



Iconic: Decoding Images of the Revolutionary Black Woman

Lakesia D. Johnson

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Angela Davis, Pam Grier, Alice Walker, Michelle Obama. Revolutionary black women have evoked strong reaction throughout American history. Magazines, political campaigns, music, television, and movies have relied upon deep-seated archetypes and habitually cast strong, countercultural black women as mammies and sexual objects. In *Iconic* Lakesia Johnson explores how this belittling imagery is imposed by American media, revealing an immense cultural fear of black women's power and potential.

But the media does not have the last word. Johnson chronicles how strong black women?truly revolutionary black women?have nonetheless taken control of their own imaging despite consistent negative characterizations. Through their speech, demeanor, fashion, and social relationships, women from Sojourner Truth to Michelle Obama have counteracted these depictions. With ingenuity, fortitude, and focus on the greater good, these revolutionary women transformed the cultural images of themselves and, simultaneously, those of American black women as a whole.

Seamlessly weaving together role models of past and present, from women in politics to artists and musicians, Johnson eloquently demonstrates how the revolutionary black woman in many public forums has been?and continues to be?a central figure in challenging long-standing social injustices.

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