

SUBMISSION GUIDELINE

Abstracts of approximately 300 words should clearly outline the research question, methodology, and argument.

Submissions must include:

- Title of the paper
 - Author's name and institutional affiliation
- Abstracts should be sent to: claijnu@gmail.com

IMPORTANT DATES

Last date for abstract submission: 18 March 2026

Notification of acceptance: 20 March 2026

Seminar dates: 10–11 April 2026

PARTICIPATION

The seminar welcomes participation from scholars of literature, comparative literature, translation studies, cultural studies, philosophy, and allied disciplines. Early career researchers and postgraduate scholars are especially encouraged to apply.

REGISTRATION

The organisers are not in a position to provide travel support or accommodation to participants. However, working lunch and a seminar kit will be provided to all registered participants. Registration Fees: ₹1000 — In-service participants, ₹500 — Research scholars and students. Payment details for registration will be shared only with selected participants after acceptance of abstracts.

PUBLICATION

Selected papers presented at the seminar will be considered for publication in a post-seminar edited volume (book form) or in Sahitya, the journal of the Comparative Literature Association of India. The last date for submission of full papers is 30 May 2026. Detailed guidelines regarding publication format, review process, and submission requirements will be shared after the seminar.

CONVENORS:

DR MRINMOY PRAMANICK
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, CIL, JNU & SECRETARY, CLAI

PROF. PARMOD KUMAR MEHRA
PROFESSOR, ENGLISH, IGNOU & VICE-PRESIDENT, CLAI

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NATIONAL SEMINAR

PEACE IN LITERATURE, LITERATURE FOR PEACE

CROSS-CULTURAL DIALOGUES AND HUMANISTIC
FUTURES

10–11 APRIL 2026

**VENUE: CONVENTION CENTRE, JNU
MODE : IN-PERSON ONLY**

Organised by

**Comparative Literature
Association of India (CLAI)**

In collaboration with

**Centre for Indian Languages
and Centre for French and
Francophone Studies
Jawaharlal Nehru University**

CONCEPT NOTE

IN a world increasingly marked by geopolitical strife, cultural polarization, and digital fragmentation, literature continues to stand as one of humanity's most profound instruments for fostering **peace, empathy, and human solidarity**. From ancient oral traditions to contemporary narratives, literary expression has served as a repository of shared human experience—preserving collective memory, resisting violence, and envisioning alternative futures grounded in compassion and coexistence. The pursuit and preservation of peace have remained among the fundamental purposes and aesthetic aspirations of literature since antiquity. In the Indian tradition, *shanti* (peace) occupies both a spiritual and philosophical centrality, forming the very substratum of its literary and contemplative imagination. Almost all the Upanishads open with an invocation to peace, affirming it as both a personal pursuit and a cosmic ideal—a state of equilibrium between the self and the universe. Literature, in this sense, not only articulates a yearning for peace in a conflict-ridden and chaotic world but also becomes a means of realizing inner harmony and the holistic evolution of human consciousness. The great Indian epics too foreground peace as the ultimate ethical and existential objective. The **Shanti Parva** (“Book of Peace”) in the Mahabharata, for instance, offers an extensive philosophical discourse on governance, morality, and reconciliation, positing *shanti* as the inevitable culmination of the epic's moral and martial conflicts. Within the domain of Indian literary aesthetics, Abhinavagupta's reinterpretation of Bharata's Rasa theory marks a pivotal moment. By introducing **Shanta Rasa** (the aesthetic experience of peace or tranquillity) as the ninth and the highest rasa, Abhinavagupta reconfigures the aesthetic experience as a movement towards stillness, detachment, and transcendence. In declaring *Shanta* as the “Rasa of all Rasas”—the one that subsumes and harmonizes every other affect—he elevates peace to the pinnacle of both human realization and artistic expression.

In the Western canon as well, the aspiration for peace constitutes a persistent ethical and aesthetic preoccupation that transcends epochs and genres. From Aristophanes' comic dramaturgy in **Peace and Lysistrata**, where reconciliation and civic harmony are envisioned as acts of moral and political restoration, to Tolstoy's monumental reimagining of war, history, and moral consciousness in **War and Peace**, the Western literary imagination repeatedly reconfigures peace as both an ethical horizon and a redemptive ideal.

Eliot's concluding benediction—**Shantih shantih shantih**—in *The Waste Land* further universalizes this quest, invoking a cross-cultural poetics of repose and transcendence in the aftermath of modernity's spiritual desolation. Across traditions, therefore, literature emerges not merely as a repository of pacifist sentiment but as an epistemological space where the human longing for equilibrium, forgiveness, and reconciliation is continually interrogated and renewed. It appeals for peace not only as a socio-political necessity in a fractured world but as an ontological condition—an inward, transformative movement toward ethical self-realization and collective harmony.

The **Comparative Literature Association of India (CLAI)** invites scholars, literary critics, writers, translators, and social scientists from across the world to an International Conference dedicated to exploring Peace as both an aesthetic category and a literary praxis. The conference seeks to interrogate literature's unique capacity to cultivate peace, not merely as an abstract ideal but as a lived, enacted, and reimagined process of healing, dialogue, and transformation. The Conference invites critical papers that view literature not merely as representation but as a dynamic pursuit of peace – a performative and affective mode that cultivates reconciliation, foster ethical imagination, and envisions alternative futures of coexistence. We welcome interdisciplinary engagements that draw upon aesthetic theory, trauma and memory studies, postcolonial/decolonial critique, translation studies, and affect theory to investigate how literary forms and practices can function as mediations of healing, testimony, and reparative imagination.

Rooted in the ethos of comparative literary inquiry, this conference aims to foster critical, multilingual, and multicultural conversations on how literary traditions across the globe nurture nonviolence, forgiveness, reconciliation, and restorative practices. Drawing on comparative literature's commitment to bridging linguistic, national, regional, and ideological boundaries, it calls for a rethinking of literature as a transnational forum for negotiating difference and reaffirming human dignity. Through plenaries, thematic panels, and the presentation of critical papers, the conference will serve as both a scholarly platform and a dialogic space for engaging with peace-centred narratives, utopian visions, and post-conflict literary expressions. It reaffirms literature's enduring capacity to shape global peace discourses, foster intercultural understanding, and advance humanistic futures.

SUGGESTED SUB-THEMES

Participants may address, but are not limited to, the following areas

AESTHETIC AND THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

- Aesthetics of peace and tranquillity in literary theory
- Comparative poetics of harmony and ethical imagination
- Literature, affect, and emotional communities
- Silence, contemplation, and interiority in literary forms

TRADITIONS, TEXTS, AND CROSS-CULTURAL DIALOGUES

- Peace discourses in classical and modern literary traditions
- War, conflict, and reconciliation in epic and narrative traditions
- Comparative perspectives on ethical governance and moral philosophy
- Spiritual, philosophical, and humanistic dimensions of literature

TRANSLATION, MEDIATION, AND COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

- Translation as intercultural dialogue and peace-making practice
- Multilingualism and literary coexistence
- Comparative literature as a bridge across cultural differences
- Minor, marginal, and border literatures

MEMORY, TRAUMA, AND POST-CONFLICT NARRATIVES

- Literature of witness and testimonial writing
- Trauma, memory, and healing
- Displacement, exile, and belonging
- Literature and restorative imagination

LITERATURE AND CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

- Literature against polarization in the digital age
- Literary activism and nonviolent resistance
- Environmental peace and ecological humanism
- Pedagogy of literature and ethical citizenship