

## Department of English – Jan-Dec 2020

The English literary society organised its annual event, *Litluminous 2020* on 28th February 2020, on the theme 'Satire in Literature and Cinema'. As a run up to the event, we collaborated with Wide Angle, the film society of the college, to screen Larry Charles' mockumentary, *Borat* (2007), on 26th February. The screening was followed by a lively discussion among the students and faculty. On the day of the literary festival, many events were organised. The first of these was a panel discussion on the theme with three speakers: Dr Lalit Kumar, Assistant Professor, Department of English, Deen Dayal Upadhyaya College spoke on the evolution of satire via British literature and then focused on satire in Hindi literature of the 20th century; Dr Nirmalya Samanta, Associate Professor, Department of English, Ramanujan College, spoke on the scope of satire in cinema, with a special focus on Charlie Chaplin's *The Great Dictator*; Mr Amit Sengupta editor and journalist, presently with Hardnews Magazine, discussed the diabolical and liberating capacities of contemporary media, especially in the trying cycle between the fake and the truth. The session was moderated by Ms Namita Paul of the department. Other events included student paper presentation competition, creative writing competition sponsored by Zubaan books, caricature-making competition, online meme-making competition, slam poetry and treasure hunt. The event concluded with a street play performance by Kshitij, the street play society of Gargi College, a satire on the contemporary socio-political circumstances.

On 4th March 2020, the literary society invited Sam Dalrymple and Sparsh Ahuja of *Project Dastaan* to present their work. Project Dastaan is working in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh to record personal histories of the Partition of the subcontinent. They spoke about their process, research and also the technology they use to record and recreate Partition histories. They seek out and record oral testimonies of survivors, connect them with friends and family across the border division, and bring lost places and people to them through virtual reality. They also did a demonstration with their VR technology to show how they are able to take people back to the places they have left behind. They also invited student volunteers to join their project in helping to build the archive.

The English literary society collaborated with the Prospicio, the Placement Cell of Kamala Nehru College, to organize a session on 'What's Next After College', on 11th September 2020. In this session students and faculty members discussed opportunities for second and third year students during and after college, including internships, placements and post-graduation. This session was followed by an event on 'Careers in Publishing' on 16th September. The presenters in this session were: Ambar Sahil Chatterjee, publishing consultant with A Suitable Agency, and formerly Commissioning Editor at Penguin Randomhouse India; Aishvarya Mishra, digital marketing executive at Harper Collins India; Shubhali Chopra, Editor (References) at Hachette India. It was an engaging session with all the three speakers explaining the different facets of publishing, and patiently answering all the questions posed by the students. Aishvarya Mishra and Shubhali Chopra are KNC alumni (batch of 2015), who

were able to engage with the students from closer to their perspective and share their journey from KNC graduates to editorial professionals.

The students of the English department organized a poetry sharing activity with all the members of the department called 'From Epistles to Verse' on 28th September. It fulfilled the poetic needs of the students and teachers during the pandemic, in the sharing of favoured and cherished lines from poet masters from different languages.

In October 2020, the literary society organized its bi-annual art exhibition, *Collective Rubbish*. In the changed circumstances necessitated by the pandemic situation and all activities occurring online, the exhibition was adapted for the digital domain and conducted over the span of a week. The event was preceded by the screening of the first fully painted animated feature film, *Loving Vincent*, on the life and work of artist Vincent Van Gogh, on 14th October. The screening was followed by a discussion on the film and the aesthetics of mixed art practices. The conceptual art exhibition was conducted from 21st–23rd October on the society's Instagram page and also hosted on the blog of the English department's newsletter, *White Noise*. The theme of this edition of the exhibition was 'Pastiche'. The students created and presented their artwork on the social media platforms and received comments and reviews for the same. For the closing ceremony of the exhibition on 23rd October, Mr Argha Kamal Ganguly, Assistant Curator, National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi, was invited to address the students. He reviewed the work of the students and discussed the exhibition in detail. He also presented a talk, 'Art in the Virtual World', where he discussed how art and museums are coping with the pandemic by moving the space of exhibition to the virtual world. He took the audience on a virtual tour of the National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi, showing some of the iconic paintings and sculptures in the gallery's collection. He also patiently responded to the wide range of questions asked by the audience.

On 19th November, the department organized a formal orientation to welcome the new batch of first year students. It included a presentation of the department activities and objectives. The second and third year students of the department also initiated a peer mentorship programme for the new students, to assist and enable them to adjust to the virtual learning and college format.