

**A Compendium of Abstracts**

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**on**

*The Spiritual in Literature*

**Literary Association of Nepal (LAN)**

**In collaboration with**

**Lumbini Buddhist University**



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## Introduction

Literary Association of Nepal (LAN) was founded in 1981AD by a group of scholars and writers to promote academic, literary and research scholarship in the country. The main objectives of LAN are to disseminate Nepalese literature abroad, to provide forum for the study of foreign literature in Nepal, and to promote creative writing. To achieve these objectives, LAN organizes regular seminars, symposia, talks, screenings of movies, creative writing workshops, discussions, and an annual two-day conference inviting scholars and writers from Nepal and abroad. In addition to that, it publishes an annual journal and regular newsletters.

## Conference Overview

The theme of the 2020 conference is “**The Spiritual in Literature**” and the papers cover such areas as literatures from far and near, on composing, comparative literature, law and literature, English and American literature, literatures of Nepal, post-colonial literature among others.

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## ABSTRACTS

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### **BP Giri: “Thinking about Thinking in the Buddha’s *Dhammapada*”**

In this presentation, I will examine the Buddha’s discourse about the nature of the human mind and the place of thinking in several verses of the *Dhammapada*. Rather than seeing the human mind, or consciousness, as an epiphenomenon of material causes, the Buddha has endowed it with the power and agency to stand on its own as the first cause of our feelings, behavior and actions. From this powerful premise, it follows that we must take responsibility for the contents of our consciousness and make a resolute effort to restrain it and purify it so that our lives can transcend the circle of birth, death and suffering while achieving enlightenment. On the one hand, the Buddha posits that the mind in its natural state of being is oriented toward truth, knowledge and joy (the bodhisattva ideal). On the other hand, the mind is perennially subject to ignorance and delusion, hence its propensity to compound, even cause, the conditions of our suffering. Methodologically, the Buddha’s discourse on the mind follows practical reasoning (reasoning from causes or consequences) while, at the same time, it is grounded on “pure reason” (reasoning from axioms or principles). My presentation will delve into some elements of Buddha’s thinking about thinking based on the verses of the *Dhammapada*.

*(Dr. Bed Prasad Giri is Professor and Dean, Lumbini Buddhist University, Nepal)*

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### **Ananda Sharma: “Contemplating the ‘Spiritual’ in Natural Encounters”**

The word “spiritual”. carries a great deal of ambiguity: it conveys different things to different people. It can be associated with religion or it can be understood as something secular; one may be spiritual in terms of religion or one may be spiritual without being religious. It is in this context

that the word “spiritual” will be reflected upon in this paper. The world that we inhabit consists of mysterious and mystical relationships that we normally cannot fathom; it takes an extra burden to realize this correlation which some would term as “spiritual” This idea that emanates from a profound symbiotic interactions will be explored in four literary texts—two poems, “The Honey Tree,” and “Curandera”; and two essays, “Living like Weasels,” and “A Wind-Storm in the Forests.” In these texts the protagonists experience epiphanies during their engagements with the numinous biosphere and comprehend a series of mystical kinship as they participate in the ecology of the earth.

*(Dr. Anand Sharma is a Professor of English at Ratna Rajyalakshmi Campus, TU, Nepal)*

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**M.G. Treu: “The Nepalese *niyātrā Thāṅge uklepachi / Scaling Thange* by Narendra Raj Prasai in the light of Francesco Petrarca’s *Ascension of Mont Ventoux* and their expression of spirituality”**

Starting from the finding of the LAN Conference 2018 on “Mountain Literature / Man and Mountain” where it was generally agreed upon that there is no western style mountain literature produced by Nepalese writers I am investigating a text which exists as a small printed book entitled “Scaling Thange” as the English translation of its original Nepali version “Thange uklepachi” (online) written by Narendraraj Prasai ( www.Nai Prakashan).

The question I am trying to answer is the relevance of the text in relation to mountain literature in Nepal. As an anchor of reference and measurement I am using the allegedly first piece of true mountain literature in the post Greek period which is Petrarca’s “The ascension of Mont Ventoux” (1336) in its latest translation into German along with the original text in Latin.

The 2020 LAN Conference’s theme “The Spiritual in Literature” will be touched upon on the basis of these two texts.

*(Dr. M.G. Treu is a Professor of German at Campus of International Languages, TU, Nepal)*

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**Dhruba Karki: “The visual spectacle of the body in the spirito–physical spectrum: A shared trajectory of action stars in popular Hollywood and Hong Kong cinemas”**

In changing paradigms of the history of human civilization, science and technology are generally associated with the West, and myth and religion with the East. In the Dionysiac religion, Greeks in their ritual consumption of wine at night connected themselves to God in Delphi, location of the Apollonian Sanctuary and the site of worship of Gala, the mother goddess connected to fertility. Similarly, the Christian apostles experienced revelation, sharing with Jesus aromatized wine and unleavened bread at the Last Supper, the Holy Communion, in Jerusalem before his crucifixion, considering it the spiritual basis for the Eucharist. In the modern time, churches consider the East inherent source of the spiritual heritage. In the visual spectacle of Hollywood, *Terminator 2* (1991) starring Arnold Schwarzenegger as the Model 101 and the Wachowskis–directed *The Matrix* (1999) with Keanu Reeves and Laurence Fishburne in major roles unfold the spiritual quest while the Shaolin monks and athletes in the 1973 Bruce Lee super hit *Enter the Dragon* and the 2001 Stephen Chow–directed *Shaolin Soccer*, in their integration of the body, mind and spirit, outbreak the Eastern spirituality and the Western physicality. In these ways, the Hollywood physicality recourses spirituality, and the Shaolin Chinese–Hong Kong experience embodies the physicality of the technologized body, with shared universal structures of journey and transformation of

consciousness, and thus, crossing the divide between the celestial and terrestrial in the visual spectacle.

*(Dr. Dhruva Karki is a Professor of English at the Central Department of English, TU, Nepal)*

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### **Abhik Mukherjee and Anwasha Roy Chaudhury: “Women of Satyajit Ray: Sex Positive and Defiant”**

The paper will show how Satyajit Ray’s women resist the sexism that came out of colonialism and reach back into a more sex positive Indian heritage, particularly Chakras and Tantric philosophy of life. This is particularly important in correcting the way imperialist ideology misrepresented gender relations in India to justify the British rule and how the misrepresentation has continued. We will discuss a selection of Ray’s films, for example, *The Adversary (Pratidwandi, 1970)*, *The Home and the World (Ghare Baire, 1984)*, and *Days and Nights in the Forest (Aranyer Din Ratri, 1970)* and will analyze the film techniques used by Ray to make his point obvious and at the same time not very shocking to the traditional Bengali audience of his time. For example, in the *Adversary*, the sex positivity of the nurse, Lotika presented with an almost inaudible religious Hindi song coming from outside (diegetic sound) sometimes a bit louder probably reminds the audience of the sex positivity of the ancient Hindus as described in Hindu epics and myths. In the *Days and Nights in the Forest*, by showing the sexual intercourse between a tribal girl and urban youth in the wilderness Ray shows by contrast how industrial triumph and modernization made us hollow by destroying our vitality and can contribute to sex negativity. In the *Home and the World*, Ray shows through the adulterous relation between Bimola and Sandip how patriarchy fueled by Victorian morality injected into Indian society by colonial rulers tries to control women’s sexuality and destroys reciprocity in male female relations and the film promotes an idea of impersonality, a movement away from the sort of egotism that flaws Sandip and that is against the Hindu vision of life in which the point is not to become personally powerful, but instead to bring things into balance.

*(Mr. Abhik Mukherjee is an Assistant Professor of English at NSHM, Durgapur, India)*

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### **Khagendra Acharya: “Impact to Mind-Heart-Body in the Maoist Combatants’ Personal Accounts”**

Following the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in November 2006, book-length writings of Nepali Maoist combatants proliferated for nearly a decade. These personal narratives render variety of issues pertaining to individual, society, and politics. Particularly, at micro level, these narratives recall stories of not only the combatants’ triumph but also the particular partisan’s suffering. In this paper, I examine the narratives of a few Nepali Maoist combatants, paying attention to the extracts that recall the impact of traumatic stressors. The method used in analyzing the extract is the thematic analysis, the method spelled out in detail by Virginia Brown and Victoria Clarke. Analysis of the extracts demonstrate that the individual partisan felt the impact of physical and psychological trauma at body, heart and mind. That observed it can be deduced that the spiritual is absent in the narrative, the phenomenon which can be the result of materialistic ideology that shaped the perception of the Maoist partisans.

*(Dr. Khagendra Acharya is an Associate Professor of English at Kathmandu U, Nepal)*

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## **Abhinaba Chatterjee: “Buddhist Analysis of the Existential Angst of the Absurd Drama”**

Concern about the existence has always been a major concern in literature. This paper proposes to analyze the existential angst depicted in the plays of major playwrights of the Absurd Theatre, namely Samuel Beckett and Harold Pinter, in terms of Buddhist philosophy.

Theatre of the Absurd, a term introduced by Martin Esslin, evolved as a reaction to the mass destruction caused during the Second World War. A major concern of the plays of Samuel Beckett and Harold Pinter is the angst of existence in a world where, to quote Nietzsche, ‘God is Dead’. The characters in the plays of Samuel Beckett and Harold Pinter depict existential angst in a world where the traditional concepts of moral values and religious sentiments have been destabilized. These concerns of the plays can be analyzed in terms of cultural modernity, which is seen to be in opposition to scientific modernization that had produced weapons of mass destruction. This paper proposes to analyze the elements of cultural modernity depicted in the select plays of Samuel Beckett and Harold Pinter in terms of Buddhist philosophy in order to bring forth the status of humanity presented in the plays.

The problem in both absurdism and Buddhism is suffering. In absurdism, realization of the absurd brings suffering because humans are fundamentally driven to pursue what cannot be found. In Buddhism, attachment brings suffering because of the nature of impermanence. There is a clear point of contention here: there is nothing ‘intrinsically human’ according to Buddhism. There is no reason for want of purpose to be something necessary for humanity. Buddhism entreats us to cease attachments; absurdism states this is impossible because it is simply the way humans are. The absurd exists specifically because humans want meaning and fail to find it. Buddhism agrees that we will fail to find it (as what is meaningful must be eternal, and nothing is eternal); it goes on to state that we must cease searching in order to end suffering. In order for the two philosophies to be reconciled, the following question must be answered: can one attain enlightenment without violating the terms of the absurd?

*(Mr. Abhinaba Chatterjee is a Research Scholar at Gurukul Kangri Vishwavidyalaya, India)*

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## **Bijay Kumar Rauniyar: “Spiritual Siddhartha: A Spiritual Journey to Oneness”**

Herman Hesse's *Siddhartha* (1922) is essentially spiritual. Told of an Indian prince during the time of Nepali counterpart Siddhartha Gautam turned Gautam Buddha, it responds to dislocation of European culture and tradition that has been dominated by material concern. Its message is: humans should behave humanely. Hesse' prince protagonist, Siddhartha leads a fulfilled life. It is untainted by materialism that was very rampant in the West in the aftermath of the First World War. While his contemporaries like TS Eliot despaired about the materialistic life in *The Waste Land* and *The Hollow Men* and F. Scott Fitzgerald about the Great Depression of the 1920s in *The Great Gatsby*, Hesse penned something oriental to assuage the western wounds and war scars till now. The paper will show that the book has a three-dimensional "spiral" structure: spiritual, lyrical, and magical. It is, however, sensible and apocalyptic, and as such caters to readers of all time and ages that question hollowness and authority, and quest for wholeness and authenticity much as Siddhartha questions and departs from the Establishment and the Enlightened alike, and virtually becomes Shivartha—blending Lord Shiva's asceticism and mantra of Om.

*(Dr. Bijay Kumar Rauniyar is aretired Professor of English atTU, Nepal)*

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## **Mr. Aniket Mohapatra: “Buddhist Ethics and the theory and practice of ‘Gross National Happiness’ in Bhutan”**

‘Gross National Happiness’ as a concept and more or less as a model of sustainable development has a substantial link with Buddhism. It owes its origin to the tantric Buddhism where insistence on ‘happiness’ is the essence of its ideal or preaching. The tiny Himalayan country may be a least developed country from the point of view of its per capita ‘Gross National Product (GNP)’ but with regard to its happiness index it stands tall amongst all its neighbouring states and beyond. Spiritualism, religiosity, charity, benevolence, non-violence, simplicity, mutual help, sacrifices, hedonism, stoicism and less-expectation-the-better life etc. are the Buddhist virtues and values which the people of Bhutan have imbibed and internalised. Happiness is felt as an inner experience attained especially through meditation. It is an ethical practice for the individual meditating which generates motivation of empathy and benevolence toward others. This is a secular aspect of Buddhist ethics and psychology. Buddhism has taught them how to behave with the nature and the natural objects. Environment, river and forests are given due respect as per the Buddhist ethics. The story of four harmonious friends (Thuenpapuenshi) namely elephant, a monkey, a peacock and a rabbit teach all the lessons of cooperation, relation and living together. People of Bhutan in general and the authorities in particular adhere to the practice of Buddhist ethics in all aspects of their life. There is a Gross National Commission to check the compatibility of all new policies for development with the concept of GNH. Accordingly, the forest cover has never been compromised for developmental projects. Several indicators and pillars have been developed in tune of Buddhist ethics to make any initiative for development a sustainable one.

The proposed paper against this backdrop is intended to trace whether or not a correlation exists between the Buddhist ethics and theory and practice of Gross National Happiness.

*(Mr. Aniket Mohapatra is a Scholar at Sri Sri U, Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India)*

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## **Tilak Bhusal: “Divine Provision in Kalidasa’s *The Cloud Messenger*”**

Kalidasa's creative genius has been reflected in *The Cloud Messenger*. He writes about nature and connects it with divinity. He adopts Hindu concept of supernaturalism in his creations. This paper highlights that Kalidasa portrays god in the soil, stone, water, mountain and plants. It shows that Kalidasa views divine elements in natural objects. Nature is divine it leads to the progress of living being. In this sense Kalidasa shows his deep concern of spiritual world view in this universe. Kalidasa has used 'cloud' as a messenger to carry the message of Yaksha to his beloved. In doing so he has used cloud and transcends it into the divine. It can go where no humans can have better approach. It has been represented as a divine. In the same token, the present paper declares that the cloud has been put to the highest order which gives a respect of divinity. It moves from the hills to the plains with the tender and obedience. This transformation of 'cloud' from the material thing to the highest order reflects the process of deification. The objective of Kalidasa's deification of cloud lies because of two different reasons: the first he was the devotee of Kali, the Hindu Goddess and another was because Yaksha could not have approached Alakapuri since he was on an exile. In Hinduism the nature and the natural objects are respected as the reflections of God.

*(Mr. Tilak Bhusal is a Lecturer in English at Butwal Multiple Campus, TU, Nepal)*

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## **Krishna Prasad Bhattarai: “Teaching Culture and Civilization in South Asian Demystified Narratives: Reading Amish Tripathi's *The Immortals of Meluha*”**

The present research paper considers 'culture' and 'civilization' as a framework in which people live their lives and communicate shared meanings with each other. Culture is the social behavior and norms found in human societies. Culture is a dynamic system through which a society constructs, represents, enacts and understands itself. This paper documents the way human consciousness cognizes and registers the world around her/him. *The Immortals of Meluha* authored by Amish Tripathi combines the narrative excess with culture, human civilization and mythical debate. The selected narrative depicts that the culture evolves as men sacrifice their duty (swadharma) for the greater good, universal religion. *The Immortals of Meluha* in its deeper level highlights about history, religion, civilization and south Asian culture. It contends that the engagement of self in action purifies man. *Shiva Purana* states Lord Shiva as the one who removes ignorance and desires, attachments, passion, emotion and all other deadly human qualities but Amish's Shiva labors hard to track down real evil. He remains insensible about the socio-religious beliefs and practices of 'Meluhan.' Throughout the novel, Amish succeed in maintaining human centered approach to do justice to his protagonist. Shiva's thoughts, manners and lifestyle reflect the mentality of a typical modern man who is reluctant to follow old norms, customs and mythical mysteries. Instead of portraying Shiva's story as a stereotypical way, Amish demystifies Shiva's myth and adopts a politics of preaching south Asian deep-rooted culture, history and philosophy to the young generation of contemporary postmodern world.

*(Mr. Krishna Prasad Bhattarai is a Lecturer in English at Siddhartha Campus, Kapilvastu, Nepal)*

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## **Anil Kumar Mohapatra: “Spiritual Internationalism and World Integration in the light of Sri Aurobindo's “Ideal of Human Unity”**

Realism, Idealism and Liberalism –are regarded as the three main schools of thought so far as the prospects and possibilities of an international society are concerned. ‘Could the states come under one global authority or organisation?’ –all have different perspectives to advance. Each one has its own perception of the nature of the global society and its sovereign actors. To one, it is anarchical and one must guard its self-interest by itself; the other perceives it as a possibility through negotiation and international law; and to the last one, at least, all the states have mutual beneficial common interest and concerns which may bring them to an understanding other than the obsessions of war.

But Sri Aurobindo has an altogether different understanding and conviction in that regard. The great Seer envisions one solution to the crises and riddles the human community has been confronted with i.e. an enlightened awareness of the spiritual unity of our existence. The truth of the Spirit has that potential. That would only achieve international unity on the basis of spiritual unity. The journey shall begin with a spiritual human being then to spiritual communities which shall end in an enlightened spiritual world community. Once the human beings attain spirituality they would go beyond the rational norms and selfish egoism. The concept of nation-states would become obsolete and thus the international war and infighting would come to an end. It would give way to a larger synthesis of mankind and lead humanity to the path of its highest possible happiness and perfection. However, Sri Aurobindo was aware of the imperfections of human beings in the current stage of the evolutionary process. He envisioned a qualitatively higher kind of human race in the evolutionary process having all spiritual attainments to make his ideal of human unity a reality. In between, he also had a vision of European Unity and had suggested some other structures to make the world unity happen.



Against this background, this paper wishes to critically look into his vision of world unity on the basis of spiritualism.

*(Dr. Anil Kumar Mohapatra is a Professor of Political Science at Fakir Mohan U, Odisha, India)*

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### **Daya Dissanayake: “Learning from Aśoka – A True Transformational Leader”**

Aśoka Cakra is the state emblem of India, along with his Lion capital. King Aśoka is considered “one of the greatest emperors the world has ever seen”. Over the past two centuries, so many studies were done, so much has been written, and discussed, yet we are unable to see the real Aśoka or his greatness. We have enshrined an invaluable gem, inside a huge stupa, which has covered the gem, layer by layer for over two millennia. What we need is not to worship the stupa, or to study it, but to recover the gem and through it, attempt to recreate the Dhamma he tried to promote then. And offering an opportunity for today's leaders and the youth, the future leaders to learn from his ancient wisdom. It is Aśoka's vision that we have to understand, through his inscriptions, and learn how to apply them successfully today, so people could “mingle with the gods” when all human beings too would be ‘godlike’ in their thoughts and their actions. We have to re-imagine and de-anglicize Aśoka, so that we do not read *Dhamma* as ‘morality’, *pasamda* as ‘sect’, *sambodhi* as Bodhgaya, or *nijhatiya* as ‘conversion’. We have to read the inscriptions, posted by a person who was a true human being, who loved his people as his own children and who wanted his people to be truly happy in this world and the next. We need such human beings today, and at least a few among them to be able to guide the rest of mankind to lead happy and contented lives, irrespective of their race, creed or caste.

*(Mr. Daya Dissanayake is an Award-winning Sri Lankan Novelist, Poet and Blogger)*

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### **Damaru Chandra Bhatta: “The Essence of the Upanishads in T. S. Eliot's Writings”**

This paper attempts to explore the essence of the principal Upanishads of the Hindu philosophy in T. S. Eliot's selected famous poems and plays. The principal Upanishads are the Ishavasya, Kena, Katha, Prashna, Mundaka, Mandukya, Taittiriya, Aitareya, Chhandogya, Brihadaranyaka and Shvetashvatara. The famous poems are The Waste Land, "Ash-Wednesday," and The Four Quartets, and the famous plays are The Family Reunion, Murder in the Cathedral, and The Cocktail Party under scrutiny in this paper. The essence of the principal eleven Upanishads is that it is Brahman who created the human beings, who get results according to their karma and are born again and again until they get moksha (liberation) through the self-realization of Brahman; therefore, our goal should be to attain moksha or Brahman, only through which we can experience perpetual peace and unbound bliss. Likewise, Eliot suggests that we should attempt to go back to our "Home" (Brahman, also a symbol of peace and bliss), for which we have to attempt several times until we become qualified through the non-dual knowledge of "the still point" (Brahman) and its self-realization along with renunciation and asceticism, or through the practice of unattached action done without the hope of its fruit (*niskam karma*), or through unselfish devotion (Bhakti). Since the path of spiritual knowledge can make us realize Brahman immediately, Eliot prefers this path of knowledge to the progressive or indirect paths of action and devotion. Thus, his texts reflect the essence of the Upanishads. The significance of this paper within the context of existing scholarship lies in its introduction to the new knowledge that Eliot's poems and plays can be interpreted by finding the essence of the Upanishads in his texts. Practically, the knowledge of the essence of the Upanishads can help us to know the mystery of life and death, and the Atman and Brahman, and to get liberation from all kinds of suffering and

misery, and the cycle of life and death.

*(Mr. Damaru Chandra Bhatta is an Associate Professor of English at Tri-Chandra Campus, TU, Nepal)*

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### **Bipin Sherchan: "Connecting with the Departed: An Exploration of the Concept of Immortality in the Thakali Community Rituals"**

Rites and rituals form one of the significant aspects of Nepali culture. Lore singing the concept of soul, in the similar way, function to a greatest extent, for creating moral ground of one's life. Faith on the existence of soul which is exhibited in the form of cultural rituals is a prominent feature of Thakali community that forms one of the indigenous nationalities of Nepal. Particularly in the community, communicating with the departed not only works as a ritual demanding an assembly of its community members, but also contributes in dissemination of the spiritual aspect for fortifying Thakali's cultural uniqueness. Despite this, the role the ritual of connecting with the departed plays in adding spiritual value to the community's cultural practices seems to have been less explored in Thakali community. Therefore, this paper aims to unfold the significance of the ritual practice of connecting with the departed in forming spiritual dimension of Thakali's cultural paradigm. Narrative inquiry was used as the research method under the interpretive paradigm. In this course, the folk lore which are expressed in the death ritual were used for exploring the perception about immortality. The lore was collected from three cultural experts of Thakali community through prolonged interview. Information collected through interview were further analyzed and interpreted with relevant literature. Reflection upon the assembled data that were interpreted with reference of existing literature suggested that the Thakali community believes on immortality of human soul. The study even uncovered the conviction of Thakali people that soul can exist in the universe in any form. Furthermore, recitation of the lore made by the participants suggested that Thakali people treat soul as an integral part of the livings and they are acknowledged in the cultural practice for their contribution while being in physical form. The study, hence, carries pertinence since it sheds light on knowledge embedded in ritual beliefs of indigenous community of Nepal.

*(Mr. Bipin Sherchan is a scholar at the School of Education, Kathmandu University, Nepal)*

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### **Shruti Das: "Dialectics of Ecosophy in D.H. Lawrence's *The Rainbow*"**

Ecosophy is the wisdom-spirituality of the world. The human nature relationship is furthered by a deeper bond of spirituality inherent in humans which expresses itself in a given environment. Felix Guattari argues that ecosophy is an ethico-political articulation between the environment, social relations and human subjectivity. Similarly, in his book *Pour une écologie de l'attention* Yves Citton draws attention to the common fundamental orientation of two approaches to ecosophy: "the necessary concatenation of several primarily interdependent levels" and the "core understanding that individuals do not pre-exist the relations that shape them", which is also a fundamental statement of the Deleuze-Guattari philosophy: "Relationism has an ecosophical value because it dispels the belief that entities or people can be isolated from their environment. Talking about interaction between entities and their environment leads to misconceptions, because an entity is an interaction". Thus, ecosophy addresses plurality of ecologies, environments and habitats that define the human and in return is constantly reconfigured and defined in a complex network of relations. D.H.Lawrence's *The Rainbow* which deals with complex relationships in between the three generations of Brangwens is a case in point, hitherto unexplored in the light of ecosophical

analysis. This paper will make an attempt to explore the complex network of relations between the three generations of Brangwens and to thereby articulate the deep spirituality exhibited through their social relations and subjectivity.

(Dr. Shruti Das is an Assoc Prof at the PG Department of English, Berhampur U, Odisha, India)

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### **Indira Acharya Mishra: “Objectification of Women's Body in Nepali Movie Songs”**

Media has always played an important role in bringing social, political and cultural changes in society. As a form of media, movie, too, has a great role in bringing about positive changes in the society. They are the vehicle for promoting culture and tradition of the nation besides entertaining the audience. The messages that are played and replayed in the movie go through a long way in determining the mindset of the people. However, the way women are presented in Nepali movies reveals that these movies, guided by the patriarchal ideology demean and objectify women. An analysis of some of the Nepali movie songs will expose the patriarchal mind set of Nepali movies. These songs demean women both verbally and visually.

Thus, this article aims to critically analyze some Nepali movie songs to find out how these songs objectify women body as sexual objects. To analyze the selected songs, it will use socialist feminists' thought. They believe that patriarchy and capitalism work together in oppressing women. Therefore, "the way to end women's oppression, in socialist feminists' estimation, is to kill the two-headed beast of capitalist patriarchy or patriarchal capitalism" (Tong 4). It will examine the lyrics and visual of "Udhreko Choli" from *Loot*, "Thamel Bazar" from *Loot 2* and "Sali Man Paryo" from "Ghamad Shere." The finding of the article suggests that these songs move beyond the boundary of entertainment and demean women both visually and verbally.

(Dr. Indira Acharya Mishra is an Assoc Prof at Mahendra Multiple Campus, TU, Dharan, Nepal)

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### **Kamal Sharma: “The Journey Within: Inner Calling as Spiritual in *The Guide* and *The Monk Who Sold His Ferrari*”**

The Journey within begins when people start contemplating about the real purpose of their existence. The contemplation of longing to know the real purpose of life starts in the process of sitting with mindfulness – meditation which transcends the survival purpose of life. It leads to spirituality, the ability to talk to oneself or the heart —the inner calling, leads humans towards the perception of Divine within oneself, treasure within oneself and happiness within oneself. R. K Narayan's *The Guide* and Robin Sharma's *The Monk Who Sold His Ferrari* are the stories of spiritual traces where protagonists find pleasure and happiness rooted in spiritual quest along with their own destiny. In the story- *The Guide*, the transformation of Raju from a tourist guide to spiritual guide for the sake of mankind and his interconnectedness with the Divine owes much to the self-realization as well as to his heart. He believes in fasting he undertook because everybody believed him, “He felt moved by the recollection of the big crowd of women and children touching his feet. He felt moved by the thought of their graduate” (97). In the same way, in the next story, *The Monk Who Sold His Ferrari*, the renowned lawyer of America – Julian Mantle abandons the job of attorney after the severe heart-attack. Then he goes to Himalayan country – India to consult the monks so that he could know the sources of happiness. As he met the leader of Sages of Sivana—Yogi Ravan, he learns the seven principles of life or seven virtues for living a fulfilling life and becomes a monk. His spiritual awakening is the proof of his miraculous transformation from an old tired frustrated lawyer to vibrant and alive monk. In this land of Sivana, he felt a

return to home, “a return to paradise that he had known long ago (36)”. Following the spirituality of purity of mind, sacrifice, mindfulness, tolerance as the themes of *Bhagvad Gita* by A.C Prabhupada and “Inner Discipline ... stillness of mind (262)” as discussed by Dalai Lama and Howard C. Cutter in *The Art of Happiness*, the researcher will conduct the research comparing the central characters mentioned above like Raju and the Monk with some Hindu mythical characters.

*(Mr. Kamal Sharma is a Lecturer in English at Dhawalagiri Multiple Campus at Nepal Sanskrit U, Nepal)*

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### **Komal Prasad Phuyal: “Of People and Protest: Spiritual Resistance in Newar Hymns”**

Culturally unique people of the Kathmandu Valley, the Newars have produced hymns that capture the tension between the person and the polity in the most telling way. Despite devotional in form, the Newar hymns project protest of the people at the bottom of the society as voice of spiritual resistance. The social mores and orders of/from the authority always act coercively on the self of people who find themselves at the margin of the society. The Newar imagination poetically transcends beyond the earthly domain of the control of authority and social structures, revolting against the existing social order. This paper studies two historical Newar hymns “Bijaya Laxmi” and “Shitala Maju” from Siegfried Lienhard’s *Songs of Nepal: An Anthology of Newar Folksongs and Hymns* (1974). When the hymns of the Newars that are still sung inherent part of social life are analyzed to examine the nature of spiritual quest, the hymns emerge as a sharp critique of contemporary power structure in the form of devotional poetry. Rana Bahadur Shah’s Sati, Bijaya Laxmi stands as the most humane form of the time in the hymn, while the whole courtiers and the rulers enforce the rules of the cremation upon the living woman. The voice of protest is embedded in the hymns as the Sati wants to hug her son and feel the warmth of the earth before sitting in the pyre. Similarly, “Shitala Maju” prays the Goddess Shitala against the atrocity of the King Rana Bahadur Shah who had issued decree to expel all the children infected with small pox from the Valley. King Rana Bahadur Shah intends to protect his son Girvan by removing all the victims in the epidemics. The unspeakable pain and suffering turn into the subject matter for the invocation of the Devi in the external form, while the deep-seated revolt of the people is expressed through the depiction of the grievous journey forced upon the innocent subjects. The people do not accept the dictations of the authority: they employ spirituality as a form of resistance to voice protest. This paper argues that the Newar hymns raise the voice of people against the state/King as spiritual resistance in its inner core though such poems externally display devotion as their primary ethos.

*(Dr. Komal Prasad Phuyal is a Lecturer in English at the Central Dept. of English, TU, Nepal)*

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### **Mani Bhadra Gautam: “Significance of the Seela and Lions around Panchakumari in the Maitidevi Temple Premises”**

This paper states that the literature covers up the different parts of life, love and death. Every rituals and religious functions from birth to death celebrated in different places of the world are the parts of spiritual literature if they acquire the literary elements and bear the literary values. This study is based on the religious things and activities this researcher went through and observed around the Maitidevi temple premises. The method of this study is field visit, interview with the priest, temple visiting people, religious fanatics and other concerned people related with

temple and religious people groups. Finding of this research is that religious places and functions are the parts of spiritual in literature.

*(Dr. Mani Bhadra Gautam is a Lecturer in English at the Central Dept. of English, TU, Nepal)*

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**Md Abu Shahid Abdullah: “Trauma, Memory and Amnesia: Physical and Psychological Repression in *The Sleeping Voice* and *A Long Silence*”**

In recent years, the Spanish society has seen the rise in extreme debates concerning the issues of national amnesia, historical memory and the recovery of the past, focusing on the period of Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), the dictatorship of Franco (1939-1975), and the advent of democracy after the fall of Franco. Many literary works produced in the last 30 years have focused on the Civil War period and its aftermath, and thus contributed to the debate concerning memory and its potential for recuperation. However, it is also argued by some factions of the population that the attempt to recover the historical memory is creating unnecessary conflict and digressing people’s attention away from many other crucial social, economic and political problems. A number of novels written by female authors emphasise the repressed voices and memories of women and children of the Civil War. Dulce Chacón’s *La voz dormida* [*The Sleeping Voice*] and Ángeles Caso’s *Un largo silencio* [*A Long Silence*] expose the severe torture inflicted upon Republican supporters and their families in the immediate period after the Civil War. The early years after the fall of Franco put a veil on the past injustices and thus silenced them in order to assure the peaceful transition to democracy. Because of this, the repressed stories of Republican families in the period of Franco continued to be denied in the democratised Spain, creating a sort of national amnesia. By offering the reader a second-generation point of view, both Caso and Chacón attempt to unveil a traumatic past concealed during and after the Franco regime. Thus, the legacy of the Civil War and the significance of conveying the stories of sufferings and resistance to the future generations is crucially dealt in both novels.

*(Dr. Md Abu Shahid Abdullah is an Assistant Professor of English at East West U, Bangladesh)*

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**Nabaraj Dhungel: “Decentering the Spiritual in B. P. Koirala’s *A Tale*: A Study on Deconstruction”**

This paper attempts to explore and examine how B. P. Koirala subverts the hierarchy of spiritual superiority and material inferiority decentering the spiritual and recentering the material in order to glorify the physical and the earthly as the heavenly. It also endeavours to depict the satisfaction from material prosperity as the ultimate satisfaction even though the material riches are considered to be ephemeral and transitory whereas the spiritual as the permanent, timeless and spaceless. Through the story, Koirala challenges the politics of elevating the spiritual enlightenment, godly greatness and intellectual beauty bringing the earthly enlightenment, humanly greatness and bodily beauty at the center. This study also shows how Koirala brings the upside down through the godly and humanly characters and the qualities. Koirala’s strong question upon the so-called superior, sacrificial, open hearted, all-loving, all-protecting and all-inspiring god, who gets threatened by the power of a human being and conspires to destroy saintly life of the man, exposes the god’s lust for power and thirst for intellectual superiority. Though Koirala’s tale seems to be highlighting and supporting Bishwamitra-Menaka myth, it actually challenges the myth of god’s grandeur, human rationality, age boundary in marriage, male superiority and female selfishness uplifting the margin. Koirala asserts that the terrestrial pleasure is worthier than the celestial one as it contributes to continue human race and humanity.

This research excavates Koirala's effort to dismantle the traditionally established notion of heavenly grandness and earthly littleness, mind rationality and body emotionality, rational superiority and emotional inferiority, male supremacy and female submissiveness, ruling males and ruled females, godly positivity and humanly negativity, and godly selflessness and manly selfishness. To justify the decentering and recentering politics of Koirala through the story, the deconstructive ideas of Jacques Derrida have been taken. The major motive of the study is to display how conventionally established structures of thought and practice can be deconstructed and new structures can be formulated exalting the concept of multiple meanings, centers and truths.

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**Namrata Das: "Occult, Necromancy and Spirituality: Reading Chinese Xianxia Literature"**

Spirituality and literary studies share parallel association based on knowledge, faith, reason and existence. The depiction of spirituality in literature has often been on a saintly note. We never hear of something like 'The Unholy Trinity'. However, there's a dark side to spirituality that exists as well, the importance of which has been neglected largely. Nothing exists without duality or binary opposition. Spirituality is all about the strong connection that one develops with one's inner self or spirit.

The concept of 'ch'i' or the life force is of primal importance in Chinese culture. Mainstream literature and cinema concentrate on the positive aspect of using this vital force which is commonly known as Cultivation. However, this paper aims to explore the Chinese 'Xianxia' web novel, *Mo Dao Zu Shi* (Grandmaster of Demonic Cultivation) by Mo Xiang Tong Xiu, which deals with Chinese spiritual folklore with special focus on sorcery, demons, supernatural and exchange of spirits. Through a close textual analysis of the novel, the paper will try to look at the manipulation of the spiritual energy stowed in the 'dantian' (the vital force of life), for the Demonic Cultivation, in a world which encounters a conflict between regular cultivation practices and cultivation through dark arts.

Another key ingredient in the novel is the utilization of the dark spiritual energy. The concept of spirituality essentially refers to seeking the meaning of life. For Wei Wuxian, the protagonist, channeling his spiritual zeal to "fight the evil and protect the poor", gives his own life a purpose. Using traditional meditation practices, he develops a spiritual connection with the supernatural world and begins to tame the spectre, but for the greater good. This paper will also study the need of manoeuvring the dark ethos of spirituality for the ethical morality.

It is subject to debate why spirituality can also be used to control the rancorous energy of corpses and ghouls against the corruption by those holding political powers. The protagonist of the novel was hated by millions, especially by those with status power, for being brutally honest and rebellious against tyranny. Even though he practises demonic cultivation, his conscience was clear, unlike those practising sane cultivation with dishonest principles. This paper will particularly take up the manifold characterization of spiritual energy, and critique the generalized projection of the celestial/heavenly facet of spirituality in literary works.

*(Ms. Namrata Das is a Lecturer in English at Calcutta University, Kolkata, India)*

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**Pragya Gautam: “Quest of Spiritualism through Buddhist Teachings Delineated in Jamling’s *Touching My Father’s Soul*”**

Jamling Tenzing Sherpa is the son of Tenzing Norgay Sherpa, who with Sir Edmund Hillary, was the first man to reach the summit of Mount Everest in 1953. Jamling was able to follow the footsteps of his father in 1996. He regards Mount Everest climbing as a pilgrimage for giving tribute to his legendary father and to meet and feel the divine beings because many Hindu and Buddhist Gods and Goddesses are believed to have taken up residence in the Himalaya. The Himalayan peaks, passes, lakes and rivers are held sacred in Hinduism and Buddhism. Even the great sages and saints choose the Himalayas as a place for penance, peace, meditation, and self-realization. This article projects Jamling’s spiritual journey to Mt. Everest for gaining merit in the mind and body. His autobiography, *Touching My Father’s Soul* is a story of spiritual evolution with his concurrent struggles, failings and irreconcilable contradictions. Like most Sherpa, he was raised as a practicing Buddhist and his belief got surprising power after he arrived at the foot of Mount Everest. More than that it is a story of a son’s quest for spiritual enlightenment through Buddhist Teachings which he followed in each step while climbing up the mountain.

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**Raju Chitrakar: “Spirituality in Nature: Ecocriticism Has Yet to Comply with”**

Anthropocentrism has been the dominant approach of human and nature relationship for millennia. It views nature keeping human being at the centre. As such, it takes nature as an object created to fulfill human needs. Spirituality in nature is beyond its speculation. However, there has emerged a contrary view from it in the recent decades. It is ecocriticism, which views human and nature relationship from the inclusive or earth centered approach: human being is not the center but a part of nature. It is acceptable to a great extent. However, it is also not free of problem: it also does not admit any form of spirituality in nature. The argument of this paper is just to prove that spirituality is one of the fundamental elements of both nature and human being. If ecocriticism would adopt it, it would emerge as a complete alternative of anthropocentrism.

*(Dr. Raju Chitrakar is a Lecturer in English at Padma Kanya Multiple Campus, TU, Nepal)*

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**Ramila Subedi: “Exploring Woman’s Aspiration to Rise: A Hermeneutic Inquiry of Gandhari’s Realization and Her Initiatives in the *Mahabharata*”**

Reading a woman’s silence and the anticipation of her subjugation has been a popular discourse among the readers of classical Hindu texts. Since patriarchy has been deeply rooted in each sphere of the community that stands on the ground of Hindu norms and values, understanding the silence and obedience displayed by women as a product of the male hegemony might seem obvious. Reading Gandhari’s discourses, in the similar context, has mostly appeared as the exhibition of her silence acceptance of the social construct. Amidst the reading of her silence and her acceptance, however, unveiling her aspiration has often been undermined. This paper, hence, aims at exploring the realization Gandhari possesses as a noble and her aspiration to stand and continue with the legitimate nobility in the set of the *Mahabharata*. For this exploration, hermeneutic inquiry was used as the research method while the discourses relating to Gandhari were assembled for peeping into her aspiration to rise. Borrowing the paradigm of ‘Trait Theory of Leadership’, reflection upon the reading of her discourses reflecting her realization and her initiatives was made. While doing so, her discourses were compared, contrasted and juxtaposed with the discourses of other women characters belonging to different settings in the classical texts. Through the rigor that was applied in the reading and reflecting in a multiple layer, the

meaning was generated about her surging aspiration to rise as a leader. Beside the assurance of her own positionality as a leader, the traits she exhibited through her discourses even spoke of her desperation to see her own clan continuing with the discourse of legitimate leadership. The study, hence, holds rationale in a sense that it may contribute in formation of a new lens for looking into a woman's silence and her implicit aspiration, which often remains being defined as her acceptance of the subordination when it comes to leadership.

*(Ms. Ramila Subedi is an MPhil Scholar at School of Education, Kathmandu U, Nepal)*

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### **Suniti Nundoo-Ghoorah: "The Rumi Boom: An Exploration of the Power of his Poetry across Centuries"**

*Be drunken with love...* The enduring popularity of Mawlana Jalal al-Din also known as Rumi (1207 – 1273), eminent scholar, mystic and poet from the thirteenth to the twenty first century is amazing. Hailed as the bestselling poet in the United States and translated from Persian into twenty three languages, Rumi has become a global icon of spiritual poetry (Lewis 2000) soaring beyond literature to music concerts (*sama*), psychotherapy, meditation, social media videos, bumper sticker quotes as well as recitations by pop stars such as Madonna and Bob Dylan. This article attempts to find out what makes Rumi's poetry so appealing. Contemporary scholars delve on the appropriation of Rumi by the West, the 'erasure of Islam' from translations of his oeuvres, and the construction of the westernised persona of Rumi from Mawlana as he is known in Persian literature (Furlanetto 2013, Ali 2017). Other studies (Schimmel 1993, Rasool 2009, Moghaddas 2015, Kaya 2016) focus on the universality, humanism and global relevance of Rumi in the midst of divisive religious and ethnic fractions. This study examines a selection of Rumi's translated poems from the perspective of Sufism, the Islam derived spiritual practice of communion with God. Sufism is the lens through which Rumi's teachings about spiritual growth are decoded and his poetic yearning for divine union appreciated (Chittick 2005). Typically, Rumi's verses reflect a soulful angst to return to the source and dissolve his being into the divine Beloved (*fana*). The mythological approach of textual analysis is applied to examine the content, themes, imagery, language and style of Rumi's poetry. It is argued that Rumi's poems have globally meaningful themes of harmony, interconnectedness, renunciation of ego, and spiritual quest. His verses express the religion of love in a simple, direct and easily accessible manner with disarmingly fresh images, analogies and metaphors drawn from nature, everyday life and emotions. The musical and aesthetic qualities of his quatrains, couplets and other verses strike a deep chord within a worldwide audience questing for spiritual horizons.

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### **Sooshilla Gopaul: "A Spiritual Literary Window for a Global Literature in Face of the Climate Change"**

A 21<sup>st</sup> century satellite video recording might reveal a clear picture of Earth as an internet connected global village but where the compounds are walled in and gated. Now and then stone pelting and neighbours howling at each other might be seen and heard. Communication of a high order is missing. To install this and to make an appeal to the fine feelings of the residents of this village a global literature with focus on the spiritual is imperative. Such a literature can minimise the abrasive effects of partisanship that is now becoming the norm of the fragmented human race. I believe a global literature with focus on the spiritual can lead people to join in efforts to



respect nature and to act responsibly in an attempt to minimise climatic changes and the damage in its wake.

In this paper, I draw from the spiritual in Hinduism, in particular, from Ramanuja (1017-1137) who took the world as being real and believed that human emotions can create the spiritual. My point is that since literature reflects human beings' endeavours to cope with life, their feelings can be woven into spirituality, which is above religion. The imminent catastrophes, arising from climate change and occurring all over the planet, demand that humanity should take measures to improve its ways of dealing with nature. It has to be conscious that being disrespectful towards it, is no longer possible. At this point I refer to Yajur Veda and the Bhagavad Gita and emphasize on the need to take fair actions. I bring forward points made by Amitav Ghosh (b.1956) in his non-fiction *The Great Derangement* (2016) and explore his novel *Gun Island* (2019) to illustrate the way he has used literature to remind readers that the spiritual exists. It may be in the form of invisible forces but it must be attended to both collectively and individually. An attention to the spiritual call and an application of the middle path recommended in Buddhism can lead to the better management of the environmental crisis.

*(Dr. Sooshilla Gopaul is an Associate Professor of English at Open U of Mauritius)*

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### **Hriseekesh Upadhyay: "Cursed to live with Pestilence: A Study of Albert Camus' *The Plague*"**

Barely into the third decade of the new century, mankind has encountered a series of pestilence—natural and metaphorical—that has claimed lives and caused endless fear and anguish across the world. SARS, MERS, Ebola, swine flu, bird flu and various other calamities have tested patience and ingenuity of humanity to defeat threats from nature and results of human action and live cheerily. The world-wide scare and loss of lives currently unfolding in China and elsewhere due to Covid19 has forced mankind to reflect on the scourge of calamity that appears to test humanity's power to control and if possible, to eradicate them. Albert Camus in his novel *The Plague* (1947) makes a study of the projected spread of the bubonic plague over an Algerian town of Oran and misguided efforts of the government authority to check fear among the city populace, contain the disease from spreading, making sure human to human transmission is halted, and enforcing the city-wide lockdown amidst shortage of food, medicine and other essential supplies. The plague in focus also reflects the German occupation of France during Second World War—the Germans descending as plague on proud French nation. At another level, Nazism/Fascism proved overwhelming pest to both Germany and Italy until massive surgery was forced on them. Each community, each society and each epoch can be studied to have been the victim of the onslaught of a particular plague which erupts from within and may subside after causing its devastation. Nepal had Ranas as plague for over a century and other eras can be dubbed to represent other pests. Simple folks celebrate when the plagues subside a bit, they are never completely done away with, but the truth is they can erupt again without visible warning to cause havoc all over again.

*(Professor Hriseekesh Upadhyay is a retired Professor of English at Tribhuvan U, Nepal)*

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### **Sushil Adhikari: "Hotline from Swoyambhu to Pashupatinath- A Unique Cultural Harmony between Religious Identity of Hindu and Buddhists of Kathmandu Valley in Nepal"**

The social genealogy of Kathmandu valley in Nepal has a unique feature. The Khadga shaped Kathmandu valley, historically, has two places with mystical origin swoyambhu and the area of Pashupatinath ((Self originated Jyotirlinga as a Most Sacred point of Shaivite and Hindu) at the

bank of Bagmati River of Kathmandu Valley are significantly present. The scholars from both religious lines Hindu and Buddhists agree on the origin of Kathmandu valley as a big pond of water before human settlement. The then kingdom of serpents was transformed to a big valley of Kathmandu and there appeared the Jyotirlinga of Swoyambhunath stupa from lotus and Shiva Linga at Deopatan at the bank of Bagmati River. These sites remain today as two major heritages sites for visitors as the spiritually holy destinations in the distance of few kilometers representing two popular religions of planet. The two tantric historical and religious power existed before fifth century B. C. according to the Vipaswi Buddha, other historians, Emperor Ashoka and other scholars. The history of Nepal also shows this valley as a power center from its origin to till the date. Many traders to rulers came in this valley and accepted the truth of these mystical power centers. The rulers of all dates and traders, local Newars are found following two religious lines side by side for a long time in historical record. The space between these two modern heritage sites have created a wonderful link and spiritual tie between Hind and Buddhist philosophy. The people have a peaceful living and common share on the rites and festivals in unique manner in both points with tribute. Both Hindu and Buddhists claim to be different in religious ideology and philosophical doctrines in their identical interpretations but end with the same assumption of spirituality, monumentality, respect and purity of these two historical sites in a unique manner. They follow same tantric methods in worships and rites in terms of Sri Yantra and the Sanskrit Language as the holy language. There are different shapes in iconographic representation on the basis of similar techniques of fundamental construction philosophy from Pagoda to stupa. The construction of Stupa and viharas at the site of Pashupatinath and Temples in the premises of Swoyambhunath Stupa. The temple and stupa have a common ending on name as Nath. The rituals and rites are different for the same purpose of peace and harmony. The tantric line and spiritual faith semi equalize to both as both premises welcome for visit and pray. There seems significant difference in appearance the lifestyle of Sadhus, Santa, Bhaktini, Monk, Nun, Temple and monastic life but heading towards same Nirvana path through emancipation and salvation. One finds a factual harmony, social living with cultural and functional identity. It proves to be a new philosophy of peaceful living with share and identity within a geography of power centers carrying a true existence of unity in diversity, harmony between differences and singleness within grouped community as a model of new social living in Kathmandu Nepal.

*(Mr. Sushil Adhikari is a Lecturer in English at Pokhara U, Nepal)*

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### **Umar Nizarudeen: “Against Andolan: Bhakti as Mystical Network”**

The medieval Bhakti poetry of India is an enduring repository of literary works that project peculiar tropes such as repetitions, parallelisms, mirroring, polyglossia, subversion and disruptions that use the intellectual love of God, Bhakti, as an emptying of religion rather than a turning loose of it. Though variegated in form, the Bhakti movement was pan-Indian in its spread and influence. In South India poets like Manikkavacakar ‘bowed, wept, danced and cried aloud’ (Schelling7) in a largely Saivite idiom that built upon the classical edifice of *akam*(inside) and *puram*(outside). Not just in South India, but throughout the matrix of Bhakti in the Indian subcontinent, Kerala has a special place, having produced many of its pioneering sages and personages. In Kerala, a region with traditions of Rama Bhakti and Krishna Bhakti, it was the Adi Shankaracharya (788-820 CE) who proposed a monistic philosophy (Advanta) in his works, and initiated the Bhakti movement through his poems such as *Nirvana Shitake*. Cherisher Namboothiri (1375-1475 CE), Unsheathe Eustachian (1495-1575CE) and Montanan Namboothiri (1547-1640 CE) were the exemplars of Bhakti movement in Kerala which combined the great tradition of Sanskrit with the little traditions of local folk culture seamlessly as in a mobius strip. SalvoSize’s work based on

Lacanian theory, Hegelianism and Marxism, holds unexplored possibilities in the study of Bhakti poetry in Kerala. Slavoj Žižek (b.1949) is a contemporary Slovenian Marxist philosopher who uses Lacanian theory to interpret culture, literature, politics and philosophy and whose concepts of ideology, parallax gap, petit object a, invisible reminder etc. will be used in this dissertation to study tropes in medieval Bhakti poetry in Kerala.

The Bhakti movement originated in the 7<sup>th</sup> century CE in Tamilnadu though Bhakti itself is as old as the Bhagavad Gita where Krishna says Bhava Madbhakto (be my devotee). The etymological root of Bhakti is the Sanskrit verb bhaj which means to 'divide, share or distribute' 'Bhakti came to mean to partake, enjoy, participate, to eat, to make love. From such concrete roots it went on to take abstract meanings such as to experience, to adore, to serve, honour or worship (Schelling,xvi). Bhakti movement was pan-Indian in nature and saints and sages and monks from various geographic regions, belonging to different sects or even religions practising divergent rituals and speaking different languages and yet behaving in an almost identical manner in their approach to God. The dominating note is that of ecstasy, a longing for union with God and to merge one's identity in the Godhead (Das, 149).

Bhakti movement in South India and elsewhere was characterised by a hydraulic upsurge in fervour for union with God by a long-suffering medieval populace that sought to escape the chains of whimsical monarchy in union with the Godhead. In the writings of Kabir, in the Godhead merged Gods of different religions, castes, classes and genders. Hence God became not the Big Other of ideology but the Levinasian other whose 'face' is the chasm between the self and the other. For Lacan and hence for Žižek, desire is the Other's desire-unification with the beloved, which is so violent, annihilating and traumatic. According to Žižek, 'the subject desires only in so far as it experiences the Other itself as desiring.' Žižek says that this abyss of the utter impenetrability of another person, and the temptation it holds in a chasm, mistakenly identified as the 'face' in Levinas, finds true expression in Judaism with its injunction to love thy neighbour but applies equally to Bhakti poetry as well with its concepts of Samadhi, glani, fanaa and sama in union with the mystical lover (God).

The earliest Tamil Bhakti poems by Tippiṭṭolar (c.BCE-250CE) were addressed to Siva (Murukan or 'the red one' identified with Siva.) The Bhakti experience is one in which in Wagnerian Gesamtkunstwerk fashion, 'melody, rhythm, dance, visualization, poetry is 'techniques of ecstasy' (Schelling,4). These threshold Bhakti poets were shamans who foregrounded dance and ritual. The tradition of Bhakti poetry in South India was taken forward by Alvar poets Antal (c.9<sup>th</sup> c CE), Nammalvar (880 CE-930CE) and the Virasaiva poets Dasimayya (c.10<sup>th</sup> c CE), Allama Prabhu, Basavanna (1106CE-1168CE) and Akka Mahadevi. The 'je ne sais quoi' supplement in a person that propels love or hatred towards the other is the object little a and is the same sweet (cenna) used by Akka Mahadevi as she calls Shiva, her Sweet (cenna) Mallikarjuna or lord white as Jasmine combining the local Kannada idiom and the Sanskrit terminology. Also, according to Basavanna 'giving back light one becomes a mirror,' and his mirror is the eating bowl of daily sustenance. According to AK.Ramanujan, Basavanna is a master of anaphora. The winnowing fan is a god, the pot is a god, the stone in the street is a god, and there is only one god, our god of the meeting rivers. There are also inverse parallels such as 'a snake charmer and his noseless wife and the nose-less woman and her snake-charming husband, the inversion representing the encounter with the mirror image of the self as the other (Ramanujan, Speaking of Siva). Žižek points out that beneath this mirror-image of the neighbour that I have created in my own self-image lurks the infinite abyss of otherness (Žižek, How to Read Lacan). In Bhakti poetry this abyss and proximity are two sides of a coin or two rhyming beats in a couplet.

The monistic doctrine of advaita or non-dualism, unity of atman and nirguna Brahman was established by Adi Shankaracharya (788-820 CE), born in Kalady in Kerala. He also wrote commentaries on the Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita and Brahma Sastras. Sometimes called 'Thomas Aquinas of Indian thought,' he sought to establish unity between various sects of religion through syncretic ritual. In his Nirvana Shatakam, Shankara says that 'I am thought, I am joy I am Shiva' (Nirvana Shatakam, Hymn 3). The Bhakti movement later found its proponents in Kerala in Cherusseri Namboothiri (1375-1475 CE), Thunzhatu Ezhuthachan (1495-1575CE) and Poonthanam Namboothiri (1547-1640 CE) who are still considered among the finest poets in the Malayalam language. The Bhakti movement in Kerala, though it lacked the religious and societal synthesising function it had to the North of India, was a syncretic combination of the Sanskrit language works and local Dravidian traditions. Zizek says that the Lacanian Real has no positive-substantial consistency, it is just the gap between the multitudes of points of view on it. Similarly the abyss of the real opened up by Bhakti poetry is but the gap between the multitudes of views on it including the great and the little (margi and desi), exalted and non-exalted, raw and the cooked, man and unman (as the gender difference is formulated according to Zizek where woman is unman), dead and the undead, mortal and immortal, self and its other. Zizek also supports Ambedkarite thought based on his philosophical foundations of Lacano-Hegelian theory and Marxism.

Thunchathu Ezhuthachan who composed verses in the the kilippattu (birdsong) format, has come to be called the father of Malayalam. Cherusseri, pioneered the 'gatha' form in Malayalam. He was inspired by the pada genre in Sanskrit including Jayadeva's Gitagovinda, and was a strong proponent of Krishna-Bhakti. His 'Krishnagadha' details the antics of the infant Krishna and is based on the classical 'Bhagavatham.' The magnificent form of Krishna as a divine infant is a child archetype and is articulated in the Bhagavad Purana. Cherusseri Namboodiri imparted a memorable Keralesque quality to it. As a result, it was Cherusseri's Krishna that was the deity which was installed in the heart of the Keralite (Mukundan, 72). 'Like Cherusseri Namboodiri, Poonthanam was also an ardent devotee of Lord Krishna (Guruvayoorappan) and composed his masterpiece, the Jnanappana (song of wisdom) under tragic circumstances. He apparently was married for a long time without issue. As a result of long propitiation of Guruvayoorappan, a son was born to him. A sumptuous feast and celebration were organized for the naming ceremony of the child. But amidst the preparations for the event, the child itself was neglected and it died in some freak accident involving the cradle etc. Poonthanam was disillusioned, lost all appetite for worldly life and devoted the rest of his life composing verses of the Jananappana, in praise of Lord Krishna whom he from then on considered to be his infant son. He touchingly writes in his Jnanappana: "while the infant Krishna dances in our hearts, do we need little ones of our own?" The incident bears uncanny resemblance to the one related by Freud in which the burning son appears in the dad's dream, quoted by Lacan in his 'Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis. (Nizarudeen, 44).

Zizek says that the gap between Freud's topological model (conscious, sub conscious and unconscious) and the hydraulic model (id, ego, super ego) is a parallax gap. Zizek speaks of various types of parallax. according to Zizek, the basic law of dialectical materialism, the conflict of opposites has been obfuscated by the new-age polarity of opposites. So, this polarity of opposites has to be replaced with the concept of 'inherent tension, gap, and non-coincidence of the one itself.' Zizek designates the term parallax for this gap which separated One from itself. Zizek enumerates the parallax of quantum physics, the parallax of neurobiology, the parallax of ontological difference between the ontic and ontological, the parallax of the Lacanian Real, the parallax of desire and the parallax of unconscious and the parallax of the phallic organs where they serve the base function of excretion and the exalted function of reproduction. (Zizek, parallax

view). Zizek also posits the petit object a as ideology. Zizek also complicates the question of belief itself as he puts into question the true nature of the believer who for him is an atheist who does not believe and for whom the Tibetan prayer wheel or prayer or ritual performed by others is the dispositive of belief as she/he remains in a state drained of all belief and yet in the pinnacle of fervour.

(Mr. Umar Nizarudeen is a scholar at JNU, India)

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**Priyanka Das: “Krishna and Shiva: The ‘Blue’ Husbands of Hindu Mythologies”**

The concept of marriage enters an individual’s psychenot only through the civil institution of family but also through religious scriptures and practices. Both the Northern and the Southern regions of the medieval India had witnessed radical religious movements, as is evident from hagiographic accounts. Vaishnavism and Shaivism are two religious cults which sprouted during the medieval era and can be classified under the broader rubric of Bhakti tradition. However, colonial historians have often tried to interpret this event from the Orientalist perspective. There is, albeit, a need to go beyond this narrow framework.

In an era where Indian women and Dalits were not allowed to have salvation, two female saints, from two different time periods, challenged the existing patriarchal order. Meerabai from 16<sup>th</sup> century Rajasthan has evolved into a legend for her relentless devotion to Lord Krishna, while Akka Mahadevi from 12<sup>th</sup> century Karnataka became an emblem of social reformation. Not only did they experience ethereal connection with the mythic figures, these female mystic saints celebrated their ‘lovers’ for their corporeal and physical grace as well. Images of both Krishna and Shiva have often been sexualized and evoked as the ‘blue-skinned’ gods. Invoking Krishna as ‘the Dark One’, Meera pined for spiritual and marital bliss through her *bhajans*, while referring to Shiva as ‘the Beautiful One’, Mahadevi proclaimed her interminable devotion through her *vachanas*.

This paper aims to study these two forms of devotional poetry in order to understand the notion of marriage and family in Hindu mythology. The female saints who challenged the regressive patriarchal order and could emancipate themselves from duties of housewives, however, had to abide by the patriarchal definitions of family by humanizing the respective gods as ‘husbands’ and then worshipping them. Mysticism in Hindu mythology still continues to influence social and cultural practices in contemporary India. While Krishna Consciousness is a global-scale institutionalization of devotion towards Lord Krishna, Hindu women still hold on to fasting rituals of Shivaratri in hope to be betrothed to someone like Shiva. Taking a few *bhajans* and *vachanas* coupled with more instances from *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, this paper attempts to problematize the concept of ‘the ideal husband’ and how appropriation of female subjectivity happens through devotion.

(Ms. Priyanka Das is an Assistant Professor of English at Presidency U, Kolkata, India)

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**Mahitosh Mandal: “Ambedkar and the Literary: The Buddhist as the “Other” in 5<sup>th</sup>CSanskrit Literature”**

“If a person touches a Buddhist or a flower of Pachupat, Lokayata, Nastika and Mahapataki, he shall purify himself by a bath.”

From *Manusmriti*, quoted in Ambedkar, *The Untouchables: Who They Were and How They Became Untouchables*

Dr B R Ambedkar, the founder of Navayana Buddhism in India, has repeatedly claimed that the history of India is a history of conflicts between the Brahminists and the Buddhists. Refusing to project Buddha as a Hindu god or an avatar, Ambedkar asserted that Buddha was opposed to caste hierarchy which was fundamentally a product of Brahminical hegemony and that Buddha waged war against Brahminism. The so-called Vedic values of equality were defunct during Buddha's time due to exclusive enjoyment of the privileges of the priesthood by the Brahmins who segregated themselves from other Varnas by claiming their semi-divine status. Buddha successfully fought such caste supremacy and thousands from among the Shudra and Vaishya communities became his disciples. However, with the end of the empire of Ashoka who glorified and practised the philosophy of Buddha, there occurred the decline of Buddhism followed by a rather fierce revival of Brahminism. Buddha had prohibited eating animal meat, except for naturally dead animals, and opposed the idea of the sacrifice of cows which were important for the agricultural communities of the time. To establish their superiority, the neo-Brahmins took a one-eighty-degree turn, as opposed to the Vedic times, and not only banned the consumption of beef and meat from all forms of animals, dead or alive but went to the extent of glorifying cow as the mother. Also, neo-Brahminism was not just an abstract, ideological opposition to Buddhism. There were concrete consequences. Many of the followers of Buddha, whom Ambedkar calls "Broken Men," were considered "untouchables." Buddhist monks were routinely condemned in this neo-Brahminical era which started, according to Ambedkar, roughly around 5<sup>th</sup> century AD. Many of the Sanskrit texts of this time attest to downgrading and otherization of the Buddhists. The classic example is the physical and verbal violence meted out to a Buddhist monk by the Brahmins in Sudrak's play *Mricchakatika*.

Sanskrit literature has mostly been appreciated for their sublime and mystical elements. Our hypothesis is that reading them from within the framework of subaltern historiography, particularly from an Ambedkarite point of view, might help us historicize these texts and bring out the curious interface between the political and the spiritual. Considering a range of literary texts, including *Manusmriti* and *Mricchakatika* composed roughly around 5<sup>th</sup> century AD, our paper aims to uncover how the literature of the time glorified one form of spirituality at the cost of downgrading another and how this is best demonstrated through the figure of the Buddhist as the "Other."

*(Dr. Mahitosh Manda is an Assistant Professor of English at Presidency U, Kolkata, India)*

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### **Jib Lal Sapkota: "Understanding Poetry through Rasa and Performance"**

This article discusses the integrated and circular relation between poetry, rasa and performance. In doing so, it tries to define rasa, its types and different materials or organs of literary rasa. Each literary rasa is illustrated with its specific sthayibhavas or permanent emotions, vyabharibhavas or subsidiary or transitory emotions, bhivas or determinants which make sthayibhavas get expressed, and the anubhavas or consequents, the outward expression caused by 'bhivas' with appropriate examples of Nepali poems. The rhythm, the aesthetic feelings and taste that is evoked through poetic creation is called 'rasa' in literature. This study argues that the different rasas in poetry can be articulated and evoked the same aesthetic feelings in the audience only through performative skill of reciting poetry as per the sound patterns, pauses, rhymes, rhythm, foot and metrical patterns. Just putting eyes on the black and white of the scripture or text, the multi-layer meanings and the taste of relishing poetry cannot be fully grasped. Therefore, poetry, rasa and performance are integrated and they form a circular relation for understanding poetry.

*(Dr. Jib Lal Sapkota is a Professor of English at the Central Department of English, TU, Nepal)*

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## **Bishwa Nath Lamichhane: “Manu as the first Law Giver”**

This work strives to explore the idea of law and examine the *Mānava-Dharmasāstra*, popularly known as *Manu’s Code of Law* or *The Laws of Manu* as the seminal work in the field of law and justice. A just human society cannot be imagined in the absence of rules of conduct, mannerism, rationality, moral behavior and ethical standards. At the core lies the human idea of how to live. The concepts like good and bad; right and wrong; correct and incorrect; proper and improper; or fair and unfair; etc. lie at the base of civilized and just human society. So, laws are as simple as rules of do’s and don’ts that govern the foundation of a just society.

Even Aristotle compared human beings as best of the animals and worst of the animals depending upon how law-abiding and just they are. They are superior to other animals only when they observe the law and order and on the day they leave them, they are below animals. “Man, when perfected, is the best of animals, but, when separated from law and justice, he is the worst of all” (Autar, Krisen Koul, 10).

Just as other aspects of human queries, the idea of law and justice emerged in the human society since the dawn of civilization. Although the terms may not have applied in the bare sense of today’s world, human queries and inquisition continuously veered round establishing a far more just, righteous, lawful state and prosperous society than the extant one.

In this regard, in the Hindu mythology in the Oriental World, Manu holds very pre-eminent position as the first precursor of law and justice for both the rulers (Kings) and the commoners (the people). What he gave the world through his *Manava Dharmasastra* (MDh) is highly acclaimed by the scholars and philosophers of the West and the East equally. As Patrick Olivelle in his famous work *Manu’s Code of Law* puts it, “sometime toward the middle of the first millennium, Brhaspati, one of Manu’s successors and himself a composer of a *Dharmasastra*, pays Manu the ultimate compliment: Manu is the authority, and any text contradicting Manu has no validity” (3).

Several Western scholars have never tired of hailing Manu at the highest. Some among them are Sir William Jones - the first translator of Manu’s work, F. Max Muller, Frederic Nietzsche among others. Nietzsche one of the devout supporters of Manu’s ideas treats Manu’s work as the supreme in comparison to other works like Christianity. As Doniger and Smith argue quoting Nietzsche, “One catches the unholiness of the Christian means in *flagrante* when one compares the Christian purpose with the purpose of the Manu Law-book” (xx).

*(Mr. Bishwa Nath Lamichhane is an Assistant Professor of English at Pokhara U, Nepal)*

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## **Basu Gautam: “Science and Spirituality: Why Science Needs Spirituality to Make Sense of the World”**

Ever since the rise of modern science in 17th century Europe, science and spirituality have been estranged. This has been worse than unfortunate because science and spirituality are major parts of human experience, and it won’t do to have them perennially at odds with each other. Hence, one of the mega thought-memes of modern history has been trying to harmonize these two dimensions of experience that so powerfully influence our lives. The challenge is how to integrate them and do justice to the best they have to offer while being wary of the worst as well.

In the “Kalama Sutra”, the Buddha advises his audience to think critically when encountering new knowledge:

“Do not go upon what has been acquired by repeated hearing; nor upon tradition; nor upon rumor; nor upon what is in a scripture; nor upon surmise; nor upon an axiom; nor upon specious

reasoning; nor upon a bias towards a notion that has been pondered over; nor upon another's seeming ability; nor upon the consideration, 'The monk is our teacher.' Rather, when you yourselves know that these things are good; these things are not blamable; undertaken and observed, these things lead to benefit and happiness, then and only then enter into and abide in them."

Among the key aspects of Buddhism, we find insistence that knowledge must be gained through personal experience rather than reliance on the authority of sacred texts or the teachings of avowed masters; because its orientation is empirical rather than theoretical; and because it rejects any conception of absolutes.

One of the dominant dualisms of our time has been the idea of disconnection between science and spirituality. Since the age of pure reason, our educational system has been working hard to establish the conviction that science has to be free of spirituality, and that spirituality should have nothing to do with science.

I believe that bringing spirituality and science together will help to bring meaning and measurement together. These two should not be fragmented or separated.

From my student years as a science major in college, I was fascinated what the giants in the field of science had to say about spirituality. When I talk about spirituality it is completely different from religion. When we discuss the relationship between science and spirituality, it is important to distinguish between spirituality and religion. Spirituality is a way of being grounded in a certain experience of reality that is independent of cultural and historical contexts. Religion on the other hand is the organized attempt to understand spiritual experience, to interpret it with words and concepts, and to use this interpretation as the source of moral guidelines for the religious community.

Science gives us rational, logical, empirical, measurable, and replicable tools and technologies which we need to function well in life. Spirituality gives us love, compassion, generosity, and a sense of mutuality. In the age of explosion of "super intelligence", I think we need these too. Without the spiritual dimension of values, vision, ethics, and aesthetics, science can lead us astray. When there are no values to guide it, science ends up producing nuclear weapons. If spirituality guided the actions of scientists, then they would think ten times before inventing weapons of war and other tools of destruction. Why do we have global warming? Because scientists have been working in the interests of the commercial and industrial establishments, without the guidance of spiritual values; that is why their scientific and technological innovations have led to planetary crises such as climate change.

Although in the past 300 years or so of human history, the explosion of western science, reason and modern thinking, in short the beginning of the scientific rationalism era, has also left the humankind looking for the answers to deeper questions like the meaning of life, this is exactly where spirituality comes into play in my opinion. Here I agree with one of the famous astronomers, cosmologist, author, astrophysicist and science popularizer of our time, Carl Sagan. In his famous book "The Demon-Haunted World: Science as a Candle in the Dark", Sagan writes: "Science is not only compatible with spirituality; it is a profound source of spirituality. When we recognize our place in an immensity of light-years and in the passage of ages, when we grasp the intricacy, beauty, and subtlety of life, then that soaring feeling, that sense of elation and humility combined, is surely spiritual. So are our emotions in the presence of great art or music or literature, or acts of exemplary selfless courage such as those of Mohandas Gandhi or Martin Luther King, Jr. The notion that science and spirituality are somehow mutually exclusive does a disservice to both."

*(Mr. Basu Gautam is President of Lumbini World Peace Forum, Nepal)*



### **Hari Krishna Lamichhane: “Jack as the Embodiment of Vishnu Figure in Cameron’s *Avatar*”**

This paper attempts to justify Jack Sully as the embodiment of Vishnu figure in James Cameron’s movie, *Avatar* (2009), applying spiritual perspectives. It claims that whenever the creatures in the universe face a crisis, Vishnu takes different avatars to rescue and preserve their lives. In the movie, Cameron presents human-caused apocalyptic situation in the life of the Na’vi, species of 10 –feet tall, blue skinned, sapient humanoids who worship a mother Goddess Eywa in the futuristic setting of mid-22<sup>nd</sup> century. After all the natural resources from the earth are exploited, the humans invade into the territory of the Na’vi in the Pandora and start exploiting them mercilessly killing them and even by destroying their long-lived Home-tree. Cameron embodies Jack as Vishnu figure while he shows human beings of the time as demonic figures. The article analyzes Cameron’s appeal for necessity of love for every creature from the side of human that he does through the representation of the protagonist, Jack Sully, who transfers himself into the Vishnu figure and fights against the demonic humans to save the lives of the Navi. In doing so, this paper borrows the ideas from James Monaco’s *How to Read a Film* to study the technical aspects of the movie while it incorporates the concept of transformation from Northrop Frye’s *Anatomy of Criticism* and C.G. Jung’s *Symbols of Transformation* as theoretical parameters to examine the text.

*(Mr. Hari Krishna Lamichhane is a PhD Scholar in English at Tribhuvan U, Nepal)*

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### **Narayan Prasad Niroula: “Representation of Spirituality in “The Heritage of Words”**

Spirituality is a broad phenomenon formed by transcendental image of linguistic symbols. Generally, it connotes to upper level of consciousness which cannot be observed tangibly and connects to virtual picture of existence. History of spirituality dates back to biblical references; and attempts to define spirituality may trigger dispute due to relationship of spirituality with religion, occidental and oriental both (Dyson, Cobb and Forman). Traveling from Theology to Humanities and Social Sciences, spirituality has made space in literary text all over the world. This research paper examines representation of spirituality in the anthology entitled “The Heritage of Words”, the prescribed text book for grade twelve students. The data items for the study include the themes – “Love and Reminiscence”, “God and Man” and “Crime and Confession”. My ontological belief on the corpus is relativist, which dictates its down-line epistemology, namely, subjectively. Accordingly, the lineage of paradigm demands interpretative position. Given that the nature of study is decoding meaning related to spirituality in the corpus, I deploy thematic analysis. The discussion over the findings might open up space for the intention of the trios in selecting the particular texts for the students of late teen readers.

*(Mr. Narayan Prasad Niroula is an MPhil Scholar at Kathmandu University, Nepal)*

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### **Ravi Shrestha: “*Siddhartha* as a Journey of Self-Discovery”**

This paper deals with the protagonist, Siddhartha’s dissatisfaction with his life, mental turmoil, inquisitiveness in knowing his existence and his quest for self-Discovery in the novel **Siddhartha**. This novel was written by Herman Hesse and was published in 1922. It was his master piece which shows his journey to the East, the influence of Buddhist philosophy upon him and his autobiographical elements that pave a way for one’s journey to Spiritual knowledge in this physical world. As the novel was written in the first world war years, the search for spiritualism would naturally be the interest of most of Europeans who found Europe devoid of it. So, finding

spiritual crisis in the West, Herman Hesse made his journey to the East (India) in quest of spiritualism as the protagonist of the novel does. Like the writer Siddhartha came across a lot of illusions that human beings encounter in their daily life. He passed through multiple vicissitudes and experiences in his life through sufferings and salvation. His such self-actualization with social life and nature ultimately leads him to attain nirvana. Thus, his quest for self-discovery indicate elements of autobiographical elements, existentialism, and self-actualizing tendency which is based on Carl Rogers' humanistic psychology.

*(Ravi Shrestha is a Lecturer in English at Patan Multiple Campus, Tribhuvan University, Nepal)*

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### **Geeta Bhattarai: "Writing Tools to Improve Creative Writing Skill"**

Developing writing skill has always been an issue faced by EFL teachers and few notice students can express themselves the best when they are encouraged in creative writing. When students start writing using writing tools they go through lots of draft and practice which is supported by process-oriented approach. Learning the writing process is important for the students as it enables students to express their thoughts, knowledge and feelings efficiently (Bhamani et al, 2013). Therefore, this paper discusses necessity of proper process in teaching writing and how English teachers can be benefitted by applying different writing techniques in EFL class. In teaching English, writing has always been challenging and it's difficult to generate interest in students to write more. So, the presentation begins with the importance of writing in English class and highlighting students' negligence and disinterest in writing. In Nepalese context, writing plays a great role in students' life as students are evaluated on the basis of their writing in exam. This paper tries to advocate that writing class can be made more motivating and enduring only when the teachers bring various effective methods and make them write in a fun way. The research designs, methods, data collection procedure, site, participants selection are presented sequentially. Classroom observations with video recording or photos are also be prioritized to present since it facilitated the researcher authenticate the research. Moreover, it also shows that students' creativity in writing is much more important than the boring format where we bound them to write.

*(Ms. Geeta Bhattarai is an MPhil Scholar of ELE, Kathmandu U, Nepal)*

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### **Keshav Raj Chalise: "Bhakti through Erotic (*shringar*): Quest of Spiritual through Physical in *Saundarya Lahari*"**

Is spirituality experienced through sense perceptions? Does it have any role of physical body? Such questions are involved in search of the connection between physicality and spirituality. Spirituality, as an abstract notion, is the point of identifying that there is something greater than the physical life, something more than just sensory experience, and the realization that life is part of cosmic or divine in nature. It is beyond a mundane existence, significant and purposeful unfolding of life in the universe.

Traditionally, physical and spiritual are understood differently in the religious practices. The physical body, beauty and bodily desires are ignored in the path to spirituality, but the question is still on does spiritual exist in absence of physical. This study on *Saundarya Lahari* tries to see the relation between these two domains with the idea that spirituality involves exploring universal themes – love, compassion, humanity, and life after death, wisdom and truth through physical.

With this knowledge, some people or life form may achieve and manifest higher levels of understanding than the ordinary person where the connection certainly exists between physical and spiritual in which the description of physical beauty has taken the mode of erotic (shringar) Bhakti as the means to achieve spiritual in *Saundarya Lahari*.

(Dr. Keshav Raj Chalise is a Lecturer in English at Nepal Sanskrit U, Nepal)

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**Susmita Talukdar: “Rabindranath Tagore's Spiritual Poetics in the Present Context of Disharmony”**

Tagore's spiritual poetics informs the notion of universal humanism that is unique in the harmonious juxtaposition of 'people's own personality' and 'the great spirit of man' or in other words, the cultural specificity of a group of people and the spirit of universal humanism. The term spirituality, in Tagore's usage neither conforms to any institutional religious creed, nor implies any other-worldly or supernatural entity; rather it is concerned with man's soul, his inner subjective consciousness, attuned with every living being of the world. This notion of spirituality gives importance to common humanity that resists mutual appropriation and subversion of cultural differences, prompted by nationalist ideologies, and institutional politics of 'difference'. In his spiritual preoccupation Tagore promulgates universalism as a way of life that harmoniously holds together diverse cultures, religions and identities in terms of an all-encompassing vision of human community. Tagore's universal humanism celebrates both the West's liberal humanist values and the East's spiritual egalitarianism, but rejects the Eurocentric cultural chauvinism of the west, and the orthodox validations of social classification of East. Based on above observation of Tagore's spiritual poetics, particularly on universal humanism, the paper will investigate on the current controversial issues in India on secularism/separatism in the context of nationalism. I'll use Tagore's *Post Office* (1912), a three act Play, and two novels, namely, *Gora* (1910) and *Home and the World* (1915) to support my arguments.

(Dr. Susmita Talukdar is a Professor of English at Padma Kanya Campus, TU, Nepal)

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**Lok Nath Dulal: “Kha Me Jatraof Bhaktapur: “An Intangible Cultural Heritage of Nepal”**

Nepal is a small and landlocked country sandwiched between two giant neighbors India and China. It is one of the richest countries in diverse natural and cultural resources that are considered our heritage. Not only status and glory, but the unique identity of our nation is also represented by the temples, monasteries, images, feasts, festivals, the mountains, rivers, forests, lakes as well as various beautiful places. These properties have made our nation popular in the world. Nepali people observe and commonly participate on celebration of many festivals and fairs celebrated in different days in the year. Each and every year people of Bhaktapur celebrate different festivals and Jatras on the special auspicious days. Among them, Kha Me is one of the important Jatra which is celebrated on the ninth day of Dashain festival. 'Kha Me' is a pure male buffalo which is reared in the name of goddess Bramhayani in Bhaktapur. It is brought in the Gathemunga festival and kept it in the ground floor of the temple of goddess Durga. During the ninth day it is taken in Open Street for the procession. It is a typical Jatra which is considered an indigenous feature and identity of Bhaktapur culture. But, unfortunately, this festival has still remained an untouched issue for the academia. Yet to the day no one has highlighted its cultural, religious and social significance in the society. Therefore, keeping it in mind, researcher has tried to fulfill the research gaps and problems through the paper.

(Dr. Lok Nath Dulal is an Associate Professor of Culture at Padma Kanya Campus, TU, Nepal)

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### **Umesh Regmi: “Buddhist Spiritualism in Orgyan Chokyi’s *Himalayan Hermitess: The Life of a Tibetan Buddhist Nun*”**

Buddhism developed in the Indian subcontinent and made expansions to various parts of the world through missionary activities of the great patrons who ruled as kings and emperors beginning from 5<sup>th</sup> century BC. The expansion was supported by cultural, historical, architectural, artistic and religious development in the region. The most influential among them was the translation of Buddhist philosophical/religious and literary texts—*Tripitaka* and *Jataka* in various languages. The translations of the Buddhist text *Tripitaka* incorporated the teachings of Sakyamuni Buddha and his stories of previous life *Jataka*. But later Buddhism declined in the place of origin but remained intact in the areas of expansion like Sri-Lanka, China and Tibet. The propagation and the institutionalization of Buddhism in these countries became successful with the abundance of Buddhist spiritual literature in the form of oral stories, local legends, translations and auto/biographical writings.

This paper explores one of the literary texts composed by a female nun, Orgyan Chokyi, born in 1675 and lived through different hardships in her life and finally becomes a nun and achieves happiness through spiritual life and practice of Buddhism. The life story of Orgyan Chokyi is recorded as the oldest autobiography of a nun of the Himalayan region in the form of spiritual literature. The autobiography *Himalayan Hermitess: The Life of a Tibetan Buddhist Nun* translated into English from Tibetan by Kurtis R. Schaeffer depicts the 17th/18th century Himalayan spiritual/religious world view through the light of Buddhism. The text unfolds the layers of social and cultural thoughts on the condition of the way of life women of 17th century Dolpo (Dolpa), Nepal. The autobiography records Buddhist spiritualism of a female Buddhist practitioner of the Himalayan region including Tibet, who was praised by the influential contemporary Buddhist masters like Orgyan Tenzing. This text transposes the untold Buddhist spiritualism of the Himalayan region from the autobiographical note of a female voice of the time and period when females were not allowed to read, write or express in private or public. This paper applies Buddhist spiritual theories by incorporating feminist approaches to highlight the contributions of a female nun in spiritual literature.

*(Mr. Umesh Regmi is a Lecturer in Buddhist Studies at Padma Kanya Multiple Campus, TU, Nepal)*

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### **Zhang Nan: “Searching for the Way in Life: Yang Zhu’s Theory of Tending Life in *Liezi*”**

Yang Zhu was regarded as a Taoist who lived in the Warring States Period. In his only transmitted work named ‘*Yangzhu*’ in *Liezi*, he presented the “tending life” theory which was considered by most scholars as a sort of “hedonism”, “extreme egoism” or “indulgence”. However, the “tending life” theory should not be simply regarded as an avocation of physical enjoyment. First, ‘*Yangzhu*’ defined Tao (the Way) as a “weak power” which only assists things to “auto-generate” and “self-transform”, so that “tending life” is also a pursuit of the ultimate meaning of Tao. ‘*Yangzhu*’ further argued that the best way of “tending life” is not to restraint and suppress one’s natural desire, for the realization of “tending life” should be based on the preservation of the body. ‘*Yangzhu*’ discussed the relationship between the “Ming” (name/reputation) and the “Shi” (Reality), which revealed that the attachment to the “reputation” is the main obstacle of the realization of “tending life”. At last, Yang Zhu proposed that the most ideal life should “roaming as the nature prompt” through a dialectical discussion. Therefore, the theory of “tending life” also reflects a pursuit that to some extent transcends the physical life.

*(Professor Zhang Nan is at School of Philosophy, Renmin U of China, Beijing, China)*

### **Manoj Prasad Sapkota, "Thoreau's Mystic Evolvement in *Walden*"**

The book *Walden* is a spiritual autobiography written by an American mystic, Henry David Thoreau. It is an account of the writer's contemplative life spent by Walden Pond to attain the ultimate Reality. It begins with the preparation the writer made for mystic life and goes on unfolding different stages of contemplation he immerses into through various mental and physical ordeals. His ascetic practice results into better apprehension of himself and the divinity as manifested in the nature. Analyzed from the perspective of mysticism, this text reveals the writer's own evolvement as a mystic through disciplined practice of observances, self restraint and contemplation. This research owes its significance as it traces the writer's subtle contemplative voyage to the realization of his own self and its union with the cosmic Self.

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### **Prabhu Ray Yadav: "The Spiritual in G.M. Hopkins's *God's Grandeur*"**

Spiritual, a genre in literature draws readers' attention towards God's grandeur. This spiritual genre in literature portrays the whole creation of the world. And it is like an eye of the readers' response. Neither a secular person sees God nor does he touch. God emerges in pure and pious soul. No one can define God without soul consciousness. Hopkins presents an artistic merit about the spiritual knowledge. Knowledge without a spiritual form or shape is like a mundane, material, physical or corporeal knowledge. The essence of spiritual meaning relates to worthy in unseen and incorporeal world or space, Spiritual is an aesthetic beauty of literature. But people in the world have less spiritual rather than secular. Very few litterateurs know the value of spirituality that is vivid in G.M. Hopkins's *God's Grenadier* (1877). This poem proposes to the poet's intellect that nurses audience who ignore the magnificence of God i.e. Nature. How does Hopkins see God's magnificence? He says "people in the world aren't yet noticed with God's Grandeur". Instead they have entangled with the mundane and materialistic world rather than the world of spirituality. Hopkins hypothesizes that people in the world are getting smeared day by day with materialistic and corporeal world, rather than the ideal and honest nature. What Hopkins's readers study spiritual in literature. A Spiritual service, a form of nursing, examines Self, Other and God. It is like an eye of measure and it weighs the state where we live, lived and will remain to live. But spiritual service is felt with soul consciousness. Scholars of several ages like T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* (1922), Rudyard Kipling's *Kim*, G.M. Hopkins' *God Grandeur*, W. B. Yeats' *The Old Pensioner*, William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, S. T. Coleridge's *Rime of the Ancient Mariners*, Milton's *Lycidas* (1637), and others are much noticed to the spirit of spiritual in literature. These works of those writers mentioned above are highly firmed with a spiritual knowledge in literature.

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## **Binod Kumar Acharya: "Amba's Hero Quest for Home: A Case of the Mahabharata"**

This paper examines the hero's quest for home analyses the story of Amba from *The Mahabharata* on. In this epic narrative, Bhishma abducts Amba, one of the three maidens, for his half brother Vichitravirya's marriage. After Bhishma spoils her home, Amba finds herself homeless. Shalva refuses to marry her; Bhishma denies going beyond his celibacy; even her father surrenders before Bhishma. In spite of his denial, she considers Bhishma an ideal husband, with whom she could create a dream house. So she agrees with Parasuram who intends to marry her with Bhishma. She intends to defeat Bhishma, so that he would accept her as his wife. She goes ahead in her journey and meets archetypal figures: Hotravahana, Parasuram, Ganga, and Shiva. Three of them remain helping hands to her while Ganga curses her. Amba also goes on three phases of the Campbellian hero's journey. Her separation is caused by Bhishma's kidnap, Salva's refusal to adopt her and her father's inability to protect her. In her initiation phase, Amba goes through a series of transformation enabling her to fight against Bhishma. She only intends to defeat him for the sake of marriage. Defeat is metaphorically extended as death in the epic. In the myth of Amba, fire signifies positive action, passion, warmth and sexual prowess, where she enters. In other words, it signifies home where one gets warm love and attachment. This paper basically answers three questions. In what way does Amba wage the quest for home? How does she get assistance from archetypal characters? What does she accomplish after her mythological journey? This reading traces the plural meanings of the myth of Amba.

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