



# Disposable People: New Slavery in the Global Economy

*Kevin Bales*

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## **Disposable People: New Slavery in the Global Economy** Kevin Bales

Slavery is illegal throughout the world, yet more than twenty-seven million people are still trapped in one of history's oldest social institutions. Kevin Bales's disturbing story of contemporary slavery reaches from Pakistan's brick kilns and Thailand's brothels to various multinational corporations. His investigations reveal how the tragic emergence of a "new slavery" is inextricably linked to the global economy. This completely revised edition includes a new preface.

All of the author's royalties from this book go to fund antislavery projects around the world.

## **Disposable People: New Slavery in the Global Economy Details**

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# **From Reader Review Disposable People: New Slavery in the Global Economy for online ebook**

## **Marcelaine says**

Please borrow this book from me. Slavery did not end in the 1800s.

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## **Heather(Gibby) says**

I don't consider myself a naïve person, but I sure became aware of some aspects of life around the globe that I was totally in the dark about. Kevin Bales walks the reader through several different types of human slavery around the globe, and outlines the difficulties encountered by anyone trying to bring about systemic change to the human rights atrocities being committed around the world. this was published in 2004, so I am hopeful that some progress has been made since that time. It has definitely spurred me to do some more reading.

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## **Heather says**

I picked this up on a trip to Arkansas. I got this one at the headquarters for Heifer Project International. Desmond Tutu says this book is "A well-researched, scholarly and deeply disturbing expose of modern day slavery with well-thought-out strategies for what to do to combat this scourge." And, you know I love me some Mr. Tutu. Please read this book.

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## **Cherie says**

A- Recently, someone sent me some thing "How many slaves do you have" and it was abt how slaves supported everyone's lifestyle, w clothes, food, tea, electronics, whatever. And honestly, it's a bit of a wake-up bc I didn't realize HOW MANY slaves there still are. Bales does an excellent job dealing with a difficult topic - it's obvious which side he takes, but he is really great, factual. It is divided into sections abt different types of slaves in different countries. Often, you meet individual slaves which provides a clearer picture of the situation. Great book. Very interesting.

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## **Tia Malkin-fontecchio says**

It is not without some shortcomings, but definitely a book people should read. The testimony of modern day slaves should move people to action. I had only two issues with the book. The first is that it is in need of updating. There is a new preface on the 2012 edition but that is not enough. Also, as a historian I take issue with some of the distinctions he makes between the "new" and the "old" slavery. Much of what he said was new, was true of slavery in Brazil during the colonial period and even 19th century. He seems to have made

these distinctions solely on the study of 19th century slavery in the American South.

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### **mis fit says**

overall, bales does a good job of connecting these insanely messed up situations of "new slavery" with changes in the global economy. the author's descriptions transport you into these horrifying worlds where people are definitely seen as... disposable. in that sense, i am really glad i read this and i learned a lot about what people have to deal with on a daily basis, stuff that my little woes hardly measure up to.

as a side note, i do worry that reading these social justice-y books allows me to exploit other people's pain for my own "self development" or something... like i am using them to become a more knowledgeable and "sensitive" person, ultimately just to feel better about myself. i don't want to be this way though.

i can only give this book three stars because, while it is absolutely a valuable book to read and these stories really need to be heard, there were some points where i just felt like bales was too simplistic. this is partly stylistic, in that he's writing to get you to *do something* about it, but it was a little annoying at times and maybe a little patronizing to the people in these f\*cked up situations.

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### **Pete says**

This book's strength lies a) in exposing the variety of slavery in today's world, b) not overstating his argument, and c) proposing concrete actions for readers. Five chapters detail five different kinds of slavery with facts and without hyperbole.

Bales as much as admits to one weakness of the argument. Only the conditions in Mauritania will strike most readers as true slavery, rather than wage slavery or exploitation (though the sex workers in Thailand are perhaps in worse conditions than the slaves of Mauritania).

More should be made of the situation in Mauritania, where the U.S. is supporting the current regime (tacitly condoning slavery) in order to oppose fundamentalist Islam.

If he is going to take on the kind of exploitation taking place in Brazil, he should expand the argument further to draw parallels with more common forms of wage slavery and economic exploitation.

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### **Shantavia says**

I read this book for my history class. I really enjoyed the way this book was written. It was written more as a story than an information heavy textbook. This book talked about how slavery still exists in our world today, just in a different form that it did in the past. We explored slavery in Brazil, India, Mauritania, Pakistan, and Thailand.

Rating: 4/5

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## **Michael Griswold says**

Kevin Bales takes the reader on an emotional and heartfelt journey to several places throughout the world including India, Thailand, and Brazil among others where we met people who are being used and then disposed of when they have no use anymore because the man can always get another sex slave from Taiwan or another charcoal maker from Brazil because conditions of poverty and a desperate wanting of a better life for their family will always lure more people into the new slavery. I like books that can mix statistics with actual human stories because it is one thing to say x is a problem because xx percent of people live like y. It is quite another to look at a girl like Siri or a family of charcoal workers in Brazil and not say that slavery is still a problem.

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## **Josephine says**

In his book, Bales recounts how the escaped slave and abolitionist, Frederick Douglass, was invited to give a keynote speech for a large Fourth of July celebration in New York in 1852.

Instead of delivering a rousing speech about the greatness of living in freedom, Douglass basically asked how we can be proud of our freedom if there were still slaves in existence?

And while most of us think of the word “slavery” in terms of something that happened a long time ago, it actually still exists today — it exists in Thailand where the sex industry keeps thousands of young women enslaved as prostitutes; it exists in Pakistan, where bonded laborers work in furnace-like heat, making bricks; it exists in charcoal-making camps in Brazil, where the poor are lured into debt bondage, where measly rations are often their only payment for their work.

And all of it continues to exist, in part, because a lot of us don’t question it.

It sort of hit home for me when Bales wrote, “...consumers do look for bargains, and they don’t usually stop to ask why a product is so cheap. We have to face facts: by always looking for the best deal, we may be choosing slave-made goods without knowing what we are buying.” p. 23-24

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## **Erin Ergenbright says**

You must read this book, which is enlightening and terrifying, but also talks about the specific reasons these horrors have happened, and continue to happen.

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## **Megan says**

If a friend hadn't invited me to a discussion group on this book, I never would have picked it up. Somehow the author managed to interview current and former slaves from Mauritania to Paris, retell their stories, contextualize the economic systems that slavery exists in, and still not get bogged down in the darkness. Or

maybe that's due to the discussion with other compassionate, engaged readers. Overall, solid investigative journalism about a topic most people don't know exists. {note: skim thr

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***"I nuovi schiavi sono strumenti usa e getta per far denaro"***

Questo libro fa parte della categoria: "leggi e guarda il mondo con occhi nuovi."

Perchè anche se pensi già di sapere non ne sai mai abbastanza.

L'analisi delle moderne forme di schiavitù può sembrare datata (pubblicata nel 1999) ma in realtà (ahimè!) basta farsi un giro su internet per accorgersi che ciò di cui ci parla Bales sopravvive se non addirittura si inasprisce a dispetto delle iniziative portate avanti dalle varie organizzazioni antischiaviste.

La tesi di fondo in merito alle nuove schiavitù è che (Mauritania a parte) non si tratti di una questione razziale ma di un affare assai vantaggioso e gli alti profitti sono una giustificazione più che sufficiente . Assolutamente da leggere!

**EDIT- 25 Novembre 2017**

[https://www.agi.it/estero/mappa\\_100\\_p...](https://www.agi.it/estero/mappa_100_p...)

<http://www.repubblica.it/solidarieta/...>

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**dara says**

"When I sat with Siri in the brothel in Thailand and looked into the flat deadness of her eyes, listened to the hopelessness in her voice, and saw the destruction of her personality and her will to escape, I glimpsed the horror of a life captured and destroyed to feed the greed of the slaveholder. It is not easy to crush a human mind, but with enough brutality, time, and indifference to suffering it can be done. Around the world it *is* being done."

Oh no, I'm adding this to my abandoned shelf! It's not the book's fault, I swear! This is a good and important book and you should read it!

I am just in a rut when it comes to reading and I can't do this right now. I read to page 144 and it took me months because I would pick the book up, read a few pages, and set it aside again. I'm just not in an emotionally receptive place right now. It's messy. It's overwhelming. It's weighing heavy on my heart that is already weighed down. I have to come to terms with the fact that in this instance knowledge is not making me a better activist; it is immobilizing me with depression. That's not quite fair to say as the depression was pre-existing, but the result is the same. When I finally accepted the fact that I can't do this now, I did at least skip to the last chapter titled "What Can Be Done?" I will at the very least try to get this book in the hands of someone else so that it is no longer collecting dust.

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**blakeR says**

This is an important book. Despite its defects I can highly recommend it to pretty much everyone because the entire world would benefit from its being read. I greatly admire Bales for his part in spreading the word on modern-day slavery, and I plan on doing my part by telling people and passing the book on to others.

The most interesting chapters are the first two on prostitution in Thailand and "old slavery" in Mauritania. The shock value probably has a lot to do with it, as well as the dumbfounding surprise of learning about the vestiges of ancient slavery still alive and well in West Africa. Before reading this book or talking to someone who had, how many people would imagine that houseslaves still exist as a matter of course throughout an entire country?

The subsequent chapters (Brazil, Pakistan and India) lose some of their power, probably as a result of following these first two. The information and Bales' discourse gets a little repetitive. Also, his writing style is a little irritating. I would have preferred a more rigorous and academic style. As it is, Bales writes a little too informally and emotionally, which sacrifices some of his argument's strength. The facts are compelling enough to support his case without resorting to sentimentality.

Additionally, there are some holes that he touches upon but leaves largely unexplored, mostly in relation to Mauritania. He mentions the extremely entrenched nature of slavery in the country and the huge obstacles abolitionists face not only in providing incentives for slaveholders to give up their slaves, but also in convincing the slaves that freedom is preferable to slavery. It is the ultimate case where the slaves actually want to remain enslaved. To me, this is a jumping off point for an incredibly fascinating moral and philosophical discussion, although I'll admit that it's probably outside the scope of Bales' work. The same mentality is present to a lesser degree in every single country he discusses.

More relevant to this book (and a less forgivable omission) is the fact that virtually none of the solutions he mentions in the last chapter would be feasible in Mauritania. None of the economic incentives to end slavery could be brought to bear since the country itself is so poor and barely affects the global economy in the first place. Likewise, the government could not be pressured because they are owned by the slaveholders, and they would simply align themselves further with other hardline Muslim nations such as Iran and Saudi Arabia in response to international pressure. If Bales sincerely could not think of any solutions to that specific case, he should have at least mentioned it.

Also, in discussing debt bondage in Brazil, Pakistan and India, it struck me that he somewhat arbitrarily separates "slaves" from the rest of the oppressed wage laborers and sweatshop workers. To me it seems very much a sliding scale, especially when he's emphasizing the subtlety of modern-day slavery. He doesn't fully convince on why battling slavery is so much more important than the battle against all unfair working/sweatshop conditions. They seem too similar to me to really be able to separate the way he does. For that reason as well the chapters on Thailand and Mauritania really stand out.

Overall it is a good and informative read. It is perhaps not as shocking to me because I've already read most of Derrick Jensen's stuff, and he is harsher in his analysis of modern-day civilization.

Not Bad Reviews

@blakerosser1

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