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Notice for the PhD Viva Voce Examination

Ms Aditi Gupta, Registration Number: 1930086, 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, 29 January 2026 at 10.00 am in Room No. 044, Ground Floor, R&D Block, CHRIST (Deemed to be University), Bengaluru - 560029, Karnataka, India.

Title of the Thesis	:	Unruly Women: Analysing Social Psychoanalytical Dimensions of Female Rage in Select Psychological Thrillers by Gillian Flynn and Paula Hawkins
Discipline	:	English Studies
External Examiner - I	:	Dr Arzuman Ara Associate Professor The English and Foreign Languages University Regional Campus, Shillong Umshing-Mawkynroh Shillong - 793022 Meghalaya
External Examiner - II	:	Dr Samuel Rufus Associate Professor Department of English Madras Christian College East Tambaram, Tambaram Chennai - 600059 Tamil Nadu
Supervisor	:	Dr Rolla Das Assistant Professor (Former) Department of English and Cultural Studies School of Humanities and Performing Arts CHRIST (Deemed to be University) Bengaluru – 560029 Karnataka, India

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.

Place: Bengaluru
Date: 19 January 2026

Registrar (Academics)

ABSTRACT

The psychological thriller landscape has witnessed a significant shift with its complicated and revolutionary representations of female characters. The new age female writers of the psychological thrillers express divergent attitudes towards social and psychological issues, realising how contemporary literature shapes how gender, agency, and identity are performed in this genre and how female rage is understood. The portrayal of female rage and resistance has become prominent as readers search for stories exploring darker psychological topics. However, literary and academic realms sometimes fail to acknowledge the obvious agency in the psychological thrillers that break conventions and challenge the traditional definition of psychological thrillers by offering unsettlingly intimate narratives, highlighting the realities of women battling internal and social issues. This research attempts to study three notable works, *Gone Girl* and *Sharp Objects* by Gillian Flynn and *The Girl on the Train* by Paula Hawkins, that interact with these themes to challenge conventional conceptions of feminism and investigate the social and psychological complexity of their female protagonists.

This study aims to reevaluate how literature negotiates gender and agency limitations. These texts question taboos around mental illness, self-harm, and maternal violence, therefore challenging reductive images of women as passive victims. However, this focus on psychological darkness and “female monstrosity” also runs the danger of supporting unfavourable preconceptions and implying a natural instability connected with feminism. This dichotomy offers a vital field of research on whether such depictions deliberately reinforce or undermine cultural prejudices.

This thesis addresses the complexity of these representations by conducting a textual and narratological analysis of the selected texts. It looks at how domestic settings, far from mere background settings, become dynamic sites of tension and psychological conflict where issues of rage, gender, agency and power intersect. It investigates the complex entanglements of female rage, agency, and victimhood as situated within intimate familial and domestic structures, challenging the traditional perception of the home as a safe haven and instead portraying it as a site of psychological turmoil and violence. Using a social psychoanalytical framework that combines Karen Horney’s theory of neurotic needs, Barbara Creed’s idea of the monstrous feminine, and Julia Kristeva’s concept of abject, the study explores the subtle depictions of female characters negotiating the expectations of societal roles and personal agency. Through an analysis of these intersecting themes, the study aims to advance knowledge of how contemporary psychological thrillers represent female experiences. It attempts to show how these novels question conventional gender roles and encourage closer examination of the interaction among female rage, identity, and social expectations in contemporary literature.

Keywords: *Psychological thrillers, Female rage, Gender studies, Monstrous feminine, Textual analysis, Social Psychoanalytical, Abjection, Narratological analysis, Neurotic Needs*

List of Publication

1. Gupta, A., & Das, R. (2025). *The cyclical nature of patriarchy in Qala: An exploration of mother–daughter relationships*. Agathos: An International Review of the Humanities and Social Sciences. Indexed in Clarivate – ESCI (Web of Science). ISSN: 2069-1025; e-ISSN: 2248-3446.
2. Gupta, A. (2024). Review of *Queersapien*, by S. D. Rangnekar. Rupkatha Journal. Indexed in Clarivate – ESCI (Web of Science). ISSN: 0975-2935.