



¡Venceremos?: The Erotics of Black Self-making in Cuba (Perverse modernities)

Jafari Allen

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Promoting the revolutionary socialist project of equality and dignity for all, the slogan *¡Venceremos!* (We shall overcome!) appears throughout Cuba, everywhere from newspapers to school murals to nightclubs. Yet the accomplishments of the Cuban state are belied by the marginalization of blacks, the prejudice against sexual minorities, and gender inequities. *¡Venceremos?* is a groundbreaking ethnography on race, desire, and belonging among blacks in early-twenty-first-century Cuba, as the nation opens its economy to global capital. Expanding on Audre Lorde's vision of embodied, even "useful," desire, Jafari S. Allen shows how black Cubans engage in acts of "erotic self-making," reinterpreting, transgressing, and potentially transforming racialized and sexualized interpellations of their identities. He illuminates intimate spaces of autonomy created by people whose multiply subaltern identities have rendered them illegible to state functionaries, and to most scholars. In everyday practices in Havana and Santiago de Cuba—including Santería rituals, gay men's parties, hip hop concerts, the tourist-oriented sex trade, lesbian organizing, HIV education, and just hanging out—Allen highlights small but significant acts of struggle for autonomy and dignity.

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