

Ain't No New Thing (breakdown take)

[Gil Scott-Heron](#)

We'd like to go into a thing called, uh, "Ain't No New Thing"
It's, um, based on, um
The fact that white people continue to rip off black artists,
They continue to uh, steal their material, their styles,
The very cultural elements that make the black artist the outstanding artist,
The master of music that he has been
Um, and, it ain't no new thing, to tell the truth
That these things are going on
We point out, very expressly the fact that uh,
Stanley Crouch comments on his album Ain't No Ambulances for No Niggers Tonight,
That uh, Chuck Berry was doing like a very heavy thing
A very rock and roll thing, the king of rock and roll as a matter of fact
But um, like, white people couldn't dig having their daughters go to no shows
And cream over no black man wiggling on the stage
So consequently, they invented Elvis Presley and let him do it.
So we gonna get into that, call it 'It Ain't No New Thing' and talk about some people.
Cultural rape and no geographical boundaries on white hate
And bizarre scarcely-concealed attempts to eliminate
Black generators of sun-heat feeling.
Ain't no new thing to to see demon fangs curling out from under squeezed-tight, too-thin lips
And leaping at jugular veins and burning black throats that either blow or sing or cry or scream. Ain't no new
thing to see the bubbling envy flashing from the depths of soulless eyes
As still another link with God is created
We used to having white people try to rob us.
Why don't they try stealing some of this poverty?
Ain't no new thing.
Anything they can't understand, they try to destroy
Anything they can't understand, they try to control
In 1896, black men picked up brass instruments and began to evoke and conjure
Entice and struggle with black spirits
Rhythmic spirits of blues, work songs,
Gospel songs, freedom songs
And songs of love and mother night
Screaming rhythm, juju rhythm, black, black magic
That calls back to lost worlds and lost lifestyles
Calling back to lost peace and peace of mind
Calling back to Genesis
Calling back to the drum
Calling back to the drum

Calling back to the first song/chant, song/chant, song/chant
That original man created. In 1896 this new spasm was called "Ass"
But the "Ass" would not be kicked
So it was copied in an attempt to control it
And then it was called "Jazz."
We used to having black innovators copied and sent back to us.
What about the Osmond Brothers?
What about Elvis Presley?
What about Tom Jones?
We used to havin' people try to rob us,
It ain't no new thing. They use the media to project their jazz idols
Tommy Dorsey and Jimmy Dorsey
And Harry James and Benny Goodman
And I suppose one day Lawrence Welk will join that elite group
And then there was sweet Bessie Smith, laying on the blood-soaked backseat of that broken-down jalopy
With a tattered quilt wrapped around her shoulders
Waiting for someone to come to her aid on a rainy Mississippi night
While a white hospital would not accept her right across the street. Ain't no new thing;
Fats Navarro screaming through tormenting dreams
Frustration ripping at his mind and bowels
Over a hundred pounds melted from his frame as he battled that white powder mountain
Ain't no new thing. Cultural rape and no geographical boundaries on white hate
Hired black musicians away in funky smoke-filled nightclubs
The chitlin' circuit.
Saturate their world with two-bit punks, washed-out, baggy-face white whores
Weasel-face, yellow-skin junkies
And cutthroat white managers
Producers, agents, owners
And on and on and on
We used to havin' white people try to rob us
Ain't no new thing, we have dug his game. Charlie Parker will live on
John Coltrane will live on
Eric Dolphy will live on
Billie Holiday will live on
Jimi Hendrix and Clipper Brown and Lee Morgan will live on
And on in the sunshine of their accomplishments
The glory of the dimensions that they added to our lives.
We declare war on Eric Burdon!
We discredit the talents of Janis Joplin and Rare Earth!
We urge that the next blue-eyed soul group include Melvyn Layer, Lyndon Johnson, Nixon and Spearhead
Agnew
And be called As the Stomach Turns. We urge that the album John Wayne Sings the Blues be released!
Release the album, J. Edgar Hoover Sings James Brown!
Release the album, Wallace and Maddox sing Sam and Dave!
Why not?

We hear Tony the Tiger saying "Right on, Tiger!"
We heard Nixon talking about "Power to the people" It ain't no new thing, it ain't no new thing
It ain't no new thing, it ain't no new thing
America is always the same old shit!
Song Discussions is protected by U.S. Patent 9401941. Other patents pending.

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