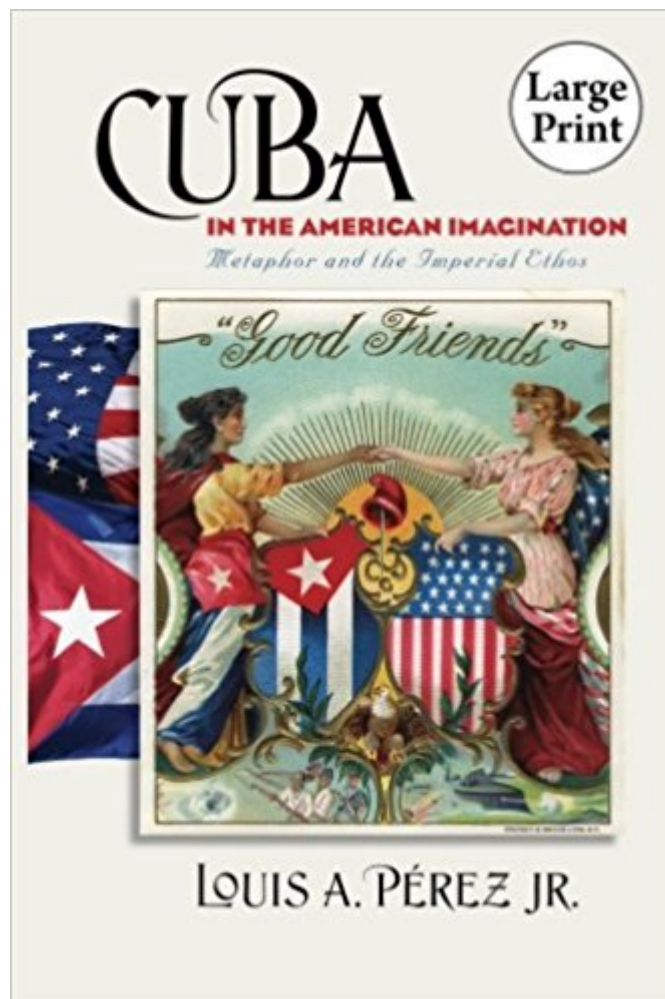




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Cuba In The American Imagination: Metaphor And The Imperial Ethos



Synopsis

For more than two hundred often turbulent years, Americans have imagined and described Cuba and its relationship to the United States by conjuring up a variety of striking images--Cuba as a woman, a neighbor, a ripe fruit, a child learning to ride a bicycle. One of the foremost historians of Cuba, Louis A. Pérez Jr. offers a revealing history of these metaphorical and depictive motifs and discovers the powerful motives behind such characterizations of the island.

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Customer Reviews

[A] brilliant and intellectually challenging analysis of the metaphors that have shaped and informed the American view of Cuba over the last 200 years. . . . An essential book for those seriously interested in a deep understanding of Cuba-U.S. relations.--Progreso-weekly.com[This] book needs to be read not only by scholars of U.S.-Cuban relations, but by anyone interested in the self-constructions of the United States.--New West Indian GuideInstructive on imperial-colonial relationships as well as connections between the past and the present. Instructors at all levels will appreciate the breadth of editorial cartoons that Perez provides. . . . One cannot read this work without being aware of the eerie parallels between the American-Cuban experience and that of America's recent role in the war in Iraq; this alone will make Perez's work of interest to many historians today.--Canadian Journal of HistoryPerez draws on politicians' speeches, newspaper editorials and comic strips published over the century and a half before the revolution to show that Cubans were consistently represented not as agents of their own destiny but as innocent

victims.--London Review of Books This is exactly the kind of book policymakers and the chattering classes ought to be reading--something beyond the ignorant regurgitations of past thinking.--Our Man in Boston Challenging, insightful, and comprehensive. . . . Perez is arguably the most original and competent scholar of Cuban history in the United States. His book has the potential to be an epoch-changing work.--Thomas Schoonover, H-Diplo Roundtable Reviews A worthy addition to the award-winning oeuvre of Perez. . . . Will attract a broad readership of those interested in foreign policy, American studies, and Latin American Studies.--Clio In a thought-provoking conclusion, Perez describes how arrogant and infantilizing metaphors from the 19th century continue to shape American policy toward Cuba.--The Chronicle of Higher Education In Cuba and the American Imagination, Louis A. Perez Jr. adds to his impressive oeuvre on US-Cuba relations in the twentieth century. . . . Compelling. . . . As the potential for change and dialogue between the United States and Cuba appears viable for the first time in decades, Perez's study remains prescient. . . . Perez's argument that metaphors matter and demonstrate hierarchies of power is convincing.--EIAL: Estudios Interdisciplinarios de America Latina y el Caribe Adds to Perez's already impressive body of writing on U.S.-Cuban relations. Those new to his work will be in awe of his deep knowledge of the topic and subtle command of the material. We longtime admirers meanwhile will be reminded why he stands as a doyen of the field.--Journal of American History An engaging and well-researched investigation into metaphors used by US politicians, journalists, and writers to depict Cuba. . . . Essential reading for Cuban experts, and it should be of interest to US and Latin American cultural historians.--Journal of American Studies Quoting both U.S. political leaders and the popular press [and] reproducing many period cartoons, Perez demonstrates that the Cuba that took shape in the American imagination beginning in the early nineteenth century was constructed around metaphors of proximity, neighborhood, and racialism.--Latin American Research Review A quietly ferocious critique of US foreign policy as seen through the lens of Cuban-US relations.--Virginia Quarterly Review Brilliant. . . . Perez's study--the latest in a series of perceptive books on US-Cuba relations by this prolific historian--illustrate[s] how an avid US self-interest was transformed into selfless moral enactment.--The Nation [An] excellent and highly recommended study. . . . One of the most important contributions to the debate about US-Cuban relations. . . . Should be required reading for policymakers, Latin Americanists, and Cuban exiles everywhere.--Latin American Review of Books Both the author and the University of North Carolina Press are to be commended for their publication. This is, in short, a text that will be of great interest to students of American expansionism specifically and to students of empire generally. For scholars of Cuban history, it is a must read.--American Historical Review Argues that Cuba was a laboratory

of American imperialism. . . . Skillfully analyses how the metaphor of neighbour and neighbourhood was employed to justify U.S. intervention in Cuba in the late 1890s. . . . Includes a remarkable number of pictorial descriptions of Cuba from a wide range of American newspapers and magazines.--Times Literary Supplement
 Brilliant. . . . Illustrate[s] how an avid US self-interest was transformed into selfless moral enactment.--The Nation
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 Perez breaks important new ground by exploring the singular influence of metaphor --linguistic constructions that located US-Cuban relations within the norms of everyday life in US domestic culture. . . . Perez's approach is interdisciplinary and erudite.--Dennis Merrill, H-Diplo Roundtable Reviews
 An indispensable study of U.S. policy towards Cuba. . . . A necessary preface for all other analyses of the subject.--Diplomatic History Review
 Impressive collection of visual material.--American Literary History
 The writing is elegant and free of jargon. . . . Anyone interested in self-justifying narratives of empire and especially the place of metaphor in shaping those narratives, should read this seminal contribution to inter-American cultural history. --The Americas

Perez is our best historian of U.S.-Cuban relations, and this book is in one sense a summation of his distinguished work over the past several decades. It is particularly significant because the U.S.-Cuban relationship is going to have to be fundamentally rethought and reshaped in the near future, and this work not only provides critical information, but also acts as a loud warning about how that debate must not be conducted.--Walter LaFeber, Emeritus, Cornell University
 Perez reminds us that the current U.S. policies toward Cuba and the hype about how the U.S. should 'manage' Cuba after Fidel are informed by deeply entrenched metaphors from the previous two centuries. This history reveals the ongoing blindness to social and political realities that such metaphors encourage. Cuba in the American Imagination is a timely addition to Perez's magisterial oeuvre.--Amy Kaplan, University of Pennsylvania
 From its intervention in Cuba's war of independence from Spain to the naming of a 'transition coordinator' for the post-Castro period, the United States has long reacted to Cuba as a neuralgic issue. Louis Perez helps us understand the recurrent American attitudes of entitlement, domination, disappointment, and shock that have framed U.S. policies, and shows how U.S. experience with Cuba has shaped the broader world reputation of the United States. One can hope that tomorrow's policymakers will learn from this

illuminating account.--Abraham F. Lowenthal, University of Southern California

Went to Cuba and so true how Americans, especially those in Dade County Florida look at Cuba as their little plaything to be punished and rewarded at will. In talking to people in Cuba that is how they perceive how their wealthy neighbors again specifically those in Florida look at them, children that need education and punished with extreme measures if they do not do as father USA tells them to do even if it is to their, Cuban detriment in terms of health and education. No wonder Castro who grew up in this environment became a rebel. And no wonder the Dade crowd ala Cruz and Rubio are hopping mad that we now are "friends" with Cuba. Very good book on our culture versus another. The cartoons are hilarious if not terribly sad and infuriating.

Anyone who considers himself any sort of an expert in Cuban-American relations has to read this book. It is the finest examination of how the United States perceived Cuba historically, as well as how American policies have been shaped by elite media and political influences since the Revolution. No one can understand the current continued hostility of the United States against Cuba without reading this book. It is one of the best in a long line of outstanding works by Louis Perez Jr.

"Cuba in the American Imagination" is on the ROROTOKO list of cutting-edge intellectual nonfiction. Professor Perez's book interview ran here as cover feature on March 3, 2009.

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