



Notice for the PhD Viva Voce Examination

Ms Rodrigues Andrea Milagres, Registration Number: 2270040, 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, 19 August 2026 at 11.30 am in Room No. 2208, Seminar Hall, Management Block, CHRIST (Deemed to be University), Pune Lavasa Off-Campus, Pune - 412112, Maharashtra, India.

Title of the Thesis	:	Obsessions with the City and Manipulation of Nature in Urban Narratives of Bengaluru, Tokyo and London
Discipline	:	English Studies
External Examiner - I	:	Dr J Mangayarkarasi Associate Professor Ethiraj College for Women (Autonomous) Ethiraj Salai, Egmore Chennai - 600008 Tamil Nadu
External Examiner - II	:	Dr Atul Patil Associate Professor and Director School of Holistic Development MIT - ADT University Loni, Pune - 412201 Maharashtra
Supervisor	:	Dr Alpana Akolkar Associate Professor (Former) School of Humanities and Performing Arts CHRIST (Deemed to be University) Pune Lavasa Off-Campus Pune - 412112 Maharashtra

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: 06 August 2026

ABSTRACT

As cities transform, dwellers experience different intensities and micro-impacts while interacting with the ecology. In urban narratives, such as fiction or film centred around a city, these impacts become indicators of the dweller's connection with nature and the urban space. This thesis proposes a multidisciplinary approach to study affective intensities and understand the dweller-nature-city dynamic. Theoretically, Nigel Thrift's affective intervention, Kenneth King's study on 'obsession' and Kevin Lynch's use of 'image' are combined with the method of an urban literary analysis to check for intensities of manipulation and obsession. The thesis first supplements the socio-ecological transformations occurring during a period of urban change, then detects obsession with the city in fiction, followed by identifying different manipulated forms of nature, and lastly, analyses the dweller's response to nature. The study selects a time period of transition across three cities: the early industrial period in Victorian London, early twentieth-century Tokyo, and early twenty-first century Bengaluru. For London, the main texts studied are *An Antiquarian Ramble in the Streets of London (Vol 1)* and *An Anthology of London in Literature*; for Tokyo, the texts are *The River Sumida* and *Kajii Motojirō's short stories*; Bengaluru is assessed in *Multiple City*, *The Artist and His Bengaluru*, and the digital project *B.LORE*.

The findings show that dwellers liken trees to phantasmagorias, and get attached to familiar sights of the city: the new gas lights in London, the sardinemongers in Tokyo and the charms of the neighbourhoods of Bengaluru. Different forms of nature arise through lake parks, avenues, lights and other such manipulations. Positive affective experiences were noted when dwellers used their own agency to discover nature, while desolation and detachment were discovered due to overwhelming urban processes. It is hoped that this thesis will broaden the scope of urban ecology by arguing that during a transition period, dwellers develop obsessive attachments to the city and experience nature as a manipulated presence. The thesis advocates for scholarly attention to the impact of the urban ecology on the dweller's wellbeing and positions urban narratives as appropriate resources to understand new variations in the dweller-nature-city dynamic during a transition period.

Keywords: Affect theory, urban ecology, obsession, forms of nature, transition period, dweller-nature-city dynamic

Publications:

1. **Rodrigues, A., & Akolkar, A. (2025).** Nature in urban memory in *B.LORE (2022)*. In S. Santhosh, S. T. Samjaila, S. Suresh, & P. S. Preethi (Eds.), *Interstices of space and memory*. Routledge.
2. **Rodrigues, A. (2023).** The transnational city of Pondicherry: Elite Indian identity crisis and Cortes' receding French image. In P. Patra & A. Bhattacharya (Eds.), *Frontiers of South Asian culture*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003428572-6>
3. **Rodrigues, A. (2023).** Imagined cities and submissive populist thought. In *Encyclopedia of new populism and responses in the 21st century*. Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-16-9859-0_324-1
4. **Rodrigues, Andrea, and Alpana Akolkar.** A Method for Quantifying Urban Elements, Ecological Descriptors and Affective Responses in Literary Texts. Patent application 202621055553. May 2026.