

Naturalism in 20th Century American Fiction

Naturalism is a literary movement that emphasizes observation and the scientific method in the fictional portrayal of reality. Novelists writing in the naturalist mode include Émile Zola (its founder), Thomas Hardy, Theodore Dreiser, Stephen Crane, and Frank Norris.

Naturalism began as a branch of literary realism, and realism had favored fact, logic, and impersonality over the imaginative, symbolic, and supernatural. Dreiser, Crane, and Norris were also journalists, and thus attempted to immerse themselves in the world of fact via the reporter's assumption of detached observation. Although they considered themselves realists, naturalistic authors selected particular parts of reality: misery, corruption, vice, disease, poverty, prostitution, racism, and violence. They were criticized for being pessimistic and for concentrating excessively on the darker aspects of life.

The novel would be an experiment where the author could discover and analyze the forces, or scientific laws, that influenced behavior, and these included emotion, heredity, and environment.

Other characteristics of literary naturalism include: detachment, in which the author maintains an impersonal tone and disinterested point of view; determinism, the opposite of free will, in which a character's fate has been decided, even predetermined, by impersonal forces of nature beyond human control; and a sense that the universe itself is indifferent to human life.

The paradox of naturalism is that it holds two contrary or conflicting views: human behavior is the result of free will, and yet also determined by natural laws.

The term *naturalism* describes a type of literature that attempts to apply scientific principles of objectivity and detachment to its study of human beings. Unlike realism, which focuses on literary technique, naturalism implies a philosophical position: for naturalistic writers, since human beings are, in Emile Zola's phrase, "human beasts," characters can be studied through their relationships to their surroundings. Zola's description of this method in *Le roman expérimental* (*The Experimental Novel*, 1880) follows Claude Bernard's medical model and the historian Hippolyte Taine's observation that "virtue and vice are products like vitriol and sugar"--that is, that human beings as "products" should be studied impartially, without moralizing about their natures. Other influences on American naturalists include Herbert Spencer and Joseph LeConte.

Through this objective study of human beings, naturalistic writers believed that the laws behind the forces that govern human lives might be studied and understood. Naturalistic writers thus used a version of the scientific method to write their novels; they studied human beings governed by their instincts and passions as well as the ways in which the characters' lives were governed by forces of heredity and environment. Although they used the techniques of accumulating detail pioneered by the realists, the naturalists thus had a specific object in mind when they chose the segment of reality that they wished to convey.

In George Becker's famous phrase, naturalism's philosophical framework can be simply described as "pessimistic materialistic determinism." Another such concise definition appears in the introduction to *American Realism: New Essays*. In that piece, "The Country of the Blue," Eric Sundquist comments, "Revelling in the extraordinary, the excessive, and the grotesque in order to reveal the immutable bestiality of Man in Nature, naturalism dramatizes the loss of individuality at a physiological level by making a Calvinism without God its determining order and violent death its utopia".

A modified definition appears in Donald Pizer's *Realism and Naturalism in Nineteenth-Century American Fiction*, (1984):

[T]he naturalistic novel usually contains two tensions or contradictions, and . . . the two in conjunction comprise both an interpretation of experience and a particular aesthetic recreation of experience. In other words, the two constitute the theme and form of the naturalistic novel. The first tension is that between the subject matter of the naturalistic novel and the concept of man which emerges from this subject matter. The naturalist populates his novel primarily from the lower middle class or the lower class. . . . His fictional world is that of the commonplace and unheroic in which life would seem to be chiefly the dull round of daily existence, as we ourselves usually conceive of our lives. But the naturalist discovers in this world those qualities of man usually associated with the heroic or adventurous, such as acts of violence and passion which involve sexual adventure or bodily strength and which culminate in desperate moments and violent death. A naturalistic novel is thus an extension of realism only in the sense that both modes often deal with the local and contemporary. The naturalist, however, discovers in this material the extraordinary and excessive in human nature.

The second tension involves the theme of the naturalistic novel. The naturalist often describes his characters as though they are conditioned and controlled by environment, heredity, instinct, or chance. But he also suggests a compensating humanistic value in his characters or their fates which affirms the significance of the individual and of his life. The tension here is that between the naturalist's desire to represent in fiction the new, discomfiting truths which he has found in the ideas and life of his late nineteenth-century world, and also his desire to find some meaning in experience which reasserts the validity of the human enterprise. (10-11)

1. Walcott identifies survival, determinism, violence, and taboo as key themes.
2. The "brute within" each individual, composed of strong and often warring emotions: passions, such as lust, greed, or the desire for dominance or pleasure; and the fight for survival in an amoral, indifferent universe. The conflict in naturalistic novels is often "man against nature" or "man against himself" as characters struggle to retain a "veneer of civilization" despite external pressures that threaten to release the "brute within."
3. Nature as indifferent force acting on the lives of human beings. The romantic vision of Wordsworth--that "nature never did betray the heart that loved her"--here becomes Stephen Crane's view in "The Open Boat": "This tower was a giant, standing with its back to the plight of the ants. It represented in a degree, to the correspondent, the serenity of nature amid the struggles of the individual--nature in the wind, and nature in the vision of men. She did not seem cruel to him then, or beneficent, or treacherous, or wise. But she was indifferent, flatly indifferent."
4. The forces of heredity and environment as they affect--and afflict--individual lives.
5. An indifferent, deterministic universe. Naturalistic texts often describe the futile attempts of human beings to exercise free will, often ironically presented, in this universe that reveals free will as an illusion.

Lost Generation Writers

World War I, originally called the Great War, resulted in more than nine million deaths. The official starting point was the assassination of the heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria. However, this was simply the spark that lit a tinder keg of overbuilt armies, imperial tensions, and complex alliances creating two opposing political forces in Europe: the Allies and the Central Powers.

The Great War became a war of attrition due to the use of trench warfare, in which both sides dug elaborate trenches where they could shelter from the enemy's artillery fire. The trench would be protected by barbed wire. In between the trenches stretched No Man's Land, and troops ordered over the top would have to climb up and cross a considerable space unprotected from the enemy's firearms in order to reach their foes and attack. Such a charge usually would gain a side only a small stretch of land, if any, and would result in many deaths. Chemical attacks had not yet been banned; Wilfred Owen's poem 'Dulce et Decorum Est' describes the experience of facing a gas attack.

While living in the trenches, conditions were deplorable. Disease was rife: Trench foot, in which soldiers suffered from gangrene and fungus as a result of wet, muddy conditions; Trench fever, which included conjunctivitis, rashes, and headaches; and Trench mouth, or acute necrotizing ulcerative gingivitis. At least two million deaths in the trenches resulted from disease before the Treaty of Versailles ended the war on 28 June 1919.

In the aftermath of the war there arose a group of young persons known as the "Lost Generation." The term was coined from something Gertrude Stein witnessed the owner of a garage saying to his young employee, which Hemingway later used as an epigraph to his novel *The Sun Also Rises* (1926): "You are all a lost generation." This accusation referred to the lack of purpose or drive resulting from the horrific disillusionment felt by those who grew up and lived through the war, and were then in their twenties and thirties. Having seen pointless death on such a huge scale, many lost faith in traditional values like courage, patriotism, and masculinity. Some in turn became aimless, reckless, and focused on material wealth, unable to believe in abstract ideals.

In literature, the "Lost Generation" refers to a group of writers and poets who were men and women of this period. All were American, but several members emigrated to Europe. The most famous members were Gertrude Stein, Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and T. S. Eliot.

Common themes in works of literature by members of the Lost Generation include:

Decadence - Consider the lavish parties of James Gatsby in Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* or those thrown by the characters in his *Tales of the Jazz Age*. Recall the aimless traveling, drinking, and parties of the circles of expatriates in Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises* and *A Moveable Feast*. With ideals shattered so thoroughly by the war, for many, hedonism was the result. Lost Generation writers revealed the sordid nature of the shallow, frivolous lives of the young and independently wealthy in the aftermath of the war.

Gender roles and Impotence - Faced with the destruction of the chivalric notions of warfare as a glamorous calling for a young man, a serious blow was dealt to traditional gender roles and images of masculinity. In *The Sun Also Rises*, the narrator, Jake, literally is impotent as a result of a war wound, and instead it is his female love Brett who acts the man, manipulating sexual partners and taking charge of their lives. Think also of T. S. Eliot's poem *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*, and Prufrock's inability to declare his love to the unnamed recipient.

Idealised past - Rather than face the horrors of warfare, many worked to create an idealised but unattainable image of the past, a glossy image with no bearing in reality. The best example is in *Gatsby*'s idealisation of Daisy, his inability to see her as she truly is, and the closing lines to the novel after all its death and disappointment:

*"Gatsby believed in the green light, the orgastic future that year by year recedes before us. It eludes us then, but that's no matter- to-morrow we will run faster, stretch our arms farther... And one fine morning--
So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past."*

African-American literature

African-American literature is the body of literature produced in the United States by writers of African descent. It begins with the works of such late 18th-century writers as Phillis Wheatley. Before the high point of slave narratives, African-American literature was dominated by autobiographical spiritual narratives. African-American literature reached early high points with slave narratives of the 19th century. The Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s was a time of flowering of literature and the arts. Writers of African-American literature have been recognized by the highest awards, including the Nobel Prize to Toni Morrison. Among the themes and issues explored in this literature are the role of African Americans within the larger American society, African-American culture, racism, slavery, and social equality. African-American writing has tended to incorporate oral forms, such as spirituals, sermons, gospel music, blues, or rap.

As African Americans' place in American society has changed over the centuries, so has the focus of African-American literature. Before the American Civil War, the literature primarily consisted

of memoirs by people who had escaped from slavery; the genre of slave narratives included accounts of life under slavery and the path of justice and redemption to freedom. There was an early distinction between the literature of freed slaves and the literature of free blacks who had been born in the North. Free blacks had to express their oppression in a different narrative form. Free blacks in the North often spoke out against slavery and racial injustices using the spiritual narrative. The spiritual addressed many of the same themes of slave narratives, but has been largely ignored in current scholarly conversation.

At the turn of the 20th century, non-fiction works by authors such as W. E. B. Du Bois and Booker T. Washington debated how to confront racist attitudes in the United States. During the American Civil Rights movement, authors such as Richard Wright and Gwendolyn Brooks wrote about issues of racial segregation and black nationalism. Today, African-American literature has become accepted as an integral part of American literature, with books such as *Roots: The Saga of an American Family* by Alex Haley, *The Color Purple* (1982) by Alice Walker, which won the Pulitzer Prize; and *Beloved* by Toni Morrison achieving both best-selling and award-winning status.

In broad terms, African-American literature can be defined as writings by people of African descent living in the United States. It is highly varied. African-American literature has generally focused on the role of African Americans within the larger American society and what it means to be an American. As Princeton University professor Albert J. Raboteau has said, all African-American study "speaks to the deeper meaning of the African-American presence in this nation. This presence has always been a test case of the nation's claims to freedom, democracy, equality, the inclusiveness of all." African-American literature explores the issues of freedom and equality long denied to Blacks in the United States, along with further themes such as African-American culture, racism, religion, slavery, a sense of home, segregation, migration, feminism, and more. African-American literature presents the African-American experience from an African-American point of view. In the early Republic, African-American literature represented a way for free blacks to negotiate their new identity in an individualized republic. They often tried to exercise their political and social autonomy in the face of resistance from the white public. Thus, an early theme of African-American literature was, like other American writings, what it meant to be a citizen in post-Revolutionary America.

African-American literature has both been influenced by the great African diasporic heritage and shaped it in many countries. It has been created within the larger realm of post-colonial literature, although scholars distinguish between the two, saying that "African American literature differs from most post-colonial literature in that it is written by members of a minority community who reside within a nation of vast wealth and economic power."

African-American oral culture is rich in poetry, including spirituals, gospel music, blues, and rap. This oral poetry also appears in the African-American tradition of Christian sermons, which make

use of deliberate repetition, cadence, and alliteration. African-American literature—especially written poetry, but also prose—has a strong tradition of incorporating all of these forms of oral poetry. These characteristics do not occur in all works by African-American writers.

Some scholars resist using Western literary theory to analyze African-American literature. As the Harvard literary scholar Henry Louis Gates, Jr. said, "My desire has been to allow the black tradition to speak for itself about its nature and various functions, rather than to read it, or analyze it, in terms of literary theories borrowed whole from other traditions, appropriated from without." One trope common to African-American literature is "signifying". Gates claims that signifying "is a trope in which are subsumed several other rhetorical tropes, including metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, and irony, and also hyperbole and litotes, and metalepsis." Signifying also refers to the way in which African-American "authors read and critique other African American texts in an act of rhetorical self-definition".

Jewish American Fiction

Jewish American literature holds an essential place in the literary history of the United States. It encompasses traditions of writing in English, and other languages, the most important of which has been Yiddish. While critics and authors generally acknowledge the notion of a distinctive corpus and practice of writing about Jewishness in America, many writers resist being named as 'Jewish voices'. Also, many nominally Jewish writers cannot be considered representative of Jewish American literature, one example being Isaac Asimov.

Beginning with the memoirs and petitions composed by the Sephardic immigrants who arrived in America during the mid-17th century, Jewish American writing grew over the subsequent centuries to flourish in other genres as well, including fiction, poetry, and drama. The first notable voice in Jewish- American literature was Emma Lazarus whose poem "The New Colossus" on the Statue of Liberty became the great hymnal of American immigration. Gertrude Stein became one of the most influential prose-stylists of the early 20th century.

The early twentieth century saw the appearance of two pioneering American Jewish novels: Abraham Cahan's 'The Rise of David Levinsky' and Henry Roth's 'Call it Sleep'. It reached some of its most mature expression in the 20th century "Jewish American novels" by Saul Bellow, J. D. Salinger, Norman Mailer, Bernard Malamud, Chaim Potok, and Philip Roth. Their work explored the conflicting pulls between secular society and Jewish tradition which were acutely felt by the immigrants who passed through Ellis Island and by their children and grandchildren.

More recent authors like Nicole Krauss, Paul Auster, Michael Chabon, Jonathan Safran Foer, Alan Kaufman, Lev Raphael and Art Spiegelman have continued to examine dilemmas of identity in their work, turning their attention especially to the Holocaust and the trends of both

ongoing assimilation and cultural rediscovery exhibited by younger generations of American Jews. Arguably the most influential of all American- Jewish novels was Leon Uris' 'Exodus'. Its story of the struggle to create the modern state of Israel translated into Russian became the inspiration for hundreds of thousands of Russian immigrants to Israel. Modern Jewish American novels often contain (a few or many) Jewish characters and address issues and themes of importance to Jewish American society such as assimilation, Zionism/Israel, and antisemitism, along with the recent phenomenon known as "New antisemitism."

Three Jewish-American writers have won the Nobel Prize in Literature, Isaac Bashevis Singer, Saul Bellow, and Joseph Brodsky. Magazines such as *The New Yorker* have proved to be instrumental in exposing many Jewish American writers to a wider reading public.

Although Jewish stereotypes first appeared in works by non-Jewish writers, after World War II, it was often Jewish American writers themselves who evoked such fixed images. The prevalence of antisemitic stereotypes in the works of such authors has sometimes been interpreted an expression of self-hatred; however, Jewish American authors have also used these negative stereotypes in order to refute them.

However American-Jewish literature has also strongly celebrated American life. It has been primarily more an American than a Jewish literature. Perhaps the preeminent example of this is the great breakthrough novel of Saul Bellow *The Adventures of Augie March*.

According to Sanford V. Sternlicht, the first generation of Jewish-American authors presented "realistic portrayals - warts and all" of Jewish immigrants. In contrast, some second or third-generation Jewish-American authors deliberately "reinforced negative stereotypes with satire and a selective realism".

Literature of Chinese-American Diaspora

Chinese American literature is the body of literature produced in the United States by writers of Chinese descent. The genre began in the 19th century and flowered in the 20th with such authors as Sui Sin Far, Frank Chin, Maxine Hong Kingston, and Amy Tan.

Characteristics and Theme

Chinese American literature deals with many topics and themes. A common topic is the challenges, both inner and outer, of assimilation in mainstream, white American society by Chinese

Americans. Another common theme is that of interaction between generations, particularly older, Chinese-born and younger, American-born generations. Questions of identity and gender are often dealt with as well.

19th-century Chinese American literature

19th-century Chinese American literature has only recently come to be studied, as much of it was written in Chinese. These Chinese-language writings of Chinese Americans immigrants have only recently been made available.

19th-century Chinese American writers were primarily workers and students. These early Chinese American authors produced autobiographies as well as novels and poems. Many wrote in both English and Chinese, sometimes exploring similar themes in each language, sometimes translating their own works from language into the other. Tone as well as content differed, as Chinese American writers in English dealt with rampant stereotypes of the Yellow Peril.

Among these early writers was Yung Wing, the first Chinese student to graduate from an American University (Yale, in 1854), whose autobiography, *My Life in China and America*, was published in 1909.

20th-century Chinese American literature

Chinese American literature written of the 20th century is written almost exclusively in English. Edith Maude Eaton, writing as Sui Sin Far, was one of the first Chinese American authors to publish fiction in English, although her works, first published in the teens, were not re-discovered and re-printed until 1995.^[5] In the 1930s, Lin Yutang's *My Country and My People* (1935), and *The Importance of Living* (1937), became best-sellers.

Chinese American authors became more prolific and accepted after the lifting of the Chinese Exclusion Act. Authors who achieved success in the 1950s included C.Y. Lee (author), whose *The Flower Drum Song* was made into a Rodgers and Hammerstein musical, and Jade Snow Wong, author of *Fifth Chinese Daughter*.

The 1970s saw further progress. Playwright Frank Chin's play, *The Chickencoop Chinaman* (1971) became the first play by an Asian American to be produced as a major New York production. Maxine Hong Kingston won the National Book Critics Circle Award in 1976 for *The Woman Warrior: Memoir of a Childhood among Ghosts*.

In the 1980s, David Henry Hwang won the Obie award for his play, *FOB*, as well as a Tony Award for Best Play for his *M. Butterfly*. Bette Bao Lord's *Spring Moon* (1981) became an international bestseller and an American Book Award nominee. Amy Tan's *The Joy Luck Club* was published to immediate popularity and wide, though not universal, acclaim. The book stayed on the New York Times bestseller list for over forty weeks, and won the National Book Award, the Los Angeles Times Book Prize, and the Commonwealth Gold Award. *The Joy Luck Club* was produced as a major motion picture in 1993 and was nominated for Best Picture.

The 1990s saw further growth, as David Wong Louie received acclaim for his short story collection, *Pangs of Love*, and Eric Liu collected memoirs and essays in *The Accidental Asian: Notes of a Native Speaker* (1997).

Recent history

Currently active and acclaimed Chinese American authors are Gish Jen, Jean Kwok, Shirley Geok-lin Lim, and Sandra Tsing Loh. Shawn Wong's novel *American Knees*, published in 1996, was adapted into an independent feature film entitled *Americanese* in 2009.

Chinese American criticism

Frank Chin and others have been vocal critics of popular Chinese American authors, particularly Chinese American women authors, such as Maxine Hong Kingston and Amy Tan. Chin argues that Tan and others paint a world in which Chinese Americans must repudiate "the icky-goey evil of Chinese culture". Others have criticized Chinese American women authors for criticizing sexism in Chinese culture; in so doing, critics argue, these women are participating in the "racial castration" of Chinese and Asian American men, who are already "materially and psychologically feminized" by mainstream, white American culture.

Some of these criticisms are fueled by anger over the way in which female Chinese American authors have portrayed the sexism and patriarchy of Imperial China, ways which male critics feel are sometimes unfair. For example, Maxine Hong Kingston has been criticized for her claim in *The Woman Warrior* that, in Chinese, the character for "woman" is also the character for "slave." Critics of Kingston claim that while 奴 (slave) contains 女 (woman), it is only as a radical to indicate the pronunciation of the character.

Literature of Indian Diaspora in America

Indo –American diaspora is one of the important diasporas which has exerted the massive impact on the literary world and produced literary genius of our time. An Indian American is a resident or citizen of the United States with origins in India. They both born in India and immigrated to United States or are born in the U. S. and have Indian heritage. Indian population is spread across the U. S. primarily in the urban areas in general and the large metropolitan area in particular. They are regarded very affluent community. Like the terms ‘Asian American’ or ‘South Asian American,’ the term ‘Indian American’ is an umbrella expression applying to people of widely varying socio-economic status, education, places of residence, generations, views, values, lifestyles and appearances. They are known to assimilate into American culture effortlessly because they have no language barriers and come from a similar society.

Indians are among the largest ethnic groups migrating to the USA legally. Immigration of Indian Americans has taken place in many waves since 1790, followed by a few hundred Indian emigrants through the 19th century.

However, significant emigration from India to U.S. has taken place in two distinct phases from 1904, and after 1965. The first wave is a part of larger Indian Diaspora generated by British Colonial repression in India, the emigrants were mostly Sikh farmers along with political refugees and activists, middle / upper-class students from various groups, who come to gain political support from British rule. The second 60 wave after 1965 included mostly students and professionals from the educated middle and upper classes in search of a better standard of living. After LPG and IT revolution, in 1990 Silicon Valley of American is dominated by Indian IT professionals.

A basic reality for most of the first generation, Indian Americans is that they have grown up bilingual. Those who have had the benefit of being educated in English medium school have grown up with English as another ‘native’ language. Unlike Chinese, language was no hurdle for Indian immigrants. Their cultural traits, excellent knowledge, good work habits have earned them the label of ‘model minority.’ For a large section of an Indian immigrant community, the bonds to

India endure. Their consciousness and sensibility include strong and highly differentiated regional consciousness, having to do with language, food, religious affiliation, dress, etc.

Indo- American Literature

Indian American literature is among the very 'young' literature in the United States, hardly forty years old.

(A) Memoirs (Autobiographies): Writing by immigrants from the Indian sub-continent is associated with personal and communal identity, memories of the homeland, and the active response to this 'new' world. Writers express their personal, familial identities and sociopolitical contexts, explaining how and why they come to be where they are and to write what they do. Ved Mehta's autobiographical inquiry in 'The Ledge Between the Streams' deals with his personal and familial detailed in an old fashioned way.

Bharati Mukherjee widens the autobiographical tradition of Ved Mehta in quite different ways. Society is the subject matter of her memoir, 'Days and Nights in Calcutta', co-authored with her husband. It is a work in which Mukherjee reveals her nostalgia for her home city.

Meena Alexander turned to writing for strength, catharsis, and alternate possibilities. The title of her memoir, 'Fault Lines' gives insight into one of the main preoccupations, self-creation, and identity formation in the context of migration.

Abraham Verghese's My Own Country is a moving memoir of how human participation and engagement with a community make any place a home. This autobiography of a doctor specializing in infectious diseases, battling with AIDS patients in a small town in Tennessee, unfolds the satisfaction that many professional Indian Americans feel about their specialized work.

(B) Poetry:

Poetry is not as popular as the novel or short-story but still, there is some major contribution by the Indian diaspora in Indo-American Literature. A. K. Ramanujan occupies an important place among Indo- American poets with a wish for connectedness and the absence of connection are the two facts of Ramanujan's poetic world. Meena Alexander's 'Migrant Music' deals with belonging and home which are created by the excavation and re- composition of the past. Agha Shahid Ali

is a Kashmiri exile. The themes of homeland, loss and exile are central to Ali's work. 'The Half-Inch Himalayas', a collection of poems depict in four sections; the very spaces opened up in exile. 'A Nostalgist's Map of America' is a volume that reveals alien spaces of hyphenated identity. Sharat Chandra's 'April Nanjangud' views and remembers India through an expatriate's sensitive awareness. Once or Twice also contains some of his earliest passionate reflection of America's attitude towards its immigrants. The family of Mirrors is an extension of earlier immigrant themes. His Immigrants of Loss deals with universality of dislocation and sharply divisive nature of American social hierarchies. Vikram Seth, a well known Indian expatriate novelist has also contributed to his collections of poems like the 'Golden Gate' and 'All You Who Sleep Tonight.' Poets like Vijay Seshadri, Ravi Shankar, Maua Khosala, Prageeta Sharma have also contributed their literary talent.

(C) Novel and Short-Story

Bharti Mukherjee is one of the prominent expatriate writers who reject the tradition-bound society of the East as she reaches out for the more empowering and individualistic society of the West. Her novel 'The Tiger's Daughter' depicts a young women's unsettling return home to Calcutta after years abroad. The wife is about the desolation of an immigrant woman of middle-class Bengali origin devoid of her support structure in a foreign society. Darkness portrays the despair produced by the encounter with Canadian racism. Her 'Middleman and Another Stories' reveals immigrant experience in US and Canada in ironic vein' Mukherjee's later novel 'Jasmine' shows the possibilities of remaking oneself in the New World.

Meena Alexander's writing shares her experiences of exile. Self creation is a familiar theme of Meena Alexander's work. In 'Manhattan Music', she portrays how New World Hybrid Dopti, a personification of the old world mythic Draupadi, saves Sandhya from an attempted suicide, as if to say that the challenge of exile is in survival and not in death. Vikram Seth shot to fame with 'A Suitable Boy', followed by the novel 'Equal Music' and the non-fiction funnily memoir two lives written at the suggestion of his mother. Chitra Banerjee- Divakaruni's writing has come late in life and is directly linked with her migrant condition. Her 'Mistress of Spices' is a novel that threads magic, memory, and immigrant life into a story of love and survival. Most of her fiction and poetry deals with the theme of gender and migration. Writers like Indira Ganesan, Amulya Maladi, Sanjay

Kumar Nigam, Hema Nair, Vijay Lakshmi, etc. have also dealt with various aspects, dimensions of expatriate sensibility

India has produced many talented writers who serve as a source of inspiration to the coming generation. The Indian Diaspora in US has made a significant impact on the contemporary American literary culture. Most of their works give us a picture of Indian society and they also cover diverse issues including the various problems faced by Indian people. Here are few Indian-American writers who have established themselves in the literary world-

Jhumpa Lahiri

Lahiri is an Indian-American author of Bengali origin, who is recognized as the first Asian to win the prestigious Pulitzer Prize. She was honoured with this achievement for her debut story collection 'Interpreter of Maladies' in the year 2000. Her first novel 'The Namesake' turned out to be a one of the bestselling novels and was also named the 'New York Magazine Book of the Year'. She discusses the lives of Indian Americans, specifically Bengalis, in most of her fictions.

Kiran Desai

Kiran Desai is the daughter of famous writer Anita Desai who happens to be the youngest woman to win the Man Booker Prize at the age of 35 for her novel 'Inheritance of Loss'. She admits that her mother's works played a significant role in her writings and winning the award was almost a 'family endeavor'. "I wrote this book so much in her company it feels almost like her book", she told the BBC. According to the Booker judges, 'The Inheritance of Loss' is a "magnificent novel of humane breadth and wisdom, comic tenderness and powerful political acuteness." Her easy and soothing writing style has won the hearts of millions of readers and she has been successful in earning a place in the world of literature.

Bharati Mukherjee

Mukherjee is a nonfiction-writer and journalist who currently works as a professor in the department of English at the University of California, Berkeley. 'The Tiger's Daughter', 'Wife', 'Darkness, an Invisible Woman' are some of her popular novels and her works give an insight into the Indian culture and immigrant experience. Most of her characters are Indian women, who were victims of racism and sexism and she also discusses about cultural clashes and undercurrents of violence in her novels. Her work 'Middleman and Other Stories' won her the National Book Critics Circle Award in the year 1988.

Fareed Zakaria

Zakaria is a well-renowned author and leading journalist, who is the editor-at-large and columnist for TIME magazine. His works, *From Wealth to Power: The Unusual Origins of America's World Role*, *The Future of Freedom* and *The Post-American World* made him a prominent personality in the world of literature. He was named one of the 100 leading public intellectuals in the world by the Foreign Policy and Prospect magazine in the year 2007 and in the year 2010 he was honoured with the Padma Bhushan.

Siddhartha Mukherjee

Siddhartha, the author of the Pulitzer Prize winning book 'The Emperor of All Maladies: A Biography of Cancer' is a prominent physician and researcher as well. The book was described, by TIME magazine, as one of the 100 most influential books of the last 100 years, and New York Times magazine placed it among the 100 best works of non-fiction. Currently, he is working as an Assistant Professor of Medicine at Columbia University and staff physician at Columbia University Medical Center, New York City.

Shauna Singh Baldwin

Baldwin is a Canadian-American novelist of Indian descent, who was honoured with the Commonwealth Writers Prize for Best Book (for her novel 'What the Body Remembers'). She developed a passion for writing when she was just 11 years old and that passion is very well reflected in her works which range from short fiction, novels and essays to poetry. In her novel 'What the Body Remembers', she takes us through the life of a child, who becomes angry for being reincarnated once again as a girl.' *The Tiger Claw* is another famous work by Baldwin which was nominated for the Giller Prize.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni

Divakurni is an author and poet whose areas of interest include spirituality, women, immigration, the South Asian experience, history, myth, magic and celebrating diversity. Her books, *Arranged Marriage*, *The Mistress of Spices* and *Sister of my Heart* were widely accepted by readers and the last two were adapted into movies as well. She won the American Book Award for 'Arranged Marriage' in the year 1995. She also works as the Professor of Writing at the University of Houston Creative Writing Program.

Akhil Sharma

Sharma became a prominent figure in the literary world with his short story "Cosmopolitan" which was anthologized in *The 'Best American Short Stories'* and was later made into a movie as well. He won the PEN/Hemingway Award for his novel 'An Obedient Father' in the year

2001 and the 2001 Whiting Writer's Award. Apart from being a well-acclaimed author, Sharma has also worked as a screenwriter for television and film.
