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**Autor:** Miller Daniel

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The field of material culture, while historically well established, has recently enjoyed something of a renaissance. Methods once dominated by Marxist- and commodity-oriented analyses and by the study of objects as symbols are giving way to a more ethnographic approach to artifacts. This orientation is the cornerstone of the essays presented in *Material Cultures*. A collection of case studies which move from the domestic sphere to the global arena, the volume includes examinations of the soundscape produced by home radios, catalog shopping, the role of paper in the workplace, and the relationship between the production and consumption of Coca-Cola in Trinidad.

The diversity of the essays is mediated by their common commitment to ethnography with a material focus. Rather than examine objects as mirages of media or language, *Material Cultures* emphasizes how the study of objects not only contributes to an understanding of artifacts but is also an effective means for studying social values and contradictions.