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## Notice for the PhD Viva Voce Examination

Ms Arockia Licy Monika C, Registration Number: 1930087, 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 Thursday, 21 May 2026 at 10.00 am in Room No. 628, 6th Floor, R&D Block, CHRIST (Deemed to be University), Bengaluru - 560029, Karnataka, India.

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|-------------------------------|---|---|
| <b>Title of the Thesis</b>    | : | <b>Cartographies of Contestation: Reading the City as Imagined Space in Select Graphic Narratives from India</b>  |
| <b>Discipline</b>             | : | <b>English Studies</b>  |
| <b>External Examiner - I</b>  | : | <b>Dr Sujatha Aravindakshan Menon</b><br>Associate Professor<br>Department of English (SSL)<br>Vellore Institute of Technology<br>Katpadi, Vellore - 632014<br>Tamil Nadu   |
| <b>External Examiner - II</b> | : | <b>Dr Amrita Sharma</b><br>Professor and Dean<br>Department of English<br>Bhagat Phool Singh Mahila Vishwavidyalaya<br>Khanpur Kalan, Sonapat - 131305<br>Haryana   |
| <b>Supervisor</b>             | : | <b>Dr Sushma V Murthy</b><br>Associate Professor<br>Department of English and Cultural Studies<br>School of Humanities and Performing Arts<br>CHRIST (Deemed to be University)<br>Bengaluru - 560029<br>Karnataka |

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:** 18 May 2026

## ABSTRACT

Cities have always been a site of negotiation, identity and power. Existing corpus of academic research tends to prioritise demographically important pointers like population growth, gender disparity, economy, employment, so and so forth. But hardly have cities been viewed as a narrative, a dialogue, or a communication mechanism. Nevertheless, cities have been epistemologically or ontologically less explored within narrative, dialogic, and communicative mediums. This thesis argues that cities within such narrative productions, especially visual narratives, carry the pulse of a city's essence – spatiality. Specifically, it investigates how these represented panel architectures within visual narrative productions can redefine and reiterate the semantic foundations of widely accepted notions of power, state and nationhood. Drawing upon Lefebvre's spatial theorisations, graphic narrative theorisations of McCloud, Eisner, and other graphic narrative scholars, it critically examines the possibility of spatial expression through a graphic medium. By drawing upon Thierry Groensteen's prepositions on comics as a visual semiotics, the thesis also critically analyses the roles played by different compositional techniques. The select texts for the study are *Hyderabad: A Graphic Novel* by Jai Undurti, *Bangalore: A Graphic Novel* by Jai Undurti, and *The Snake and The Lotus* by Appupen.

The study's analysis indicates that the idea of urban is driven through contesting spatial actors since every single panel contains spatial actors that contest each other to create their unique spatialities. The compositional elements of the graphic novel serve as a tool of expression. The analysis also indicates that dimensional layering - a combinatory reading of blocking and framing simultaneously - is the basic morphological unit beyond the panels.

Through close reading of texts, the thesis argues for visual literary cartographic practices to be a highly significant and effective approach in understanding and mapping of power structures and spatial actors, more than cartographies that are driven by quantified data specifics. It also emphasises further research on urban issues through city-centric visual representations of Indian origin, since they represent multiple spatial actors that bear within them contemporary perspectives on urban issues. By doing so, the study positions graphic narratives as a valuable site of spatial production and advances literary cartography as a critical methodology for deciphering reimagined cities.

**Keywords:** *Graphic Novels, Indian Graphic Novels, Visual Semiotics, Compositionality, Spatiality, Literary Cartography.*

### **Publications:**

1. **Monika C, Arockia Licy.** "Place, Ideology, and Protest: Analysing Urban Politics in *Hyderabad: A Graphic Novel*", *Literature & Aesthetics*, Vol 32., No 1, 2022.
2. **Monika C, Arockia Licy.** "Graffiti's Spatial Contestation: An Observational Analysis on Church Street", *Street Art and Urban Creativity*, Vol 10., No 3, 2024.
3. **Monika C, Arockia Licy & Dr Sushma V Murthy.** "Trialectics of Graphic Space (TOGS) Spatial Consumption Model", Indian Patent Office, Patent published, 2026.