Historiographic Metafiction in Ishmael Reed’s *Flight to Canada*

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Anglo-American Studies

By: Messous Warda.

Supervisor: Aaid Salah Eddine.

Examiner: Stiti Rinad.

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Candidate Declaration Form

I, Messous Warda

Candidate of Master at the Department of English, Larbi Ben M’hidi University, do hereby declare that the dissertation entitled: Historiographic Metafiction in Ishmael Reed’s *Flight to Canada.*

in partial fulfillment of MA Degree in **Anglo-American Studies** is my own original work, and it has not previously, in its entirety or in part, been submitted at any university.

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Dedication:

Firstly, my deepest and warmest gratitude to my endearing parents. My mother Dalila for her generous support and invaluable impute. To my father Nacer- Eddine for his physical and emotional encourage. To my sisters: Djamila Iman, Khadidja, Oumaima, Ikram, and Yousra. To my brother: Abd Allah. Without forgetting all my family; Especially my grandmother and my Uncle Ali. My antes Houria, Hasna, Souad, Naima, Mimia and Kenza. To my dear cousins: Randa, Houssem, Amira, Houda, Raouf, Imad, Hassan, Younes, Bouchra, Zahia, Marwan, Mohamed, Abd Allah, and Adam. Secondly, my special thanks for my first teacher of English Miss Djamila. I would like to express my thanks to my intimate: Rania Sabrine for her help, Abir, Zineb, khawla Asma, Naziha. Also to my close friend Mouhamed Zellache for his motivation and advices. Also Djeghlal Amir, Salah Bouzid, and Abd El Raouf Farhi. Finally, I would like to thank all my classmates.
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Abstract:
In the world of Literature, many writers write a myriad of novels in the genre of postmodern literature in general, and some distinct authors write under the Historiographic metafiction. Which is the combination between fiction and history. So, each story varies from each other in a sense of the order of events, or the idea pictured in the story. This research investigates the correlation between history and metafiction and how it turned to recast the past. It is also involved in black postmodern writers and techniques of Historiographic metafiction. In fact, numerous contributors, especially the Afro-American postmodern writers have moved from fiction to Historiographic metafiction to show changes and revisionism of history. This inquiry concentrates on Historiographic metafiction in Ishmael Reed’s Flight to Canada (1976). It explicates how this writer manages to portray the past and real historical events through the use of metafiction. It projects the complementary relationship between History and metafiction in literature and that literature of Afro-American writers can serve the literature and history to give the impression that literature is not less when comparing it with History, they are two sides of the same coin.

Key Words: Historiographic metafiction, Black postmodernism, Afro-American writers, revisionism of history.
Resumé :

Dans le monde de la littérature, de nombreux écrivains écrivent une myriade de romans dans le genre de la littérature postmoderne en général, et certains auteurs distincts écrivent sous la métafiction historiographique. Ceci est la combinaison de la fiction et de l'histoire. Ainsi, chaque histoire varie de l'autre dans un sens de l'ordre des événements, ou l'idée illustrée dans l'histoire. Cette recherche examine la corrélation entre l'histoire et la métafiction et comment il se tourna vers refondre le passé. Il est également impliqué dans noirs écrivains et techniques de métafiction historiographique postmodernes. En fait, de nombreux contributeurs, écrivains postmodernes en particulier les Afro-américains sont passés de la fiction à métafiction historiographique pour montrer les changements et le révisionnisme de l'histoire. Cette enquête se concentre sur métafiction historiographique dans le roman de Ishmael Reed *le vol au Canada* (1976). Il explicates comment cet écrivain parvient à dépeindre le passé et les événements historiques réels grâce à l'utilisation des metafiction. Il projette la relation de complémentarité entre l'histoire et la métafiction dans la littérature et que la littérature des écrivains afro-américains peuvent servir la littérature et l'histoire de donner l'impression que la littérature est pas moins lorsque l'on compare avec l'histoire, ils sont les deux faces d'une même médaille.

**Termes clés:** Metafiction historiographique, postmodernisme noir, afro-américains écrivains, révisionnisme de l'histoire.
الملخص:

في عالم الأدب العديد من الكتاب ساهموا في كتابة عدد لا حصي من الروايات في عالم الأدب بشكل عام، ويشكل خاص تطرق بعضهم ليكتب تحت ظل ما يسمى بتأريخ ما وراء القصص. وهو عبارة عن مزيج بين الخيال والتأريخ و ذلك ما أدى بإخلال كل عمل عن الآخر في الأحداث والتاريخ. هذا البحث يدرس العلاقة بين التاريخ و ما وراء القصص وصفة خاصة تقنيات ما وراء القص التاريخي، فقد انتقل العديد من الكتاب عن خاصية الأفراد الأمريكيين من الخيال إلى ما وراء القصص وذلك من أجل إظهار التغيرات وإعادة كتابة التاريخ. في رواية للكاتب إسماعيل ريد "رحلة الطيران إلى كندا" (1976) بين لنا كيف يمكن إعادة تصوير أحداث حقيقية من الماضي من خلال استخدام تاريخ ما وراء القص في الأدب وصفة خاصة في الأدب الأفروأمريكي. و أن الأدب عصر مكمل للتاريخ و أنهما وجهان لعملة واحدة.

المصطلحات الأساسية: وراء القصما بعد الحداثة، كتابة التاريخ، الكتاب من أصل إفريقي، التحريفة من التاريخ.
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General Introduction:

Postmodernism is a set of ideas that emerged since the mid of 1980’s , it is a concept that appears in wide variety of disciplines or areas of study including art, architecture, music, film, literature, sociology, communication and technology. Postmodernism is “post” denies the existence of any ultimate principles, it breaks away from the idea that man can achieve understanding through a reliance on reason and science. i.e.; placing all principles under the scrutiny of its skepticism, it must realize that even its own principles are not beyond questioning. Consequently believing about fiction especially in literature has led to introduce a new style of writing that is Historiographic metafiction. So, in this work we will attempt to clarify the relationship between metafiction and history under Black postmodernism in Ishmael Reed’s *Flight to Canada*.

The term Historiographic metafiction is a term used by a lot of writers as Linda Hutcheon and Chaucer. Historiographic Metafiction is a literary device associated with modernist literature and postmodernist literature. Especially by The Afro-American writers it overused too self-consciously and systematically draws attention to the literary work status as an artifact, and it poses questions about the relationship between fiction and reality, usually using irony and self reflection. Deeply, Historiographic metafiction is one kind of postmodernist novel which rejects projecting present beliefs and standards onto the past and asserts the particularity of the individual past event(Hutcheon 122). It also suggests a distinction between events and facts that are shared by many historians.

The history “documenting events” is facing so many obstacles in different wars and events and metafiction gives the opportunity to various wars to be disfigured
especially in literature in order to suit an artistic goal. Precisely, Historiographic metafiction can be used as an effective device for achieving a specific artistic, intellectual and ideological purpose. In this regard, it is relevant to address the following research questions:

1- To what extent can we picture the significance of Historiographic Metafiction as a tool in rewriting history for the sake of liberation from cultural and artistic slavery in Ishmael Reed’s *Flight to Canada*?

2- In what way can fiction serve a historical event such slavery in the civil war?

3- Why the writer chooses to write about history in *Flight to Canada*?

4- What are the reasons behind rewriting history?

5- What is the relationship between metafiction and history?

The aim behind picking out this piece of writing is to see how Ishmael Reed reinvented a historical event that is the issue of slaves in the civil war. Also, it seeks to identify the role of Historiographic Metafiction in picturing the African American writers rewriting history. In addition to that the thesis is investigating the motives and inducement that led Ishmael Reed write bout history in *Flight to Canada* in fictional way.

The methodology of the thesis employs two main approaches, historical and formalistic approaches. Moreover; the thesis will be divided into three main chapters. The first chapter entitled Theoretical Background of Postmodern Historiographic Metafiction consists of two sections, the first one deals with the Afro-American postmodern characteristics and aspects, the second one shed lights on the metafiction aspects and its techniques. The second chapter will be practical entitled Analyzing
Historiographic Metafiction in *Flight to Canada* investigates how the writer applied Black postmodern and Historiographic metafiction techniques on his novel. Concerning the third chapter will be also a practical one entitled *Flight to Canada* behind the Layers of Revisionism and Rewriting History this chapter will be about the revision of historical events in a fictional way and for what reason.

In the quest of this research many sources that tackled the same subject of this work are partitioned between primary and secondary, varying between books and articles. The researcher has the primary source which is the novel by Ishmael Reed *Flight to Canada*, it opens with Reed’s poem followed by a present-day reflection on the ways in which Josiah Henson’s escaped slave narrative and Harriet Beecher Stowe’s more celebrated version of it helped create the history of the war. We have also the book of Linda Hutchen *A Poetic of Postmodernism :history, theory, fiction* (1988) in which the term Historiographic metafiction has been coined to describe those literary texts that assert an interpretation of the past but are also intensely self-reflexive. I.e. critical of their own version of the truth as being partial, biased, incomplete, etc (Hutcheon 122-23). Historiographic metafiction, therefore, allows us to speak constructively about the past in a way that acknowledges the falsity and violence of the "objective" historian's past without leaving us in a totally bewildered and isolated present, in her book Ishmael Reed’s *Flight to Canada* tackled as a great example of Historiographic metafiction novel.
Chapter One

Theoretical Background of Postmodern Historiographic Metafiction

The term Postmodernism, which has appeared fundamentally in the late twentieth century, as a rejection of all the movement before. Black post modernism is one genre of the Afro-American writers, despite the fact that there exist several black postmodernist characteristics one of the major important is Historiographic Metafiction.

This chapter will avail as a theoretical base for the other chapters. It is divided into two sections. The first section served to introduce the term postmodernism and black postmodernism with its characteristics, while the second one aims to introduce Historiographic metafiction with its techniques. In brief, this chapter questions the following points: What are the origins of the postmodernism as a movement and period? What is black postmodernism? What is and what are the main characteristics of Historiographic Metafiction?

1. African-American Postmodernism:

Postmodernism is not an easy task to be defined. It is a complicated and a vague concept. It appears in a wide variety of disciplines or areas of study thus it is hard to locate it temporally or historically. Regarding this further explanations are required to unveil the exact illustration of the concept Postmodernism. According to John McGowan in his book entitled Postmodernism and its Critics, the concept indicates the distinct alteration in the way the humanistic intellectuals see the link of their own work to the society. He adds that everything that is related to Postmodernism from themes to postures to stylistic lineament are to be traced in accord to what intellectuals have impact on the world that is completely antagonistic to the standards of arts and
intellectual works. In addition to that from the time of the romantics the humanistic intellectual consider themselves completely discrete to any predominant traditions and manners of the commercial society, as a result they started to set platforms and agendas to that society’s transformation and transition consequently, McGowan educed a definition of the concept Postmodernism as a specific “diminished, version of romantic dreams of transformation—hardly the middle age that poets in their youth would have chosen, but a despondency that is fitting all the same” (McGowan 1).

Postmodernism has been tackled from a different angle. Brian McHalle refers to different intellectual’s definition. Jencks conceptualize it as “double coding” in which the postmodernist work is in one hand addresses an elite minority audience using high-art codes, and for the mass public is via popular codes (9).

A working definition for the concept postmodernism is deduced from understanding the word “modernist” In a book dubbed Paul Auster’s New York Trilogy as “Historiographic Metafiction” the term is used to refer to the art, philosophy, literature, architecture along with music…etc which are created in the time which want to come against the already existed norms made in the previous period (Ali Abstract ).

Concerning the intermingling between postmodernism and modernism A. J. Cuddon explains that the corpus post-modernism indicate that something is already finished and done but it is not the same case because there is no exact separation because avant-garde movement’s impact continue, even it has been said that there is a new avant-garde but postmodernism is still occurring and when something came to exist it will be easier to understand it (690).

On the other hand the same issue of the relationship between postmodernism and modernism. Linda Hutcheon tackled in her book entitled A Poetics of
Postmodernism: History, Theory and Fiction that Postmodernism comes as a rejection against modernism in which according to her “postmodern” situates the movement historically and philosophically against modernism, furthermore historically speaking it is nothing but a stand of the old values and ideologies. On a literary level, postmodernism indicates a literary theory and practice which overcomes the traditional narrative forms, interpretations and methods of analysis (7-10). She strengthens her idea by referring to the first person who coined the term postmodernism. He was a historian British called Toynbee, for whom post modernity brings at the end of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century, in which this period is characterized by the industrial, the French revolution, social upheaval and change. This can be clearer in Hutcheon’s own words in which she states that:

Tony bee characterized the previous modern period as a middle-class bourgeois era marked by social stability, rationalism, and progress-atypical bourgeois middle –class conception of an era marked by cycles of crisis, war and revolution. The postmodern age, by contrast, is a time of troubles marked by the collapse of rationalism and the ethos of enlightenment ( qtd in Hutcheon 6).

Postmodernism can be understood through the perspective of Linda Hutcheon as an obviously literary aesthetic balancing advantages as risks. Postmodern literature avails a reaction to the given stylistic and ideological limitations of modernist literature and the radical changes the world sustained after the end of World War II. The postmodern literary writers have been influenced by different movements and ideas taken from the postmodern philosophy (Hutcheon 18 ).
To specify more the quest about the period, the genre black post modernism is one of the many examples which provide more information about the movement in general. As a starting point and as the name suggest black stands for Afro-American writers which the *Encyclopedia Britanica* clarifies it as the set of literature produced by Americans of African origin. It starts in the pre-revolutionary war period. In which the African American writers were part of the creative truculent dialogue with the Americans something that gave birth to a very rich literature in describing and tackling social matters, providing instructive appreciation of American identities and history (*Encyclopedia Britanica*).

The beginning of the Afro-American movement was not quite successful either it was appreciated nor welcomed. This aspect has been discussed in many sources and one of them is Gloria Jean Watkins known as Bell Hooks as her pen name in her book *Postmodern Blackness* in which she states her experience saying that:

I talked about trying to grapple with the significance of postmodernism for contemporary black experience. It was one of those social gatherings where only one other black person was present. The setting quickly became a field of contestation. I was told by the other black person that I was wasting my time that "this stuff does not relate in any way to what's happening with black people." Speaking in the presence of a group of white onlookers, staring at us as though this encounter was staged for their benefit, we engaged in a passionate discussion about black experience. Apparently, no one sympathized with my insistence that racism is perpetuated when blackness is associated solely with concrete gut level experience conceived either as opposing or having no connection to abstract thinking and the production of critical theory.
The idea that there is no meaningful connection between black experience and
critical thinking about aesthetics or culture must be continually interrogated
(Hooks 22).

She even mentioned that the reason of defending postmodernism and its connection to
black folks was something good but she was always worried about contentedness
because she reached the subject very carefully with many doubts. In addition to that
the failure to recognize the critical black presence in the culture oblige a black reader
mainly a black female reader to investigate her interest in a subject where those who
write about seem not to have any idea about the black women existence or that even
the idea of there is perhaps some female black writer is writing somewhere or saying
something that may be quite interesting something that can be seen or heard (Hooks
22-6).

Characteristics of Postmodernism:

The features that distinguishes postmodernism from any other movements, as
modernism is that it is identified by the following points:

1- Intertextuality

In an article dubbed what is “intertextuality”? The concept has been defined
as the reference to or the application of a literary, media, or social “text” within
another literary, media, or social “text.” In which in literature, intertextuality means
that a book refers to a second book by title, scene, character, or storyline, or when a
book refers to a social “text” such as a media, social, or cultural story. So this
intermingling call for a comparison between someone understands of the text outside
the book and its employment within the book. Intertextuality calls for a set of
questions, first is about the motives behind choosing that specific literary or social
text, and the manner of including the text in the book, and the effects or the outcomes of the text re-imagined by the book, or the book shaped by the text. It is seen as a very interesting element of postmodernism because it is based on the acknowledgement or the admission of the previous literary works. In other words, the concept of intertextuality means that there is a dependence or reliance on the literature that has been produced before in a way to comment on the situation in which both literature and society found themselves in the second half of the 20th century. In which the comments are related to: living, working, and creating on the backs of those that had come before (What is “intertextuality”).

2-Metafiction

The concept of metafiction has been celebrated and manifested in many written texts and mainly in the postmodern literature. In Michael Butter’s book entitled The Encyclopedia of Twentieth-Century Fiction, the concept means simply writing about writing in order to make the reader aware of its fictionality and the presence of the author. In which the writer uses such an element to provide an obvious conspicuously shift in narrative, some kind of jumps in time, also it is used to preserve emotional distance as a narrator (Butter 626).

Concerning the same concept of metafiction, In a book dubbed Novel Arguments: Reading Innovative American Fiction. Richard refers to a set of illustration of the concept. On one hand, Patricia Waugh states” Metafiction is a term given to fiction writing which self-consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artefact in order to order to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality” (qtd in Walsh 39). Regarding this Richard Walsh deduces that Waugh’s definition relies on the fact that metafiction is based formally and thematically on
coming against the so called “fiction about fiction” instead it must be called “fiction about fiction about reality” (Walsh 39.) metafiction is the most characteristic of postmodernism, it reminds the readers that the work is complete fiction, it is a mirror that reflects the world (16).

3-Pastiche:

Another feature of postmodernism is labeled as pastiche. The latter has been defined by James F Austin in his book Prount Pastiche and the Postmodern or Why Style Matter as something like elements of former genres and styles of literature that has been combined or “pasted” to shape a new narrative voice, or to comment and to include the point of view concerning the production of their peer or their contemporaries as an example the very well known postmodern author called Thomas Pynchon who utilizes elements from science fiction, war fiction, songs, detective fiction, pop culture references, obscure, and fictional history (Austin 75).

4-Temporal distortion:

Another technique utilizes in postmodern literary works is called the Temporal distortion. It is defined in the book dubbed Encyclopedia of Postmodernism, that it is a literary technique that uses a nonlinear timeline, that is to say that the writer may jump forwards or backwards in time, or there may be cultural and historical references that has nothing to do with the story ( Taylor and Winquist 12). In another article entitled “Postmodernism: Positioning and pushback”, the concept temporal distortion is when certain events can be overlapped and repeated, or when there is various events occurred altogether in order to fulfill irony ( Taylor and Winquist 15).

5- Playfulness, irony, satire and comedy:
Playfulness, irony, satire and comedy, are the hall marks of both historical metafiction and postmodernism; they may be collected in one genre which is black humor. The author treats a serious issue like the slavery issue or the world war using ironic, satire, and comedy mixing this playfulness with complexity. According to Linda Hutcheon, “postmodern fiction as a whole can be characterized by the ironic quote marks, that much of it can be taken as tongue-in-cheek” (Hutcheon 120).

6-Magical realism:

In a book entitled Encyclopedia of Postmodernism. One of the famous techniques used is magical realism. Harold Bloom and Blake Hobby declare that magical realism has its roots in the work of Jorge Luis Borges and Gabriel García Márquez, two South American writers, and some have classified it as a Latin American style. This technique is one of the most important techniques in the postmodern in which it is the introduction of impossible, imaginary and fantastic elements into something which is normal. The term Magical Realism when it is used in realist novels it comes in the form of including dreams taking place in real time and real places during normal life, but with the inclusion of deceased characters, with extremely complicated plots, along with wild shifts in time, and myths and fairy tales becoming part of the narrative (Bloom and Hobby 151).

7-Historiographic metafiction:

This term was created by Linda Hutcheon to refer to novels that fictionalize actual historical events and characters: Thomas Pynchon’s Mason and Dixon, for example, features a scene in which George Washington smokes pot.

The movement called the Afro-American postmodernism was not a myth, it was something that was highly presented and celebrated in many of the literary works.
Its illustration along with its features was projected in written texts. As a starting point before giving demonstration, it is a must to know the very famous writer.

*Mumbo Jumbo* is considered as an example of Black postmodernist historical novel, written by Ishmael Reed in 1972, among critics this novel *Mumbo Jumbo* categorized as one of the most Afro-American postmodern novel.

Another example of Afro-American works was *Mama* by Terry MC Millar, she is an American author, *Mama* was the first novel of Millar according to Robert Henkes in his book *The Art of American Women: Work by the Twenty-four Artists of the Twentieth century* this work is characterized by relatable female it is about an uneducated black women living in 1960’s who possesses the strength to survive (Henkes 124).

Not just novels also poems , one of the famous and greatest Afro-American poet , Elynas Rayson Rogers was famous for his tow erudite and topical poems ,” *The repeal of Missouri compromise considered”* and the second poem about slavery ,” *A Poem on the Fugitive slave law”* (Pettis 310).

### 2- A Deep look into Historiographic Metafiction and its techniques:

Historiographic metafiction can be viewed as a technique of postmodernism and as a genre that has similar characteristics of postmodernism .It is one of the well known techniques used in the postmodern period, the latter contains two main words which are history and fiction. Linda Hutcheon refers to Nye’s view about the two saying that “Literature and history were considered branches of the same tree of learning” (Hutcheon 37 ) regarding this definition Hutcheon summarizes illustration of Historiographic metafiction in which History is kind of fiction in which we live and loye to survive, and fiction is a kind of speculative history… by which the available
data for composition seems to be greater and more various in its sources than the historian supposes (34).

After understanding the detailed meaning of Historiographic Metafiction, as a one concept a better conceptualization would be by tracing its coinage. In *A Poetic of Postmodernism* it is said that Historiographic metafiction is a term coined by Linda Hutcheon, in the late of 1980s; it is considered as a combination of the historical events with the devices of metafiction, the term related with works of postmodern literature. According to Hutcheon the works of Historiographic metafiction are “those well-known and popular novels which are both intensely self-reflexive and yet paradoxically” (Hutcheon introduction).

Concerning the relationship between history and fiction B.H Smith in Hutcheon’s Books says that Historiographic metafiction suggests that truth and falsity may indeed not be the right terms in which to discuss fiction,. Postmodern novelists assert that there is only truth in the plural fiction and histories which are narratives distinguished by their frames (Hutcheon 144). On the other hand Hutcheon’s response about fiction and history’s combination is that fiction is a representation and reproduction and rewriting of the past in orders to stick it to the present and forbade it from being conclusive and teleological. While for history she says that:

Past events can be altered, history gets rewritten well we’ve just found that this applies to real world too… may be the real history of the world is changing constantly? Why? Because history is a fiction, it is a dream in the mind of humanity, forever striving … towards what? Towards perfection (Htcheon174).

Metafiction mechanism is a recent form of literature which has been brought about by the increase of self-aware techniques that iterate the boundaries between
fiction and history; this includes and motivates the reader to know what is between the lines. Linda Hutcheon sees Historiographic metafiction as a tool to rewrite history in postmodern fiction. In postmodernism, it is the representations of the truth and history which is no longer monolithic and objective (Hutcheon 36).

She considers historical consciousness and reflection upon history to be fundamental in the postmodern literary experience. Thus, historical metafiction perfectly represents the poetics of postmodern. It refers to the world of history and that of fiction. So, it is the combination and the meeting points of history and fiction (Hutcheon 36).

In the early of the twentieth century, fiction plays an important role, it starts self-consciously to treat their position, the form of historical metafiction recognized its status as a fictional work. In this writing, the techniques took many forms; for example, the presentation of the first person I, the author addressing directly the reader, dynamically by turning the author as a character within the text. As Simon Barton in Patricia Waugh book declares that “fictional characters that are fragmented to the reader and acknowledge that are fictional constructs”(52). So, the character may offer and present a sign of becoming self-aware and may question their reality, Patricia Waugh states:

I would argue that metafiction practice has become particularly prominent in

The fiction of the last twenty years. However, to draw exclusively on

Contemporary fiction would be misleading, for, although the term

'Metafiction' might be new, the practice is as old (if not older) than the novel

Itself. Metafiction is a tendency or function in all novels (Waugh 5).

Historical metafiction permits fiction to analyze the background and the history of the novel as stated by Waugh “by studying metafiction, one is, in effect studying that
which gives the novel its identity “(Waugh 5). So metafiction has induced the reader in order to study the convention of the novel’s history, that allow and gave the novel the style and structure that it has today. In all the novels, the Historiographic metafiction techniques aim to set out the essential of this sensitivity and rockiness by addressing the novels which are built through historical forms of communication. Waugh declares that:

There is no one privileged 'language of fiction'. There are languages of Memoirs, journals, diaries, histories, conversational register, legal records, Journalism, documentary. These languages compete for privilege. They Question and relativist each other to such an extent that the 'language of Fiction' is always, if often covertly, self-conscious. (Waugh 6).

Literary historiography is a mixture of history and fiction; in such tendency that F. O. Matthiessen says they ‘enrich’ one another. He declares that in the American Renaissance of the 1980s and after, literary historiography has been more than a subgenre; it is a new style. To analyze the outcomes of the intermixture of these branches of knowledge, Matthiessen aims to “the breaking down of arbitrary divisions between them” (43) in which she made it potential for the literary critic to benefit from for the historian and the history; in order to extend his own consciousness to reach “general culture” through “politics”. However, it seems that Historiographic metafiction, which is a fundamental postmodern art form, is frequently different from the literary historiography of the 1980 because the main reliance of the postmodern historiography is upon parody, textual play, and other language techniques which are used for the purpose of historical re-conceptualization.

In the historiography which began in the 1980s, history was as a chain of past realities which concretely existed out of language, not only out of imagination.
History and fiction were always there, and the historiographer would combine them to add to their capacities and increase a new genre. However, “Historiographic metafiction” is a genre by which Hutcheon means “those well-known and popular novels which are both intensely self-reflexive and yet paradoxically also lay claim to historical events and personages” (5). Here she is claiming that in Historiographic metafiction, history is subjective and perspective. In addition, it is a product of language, and is manufactured in the power-plant of our imagination (Hutcheon 75-9).

Metafiction characterizes the capacity of fiction to reverberate on its own status as fiction and thus refers to all self-reflexive utterances which thematize the fictionality of narrative. Metafiction is a literally fiction that includes within itself reflections on its own fictional identity (Hutcheon 14). Thus, the term symbolizes all kinds of self-reflective elements and utterances of a fictional narrative that do not address their referent as obvious reality but instead persuade readers to reflect on the textuality and fictionality of narrative in terms of its artifactuality (Stephan 224).

Following Stephan Morawski definition of metafiction as a form of discourse which draws the recipient’s attention to the fictionality of the narrative, it becomes evident that the term cannot be equated with Meta-narration (47). Metanarrative comments are interested with the act and mode of narration, and not with its fictional nature. In the contrary to metafiction, which can only manifest in the context of fiction, sorts of metanarration can also be found in many non-fictional narrative style and media.

Metanarrative passages need not to demolish aesthetic illusion, but it may also participate to substantiating the illusion that a narrative examines to create. It is precisely the concept of “narratorial illusionism” offering the presence of a speaker or narrator, that states that metanarrative expressions can avail to create a different mode
of illusion by accentuating the act of narration. Therefore, precipitating a different strategy of naturalization, in other words what Fludernik has called the “frame of storytelling.” (311).

In a recent study, metafiction and metanarration are considered to be an umbrella terms, so metanarration is one of metafiction techniques, it denotes self-reflexive utterances, i.e. comments indicating to this discourse rather than the story itself. Although they are regarded and sometimes used “discussatable”, the terms should be prominent; metanarration refers to the narrator’s reflection, interests and comments on the historical fictionality and construction of narrative. Moreover, metafictionality resolved the quality of uncovering the fictionality of narrative. Metanarration captures these forms of self-reflexive narration in which aspects of narration are inscribed in the “narratorical” discourse; this means that the narrative utterances about narrative more than, fiction about fiction.

The relationship between fiction and history is a complex one, Historiographic metafiction situates itself within historical discourse without capitulating its autonomy as fiction. In the postmodern novel, the pact and conventions of both historiography and fiction are achieved to fulfill such a desire for “worldly” (3).

One of the goals set for the historians along with writers is to generate and produce a completely new system of both thoughts and idea. That is to say that history and fiction are arbitrary signifiers with their references, in which sometimes it became so easy to trace it in the real life and even in neither history; while sometimes no trace can be traced at all in neither real life nor history. Concerning this point the Canadian Linda Hutcheon tackled the contradiction and the clash found in Historiographic metafiction makes it as she called it “Simultaneously exhausting and formative”, in
order that as a form of metafiction, it seeks “within conventions in order to subvert them” (15).

So, it seeks to exterminate the fusty banal courses in one hand, while on the other hand it based the formation of what Zavarzadeh has called news “frames of intelligibility in the postmodern fiction”. Whilst according to Mas’ud Zavardeh, it does not limit the productive power of Historiographic metafiction to the literary narrative, but provides it to the other “modes of cultural (...) intelligibility” (607-11).

In the lights of Hutcheon’s theories, there are three prominent features and traits of Historiographic metafiction which are intertextuality, parody and paratextuality.

Intertextuality:

Intertextuality is a concept associated with Historiographic metafiction. It is a term coined in 1966 by the literary theorist Julia Kristeva. When she contrived her theory of intertextuality, she believed that there is a coherent force in literature that connects all the several traditions, past and present. According to Kristeva the concept of intertextuality is an expression of the complicated dependence of literary works on all literature that has come before them. She defined intertextuality as “reading between lines”. (15). Every text surly reveals that it situates in relation to any other text in the reduction of which it can be registered neither in the consciousness nor in the domain of signification. Therefore, it is so clear why Ronald Barthes preserved that “any text is an intertextual” (Hawthorne 127).

Barthes “intertext” is a universal and omniscient text to which all texts are members and in the environment of which they are present. Consequently, intertextuality is the significance of texts as they are related and connected to each other thematically and structurally. While this universal and omniscient text is more
than simple coming together of a number of individual texts, there are allusion and indication which tend the reader to collaborate in textual negations for better enlightenment. There are sound in which convey him to derelict time periods for his remembrances and sympathies. Thus, “intertextuality has it that a text should be read as a divided block of writing but in the lights of its relations to other texts’. However, Hawthorn detects the theory of intertextuality in another form, in Mikhail Bakhtim’s writings, he declares that “Dialogic element in all utterances” (126) basis a mode of intertextuality in the recent period, simply because dialogue excites a text to the question about the existence, the function and the meaning of any other text.

Furthermore, according to Hutcheon the writers of Reader’s Guide to contemporary literary theory believe that intertextuality is universal; it is more than producing “the past in the form of shallow and comprised nostalgia” (208). So, intersexuality examines the relationship between one literary text and other texts, in a domain of intertextuality, which is pluralistic, it is the solution of contemporary intellectual reader who reads to know everything and everywhere.

Parody:

Parody is derived from the Greek phrase parodia, which is referred to a type of poem which imitated the style of epic poem but which extra changes, corresponding to M.H. Abrams it is the imitation of the characteristic features of a particularly work, special style of a particular author, or different features of a literary genre, bring down the original by applying the imitation to a comically inappropriate subject (26). It is clear that the literary types originated from parody is the imitation of a literary work in a way that led the parodist to use techniques including drama, satire, irony,
hyperbolic statements that make it difficult for the reader to understand, for a parody there is a surface level as well as an under level.

On the surface level, it is the use of techniques such as derision, joke, drama, comedy and ridicule. On the other hand, there is conscious which make the reader to overtake his mentality and make himself accustomed to new idea, the thematic diverse of these works make the parody into satirical imitation which pledge the mental excitement of the reader (4).

Parody tends to suggest a new different mode of thoughts of the previous one for the disintegration to repeal a previous intelligibility, so parody is both, omission and revocation.

A Historiographic metafiction writer uses a parody in order to pledge that the canonical works should and can be re-evaluated, among techniques that set a work, author, and ideology under new reading of history, concerning parodist, this works are imitated also their intertextuality not just in their intention, concern this Hutcheon notes that “parody is not to destroy the past; in fact, to parody is both to enshrine the past and question it” (6).

Paratextuality:

Paratextuality used in Historiographic metafiction, in which it is the use of external documents in fiction. Hutcheon declares that postmodern novel paratextuality is characterized more by the use of footnotes, epigraphs, prefaces, and epilogue. Sometimes, they are parachuted directly into the fictive discourse”(92). These elements give certain clear orientation to the reader’s mind. David Herman asserts that “paratextuality materials afford resources for interpretation, allowing readers to channel and delimit their inferential activities by situating texts within generic (or
TEXT-TYPE) categories, historical epochs, author’s oeuvres, sociopolitical controversies, and so on “(190). Therefore, it is clear that the prtext is the cause for the creation of “protocol” which determines how the text should be read. Also “the paratext directs reading grounds interpretations, expand the frontiers of the text, and provides ways of differencing” (Austere 70), paratextuality is the outside of metafiction.

Time:

Moving to other major elements that construct Historiographic metafiction, one of the most important of them is time. It is a part of the setting and sometimes it is the story itself. Historical metafiction deals with a story in the past. Sometimes during a significant time period, we find that the writer focuses on the details of the story, and mixes the past, present and a little bit the future (Stephen 5).

Characters:

Fragmentations of characters on Historiographic metafiction techniques include fictional characters, well known historical figures. Concerning the fictional characters, the writer should succeed to create life like characters that are close to readers and make the character images touching which led the readers to accept and generate a wide range of resonance. Or they depict a mixture between fictional and real characters, with a explanations and details about the character, clothing, dialogue and even setting, to guarantee that they suit the time periods in which the narrative take place (Stephen 12)
Fragmentation of the plot and temporal distortion:

Fragmentation of plots is another important aspect of Historiographic metafiction, as Leith defines the plot as the series of events, of which a story is constituted. The Historiographic metafiction grasps that the cohesive plots that are established in traditional novels are not the true characteristics of reality, as Patricia Waugh proclaims “in showing us how literary fiction creates its imaginary worlds, metafiction helps to understand how the reality we live day by day is similarly constructed, similarly written” (Waugh 18).

More deeply the fragmentation of plot signifies the breaking rather than building up of information, and in general it refers to breakdown not only plots, also characters, themes, and setting. The reader cannot be sure if the narrator is credible or untrustworthy, it is breakdown of plot and sometimes it is very hard to understand the story because of the unordered plot, it may start the story by its end and then telling the story, this called the flashback and the forward back. In historical metafiction concerning the fragmentation there can be stories without plots, the story may be there even there is no sequence or series of incidents, the demand that the story can be within the plot, consequently plots may not occur in some historical metafiction that belongs to postmodern narratives, and also plots can be absent in the entire story (103-5). Also we can regard the fragmentation of the plot as the temporal distortion on which there is no linear time.

Dialogue:

In Historiographic metafiction novels, the use of dialogues between characters, especially the longue dialogues, is a technique that may let the reader believe in the
story especially when the dialogue combines between real events. This may give more
credibility to the whole novel or story (Mark 366).

Irony:

The notion irony has been used in the postmodern literature and in
Historiographic metafiction. Simply irony in the dictionary it is “……………….” While
more precisely in the postmodern literature as Brand Nicole illustrates it in his book
*The Cambridge Introduction to Postmodern Fiction* that according to the
understanding of irony that it is not importantly an empty, cynical or gesture but a an
important negotiation, strategy or a way to get rid of the inevitable silence of avant-
Garde (Nicole 16) while for The usage of irony, generally speaking it is more
premature with respect to the choice of form for stating the underlying or the exact
meaning. While precisely speaking the type of irony in postmodern is even more
precocious for the reason of the opposition between the construction meanings
(123). Ironic strategies are frequently examples of postmodern fiction,

Playfulness:

Concerning the term “playfulness” the writer Stuart Reifel in a book dubbed
*Play Context Revisited* it is said that the quest about the term followed two
mainstreams. First, the work of Barnett and her colleagues used the definition of
playfulness set by Lieberman which is “comprised of physical, cognitive, and social
spontaneity, manifest of joy, and sense of humor” (144) , while the second line was
set by Rogers who declares it along with Rubin, Fein, and Vandenberg as” a
behavioral disposition on that occurs in describable and reproducible contexts and is
manifest in a variety of observable behaviors”(qtd.in Reifel 144) after providing the
different illustrations given by various intellectuals he summed the right illustration as
the ability to play and to cover the attitude or spirit which one goes about an activity, and it does not differentiate between work and play (144).

Black Humor:

Postmodern authors were certainly not the first to use the humor in their writings but the technique black humor latter on became a major technique in postmodern writings. It has been defined in many sources and the direct simple one is “a form of humor that regards human suffering as absurd rather than pitiable, or that considers human existence as ironic and pointless but somehow comic” (dictionary.com). While Harold Bloom and Blacke Hobby in Dark Humor turning to French, it stands of “humour noir”, the last is seen in the Grand Larousse de la langue francaise as that form of humour which uses cruelty, bitrness, and sometimes despair, underlines the absurdity of the world” (81)

Paranoia:

Another label is named paranoia, the latter is celebrated in the postmodern pieces of writings and also in Historiographic metafiction. It is an “Unjustified suspicion and mistrust of other people” (Oxford Dictionaries) Victor E. Taylor and Charles E. Winquist proclaim that the postmodern writers and especially the Afro-American ones always tend to believe that the new world cannot be explained nor grasped and that any type of connections or controlling influences on the problems and the chaos of society would be something scary and this creates something called paranoia in many Historiographic metafiction postmodern literary works (Taylor and Winquist 2).

To sum up, Blackness and Historiographic metafiction were introduced as a new genre in literature at the beginning of the twentieth century, they appear as a
reaction against what was before. However; postmodernism is a vague to be defined, also we can notice that Historiographic metafiction is one of the black postmodern characteristics, in the same time it is continuity under “characteristics” since it has the same features. Historiographic metafiction is the combination between history and fiction, Historiographic metafiction is one of the black postmodern characteristics. Many writers wrote about Historiographic metafiction like John Fowles’, E. L. Doctorow, Ishmael Reed. Ishmael Reed is one of the best writers of Historiographic metafiction especially in his novel *Flight to Canada*. 
List of work cited:


Chapter Two

Analyzing Historiographic Metafiction in *Flight to Canada*

The general views which have been provided in the first chapter help the theoretical part which asserts the existence of Historiographic metafiction in black postmodern works. As a way to support the previous claim, the following chapter practically testifies the entity of Historiographic metafiction properties in the work of Ishmael Reed’s *Flight to Canada*.

This analysis shows how Reed has kept up with Historiographic metafiction as an important work through extracting the postmodernist Historiographic metafiction literary techniques in this work.


The Afro-American Ishmael Reed made his name with his important and famous works in which he tackled the black element and revealed the permeable nature of American experience and identity, he is always insisting of blacks and the issue of slavery.
More specifically, Ishmael Reed’s *Flight to Canada* is considered as an important work that regarded as an example of Postmodern Historiographic metafiction. Written in 1967, Ishmael Reed’s *Flight to Canada* is a novel which is considered as one of the outstanding books of postmodern era. In recent decades, critics and writers go to great lengths in categorizing this novel as a Historiographic metafiction. Although *Flight To Canada* is Reed’s civil war novel, all the ages of American history are compressed into this satire and irony, in Reed’s novel time is unprompted, the novel opens with a great poem “Flight to Canada”, pursued by a current repercussion on the modes in which Josiah Henson’s escaped slave narrative and Harriet Beecher Stowe’s more celebrate version, it helped create the story of war, in this novel Reed integrates between fiction and real events and also real historical characters.

*Flight to Canada* is divided into three parts, ”Naughty Harriet”, “Lincoln the Player”, and “The Burning of Richmond”. *Flight to Canada* is the fifth novel of Ishmael Reed, is a collection of imaginatively depicted civil war in South. It pictures the relationship between Arthur Swille, a factiously wealthy Virginia planter, and variety of sociologically stereotype slaves.

The novel is presented as the slave narrative of Uncle Robin repeatedly tells Swille that the plantation in his idea is paradise, and he confirms his master that does not trust or believe that Canada exist, Raven Quick skill, “the first one of Swille’s slaves to read, and the first to write, the first to run away”, is the author of Uncle Robin’s story (Reed 12).

In this novel the Afro-American writer presented it under the following Historiographic metafiction techniques: fluidity time, intertextuality, parody, paratextuality, fragmentation of the plot, temporal distortion, the use of adjectives,
revisionism, satire, humor and paranoia, Real places and characters and the use of letters

In the novel time is fluid, Reed made a mixture of time by using the past and the present, he superimposes the present on the past, for example, in this passage Reed mixing the present, past and future in one paragraph:

"I’m glad he’s doing my book. I’ll be glad to see him again. I wonder did he find what he was looking for in Canada? Probably all that freedom gets to you. Too much freedom makes you lazy" (Reed 178).

Time in this novel is “consciousness”, the use of time is binary, indicating the events, real and fictional of the 1860’s and 1970’s negotiated anachronisms are familiar, for example, when Abraham Lincoln first meets the Virginia aristocrats Arthur Swille …..”Swille is talking on the phone, the play at Ford’s theatre at which Lincoln is assassinated is carried on public television…” (25).

The use of intertextuality is to read what is between lines, it examines the relationship between one literary text and other texts, in Reed’s *Flight to Canada* intertextuality is destabilizing: it means to shape up our understanding, all the novel is a product of intertextuality. Reed uses materials from the past to explain the present or the future. In the case of *Flight to Canada* the past is most hilariously Harriet Beecher Stowe’s novel, Uncle Tom’s Cabin is a parody. The novel is Jerome, a demonized Uncle Tom’s Cabin that pictures upon two additional aspects of Reed’s “Voodoo” and “Neo hoodoo”.

Also we can analysis more the intertextuality by intertexts of Neo-HooDooism both in explicit and implicit way. In an interview with Reginald Martin, Ishmael Reed defines his artistic credit as an design process of rethinking and re-imagining the
various texts in order to create a syncretistic aesthetic: “There are European influences in my work, as well as African, Native American, Afro-American, and that’s what Neo-HooDooism is all about” (Ghorbani 12). Since Reed considers “the black aesthetic” a limiting term enforced by critics, he advocates the importance of Neo-HooDooism as an inclusive aesthetic that contains both written and folkloric texts, Eastern and Western influences, and a broad view on past and present historical events. The strongest point of Reed’s Neo-HooDooism consists in abolishing literary and historical conventions through his technique of making us contemporary with a multitude of texts and contexts that are reexamined throughout his whole work. Taking Reed’s Neo-HooDooist ideas as a starting point, Reed focuses on the neo-slave narrative *Flight to Canada* (1976) and the way it rewrites key nineteenth-century Euro-American texts.

From the analysis of the novel Reed uses both explicit references to Harriet Beecher Stowe and William Wells Brown and implicit allusions to Frederick Douglass, Harriet Jacobs, Edgar Allan Poe, Alexandre Dumas, Oscar Wilde, Walt Whitman, Alfred Lord Tennyson, Walter Scott, and others all of those in order to indulge in a subversive exercise of uprooting his black and white precursors. As Reed has no anxiety of influence, he designs his originality and intertextual strength from the transplanted texts that are reconsidered in both a creative and critical way. The novel is a powerful example of Historiographic metafiction (Ghorbani 5):

Why isn’t Edgar Allan Poe recognized as the principal biographer of that strange war? Fiction, You say? Where does fact being and fiction leave off? Why does the perfectly rational, in its own time, often sound like mumbo-jumbo? Where did it leave off for Poe, prophet of a
civilization buried alive, where according to witnesses, people were often whipped for no reason (Reed 10).

By using the analytical perspective of Linda Hutcheon, Reed’s *Flight to Canada* parodies the historical and literary of the slave narrative as written by both blacks and whites. Uncle Tom’s Cabin as Hutcheon declares that the novel is a “Mumbo Jumbo” extended and multiple parodic polemic, the writer referred to his novel in his poem he brings the original words of his previous novel by applying the imitation of comically inappropriate subject (26). And one of the most intertexts that occur from a poem by Reed for example:

I flew in non-stop
Jumbo jet this A.M Had
Champagne.
Compiments of the Cap’n
Who announced that a
Runaway Negro was on the
Plan. Passengers came up
And shook my hand
& within 10 min .I had
Signed up for 3 anti-slavery
Lectures . Remind me to get an
Agent.(Reed 3)

This novel depicts all the types of intertextual parody that were in American Fiction, corresponding to M.H. Abrams in the book of Linda Hutcheon that is clear that the literary types originated from parody is the imitation of a literary work in a way that led the parodist to use techniques including drama, satire, irony, hyperbolic statements
that make it difficult for the reader to understand, for a parody there is a surface level as well as an under level (27).

Concerning Paratextuality in *Flight to Canada*, it does not appear a lot because in all the novel Reed explains and gives a clear orientation to the reader’s mind, it is known that paratextuality is the use of epigraphs, prefaces, and footnotes (Hutcheon 92). Reed uses footnotes in two or three places, such this example:

> While I am a native mind riding
> Bareback, backwards through
> A wood of words and when I stumble
> I get my Ibo* and hobble
> Like a bloody-footed slave… (123).

Then the writer explains what does Ibo means, in a small clear definition that Ibo is a fiercely proud African who’d rather cut their throats than be sold into slavery (123). Another example in *Flight to Canada* in which the writer combines between intertextuality, parody and paratextuality is when Reed includes a poem of the famous poet Elymas Payson Roger:

> But all the blind Nebraskaites / Who have invaded human rights/ ………./ They trod upon the compromise (Reed 64-5).

Another used technique is the fragmentation of the plot; it is to break down the plot, characters, theme, and setting. Reed shifts and moves from a scene to another. He mixes artifacts of the present into the past such as Stowe’s tape recorder, Swille’s porno movies, Lincoln is shot on live TV. The writer ignored the chronological history, he gives his characters information and knowledge about the future; this resulted the fragmentation of plot.
According to A. Timothy Spaulding in his book *Reforming the Past: The Fantastic and the Postmodern Slave Narrative*, the time effects both characters and readers. Reed’s narrative deceives the reader through a reservation of material and creative anachronisms. He occupied the present and the past within the novel and made it fluid, which led to see the relationship between the current time and historical one as seamless. In fact that there are elements in the story that reject the temporal logic, for example, Raven Quickskill and the other characters who accept the reality of the past as bearing the mark of the present, and the readers also accept the relationship between American slavery and the contemporary culture (Spaulding 43).

Another technique is temporal distortion which is the continuity of the fragmentation of the plot. In *Flight to Canada*, it is used in the whole story, relying on the technique called temporal distortion in the scene that there is no exact order of time; for example, from the beginning of the story until the end it is completely the opposite because the writer started to talk about the end, then he moved to talk about the events of the story, in the scene that initially he provides the results than he gives the reason.

*Flight to Canada* has two time lines which move in parallel, one being the 1860s (the American Civil War period) and the other the 1970s. These "multiplicity" of narrative, and Reed’s creative anachronisms, once more, cause the blurring of time which confuses the reader about the exact time of each incident. For example, as it is said before that the writer in the beginning of the story started by its end, then he moved to the old days when Raven was a slave especially in the second part when he describes Lincoln the player.

Reed, in this novel, deals with characters in such a way that let the reader feel the characters presence because he serves details about each one. Both fictional and
historical figures are mixed in *Flight to Canada*, the characters do not belong to the world resembling everyday reality, their circumstances are humorous, Reed animates his fictional characters, also in the novel the writer mixes the fictional characters such as Princess Quaw Quaw Taralaralara, Mammy Barracuda, Lee Me…with historical figures such as the Story of Uncle Robin. He exposes the giant villains of American society through the eyes of one who has suffered at their hands. In *Flight to Canada* the writer prefers to exhibit that he knows more about the characters and this is obvious and appeared in the entire novel.

The writer awareness of the events along with the character mind is highly recognized in the whole story because they are part when the writer himself gives and paves the way for what is going to happen before the event would take place as an illustration of that in many places in the story not only on the first part which was celebrated a lot because as we know the first part in the story is its end. Three examples are evidence for what is said:

The first example:

Barracuda has a silk scarf tied about her head. She wears a diamond crucifix on her bosom. It’s so heavy she walks with a stoop. Once she Went into the fields and the sun reflected on her cross so, two slaves Were blinded (20).

The second example:

Quick skill walked the streets. He kept seeing license plates with VIRGINIA on them; they seemed to be following him. He put his collar up around his neck. He put his hands in his pocket. He kept walking against the windows, he was a fugitive ….he could disguise himself (76).
The third example:

He looked at her. She was staring straight ahead. She stared vacantly like that until they reached the Eagle Hotel. When he checked in there was a note for him Uncle Robin. The next morning he received another note. Her note. In the middle…, she had left the hotel (165).

Reed before every scene prefers to illustrate what is going to happen and gives details about how it is going to be and what are the conditions in order to let the reader and put it in the heart of the scene.

The writer in all the novel uses dialogue in a way we can say that fifty percent of the novel is a dialogue and conversation between the characters. The writer in this novel is an epilogue he steps and speaks indirectly to the reader by explaining the dialogue; the setting, example: Jeff Davis was fresh out of his chair…with a serious dreamily look, he says “listen, ah, 40s, I have to go” then Reed explains that Lincoln wants just to know why they were(78). We can say that the reader by using dialogues with an explanation to illustrate the condition that around the characters is in a way or another used in order to addressed the reader directly.

The use of letter:

Dear QuawQuaw Where ever or whoever: Maybe one day people of your class will realize that people of my class must grovel, worm ad root our way through life fending off the bad birds so we’ve little time to take those we love under our wing. And that we become like mythical goof us birds, invented by lumbermen I think s who fly backwards and build their nests upside down. We get smashed and our ending are swift(12).
The second example is the letter back by QuawQuaw,

Dear Raven,

And I thought our people were bad, Worshiping Bears, Turtles’, Ravens, Coyotes and Eagles, but your people worship any old thing or make an “object of reverence “ of just about any “new thing” , HooDoo expression you once taught me, “Only Ghosts hate New Thing” and then that morning I saw you , in our berth on the steamer , lake Erie …You thought I was asleep.(12).

These two letters were used by Reed in order to show the reader the relation between Raven and Quaw Quaw , to show us that she always came back and both care about the Human condition as Reed described it.

Another form of Historiographic metafiction is to give real places in order to let the reader and convince him about reality and truth of the story explicitly; this is through the historical characters and places. This technique used in all the parts of the novel, example in the first chapter when Reed was talking about Harriet Beecher Stowe who is an afro-American writer who wrote about uncle tom Cabin, this is concerning the use of reality, The Queen Victoria was mixed as a historical character with a fictional character Josiah Henson in one paragraph:”Josiah Henson went away and fell in love with Wood Nobody can tale his wood. His walnut boards. He took his walnut boards to England and exhibited them at the crystal palace. Met the young Queen Victoria” (8).

Also here the writer refers to a real place such “Crystal Palace”, also in another example Reed uses real places,, “Camelot .Where is this town , aide ?How far
away I this town Camelot? it is a train stop? Is it in Virginia? Camelot is the mythical
city of Arthurian legend, Mr. Lincoln”(47).

Also another real place is a hotel situated in America until now days , Reed
states that : “The note she had left Quick skill on the dresser of the Eagle Hotel had
read merely , “Gone South” , with her signature scrawled underneath”(12).

Reed tries to show real characters from reality “history” and also real places
that still exist with fluent details about them, the aim behind using reality in places or
in characters, both is to let the reader be familiar with the story, because in all his
writing of Reed is difficult to be understood, so as if we can say it is as “help” from
the writer.

In *Flight to Canada*, Reed uses satire, humor and comedy, invective in order to
create narrative space of western hegemony, to show that slaves are suffering .in all
the novel Reed’s try to discuss an present an important issue which is slavery in a
comic way in order to let the reader enjoy the reading and in the same time in order to
convince the reader that there is a serious issue that should be tackled for example:

The snake society went on satellite television to take credit for it, and
added an especially grisly sidelight to a most heinous crime by joking
that the head was covered with crocodile regurgitation because Mitchell
was too rich for the crocodile, and that the crocodile just Kinda laid
around on the banks these day, wearing Bloomingdale shades, and was
calling himself Aldo the Gourmet Crocodile.(17)

In this example Reed employs satire, humor and paranoia not just to create a
narrative space we can call this also the playfulness, at the same time as a weapon to
remind us of the dangers of taking ourselves and our cherished opinions too seriously.
We also note that the existence of a set of adjectives which serve to add beauty and to give extra details about the event in the following paragraph is an example about the use of adjectives: “Leech field was lying naked, his rust-colored body must have been greased, because it was glistening and there was…” (71) here the writer tries to show that Leech did not know how to lie his lying were obvious because his face is innocent. Another example: “They are using long golden combs. Ms. Swille is propped in the bed. She has a Band-Aid on her skin, here and there. Her skin is a raw red from the scalding hot water. She is drinking a tall glass of milk between sobs” (114). The writer here also used adjectives to describe in a way or another, the relationship between Swill and his lover he describes the scene then he continued in the novel to narrate and show the tenderness of Swille.

Regarding this we note the following adjectives from the first and second extract: naked, rust-colored, long, golden, raw, red, hot, and tall. They are all used in stand of clarify Reed’s scene in the two examples.

One of the most important characteristics of Historiographic metafiction is revisionism in which it is the essential that we look at history with a critical eye to performed the past, and to record the historical events. In Flight to Canada, the writer has focused in all the story in recording the historical events, and mentioning some historical information that has nothing to do with the story, for example: mentioning the story of Abraham Lincoln using a dive that’s a telephone, something was highly noticed in both in written form of the story Flight to Canada and also the movie for the sake of liberation and also as a process of developing and refining the writing of history (24).
Those are the most important techniques of Historiographic metafiction that applied in Ishmael Reed’s *Flight to Canada*, we can notice that the author focused on details and the small things that other writers ignored them.

In his novel *Flight to Canada*, Reed shows how the slave’s story could be manipulated by abolitionist through merciless portrait of Harriet Beecher Stowe stealing Josiah Henson’s narratives and themes of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. Also, *Flight to Canada* exposes anachronisms in the scene in which the president Abraham Lincoln’s assassination being shown on Television, this reveal the unlooked period between slavery and the present. (Crisu 99).

The novel starts with a poem of the same title as the book, ‘*Flight to Canada,*’ written by Raven Quickskill, which narrates his escape and subsequent flight to Canada in a “non-stop/Jumbo jet” (Joe 3). Being through different adventures, Quickskill finally succeeds to escape to Canada – the slaves’ supposed utopia – only to be bitterly disillusioned that no such utopia can ever exist and to recognize that slavery is, in another way, present in Canada. His once-slave Carpenter friend who escaped to Canada before Quickskill, informs him that in Canada “Vigilantes harass fugitive slaves, and the slaves have to send their children to schools where their presence is subject to catcalls and harassment” (Butter 160), and that, in fact, “Americans own Canada” (161). this poem if we analysis it is written in a form of a letter because he started it by the opening phrase of the letter “Dear”:

Dear Massa Swille

What is was,

I have done my Liza Leap

& am safe in the arms

Of Canada, so
Ain’t no use your slave

Catcher's waitin on me

At Traiways

I won’t be there (Reed3).

From this extract we can notice that is not a poem like the ordinary poems but it’s more deeply and clear that was a letter, also we can understand that is a letter from his word “waitin” instead of waiting and “&” instead of the pronoun I, if it was a poem he cares about the correct words.

To sum up, in all Reed’s novel there are a clear use of Historiographic metafiction; characters, poem, letter, flash back …Ect. These techniques prove that Flight to Canada is a Historiographic metafiction work. All critics argue about Ishmael Reed writing that are difficult to be read because of” the lack of plot” and “stock characters”, the fact that Reed is not clear he tackled many things at the same time, when reader and critics miss to survey the allusion used in his work which resulted the negative, misreading, and misinterpretations. Also the use of the other Historiographic metafiction those which were used by Reed in Flight to Canada have an important effects which let and help the reader to understand the novel, also to give his work credibility, as many critics stated that the use of Historiographic metafiction is not an easy task to apply it in the entire novel.
End notes:

(1) **Voodoo**: A religion of West African origin practiced chiefly in Haiti and other Caribbean countries, based on animism, magic, and elements of Roman Catholic ritual, and characterized by belief in a supreme God and a large pantheon of local and tutelary deities, deified ancestors, and saints, who communicate with believers in dreams, trances, and ritual possessions.

(2) **Neo hoodoo**: Hoodoo consists of a large body of African folkloric practices and beliefs with a considerable admixture of American Indian botanical knowledge and European folklore. Although most of its adherents are black, contrary to popular opinion, it has always been practiced by both whites and blacks in America.


Chapter Three

*Flight to Canada* behind the Layers of Revisionism and Rewriting History

Going via the history of human beings, one can detect that God granted them freedom with all its deep meanings. Recently the latter was exposed to a complete violation. Since many people started to lose their Freedom, identities, and values due to colonization, gender, racism and so many other reasons. Black Americans were highly hosted to such violations and more precisely the Afro-Americans, their history reveals to what extent they suffered for displacement, lack of identity, segregation, discrimination, and lynching because of racism. However, with that being said, this chapter is serve to tackle one of the famous Afro–American writer dubbed Ishmael Reed, more than that it will give an insight look on the idea of rewriting history and how he was able to reinvent the past events in his piece of writing by means of mixing Historical metafiction and history for the sake of liberation from cultural and artistic slavery in *Flight to Canada*.

Concerning the significance of Historiographic metafiction, many writers praised its contributions to the field of literature in general and in the area of Afro-American pieces of writings. In a book entitled *History and National Ideology in Greek Postmodern Fiction*, it declares that metafiction as a concept shows a way to investigate the manners postmodernist authors approach theses concerns. He states that since the process of metafiction highlights the complex ways in which text are made up as an example the constructiveness of reality. Historiographic metafiction, in particular, gave emphasis on the issue of making sense or rationalizing the events of history and the manners in which historiography is another kind of narrative
construction (Kastan 10). Historiographic metafiction has simply taken up those issues that postmodern historiography deals with as Kasten states:

subjectivity with its notion of mediation, partiality, and perception; uncertainty and questions of textuality, construction, and the creation of historical discourse, selection of its problems of inclusion and exclusion, missing evidence, multiculturalism, margin(s) versus center, and surprised history (22).

Concerning these points according to the same writer those fictions are still historical novels, they have been written with an eye to some of the mentioned points above, but this does not mean that fiction must in a way contain and cover all of the notions to be labeled as a postmodern historical fiction.

Such historical distinction does not make any sense for Hutcheon, in which she listed three primary characteristics which Lukas come up with, at the same time she was describing how Historiographic metafiction changes in each regard. The most interesting thing to be noticed is that in each case Historiographic metafiction is nothing other than historical fiction.

Regarding the importance of history, many writers agreed that History was delivered through writing. It is writing that brings back time and draw the previous life from events and characters. Writing is a key contributor in the field of both history and literature. In the sense that any piece of writing that delivers historical information is because of some writer who made it a part of their journey. So one may wonder why writing history? Such a question is simple yet is so profound in meaning and requires a serious quest to unveil the motives behind verbalizing and recording history (Gerda 25).
Wilhelm Dilthey declares that “the power and the breath of our lives and the energy with which we reflect on them are the foundation of historical vision” (qtd. in Gerda). He even states that being historians is shared and practiced all human being as a mere example, presenting ourselves to strangers is via retelling stories of our lives, retelling is exposed to many interpretations and different emphasis. In the sense that we strengthen individual events as having been crucial at various times of our lives in our life history and by doing so events are given new meanings. Though what has been explained is a process of the so-called making history yet people are not aware of such natural action that is telling history (Gerda 29).

Regarding this one can detect that understanding history is a matter of daily life activity and that verbalizing previous events are included in making history itself. So it is not bounded to certain high educated people sitting behind their desks writing books about history. Through history personalities are recognized boundaries are set, nations are built. The same wonder of why writing history from the first place has been tackled in an article. The latter states that that dropping own history doesn’t mean bringing facts together to have some historical chronological, it is the process of making shaping known facts into a coherent whole, so history as an academic discipline is an “interpretive craft”, which means that historians are not interested in explaining or exposing someone or something in the past but either it aims at showing how that thing or that person changes over time, it answers historical question like why events took place, who or what caused it, why it happened when it happened … in addition to that writing history depends on two main sources: primary ones which are contemporary with the chosen event like newspaper, letters, a historical accounts based on interviews. Secondary sources, which includes history textbooks, articles that are written after the event (30).
Writing history is quite clear, but the interesting thing is that it has been written one more time. Such way of rewriting what has been written is known as revisionism. The latter has been defined in Why American history is not what they say that the term revisionism applies the study of history. Joseph R. Stroberg states that “it refers to any efforts to revise a faulty existing historical record or interpretation” (qtd in Barnes 5) another one came to afford a very long yet convincing illustration of the term revisionism, Harry Elmer Barnes says “the effort to review the historical record in the light of a more complete collection of historical facts, a more calm political atmosphere, and a more objective attitude” (72) regarding this the task of revisionism embeds a call for revising or checking out and scrutinizing the recorded events when having new facts (72).

Harry Elmer Barnes stated that rewriting history in not something modern, it is old that can be traced ages before, more than that he says that the revisionist is the one who is able enough to view basic facts in different ways as in interrelated and unified in new relationship he states that:

Revisionism has been most frequently and more efficiently applied to correcting the historical record about wars because truth is always the first war. The emotional disturbances and distortions in historical writing are greatest in wartime, and both the need and the material for correcting historical myths are most evident and profuse in connection with wars (72).

Regarding Barnes illustration, it is claimed that rewriting history is bound to reshape records related mainly to wars. To correct them, because the truth is seen as a war in itself in a period in which writing about history is tainted with emotional disorder along with deformation, therefore, the need to correct historical myths is
evident in war time. The writer tackles the issue of revisionism in different ways; one is explaining that the task of the revisionist is to fulfill the urge to discover new realities. Since according to Barnes the student of history is always given more space while writing if compared to a chemist, biologist …Etc since a student of history is not in need of writing down (72-5).

History matters and writing it is actually valuable and precious, that is generally speaking, but when it comes to literature an acute insight is needed. Writing history was highly celebrated in literature; Ishmael Reed is one of the early writers who deal with rewriting history almost in all of his works. As the great writer, Harries Glen states that “The publication of Flight to Canada in 1976 pictured a return to the levels of quality and originality in Reed’s first three novels. This shows a great example of Historiographic metafiction “(Harris 461), Reed once again uses parody to date us history published the same year as the bicentennial, Flight to Canada includes Reed’s repayment to two hundred years of official history. In its pages he attacks the most untouchable myths of US traditions, centering on the period of the civil war both the union world view and the allied ideals are undermined by Reed’s chew satire Lincoln is like an illiterate and trimmer who states redaction of the slaves is an act of cunning political pragmatism (Navaro 90).

Harriet Beecher Stowe is mimic who becomes rich at the expense of other’s suffering (her uncle tom’s cabin was “lifted from Josiah Henson), who appears in the novel as Uncle Robin, the new capitalist order introduced after the union’s destiny. Southern values are compiled by Swille, the ruler of a decadent empire that is haunted by Edgar Allan Poe’s ghost and modeled on the image of King Arthur’s Camelot. Along with nineteenth –century characters and situations, the novel introduces element from twentieth –century technology ( telephone, TV, cassette, Xerox
machines, radio, microphone, helicopters). Raven Quickskill, the protagonist, escapes to Canada in a jumbo jet, Lincoln’s assassination is broadcast live and replayed as part of TV broadcast of the play My American Cousins, the novel language is not typical of traditional and slang, the result is one of the most aggressive expressions of what Brian MCHale has called the postmodernist revisionism of the historical novel (91).

In introducing twentieth–century material culture into the past, the story undermines conventional chronology and thereby twists the linear logic of discourse that dominates official historiography. Above all, Reed’s apocryphal version of the events allows the reader to witness a rewriting of US political history that identifies the past’s actual protagonists and rescues its real victims (93).

Quickskill’s *Flight to Canada* allegorizes the search for an aesthetic utopia represented by writing in a state of liberty, an ideal for which Reed has fought in all his work. The novel ends with its protagonist coming to an understanding of his condition: Canada is only a state of mind, a desirable ideal the black writer has to strive for, no matter where he may be physical. The fact that Reed has his protagonist return to the South and devote himself to rewriting history is symbolic of the author’s engagement with his immediate reality and contradicts the charges of escapism that social–realist critics have launched against him (93).

*Flight to Canada* is simultaneously a declaration for creative freedom and denunciation of the plunder of black culture by the white cultural establishment. In its pages Reed develops tendencies he had outlined in previous novels, especially *Mumbo Jumbo*. In terms of plot, however, Reed abandons the detective genre as the book’s structuring convention to focus on the recreation of slave narratives.
successful result of this work which considered as the best works of Reed after mumbo-jumbo stems from the multiplicity of its levels of interpretation, from the inexhaustible richness of its network of allusion, and, above all, from the active interaction between parodic play and Historiographic reflection (94).

All of Reed’s novels follow a process of continuity regarding aspects of the postmodernist historical novel. They frequently refer to the dark areas of the past to understand present reality. Indeed, history is seen as the eternal conflict between the tragic and repressive spirit of humorous and liberating forces represented by African American culture and the indigenous people of America (94).

In his book entitled Reforming the Past: History, the Fantastic, and the Postmodern Slave Narrative, A.Ti Monthy Spaulding tackled the quest from the start of the novel, he recognized that the poem “Flight to Canada” as a tool to supply an instant support from anti-slavery movement, also Reed detailed the satirical and pragmatic view of the slave narrator when he introduced William Wells Brown into the novel, he presented it in the story as the black writer (Afro-American) who avail capitalism from within the system also the character Raven is a potent symbol in Flight to Canada to reinvented and represent the quest for liberation of cultural, economic and aesthetic slavery (Spaulding 185).

A.Ti Monthy Spaudling reports that three essential tools are to take away their language, their folklore, and their spirituality. When slave-trading whites from the West attempted warrant subjugation of African slaves, they used these tools with a vengeance. In his anachronistic satire of the Civil War, Flight to Canada, Ishmael Reed wrists these devices from the hands of the oppressors and holds them back to his characters, through promoting liberation (186).
The fraud figure is a standard of African folklore and by extension, has become part of African American literature. Reed is by far not the first to inquire the cheat. Nineteenth Century writers such as Chestnutt and Harris, Twentieth Century writers such as Hughes and Ellison, and on into the Twenty-first century in the works of Toni Morrison and others, have the trickster appear as a way of holding onto to an identity, which colonial powers have continually sought to squelch. In *Flight to Canada*, the trickster is embodied in two characters: Raven Quickskill and Uncle Robin (187).

The novel begins with a poem that carries the same name as the book. The poem is a letter from Quickskill to Massa Swille. The letter exposes that the narrative joined with the trickster myth has already been played out. Indeed, the trickster has won out over his oppressor who, according to the myth, is always equipped with more resources. Quickskill is a relative avatar for Ishmael Reed.

The second trickster in novel, Uncle Robin, plays a significant function in the downfall of oppression's representative in the story, Massa Swille. After Swille appears with a Mephistophelian end, it becomes transparent that by attending his "owner's" will, Robin has managed the slaves freedom and granted himself and his wife the plantation. He says to Aunt Judy, "Sometimes the god that works fast for them is slow or indifferent for us. We have to call on our gods. When we came here, our gods evolved with us. They'll never go away"(Reed 170).

Here Reed demonstrates the beginning of the spiritual beliefs that came as part of an African heritage. Quickskill also alludes numerous times throughout to definitely non-Western, non-Christian spiritual tenants (Spaulding 130).
With Swille dead, it is now safe for Quickskill to turn and the story ends with the possibility of its beginning when Quickskill remains down to write. By this action, while admittedly not in any African language, he does take back the power of language and will tell the tale of a Flight to Canada, requesting the folklore of his ancestors who had been shackled and dragged from their home and into bondage. Reed has now returned language, folklore, and spirituality to the ghosts of those from whom it was stolen (130).

Reed also expresses on the Uncle Tom stereotype in this piece of writing. The reader is presented with numerous chances for coping with slavery and racism. Raven Quickskill hopes to write, to connect with his people and to try to explain the complexities of the system. He holds and servitude as he runs away from his master Swille and protests to even venture to buy himself because, as he points out, he is not property but a person. Stray Leechfield, another left slave, takes a changed sweep. He trades his body so that he can redeem himself, taking part in pornography (Stroberg 55).

Quickskill is terrified at Leechfield's enthusiasm to take part in this racist doctrine, even for this plan. A third option is demonstrated in the experience of Uncle Robin, upon whom Harriet Beecher Stowe based some of her Uncle Tom's Cabin and who is a trusted and loyal servant of Swille--except he is also taking advantage of Swille. He switches Swille's will so that the plantation is left to himself instead of Swille's family and, because he has performed the Uncle Tom so absolutely, the family recognizes it as a reward for his loyal service (55-9).

Those are the most important events and interpretation of Reed as many producers have found their voices through the means of re-writing early African
Diasporic experience. One product of this self-conscious act is the production of the “neo-slave narrative”: a subgenre of historical fiction, which often discuss opportunities of the slave experience.

In a sensitive reading made by Kalenda Eaton, she represented the work of Reed from another direction, Flight to Canada, Reed’s early novel about the economics of slavery, impossibility of escape, curiously uses black female characters as comic relief in an attempt to maintain the fully expands male characters. This move believes black women have the power of collective agency, absent in communities of black men, which allows them to resist unfavorable images. Therefore, the use of parody and satire becomes intricately tied read of gender dynamics within the black slave community in the authors’ attempts to retain the male figure from the annals of history. In Warriors, Conjurers, and Priests, Joyce Ann Joyce notes, “Not surprisingly, one of the most important problems in scholarship on [Ishmael] Reed involves his negative characterizations of Black women” (qtd in Eaton). She then continues to argue in Reed’s favor and states, “Though he challenges societal evils, he is not didactic, and no one, neither man nor woman, escapes from his novels unscathed” (41).

Reed's novel follows Raven Quickskill’s escape from a southern plantation and the effect his flight has on the remaining inhabitants. He is able to compose himself into being with crafty poetry and numerous letters detailing his exploits in the northern United States. Throughout his satirical portrayal of 19th century America, Reed explores Abraham Lincoln’s rhetoric, white gentility, and the “cult of true womanhood”, while also revealing the exploitation of the fugitive slave on the lecture circuit and Harriet Beecher Stowe’s “theft” of Josiah Henson’s life story among other tantalizing historical truths. Reed utilizes the location of the novel to try the weighty
issue of black complicity in the slave system as well as cross-racial intimacy encouraged by the isolation of plantation (Eaton 44).

The famous novel entitled *Flight to Canada* describes a search for liberation that goes behind the physical and aesthetic dimensions of slavery as a foundation. In the sense that in the whole journey, Raven confronts two characters who also tries to destroy the varied aspects of slavery, as a starting point, one of them is called Stray Leechfield, a friend of Raven Quicksill and formerly a fellow slave on Swille's plantation, another one is called Quaw Quaw Tralaralara, a native American woman, and Raven's lover.

Within his connections with these characters, Raven starts to question his position as a commodity in a commodity culture. Leechfield and Quaw Guaw present Raven with differentiating strategies of destroying cultural slavery and eventually express failed models in this examination (44).

In response to these two methods, forms an alternative and oppositional aesthetic that critiques rather than corresponds to the hegemony of American commodity culture. By conflating time through a reproduction of anachronisms, Reed confirms Leechfield and Quaw Quaw's preoccupation with cultural commodities and market forces as contemporary responses to slavery (50).

On one hand, Stray Leechfield attempts to achieve freedom by manipulating the game of cultural commodities on solely economic terms. In the process, Leechfield disregards the implications and possibly debasing effects his design will have on his narrative authority and political agency. On the other hand, Quaw Quaw Tralaralara tries to transcend cultural slavery on entirely aesthetic terms by producing a
marketable and universal form of expression. Ultimately, her playful and abstract representations fail to achieve any political efficacy (54).

To sum up, one can easily notice that the state that Historiographic metafiction novels are a vehicle for rewriting history and recovering the past in unconventional ways, more than that its core is not restricted to is not to bring into life the historical past. Furthermore, but it is to represent and revision it and the illustration with the Afro-American writer Ishmael Reed in *Flight to Canada* is a key evident that the bottom line is to represent the past events and to show the importance of history and to give a new interpretations and most of all its significance relies on how much it is significant in serving and ushering liberation from the issue of slavery.
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General Conclusion:

Postmodern literature avails a reaction to the given stylistic and ideological limitations of modernist literature and the radical changes the world sustained after the end of World War II. The postmodern literary writers have been influenced by different movements and ideas taken from the postmodern philosophy.

Black postmodernism is a new movement that appeared in the twentieth century as a rejection against all movements before black postmodernism is one of the postmodernism genres that deals with serious and important issues by using different techniques of literature.

Historiographic metafiction is a new term coined by Linda Hutcheon under and as one of postmodern characteristics. Historiographic metafiction is a combination between history and fiction, it is an important genre that emerged and most used by African-American writers.

Historiographic metafiction has many characteristics that built the Historiographic metafiction novels such as intertextuality, paratextuality, parody, fiction, black humor, the used of letters and dialogues, all those characteristics can be used to an effective tool for achieving a specific artistic, intellectual and ideological purpose.

There exist a close relationship between history and literature (fiction). Moreover as we all know that behind any literary work there should be some historical events that inspire the writer to create a piece of writing, Flight to Canada 1976 a work by the Afro-American writer Ishmael Reed that shows the relationship between history and fiction, and how a historical events can be served and reinvented in order to present
and record the past events in a present interpretations for the sake of liberation from cultural, economic and religious from slavery. Eventually History and literature are interdependent, we can compare their link to the reason and the feelings, the mind and the heart, the soul and the body.

Finally, Reed managed to create a novel that gave equal interest to the content and the form through the adaptation of history and fiction.
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