

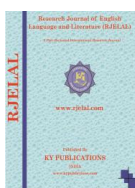


## WASTE TIES: WASTE, POWER AND THE EVOLUTION OF THE ANTHROPOCENE

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### ABSTRACT

This essay delves into the relationship between waste, power and the unfolding of the Anthropocene. Human domination of the planet Earth during the Anthropocene has effected the hierarchization of humans in terms of their faculty to dominate all reachable space-time so that it is transformed from non-human waste into anthropocentric space-time. Humans have also been hierarchized in terms of the facility with which they can dismiss allegations of waste production and generate waste management answers. Three texts, William Bradford's *Of Plymouth Plantation*, Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* and R. K. Narayan's *The Guide*, have been used to inquire into the relationship between waste, power and the Anthropocene, subsequent to the claim that this relationship, as seen in texts such as Ann Petry's *The Street*, ignited the Second World War and its repercussions, the contentions between differences in linkages inside and outside anthropocentric space-time, which have endured into the twenty-first century. The ideas of right use and waste motivated William Bradford's Puritans to repeatedly refuse biomic, biotopic and ecospheric attunement after they arrived in North America. They censured humans and other organisms for what they regarded as crimes and sins. The use of waste for anthropocentric production, not consumption, underpins the argument in favour of English colonization in Crusoe's novel. Narayan's novel interrogates whether non-anthropogenic waste is more dangerous to the ecosystem than anthropogenic waste and probes the position of waste and wastrels in protecting, through their nullification and encouragement of the self-centredness of anthropocentrism, the flawed modern state and its people.

Keywords: Anthropocene, waste, William Bradford, Daniel Defoe, R. K. Narayan, ecocriticism

### INTRODUCTION

Either government as the public channel of communication or message that forms the people of the modern nation-state<sup>1</sup> or the individuals of the public in Ann Petry's novel of social protest *The Street* (1946) must agree to take on the label of the greater abuser or the greater waster with respect to the differences of the public that are supposed to be

protected by the public channel of government and the public that builds this channel. On her way to Chicago, Lutie Johnson believes that the responsibility of childcare and upbringing of her child who is awaiting a decision of the Children's Court (regarding his juvenile delinquency) should be handed to the lesser abuser, the state, as she has been provoked to murder a man and is a fugitive

from the laws of a government that did not protect her position as a single African American parent who has been abused by her family and is in a disadvantaged position of difference economically, politically and socially under the government of the similarities of the people. One of the questions that the reader finds in the text is related to the accountability of the government and the public that elects the government in creating the purported greater abuser, Lutie Johnson. This question materializes through the street (116<sup>th</sup> Street of New York City) on which Lutie's apartment is located – a street where the New York City Department of Sanitation is responsible for cleanliness as in the other streets of the city and where the public that elects its representatives is not only not powerful enough to have an impact on City Council decisions but is also not acquainted with the instruments required to protect differences so that the trash that explodes on the public streets apparently corresponds to the explosion of differences during (and after) the Second World War affronting governments that labeled differences as similarities and deliberately performed (such as through the Holocaust and racism) their obliviousness of differences in the prior (to the Second World War) years of the Anthropocene.

Lutie's deliberations about the label of greater abuser reappear in the emissions or carbon trading negotiations under the 1997 Kyoto Protocol and related agreements in the twenty-first century between nations who have the universal or global welfare of the "child" planet Earth in mind. Trade in profits between nations involves trade in battery/abuse between nations. Climate change agreements permit nations the right to purchase the right to make greater carbon emissions (greenhouse gases) from other nations while the objective is to keep the global carbon emissions within assigned permissible limits. The label of greater abuser is sought in carbon trading by centrestaging stories about differences in global development and similarities and differences between developing and developed nations. That label is authorized only for the "right" developer who is appreciated under a carbon credit system for purchasing the right to battery (perhaps increasing their ecological debt)

from another who does not have bargaining power in development. A global system of waste, its production and corrosion, its detection, treatment and concealment in interconnected political, economic and social systems deserves attention in studies of the evolution of the Anthropocene.

Totalitarian control of all space accessible to humans has been the objective of survival in time of the human species. Space-time cannot be separated into its components except in anthropocentric ideologies that refuse to acknowledge other modes of existence. It could be argued that the Anthropocene is the period of time in which humans have dominated the planet (Earth)<sup>2</sup> and in which domination is today accepted as destruction by all those who are trying to prevent further climate change and extinction of species, among other outcomes, on Earth and around it; it is about waste produced by humans. In the end, the useful anthropocentric space-time is often seen to have turned into the identical twin of the wasteful space-time<sup>3</sup> (in the manner of Benjamin's statements on the Angel of History<sup>4</sup>) that has been beyond human domination in anthropocentric terms within the space-time of the universe.

Waste is also about the limits of use of the universe for humans. It turns into the limit of the Anthropocene that indicates the subordination of the Anthropocene to the space-time of the whole changing universe. The wastefulness of the anthropocentric space-time is the space-time in which all differences (human and non-human) might appear to exist or be useful (in the manner of Bataille<sup>5</sup>) to maintain the dominant group of humans not because these conditions are considered necessary but because they nourish attachment to the system and the dominant group might relate this to the wasteful subservience of anthropocentric space time to the whole space-time of the changing universe – so domination in anthropocentric space-time might be justified on the basis of the minoritization of anthropocentric space-time in relation to universal space-time by attempting to rationalize that which cannot be rationalized until the telos of the universe is rationalized.

The purpose of this essay is to look at the relationship between waste and power in connection with the advancement of the Anthropocene. Human domination of the planet Earth during the Anthropocene has effected the hierarchization of humans in terms of their faculty to dominate all reachable space-time so that it is transformed from non-human waste into anthropocentric space-time. During the endeavour to dominate, not only has the waste produced been hierarchized but humans have also been hierarchized in terms of the facility with which they can dismiss allegations of waste production and generate waste management answers.

Waste or uncultivated land could be claimed for human cultivation by anybody in ancient Europe and such settlers were often tainted by their position outside the law of the land before they were absorbed into the existing political, social and economic system of the surrounding country of legal inhabitants.<sup>6</sup> Governments were not contested and assessed by waste only in ancient Europe; even in the twentieth century, governments were evaluated – for instance, in the case of socialist and capitalist governments – on the basis of their position with respect to waste.<sup>7</sup> Deliberate decisions on defining waste and the belief in its innateness with respect to human life were and are linked to differences among humans and were and are formed by ideologies of its significance to divergent humans.<sup>8</sup> Economic, biological and emotional factors have had an effect on the development of the cultural magnitude of waste.<sup>9</sup> Ethical problems related to waste which are induced by human production and consumption have also sculpted problems of drawing the borderline between the public and the private, between an individual body and a group, between humans and non-humans and between different humans.<sup>10</sup>

Three texts from three prominent moments in the Anthropocene – William Bradford's *Of Plymouth Plantation 1620-1647* (written in the seventeenth century but published for the first time in 1856), Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) and R. K. Narayan's *The Guide* (1958) – could be used to examine the relationship between waste, power and the development of the Anthropocene.<sup>11</sup>

#### WASTE CRIMES AND SINS

The Mayflower colonists in William Bradford's *Of Plymouth Plantation* had encountered terms of categorization such as "wild", "savage", "brutish" and "barbarous" for the biome that was thought to exist in the biotope that they had selected for the purpose of populating themselves preceding their migration to North America from Leyden (and following their evacuation from England that was activated by religious persecution). Native Americans and animals were synonymous in the Puritans' anthropocentric outlook as they were the "waste" that the colonists would seek to control to inaugurate their community in North America:

The place they had thoughts on was some of those vast and unpeopled countries of America, which are fruitful and fit for habitation, being devoid of all civil inhabitants, where there are only savage and brutish men which range up and down, little otherwise than the wild beasts of the same. [...] The change of air, diet and drinking of water would infect their bodies with sore sicknesses and grievous diseases. And also those which should escape or overcome these difficulties should yet be in continual danger of the savage people, who are cruel, barbarous and most treacherous [...] <sup>12</sup>

The parasitic consequences of the invasive actions of the Puritans have been documented by many scholars and it could be argued that the anthropocentric Puritans had a destructive effect on the biome of the biotope they selected because they were unable to engage in mutualism.

In the early days of the Plymouth colony, the issue of the right use of so-called waste land, also considered to be the "Lord's waste" (a reference to God as well as to the aristocrats who owned the patent for New England), undermined and damaged relations between the Plymouth colony and other English colonies in North America when they wished to profit from the same area of land.<sup>13</sup> It also propelled violent competition with French and Dutch colonists and with Native Americans. The Plymouth colonists might have argued that they

were involved in the right use of “waste land” but they also had to embrace commensalist and sometimes symbiotic relations with Native Americans such as the Wampanoags in the beginning. Native Americans such as Squanto “directed them how to set their corn, where to take fish, and to procure other commodities, and was also their pilot to bring them to unknown places for their profit”.<sup>14</sup> Some respect for Native Americans as members of the human species seems to have been galvanized in place of the racist predisposition to view Native Americans as wild beasts native to “waste” land, as treaties were commenced regarding their approach to each other. The idea of right use and the related idea of waste also appeared in these treaties and in the connections forged between the Native Americans and the colonists of Plymouth and other plantations. In the treaty between the Wampanoags and the Mayflower settlers, it was declared:

1. That neither he nor any of his should injure or do hurt to any of their people.
2. That if any of his did hurt to any of theirs, he should send the offender, that they might punish him.
3. That if anything were taken away from any of theirs, he should cause it to be restored; and they should do the like to his. [...] <sup>15</sup>

The norms adopted in the treaty also apparently incited the Native Americans’ demand that one of the English settlers of Thomas Weston’s plantation be hanged for stealing from the Native Americans after some of them “wasted part away among the Indians”.<sup>16</sup> The Mayflower colonists were reluctant to take punitive action against “one of their men” but had to execute an Arthur Peach, who stole from and murdered a member of the Narragansett tribe later, so that they could “see justice done”.<sup>17</sup> The Native Americans seem to have been classified more and more as waste with time and the mass slaughter of the next few centuries is anticipated in the outlook that degraded them as soon as their differences interfered in the Plymouth settlers’ outlook on the right use of land and waste. When the Episcopalian Thomas Morton of the Mount Wollaston plantation (later named Merrymount) collaborated with Native Americans, the symbiotic

relationship seemed to injure the Plymouth (Puritan) colonists’ idea of right use and waste and they then perceived the Native Americans not as commensalist but as amensalist:

[...] they [Thomas Morton and the other residents of the Mount Wollaston plantation] fell to great licentiousness and led a dissolute life, pouring out themselves into all profaneness. And Morton became Lord of Misrule, and maintained (as it were) a School of Atheism. And after they had got some goods into their hands, and got much by trading with the Indians, they spent it as vainly in quaffing and drinking, both wine and strong waters in great excess [...] They also set up a maypole, drinking and dancing about it many days together, inviting the Indian women for their consorts, dancing and frisking together like so many fairies, or furies, rather; and worse practices. [...]

Now to maintain this riotous prodigality and profuse excess, Morton, thinking himself lawless, and hearing what gain the French and fishermen made by trading of pieces, powder and shot to the Indians, he as the head of this consortship began the practice of the same in these parts. [...]

O, the horribleness of this villainy! How many both Dutch and English have been lately slain by those Indians this furnished, and no remedy provided; nay, the evil more increased, and the blood of their brethren sold for gain (as is to be feared) and in what danger all these colonies are in is too well known.<sup>18</sup>

The disparagement of synthesis or fusion with respect to Native Americans and the residents of Merrymount also embraces amnesia regarding the use of guns against Native Americans by the Plymouth colonists. The ideas of right use and waste motivate the Puritans to repeatedly resort to anthropocentric and racist refusals to biomic, biotopic and ecospheric attunement and to condemn other humans and other organisms for what they conceived as crimes and sins. Bradford argued:

Men being to come over into a **wilderness** [emphasis inserted], in which much labour and service was to be done about building and planting, etc., such as wanted help in that respect, when they could not have such as they would, were glad to take such as they could: and so, many untoward servants, sundry of them proved [...]<sup>19</sup>

Cases of “wickedness”, “buggery” and “uncleanness” on the Plymouth plantation sometimes concluded not only with the imposition of penalties, including capital punishment, on the Plymouth residents who were convicted but also with retribution against other organisms (who may not be considered to be criminals today).<sup>20</sup> A young servant named Thomas Granger who was “detected of buggery, and indicted for the same, with a mare, a cow, two goats, five sheep, two calves and a turkey” was awarded the death penalty. What might shock some of today’s readers is that the animals were also “convicted” of the same wasteful crime: “For first the mare and then the cow and the rest of the lesser cattle were killed before his [Thomas Granger’s] face, [...] The cattle were all cast into a great and large pit that was digged of purpose for them, and no use made of any part of them”.<sup>21</sup>

#### **CONSUMERS OF WASTE INTO PRODUCERS OF EXISTENCE**

Escaping from a shipwreck, Robinson Crusoe in Daniel Defoe’s novel on the life of the man named as such, lands on an “Island of Despair” and fears that he “should be devoured by wild beasts, murdered by savages, or starved to death for want of food”.<sup>22</sup> He assumes that the biotope he will contend with will not save him by providing the comfort of his ecological niche. The biome he discovers comprises goats, fowl, wild cats, foxes and grapes, lemons and sugarcane – also found in the English countryside and in English colonies in the Caribbean. The biotic and abiotic elements of an island of which he will soon appoint himself as “king and lord”<sup>23</sup> demoralize him as he imagines them to be wasteful and it is the channel of salvage of wasting items – including, tools, weapons, clothes and some food – from the wreck that enables him to guide his agonistic behavior towards the exertion of

allochthonous authority over the entire island. The use of waste for production and its relation to the argument in support of the project of English colonization, the position of scavenging, agonisticism and altruism in the food chain overshadow the major part of the novel.

Crusoe categorizes the island as a penal colony where he “was a prisoner, locked up with the eternal bars and bolts of the ocean, in an uninhabited wilderness, without redemption”.<sup>24</sup> He supposes that his abandoned condition on the island is the terminus of a journey of rebellion against his parents, who had not desired that he become a sailor and merchant when he left Yorkshire.<sup>25</sup> On the island, his heterotrophic position as a primary and secondary consumer in the food chain is only engendered because he has to forsake his maritime and commercial role and turn the island into his property in the Lockean sense through his production and labour<sup>26</sup> on the wasteland as well as on the items taken from the wrecked ship. This seems to indicate that there is a critique of merchants and traders in the novel that is similar to the one in Defoe’s *The Complete English Tradesman* (1729), where Defoe argues that the “complete tradesman” would possess awareness of all the goods and products he transacted and should also be able to enter another occupation, if required:

1. That he has a general knowledge of not his own particular trade and business only [...] but our complete tradesman ought to understand all the inland trade of England, so as to be able to turn his hand to any thing, or deal in any thing or every thing of the growth and product of his own country [...] and may, if he sees occasion, lay down one trade and take up another when he pleases, without serving a new apprenticeship to learn it.
2. That he not only has a knowledge of the species or kinds of goods, but of the places and peculiar countries where those goods, whether product or manufacture, are to be found, [...]
3. That he understands perfectly well all the methods of correspondence, returning money or goods for goods [...]<sup>27</sup>

Production generated from waste underpins the argument in the novel in favour of colonialism in Crusoe's anthropocentric Lockean state of nature. To Crusoe, there seem to be two states of nature – when Crusoe discerns a footprint on the island, he ruminates that it is an imprint of “some of the savages of the mainland over against me, who had wandered out to sea in their canoes, and, either, driven by the currents, or, by contrary winds, had made the island, and had been on shore, but were gone away again to sea, being as loath, perhaps, to have stayed in this desolate island, as I would have been to have had them”.<sup>28</sup> The “savages” (the autochthonous people of the Caribbean and the American mainland) also think that Crusoe's island is a wasteland but they come to the island only on expeditions to consume their “waste” – the enemies they overcome in violent clashes. In the cannibals' state of nature, according to Crusoe, savages live not through production but through consumption alone. Crusoe decides that his agonistic behavior on the island need not be transformed to kill the cannibals since they are not detrimental to his property rights in his state of nature: “[...] it occurred to me, that albeit the usage they gave one another was thus brutish and inhuman, yet it was really nothing to me: these people had done me no injury [...] it could not be just for me to fall upon them”.<sup>29</sup> It is Crusoe's apparently altruistic project to not only “liberate” the lives of a few “savages” who could take him to the safety of the Spanish coast on the mainland (although he dislikes the massacre of Native Americans by the Spanish colonizers) but also to “teach” them to transfigure themselves from the position of tertiary consumers (consuming human flesh) to those of primary and secondary consumers, indulging in biomimicry, imitating primary producers in a constrained way.

Crusoe recurrently describes the cannibalistic consumption of the “savage” tourists as “cruel, bloody entertainment”<sup>30</sup> and “merriment and sport”<sup>31</sup> and forefronts the labour that his “savage” slave Friday, whom he “liberates” from his enemies' confinement, has to undertake to convert his trophic level in the food chain. Friday communicates that he is aware that Crusoe will have to work to help Friday's subsistence and that “he

would work the harder for me [Crusoe], if I would tell him what to do”.<sup>32</sup> Subsequent to Friday's rescue from his state of nature, he becomes Crusoe's slave in the latter's state of nature where nations are constructed as different states of nature and “national punishments [...] make a just retribution for national offences”<sup>33</sup>, and where he will never become a British citizen with equal rights as Crusoe but remain a slave because he was not born in Crusoe's non-cannibalistic Lockean state of nature. Friday declares that he will teach his nation to quit cannibalism and to metamorphose from consumers of waste into producers:

“Yes,” he said, “I be much O glad to be at my own nation.” “What would you do there!” said I; “would you turn wild again, eat men's flesh again, and be a savage as you were before?” He looked full of concern, and, shaking his head, said, “No, no! Friday tell them to live good, tell them to eat corn bread, cattle flesh, milk, no eat man again,” “Why, then,” said I to him, “they will kill you!” He looked grave at that, and then said, “No, they no kill me; they willing love learn” [...]<sup>34</sup>

The text shows Crusoe's success as a colonizer through his argument about the expediency of scavenging and the use of waste for anthropocentric production and its necessity only for anthropocentric production. In the concluding chapters of the novel, predatory and scavenging animals such as wolves and bears that are tertiary consumers with respect to humans are dispatched through chicanery when they attack Crusoe and other travellers and seem to figure in the text's argument celebrating anthropocentric production against the other productions of nature and against only consumption. The use of deception to trick bears and wolves<sup>35</sup> by Crusoe and his companions, especially by Friday, seems to indicate the intensity of the hatred that Crusoe possesses towards tertiary consumers and his support for anthropocentric production even after he has left the island.

#### **WASTE DEACTIVATORS<sup>36</sup>**

A wastrel who turns into a tourist guide and a manager for a dancer, is jailed and finally tries to

become a martyr to prevent non-anthropogenic waste features in R. K. Narayan's *The Guide* that also interrogates whether non-anthropogenic waste is more dangerous to the ecosystem than anthropogenic waste and the disposition of the relationship between them. The loafer who is called Railway Raju by his advocates appears to be one of the worthiest guardians of the ecosystem in India as he educates himself, after quitting school, by reading discarded books whose pages are to be used as wrapping-paper. Learning from waste, a wastrel, not only provides evidence of the erroneous wastage of resources that could be exploited for education in a modern state but also exhibits the position of the ingenious wastrel in protecting the flawed state and its people, through the "neutralization" of the hazards posed by anthropogenic waste such as the wastrel Railway Raju himself and waste paper:

I made it known far and wide that I was looking for old paper and books, and soon gathered a big dump. In my off-hours I sat sorting it out. During the interval between trains, when the platform became quiet, there was nothing more pleasing than picking up a bundle of assorted books and lounging in my seat and reading [...] I read stuff that interested me, bored me, baffled me, and dozed off in my seat. [...] I learned much from scrap.<sup>37</sup>

Railway Raju occupies the exterior of the space-time of the citizens of the modern state, where no government resource is allocated for development and where a school dropout may succeed as a tourist guide and as a manager for a dancer only through fraudulent wasteful channels that can result in imprisonment on criminal charges. His comfort in interactions with others ("It was in his nature to get involved in other people's interests and activities"<sup>38</sup>) is not occasioned by self-abnegation but by self-interest that is an imitation of the anthropocentric space-time of modern society and the state that disregards him. The nuclear chain reaction of self-interest in the novel is evidenced by the duplicitous measures taken by Railway Raju to deceive tourists, by his forging of his lover's signature and by his life as a Swamiji (holy man or monk) who tries to guide

the Mangal (also called Mangala in the text) villagers only because he craves the free food that they bring him. His most devoted disciple Velan repudiates him after hearing his confession because there is no space for a wastrel except as a martyr for the society and the state. Raju must fast until the rains descend to eliminate the drought that is producing non-anthropogenic waste in the region. The penal system that is purportedly programmed to help Raju and other criminals integrate with society fails before he becomes a fake monk because the prison is not a place where the use of waste and wastrels by society later is arranged or compelled but it is instead a place where the negative shade considered intrinsic to waste among people becomes graver. Raju becomes a "Vadhya"<sup>39</sup> (teacher) in jail but is not trained or educated to teach as part of the education system after leaving jail.

The exterior space in which Raju resides is also the space which cultural practices such as classical dance inhabit in the middle of the twentieth century in India. Raju's lover Rosie who becomes wealthy as a Bharatnatyam dancer with Raju as an untrustworthy manager knows that dancers "are viewed as public women"<sup>40</sup> and she is called a "time-killer"<sup>41</sup> by her husband as her gendered existence as the private property of a man is destroyed by her transport outside anthropocentric space time through her dancing as well as her relationship with a wastrel. In the murky space occupied by Raju and Rosie, it is possible for anthropocentric gender relations to be unsettled as Rosie bails and "liberates" Raju from jail – "She never spoke to me except as to a tramp she had salvaged".<sup>42</sup> But this is not a space of self-abnegation of the kind that is featured in Camille Paglia's argument on the obligation to emulate the "spiritual homelessness" of the tramp – this is not a location for "balance[ing] philosophical detachment, the isolated consciousness, with a sense of community and engagement with social issues".<sup>43</sup> It is not a space in which Rosie's self-interest is subordinated to self-abnegation. Although she indulges in biomimicry for a dance in which she reproduces the movements of a cobra and dances to raise money for philanthropic purposes such as for the erection of a maternity home, the self-abasement that is required for eco-

art is impossible for her in the outer space in which she dwells. It is a space in which anthropogenic waste merely presents an extreme version of the self-centredness of anthropocentrism.

The drought that coerces Raju to seek martyrdom on account of non-anthropogenic waste seems to indicate that wasteful space-time opposed to anthropocentric space-time will dictate and control humans. Non-anthropogenic agents such as the rains which are delayed and whose scheduled arrival might not transpire and the resultant drought which devastates human agriculture and might effectuate an ecocatastrophe underline the nonexistence of bioregionalism in society and the state. Whereas Raju shepherds and counsels his disciples on their relationships with each other and with divinity, he himself has had a relationship of abjection with society and the state, and the wretched relationships between humans correspond to the unwholesome relationships between humans and the environment that cause the loss of integrity of the ecosystem. Only ravenous crocodiles that threaten humans, especially their young children, feature in society's acknowledged encounters with nature and the state policy about climate and other biotic and abiotic factors is seen in health camps organized at the temple where Raju fasts as a Swami, in a government commission of inquiry concerning the drought and in films about dams and other irrigation projects about anthropocentric control of the environment. Knowledge possessed about the environment and non-anthropogenic waste by society and the state is demonstrated to be insufficient or fraudulent. It is anthropogenic activities that are considered to have had a share in generating non-anthropogenic waste and in denaturing the environment. The villagers interrogate Raju: "Is it true, Swami, that the movement of aeroplanes disturbs the clouds and so the rains don't fall? Too many aeroplanes in the sky.' Is it true, Swami, that the atom bombs are responsible for the drying up of the clouds? [...]"<sup>44</sup> In the risk societies of modern states, technology can produce anthropogenic waste in coordination with non-anthropogenic agents as part of a Domsday syndrome instead of working in synergism with non-anthropogenic agents for sustainable development.

Religion seems to recognize the need for a withdrawal from anthropocentric space-time by problematizing the domination of anthropogenic agents but the selection of the wastrel and hungry Swami (as mentioned earlier, Raju becomes a monk to gain access to food) as a martyr by the people validates society's need for protecting itself analogically to the state's necessity to safeguard itself by making the destruction of anthropogenic waste responsible for revitalizing anthropocentric space-time. The doctors sent by the government "to watch and report" may not offer the Swami anything but "small doses of saline and glucose" because "[h]is life is valuable to the country"<sup>45</sup> but only if he is preparing to become a martyr by fasting. Self-abnegation for waste is impossible, sustainable development with waste is impossible and truth with waste is impossible as long as waste is recognized as possible in such a discourse. Sincerity is a mandatory specification for waste martyrs and Raju "felt that after all the time had come for him to be serious – to attach value to his own words".<sup>46</sup> His self-abnegation – "For the first time in his life he was making an earnest effort; for the first time he was learning the thrill of full application, outside money and love; for the first time he was doing a thing in which he was not personally interested"<sup>47</sup> – upholds the self-interest of society and the state and "deactivates" the perils of waste.

## CONCLUSION

At the completion of Petry's novel *The Street*, the snow that descends on New York City as Lutie departs for Chicago seems to camouflage all differences among residents, black and white, and the streets of the city: "The snow fell softly on the street. It muffled sound. It sent people scurrying homeward, so that the street was soon deserted, empty, quiet. And it could have been any street in the city, for the snow laid a delicate film over the sidewalk, over the brick of the tired, old buildings; gently obscuring the grime and the garbage and the ugliness."<sup>48</sup> While it is possible to argue that the novel here directs its attention to the incorporation of all differences in the naturalized discourse of whiteness (hence the use of a natural event such as snow) in the U.S. nation-state, it could also be argued that the snow does not impact all differences



equally as it merely acts as a façade for the differences concealed by it. Environmental issues do not impact all individuals and nation-states uniformly and a trade in battery – carbon or other – cannot mask the biomic and biotopic differences

that make international efforts to work with differences related to welfare and waste – including those on climate change – more critical in the twenty-first century.

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> See Sengupta 136 for more on this argument.

<sup>2</sup> See Clark.

<sup>3</sup> In the age of computers, “garbage in, garbage out” is a phrase that is used to describe the erroneous output obtained by feeding incomplete or wrong data to a machine. The Anthropocene could be satirized as an age in which non-anthropogenic matter or waste can be dominated by humans only when it can be converted into anthropogenic waste.

<sup>4</sup> See Benjamin.

<sup>5</sup> See Bataille.

<sup>6</sup> See Wright.

<sup>7</sup> See Gille.

<sup>8</sup> See Sosna and Brunclikova.

<sup>9</sup> See Hawkins and Muecke.

<sup>10</sup> See Cahill, Hegarty and Morin; and Strasser.

<sup>11</sup> The first text offers a narrative of events that occurred in real life and the next two texts are fictional. All three provide evidence of the discourses of waste directing lives in their time.

<sup>12</sup> See Bradford 26-27.

<sup>13</sup> See Bradford 315-17.

<sup>14</sup> See Bradford 89.

<sup>15</sup> See Bradford 88-89.

<sup>16</sup> See Bradford 128-29.

<sup>17</sup> See Bradford 336-37.

<sup>18</sup> See Bradford 228-30.

<sup>19</sup> See Bradford 357.

<sup>20</sup> See Bradford 351-57.

<sup>21</sup> See Bradford 356.

<sup>22</sup> See Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*, 58.

<sup>23</sup> See Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*, 84.

<sup>24</sup> See Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*, 96.

<sup>25</sup> See Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe* 76.

<sup>26</sup> See Locke.

<sup>27</sup> See Defoe, *The Complete English Tradesman*.

<sup>28</sup> See Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*, 132.

<sup>29</sup> Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*, 146-47.

<sup>30</sup> See Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*, 144.

<sup>31</sup> See Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*, 157.

<sup>32</sup> See Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*, 183.

<sup>33</sup> See Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*, 148.

<sup>34</sup> See Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*, 193.

<sup>35</sup> See Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*, 253 and 258.

<sup>36</sup> See Farrier for a useful discussion of the organization of resources and waste under

capitalism, a system that depends on scapegoated places and people.

<sup>37</sup> See Narayan 49.

<sup>38</sup> See Narayan 9.

<sup>39</sup> See Narayan 226.

<sup>40</sup> See Narayan 84.

<sup>41</sup> See Narayan 71.

<sup>42</sup> See Narayan 218.

<sup>43</sup> See Paglia.

<sup>44</sup> See Narayan 92-93.

<sup>45</sup> See Narayan 244.

<sup>46</sup> See Narayan 109.

<sup>47</sup> See Narayan 238.

<sup>48</sup> See Petry 436.

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