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Course of Studies

Module

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Thesis Statements

The Vietnam War in American Literature and Culture

1. While Vietnam War literature produced by non-Asian Americans and Vietnam War literature produced by Asian-Americans both deal with masculinity and its expression, literature produced by non-Asian-Americans often does not reflect or criticize what society expects of men in war and at home. Movies such as [*movie title*] (year) and [*movie title*] (year) for example depict men that have to conform to very limiting societal standards and display those standards as something desirable. Asian-American literature, by contrast, depicts men that struggle with these expectations or break them.
2. Vietnam War Literature is often written by second generation Asian-Americans and deals with the racism and the struggle of identity they experience in the US. This is often expressed by the inability of protagonists to understand their parents as well as by the clash of cultural they experience. However, the texts also point out the similarities of experiences of Vietnamese war refugees and their children born in America.
3. American Vietnam War literature portrays the Vietnam War mainly as an American tragedy. In these texts the US Army is badly equipped and merciful but at the same time a loyal and brutal force fighting for a “good cause” while Vietnamese people are enemies or helpless victims who are dependent on US soldiers.
4. Asian-American Vietnam War Literature focuses more on the consequences of the war for the Vietnamese. It expresses emotions and reflects on the experience Vietnamese people were forced to go through. However, it does not ignore the American point of view as much as American literature ignores the Vietnamese view and even acknowledges the human connections that arose during these times between Vietnamese and Americans. Moreover, Asian American literature does not always depict the USA as the enemy. Therefore, it could be argued that Asian- American Literature provides a more balanced and complex depiction of the Vietnam War.
5. Asian-American Vietnam War literature does not only describe the experiences of Vietnamese people during the war and on their flight to the U.S., it also depicts the long-term psychological and physical injury that the war caused.
6. The online comic [*title of the online comic*] does not only reflect the kind of institutional racism Vietnamese people still have to experience in the US, it uses the well-known example of Vietnamese refugees to show which problems contemporary refugees must face in America.

Black Feminism and Black Women in American Literature and Culture

1. Using the concept of intersectionality to analyze the depiction of Black motherhood in Black feminist literature, it can be argued that Black women struggle to meet the social expectations of being a mother because of white hegemony, racism and sexism. This can be seen by how Black women in these texts are portrayed as lacking a personal connection to their children, cannot care for their children in the way they want to, and sometimes do not even have a claim to their own children.
2. Black feminist literature deals with the impact of toxic masculinity on Black women. It does not only portray how Black men, in similar ways than white men, uphold sexist expectations about Black women's roles in society to strengthen their own masculinity, but also how Black women must fight racist and sexist stereotypes to empower themselves and defend their place in their community.
3. Black feminist literature deals with the intersection of race and gender and shows how Black women are only viewed as women when it benefits white people or Black men. They are confronted with white beauty standards and often struggle with embracing their femininity without shame. Black men in these texts are often want Black women to be feminine in a way that they and wider society can feel comfortable with, and white people, including white women, do not see Black women as women but primarily as Black people. Black women themselves have frequently internalized misogyny and anti-blackness (manifested as colorism) and thus are shown to discriminate against other Black women if they do not fit an idealized role.
4. Black feminist literature often deals with black women's empowerment. It covers sexual empowerment, financial empowerment and self-empowerment. Different ways of achieving empowerment are depicted, which often means breaking societal rules and reaching for goals that seem unreachable. Black women's empowerment is often underlined by metaphors surrounding nature or by narratives of Black women who create their own identity, instead of living by the expectations of others. Women's empowerment in the materials I have chosen is not exclusive to the present: they often refer to the past where enslaved women empowered themselves through education and other forms of resistance to white oppression.
5. Analyzed from an intersectional point of view, the novel [*novel's title*] (year) by [author's name] depicts a young girl who struggles to speak up not only because of her Blackness but because of her gender and socio-economic background. She is not only struggling to speak up about the death of her friend but moreover feels trapped in a society and culture shaped by sexism and white hegemony.