended seemingly forever, gray and refuse-littered” (202). Now resembling Gandhitown—Dick’s city built upon the discarded trash of its own production from *Clans of the Alphane Moon* published only four years earlier—the Los Angeles cityscape in the novel becomes a site upon which Dick has mapped out an American future in which waste consumes everything around it. Kipple’s complete and absolute proliferation can be the only telos for a postwar American society producing so much technological gadgetry and so much waste. Indeed, the new concept of kipple crystallizes Dick’s fascination with garbage and his later interrogation of waste’s intractability in one figure. Garbage has a new figurative purpose in his fiction: the fear of endlessly accumulating garbage and the notion of entropy mark social, political, and environmental degradation and disruption.

While certainly Dick’s anthropomorphization of waste in *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* is meant to represent a kind of satirical comment on a perceived proliferation of garbage in American society, in a novel obsessed with cyborg and android replications of human bodies and minds, the emphasis on the phenomenon of becoming-garbage can be thematically linked to the concept of a merging of the human body with technology. Because he is a driver for an electric animal repair company and

surrounded by mechanical replications of bio-organic species, J.R. Isidore's vocal anxiety about kipple can be linked with the posthuman concept of a merger or interrelation between the human body and synthetic materials. Isidore in fact spends most of the novel trying to define his own humanity against the simulacrum of a group of escaped androids, whose ontological and epistemological posthumanity is a threat to Isidore's sense of himself and human beings in general. In fact, Isidore's anxieties about kipple are also due to what he sees as its ability to merge distinguishable objects into the indistinguishable mass of useless garbage and junk. Pondering on his 1992-era apartment building, he expresses his fears of kipple's powers to merge objects together: it is a matter of certainty that "everything within the building would merge, would be faceless and identical, mere pudding-like kipple piled to the ceiling of each apartment" (Dick *Blade* 17). Thus, while product and object must unavoidably become waste as androids begin to diffuse into the human population, and the human body is penetrated with synthetic materials, the merger of humans and technology becomes for Isidore (and perhaps even Dick himself) an equal certainty.

The turning of everything to kipple in the novel is the ultimate merger of culture and nature, where garbage polices the boundaries between all binary oppositions. For Dick, the implications of kipple's exponential proliferation provide concerns in terms not only of the American landscape, but the human body, and with it conceptions of humanism: kipple has ontological implications within a posthuman context. Dick, a postmodern humanist,¹⁸³ and his fiction evince anxieties about the loss or confusion of essential human qualities in worlds of simulation and technologies. As androids and cyborgs become realities, their tech will break down; as the artefacts of planned

obsolescence become junk, and as technology merges with the human body, a merging of the human body with technology becomes, within Dick's matrices of representation, essentially, a merging of the human body with garbage. As Greg Garrard has argued, "Ecocriticism...shares with liberationist and cyborg criticism a sustained and sustaining interest in the subjectivity of the non-human, and in the problem of the troubled boundaries between the human and other creatures. All three critical discourses invite an encounter with the pleasures and anxieties of a possible post-human condition" (Garrard 148). Thus, as the worlds of the future are littered with waste and junk, the landscape comes to symbolize not only an ecological crisis—the *junking* of human society—but also the *junking* of the (post)human body.

3.5 Earth Day, Restaurants and Spiritual Trash

By the 1970s, not only public litter, but waste accumulation in general was beginning to become an open public problem, as waste management industry officials were beginning to prophesize a coming waste crisis. The New York City garbage strike in 1968 saw piles of garbage bags line the inner city streets, and litter became symbolic of the ways waste was overtaking American cities and countrysides. There was such a furor in the popular media, articles like "How Science Will Help Us Get Rid of Our Mountain of Junk" were surfacing in magazines like *Popular Science* and *Popular Mechanics*. Located in the latter publication in April 1971, the secondary headline to the article read "Researchers are developing astonishing ways to deal with one of man's stickiest problems—taking out the garbage" (Gilmore 71). By C.P. Gilmore, the article provided an ecological angle to the nation's perspective on its mounting waste: it is

imperative that public institutions work toward “getting rid of the tidal wave of junk that threatens to drown us and, at the same time, salvaging at least some of the millions of tons of valuable materials that we toss into our garbage cans each year” (71).

By the early 1970s, even *Keep America Beautiful* had gone environmental. At the end of the 1960s the black and white commercials exemplified by “Every Litter Bit Hurts” in which “America’s litter problem” is identified as an aesthetic problem, were replaced, in full colour, with one of the most successful ad campaigns of the modern era. On the first Earth Day in 1970, *Keep America Beautiful* converged the discourses of environmentalism, littering, and the history of the American landscape in the figure that has become known as the *Crying Indian* (the name that also gives the commercial its *de facto* title). Over an intense score of what is supposed to be Native-flavoured music, the narrator begins his rhetorical plea to the American citizen by announcing, “[s]ome people have a deep abiding respect for the natural beauty that was once this country. And some people don’t” (“Crying Indian”). On screen, a native American figure paddles his canoe amidst rubbish and waste materials in an American lake, only to discover more on the shore. In the final moments, the native American witnesses the flagrant littering of what appear to be fast food containers and bags discarded from a moving vehicle. A tear rolling down his cheek, the Indian turns for a zooming close-up to meet the gaze of the (guilty and shamed) American consumer. Now, not just consumer guilt, but historical guilt was being used to discipline the American citizen from discarding their trash in public spaces.

The commercial thus ties the American land to native Americans. As Greg Garrard notes about the “indigenous American perspective” (Garrard 54), it is “shaped by

the fact that, whether as idealised ‘noble savages’ or as savages pure and simple, Indians have historically been reduced to a mere feature in the pastoral landscape or even eliminated from it” (54-5). At the same time, in portraying the “native American” (Iron Eyes Cody, the actor portraying the “Crying Indian” was in fact a Sicilian actor) as being one-with-nature, the commercial actually reasserts the modernist separation of modern man and environment, for the modern Americans are portrayed as active agents desecrating a sacred, passive, environment. Constructed for American consumption, the figure of the Native American is linked with (passive) nature, as the modern American is linked with culture; there is, the commercial suggests, something barbarous about civility. Furthermore, it implies a decidedly American dimension to garbage and links garbage to pollution. Even industry is implicated in the commercial, as the Indian’s canoe floats past chemical wastes emitted by a factory in the background, a dynamic image which reminds us of Jacobs’ static photographs of American industrial scenes.¹⁸⁴

Fed up with the media, Charles Fenno Jacobs got out of the photography business and opened, of all things, a restaurant.¹⁸⁵ While we cannot speak of a legacy of Jacobs’ photographs since they have for the most part remained undiscovered, many of them do anticipate American artistic photography’s concerns in the 1970s as environmentalism became a centralized discourse, and environmental journalism became its own institution. But his photographic influence, while perhaps unexplored, can also be found in the art world—at least in terms of his subject, themes, and critique of industry. For example, Ed Ruscha’s “Twenty-Six Gasoline Stations” (1963), a work in which he has produced postcards of gas station images, belongs to the same kind of critique of industry and its manifestation in the landscape. Kenneth McGowan’s work in the 1970s, specifically his

emphasis on the contrast between industry signage and the signage of public waste materials, also reminds one of Jacobs. Canadian photographic artist Edward Burtynsky displays many of the same characteristics of Jacobs' journalistic photos in his artworks. Lori Pauli calls on John Brinckerhoff Jackson's notion that landscape is always, in a sense, manufactured, to describe the way Burtynsky's photos are meant to reveal "the imprint of humanity upon the environment" (Pauli 10), much like Jacobs' oeuvre has attempted to do.¹⁸⁶

As the 1970s began, Philip K. Dick fell victim to his own paranoid fantasies. While he maintained a writing career, and persisted in his investigation of the themes of postmodernity, his fascination with waste materials continued. In a later, autobiographical novel, *Radio Free Albemuth* (written in 1976 but published posthumously in 1985), which dealt explicitly with his psychic break, he presents an extended passage in which the narrator meditates on a new dimension to waste materials in the Dick oeuvre:

I spent one whole day walking around Placentia, enjoying myself immensely. There was a beauty in the trash of the alleys which I had never noticed before; my vision now seemed sharpened, rather than impaired. As I walked along it seemed to me that the flattened beer cans and papers and weeds and junk mail had been arranged by the wind into patterns; these patterns, when I scrutinized them, lay distributed so as to comprise a visual language. It resembled the trail signs which I understood American Indians used, and as I walked along I felt the invisible presence of a great spirit which had gone before me—walked here and moved the unwanted debris in these subtle, meaningful ways so as to spell out a greeting of

comradeship to me, the smaller one who would follow. You can almost read this stuff, I thought to myself. But I couldn't. All I could gather from the arrangements of trash was a participation in the passage of the great figure who had preceded me. He had left these discarded objects placed so that I would know he had been there, and in addition a golden illumination lay over them, a glow that told me something about his nature. He had brought the dust out of its obscurity into a kind of light; this was a good spirit indeed. (126-7)

In the above passage, Dick frames the random city waste and litter within a new framework of transcendent beauty, figuring it as a spiritual substance with textual and religious significance. Why would Dick so late in his life and writing career begin to see waste in this way? To provide a possible answer to this question, and to find out what happened when the futures predicted by Dick (and others) did not arrive, we must turn to the end of the Cold War. With this new insight prompted by Dick's final meditations on trash in literature, I now turn to the site that has been created to store, manage, and contain the trashed and junked materials of the Cold War: the modern sanitary landfill.

CHAPTER FOUR

TOXIC ARCHIVE:

*LITTERATURE AND THE COLD WAR LANDFILL***4.1 Endings**

Let us now consider the end—not of the world, but of the Cold War. As the communist block began to collapse at the end of the 1980s, and the Soviet Union itself disintegrated in the early 1990s, it seemed as though the world could breathe a sigh of relief because nuclear conflict had been averted. Indeed, American liberal-democratic capitalism appeared triumphant in the ideological struggle between the two superpowers from the late 1940s to the early 1990s. But while the end of the Cold War came not with an atomic bang, it was nevertheless accompanied by an environmental whimper.

Perhaps nowhere is this whimper more powerfully attended to than in Don DeLillo's reflections on this period. While America's nuclear legacy is perhaps most pertinent and obvious, DeLillo's novel *Underworld* (1997) also points to American sanitary landfills as important sites through which we might understand the logic of the Cold War, its culture, its psychology, and its disregard for national ecologies. Insisting that the build-up of American garbage can be read culturally, the novel suggests that landfills are not merely dumping grounds for useless materials but rather important spatial archives through which we might access and assess the psychological and material stakes of the Cold War. As the novel moves backwards in narrative time from the end of the Cold War in the early 1990s to its beginnings in the 1950s, it traces the curious and

un-recognized interlocking histories of the waste management industry and the American Cold War project.¹⁸⁷

At a crucial point in the novel, waste management professional Brian Glassic visits the massive *Fresh Kills Landfill* on Staten Island. While he works in the industry and encounters these kinds of spaces routinely, the landfill's enormity is still able to overwhelm him. Though his vantage does not allow a full-on view of (or into) the landfill—instead it is a removed look at the structure as a feature of the land—he acknowledges the vast scope of garbage's reach by meditating on the trash that peeks out from beneath the daily cover of soil and clay. Calling upon the submerged garbage in an attempt to read its significations, he sees “[s]pecks and glints, ragtails of color appear[] in the stratified mass of covering soil, fabric scraps from the garment center, stirred by the wind” (DeLillo *Underworld* 185). As Fresh Kills' enormity has the effect of defamiliarizing garbage as a remainder or by-product, Glassic himself starts to view it as a significant material presence in the cultural matrix—it is not merely just the useless leftovers of consumption or the remains of cultural production devoid of cultural significance. In fact, *Underworld* forces its readers to confront the significance of Fresh Kills as Glassic stands before it. That while “[t]he mountain was here,” as the narrator focalizes through Glassic, “unconcealed, but no one saw it or thought about it, no one knew it existed except the engineers and teamsters and local residents” (185) belies Glassic's (and DeLillo's and our) urge to penetrate and reveal the landfill's contents. Garbage—in all of its materiality and textuality—deserves to be read.

For DeLillo, even (perhaps especially) toxic waste necessitates a place in the cultural consciousness, and *Underworld* spends much time linking regular garbage

materials and landfill sites, to those toxic and nuclear waste sites established across the American landscape during the Cold War. As the epitome of toxic (and Cold War) waste, nuclear waste, produced in its most massive quantities during the Cold War era in the build-up of the American nuclear arsenal, epitomizes a number of garbage's dimensions (if in the extreme): its persistence beyond its management, its effect on the physical landscape, and its ability to haunt us with its absent presence.¹⁸⁸ While nuclear and municipal solid waste do not have any material connections to speak of, they have always been linked in popular discourses because of their shared status as substances in need of disposal or management.¹⁸⁹ A *Popular Mechanics* article of April 1955 suggestively titled "The World's Hottest Garbage," for example, associates nuclear waste with municipal solid waste through the language of disposal: "[a]ll homeowners and communities have garbage problems," the author states, "but none like those of atomic-energy plants, which have the world's biggest and most expensive garbage headache" (Gibbs 124). In this analogy, nuclear waste is merely the nation's garbage, simply an unwanted, undesirable by-product of the arms race. On the other hand, as the article goes on to stress, nuclear waste presents the nation with a pressing and potentially disastrous dilemma, for disposing of radioactive materials had become an important national issue—there were no standardized solutions to the nuclear waste question, and it only promised to become an even bigger issue as the U.S. continued its nuclear arsenal.

In a clever and meaningful irony, DeLillo's solution to the nuclear waste problem in *Underworld* involves "destroy[ing] contaminated nuclear waste by means of nuclear explosions" (DeLillo *Underworld* 791). At the end of *Underworld*, in the epilogue taking place in the aftermath of the Cold War, protagonist Nick Shay travels to the former

Soviet Union as a representative from “Waste Containment” (804) acting as a “waste analyst” (804), to observe a Russian waste management firm dispose of American nuclear waste. Russian waste industry official Viktor Maltsev’s company *Tchaika* trades in nuclear explosions: “[t]hey will pick up waste anywhere in the world, ship it to Kazakhstan, put it in the ground and vaporize it” (788), Nick tells us. Using nuclear bombs, whose own production creates nuclear waste, to destroy nuclear waste, is a kind of ouroborosian loop between production, consumption and by-production: as Nick remarks, in the nuclear era “what we excrete comes back to consume us” (791). Bringing these two phenomena, nuclear weapons and nuclear waste, together in an explosion leads Maltsev to meditate on their relationship to one another. He concludes that “waste is the secret history, the underhistory” of the Cold War. “All those decades,” he continues, “when we thought about weapons all the time and never thought about the dark multiplying byproduct” (791). While it appears that Maltsev is referring specifically to nuclear waste, his statement also implies toxic and municipal wastes as well.

Exaggerating the ways the nuclear wastes destroyed by Maltsev and Shay can become a document, the novel’s garbologist Jesse Detwiler sees the future of waste in terms of tourism.¹⁹⁰ He remarks, “[t]he more toxic the waste, the greater the effort and expense a tourist will be willing to tolerate in order to visit the site....And the hot stuff, the chemical waste, the nuclear waste, this becomes a remote landscape of nostalgia. Bus tours and postcards. I guarantee it” (286). Nuclear waste endures as some kind of memorabilia in Detwiler’s model, and assumes a dimension of nostalgia: “[n]ostalgia for the banned materials of civilization, for the brute force of old industries and old conflicts” (286). As a document of the Cold War, nuclear and toxic wastes persist to be read and

come to signify the “old conflicts” (286) by virtue of their relationship to the Cold War effort; as such, the American landscape becomes an archive of Cold War nuclear history as well.

As the dominant narratives of the past forty-five years—nuclear proliferation,¹⁹¹ mutual assured destruction,¹⁹² and political and cultural containment—suddenly seemed irrelevant in the Cold War’s aftermath, ecological discourses of sustainability, recycling, and waste reduction emerged with increasing urgency, filling this ideological void of wastefulness.¹⁹³ As the psychological landscape underwent a paradigm shift at the end of the Cold War, DeLillo turned his attention to the Cold War’s effects on the physical environment to locate the cross-section of these discourses. Marked by the dangerously radioactive remainders of nuclear testing, littered with the waste, garbage, refuse, junk, and detritus of American postwar cultural excess, and dotted with dumping grounds and sanitary landfills created to manage these discarded materials, the American landscape bore the toxic brunt of the decades-long geopolitical struggle. One site in particular laid bare these issues, the landfill whose architecture and archaeology is so carefully detailed by DeLillo. Drawing inspiration from DeLillo’s insights and in partial response to their material implications, in this chapter I argue that because of the ways landfill sites contained and preserved the hazardous wastes produced during the Cold War, the modern sanitary landfill is a pre-eminent site through which we can reflect upon the Cold War, its end, and its physical and psychical cultural residues. At the same time, literature and landfills are, I suggest, inextricably linked. While garbage can become a kind of archival document, literary documents become garbage as well. In other words, not only do landfills make significant appearances in literary representations of the end of the Cold

War, but literary texts also make significant material contributions to modern sanitary landfills. DeLillo's novel in fact reveals there is a kind of homology between these two sites: both the space of the landfill and the space of literature become archival repositories for cultural objects and narratives of the past.¹⁹⁴

To explore the centrality of landfills in the aftermath of the Cold War and reveal the ways these sites can be readable archives of Cold War toxicity, I accordingly assess the archival significance of landfills while simultaneously reflecting upon literary representations of these sites. Focusing on these two related approaches to the landfill, I argue that this site constitutes a textual repository, and in my close analysis of select novels by DeLillo and poetry by A.R. Ammons, reveal the ways that garbage materials can assume a kind of textuality. DeLillo's *Underworld* and Ammons' long poem *Garbage* (1993) provide some of the most prolonged and sustained explorations of landfill sites in American literature, and it is no coincidence that they both appear in the immediate post-Cold War period. While Ammons' text assumes the form of a poem, his figuring of garbage itself as a kind of poetry becomes important not only for his meditations on landfill ontologies, but for my own investigations into these spaces, for it reasserts the textual dimension of garbage and the archival nature of landfills I want to locate in this chapter.

Initially, I do so by way of archival theory's own conceptualizations of archives as spaces that incorporate documents of information and historical value. Because archival theories of documentation have yet to fully assimilate garbage materials into their framework,¹⁹⁵ I also revisit Jacques Derrida's poststructural concept of the archive—a theory that inspires my discussion in chapter two of Robert A. Heinlein and

Walter M. Miller's meditations on garbage and its relationship to the fallout shelter in post-nuclear scenarios—and its accompanying *archive fever* to reconceptualize these landfill sites as grotesque anti-archives. Landfills are accompanied by their own feverish negotiations, for they store precisely those materials that do not belong in the archive; instead archival refuse has been sent to coalesce in these repositories. By the same token, literature's material relationship to the landfill also becomes something for literature to obscure, for the landfill represents a pre-eminent site of literature's own material destruction. While Derrida uses the central narrative of the Cold War itself, the event of nuclear annihilation, to foreground the ways the archive is conditioned by the very potentiality of its material destruction, I suggest in this chapter that landfills also condition literary production with a recognition of its own gradual degradation.

Additionally, I return to Sianne Ngai's affect of "stuplimity" (Ngai 248)—with which I framed in chapter three the Cold War subject's negotiations with public litter before the emergence of the *waste gaze*—for her concept of a stupefied paralysis leading to a confused and apathetic reaction perfectly embodies the kind of affect produced by a landfill. Ultimately, because stuplimity is an aesthetic affect, my investigations of the landfill's cultural importance find productive expression in representations of landfill sites within the space of literature.

There is thus a crucial irony in the emergent waste-consciousness in literature of the Cold War period I have been tracing throughout this dissertation: while literature becomes a representational location for a kind of waste-consciousness by opening itself up to readings of trash, it simultaneously blinds itself to its own material relationship to the landscape and its intimate relationship with the landfill. Literature's disavowal of its

own role in landfills spaces, I argue, is precisely related to the Cold War project itself. Necessarily linked with such degradation is literature's own contamination and contaminative potential within the logic of the landfill: books too become imbricated in these archives of toxicity. As paper can transmit signs, ideas, and narratives in the form of the book, it can also disseminate toxic substances in a landfill. Fiction has thus demonstrated a general tendency to disavow its material implications in landfills, even when it represents these spaces.

To avoid confronting these issues, and to maintain a compensatory fantasy that books are somehow not involved in landfill ecologies, fictional texts often emphasize other kinds of paper garbage, such as magazines, memos, and envelopes, as, I will show, *Underworld* does. At the same time, while postmodern fiction certainly recognizes the toxic and burdensome material reality of landfills and dumping grounds, it depicts landfills not merely as wastelands where cultural remainders are degraded, deteriorated, and implicated in toxicity, but sites of recovery, places from which one can reclaim junked items that can then be put to new and novel uses—in short, originary spaces for the production of literature itself. Ammons' *Garbage*, a text very different from *Underworld* to be sure, also investigates landfill ontologies by using the very concept of a landfill as the thematic centre of the poem: the author uses the occasion of his chance sighting of a landfill site in Florida as an impetus to meditate on his mortality, American culture during the 1980s and early 1990s, and on the medium of poetry more generally. As books become archival materials in libraries, museums, and personal collections, those that fall out of use submit themselves as unreadable fragments of textual production

to the anti-archival space of the modern sanitary landfill, where they will necessarily degrade and co-mingle with the rest of the garbage.

4.2 Cold War Archive

Don DeLillo's novel *Underworld*, features explicit and direct descriptions of the sites of American waste management. However, his central characters approach the landfill not from the perspective of the average consumer for whom waste is, as I've shown in chapters one, two, and three a transient phenomenon, but from an insider's perspective, as many of the main characters are employed with *Whiz Co.*, a large American waste management firm. With an industry focus on the nation's waste and the sites that have been designated to manage it, *Underworld* provides a sustained meditation on modern sanitary landfills and exposes the ways they are doubly removed from our cultural consciousness by lifting the veil between them and the American consumer. Conceived as safe repositories for the hazardous and non-hazardous materials and objects of cultural discard and refuse, landfills operate with an agenda of containment: its sanitary lining and maintenance practices attempt to preserve the surrounding environment within which it is located from the proliferation of harmful chemicals and pollutants. Thus, in tandem with the nation's foreign policy of containing the spread of communism and the nation's domestic policy of cultural containment,¹⁹⁶ the containment of toxic and potentially hazardous waste materials (moves to keep their proliferation under control) became a paradigm for Cold War waste management. Because these landfills were premised upon a technique of containment and separation, landfill operating procedures often prevented onlookers from seeing most of its contents. Indeed,

waste management innovations of the mid-twentieth century introduced sanitary techniques whereby *cells* (spaces of daily deposit) were covered with soil, clay, and other materials. Being “structurally unique in the built environment...[,] [s]ealed to isolate the polluting materials abandoned in them,” landfills are essentially “huge buried containers” (Thomson 79).¹⁹⁷

When *Underworld*'s chief protagonist and sometime narrator of the polyphonic text Nick Shay views his first landfill in the late 1970s, the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976 has just introduced new sanitary landfill guidelines for the waste management industry after decades of environmental mishaps. These new national guidelines gave the Environmental Protection Agency “the authority to control hazardous waste from the ‘cradle-to-grave’” (“Summary”) including “the generation, transportation, treatment, storage, and disposal of hazardous waste” (“Summary”) because, in part, containment of landfill toxins introduced into the waste stream had become an important issue during and after World War II. Because the initial stages of the site Shay gazes upon, which is located in a desert in the American west, have only just been completed, the site does not yet contain any garbage or waste materials. Faced with the expanse of the landscape cavity, he is “taken by surprise” (DeLillo *Underworld* 285). He continues: “[t]he sight of this thing, the enormous gouged bowl lined with artful plastic, was the first material sign I’d had that this was a business of a certain drastic grandeur, even a kind of greatness maybe” (285). Because the site is empty, merely awaiting the arrival of garbage, Shay is able to describe its visible sanitary apparatus—the plastic liner, a “high-density membrane that was oddly and equally beautiful in a way, a prophylactic device, a gas control-system” (285)—and its vastness as an open space. In describing the landfill’s

lining as a prophylactic, Shay realizes that, as massive containers, landfills perform, as John Scanlan has noted, a kind of “entombment and preservation” of garbage, and that in doing so they have the potential to function as “the time capsules of contemporary society” (Scanlan 142).

Shay’s exegesis on the sanitary lining of the landfill reminds us that by containing waste materials, sanitary landfill operations also, for better or worse, preserve the bulk of the material leftovers of civilization. Though partial and degraded, packaging, disposable objects, junked items, organic leftovers, electronics, and other miscellaneous objects, persist beyond our contact with them. Because they bear the marks of our consumptive practices, these waste materials have the potential to function as cultural documents and even provide information about the culture that has produced it—attitudes, production methods, and value systems. Any given postwar sanitary landfill, then, in containing and preserving these waste materials, might be said to act as a kind of archive of objects and materials discarded during the American Cold War era. While traditionally archives have consisted of official or legal documents, what constitutes an archive today is considerably more ambiguous. The Society of American Archivists, for instance, defines *archives* as follows:

[m]aterials created or received by a person, family, or organization, public or private, in the conduct of their affairs and preserved because of the enduring value contained in the information they contain or as evidence of the functions and responsibilities of their creator, especially those materials maintained using the principles of provenance, original order, and collective control. (Pearce-Moses “archives”)

Concurring with this definition of archive, archivist John Roberts states that an archivist's task is to "save what is historically valuable" (Roberts 70). Upon first glance, garbaged materials and remainders of consumed commodities would not appear to embody or reflect any sort of enduring value—especially when garbage can be defined as "all that anonymous stuff falling between valued objects and simple dust" (Kennedy 7). In fact, these conceptualizations of archiving imply that landfills, in contrast, seem to function as spaces which contain all those materials not considered valuable enough to have been included in an archive. From this perspective landfills act as a kind of supplement to the archive, accepting everything the archive does not consider valuable, and defining the archive in its negative relation (as a non-archive) to it. But since garbage can act, as Gay Hawkins has argued, as a "social text" (Hawkins 2) leading to the logic or illogic of a culture, garbage certainly qualifies as "evidence of the functions and responsibilities of their creator," as the Society definition decrees. Indeed, waste can be important "evidence of the functions and responsibilities of their creator" (Pearce-Moses "archives").

Poststructuralist readings of the archive have stressed its role in conditioning discourses, and thus our perception of history and culture, while at the same time emphasizing its vulnerability and failure to truly compensate for the limitations of human memory.¹⁹⁸ For Jacques Derrida, the archive, which strives to achieve some form of totality, must necessarily fail, for there is always some form of external substrate. As a result, the archive can only structure the way it will be accessed and read, and thus *produces* as much as records events: it is therefore unreliable, fragmentary, discontinuous, and marked by lack and disorder. The acts of searching or maintaining the archive become as a result feverish negotiations with the cultural forces of hope and the

death drive, for the very act of instituting the archive embodies an optimism that it might endure, but an acknowledgement that it must necessarily be destroyed.¹⁹⁹ I suggest this anxiety is in some sense also dimensioned with an anxiety of waste, for if the archive is intent on collecting everything of value, it is equally intent upon jettisoning those objects considered to have no value—thus, garbage and trash are the very materials that are denied archival status, ignored in the fury of archive fever. As such, waste materials are precisely what allows the archive to pose as continuous, total, and organized, for if the archive constitutes at least the attempt at ordering cultural information, the very process of archiving is conditioned by the method of distinguishing the useful from the useless (in archiving the former and disposing of the latter). I am thus looking at what conditions the archive, not the archive itself, and suggest that these discarded materials constitute their own archive. According to this framework, the modern sanitary landfill is itself a kind of anti-archive and an archive simultaneously: landfills are in some sense grotesque inversions of archival spaces because they begrudgingly preserve those objects we wish to see destroyed but which must necessarily remain. Landfill sites thus evoke a different kind of feverish response in those who encounter them, for they confront us with the traces we thought we had erased. In other words, the garbage archive I am trying to posit is located *outside* of traditional archives, a direct result of the fever in Derrida's theory—a theory that, while replete with inferences toward disvalued materials, has yet to be recognized as directly bearing upon garbage.

It is perhaps obvious to suggest that garbaged materials act as traces of previous actions, cultures, attitudes, desires, and pleasures (among other things); an understanding of how these traces relate to us can provide a way into conceptualizing reactions to

landfill sites. Derrida's use of the cinder—which becomes for Derrida the most appropriate figure for his notion of the trace²⁰⁰—while certainly linked most closely to the materiality of language and writing, provides a more evocative image of the trace in relation to material cultural remainders we find in garbage and trash. As a material embodiment of *différance* (and thus the trace), the cinder works by effacing itself at the very moment of its realization; a material paradox, cinders *become* cinders as they are consumed. All that is left is the ash of its process of becoming. Ash, a virtual synonym for garbage²⁰¹ (as garbage is incinerated, it is turned to ash), acts as the residue of presence, and itself cannot be fully erased. Garbage, in constituting the remainders of culture, like cinders, refuse to be effaced but, at the same time, are also refused presence—waste haunts us precisely because it lingers between presence and absence. Derrida's spatialization of the trace in cinders—his entire meditation on cinders as traces is occasioned by his distinction between the phrase “cinders there are” (Derrida *Cinders* 21), and the phrase “cinders *there* are” (22)—reinforces the notion of landfills as away-spaces, places from which individuals are normally spared contact (and even thought), and attests to their ability to haunt us: while landfills allow us to go on about our daily lives with the understanding that these (often toxic) materials have been hidden, destroyed even, they instead help preserve these material traces of cultural production and consumption of ecologically untenable objects and compounds.

The fact that these materials are *still there* afford them a kind of power over us. I suggest such a power is structured upon waste's ability to signify. As a material embodiment of the trace, garbage's textuality makes it function like a document in its ability to contain or provide information. Like the term archive, *document* has been

opened up considerably from traditional meanings in recent years. The Society of American Archivists states that while a document “is traditionally considered to mean text fixed on paper,” it also concedes that the term “includes all media and formats” (Pearce-Moses “document”). For example, while a document can be “[a]ny written or printed work; a writing” (Pearce-Moses “document”), the definition put forth by the society also includes, quite generally, the broad scope of any “[i]nformation or data fixed in some media” (Pearce-Moses “document”). Garbologists William Rathje and Cullen Murphy’s in-depth archaeological studies of American landfill sites have found that consumption habits, cultural attitudes, and demographic information can indeed be gleaned from sifting through and analyzing these preserved remainders. Moreover, the Society acknowledges that even if the information or data a media-object conveys is “not part of the official record” or invokes a “nonrecord” (SAA) it can still be considered a document. This is a definition certainly inclusive of garbage, for it accepts garbage’s status as that which has been disposed from matrices of value (by individuals, institutions, cultural norms, etc) and the archive itself. Thus, as documents, garbage can often be read and interpreted; or, as Melosi puts it, while “[l]andfills become ‘monuments to a disposable culture’; garbage becomes text” (Melosi 32). Indeed, garbage does not simply exist as leftover materials, but also as textual fragments through which one can glean information about human behaviour.²⁰²

But it is precisely garbage’s documentary nature that compels us to remove it from the public eye. What garbage can potentially reveal about an individual, a family, a community, can often be a subject of discomfort with its own structure of anxiety. As such, despite garbage’s persistence—contained, preserved, and archived—the sanitary

landfill is, within the social imaginary, supposed to be a space of historical erasure. This desire for erasure of the material leftovers of cultural consumption and garbage's inevitable persistence in the spaces of sanitary landfills despite such desires colours these sites with cultural anxiety. Landfills can thus also engender a kind of archive fever (*landfill fever?*), for while landfills effectively but unintentionally preserve the remainders of consumer culture like an archive, landfills render these remainders inaccessible, unreadable, and therefore illegible to the public at large. Geographically, these textual and material fragments become virtually inaccessible: since landfills are remote sites of cultural repression, "half-existing zones that no one ever sees" (Scanlan 158) traditionally located on the margins of communities away from centralized spaces, they therefore present limited opportunities for consumers to encounter them. As garbage-texts stored inside landfills can act as documents of cultural periods, synchronic crosscuts of attitudes and consumer practices in history, their potential for signification is violently nullified as the landfill's procedural policies render them illegible. When disposed, garbaged materials thus exist in the slippages between remembered and forgotten cultural artefacts, between knowable and unknowable phenomena.

Once landfills have been finally capped and covered over with soil and earth, these materials are effectively closed off from networks of signification; unlike documents in an archive, on hand and retrievable, garbage is permanently isolated.²⁰³ Unable to be read, these fragmented texts assume a silence which only expresses their inability to act as signs—of materials (of culture, of consumption, of the products they once were), and cultural attitudes (disposable ethos, flagrance, excess). Such reclamation of these zones—turning them into parks²⁰⁴—does effectively re-assimilate these spaces

into the public consciousness, but their occlusion of the garbaged materials underneath the surface of the new parkland further facilitates the concealment of refused cultural artefacts from public view. As the space once allotted for the storage of cultural refuse is reinscribed as useable land space—literally covered over with soil, greenery and flora—devoid of any overt relationship to the remainders of cultural activities which remain underneath, the new space can only promote what Mira Engler calls a *camouflaging* of these sites,²⁰⁵ covering up the past with new surface spatial identity. Veteran landfill restoration specialist Bill Young refers to these spaces as post-consumer landscapes to signify a temporal shift in land usage from consumption to a natural environment. But as the waste-laden landscape of the landfill, spaces once defined by cultural refuse, are replaced with the simulacrum of a natural ecosystem, it is re-modelled to accommodate the very cultural processes garbage and refuse are evidence of: consumption and leisure. Like Marc Auge’s non-spaces, landfills, sites of cultural and historic inscription by nature, when greened, are stripped of the markings of history.²⁰⁶

Consequently, when garbage itself is brought into literature and resurrected from these spaces on a smaller and more intimate level, it is recalled from the silence it assumes underground, and rendered legible. The very nature of garbage—a substance that is always made up of fragments and remainders of things—of course lends itself to being described in all of its gory and grimy details. In another of Don DeLillo’s novels, *White Noise* (1985),²⁰⁷ for example, narrator Jack Gladney looks through his kitchen garbage and disposal unit “item by item, mass by shapeless mass,” and encounters, among other things, “a banana skin with a tampon inside[,]...a horrible clotted mass of hair, soap, ear swabs, crushed roaches, flip-top rings, sterile pads smeared with pus and

bacon fat, strands of frayed dental floss, fragments of ballpoint refills, toothpicks still displaying bits of impaled food” (DeLillo *White* 259). When brought into the space of literature in this manner, the phenomenon of garbage often demands long, visceral descriptions of not only its composition as a whole, as a somewhat indistinguishable mass of objects—John Scanlan puts it nicely when he states that “[g]arbage is the formlessness from which forms takes flight” (Scanlan 14)—but also its constituent parts. Such lingering and descriptive passages detailing the specific contents of a garbage pile acknowledge and speak to the material variety that makes up this thing we refer to as garbage. While giving the author a chance to display his or her descriptive expertise, garbage *en masse* also requires grandiose accounts similar to those epic catalogues of Homer, Virgil, and Milton, which are meant to relate a sense of the breadth and scope of waste’s cultural ubiquity to the reader.

Beyond mere description, the articling of garbage can also become a meditation on the personal implications of the remainders and fragments of consumer activities, archaeological in their importance as cultural artefacts. Reacting to the eerie legibility of the waste—he feels “like an archaeologist about to sift through a finding of tool fragments and assorted cave trash” (DeLillo *White* 258)—Gladney expresses his fascination with these objects as personal, self-defining articles through a series of (somewhat rhetorical) questions: “Is garbage so private? Does it glow at the core with personal heat with signs of one’s deepest nature, clues to secret yearnings, humiliating flaws? What habits, fetishes, addictions, inclinations?” (259). His archaeological study of his family’s garbage thus brings out its curious textuality, the way garbage can signify, and fascinates Gladney with the ways it represents some kind of forgotten or

unrecognized personal expression. DeLillo's garbage list curiously invokes and subverts Walt Whitman's catalogue of the self's myriad multitude of fragments, feelings, and contradictions, and capacity to continually (re)fashion himself.²⁰⁸ In narrating Gladney's task in this way, DeLillo effectively parodies the Whitmanian catalogue of the self in emphasizing how much discarding garbage, what he calls in the passage the "dark underside of consumer consciousness" (259), has an under-recognized importance in the self- or identity-making process.²⁰⁹ Thus, while we contain multitudes, as Whitman puts it, we also *discard* a multitude of material objects, which are equally a part of what constitutes the self.²¹⁰

In this passage from DeLillo's *White Noise*, Gladney is forced to realize that once we discard these multitudes of by-products and cast-offs, they are sent to circulate elsewhere beyond our apprehension of them—as a result, they not only evade our attention, but somehow haunt us with their absence. Paused in the garbage bag on their way to the sanitary landfill, these materials are fascinating and somewhat terrifying for Gladney precisely because they have yet to become fully released from his family's home and thus their possession. In this grotesque space between the home and the landfill, these materials are revealed to be disruptive of the binary of personal and collective: produced by the Gladney family, these items are about to be shipped away and added to the piles of garbage produced by others. The list of the Gladney's garbage is thus also significant for Gladney (and DeLillo and us) because it has been interrupted on its route to the zones outside of commerce, consumption, labour and leisure—the places we have sanctioned these materials to exist, the places we do not care to think about. As Gay Hawkins has noted, the ways we conceptualize our products omit any consideration of their material

persistence beyond our consumption of them: in her words, “[t]he magical qualities of the commodity obliterate its origin and its final destination” (Hawkins 29). She continues, “[e]xternal systems of removal from garbage trucks to sewers have dramatically reduced the demands waste makes on us. It simply gets taken ‘away,’ and while we know generally where it goes, the invisibility of these places, their location underground or on the margins of cities, facilitates denial or active not knowing” (Hawkins 16). Piling artefact upon artefact, piece of junk upon bit of rubbish, the garbage catalogue in literature also gestures towards these spaces of cultural denial, and forces us to consider our own implications in collective garbage accumulation.

But there is also something else at work in these literary depictions of waste materials and dumping grounds—another kind of affect best captured in Sianne Ngai’s concept of the “stuplime” (Ngai 277). While encounters with garbage shock us due to their occasional ability to call to our attention the massive spaces of their management, we can also become stricken with a kind of paralysis with regard to our response to garbage. Gladney’s awe in *White Noise* at the personal dimensions of what he and his family have discarded—supposedly released from their care and sent to be managed—is also tempered by a curious exhaustion: these artefacts, or at least their remainders, mire him in their complexity and their brute form as muck, prompting from him a tedious attempt to cognitively assimilate all of these materials. Garbage lists produce in Gladney (and by extension the reader) an affect of “stuplimity” (Ngai 271), an emotional or affective paralysis engendered by the holding together of “shock and exhaustion” (271). Stuplimity is brought on by “a tension that holds opposing affects together” (271), and culminates in an “indeterminate affective state that lacks the punctuating ‘point’ of an

individual emotion” (284), a kind of “neutral” (284) and thus stupefying openness. While Ngai is specifically speaking about art and a decidedly aesthetic response—especially the *language* of mire, banal repetition, tedium—and does not reference garbage specifically (she does gesture towards muck) garbage produces a similar affect. What could be more banal and tedious than household garbage or municipal waste management? What could be more shocking than the site of one of civilization’s enormous storage facilities for its discarded and refused objects? In other words, it forces us to *read* garbage whilst also considering the ways these materials have been made illegible in the spaces they must ultimately end up. When and if we do encounter these spaces of refusal, we are thus wrought by this tension between their massiveness and the utter tedium of the materials of which it consists.

While, as its name suggests, stuplimity invokes the sublime, its balanced tension between shock and boredom, between awe and exhaustion, does not lead to a kind of transcendence: stuplimity “reveals the limits of our ability to comprehend a vastly extended form as a totality...yet not through an encounter with the infinite but through an encounter with finite bits and scraps of material repetition” (271). A natural landscape like The Grand Canyon or Niagara Falls might produce a kind of Kantian moment of mathematical sublimity, whereby we are confronted with the infinite and transcend our own limitations and subjective positions; on the contrary, on its own, garbage in most contexts merely confronts us with the quotidian, for garbage is something we create, engage with, and dispose of everyday. However, when garbage is presented to us *en masse* as a conglomeration in a landfill—in a dumping ground, in a pile and perhaps even in a bag as Jack Gladney’s stuplimity testifies—the vastness of garbage shocks us at the

same time that its constituent material parts mire us in their heterogeneity—we are thus left in a state of stupefied confusion and brought to a kind of paralysis: we do not know quite how to react. It is precisely because we are forced to disregard these spaces that they hold such power over us. As Scanlan notes, garbage “disappears *outside* into a different ‘space’—a space that is beyond self-perception and out of sight. And such is the location, where, unsurprisingly, it easily becomes invisible” (Scanlan 135). Located away from our spaces of leisure, consumption, labour, and commerce, landfills exist as unseen and forgotten spaces and, when encountered, produce an affect of stupor.

In her critique of Fredric Jameson’s discussion of the postmodern fragmentary aesthetic, Ngai takes issue with his reading of the concept of a heap as being a mere throwing-together of fragments; she instead suggests that a heap can cohere and even achieve a kind of unity. Jameson’s heap of fragments (a postmodern response to the crisis of historicity and the waning of affect, the latter Ngai attempts to challenge as well), is thus defined by privation, a lack of wholeness. Ngai’s heap, on the other hand, is marked by a positivity, an accrual of fragments, a potential for something more than its existence as constituent parts.

While she cites the post office, the laundry, agricultural sites, and the office as examples of productive heaps—heaps as *organizations*—I find it fascinating that she omits the trash, rubbish, or garbage heap. Indeed, the garbage heap—and even more so the sanitary landfill, in its methodical approach to containing garbaged materials—assumes a kind of coherence in being an indistinguishable mass of objects. Moreover, not only constituting themselves, as deposits of disowned and unvalued objects (or fragments thereof), landfills and dumping grounds take part in the active constitution of society as a

whole—they function as structuring and ordering spaces which allow civilization to exist. As Scanlan notes, garbage is “the background against which we *make* the world” (9) and he astutely points out that “our separation from it is the very thing that makes something like a culture possible” (9). In this negative way, landfills are *productive*. Yet while we recognize the role they play in our ordering of society, we do not desire to see them, for we do not wish to be confronted by the remnants of cultural production and consumption. Moreover, in their very enormity, we simply cannot assimilate these spaces into our cognitive framework.

Thus, in *Underworld*, DeLillo works to restore the textual and productive nature of garbage by emphasizing the ways sanitary landfills as marginal zones force garbaged materials into the space of illegibility, and in doing so, play a crucial role in allowing our societies to function. When thematizing garbage, DeLillo attempts to reclaim the landfill’s camouflaged cultural existence (to use Engler’s phrase), by reasserting the textuality of garbage, re-grounding forgotten histories in material realities and re-embedding garbage within a network of social relations. Waste’s illegible status prompts, for example, *Underworld’s* garbologist, Jesse Detwiler, to make the following argument:

I don’t think you ought to be isolating these sites [landfills]....Bring garbage into the open. Let people see it and respect it....Make an architecture of waste. Design gorgeous buildings to recycle waste and invite people to collect their own garbage and bring it with them to the press rams and conveyors. Get to know your garbage. (DeLillo *Underworld* 286)

One way of working through the trauma of garbage’s unassimilability and liminal existence in the cultural imaginary, Detwiler suggests, is to make it *visible*. Bringing

garbage into the open would force communities to embrace what Paul Gleason calls (in reference to Detwiler's sentiments) a "semiotics of waste" (Gleason 130), and recognize its productive role in our culture. As Elizabeth K. Meyer suggests, parks on top of landfills should "make visible the past connections between individual behaviour, collective identity, and these larger industrial and ecological processes" (Meyer 64). Similarly, DeLillo stresses the ways landfills need to be recognized, assimilated as cultural spaces and phenomena. In other words, as an unread archive, landfills should be made legible to the culture at large so that their value, importance, and content can emerge.

4.3 *Pulped Fiction*

While DeLillo's *Underworld* exposes the productive role of landfill sites in maintaining Cold War culture while at the same time tracing the ecological implications of their history, the novel also reveals, though somewhat inadvertently, that literature itself cannot disentangle its own materiality from landfill's toxic ecologies—specifically through its thematic use of paper. For not only is the novel obsessed with garbage, it is also preoccupied with paper, littered with references to magazines, notes, books, documents, paper cups, product packaging, paper tissue, and newspapers. For instance, the third-person omniscient narrator of the opening section—a lengthy dramatization of Bobby Thompson's famous 1951 homerun known as "the shot heard round the world" that won the New York Giants the pennant—remarks on the phenomenon of recreating a game of baseball from a "piece of paper filled with letters and numbers" (DeLillo *Underworld* 25); a school kid becomes well known in his class for eating the pages out of

his history textbook; chief protagonist and sometime narrator Nick Shay uses paper tissue to clothe his prize possession, a baseball that may or may not be the ball hit by Thompson in the 1951 pennant game.²¹¹ Nick Shay in particular is acutely attuned to paper materials because of his job as a waste management consultant and so-called “waste-analyst” (804), and descriptions of Shay’s profession and his relationship to waste certainly account for much of the novel’s interest in paper. In fact, the novel, as Nick’s industry does, links paper materials with waste: as a disposable product, paper is indeed a considerable component of municipal waste streams,²¹² and as Nick’s industry develops over the decades following the postwar period, it becomes an important part of municipal recycling programs. On a number of occasions, Nick even describes in great detail the diligent ways he and his wife, as waste conscious consumers in the 1990s, organize their paper waste for recycling.²¹³

The novel’s famous opening section²¹⁴ makes the most extensive use of paper as a waste product. Set at the Polo Grounds during Thompson’s famous homerun, stadium fans celebrate the event by throwing “torn-up scorecards and bits of matchbook covers,...crushed paper cups, little waxy napkins they got with their hot dogs” (16) into the stands and onto the field, creating what the narrator calls a “contagion of paper” (38) as it moves about in droves “rolling and skittering in the wind” (33). To emphasize its ubiquity, DeLillo provides an even longer list of the paper materials:

It is coming down from all points, laundry tickets, envelopes swiped from the office, there are crushed cigarette packs and sticky wrap from ice-cream sandwiches, pages from memo pads and pocket calendars, they are throwing faded dollar bills, snapshots torn to pieces, ruffled paper swaddles for cupcakes,

they are tearing up letters they've been carrying around for years pressed into their wallets, the residue of love affairs and college friendships, it is happy garbage now, the fans' intimate wish to be connected to the event, unendably, in the form of pocket litter, personal waste, a thing that carries a shadow identity—rolls of toilet tissue unbolting lyrically in streamers. (44-5)

While these myriad paper products, from everyday objects of ephemera to valued and valuable cultural artefacts, are given a brief new use in this celebration, the fact that these paper materials must turn into garbage once the event has ended, bagged and managed by stadium janitors, and sent to the newly opened *Fresh Kills Landfill* on Staten Island, is also apparent.

Fond of lengthy descriptions,²¹⁵ it is likely DeLillo took considerable care in providing a comprehensive and varied collection of paper-made articles to use in this catalogue. What I find curious in his description of the revelry is what has been omitted. I wonder: did the author's own medium not cross his mind? Nowhere in this description does DeLillo once mention the pages of a paperback, a hard-cover, a romance novel, a pocket book, a dime-store novel, a comic book, a volume, a periodical. Perhaps, one might argue, people simply do not bring books to sporting events. This may be true. But is it any more likely they would instead bring office envelopes, photographs, and love letters? Perhaps, one might argue further, those who may have had pocketbooks on their person at a baseball game would consider them to be too valuable to destroy—to *waste*—in the thrill of the moment. Yet, if the baseball fans are so enraptured they can tear up money, paper bills, things of monetary value, then would common, everyday books be so inviolable a commodity? In fact, a *Life* magazine figuring prominently in DeLillo's

thematization of the event (an image of Breughel's *The Triumph of Death* printed in its pages becomes for J. Edgar Hoover, in attendance at the game, an ominous portent of the Soviet Union's increasing adeptness with nuclear weapons, a fact he has just been informed of), comparable in price to a cheap paperback at the time, is torn to shreds and becomes part of the celebratory scene. But while there are countless examples of paper products more appropriate and believable to see in the stands of the Polo Grounds than a book, since *Underworld* itself is a literary text, a book, a bound collection of papers—and not a small one at that with its eight-hundred and twenty-seven pages—it is interesting that DeLillo did not think to include the material book in his description of the falling paper at the Polo Grounds.

For that matter, of all the paper waste in the entire novel, not once does DeLillo implicate the material book in his descriptions of garbage. How can we account for this omission? Perhaps the book did cross his mind. Perhaps books' paper materiality made perfect sense but including an example of it in the destructive ecstasy of fandom would submit *the book* to too much violence. Or perhaps DeLillo's acknowledgement of where a trashed book would end up engendered anxiety at the thought of its final resting place. In some sense, referring to books as material garbage foregrounds the unsettling notion of literature's unavoidable degradation into garbaged materials. If this is the case, then garbage bags, trash cans, dumps, and landfills, represent spaces of anxiety for fiction because they inadvertently confront literature with the eventuality of its own material destruction. While Walter Moser has compellingly argued that references to garbage in literary texts represent a kind of self-thematization,²¹⁶ fiction seems curiously reluctant to address its own relationship to dumps and landfills. Instead of depicting landfills as

wastelands where textual remainders are degraded and deteriorated, texts often figure spaces of disposal as sites of recovery, places from which one can reclaim junked items that can then be put to new and novel uses—in short, an originary space of images and inspiration for literature.

A.R. Ammons, for example, begins his long poem with the unexpected notion that “garbage has to be the poem of our time because / garbage is spiritual” (Ammons 18).²¹⁷ Garbage may be figured as poetic because it is spiritual, but perhaps also because it is textual, fragmentary, and imagistic. In fact, the speaker analogizes the poet’s mind (as a repository for the stuff of fiction) with dumping grounds, noting, “There is a mound, / too, in the poet’s mind dead language is hauled / off to and burned down on, the energy held and / shaped into new turns and clusters” (20). For Ammons, garbage represents not only material refuse, but cultural materials waiting to be recycled into poetic or literary images. As Michael Thompson sees rubbish as the condition of economic possibility, as Hawkins sees garbage in its potential for an ethical framework of identity, and as Scanlan (in some ways) sees waste as productive in its function in determining knowledge, Ammons recognizes garbage is merely, from his perspective, a state of transition.

In contrast with sanitary landfills, the modernist garbage dump symbolized cultural degeneration as unsanitary, open-faced spaces of bio-degradation. The ash heaps of F. Scott Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby*, for example, are significantly located near the site of Daisy’s act of manslaughter and embody the interzone separating morally corrupt West Egg and the road to Manhattan. A depository for the remnants of incinerated waste materials, the valley of ash is described as a “dismal scene” (Fitzgerald 16), a “solemn dumping ground” (16), thus tainting the New York landscape with both the materials of

used-up objects and the residues of the processes of incineration. As such, the space constitutes “a fantastic farm where ashes grow like wheat into ridges and hills and grotesque gardens; where ashes take the forms of houses and chimneys and rising smoke and, finally, with a transcendent effort, of men who move dimly and already crumbling through the powdery air” (16). From this perspective, waste itself is a sign of modern meaninglessness exacerbated by rampant consumerism, and provides justification for nostalgia for a golden age of the Western past. Though they exist to unburden public spaces of trash and waste materials, ash heaps and dumping grounds, as overflowing storage facilities for the remainders of modernity’s production cycles, offer an illusion of order. Pushed to the margins of society, these spaces only help in constructing the illusion of stabilized civil organization.²¹⁸

It is indeed not accidental that the waste management industry shift from garbage dump to sanitary landfill coincides with the emergence of postmodern conceptualizations of these spaces as sites of recovery. As the waste management industry’s containment of materials rejected by society became symbolic of those voices marginalized by patriarchal, centralized discourses of Western capitalism, postmodern concerns with eccentric or marginal historical and cultural phenomena were receptive to the refused and discarded materials of culture. Those authors highlighting silenced genders, ethnicities, and minorities working against the dominant cultural metanarratives of historical discourse sought to bring overlooked and undervalued objects and voices to the centre of popular consciousness.²¹⁹ Resistant to the notion of stable, unified, and all-encompassing metanarratives, DeLillo’s *Underworld* focuses on the sanitary landfill as an embodiment—in the physical and psychological landscapes of American culture—of the

dislocated and under-valued voices of marginalized histories, what he calls “counter-history[ies]” (DeLillo “Power” 63) discarded from dominant discourse and histories. As such, garbage becomes a site of potential and possibility for new voices, uses, and narratives.

As Steven P. Schneider notes, the speaker of *Garbage* reveals the very form of the poem, the long poem, suggested itself because Ammons’ search in the local library for books on garbage disposal turned up nothing: the empty space of the page became a metaphorical dumping ground for the mass of entangled ideas Ammons wanted to express—to, as Schneider puts it, “‘dispose’ of both the clutter in his life and its meditative recollections” (Schneider *Widening* 221). Moreover, the impetus for the poem’s content originated, Ammons tells us in an interview, from his physical sighting of a landfill sight in Florida.²²⁰ Thus, instead of representing the end of literature, the space of fiction’s deterioration, landfill space is finessed in the poem as “the gateway to beginning” and “the portal / of renewing change” (Ammons 28). As objects of change and potential, and as cultural remainders—objects that have been used and discarded by someone—garbage becomes a cultural repository from which authors of fiction can draw. Bringing the space of the landfill into the space of poetry becomes in this instance a kind of ouroborosian closed circuit of renaissance in which literature does not have to consider or contend with its material end. This cycle of change Ammons articulates between poetry and the refuse of cultural production and social interaction does not include literature’s own material embodiment in paper: certainly ideas and images are recycled over and over again, but the physical artefacts within which these images reside are not articulated as part of this loop of exchange.

Critics like Spiegelman have argued that in poems such as *Garbage* and *Sphere* (another long poem by Ammons about the earth), Ammons exhibits attitudes towards the relationship between man and the environment which make him assume the role of “the poet as ecologist” (Spiegelman 52). Yet Ammons himself has shrugged off such notions. In the early 1990s he stated, “[m]ost people are reading me as some kind of nature poet but they are not hearing the concerns” (Schneider “Interview” 330). Thus, while one might construe Ammons’ neglect of the materiality of literature to stem from some latent environmentalism, a kind of shame at the ways paper texts have used up vast amounts of tree resources or the contribution paper makes to landfill sites, this is not the case. In fact, when interviewer Schneider brings up the fact that for part of his career in the 1970s, Ammons wrote many of his poems on “mimeographed paper that had been used on one side” (329), or what Schneider calls “trash paper” (329), Ammons dispels the notion that his choice to do so was based on “environmentally conscious” (329) reasoning, and admits it was only for practical reasons. Ammons was, instead, more concerned with the ways the materiality of paper would condition his writing. For instance, after using mimeographed leftovers for some poems, Ammons turned to using adding machine tape, a paper substance upon which he composed *Garbage*.²²¹ The slender, inches-wide limitations of the strip imposed certain boundaries on his poetic iterations and meditations in their length and punch, almost like, to carry Ammons’ own metaphor further, a sanitary landfill cordons off cells of daily deposits of waste. In fact, that *Garbage* is composed of only one long, single sentence, separated after each idea with colons, suggests that both the poem—as one continuous sentence—and the materially continuous paper surface of the adding machine tape, evokes not only the sanitary landfill

as an open space upon which to dump his poetry, but also the endless one-way movement of the urban waste stream. Thus, not only does the poem take its images but also its form from the garbage dump.

Like Ammons, DeLillo also riffs on the generative powers of cultural detritus where fiction is concerned. Brian Glassic's scene at the *Fresh Kills Landfill* on Staten Island with which I began this chapter becomes almost a structure in miniature for the entire novel: Glassic, like DeLillo, constructs a narrative out of cultural remainders by imagining stories related to the flicks and glints of garbage materials peeking out of the topsoil. As a waste management industry professional, Glassic might be expected to gloss over these specks of materials; however in this scene, his careful eye picks out details within the landfill soil, and uses them for his fictional fancies. As he looks at the surface, “[s]pecks and glints, ragtails of color appeared in the stratified mass of covering soil, fabric scraps from the garment center, stirred by the wind, or maybe that teal thing is a bikini brief that belonged to a secretary from Queens, and Brian found he could create a flash infatuation, she is dark-eyed and reads the tabloids and paints her nails and eats lunch out of molded Styrofoam, and he buys her gifts and she gives him condoms” (DeLillo *Underworld* 185). It is as if these materials, though only partially in view, demand to be interpreted, to be utilized, to be origins of narrative. In fact, after seeing the grandeur of Fresh Kills, the entire garbage industry becomes for him a challenge: he feels compelled “to understand all this. To penetrate this secret” (185). In other words, Glassic's meditation on the debris of rags and fabrics prompts him to conceptualize these garbaged materials—even or especially those underneath the clay covering—as objects of documentation, each with a material history, and a historical narrative involved in the

object's use and eventual discarding. Classic knows, as Ammons does, that even if his fiction about the girl and his relationship with her were real that all of these objects “end[] up here, newsprint, emery boards, sexy underwear, coaxed into high relief by the rumbling dozers” (185).

Because it is expressed through the medium of paper, literature is a disposable product, mass-produced by an industry, and oriented towards, ultimately, either a library, an archive, or a landfill, where the material medium of literature is sent when it has ceased to have value. When texts represent zones of landfill disposal sites they evince an exploration into the very limitations of literature as a physical, material medium, and apostrophize the horizons of literature's own status of value and being. To narrate or thematize the garbaged contents of a landfill in the space of literature, then, is to narrate the primary space of the medium's own destruction.

In fact, literature has always had its material associations with garbage. Before wood pulp became an industry standard for the construction of paper materials, between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries most paper was created out of recycled rags (*Conserve*). With a recycled material as its medium, literature was, essentially, printed on reclaimed waste materials. Only after rag shortages in the middle of the nineteenth century did the paper industry start to look for other paper-making options. As wood pulp became a viable alternative, the industry began to harvest the American landscape's then vast tree resources for the making of paper and paper products. But even after this industry shift, some fiction was still associated with garbage. Indeed, there is a certain irony that just as the publishing industry was beginning to move away from the production of books via the garbaged materials of rags to paper made from wood pulp did

the burgeoning dissemination of so-called *pulp* magazines and literature begin its associations with *trash culture*. Pulp fiction, the genres of detective, crime, and horror stories of the 1930s and 1940s so named due to their production on pulp paper, a cheaper form of wood-pulped paper economically feasible for mass-production, was deemed unreadable and unfit for popular consumption by commentators critical of its content. It was thus associated with trash or garbage. “[T]ypically lurid or sensational in nature,” the Oxford English Dictionary (“pulp fiction, *n.*”) tells us, the term *pulp fiction* generally refers to “any popular or sensational writing that is regarded as being of poor quality” (“pulp fiction, *n.*”). These magazines and books belonged, according to this perspective, not in the libraries and bookshelves of cultured citizens, but the garbage cans, and thus the garbage dumps as well.

Thus, while fiction had been materially released from its relationship with garbage, the new generic fiction for the masses was associated with garbage for its low standard of literary quality, its degenerative subject matter, its trashy content. The term *pulp* thus played a dual role in referring to both the type of cheap paper that made economic sense for mass-dissemination (and thus debased to cultural critics), and also the “soft, moist, formless substance or mass of material” (“pulp, *n.*”) paper degrades into over time in a landfill. But what the allocation of low or mass literature to the status of garbage obfuscates is the reality that even the material books of high literature end up as garbage as well.

As Walter Moser notes, “the text is not the book, but the text depends on the book as its material support and technical realization. The material alteration or even destruction of the book might also alter or destroy the text” (Moser). Thus the materiality

of the text will ultimately lead to what he calls “the becoming-garbage of the printed artifact” (Moser). When literature, he continues, brings garbage and waste materials into the space of literature—even recyclable materials—we can think of the phenomena as a kind of self-thematization of the media on which literature is based and therefore dependant: literature itself becomes subsumable under the category of garbage and trash. To take Moser’s fascinating argument further, landfill sites render literature’s own material vulnerability apparent, the process of *becoming garbage* is actualized in landfills, where they live out their remaining days as degraded, eroded, and illegible texts. Literature’s fascination with the textuality of garbage and landfill and dumping spaces speaks to a morbid fascination with literature’s own end, which represents its ultimate material garbaging, and thus its own ultimate silence. Literature’s end in the postwar period is thus defined by a material existence in a space of silence, where texts and garbage mingle together, waiting to be read, only to be silenced by the sanitary processes of postwar waste management.

Outside of the spaces of fiction, how might ecocriticism reconcile this apparent obfuscation of literature’s role in the make-up of landfill space, or for that matter, its toxic implications? If books do end up in a landfill, despite the ways these texts evince active refusals of such realities, there are indeed interesting and important implications in terms of literature’s role in ecological matters. Eminent ecocritic Cheryll Glotfelty defines ecocriticism broadly in the introduction to her collection *The Ecocriticism Reader* as, “the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment” (Glotfelty xix). Such a statement could engender (at least) two interpretations—ecocritics should focus on the representational aspects of literature and its relationship to the

environment—what is imagined, represented, and depicted *through* the art form of literature; or, ecocritics should investigate the relationship between literature’s physical materiality (paper, the book) and the environment. (Or, of course, one could explore both interpretations.) Ecocritics have tended to privilege the former interpretation (I mean of the ecocritical task and not necessarily Glotfelty’s definition). Richard Kerridge, for instance, similarly suggests the ecocritic should “evaluate texts and ideas in terms of their coherence and usefulness as responses to environmental crisis” (Kerridge 5). To frame texts as responses to environmental crisis potentially obscures the fact that they too can be implicated in such crises.²²²

To understand an alternative view, we need to return to Jacques Derrida, who has interrogated literature’s material relationship to the environment through the back door. To expose literature’s vulnerability to the elements and time, he uses as a metaphor the central narrative of the Cold War: the possibility of atomic annihilation. His discussions of the archive, most prominently in his essay “No Apocalypse, Not Now (Full Speed Ahead, Seven Missiles, Seven Missives)” (1984) and *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression* (1995), suggest that the archive (and the fever which it engenders) is in fact conditioned by the very real fear of its irrevocable destruction. In Derrida’s estimation, the event of nuclear war itself can never be experienced as such and can only be “fabulously textual” (Derrida “Apocalypse” 23) because it can only be represented textually in advance, for the actual event of nuclear holocaust in effect means nothing less than the “total and remainderless destruction of the archive” (27).²²³ Thus the nuclear event conditions not only the very grounding of the archive, lingering in the background (or the *foreground* to be precise) to haunt the archived materials with its possibility, but

literature itself. But in some sense, Derrida's textualizing of nuclear war is also a rhetorical technique employed to expose the ways literature is, and always has been, susceptible to a totalizing self-erasure, due to its status as a discourse which "produc[es] and then harbor[s] its own referent" (27). Thus, Derrida's use of nuclear war is both literal and metaphorical, for he argues that literature itself has always been *nuclear* in that it has always been wrought with an anxiety surrounding its complete and total destruction. The anxiety of the landfill represents, I think, a more pressing, though anti-climactic, problem for literature. While indeed the continual production of literature and books defers the ultimate erasure of literature outside of a nuclear holocaust, the degradation of the materiality of texts represents a more gradual literary apocalypse. While Derrida's version of apocalypse does not allow for any remainders, the ends of literature are in fact conditioned by the material books' turning to waste. Outside the paradigm of nuclear annihilation, such as the one outlined by Derrida and nuclear criticism, literature's end is instead a gradual entropy, which also implicates it more closely with long-range ecology than immediate annihilation.

That the publishing industry before the mid-nineteenth century (if we can call it an industry at that historical moment) had for centuries recycled old rags and clothing into paper meant it manifested a kind of waste-conscious ecology. This was not engendered, however, by any ecological motives. Rags were simply the best resource, and most plentiful in terms of its need for printing books and its availability. When the paper industry shifted from rags to wood pulp due to a shortage of rag materials, literature became implicated in environmental ecologies in new and different ways. Of course it has to be mentioned that, most obviously, the paper industry has had an

indelible effect on the natural tree resources of the world. But there have also been chemical side effects at the level of paper production. As wood pulp paper is produced the pulp materials are bleached with chlorine to give it its white hue, and to reduce the levels of lignin in the wood, an organic substance which must be eliminated in the production of paper.²²⁴ During this process harmful chemicals in the form of chlorinated organic compounds are dispersed as by-products. For example, dioxins and furans released during the process do not break down when released into water and can often affect food chain ecologies when consumed by aquatic life. In 1985 the Environmental Protection Agency labeled dioxin “the most potent carcinogen ever tested in laboratory animals” (*Conserve*). In fact, close to one thousand organochlorines are produced during the bleaching process vital to paper production, most of which have not been tested or studied in terms of their effects on health and the environment.

At the other end of paper’s production cycle, waste paper, in its form as degraded paper products or mushed back into pulp through landfill processing, also takes part in toxic ecologies. As paper can transmit signs, ideas, and narratives in the form of book, pulp can also transmit hazardous materials and toxins into the atmosphere, becoming a “contagion of paper” (DeLillo *Underworld* 38) and literalizing DeLillo’s metaphor from. Since old books become materially entangled with cultural remainders in a sanitary landfill—household cleansers, pesticides, industrial wastes sent to municipal landfills—fiction’s material form takes part in the landfill’s overall effect on the environment. Not only does paper mingle with other, potentially dangerous or hazardous materials, embodying toxicity as it absorbs these chemicals into its materiality, but paper can also become an agent releasing chemicals and gases into the atmosphere. For instance, when

paper biodegrades, as an organic material, it releases methane, a potent greenhouse gas. Methane is in fact a large problem for landfill operators, as it is highly flammable, and a burden on the environment—methane trapping and filtering systems are mandatory in the U.S. Even after landfills are converted to green spaces, systems of methane collection and release are still necessary, as piping networks are set up beneath the newly established ecosystem to filter the methane released from biodegrading paper and paper products, including books. In addition, as an organic material, paper is also a prime candidate for incineration. Along with plastic, paper is “highly conducive to mass burn technologies” (Blumberg 212). In the early days of incineration, the gases produced during the process of burning garbage were merely released into the air, without thought to their potential ecological effects. But by the 1950s, state and federal laws began to clamp down on incinerator pollution. As incinerators changed with environmental consciousness, either incinerators were closed down, or ecological modifications were made.²²⁵ In some modern incinerators, exhaust is not released into the atmosphere, but channeled into power generators.²²⁶ Along with other paper materials, books thus become material for fuel, as many landfill power generators can generate at least enough power to run the incineration plant (and there can often be a surplus). But while literature’s remains might be put to this positive ecological use, fumes of paper exhaust also represent the exhaustion of literature’s potential for signification. Like the book burnings of Ray Bradbury’s *Fahrenheit 451* (1953), where institutions running the government track down and burn books as an attempt to destroy the knowledge they do not control, incinerated literature evokes a Derridian (exaggerated to be sure but present nonetheless) horror of the ultimate erasure of the literary archive.

Can an economy which promotes the recycling of paper alleviate paper, and thus the book's, burden on the environment? In *Underworld*, though paper embodies disposable culture in its ephemerality, it is also a prime candidate as a recyclable material. As Shay and his granddaughter visit a recycling facility in Phoenix, he meditates on the implications of turning garbage into reusable materials for industrial production. "[I]nside the vast recycling shed," he says,

we stand on a catwalk and watch the operations in progress. The tin, the paper, the plastics, the styrofoam. It all flies down the conveyor belts, four hundred tons a day, assembly lines of garbage, sorted, compressed and baled, transformed in the end to square-edged units, products again, wire-bound and smartly stacked and ready to be marketed. (DeLillo *Underworld* 809)

As products again, recycled garbage—here paper is named explicitly—sheds its status as garbage and becomes a useable (and valuable) resource. Instead of disintegrating or being incinerated, paper is offered the chance to be turned once more into the pulpish substance it began its paper life as. But DeLillo makes the point that as garbage materials gain a new life as material resources, they also become embedded in new circulations of exchange. Indeed, the waste industry has found a new and profitable niche in recyclable materials. Recycled objects are, as Shay notes, “products again” (809), “units” (809) to be sold back into the systems of production, ultimately serving the modes of mass-consumption. In other words, recycled along with these materials is the productive and consumptive practices of disposable cultures.

In DeLillo's estimation, landfills have cultural weight, while recycling plants merely sort materials for their re-entry into the processes of production.²²⁷ Here in the

epilogue, DeLillo turns to a third landfill site so as to contrast it with the recycling plant. It has been closed, “jammed to capacity, but gas keeps rising from the great earthen berm, methane, and it produces a wavering across the land and sky that deepens the aura of sacred work. It is like a fable in the writhing air of some ghost civilization, a shimmer of desert ruin” (809-10). DeLillo’s fire and brimstone descriptions of the landfill differ from the images of renewal of the recycling plant. At the same time, the space evokes a *sacred* dimension, for it will remain into the future underground despite what happens to the surface of the earth. The recycling plant, in contrast, does not get the same treatment. Here the waste does not invoke spirits of the past, but “the unsorted slop, the gut squalor of [people’s] lives” (810). Shay even displays a kind of respect for the landfill site. “Maybe we feel a reverence for waste,” he muses, “for the redemptive qualities of the things we use and discard. Look how they come back to us, alight with a kind of brave aging” (809). While it is of course not the most ecologically sound site, the sanitary landfill has the paradoxical ability to redeem culture in the same way that the archive, in its housing of the knowledge and artefacts of a culture, is supposed to—landfills will be some kind of evidence that human beings have been here, monuments to our civilization.

Surprisingly, books do not even make it into *Underworld*’s recycling plant. Yet spread out in the epilogue’s compartmentalized narrative—in which narrator Shay jumps from topic to topic, paragraph to paragraph—are meditations on book collecting. Amidst Shay’s hindsight assessment of his life, the waste management industry, and the Cold War, he intersperses descriptions of his relationship to bookshelves. The first such description interestingly follows a paragraph on his job as a waste analyst in the 1990s in which he explains his role as an advisor on the “vacated military bases” now out of use

after the end of the Cold War (turned to wastelands), which are, ironically, “being converted to landfill use” (804). He is also involved, he adds, in a nuclear waste disposal initiative, in which “a bunker system under a mountain in Nevada...will or will not accommodate thousands of steel canisters of radioactive waste for ten thousand years” (804). Following this topic of landfills and nuclear waste, he states,

I rearrange books on the old shelves and match and mix for the new shelves and then I stand there looking. I stand in the living room and look. Or I walk through the house and look at the things we own and feel the odd mortality that clings to every object. The finer and rarer the object, the more lonely it makes me feel, and I don't know how to account for this. (804)²²⁸

After his reference to nuclear waste's persistence, Shay moves to the subject of collectible books, which, along with the other objects, are said to have an “odd mortality” (804) about them, drawing an implicit parallel between the durability of radiation, and the relative ephemerality of paper: while nuclear waste persists, paper and books degrade and become unreadable, and both substances take part in their own relationships to the landscape.

CONCLUSION

RESIDUES

Throughout this project, *residue* has been a central concept for understanding the material implications of garbage, trash, waste, refuse, junk, and detritus. Whereas these latter six terms refer to the objects and things that have been managed spatially, through being cast aside, thrown away, and disposed of, the concept of *residue* underlines the temporality of garbaged materials and their legibility as archival materials related to the American Cold War project. While the discourses of convenience set up domestic spaces, and especially kitchens, as pre-sanitized zones free of garbage, Judith Merrill's *Shadow on the Hearth* (1950) and Richard Yates' *Revolutionary Road* (1961) reveal not only that residual garbage was in fact a significant domestic problem, but that the acts of disposal, though fraught with Cold War gender politics, were vital to obscuring waste's importance to the Cold War project. As Robert A. Heinlein reveals in *Farnham's Freehold* (1964), the unique Cold War architecture of the backyard fallout shelter, subject to a logic almost diametrically opposed to kitchen spaces—a quick dismissal of garbage was substituted for a temporary domestication of waste and material residues within the sealed, underground space—posed a similar critique of Cold War discourses of order and waste management. As garbage made its way into public spaces, litter became a trope not only in the photographs of Charles Fenno Jacobs and Cold War visual culture at large, but also science fictional perspectives of future American landscapes produced by Cold War conflicts; the novels and short stories of Philip K. Dick revealed explicitly how the ontology of garbage had changed: while waste had always been linked with the past, it

was now implicated in material futures. If this is the case, what does reside and still linger from the Cold War period? What are the residues of the Cold War?

After discussing in chapter four the ways the new modern sanitary landfill was created specifically to contain the Cold War residues that have persisted into the present moment, some toxic and many of the sites ecologically unsound, I now conclude with a reflection on the temporal dimensions of Cold War residues. Defined by the OED as “[t]he remainder, the rest; that which is left” (“residue, *n.*”), the term *residue* refers not only to what has been cast aside, but what continually *remains* as well; produced in the past, residues *are* residues because they stick around, endure, and persist into the future indefinitely. As literary representations of waste management channeled waste through the spaces of Cold War daily life—the kitchen, the speculative space of the fallout shelter, and the public spaces of the urban and suburban middle-class—a new kind of waste-consciousness emerged, providing an alternative way of looking at waste materials. In formulating waste materials as residues, the texts I have explored embodied and promoted an emergent waste gaze in contrast to the dominant cultural paradigms of Cold War containment, consensus, and normality, which sought to marginalize and elide them. From this perspective, trash can thus be seen not just as materials symbolic of social marginalism, but the disavowed center of the accepted world.

Our cultural mandate in the west has been since the nineteenth century to organize waste materials.²²⁹ To do so, we sought first to spatialize these materials, separating them from the spaces of leisure, commerce, labour, and transit. After the introduction of synthetic chemicals and hazardous industrial wastes in the middle of the twentieth century, industry officials created modern sanitary landfills because garbage had become

not only a spatial problem, but a temporal one: sites of disposal were constructed to accommodate not just the spatiality of garbage, but the temporality of residues, for as waste materials became less likely to bio-degrade, they evolved into objects of *long-term* management. Cold War science fictional representations of future American landscapes foresaw and represented the lingering effects of these material residues and even at times meditated on their ecological implications. In doing so, the speculative fiction of Robert A. Heinlein, Philip K. Dick, and Walter M. Miller, traced the future material impact of the Cold War, as garbage and its related phenomena were shown in various fictions to persist into future American histories. Now, at the same time that Cold War waste's toxicity renders it harmful to modern ecologies, garbage can also be read as an important archival resource that indexes the period's perspectives on waste, its cultural norms, and ultimately its toxicity.

This project has shown that throughout the order-making process of Cold War organization, garbage was collected, managed, stored, and in some sense cared for. It assumed the status not only of cultural refuse, but also of cultural residue. But while certainly these material remainders persist, so too persists the question, what then do we do with these material remainders? One strategy that has proven unproductive has been to ignore them. Until emergent environmentalism entered the mainstream in the late 1960s and 1970s, garbage, the material residues left over from our acts of consumption, our acts of determining value, or our acts of merely throwing something away, were routinely dismissed. As Greg Kennedy notes, trash "as a phenomenon...tends always to disappear—into black plastic bags, out-of-the-way landfills, incinerators, into the depths of the ocean and Third-World processing plants" (Kennedy 52). Similarly, John Scanlan

argues that garbage is always “pushed into these half-existing zones that no one ever sees” (Scanlan 158). But since the early Cold War period, after the rise of modern environmentalism, new alternatives have been introduced. I ended the last chapter discussing, for instance, the emergence of the American initiatives of waste recycling as a response to the mounting material build-up of garbage during the Cold War. While I argued that disposable paradigms remained despite the reduce, reuse, and recycle initiatives of the 1980s—the so-called waste hierarchy—recycling has indeed become a dominant cultural ideology, regardless of whether or not it has become environmentally or economically beneficial. In fact, Gay Hawkins has argued that recycling should be seen outside of economy, for it is socially and ethically beneficial: she says, “[y]our waste and what you do with it can be a source of cultural capital or moral condemnation” (Hawkins 95). In taking up the residual materials, breaking them back down into their material components, and manufacturing new products out of them, recycling engages with residual materials by putting them back to work.

But while I may have been focusing on the material residues of the Cold War in this dissertation—their production, their disposal, their legibility—there are also always cultural residues at play. In the OED’s formulation, the idea of residue encompasses a broad range of phenomena—both material and abstract, both physical and psychological. Indeed, immaterial by-products can be considered residue as well. The OED definition suggests that residue, as a “[t]he remainder, the rest[,] that which is left” (“residue, *n.*”), can also refer to cultural phenomena. Thus, alongside material residues, we also experience and negotiate with cultural residues.

I want to take up this notion of cultural residues with a return to Fredric Jameson. Jameson has argued that the dominant logic of postmodernism hinges, in part, upon a continual recycling of the narratives, forms, and aesthetic styles of the past. His version of the technique of pastiche requires an acknowledgment of the things left behind only to restage, reuse, revisit, and recycle them, for it is “like parody, the imitation of a peculiar or unique, idiosyncratic style, the wearing of a linguistic mask, speech in a dead language” (Jameson 17). Because Jameson is totalizing in his assessment of the postmodern present, in which all signs to history have been incorporated into postmodern cultural production, he attempts to efface the notion of the residual in discussing the postmodern moment: “the postmodern must be characterized as a situation in which the survival of the residue, the holdover, the archaic, has finally been swept away without a trace. In the postmodern, then, the past itself has disappeared (along with the well-known ‘sense of the past’ or historicity and collective memory)” (Jameson 309). While perhaps Jameson is right to suggest that postmodern aesthetics engages with residues through constant repetition by representational means—its way of simultaneously dealing with but also engendering the so-called “crisis in historicity” (Jameson 22)—it is also crucial to recognize at the same time the material residues left behind as well. Jameson does invoke the “residual traces of modernism” (xvi) and the “residuality of the modern and its values” (xvi) when interrogating the term *postmodernism*, but solely, it appears, in relation to aesthetic modes and representational forms. But while the *post* in postmodernism may refer “to time or order” and in the most usual sense of being “[u]sed adverbially with the sense ‘afterwards, after, subsequently’” (“post-, *prefix*”), this dissertation has shown that while referring to an after, the *post* also necessarily signifies

and harbors *residues* as well—of not only the aesthetics of *modernism*, but the junk and detritus of *modernity* as well.²³⁰

In the *post*-Cold War period, ecology and environmentalism have become dominant cultural paradigms. But just as the material garbage that has been discarded has never been quite fully removed from our consciousness, nor disappeared from the nation's landscape, old habits and attitudes toward waste remain as residues as well. Raymond Williams has argued that as dominant cultural ideologies change and are dislocated by emergent ideologies, the previous dominant modes often remain as what he calls “residual” (Williams 605) paradigms, ideologies, and cultures. Residual cultural paradigms are not just “that which is wholly recognized as an element of the past” (605), but those cultural elements and phenomena that are still present and practiced “on the basis of residue...of some previous social and cultural institution or formation” (605). “The residual,” he notes further, “by definition, has been effectively formed in the past, but it is still active in the cultural process, not only and often not at all as an element of the past, but as an effective element of the present” (606). Thus, while some residues merely *reside* into the future, others still *resonate*: while they linger, they also continue to inform the present moment.

As the new discourses of environmentalism, the new world order, and globalization emerged as dominant paradigms in the 1990s, it may have appeared as if Cold War cultural norms had been dismantled and disintegrated. But this is of course not the case. In this regard, my project has aimed to contribute to recent cultural histories which have debated the extent to which the Cold War has in fact ended.²³¹ But whereas what may be described as end-oriented scholarship has focused on the discursive

hauntings of neo-imperialism in contemporary wars on terror, my intervention has been with the material ends—the residues—that persist. In fact, new hegemonic ideologies, try as they might, simply cannot erase, elide or completely efface these residual cultures, and can only allow them to continue without trying to assimilate them. While the events of September 11, 2001 seemed to bring back Cold war rhetoric and terminology and adapt it to post-911 anxieties about terror, the events only served to expose the ways the Cold War had only appeared to be effaced, and instead lingered in residual forms. The same discourses of anxiety and consumption and nuclear preparedness (both discussed in chapter two) were not only intensified but refashioned to fit the new paradigms, as many commentators noted.²³² This project has sought to reveal the ways that as dominant, hegemonic paradigms are replaced by emergent discourses, material trash becomes an important document from which to tease out the conflict between these discourses. As a residual material itself, it lends itself to making cultural habits, desires, attitudes, and ideologies legible.

In closing, I want to briefly revisit the notion of *residue* by looking at its linguistic prefix, *re-*, a prefix that has fronted many of the terms I have been using and reusing throughout this conclusion. *Re-* signifies, the OED tells us, “the general sense of ‘back’ or ‘again’” (“*re-*, *prefix*.”); in other words, it encapsulates a reference to the ways something in the past—a material, an abstract phenomenon—or the past itself is somehow brought back into the current moment. Thus, when the prefix “*re-*” is attached to a verb, it denotes the “action [signified by the verb] itself is performed a second time, and sometimes that its result is to reverse a previous action or process, or to restore a previous state of things” (“*re-*, *prefix*.”). That we revisit this prefix in our language so

often, applying it to countless verbs and actions throughout our cultural milieu, suggests that not only are we obsessed with the past, but that our language bears the residual traces of this obsession as well (for instance, note the definition's use of the *re-* prefix three times in result, reverse, and restore). In fact, the term from which residual comes, "reside" is itself a splicing of the *re-* prefix and the verb which means 'to sit'—to *reside* means to return to sit or stay. Similarly, the noun *remain* also makes use of the *re-* prefix in reference to those phenomena that refuse to go away. Our linguistic preoccupations tell us that while we attempt to forget, discard and ignore the past, we feel compelled to continually revisit it. We recycle our old narratives, reuse leftover materials, and restage past events.

But as we revisit the narratives of the past, we need to recognize not only how these phenomena once resonated, but how they still might resonate. My cultural materialist and ecocritical approach to literature and cultural artefacts has in this dissertation attempted to take into consideration not only the material relationship between the landscape, the environment, and human culture, but the ways we continually revisit, restage and recapitulate the cultural ideologies of the past as well—even as we move beyond them. In terms of the study of waste and garbage, plenty of work remains to be done. I suggest we continually re-read these archival spaces, these texts, to locate what refuses to go away, to reflect upon the ways the past still influences our current behaviours. Only if we reinterpret the residues, remember what has been discarded, and recognize what lingers as cultural and social residues, can we continually renegotiate fiction's relationship to garbage. As John Scanlan rightly notes, "we are our leftovers, and that garbage—far from being spent or used-up—presents an alternative version of

‘reality’ and does not entail, as the verb ‘to consume’ suggests, the exhaustion of possibility” (Scanlan 143). Crucially, in re-interpreting our past through literature and cultural artefacts, ultimately we should recognize the past as a means of gaining insight into our coming future.

Notes

¹ Langley, the younger of the two, it was reported, was sometimes seen “rummage[ing] in a garbage can or collect[ing] trash in an alleyway” (“Strange” 49).

² The six productions are as follows: Mark St. Germain *The Collyer Brothers At Home* (1980) by; *The Gentlemen of Fifth Avenue* (1983) by James Penzi; *The Dazzle* (2000) by American playwright Richard Greenberg; *Clutter: The True Story of the Collyer Brothers Who Never Threw Anything Out* (2004) by Mark Saltzman; *Samlarna (Collectors)* (2005) by Lotta Lotass; and *Hermitage: The Strange Story of The Ghost Men of Harlem* (2009) by Frederick Andersen.

³ Steketee and Frost’s *Compulsive Hoarding and Acquiring: Therapist Guide* defines the “disorder” as a “profound inability to discard material items that are no longer useful, can result in sever disruption of interpersonal relationships, threats to health, and even death in some extreme cases from the dangerous accumulation of ‘clutter’” (Steketee vi). In the last decade, hoarding has also become somewhat of a popular culture phenomenon, as reality television shows like A&E’s *Hoarders* and The Learning Channel’s *Hoarding: Buried Alive* and books like Gail Steketee and Randy O. Frost’s *Stuff: Compulsive Hoarding and the Meaning of Things* (2010), Randy O. Frost’s, *Buried in Treasures: Help for Compulsive Acquiring, Saving, and Hoarding* (2007), and Michael A. Tompkins and Tamara L. Hartl’s *Digging Out: Helping your Loved One Manage Clutter, Hoarding and Compulsive Acquiring* (2009), have brought the condition mainstream recognition.

⁴ Interestingly, the neighbourhood children used to refer to them as ghost men due to their bizarre and eccentric behaviour. See Franz Lidz's *Ghostly Men: The Strange But True Story of the Collyer Brothers and My Uncle Arthur, New York's Greatest Hoarders (An Urban Historical)* (2003).

⁵ See *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression* (1995).

⁶ The so-called Cold War consensus was a multifarious concept, but its key components were the values associated with liberal, democratic freedom, which were packaged to be performed on a national level to display American standard of living to the rest of the world in contrast with Soviet Communism. Richard A. Melanson sums it up as a consensus of values that was supposed to define an American national identity, including "liberty, individualism, popular sovereignty, and equality of opportunity" (Melanson 10). The ideological consensus was also linked with the emergence of a new affluence in the postwar period. Excess consumption—in contrast to Soviet asceticism and deprivation—became an important practice because individual affluence meant national well-being. Beatrice Colomina has suggested that a "lifestyle of prosperity and excess...was the main weapon in the Cold War" (Colomina, "Hothouses" 16). Daniel Horowitz emphasizes a cross-pollination between spheres unique to the Cold War period, pointing to the "growing link between capitalism, democracy, and consumption" (Horowitz 8) as an organizing principle behind the Cold War consensus. Clifford E. Clark Jr. framed the consensus in these terms: "One of the most remarkable features of post-World War II America was the rise of an unprecedented consensus which saw

affluence as the core of a new order. Politicians celebrated the new abundance, and...intellectuals have often feared its conformist aspects” (Clark 171).

⁷ Alvin Gouldner referred to this emergent group of white, middle-class Americans as “the New Class” (Gouldner 11)

⁸ As the *Life* article states, people already thought Langley (the more public brother) was crazy because “he never threw anything away” (“Strange” 49).

⁹ Traditional entrances and exits were blocked with refuse.

¹⁰ There is no general consensus regarding a precise moment we might point to as the beginning of the Cold War. Some critics have suggested the dropping of the nuclear bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 constitute its beginnings, while others point to Winston Churchill’s “Iron Curtain” speech of 1945, while still others suggest that only with the Soviet Union’s development of nuclear capabilities in 1949 did the tensions truly begin (for a further discussion see *American Cold War Strategy: Interpreting NSC 68*). Rather than picking one precise moment, I acknowledge the importance of all of these events in what certainly conditioned the Cold War, and suggest that the cultural climate of the late 1940s was already being affected by the political agendas of American foreign policy. Thus, while the deaths of the Collyer Brothers was hardly a *Cold War* event, I want to highlight the cultural climate within which their deaths was situated. Throughout this dissertation I use the terms *postwar* (as in post-World War II) and “Cold War” somewhat interchangeably because the politics of the Cold War had virtually become an organizing principal for postwar American society and culture (see for example Brandon

Hookway's essay "Cockpit," Annmarie Brennan's essay "Forecast," and Laura McEnaney's *Civil Defense Begins at Home: Militarization Meets Everyday Life in the Fifties*) and infused American society and cultural production with ideological narratives and political imperatives (See Alan Nadel's *Containment Culture: American Narratives, Postmodernism, and the Atomic Age*, and Beatrice Colomina's essays "Cold War / Hothouses," and "Domesticity at War"). Thus, while *postwar* is a term of historical periodization and *Cold War* a term to describe the geopolitical milieu of the postwar era, I follow these critics in suggesting that cultural production and American sociality was intimately linked with the American Cold War agenda.

¹¹ The Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan were twin initiatives instigated by the Truman Administration to show political support for any groups aiming to achieve American style, liberal democracies and to fund European postwar reconstruction respectively. Because of the developing postwar tensions between the victors of the Second World War (the U.S. and the Soviet Union), the Truman administration passed the National Security Act in 1947, which created the National Security Council and modified the Office of Strategic Services into the Central Intelligence Agency. The task of the newly formed NSC was to council the president's office on foreign relations, while also providing assistance on initiatives aimed at national security. The creation of the council was, in part, prompted by the Deputy of Chief Mission to the USSR George F. Kennan's "Long Telegram" of 1946, which was wired to Washington from his diplomatic trip to the Soviet Union of that year. In the telegram, Kennan outlined what he

believed to be Soviet intentions on advancing communist, anti-capitalist principles of revolution throughout the world at the expense of American foreign and domestic interests. Many of the NSC's policies between its inception and 1950 were founded upon the observations and recommendations in both Kennan's initial telegram, and an edited version of the telegram, "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," made public in *Foreign Affairs* magazine, July 1947. Kennan's telegram and article, positing for the first time in the postwar period the imperative of containing Soviet expansion, emphasized the Soviet's ability to increase production—of military and industrial infrastructures—on massive levels, and became the basis for National Security Council memo 68, a defining document of American foreign policy and the Cold War. For more information, see *American Cold War Strategy: Interpreting NSC 68*.

¹² Nadel's concept of cultural containment involved a systematic approach to cultural and social phenomena in which any abnormal threats to an established normality were contained through strict discursive binary oppositions in popular narratives. See *Containment Culture: American Narrative, Postmodernism, and the Atomic Age* (1995).

¹³ See Martin V. Melosi's *Garbage in the Cities: Refuse, Reform, and the Environment* (2005).

¹⁴ John P. WcWilliams frames Melville's attitude as a "dismissal of the past" (127). See *Hawthorne, Melville, and The American Character: A Looking-glass Business* (1984).

¹⁵ Interestingly, while it may appear upon first glance as though T.S. Eliot's "The Waste Land," must certainly make central thematic use of waste and garbage in its meditation on the decay of European civilization simply by virtue of its title, the land of waste in the poem is framed not in terms of a landscape strewn with trash, but a *barren* space, devoid of cultivation and renewal, semantically appropriating the term "waste" from its definition as an "[u]nhabited (or sparsely inhabited) and uncultivated country; a wild and desolate region, a desert, wilderness" ("waste, v."). Eliot uses *waste* as a term is used to give modern Britain and continental Europe the physical characteristics of a piece of land that has become overgrown due to a lack of attention and no implementation of order; indeed, there are, surprisingly, no references to material waste in the poem. The contemporary cultural waste land in the first section of the poem is defined by a ground of "stony rubbish" (Eliot 1431) where the cultural roots and of the past cannot flourish, and not a zone littered with cultural detritus. In fact, the speaker refers to an absence of garbage in third section of the poem, *The Fire Sermon*, as the Thames River, the speaker laments, "bears no empty bottles, sandwich papers, / Silk handkerchiefs, cardboard boxes, cigarette ends / Or other testimony of summer nights" (1435). Similarly, the "heap of broken images," the speaker "shore[s] against [his] ruins" (1443) are the fragmented and lamented ideals of the past civilizations, and not a conglomeration of material cultural fragments.

¹⁶ There have been a number of studies on the specific sub-genre of "Cold War" fiction or literature, with varying approaches, but none have considered an environmental

or ecocritical approach to Cold War fiction. Thomas Hill Schaub's *American Fiction in the Cold War* (1991) articulates what he sees in American fiction as a liberal retreat from politics stemming from the emerging New Left's political skepticism after World War II. Arne Axelsson's *Restrained Response: American Novels of the Cold War and Korea, 1945-1962* (1990) sees a similar "restrained response" to the major political events of the Cold War period, marked by a turn to domestic novels and fabulism. Marcel Cornis-Pope's *Narrative Innovation and Cultural Rewriting in the Cold War Era and After* (2001) focuses on the connection between the Cold War and emergent postmodernism, but only in terms of narrative form and experimentation.

¹⁷ See *The Linguistic Turn* (1967).

¹⁸ Jacques Derrida and many of his deconstructive or poststructural contemporaries, for example Paul DeMan and Jonathon Culler, investigated the ways that postmodern literature foregrounded the very problems of representation as a strategy.

¹⁹ Here I refer to the poststructuralists again, but also critics like Linda Hutcheon and her discussions of metafiction or Raymond Federman's analysis of what he calls "surfiction" (another name for what has become known as metafiction). See *Narcissistic Narrative: The Metafictional Paradox* (1980) and *Surfiction: Fiction Now and Tomorrow* (1975) respectively.

²⁰ See Jean Baudrillard's *Simulacra and Simulation* (1985).

²¹ See "The Bakhtinian Road to Ecological Insight."

²² See *Ecocriticism* (2004)

²³ Fredric Jameson and Andreas Huyssen are the most notable critics. See *Postmodernism, Or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (1991) and *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism* (1986), respectively.

²⁴ See *Against the American Grain* (1962).

²⁵ See Lyotard's *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (1979).

²⁶ See *American Science Fiction and the Cold War: Literature and Film* (1999).

²⁷ See *Fictions of Nuclear Disaster* (1987)

²⁸ See *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (1973).

²⁹ See *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969).

³⁰ See *Postmodernism, Or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (1991).

³¹ See his chapter "Nostalgia for the Present" from *ibid.*

³² See Brandon Hookway's essay "Cockpit."

³³ See his chapter "Totality as Conspiracy" from *The Geopolitical Aesthetic: Cinema and Space in the World System* (1992).

³⁴ The acronym stands in for the phrase, "WE AWAIT SILENT TRISTERO'S EMPIRE" (Pynchon 139).

³⁵ William H. Whyte used the *organization man* epithet to name and define a type of business ideology adopted by the middle class emerging in the postwar period, whereby "between themselves and organization they believe[d] they [would] see an

ultimate harmony” (Whyte 4). The suburbs came to exemplify the organization man’s desire for organization, in its architecture and its urban planning.

³⁶ Recent analyses of African American ecologies include Paul Outka’s *Race and Nature from Transcendentalism to the Harlem Renaissance* (2008) and Kimberly K. Smith’s *African American Environmental Thought: Foundations* (2007). Despite the provocativeness of their approaches, it is beyond the scope of this project to investigate the racialization of trash.

³⁷ See Michel Foucault’s *The Archaeology of Knowledge* and Jacques Derrida’s *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*.

³⁸ The death drive is “above all anarchivic...or archiviolithic. It will always have been archive-destroying, by silent vocation” (Derrida *Archive* 10).

³⁹ Richard Klein also remarks on its totalizing assessment of nuclear war: “Nuclear Criticism determines the specificity of what it calls total nuclear war in so far as it is, potentially, a burning of practically everything, including memory. The difference [between the Nazi killing of six million Jews and nuclear war according to nuclear critics] is one between destruction on a vast scale that is collectively survived, archivally remembered, and politically mourned, and a total burning—a true holos-kaustos—in which no public survival, no collective recollection, no institutional mourning, remains” (Klein 78). See his essay “The Future of Nuclear Criticism.”

⁴⁰ See Derrida’s essay that inaugurated nuclear criticism, “No Apocalypse, Not Now (Full Speed Ahead, Seven Missives, Seven Missiles)” (1984).

⁴¹ She notes that “the notion of the sublime is continuous with the notion of nuclear holocaust: to think the sublime would be to think the unthinkable and to exist in one’s own non-existence” (Ferguson 7), and that essentially the nuclear sublime “operates much like most other versions of the sublime, in that it imagines freedom to be threatened by a power that is consistently mislocated” (9).

⁴² Reading only the ecocritical aspects of waste and its relationship with the environment misses the social and cultural aspects of waste; by the same token, reading only the formal aspects of waste—its materiality, its composition—misses the ecological and social effects of trash; reading only the aesthetic aspects of trash—its function within literature—in turn neglects these other approaches.

⁴³ Since William Rueckert (possible inaugurator of the term *ecocriticism*) and his 1978 essay “Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism,” ecocritics have investigated the ways human interactions with the environment have been represented.

⁴⁴ For example, Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring* (1962) positions itself within a critique of Cold War chemical production. For discussions of Rachel Carson’s own Cold War rhetoric, see Cheryl Glotfelty’s essay “Cold War, Silent Spring: The Trope of War in Modern Environmentalism,” and Ralph Lutts’ essay “Chemical Fallout: Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring*, Radioactive Fallout, and the Environmental Movement.” Also, Lawrence Buell’s discussion of “toxic discourse” (Buell 639) makes specific reference to the rhetoric of contamination that dominated domestic discourse during the Cold War (metaphorically in the case of the Red Scare and literally in the language of Carson’s

critique of corporate America's rampant pollution), though he suggests such rhetoric did not originate during the Cold War. In addition, Spencer R. Weart, moreover, treats what he calls ecocatastrophical fear, an anxiety about coming environmental disasters, specifically as an offshoot of Cold War nuclear fears. See *Nuclear Fear: A History of Images* (1988).

⁴⁵ Michael Thompson's early approach to junk and garbage emphasized an economical reconsideration of the value of wasted objects. See *Rubbish Theory: The Creation and Destruction of Value* (1979).

⁴⁶ Gay Hawkins has found an ethical role for garbage in the ways we choose to manage and interact with it while constructing our individual and collective identities. See *The Ethics of Waste: How We Relate to Rubbish* (2006).

⁴⁷ John Scanlan sees an important role for garbage (in terms of knowledge but also materially) in our understanding of the world and our role in it. See *On Garbage* (2005).

⁴⁸ Greg Kennedy's ontological study of waste seeks to position *trash*, a decidedly modern and technological garbage, against our conceptualizations of *waste*, which he distinguishes from trash as a more traditional and organic material. In Kennedy's astute hypothesis, he argues that the introduction of trash has worked to obscure our conceptualizations of waste, eradicating our subjective value-decisions of what constitutes a valued or de-valued object.

⁴⁹ Julian Stallabrass argues that trash can provide grounds for critiques of industry and capital “by unmasking the symbolic pose of the commodity as a sham” (Stallabrass 417). See his essay “Trash.”

⁵⁰ John Scanlan provides a chapter on garbage’s status as that which we have repressed, and links it to the uncanny as well. In terms of repression, it is clear that the ways we repress our garbage has changed since the introduction of the modern environmental movement in the 1960s, and the subsequent recycling initiatives of the 1970s and beyond. See Gay Hawkins for further discussion of the ways waste has been, in some ways, domesticated since the 1970s. This project focuses on a time before such moves to domesticate and recycle waste had taken hold in the popular imagination—in the immediate postwar period people were still repressing their intimate relationships with their waste materials.

⁵¹ See his essay “No Apocalypse, Not Now (Full Speed Ahead, Seven Missives, Seven Missiles)” (1984).

⁵² A landmark Cold War event, the exhibition was “[d]esigned to inform the general public of the cultural and scientific accomplishments of the opposing world power” (Larner 25).

⁵³ See Gary Donaldson’s *The First Modern Campaign: Kennedy, Nixon, and the Election of 1960*, page 67.

⁵⁴ See below for a discussion of the relationship between the nuclear button and the buttons of household appliances and gadgetry.

⁵⁵ Kaplan rightly notes, “[i]f domesticity plays a key role in imagining the nation as home, then women, positioned at the center of the home, play a major role in defining the contours of the nation and its shifting borders with the foreign” (Kaplan 582).

⁵⁶ For an in-depth study of the quasi-militarization of the American home, see Laura McEnaney’s *Civil Defense Begins at Home: Militarization Meets Everyday Life in the Fifties* (2000). See also Beatrice Colomina’s essay, “Domesticity at War.”

⁵⁷ See the introduction to this dissertation for a discussion of the various forms of Cold War containment.

⁵⁸ Many commentators have remarked on the ways the foreign policies of the Truman Administration (and throughout the Cold War and beyond) represented a veiled imperialism. See, for example, Christian G. Appy’s *Cold War Constructions: The Political Culture of United States Imperialism*. At the time, the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan were both seen by the Soviets as evidence of an implicit imperialism. See, Richard B. Day’s, *Cold War Capitalism: The View From Moscow, 1945-1975*.

⁵⁹ Laura McEnaney suggests that after World War II, the nation was defined by a socio-cultural environment in which “neither demobilization nor total militarization,” were in place; instead, a climate of “‘national security,’ a term and concept broad enough to accommodate both eager and reticent cold warriors” (McEnaney 4) prevailed. American citizens were therefore placed in a liminal state of peace shadowed by the possibility they might be attacked with nuclear weapons by the Soviet Union. In promoting home protection from nuclear attack, the Federal Civil Defence

Administration and governmental initiatives provided “a security program that domesticated war and made military preparedness a family affair” (McEnaney 4).

⁶⁰ See Alan Nadel’s *Containment Culture: American Narratives, Postmodernism, and the Atomic Age*.

⁶¹ Lupton and Miller refer to modernity’s need to keep the waste moving as a general “process of elimination” (Lupton 41), as waste materials are systematically forced across spaces so as to keep them conducive to activities, including consumption. See *The Bathroom, The Kitchen, and the Aesthetics of Waste: A Process of Elimination*.

⁶² See note 6.

⁶³ Indeed, the Cold War garnered associations with science fiction soon after World War II due to the nuclear bomb’s prominence in its discourse and the ways the Cold War itself was ostensibly oriented towards the possibility of a future conflict. As such, a thematic entanglement can be seen between the science fiction genre and the Cold War. See David Seed, *American Science Fiction and the Cold War: Literature and Film*; and M. Keith Booker’s *Monsters, Mushroom Clouds, and the Cold War: American Science Fiction and the Roots of Postmodernism, 1946-1964*.

⁶⁴ See the chapter, “A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century” in her book, *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*.

⁶⁵ For a discussion of Betty Friedan's relationship to the Cold War, see Daniel Horowitz's essay, "Rethinking Betty Friedan and the Feminine Mystique: Labor Union Radicalism and Feminism in Cold War America."

⁶⁶ In their essay, "Rugged Domesticity: Frontier Mythology in Post-Armageddon Science Fiction by Women," Newell and Lamont argue that "[s]ince, in cold-war culture, middle-class women were primarily responsible for the production of normalcy, the savage war transforms them into domestic soldiers" (Newell and Lamont 427). In some ways, as femininity became militarized in the Cold War, the Cold War, and war itself, became feminized. For a discussion of ways the nuclear bomb was feminized in public discourses, see Newell and Lamont.

⁶⁷ Harriet Rosenberg, in her essay "The Kitchen and the Multinational Corporation: An Analysis of the Links between the Household and Global Corporations," goes as far as arguing that a kind of corporate imperialism had taken place in American homes, where the kitchen labour of women was linked to corporate agendas.

⁶⁸ See June Freeman, *The Making of the Modern Kitchen: A Cultural History* (2004).

⁶⁹ See Daniel Horowitz's *The Anxieties of Affluence: Critiques of American Consumer Culture, 1939-1979* (2004), and Freeman, 26.

⁷⁰ Corporate entities analyzing market fluctuations and the purchasing habits of consumers like military situations began to systematize even private spaces by conceptualizing the cultural practices of consumption through the languages and concepts

of systems, a kind of “professionalization of warfare” through “systematization of intelligence” (Hookway 24). While the “lines between the government, industry, and science were forever blurred” in the Cold War period, “woven together to fabricate a single complex—a huge organization working with similar methodologies toward a common objective” (Brennan 63), a heightened consumption of mass commodities became a dominant Cold War ideology, and the home consumer soon became a locus not only of consumption, but also productivity: what consumers did in their homes affected the larger systems of circulation and exchange.

⁷¹ See Brandon Hookway’s essay, “Cockpit.”

⁷² The mechanized systemocentrism of the Cold War kitchen did not appear out of nowhere. In fact, the history of the modern American kitchen until the postwar period can be read as a continual progression from being a mechanocentric space—in which the efficiency of the kitchen was organized according to human-appliance interface—to a systemocentric space in the Cold War period. As kitchen planners and designers began to advertise and publish floor plans, blueprints, guides, books by domestic specialists like Catharine Beecher (1800-1878) and Christine Frederick (1883-1970), and articles in magazines like *The Ladies Home Journal* (1883-present), *Better Homes and Gardens* (1922-present) *The American Home* (1925-1977), the lived space of the American private kitchen was increasingly abstracted to incorporate the influences of industry professionals and experts in terms of organizational configurations and modes of practice. Most historians of domestic spaces locate the beginnings of the modern American kitchen in

Catharine Beecher's innovative dissertations on the spatial organization of kitchen appliances and materials between the 1840s and '60s. She published her discursive illustrations of kitchen efficiency and offered rough blue-prints and floor plans of orderly, systematized kitchen designs for those who could afford to think about remodelling kitchen space in their homes in books like *A Treatise on Domestic Economy* (1842) and *The American Woman's Home* (1869), co-authored with her sister, abolitionist and author Harriet Beecher Stowe. Decades later in the 1910s, Christine Frederick, editor of the *Ladies' Home Journal* and *Home Economics*, applied Frederick Taylor's principles of scientific management to kitchen space. The Frankfurt Kitchen designed with Taylor's principles in mind in the late 1920s and other kitchens of efficiency found their greatest application to date in the Cold War fitted kitchen, where garbage and waste management were crucial components of maintaining and even constituting kitchen spaces. For more kitchen history see Freeman, and Lupton and Miller.

⁷³ For a fascinating look at the ways Soviet kitchens functioned in a similar manner—as ideologically charged spaces with material and psychological Cold War ramifications—but within a communist framework, see Susan E. Reid's essay "The Khrushchev Kitchen: Domesticating the Scientific-Technological Revolution."

⁷⁴ It was estimated that five million homes would be needed by 1950 to accommodate returning soldiers (both *Shadow's* Jon Mitchell and *Revolutionary Road's* Frank Wheeler are former GIs) and suburban expansion (and generally, a new postwar

affluence), and that a further 12.5 million more would be needed by the end of the decade. These statistics are from Rene Chow's book, *The Fabric of Dwelling*.

⁷⁵ Roger Silverstone, for example, has noted an "intimate and dissoluble link between suburbia and buying" (Silverstone 8).

⁷⁶ Taking note of such postwar developments, neo-Marxists like Lefebvre and David Harvey were beginning to theorize the ways free market capitalism based on economic growth relied on spatial dispersion in the early 1960s, and Michel Foucault was about to pronounce that the 1960s would "perhaps be above all the epoch of space" (qtd. in Tang 236).

⁷⁷ The film includes a textual guide at the bottom of the screen to inform viewers of the amount of time that has gone by since the bomb's detonation.

⁷⁸ Laura McEnaney's "[a]tomic housewifery" (108) refers to the ways the Federal Civil Defense Administration and government officials constructed and prescribed a mobilized femininity on the home's domestic front, where housework became militarized and important for the maintenance of the Cold War cultural consensus. See *Civil Defense Begins at Home: Militarization Meets Everyday Life in the Fifties* (2000).

⁷⁹ See Linda Eisenmann's *Higher Education for Women in Postwar America, 1945-1965* (2006).

⁸⁰ See note 35.

⁸¹ In terms of Cold War masculinity, Michael P. Moreno argues that "Cold War economic reforms of production and consumption confined the traditional frontier spirit

of the white American male to the domestic sphere” (Moreno). Susan Faludi has theorized Cold War masculinity in relation to William Whyte’s organization man; she suggests a domestication of postwar masculinity through corporate organization. See, *Stiffed: The Betrayal of the American Man* (1999). Kyle Smith notes that masculine attempts to escape the confines of the domestic realm during the Cold War was a restaging of the “perennial American male narrative of the hero’s flight from domesticity” (Smith 106).

⁸² There have been a number of paradigm shifts regarding how feminine or gender politics were played out in post-World War II American homes. The emerging second-wave feminism of the late 1950s and early 1960s focused on the physical and psychological oppression of females in domestic roles, and how media images perpetuated such roles; Betty Friedan’s *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) and other such books serve as an example of this perspective. Subsequent re-evaluations of Friedan provided evidence that women often played political and activist roles in their homes and communities, yet did not receive recognition for such activities. Further analyses extolled the need to distinguish between the different experiences of women, in relation to their class, ethnic, and social subject positions. As of late, some critics have adopted the view that, as Stearns notes, popular culture “revealed anxieties and uncertainties about domestic ideology and gender roles—uncertainties often overlooked by historians. They argue that films, television programs, and rock and roll from the 1950s presented contradictory messages about a woman’s proper role in society” (Stearns 530). In fact,

“gender ideology in the 1950s was not simply an overwhelming and omnipresent discourse demanding conformity to the domestic ideal” (530), but “popular culture from the 1950s reflected a deep ambivalence Americans felt about the gender roles in the postwar years” (531). I adopt the latter position. For a concise summary of these four different modes of analysis, see Peter N. Stearns, “The Way to a Man's Heart: Gender Roles, Domestic Ideology, and Cookbooks in the 1950s.”

⁸³ Gary Cross has argued that while the entire notion of the suburbs was a male construct in many ways “[f]eminists have defined suburban space as an extension of the artificial division of the public and private wherein women were confined to the limiting roles of home and motherhood” (Cross 116).

⁸⁴ Sandy Isenstadt argues that even the refrigerator, in terms of its material presence as an electrical appliance used to store incoming groceries and goods, was “dissolved by...its spectacularization” and remaining was “a vision of plenty” (Isenstadt 311)—its mechanical and technological mechanisms were obscured by the discourses of home economics, which framed the refrigerator not as an appliance, but a “window on to a larger landscape...of material abundance and prosperity” (317).

⁸⁵ See Isenstadt. Kitchen companies like *Frigidaire* linked their products with architectural modernism specifically in their mode of “concealing equipment” (Isenstadt 313)

⁸⁶ See Richard Shusterman’s *Bourdieu: A Critical Reader*.

⁸⁷ For a discussion of the ways the suburban home was figured as a space ship in popular discourses, see Lynn Sigel's essay, "From Theatre to Space Ship: Metaphors of Suburban Domesticity in Postwar America."

⁸⁸ See Kathleen Anne McHugh, *American Domesticity: From How-to Manual to Hollywood Melodrama* (1999).

⁸⁹ Gladys thinks nostalgically about the kitchen in other situations as well. In fact, only hours after their kitchen activities have kept their mind from considering the horrors of the nuclear attack around them (see above), Gladys thinks back fondly to those moments: "It was a hiatus in the storm, a valley of safety where they were safe and peaceful together for ten minutes that night. Later Gladys remembered it, relived every one of those minutes in the warm, bright kitchen, with both her girls trusting her, secure, mysteriously confident in her power to fix things, somehow" (Merril 40).

⁹⁰ Planned obsolescence refers to industry "techniques used to artificially limit the durability of a manufactured good in order to stimulate repetitive consumption" (Slade 5). See chapters two and three for more of a discussion on this industry strategy.

⁹¹ See *Rubbish Theory: The Creation and Destruction of Value* (1979), *On Garbage* (2005), and *The Ethics of Waste: How We Relate to Rubbish* (2006) respectively.

⁹² Brookes Stevens noted in the later 1950s, "The industrial designer is called upon to be working from a year to two years ahead of that particular article which may be enjoying a booming acceptance at the moment" (Stevens 12).

⁹³ David Seed provides a short history on the use of the term “button” as a metonym for the nuclear bomb in *American Science Fiction and the Cold War: Literature and Film*. According to Seed, the phrase ‘pushbutton warfare’ gained popularity as early as 1950 when editor of *Astounding Science Fiction* magazine John W. Campbell insisted that “mind pushbuttons” (qtd. in Seed 130) were presenting the world with a considerable danger. Along similar lines, Daniel Ford stated that “the term ‘button’ is ‘just a shorthand way of talking about the elaborate means of ordering a nuclear strike” (qtd. in Seed 120). The “first public article on missile silos quoted an officer as admitting: ‘with all these backups and inhibitors, we’re like robots in a way”” (Seed 130). Erich Fromm later articulated an understanding of push-button warfare similar to the officer’s figuration of his roboticism in war: “In modern war, one individual can cause the destruction of hundreds of thousands of men, women and children. He could do so by pushing a button; he may not feel the emotional impact of what he is doing, since he does not see, does not know the people whom he kills; it is almost as if his act of pushing the button and their death had no real connection” (Fromm 119).

⁹⁴ Coontz’s book, *The Way We Never Were* (1992), argues, as the title suggests, that the 1950s has been a nostalgic construction almost from the time of its passing.

⁹⁵ Almost immediately following the first wave of postwar suburban expansion, cultural critics like Lewis Mumford, William Whyte, John Kenneth Galbraith, and Vance Packard, took aim at the suburbs, critical of its conformity in relation to what was even

then being referred to as a Cold War cultural consensus. Mumford, for instance, in an oft-quoted critique of suburban banality, described its way of life as

a multitude of uniform, unidentifiable houses, lined up inflexibly, at uniform distance, on uniform roads, in a treeless communal waste, inhabited by people of the same class, the same income, the same age group, witnessing the same television programs, eating the same tasteless pre-fabricated foods, from the same freezers, conforming in every outward and inward respect to a common mold.
(Mumford 486)

⁹⁶ See *Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*.

⁹⁷ For instance, tech devices in many science fiction films were figured as “spermatic tools and seeds which inseminate the hyperreal terrain” (Sofia 48), a process she calls the “sexo-semiotics of technology” (48), a type of “psychoanalytic ethnography concerned with the poetics and erotics of tools” (48).

⁹⁸ At the end of the novel, Frank confronts April with the “dark pink bulb of a rubber syringe” (Yates 222) (her instruments of choice to perform the operation) in the kitchen as she “back[s] away through the vegetable steam in retreat but in defiant readiness” (222); the calendar that reminds them of the temporal window in which to successfully abort the fetus “hung on their kitchen wall” (227); when Frank believes April has passed the point of performing the abortion safely, which he thinks signifies her inability to carry it out, the kitchen is described as being “alight with all the colors of the sunrise—it was a beautiful morning—and the calendar had lost its power” (255).

⁹⁹ See Harriet Rosenberg's essay, "The Kitchen and the Multinational Corporation: An Analysis of the Links between the Household and Global Corporations."

¹⁰⁰ See Paul Boyer's essay, "From Activism to Apathy: The American People and Nuclear Weapons, 1963-1980."

¹⁰¹ She includes an amusing anecdote in which her husband turns into a Jekyllish character upon having to confront some nasty garbage normally taken care of by Mainardi herself.

¹⁰² Significantly, of the many conflicts in the home, Colomina also implicates ecology in post-1970s domesticity, for "[w]ith recycling, even the waste of the house is subject to classification" (Colomina "Domesticity" 15). Thus, with waste "[d]omesticated" (15) in ways unavailable to April Wheeler or Gladys Mitchell, waste materials have also become a loci of personal and national conflict over the environment within domestic space.

¹⁰³ See Anna Krugovoy Silver, "The Cyborg Mystique: 'The Stepford Wives' and Second Wave Feminism."

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ See, for example, chapter one on the Cold War kitchen.

¹⁰⁶ For a discussion of the ways "[n]uclear fear was a shaping cultural force" (Boyer 823) and an argument regarding its (somewhat surprising) diffusion in the mid 1960s, see Paul Boyer's essay, "From Activism to Apathy: The American People and Nuclear Weapons, 1963-1980."

¹⁰⁷ While many pamphlets and informational tracts suggested shelters could provide protection if individuals remained in them for a two week period—see “Your Basement Fallout Shelter” and “Fallout Protection: What to Know and Do About Nuclear Attack”—there was not much consensus as to the particular effects of radiation, how long radiation might pose a risk, and, in short, just exactly what might occur in the event of nuclear war. An article on fallout shelter and interior design suggests a shelter dweller would “be safe if the shelter contains enough shielding material to keep the fallout from getting to him, and if he stays beneath this shield until the danger is over” (“Lived-In” 258). The article “Lasting Fallout Danger,” in *The Science News-Letter*, June 1955, states “[a] person who leaves his shelter the second day after an H-bomb explosion could be exposed to lethal doses of radiation the first month. Shelter period should be weeks not days.” (“Lasting” 406). Dr. Ralph E. Lapp, Washington physicist involved in the Manhattan Project was paraphrased in the article: “If an emergency standard of one r (roentgen) a day is set as the safety level, 20 times the Atomic Energy Commission's present limits, Dr. Lapp suggested it will be from six to nine months before an area would be safe” (406). An article entitled “Study Fallout Patterns” in *The Science News-Letter* of 1959 argues that “[t]hose who survive in shelters must...expect to live in them for prolonged periods beyond the two to three weeks of acute fallout danger” (Study 411). Another article in *The Science News-Letter* of 1955, “H-Bomb Contamination,” states that the H-bomb tested on March 1, 1954 would “contaminate 7,000 square miles with deadly radioactivity, the Atomic Energy Commission revealed in its first public report on

fallout effects” (“H-Bomb” 134) and that “sufficient radioactivity in a down-wind belt about 140 miles in length and of varying width up to 20 miles to have seriously threatened the lives of nearly all persons in the area who took no protective measures” (134). Whereas “190 miles down-wind, it is estimated that the level of radioactivity would have been sufficient to have seriously threatened the lives of 5 to 10 percent of any persons who might have remained exposed out of doors for all of the first 36 hours” (134).

¹⁰⁸ In Lichtman’s words, “though intended to reassure” the fallout shelter “was a site of anxiety” (Lichtman 51).

¹⁰⁹ Beatrice Colomina notes that an American “lifestyle of prosperity and excess...was the main weapon in the Cold War” (Colomina “Hothouses” 16).

¹¹⁰ It is also reminiscent of the ways kitchen design companies of the 1950s figured kitchens as almost-autonomous technologies. See chapter one.

¹¹¹ The so-called *Berlin Crisis* (generally periodized between the years 1958 and 1961) had recently intensified between June and November, 1961 due to the Soviet Union’s construction of the Berlin Wall separating East Berlin from West Berlin. For more, see Susan Peterson’s *Crisis Bargaining and the State: The Domestic Politics of International Conflict* (1996).

¹¹² Howard Simons identifies “four general rings of destruction depending on the size of the bomb” (Simons 250). Ground zero is a space of total destruction. The second ring would receive heavy to medium damage and a shelter might actually provide some

protection (“a shelter [at this distance] deep enough and solid enough can save your life” [Simons 250]). The third area would receive light damage and at this range a shelter could protect one from blast and fallout. In the fourth ring, a shelter will apparently save lives. Despite Simmons certainty, as mentioned above there was little consensus in the scientific community. There are in fact so many contradictory reports it is difficult to separate the optimistic, propagandistic sources from those that attempted to accurately represent the effects based on proximity to the blast, weather patterns, and other relevant phenomena.

¹¹³ See “Your Basement Fallout Shelter” and “Fallout Protection: What to Know and Do About Nuclear Attack.”

¹¹⁴ Though all fallout shelters were designed to keep occupants free of radioactive fallout, shelter sizes, shapes, and designs differed according to contingent variables—geography, economy, desired occupancy, etc. For the purposes of this study, I will focus specifically on the private, suburban fallout shelter, designed and built for a small family. While one popular version involved converting a corner of the basement with bricks and concrete, for consistency and the sake of my argument, I want to specifically investigate the self-contained fallout shelter dug into the ground on the suburban plot—partially submerged or fully buried—completely separate from the house structure. Usually comprised of one enclosed room, anywhere from fourteen by eighteen feet (see the Canadian pamphlet of 1961 “Your Basement Fallout Shelter,”) though some were even as small as a cylindrical space with a diameter of only four feet (see “Fallout Protection:

What to Know and Do about Nuclear Attack.”) the backyard shelter could often house a kitchen-like preparation area, bunks for sleeping, shelves for storage, a table for eating, and space for containers in which human and commodity by-products and waste materials could be deposited. Howard Simons identified five different types of fallout shelter in a 1955 article for *The Science News-Letter*. The first three, all built or set up in the basement of the home, offer the least protection. He identifies them as easy to make and costing around forty to ninety-five dollars. They are (1) a reinforced-concrete lean-to (an area in the basement spatially defined by a propped up slab of concrete over a small area in which to cover oneself), (2) a wooden lean-to, and (3), a basement corner room. This third type would approximate a backyard-style fallout shelter right in the basement, a sectioned off, even bricked up, self-contained space with enough room to fit beds, a sitting area, and kitchenette. The fourth and fifth are more elaborate and offer more protection, as they are of the backyard variety—self-contained units buried in the ground, bunker-like. These would provide the best protection from blast, debris and radioactive fallout. They could either be (4) a high covered trench with concrete roof, or (5) a reinforced-concrete basement exit. The former, able to support six to eight people for a two week period, would cost around one-hundred and eighty dollars and “consist[] of a rectangular box, the roof of which is precast or poured concrete or wood supported on block walls and covered with three feet of earth” (Simons 250). The entrance would fall at a right angle to lessen the threat of debris. The latter, the basement exit shelter, would be “actually a low tunnel, three feet wide, with an entrance at one wall near the corner of

the basement, and extending ten feet to steps or a ramp to the surface” (251) and cost around one thousand dollars.

¹¹⁵ See chapter one.

¹¹⁶ See note 111.

¹¹⁷ The article states explicitly the man is closing the door, but does not go into detail about the reasons for his action.

¹¹⁸ The section also includes a feature on the Carlson family, who act as an example to readers that shelters can be “safe and livable” (“Family” 105). They are shown with games and books and a wall behind them stocked with supplies and consumables.

¹¹⁹ As Sarah Lichtman notes, fallout shelters were “indispensable space[s] that people hoped never to use” (Lichtman 40): shelters and the lives supposedly to be lived out in them were a “largely imagined design phenomenon” (39). In fact, despite the hype and constant attention fallout shelters received in the media in the late 1950s and the early 1960s, according to Kenneth D. Rose “evidence indicates that very few Americans took any steps toward preparing their homes against nuclear attack” (Rose 10). By the end of the 1950s, “Americans by overwhelming margins had not only made no preparations for nuclear war, they had not even *thought* about making such preparations” (18). In terms of how many were actually built, this is, according to Rose, “a difficult question to answer because many shelter owners were not anxious to advertise the fact that they had a shelter” (201). But, despite his disclaimer, Rose suggests that by 1965, “as

many as 200,000 may have been in place” (202), which “would mean about one shelter for every 900 persons or one shelter for every 266 households” (202). Regardless of the numbers, inflated or underestimated, while it is certain the majority of Americans did not construct fallout shelters of their own, that the fallout shelter became a topic of much conversation and speculation in many communities means questions of shelter living were topical and prevalent in many circles. It is clear, Rose notes, that while “relatively few Americans actually *built* fallout shelters,” at the “height of Cold War tensions Americans *talked* a great deal about fallout shelters” (emphasis added, 202). Even those individuals who did not have fallout shelters constructed in their backyards or the basements of their homes may have, at some point, consciously considered the ways fallout shelter living would have meant a reconfiguration of their day-to-day routine and habitual actions.

¹²⁰ See Annmarie Brennan’s essay “Forecast” for a description of the ways military techniques became part of corporate strategies and even the everyday lives of American citizens in the Cold War.

¹²¹ Derrida argues specifically that “[t]he terrifying reality of the nuclear conflict can only be the signified referent, never the real referent (present or past) of a discourse or a text” (Derrida “Apocalypse” 23).

¹²² Science fiction author Isaac Asimov famously stated that “[t]he dropping of the atomic bomb in 1945 made science fiction respectable” (qtd. in Seed 8).

¹²³ Elaine Tyler May begins her study of Cold War domesticity in *Homeward Bound* (1988) with a discussion of the Mininsons. In her framework, the story supplemented the nuclear discourses and their militarization of the American home.

¹²⁴ See chapter one.

¹²⁵ There were both extreme and moderate attempts to embody the future in American production cycles. On the one hand, as Brooks Stevens noted in the late 1950s, “[t]he industrial designer is called upon to be working from a year to two years ahead of that particular article which may be enjoying a booming acceptance at the moment” (Stevens 12); on the other, corporations like Monsanto were creating homes in Disneyland’s *Tomorrowland*, and even entire cities (at least in mock-up form), promoting their plastics and synthetic materials as the material of choice decades into America’s future. See the film, “The Monsanto House of the Future” (1957).

¹²⁶ See chapter one.

¹²⁷ One official governmental study under the Joint Commission on Atomic Energy of 1959 predicted that in a limited nuclear engagement between the Soviets and the U.S., the latter would suffer 50 million civilian deaths and 20 million civilian casualties. See Ralph E. Lapp, “What is The Price of Nuclear War?” Even Hermann Kahn, who believed a nuclear war winnable as late as 1960, acknowledged that “[t]he world may be permanently (i.e., for perhaps 10,000 years) more hostile to human life after such a war. Therefore, if the question, ‘Can we restore the prewar conditions of life?’ is asked, the answer must be ‘No!’” (Kahn 21).

¹²⁸ See Sarah Lichtman's essay, "Do-It-Yourself Security: Safety, Gender, and the Home Fallout Shelter in Cold War America."

¹²⁹ The Federal Civil Defense Administration (FCDA) was created by executive Action in 1951, and the Federal Civil Defense Act was passed in the same year. Administrator Millard Caldwell was unsuccessful in three bids—1951, '52, and '53—to implement national shelter building initiatives. The next year, new FCDA chief Frederick Peterson favoured evacuation policies and planning to the creation of a national shelter infrastructure. In 1957, the Gaither Report "recommended a \$25 billion system of shelters that would be stocked with about \$10 billion worth of equipment and supplies" (Rose 31), and even suggested looking into shelters that could protect against nuclear blast as well as fallout, requiring an additional \$20 to \$30 billion. For a more detailed history, see Kenneth D. Rose's *One Nation Underground: The Fallout Shelter in American Culture* (2001).

¹³⁰ The Kennedy administration that followed took a similar position and called upon the same mythologies: the September, 1961 *Life* magazine special on the subject, discussed above, began with a letter to the American people from President Kennedy in which he implored they take their own initiative to protect their families, "and in doing so strengthen [their] nation" (Life 95).

¹³¹ See Susan Faludi's book, *Stiffed: The Betrayal of the American Man* (1999).

¹³² While David Seed has argued that the ending of the novel represents a rebirth of the American nation, for it "transposes an image of a lost frontier life onto a post-

nuclear landscape mined and cratered where Farnham's family might form the nucleus for national rebirth" (Seed 33), this reading, while perhaps apt for the ending of the novel, misses the ecological premises of their life in the future timeline. As the novel in the final analysis asserts a new American frontierism on a post-nuclear landscape, the family's reliance upon the fallout shelter—both during their sequestered period and after their emergence into the future timeline—for its domestic conveniences subverts the paradigm of shelter abundance. The new frontierism of *Farnham's Freehold's* entire middle section and up to their climactic return is one of restraint, an engagement with nature based on principles of sustainability.

¹³³ When Hugh and Karen open their trading post and restaurant, their sign tells its customers "!!!!Any BOOK Accepted as Cash!!!!" (Heinlein 333).

¹³⁴ See Haynes Johnson, *The Age of Anxiety: McCarthyism to Terrorism*.

¹³⁵ See Patricia Vettel-Becker, *Shooting from the Hip: Photography, Masculinity, and Postwar America* (2005).

¹³⁶ See *ibid* and Dagmar Barnouw's *Germany 1945: Views of War and Violence* (2008).

¹³⁷ The beginnings of the modern environmental movement are of course a debated topic, but it is commonly attributed to the popularity of Rachel Carson's book *Silent Spring* (1962). See Laurence Buell's essay "Toxic Discourse."

¹³⁸ The Institute of Applied Research has defined the volumetric dimensions of what constitutes visible litter for public spaces, and their framework has become the

industry standard. Within city limits, anything larger than a matchbook is considered visible litter; on highways, the minimum size of visible litter is a cigarette pack. See *Keep America Beautiful*'s "Literature Review: A Review of Litter Studies, Attitude Surveys, And Other Litter-related Literature."

¹³⁹ *Keep America Beautiful* in fact found photography such an important medium in the location and surveillance of litter (and checking and cataloguing its progress in cleaning-up the landscape) it began in the 1980s to employ what it called a "photometric index—a means of measuring degrees of mess by periodically photographing randomly chosen plots and counting litter thereon" (Williams 124).

¹⁴⁰ Many garbage theorists have remarked on the ways we turn a blind eye to garbage even now after the environmental turn of the 1960s and 1970s. See Michael Thompson, *Rubbish Theory: The Creation and Destruction of Value* (1979); John Scanlan, *On Garbage* (2005); Greg Kennedy, *An Ontology of Trash: the Disposable and its Problematic Nature* (2007).

¹⁴¹ As a *Keep America Beautiful* study would later reveal, consumers in fact felt "no ownership" of the materials they discarded, and justified littering with the belief that "[s]omeone else [would] clean up after them" ("Literature Review" 32).

¹⁴² See chapter four for a further discussion of stuplimity in relation to Don DeLillo's novel *White Noise*, in which main character Jack Gladney experiences a confused response to his exploration of his household trash.

¹⁴³ See Jason P. Vest's *The Postmodern Humanism of Philip K. Dick* (2009).

¹⁴⁴ See Alan Nadel's *Containment Culture: American Narratives, Postmodernism, and The Atomic Age* (1995) and my discussion of containment culture in the introduction and chapters one and two.

¹⁴⁵ Garden Clubs had already "started anti-litter campaigns years before industry financing made K.A.B. possible" (Grutzner 22), but this was the first national organization.

¹⁴⁶ *Keep America Beautiful* has, according to their own numbers, reduced litter by 61% since 1968 ("Keep America").

¹⁴⁷ See chapter five, "Empty Bottles," of Gay Hawkins' *The Ethics of Waste: How We Relate to Rubbish* (2006).

¹⁴⁸ See "Decline of Beauty in Living Decried," *New York Times*; Harrison Salisbury, "City Wages Constant Battle To Keep Streets Litter-Free," *New York Times*; and Charles Grutzner, "Crackdown on Litterbugs," *New York Times*. The National Audubon Society, the Sierra Club, and the Wilderness Society supported KAB until mid 1970s when they objected to "its troubling political agenda and its penchant for visual obfuscation" (Dunaway 88). The so-called "bottle bills" of the 1970s, a legislative crackdown on disposable bottles, were a source of contention: "The KAB leadership, composed of major corporations in the beverage and container industries, lined up against the bottle bills, going so far, in one case, as to label supporters of such legislation as 'Communists'" (88).

¹⁴⁹ See his essay, "Trash."

¹⁵⁰ Early ecocritic Joseph Meeker has argued this modernist binary of nature/culture set up the primary framework for modern environmental crises. See, *The Comedy of Survival: Studies in Literary Ecology* (1974).

¹⁵¹ After the Second World War had ended, Jacobs approached *Fortune* magazine with fellow Steichen group vets Victor Jorgensen, and Horace Bristol, and suggested they document postwar reconstruction around the world. Upon *Fortune*'s acceptance, Jacobs spent a year and a half in Europe (while Jorgensen covered Africa, and Bristol took Japan). See Christopher Philips' *Steichen at War* (1981).

¹⁵² F. Jack Hurley makes the only remark I am aware of that comes close to such a perspective; in a description of Jacobs' work of the 1940s and 1950s, he notes Jacobs was conceptually "ahead of its time" (Hurley 103) in the way he was "sensitive to environmental considerations years before such ideas became common" (103). However, this was not within a critical context and is found in Hurley's edited volume of industry photographs, *Industry and the Photographic Image: 153 Great Prints From 1850 to the Present* (1980).

¹⁵³ For a further discussion of the Cold War consensus, see the introduction and chapters one and two.

¹⁵⁴ See Berger's *Ways of Seeing* (1977) and Barthes' *Image, Music, Text* (1977).

¹⁵⁵ See John Szarkowski's *American Landscapes: Photographs from the Collection of the Museum of Modern Art* (1981).

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ One notable exception is African American photographer Roy DeCarava, whose photographs documenting the African American experience, like “Graduation 1949” feature garbage. Its agenda, however, is primarily political as it attempts to contextualize African American neighbourhoods with public masses of waste and litter—the subject graduates (from what, we are not sure) only to walk back into a trash-laden alleyway in an empty city lot. Unfortunately the topic of the racialization of waste is outside of the bounds of this project.

¹⁵⁹ In Jacobs’ only overt relation to Cold War events, one of his photographs was featured in his colleague and mentor Edward Steichen’s “Family of Man” exhibition, a collection of over five hundred photographs taken by over two-hundred and seventy photographers, which, while originally exhibited in 1955 at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, was a major cultural component of the American Exhibition in Moscow, 1959, where the kitchen debates between Nixon and Khrushchev had taken place. See, Eric J. Sandeen’s *Picturing an Exhibition: The Family of Man and 1950s America* (1995).

¹⁶⁰ See, *On Garbage*, 163-7.

¹⁶¹ See, *The Ethics of Waste: How We Relate to Rubbish*.

¹⁶² The “lumber room” was a trope or metaphor in English literature of the nineteenth century denoting a place unseen that was thought to be full of unimaginable resources and objects.

¹⁶³ The article does not include a by-line; it is attributed to Jacobs as photo-essayist.

¹⁶⁴ See Grutzner's "Crackdown on Litterbugs."

¹⁶⁵ See *The Production of Space* (1991).

¹⁶⁶ Stallabrass makes the very astute observation that artist Irving Penn's removal of trash from their context and photographing them against white background took away their significance.

¹⁶⁷ Dick criticism is wide and varied in its topics of discussion, and has exploded in the last decade due to Dick's novels' thematic preoccupations with (and anticipations of) many phenomena associated with postmodernism. Thus, most recent criticism has focused on the themes of postmodern humanism (See Jason P. Vest, *The Postmodern Humanism of Philip K. Dick* [2009]) postmodernity (Lejla Kucucalic, *Philip K. Dick: A Canonical Writer of the Digital Age* [2009]), paranoia (Carl Freedman, "Towards a Theory of Paranoia: The Science Fiction of Philip K. Dick."), schizophrenia (Greg Rickman, "'What is this Sickness?': 'Schizophrenia' and *We Can Build You*"); and the religious overtones of his work (Gabriel Mckee, *Pink Beams of Light From the God in the Gutter: The Science-fictional Religion of Philip K. Dick* [2004]). Yet I can find no sustained analysis of the function of garbage and trash in his fiction, despite the fact that it is so prevalent.

¹⁶⁸ Claire Sponsler's "Beyond the Ruins: The Geopolitics of Urban Decay and Cybernetic Play."

¹⁶⁹ See Dani Cavallaro's *Cyberpunk and Cyberculture: Science Fiction and the Work of William Gibson* (2000) for a discussion of the ways *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* "anticipates cyberpunk in important ways" (Cavallaro 13).

¹⁷⁰ Kucucalic, 1.

¹⁷¹ Dick reveals that science fiction anthologizer Judith Merrill (and chapter two's *Shadow on the Hearth* author), whom he refers to only as J.M., refused to publish the story because of its strange depiction of garbage men. See Richard A. Lupoff's interview with Dick in "A Conversation with Philip K. Dick."

¹⁷² See David Seed's *A Companion to Science Fiction* (2005), 179.

¹⁷³ For a discussion of the ways Dick's so-called Mars novels—including *Martian time-Slip* (1964) and *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldrich* (1965)—are "satirical assaults on postwar American culture" and "critiques of the nation's past" (Abbott 254) see Carl Abbott's essay, "Homesteading on the Extraterrestrial Frontier." See chapter four for a discussion of the modern sanitary landfill as an archive of Cold War toxicity.

¹⁷⁵ See Giles Slade, *Made to Break* (2006).

¹⁷⁶ Theodore Levitt suggested that obsolescence shadows not just products of planned obsolescence, but, due to the "ethos of disposability" (Hawkins 24) such a strategy promotes, *every* product. See the chapter "The Shadow of Obsolescence," in *Marketing Myopia* (2008).

¹⁷⁷ See Vance Packard, *The Waste Makers* (1960).

¹⁷⁸ See Beatrice Colomina's introduction to *Cold War Hothouses*; Annmarie Brennan's essay, "Forecast"; and Brandon Hookway's essay "Cockpit."

¹⁷⁹ American President Dwight Eisenhower's state of the union address of 1956 explicitly implicates planned obsolescence in the Cold War arms race: "In these days of uneasing technological advance, we must plan our defense expenditures systematically and with care, fully recognizing that obsolescence compels the neverending [sic] replacement of older weapons with new ones" (qtd. in Slade 232).

¹⁸⁰ See a discussion of *A Canticle For Leibowitz* in chapter three.

¹⁸¹ Buell makes a connection between eco-dystopian novels and the Cold War: "Their [these novels'] impetus devolves from, just as Carson's diagnostic does, from cold war era nuclear fear" (Buell 649).

¹⁸² Buell calls *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* an "ecocatastrophe novel[]" (Buell 649).

¹⁸³ See Vest.

¹⁸⁴ Dunaway suggests that we can also read the critique of industry, as the background does show a factory belching smoke into the air. See Finis Dunaway, "Gas Masks, Pogo, and the Ecological Indian: Earth Day and the Visual Politics of American Environmentalism."

¹⁸⁵ See Frances Fralin's *Indelible Image: Photographs of War, 1846 to the Present* (1985).

¹⁸⁶ A key difference between the two photographers (beyond the fact that Jacobs was not taking photographs for the art world) is that Burtynsky wanted to move “beyond the automatic response that equates manufacturing with ugliness and pollution” (Pauli 25).

¹⁸⁷ For an examination of the structure of *Underworld*, see David Noon’s essay “Triumph of Death.”

¹⁸⁸ As soon as it emerged in the 1940s, nuclear power was a subject of general ambivalence in the public imagination—like any tool, it could be used either as a weapon, or as a source of power. But in both scenarios—the production of nuclear bombs, the running of nuclear power plant reactors—handling enriched uranium or plutonium meant necessary hazardous and radioactive by-products. While low-level nuclear wastes, of relatively moderate radiation levels, could be encased in canisters and could be, according to a *New York Times* article of 1959, “encased in concrete and dumped into the sea” (“Hot” 40), the “hotter” materials with high levels of radioactivity were not so much disposed of as stored in underground facilities specially designed for containing them; despite such measures, stored under the earth, they would remain active and potentially dangerous. At the Hanford Atomic Works site for instance—the site of the production of the two atomic devices dropped on Japan in 1945—while almost ninety-five percent of the waste products were stored underground, many deposits were already understood to potentially “remain dangerous for as long as 1,000 years” (40).

¹⁸⁹ Tony Tanner rightly notes of *Underworld*, “over everything the shadow of the bomb” (Tanner 55) and Mark Osteen suggests in his discussion of DeLillo that “the atomic bomb has become the ‘Deus Otiosus – Hidden God – of the twentieth century’” (Osteen 99).

¹⁹⁰ Donald L. Hardesty has suggested that even toxic wastes and hazardous materials can be considered cultural documents. He argues that “[t]oxic waste dumps or other hazardous landscape elements can be interpreted from a number of perspectives, but viewing them as historical documents, as commodities, or as ideas appears to be particularly useful” (Hardesty 20).

¹⁹¹ This was a nuclear narrative present since the late 1950s but significantly invigorated in the mid 1980s. The emergence of the school of nuclear criticism in 1984 was a response to the renewed tensions between the Soviet Union and the U.S. in the early 1980s. See the special issue of *Diacritics* (14.2) from the summer of that year which inaugurated the critical school for a further discussion.

¹⁹² Mutual assured destruction refers to the fact that both superpowers had enough nuclear weapons in their arsenals to completely destroy each other. In some ways this tension structured the geopolitical climate of the Cold War, and had somewhat fulfilled a function of deterrence. See Roman Kolkowicz’s introductory chapter, “The Rise and Decline of Deterrence Doctrine,” in his edited volume *Dilemmas of Nuclear Strategy* (1987).

¹⁹³ In Al Gore's *Earth in the Balance: Ecology and the Human Spirit* (1992), for example, he takes the name of his proposed ecological mobilization of the nation's citizen from the newly defunct Cold War's terminology: he states "I have chosen the phrase Strategic Environment Initiative purposely to imply an environmental equivalent of the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), the crash program to develop a series of technological breakthroughs focuses on a common, if highly controversial, military objective" (Gore 321) and notes that a Strategic Environment Initiative "must focus on the development of environmentally appropriate technologies" (321).

¹⁹⁴ Jesse Kavadlo sees DeLillo himself as a kind of waste manager through his construction of the novel: "[t]he authorial persona, through waste management of wasted culture, is not resurrected as much as recycled—remade from the texts and languages of the past" (Kavadlo "Recycling" 386).

¹⁹⁵ See my discussion below of the Society of American Archivists' definitions of archival materials and documents.

¹⁹⁶ See the introduction for an explanation of these political and social aspects of the Cold War period.

¹⁹⁷ On August 27, 2001, the American National Park Service made the controversial announcement that a municipal sanitary landfill in Fresno, California, had been designated as a National Historic Landmark. The landfill site had qualified under the NPS's "individual topics" criterion, according to the official press release, and was chosen for its "individual contribution[] to the broad scope of American history"

(“Secretary Norton”). Located three miles southwest of Fresno and operating continuously between the years 1937 and 1987, this landfill is generally acknowledged as the first modern sanitary landfill in the U.S., and it heavily influenced post-World War II American waste management practice. Employing the requisite techniques to justify the “sanitary” label, it pioneered now standard practices, such as the daily layering of garbage deposits with dirt (covering waste with inches-thick soil to contain and separate it from the air and surrounding environment), the compartmentalization of landfill space (separating deposits in sections throughout the site), and compacting garbage to maximize capacity. For more, see Martin V. Melosi’s essay, “The Fresno Sanitary Landfill in an American Cultural Context.”

¹⁹⁸ See Michel Foucault’s *The Archaeology of Knowledge* and Jacques Derrida’s *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*.

¹⁹⁹ The death drive is “above all anarchivic...or archiviolithic. It will always have been archive-destroying, by silent vocation” (Derrida *Archive* 10).

²⁰⁰ See Ned Lukacher’s introduction to Derrida’s *Cinders* (1991).

²⁰¹ See Blumberg and Gottlieb’s *War on Waste* (1989).

²⁰² When *Underworld*’s Brian Glassic looks “at all that soaring garbage” at the *Fresh Kills Landfill* on Staten Island he realizes “for the first time what his job was all about. Not engineering or transportation or source reduction. He dealt in human behaviour, peoples habits and impulses, their uncontrollable needs and innocent wishes, maybe their passions, certainly their excesses and indulgences but their kindness too,

their generosity” (184). Glassic’s revelation suggests that waste can be read anthropologically, as an assessment of the values of either a culture at large or communities, families, and individuals. In Paul Gleason’s comparison of DeLillo’s depiction of the American wasteland with that of T.S. Eliot’s depiction of the British and continental European cultural and psychological waste land, he notes that DeLillo (and Eliot) suggest that “waste and literature function as cultural productions that illuminate the civilizations from which they derive” (Gleason 130).

²⁰³ Studies like Rathje and Murphy’s are rare exceptions. See *Rubbish!: The Archaeology of Garbage*.

²⁰⁴ While conversion of landfills is becoming an increasingly popular solution to the maintenance of these sites, the Fresno Sanitary Landfill memorialized by the American National Park Service in 2001 (see note 197) gave rise to vocal opposition. Public opposition to the nomination arose as word of the site’s extreme toxicity was released. By 1989, the Fresno Landfill had become one of the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry’s *Superfund* sites—industry vernacular for an ATSDR location with a high priority, toxic clean-up imperative. But Fresno’s Superfund status aside, many commentators could not fathom finding any value—cultural, historical, social, educational—in a site designed for useless materials (except perhaps its value as a place to contain and store these used-up materials). Festering beneath the overwhelming discriminatory position against Fresno as a site of failed waste management (via its unsuccessful attempt to contain toxic materials) are clearly deeper anxieties about the

nature of garbage and the status of the American landfill as a geographic zone in relation to spaces of commerce, leisure, labour and domesticity. While the site did eventually become recognized as a National Historic Landmark in 2001, the initial ambivalence evident in the processes of designating and rescinding the site speaks to a general discomfort with the ways landfills intersect with each of the concepts implicated in the NPS's designation: the nation, its history, and its landscape. For more, see Martin V. Melosi's essay, "The Fresno Sanitary Landfill in an American Cultural Context."

²⁰⁵ See *Designing America's Waste Landscapes* (2004).

²⁰⁶ See *Non-places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity* (1992).

²⁰⁷ Jesse Kavadlo reads *White Noise* within a Cold War context: "[T]he language of a divided and recombined nuclear family, with its cores, suggests the metaphor of the atomic bomb (a Cold War preoccupation further evident in *Underworld*)" (Kavadlo *Balance* 17) and notes that "[t]he implicit cold war threat of impending doom continues to hang over the novel but inverted: the threat of technology is purely domestic, not foreign, insinuating that the enemy is ourselves and our attitudes toward technology and waste, not some outside or foreign other" (28).

²⁰⁸ John B. Mason notes that there is "a recurring tendency" in Whitman's poems "to become catalogues of persons and things" (Mason 34).

²⁰⁹ Gay Hawkins notes that our waste management practices are "fundamental to the practice of subjectivity" (Hawkins 4) and that "[s]tyles of waste disposal are also styles of self" (4).

²¹⁰ When Barbara Novak states that “Emerson’s self-reliance eradicates the old and gives promise to the new” (Novak 19), she invokes the language of disposal.

²¹¹ This is true even in paper’s absence. Nick Shay’s runaway father, a bookie for the mob, is famous in the criminal underworld for never having “commit[ted] a figure to paper” (DeLillo 104), a fact that is repeated frequently in the novel.

²¹² William Rathje’s archaeological analyses of more than fifteen landfills in the United States over two decades found that, indeed, paper made up an astounding forty-five percent of landfill space. See *Rubbish! The Archaeology of Garbage*.

²¹³ Nick notes, “We separate our household waste according to the guidelines. We rinse out the used cans and empty bottles and put them in their respective bins....We use paper bags for the paper bags” (DeLillo 803); later, he says “[w]e do clear glass versus colored glass and it is remarkable really how quiet it is, a stillness that feels old and settled, with landmark status, the yard waste, the paper bags pressed flat, the hour after sunset when a pause obtains in the world and you forget for a second where you are” (806-07).

²¹⁴ The “Prologue” to *Underworld* was published separately in advance of the novel as a novella, *Pafko at the Wall* (1992).

²¹⁵ See my analysis of a scene from his novel *White Noise* (1985) above.

²¹⁶ See Walter Moser’s essay “Garbage and Recycling: From Literary Theme to Mode of Production” and my intervention below.

²¹⁷ Ammons' figuring of garbage is similar to Philip K. Dick's spiritualizing of waste in *Radio Free Albemuth*, as discussed at the end of chapter three. Also, in *Underworld*, Nick Shay states "[w]aste is a religious thing. We entomb contaminated waste with a sense of reverence and dread. It is necessary to respect what we discard" (DeLillo *Underworld* 88).

²¹⁸ Joanne Gass even states in her essay comparing Nick Shay with Fitzgerald's Nick Carraway, that "Shay's America has *become* a valley of ashes" (Gass 126).

²¹⁹ While I would hesitate to call DeLillo a postmodernist author, in this context he exhibits postmodernist characteristics. In the last decade, critics have tended to read him as a (late) modernist writer, for various reasons. Jesse Kavadlo, for example, sees DeLillo as writing outside of postmodernism—while his subject is certainly the postmodern world, his modernist beliefs in faith and the power of language condition his writing (*See Balance at the Edge of Belief* [2004]); Frank Lentricchia similarly positions DeLillo as "last of the modernists, who takes for his critical object of aesthetic concern the postmodern situation" (Lentricchia 14).

²²⁰ See Ammons' interview with Steven P. Schneider.

²²¹ *Ibid.*

²²² While some critics do make references to the materiality of literature, I have not seen a discussion of the ways literary narratives themselves implicate their own physical medium in the spaces of waste disposal and management, or the ways they actively avoid such revelations. For example, in her essay on the relationship between

ecocriticism and the critical practice of new historicism, “Ecocriticism, New Historicism, and Romantic Apostrophe,” Helena Feder notes that there is an “ecocritical recognition that poems have an actual materiality, whether they are composed of mined graphite and wood-pulp paper or composed of electrical impulses travelling through billions of miles of plastic and metal lines” Feder (45). However, after recognizing this, she moves on to discuss instead, as her main task dictates, the historical environments surrounding and conditioning a poem’s creation, reading, and subsequent interpretations—specifically the ways the poetic apostrophe “literally addresses [material and actual] contexts” (43) by referring to an externality (something *outside* of the poem). While her main line of enquiry does involve other matters, I still find it interesting that she comes so close to addressing the material nature of text in its medium of paper in relation to the environment without implicating it as a potential environmental problem.

²²³ In an offshoot of deconstruction known as nuclear criticism, of which Derrida’s aforementioned essay is the inaugural text, critics were encouraged to explore the ways nuclear holocaust, as the most pressing threat to humanity and its archive—of knowledge, of literature, of culture—conditions discourse and even each textual moment.

²²⁴ See Lois Marie Gibbs’s book, *Love Canal: And the Birth of the Environmental Health Movement*, 12.

²²⁵ See Blumberg and Gottlieb.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*

²²⁷ Some cultural critics, like the *New York Times Magazine*'s John Tierney, have indeed argued that modern recycling is nothing more than an alibi for consumption. See his article "Recycling is Garbage." Moreover, statistics show that even while the volume of recycled products increases, so does the accumulation of waste. In the end, production and consumption has increased despite the waste-conscious initiatives of environmental groups and agencies. In a study of the decade's consumptive practices in the United States from 1990-2001, one can certainly see unmistakable trends. While percentages of waste that is recycled go up, from 8% in 1990, to 27% in 1996, and 33% in 2000, the levels of waste increase year by year as well. While in some years waste increases by only 1-4 million tons, in other years it can increase between 24 and 35 million tons. These statistics were taken from zerowasteamerica.org.

²²⁸ A few pages later, DeLillo speaks of the bookshelves again: "We have bookshelves built in the cool room at the back of the house, my mother's old room, and you know how time slips by when you are doing books, arranging and rearranging, the way time goes by untouched, matching and mixing inventively, and then you stand in the room and look" (806).

²²⁹ See Martin V. Melosi's book *Garbage in the Cities: Refuse, Reform, and the Environment* (2004).

²³⁰ Kwame Anthony Appiah has suggested that the *post* in postmodernism might be linked to the post in post-colonial by framing the post in both terms as a rejection of what came before, for it "challenges earlier legitimating narratives" (Appiah 353). But

when he also describes the post of postmodern and postcolonial as being “the *post*-of [a] space-clearing gesture” (348), his metaphor of space clearing, I suggest, harnesses the discourses of disposal.

²³¹ Lori Kim argues that despite the supposed end of the Cold War, the American “imperial mandate [once rationalized in Cold War terms] is still alive and well” (Kim 238).

²³² Using the language of Raymond Williams’ cultural materialism, Kim argues that the American response to 9/11 suggests that “the Cold War as a structure of feeling and production of knowledge for interpreting and acting upon new geopolitical configurations in the ‘post’-Cold War era hardly seems to be residual, but (newly) dominant” (Kim 238). Haynes Johnson notes a similar return to Cold War rhetoric in the post-9/11 era. See *The Age of Anxiety: McCarthyism to Terrorism* (2005).

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