

ITERATURES IN ENGLISH

Theories and Practices

(Vol. II)



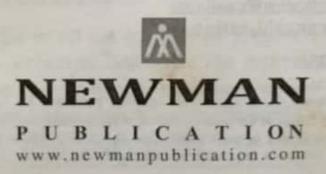
Mr. Bibhishan Phad

LITERATURES IN ENGLISH

(Theories and Practices)
(Vol. II)

Edited by

Mr. Bibhishan Phad



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	and the Dominated Mode in Shashi Deshpand	0.1
16.	The Dominative and the Dominated Mode in Shashi Deshpand	C S
	'That Long Stience	
	Dr. K. K. Ladda A Critique of Subaltern Theory	103
17.	A Critique of Subantern	100
11	Mr. M. S. Billiam Pao and Chinua Achebe	108
18.	Colonial Proposition: Raja Rao and Colonial Proposition: Raja Rao and Mr. Manjramkar N. N. & Dr. Shinde S. K. Mr. Manjramkar N. N. & Dr. Shinde S. K. Mr. Manjramkar N. N. & Dr. Shinde S. K.	
	Mr. Manjramkar N. N. & Debiaton Mistry's "Tales from Fires	111
19.	Mr. Manjramkar N. N. & States from Firozsi Ethnic Inclusiveness in Rohinton Mistry's "Tales from Firozsi	nah
900	Raag"	
		118
20.	Quant for Salf in Bharati Mukilerjee 5	
	The state of the survivation	123
21	Anita Nair's Ladies Coupe: A Feminist Perspective	
	I Conwone	128
22	Reflection Of Karl Marx Thoughts In Literature	
22.	Dr. Korde R. C.	134
	Literature in the light of Indian English and The Indian	4
23.	Literature in the light of molan English	
	Contribution	142
200	Ku. M. P.Sonare	
24.	Critical Approaches to Film Studies: An Overview of Signific	-am
	Theories and Practices	140
	R. B. Kadam	148
25.	The Power of Self Esteem in Chandalika by Rabindranath Ta	
	Dr. Solunke R.E.	160
26.	Postcolonial Theories	
	S. M. Gaikwad	167
27.	Reflection of Socio-political Perspectives in Upamanyu	
	Chatterjee's English August : An Indian Story	
	Dr. S. T. Haibatpure	175
28.	Untouchability in Tagore's Play Chandalika	
	Prof. Dr. Geeta Patil	182
29.		-
	Red Indian Boys from "Shagganappi" by Emily Pauline John	Son.
	An Exhibition of PrimitiveCourage with Indian Etiquettes Dr. S. G. Patil	106
30.	The state of the s	186
	Eco-Feminism and The Role Of Women As Preservers J.D. Sampale	
31	Passarch D	195
01.	Research Based Pedagogy ToolA Need of Time Dr. A. P. Mali	
32	English I	200
54.	English Language Teaching and Learning in India:	
	Mana B. B.	

A Critique of Subaltern Theory

Mr. Manik Subhash Bhatane

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Subaltern is the word derived from Latin it means of lower status, 'sub' as next below, alternus' as every other. The concise Oxford English dictionary and the Cambridge Advanced Learner's dictionary give the meaning of the term as an army officer whose rank is lower than captain. The Wikipedia an online encyclopedia gives two types of definition of the term,

- Subaltern is a term that commonly refers to persons who are socially, politically and geographically outside of hegemonic power structure.
- The term subaltern is used in postcolonial theory. The meaning of the term in current philosophical and critical usage is disputed. Subaltern is the term used in general sense to refer to marginalised groups and the lower classes in society. A subaltern is someone with low rank in social, political or other hierarchy. It can also mean someone who has been marginalised or oppressed.

The term 'Subaltern' was first elaborated by Italian, Marxist intellectual Antonio Gramsci. According to Gramsci the term refers to the groups who are outside of the established structures of political representation. The term subaltern has close association with Marxism, Post- Structalism and Post-Colonial Criticism. Subaltern studies have great relevance to understand and interpret the contemporary society and history. Antonio Gramsci has used the term as subordinate position in terms of class, gender, race and culture.

The term subaltern was popularized by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's essay 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak has made emphasis on the structure of colonialism, the Feminist movement and Marxism. 'Can the subaltern speak?' is her influential essay later on expanded in her book 'Critique of Post-Colonial Reason' (1999). Her essay has played a pivotal



Mr. Bibhishan Phad has been teaching English language and literature for last 11 years. He is an Assistant Professor and Head of the Department of English in Kholeshwar Mahavidyalaya, Ambajogai. He has published various research articles in national and international journals and books and has presented research papers in various state, national and international conferences. He is interested in British, Indian literature and English Language Teaching.



