



# Tourist Attractions: Performing Race and Masculinity in Brazil's Sexual Economy

*Gregory Mitchell*



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While much attention has been paid in recent years to heterosexual prostitution and sex tourism in Brazil, gay sex tourism has been almost completely overlooked. In *Tourist Attractions*, Gregory C. Mitchell presents a pioneering ethnography that focuses on the personal lives and identities of male sex workers who occupy a variety of roles in Brazil's sexual economy.

Mitchell takes us into the bath houses of Rio de Janeiro, where rent boys cruise for clients, and to the beaches of Salvador da Bahia, where African American gay men seek out hustlers while exploring cultural heritage tourist sites. His ethnography stretches into the Amazon, where indigenous fantasies are tinged with the erotic at eco-resorts, and into the homes of "kept men," who forge long-term, long-distance, transnational relationships that blur the boundaries of what counts as commercial sex. Mitchell asks how tourists perceive sex workers' performances of Brazilanness, race, and masculinity, and, in turn, how these two groups of men make sense of differing models of racial and sexual identity across cultural boundaries. He proposes that in order to better understand how people experience difference sexually, we reframe prostitution—which Marxist feminists have long conceptualized as sexual labor—as also being a form of performative labor. *Tourist Attractions* is an exceptional ethnography poised to make an indelible impact in the fields of anthropology, gender, and sexuality, and research on prostitution and tourism.



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