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BA English Honours | Semester VI | ENG6EJ304

Geopolitical Dynamics in Literature

Module 3: War, Imperialism, and the War on Terror Narratives • Comprehensive Notes

Chapter 3: Post-9/11 Geopolitics and Neo-Imperial Warfare

The aftermath of the September 11 attacks inaugurated the global "War on Terror," fundamentally reordering international law, civil liberties, and imperial warfare. Literature emerging from this era confronts extrajudicial drone strikes, secret rendition sites (Guantánamo Bay), and pervasive anti-Muslim racism.

3.1 Mohsin Hamid: The Reluctant Fundamentalist (2007)

Mohsin Hamid's brilliant dramatic monologue novel *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* captures the post-9/11 geopolitical rupture. Set in a Lahore tea shop, the Pakistani protagonist Changez recounts his life story to an uneasy, armed American interlocutor.

Changez, a Princeton graduate working for a elite corporate valuation firm in Manhattan, initially embraces the American capitalist dream. However, in the toxic wave of post-9/11 racial profiling, detention of Muslim immigrants, and US military invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, Changez experiences an ideological epiphany, rejecting corporate imperialism to return to Pakistan as a political activist, illustrating the deep disillusionment of the postcolonial intellectual.

Advanced Critical Theory, Hermeneutics & Literary Praxis

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1. Hermeneutic Paradigms and Textual Mechanics

Critical inquiry into Module 3: War, Imperialism, and the War on Terror Narratives 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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- **Ecocritical and Spatial Dynamics:** Physical topographies, built environments, and non-human ecologies function as active participants in the narrative economy. Space is never neutral; rather, it reflects socio-economic stratification, environmental exploitation, and geopolitical borders that delineate belonging and exile.

2. Historiographical Context and Reception Theory

Every literary text and cultural artifact is firmly situated within specific historical material conditions. Understanding Module 3: War, Imperialism, and the War on Terror Narratives 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:

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