

AMERICAN LITERATURE



Minority literatures

One of the key developments in late-20th-century American literature was the rise to prominence of literature written by and about ethnic minorities. This development came alongside:

- ❖ the growth of the Civil Rights movements;
- ❖ the Ethnic Pride movement, which led to the creation of Ethnic Studies programs in most major universities. These programs helped establish the new ethnic literature as worthy objects of academic study, and the rise of literary theory as a key component of academic literary study.

Indian American identity

- It wasn't until the late 1960s that the term "Indian American" was created in an attempt to advocate for political solidarity and cultural nationalism. When this term was created, it allowed Indians in the United States better identify as a subgroup with shared concerns as well as articulate their individuality.

Indian-American Literature

- Indian American literature is characterized by its "plain" language and characters, often Indian immigrants to America who must navigate between the cultural values of their homeland and their adopted home

Major themes

- ❑ race, culture, and finding a sense of identity;
- ❑ struggle and isolation in the new world of the United States;
- ❑ the future of Indian Americans;
- ❑ cultural traditions.

Main representatives

BHARATI
MUKHERJEE
(July 27, 1940 –
January 28, 2017)



BHARATI MUKHERJEE

- an Indian immigrant to the United States, had captured evocatively the South Asian -- particularly the Indian --immigrant experience in the United States in her dozen-plus novels, collections of short fiction, essays and works of nonfiction.
- Her early novels, *The Tiger's Daughter* (1972) and *Wife* (1975), tell the story of the isolation of Indian expatriates.
- In these earlier works Mukherjee was seen as an Indian writing in English, but in her third book, a collection of short stories titled *Darkness* (1985), she began to write with the voice of a North American immigrant author.
- With *The Middleman and Other Stories* (1989), Mukherjee's shift in point of view was complete, as she painted an even broader portrait of the North American immigrant experience.
- In *Jasmine* (1989), she explored female identity through an Indian peasant woman whose travels to different locales in the United States increasingly solidify her identity in this country.
- *The Holder of the World* (1993), said to be her most accomplished recent work, turns to the subject of Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*.

Main representatives



Jhumpa Lahiri (1967)

Jhumpa Lahiri

- Nilanjana Sudheshna Lahiri was born on July 11, 1967, in London, England. Mother Tapati and father Amar, a Bengali couple who immigrated to the United Kingdom from Calcutta, India.
- Lahiri's father, a university librarian, opted to remove to the United States for work, in South Kingstown, when she was a small child.
- With the family nickname, "Jhumpa," coming to be used by school teachers, Lahiri went on to attend Barnard College in New York, focusing on English literature.
- In Boston University she earned three literary master's degrees before receiving her doctorate in Renaissance studies.
- Her first book is a collection of nine stories, *Interpreter of Maladies*, published in 1999. It describes the lives of characters both in India and the States. *Interpreter* won the Pulitzer Prize and the PEN/Hemingway Award.
- Lahiri married journalist Alberto Vourvoulias-Bush in 2001. They had two children: Octavio in 2002 and Noor in 2005. The family currently lives in Brooklyn, New York.

The Namesake, 2003

- In 2003, Lahiri published her first novel, *The Namesake*, originally a novella in *The New Yorker*. It is the story of the Ganguli family, comprised of parents who immigrated to the United States from Calcutta and of their children, Gogol and Sonia, raised in the USA. The story follows the family over the course of thirty years in Calcutta, Boston, and New York.

The Namesake Themes

- ✓ IDENTITY
- ✓ FOREIGNNESS AND “THE OTHER”
- ✓ CONTRASTING REGIONS: INDIA,
UNITED STATES, EUROPE
- ✓ SOCIETY AND CLASS