INDIAN ENGLISH LITERATURE

Indian English Literature refers to the body of works by authors in India who write in English and whose native or co-native language could be one of the numerous languages of India. It is also associated with the works of members of the Indian diaspora. The very definition of the adjective “Indian” here is hazy. Many of these writers neither live in India, nor are Indian citizens. As a category, this production comes under the broader realm of postcolonial literature – the production from previously colonised countries such as India. Though one can trace such writers in India to a century back, Indian writing in English has come into force only in the last couple of decades or so, as far as literature goes.
Nazneen is a teenager forced into an arranged marriage with a man considerably older than her—a man whose expectations of life are so low that misery seems to stretch ahead for her. Fearfully leaving the sultry oppression of her Bangladeshi village, Nazneen finds herself cloistered in a small flat in a high-rise block in the East End of London. Because she speaks no English, she is obliged to depend totally on her husband. But it becomes apparent that, of the two, she is the real survivor: more able to deal with the ways of the world, and a better judge of the vagaries of human behaviour. She makes friends with another Asian girl, Razia, who is the conduit to her understanding of the unsettling ways of her new homeland.

*Maps for Lost Lovers* is set in a Pakistani community in an unnamed English town. Shamas, a social worker, has no need for Islamic orthodoxy. His wife, Kaukub, knows no other way, and her religious fervor has driven all their children away. Shamas' brother has fallen in love with a woman who has been divorced and abandoned by her husbands. When the lovers move in together, they're found murdered by her brothers to protect the family honour because she was living in sin. *Maps for Lost Lovers* takes place in the next 12 months after the murders, highlighting the claustrophobic society and clash of liberation versus old traditions and hatreds.
Young Ramchand rushes through the dusty streets of Amritsar, once again late for work. Chastised by his boss, he takes his place among the cottons and silks of the sari shop, selling yards of cloth to the wealthy and fashionable women of the town. Offered a glimpse of a more opulent world, Ramchand is seduced by the idea that he might somehow better himself. But making dreams real will come at a price that a poor shop assistant might not be able to pay.

A year after his divorce, Jayojit Chatterjee, an economics professor in the American Midwest, travels to his native Calcutta with his young son, Bonny, to spend the summer holidays with his parents. And as Jayojit walks the bustling streets of Calcutta, he finds himself not only caught between clashing memories of India and America, but also between different versions of his life, revisiting lost opportunity, realized potential, and lingering desire.

Three generations of an ancient family come and go in Chevathar, the village by the sea. First there is Solomon, the patriarch, manoeuvring to keep the peace as caste struggles begin to encroach on the village. Then there is the story of Solomon's sons, their fortunes rising and falling as India begins its struggle for independence. Finally, there is the story of Solomon's grandson, making his own stand for independence.
Anita DESAI
Diamond dust
*Vintage* (2000)

A new collection of short stories from Anita Desai. In "Winterscape", a quietly haunting tale, two Punjabi village women try to make sense of the chilly world inside and outside a snowy Toronto window; in several other stories it is summer heat that becomes the catalyst. An ageing couple are stuck in a stultifying Delhi by the visit of an old Oxford friend, who trades on his charm; the family in "Five Hours to Simla", caught up in a road-raging traffic jam, are distracted by a perambulating Universe of hawkers, beggars and hungry curs.

Chitra Banerjee DIVAKARUNI
Arranged marriage
*Black Swan* (1997)

A collection of 11 stories, each one complete in itself, which chronicle the hopes and fears of Indian-born women living in America.

Sunetra GUPTA
Memories of rain
*Phoenix* (1992)

The forward action of Gupta's hypnotic novel takes place during a single weekend: Calcutta-born Moni, despondent over her English husband's infidelity, secretly plans to take their daughter and return to India on the child's sixth birthday. But the stream-of-consciousness narrative weaves together memories and images, providing not just the history of a fragile love but of a woman's psychology and soul.
Leela Patel is sent to Paris to stay with relatives after her father is killed by terrorists in Kenya. Living with her gluttonous aunt, confined to her uncle's Indian grocery, she feels suffocated. Taking flight, she uses her uncanny sense of smell to rise to culinary heights. Then, it betrays her.

In India, at the birth of the last century, an infant is brought howling into the world, his remarkable paleness marking him out from his brown-skinned fellows. Revered at first, he is later cast out from his wealthy home when his true parentage is revealed. So begins Pran Nath's odyssey of self-discovery - a journey that will take him from the streets of Agra, via the red light district of Bombay, to the green lawns of England and beyond - as he struggles to understand who he really is.

Collection of short stories. A couple exchange confessions during blackouts in their Boston apartment as they struggle to cope with a heartbreaking loss; a student arrives in new lodgings in a mystifying new land and, while he awaits the arrival of his arranged-marriage wife from Bengal, he finds his first bearings with the aid of the curious evening rituals that his centenarian landlady orchestrates; a schoolboy looks on while his childminder finds that the smallest dislocation can unbalance her new American life all too easily and send her spiralling into nostalgia for her homeland...Prix Pulizer 2000
Jhumpa LAHIRI  
The Namesake  

The Namesake takes the Ganguli family from their tradition-bound life in Calcutta through their fraught transformation into Americans. On the heels of an arranged wedding, Ashoke and Ashima Ganguli settle in Cambridge, Massachusetts, where Ashoke does his best to adapt while his wife pines for home. When their son, Gogol, is born, the task of naming him betrays their hope of respecting old ways in a new world. And we watch as Gogol stumbles along the first-generation path, strewn with conflicting loyalties, comic detours, and wrenching love affairs.

Rohinton MISTRY  
Family matters  
*A. Knopf* (2002)  

Nariman Vakeel, a seventy-nine-year-old Parsi widower, beset by Parkinson's disease and haunted by memories of the past, lives in a once-elegant apartment with his two middle-aged stepchildren. When his condition worsens he is forced to take up residence with Roxana, his own daughter, her husband, Yezad, and their two young sons. The effect of the new responsibility on Yezad, who is already besieged by financial worries, pushes him into a scheme of deception. This sets in motion a series of events - a great unravelling and a revelation of the family's lovetorn past - that leads to the narrative's final outcome.
Bharati MUKHERJEE
The Holder of the world
Ballantine books (1994)

This is the remarkable story of Hannah Easton, a unique woman born in America in 1670. Inquisitive, vital, and awake to her own possibilities, Hannah travels to Mughal, India, with her husband, an English trader. There, she sets her own course, "translating" herself into the Salem Bibi, the white lover of a Hindu raja.

Vidiadhar Surajprasad. NAIPaul
A Flag on the island

Imperialism, the loss of the Empire and the consequences for the peoples involved, the fate of individuals caught between different cultures has been the main subject Naipaul has dealt with in his writings all his life. In ‘A Flag On The Island’ he did so, partly in a humorous way.

Rasipuram Krishnaswamy NARAYAN
Swami and friends
Mandarin, (1990)

In the enchanted world of Malgudi, ten-year-old Swami is growing up in exciting times. India is beginning to stir in its great struggle for independence. Swami, however has been immutably moulded by his British rulers, and wouldn't dream of missing cricket practice.
**Arundhati ROY**

*The God of small things*

*Flamingo (1997)*

*The God of Small Things* is nominally the story of young twins Rahel and Estha and the rest of their family, but the book feels like a million stories spinning out indefinitely; it is the product of a genius child-mind that takes everything in and transforms it in an alchemy of poetry. Booker prize 1997

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**Salman RUSHDIE**

*Midnight’s children*

*Pan (1982)*

Saleem Sinai was born at midnight, the midnight of India's independence, and found himself mysteriously 'handcuffed to history' by the coincidence. He is one of 1,001 children born at the midnight hour, each of them endowed with an extraordinary talent - and whose privilege and curse it is to be both master and victims of their times. Through Saleem's gifts - inner ear and wildly sensitive sense of smell - we are drawn into a fascinating family saga set against the vast, colourful background of the India of the 20th century.

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**Salman RUSHDIE**

*The Moor's last sigh*

*Vintage (1996)*

'Moor' Zogoiby, only son of a wealthy, artistic-bohemian Bombay family, finds himself in such a moment of crisis. His mother, a famous painter and an emotional despot, worships beauty, but Moor is ugly, he has a deformed hand. Moor falls in love, with a married woman; when their secret is revealed, both are expelled; a suicide pact is proposed, but only the woman dies. Moor chooses to accept his fate, plunges into a life of depravity in Bombay…
Shyam SELVADURAI
Cinnamon gardens
*Emblem* (1999)

Set in 1920s Ceylon, the Cinnamon Gardens is a residential enclave of wealthy Ceylonese. Among them is Annalukshmi, an independent and high-spirited young teacher intent on thwarting her parents' plans to arrange her marriage. In a parallel narrative, her uncle, Balendran Navaratnam, respectably married but secretly homosexual, has his life disrupted by the arrival in Ceylon of Richard, a lover from long ago.

Vikram SETH
The Golden gate
*Faber and Faber* (1981)

Written in verse, this was Vikram Seth's first novel. Set in the 1980s, in the affluence and sunshine of California's silicon valley, it is the story of twenty-somethings looking for love, pleasure and the meaning of life.

Manil SURI
The Death of Vishnu
*Bloomsbury* (2002)

Vishnu, the odd-job man in a Bombay apartment block, lies dying on the staircase landing. In his fevered state, he looks back on his love affair with the seductive Padmini. This title blends Hindu mythology with closely observed social detail and even a dash of Bollywood sparkle.
Eighteen-year-old Ram Mohammad Thomas is in prison after answering twelve questions correctly on a TV quiz show to win one billion rupees. The producers have arrested him, convinced that he has cheated his way to victory. But twelve extraordinary events in street-kid Ram's gave him the crucial answers. In his warm-hearted tale lies all the comedy, tragedy, joy and pathos of modern India.

**BIOGRAPHIES**

**Monica ALI**

Monica Ali is the daughter of English and Bangladeshi parents. She came to England aged three years, her first home being Bolton in Greater Manchester, and later studied at Oxford University. She lives in London and was named in 2003 as one of twenty 'Best of Young British Novelists'.

**Nadeem ASLAM**


**Rupa BAJWA**

Rupa Bajwa was born in Amritsar, north India in 1976. She is currently based in Amritsar. *The Sari Shop* is her first novel.
**Amit CHAUDHURI**
Born in Calcutta, India, in 1962, Amit Chaudhuri was brought up in Bombay. He graduated from University College, London, and was a research student at Balliol College, Oxford. Amit Chaudhuri lives in Calcutta with his wife and daughter. He is editor of *The Picador Book of Modern Indian Literature*, published in 2001. His most recent book is *St. Cyril Road and Other Poems* (2005).

**David DAVIDAR**
David Davidar was born in 1959 in Kerala into a military family. He is a graduate of Madras University. In his mid-twenties, he moved to Bombay to pursue journalism, before changing over to publishing. He completed a course in publishing from Radcliffe/Harvard. *The House of Blue Mangoes* is his debut novel, a voluminous work chronicling multiple generations set in deep southern India.

**Anita DESAI**
Anita Desai was born June 24, 1937 in India to a German mother and an Indian father. Although she now resides in South Hadley, Massachusetts, teaching writing at Mount Holyoke College, she is a member of the Advisory Board for English in New Delhi. Desai writes in English, saying, “I first learned English when I went to school. It was the first language that I learned to read and write, so it became my literary language”. Her family spoke German at home and Hindi to their friends.

**Chitra Banerjee DIVAKARUNI**
Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, who was born in India, is an award-winning poet and writer who is also a co-founder (and past president) of MAITRI, a helpline for South Asian women. In 1995, her short story collection *Arranged Marriage* was awarded the PEN Oakland Josephine Miles Prize for Fiction, the Bay Area Book Reviewer Award for Fiction, and an American Book Award from the Before Columbus Foundation. Her fourth poetry collection, *Leaving Yuba City*, was published by Anchor in August of 1997.
Sunetra GUPTA

Sunetra Gupta was born in Calcutta, India, on 15 March 1965 and spent her childhood in Ethiopia and Zambia. She returned to Calcutta as a teenager and began writing, encouraged by her father who introduced her to the work of the Bengali poet Rabindranath Tagore. She studied biology at the University of Princeton and has a Ph.D. from the University of London. She is a Reader in Epidemiology at Oxford University. She is the author of four novels, *Memories of Rain* (1992), originally inspired by Brendan Kenelly's adaptation of *Medea, The Glassblower's Breath* (1993), about a single day in the lives of a butcher, a baker and a candle maker and the women they all love, set in Calcutta, New York and London; *Moonlight into Marzipan* (1995), the story of a remarkable discovery made in a crumbling garage laboratory in Calcutta; and *A Sin of Colour* (1999), which narrates the history of three generations of a wealthy Indian family from Calcutta. *A Sin of Colour* won the Southern Arts Literature Prize.

Radhika JHA

Radhika Jha was born in Delhi and is currently living there, but she studied and lived in Paris. She writes on culture, atmosphere and the economy for the Hindustan Times and Business World. She has worked for the Rajiv Gandhi Foundation, where she started the Interact project for the education of children of the victims of terrorism in India.

Hari KUNZRU

Hari Kunzru is a novelist living in London. He was born in 1969, and grew up in Essex. He studied English at Oxford University, then gained an MA in Philosophy and Literature from Warwick University. *The Impressionist* (2002) won the 2002 Betty Trask Prize and the 2003 Somerset Maugham award and was also shortlisted for several awards, including the 2002 Whitbread First Novel Award.
Jhumpa LAHIRI
In 1967, Jhumpa Lahiri was born in London to Bengali parents. As a child, Lahiri moved with her family to Rhode Island where Jhumpa spent her adolescence. Lahiri went on to attend Barnard College, graduating with a Bachelor of Arts in English and later attending Boston University. It was here Lahiri attained Master's Degrees in English, Creative Writing, and Comparative Studies in Literature and the Arts as well as a Ph D in Renaissance Studies. Lahiri is currently living in New York with her husband and son.
Lahiri has won many awards for *Interpreter of Maladies*. These awards and honors include The Pulitzer Prize in 2000, The Transatlantic Review Award from the Henfield Foundation, The Louisiana Review Award for Short Fiction, the O. Henry Award for Best American Short Stories, the PEN/Hemingway Award, The New Yorker Debut of the Year Award and The American Academy of Arts and Letters Award.

Rohinton MISTRY
Rohinton Mistry was born in Bombay (now Mumbai), India in 1952. He graduated with a degree in Mathematics from the University of Bombay in 1974, and emigrated to Canada with his wife the following year, settling in Toronto, where he worked as a bank clerk, studying English and Philosophy part-time at the University of Toronto and completing his second degree in 1982.
Barhati MUKHERJEE
Bharati Mukherjee was born on July 27, 1940 to wealthy
cparents, Sudhir Lal and Bina Mukherjee in Calcutta, India. She learned how to read and write by the age of three. In 1947, she moved to Britain with her family at the age of eight and lived in Europe for about three and a half years. After getting her B.A from the University of Calcutta in 1959 and her M.A. in English and Ancient Indian Culture from the University of Baroda in 1961, she came to the United States of America. Having been awarded a scholarship from the University of Iowa, earned her M.F.A. in Creative Writing in 1963 and her Ph.D. in English and Comparative Literature in 1969.

Vidiadhar Surajprasad NAIPAUL
Vidiadhar Surajprasad Naipaul was born in Chaguanas, Trinidad, on August 17, 1932. His Hindu grandfather had emigrated there from West India as an indentured servant. His father, Seepersad (1906-53), was a journalist, whose literary aspirations were inherited by V.S., and his brother, Shiva. The family moved to Port of Spain, where Naipaul attended Queenís Royal College. In 1948, he was awarded a Trinidad government scholarship, which he used to study literature at University College, Oxford, beginning in 1950. Following his graduation in 1953, Naipaul worked as a free-lance writer with the BBC, hosting the program "Carribbean Voices," and with the literary journal, The New Statesman. He married an English woman--Patricia Ann Hale--in 1955. Since then, he has resided in London, travelling extensively and writing many critically acclaimed novels, short stories, and essays. He was awarded the Nobel prize in Literature 2001

Rasipuram Krishnaswamy NARAYAN
R.K. Narayan was essentially a storyteller, whose sensitive, well-drawn portrayals of twentieth-century Indian life were set mostly in the fictional South Indian town of Malgudi. Most of Narayan's work, starting with his first novel Swami with friends (1935), captures many Indian traits while having a unique identity of its own. Like William Faulkner his novels were grounded in a compassionate humanism and celebrated the humour and energy of ordinary life. Narayan lived till ninety-four, writing for more than fifty years, and publishing till he was eighty seven.
**Arundhati ROY**

Arundhati Roy was born in Shillong, Meghalaya, to a Keralite Syrian Christian mother and a Bengali Hindu father. She spent her childhood in Aymanam in Kerala. She left Kerala for Delhi at age 16, and embarked on a bohemian lifestyle, staying in a small hut with a tin roof and making a living selling empty beer bottles. She then proceeded to study architecture at the Delhi School of Architecture. Arundhati acted in the role of a village girl in the award-winning movie Massey Sahib, and wrote the screenplays for “In Which Annie Gives it Those Ones and Electric Moon”. She began writing The God of Small Things in 1992 and finished it in 1996. *The God of Small Things* won the Booker Prize in 1997 and the Sydney Peace Prize in 2004. She is a well know peace activist.

**Salman RUSHDIE**

Salman Rushdie was born in Bombay (now Mumbai) on 19 June 1947. He went to school in Bombay and at Rugby in England, and read History at King's College, Cambridge, where he joined the Cambridge Footlights theatre company. After graduating, he lived with his family who had moved to Pakistan in 1964, and worked briefly in television before returning to England. His second novel, the acclaimed *Midnight's Children*, was published in 1981. It won the Booker Prize for Fiction, the James Tait Black Memorial Prize (for fiction), an Arts Council Writers' Award and the English-Speaking Union Award, and in 1993 was judged to have been the 'Booker of Bookers', the best novel to have won the Booker Prize for Fiction in the award's 25-year history.

**Shyam SELVADURAI**

Shyam Selvadurai was born in 1965 in Colombo, Sri Lanka. He came to Canada with his family at the age of nineteen. He has studied creative writing and theatre, and has a B.F.A. from York University. *Funny Boy*, his first novel, was a national bestseller, and won in Canada the W. H. Smith Books First Novel Award and, in the U.S., The Lambda Literary Award, and was named a Notable Book by the American Library Association. *Cinnamon gardens*, his second novel, was short listed for the Trillium Award.
Vikram SETH
Born in 1952 in Calcutta, India, Vikram Seth was educated at Corpus Christi College, Oxford, Stanford University and Nanjing University. He has travelled widely and lived in Britain, California, India and China. His first novel, The Golden Gate: A Novel in Verse (1986), describes the experiences of a group of friends living in California. His acclaimed epic of Indian life, A Suitable Boy (1993), won the WH Smith Literary Award and the Commonwealth Writers Prize (Overall Winner, Best Book). Set in India in the early 1950s, it is the story of a young girl, Lata, and her search for a husband. An Equal Music (1999), is the story of a violinist haunted by the memory of a former lover.

Manil SURI
Manil Suri was born in July, 1959 in a city that no longer exists on official maps (Bombay, which now can be found under its new name Mumbai). He spent several years of his life acquiring degrees in mathematics, followed by several years climbing the academic ladder as a mathematics professor at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. This is the only job he has ever had, and he is amazed to wake up and discover (on most days) that he still likes it.

Vikas SWARUP
Vikas Swarup was born in Allahabad, India, to an illustrious family that includes several prominent lawyers. He attended Allahabad University, where he made his mark as a champion debater, winning national-level competitions. After graduating, he joined the Indian Foreign Service and was posted to various countries, including Turkey, the US, Ethiopia and the UK. Currently he works in the Ministry of External Affairs in New Delhi, where he is the director in charge of India’s relations with Pakistan. Q and A, Vikas Swarup’s first novel, has been sold in 15 countries and optioned for film development.

Retrouvez l’Inde en septembre à la médiathèque avec l’exposition Ahmedabad no life last night, du photographe Frédéric Delangle, une rencontre littéraire et un cycle cinéregard