

Johnson, Christopher, New School University, United States

Barack Obama and Liberation Identity

This paper is a consideration of the visual display of Barack Obama. Authors have suggested that the black male image in film over time prepared white American voters for the presidential election of November 2008 (Dargis and Scott, 2009). Such writing contradicts the notion of race as a social fiction as posed by Appiah, Gates and others. Arguably, not since Martin Luther King, Jr. has there been a leader whose message holds the potential to liberate identity. The persona of the president has inspired fandom, has instigated personal collapse among rivals and has placed the body of the man in a position of a near spiritual adviser. I will focus on the themes of (a) religious practice, church going and the presidential image, (b) Obama, Malcolm X and the African American male authority figure, and (c) Barack Obama as Buddha and the One.