

**Department of Sociology, Delhi School of Economics, Delhi  
University invites you to the first**

FRIDAY RESEARCH COLLOQUIUM in this academic year

**Prof. Antonádia Borges,**

Federal Rural University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

**An ethnographic reading of a contemporary South African  
novel: land struggles, racism and scattered ontologies**

Time: 3:00 pm

Day and Date: Friday, 13<sup>th</sup> October, 2023

Venue: Srinivas Seminar Room, Department of Sociology

**ALL ARE WELCOME**

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**ABSTRACT**

Some perennial questions in my investigations in South Africa include land grabbing and the weight of colonial and racist narratives in shaping different incommunicable worlds. In this paper, I put into an imaginative dialogue voices emanating from a work of fiction and voices that I heard in different circumstances during my fieldwork in South Africa.

The Promise, by Damon Galgut, is a novel laureated with the Booker Prize 2021. Michael Fischer (2023) assumes the writer/artist is a para-ethnographer. Sharing this position, I imagine fictional creations in the novel as partially based on ethnographic material the author, being himself, to some extent, native to his land, produces. An artist's ethnography differs from an anthropologist's in its densities, intensities and purposes. Nevertheless, both, in dialogue, contribute to analysing the relation between science and art and how different ontologies are dealt with in these two realms where knowledge is imaginatively produced. My purpose is not an exegesis of the novel or scrutinising its author. I occupy, with stories of my fieldwork, blank spaces left by the author to his readers. My strategy is similar to landless peoples in South Africa who thrive in contemporary times, occupying parallel realities and resisting a master single narrative.