

Gregson / Crang

## Unbecoming Things

Mutable Objects and the Politics of Waste

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This book responds to moves to rematerialize the social sciences, to attend to the stuff of daily life but challenges the social sciences to think beyond objects as stable things. It forwards the argument that objects need to be seen not as stabilising things, or immutable mobiles – as time stilled and materials fixed and conserved in the object form – or even always in the making, as becoming but as unbecoming things. It argues that objects are better seen as things coming apart, as en route to becoming something else, some stuff else, somewhere else. It locates these arguments in economies of demolition, disposal and reincarnation, focusing on object death, materials recovery and re-fabrication, and the sequestration and unleashing of materials classified as wastes. It uses as its exemplar case the classic immutable mobile, the ship – one of the most durable and complex of fabricated objects. It illustrates these arguments through global ethnography conducted in various settings around the world, including South Asia and the EU.



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**Kundenservice Fachmedien Otto Schmidt**

Neumannstraße 10, 40235 Düsseldorf | [kundenservice@fachmedien.de](mailto:kundenservice@fachmedien.de) | 0800 000-1637 (Inland)

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