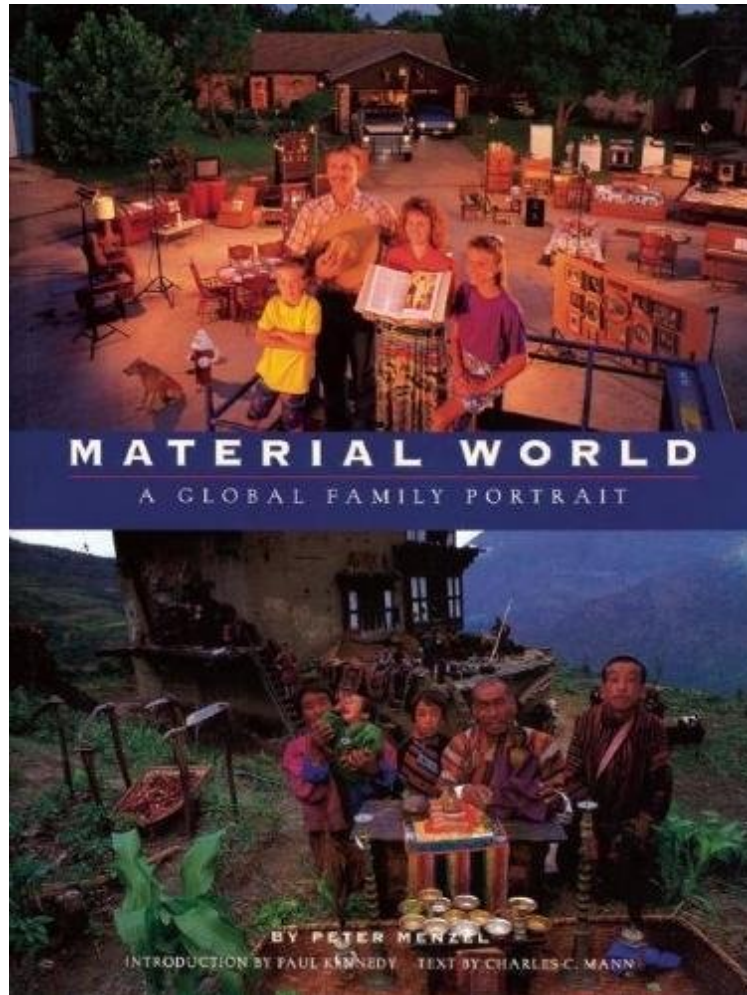


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Material World: A Global Family Portrait

Peter Menzel, Charles C. Mann

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Peter Menzel, Charles C. Mann : Material World: A Global Family Portrait before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Material World: A Global Family Portrait:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. We love looking at this book when we are studying specific ...By D HancockWe love looking at this book when we are studying specific countries in our homeschool geography class. My six year old son loves to sit with me as I read to him about the families in each place and how they live. It's amazing to me to see all of these different cultures and to be able to imagine what it would be like to live in these places. Sometimes it is quite eye opening to realize just how much we have in America. This book really makes you stop and think about all of these other places - would be a great conversation piece to have in your home.3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. At least as important to read now (2015) as when it was first publishedBy Aisling D.Still a great book and deeply thought-provoking. I'm not sure the represented countries and cultures are still as sensible

about possessions, so I'd be interested in a follow-up to this book. Nevertheless, I think this is an important book for people to read as they consider decluttering, downsizing, or otherwise reducing the excess things they own in favor of living more simply.² of 2 people found the following review helpful. a good sample. In eachBy Fred CurtisI have purchased several copies of this book over the years. I replaced my first copy because my daughter took it to school so many times over the years it became tattered. The book is a series of photographs with brief narratives and data. Peter Menzel traveled forty some odd countries around the world, a good sample. In each, he found a family with the median income for the nation, a family with as many families above it as below it on the distribution of income. He photographed the family in and near its residence, focusing on the families possessions. in each case, one photo shows all the families belongings arrayed together. There are also three comparative photo spreads of meals of the world, televisions, of the world and toilets of the world. The fact that the book is 20 or so years old is obvious in terms of mobile devices and computers. Nonetheless, it is a brilliant exposition of under-consumption, sufficient consumption and over-consumption. I would note that it may be weaker in showing over-consumption given its focus on the median income family. It is still brilliant and poignant.

In an unprecedented effort, sixteen of the worlds foremost photographers traveled to thirty nations around the globe to live for a week with families that were statistically average for that nation. At the end of each visit, photographer and family collaborated on a remarkable portrait of the family members outside their home, surrounded by all of their possessionsa few jars and jugs for some, an explosion of electronic gadgetry for others. Vividly portraying the look and feel of the human condition everywhere on Earth, this internationally acclaimed bestseller puts a human face on the issues of population, environment, social justice, and consumption as it illuminates the crucial question facing our species today: Can all six billion of us have all the things we want?

.com In honor of the United Nations-sponsored International Year of the Family in 1994, award-winning photojournalist Peter Menzel brought together 16 of the world's leading photographers to create a visual portrait of life in 30 nations. *Material World* tackles its wide subject by zooming in, allowing one household to represent an entire nation. Photographers spent one week living with a "statistically average" family in each country, learning about their work, their attitudes toward their possessions, and their hopes for the future. Then a "big picture" shot of the family was taken outside the dwelling, surrounded by all their (many or few) material goods. The book provides sidebars offering statistics and a brief history for each country, as well as personal notes from the photographers about their experiences. But it is the "big pictures" that tell most of the story. In one, a British family pauses before a meal of tea and crumpets under a cloudy sky. In another, wary Bosnians sit beside mattresses used as sniper barricades. A Malian family composed of a husband, his two wives, and their children rests before a few cooking and washing implements in golden afternoon light. *Material World* is a lesson in economics and geography, reminding us of the world's inequities, but also of humanity's common threads. An engrossing, enlightening book. --Maria Dolan From School Library JournalYA?A fascinating look at the material possessions of families throughout the world. These people have been determined "average" for their countries and have agreed to have photographers move the contents of their houses outside in order to create visible representations of their relative standards of living. The dirt house and few possessions of Mali residents contrast with the 4 cars, 45-foot long sofa, and 12+ oriental carpets lined up outside the luxury home of a family from Kuwait. Each chapter includes the original spread of possessions, statistics about each family and country, as well as further pictures of daily life and some observations by the photographer. Interspersed among the chapters, which are divided by region, are pictorial representations of such interesting comparisons as televisions, meals, and toilets. Almost all of the pictures are in full color. Menzel hoped this would be "a unique tool for grasping cross-cultural realities." It is that and much more.?Susan H. Woodcock, King's Park Library, Burke, VACopyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc.From Library JournalAlthough *Material World* might appear to fall into the genre epitomized by Edward Steichen's *The Family of Man* (1955), the book truly defies facile classification; it seems at once art, photojournalism, human geography, and visual anthropology. It is a remarkable and captivating coupling of photographic art with economic and demographic statistics. Very largely the work of 16 photographers, including Menzel, the book is most outstanding in its color photographic portraits of 30 families with their material possessions arrayed nearby. Each family represents one of 30 different countries-some poor, some rich-and each approximates what World Bank and UN statisticians deemed to be "average" for its country. Tables associated with the photographs provide statistical portraits of the families and their nations; photographers' notes on their specific projects enlighten the viewer. Though the format allows superficial browsing, the combination of detailed photographic presentations of material goods with the commentaries and statistics invites careful reading and cross-cultural comparison. Readers should find the comparison worth making. Strongly recommended for all libraries. [A CD-ROM of the same title is available; for more information, see p. 21.-Ed.]-James D. Haug, East Carolina Univ. Lib., Greenville, N.C.--James D. Haug, East Carolina Univ. Lib., Greenville, N.C.Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc.