



OSCILLATION BETWEEN MODERNISM AND POSTMODERNISM: A METAMODERNIST READING OF DOLEN PERKINS- VALDEZ'S TAKE MY HAND

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Abstract

This paper examines Dolen Perkins Valdez's *Take My Hand* (2022), applying the lens of metamodernism to analyze how the novel shifts between Postmodern critical doubt and modernist ethical conviction in relation to past suffering. Focusing on two sides of Civil Townsend's story, which is set in both 1973 and 2016, the study shows how the novel challenges postmodernism while addressing important issues. Based on Vermeulen and Van den Akker's (2010) theory of metamodernism and Allan McKee's (2003) model of textual analysis, this study examines how the novel moves between modernism and postmodernism. This study shows that *Take My Hand* shows the methods of metamodernism. such as oscillation, ambivalence, relationality, and sincerity mixed with irony give many ways of connecting again with reality and meaning beyond the limits of fixed ideas of modernism and postmodernist nihilism. The research also shows how *Take My Hand* takes back storytelling as a tool of both honesty in knowledge and emotional truth, therefore showing a metamodernist philosophy of sincerity after irony. This paper also aims to develop and explain ideas about how society changes. Also, the research is very important because it provides a move away from postmodernism. This great change also shows how society is moving forward and how society can be further understood and developed. This is an important change in philosophy and understanding society.

Keywords: *Epistemological, Irony, Metamodernism, Oscillation, Skepticism, Trauma*

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1. Introduction:

The start of the 21st century has witnessed scholars and researchers in the humanities and social sciences begin to see a critical change in the way we experience, collaborate with, and understand our surroundings. This departure from the postmodern era's trademark fracture, incongruity, and wariness signifies the emergence of a new social representation, entitled Metamodernism. Metamodernism, characterized by a renewed emphasis on individual experience, effect, and feeling, seeks to accommodate the coherent irregularities of postmodernism and modernism by reconciling both tendencies, such as seriousness and playfulness, and sincerity and irony that describe our present moment. Metamodernism, through its oscillations between many mental and profound states, suggests a curious focal point through which to deal with the ins and outs of our digitized, globalized, and progressively doubtful world.

By looking at its appearances in specific fields, the current research aims to study the effects and nature of metamodernism. This analysis, by analyzing the ways through which metamodernism is redesigning our social scene, endeavors to enhance a further philosophical comprehension of the basics that form our place and our reality within it.

The purpose of this study is to analyze and discuss metamodernism's different strategies which are used to re-evaluate and revise the concepts of postmodernism and modernism by developing them for the 21st century in the selected novel.

2. Literature Review:

Metamodernism is a new development in different areas of human way of thinking, skill, writing, engineering, law-related matters, and many other human activities. In the main idea, the growth in learning and society that showed up after postmodernism is much of the time called metamodernism.

Post-postmodernism and neomodernism are terms that are used mutually with metamodernism to show the improvements that came from completion as a response to postmodernism. Rejecting postmodernist lack of trust, originally a response to trust in new ideas in their ideas, metamodernism is often seen as getting involved between parts of both modernism and postmodernism. All around, metamodernism is the main thinking about society in modern life today.

It tries to do better than modernism and postmodernism to answer the current way society works. Its main idea is that confidence, trust, interaction, and honesty can try to overcome postmodern mismatch and separation. While modernism was mainly about knowledge (worried about the idea of information) and postmodernism was mainly about existence (worried about the idea of being), metamodernism, which showed up in the first ten years of the 21st century, studied in detail the completeness and honesty of old modernism and the gap and distrust of postmodernism.

Metamodernism wants to get past postmodern gaps, trying to recreate a sense of completeness that helps positive change both locally and globally. The most famous metamodern authors include David Cultivate Wallace, Jonathan Franzen, Zadie Smith, Ian

McEwan, Jonathan Franzen, Jeffrey Eugenides and Imprint Z. Danielewski. (Yousef 2017).

Dolen Perkins-Valdez's *Take My Hand* (2022) is an important work of historical fiction that questions the link between gender, race, and medical ethics in the United States, especially through the view on forced sterilizations of black girls and women in the 1970s. Slightly mixed by the real-life 'Relf sisters' case' in Montgomery, Alabama, the novel explores how institutional racism, personal responsibility, and collective memory come together in making both national history and individual lives. This part of the research presents a detailed look at the novel's characters, historical context, central themes, plot, and storytelling style, to place it as a novel that shows sensitivity to changes of metamodernism. *Take My Hand* by Perkins-Valdez continues this practice by showing the sterilization of two young black girls in Alabama named India and Erica Williams.

Many critics have noted that by setting her novel in 1973, Perkins Valdez shows, even after the Civil Rights Movement, the lasting control of certain races over reproduction (Robinson, 2023). This places the novel in an inheritance of African American literature that looks at the medical methods that have been applied as a tool of harsh treatment and unfair control. It also explores the black people's spirit to fight.

The proper place of the witness is another major theme in African American literature. In *Scenes of Subjection*, Hartmann (1997) points out that the story serves as a place for correcting the harm in the records while accepting the difficulty in understanding its terrors. *Take My Hand* carries out this tension through the storytelling of Civil, which changes between showing regret and a record of injustice that she got involved in. Study of testimony in literature, Felman and Laub (1992) explain how the revealing of Civil involves the reader and gives proof of, creating a sense of moral connection to the past.

As a literary and cultural movement, modernism is often seen to be followed by a faith in human progress through the use of reason, art, and technology. Authors like Virginia Woolf and T. S. Eliot tried new forms in order to share personal experience but with knowledge of confidence in the art's ability to express universal truths (Bradbury & McFarlane, 1976).

Within the background of societal progress, the modernist ideology combined with reformist narratives, which made medicine and science a means of improvement and understanding (Williams, 1983). *Civil* shows this modernist approach in the novel when she presents her work at the clinic as community service.

3. Research Methodology

This research is positioned in the constructivist and interpretivist research paradigm that argues that there are various interpretations of reality and that reality is also not fixed (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The research work was carried out from the qualitative approach of narrative research by following Creswell et al.'s (2007) division of qualitative

research designs. Narrative research is a subjective exploration plan that digs into the lives and encounters of people, frequently utilizing narrating techniques to catch the member's voice and viewpoint. Allan Mackee's model of textual analysis (2003), which he introduced in his essay on textual analysis, is used for the analysis of the selected works. To discover the features of post-modernist literary theory or deviant features, the emphasis will be on the deep reading of the carefully chosen texts and on the investigation of the original lines from the text. Mckee (2003) thinks that "When we perform textual analysis on a text, we make an educated guess at some of the most likely interpretations that might be made of that text" (P. 01). As Mackee has said, the researcher is likewise involved in extra-textual information for the legitimate comprehension and understanding of the text. Mackee (2003) additionally contends that the undertaking of a pundit is to contemplate profoundly not just the apparent implications of the text but also the internal suggested impacts with regard to what the text implies, and what the planned perusers or watchers are, what sort of impact the creator needs to make, what individual is utilized by the creator and for what reason, etc. The point is to attempt to decipher and comprehend the internal thought processes and motivations behind the writer, which he suggests in the writing, and is needed to pass on to his audience and readers.

The selected novel is analyzed from the perspective of the proposed literary theory Metamoderenism, postulated by Vermeulen and van der Akker (2017). It has become, to some degree, an ordinary thing to start a conversation on post-modernism by focusing on the fact that there is no such thing as "the postmodern". In light of everything, the postmodern is essentially the articulation for various disengaged tendencies, the popular articulation for a larger part of boundless sensibilities. Metamodernism, a literary, social, and artistic moment that arose in the early 21st century, offers a one-of-a-kind hypothetical system for grasping the intricacies of contemporary text and culture. In the interim, Mackey's text based examination model gives a thorough strategy to dissecting texts. By consolidating these two methodologies, scientists can acquire a more profound comprehension of the ways in which social texts reflect and shape how we might interpret the world.

4. Discussion and Analysis

This part looks at the metamodernist theoretical view on *Take My Hand* by Dolen Perkins-Valdez (2022) to achieve this, as the novel moves between postmodern critical doubt and strong modern moral belief to rebuild the past of historical trauma. The focus on dual narration of Civil Townsend, the story being located in 1973 and 2016, shows the postmodern resistance to objectivity of the text and the keeping of the main complexity at the same time.

The discussion explains that the story of *Take My Hand* gets back to storytelling as a means of truthfulness in understanding as well as real feeling, therefore, stating a

metamodernist philosophy in which honesty will follow irony. According to Vermeulen and Van den Akker (2010), metamodernism is a postmodern irony and modern, excited cultural and aesthetic approach that exists between the earlier and the later. It is not rejecting the two opposite ends but moves between both of them in order to create a meaning while aware of instability.

Similarly, *Take My Hand* (2022) shows such a sense of sensitivity by use of the real-life story of the Relf sisters, Black girls who had been sterilized against their will in 1973 Alabama, to tell the fictional story of the Civil Townsend.

Inner morality, timelessness, and self-aware narration are the three techniques used in the novel so as to change the image of postmodern and modern methods in the novel's historical writing.

Civil is described by her strict following of her patients as a sign of a high level of modernism and faith in social improvement and making moral choices. When Civil first moved into the Montgomery Family Planning Clinic, her purpose was to serve her people, showing a belief that justice and truth can be reached through changing the structure and honesty (Perkins-Valdez, 2022). This strong desire supports the modernist literary tradition that develops clear moral ideas, even in a broken world. Still, this clarity is questioned by the finding that the clinic itself is part of an organization of generative control over Black bodies.

This conflict in Civil's belief that institutional power can be related to justice forces her into self-reflection, starting the shifting that represents her metamodernist journey.

While Dolan Perkins-Valdez's *Take My Hand* is included in past detail, it rejects giving a single fair report. Instead of that, it layers Civil's present and past points, letting emotional uncertainties and conflicts appear. In her novel, Civil repeatedly questions the truthfulness of her memories, expressing doubt about what she said, saw, or even happened (Perkins-Valdez, 2022). This self-doubt reflects the doubt of postmodernism toward fixed truths and major stories. Yet unlike postmodernist emotional distancing, the writer agrees with Civil to face the past with moral and emotional understanding.

The novel acts as a place for witnessing, not just of narration, and thus takes back the power of storytelling without rejecting its limits.

The structure of the novel shifts between 1973 and 2016, which works not only as a choice of style but also as a method of metamodernism to directly compare present wisdom with past ideals. By means of this double timing, readers understand both Civil's aged regret and her hopeful energy. The history is not only looked at again, but also it is assessed again with an emotional impact that avoids exaggerating or rejecting. According to RosePetals1984 (2022), Civil's two-part description makes readers sit with discomfort imagining what it means to hold power in a powerless system.

Such does not offer irony or calls for closure, readers into a knowledge based on connections, which is a key feature of metamodernism.

Perkins Valdez's prose shows a return to inner thoughts and modernist poetic style, while including postmodernism's broken structure. The fact that Civil speaks in court represents an admitted involvement and a clear statement of justice. The story does not deliver a decision on her guilt, thus leaving space for mixed emotions, as well as being able to use moral responsibility. The success of the novel is due to its ability to make the personal political through the admired writing style, which is able to define history not as a story of events, but as experience. This two-sided self, as criticized by the narrator, focuses on a metamodernist narrative that is honest, aware of its context and itself.

The novel begins with Civil describing her memories of India and Erica, "A year never passes to stitch their names inside your clothes, too." (Perkins Valdez, 2022, p. 1). Such an introduction presents care and memory as important for understanding knowledge, and challenges postmodern ideas about memory formed as an ideology. Deep sadness and awareness as a witness in Civil have strong moral importance of modernism, but as she recognises the limits of her own point of view and comes to consider her personal role, postmodernist criticisms are raised. Over here, the cultural belief is that knowledge of history is needed but temporary, which is a metamodernist stance that moves between self-reflection and involvement (Vermeulen & van den Akker, 2010).

The novel uses storytelling methods that move between postmodern irony and modernist sincerity. Civil's thoughts on her wealthy background, "I'll be honest, I was uppity" (p. 9), consider her own modernist belief in progress while supporting her desire to succeed. Her experiment of sterilizations ("skin left on the playground," p. 14) is both an awareness of structural harm and an emotional, moral impact that modernism's ideals of public health covered. Future, Civil hides a photo of herself as a child, questioning: "Would my baby have looked like me?" (p. 29). This links to modernist desire for connection with postmodernist awareness of uncertainty, which is a main feature of metamodernism's oscillating style (Gibbons, 2015).

Through showing shame, sadness, and awareness, the novel puts the readers in a place that leads them to deep thinking and shared moral commitment. The text inspires because of anger at systemic racial injustice of the sterilization practices; it also forces the readers to question Civil's role and assumptions on her part about the Black communities she helps. This two-part position matches the text that Mackee (2003) includes the readers, where they are placed in terms of beliefs and emotionally, moving between criticism and sympathy.

Civil uses a report-like style that expresses a metamodernist feeling that moves in critical self-awareness and sincere self-awareness. For example, we see her say, "I'll be honest and ... a certain kind of pride" (p. 9). This confession connects a strong moral

character, which is humbly and sincerely motivated, with a strong sense of understanding of the limits of her view. Opposite to the modernist heroes that often seek clear progress, Civil is fully aware of her individual challenge to the system that she wants to change. Similarly, by the time she hides a photo from her childhood, she thinks, “Would my baby have looked like me?” (p. 29).

This scene of desire and being open goes against irony and the clear modernist rules, which shows the metamodern emotional world shows real feelings in a balanced way.

The novel later uses ways to remember and watch that switch between feeling deeply and thinking clearly. Civil connects in a meaningful way the names of Erica and India in her white coat, “I tell this story to stitch their names inside your clothes, too. A reminder to never forget” (p. 1). This act of remembering forms a reason for the duty to speak the truth and realizes that the damage cannot be undone. At this point, the story goes against postmodern narratives that make memory completely personal and not fully trustworthy to avoid modernist pride regarding what past marriages taught. Seeing the sterilizations, when Civil does so, the text gives us a clear image of strong feelings, “The room smelled ... her forehead with my hand. ‘Hush, baby. Don’t talk’” (p. 155). This moment combines the direct emotions and understanding of systemic violence and rejects hopelessness and sad emotions. The metaphors used in the text show the text’s back-and-forth style. According to civilians, the aftermath of the sterilizations is characterized by leaving skin on the playground, thus highlighting the lasting impact of the trauma and the need to make someone responsible. More so, she takes the names to lay the past to rest, thus showing the novel as a story of ongoing moral healing. These are the metaphors, which represent the metamodern concept of combining hope and sadness, sometimes both or none (Vermeulen & van den Akker, 2010).

Mackee (2003) emphasizes the role of how the texts introduce the readers to the use of welcoming personal views. In *Take My Hand*, the reader is placed between anger about injustice and critical thinking. When Civil comes into the rural community, she states: “Fact is, the only time I remember us going out to the country was when we were passing through ... We definitely had never been in folks’ houses out there” (pp. 20–21). Her honesty about not knowing pushes readers to question class, race, and geography. Similarly, the text calls readers to take part in Civil’s affective journey, feeling her anger, grief, and love. When she supports Erica and India in the hospital: “Shhh, shhh. I rubbed her forehead with my hand. ‘Hush, baby. Don’t talk’” (p. 155), readers are also urged to question as well as to feel. These two roles at the same time, thinking and feeling together, support metamodernism’s importance of honesty but thoughtfulness, going between (Gibbons, 2015).

One of the main conflicts in the novel is the moving between Civil seeing how things really work and her high ideals that sometimes get in the way. At first, she considered her work to be good: “We had a job to do. Ease the burdens of poverty. Stamp it with both feet” (p. 14). This matches modernism’s faith in the power to make your own decisions and logical improvement. Even so, she comes to understand that racism and poverty are built into the system and cannot be easily helped by personal actions. When she reveals: “What we didn’t know was that there would be skin left on the playground after it was all over and done with” (p. 14), she accepts the limits of her being sure what is right.

The novel *Take My Hand* creates a difference between learning from experience and learning from others, with the institutional knowledge coming from many places that are important for public health and medicine. Civil’s emotional connection to Erica and India, remembering them, remembering their smells and cries, is fixed in Black feminist ways of knowing, which Collins (2000) refers to as dialogical, experiential, and ethical. This compares with the logical calculations of the clinic, which justified sterilizations in the name of progress and efficiency. When Civil remembers: “I tell this story to stitch their names inside your clothes, too” (p. 1), she confirms that knowing is an act of responsibility and care, not just data accumulation. This new way of knowing answers what postmodern doubt failed to solve, and rule by experts, building knowledge on responsibility and connections. As a final point, the novel places Civil as a historical witness who moves between respecting the history and accepting that it can’t be undone. The novel thus criticizes the postmodernist while rejecting modernist pride or victory.

The carefully chosen passage texts Civil in an instant of surprising emotional and bodily reactions during a professional meeting:

“I cannot believe how quickly the conversation has turned. We are in his office, for goodness’ sake. The lights are bright. There is no mood music, no wine to dull the senses and loosen the tongue. He takes my hand again, and his touch shoots a tingle through my arm. I’m healthy. Other than a little elevated blood pressure, I have very little in the way of aches and pains, thank the good Lord. But I accepted a long time ago that I lead a life of the mind. My body and its urges are secondary. It’s easy to forget your own flesh when you are concentrated on other people’s bodies” (Perkins Valdez, 2022, p. 148).

This moment highlights personal, felt desires (an affective, even irrational force) and logical, work-related thinking (a modernist ideal), which the passage doesn’t joke about and doesn’t solve. In its place, it makes it dramatic Civil’s inner struggle of these tensions, which is considered a key feature of metamodernism. As Allan Mackee (2003) is focused on, the first step of textual analysis is identifying the hidden cultural ideas in the text. This scene challenges the modernist image, creating a logical, detached worker. The fact that Civil is surprised at such a response of her body, a tingling all along her arm,

breaks in on what she has got as how she sees herself: life of the mind, in which the body and its drives become treated as less important. One can see that in this context, the belief in experts solving everything is not enough because it does not fit the reality of the human body, and experience can't be reduced. At the same time, the text avoids the postmodern urge to criticize these ideas totally without thinking. The realization that strong desire, that is marked by Civil, is not found to be a showing of people's failures or dishonesty; in fact, it is a part of a complex human experience, a sign of a metamodernist moving between emotional honesty and professional behavior (Vermeulen and van den Akker, 2010).

Allan Mackee's second step is analyzing textual methods, which shows how the text moves between postmodern and modern ideas. The show contrasts between place, desires, and professional rules, "We are in his office, for goodness' sake. The lights are bright", with bodily reaction, "his touch shoots a tingle through my arm, creates a tension between unbidden desire and professional propriety. Also, the mocking comment about the absence of "mood music" and "wine" proposes Civil's self-awareness and humor, very strong postmodern irony, but she becomes emotionally distant. As an alternative, she recognizes her true feelings and the awkwardness of the situation, which is a metamodern move that accepts criticism and honesty together (Gibbons, 2015). And then at the end, Allan Mackee's third step of textual analysis is considering reader positioning, which shows how the text asks readers to pay attention to Civil's tension. Readers are put in a situation to understand her emotional openness and work-related unease, feeling awkward, but seeing that she's honest. The text rejects postmodern irony's urge to judge as right or wrong and equally rejects modernist judging as right or wrong. Rather, it inspires the reader to, move back and forth, to feel and to think in a way that brings into line with metamodernist feelings and awareness (Vermeulen & van den Akker, 2010).

This shift between the personal and the professional, the physical experience and reason, the postmodern and the modern shows something different from postmodernism because it doesn't become meaningless, sarcastic, or broken. Rather, the passage encourages the value of both sides of the tension and seeks meaning even between conflicts. Where a postmodernist reading might criticize Civil's bodily reaction as proof of the doubts about job role or gender power (Hutcheon, 1988), the metamodernist reading identifies her desire and vulnerability as reasonable and even important for a fuller understanding of her being human. In this scene, Civil expresses a metamodernist state: she is able to admit her physical urges and at the same time, she remains in logical thinking at work as she moves back and forth, but doesn't solve her repeating issues. Through the application of the MacKees model, the cultural beliefs about the bodies and professions through the use of expressive language that is important in the text, which is a combination of irony and honesty, can encourage readers to think and feel together. Thus, by doing so,

Take My Hand leaves the postmodernist cynicism and preempts a metamodernist sense of ambivalence, though seeking substantive meaning.

The novel makes it dramatically, emotionally, and ethically tense point of reckoning on the part of Civil, as she faces the truth of giving contraception to two young black girls, India and Erica, without agreeing with full knowledge. “When the girls... My hand began to shake.” (Perkins-Valdez, 2022, p. 134). This passage shortly tells the shift between postmodern questioning those in power and knowledge, and modernist faith in medical logic, but does so in a way that pushes away settling into postmodern emotional distance and sees it as a metamodern way of thinking and irony. Instead, it shows what Vermeulen and van den Akker (2010): moving between affect and criticism, sincerity and doubt, action and reflection. Civil’s part at the clinic is mostly shown within modernist ideas about progress in medicine as a kind, logical force, bringing control and health to marginalized groups of people. Her institutional position and training lead her to accept that birth control is necessary and helpful: a way to protect these girls from unwanted harm or pregnancies.

The passage, however, stops short of this assumption by highlighting the violence of such actions, especially when it is done without permission, and the lived experiences of the affected persons. Civil notes that there has been no one who has taken the step of seeking consent as to the beginning of the menstrual cycle in girls, thus signaling how the medical system ignores Black girls’ bodies to control and not as real people. This avoidance, meaning putting something into them in case it might be harmful, is used to criticize modern ideas, especially prevention, showing postmodern doubt about knowledge being controlled. (Hutcheon, 1988). Besides, instead of losing hope or moral responsibility, which is common in postmodern texts, the narrative starts making a way to make ethical and emotional recommendations, which is characteristic of metamodernism (Gibbons, 2015). Civil takes away a needle, throws her gloves away, and admits to having failed to ask enough questions, thus showing a new commitment and also a signal of her questioning mindset.

The next part in the textual analysis by Mackee is focused on textual methods, which is reflected in the shift of Civil’s text between weaknesses and power between emotion and being responsible in the narrative.

The narration moves between:

correct medical judgment (“India had been ten years old and Erica twelve”);
rising doubt (“what could be poisonous”);
emotional reaction (“My hand began to shake”).

These movements in voice and tune point out Civil’s internal conflict between her specialized role as a deal-maker of modernist medicine and her emotional awareness of the girls’ humanity and being part of it. The expressions of motherly feelings of Civil

towards India make it even more difficult to understand her position by making her morally wrong, but feeling deeply involved. This passage can be seen to have a sense of both or neither belonging to metamodernism, where there is a genuine wish to help, and it goes unnoticed that the institutional violence is part of her actions (Vermeulen and van den Akker, 2010). Civil does not deal with this conflict but rather lives in it without the irony of postmodernism, but with the sincerity of self-awareness. The last step by Allan McKee is making the reader understand how he is led to participate in the text. It is here that the reader is both forced to be critical as a form of interrogation, as well as experience the urgent sense of right and wrong of the situation in which systemic structures are created.

Descriptions of senses used by Civil, her shivering hand, the tears of Erica, and the widened eyes of India are the reasons why the reader becomes empathetic. The readers are brought to the place where they feel the burden of the innocence of the girls, as well as the growing awareness of Civil's own role. At the same time, the text does the readers the criticism of controlling doctors and unfair social systems in which there is no easy moral choice. The storyline, by allowing the readers to understand and care at once with Civil and anger at the system that she represents, is consistent with the fact that discussion between postmodern doubt and modern excitement is what is needed in metamodernism religion (Gibbons, 2015, p. 30). This movement out of postmodernism focuses on preferring ironic separation or not taking action when the system punishes.

A postmodern reading may stop at the point of showing the power structures of race and medicine, but in the case of the book, *Take My Hand* goes beyond that. Civil only comes to the realization of her carelessness, but does not clear herself of blame or hide behind mistrust. The fact that she decides to stop the procedure and reviews that she did not ask important questions and that the girls were weak and human beings is a signal of her caring about learning how to treat people right; another way of understanding that may be effective and even critical at the same time. Such a position maintains the sense of being responsible when things are unclear, and it is rather close to the mindset mixing old and new ideas (Vermeulen and van den Akker, 2010). Text therefore highlights the struggle of Civil to the limits of the modernist ideals of medical progress, as well as the weakness of postmodern criticism in itself, leading to action that is moral. Using the textual analysis presented by McKee (2003) shows how the story reveals modernist assumptions, the methods of moving, and places the readers in a position to think and feel at the same time. This continuous change between uncertainty and awareness of issues and goodwill, mistrust and good faith, is a uniquely metamodernist exercise in breaking with keeping responsibility even without full clarity. By having Civil experience, an emotional crisis, as well as clear uncertainty, one can think that it appears in interactions with others, depending on the situation, and changes over time, knowing that, in its turn, is completely metamodern.

This part of the text talks about the research and shows the clinical charts, where the description of the patients and their complaints is written without personal feelings. “At the bottom Any kids?” (Perkins-Valdez, 2022, p. 103). Such a short but strong passage is an example of a conflict between modernist rationality, post-modern criticism, and a metamodern shift into unclear situations and moral ideas. The passage points out cultural beliefs. Allan Mackee (2003), in the first phase of textual analysis, identifies cultural assumptions compared to modernist ideas that consider medicine as an objective, scientific practice. The routine notes show the system wants people to stay detached: results and symptoms are limited to the same kind of statements, like, patient tolerates medication well- no side effects, like human suffering can be simplified and repeated. This follows modernist thinking of measuring things, making sense, and general knowledge. Even then, this assumption is a narration that moves fast, ignoring moral and emotional parts.

This struggle shows the post-modernist argument that universal ideas can lead to leaving people out; in this case, clinical medicine is very often the tool of marginalisation and power (Hutcheon, 1988). However, instead of wrongly calling these actions negative, the novel seems to be suggesting a more detailed approach because it moves between a desire to care and an understanding of the failure of the whole system, which is a sign of changing ideas.

The second part of the textual analysis, by which Allan Mackee (2003) explains textual methods, makes us see that sincerity and irony are the two methods used in the text. Even the style of the notes themselves is representative of modern systems that are strict and impersonal, being repetitive, standardised, and unemotional. However, the funny difference between cold medical facts and the nurse’s feelings (with the sign of exclamation) signals that this goal is impossible. Unsigned, unusual punctuation is also a signal of ignoring rules or breaking them, which all point to the issue of blindly following rules. The high use of exclamation marks shows that human emotions don’t fit into medical rules.

The purely post-modern interpretation could stop at showing how the medical language is cold and covers up power relationships. The novel *Take My Hand* goes further to suggest a way to do the right thing even in imperfect systems. Therefore, this scene shows the metamodern moves between post-modern doubts of institutional power and the modernist ideals of logical care, without the need to adopt either of the two ways. It instead creates a third way, which takes confusion and tries to act as a moral meaning, a key feature of metamodernism (Vermeulen and van den Akker, 2010). In this case of a clinical setting, Perkins Valdez shows the opposition between the post-moderns and the modernist rationality, but it combines criticism and compassion in a new way that moves between irony and honesty, coldness.

As we have used the textual analysis of Mackee (2003), we see how the institutional medicine cultural beliefs are revealed, the element of narrative methods predicting humanity and irony before, and puts the reader in a way to think critically, yet still have a feeling in their heart. By doing so, moving back and forth between the post-modern and the modern is shown as going away from post-modernism in that it maintains the emotional genuineness, feeling what is right, and having purpose even when the system doesn't work, which is what "Take My Hand" does.

Take My Hand by Dolan Perkins Valdez (2022) is a work of drama that shows the confused emotions and morals that allow the uneasy feeling the Black nurse is facing because of dealing with the results of medical injustice and systemic racism in 1970s Alabama. This study explores the ways in which the storyline changes postmodern negativity and irony in the name of responsibility, sincerity, and meaning in an unclear context by applying the point of view of metamodernism, as discussed by Vermeulen and Van den Akker (2010), which finds the modern culture as changing postmodernist and negativity and modernist idealism. Through using a method to study the text of Allan Mackee's (2003), which studies the cultural beliefs, textual methods, and reader positioning of a text, I study the passage to show how Take My Hand shows a changing sensibility that changes from the postmodern and aligns with metamodern values.

This part of the text, Civil's quiet, leaving with hesitation from an encounter with her past, captures the conflict between doubt and connection, giving up and hope, distance and closeness. The analysis below shows how this scene shows a back-and-forth between postmodern and modern that goes beyond normal behavior.

The text moves between postmodern doubt and modernist concepts of closure, thus turning out to be not as following strict rules, a postmodernist belief that rejects both sides. It looks like an emotional way out of the scene would be understood as a performance on the part of a critic of modern ideas, showing before it happens the cultural scripts and power relations that control the situation (Hutcheon, 1988). The novel Take My Hand sees these relations, yet at the same time proves that even so, these criticisms, understanding, caring moments, and moral values could be gained and needed. The internal struggle of Civil, whose desires to stay balanced by the need to leave, her love of possibility, and her sense of the ending, is a representation of a kind of metamodern thinking that does not abandon responsibility and hope without giving up.

The novel, Take My Hand, rethinks historical fiction through a metamodern core, one that refuses to choose between postmodern doubt and modernist honesty. Instead of that, Perkins Valdez presents a narrative that moves carefully when things aren't clear, caring about what's fair and being right about the facts. By checking the relationship between Systemic inequality and Personal choice. Civil Townsend becomes a metamodern protagonist: Broken but aiming, damaged but kind. In doing so, Perkins Valdez declares a

21st-century method of Past connection, not through nostalgia or irony, but through storytelling that moves between feeling and knowing, between truth and fact.

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