Black Americans and Popular Media: A Black History Month Conversation

Jane Rhodes, Professor and Head
Department of Black Studies
Race and Media--The Contestation over Images

Representations of Blacks in Mainstream Media

Black Responses to Mainstream Representations
Black Americans central to the history of American popular culture: Minstrelsy
Defense of Slavery launches the Film Industry
Insult and mimicry central to the emergence of talking cinema
Radio--A new medium continues minstrel theme
Music Recording--a segregated, yet profitable industry
From Blues, to Jazz, to R&B and beyond
Black Americans respond on screen

Black Independent Cinema:
Oscar Micheaux--1920s-40s
1970s--Black independent filmmaking
Meanwhile--an emerging medium: television
By the 1990s--content shifted to gritty urban context
Complementing the rise of hip hop—new generation of independent filmmakers
21st century context for Black American cinema
Black authorship, black control, alternative images
Today's (lockdown) media landscape
Is more, better???? Discuss