

English Association, Motilal Nehru College (University of Delhi)
is organizing a *Students' Seminar* on
Madness in Art: A Palindrome of Reality and Fabrication
(17 March 2018)

Call for Papers

The image of the tortured artist has become a pop-culture favourite in an age of digital scepticism, post-truth and disbelief in mass-media where we joust with definitions and traditions to restore semblance with a life that reassures us. The underlying indeterminacy and inexplicability of confusion and despair in a troubled mind is largely a reflection on the ontological conditions of existence. In this universe the grey-area of half-knowledge is what can ultimately be managed. What is the predicament of an artist in this age of uncertainties? How do we simultaneously understand eccentricities and idiosyncrasies of artists and appreciate them? Is it possible that aberrations are not an extra but perhaps the very weave of the artist who is because of them? Do we consider individual ambivalence as enabling or disabling, vis-à-vis the society that *harbours* the artist? Is there really a relation between a tragic state of “madness” and the creative impulse?

It is probably not wrong to say that creativity shares certain cognitive and dispositional traits with psychopathology. The degree of this commonality is contingent on imaginative flair. Artistic ingenuity is after all nothing but the ability to synthesize non-related ideas in novel and meaningful ways to create higher and more profound ideas and meaning. The artist is understood through his impulse as also his tacit ethical position.

We seek to answer questions and explore ways in which we may come up with similar questions that problematise foundational definitions because the language in which an artist comes to be is his hiatus – the space that he or she inhabits. Women artists, gender identities in art, the way art speaks what it speaks, and the popular taste circuit need to be looked into critically. The market of a psychologically drifted artist is ripe for investigation. It is imperative that we re-visit the persona and personal lives of celebrated or undiscovered artists without the cynicism that our age incubates in us as survival strategy.

In this context we welcome papers related to but not restricted to the following areas:

- Gender identities and practices as reflected in literature - sexism and madness
- Periodic literary genres that have given birth to characters or ideas in excess of their times
- Partition, exile and trauma
- Goth and rebellion against the norm
- Philosophical discourse on Madness and Reason
- History of madness in literature

- Hysteria and abnormality in cinema
- Maniacal aesthetics in musical genres
- Lunatic characters as social aberrations in theatre and other performing arts
- Artistic creativity and mental illness in paintings

Important Dates:

Abstract Submission - **23** February 2018

Approval of Abstracts - **25** February 2018

Final Paper Submission - 10 March 2018

Abstracts of about 200 words along with keywords and author's details may be submitted to deptofenglish.mlnc@gmail.com