



An Ontology of Trash: The Disposable and Its Problematic Nature (SUNY series in Environmental Philosophy and Ethics)

Greg Kennedy

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A philosophical exploration of the problematic nature of the disposable.

Plastic bags, newspapers, pizza boxes, razors, watches, diapers, toothbrushes ... What makes a thing disposable? Which of its properties allows us to treat it as if it did not matter, or as if it actually lacked matter? Why do so many objects appear to us as nothing more than brief flashes between checkout-line and landfill?

In *An Ontology of Trash*, Greg Kennedy inquires into the meaning of disposable objects and explores the nature of our prodigious refuse. He takes trash as a real ontological problem resulting from our unsettled relation to nature. The metaphysical drive from immanence to transcendence leaves us in an alien world of objects drained of meaningful physical presence. Consequently, they become interpreted as beings that somehow essentially lack being, and exist in our technological world only to disappear. Kennedy explores this problematic nature and looks for possibilities of salutary change.

“...Kennedy offers a timely intervention that will be of interest to many. In particular, it seems as though philosophers, ecologists, environmentalists and individuals or group of similar ilk would get the most traction from this material ... there is much to appreciate in this text.” — Symposium

“...a contribution to ontology in the Heideggerian tradition. It is also an important addition to the literature on environmental philosophy ... The book will interest more than phenomenologists and will benefit those preoccupied with the environment and the problem of landfill pollution.” — Comptes Rendus

“This book is written gracefully and engagingly. Trash is a surprisingly revealing lens on contemporary culture. Kennedy’s approach is incisive without being zealous and critical without being negative.” — Albert Borgmann, author of *Real American Ethics: Taking Responsibility for Our Country*

“I particularly liked the discussion of fast food, Heidegger, embodiment, and the city. There is much that is swift and brilliant in the matters covered, telling and insightful in the multileveled critique of modernity.” — Drew Leder, author of *Sparks of the Divine: Finding Inspiration in Our Everyday World*

Greg Kennedy is an independent scholar and received his PhD in Philosophy from the University of Ottawa.

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