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## Notice for the PhD Viva Voce Examination

Ms Shaikh Neda Parvin Rafiuddin, Registration Number: 2170016, PhD Scholar at the Department of English and Cultural Studies, School of Humanities and Performing Arts, CHRIST (Deemed to be University) will defend her PhD thesis at the public viva-voce examination on Wednesday, 20 May 2026 at 02.00 pm in Room No. 044, Ground Floor, R&D Block, CHRIST (Deemed to be University), Bengaluru - 560029, Karnataka, India.

- Title of the Thesis** : **“The Homeland that Killed Us in Its Name”:  
Tracing Literary Feminisms through Select  
Lebanese War Literature of Hanan Al-Shaykh  
and Iman Humaydan**
- Discipline** : **English Studies**
- External Examiner - I** : **Dr Merin Simi Raj**  
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- External Examiner - II** : **Dr Urmishree Bedamatta**  
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The members of the Research Advisory Committee of the Scholar, the faculty members of the Department and the School, interested experts and research scholars of all the branches of research are cordially invited to attend this open viva-voce examination.

**Registrar (Academics)**

**Place:** Bengaluru  
**Date:** 13 May 2026

## ABSTRACT

This thesis examines how Lebanese women writers Hanan al-Shaykh and Iman Humaydan reimagine war, memory, and gender through feminist literary practices. Situated within the historical, political, and cultural aftermath of the Lebanese Civil War (1975–1990), the study explores how women’s fiction transforms sites of violence and exile into spaces of testimony, remembrance, and ethical resistance. Against the masculinist tradition of Lebanese war literature dominated by male voices, al-Shaykh and Humaydan articulate what this research terms ‘literary feminisms’: text-specific narrative practices through which women translate trauma into testimony and silence into speech.

The study analyses four novels—al-Shaykh’s *The Story of Zahra* (1980; transl. 1986) and *Beirut Blues* (1992; transl. 1995), and Humaydan’s *Other Lives* (2010; transl. 2014) and *The Weight of Paradise* (2016)—to stage a comparative reading of wartime and post-war feminist narrative strategies across different historical and affective contexts. Drawing on feminist conflict theory, postcolonial feminism, and trauma and memory studies, the research interprets the female body, narrative voice, and the archive as interlinked feminist sites of resistance. In *The Story of Zahra*, the wounded body registers the convergence of war and patriarchy upon female subjectivity. *Beirut Blues* transforms embodied silence into linguistic endurance through the epistolary form, where letter-writing becomes a practice of survival and witnessing amid national collapse. In Humaydan’s post-war fiction, displacement and diaspora reframe memory as an ongoing ethical labour: *Other Lives* explores exile as a condition of fractured belonging, while *The Weight of Paradise* imagines the feminist archive as a counter-memory sustained through care, relationality, and affective inheritance.

Through close textual analysis, the thesis demonstrates that Lebanese women’s war narratives do more than document trauma: they construct a feminist historiography that challenges state-sanctioned amnesia and patriarchal regimes of representation. Read comparatively, the four novels articulate a feminist genealogy of remembrance that moves across embodied testimony, narrative survival, diasporic memory, and counter-archival care. By positioning women’s writing as a moral and mnemonic intervention, this study argues that some of the most enduring archives of Lebanon’s civil war reside not in institutions, but in the voices, bodies, and stories of those historically relegated to the margins.

**Keywords:** *Lebanese Civil War; Feminist Historiography; Trauma and Memory; Literary Feminisms; Hanan al-Shaykh; Iman Humaydan*

### Publications

1. **Shaikh, Neda Parvin**, and Sonia Ghalian. “Angry Young Women: Evolving Forms of Female Resistance in Contemporary Bollywood Cinema.” *Intersections: Gender and Sexuality in Asia and the Pacific*, no. 52, Nov. 2025. URL: [http://intersections.anu.edu.au/issue52/shaikh\\_ghalian.pdf](http://intersections.anu.edu.au/issue52/shaikh_ghalian.pdf)
2. **Shaikh, Neda Parvin**. “Feminism in Practice: Learning from the Barefoot ‘Solar Mamas.’” *Journal of International Women’s Studies*, vol. 26, no. 3, May 2024, special issue, “Selected Papers from the 9th World Conference on Women’s Studies.” URL: <https://vc.bridgew.edu/jiws/vol26/iss3/14/>