

Analysis of rebecca solnit's chapter of the garden of merging paths

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Assignment Essay Today, historical events continue to influence society in unprecedented ways. Living in a world characterized by unexpected changes owing to advances in technology, transport, and communication, America continues to reinforce its dominance in the world. Rebecca Solnit's chapter "The Garden of Merging Paths" is a concise and clear description of the events during the Cold War era. In this chapter, Solnit provides readers with crucial insights about the various activities and happenings in this era, which led to the emergence and rise of America to the summit in world affairs. The Cold War was characterized by increased tensions between America and Russia, and military advancements characterized each other's agenda in dominating world affairs. Therefore, Solnit's arguments elicit praise and criticism of this period in almost equal measure, but are apparent America realized its objective after decisive sacrifices.

My primal reason for reading this chapter is to comprehend and understand numerous events in society that have shaped human conditions in the world. It was possible by reading Solnit's work to understand the unique features of Silicon Valley, as she notes "Finding the landscape of Silicon Valley isn't as easy as getting the subdivisions and freeway exits and industrial parks." When Langdon Winner wrote a profile of Silicon Valley a few years ago, he reached for the Winchester Mystery House as its Emblem. It is an obvious one in a region whose other landmarks are scarce (Solnit 52). Consequently, I agree with Solnit on the difficulty of finding the landscape of Silicon Valley. Increased military operations have transformed the valley into an area of underground military bases, tunnels, and activities. The physical landscape of Silicon Valley is deceiving because even though one can see decaying

emblems like the Winchester Mystery house, it is apparent many more buildings, and facilities characterize the valley's landscape. Her arguments about Silicon Valley significantly transformed my perception about a landscape, and I discovered that even underground features in the area are part of its landscape.

Moreover, the difficulty in finding the landscape of Silicon Valley led to my second reason for reading this text, which was to comprehend and understand Solnit's comparison of Silicon Valley with a maze. After understanding why the author compares Silicon Valley with a maze, I critically analyzed this comparison to understand this inevitable metaphor clearly and easily. Advances in technology, transport and communication has led to increased social problems in modern society. I believe the author compares the moral and social twists resulting from technology with the structure of the maze. Just like it is difficult to find a path in the maze, modern society fumbles with aligning its need for social change with the spread of globalization. It is demonstrated in Silicon Valley where military activities have significantly affected the local population in this area.

Finally, I read this text in order to understand the history of Silicon Valley. She compares America's military preoccupation with increased land coverage of military facilities used to create, test, and deploy military weapons. However, this saw resistance from indigenous communities. As she notes, " Sarah Winchester moved west after she became the widow of a man whose repeating rifle was the definitive weapon in western expansion-" the gun that won the West." Frightened of the souls of the Native Americans killed by the Winchester repeating rifle, she spiritual advice and was told that

as long as her house was being built, she was safe..." (Solnit 52). I read this chapter to appreciate the journey the country has made for many decades. By understanding life in the West through Solnit's eyes, I now acknowledge and appreciate the need for military advancement and Western expansion during this period.

Work Cited

Solnit, Rebecca. "The Garden of Merging Paths", *Uneven Terrain: The West*, 51-60