



Postmodern Perspectives in Ishmael Reed's Novel

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Abstract - This article is a particular study on Ishmael Reed's aesthetics. Based on Jacques Derrida's theory of deconstruction, Ishmael Reed's style touches on a variety of important aspects such as the challenge to the linearity of the story, lack of coherence to cohesion, breaks of the notion of chronology, disjointed characters, fragmentations and recurrent contradictions. This particular focus allows Ishmael Reed to break with the traditional limits of the Blacks' fiction where the target is exclusively about race issues. As a multicultural promoter, Ishmael Reed's fiction aims at liberating the Blacks' literary production. Therefore, this research paper describes Ishmael Reed's successful approach to challenge the modern mass culture in order to rehabilitate the black culture. These cultures are, sometimes, in conflict, intersecting or crisscrossing but they end up coexisting. This inevitable meeting of American culture with the other cultures of the world is called hemispheric novel or American culture's ability to communicate with the rest of the world.

Key Words: Deconstruction, Contradictions, Challenge, Aesthetics, Culture.

Résumé - Cet article est une étude particulière sur l'esthétique d'Ishmael Reed. Basé sur la déconstruction, une théorie propre à Jacques Derrida, le style d'Ishmael Reed touche une variété d'aspects importants tels que le défi à la linéarité de l'intrigue, le manque de cohérence à la cohésion, les ruptures avec la notion de chronologie, les personnages décousus, les fragmentations, et les contradictions récurrentes. Cette approche particulière permet à Ishmael Reed de rompre avec les canons traditionnels de la fiction des noirs, où l'objectif est essentiellement basé sur les questions raciales. En tant que promoteur du multiculturalisme, la fiction d'Ishmael Reed vise à libérer la production littéraire des noirs. Par conséquent, ce document de recherche décrit l'approche réussie d'Ishmael Reed pour remettre en question la culture de masse moderne afin de réhabiliter la culture noire. Ces cultures, parfois en conflits, se croisent ou s'entrecroisent, mais finissent par coexister. Cette rencontre inévitable de la culture américaine avec les autres cultures du monde est appelée le roman hémisphérique ou la capacité de la culture américaine à communiquer avec le reste du monde.

Mots clés : Déconstruction, Contradictions, Challenge, Esthétique, Culture.

INTRODUCTION

A lot of African American literary productions are mostly based on postmodernist structural backgrounds such as the challenge to the linearity of the story, disjointed characters, fragmentation, breaks of the notion of chronology, of coherence to cohesion and the defiance of the social conventions and norms. That is to say that, in African American fiction, postmodernism becomes a major concern for writers namely Toni Morrison, Ernest J. Gaines who essentially focus on racial representation and identity issues. In their works respectively *Sula* (1973) and *A Lesson Before Dying* (1993), they put emphasis on



Blacks' identity, racial segregation and discrimination and family's issues. Together, they develop a literature of contestation by fighting for the sake of black people's lives in America but they fail in going beyond the traditional limits of black fiction. Here is where Ishmael Reed shows his fame. *Mumbo Jumbo* (1972) and the *Terrible Two* (1982) are Ishmael Reed's most successful fictions in which he challenges the traditional limits of the Blacks' fiction. Ishmael Reed believes that African American writers are too limited because their main focuses are exclusively confined in portraying the Blacks' living conditions. From Ishmael Reed's viewpoint, the latter miss the mark in expressing black people's joy, beauty in their works. This is why Ralph Dumain believes that Ishmael Reed's position is closer to that of Baraka. As a sake of argument Ralph Dumain Writes: *Like Imamu Baraka, Reed believes that Afro-American authors must be estranged from the dominant culture, but Reed also wants to avoid being stifled by a similarly restrictive counter tradition.* (1987, p3). Ishmael Reed as Imamu Baraka is terribly fighting to combat the traditional limits of Blacks' fiction. They believe that black writers are too limited. This is what the Harlem Renaissance thinkers fall short in implementing in their writings. According to Ishmael Reed, for a writer to be representative, he should liberate art form. As Imamu Baraka, Ishmael Reed believes in the future of Blacks' art. For them, black art is life, it never stops. This is in keeping with Ishmael Reed's story of Jes Grew, a philosophy he believes is unstoppable. Ishmael Reed has a futuristic vision of the black art. This is why in his literary production, the challenge to the traditional limits of black's literary form is recurrent. In so doing, postmodernism becomes now a technique through which a cultural critic is developed. Therefore, Ishmael Reed challenges the modern mass cultures which distort the African American traditions and values. Ishmael Reed's aesthetic consists in subverting the established system. How does Ishmael Reed defy the white culture in order to implement the black culture in America? How does Ishmael Reed bring all the cultures (black and white) together? At what extent can we analyze Ishmael Reed's work as typically postmodern issues of black identities or racial representation? How does Ishmael Reed's fiction transcend the black world's fiction to better position the American culture in the world?

Therefore, this article describes Ishmael Reed's successful approach to challenge the modern mass culture in order to rehabilitate the black culture. These cultures sometimes are in conflict, intersecting or crisscrossing but they end up coexisting. This inevitable meeting of American culture with the other cultures of the world is called hemispheric novel or American culture's ability to communicate with the rest of the world. Then, this research paper turns around two main parts: first of all, the notion of deconstruction and then Black Aesthetics.



1. Methodology

The topic to be examined is done through library research, google, academic websites such as JSTOR, J Library. I first went to the West African Research Center where I found relevant issues on black aesthetics. Black Aesthetics or African American literary history deals with African American culture. It touches on a variety of important themes such as drama, literature, race issues, music, art and poetry to name but a few. I also went to JSTOR and SPARKNOTES where I discovered many details on Ishmael Reed's skill or style. In JSTOR, I found critics about one of Ishmael Reed's style: the notion of repetition. Researches have shown that Ishmael Reed is not growing as a writer should do because, in many of his books, he repeats the same theme. In both *Yellow Back Radio Broken Down* (1960) and *Mumbo Jumbo* (1972), Neo-hoodooism is the main theme that is developed. In *Yellow Back Radio Broken Down*, Ishmael Reed briefly expounds the history of Neo-Hoodooism but in *Mumbo Jumbo*, his exposition is more elaborated. Further explorations of Neo-hoodooism are to be found in Ishmael Reed's *Last Day of Louisiana Red* (1974). In all these works, Neo-Hoodooism is repeated. Ishmael Reed uses this notion of repetition as a successful postmodern device to challenge the Western culture, and in particular the American one. This article is illustrated with examples mainly taken from *Mumbo Jumbo* (1972) and subsidiarily from the *Terrible Twos* (1982) as is proper.

2. The Notion of Deconstruction

This part covers Ishmael Reed's postmodern techniques narratives: the challenge to the traditional narratives of the Blacks and then the Mu'tafikah dedicated to cultural terrorists. In *Mumbo Jumbo* (1972), Ishmael Reed explores this notion of deconstruction through the Mu'tafikah. In addition to this, another Ishmael Reed's successful postmodern feature is exemplified through his character Biff Musclewhite. Biff Musclewhite constitutes a pretext for Ishmael Reed to have a glimpse at the terrible consequences of the colonization on the Blacks. The separation of Papa Labas and his companion who got killed by Biff Musclewhite is a symbol of a disjointed family. This part will also be exemplified by St Nichola, a character in *the Terrible Twos* (1982) by Ishmael Reed, dedicated to deconstruct the United States Political System¹.

¹ *The Terrible Twos* and *the Terrible Threes* parody presidential politics and expose the news medias culpability in government corruption, identifying the incestuous relationship between the two. Like these novels, *Conjugating Hindi* portrays a contemporary US society dominated by reactionary political elites who have polluted its media-saturated culture with xenophobia, racism, and crass materialism. Along with *the Terrible Twos'* deconstruction of the US Christmas customs, Reed's 1982 novel also presciently portrayed the rise to the presidency of a TV celebrity like Donald Trump. From <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/9781119431732.ecaf0210>. Visited on July 19th, 2024 at 11:32 am.



2.1. *The Challenge to the Traditional Narratives*

The rejection of master's narratives and the break from the traditional literary form place Ishmael Reed among the most outstanding postmodernists. In *Mumbo Jumbo*, Ishmael Reed's satire aims at deconstructing the texts developed by the dominant speech of the white masters' fiction. In *Mumbo Jumbo* (1972), Jes Grew (the black culture) is working against the Wallflower Order (the white culture or Atonist culture). That is to say, there is a conflict between the two cultures: the Whites' and the Blacks'. The triumph of Jes Grew over Atonism is Ishmael Reed's indictment of Western civilization. In *Mumbo Jumbo*, the story is told through Jes Grew, the religion of the Egyptian god, Osiris. Based on dancing activities, Jes Grew symbolizes liberty and the configuration it makes puts Reed to the level of a recurrent promoter of multiculturalism. Jes Grew's manifestation is Pluralistic because according to Reed, Jes Grew addresses different cultures. When we look at the way it is spread throughout the world, we can easily conclude that it is as a wire, a thread that connects the different corners of the world. It is not a totalitarian religion. It is an inclusive culture. Jes Grew opens its doors to all humanity whether you are black or white. Its main role is to federate and convince the white racist culture to tolerate black culture.

Briefly, Jes Grew symbolizes the outbreak of jazz. It is in short, the time when the spirit of blackness started overtaking America and the world in 1920s. It is in opposition to the Wallflower order which has nothing to do with dancing. This wallflower order is seeking to fire Jes Grew. Here, Jes Grew is seen as a creator of collective consciousness which is favored by Papa Labas, a voodoo priest at the Mumbo Jumbo Cathedral. Papa Labas teaches the spirit of Jes Grew to anti-Jes Grew. And Jes Grew carriers also teach Jes Grew's philosophy to their acquaintances. By teaching Jes Grew, the voodoo spirit is going to be experimented within the American mainstream culture. Then a dialogue of culture is settled and collective consciousness is more than ever cultivated in both cultures.

This is probably the reason why Reed is most of the time considered an everlasting promoter of multiculturalism. In addition to its deconstructive nature, the ways and means Jes Grew emerges in America pay attention to Ishmael hemispheric novel. As a diary, this book is brought to the United States of America by Hinckle Von Vampton who is considered as an immoral member of the Knights Templar. And when analyzing this text in relation to Ishmael Reed's philosophy, we think about its symbolical values. It is considered as a cultural connection that connects black soul to the American white culture. This religion is from Prince Osiris. And its religious activity is the dance. Dancing is important in Reed's ideology. Dancing is entertainment. In a white racist society, Reed believes that music can influence white to assimilate. And when we talk



about assimilation, we think about acceptance of differences. White racist people once at black parties forgot all barriers and started getting into communion with black culture. If Blacks succeed in making Whites dance at their parties, they will succeed in what Senghor calls the dialogue of culture. Jes Grew is life it is the tool Reed uses to magnify cultural pluralism. This probably is the reason why Papa Labas had a futuristic vision of the text. For him, sooner or later, the text spirit will catch up with the others. By continuing to teach the book to later generations, they will be able to enliven Jes Grew's philosophy which undoubtedly uplifts black at their most distinguishable values in terms of culture. Through papa Labas' point of view, Reed wants to eternalize the book smart spirit.

2.2. *The Mu'tafikah: Cultural Terrorists*

One most important element in Ishmael Reed's deconstructive style is his characterization. In *Mumbo Jumbo* as in *The Terrible Twos*, the Mu'tafikah and the Nicholas play a remarkable role. As the Mu'tafikah, the Nicholas are dedicated to subvert the white political system based on stigmatization, repression, terror and horror. In the *Terrible Twos*, St Nicholas is the chosen character to defy the white revisionist institution, Hollywood movies and TV. St Nicholas races against the western culture officially set in *The Terrible Twos*. As in *The Terrible Twos*, In *Mumbo Jumbo*, Ishmael Reed criticizes the Whites' capitalist system set by Ronald Reagan² and later by Donald Trump. He also depicts the way the African American cultural form has been marginalized in America. It is in this context of white political system set against the black culture that one must analyze Ishmael Reed's Novels' *The Terrible Twos* and *Mumbo Jumbo*. In these two books, Ishmael Reed tries to decolonize the black culture through the characters St Nicholas and the Mu'tafikah. In *Mumbo Jumbo*, the Mu'tafikah are a group of people dedicated to decolonization. The Mu'tafikah challenges the dominant culture by attacking the Whites' museums where the Blacks' museums are illegally housed. This dismantlement of the Art and Museums by the Mu'tafikah shows Ishmael Reed's technique of decolonization. As a group of people coming from different backgrounds, the Mu'tafikah's main role is to subvert the master narratives and to invent a culture of their own. The fact of returning the cultural artifacts to their place of origin enlivens the cultural spirit that has been stolen from black Americans. The attitude of Berbelang symbolizes the behavior of the white colonizer. The Mu'tafikah is the postmodern device Ishmael Reed uses in his decolonizing discourse. In this perspective, (Crystal Boson 2012, p. 165) declares:

² Ronald Reagan, originally an American actor and politician, became the 40th President of the United States of America serving from 1981 to 1989. His term saw a restoration of prosperity at home, with the goal of achieving "peace through strength" abroad. As a republican, Reagan Philosophy is Closer to that Donald Trump, the 45th President of the United States of America. From <https://www.whitehouse.gov/about-the-white-house/presidents/ronald-reagan/>. Seen on July 19th, 2024 at 13:25 pm.



The Mu'tafikah, in addition to serving as a postmodern device, have a decolonizing function; they serve both as an explanatory and cautionary tale. In order to return this art to its place's origin, they mimic the convention of the colonizer. Berbelang has masterfully appropriated the discourse of the colonizer, as well as modifying it to suit his own authentic vernacular. Despite their different cultural and ethnic backgrounds, the Mu'tafikah are able to band together towards the greater goal of decolonizing their combined cultures from the discourse established and controlled by the white culture.

The main purpose of the members of this group is to return stolen artifacts to their place of origin. Then, Ishmael Reed's *Mumbo Jumbo* should be understood under this angle of investigation. In addition to the role of these Mu'tafikah, Ishmael Reed invites his reader to the inevitable confrontation between Jes Grew and the Masters Narratives' skill. While Ishmael Reed's *Mumbo Jumbo* is denying the master narrative discourse meaning the white Christian text represented by Atonism, he brings the reader of any race remark the presence of Jes Grew. Ishmael Reed values Jes Grew and sweeps away Christianity. Then, there is obviously a possibility of a postmodern reading of Ishmael Reed's novels for they are saturated with themes such as fragmented characters, the notion of repetition, the breaks with conventions. These characteristics place Ishmael Reed as one of the most skillful writers of his generation.

3. Black Aesthetics

Black aesthetics can be defined as the African American literary history. It starts from the ninetieth and extends to the twentieth. This period is marked by radical changes in terms of technique narrative in black literature. Ishmael Reed distinguishes himself from the other black writers by his newly deconstructing style based on repetition and the challenge to the notion of order.

3.1. *The Notion of Repetition*

In fiction, rarely do we read novels whose stories are told in a chronological way because novelists generally opt for another time sequence that is obviously different from the physical time. Sometimes, the beginning of a novel is saturated with items which will end the story. Inside the story itself, the writer can include what is called an analepsis which is nothing but a kind of repetition or a flash back telling an event or an episode which happened before the beginning of the story. The prolepsis which is the contrary is an anticipation of the story or events where the narrator provides his reader with a glimpse at the future events. When we come to repetitions, they are poetic devices which give sense to the poem. Clever repetition is just testifying the talent and the skill of the poet. To that end, African American novelist, Ishmael Reed has conceptualized a new threat of literary device. That is the notion of deconstruction. This new skill of Ishmael Reed consists of reinterpreting and criticizing Western racist values.



Therefore, he reinvents a new emerging genre in African American writing. This item of deconstruction is called Neo-hoodooism. This Neo-hoodooism is repeated in all the fiction of Ishmael Reed. Research has shown the same critics who attest Ishmael Reed as the best black writer of the twentieth century America can also at the same time reproach him with being repetitive. They believe that Ishmael Reed is not moving as a writer should do. A writer should develop ideas but they should be different from one novel to another. It is not a good style to repeat the same ideas in two different works. In so doing, Ishmael Reed is not really growing as a writer should. These judgments do not really pull Ishmael Reed out of the brilliant writers at that state of black fiction.

In fact, one can notice that in Ishmael Reed's work, there are obviously considerable varieties. Ishmael Reed's repetition of the same themes in different novels is really something innovative. He makes progress. He is an innovator for this style is of his own. What seems a minor motif in one novel takes an important and outstanding dimension in another book. Therefore, it becomes a major motif in the next novel. Thus, Ishmael Reed is somehow so fascinating. His ability to repeat action in different novels conveys a charm upon which Ishmael Reed identifies himself. Then in the next novel, the repeated idea is expected to be more developed.

For instance, in Ishmael Reed's both *Yellow Back Radio Broken Down* (1960) and *Mumbo Jumbo* (1972), Neo-hoodooism is the main theme that is developed. In *Yellow Back Radio Broken Down*, Ishmael Reed gives a brief discourse on the history of Neo-hoodooism but in *Mumbo Jumbo*, it is altogether different for the same theme, Neo-hoodooism is more elaborated. Further exploration of Neo-hoodooism is to be found in Ishmael Reed's *Last Day of Louisiana Red* (1974). In Ishmael Reed's fiction, one can easily admit that the use of Neo-hoodooism is very recurrent.

Neo-hoodooism is an animistic religion from Prince Osiris to Jazz. Ishmael Reed uses Neo-hoodooism to dismantle the Western hegemonic law by subverting language, mythology and religion. This new style invented by Ishmael Reed is just a way of taking a stand against white literature. Thus, he uses Neo-hoodooism as an indispensable item in his fight for the role of African Americans in history. This is why he does not cope with Christianity. Neo-hoodooism breaks the Christian ideology down and gives more considerations to multiculturalism. It is a polytheist religion whereas Christianity is monotheistic. Ishmael Reed's Neo-hoodooism seeks to dismantle this white religion which, it is believed, has denied black their true cultural heritage. This is what Ishmael Reed's deconstructive style is all about.



3.2. *The Challenge to the Notion of Order*

Some aspects of the novel *Mumbo Jumbo* (1972) forcefully show Ishmael Reed's defiance of the notion of order. There is a conflictual situation between the individuals and the society. On the one hand, this is exemplified by a white character trying to colonize the Blacks and their culture. On the other hand, there is a chosen Black character working for the survival of the black culture. As an illustration, through the character of Biff Musclewhite, one can figure out the poor attitude of the colonizer. He is hired by the wallflower order to oppress the Jes Grew carriers. This idea is strengthened by his being a murderer. He kills the two Papa Labas' coworkers. Both Berbelang and Charlotte are teammates of Papa Labas. They help Papa Labas to find the sacred text. Biff Musclewhite kills them to stop Jes Grew's propaganda. Many of Papa Labas' helpers leave him. They are finally separated. This is also one of the postmodern characteristics. That of a disjointed family. They no longer have the same goal. Some betrayed Papa Labas; others took their own path for their own interest.

For instance, Abdul Hamid, the black American Muslim Magazine editor, is one of the rare personalities in the book because he is the only black man who fights against Jes Grew carriers. Yet, his attitude shows serious limits when examined in isolation. He does not destroy the sacred text for granted. As a Muslim, he believes that his religion, Islam, is saturated with many restrictions. For him, Islamic rules are really different from the Osirian dancing religion. He just regards Jes Grew as abominable. He goes as far as comparing it with evil. This is why he destroys the sacred text. In *Mumbo Jumbo*, one can easily witness a disruptive society.

Another character who leaves Papa Labas is Berbelang. He breaks free and joins the Mu'tafikah group. Through his adhesion, a group of cultural terrorists is to be organized. This Mu'tafikah group are formed by people of different backgrounds. They come from different communities and they are dedicated cultural terrorists. Their role is to return the stolen arts to their place of origin. An analysis of how the characters are interlinked, a deep observation of the characters and their relations show undoubtedly the picture of a disjointed family.

Papa Labas the main character in *Mumbo Jumbo* faces his unescapable opponent Hinckle Von Vampton. Hinckle Von Vampton is a white man. He symbolizes the white culture defender. He is continuously running after the sacred text, Jes Grew. His main objective is to destroy the text that records the black cultural heritage. He wants to destroy the sacred text so much so that it will not be spread throughout the world. Once the text is lost, Papa Labas finds himself in a situation he cannot approach easily for the text serves as guidance. As a diary,



Papa Labas wants to find the text. The text is the only possible solution to break with the masters' racist narratives. Finding the text and spreading it summon like the black cultural Propaganda. By propagating black cultures, Ishmael Reed stops the Western civilization. This is probably the reasons why Papa Labas sets out to look for the text. In this perspective, many critics believe that the quest for the text is Papa Labas' quest for identity. As a matter of consequence, Papa Labas' search for the text is also a quest for himself. Another postmodern philosophy by Ishmael Reed is non-conformism. Ishmael Reed is a non-conformist. He never imitates the other black writers who just repeat the work of the others. In this perspective, (Ishmael Reed, 1972, p. 52) writes:

At least he has his own flag, not like these black Marxists who merely mimic the words of the International, somebody else's thought, and somebody else's song. Abdul is just an irritated lyricist who can't seem to get his music sung. I am eager to read his book when it's out.

Ishmael Reed uses a decolonization tongue to restore the black dignity. To that end, he reinterprets the black history so that the true history of the world will be heard. All his efforts are turned towards subverting the western system so that the Blacks can hear the true history of the world. By returning items to their right place the black history will be rehabilitated. Talking about this restitution of art, (Ishmael Reed, 1972, p. 82/83) states:

On the table lies a Nimba mask made of guinea wood they've seized from private collection belonging to a society woman on Park Ave. other Mu'tafikah are carefully packing items. They are to be sent to a contact "Frank" somewhere in the pacific Islands who will in turn ship them to their rightful owner in Asia. "Tam" a Nigerian musician and writer will return 5,000 mask and wood sculpture to Africa. He had begun by lifting a Benin Bronze plaque with Leopard from Linden-Museum in Stuttgart, Germany. Before museums heads could warn their continental colleagues of his presence in Europe, he and his aides, posing as innocuous exchange students, had repatriated mask and figures-carried to Europe as booty from Nigeria Gold Cost, Upper Volta and Ivory Coast from where they were exhibited in the pirate dens called museums located in Zurich, Florence, England, and in private collection in Milan. The Tristan Tzara collection, Paris, the Rittberg Museums Located in Zurich, Berlin's Museum fur (...), they rape a harvest of their countrymen's stolen work. (Their task is in many ways easier, for example, they don't have lift heavy sculpture or canvases. Some pieces are only a few inches.) the Jeans Pierre Hallet collection of Congolese sculpture is picked clean.

The cultural terrorists, here, play an important role in the art restitution. They restore the maximum items to their respective place all around the world. Nothing to be left behind. So, *"they repeat the names of the items aloud the sound resembling subdued chanting. Berbelang always requests that the items to be liberated be committed to memory. In this way not a single item will be left behind"* (Ishmael Reed, 1972, p. 83). Ishmael Reed forms this group of secret society to magnify the notion of deconstruction. Moreover, the notion of time sequence is also well developed by Ishmael Reed.



CONCLUSION

Mumbo Jumbo (1972) and the *Terrible Two* (1982) are Ishmael Reed's most successful fictions in which he challenges the traditional limits of the Blacks' fiction. In these works, relevant issues are the challenge to the notion of order, disjointed characters, fragmentations, everlasting or recurrent contradiction, breaks of conventions, lack of chronology and the challenge of coherence to cohesion. Such a narrative style shows that Ishmael Reed's fiction can be considered as a postmodern discourse. In this perspective, Neo-hoodoo is a style invented by Ishmael Reed to discuss ethnic culture and the experience of the black Americans in the United States of America before, during and after slavery. A good approach to Ishmael Reed's fiction must begin with this concept of neo-hoodooism. In all his work, Ishmael Reed cleverly retraces the influence of this religion. It is brought in America by the trade of enslaved workers. Neo-hoodooism, as an aesthetics, seeks to capture the black spiritual religion and integrated it in the mainstream culture. That's what his *Mumbo Jumbo* is all about. In *Mumbo Jumbo*, the central thesis is the conflict which opposes the white culture against the black civilization. It is an embodiment of the Harlem houngan priest, Papa Labas and his faithful coworker Black Herman racing against the Atonist gang.

This Atonist gang, led by Set, is dedicated to monotheism. All their efforts are directed to swipe away the black-derived faith Jes Grew. Jes Grew is a polytheist religion dedicated to freedom and multiculturalism. This history of religion is a counter history of the Bible which seeks to transform the Judeo-Christian philosophy. Dividing Osiris, Moses and Set, Ishmael Reed's story is the story of religion Neo-hoodooism which seeks to deconstruct the false history of the world white have produced. In its attempts to reinterpret the true history of the world, Neo-hoodooism seeks to dismantle the fundamental foundation upon which white civilization is tied. For instance, the Mu'tafikah are an organization whose only role is to return the black artifacts to their place of origin. Black arts have been stolen during colonization. Due to the Mu'tafikah, the illegally housed artifacts in white museums are returned to their rightful owners. According to Ishmael Reed, the western civilization has denied the black Americans the right to hear from their true history.

In one word, we can easily state that Ishmael Reed fiction was dedicated to decolonize the black culture which had been looked down for years. As in *Mumbo Jumbo* (1972), *Flight to Canada* (1976) is a glimpse at the complex relation between black Americans and the Whites. It is a satirical novel which challenges the western civilization. *Flight to Canada* (1976) is a fair embodiment of the cultural struggle between African American and the western civilization. It is a colonial discourse. Based on a slave viewpoint, *Flight to Canada* deals with the escape of



the three slaves. Raven Quickskill and his companions are trying to escape from their masters' plantations. Arthur Swille, their master, is searching for them. It is just the conflict between two cultures: the Blacks and the Whites. Slaves running away symbolizes black fight for freedom; and Massa Swille's temptation to keep them is the Whites' everlasting attitude of domination. This is why the story can be associated with that of a class struggle

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