Transcript for Dr. Mark Anthony Neal on the Study of Black Popular Culture Video

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Dr. Neal: So Mark Anthony Neale, I teach African and African American Studies at Duke University. My area of specialty is black popular culture. For me black popular culture was important in part because it was a space that people did not spend a lot of scholarly time. There has been a lot of work on jazz. There has been a lot of work on music, but not folk who took serious things like African American comics, television, film and a range of other things. And so for me it was important to do this kind of work because I thought that what we saw in popular culture was the reproduction of various kinds of ideologies. And given the amount of time that people spend consuming popular culture I thought it was important that we had a critical process that went along side the stuff that we were consuming. My early days, I was very much influenced by the writings and music by Amiri Baraka, I went to grad school around the time that we start to see this first generation of so-called black intellectuals, the Cornel West, Bell Hooks, Michael Eric Dyson. And they all emerge around the same time that hip-hop was becoming very popular and of course there was the L.A. riots and I saw what they were doing and they got the chance to talk very seriously about pop culture and the black music arrangement and other things and quite frankly I wanted to get down with that. I wanted to do that kind of work also. So it’s been very exciting for me both writing about popular culture in a very seriously scholarly way. But at the same time also being able to translate the scholarly stuff to broader audiences so the stuff that’s been happening in the blogosphere, Twitter, Facebook you know the new digital media, if you will, have all become just more enhanced tools, I think for people to talk about the significance of popular culture in our lives.