

'What's in a name? A rose by any other name would smell as sweet.' Or so Mr Shakespeare would have us believe. But in some instances, names mean a lot and some names really do stink.

The term 'urban' is quickly becoming the 'coloured' of our age. It wasn't all that long ago that the term 'coloured' was the terminology used by whites who found the words 'negro' or 'nigger' a mite too distasteful for their palettes.

Nowadays, any reference to black cultural products is being referred to as 'urban'. It started in the music industry where record bosses suddenly woke up to the fact that black music was finding a large audience among whites.

'Urban' became the term which enabled black music to accommodate the likes of Justin Timberlake and Britney Spears, and any cultural connection was easily removed.

What the term 'urban' represents is the power of whites to take a product from blacks, rename and redefine it. As one brotha stated recently on an internet chat room: 'The term "urban" is patronising, misrepresentative, contrived and designed by white guys in suits who think that if they "un-colour" music, they can sell it to more people. Black is black - whether it's made by a white boy in Camberwell or a black guy in Norwich.'

'Urban' represents theft and the power to steal. When one considers that the history and struggle of a people is represented by black music, it is an insult to allow others to change that for their own commercial gains.

It was only a few years ago that BBC Radio 1 had a ban on playing rap music. When MTV started, it refused to show black music videos and even had to be persuaded to air Michael Jackson's *Thriller*.

Ten years ago HMV and Virgin stocked very little black

Pope Fiction

THE PATH OF THE RIGHTEOUS MAN



Thought for the day

The shin: a device for finding furniture in the dark.

CALL IT WHAT IT IS

We are treated to the spectacle of Simply Red's Mick Hucknall getting a MOBO

wanted to buy. They had no interest in their black customers.

I can remember a few years back, how the staff of Tower Records in London were taken off guard by the huge numbers of black fans who turned up to see Mr Shabba Ranks doing a guest appearance at the store. Most of the staff didn't even know who he was.

What makes the whole 'urban' issue even more galling is how ready black people are to appease those with the power rather than standing strong. So we are treated to the silly spectacle of Simply Red's Mick Hucknall getting a MOBO Award and Keanu

spective in such matters, it surely can't be at all costs, can it?

Just a few years back, black recording artists were never given awards such as the Brits or Mercury Music Prize, so why the need for us to start flying the inclusion flag when it was never seen on any music industry flag pole in the past?

If 'urban' was only confined to music it would be one thing, but its use is already stretching outside. One brotha told me that, although all the content on a website he is setting up is about black people, he prefers to call it 'urban' because he doesn't want to exclude white people.



Justin Timberlake and Britney Spears: perfect urban pair?

presumably with the same ethos. While we are on the subject, perhaps someone could explain to me why the term 'urban' is even relevant? According to the census, 80 per cent of the UK population lives in urban centres, so most music will be produced by people



JOKE OF THE WEEK

A DANGEROUS escaped convict broke into a house and tied up a young couple who had been sleeping in the bedroom.

As soon as he had a chance, the husband turned to his young wife, bound up on the bed in a skimpy nightie, and whispered, "Baby, this guy hasn't seen a woman in years. Just cooperate with anything he wants. If he wants to have sex with you, just go along with it and pretend you like it. Our lives depend on it."

"Dear," the wife hissed, spitting out her gag. "I'm so relieved you feel that way because