

## **Man the Polluter**

Nothing will ever dim the glory of man's achievements in space this week or this country's pride in its men on the moon. Not even the debris they left behind, from electronic equipment to waste and wrappings that had to be "jettisoned" to make the magnificent, epochal mission possible.

But as New Yorkers watched the discovery of a new world with awe under a smog-yellow sky, some remembered that this was once a new world, too. Americans have "jettisoned" their wastes into the waters and the skies. The rivers are cesspools and the cities slums. In three short centuries—too brief a time to be measurable on the scale of the universe—the inhabitants of this land have fouled their nest to the point where it would take the major part of the country's money and resources and the redirecting of all its priorities to restore what has been spoiled.

Man takes his litter to every new frontier. In Antarctica, the stop before the moon, man the explorer turned into man the polluter at McMurdo base in a brief ten years. That is some kind of standing back-jump record for ruining the environment. "A smoking garbage dump and junkyard litter the shore of a once picturesque inlet," an observer reported. "Power lines from the nuclear plant deface the stark, windswept and lifeless hills that so awed and impressed explorers 50 years ago." The answer, with that unconscious black humor of the earthbound world of the absurd in which glory is so close to garbage, is a McMurdo redevelopment program.

Is the handwriting on the moon?