■ Science & Technology

45-0241 TD93 2006-13724 CIP
Kennedy, Greg. **An ontology of trash: the disposable and its problematic nature.** State University of New York, 2007. 218p bibl index afp ISBN 9780791469934, $65.00

This reviewer managed to wade through this book, believing author Kennedy sincere in trying to make a point. The text is obscure. On page 19: "Levinas argues that the true being of the Other encountering me as a human face eludes both ontic and ontological comprehension, which is a kind of possessive grasping, and instead elicits a receptive acknowledgement, which is a kind of caress." As understood, the point is that high-technology disposable cups (trash) and central heating (lost involvement) are evils that lead inevitably to the extinction either of the human race or the humanness of our race. On the other hand, sustainable smallholding agriculture, hearths burning split wood, and presumably ceramic coffee mugs are all right. From the caveman point of view, the hearth and smallholding agriculture are very high technology, and the (trashed? wasted?) water and chlorine and diesel fuel to clean the coffee mug are never mentioned. "The techniques of industrial meat production are nothing short of rationalized savagery" implies that despite his worship of sustainable agriculture, the author has never actually encountered a chicken too old to continue laying eggs. **Summing Up:** Not recommended.—*D. H. Stedman, University of Denver*

45-0242 Q180 2006-32240 CIP
Martin, Mike W. **Creativity: ethics and excellence in science.** Lexington Books, 2007. 133p bibl index afp ISBN 0739120530, $55.00; ISBN 9780739120538, $55.00

In this small volume, philosophy professor Martin (Chapman Univ., CA) defines scientific creativity variously as an ideal, an achievement, and a sort of production process, the products of which are "significant truths, illuminating explanations, and useful technologies." Scientific creativity, though related to the intellectual virtues, is not a moral virtue. Nonetheless, according to Martin, it shapes moral creativity in that its products advance human well-being and the environment, enrich human understanding, and promote meaningful work. In short, from a moral perspective, the connection between scientific creativity and moral creativity seems to be largely utilitarian, more focused on consequences than on motives. In a series of well-organized and aptly illustrated chapters, the author raises a number of seminal topics in which he establishes relationships between scientific creativity and moral creativity. These topics include serendipity or moral luck, paradoxes of motivation, scientific misconduct, forbidden knowledge, leadership, and teaching. In a final chapter titled "Good Lives," Martin poses the provocative question of whether or not creativity in general is always beneficial. Though creativity is conventionally viewed as overwhelmingly positive, the author intimates that it might at times be a hindrance to the achievement of wisdom. **Summing Up:** Recommended. Upper-division undergraduates through professionals.—*D. M. Gilbert, Maine Maritime Academy*

45-0243 T14 MARC
Philosophy of technology: 5 questions, ed. by Jan-Kyrre Berg Olsen and Evan Selinger. Automatic Press/VIP, HC Hansens Gade 9, st. th., DK2300 Copenhagen S, Denmark , 2007. 270p bibl index ISBN 8799101386 pbk, $28.00; ISBN 9788799101382 pbk, $28.00

A book one can feel comfortable (if guilty) reviewing before they are done, this is a book to be read slowly, pondered, and savored. It is part of a "5 Questions" series published by Automatic Press and presents a collection of scholars in the field with five questions that provide a broad overview of their beliefs, opinions, theories, and even personal history. It is an excellent book for gaining a broad overview of the current state of the philosophy of technology as a field of study. The voices are wide ranging, from technologically founded conservative views to postmodern critiques that push the boundaries of narrative in their very writing. Though it presents a wonderful resource for debate and contemplation, it will not leave sticklers for due process happy. It lacks any discussion of why the questions were chosen, how the people were selected, or any analysis of respondents versus the selection pool. The companion Web site is merely an advertisement for the book. Nonetheless, for advanced readers, those looking for a solid breadth of field, and all academic library collections. **Summing Up:** Highly recommended. General readers; upper-division undergraduates through professionals.—*P. L. Kantor, University of Advancing Technology*

■ History of Science & Technology

45-0244 TK9230 2006-5497 CIP
Bowles, Mark D. **Science in flux: NASA's nuclear program at Plum Brook Station, 1955-2005.** NASA, 2006. 335p bibl index

Bowles offers a history of a major part of the US attempt to develop nuclear-powered aircraft and space rockets. The Plum Brook facility was initiated in 1956 and shut down in 1973. Incorporating two reactors, it was built at a cost of $120 million; it cost $150 million to shut it down. The story, beginning with the original Native American inhabitants, includes the farming era, a WW II munitions plant, technological competition with the Soviet Union, the nuclear research site, and an unknown future. This is a well-written book, with many photographs, illustrating on-again, off-again US national policies, commitments, and waste. It is a political, personal, community, and technological history; the technology is completely at a layperson's level. (There are useful appendixes to introduce lay readers to the nucleus and nuclear reactors.) It incorporates interesting stories of the interactions between the "atomic personnel" and the citizens of the surrounding community; e.g., how does a woman engineer get her hair washed when the cosmetologist is afraid of being "radioactivised"? The book should be pleasant reading and useful to those interested in the history of technology and the relations between technology, society, and government. **Summing Up:** Recommended. General readers; lower-division undergraduates through professionals.—*A. M. Saperstein, Wayne State University*

45-0245 TL867 MARC
Cook, Richard C. ***Challenger* revealed: an insider's account of how the Reagan administration caused the greatest tragedy of the space age.** Thunder's Mouth, 2006. 518p index ISBN 1560259809, $28.95; ISBN 9781560259800, $28.95

Author Cook, a self-styled whistleblower, seeks to prove that President Reagan's desire to give kudos to the first teacher in orbit, who was to be sitting in the balcony at his State of the Union address, was responsible for the ill-fated launch of the *Challenger* orbiter at such low temperatures that it caused the O-rings to fail. Cook blames the air force and the administration for trying to take over NASA and weaponize space. He believes that the White House plotted to maneuver William Graham into the administrator's job at NASA to expedite the takeover process. He uses phrases like "party line" and "right-wing plot" in this very self-centered narrative, quoting an astrologer to help make his case. The book is full of suppositions, unsubstantiated motives, and polemics. In reality, the Russians suffered worse tragedies in their program, and the Defense Department was urged to use the shuttle since it was cheaper. No figures or tables; 16 pages of black-and-white photos; 8 pages of glossary; 11 pages of notes; 15-page index. **Summing Up:** Not recommended.—*W. E. Howard III, formerly, Universities Space Research Association*

45-0246 TA1023 2006-8602 CIP
Fotsch, Paul Mason. **Watching the traffic go by: transportation and isolation in urban America.** Texas, 2007. 240p bibl index afp ISBN 0292714254, $55.00; ISBN 0292714262 pbk, $22.95; ISBN 9780292714250, $55.00; ISBN 9780292714267 pbk, $22.95

Fotsch (communication studies, California State Univ., Northridge) offers readers a very enjoyable book. The transformation and development of our cities from the trolley era to automobiles, the inequalities of race, class, and gender in transportation, the impact of the 1939 World's Fair and the General Motors Futurama exhibit on the interstate freeway network, the New York Subway system, and even the freeway chase of O.J. Simpson are just a