


EDITORIAL

Synergy Journal is proud to offer a selection of articles presented at the International Conference entitled CONFLUENCES: INDIAN STUDIES AND ROMANIAN PERSPECTIVES. FROM CROSS-CULTURAL TO FEMINIST APPROACHES, organized by the ‘Rabindranath Tagore’ Cultural Center, in partnership with the Department of Modern Languages and Business Communication of Bucharest University of Economic Studies (ASE) on 19 March 2022. This hybrid event gathered prestigious researchers in Indian Studies, History of Religions, Feminism and Gender Studies, Intercultural Communication, Literary, Film and Cultural Studies and was hosted by the National Library of Romania. The conference was part of a series of events dedicated to Indian culture in Romania, under the auspices of the Indian Embassy in Romania - the Festival of Indian Culture ‘Namaste India’, the XIIth edition, and was supported by the Romanian Ambassador to India, Nepal and Bangladesh, her Excellency Daniela Sezonov Țane, who addressed the audience live with a heartfelt message. Welcoming remarks were offered by Prof. Marius Profiroiu, Vice-Rector of ASE Bucharest and Associate Professor Teodora Șerban-Opreșcu, Director of the Department of Modern Languages and Business Communication, ASE Bucharest. Among the participants we would like to bring special thanks to Professor Ionela Băluță from the Faculty of Political Sciences at the University of Bucharest who delivered an insightful keynote speech on Gender Studies in Romania, Liliana Popescu, Professor and Vice-Rector at the National School of Political Science (SNSPA), whose keynote speech entitled ‘The Importance of Women’s Solidarity Worldwide’ was extremely relevant in the context of the past and present struggles of global women, Dr. Eugen Ciurtin, senior researcher and Director of The Institute for the History of Religions of the Romanian Academy, who spoke about Indian studies and its classic meaning in the Romanian context, and Dr. Carmen-Leocadia Pesantez, „Carol I” National Library, Bucharest, who delivered a speech on representations of feminism in India. Equally interesting were the presentations by Maria-Sabina Draga Alexandru (University of Bucharest), Professor Jatindra K. Nayak (KISS deemed to be University, Odisha, India), Anil Pradhan (General Secretary, Sikshasandhan, Odisha, India), Rita Dutta (independent researcher in film studies), Emilia Ivancu (ASE), Elena Stoican (ASE), Dana Radler (ASE), Oana Mirela Chachula and Simon James Brooks (Speleological Foundation "Club Speo Bucovina", Suceava) and Alexandra-Iulia Nuc (Universitatea Babeș-Bolyai Cluj Napoca).

The selection of articles published in our journal opens with two of the keynote speeches, in the section **Feminist Approaches and Cross-Cultural Synergies: CONSIDERATIONS ON THE FUTURE OF FEMINISM WITHIN THE POSTCOLONIAL AND POSTCOMMUNIST FRAMEWORK** by

Roxana-Elisabeta Marinescu and JOURNEY OF WOMEN'S STUDIES IN INDIA (1974-2023) by Vibhuti Patel. While the former article deals with the possible future of feminism in India and Romania, which belong to the postcolonial/postcommunist paradigm, the latter presents an overview of Women's Studies as an academic discipline in India from a chronological perspective and underlines both the challenges it has encountered and its evident achievements.

In the first article in the **Indian Literature – Past and Present** section, INDIAN WOMEN'S WRITING: FROM THE PAST TO THE PRESENT, presented at the conference as a keynote speech, Nilufer E. Bharucha makes a plea for Indian women's writing overcoming the stereotypes and prejudices of the critics, in order to move to the centre of literary discourses, and to this view, the author presents the most important writings of Indian women along the centuries. Cleopatra David looks into Hindu sacred texts and the role women play in them, with a special emphasis on Shakti and Lakshmi (SHAKTI AND LAKSHMI PRINCIPLES. EMPOWERING WOMEN IN INDIAN TRADITION). Raluca Boboc adds another cross-cultural dimension in her article THE WOMEN FROM ALAPSUR IN GÖRAN TUNSTRÖM'S TRAVEL MEMOIR: THE DYNAMICS OF A REVERSED ALTERITY TECHNIQUE, in which she interrogates alterity under the guise of the women from Alapsur, as it comes out of the textual analysis of Swedish author Göran Tunström's travelogue to India.

The section **Indian Film through a Gender Lens** contains three articles, with the first one by Sridhar Rajeswaran, another keynote speech of the conference, dealing with some of Deepa Mehta's filmography, as an important film-maker of the Indian diaspora in Canada (SCORCHED BY FIRE, DROWNED BY WATER, NO HEAVEN ON A CRACKED EARTH: 'A LOOK' AT DEEPA MEHTA'S WOMEN). Preeti Sridhokar analyses the impact of Bollywood on the national psyche through its popular songs (THE 'CAST'ING CONVENTION: IMPACT OF INDIAN FILM MUSIC ON REINFORCING GENDER STEREOTYPES), and Valentina Marinescu, Anda Anca Rodideal, and Ramona Marinache focus on the Romanian women's perception of Indian popular culture texts (TV series), as a mix between local and the universal ingredients (DECODING INDIA'S POPULAR CULTURE – THE ROMANIAN WOMEN'S GAZE).

The section **Indian-Romanian Synergies** includes two very intimate and heartfelt texts of personal discoveries: Mariana Nicolae presents an account of her own travels to India and the multifaceted discovery of its culture and its women (DISCOVERING INDIAN WOMEN – A CULTURAL JOURNEY), while Carmen Muşat-Coman pays tribute to one of the most relevant personalities who connected the Indian and the Romanian cultural spaces: the educator, writer, translator and mentor for many generations of students, Amita Bhoose (THE BENGALI LANGUAGE, FROM INDIA TO ROMANIA).

In the **Bookreview** section, Nicoleta Stanca introduces Alina Cojocaru's recent endeavour, a 233-page interdisciplinary volume entitled *Geographies of Memory and Postwar Urban Regeneration in British Literature. London as Palimpsest*, published with Cambridge Scholars Publishing in 2022. The volume has London as background and main pretext for the analysis of the novels *Hawksmoor* (1985) by Peter Ackroyd, *City of the Mind* (1991) by Penelope Lively, *White Teeth* (2000) by Zadie Smith, *Small Island* (2004) by Andrea Levy, *High-Rise* (1975) by J.G. Ballard, *Mother London* (1988) by Michael Moorcock, *The Good Terrorist* (1985) by Doris Lessing and *Saturday* (2005) by Ian McEwan.

Hoping you will find the content of this first issue of **Synergy** Journal for 2023 intriguing and relevant, we invite you to access it online and/ or read its paper version.

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