



Materializing Poverty: How the Poor Transform Their Lives (Anthropology of Daily Life)

By Erin B. Taylor

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Poverty is generally defined as a lack of material resources. However, the relationships that poor people have with their possessions are not just about deprivation. Material things play a positive role in the lives of poor people: they help people to build social relationships, address inequalities, and fulfill emotional needs. In *Materializing Poverty*, anthropologist Erin Taylor explores how residents of a squatter settlement in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, use their material resources creatively to solve everyday problems and, over a few decades, radically transform the community. Their struggles show how these everyday engagements with materiality, rather than more dramatic efforts, generate social change and build futures.

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- Sales Rank: #2169814 in Books
- Published on: 2013-10-10
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.35" h x .77" w x 6.21" l, .92 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 192 pages

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Editorial Review

Review

What is poverty? In answer, we need more than statistics, we need to understand what is experienced as poverty. Through scholarly and incredibly rich ethnography Taylor shows the consequence of appreciating that it is the poor rather than the rich whose experience is dominated by materiality. *Materializing Poverty* is an account that respects both the creativity and the constraints that may accompany poverty. People from all disciplines would be better educated in this essential issue by reading this empathetic engagement which goes beyond the meaning of poverty to how the poor create meaning. (Daniel Miller, University College London)

From its brilliant introduction to its final word, *Materializing Poverty* evokes the struggle and also the triumph of La Ciénaga where the intimate materialities of life are used to interpret the experience of being poor. Its account of the polyvalent way in which material forms are deployed in an urban *barrio* provides a new and provocative understanding of inequality in both a national and an international perspective. I feel confident that in the years to come this landmark ethnography will become a standard reference on poverty both within and beyond the Caribbean. (Diane Austin-Broos, Professor Emerita of Anthropology, University of Sydney)

About the Author

Erin B. Taylor is an Australian anthropologist who received her PhD from The University of Sydney in 2009. She lectured there for three years before taking up a research fellowship at The University of Lisbon. During this time, she helped found the popular anthropology website PopAnth: Hot Buttered Humanity.

Users Review

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