The Iconic Obama, 2007-2009: Essays on Media Representations of the Candidate and New President. Nicholas A. Yanes and Derrais Carter, eds. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., Inc., 2012. p/bk 258 pp. ISBN 978-0-7864-4602-5. Price $45.00.

This book contains a selection of essays that critically analyze the representations of President Barack Obama through contemporary modes of consumption including news media and, more significantly, popular culture such as viral videos, comic books, street art, and music. The book has been divided into six sections according to representational mediums including the branding of Obama and his ties popular to cultures; the way he has been represented on television and film; his connections to hip-hop; his relationship to news and digital media; and finally, the manifestation of Obama's image and values on a global scale.

Section One focuses on the construction of the Presidential candidate's identity leading up to his first term election. The prevailing questions address his status as the first African-American candidate President. By examining campaign speeches and his memoirs, Sikanku and Yanes argue that Obama's multi-layered inspections of his own identity allow a construction of a candidate with "global appeal" (25). The essays in Sections Two, Three, and Four offer a range of critical insights on Obama's appearances in film, television, hip hop music, graffiti culture, and comics. Many of the discussed texts should be no stranger to those who have paid close attention to the news surrounding the depictions of Obama throughout the election cycle. Vaughn, for example, cites several articles claiming that the presence of black Presidents in film and television have had a positive influence towards an Obama Presidency (46). Banh utilizes a scene from *Boston Legal* and juxtaposes it with real-life reactions from right-wing critics to investigate arguments regarding the notion of a "post-racial America" (67-80). Gosa's essay on Obama and rap music deconstructs the symbolism surrounding his Presidency (94). The theme of branding returns in Schneider's argument on the symbiotic relationship between the Obama campaign and street artist Shepard Fairey (97). Section Four concludes with a conversation with Larry Hama, the creator of the Barack the Barbarian comic, one of four short interviews in this book (128).

The research in Section Five surrounds the way in which news media framed Barack Obama's identity and actions. Gutsche, Carviou and Arif argue that his success is based on the notion that the mainstream news media favors representations of hegemonic, heterosexual masculinity (133). The connections between sexuality and race are also explored in Streeter's essay, and an interview with Ben Relles, creator of the Obama Girl viral video (167, 169). Becker attempts to clarify the way social networking technologies are used to mobilize those who hold particular political ideologies in a situation that is still familiar today (151).

While much of the discourse has surrounded representations within America itself, Section Six of *The Iconic Obama* includes pieces on how other cultures view America through the lens of their president. The two essays and the interview with French journalist Sébastian Compagnon reveals the prominence Barack Obama has acquired, not just as a historically significant figure in American politics, but also in global popular culture (234). Kiuchi explores how Japan's City of Obama utilized the image and values of the then-Presidential candidate as popular culture as pieces of inspiration to revitalize their own community (198). Parlak and Tunç consider the potential Obama may provide in the long, ever-changing relationship between America and Turkey, which is reminiscent of the points introduced in Section One (226).

Although the discussions surrounding the ideological implications of Obama's Presidency in the book arose nearly three years ago, *The Iconic Obama* still feels timely, as the issues often still directly relate to the current political climate. Each chapter directly positions this book as a part of the continuously developing research on the current President and American political cultures. In the conclusion, Yanes borrows an analogy from Stephen Colbert to describe popular culture today as "crumbly", allowing the creation of "mass-cultural artifacts" that are "mostly isolated from other popular narratives and items" (239). Barack Obama's ability to gain mass attention in the midst of this cultural landscape helps to justify why he should be considered a unique cultural icon, and thus intriguing for researchers in the field of politics and popular culture.

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