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Exploring the Virulent Jazz Counterculture in *Mumbo Jumbo*

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This is a work in cultural studies focusing on the literary representation of the rise of a jazz counter-culture in Ishmael Reed's Mumbo Jumbo (1972). Discussion of the politics and aesthetics of this counter-culture mainly hinges on the central metaphor of Jes Grew, a strange illness that escalates into a pandemic.

Introduction

Ishmael Reed's *Mumbo Jumbo* (1972) functions as a text of cultural revolt, representing a new form of Black counterculture, urging the Black Subject to depart from rigid, repressive conventions of a dominant White culture and to find alternative meaning and identity within an emerging cultural landscape, produced and propelled toward the centre by the Jazz musical narrative. This revolution not only creates a unique cultural space and identity but also de-essentializes the black cultural identity by drawing attention to numerous varied elements that participate in the production of new meaning.

Jes Grew, the phenomenon which binds the multifaceted text in cohesion and brings together elements from History, Jazz and Afrofuturism, is communicated by using the metaphor of a virulent disease- the Jes Grew pandemic. This article is a work in cultural studies, attempting to map the evolution of the counterculture that Jes Grew represents and its effect on identity. This mapping is achieved by viewing the equation of the Jazz counter culture with the Jes Grew pandemic.

To understand the racial and cultural politics that the narrative is invested with, this essay will adopt the theoretical frameworks of postmodernism and popular culture studies, particularly Raymond Williams' theory of dominant, residual and emergent cultures, and Stuart Hall's theory of production of cultural identities. The essay will argue that *Mumbo Jumbo* uses elements of residual culture such as folkloric motifs, voodoo practice, and more to revitalize the rising Jazz counterculture, signified by the creative expression of the cultural identity in music and dance performances. The prominence of the Jazz counterculture in Harlem is represented by the virulent phenomenon of Jes Grew, offering resistance and openly challenging a totalising, white supremacist, assimilationist ideology. Continuing this

conversation of residual elements and Jes Grew, the novel adds elements of an emergent Afrofuturist culture, envisioning a Black Utopia, embedded in the Jazz narrative.

Raymond Williams, in *Marxism and Literature*, provides a historical analysis of culture by defining residual, dominant and emergent as terms that describe the “dynamic interrelations” of “historically varied and variable elements” within a cultural process (Williams 121). These “dynamic interrelations” such as traditions and institutions help understand the “complexity” and development of the cultural process. Instead of focusing on a particular stage of culture, as a singular, isolated cultural system, he examines the “complex interrelations between movements and tendencies both within and beyond” a particular cultural system to “connect with the future as well as with the past” (121).

In Williams’ theory, the dominant is always hegemonic and the residual and emergent are either alternative or sometimes even oppositional to the dominant culture. Williams’ theory does not quite mention a counterculture. To fully express the cultural quotient of the novel, this essay will stick to the broader framework of Williams’ work by exploring the residual and emergent in the context of the Jazz counterculture, while its opposition- the dominant, hegemonic culture will be identified as the Atonists’ white supremacist culture.

Different phases of the cultural process enter an environment of fluidity and playfulness demonstrating a self-affirming narrative of culture which offers its subjects the active agency of production of identity by fostering the innovative powers of Jazz music narrative, the history it (re)writes and the future it imagines. The idea of the production of dynamic, fluid identities can be understood by Stuart Hall’s theory. Stuart Hall in “Cultural Identity and Diaspora” rejects a static and essentialist understanding of cultural identity, defined by a “collective ‘one true self’, hiding inside the many other, more superficial or artificially imposed ‘selves’, which people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common” (Hall, 393). He advocates the second view of cultural identity, wherein identity rather than being simply discovered is produced or more precisely, is the function of the subject’s socio-political positioning throughout history. Cultural identity, according to him is “subject to the continuous ‘play’ of history, culture and power” and is largely determined by how a subject is “positioned and how it positions itself within the narratives of the past” (394).

This article will attempt to justify its arguments in three sections. The first one will discuss the conflict between the Atonists’ dominant culture and the Jazz counterculture. The second section will explore the employment of residual elements in the text and the significance

of history in the narrative playfield. The third section will discuss the Afrofuturist elements present in the text. In doing so, the article seeks to expand its thesis of an interconnected threefold structure of the cultural process (dominant, residual and emergent) by using each section to piece together the textual clues that lend the novel its orientation of cultural celebration and resilience through the jazz metaphor masked by the synonymous Jes Grew disease.

Section I

The counter cultural process that the narrative explores, is firmly embedded in the Jazz trope, which is also found in the works of Harlem Renaissance poets such as Langston Hughes and even in later works of postmodernism, like Toni Morrison's works. In its resistance to the cultural authoritarianism of the 'Atonist' white supremacists, Black counterculture relies on Jazz not simply as a form of creative expression but also has the Jazz metaphor transcend temporal boundaries, as the text introduces all of the elements of residual and emergent within the Jazz framework. The counterculture's recourse to its past and its hopeful vision of a utopic future resists the systematic cultural chauvinism of the ruling 'Atonist' institutions, which function primarily by constructing and maintaining the Self-Other binary through various hegemonic apparatuses such as mass media and religion. Jes Grew's arrival and quick spread poses a threat for the Atonists and kickstarts a chain of events that expose racial inequality in modern society.

The novel opens by invoking a sense of urgency that follows a disaster, as Jes Grew advances toward New York in search of its text. Perceived and labelled as a plague or pandemic by the Atonists, Jes grew is defined as a disease which results in loss of discipline and psychological stability. Jes Grew actually functions as a psychosomatic manifestation of the spirit of Jazz, as each body it possesses breaks into ecstatic fits of singing and dancing, as the narrator explains:

“Actually Jes Grew was an anti-plague. Some plagues caused the body to waste away; Jes Grew enlivened the host...Some plagues arise from decomposing animals, but Jes Grew is electric as life and is characterized by ebullience and ecstasy. Terrible plagues were due to the wrath of God; but Jes Grew is the delight of the gods.” (Reed 6)

Jes Grew decodes the cultural and racial politics *Mumbo Jumbo* is invested in by destabilising the meaning and perspective attached to ‘disease’ and adapting it to an entirely new climate of cultural reclamation and celebration by deconstructing the dominant culture defined illness and reinterpreting it as potentially healing and liberating.

By making Jes Grew, an exaggerated, virulent manifestation of the Jazz tradition, *Mumbo Jumbo* underlines the vital position that Jazz occupies in the cultural psyche of the Black subject in America. *Mumbo Jumbo*’s use of the familiar tradition, reaffirms the upbeat convergence of art, creativity, performance and spiritual resilience of the Subject, engaged in producing an empowered cultural psyche, enabling multiple innovative ways of cross communication between the historical, contemporary and futurist rhythms of Jazz counterculture. Keren Ormry identifies Reed’s use of a “jazz aesthetic as a way of reconciling the violent past with the new demands of the present, ultimately envisioning a future that rewrites racial and ethnic ideologies.” She notes that the new innovations of form and style in Jazz music, called “New Music” or “free jazz” become the ‘conceptual framework’ for Reed in creating “a new language that then begins to transform the potentially paralyzing and destructive force of the past into a much more productive, creative force” (127). Adapting Adorno’s theory of “informal music” to her study of “musical and social implications” of free jazz in *Mumbo Jumbo* (128), she writes that informal music is characterized by “lack of formality, a rejection of traditional and expected forms of expression” (130), setting the tone for Reed’s Jazz narrative.

The informal music of the Jazz counterculture that reverberates through the entire narrative protests against the consciously constructed opposing binaries of the superior, ‘natural’ Self and the inferior ‘unnatural’ Other, whose annihilation becomes the foundation upon which the entire establishment of the Western culture stands, legitimising its identity and maintaining its dominance by subjecting all minor, non-Western cultures, in this case a particular manifestation of a distinctly African-American culture to mass standardization, under the label of Other cultures, ignoring crucial points of difference in the flow of cultural information. The Atonists not only imprison what they see a threatening Other culture in the periphery of social order and existence, but they also derive their power from the standardization of the dominant, white supremacist Western culture as ‘right’ or naturally accepted and legitimate, allowing no space for the play or dialogue of diverse cultural elements.

This is best described by the insidious hegemonic moves of the self-declared custodians of Western culture when it is revealed that the mass media “paid its dues to the Atonist order” by ensuring “the glorification of Western Culture” (Reed 57). While the “authentication of a Rembrandt” is described as “The most notable achievements of mankind,” a column describing Afro-American Painting” is “described by the Atonist critic as “primitive,” at best “charming” and “mostly propagandist” (57). Continuing their plan of putting an end to Jes Grew, the Atonists devise a plan: “to groom a Talking Android who will work within the Negro, who seems to be its classical host; to drive it out...blot Jes Grew. A speaking scull they can use any way they want, a rapping antibiotic who will abort it from the American womb to which it clings like a stubborn fetus. In other words, this Talking Android will be engaged to cut-it-up, break down this Germ, keep it from behind the counter” (17). Note the vapid, open declaration of racism in these words. By rejecting veiled, metaphorical language, Reed highlights the systematic oppression of the marginalised and opens a channel of dialogic criticism by holding up this episode in its bare form for the readers’ engagement, enabling them to interrogate unjust and inequal social order.

Using the brutal imagery of abortion to describe the plan to uproot and ‘eradicate’ Jes Grew, reflects the cultural annihilation that marginal groups suffer, in order to prevent the natural growth of the cultural process founded on Jazz. Further complicating the annihilation project is the re-enactment of an enslavement narrative, in which the master race/culture systematically exploits, controls and subjugates every attempt of a cultural uprising. The role of a Talking Android will be to ensure that Jes Grew never catches on by convincing the subjects that rely on counterculture, of the Atonist approved racial hierarchy, encouraging internalization of the ideas perpetuated by Atonists. (The figure of the Talking Android is an important one in Reed’s novel and the article will revisit it later to discuss about in connection to Afrofuturism.) This cultural slaughter is underlined by the Talking Android’s function of colonising the mindset to obliterate all the traces of a rising Jazz counterculture and circumscribing a distinct cultural identity of a black subject within the terms and conditions provided within the Atonist culture.

Alfonso W. Hawkins Jr explains that “the apparent ‘Africanization’ of the Western World is a cause for alarm. Reed presents this social dynamic as a metaphor to show, through music, how religious and racial paradigms seek to corner and place one group against a “supreme” Western group or standard” (121). The significance of the Jazz metaphor can be clearly understood when by its playful subversion of the hegemonic forces of the supreme

Western culture. For example, attacking institutionalized religion, Papa LaBas' Mumbo Jumbo Cathedral, not only plays with the word 'cathedral' but adds a Jazz spin to the place by replacing rooms such as "the vestry, cloister, nave, vestibule, or altar" with "Dark Tower Room the Weary Blues Room the Groove Bang and Jive Around Room the Aswelay Room [and the] room PaPa LaBas calls the Mango Room" (Ormry 135), which James Lindroth decodes as phases and terms from Jazz music History (Lindroth 195), foregrounding for the reader the engaging playfield of Jazz aesthetics of the text and more importantly, the sense of liberation provided by celebrating different cultures.

Section II

The residual, according to Williams is any element which, "has been effectively formed in the past, but it is still active in the cultural process" (Williams 122). There might be some "experiences, meanings, and values which cannot be expressed or substantially verified" in the present temporal order, but are "lived and practised on the basis of the residue-cultural as well as social-of some previous social and cultural institution or formation" (122). The "actively residual" is not incorporated into the cultural scenario as an unmediated symbol of the past, with a static, unaltered meaning but "by reinterpretation, dilution, projection, discriminating inclusion and exclusion" (122), profoundly affecting the residual symbols such as voodoo, the figure of trickster in African folklore, and myths of Egyptian deities. They adapt to the current discursive flows of history and politics, as they are weaved into the Jazz fabric of Black counterculture, giving rise to new, empowered vision of cultural identity.

Harlem houngan Papa LaBas recognizes the reason for the rise of Jes Grew as the search for its text, the Book of Thoth. He reveals the origins of Jazz and voodoo when he tells the story of the Egyptian deities while exposing the Atonists, Von Vampton and Gould. The voodoo priest's act of storytelling serves two important purposes. One, it functions as the recovery of a lost past and interrogates the commonly accepted version of history and myths. Two, Papa LaBas' act of storytelling itself, underlines the significance of oral narratives that are central to the African American folk cultures. Additionally, his character is modelled after the trickster figure that appears in the voodoo spirit world and in African American folktales. "LaBas's very name, in fact, is taken from the African deity Legba and his Haitian incarnation PaPa Legba, a trickster figure who mediates between the spiritual and material worlds" (Swope

612). These references to voodoo and folklore underline the significance of the function of residual elements in the novel's quest of cultural identity.

With the adaptation of the residual elements into the new Jazz counterculture and into Jes Grew, metanarratives such as Religion and History are no longer held up as singularly legitimate forms of knowledge. Lyotard defines the postmodern as "incredulity toward metanarratives" resulting in a crisis in validation of knowledge (73). No longer seen as True, authoritative, knowledge systems, the Grand Narratives of Western Metaphysics such as Christianity and History that rule the Western psyche and are protected and perpetuated by their Atonist guardians, are rejected to give way to a playful, celebratory Jazz counterculture that is founded upon the multicultural effects of neo- hoodoo aesthetic and the imaginative reinventions of ancient Egyptian myths that retell the birth of this culture of Jazz revelry.

Reed in *Shrovetide*, shares his fundamental ideas in conjuring a neo-hoodoo aesthetic. "This attention to cultural mixing is crucial to Reed's definition of the Neo Hoodoo aesthetic. He explains, "Voodoo is the perfect metaphor for the multicultural. Voodoo comes out of the fact that all these different tribes and cultures were brought from Africa and Haiti. All of their mythologies, knowledges, and herbal medicines, their folklores, jelled. It's an amalgamation like this country" (qtd. In Swope 614). Swope further notes that "*Mumbo Jumbo* itself reflects this multicultural amalgamation by combining a variety of literary styles—from African oral tales to the comic book as well as a variety of cultural and textual influences: history, film, jazz, Voodoo ceremonies, etc" (614). The intertextual and cross-genre references to voodoo and folklore underline the significance of such residual elements within the larger socio-political dynamics of countercultural currents discussed here.

Tracing the rich and complex genealogy of jazz and voodoo traditions as he narrates alternate versions of history and mythology, Papa LaBas unlocks the 'other' version of history, not present in Atonist documents or knowledge systems. Osiris' cultural investment on the spiritual energy granted by performing arts as an expression and channel of gaining joy and individual liberty is in sharp contrast to Set's policies. The Atonist equivalent of the Osirian age, Seth takes over Osiris' position and begins a reign based on strictly repressive and authoritarian value system, inverting what has long been the natural order of things by relegating the multicultural traditions of Osirian innovations to the periphery and promoting a bleak, mechanical, singularly controlled existence for his people, a design reflected in the Atonist culture. The reconstruction of history that the text includes serves to destabilize the

binary oppositions and hierarchical notions perpetuated by institutions of the dominant Atonist faith by exposing the pitfalls of singular authoritative perspective and celebrating multiplicity of perspectives and the coexistence of multiple cultures by recovering a lost past or reimagining history to provide plural and alternative voices.

James Lindroth notes that the core of Reed's subversion strategies is formed by "hoodoo, with its rituals, conjure men and women, and its spirits, or loas, of whom chief examples are the trickster deities Legba, Guede, and Erzulie" (185). He points out the important role that Voodoo plays in rejuvenating the Jazz counterculture. To discover individual creativity by observing various voodoo rituals in the many jazz rooms of Mumbo Jumbo Cathedral, "a chief activity is communion with the loas," intertwining the traditions of music and religion. Furthermore, this convergence is also symbolized by Osiris "the black Egyptian trickster deity, and through the image of the temple of Osiris, an analogue of LaBas's Mumbo Jumbo Cathedral." Moreover, he is identified as "the first jazz improviser," while Isis "is identified with hoodoo deity Erzulie" (195). The significance of voodoo spirits or loa is central to the text, as it adapts the same effect of subversion as and acts alongside the Jazz music tradition.

In its exploration of the freewill and creative magnetism of the loas, *Mumbo Jumbo* challenges authoritarian tendencies in the Atonists' culture that maintains control over historical narratives of Jazz and Voodoo mysteries by launching a hegemonic logocentric attack upon the History of Jazz and Voodoo mysteries. Originally appreciated Egyptian mysteries were soon labelled and perceived to be wrong by legitimising the (Atonist conferred) meaning of daimon as unnatural and evil, underlining the powerful influence of the Atonist organization over language, production of meaning and finally socio-political responses. Dionysus, who is commonly seen as presiding over chaos, seen in direct opposition to a stabilized Apollonian order, in *Mumbo Jumbo* learns the Jazz and voodoo Mysteries and facilitates the building of temples. This underlines the strong cross-cultural influence of such Mysteries, however, the Atonists do not allow these practises to be normalised, by representing them as unholy:

The Greeks established temples to these Egyptian-derived mysteries where people would go out of their heads so that the gods could take them over. (About the 10th century the Atonist priests will call this diabolical possession or corrupt the Greek word daimon so as to have evil connotations. Freud, the later Atonist

[according to 1 biographer, a big fan of Moses, Cromwell and other militarists], is to term this ‘hysteria’). (Reed 169)

The addition of Freud to this list highlights the growing lineage and power of Atonist practices of marginalising groups and practices that they don’t approve of. The Atonists seems to be wielding powerful techniques of mass control as we learn that the branding of certain practices as evil is no longer limited to the religious institutions of the Atonist order but has found its way into validation by supposedly ‘scientific practices’ such as Freudian psychoanalysis. But the narrator intervenes and explains the character of the loa for the reader’s benefit:

The loa is not a daimon in the Freudian sense, a hysteric; no, the loa is known by its signs and is fed, celebrated, drummed to until it deserts the horse and govi of its host and goes on about its business. ...The last thing these attendants would think of doing to a loa’s host is electrifying it lobotomizing it or removing its clitoris, which was a pre-Freudian technique for ‘curing’ hysteria. (50)

Neo-hoodoo rejects such anti-human tendencies of knowledge systems that grips the ‘rational’ mind conforming to the clinical or psychoanalytic definitions of madness and its supposed ‘cures’ as approved by the Atonists and satirises the metanarrative of psychoanalysis and interrogates the controversial Freudian theories concerning hysteria while critiquing the practise that studies human mind and cites the authority of ‘scientific awareness’ to segregate between normal and abnormal. Following the appearance of Jes Grew in the modern world, the Atonists again use their authority to represent it as a contagious illness and look for it ‘cure.’

Section III

Williams’ theory is based on a wholly Marxist model and the rise of an emergent culture, he writes, is the result of the emergence of a new class. Before going on to a class-based analysis of emergent culture, Williams provides a broader understanding of the term, as he writes the ‘emergent’ means that “new meanings and values, new practices, new relationships and kinds of relationship are continually being created.” (123). *Mumbo Jumbo* looks forward to an optimistic future that ensures inclusivity and a more empowering existence by turning to the multiple possibilities of social equality offered by Afrofuturism. According to Mark Dery, “Speculative fiction that treats African-American themes and addresses African-

American concerns in the context of twentieth-century techno culture-and, more generally, African-American signification that appropriates images of technology and a prosthetically enhanced future-might... be called 'Afrofuturism'" (180).

Following the tradition of speculative science fiction, *Jes Grew*, which finds its foundations in the surreal mysteries of Haitian voodoo and ancient African myths, is deeply grounded in the contemporary world of scientific and technological progress as a biological and a cybernetic phenomenon. *Jes Grew* spreads like a virulent fever, its essence etched into the very DNA of its host. Like discussed in section I of the article, the Atonist cure to this 'illness' is to be found in a human vaccine: a young black boy, schooled and manipulated by Von Vampton, a member of the Atonists' organisation to internalise and perpetuate within his community the racial norms that structure the social order. In turning a human being into a mechanical figure of that ventriloquizes their words, the Atonists have effectively dehumanized a person and reduced him to a cyborg to be used as an instrument of mass deception. Myungsung Kim identifies the two important factors that influence *Jes Grew* in contemporary technoscape, "bioinformatics and sonic vibration" (92). While the former is illustrated by having *Jes Grew* function like an infectious microbe, the latter is demonstrated by JGs being a jazz music metaphor, living and travelling via sound waves. JGCs perfectly illustrate the turning of an organic human body to "a codified medium of information storage and transfer in modern technoculture" (91).

With the Haitian loas of *Jes Grew* that possess their hosts via sonic vibrations, adapting to technology allowing the ancient practice of voodoo and contemporary technoscapes interact. *Jes Grew*, Kim notes, "spreads mainly through radio networks", as it "feed on the dominant culture's media ecology to carry biologically inscribed cultural information." (95), *Jes Grew*'s taking over of the sound networks of mass media subverts the hegemonic pressure that a wholly unchallenged Atonist controlled mass media enjoyed over the society. The technoscape influence is not only visible in the transmission of the anti-plague, but also in the aspects of neo-hoodoo practice- especially when Papa LaBas, claims having two heads and experiencing Knockings- which the narrator clarifies are high frequency electromagnetic waves that help Papa LaBas sense the activity and proximity of *Jes Grew*, reiterating this article's argument of the interaction of residual and emergent forces in the rise of a Jazz counterculture and the novel's celebration of these elements.

Following the Jazz tradition, the language of the novel is marked by its fluidity in meaning production, reflecting the “cacophony of Free Jazz” and informal music. Such linguistic innovations not only facilitate utopic tendencies in the text, ensure a new beginning, new identity, and new meaning, but also trace their long history back to slavery, when slaves from different parts of Africa had create a new language to avoid making their communication sound like ‘mumbo jumbo’ and hence avoid isolation. Furthermore, mumbo jumbo also refers to a "magician who makes the troubled spirits of ancestors go away," like Reed who “conjures a new language through which the troubled spirits of the haunting past can be put to rest and a new relation to the present and to the future can be established” (Ormry 135).

This creation of a new language unlocks the utopic possibilities that the text offers. The playful, experimental form that borrows from multiple genres- comic book, novel, academic research (complete with footnotes and bibliography), historical narrative, etc. This reflects the polyphony that the narrative encourages, offering self-affirmative spaces to minor or lost cultures. The idea of a Black Utopia is demonstrated by Jes Grew, encouraging the spiritual fulfilment of all persons by infecting them with celebratory Jazz moves and removing their social inhibitions.

Mumbo Jumbo might well be the description of the carnivalesque site that offers maximum participation to multiple cultures and traditions in order to eliminate marginalization and racial victimization of minorities. *Mumbo Jumbo*’s celebration of the emerging Afrofuturist elements in the cultural process, sustains the search for a carnivalesque Black Utopia. De Witt Kilgore in “Afrofuturism” mentions that one of the enduring features of Afrofuturism is “a recasting of the black subject in modern terms, a process of continual renewal that involves shedding the sticky past of colonialism and slavery” and “to imagine futures directed by the survival and even the resurgence of black people and their cultures, experiences, and designs” (Kilgore 3,7), as the prominence of Haitian voodoo and the Ancient Egyptian myths in the text (discussed as elements of residual culture in Section II) suggests. suggests. Papa LaBas’ retelling or reinvention of History was not limited to the temporal boundaries of a lost, static past but by entering the popular cultural consciousness, they restructure the present and future.

Conclusion

Williams' theory of residual, emergent and dominant in the historical analysis of culture and Hall's theory of the cultural identity as positions that are produced by the dialogue of the discursive functions of history, politics and culture, support each other by drawing out, among other significant details, the tendency toward constant movements of cultural artefacts or practices, which are viably expressed in the present cultural scenario. Hall reinforces the importance of movement and interaction of varied cultural elements and of cultural systems by establishing that no cultural form is pure and all forms of culture are "to some degree hybridized from a vernacular base", they must be perceived not as "the recovery of a lost dialogue bearing clues for the production of new musics (because there is never any going back to the old in a simple way), but as what they are- adaptations, molded to the mixed, contradictory, hybrid spaces of popular culture" (Hall 28).

Mumbo Jumbo ends without Jes Grew's union with its text, signifying a continued separation of body and soul that is reflected in the convention of Atonists' regressive, authoritarian culture that glorifies self-discipline and repression. But the series of events that Jes Grew starts off, particularly the celebration of a Jazz trope that binds cultural innovations from past, present and future and causes their interaction to lend an optimistic vision for an inclusive future with an empowered, multicultural Black identity inspired from Jazz, voodoo and Afrofuturism, in America, ensuring that the Self-Other divide is made redundant as the Black subject is no longer treated as the Other. The Black subjectivity is pulled out of the margins and given space in the central structure and order of society from where it can begin the task of deconstruction of the prevalent stereotypical, prejudiced images of their culture and community, as they actively engage in the production and representation of a new cultural identity to fight racial subjugation by orienting the narrative in the quest of a new, more inclusive, more carnivalesque future- toward finding a Black Utopia, populated by people who can nurture their own loas adequately and are no longer trapped by the dogmatic rules of Atonist Gods.

Mumbo Jumbo's reaffirmation of the innovative and resilient powers of the Jazz culture, with its syncopated rhythms of past/ residual voodoo and Egyptian mythology and of Afrofuturist technoscapes breaks all chains of racial subjugation by celebrating difference, hybridity and plurality to herald a cultural consciousness that proudly develops its identity at various junctures of the cultural process and refuses being reduced to a singular constant monolithic

relic just as a loa is kept well fed and nurtured, symbolising the release of the human spirit/soul from the hegemonic constructs of the Atonist culture.

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