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BA English Honours | Semester VI | ENG6EJ302

Indian Women Writings

Module 3: Drama, Performance, and Feminist Resistance • Comprehensive Notes

Chapter 3: Feminist Theater, Body, and Political Performance

Feminist theater in India moves beyond the proscenium stage to engage directly with street theater, subaltern resistance, and the reclamation of mythological archetypes. Playwrights such as Mahasweta Devi, Dina Mehta, and Tripurari Sharma dismantle patriarchal dramatic traditions.

3.1 Mahasweta Devi: Theater of the Subaltern

In plays like *Mother of 1084* and *Bayen*, Mahasweta Devi dramatizes the political awakening of women. In *Mother of 1084*, Sujata Chatterjee, a bourgeois mother in Calcutta, confronts the corpse of her Naxalite son Brati (designated merely as corpse number 1084), transforming her maternal grief into revolutionary consciousness against the corrupt state.

Advanced Critical Theory, Hermeneutics & Literary Praxis

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1. Hermeneutic Paradigms and Textual Mechanics

Critical inquiry into Module 3: Drama, Performance, and Feminist Resistance reveals how textual forms construct meaning through complex aesthetic strategies and structural choices:

- **Structuralism and Semiotic Deconstruction:** The organization of signs, tropes, and syntactical structures establishes narrative authority while simultaneously revealing internal fissures. Binary oppositions embedded within the discourse—such as center versus margin, tradition versus modernity, and subjective interiority versus objective reality—are systematically problematized through textual slippages and ambiguous signifiers.
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2. Historiographical Context and Reception Theory

Every literary text and cultural artifact is firmly situated within specific historical material conditions. Understanding Module 3: Drama, Performance, and Feminist Resistance requires examining how contemporaneous social movements, intellectual revolutions, and material shifts in print and digital publishing influenced textual production. Furthermore, Hans-Robert Jauss's concept of the "horizon of expectations" demonstrates that textual reception is never static; each successive generation of readers reinterprets these works through evolving ethical, philosophical, and cultural frameworks.

3. Comparative Aesthetic and Thematic Matrix

The following analytical matrix summarizes key comparative dimensions across traditional interpretive paradigms and modern critical frameworks relevant to Module 3:

Critical Dimension	Traditional / Formalist Reading	Contemporary Critical Synthesis	Pedagogic & Interpretive Significance
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Media & Cultural Materialism	Autonomous aesthetic object isolated from economic and technological modes of production.	Examines print capitalism, digital distribution, translation praxis, and multimodal adaptations.	Connects literary aesthetics to global production networks and digital media convergence.

4. Pedagogical Synthesis and Scholarly Praxis

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