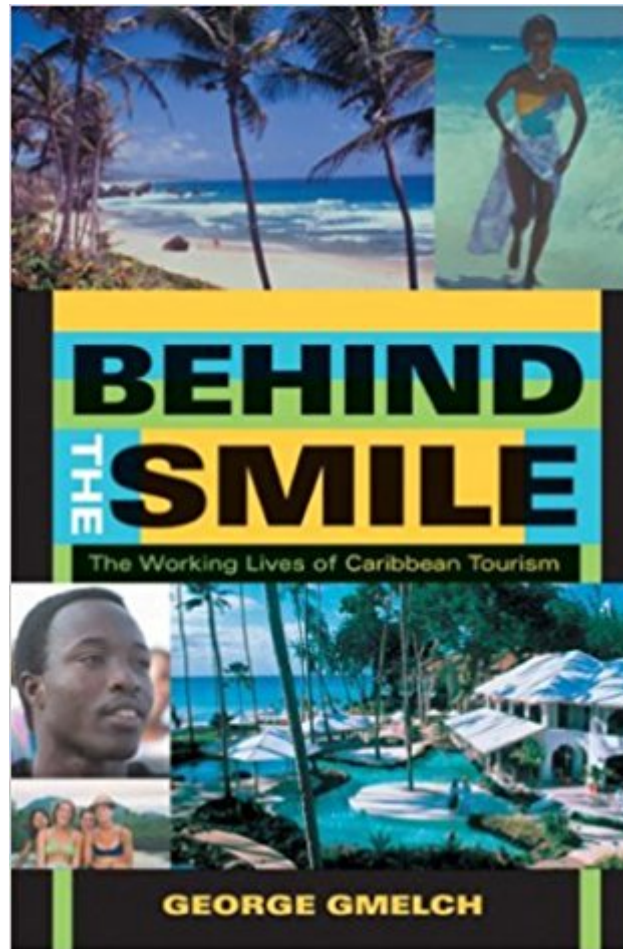


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Behind The Smile: The Working Lives Of Caribbean Tourism



Synopsis

Behind the Smile is an inside look at the world of Caribbean tourism as seen through the lives of the men and women in the tourist industry in Barbados. The workers represent every level of tourism, from maid to hotel manager, beach gigolo to taxi driver, red cap to diving instructor. These highly personal accounts offer insight into complex questions about tourism: how race shapes interactions between tourists and workers, how tourists may become agents of cultural change, the meaning of sexual encounters between locals and tourists, and the real economic and ecological costs of development through tourism. This updated edition includes several new narratives and a new chapter about American students' experiences during summer school and home stays in Barbados.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Building on his experience writing about Caribbean migrants and Barbados history and culture, Union College anthropology professor Gmelch presents an intriguing, but ultimately cursory, look at the world of Caribbean tourism. He profiles 20 men and women who work in Barbados's tourism industry, from maids and hotel managers to taxi drivers and diving instructors. By doing so, Gmelch finds answers to some questions about how tourism workers view their clients' affluent lifestyle, moral character and pursuit of leisure. Rather than drawing conclusions (or even commenting on his findings) however, the author prefers to let his subjects speak for themselves. For example, Gmelch makes no commentary about hotel water sports supervisor Zerphyl Greaves's belief that "sometimes you get the feeling that maybe they tourists don't like you because you're a different

color.... Sometimes you hear comments like, 'These black people don't really know how to do things right.'" Nonetheless, despite its lack of comprehensive analysis, this wide-reaching study provides a useful document about how Caribbean residents feel about the many visitors to their islands.
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""The narratives are thought-provoking and Gmelch's comments are insightful. Everyone in the tourist industry should have this book on their shelves."" -- Anthropological Quarterly

the old one has been broke in my family , great . This is a well made, very sharp product at a great price point. I'd definitely recommend it and would buy other products from the seller. Another nice touch is that the seller contacted me to ask if I was satisfied. I am. suit for this price . it is very fast delivery.

This book is a simple, straight-forward, easy-to-read study of workers in the tourist industry in Barbados, employing oral history. The main body of the book is twenty brief, transcribed interviews from individuals positioned differently in the industry. The interviews are interesting, and offer illuminating insights into the views of workers themselves. The author is an anthropologist with considerable experience in fieldwork and oral history, who has been directing an ethnographic field school in Barbados. He has also written books on Bajan society and on Bajan emigrants. The book begins with an introductory chapter on tourism in general and Bajan tourism in particular, raising several issues for consideration. The second chapter provides an overview of the Barbados tourist industry, ending with a brief discussion of his research methods. There is also a concluding chapter, with generalizations based on the twenty interviews. The most striking point I got from reading this book is that the informants all seem to enjoy their jobs, and gain personal gratification from it, contrary to the critiques of many or most scholars. I would recommend this book to anyone interested in tourism or in the Caribbean.

I read this book for a research paper on Barbados, that I chose to write for an undergraduate anthropology class called Caribbean Ethnography. The book is written by Professor George Gmelch of Union College in Schenectady, NY. It is a very simple book with little to no anthropological analysis on the surface. However, upon completing this book you will realize Gmelch's perfect and unintentional introduction to the anthropology of everyday life. That is to say, the Gmelch gives us 20 snapshots of people working in the tourism industry in Barbados. Gmelch brings us, their jobs,

their home lives, their concerns and the things that bring them joy. Gmelch stumbles upon a fantastic way to introduce a culture. As I read this book (about 3 years ago, I am writing from memory which can only mean that this book was very good at leaving an impression), I thought that it would be great if other anthropologists and writers did this for each culture they study, as the lives of the people, their homes and concerns are surely one of the greatest insights into their culture. This book is generally about tourism, specifically about Caribbean tourism and the country of Barbados. I gave this book to my mother for her to read, as she is a regular big-boat cruise traveler. She loved the book. She told me it brought her a better awareness to the happenings outside of the cruise ship bubble. She was not shot down from ever going on cruises again, but rather took more consideration into planning her cruise, ecologically, economically and culturally.

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