

Foreword

“Artistry Unbound: The Influence of African Americans on Popular Culture ”

by Alicia L. Moore and La Vonne I. Neal

*Popular culture is all those elements of life which are not narrowly intellectual or creatively elitist and which are generally though not necessarily disseminated through the mass media.*¹ – Ray B. Browne

Ray B. Browne (January 15, 1922 – October 22, 2009), author and professor emeritus, was one of the harbingers in exploring popular culture.² For example, in the early 1970s, he contributed to the development of a department of popular culture at Bowling Green State University and as an editor for the *Journal of Popular Culture* he inspired ongoing dialogue about popular culture.³

Browne contributed to many conversations about how to define popular culture and once described popular culture as “... whatever is widely disseminated and experienced....”⁴ In the early 1990s, Black Sheep, a hip hop duo (Andres “Dres” Titus and William “Mista Lawnge” McLean) were widely disseminated and were on a unique trajectory when they boldly stated in their song, *The Choice is Yours*, that their style was a model for innovation as they sang, “... Niftily, we can make it hip to be, what we are cause we be the epitome, Doo-Dah-Dippity.” And who can forget their chorus, “you can get with this, or you can get with that. I think you’ll get with this, for this is where it’s at.” Moreover, a clear example of Black Sheep’s influence on popular culture was illuminated when almost two decades later in 2010, their song *The Choice is Yours* was used by Kia Motors to support one of their marketing campaigns that touted in a television commercial how Kia Motors is the epitome of innovation for auto design and thus they make your choice easier. Throughout the commercial you hear the chorus, “you can get with this, or you can get with that.”

Throughout this special issue, with guest editor, Joseph E. Flynn, the choice will be yours. You can spend time with the authors experiencing their multiple voices reflecting on the Influence of African Americans on popular culture through examinations of images of African Americans on television or

suggestions for how to engage students in discourse about media literacy as well as the importance of visual culture just to name a few of your options. Joseph E. Flynn, an assistant professor of curriculum and instruction, has made important contributions to the discourse on popular culture more specifically how to engage teachers in discussions about film. Flynn’s research, *Reel Dialogues: Using Film to Discuss Race and Whiteness with Teachers* is an important addition to education foundations and social justice curricula design.

We conclude with a thought borrowed from Black Sheep--Doo-Dah-Dippity.

Notes

1. Harold E. Hinds, Marilyn Ferris Motz, Angela M. S. Nelson, (Eds.), *Popular Culture, Theory and Methodology: A Basic Introduction*, University of Wisconsin Press, 2006.
2. Ray B. Browne obituary in the New York Times retrieved on March 1, 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/10/28/education/28browne.html>
3. Ray B. Browne biographical information and contributions retrieved on March 1, 2011. <http://www.bgsu.edu/offices/mc/news/2009/news73185.html>
4. Marilyn F. Motz, John G. Nachbar, Michael T. Marsden, Ronald J. Ambrosetti, (Eds.), *Eye on the Future: Popular Culture Scholarship into the 21st Century in Honor of Ray B. Browne*, Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1994.

Teacher Resources

1. The Journal of African American History (JAAH), Summer 2005 Special Issue “The History of Hip Hop” at http://www.jaah.org/jaah_index_v90.html
2. The National Humanities Center Online Collection of Primary Sources (e.g. historical documents, literary texts, and works of art) is a free resource. The Toolbox Library---The Making of African American Identity Volume III, 1917-1968 Text # 8 highlights Community and Culture. <http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/pds/maai3/community/text8/text8read.htm>
3. An interview with Ray B. Browne in 2002 the *Americana—the Journal of American Popular Culture, 1900-Present* http://www.americanpopularculture.com/journal/articles/fall_2002/browne.htm
4. The Popular Culture Association and American Culture Association (PCA / ACA) Website. <http://www.pcaaca.org/about/history.php>

BHB Corrections



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Carney survived the war and, in May 1900—thirty-seven years after the brutal battle at Fort Wagner—he became the first African American to receive the Medal of Honor and finally--the recognition that he deserved.

Correction: BHB Vol. 73, No. 2, page 5

Carney survived the war and, in May 1900—thirty-seven years after the brutal battle at Fort Wagner, he was the first African American whose act of heroism eventually led to being awarded a Medal of Honor.

Suggestion:

Carney survived the war. His bravery at the brutal battle of Fort Wagner would be the first act awarded a Medal of Honor, though he did not receive it until May 1900—thirty-seven years later.

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