

Report

BRICOLAGE

An interdisciplinary lecture/workshop series organized by the Research Scholars, Department of English, funded by UGC-DSA II

February-March 2020



About

Bricolage: the term derives from a French verb, where it means to tinker about, or do-it-yourself. Lévi-Strauss describes bricolage as a characteristic feature of mythical thought. Mythical thought, the thought that creates myths, does this using themes from culture that already have their own set meanings, but which are rearranged in new combinations and contexts. Thus, bricolage is not a primitive form of thought that is transcended through evolution, but a fundamental aspect of human intellectual activity.

All researchers are bricoleurs: we dip into a pool of existing methods, ideas and theories, play around with them, develop a set of tools that change and sharpen along the way to finally arrive at work that is, in all fairness, still becoming.

Drawing on this concept, the research scholars of the department of English, University of Hyderabad, organized *Bricolage*, a series of workshops and lectures through the months of February and early March. These consisted of a capacity-building workshop around academic writing for research, lectures about the intersection of various disciplines with literature and a roundtable inviting scholars from different universities in Hyderabad. The lectures of this series were delivered by prominent speakers from around the city as well as faculty members from different departments in the university. Dr Bhaskar Lama was the faculty coordinator of the series.

Bricolage 2020 was an academically invigorating series of events.

EVENTS

3 February 2020

What We Do Not Talk About When We Talk About English Research

- Professor K. Narayana Chandran

Professor K. Narayana Chandran, distinguished researcher, teacher and mentor whose research and professional career spans over a period of thirty-five years, and who has recently been ranked as the #1 Arts and Humanities researcher in South Asia and #9 in the entire Asian region, inaugurated the *Bricolage* workshop and lecture series on February 3, 2020 with a distinguished lecture titled "What We Do Not Talk About When We Talk About English Research". In the lecture, Professor Chandran provided a brief overview of the institutional practices and protocols that have determined English research in India, the contemporary trends that mark the discipline, and the limitations and challenges that English research in India must address today. Where in pure and applied research in the Sciences researchers break ground *together*, the story, Professor Chandran cautioned during the lecture, is all too different when it comes to English research in India.

Read the rest of this report on Prof. Chandran's lecture written by Jinan Ashraf, a research scholar from the department of English, [here](#).

Research Scholars' Roundtable

We believe that the best "scholarly clearing house" is young people talking together and the building of a research community among young researchers. Keeping this in mind, we invited research scholars from various universities in the city to join us after the inaugural lecture on the February 3, 2020 for a roundtable discussion. We attempted to locate the lecture in the context of the research problems our individual projects deal with, hoping to initiate conversations around research areas, methods and ideas that we are engaged in. Around 50 scholars from universities such as EFLU, Osmania University and Kakatiya University besides our own scholars participated in three parallel roundtable discussions.

Sourav Jatua, a research scholar in one of the roundtable panels points to the following key points discussed in his sessions:

"Key points discussed during the roundtable included how a prospective researcher locates their distinct area in the larger rubric of an 'English' Department; how often do conventional methods of 'English' research alter and make way into other methodologies of Social Sciences Departments; in deciding to pick up "literary" texts as primary materials, to what extent does the literary authority of the text correctly explicate the experiences it seeks to present, and how much our reading exists beyond the texts we choose. Is methodology personal, or should the researcher try to follow an objective structure of thinking was the closing thought."



Clockwise from top left: Prof. Chandran delivering his lecture; the Head, Prof Anna Kurian felicitating Prof. Chandran; a student presenting a memento to Prof Chandran; one of the three scholars' roundtables in progress.



5 February 2020

Why Aesthetics is Always Also Politics

-Professor Susie Tharu

Susie Tharu, retired professor of EFL University and co-editor of anthologies like *No Alphabet in Sight: New Dalit Writing from South India* and *Women Writing in India: 600 BC to Present* amongst others, delivered the second lecture of Bricolage on *Why Aesthetics is Always Also Politics* on February 5, 2020. In the lecture, Prof Tharu explored the Boosa movement of the mid-1970s in Kannada literature. Her talk drew from various aesthetic paradigms to explore

Dalit politics and went on to suggest that “transformations of affect, subjectivity, and meaning necessarily underlie and accompany significant ethico-political moments”.



You can also read Laboni Mukherjee's [report](#) on Prof Tharu's talk and see the [video](#) recording of her lecture.

10 February 2020

Exploring Looking, Seeing and Reading in the Movies

- Dr. Sushmita Banerji

Dr. Sushmita Banerji from the Centre for Humanities and Social Sciences, IIIT-Hyderabad, whose primary work is on the films of Ritwik Ghatak, delivered the third lecture of *Bricolage*. Taking off from an assertion that “while a large number of films share a common grammar, there are some that produce a grammar unique to their sign system conditionally producing a language particular to each film,” Dr. Banerji grounded her lecture in the question of reading signs. Framing this question within the disciplinary contexts of her own training in literature studies and film studies, she emphasised the constant, two-way traffic of ideas and methods between the two. Her lecture was divided into two main parts: first, she offered a cursory overview of the evolution of film theory, and secondly, after screening short clips from Satyajit Ray's *Charulata* (1964), an adaptation of Rabindranath Tagore's novella *Nastanirh* (1901), she demonstrated how the film may be read on two different registers.



The rest of this report by Akshata S Pai, research scholar at our department can be found [here](#).

13 February 2020

What can Literature do about Sociology?

- Prof. Sasheej Hegde

Prof. Sasheej Hegde from the department of Sociology, University of Hyderabad delivered the fourth lecture of Bricolage. Prof. Hegde sought to perform an interloping function in his talk, taking off from a reflection on the work of writer and critic U. R. Ananthamurthy. His primary focus was on what a recourse to literature could do for sociology. He described in his talk “the possibility of encapsulating more vivid descriptions of social and cultural life, a question as much central to literature as to sociology”.



Sreelakshmy M's report of Prof Hegde's talk can be found [here](#).

24 February 2020

Myth and Politics of Textualization in the Theyyam Performance

- Dr Jolly Puthussery

Dr Jolly Puthussery from the Centre of Folk Culture Studies, University of Hyderabad delivered the fifth lecture of Bricolage. The lecture centered around keywords like myth and ritual and explored the *Pottan Theyyam* performance in Kerala. By looking at the process of textualization, in its verbal, textual, and visual contexts, the talk discussed the changing worldview of participating communities. Dr. Puthussery began his lecture with a general introduction to myth, its definition and functions. He alluded to several critics of myth like Joseph Campbell, James Frazer, Bronislaw

Malinowski etc. to call myths narratives about phenomena, rituals and religion, and as answers to the questions of human existence, before delving into an exploration of the Pottam Theyyam performance.



Sreekutty TJ, a research scholar from the department presents a report on Dr Puthussery's talk [here](#).

28, 29 February 2020

How Literary Scholars Read and How They Write

- a two-day workshop by Dr Anannya Dasgupta and Greeshma Mohan
(short report by Manoj Jayakumar, research scholar, department of English)

The two-day workshop on "How Literary Scholars Read and How they Write" under **Bricolage** was conducted by Prof. Anannya Dasgupta (Director, Center for Writing and Pedagogy, KREA University) and Greeshma Mohan (Associate, Center for Writing and Pedagogy, KREA University).

On the first day, the first session began with an exercise on writing observations. This was followed by a session on description and its uses in writing. In this session, there was a discussion as to how description would help us in rendering the world of the text, which would then be helpful in analyzing it. After this, there was a discussion of how to provide peer-review where the assignments submitted prior to the workshop were discussed. The day ended with a session on reflection writing that was geared towards reflecting and thinking about our writing. On the second day, the first session began with a writing exercise. This exercise focussed on the construction of sentences. This was followed by a lecture entitled "Between 'Literary Criticism' and 'Theory': Academic Writing as a Literary Scholar" by Prof. Anannya Dasgupta, which helped us understand the place of literary scholars in the close reading of texts. This was followed by sessions on the construction of paragraphs and the formation of sentences. These sessions helped us

focus on the basics of writing in the making of an argument. The day ended with a feedback session with the resource persons that involved an open discussion on what we learnt from the workshop.



11 March 2020

Christianity and 'Ethical' Life in Dalit Literature

- Prof. K. Satyanarayana

The sixth and final lecture of *Bricolage* was delivered on March 11, 2020 by Professor K. Satyanarayana from The English and Foreign Languages University. Editor of books such as *No Alphabet in Sight: New Dalit Writing from South Asia, Dossier 1: Tamil and Malayalam* (Penguin Books, 2011) and *From those Stubbs Steel Nibs are Sprouting: New Dalit Writing from South Asia, Dossier 2: Kannada and Telugu* (HarperCollins India, 2013), Prof Satyanarayana's interests lie in Dalit Studies and Literary History. Through his reading of *Ants Among Elephants*, the lecture focused on the confluence of Christian and Dalit identities. Prof. Satyanarayana pointed out how often families come to play an integral role in bridging the identity of being a 'dalit' in close association with being a 'Christian' – and how these two identities come to influence the idea of 'ethicality' in their lives.



You can find a report by Sourav Jatua, a research scholar from the department of English, on Prof. Satyanarayana's lecture [here](#).

The Team

Faculty Coordinator: Dr. Bhaskar Lama

Convenors: Meenakshi Srihari, K. Noah Simon

Hospitality: Moumita Chowdhury, Manoj Jayakumar

Logistics: Sourav Jatua

Finance: Ishanee Sarmah, Nimisha Sinha

Amrutha P. U. as the research scholars' representative

And,

- Various volunteers from the research scholars for delivering the welcome address, vote of thanks, and writing reports: Arjun Raj V, Jinan Ashraf, Laboni Mukherjee, Vinita Teresa, Akshata Pai, Evangelene Carina Nongkhlaw, Sreelakshmy M, Alma Themreichon, Sreekutty TJ, Prateeti Chowdhury.
- Laboni Mukherjee for artwork.
- Akash from MA, for designing posters.

The outbreak of Covid-19 meant that the series wrapped up early - we hope to conduct the cancelled lectures and workshops another time. Hopefully *Bricolage* becomes an annual event!

Lecture Reports

Report 1

What We Do Not Talk About When We Talk About English Research

— Professor K. Narayana Chandran's Inaugural Lecture

Jinan Ashraf
Department of English
University of Hyderabad

Professor K. Narayana Chandran, distinguished researcher, teacher and mentor whose research and professional career spans over a period of thirty-five years, and who has recently been ranked as the #1 Arts and Humanities researcher in South Asia and #9 in the entire Asian region, inaugurated the *Bricolage* workshop and lecture series on February 3, 2020 with a distinguished lecture titled "What We Do Not Talk About When We Talk About English Research". In the lecture, Professor Chandran provided a brief overview of the institutional practices and protocols that have determined English research in India, the contemporary trends that mark the discipline, and the limitations and challenges that English research in India must address today. Where in pure and applied research in the Sciences researchers break ground *together*, the story, Professor Chandran cautioned during the lecture, is all too different when it comes to English research in India.

Professor Chandran put forward precious distinctions between two broad types of English research in India: faculty and doctoral research. For his lecture, Professor Chandran pursued the topic of what remains *unsaid* in doctoral research in English in India.

The idea of English:-

Entangled perennially in terminological mix-ups, how do we begin to look at, and make sense of, what we call English? How foreign is *English to us*, and how foreign are *we to English*, and how much of what we understand to be English remains within our focus? How are we related to this strange sign without a signified? In his elaboration of this topic, Professor Chandran further asked the scholars to examine *what* and *who* English is good for, and to what *intents* and *purposes* (*ours* and *others*).

The General State of English Departments across India:-

Where does English research in India stand, and what deep-seated problems face the discipline today? Professor Chandran provided a brief survey of the limitations of English Departments across the country, namely: the dearth of funding that inevitably excludes us from participation in and contribution to global scholarship; the lack of 'character' in English Departments across the country (a 'character' that would enable the Department to grow as a centre for learning and development, marked by professionalism, burgeoning archives, holdings, and subscriptions, specializations and access to material and human resources); the lack of national policies in English research that decide the parameters and scope of research, and aid consensus in what constitutes "English research" in India, in addition to pronouncing distinctions between teaching and research Departments. The lack of specialization in English Departments across the country come in the way of providing scholars who wish to seek centralized places of learning and training in specific areas in the discipline. In most departments of English, underachievement seems to be the norm as these centres figure low in research aims and ambitions, thereby affecting research output and

standing in international scholarship— most of our research gains, Professor Chandran pointed out to us, are local gains. No real production of knowledge takes place— only ceaseless *reproductions* of knowledge. There is a real problem of access to proper human resources (examiners, for instance) that can effectively guide and provide qualitative assistance to our work. There is a general tendency to prevaricate when it comes to publication because students/Departments do not familiarize themselves with international opportunities of research, or learn of the various types of publications (foreign, peer reviewed, and high impact review) at the international academic levels. Additionally, one of the pressing concerns that the discipline must address today is the study English in the context of the Indian languages and the rich philosophical traditions that Indian researchers inherit. Seldom it is that Indian traditions of thought are made to bear upon our interactions with English.

Training for (and Competence in) Research:-

Research, like most (a)vocations, calls for competence, training, and rigorous preparation. Most Departments of English do not provide formative training in research to students at the postgraduate level. A training of this kind would enable students to pursue a research degree with confidence, competence, and appropriate skillsets, *beyond* the practical application of a given theory to a selected group of texts. This kind of training would also enable students to distinguish the differences between a research degree and other degrees, and understand how “philosophy” figures in the context of research. In research as in life, Professor Chandran argued, one needs to ask basic questions about the world. As researchers, it is important to trace and understand the competing philosophical tradition(s) that override our work, in addition to holding ourselves accountable to the *ethics* of research. Here Professor Chandran also emphasized the significance of *competence* in research extending beyond mere linguistic competence to the need for such values as commitment, emotional toughness, and intellectual tenacity, and an aptitude that thrives in intellectual stimulation. In the scholarship of the world, one needs to unlearn the need to pursue work in metropolitan universities in India when several competing alternatives to research and education are also present. As we begin to ask ourselves *why* we pursue research, there is also a need to examine the reality of the deregistration process in English research in India.

Kinds of English Research:-

There are several kinds of English research that one could pursue, but which Departments of English usually shy away from. One of them would be to clear the way for *interpretive studies*. In looking to the West, we have only *conformed* to and *confirmed* their philosophical and critical approaches and methods when we teem with the untapped potential of our own interpretive traditions. How do we understand such concepts as *argument*, *reasoning*, *consensus* and *oral traditions* in our intellectual traditions? Professor Chandran pointed out that there is scope for interpretive work of this kind especially in the preparation of annotated bibliographies, glossaries of key words, and surveys of scholarship in literature to that effect. Another area that researchers may well consider could be *perspectival studies* which involves drawing frameworks of select concepts and examining them diachronically. *Cross-linguistic studies* would enable researchers to examine what English has meant to the Indian languages of a particular region. A study of this kind would spawn substantial research along linguistic and epistemological interfaces. Lastly, *metacritical and bibliographical studies* would enable us to evaluate and analyze traditions of critical thought and scholarship on a particular writer/concept/ work in order to understand the methods and motives of some of the most established theoretical and critical traditions.

Growing up in English in India:-

How do we begin to conceptualize the institutional history of English, and how do we situate the history of the English language at the regional level? What do our writers say about growing up in English, and how does

education in English prepare these writers for a social life in their mother tongues? Professor Chandran reminded us that a fascinating world of research opens up to those of us who choose to pursue the ways in which our narrative traditions have been affected by English. Professor Chandran also urged the students to examine their own reading habits, and how certain writers (such as Salman Rushdie, for instance) have received, rejected and reformed the received tastes of the reading public in the country. A related study of reading habits would also include the study of the reader's interactions with, and reception of, digital and online texts.

Finding One's Way and Voice in Research:-

Professor Chandran's concluding remarks emphasized the significance of coming to terms with the idea that writing, like learning to walk or ride a bicycle, is process that must be advanced at one's own pace and allowed to bide time. Researchers cannot expect quick results in limited time without compromising their work. In this context, Professor Chandran also pointed out how training in academic writing largely involves teaching oneself to write and finding one's way and voice in the process. Professor Chandran concluded with Henry David Thoreau's profound remark: "Nothing goes by luck in composition. It allows of no tricks. The best you can write will be the best you are." In research, as Professor Chandran reminds us, the work begins with oneself.

During the inaugural session of *Bricolage* Professor Chandran was duly felicitated by the Department of English, University of Hyderabad for his long standing contribution to research, teaching and teacher-training.

Report 2

Why Aesthetics is Always Also Politics

Lecture by Susie Tharu, 5th February, 2020.

Laboni Mukherjee
Research Scholar
Department of English

"...in or about December, 1910, human character changed...All human relations have shifted—those between masters and servants, husbands and wives, parents and children. And when human relations change there is at the same time a change in religion, conduct, politics, and literature."

"Mr. Bennet and Mrs. Brown", Virginia Woolf.

Susie Tharu, retired professor of EFL University and co-editor of anthologies like *No Alphabet in Sight: New Dalit Writing from South India* and *Women Writing in India: 600 BC to Present* amongst others, began the second lecture of *Bricolage*, titled "Why Aesthetics is Always Also Politics", with the above lines. With these lines she set the tone of the lecture in two ways: she spoke about how Modernist pathbreakers like Woolf were far more radical in their politics than simply the gifted novelty of the stream-of-consciousness literary form that history of literature accords them, and she talked about a similarly rupture-creating date in Kannada Literature – 1954. 1954 was the star-studded year for Dalit Kannada Literature, with writers like D.R. Nagaraj and Siddalingaiah being born. She then spoke of how these figures, in college, were instrumental in Dalit support of the non-upper caste Chief Minister of Karnataka, B. Basavalingappa during the "Boosa" agitation of 1973. Basavalingappa's opinion on how Kannada students, while retaining Kannada pride, ought to embrace English in a spirit of "True Nationalism", and how much of then Kannada Literature was "Boosa" (translated as "husk", "chaff" or "waste") had sparked protests from several Kannada nationalist students, as well as a parallel movement in his support launched by Dalit Students, amongst them Nagaraj and Siddalingaiah, who brought in a new Dalit aesthetic to Kannada Poetry, going so far as to challenge conceptions about the language of poetry.

Tharu spoke of how the language of Dalit poetry brought not only the "Boosa", the stench of the cowshed, non-poetic material, into the literary world marked by the aesthetics of the upper-caste elite, and began to question the notion of poetry devoid of social concern and Dalit affect. Further, questions were raised as to which of the many Kannadas is the real or literary Kannada? Tharu spoke of Siddhalingaiah's poem "A Song" ("Bash them, kick them, skin these bastards alive!") and H. Govindaiah's "A Letter to Father", which she read out in the course of the lecture.

Tharu then spoke of how Aesthetics in modern Western epistemology is comparatively recent, based on the Kantian notion of Aesthetics in his *Critique of Aesthetic Judgement* which was firmly anchored in the politics of the French Revolution. The French Revolution had, for the first time, introduced Democracy, the formation of the Modern Nation-State, and the idea of the land belonging to the people, now citizens. Kant's idea of Beauty was based on this idea of the free Man in a modern Nation state. Tharu showed us how he had joined Beauty with the ideas of Truth and Virtue, and had done so with what he, and Schiller and Hegel after him, called "Taste". "Taste" was a political endeavour to teach citizenship and a "new innocence" of seeing Beauty as the guarantor of what was True and Virtuous to the new people of the Nation State, that had led to the rise of the modern University, with a shift in pedagogical interest from fine or decorative art, religious art and the ancient Greek focus on mimesis and representation. This idea had percolated to Romantic poetry and novels, making aesthetics in Literature very political and democratic. By way of illustrations, she had referred to William Wordsworth's "Daffodils", stating that the daffodils, and the land they cover, were no longer God's but the free Man's to explore, and John Keats' "Ode on a Grecian Urn", with its final lines of "Beauty is truth, truth beauty, – that is all Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know".

Tharu then linked Kant to Gramsci's chapter on the role of the Intellectual in his *Prison Notebooks*, in which the role of the emergent intellectual in paving the way for a new proletarian hegemony by giving the group homogeneity, making them aware of their economic, social and cultural functioning as well as giving them a chance to express the affective dimension of their politics. The intellectual does that in the arena of culture and aesthetics, which shapes politics.

Tharu concluded her lecture with speculations on the nature of a new structure for the University, one that will be formed by the entry of marginalised sections of society into the institution which is not merely sanctioned entry, because sanctioned entry is no real entry at all. Their right to aesthetics has to be created by them, and is not simply waiting to be occupied. She mused on the constituent features of a proper faculty of arts, which are the presence of the knowledge, the skill, the experience and the bent of heart and mind to teach art in our times. According to her, we ought to ask questions on what the art and aesthetics of the marginalised can bring to our imagination of truth, being and nationalism, finally bringing in the "community of the question" based on a spirit of true enquiry and friendship. In the very engaging question and answer section that followed, topics like the "return to the text", the question of whether politics was also always aesthetics, the differences between Classicist aesthetics and Romantic Aesthetics, the banality of what is currently being dished out as "politics" and "aesthetics", the idea that true Politics is "people claiming for Humanity" and the marriage of aesthetics and politics with the aim of seeing something newer and more beautiful with change, were discussed.

Report 3

Dr. Sushmita Banerji on "Exploring looking, seeing and reading in the movies"

Akshata S Pai
Research Scholar
Department of English

Dr. Sushmita Banerji from the Centre for Humanities and Social Sciences, IIIT-Hyderabad, delivered a lecture on “Exploring looking, seeing and reading in the movies” at 2 30 pm on February 10 as part of *Bricolage*, the workshop and lecture series funded by UGC DSA II, and organised by the research scholars of the Department of English. Dr. Banerji grounded her lecture in the question of reading signs. Framing this question within the disciplinary contexts of her own training in literature studies and film studies, she emphasised the constant, two-way traffic of ideas and methods between the two. Her lecture was divided into two main parts: first, she offered a cursory overview of the evolution of film theory, and secondly, after screening short clips from Satyajit Ray’s *Charulata* (1964), an adaptation of Rabindranath Tagore’s novella *Nastanirh* (1901), she demonstrated how the film may be read on two different registers.

Dr. Banerji began the lecture with the question: what is different about reading cinematic texts? Thinking about the different experiences that films and literary texts offer to their readers/viewers, she began by considering the materiality of that difference. She explained how the viewing experience of cinema has historically been contradictory: while a film was screened in a public theatre located in the public sphere, the viewing experience itself – watching a film in the dark, unable to see other viewers while being immersed in the narrative unfolding on the screen – was an isolating one. The film addressed itself to the individual viewer. The experience of watching films was therefore at once communal and individual. She drew a parallel with the development of popular modes of literary reading. The Victorian novel, for example, was meant to be read silently in private, but it was also often read aloud to an audience who might not have been able to read. She concluded this section with an important question: in the light of parallel developments in cinema and literature, in what ways has cinema influenced modern practices of reading?

How did modes of reading cinema emerge in the first place? Filmmaking and film studies have been institutionalised as pedagogies and discourses. How did this come about? How did it come to be generally accepted that with their audio-visual semiotics, films have their own language, grammar and lexicon and are texts in their own right, valid objects of reading and interpretation? To contextualise these developments, Dr. Banerji offered a brief overview of the evolution of film theory. She traced how film theory emerged as a site to discuss the nature and potential of the cinematic form, its relation to other art forms as well as its singularity and medium-specificity. Starting from the formative era of cinema from the 1890s onwards, she noted how filmmakers and other intellectuals attempted to understand the potential of cinematic techniques and also to legitimize it as an art form. The development of Soviet montage theory and French impressionism, for example, focussed in divergent ways on the capacity of the cinematic form, the effects it could be used to create and the ends to which these should/could be employed. Besides formal techniques, film and film theory were thus also shaped by the socio-political contexts within which they were fostered. Sergei Eisenstein, for example, explored the potential of films to engender a revolutionary class consciousness among the audience.

Dr. Banerji also touched upon the auctorial or the *auteur* theory of cinema which emerged in the 1940s out of the thinking of André Bazin and Alexandre Astruc and posited the director-as-author whose signature inscribes every aspect of the film. In the 1950s and 60s, the mimetic potential of cinema, its realist and documentary capabilities were explored to gauge the use of cinema as a political tool. Dr. Banerji particularly dwelt on the linguistic turn in cinematic theory with which the cult of the *auteur* came to be displaced in favour of understanding the language of cinema. Developed in the work of Christian Metz and others, the resources of linguistics and narratology were drawn upon to understand the operations of signification in cinema. Auctorial theory and structural linguistics however also began to be employed together, leading to an interest in genre-based analysis, in which questions of conventions and expectations were seen as structuring the production of meaning in a text.

Dr. Banerji then went on to demonstrate the use of some of these methods using Ray's *Charulata* as a textual example. First, she led a discussion on a psychoanalytic reading of the film. The structures of visibility in the film and the camera movements, cuts, focalisation, etc. which aided the production of certain kinds of gaze were minutely pointed out. Dr. Banerji explained how the film arranged points of view using certain types of shots, constituting certain kinds of subject-object relations and thereby disrupting gendered conventions of the representation of subjectivity and interiority in cinema. Secondly, drawing on narratological and linguistic theories, Dr. Banerji read the film *as an adaptation*. Drawing upon the differentiation between *sujet* and *fabula*, the two texts – Tagore's novel and the film – were considered in terms of their spatio-temporally differently situated engagements with the 'woman question'. If Tagore situated the question of women's roles in Bengali culture in the context of the freedom struggle, the context for Ray's film were the early years of nation-building. Both readings, psychoanalytic and narratological, were situated in a socio-historical context in terms of their critique of the 'modern Bengali household' and its practices of gender. The lecture was followed by a question-and-answer session in which questions about the formal techniques of cinema, its materiality as an industrial form, modes of cinematic adaptation, and questions of discipline-bound ways of reading were raised and discussed.

Report 4

On "What can Literature do about Sociology?" by Prof. Sasheej Hegde

Sreelakshmy M
Research Scholar
Department of English

The fourth lecture of the Bricolage series was delivered by Prof. Sasheej Hegde from the department of sociology. He began his lecture, "What can Literature do about Sociology?" by invoking the concept of the "bricoleur" and the theme behind the Lecture/Workshop Series "Bricolage". Replete with wit and humour, Hegde located himself as an "interloper" who is situated at the juncture between Literature and the Social Sciences. He then talked about the possibility and the potentiality of creating an interface between the two disciplines. This interface between Literature and the Social Sciences, he argued, can be a creative opportunity for students of both the disciplines.

Using the example of U.R. Ananthamurthy's life and work, especially as an academic/writer who was a product of both Marxist modernism and Indian socialite influences, Prof. Hegde briefly discussed the concept of the sociology of caste in *Samskara* and *Bharathipura*. Ananthamurthy who called himself a "novelist" torn between "statusquoist acceptance" and "revolutionary ruthlessness", often talked about the sociology of life through his literary works. Following the inclination of literary writers to be dramatic, said Hegde, Ananthamurthy once said: "I can't be an absolutist, for I am a novelist and not a poet." The speaker also noted that Sociology devotes itself, frequently, to questions of identity. Ananthamurthy, therefore, used his literary prowess to address the sociology of caste with a particular dexterity that allows for a form of exploration that slips from Sociology when it tries to do the same. He concluded the lecture by reiterating the need to engage in forms of thinking that facilitates a psychological robustness. The Question-Answer session mainly revolved around interdisciplinary approaches towards the study of disciplines. Asking the listeners to work with the tangible facets of a text rather than with its metaphorical meaning, Prof. Hegde reminded us that all of the best practitioners of a discipline consider his/her field as an "uncertain compound".

Report 5

"Myth and Politics of Tetualization in the Theyyam Performance" by Dr Jolly Puthussery

Dr. Jolly Puthussery, Faculty at the Centre for Folk Culture Studies, University of Hyderabad delivered a lecture on the topic “Myth and Politics of Textualization in the Theyyam Performance” on 24th February 2020 at ASIHSS Hall in the Department of English. It was the fifth lecture in the UGC-DSA sponsored lecture series *Bricolage* organized by the research scholars of the Department of English. Dr. Puthussery began his lecture with a general introduction to myth, its definition and functions. He alluded to several critics of myth like Joseph Campbell, James Frazer, Bronislaw Malinowski etc. to call myths narratives about phenomena, rituals and religion, and as answers to the questions of human existence. He also mentioned Joseph Campbell’s categorization of functions of myth into four, namely the mystical, sociological, cosmological and pedagogical.

According to Dr. Puthussery, “myth is put to performance to legitimize caste hierarchy”. He brought in these ideas to explain the socio-cultural and political significance of the “Pottan Theyyam”, an art form famous in the Northern part of Kerala performed mainly by the Pulaya community who were considered as untouchables by the elite upper caste “Janmi” (landlords). In his general overview of Theyyams, he said that the deification is nothing but transmigration which occludes the rigidity of religious norms. For instance, in the Pottan Theyyam, the performer is a talking god who comments on contemporary issues of caste. Dr. Puthussery concluded his talk with his observation that the political and ideological interventions have resulted in making myths and rituals subservient to power which in turn have affected the Theyyam performances - like the Hindutva influence on the Pottan Theyyam that has converted it to a “Hindu” myth of God Shiva and Goddess Parvati different from the original story of the rebellious Pulaya who was put to death for questioning the Janmi.

Report 6

“Christianity and ‘Ethical’ Life in Dalit Literature” by Professor K Satyanarayana

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The sixth lecture of *Bricolage* – the interdisciplinary workshop/lecture series being organized by the Research Scholars of the Department of English, funded by the UGC-DSA-II was held on March 11, 2020 at the ASIHSS Hall, School of Humanities. Professor K. Satyanarayana from EFL University delivered the lecture titled, “Christianity and ‘Ethical’ Life in Dalit Literature.”

Prof. Satyanarayana started his talk with a general introduction and overview of how the majority of Dalit writers do not identify as ‘Christians’, but would rather prefer the identity tags of being an ‘Ambedkar -ite’, a Bahujan

or even simply being identified as a Dalit writer. Within the spectrum of Dalit writing in Tamil Nadu, Kerala or Andhra Pradesh, discrimination, issues of inequality have been prevalent as the issues of discussion conventionally. However, as the speaker pointed out, Christianity as an idea, a tool to attain a future better life has always been central to the 'dalit' – examples being cases where parents becoming converts actually helped their future generations to take part in a social life (often centred around and offered by the Church). However, this experience has not been taken into account much in history, the speaker pointed out. The usual remains more on the Marxist rhetoric and the Ambedkarite ways of representing themselves in writing. Through his reading, Prof. Satyanarayana pointed out how often families come to play an integral role in bridging the identity of being a 'dalit' in close association with being a 'Christian' – and how these two identities come to influence the idea of 'ethicality' in their lives. As example, Prof. Satyanarayana pointed out the example of the book *Ants Among Elephants* (2017) where the narrative works through the family. As Shivasagar, the noted Naxalite leader pointed out to the speaker in an interview, what constitutes to an 'ethical life' comes from the subjective perception one has.

Drawing from Foucault's idea of how the self comes to be through reflection, the speaker commented on how the idea of the human and gradually the 'being' comes to play on the Dalit identity also. This idea of the human then also becomes humane in nature, as the religious inflection, generating a sense of life to live with humility. In this regard, it was shown how the Dalit texts from the specific locales became a document chronicling social change and mobility for the last 60-70 years in (erstwhile) Andhra Pradesh, for instance. Towards the end, the speaker highlighted how these writers have also tried to understand and have come to terms with the contemporary colonial enterprise. The influx of the missionaries in the daily life of the general people, through schools, educational institutions, courts of law among others transpired into what Prof. Satyanarayana has termed the 'material' gains of Christianity.

The lecture ended with an invigorating question and answer session and a vote of thanks to all the participants concerned in the lecture series of *Bricolage*.