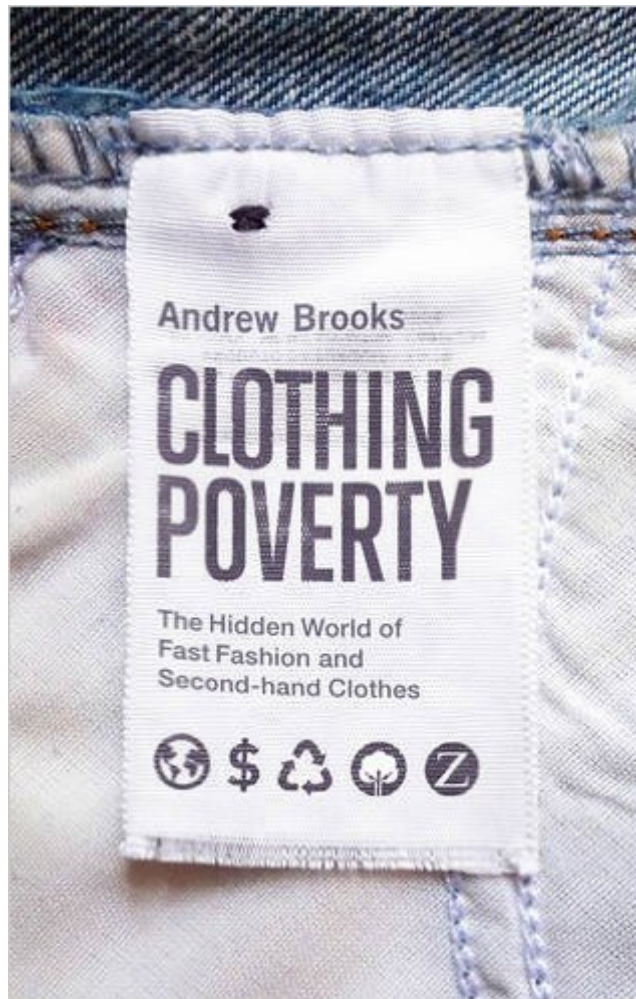


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Clothing Poverty: The Hidden World Of Fast Fashion And Second-hand Clothes



Synopsis

You look good in those jeans. But are those jeans themselves good? Have you ever looked into where they came from and who made them? Andrew Brooks has, and with *Clothing Poverty* he takes readers on a global journey, from fabric to fashion show, to reveal the worldwide commodity chains and hidden trade networks that transect the globe and perpetuate poverty. Stitching together rich narratives from markets in Mozambique, Nigerian smugglers, Bolivian traders, London vintage shops, and growing ethical fashion lines like Vivienne Westwood's, Brooks draws connections and shines light in the world's dark corners; and forces us to think anew about fashion, ethics, and our role in global production and exploitation.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This could be an excellent book instead of merely good and informative. The author sets his intriguing analysis of the global used clothing market within a sort of neo-Marxist frame, more readable than one might expect, but it turns an interesting account into a case study for the inadequacies of global capitalist systems, asserting things much change lest poverty be institutionalized. In addition, Brooks uses some words that are likely to obscure his meaning. For example, most readers are not going to be interested in "fetishism" in the market and "semiotic" anything is almost guaranteed to put the general reader to sleep. So why four stars, if I'm this critical? Even with the bias, this is an interesting topic, and the book is full of information, much of it based on the author's experiences in Mozambique and elsewhere. Several chapters stand out. The

others, well, readers sample the book before you buy. Chapter 1, "A Biography of Jeans" is interesting. The world market for jeans is \$60 billion, an eighth of the global clothing sector. Chapter 3, "The Shadow World of Used Clothing" has intriguing discussion of where used clothing originates and how it is sold. The second hand global trade is \$4.3 billion (this seems quite an underestimate), citing UN figures for 2013, and in some countries this used clothes market is the major source for clothes. Chapter 6, "Second Hand Africa" describes some of his experiences in Mozambique, and is informative on how the clothes are actually sold, and how people decide to buy them. One detail I have not seen elsewhere. Each year the US Super Bowl generates a huge amount of gear in advance of the game's result. The losing side gear cannot be sold in the US due to NFL rules, so it enters this trade. The other chapters may be interesting to some readers. One chapter discusses how cotton institutionalizes poverty, and the last chapter looks at ethics and describes some efforts at fair trade and related concepts, and how they play out.

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