



Kings for Three Days: The Play of Race and Gender in an Afro-Ecuadorian Festival (Interpretations of Culture in the New Millennium)

Jean Muteba Rahier

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With its rich mix of cultures, European influences, colonial tensions, and migration from bordering nations, Ecuador has long drawn the interest of ethnographers, historians, and political scientists. In this book, Jean Muteba Rahier delivers a highly detailed, thought-provoking examination of the racial, sexual, and social complexities of Afro-Ecuadorian culture, as revealed through the annual Festival of the Kings. During the Festival, the people of various villages and towns of Esmeraldas--Ecuador's province most associated with blackness--engage in celebratory and parodic portrayals, often donning masks, cross-dressing, and disguising themselves as blacks, indigenous people, and whites, in an obvious critique of local, provincial, and national white, white-mestizo, and light-mulatto elites. Rahier shows that this festival, as performed in different locations, reveals each time a specific location's perspective on the larger struggles over identity, class, and gender relations in the racial-spacial order of Esmeraldas, and of the Ecuadorian nation in general.

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