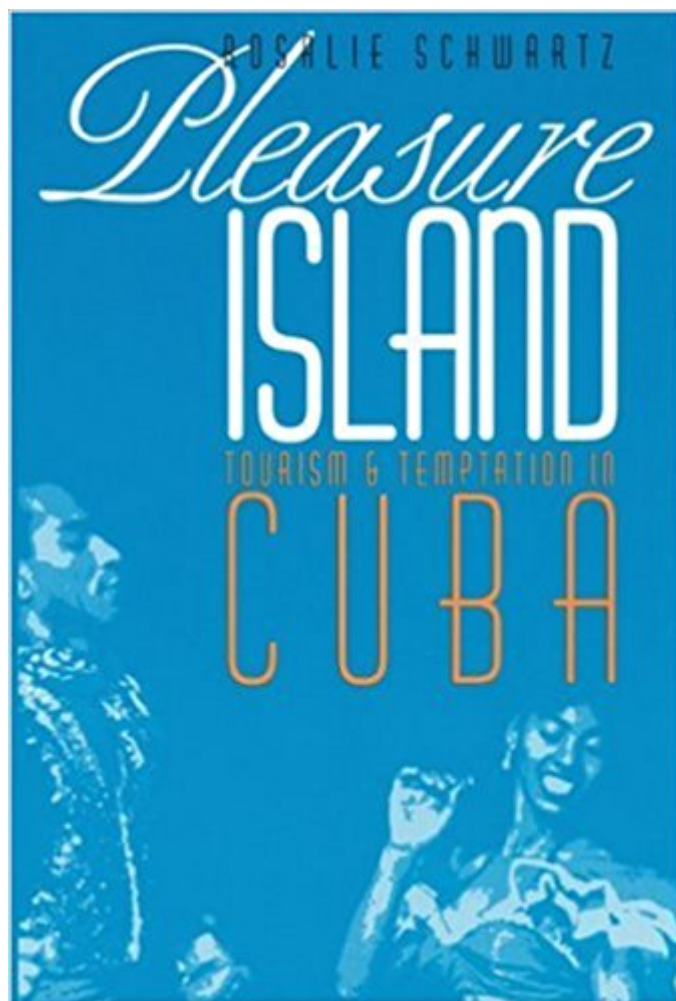




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Pleasure Island: Tourism And Temptation In Cuba



Synopsis

Pleasure Island explores the tourism industry in Cuba between 1920 and 1960, as international travel ceased to be primarily a privilege of the wealthy, incorporating the world's growing middle class. Rosalie Schwartz examines tourists' changing ideas of leisure and recreation, as well as the response of a colonial-era Spanish city turned fleshpot and endless cabaret. The tourism industry mushroomed in and around Havana after 1920, as hundreds of thousands of North Americans transformed the city in collaboration with a local business and political elite. The Depression, exacerbated by a bloody revolution in 1933, plunged the tourism industry into a downward spiral; its steady comeback after World War II, and its Mafia-influenced 1950s heyday, ended abruptly when Fidel Castro came to power in 1959. The tourist stream was diverted to Cuba's Caribbean neighbors, where it remains.Â This work is a history of a very idiosyncratic industry, as well as a study of mass tourism's influence on the behavior, attitudes, and cultures of two politically linked but diverse nations.

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