

**2018 - 2019**

**Name of the Department/Society: English Society**

**Name of the Event 2:** Unreasonable Subjects/Reasonable Discourse: Examining the question of Mental Illness in Literature and other forms

**Date of the Event:** 4/4/2019

In recent times mental illness has become the defining common term used to describe distinctive emotional states and experiences of our human condition. The lecture series was organised to explore how these experiences have been represented and examined in literature and other discourses. There were two parts to the enquiry undertaken in this series: first to locate the examination of mental illness in the field of 'literary' or works of imagination. What is the convergence, if at all, between mental illness, writing and artistic identity? The recent focus on illness narratives, particularly the popularity of illness memoirs and private journals has lent force to the assumption of literature/writing as therapy. To what extent is writing or works of imagination a cause, form of illness or a means of coping with illness? The second part of our enquiry relates to how we may define mental illness and also in relation to the field or expanding industry of mental health. Is the mental health industry with its focus on personal growth, productivity, self-realization etc making us more ill? Is mental illness a useful term in helping to draw upon it and communicate about our everyday lived experiences? The lectures by two speakers, Prof Anup Dhar and Dr Nilofer Kaul was followed by a question-and answer session. The event was attended by a large group of undergrad and postgrad students of Hansraj College and other affiliated colleges of Delhi University as well as MPhil students of Delhi University.

