Neither Black nor White: A New Approach to the Modern Racial Plight in Jean Toomer's *Cane*

ID No. 2534

(PP 307 - 316)

https://doi.org/10.21271/zjhs.23.3.18

Khadeeja Saeed Ismail
English Department- College of Education
Salahaddin University-Erbil
khadeeja.ismail@su.edu.krd

Juan Abdullah Ibrahim
English Department- College of Languge
Salahaddin University-Erbil
juan.ibrahim@su.edu.krd

Received: 11/08/2018
Accepted: 28/04/2019
Published: 20/06/2019

Abstract

Prior to the publication of *Cane*, the light-skinned African American author Jean Toomer (1894-1967) seemed to declare his black blood. However, with his travel to Georgia to find solace with the black-skinned race and serve as a school principal he starts distancing himself and his works from the African-American label. Thus, Toomer's journey to the south formed the bases of his creativity, set him in the mid of his racial confusion and motivated him to create a new race in America, demonstrated in *Cane*.

Toomer's reaction to the horrified state of the blacks in the south is revealed through his rejection of being labeled a Negro. Though this rejection has been interpreted as a disapproval of the black race and black culture, an accurate examination of *Cane* would reveal that rather than denying black race Toomer was disaffirming race altogether. More importantly, Toomer worked for swaying away the restrictions posed on the issue of racial discrimination through claiming a universal existence of man, regardless to his color or the group he belongs to. Hence, he established the notion of a "new race in America", formed through the combination of various races, and he regarded himself as the epitome of this new race.

This study sheds some lights on various techniques Toomer employs for rejecting racial categorization in *Cane*. *Cane* is Toomer's most influential criticism of American racial stereotypes. It rejects the peculiar stereotypical description of African Americans, through the depiction of a number of characters entrapped by racial boundaries, and struggle to overcome racial segregation. These characters who are embodiments of the author's beliefs are representatives of individuals of Toomer's new American race. Thereby, Toomer's technique of defending the blacks is unique and different from his African-American contemporaries due to his daring and unusual treatment of the issue of race. For the sake of illustrating Toomer's peculiar notion of race, several prose vignettes and poems from *Cane* are depicted for analysis.

KeyWords: race, color, Toomer, Negro, *Cane*.

1. Introduction

In 1903, W. E. B. Du Bois, the essayist, historian, and novelist as well as the founder and editor of *The Crisis*- a monthly journal defending the rights of all men regardless to their race- proclaimed, "The problem of the Twentieth century is the problem of the color line" (Edwards, 2007: xv). This statement, which occurred in his book T*he Souls of Black Folk*, is probably the most well-known articulation of the contest that race set forth to the United States with the onset of the twentieth century. Undoubtedly, in lifting the "veil", the great and predictor Du Bois was trying to concert the boundaries that isolated blacks and whites.

For Jean Toomer, the challenge was "color" itself rather than being the "line". According to Toomer, the American fusion of color and race was the greatest problem to dispatch. His best known volume, C*ane*, is his attempt to overcome that problem. In C*ane*, Toomer tries to sweep away color as a definition of racial identity and to attribute literal colors to the aspect of visual delineation.

Toomer's life and literary career have confused generations of critics and readers accurately due to the puzzle of color. They wondered how they categorize a man who

belonged to both sides of the color line but approved neither. They wondered as well to which genre attribute *Cane*, which defies genre classification as Toomer who had the wish of defying racial categorization (Nadell, 2001: 142).

However, Toomer's stance to the issue of race is interpreted differently in the shadow of the difference of his concept in this realm. Rather than calling for equality between pure races, Toomer pleads for a universalized race, and this new attitude of race emerges as a consequence of his multiracial roots. Moreover Toomer's dissatisfaction with the state of certain racial groups stimulated him to invent a new perspective on this matter.

2. Toomer's Conception of a New "American" Race:

In response to the inadequacy Toomer noticed in American notions of race, he visualized a "new race in America", that could be illustrated solely by a new American literature. Toomer regarded himself as the epitome of this new race. During the celebration of his marriage to a white woman, Margery Latimer, an incident invoked the national press to depreciate miscegenation or marriage between people of two different races, he (qtd in Nuzum, 2003: 10) affirmed:

> There is a new race in America. I am a member of this new race. It is neither white nor black nor in-between. It is the American race, differing as much from white and black as white and black differ from each other. It is possible that there are Negro and Indian bloods in my descent along with English, Spanish, Welsh, Scotch, French, Dutch and German. This is common in America; and it is from these strains that the American race is being born. But the old divisions into white, black, brown, red, are outworn in this country. They have had their day. Now is the time of the birth of a new order, a new vision, a new ideal of man. I proclaim this new order. My marriage to Margery Latimer is the marriage of two Americans**.**

Toomer aimed at combating what George Hutchinson phonily conceived as the American racial discourse's "belief in unified coherent 'black' and 'white' ". (Sollors, 2000: 371) He imagined his new race as an American "ideal" that included and yet exceeded all racial classes, and consequently moving further away than binary racial discourse (Nadell, 2001:143).

Toomer's sophisticated, frequently contrastive opinions regarding race-specifically his own race-have been discussed by scholars to date. The nature of existing reviews on Toomer varies from laudatory-admiring his successful attitude against the incorrect notions of "one-drop" concept of racial purity-to flattering degrading his deception of African- Americans in the statements that portray his denial of his "Negro" heritage. As a supporter of being a member in the "American race," rather than a skin color-determined race, Toomer earns a radical position. This is due to his rejection of the supposition of the inferiority of the "pure blood" or the so called "African blood" people to the other racial groups. Yet this attitude advocates Toomer's life as an African American, exposed to the restrictions and prejudices associated with that name, and thereby create a problematic position for the writer who assists the ushering in the Harlem Renaissance with a modernist brilliant work.

The affair of Toomer's vision of race does not accept a unique and consistent explanation. His multiple autobiographies attempt to demonstrate a fixed narrative, yet the great textual evidence of his career turns that trial problematic. Undoubtedly, Toomer is more fascinated by the "Negro problem" of the day and more amenable to approve the "Negro" label before the printing of *Cane*. In 1922, within the content of a letter Toomer wrote to Sherwood Anderson, Toomer's friend who has a great role in the development of modern writing in the United States, he describes empathetically the deep inferiority incorporated within African Americans, who, due to extreme disenfranchisement, prejudice and fear of bodily torturing, think they ought to choose either assimilation or isolationism. Yet, as he admits his African legacy, he reprehends Anderson as well for restricting his outlook of

Toomer to "Negro" in writing to Waldo Frank dated to 1923: "as an approach, as a constant element (part of a larger whole) of interest, Negro is good. But to try to tie me to one of my parts is surely to loose me." (Vetter, 2010: 137). These words present a preview of the coming Toomer, a man profoundly engaged with the discursive fragmentation of his body, the use of body parts and this awe is resonated as he refers, in one of his autobiographies, to his uneasy state of mind in the *Cane* era of the early 1920s: "Spiritually I was plunged into the fundamental problems of this era; and the plunge, though invaluable as a means to the expansion of my consciousness, and my conscious individualization, sort of dislocated my parts." (Vetter, 2010: 137). This is because of Toomer's desire to behold human beings instead of races as Diana Adesole Mafe (2013: 87) proclaims, "[he] stood apart from his contemporaries because of his desire to see human beings rather than races." Thus, the evidences from *Cane's* advertising and framing years reveal a Toomer who aims at complicating the category of "Negro" identity more than disavowing it.

In fact, Toomer rejects the scientific views explaining the formation of the "new American race" as well. He claims the incapability of scientists of understanding the notion of race because of its murkiness. The author denies as well the pseudoscientific views of the assimilation of the original existence of pure races with pure metals and liquids- being the outcomes of the fraction of the amalgamated elements. According to Sollors (1997: 115) Toomer's denouncement of a scientific analogy is conveyed as he argues that:

> This new race is neither white nor black no red no brown. These are the old terms for old races, and they must be discarded. This is a new race; and though to some extent, to be sure, white and black and red and brown strains have entered into its formation, we should not view it as part white, part black, and so on.… Water, though composed of two parts of hydrogen and one part of oxygen, is not hydrogen and oxygen; it is *water*, a new substance with a new form.

On the other hand Diana I. Williams (2001: 189) contends that Toomer's ideas regarding race possess eugenic implication. She realizes as well the existence of a critical difference between labeling the biracial character "neither black nor white" and terming it "both black and white," a difference that is visually figured in *Cane*. Therefore, penetrating through *Cane* is necessary for apprehending Toomer's notion of race.

3. *Cane*: A Pictorial Portrayal of the New American Race:

In *Cane* (1923), a group of short stories and poems, Toomer tackles the problem of the oppressed individuals -specifically throughout the cultural revival of African American literature, art, and music known as the Harlem Renaissance- who strive for overcoming racial binaries. *Cane* poses the context of the American system that legalizes racism. The novel is an exploration of the issue of race in a highly segregated community, and an attempt to save these oppressed characters from the defiant binary construction. Toomer declares that his conjured individuals are incapable of discovering their full identities since racism represses those parts of them that would have rendered them whole (Fox, 2014: 1).

Composed in bits and pieces in the first half of the 1920s, *Cane* was enormously a response to a period when racial and national identities were in controversy. Thoughts concerning race were hardening throughout stereotypical lines. Toomer rejected a literature based on classifications for the description of the individual identity and regarded it inconvenient for the portrayal of the new American race, since these categorizations revolve around and support stereotypes of biological and social classes, as Sander Gilman (1985: 28, 29) sates:

> Within the closed world they create, stereotypes can be studied as an idealized definition of the different. The closed world of language, a system of references which creates the illusion of completeness and wholeness, carries and carried by the need to stereotype. For stereotypes, like common places, carry entire realms of associations with them, associations that form a subtext within the world of fiction.

American racial stereotypes is attacked most powerfully by Toomer's *Cane*, which denies stereotypical presentations of African Americans; via the manipulation of different extraordinary visual depictions of physical appearance to defy predominating notions of race.

Nadell (2001: 145) claims that Toomer wishes to behold the United States attempt to separate the Negro from the social crust that ties him. The "social crust" is a medium by which the inhabitants of the United States are bound in a restricting social system and Toomer acknowledges:

> For should there be set up an arbitrary figure of a Negro, composed of what another should have him be like, and the assertion made that he should model himself after it, this figure, though prompted by the highest interest, would nevertheless share the false and constricting nature of all superimposed images.

Cane is Toomer's attempt to ruin the "false and constricting … super-imposed images" of race. These "superimposed images," forced externally and frequently approved internally, form a link between racial labels and typifying social, political, and behavioral features. *Cane* subverts the language that employs these stereotypes for the depiction of identity. Through providing visually based descriptions, *Cane* is at odds with terms as "white" and "black".

The initial two parts of *Cane* possess identical structures. A group of prose vignettes set with poetry describe different African American characters and experiences. "White" and "black" are substituted by visual alternatives in both sections. The sketches *Karintha*, *Esther*, and *Theater* specifically deal with these visual features. Yet *Cane*'s power emerges from its combing with the conflict between visual portrayals that ignore the racial codes of society and the social recognitions that caused abuse and oppression to African Americans. Though Toomer perhaps intends presentations of physical portrayals to be entirely formal, ahistorical, and visual, he is incapable of neglecting the history of African Americans as an assemblage. This tension is brought to a crisis point and left unresolved in the last vignettes of each of the first two sections of *Cane*, *Blood-Burning Moon* and *Bona and Paul*.

The first part of *Cane* is placed in the South. Each of its prose vignettes ponders about a woman in the fertile natural terrain of the South. *Cane* is written from the perspective of a romantic outsider heavily involved in a landscape and rural life manner yet deeply separate from it (Outka, 2008: 183). Therefore, appearances and particularly skin colors are presented by extraordinary natural images that are not steadfastly related to the solid base of any specific color: Karintha's "skin is like dusk on the eastern horizon," (*Cane*, 3). Esther's hair "looks like the dull silk on puny corn ears. Her face pales until it is the color of the gray dust that dances with dead cotton leaves" (*Cane*, 32). Louisa's "skin was the color of oak leaves on young trees in fall". (*Cane*, 39)

Though the color of leaves or that of dusk is possible to be imagined, the depictions convey the ultimate incapability of language to portray subtle differences of color. Even the exact color of Esther's complexion is not given as the gray color of the dust is so changeable on the "dead cotton leaves" that it does not suggest any literal idea about it. Rather than conveying a sense of a particular color, the depiction affirms the impossibility of fixing an individual's complexion categorically. The goal is disallowing the reader an easy apprehension of skin color and an easy link between color and race.

The second part of *Cane* takes place in the North and illustrates Negroes who have moved there from the South. In this new atmosphere ethnicity is depicted differently as the language of jazz is the dominant device. The location is established with *Seventh Street*: "A crude-boned, soft-skinned wedge of nigger life breathing its loafer air, jazz songs and love, thrusting unconscious rhythms, black reddish blood into the white and white-washed wood of Washington." (*Cane*, 53)

In the sketches of this section, color adjectives are detached from their racial connotations via two ways: firstly, the repetition of the colors "black", "white", and "red" by

which a sense of defamiliarization is created within the reader, and secondly, employing some colors of the spectrum for the description of physical appearance. Instead of affirming the inaccurateness of language to describe race (like the noncolorized images of the first section), these sketches stretch the traditional mode of color description.

In his essay *The Americans*, Toomer (qtd in Nadell, 2001:145, 146)attracts attention to the hardness of describing characters according to colors terms:

> It is a mistake to speak of blood as if it had various colors in the various races. All human blood is the same. When we use color adjectives what we really are referring to are skin pigments. This is one of our main troubles. We see a surface and assume it a center. We see a color or a label or a picture and assume it is a person**.**

Accordingly, as color exceeds connoting skin pigment it turns to be society's apprehension of racial identity, something involving several dimensions. Toomer requires racial depiction, if employed at all, to be one dimensional, plane, and equable like the natural world. Thereby, the issue that Toomer tackles is how to attribute color adjectives to their external, denotative meaning in the matter of race, to become a representation of skin pigment instead of a putative center.

In *Theater*, in the second part of *Cane*, Toomer offers a statement about race in addition to composing a tale concerning Negroes (kopf, 1988: 288). The manipulation of many colors is for painting Dorris' portrait. It is an emphasis on the visual nature of appearance instead of the social nature of identity: "Her hair, crisp-curled, is bobbed. Bushy, black hair bobbing about her lemon-colored face. Her lips are curiously full, and very red. Her limbs in silk purple stockings are lovely." (*Cane*, 69) The employment of colors in this story is a suggestion of physical description rather than implying racial issues.

Moreover, a competition between visual descriptions and the social connotations of appearance is noticed in *Cane*. The book inhibits the apprehension of race as a merely visual phenomenon. In *Becky*, for instance, in the first section of *Cane*, that possesses a southern setting, description is independent on the visual: "Becky was the white women who had two Negro sons. She's dead; they've gone away. The pines whisper to Jesus." (*Cane*, 8) Becky is physically absent in the vignette named after her; she exists in the white and black populations' imagination and they condemn her. Rather than telling the reader of what Becky looks like, "White" informs us about her social status and the apprehension of race among the folk that reside the town (Nadell, 2001: 148).

Furthermore, another phenomenon that Toomer criticizes in *Cane* is dominance of color, which is intimate to racial labels. The author damns the connivance of those characters who approve the bourgeois determination of identity and behavior via the potential of color. This idea is best exemplified in *Box Seat*, from the second section of *Cane*, which is placed in the North. In this vignette in which even its title conveys the recurring idea of constraint Muriel is boxed by the houses and the social conventions the houses mirror and enhance (Petesch, 1989: 203). It is an exploration of the conflict between color as a jail house of social identity and color as a segment of the dynamic visual environment of the North:

> *Muriel, leading Bernice who is a cross between a washer-woman and a blue-blood lady, a washer-blue, a washer-lady, wanders down the right aisle to the lower front box. Muriel has on an orange dress. Its color would clash with the crimson box-draperies, its color would contradict the sweet rose smile her face is bathed in, should she take her coat off. She'll keep it on. Pale purple shadows rest on the planes of her cheeks. Deep purple comes from her think-shocked hair. Orange of the dress goes well with these. Muriel presses her coat down from around her shoulders. Teachers are not supposed to have bobbed hair.* (*Cane*, 83)

The depiction of Bernice firstly unfixes any unique apprehension of color by illuminating the possibility of suggesting social position. Through the movement from "blue-blood" to

"washer-blue" the focus is turned on the "blueness" of blue instead of its social connection to "blue-blood". The researchers think that even if the color blue had conveyed "blue blood" representations it refers to the new American race. This is due to Toome's description of the new race as a fusion of three races: the black (African), the white (European), as well as the red (Native American). The combination of these three races would produce the new race. Toomer addresses the representative of this new race as "the blue man" or "the purple man" (Rusch, 1992: 20). Then there are two competing modes of color description presented in the text: the visual and the social. There is a competition between the bourgeois social control of the tale and the beauty of the "pale purple" and "orange". It is obvious that Muriel victimizes herself as well as the visual beauty of color to the social thought; the placement of her coat on her shoulder is an indication of her trials to embrace both worlds. Color description portrays the struggle of *Box Seat* and conveys that in addition to its visual representations color can connote social position where there is no place for the free play of identity.

The conflict between description as medium to provide a sense of the ocular world and description as symbolic representation for social identity spreads throughout the first and second sections of *Cane*. In spite of Toomer's attempts to reject the social and historical meanings of race, they become apparent in *Blood Burning Moon* and *Bona and Paul*, the vignettes that bring the first and second sections of *Cane* to an end respectively (Nadell, 2001: 148, 149).

The tale of *Blood Burning Moon* pursues a young African- American woman, Louisa, and her two lovers, Tom, a Negro, and Bob, a white Southerner. For the sake of Louisa, the two lovers enter in a competition ending with the death of both of them (Meerkerk, 2011: 3). The conflict between appearance and racial label is encapsulated in Bob's expression of his feelings for Louisa: "she was lovely—in her way. Nigger way. What way was that? Damned if he knew. Must know. He'd known her long enough…. Beautiful nigger gal. why nigger? Why not, just gal? No, it was because she was nigger that he went with her. Sweet…." (*Cane*, 45) In the same few lines Louisa proceeds from the state of being "lovely in her own way" to lovely in her "Nigger way." Yet this way which is so obviously related to her social situation, is what turns her attractive. "Lovely" is linked with her "skin [as] the color of oak leaves on young trees in the fall," yet the "nigger way" combats. Only when the reader focuses on the connection between race and social categories, are these divisions propped by the Southern population, the social position of whom predict racial chaos. With the culmination of the story in violence the mode of racial description wins.

Bona and Paul is a northern interracial love tale that parallels the southern *Blood Burning Moon*. The full identification of the problems of color with race culminates the tale. Bona's description of the African-American Paul echoes Bob's description of Louisa in the preceding sketch (Nadell, 2001: 149): "He is a harvest moon. He is an autumn leaf. He is a nigger. Bona! But don't all the dorm girls say so? And don't you, when you are sane, say so. That's why I love—oh nonsense." (*Cane*, 95) Moving from "harvest moon" or "autumn leaf" to "nigger" recalls the passage of the first section of the text.

Moreover, Paul's employment of color adjectives for the description of his white friend, Art, is an attempt to settle Art's complexion:

> *His face….is a healthy pink the blue of evening tins a purple pallor….Art is a purple fluid, carbon-charged, that effervesces beside him. He loves Art. But is it not queer this pale purple facsimile of a red-blooded Norwegian friend of his? Perhaps for some reason, white skins are not supposed to live at night….Bona didn't, even in the day time. Bona, would she be pale? Impossible. Not that red glow. But the conviction did not set his emotion flowing.* (*Cane*, 99)

In a similar consciousness to that of the narrator, Paul gazes on his white friend, Art. Via employing colors for the depiction of whiteness as an aspect of the visual world in a manner close to his concentration on blackness, Toomer basically contends that regardless of

the social categorizations of people into white and black, all individuals have to be exposed to a visual gaze. Yet Paul's internal thoughts reveal his realization of the possibility of the disagreement of the social and visual.

Yet Toomer's manipulation of color adjectives is not restricted to the mere indication of complexion and social position, but prolongs to the illustration of states of mind. Idioms as "pale" and "red" reveal unique internal features rather than stereotypes. Thereby the connections between skin color and behavioral, intellectual, as well as emotional stereotypes are undermined. In 1922, in a letter to Frank, Toomer (qtd in Nadell, 2001: 150) states:

> The only time I think 'Negro' is when I want a particular emotion which is associated with this name. As a usual thing, I actually do not see difference of color and contour. I see differences of life and experience, and often these lead me to physical coverings. But not always, and from the stand point of conventional criticism, not often enough. I'm very likely to be satisfied with a character whose body one knows nothing of**.**

Toomer disapproves the "physical coverings" which are associated through "conventional" work to designations of social position, like "Negro." According to Toomer, these coverings possess too many stereotypes ascribed to them. Instead, with "Negro" he aims 'apprehension of race that determines social identity due to bodily appearance.

At the end of this tale, Toomer's experiments disappoint his expectations. In spite of Paul's efforts to redefine himself the social understandings of race prevail. Bona's view of Paul is that he is "Colored; cold. Wrong somewhere", ascribing his difference from her to his racial identity. Identically Paul realizes that "people saw, not attractiveness in his dark skin, but difference" (*Cane*, 102). It is a difference that emphasizes the social instead of the visual.

Interestingly, Toomer's trial and default to rescue color from the social world appears at the end of *Bona and Paul*, as the couple quickly exit the restaurant where they meet:

> *As the black man swings the door for them, his eyes are knowing. Too many couples have passed out, flushed and fidgety, for him not to know. The chill air is a shock to Paul. A strange thing happens. He sees the Gardens purple. And a spot is in the purple. The spot comes furiously toward him. Face of the black man. It leers.* (*Cane*, 106)

Initially, the doorman appears to damn the interracial union of Bona and Paul. Yet later Paul had a strange experience; he at first views the doorman as a "spot" in the "purple" in the Gardens. At a great distance, the spot occurs as part of the visual world. As Paul gets nearer, the spot renders into the face of a "black man" who "leers". Dissimilar to "purple" that owns denotative features; "black" possesses connotative representation of race as a socially identified phenomenon. In the North, traditional affiliations with race conquer. In spite of Paul's and the doorman's shaking hands at the end Bona has already departed. Thereby the conclusion is an indication of the loss of the likelihood of interacting as individuals, beyond social roles depicted by color and race.

The manipulation of visual devices is not restricted to *Cane*'s prose vignettes but exceeds to the text's poems as well. In the first two poems of the first section, for instance, the woman's face is compared to different objects or states (Nadell, 2001: 151). The poem *Face*, from *The Collected Poems of Jean Toomer* (hereafter is referred to as TCPJT), objectifies an old aged woman who is on the cusp of death. It is a depiction of an old woman's face and a comparison and contrast between the pain and sorrow she has suffered and her beauty (Davis, 2013: 15):

> Hair—
> silver-grey,
> like streams of stars,
> Brows—
> recurved canoes

quivered by the ripples blown by pain,
Her eyes—
mist of tears
condensing on the flesh below
And her channeled muscles
are cluster grapes of sorrow
purple in the evening sun
nearly ripe for worms.

(*TCPJT*, 9, II. 1-13)

The grey hair is a suggestion of the anxiety of lynching trauma via the quivers of pain above the brow, as well as the tears filling the eyes. The hair is also an expression of the dignity and sagaciousness of age. The grey-haired matron's face speaks of an amalgamation of feelings-pain, grief and possibly despair (Welch, 2007: 54, 55). Thereby colors in the poem indicate meanings beyond the surface. On the other hand, the combination of beauty and objectification along with death and destruction is much identical to *Portrait in Georgia*, another poem in *Cane*.

Portrait in Georgia is a description of a white Southern belle along with a manifestation of the lynching of a black man (Davis, 2013: 15):

Hair--braided chestnut, coiled like a lyncher's rope
Eyes—fagots
Lips—old scars, or the first red blisters,
Breath—the last sweet scent of cane,
And her slim body, white as the ash of black flesh after flame.

(*TCPJT*, 30, II. 1-6)

The poem is a presentation of the scene of violent lynching. In other words it is a traditional portrait poem dominated by Southern racial violence. Toomer's emphasis on how society's apprehension of race has and will go on in yielding unfathomable terror is conveyed via the employment of images as the "lyncher's rope," and the "fagots" by which the "black flesh" is burned. Moreover, colors are manipulated for indicating the brutality of the images of lynching in the poem.

However, the past of African Americans is extraordinarily acknowledged in the poem. Toomer realizes as well that the historical and present brutality of the South stand as a powerful enemy against his yearning for an ahistorical, free sense of the individual. Toomer's depiction of a woman's face as a central image in both poems and the fragmentation of the comprising parts of the face is an attempt to diffuse some of the horror he illustrates.

Nadell (2001:156) claims that following *Cane*'s publication, Toomer approves the label "Negro", which he realizes to be the cost of his admission in the world of writing, despite his rejection of the designation previously:

> When one day Liveright wanted me to push the Negro feature …I refused. He then wrote me to the effect that he did not see why I could not accept my race. This angered me, and I doubtless said something that angered him. Neither could I see why I should accept my race; but what I meant by my race and what he meant by my race were two different things.

Therefore, Toomer's resistance to the designation of a "race writer" as he was called by Liveright was due to his intention to swamp the label "Negro", and become "an artist," and to mold himself as an "American" writer. Actually Toomer is annoyed by being invented as the representative of his own race by others. The author is capable of finding a way for inventing himself and creating the literature to illustrate his invention through viewing himself more complex than a Negro writer and perceiving *Cane* as a production that contributed in more than one mechanism.

4- Conclusion:

At a time that many African American writers were construed by some critics for their passive endorsement of slavery, Jean Toomer is criticized for his denial of his Negro identity. Though Toomer's multiracial origin may advocate this claim a penetration through *Cane* would reveal a new approach to the problem of race. The text's prose vignettes and poems is an attempt to detach color from its racial and social implications and employ it to the mere indication of appearances.

This is achieved through various techniques. Sometimes Toomer employs colors other than black and white for referring to individuals' race and confines color adjectives to the mere indication of visual aspects. Furthermore, he manipulates colors to describe the internal states of mind and distances himself from racial designations of the color idioms. This is due to Toomer's belief that the problem of the twentieth century is the problem of color.

Therefore, Toomer's difference from other Harlem Renaissance writers emerges from his struggle to drop racial references to color altogether rather than calling for a particular racial group. The notion he adopts is a call for Americanism instead of racialism. Thus, the inclusion of both of the Southern and Northern terrains in *Cane* is an indication to the sameness of their people regardless of their racial colors.

References:

- Davis, C. M. (2013) *The Objectification of Women in Cane*. M A dissertation. Cleveland State University.
- Edwards, B. H. (2007) *W.E.B. Du Bois. The Souls of a Black Folk*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Fox, S. (2014) *Escaping the System: Dancing to Transcend Racial Binaries in Jean Toomer's Cane*. Senior Seminar in English: Masterpieces.
- Gilman, S. L. (1985) *Difference and Pathology: Stereotypes of Sexuality, Race, and Madness*. New York: Cornell University Press.
- Mafe, D. A. (2013) *Mixed Race Stereotypes in South African and American Literature: Coloring Outside the (Black and White) Lines*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Meerkerk, C. (2011) *A Translation of Jean Toomer's Short Story "Blood-Burning Moon*." Bachelor in English Language and Culture, Utrecht University.
- Nadell, M. J. (2001) *Race and the Visual Arts in the Works of Jean Toomer and Georgia O'Keeffe*, **In**: Fabre, G. & Feith, M. (eds.) *Jean Toomer and the Harlem Renaissance*. Rutgers: Rutgers University Press, pp. 142-161.
- Nuzum, R. (2003) *Jean Toomer or How the Failed Race Man Performed Modernity*. MA dissertation. University of Florida.
- Kopf, G. (1989) *The Tensions in Jean Toomer's "Theater"*, **In:** O'Daniel, T. B. *Jean Toomer: A Critical Evaluation*. Washington, D.C: Howard University Press, pp. 287-292.
- Outka, P. (2008) *Race and Nature from Transcendentalism to the Harlem Renaissance*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Petesch, D. A. (1989) *A Spy in the Enemy's Country: The emergence of Modern Black Literature*. Iowa: University of Iowa City.
- Rusch, F. (1992) *Form, Function, and Creative Tension in Cane: Jean Toomer and the Need for the Avant-Garde, Black Modernism and Post-Modernism*, Vol. 17, No. 4, pp. 15-28.
- Sollors, W. (1997) *Neither Black Nor White Yet Both*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- ---------- (2000) *Interracialism: Black-White Intermarriage in American History, Literature, and Law*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Toomer, J. (1988) *The Collected Poems of Jean Toomer*. London: University of North Carolina Press.
- ---------- (2011) *Cane*. New York: Rudolph P. Byrd and Henry Louis Gates, Jr.
- Vetter, L. (2010) *Modernist Writings and Religio-Scientific Discourse. H.D., Loy and Toomer*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Welch, M. L. (2007) *Tortured Shadows: Representations of Lynching in Modernist U. S. Poetry*. PH D dissertation. University of Virginia.
- Williams, D. I. (2001) *Building the New Race: Jean Toomer's Eugenic Aesthetic*, **In:** Fabre, G.& Feith, M. (eds.) *Jean Toomer and the Harlem Renaissance*. Rutgers: Rutgers University Press, pp. 188-199.

نەرەش نە سپی: تێگەیەشتنێگی نوێ بۆ کێشەی رەگەز پەرستی لە سەدەی هاوچەرخ لە رۆمانی کەین ی جین تومەر

پوختە

بەر لەچاپ کردنی رۆمانی کەین نووسەری ئەمریکی ئەفریقی خاوەن پێستێی رەنگ رەشی کاڵ جین تومەر (1894-1967) رەش پێستی خۆی رایەگەیاند. بەلام گەشتەکەی بۆ جۆرجیا بەمەبەستی گەیشت بە هاورەگەزەکانی و کاکردن وەکو بەڕێوەبەری قوتابخانە وای لێکرد کە خۆی و کارەکانی دووربگرێت لە نازناوی ئەفریقی ئەمریکی بەمش گەشتەکەی تومەر بۆ باشوو بنچینەکانی بەهرەمەندی نووسەر دەرخست و وای لێکرد کە رەگەزێکی نوێ لە ئەمریکا بدۆزێتەوە هەروەکو لە رۆمانی کەین دەردەکەوێت.

پەرچەکردای تومەر دەردەکەوێت لەپاشگەز بوونەوەی رەش پێستی خۆی بە هۆی دیتنی دیمەنی مەترسی داری رەش پێستەکان لە باشور. هەرچەندە ئەم حاشا کردنە لە رەش پێستی خۆی لێکدراوەتەوە وەك حاشا کردنی رەگەزی رەش و کەلتوورەکەی، بەلام شیکردنەوەیەکی ورد بۆ رووەانی کەین دەری دەخات کەوا لەبری حاشاکردن لە رەگەزی رەش تۆمەر کاری دەکرد بۆ نەمانی رەگەزپەرستی بەتەواوی. لەمەش گرنگ تر مەبەستی تۆمەر نەهێشتنی کۆت وبەندی سەپێندراو لەسەر بابەتی جیاکردنەوەی رەگەزی لە رێگای داواکردنی هەمان مافی مرۆ بوون بە بێ جیاکاری لە رەنگ و شوێنی نیشتە جێبوون هەر لەمەشدا بیرۆکەی (رەگەزی نوێ لە ئەمریکا) هەڵقوڵاوە لە رێگای کۆکردنەوەی رەگەزجیاوازەکان، وتومەری خۆی بە پێشەنگی ئەم رەگەزە نوێیە دەزانێت.

ئەم توێژینەوەیە تیشك دەخاتە سەر چەند تەکنیکێکی جیازواز بەکارهاتوو لە لایەن تومەر بۆ رەت کردنەوەی جیاوازی رەگەز پەرستی لە رۆمانی کەین. کەین کاری گەرترین رۆمانی تومەرە بۆ رەخنە گرتن لە ناوزەراندنی گشتی رەگەزپەرستی لە ئەمریکا لە رێگای وەسف کردنی چەند کارەکتەرێك کە لە ژێرکاریگەری رەگەزپەرستی نەتەویی دابوون و کە کاردەکەن بۆ سەرکەوتن بەسەر جیاوازی نەتەویی. ئەم کارەکتەرانە نوێنەرایەتی بیر و ڕای نووسەر دەکەن بەمەش شێوازی تومەر بۆ بەرگەری کردن لە رەش پێستەکان ناوازەیە لە جۆرەکەیدا و جیاوازە لە هاوچەرخە ئەمریکی و ئەفریقەکانی تر بە هۆی بوێری نووسەر و مامەلەکردنی جیاواز لە کێشەی رەگەزی پەرستی. لە پێناو روون کردنەوەی بیرۆکەی نامۆی تووەمر دەربارەی رەگەز پەرستی توێژەران چەندین تێکستی پەخشان و شعری لە کەیین شی دەکەنەوە.

لا أسود ولا أبيض: مفهوم جديد لمحنة العرق في العصر الحديث في رواية كين لجين تومر

ملخص

قبل نشر كين ، ظهر الكاتب الأميركي الإفريقي ذو البشرة الفاتحة جين تومر (1894-1967) معلنا عن عرقه الأسود. الا ان رحلته إلى جورجيا للالتحاق بذويه والعمل كمدير مدرسة، جعلته يبعد نفسه وأعماله عن اللقب الأفريقي الأمريكي. وهكذا ، شكلت رحلة تومر إلى الجنوب قواعد إبداعه، وجعلته في منتصف ارتباكه العرقي وحفزته على ايجاد عرق جديد في أمريكا ، ظهر في كين.

تظهر ردة فعل تومر للحالة المرعبة للسود في الجنوب من خلال رفضه ان يوصف بأنه زنجي. على الرغم من أن هذا الرفض قد تم تفسيره على أنه رفض للعرق الأسود والثقافة السوداء، إلا أن التحليل الدقيق لكين سيكشف عن أنه بدلا من إنكار العرق الأسود، كان تومر يثبط العرق تماما. والأهم من ذلك، فقد هدف تومر الى تذليل القيود المفروضة على مسألة التمييز العنصري من خلال المطالبة بوجود كونى للإنسان، بغض النظر عن لونه أو المجموعة التي ينتمي إليها. ومن ثم ، أنشأ فكرة "العرق الجديد في أمريكا"، التي تشكلت من خلال الجمع بين مختلف الأعراق، واعتبر تومرنفسه مثالا لهذا العرق الجديد.

تسلط هذه الدراسة الضوء على تقنيات مختلفة مستخدمةمن قبل تومر لرفض التصنيف العنصري في كين. كين هي أكثر الروايات انتقادا للنماذج النمطية العنصرية الأمريكية. فالرواية ترفض الوصف النمطي الغريب للأمريكيين ذو الأصل ألافريقي، من خلال تصوير عدد من الشخصيات المتأثرة بالعنصرية العرقية، والعاملة من أجل التغلب على التفرقة العنصرية. فهذه الشخصيات التي تمثل تجسيدًا لمعتقدات المؤلف يمثلون أفراد العرق الأمريكي الجديد . بالتالي، فإن أسلوب تومر للدفاع عن السود فريد من نوعه ويختلف عن معاصريه الأميركيين الأفارقة بسبب جرأته ومعاملته غير العادية لقضية العرق. من أجل توضيح فكرة تومر الغريبة عن العرق، يختار الباحثون العديد من النصوص النثرية و الشعرية من كين لتحليلها.