

**Iulia Rascanu, ESR, CoHaB Mumbai**  
**Participates in**  
**International conference on 'Transnational Women's Literature in Europe', Budapest, Hungary**  
**May 24-26 2013**

Ms. Iulia Rascanu, ESR from Mumbai University attended an international conference on 'Transnational Women's Literature in Europe', at the University of Budapest, Hungary, and presented a paper on 'Transnational Indian Women Writers in the U.K.'

**"Making It in the West". Stories of Failure and Success Told by Diasporic South Asian Women in Contemporary British Fiction**

As of now, Europe is a concept that can be interpreted in a variety of ways: geographically, socio-economically, politically, legally etc. In addition to these, the mobility of people, not only within and across Europe but also inside and outside it, contributed to the transnational phenomenon which generated the emergence of new literatures that had to be acknowledged as part of the literature that is being produced in Europe. British literature is a very well-known and largely studied domain in universities across and outside Europe. The literary canon has long rejected the acknowledgement of 'minor' writers who belong to ethnic minorities that live in Britain. South Asian British writers are a case in point.

Diasporic people of South Asian origin have been largely represented in fiction by diasporic South Asian writers who tell personal stories of migration and/or of cultural negotiation. The paper will analyse novels by contemporary British Asian writers who depict stories of migration told by 'immigrants' of different generations. The focus will be placed on the comparison of various experiences lived by female characters in the selected novels and on the analysis of the ironical reversal of 'culture bearer' roles between women and men in Indian cultural understanding. The analysis will demonstrate that female characters are more frequently preoccupied to find a way to adapt to the new environment without completely giving up their cultural heritage while looking for a particular 'Third Space' that allows them to perform cultural negotiation. Thus, women, the 'culture bearers' par excellence are more flexible when adopting a new culture. In addition, some of them find ways of using abilities considered 'feminine' or even 'Eastern'-bound 'feminine' (women in the Eastern part of the world could be viewed as more connected to the domestic sphere of their own houses and as performing an active role in a network of female relatives and friends) to much more 'Western' ends (such as setting up their own businesses or daring living on their own). The stories of 'success' are yet counterbalanced by 'failure' stories in which immigrant women are not so much concerned about getting integrated in the new culture itself as about keeping alive and even surviving within a love story with white men. The paper will employ both postcolonial and diasporic theories while encompassing feminist theories in trying to address its major question: how are women's migration stories divided in stories of 'success' and of

'failure' when discussing their relationship with the new cultural environment and their very relationships with their partners? 'Love' and female 'solidarity' are two concepts that help analyze and better understand their stories.