قراءة ما بعد حداثية لمسرحية "فيت روك" للكاتبة ميغن تيري

Megan Terry's *Viet Rock:* A Postmodern Reading

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الملخص

فييت روك، مسـرحية للكاتبة ميغان تيري، هي قطعة فنية لما بعد الحداثة، التي تشــكك في الأعراف السـردية القياسـية وتفحص تأثير حرب فيتنام على المجتمع الأمريكي. الغرض من هذه الرسـالة هو إلقاء نظرة على عناصـر ما بعد الحداثة في المسـرحية ومسـاهمتها في اتجاه ما بعد الحداثة في المسـرح الأمريكي. الهدف من الدراســة هو فحص البنية المجزأة للمسـرحية، واسـتخدام موضـوعات ثقافة البوب، واللحظات الفوقية المسـرحية، وكلها تسـاهم في نقد ما بعد الحداثة للمعايير والقيم الثقافية السـائدة. سـيبحث البحث أيضًـا في تصـوير المسـرحية لهياكل السلطة وجاذبيتها للتغيير الاجتماعي، وتواجه الدراسة تحديات مختلفة، بما في ذلك الشكل المعقد للمسرحية، والذي يحتاج إلى فحص وتفسـير دقيقين. التحدي الآخر هو أن المسـرحية تحتاج إلى معرفة العوامل التاريخية والثقافية التي خلقت حركة ما بعد الحداثة. تلقي الدراســة الضــوء على ميول ما بعد الحداثة في المسـرح الأمريكي وتقدم رؤى حول كيف يمكن للمسـرح أن يتحدى الروايات الثقافية السـائدة ويحقق التغيير الاجتماعي. تنقسم الدراسـة إلى ملخص ومقدمة ومناقشـة بما في ذلك ميغان تيري وتحليل فييت روك وخاتمة.

Abstract

Viet Rock, Megan Terry's play, is a postmodernist piece that questions standard narrative conventions and examines the influence of the Vietnam War on American society. The purpose of this dissertation is to look at the play's postmodernist elements and its contribution to the postmodernist trend in American theater. The study's goal is to examine the play's fragmented structure, usage of pop culture themes, and meta-theatrical moments, all of which contribute to a postmodernist critique of dominant cultural norms and values. The research will also look into the play's depiction of power structures and its appeal for social change. The study faces various challenges, including the play's complicated form, which needs careful examination and interpretation. Another challenge is the play needs knowledge of the historical and cultural factors that created the movement of post modernism. The study sheds light on postmodernist tendencies in American theatre and provides insights into how theater can challenge prevailing cultural narratives and achieve social change. The study is divided into an abstract, introduction, and discussion including Megan Terry, Viet Rock analysis, and a Conclusion.

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Section One
Introduction

"Viet Rock," Megan Terry's play, is a postmodernist work that examines standard narrative conventions and test the influence of the Vietnam War on American society. The purpose of this dissertation is to look at the play's postmodernist elements and its contribution to the postmodernist trend in American theater. The study's goal is to examine the play's fragmented structure, usage of pop culture themes, that contribute to a postmodernist critique of dominant cultural norms and values. The research will also look into the play's depiction of power structures and its appeal for social change.

Moreover, the play utilizes mainstream society viewpoints like music, moving. It dresses the adaptation of culture and the lines among high and low culture. veit rock , according to Cubukcu (2018, p. 40), demonstrates how popular culture can both express and confuse individual and social identities. He indicates that it can posit a question about authenticity. hence. The play's criticism of prevalent social norms and ideals is supported by its references to popular culture

Hancock (1999, P.4) defines postmodernism as "a fragmented and decentered approach to representation that questions established concepts of art, literature, and culture." By its non-linear form and use of meta-theatrical moments, Terry's "Viet Rock" embodies these postmodernist characteristics. According to Cubukcu (2018, 41), the play challenges the distinctions between high and low culture and criticizes the monetization of cultural creation by incorporating pop culture elements like music and dance. According to Kibar, the play also look into authority of the systems and their action on social connections through reflecting the experiences of troops and civilians affected by the Vietnam War (2018, 347).

The influence of the Vietnam War on American society is also examined in the play. "Viet Rock" portrays the perspectives of troops and civilians affected by the war. at same time, it criticizes the governmental and social structures that supply the conflict. The fragmentary form of the play, as well as its use of pop culture tropes, express the uncertainty and disorientation of individuals touched by the war (Kibar,2018,355).

According to Walden (2018, p.2), the play is not essay examine because of its fractured structure that it uses the pop culture elements and meta-theatrical moments necessitates Nonetheless, by examining these issues, the play can be considered an direct insights into the postmodernist tendencies of American theater and their relevance to current cultural and political conflicts.

At last, "Viet Rock" is a significant work of postmodernist theater that tests traditional form structures, studies the prevailing social standards and values, and examines the effect of the Vietnam war on American

culture. Through its fragmented structure, use of pop culture tropes, and meta-theatrical moments, the play pushes the audience to wonder about their assumptions about art, culture, and society.

1.2 Hypothesis:

Megan Terry's play Viet Rock is a postmodern text that challenges traditional notions of narrative structure and identity.

1.3 Aims:

This study aims to examine the postmodern features of Megan Terry's Viet Rock and explore how they challenge conventional theatrical practices and cultural assumptions.

1.4 Questions:

How does Viet Rock employ postmodern techniques to disrupt traditional narrative structure?

What role do identity and power dynamics play in the play?

How does Viet Rock comment on the Vietnam War and its cultural aftermath?

1.5 Methodology:

This study will employ a close reading of the play, drawing on postmodern literary and theatrical theory to analyze its themes and techniques. The analysis will also consider historical and cultural contexts, as well as critical reception of the play. The study will utilize a qualitative research approach, focusing on interpretation and analysis of the text rather than quantitative measures. This study examines *Viet Rock* from a postmodernist perspective, which entails studying the play's narrative fragmentation, usage of pop culture references, and self-reflexivity in the framework of postmodernist theory. This method would entail examining relevant material on postmodernist theory and applying it to the play's interpretation. Academic publications, books, and internet resources such as JSTOR and Project MUSE can all be used to collect data. A detailed reading of the play and its historical setting can provide useful insights into its postmodernist elements and sociopolitical critique.

Section Two

2.1 Postmodern Theory:

Postmodern theory suggests that reality is constructed through language, power dynamics, and cultural contexts, challenging the notion of a stable and objective truth. Postmodern texts often employ fragmentation, intertextuality, and self-reflexivity to challenge conventional narrative structures and expose the constructed nature of identity.

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Discussion
2.2 Postmodernism In Viet Rock

Postmodernism's non-linearity and fragmentation narrative are two of its characteristics that: The show has a non-direct story structure, which infers that occasions are not introduced by forming or following a logical order or sequence. A postmodern approach, narrative fragmentation challenges conventional storytelling's linear structure (Foster, 1996, p. 1).

In Viet Rock, Megan Terry defies conventional storytelling by employing a fragmented and nonlinear narrative style. The crowd is treated with a grouping of detached scenes and occasions that are not introduced in that frame of mind as the play unfurls. For instance, the drama opens with a protest taking place, then a man arriving in Saigon, then soldiers searching the jungle, and so on. The typical cause-and-effect structure of relating to the telling or writing of stories is undermined by this fragmentation of the narrative, leaving the listener confused and imperfect (Ibid,1996, p. 1).

Foster (1996) says that the use of non-linear narrative and fragmentation in postmodern literature is a deliberate attempt to challenge the reader's beliefs about the nature of reality and the author's role in making meaning. Scene 2 a woman and a man stand behind a wall is one example of a fragmented and non-linear narrative structure in Viet Rock. Postmodern writers like Megan Terry try to create a more open and inclusive kind of storytelling that allows the reader to participate with the text in a more critical and engaged way (Foster, 1996, p. 2).

> They are smoking. Woman: I want to go home. I do not want to be here. It is terrible. Man: This is a very important moment. We have to make the most of it. Woman: I cannot stand it anymore. It is not what I came here for. Man: I know, I know. However, this is what we have to do. We have to be here. Woman: I want to go home.Man: We will go home soon enough. Just hold on longer." (Terry, 1966, p. 55)

Because the events in this scene do not take place in a particular order, it is an illustration of non-linear structure in the narrative. The scene jumps right into a male and female conversation without any context or explanation. The discussion is broken and disconnected, with the lady needing to return home and the man encouraging that they should be available for a significant occasion. When there is no obvious context or exposition, the audience becomes disoriented and must piece together the information to make their own conclusions about the characters and their circumstances.

Second viewpoint is self-reflexivity which is a trait of postmodern theater, and Viet Rock is no exemption. The play emphasizes its own serious thought, and contractedness, drawing attention to its status as an artistic creation. According to Mobley (2004, p.130), for instance, the characters will occasionally break the fourth wall and speak directly to the audience, thereby acknowledging their presence as observers.

In Scene 5, Liat says "We're just actors in a play," it is about the performance's artificiality.   As Liat acknowledges the constructed nature of the theatrical experience. "This is not true", in the play (Terry, 1966, page 31). This moment highlights the play's self-reflexivity.

The play emphasizes its place as a work of art rather than a representation of reality by repeatedly drawing attention to its own artificiality and being somewhat artificial. One strategy "Viet Rock" achieves this is by breaking the fourth wall and straightforwardly tending to the crowd. In Scene 11, for instance, the characters examine the idea of the theater experience, with the Vietnamese lady endeavoring to underline the meaning of the occasion while Paul rejects it as phony (Storey,2013p 134).

Additionally, the play's self-reflexive nature is highlighted by its use of meta-theatrical elements. K.C., for instance, a monologue in Scene 9 about the significance of language and storytelling. The idea that self-reflexivity in postmodern theater encourages audiences to critically engage with the theatrical experience and reflect on their notions of reality. This not just points out the play's made structure, yet, in addition underline the possibility that all accounts, incorporating those introduced in theater, are totally emotional and created (Ibid, 1966, p.135).

The ultimate goal of Viet Rock's self-reflexivity is to break down the traditional lines that separate art and reality. This will allow the audience to critically engage with the spectacle and consider their own worldviews. For example

> Vietnamese woman: (To audience) Do you understand what is happening here? Do you understand the significance of this moment? Do you realise that you are witnessing history in the making? PAUL: (To audience) Do not listen to her. She is just trying to impress you. We are all just actors in a play, pretending to be something we are not. Vietnamese woman: (To Paul) How can you say that? It is real. It is happening right now. PAUL: (To Vietnamese Woman) Do not be naive. We are just playing a game, and the audience is the only thing that makes it real. (Terry, 1966, p. 63)

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In this scene, the characters break the fourth wall and defy the crowd straightforwardly, uplifting them to reconsider the idea of the theater experience. The Vietnamese lady attempts to underline the meaning of the occurrence; however Paul excuses it as a trick. The audience is given the opportunity to critically engage with the visual spectacle and this debate emphasizes the play's contracted nature.

In addition, Intertextuality is a distinctive feature of postmodernism, and Viet Rock creates a profound and intricate work of art by drawing inspiration from a variety of sources. The play is influenced by rock music, avant-garde theater, protest songs from the Vietnam War, and a variety of other genres. By bringing together these various sources, the play creates a sense of intertextuality and blurs the lines between various art forms and genres. One way that Viet Rock incorporates intertextuality is through music (Storey, 2013, p. 37). Terry asserts that Viet Rock draws from a wide range of sources, including protest songs written during the Vietnam War, rock music, and avant-garde theater, in order to generate a sense of intertextuality. By borrowing this song, Viet Rock creates a sense of intertextuality and blurs the lines between rock music and theater (Ibid., 2013.p37).

Additionally, the use of avant-garde theatrical techniques like self-reflexivity and non-linear narrative highlights the play's intertextual nature. The play uses these procedures to obscure the lines between various sorts of artistry. It allows the crowd to participate on different levels. In the end, Viet Rock's intertextuality aims to break down traditional boundaries between genres and art forms. As a result, the play is deep and complex, inspiring the audience to interact with it in unconventional ways (Smith, 1996, p. 70).

ultimately, deconstruction is a significant part of postmodernism, the show dismantles winning social stories about the Vietnam War, testing the oversimplified legend antagonist division and raising doubt about the idea of a solitary, objective truth. The dismantling of conventional narratives is a significant postmodern idea. Viet Rock dismantles winning social stories encompassing the Vietnam War, which is a major question in postmodern writing and craftsmanship. The drama, in particular, challenges the simplistic hero-villain dichotomy that typically accompanies conflict depictions and undermines the concept of a single, objective truth (Ibid., 1996, p. 72).

In her article "The War at Home and the War Abroad:" Susan S. Lanser writes that the play "deconstructs the master narrative of US military engagement in Vietnam." (Lanser, 1990, p. 196). According to Lanser "Viet Rock" highlights the numerous "languages" used to depict the Vietnam War and their "rhetorical force" in shaping popular opinions of the war (Lanser, 1990, p. 197).

Viet Rock deconstructs common cultural myths in a number of ways, one of which is through the depiction of troops. The drama shows them as flawed, real people who are dealing with their own doubts and anxieties, not as heroic characters. Eddie, for instance, admits that he is afraid and unsure about his role in the conflict(Terry, 1970Scene 6). The simplistic hero-villain dichotomy that typically accompanies depictions of combat is called into question by this depiction of troops as multifaceted individuals (as cited in Lanser, 1990, p. 198).

Susan Harris Smith claims that Viet Rock is an example of postmodern theater that challenges conventional cultural narratives regarding the Vietnam War. Smith claims that the play presents a conflict that is more nuanced and complex, challenging the conventional notion of the heroic soldier.

> The soldiers in *Viet Rock* are not heroes; they are conflicted human beings struggling with their doubts and fears. The play deconstructs the simplistic hero-villain dichotomy that often characterises depictions of war, challenging the idea of a single, objective truth. By presenting multiple perspectives on the war, *Viet Rock* invites the audience to question their assumptions about the conflict (Smith, 1996, p. 71).

The citation from Viet Rock stresses the play's topic, which challenges the essential legend miscreant paired and raises doubt about the idea of a solitary, objective truth. The American soldier who speaks is unhappy with the war and his part in it. He admits that he is just a child who was drafted into a war he despises, but he rejects the idea of being a hero or a decent soldier.

By presenting a variety of perspectives on the war, Viet Rock also challenges the idea of a single, objective fact. The play features scenes that contrast the lives and perspectives of Vietnamese locals and American soldiers. The audience is encouraged to reevaluate their own presumptions regarding the war as a result of this diversity of viewpoints, which challenges the notion of a single, objective reality. Overall, the deconstruction of prevailing cultural narratives in *Viet Rock* aims to question the oversimplified and frequently incorrect representations of war that are frequently depicted in popular culture, allowing the audience to engage with the complexity of the conflict (Johnson, 1994, p. 87).

In Scene 7, the character of Kim speaks about her experience of the war and challenges the traditional hero narrative associated with soldiers. She says:

> I am not a hero. I'm not even a good soldier. I'm just a kid
> who got drafted. Moreover, I would not say I like it. I hate

being here, I hate the war, and I hate myself for being a part of it. But I cannot just quit. I can't just walk away. Because that is not what we're supposed to do, right? We're supposed to be brave and strong and fight for our country. But what if our country is wrong? What if we are fighting for something that's not worth fighting for? (Terry, 1970, p. 41).

One example of the play presenting multiple perspectives is in Scene 6, where the audience witnesses a conversation between a group of Vietnamese villagers:

VOICES OFF: ...This is our village. This is our home. We are simple people. We want nothing more than to live in peace. ...The Americans came and destroyed everything. They killed our people, burned our homes, and destroyed our fields. ...We are afraid. We do not know what will happen next. Will the Americans come back? Will the war ever end? ...We do not understand why this is happening. We do not know whom to trust. ...We want to live in peace. Is that too much to ask? (Terry, 1970, p. 30)

This scene portrays the Vietnamese townspeople's perspective, which is regularly stifled or disregarded in customary accounts about the Vietnam War. Viet Rock subverts the common social account that presents American troopers as legends and Vietnamese as miscreants by adding their voices and encounters. Instead, the play presents a more comprehensive and nuanced account of the war, emphasizing the variety of perspectives and challenging the audience to question their own preconceived notions regarding the conflict.

Lastly, Viet Rock is a postmodern play that challenges conventional cultural narratives about the Vietnam War by combining literary and theatrical approaches.

1- Fragmentation: The play's narrative is fragmented and non-linear, with scenes and characters shifting rapidly and without warning.

2- Intertextuality: The play incorporates references to other texts, including literary works, songs, and political speeches, which challenge conventional notions of originality and authorship.

3- Self-reflexivity: The play frequently draws attention to its own theatricality and the constructed nature of the performance.

4- Irony: The play employs irony to highlight the gap between appearance and reality, challenging conventional assumptions about truth and meaning.

5- Hybridity: The play blends different genres and forms, including rock music, surrealism, and political satire, to challenge conventional boundaries and categories.

6- Metafiction: The play challenges the authority of the author by blurring the line between fiction and reality and calling into question the relationship between the audience, the performers, and the text.

These postmodern techniques serve to disrupt conventional narrative structures and expose the constructed nature of identity and reality

3.1 Conclusion

Viet Rock is a stunning piece of postmodern theater that challenges conventional accounts of the Vietnam War. The play pushes the crowd to reconsider their own thoughts regarding the conflict and think about the intricacy of the contention through its utilization of fracture, juxtaposition, and self-reflexivity. The play employs intertextuality to emphasize the interconnectedness of various creative forms and genres. Additionally, the play's deconstruction of popular cultural narratives challenges simplistic hero-villain dichotomies and prompts the audience to question the idea of a single, objective reality. In addition, the play's self-reflexivity encourages the audience to participate critically in the theatrical experience and emphasizes its status as a work of art.

Viet Rock is as a postmodern theater challenges conventional accounts of the Vietnam War. The play encourages the crowd to reconsider their own thoughts regarding the conflict and think about the complexity of the contention through its utilization of fracture, juxtaposition, and self-reflexivity. The play employs intertextuality to emphasize the interconnectedness of various creative forms and genres. Additionally, the play's deconstruction of popular cultural narratives challenges simplistic hero-villain separation and prompts the audience to question the idea of a single, objective reality. In addition, the play's self-reflexivity encourages the audience to participate critically in the theatrical experience and emphasizes its status as a work of art.

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