

**CHRIST**(DEEMED TO BE UNIVERSITY)
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Notice for the PhD Viva Voce Examination

Ms Ann Treessa Benny, Registration Number: 2070535, PhD Scholar at the Department of English and Cultural Studies, School of Humanities and Performing Arts, CHRIST (Deemed to be University), Bangalore will defend her PhD thesis at the public viva-voce examination on Friday, 17 October 2025 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** : **Shades of Ex-Centricity: An Analysis of Madness in Select Postcolonial Indian English Fiction**
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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.

Place: Bengaluru
Date: 06 October 2025

Registrar (Academics)

ABSTRACT

Madness has been a fascinating theme throughout literary history. Myths, legends, ancient religious texts, and literature across the world contain references to madness. Studies on the concept of madness indicate that the definitions of madness have changed several times throughout history, and the popular understanding of madness has been influenced by the socio-cultural values and political atmosphere of the respective time and place (Foucault; Porter; Scull). As literature has also been widely influenced by these changing definitions, rather than representing madness as a medical condition, literature has often portrayed madness as a product of the authoritative socio-cultural norms and contexts created by certain power structures throughout various moments of history and as a site for resistance. Similarly, even postcolonial literature has adopted the theme of madness in multiple ways. According to studies on the theme of madness in postcolonial literature, madness in postcolonial texts often acts as a site for witnessing and responding to colonialism (Huebener; Keller; Zinato and Pes; Luangphinth; Josephs). Although many studies have examined the theme of madness in postcolonial literature, only a few have explored its representation in postcolonial Indian English fiction. With a diverse cultural background and an overwhelming history of colonial rule and its aftermath the Indian context offers a complex backdrop for studying the representation of madness. Thus, the thesis titled “Shades of Ex-centricity: An Analysis of Representation of Madness in Select Postcolonial Indian English Fiction” aims to examine the theme of madness and its socio-political implications in Anita Desai’s *Cry, the Peacock*, Anirudh Kala’s *The Unsafe Asylum: Stories of Partition and Madness* and Arundhati Roy’s *The God of Small Things* using literary stylistic analysis and a postcolonial conceptual framework. Even though the writings of Anita Desai, Anirudh Kala and Arundhati Roy are diverse in style and content, they represent madness as ex-centricity which results from their sense of uprooting and suffering, and results in a sort of aberration. Characters within the texts are portrayed to exhibit impaired reasoning and emotional responses that delineate from what is considered normal. Thus, the research contributes to the evolving discourses on the concept of madness in postcolonial literature and challenges the popular interpretations of madness.

Keywords: *Ex-centricity, madness, postcolonial identity, postcolonial literature, social norms, stylistics*

Publications:

1. **Benny, Ann Treessa.** “A Journey through Madness: A Comparative Study of Anita Desai's *Cry, the Peacock* and Paulo Coelho's *Veronika Decides to Die*.” *Literary Voice*, vol. 1, no. 18, Sept. 2022, pp. 204–08. (Web of Science).
2. **Benny, Ann Treessa.** “Madness and Colonialism: An Analysis of Anirudh Kala's *The Unsafe Asylum*.” *Literature and Aesthetics*, vol. 32, no. 2, 2022, pp. 262–73. (Web of Science).