



**CHRIST**  
(DEEMED TO BE UNIVERSITY)  
BANGALORE · INDIA

## Notice for the PhD Viva Voce Examination

Mr Rajat Sebastian (Registration Number: 2070504), PhD scholar at the School of Arts and Humanities, CHRIST (Deemed to be University), Bangalore will defend his PhD thesis at the public viva-voce examination Monday, 08 January 2024 at 10.30 am in the Seminar Hall, First Floor, Academic Block, Bangalore Bannerghatta Road Campus, CHRIST (Deemed to be University), Bengaluru - 560076.

- Title of the Thesis** : **Symbols as Photographic Texts in the Travel Narratives of Paulo Coelho**
- Discipline** : **English Studies**
- External Examiner (Outside Karnataka)** : **Dr Joly Puthussery**  
Associate Professor and Head  
School of Social Sciences  
University of Hyderabad  
Gachibowli, Hyderabad  
Telangana - 500 046
- External Examiner (Within Karnataka)** : **Dr Dhishna P**  
Associate Professor  
School of Humanities, Social Sciences & Management  
National Institute of Technology  
Srinivasnagar P O  
Dakshina Kannada District  
Karnataka- 575025
- Supervisor** : **Dr Vidya S**  
Assistant Professor  
Department of English and Cultural Studies  
CHRIST (Deemed to be University)  
Bangalore Bannerghatta Road Campus  
Bengaluru – 560076  
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**

**Place:** Bengaluru

**Date:** 03 January 2024

## ABSTRACT

Brazilian writer Paulo Coelho de Souza's *The Pilgrimage*, *The Alchemist*, *Zahir*, *Aleph* and *Hippie* are known for using literary symbols to describe journeys where the protagonists travel to different destinations searching for something valuable. The author resorted to multiple religions, cultures, traditions, mythologies and folklore to derive inspiration to use those symbols and frame his philosophical thoughts. As the symbols used by Coelho can be deciphered in whatever way subject to personal interpretations, one way of understanding them can be from the perspectives of their already established meanings in religions, cultures, traditions, mythologies and folklore. Such a way of understanding limits the possible meanings that can be derived from those symbols. Moreover, another sign system is known for conveying limited meanings, usually called 'photographs.' Though absolute material accuracy is seen as the hallmark of photography, the meaning of photographs also depends upon their interpretations, and photographic truth is considered a myth. Still, photographs possess documentary properties and convey limited meanings to a large extent.

This thesis studied the idea of photography, defining the same by understanding the historical developments in photography over time. Knowing the definition and properties of photographs, it looked at how photographs convey limited meanings and exhibit 'iconic' properties in general. After isolating and studying the literary symbols used by Coelho in the five travel narratives mentioned above using the Peircean model of semiotic analysis, the thesis concludes that symbols act as photographic texts to a certain limit in the five novels, as they tend to move towards becoming 'iconic' from 'symbolic' if understood from the perspectives of their existing meanings in religions, cultures, traditions, mythologies and folklore.

*Keywords: fiction, novel, literary symbols, Paulo Coelho, travel narratives, photography, iconicity, photographic texts*

### **Publications:**

1. Sebastian, Rajat. "Relevance of Symbols in Paulo Coelho's *The Alchemist*." *Rupkatha Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities*, vol. 14, no. 2, 1 July 2022, pp. 1–11.
2. Sebastian, Rajat, and Titto Puthuva. "Literary Symbolism of Mountain in Paulo Coelho's *The Fifth Mountain*." *Literary Voice*, vol. 1, no. 18, Sept. 2022, pp. 279–284.