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Conclusion

In: Šalamoun, Jiří. *The satire of Ishmael Reed : from non-standard sexuality to argumentation*. First published Brno: Masaryk University Press, 2019, pp. 104

ISBN 978-80-210-9366-9; ISBN 978-80-210-9367-6 (online : pdf)

Stable URL (handle): <https://hdl.handle.net/11222.digilib/141703>

Access Date: 16. 12. 2024

Version: 20220831

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7 CONCLUSION

In her published collection of lectures delivered at Harvard University, Toni Morrison asks the following question: “What happens to the writerly imagination of a black author who is at some level always conscious of representing one’s own race to, or in spite of, a race of readers that understand itself to be ‘universal’ or race free?” (*Playing in the Dark* xii). This book proposes one of many answers by claiming that such a writer can change their mode of writing so that it can reach American readers in a novel way. It has shown on the example of the novels of Ishmael Reed how his satire has significantly changed and adapted itself to a new understanding of racism in America in order not to lose its relevance. It has also shown that Ishmael Reed no longer presumes that racism is evident and that his novels no longer attack it with satire based on the revelation of vice or defects of character. Instead, using argument-based satire, they demonstrate it before they dismantle it. This book argues that the argument-based satire of Ishmael Reed is now a better means of countering racism since it provides more guidance to the reader, who is nudged to reach conclusions that are more in line with Reed’s and with current research in social sciences.

Satire scholar Kirk Combe writes that “[s]atire is a product of a particular person writing at a particular time for a particular audience within a particular society” (74). It hence appears natural that Reed changes his satire and irony in order to adjust his literary output to the new realities of American society. Since Reed’s contrast-based irony relies too much on a degree of understanding which is no longer a part of American life, it is not likely to be a very effective form of satire with which to attack racism in the contemporary United States of America. I would like to express the hope that this is not the case with argument-based satire, which can now achieve ends that Reed’s previous form of satire no longer can.