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Matter Unmoored: Trash, Archaeological Consciousness and American Culture and Fiction in the 1980s

TIM JELFS

This article considers the cultural significance of the garbage panics of the 1980s, including the voyage of the infamous *Mobro 4000* “garbage barge.” The article argues that the trash at the centre of these panics is important to our understanding of both the 1980s and the present because it demanded – and still demands – that Americans see and understand it as a class of matter unmoored from temporal as well as spatial boundaries. The alarming durability of the supposedly ephemeral refuse of a culture of mass consumption invoked an “archaeological consciousness” prone to muse upon the longevity of material remains. This consciousness was expressed in various cultural and discursive arenas throughout the 1980s, revealing that durable detritus was not just a pressing public policy issue but a marker of cultural anxieties emerging out of the operations of archaeological consciousness. From concerns about contingency of the mass-consuming culture of the late twentieth-century United States to reflections on trash’s own epistemological complexity, trash spoke in unexpected ways throughout the 1980s, raising important questions about the relationship between producers of culture and their audience, whose receptiveness to the urgencies of archaeological consciousness suffers from a frustrating transience as far as trash is concerned.

It is surprising that more cultural histories of the 1980s do not start with the decade’s trash. More than ten years ago now, Bill Brown wrote in *Critical Inquiry* of a present in which “history can unabashedly begin with things and with the senses by which we apprehend them ... with the smell ‘of frying oil, shag tobacco and unwashed beer glasses.’”¹ The narrative opening he was quoting, from Simon Schama’s *The Embarrassment of Riches: An Interpretation of Dutch Culture in the Golden Age* (1987), struck Brown as redolent of a moment in which a certain materialist impulse, an attentiveness to things and human relations with things, had acquired a new respectability in scholarly discourse across the humanities. That attentiveness, spoken of now in terms of a material or “thingly” turn, shows no signs of having dissipated.

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¹ Bill Brown, “Thing Theory,” *Critical Inquiry*, 28, 1 (Autumn 2001), 1–22, 2.

From as early a text as Mary Douglas and Baron Isherwood's *The World of Goods* (1979) to Brown's own *A Sense of Things* (2005) and work originating in the field of science and technology studies by Bruno Latour, we appear to have been living for some decades now in an age in which the kind of "methodological fetishism" advocated by Brown and others – a willingness to begin (if not end) scholarly enquiry with material culture and the question of things – has become an integral part of studies across the humanities.²

So heterogeneous has the work associated with the material turn been that it would be impossible to do full justice to its findings here. Suffice it to say that with its focus on the liberation of things from mere objects to agentic entities that intervene in and structure our lives, the new materialism has helped us to understand just how (much) matter of all sorts still matters, including trash. Indeed, despite the abject connotations attached to the term, trash has held a particular fascination for numerous scholars throughout the long cultural moment in which the material turn has been working its various effects. As early as 1979, for example, Michael Thompson's *Rubbish Theory* highlighted how consideration of discarded material culture represented an appropriate starting point for a sociological examination of the idea of "value." For Thompson, things cycled and flowed through three distinct categories – the durable, the transient, and "rubbish" – in a way that illustrated how value itself might be sociologically created and destroyed.³ Two decades later, Susan Strasser published *Waste and Want* (1999), a voluminous social history that uncovered the centrality of trash in US American cultural and economic life, locating an important shift in Americans' relation to things "[t]oward the end of the nineteenth century, [when] disposal became separate from production, and ... [t]rash and trashmaking became integral to the economy in a wholly new way."⁴ Jane Bennett's more recent *Vibrant Matter* (2010) begins with a meditation on a collection of Baltimore street litter, finding in it an example of what she sees as the vibratory, agentic vitality of nonhuman matter. Meanwhile, those scholars working in the emerging subfield of discard studies (with its focus on the "slow violence" done to the world by the various forms of matter that global capitalism constantly

² Ibid., 6. See also Mary Douglas and Baron Isherwood, *The World of Goods: Towards an Anthropology of Consumption* (London: Routledge, 1979); Bill Brown, *A Sense of Things: The Object Matter of American Literature* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2003); Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); John Law and John Hassard, *Actor-Network Theory and After* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999).

³ Michael Thompson, *Rubbish Theory: The Creation and Destruction of Value* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 9.

⁴ Susan Strasser, *Waste and Want: A Social History of Trash* (New York: Metropolitan Holt, 1999), 15.

sloughs off into the ecosystem) not only exemplify the strength of the bond that now exists between scholarly inquiry and trash but also demonstrate how that trash needs to be understood in the most expansive spatial and temporal terms possible, as the operations of global production, consumption and disposal distribute what we no longer need on a planetary scale, and over long, slow spans of time.⁵

To restate in slightly different terms the point I began with, then: if oil, tobacco, beer and glass were apt things to begin an account of the Dutch Golden Age with in the mid-1980s, there are surely worse things to begin any account of the culture of the United States in the 1980s themselves with now than the trash, garbage, junk, pollution and dirt that were all conspicuous cultural presences in the United States in the “new Gilded Age” of that decade.⁶ After all, the more one looks at the 1980s, the more of such stuff one seems to see, oozing out of or into one aspect of American life after another. One of the era’s signature literary styles was a “dirty realism” that brought news from a struggling, blue-collar world “cluttered with junk food and the oppressive details of modern consumerism.”⁷ On Wall Street, Michael Milken recycled the toxic contents of the securitized debt markets and made an illegal fortune from “junk bonds” that eventually landed him in prison.⁸ Such examples operate principally at the level of metaphor. The same is not true, however, of the CFCs and carbon deposits that environmentalists like Bill McKibben showed were dirtying the air throughout the decade.⁹ Nor is it true of the enormous mass of floating trash in the middle of the Pacific Ocean that we now know as the Great Pacific Garbage Patch,

⁵ Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 2010), 4–6; Rob Nixon, *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011). For more on discard studies, see <http://discardstudies.com>.

⁶ Robert M. Collins, *Transforming America: Politics and Culture during the Reagan Years* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 157. For other useful histories of the decade see Gil Troy, *Morning in America: How Ronald Reagan Invented the 1980s* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005); John Ehrman, *The Eighties: America in the Age of Reagan* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005); Graham Thompson, *American Culture in the 1980s* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007); Sean Wilentz, *The Age of Reagan: A History, 1974–2008* (New York: HarperCollins, 2008); Bradford Martin, *The Other Eighties: A Secret History of America in the Age of Reagan* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2011).

⁷ Bill Buford, “Dirty Realism: New Writing from America,” *Granta*, 8 (1983), 4–5, 4.

⁸ Milken, a trader with Drexel Burnham Lambert, was a controversial figure throughout the decade. For an account of his rise and fall, along with that of arbitrageur Ivan Boesky, the model for the era-defining Gordon “greed is good” Gekko in Oliver Stone’s *Wall Street* (1986), see James B. Stewart’s *Den of Thieves* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1991).

⁹ Bill McKibben, *The End of Nature: Humanity, Climate Change and the Natural World* (New York: Random House, 1989).

the existence of which was first postulated by government scientists in 1989, even while other researchers intensified efforts to reduce the amount of man-made debris that decades of space exploration had left spinning in continuous orbit around the Earth.¹⁰ Closer to home, there was nothing merely metaphorical, either, about the medical waste that washed up on New Jersey shores, closing beaches in the summers of 1987 and 1988.¹¹ Nor, again, about the more than three thousand tons of trash that the *Mobro 4000* garbage barge was unable to unload in the same year. This was all matter self-evidently out of place.¹²

Consider the garbage barge. In late March 1987, the *Mobro 4000* had originally left Islip, New York with the intention of dumping its load in Morehead City, North Carolina, where the waste it carried was to be put to use in the production of methane gas. The proposed deal fell through as the barge sailed south, amid rumours that it was carrying medical waste, including hypodermic syringes and bedpans. The *Mobro* was subsequently left searching for a port and a waste disposal facility that would accept its cargo. The owners approached ports in Alabama, Louisiana, Texas, Mexico and Belize but none wanted the barge; the governor of Louisiana even threatened to have National Guardsmen open fire on the vessel if it tried to dock. Given that a similar case – that of the *Khian Sea* – had ended with reports of that vessel's load having been dumped at sea, the barge's eventual return to New York, and the garbage's incineration in Brooklyn in October, months after it had departed, were cause for considerable local and national relief.¹³

However, that relief could hardly mask the cultural concerns that such episodes brought into focus in the second half of the decade. For this trash was

¹⁰ Robert H. Day, David G. Shaw and Steven E. Ignell, "The Quantitative Distribution and Characteristics of Neuston Plastic in the North Pacific Ocean, 1985–1988," Second International Conference on Marine Debris, 2–7 April 1989, Honolulu, Hawaii, at https://swfsc.noaa.gov/publications/TM/SWFSC/NOAA-TM-NMFS-SWFSC-154_P182.PDF; Inter-Agency Group (Space), "Report on Orbital Debris for National Security Council," Washington DC, Feb. 1989.

¹¹ Robert Hanley, "Many Beaches in Jersey Reopen; Source of Medical Waste Is Sought," *New York Times*, 16 Aug. 1987, 42.

¹² Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966), 35. The British anthropologist Mary Douglas claimed to have taken this well-known definition of dirt from Lord Chesterfield, but the attribution has been disputed. See Richard Fardon, "Citations out of Place, or Lord Palmerston Goes Viral in the Nineteenth Century but Gets Lost in the Twentieth," *Anthropology Today*, 29, 1 (2013), 25–27.

¹³ Robert D. McFadden, "Garbage Barge Returns in Search of a Dump," *New York Times*, 18 May 1987, A1; Richard C Firstman et al., *Rush to Burn: Solving America's Garbage Crisis?* (Washington, DC and Covelo: Island Press, 1989); Liz Goff, "The Old Disaster: Queens' Garbage Standoff," *Queens Tribune*, 8 Feb. 2001, available at <http://queenstribune.com/garbage-queens-trashy-tale-the-latest-plan-for-moving-out-the-waste>.

problematic. What did it mean that it could not be disposed of for so long? And what did it say about the 1980s? In the pages that follow, I want to argue that the trash loaded upon the *Mobro 4000*, the trash polluting New Jersey beaches in the same year, and even the trash buried (and dug up) in sanitary landfill sites over the course of the decade, is important to our understanding of the culture of the United States in both the 1980s and the present because it demanded – and still demands – that we see and understand such detritus as matter unmoored not just from spatial boundaries but also from the temporal boundaries assigned by a culture of mass consumption. For decades, those who had theorized such discarded matter had emphasized its ephemeral nature, whereas trash in the 1980s was asserting with increasing force both a characteristic resistance to being spatially contained and an alarming durability.

Insofar as it was doing so, I want to suggest, trash has a crucial heuristic value for understandings of US culture as a whole throughout the 1980s. For it invoked a certain “archaeological consciousness” that was also finding expression across diverse spheres of the nation’s culture throughout the decade. As I will show, much art, and particularly fiction, of the 1980s revealed that durable detritus was not just a pressing public policy issue but, for several artists and writers, a marker of a number of cultural anxieties emerging out of the operations of archaeological consciousness. Time and again in texts of the 1980s, trash speaks to concerns about the worthlessness and contingency of the mass-consuming culture of the late twentieth-century United States. But it also prompts reflections on its own epistemological complexity, for in the 1980s the kind of unmoored matter that features in cultural texts is mute and uncommunicative at least as often as it is eloquent and informative. And even when garbage does still have much to say throughout cultural texts of the 1980s about the mortality of both the human subject and entire civilizations, it also frequently attests to the individual’s obliviousness to such truths in a decade in which triumphalist political discourse had figured the nation as back on the rise after the supposed confusion and inertia of the 1970s. This in itself, I will argue, raises important questions about the relationship between producers of culture and their audience, whose receptiveness to the urgencies of archaeological consciousness suffers from a frustrating transience as far as trash is concerned. In sum, what a consideration of the cultural representation of trash and archaeological consciousness in the decade reveals is that although Americans were clearly conducting an important conversation with their trash in the 1980s, it was – as it still is – a fractured, problematic conversation, as characterized by awkward silences and dropped cues as moments of horrifying eloquence.

There can be no doubt of the cultural impact of the ocean-worrying trash that made so much news in the late 1980s. National newspapers covered the garbage barge’s journey. It featured on *The Tonight Show*, the *Phil Donahue*

Show – on which its host called its load “the most famous 3000 tons of garbage in the history of the universe” – and even in Steven Soderbergh’s *sex, lies and videotape* (Outlaw, 1989). In *See No Evil, Hear No Evil* (TriStar, 1989), when Richard Pryor and Gene Wilder drive a police car off a Manhattan wharf directly into “the 7000 tons of garbage” hauled by a passing garbage barge, the audience may have recalled media reports of the *Mobro*’s journey. Even political speech of the late 1980s drew directly on themes related to both the New Jersey medical waste and the *Mobro 4000*. “I am going to stop ocean dumping,” George H. W. Bush promised the Republican National Convention in 1988. “Our beaches should not be garbage dumps and our harbors should not be cesspools.”¹⁴ The references were to the *Mobro 4000*; the *Khian Sea*, its highly controversial predecessor; and the medical waste that had polluted New Jersey shores for two consecutive summers, as well as to Boston harbor. One of the less remembered negative television ads of the infamously dirty 1988 Bush–Quayle campaign featured images of garbage afloat upon the water in the harbor and a voice-over accusing Massachusetts governor and Democratic presidential candidate Michael Dukakis of being responsible for its presence.¹⁵

A whole complex of cultural anxieties pulsed through such highly mediated events as the voyage of the *Mobro 4000*. In the midst of a poorly understood AIDS crisis in which many tens of thousands of hearts were supposedly, like Prior Walter’s in Tony Kushner’s *Angels in America* (1990), “pumping polluted blood,” medical waste was a particular cause of concern.¹⁶ Broadcasting his weekly *Letter from America* for BBC Radio on 29 July 1988, during what he called the “atrocious, burning summer” that followed that of the voyage of the garbage barge, Alistair Cooke told his British audience of the beach closures necessitated by the discovery of “hospital waste of every gruesome sort from syringes and bandages and decayed organs to the corpses of laboratory rats.”¹⁷ Subsequent studies may have proven that such waste constituted only a small proportion of the garbage washing ashore during those summers, but public health fears at this time were perfectly understandable.¹⁸ After all, the revelations from the Love Canal scandal that had emerged in the

¹⁴ George H. W. Bush, “Acceptance Speech,” Republican National Convention, Superdome, New Orleans, 18 Aug. 1988, at www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/georgehwbush1988rnc.htm.
¹⁵ Available at www.livingroomcandidate.org/commercials/1988/harbor.

¹⁶ Tony Kushner, *Angels in America: A Gay Fantasia on National Themes*, first combined paperback edn (New York: Theatre Communications Group, 2003), 40.

¹⁷ Alistair Cooke, “America’s Polluted Waters,” *Letter from America*, BBC Radio, 29 July 1988, transcript available at www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/to8HyN6h55P3zTQ3FwcpfQ/americas-polluted-waters-29-july-1988.

¹⁸ See, for example, Kathryn D. Wagner, “Medical Wastes and the Beach Washups of 1988: Issues and Impacts,” Second International Conference on Marine Debris, 2–7

late 1970s confirmed that the American way of life in the late twentieth century might well entail living on top of several tens of thousands of tons of toxic industrial waste. Why would Americans of the late 1980s not fear the unknowable consequences of (sun)bathing amid the kind of detritus so evocatively catalogued by correspondents like Cooke?

Such health concerns aside, no other set of cultural anxieties are more obvious in the cultural response to the garbage panics of the 1980s than those related to space. "SPACE," Charles Olson's "central fact to man born in America," was precisely what Americans were running low on, according to some media sources.¹⁹ "Buried Alive! The Garbage Glut" ran the headline of a *Newsweek* cover on the alleged crisis in November 1989, introducing a story that gave voice to an apparently earnest fear that the discarded matter of the late twentieth-century United States, of which the load of the *Mobro 4000* was but a representative fraction, would, as one Cape Cod newspaper put it, "come back to haunt, and bury, its inhabitants."²⁰ As Patricia Poore has argued, for all their rhetorical and symbolic force, such fears had little empirical basis on the national level.²¹ As recently as the beginning of the twenty-first century, writers on garbage were citing studies that suggested that even

if the current rate of generation were maintained, all of America's garbage for the next one thousand years would fit into a landfill space 120 feet deep and forty-four miles square – a patch of land representing less than 0.1 percent of the surface area of the United States.²²

Yet what the unbidden glimpse into both the national and international commerce in trash afforded by the garbage barge did make obvious was that the routes taken by garbage mapped onto spatial inequities in population and wealth. Populous states like New York and New Jersey, for example, used contractors to truck their garbage as far afield as New Mexico in the West or to southern states like North Carolina or Louisiana, while the voyage of the *Khian Sea* entailed the dumping of a full four thousand tons of its 14,000-ton load on Haiti before the remainder disappeared into the Indian and Atlantic Oceans.²³ Prompted in part by the *Khian Sea* affair, the 1989 Basel

April 1989, Honolulu, Hawaii, at http://swfsc.noaa.gov/publications/TM/SWFSC/NOAA-TM-NMFS-SWFSC-154_P811.PDF.

¹⁹ Charles Olson, *Call Me Ishmael* (New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, 1947), 11.

²⁰ Melinda Beck et al., "Buried Alive," *Newsweek*, 27 Nov. 1989, 66–76; untitled editorial, *Cape Cod Times*, n.d., available at www.jconoverjr.com/g%20barg%205%20editorials.pdf.

²¹ Patricia Poore, "America's 'Garbage Crisis': A Toxic Myth," *Harper's*, March 1994, 24–28.

²² William L. Rathje and Cullen Murphy, *Rubbish! The Archaeology of Garbage* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2001), 108.

²³ Ibid.; Hope Reeves, "The Way We Live Now: 2-12-01: Map: A Trail of Refuse," *New York Times*, 12 Feb. 2001, at www.nytimes.com/2001/02/18/magazine/the-way-we-live-now-2-18-01-map-a-trail-of-refuse.html.

Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Waste and Their Disposal was signed but not ratified by the United States; by 1992, Larry Summers, then chief economist for the World Bank, was asserting in a memo subsequently leaked to Greenpeace that “the economic logic behind dumping a load of toxic waste in the lowest-wage country is impeccable.”²⁴ Space, then, was an issue, but not quite in the way that the mainstream media portrayed. It was less a case of the United States being in danger of burying itself alive and more one of how the trajectories traced by trash disclosed to view the uneven development on which the maximization of profit (or the limitation of loss) might hinge in the rapidly globalizing, increasingly transnational systems of production, consumption and disposal still regnant today.

However, this was never only a question of space, or of the revelatory geographies inscribed by the solid waste streams pouring forth out of the United States in the 1980s. Since the early 1970s, the University of Arizona’s Garbage Project had been investigating the “archaeology” of domestic waste; from 1987 onwards, prompted in part by the publicity surrounding the garbage crisis supposedly emblemized by the plight of the *Mobro 4000*, the project’s founder, William Rathje, expanded the scope of his research into what has been called “the archaeology of us” to begin excavating landfill sites.²⁵ Rathje and his team discovered that conditions inside landfills were such that the biodegradation supposedly occurring therein was, in many cases, a “myth,” and that what was being buried within such sites was in fact “durable beyond precedent.”²⁶ This coincided with a spate of legislation aimed at the synthetic plastics that appeared to many the principal cause of rubbish’s unwanted durability. As early as 1988, the legislature of Suffolk County, New York approved a bill banning plastic bags.²⁷ In 1990 alone, twenty-two states debated laws concerning disposable diapers. The state of New York even considered mandating environmental warnings on diaper packets informing consumers that the items contained within “may take over one hundred years to degrade in a landfill.”²⁸

This growing awareness of the surprising durability of the matter Americans were discarding in ever greater volumes contributed to the distinctive character

²⁴ “Let Them Eat Toxics,” *Harper’s*, May 1992, 26–27.

²⁵ William L. Rathje, “The Garbage Project & ‘The Archaeology of Us’” (1996), *Symmetrical Archaeology*, Stanford Humanities Lab, at <http://humanitieslab.stanford.edu/23/174>. See also Richard A. Gould and Michael B. Schiffer, eds., *Modern Material Culture: The Archaeology of Us* (New York and London: Academic Press, 1981).

²⁶ Rathje; Rathje and Murphy, 130.

²⁷ “Suffolk Votes A Bill to Ban Plastic Bags,” *New York Times*, 30 March 1988, B1.

²⁸ Rathje and Murphy, 165.

of the “garbage panics” of the decade. The discarded matter produced by a mass-consuming, “throwaway” society had previously been characterized in terms not of its durability but of its ephemerality. As early as 1930, Stuart Chase was sardonically insisting in a *Harper's* essay that it was “a duty partaking of the sacred to keep millions of tons of motor cars, radios, phonographs, furniture, clothing, toys, printed matter moving briskly towards the junk pile with a minimum of stoppage in the hands of the user.”²⁹ Nearly twenty years later, Hannah Arendt argued in *The Human Condition* (1958) that while it was “durability which gives the things of the world their relative independence from men who produced and use them,” this durability did not apply to waste.³⁰ When Arendt writes that “our whole economy has become a waste economy, in which things must be almost as quickly devoured as they have appeared in the world,” she neglects how things might not be “devoured” in their entirety, nor necessarily disappear from “the world” once whatever was left of them had been discarded.³¹ Similarly, in *The System of Objects* (1968), Jean Baudrillard had claimed that “for centuries generations of people succeeded one another in an unchanging décor of objects which were longer-lived than they, whereas now many generations of objects will follow upon one another at an ever-accelerating pace during a single human lifetime.”³² There is a clear tendency in such commentary to underplay the lifespan of the discarded matter of the object world, as if things and what remains of things always moved briskly, barely pausing, barely being, as they lived and died, moved on or disappeared.

In this light, the news that William Rathje and his colleagues were bringing up from the depths of sanitary landfill sites from the late 1980s onwards was news precisely because it established that so much discarded matter survived, and was going to survive, far longer than anyone had previously hypothesized. The understanding that this might be true of some materials, such as plastics, led to local legislative responses aimed at plastic bags and disposable diapers. But what Rathje was establishing was that this was not simply a question of plastics alone. Accompanying the 1989 *Newsweek* story on “the garbage glut” was a photograph of an intact, well-preserved corncob and a newspaper dating back to 1952 that had been retrieved from a landfill: all manner of tossed-away things would live on long after what Arendt had called their “makers and users” had passed away, regardless of the materials of which they were composed.³³ Hence the desire for the symbolic and material

²⁹ Stuart Chase, “The Mad Hatter’s Dirty Teacup,” *Harper's*, April 1930, 580–86, 585.

³⁰ Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 2nd edn (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), 137.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 134.

³² Jean Baudrillard, *The System of Objects*, trans. James Benedict (London: Verso, 2005), 172.

³³ Arendt, 137.

“reincarnation” of such objects held out by what were in the 1980s still nascent recycling schemes, which for some commentators represented a way out of the crisis of the moment. The deathlessness of such dirt made a change of material form, either by means of biodegradation or through some other transformative process, itself an object of desire.³⁴

This growing awareness of the temporally dislocated nature of the kind of late twentieth-century trash that made up the garbage barge’s load, its recalcitrant refusal to go away after it had been thrown away, was of considerable historical and epistemological significance. So often conceptualized as ephemeral, this was not only matter out of place, it became clear. This was matter unmoored in both space and time, resistant to the ephemeral, here-today-gone-tomorrow lifespan assigned to it by a culture of mass consumption and planned obsolescence, reluctant to undergo the transformative processes so fervently wished upon it, and thus demonstrably capable of making what Thompson had characterized in *Rubbish Theory* as “the seemingly impossible transfer” from “transience to durability.”³⁵ This double dislocation of matter in time and space may inform many of our contemporary understandings of garbage, but it was still a relatively new notion in the 1980s. The decade therefore represents an important watershed in our conceptualization of the nature of trash. With American junk afloat on global tides, pooling on the surface of the Pacific in the form of the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, and even (as NASA had confirmed) orbiting the planet, the spatial extent of the problem posed by such matter was obvious for anyone willing to consider it. The news that much of the discarded matter already spatially contained in sanitary landfill sites was nevertheless evading death showed that the temporal extent of the material waste Americans were manufacturing in ever greater quantities ought to have been no less an object of wonder.

Rathje’s work was both driven by and sought to invoke what one historian of archaeology, Alain Schapp, has called an “archaeological consciousness.”³⁶ For Schapp, archaeological consciousness, varieties of which can be traced at least as far back as the sixth-century BC cuneiform engravings on stone tablets uncovered in Larsa, modern-day Iraq, is a habit of mind “born more of confrontation with the future than with the past,” in which one contemplates not just what has survived from other times, but what will survive from ours. “We have to engage with the idea that other human beings, maybe tomorrow, maybe in a few hours’ time, maybe a few years or centuries from now, will

³⁴ Beck et al., “Buried Alive,” 68, 71–75.

³⁵ Thompson, *Rubbish Theory*, 9.

³⁶ Alain Schapp, *The Discovery of the Past: The Origins of Archaeology*, trans. Ian Kinnes and Gillian Varndell (London: British Museum Press, 1996), 18.

look upon our traces,” Schapp writes.³⁷ For centuries, the survival through time of just such material traces has prompted a sense of contemplative wonder in those musing upon them. Indeed, the study of such lasting things and bits of things, of middens and shell heaps, lies at the heart of the discipline of archaeology. Scholars once conceived of the way in which such bits and pieces travel through time in metaphorical terms apt to describe the kind of ocean-borne detritus that plagued American shores and consciousnesses in the 1980s. For proto-archaeologists and early antiquarians had used the term “time’s shipwreck” to describe the “jetsam on the shore of history,” which “if properly interpreted, reveal[s] facts, practices and behaviour which could take us to the heart of past societies.”³⁸ In a mass-consuming society in which even the most ephemeral objects obtain a surprising durability, the sheer amount of such wreckage increases exponentially; and in Rathje’s work and the anti-plastic legislation of the late 1980s we can surely detect an archaeological consciousness eager to reduce the exposure of the Earth and future generations to the long-lived garbage of the late twentieth-century United States.

Such a consciousness, however, was by no means limited to archaeological research itself, nor to the public-policy debates provoked by the growing awareness of the durability of even the most supposedly ephemeral things. Unmoored matter and archaeological consciousness teem across a range of the cultural production of the United States between the late 1970s and the late 1980s. As early as 1979, in *Motel of the Mysteries*, the British-born illustrator David Macaulay, previously known for educational books on the architecture and construction of the set-piece glories of western European culture like *Cathedral* (1973) and *Castle* (1977), offered a satirical illustrated account of an archaeological excavation that takes place in the year 4022, more than two thousand years after the supposed burial – in the middle of the 1980s – of the contemporary United States under the weight of its own junk.³⁹ In 1980, the artist Sam Weiner staged an installation called “Splendors of the Sohites” at New York’s OK Harris gallery, a “sly parody of blockbuster museum loan shows, right down to the attached gift shop, [which] featured archaeological fragments of a supposedly vanished SoHo civilization – ‘funerary objects’ that strangely resembled abandoned hubcaps, heavily patinated beer-can tabs labelled ‘hermaphrodite symbols,’ and other marvels.”⁴⁰ Riffing on the success of the Treasures of Tutankhamun exhibition that had toured seven major cities in the United States and was seen by a million

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid., 163.

³⁹ David Macaulay, *Motel of the Mysteries* (London: Hutchinson, 1979).

⁴⁰ Calvin Tomkins, “The Art World: The Antic Muse,” *New Yorker*, 17 Aug. 1981, 80–83, 80.

Americans between 1976 and 1979, the work of Weiner and Macaulay involved an ironic turn inwards. They speculated on what might remain of American civilization for archaeologists to marvel at in the future.⁴¹ Both Macaulay and Weiner alighted on the most worthless refuse and part-objects either as the cause of civilizational collapse or as the remnants that would survive that civilization. Recent films like Mike Judge's *Idiocracy* (20th Century Fox, 2006) and Pixar's *Wall-E* (2008), where cultural apocalypses take the form of suffocating accumulations of trash, follow the contours of this satirical attack on the culture of the modern-day United States. Such versions of the apocalypse suggest that the United States might have nothing to offer posterity besides the worthless waste products of contemporary mass consumption and add to a long rhetorical tradition of jeremiads about American materialism that had returned with some force on the cusp of the 1980s when President Jimmy Carter tried to convince Americans that they had learned "that piling up material goods cannot fill the emptiness of lives which have no confidence and purpose."⁴²

The plate paintings that the painter Julian Schnabel produced at the beginning of the 1980s present another interesting expression of archaeological consciousness. Works like *The Sea* (1981) and *The Mud in Mudanza* (1982), in which Schnabel used broken plates as the grounds of his painting, are artistic reifications of the notion of "time's shipwreck." "The Sea" communicates the idea most directly, with its partly clear, partly muddied, black-and-blue palette, its series of white horizontals foaming laterally across the painting like the spume that bubbles along the crests of waves, and its jumbled horde of pots and plates and hunk of actual charred wood fixed onto the canvas like something washed up on shore.⁴³ *The Mud in Mudanza* suggests not a sea but a river running dry to reveal a geological battleground: a violent gash of volcanic red runs through a panel dominated by a green-black hue reminiscent of petroleum deposits. Sandy shades turn muddier in patches or are streaked with a marine blue or ever-darker reds; a single swathe of plates retains a white china glaze, not yet subsumed into the slowly hardening geological gloom.⁴⁴ Thomas McEvilley has written of *The Mud in Mudanza*,

It is the loam of history that lies there among the gaping vessels that seem to come from another age. It is the dissolving and fertilizing ground of the past on which

⁴¹ Marilyn Chase, "Museum Show Inspires Tutmania," *New York Times*, 8 March 1978, C9.

⁴² Jimmy Carter, "Address to the Nation on Energy and National Goals," 15 July 1979, in *The American Presidency Project*, available at www.presidency.ucsby.edu/ws/?pid=32596.

⁴³ Available at www.julianschnabel.com/category/paintings/plate-paintings/plate-paintings-group-2.

⁴⁴ Available at www.julianschnabel.com/category/paintings/plate-paintings/plate-paintings-group-2.

we raise our brief constructions, which are equally to be broken down into the death-and-life swamp of the archaeological rubbish dump ... The fact that the shards are not really from ancient ceramic wares ... but contemporary ones, usually brand new from the stores and sometimes still bearing labels or price tags, focuses the onslaught of ravaging time onto our own moment.⁴⁵

McEvelley underscores the double vision inherent in such artistic works. Like Walter Benjamin's "angel of history," who "sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet," they look backwards to the past as time serves to transport "the gaping vessels that seem to come from another age" into the present.⁴⁶ At the same time, such work looks forwards, as the objects that are part of the work raise the question of what amongst the endless mass of the material culture of the late twentieth-century United States might survive in times to come. Both perspectives contribute to a conceptual dialogue between the ephemeral and the durable as the paintings stage a tension between "the onslaught of ravaging time" and the things that survive, in one form or another, to tell the tale of that ravaging after individuals and civilizations have passed away.

Compare the novelist Don DeLillo's celebrated mid-decade work *White Noise* (1985), which is steeped in a deeply ironic sense of the contingency of the culture of the late twentieth-century United States. Such a sense had been present in DeLillo's work from as early as his first novel, *Americana* (1971), in which the narrator meditates upon a car tyre test track in Texas: "I looked at that huge circle of asphalt, nine never-ending miles, something left behind by a crazed or childlike people."⁴⁷ A curious piece of Americana projected into the future, the test track is conceived as a monument or relic, with much to say about the culture that had produced it. This archaeological consciousness only intensifies in *White Noise*. Looking upon what he calls "the two-story world of an ordinary main street," the narrator finds that it reminds him "that Albert Speer wanted to build structures that would decay gloriously, impressively, like Roman ruins."⁴⁸ It is part of the humour of *White Noise* that Speer, of all architects, should be invoked here, given that Jack Gladney, DeLillo's narrator, is a professor of "Hitler Studies" who cannot speak German. The reference to an architecture responsive to the pathological death-drive of Hitler and the Third Reich captures DeLillo's preoccupation with the transience of human endeavours, the evanescence of the human subject, and the contingency of even the most powerful cultures and civilizations. "We create beautiful and lasting things, build vast civilizations,"

⁴⁵ Thomas McEvelley, *Julian Schnabel: Paintings 1975–1986* (London: Whitechapel, 1986), 15.

⁴⁶ Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zorn (London: Pimlico, 1999), 249.

⁴⁷ Don DeLillo, *Americana* (London: Penguin, 1990), 375.

⁴⁸ Don DeLillo, *White Noise* (London: Picador, 1999), 257.

Gladney observes to his colleague and sometime confidant, Murray Jay Siskind, who teaches in the department of “American environments.” “‘Gorgeous evasions,’ he said. ‘Great escapes.’”⁴⁹ Gladney is attempting to evade his own fear of death, but Siskind implies that the construction of “vast civilizations” is powered by the same impulse. Death cannot be evaded either on the cultural or on the individual level. “The ruin is built into the creation,” as Gladney says of the buildings he dwells upon on Main Street.⁵⁰ What stands in the present will collapse in the future, eroded into ruin and rubble: yet more wreckage on the tides of time.

At times, DeLillo’s articulation of archaeological consciousness is even more explicit. When the Gladney family flee from their home in the face of looming ecological disaster and encounter a deserted gas station, DeLillo’s narrator describes how the pumps “were not locked, which meant the attendants had fled suddenly, leaving things intriguingly as they were, like the tools and pottery of some pueblo civilization, bread in the oven, table set for three, a mystery to haunt the generations.”⁵¹ The metaphor of the vanished-civilization-to-be glimpses the present age as the past of a future still to come, and the everyday buildings and objects of the 1980s as what DeLillo would refer to in a later, post-9/11 essay as “the ruins of the future.”⁵² Such archaeological imagery is hardly out of place in literature of the 1980s. In *The Invention of Solitude* (1982), Paul Auster meditates upon the possessions his father left behind upon his death: “In themselves, the things mean nothing, like the cooking utensils of some vanished civilization.”⁵³ In *In Country* (1985), Bobbie Ann Mason’s narrator touches the name of her dead father engraved on the Vietnam Veterans’ Memorial and discovers “[a] scratching on a rock. Writing. Something for future archaeologists to puzzle over.”⁵⁴ What is distinctive about *White Noise*, however, is the way in which the novel incorporates such archaeological perspectives into its contemplation of everyday waste, for when, in another scene from the novel, Gladney observes the compacted trash his family generates, he describes himself feeling “like an archaeologist about to sift through a finding of tool fragments and assorted cave trash.”⁵⁵

And yet, if DeLillo’s narrator turns to the family trash as an archaeologist turns to an archaeological find, in the hope that it might tell him something of the people and practices that left it behind, what defines this particular agglomeration of matter is its abiding epistemological elusiveness. One of the

⁴⁹ Ibid., 290.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 258.

⁵¹ Ibid., 126–27.

⁵² Don DeLillo, “In the Ruins of the Future: Reflections on Terror and Loss in the Shadow of September,” *Harper’s*, Dec. 2001, 33–40.

⁵³ Paul Auster, *The Invention of Solitude* (New York: SUN, 1982), 10–11.

⁵⁴ Bobbie Ann Mason, *In Country* (New York: Perennial, 1993), 244.

⁵⁵ DeLillo, *White Noise*, 258.

novel's earliest critics, Frank Lentricchia, argued that the rash of rhetorical questions that Gladney poses at the sight of his family's trash – "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? What solitary acts, behavioural ruts?" – mimics the questioning voice in John Keats's "Ode on a Grecian Urn."⁵⁶ If so, DeLillo emphasizes the impervious muteness of such things, for although Keats may have made his Grecian urn talk, saying "Beauty is truth, truth beauty, – that is all/Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know," the Gladney family trash is to a large extent unresponsive. As Bobbie Ann Mason's narrator suspects will be true of the Vietnam Veterans' Memorial unveiled in 1982, Gladney's trash remains something to puzzle over; in itself, as Auster claims of his father's banal legacy of abandoned things, it very often "mean[s] nothing." The point here is partly that trash, like any other future archaeological find, is difficult to understand. Shortly after the publication of *White Noise*, newspapers like the *New York Times* would publish details of William Rathje's interrogations of the much vaster accumulations of trash that had been collected in sanitary landfill sites. In such texts, Rathje spoke of the eloquence of trash, describing how reliably it informs archaeologists about human practices. *White Noise* illustrates that even as it prompts such interrogations, trash of all sorts is likely to refuse to answer many of the questions it raises, for sometimes trash is just meaningless trash, or what David Evans has called in relation to DeLillo's work a "stubbornly senseless" kind of matter.⁵⁷ If it says anything at all, it says, in a sense, nothing, and saying nothing speaks to nothing so much as the very idea of nothingness. Indeed, this cultural excrement is ultimately not so different from the pile of faeces an earlier DeLillo narrator had found in the middle of the west Texas desert, which with its "nullity" and "whisper of inexistence" had offered up yet another intimation of mortality.⁵⁸

DeLillo has consistently been praised for the prescience of his work, and in seizing upon the complexities of domestic trash in *White Noise*, he anticipates the cultural reception of the garbage panics that followed later in the decade. But fictional texts of and about the 1980s produced after the voyage of the *Mobro 4000* exhibit clear signs of having been influenced by the intensification of the "garbage discourse" that followed in the barge's wake in ways that complicate the meaning of unmoored matter still further. John Updike's *Rabbit at Rest* (1990), the final part of a tetralogy that offers a decade-by-decade social

⁵⁶ Ibid., 259; Frank Lentricchia, "Tales of the Electronic Tribe," in Lentricchia, ed., *New Essays on White Noise* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991) 87–113, 106.

⁵⁷ David Evans, "Taking Out the Trash: Don DeLillo's *Underworld*, Liquid Modernity, and the End of Garbage," *Cambridge Quarterly*, 35, 2 (2006) 103–32, 111.

⁵⁸ Don DeLillo, *End Zone* (London: Picador, 2004), 85.

history of the United States from the 1950s to the 1980s, is uncommonly full of garbage. When Harry “Rabbit” Angstrom, by now the franchisee of a Toyota car dealership, anxiously awaits a visit from a company representative, he notices that the hedge bordering his lot “has collected a number of waxpaper pizza wrappers and Styrofoam coffee cups.” Moved to remove this trash, Angstrom goes out into “the hot polluted air” and discovers that the

more wastepaper he gathers, the more it seems there is – candy wrappers, cigarette-pack cellophane, advertising fliers and whole pages of newspaper wrinkled by rain and browned by the sun, big soft-drink cups with the plastic lid still on and the straw still in and the dirty water from melted ice still sloshing around.⁵⁹

Updike’s description of environmental pollution parallels Angstrom’s own carefully documented physical decline and fall. Just as Angstrom clogs his arteries with snacks and junk food, so this particular “American environment” is choked with “crud.”⁶⁰ There is a dramatic inevitability about the arrival of the Japanese executive, Mr. Shimida, at just the moment Angstrom realizes that there is more trash despoiling his lot than he can carry in his big, ex-basketball player’s hands: more than just senseless, this rubbish serves as a symbol of both personal and national decline after a decade in which Japan’s economic rise concerned many American observers. But if the imagery of the trash-polluted hedge focusses above all on the *spatial* extent of the displaced matter littering the United States of the 1980s, it is the *temporal* endurance of matter that prompts intimations of Rabbit’s own mortality. Contemplating the items of furniture that fill his Florida condominium, Rabbit observes that they “all have a certain power, the ability to outlast him. He is flesh, they are inanimate things.”⁶¹ And so too, of course, are the items of trash that litter Rabbit’s lot; they will outlast him even after they have been properly thrown away, for, as the 1980s revealed, garbage can be buried but it does not necessarily die.

Jay McInerney’s *Brightness Falls* (1992), a novel written about the 1980s shortly after the decade had come to an end, makes a related point through an image of accreted, layered burial. McInerney’s narrator describes a character walking to work on mid-1980s Wall Street, and has her

high-stepping over buried ceramic pipe bowls and wine jugs, bent nails, broken glass and brick fragments, partially fossilized pig, chicken and sheep bones, and other detritus that had been regularly tossed over the wall three centuries before, her route so familiar that she was as oblivious to it as she was to what was underneath the pavement, not really seeing the towering temples to Mammon as she walked toward the one in which she toiled, reading her paper in the available light that found its way to the canyon floor.⁶²

⁵⁹ John Updike, *Rabbit at Rest* (London: Penguin Classics, 2006), 349–50. ⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 349.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 449.

⁶² Jay McInerney, *Brightness Falls* (London: Bloomsbury, 1992), 41.

Like Julian Schnabel's 1980s paintings, McInerney's prose moves two ways: down, towards the durable ephemera of the past, and up, towards the ephemeral durability of the present. He figures the investment banks and brokerage firms of 1980s Wall Street as anachronistic "towering temples to Mammon" and places those metaphorical temples in a context that implies that they too will fall, like "the seventeenth-century log wall that had protected the Dutch settlers from the Indians and the British."⁶³ McInerney's pipe bowls and wine jugs, nails, glass, brick and bone are of a piece with the family trash in DeLillo's *White Noise*, the hedge litter in *Rabbit at Rest*, and the three thousand tons of contemporary American detritus that formed the load of the *Mobro 4000*. All speak of cultures and individuals that once were but eventually will no longer be, even if they do not, as DeLillo's narrator implies, always speak with the clear-throated clarity an archaeologist might desire. Of course, McInerney's character, Corrine, knows nothing of what lies beneath her feet; her eyes are fixed on a mediated present, her newspaper commanding her attention even as she walks. In this way, McInerney emphasizes the obliviousness of the individual subject to the rising and falling motions of historical time, an obliviousness that found its counterpart in 1980s financial history, as well as in McInerney's novel, in the unexplained and to many still inexplicable Wall Street crash of October 1987. For if the economy of the United States, and indeed the nation, was, as Ronald Reagan asserted in his successful reelection campaign, "back" and on the rise again after the stagflation of the 1970s, what the 1987 crash emphasized was the suddenness with which all rising bodies can unexpectedly fall. McInerney's image thus offers an acerbic comment on the 1980s themselves: any tales the accumulated refuse of generations might have to tell about the contingency of all cultures and civilizations, and about the evanescence of all individual human practices, go pointedly unheeded in a decade in which the cultural air of the United States was at times as noisy with national self-congratulation as it had ever been. Even when trash speaks, it is not necessarily heard.

Of course, no such obliviousness greeted the garbage barge and all that attended it once it emerged onto – and lingered on – the American scene. But if the "garbage panics" of the late 1980s reanimated a degree of archaeological consciousness and brought into renewed focus concerns about the values and contingency of late twentieth-century US civilization, the question remains whether such moments of wider cultural visibility are themselves fated to a frustrating transience. For all the uptick in recycling rates and the emergence of bags that proclaim "I am not a plastic bag" and cups that say "I am

⁶³ Ibid.

not a plastic cup,” subsequent decades have proved just as durably trash-filled as the 1980s. Waste-generating mass consumption carries on apace, and writers and artists continue to draw our attention to the fact. In the 1990s, works like A. R. Ammons’s National Book Award-winning poem *Garbage* (1993), or DeLillo’s magnum opus *Underworld* (1997), which includes repeated references to a *Khian Sea* or *Mobro*-like ship carrying a reportedly toxic cargo and rumored to have been “sailing port to port” for years, show as much.⁶⁴ But one wonders to what effect. For in our own time, a phenomenon like the Great Pacific Garbage Patch occupies a position in the cultural consciousness of the United States akin to that of the domestic trash in *White Noise*, of which DeLillo’s narrator asks, “Was this the dark underside of consumer consciousness?”⁶⁵ The Pacific’s plastic floats miles offshore, open to the elements but unseen and disregarded, an obscene testament to the durability of the most ephemeral things and the paths they trace across the globe. Scientists and photographers have already brought back news from that place, just as Rathje carried his up from the nation’s subterranean garbage dumps.⁶⁶ Chris Jordan’s images, for example, illustrate the durability of contemporary trash in the starkest possible terms: plastic bottle tops and cigarette lighters left exposed on the Pacific atoll of Midway as the flesh of the immature albatrosses that had the misfortune to swallow them rots away, framing each contingent mess of litter against small sad mounds of feather, beak and bone. Still, for most of the wider public, the masses of floating trash may as well be buried deep beneath their feet (like that in McNerney’s *Brightness Falls*), so little attention have they commanded, even in an age we have taken to calling the “Anthropocene,” in which man-made, durable plastics are “near-ubiquitous,” forming “stratigraphic markers” of the present for generations of archaeologists still to come.⁶⁷

In this sense, the foregoing discussion surely has implications for more than understandings of the 1980s alone. To be sure, the garbage discourse of the decade is an intriguing feature of an era that many historians have characterized all too simplistically as one in which citizens of the United States ignored Jimmy Carter’s jeremiad against the “piling up” of “material goods” to give themselves over to material things as never before.⁶⁸ Incorporated into our

⁶⁴ Don DeLillo, *Underworld* (London: Picador, 1999) 277–81.

⁶⁵ Don DeLillo, *White Noise*, 259.

⁶⁶ See Charles Moore, “Trashed: Across the Pacific Ocean, Plastics, Plastics Everywhere,” *Natural History*, 112, 9 (2003), 46–51; Chris Jordan, “Midway: Message from the Gyre,” at www.chrisjordan.com/gallery/midway/#CF000313%2018x24.

⁶⁷ Jan Zalasiewicz et al., “The Geological Cycle of Plastics and Their Use as a Stratigraphic Indicator of the Anthropocene,” *Anthropocene* (2016), at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ancene.2016.01.002>.

⁶⁸ See, for example, Collins, *Transforming America*, 147, 157 ff.; Troy, *Morning in America*, 18.

evolving perceptions of the period, the anxieties around trash and what it might have been saying about the longevity of the civilization that was producing it in such widespread and durable quantities may well serve to deepen a sense of the 1980s as representing the dawning of a “new Gilded Age.” For what lay beneath the glister of late twentieth-century consumer culture, or was being produced alongside it, episodes like the voyage of the garbage barge disclosed, was a far-flung reliquary of potentially deadly, durable detritus. The surface sheen of the decade, in other words, was just that: a superficial gloss over sordid and troubling material realities. But as numerous commentators have intimated, that “Gilded Age” that began somewhere around the late 1970s may in fact never have ended; we are instead stuck in a “long 1980s” that has continued to witness the global expansion of the ecologically disastrous systems of capitalist production, consumption and disposal out of which the garbage discourse of the 1980s emerged.⁶⁹ If that is the case, we can surely expect further evanescent flarings of archaeological consciousness as producers of culture dwell, however transiently, on the implications for posterity of a truth acknowledged by Edward Abbey as early as 1968 but never before realized to the same extent as it is today. “Nature’s polluted/There’s man in every secret corner of her,” observed Abbey, quoting Thomas Lovell Bedoes, in *Desert Solitaire*.⁷⁰ And in every such corner, many US citizens were first beginning to understand in the 1980s, the parings and refuse of even the most insignificant aspects of their civilization’s material culture are likely to stay, in one form or another, long after those who made and all too briefly used them are gone.

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY

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⁶⁹ See Leigh Clare La Berge, *Scandal and Abstraction: Financial Fiction of the Long 1980s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015); or how, contemplating the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis, Michael Lewis reflected on the curious longevity of what he calls “the financial 1980s.” “I thought I was writing a period piece about the 1980s in America,” Lewis writes, recalling his memoir of that era, *Liar’s Poker*. “Not for a moment did I suspect that the financial 1980s would last two full decades longer.” Michael Lewis, “The End” (11 Nov. 2008), at *Portfolio.com*. Both are examples of the growing sense that the last few decades form a more or less contiguous period.

⁷⁰ Quoted in Edward Abbey, *Desert Solitaire: A Season in the Wilderness* (New York: Touchstone, 1990), 165.