SPACES OF AFROFUTURISM: SUN RA AND UNIVERSAL BLACK FUTURITY

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This paper explores Afrofuturism as a significant artistic and political movement, examining it as a platform for expressing the voices of a repressed population within the global context. Using the African American jazz musician Sun Ra as a case study, the paper illustrates how Afrofuturism challenges societal norms and redefines Black identity and agency. The paper also investigates the relevance of Afrofuturism beyond African American communities. Through heightened "infrapolitical" tactics – such as dismissal, evasion, escapism, and the reimagining of oppressive histories – Afrofuturism provides a safe haven for marginalized voices. In conclusion, this paper posits that Afrofuturism is a powerful tool for envisioning and shaping the futures of Black communities worldwide. By embracing speculative, mystical, artistic, and exploratory narratives, while rejecting oppressive histories, Afrofuturism cultivates the potential for more inclusive and empowered futures for Black individuals.

Keywords: Afrofuturism, space of appearance, Sun Ra, infrapolitics, art resistance

INTRODUCTION

One could gaze off into space on a stary night and wonder "What if we were aliens inhabiting the Earth amongst the human species?[1] What if there is a hidden reality in a 'galaxy far far away',[2] 'where no man has gone before'?[3]" These questions might seem absurd initially, but they are neither pointless nor trivial. While it seems nonsensical to speculate about their answers, they can be useful to problematize and highlight the varying experiences of certain populations on our own planet.

[1] This article was created within the project Infrapolitical Practices and Changes: From the 1990s to Lived Futures (INFRA), financed by the European Union – NextGenerationEU.

[2] Referring to a popular quote from the opening of the Star Wars franchise.

[3] Referring to a popular quote from the opening of the Star Trek franchise.

In this paper, I will focus on the artistic current of Afrofuturism, viewing it as a means of political participation, understood as a "space of appearance" (Arendt 1998 [1958]) and a means of "infrapolitical" action (Scott 1990). Afrofuturism could be seen as a way to project Black[4] individuals around the globe into the future of humanity, a place often presented as being devoid of "blackness" by the Western-dominated rhetoric and art forms. This is done so by the alteration of human history, references to space, aliens, and meta-human occurrences, as part of a Black empowerment movement, outside of the established socio-historical framework and not following the long tradition of slavery and colonialism. In an alternate reality, Black individuals have neither been exploited nor tortured for the benefit of the "western Others" and thus are not contemporary victims of past atrocities.

Throughout the paper, I will address a series of interconnected questions to better understand the ideology and applicability of Afrofuturism. More specifically, I will wonder whether we could consider it a way of resistance to the Western-dominated cultural destruction of black subjectivity and what the outcome of the offered altered realities is. Finally, who does it concern, and does it homogenize all Black individuals across the globe, regardless of the various historical and socio-cultural circumstances?

The first section offers a foundational overview of Afrofuturism, integrating various theoretical perspectives from prominent scholars. In the second section, aiming to give a concrete example, I will concentrate on the case study of one of the pioneers and most prominent figures of Afrofuturism, the African American jazz musician Sun Ra, whose influential work and public persona in the 1960s and 1970s, inspired a series of other artists to follow his example in exploring a cosmos of possibilities. In the last section, I will problematize the universality of Afrofuturism and its applicability both to African American individuals, the African Diaspora in general and to contemporary African migrants in the USA, questioning whether all these social actors are part of a common "Black community" or members of distinct and often conflicting ones.

UNDERSTANDING AFROFUTURISM

Afrofuturism, being an extravagant or even avant-garde artistic current spanning a series of media such as literature, music, design, and fashion, is exceedingly difficult to accurately define. It is closely related, however, to the political notion of Afrocentrism (Moses 1998: 20). According to this political ideology, Africa as a locus and symbol is placed in the center of rhetoric that aspires to prove the impactful contribution of people of color to human history and progress despite the Western hegemony of European Enlightenment.

[4] I use this broad umbrella term to refer to both African American individuals, the African Diaspora in general and the native population of different African countries, discussing their similarities and differences in the last part of my paper.

Afrocentrists are going as far as claiming that the whole European civilization, where Black individuals nowadays tend to be absent, started in Africa, sometimes referencing "black" Ancient Egypt as the crown jewel of this influence. Hence, the Afrocentric discourse empowers Black individuals, reassuring them of their ability to partake in "civilization" and "modernity", not simply by following the West, but by being creative in their own right.

Whilst the term "Afrofuturism" has been officially coined by the American literary critic Mark Dery (1994), the aspiration to look towards the unknown and into space to imagine a better future for Black individuals started in the 1960s, the zenith of the American Space Age[5] and the Civil Rights Movement. Hence, we could suggest that when Dery argued that:

> Speculative fiction that treats African-American themes and addresses African-American concerns in the context of 20th-century technoculture – and, more generally, African-American signification that appropriates images of technology and a prosthetically enhanced future – might … be called Afrofuturism. (1994: 180)

he was merely referring to an already 30-year-old vibrant practice.

According to English-Ghanian author Kodwo Eshun, imperial and colonial European regimes in Africa and the Americas "denied Black subjects the right to belong to the Enlightenment" (2003: 287). Furthermore, he argues that throughout the 21st century art often depicts the future as dystopian to hide the current state of the world. Powerful individuals in that future are those who have the technological means to advance, leaving behind the disempowered to live in "the past". The priority of Afrofuturism, then, is to propagate that Africa and its colorful cultures can be objects of any futurist projection, overcoming the intimidating and overdetermined scenarios of an absolute dystopia (ibid.: 291–292).

African visual artist and curator Mawena Yehouessi proposed that "Afrofuturism is first a matter of individual paths",[6] where subjects mix laws, habits and personal fantasies in order to redefine themselves, freed from post-colonial assumptions, creating their own mythologies, concluding that "Afrofuturism is then an original and auto-determined way of life". Moreover, she claims that this current is not another form of escapism since artists offer unattainable realities which will pragmatically not alter our everyday lives. These different imaginaries are utilized instead to criticize the current state of the world.[7] We come to understand, therefore, that Afrofuturism, whose primary manifestation took place amongst the African American communities of the United States, is inextricably linked with the genre of science fiction, with the imaginative world of open-ended possibilities. Looking at the landscapes away from Earth and its history, people can create imaginative scenarios of how other worlds might be better than the ones they currently inhabit.

[5] The American Space Age, known as the "Space Age", began in the late 1950s with the goal of exploring space and developing space technology. This era shaped American culture and identity, as well as the political and cultural context of the time.

[6] http://blackstothefuture.com/en/3-steps-to-afrofuturism-incarnation/ (accessed 4 July 2024).

[7] http://blackstothefuture.com/en/3-steps-to-afrofuturism-conceptualisation/ (accessed 4 July 2024).

SPACE IS THE PLACE

In this section, I present the very influential persona and work of Sun Ra, a jazz musician who "came to Earth in order to save the human race with his music" (Youngquist 2016: 7). By doing so I hope to give a concrete example not of what Afrofuturism is, but what it can do to advance the living conditions of certain individuals, often highlighting the absurdity of the present social reality.

Leading to the 1960s and the case study of Sun Ra's artistic Afrofuturistic presence, a very short historical overview is in order, as the particular circumstances of its development are crucial. In a sense, Afrofuturism developed because of the socio-cultural and historical frame where the artists lived (Wofford 2017). African American communities provide a special case for analysis due to their special position inside the broader American society, being present almost from the beginning of the European presence in the New World. Nowadays they are legally fully integrated members of the American society, having, however, a quite different settlement history. It is common knowledge that their ancestors were forcibly dislocated from Africa during the colonial slave trade in order to provide free labor in the growing plantations and elsewhere, being constantly exploited, being denied their human dignity. Moreover, even after the abolition of slavery in 1865, they remained a marginalized group of people for another 100 years, lacking basic human rights such as equal education, proper legal representation and the right to vote. During the 1960s, however, whilst American society was in public unrest due to the war in Vietnam, the Hippie movement and the Space Race, because of the threat of the USSR in the middle of the Cold War, African Americans achieved significant victories in order to better their position as members of the society through political activism. These were exactly the right conditions for the advancement of the civil rights struggles and the emergence of a new artistic expression, the "stargazing" Afrofuturism and one of its pioneers and main representatives, Sun Ra.

My main source of information will be the highly acclaimed biography of Sun Ra, *A Pure Solar World: Sun Ra and the Birth of Afrofuturism* (2016), written by English professor Paul Youngquist. I chose this historical case study, one of the first examples of direct Afrofuturistic artistic presence, because I would like to highlight the creative and daring initiative that this artist displayed in the precarious social settings.

The author begins his book by stating "He (Sun Ra) came from Saturn. Arrival date: May 22, 1914. Place: the Magic City, Birmingham, Alabama. Terrestrial identity: Herman Poole Blount" (ibid.: 7). After he refused to be drafted in the Second World War as a "colored",[8] the young African American musician found himself in the vibrant and artistic ghetto of Chicago, where the second renaissance of Black culture took place in the 1950s, the first

[8] This is the terminology used at the time at the US Army documentation, and it is referenced in the book in this way.

being in Harlem in the 1920s (ibid.: 20). There, he mingled with various intellectual circles and Civil Rights organizations, resulting in his direct involvement in the Black Empower Movement. He aimed to inspire and empower African Americans through his actions and more specifically his music by creating a novel lore and mythology around him in order to show an alternative way to the current oppressive reality, being at the same time both playful and serious regarding his work and Messianic messages.

Therefore, he manifested a blurred admixture of cult-oriented traditions such as numerology, theosophy, and the extra-terrestrial, combining them with the most prominent, for the Western audience, African civilization, Ancient Egypt, making it "black" (ibid.: 33). Following this logic, he officially changed his name to "Le Sony'r Ra", referring to the Egyptian God of Sun, Ra. In doing so, he rejected the colonial-slave name that was given to him, preferring to be named after a God (ibid.: 41). Moreover, he was one of the founding members of the artistic collective "Thmei", named after the Egyptian Goddess of Truth and Justice. The main aim of this collective was the promotion of a counter-cultural spirituality, focusing on the "deeper antiquity" of African origins, older than the European civilization and Christianity (ibid.: 33–35). They did not aim to revitalize Ancient Egypt, but to be an alternative to both passive resistance or open violence, at the same time-fighting political ignorance (ibid.: 40).

Hence, for Sun Ra, Ancient Egypt was an impactful starting point to offer an alternative to the Western-dominated notion of civilization. Combined with the rhetoric of open possibilities that the outer space offered, Sun Ra created a lore for himself that liberated him from his American, post-colonial identity, giving a de facto example of change.

With his band, the Arkestra – as "orchestra" was pronounced in Alabama – he explored new sounds and musical combinations, unheard by the human ears, making the audience often feel unease. Ever-advancing digital technology influenced music production creating a contemporary soundscape, making music unable to be racially identified anymore (Eshun 2003: 296). These sounds, the outcome of these experimental jazz performances, would potentially open new cultural prospects for the Black individuals to express themselves. Sun Ra aimed to perform therapeutic tones, wanting to shock the public, so that people can be awakened from their deep sleep, to soothe the pain of the segregation regime and to change the listeners' mentality and physicality (Youngquist 2016: 177–178).

Sun Ra was not simply a composer, a sensory musician, or a space enthusiast. He was a person of his time, a time of racial segregation and space exploration. Since Black individuals did not "fit into" the urban environment of the white American, then perhaps space could provide the much-needed serenity in its abyss. The 1960s Space Age demanded the abolition of history, given that "civilization" was due to fail repeatedly. The Space Age needed to be a completely novel and failproof development of humanity's expansion – or colonization. Following this logic, Sun Ra aspired to blur the lines between history, sciences, and myths, creating a myth-science that would lead to the possible salvation, having the former as a vehicle to reach the infinity of the stars. Astro-black mythology, unlike science,

does not really exist, hence it is more malleable and can transport "Blackness" beyond the mundane everyday life of the segregationist American society (2016: 189–90, 194). This proposed alter-destiny framed this "black futurity" outside of the given narratives of the Black resistance (Reed 2013: 122). The solution was not to resist but to refuse the oppressive history of African Americans in order to overcome it, offering a different lore, that of an "alien" race.

Apart from creative titles for his albums such as "Super-Sonic Jazz" (1957), "The Heliocentric Worlds of Sun Ra" (1965), and "Astro Black" (1973), Sun Ra was a poet whose words aimed to encourage and stimulate the struggling African American communities. For example, in his poem "The Black Rays Race", the Black race becomes rays of power, beaming their wisdom upon the world, extending their influence. From second-class citizens, African Americans were now transformed into a new race, the "angel race", the real inhabitants of the outer space who would return to their homeland – metaphorically the "exotic" Africa – by embracing the messianic music that Sun Ra offers them (2016: 194–196).

> See how the black rays of the black race
> Have touched the immeasurable wisdom
> And therefore the unknown quantity
> See how they are not understood
> And as what they know is what they are
> See the unlimited freedom of the black rays.
> Sun Ra, "The Black Rays Race," in *The Immeasurable Equation*, 83

The messianic persona of Sun Ra was emblematic in the feature film he starred in, called "Space is the Place" (1974) directed by John Corney. This movie encloses the jumble of effect his overall work would have on Black individuals. Returning to Earth from Saturn with his impressive spaceship after a prolonged period of absence, he is set to "save" African Americans by taking them into his astral vehicle before the imminent destruction of the planet. In this quest, he gambles with the Overseer, an ambiguous extra-terrestrial African American pimp, for the fate of Black Humanity.

Initially, he aims to persuade African Americans to join him in his path by addressing them directly and by opening up the "Outer Space Employment Agency", to no avail. Replying to the doubts of a young African American he says:

> I'm not real. I'm just like you. You don't exist in this society. If you did, your people wouldn't be seeking equal rights. You're not real. If you were, your people would have some status among the nations of the world. So, we're both myths. I do not come to you as the reality, I come to you as the myth, because that's what Black people are, myths.

Throughout the film – as well as in all of his public performances – his attire was "pharaonic", resembling Egyptian deities with an alien twist, once again merging civilization with mythology. He chose to wear long cloaks filled with vibrant patterns and daring color combinations. Moreover, he wore headpieces containing the solar disk, sometimes resembling an open spacesuit helmet.

Finally, after a series of unsuccessful attempts at persuasion, he organized the ultimate concert in order to make people believe in and follow his salvatory message. The movie ends with the Earth's explosion with all of its inhabitants, apart from the African Americans who converted to his teachings and were safely boarded into his extraterrestrial vessel, setting course for unexplored galaxies.

Summarizing the work of Sun Ra, we could argue that his artistic presence was experienced through his deeply political performative persona. Manifesting his own past and destiny, he refused to be subjected to the American post-slave trade reality. He refused to associate himself with Earth and the atrocities, injustices, and the segregation system. Instead, he advocated for a surrealist speculative political activism for Black empowerment, propagating that all people, no matter what their "race", have a place under the "Sun" and belong to the future of humanity. Black individuals in his mythology have equal rights to claim "tomorrow" and not to be omitted as "not real" (Elia 2014: 90). His utopian space exploration for an altered tomorrow is an imaginative quest and an answer to the dominating Western post-colonial and racist regimes (ibid.: 88).

I view the work of Sun Ra and the ideology that encircles "Afrofuturism" within what American Anthropologist James C. Scott called "Infrapolitics" (1990), i.e., infra-red political actions and narratives that pass under the radar of mainstream, dominating politics. According to the scholar, in the scene of public performance, there are two interrelated and combating "Transcripts": the official "Public Transcript" that offers the authority's refined and redefined discourse about reality, politics, culture, etc., and "Hidden Transcripts" that stem from below and aim to shed light on alternative histories within this strict framework. The importance of Afrofuturism as an artistic-political movement relies upon its intriguing approach to overturning and revising existing power relations, placing itself outside the framework of categorization and distinction, shaping an internal prehistory that looks to the future without remaining bogged down by the weight of the present as defined by others. Ultimately, Sun Ra offered an alternative, liberating and universal viewpoint for African American individuals, not to escape the unbearable and unjust reality, but to highlight its absurdity. By mixing various factual and plasmatic elements of a supposed common Black culture, he formulated a toolbox of artistic and eye-opening resistance.

BETWIXT AND BETWEEN THE AFRICAN DIASPORA

I will devote the remainder of my paper to discussing whether this avant-garde artistic expression, as Sun Ra and other influential African American artists developed it, concerns only African American individuals in the United States or whether it applies to other individuals across the Atlantic.

As I mentioned previously, the long history of the slave trade was impactful for both sides of the Atlantic Ocean, influencing the lives of African individuals and the historical

development of the United States and the African colonies. African American anthropologist St. Clair Drake (1982) identified two distinguished historical movements of Pan-Africanism, the traditional one, originating in late-19th century Americas as a political movement, whilst its continental variation emerged in the post-colonial independent African states, heavily supported by their nationalist leaders. Hence, Drake concludes that Pan-Africanism, the notion of a cultural, political, and racial unity of all Africans across the globe, is a "transatlantic phenomenon" (ibid.: 353–359).

Having Pan-Africanism and the historical transatlantic connections in mind, could we argue that African Americans are part of the African Diaspora? In his much-cited article "Diasporas", James Clifford argues that diasporas presuppose two or more interrelated communities in separate locations, acting as "a signifier, not simply of transnationality and movement, but of political struggles to define the local, as a distinctive community, in historical contexts of displacement" (1994: 308). Moreover, these communities are connected by linking members being both "here" and "away", affecting their daily lives and entangling them. According to him, diasporas are not equated with immigrant communities emphasizing that diasporic people use various forms of identification with the other, not co-shaping a singular identity. Diasporic rhetoric is formulated to function as relationships, not objectified pre-given forms (ibid.: 321). More important, however, is the idea that "here" and "there", "now" and "then" are blurred, forming an "antiteleological temporality". To quote the author:

> Linear history is broken, the present constantly shadowed by a past that is also a desired, but obstructed, future: a renewed, painful yearning. For black Atlantic diaspora consciousness, the recurring break where time stops and restarts is the middle passage. Enslavement and its aftermaths-displaced, repeated structures of racialization and exploitation-constitute a pattern of black experiences inextricably woven in the fabric of hegemonic modernity. (ibid.: 318)

We come to understand, therefore, that while Black individuals around the world tend to have common points of reference such as the slave route and the oppression of the Western gaze in the post-colonial globalized era, they do not form one concrete Pan-African community. Russian anthropologist Dmitri Bondarenko devoted his most recent book *African Americans and American Africans: Migration, History, Race and Identities* (2019) to researching the power relations and rhetorics between African Americans and the migrants from Africa in the United States, questioning whether these two groups form a singular community based on race, culture, and historical connections.

In his introduction he argues that the interaction of these people highlights an existing social distance that contradicts concepts such as "Afrocentrism" and "Negritude",[9] claiming that "they saw the other group in the mirror, but it wasn't their own reflection, only a very distorted image" (2019: 4–7). Moreover, there is neither a singular African diasporic

[9] This is a derogatory term, used by the author only to emphasize the grouping together of many different peoples across the various African nations, based purely on abstract racial categorizations.

identity nor a homogeneous migrant African community. Instead, several national communities inform and enrich the former two categories. One of the most important dividing lines is the perception that African Americans are natives in the USA whereas Africans are migrants, thus foreign nationals. The former consider that their ancestors helped to build the state and fought for the rights of the Black community, while Africans simply benefit from the outcome of their struggles, aiming to imitate the white American status and lifestyle (ibid.: 16–19, 27–28). In contrast, the migrants, being often highly educated, accuse the African Americans that they are lazy, choosing a liminal life of criminality and victimization.

It has been noted that the Africans' imaginary of their American counterpart has been formulated to a great degree by American movies and media. Stereotypes and categorization advance the dynamic between these two groups. According to the author, there is not a single Black community but several interacting ones. This relationship, however, does not mean or indicate direct hostility or antagonism, since both communities recognize similarities and historical connections amongst each other, with one of the most prominent ones being the constant oppression under the Euro-American colonialist forces. Bondarenko, thus, claims that while these two communities interact, they are simultaneously attracted and repulsed by each other as if they were two magnets (ibid.: 24–25).

Arguing, therefore, that there is not a singular global Black community, but a series of networks of transatlantic interaction between various communities, formed by their own socio-historical and cultural circumstance, we come back to our final question. Could the African American artistic current of Afrofuturism, with all its political agenda and imaginary social utopias, apply to Black individuals other than African Americans?

To answer this question, we should note that Afrofuturism is not the sole notion that defines the artistic phenomenon described in this paper. Since we are not referring to a unique Black community, we should not limit ourselves by using a singular definition, but instead observe that there is a plethora of similar yet slightly different concepts that aim to encapsulate the varying socio-historical and cultural variations of Black empowerment across the world. Some distinct examples would be those of "Astrofuturism" (Kilgore 2003) "Black Futurism" (Scott 2021), "Africanfuturism"[10] (Okorafor 2019; Kozieł 2021). What all these variations offer us, highlighting various aspects of the broader Pan-African cultures and localities, is the ability to understand that the importance of Afrofuturism is not in its strict definition but in its complexity and utilization by a multitude of social actors themselves, their social presence and place in history and society through the formation or instrumentalization of this speculative techno-futuristic art.

Ultimately, regarding the applicability of "Afrofuturism" as a universal and inclusive black futurity, I will turn to the work of political philosopher Hannah Arendt, who introduces the concept of the "space of appearance" in order to frame the collective questioning and

[10] http://nnedi.blogspot.com/2019/10/africanfuturism-defined.html (accessed 4 July 2024).

political action of individuals who criticize the contemporary state of the world and work towards alteration. In her notable book, *The Human Condition* (1998 [1958]), she argues that we actively enter the human world and togetherness through our speech and actions, forces that present our own initiatives and allow us to appear in the public sphere (1998 [1958]: 176–179). Furthermore, what is indicative is that actions are not possible in isolation but are always a part of the "subjective in-between", referred to as the "web of human relations" and influenced by it in a series of indeterminate variables, they are never fully materialized, but instead simply actualized to a degree (1998 [1958]: 183, 188, 190).

Within this framework, the "space of appearance" (1998 [1958]: 199) comes into being as fleeting moments of human togetherness where everyone involved aspires to project "who" they are individually or collectively, through their words and deeds, thus participating in the public transcript (Scott 1990). Elsewhere we read Arendt's observation that certain disempowered social actors are faced with an existential struggle that neither themselves nor their contribution to society matter anymore in the contemporary individualistic and globalized world (Feldman 2015: 6–9). Hence, it is not enough to simply think or judge, but to be willing to act upon the world. Eventually, what holds together this "space of appearance" that enables individuals to act is a form of power, understood as a power potential that exists only in its actualization.

Combining this with the previously mentioned theoretical analysis by James Scott, I would argue that ultimately Afrofuturism as an artistic current and an ideology, a cosmological framework and an "infra" political initiative is a social mechanism conceptualized and initially formulated in the "hidden transcript" of the artists' minds, but that it is always intended to be present, or to use a different term, to "appear" in the public transcript, undermining it, highlighting its absurdity. The latter is accomplished by seemingly refusing to be part of the given and imposed historical settings, addressing anyone who wishes to identify with the message that is being advocated, which naturally crosses the narrow national borders of a state. Understanding the broader artistic umbrella of Afrofuturism as a space of appearance, as a locus of joined action of interacting artists across the Black Atlantic (Gilroy 1993), we can understand the former as a way of conducting affirming politics from below.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, this paper aimed to highlight the social relevance and importance of the artistic current of Afrofuturism as an alternative, non-European, projection of Black subjectivity into the present and future of humanity. Imagining the unexplored worlds of outer space, relating with the alien and rejecting any association with the human race, its injustices, segregation regimes, inequalities and bloody history, Afrofuturism offers a vibrant and extravagant altered mythology.

Discussing the life and work of Sun Ra, I attempted to depict the pragmatic aspects of the implementation of such narratives and their effects. Through his futurist music, the jazz musician highlighted the present state of African Americans and proposed to them to overcome their hardships by being imaginative, playful, and political in their own way. Invested in addressing that Black subjectivity is not "subjected" or framed by European colonialism and techno-futuristic power relations, he claimed that futurity equally belongs to the Black individuals around the world.

Finally, I was interested in understanding whether the qualities of Afrofuturism as an artistic polemic are applicable and relative to the African Diaspora around the world, including contemporary African individuals. I concluded that whilst we cannot talk about a concrete or distinct homogeneous global community, there are historical and cultural connections among Black individuals around the world because of the severe alteration of the African histories due to the European slave trade and colonial regimes. In that context, the importance of Afrofuturism, regardless of its multiple definitions, different appellations, or particularities, is to be found in its universal call for Black presence and coming together of distinct and variable subjectivities into an uncharted future, free from the stigmatization of the "Other", bearing the latter notion as a symbol of personal and collective pride.

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PROSTORI AFROFUTURIZMA: SUN RA I UNIVERZALNA *CRNA* BUDUĆNOST

Ovaj rad istražuje afrofuturizam kao značajan umjetnički i politički pokret, promatrajući ga kao platformu za izražavanje glasova potisnutih populacija u globalnom kontekstu. Koristeći afroameričkog jazz glazbenika Suna Raa kao studiju slučaja, rad ilustrira kako afrofuturizam propituje društvene norme i redefinira crnački identitet i djelovanje te istražuje relevantnost afrofuturizma izvan afroameričkih zajednica. Kroz pojačane "infrapolitičke" taktike kao što su ignoriranje, izbjegavanje, eskapizam i ponovno oblikovanje potlačenih povijesti afrofuturizam pruža sigurno utočište marginaliziranim glasovima. Zaključno, u ovome se radu tvrdi da je afrofuturizam moćan alat za zamišljanje i oblikovanje budućnosti crnačkih zajednica diljem svijeta. Prihvaćajući spekulativne, mistične, umjetničke i istraživačke narative, dok odbacuje potlačene povijesti, afrofuturizam njeguje potencijal za inkluzivnije i osnažene budućnosti za crnačke pojedince.

Ključne riječi: afrofuturizam, prostor pojavnosti, Sun Ra, infrapolitika, umjetnički otpor