## The 'Outside' Substantiates Academics:

Or how theory's situated material history can be foundationalized in music, art and craft

2<sup>nd</sup> Sept 2024 Solomon Benjamin HSS, IIT-Madras



#### **Key Points**

Have another life! for good solid 'theory: The 'outside' as an expansive practiced space; material working in music, film, art – ceramics, theater remains jointed to conceptual ones!

Collaborative Camaraderie -- across disciplines and those who are considered as 'non academics', and with "younger scholars" both in authorship and substantive argumentation. Their field work taken seriously evolves theoretical agency to open new theoretical ground.

**Practicing textured "field work" is almost always uplifting!** academic being experimental and experiential -- just as doing music, art, craft shapes our own agency of enjoyment, laughter, and of good cheer!

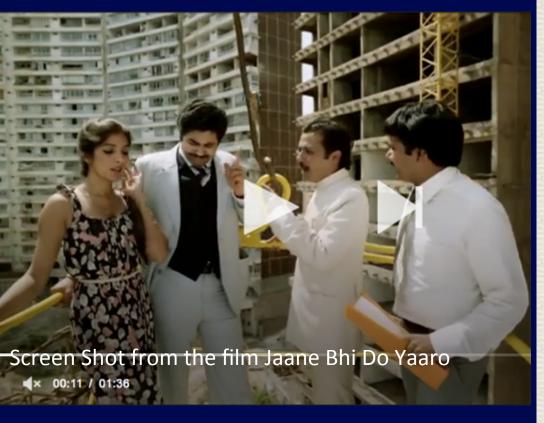
Take the Context Seriously, and the constellations that constitute it: Situationally located theorization

# Academia is not an abstraction but Materialized in Departments: '..We don't need no thought control, No dark sarcasm in the classroom..'

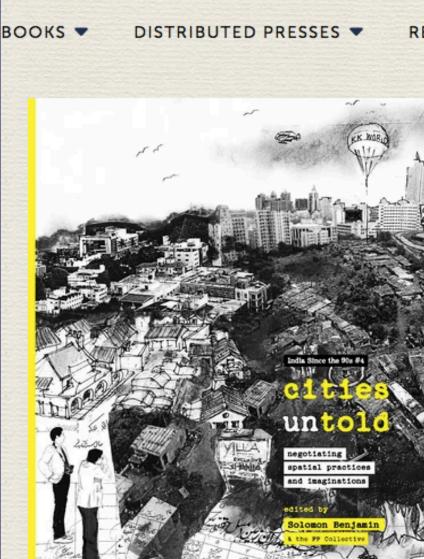
- Departments need to slow down! To accept (not give) space for slow intent, to catch one's breath, to relieve the ceaseless anxiety of grades, CGPA, publishing ranks – that may often mask impostership, fear to spur aggression and insecurity..
- The problem is systemic! Rather the individual being blamed as 'deviant', -- wherein power hierarchies, reluctantly release agency, and in which, an instance of speaking correct English (the Queen or US Imperial Power) is a way to obliterate and subjugate?
- Restraining 'field work and theorization' is political! When 'reluctantly allowed' to prelude it with 'the' literature review' is usually 'shelter' sought in canonic literatures to mask power –laden impostership?

Thus departments, as vital seeding grounds to broader academia, need an **outside**: a space where one can be a musician, an artist, a poet, a cook, an explorer (or even a mafia don). And is there need to vision a department as a manifestation of this larger vision to **actively** support outsides?

'high grade publishing' emerge from a slower reflective and necessarily longer material history that lies outside academia. It often entangles art, theater, music, craft, and wandering aimlessly the street!







#### **Urban Popular Economies:**

Territories of Operation for Lives Deemed Worth Living

## PUBLIC CULTURE 34:3 . MY COLLECTIVE

Solomon Benjamin, Alioscia Castronovo, Luci Cavallero, Cristina Cielo, Véronica Gago, Prince Guma, Rupali Gupt Victoria Habermehl, Lana Salman, Prasad Shetty, AbdouMaliq Simone, Constance Smith, and João Tonucci

Majority Urban Politics and Lives Worth Living in a Time of Climate Emergencies

Social Text 150 · Vol. 40, No. 1 · March 2022

2472-9495089 © 2022 Duke University Press

AbdouMaliq Simone and Solomon Benjamin

Provincialising Alappad's Nationalistic Gaze: A Spatial Complexity Siting the 'South' Beyond the Metro

Social Change
53(2) 210–225, 2023
© CSD 2023
Article reuse guidelines:
in.sagepub.com/journals-permissions-india
DOI: 10.1177/00490857231169974
journals.sagepub.com/home/sch



Nidheesh S.1 and Solomon Benjamin1

DOI: 10.1111/tran.12643

ARTICLE



Land, property, and territory: Mutual embeddedness as understood by the *tongbian* philosophy

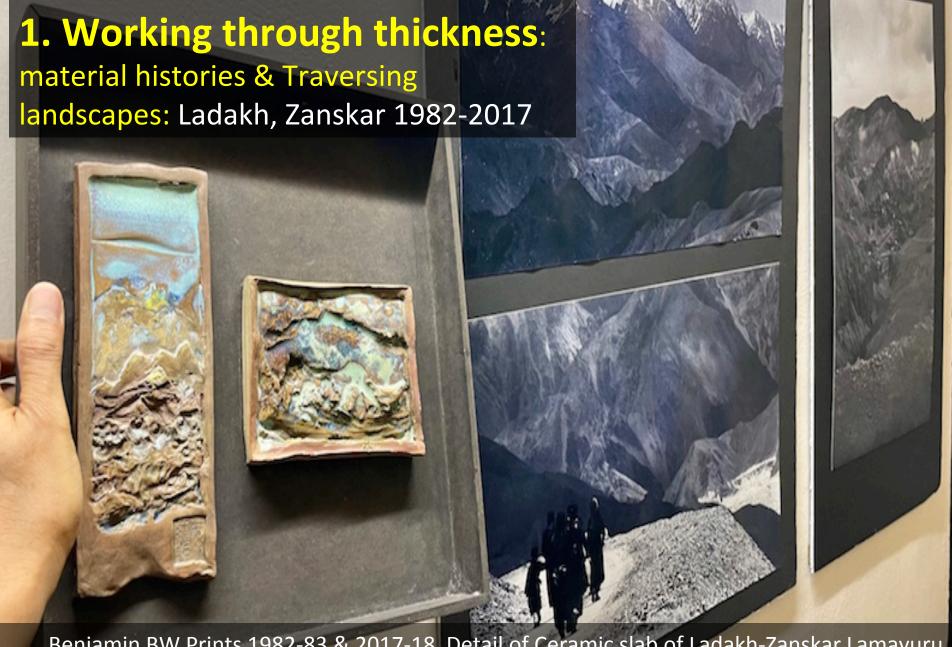
Wing-Shing Tang<sup>1</sup> 🛛 | Rupali Gupte<sup>2</sup> 🕒 | Prasad Shetty<sup>2</sup> 🖯 | Solomon Benjamin<sup>3</sup> 🔾

#### Local Officials and the Struggle to Transform Cities

A view from post-apartheid South Africa

16 Porous bureaucracies, land and urban inclusion: a perspective from Indian cities Varun Patil and Solomon Benjamin

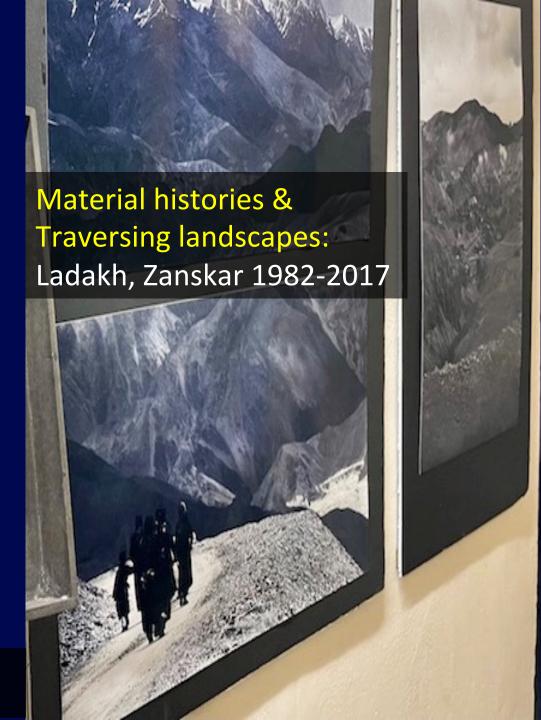
Edited by Claire Bénit-Gbattou



Benjamin BW Prints 1982-83 & 2017-18 Detail of Ceramic slab of Ladakh-Zanskar Lamayuru



Benjamin 1988 (?) Lamayuru bordering Zanskar . Water Color on brown card



Its collaborative, Bowl by Gitanjali carving by Solly, 2020 around memories of Almora - NandaDevi & Trishuli



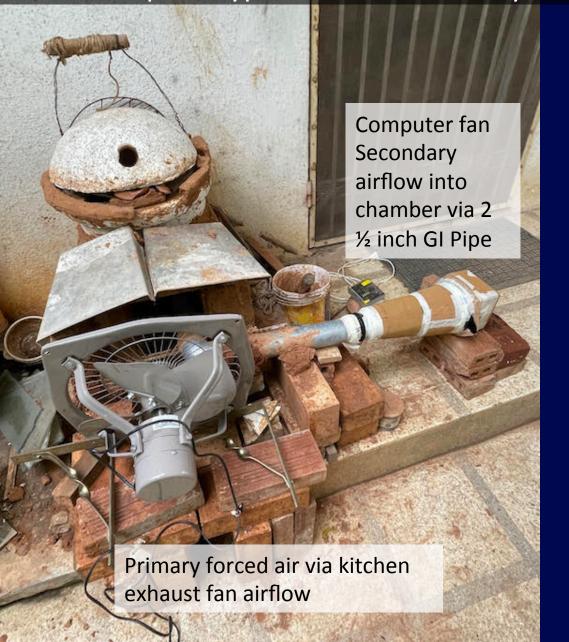


Its always collaborative, Bowl by Aasta Sahal, glazing by Solly, 2020





Pizza Ovens to Forced air low fired Ceramic kilns interspaced via 7 model prototypes 2019-24 Its always a constant experimentation









A 4 yrs old imagination to fly to Galaxies! (the Magic School bus series) 2002 made Butterfly Winged Stool for a 4 yr. old Kedar \* Re-purposed 25 yr. old Burma teak, Rose wood, copper tubing, Maple Wood Dowels



Our analysis of a dis-membered phone to explore the social basis for replacement & customization among different 'techie' youths: those with 2 ½ to 3 Yrs apprentenship to those who have 5-10 + yrs experience (Ustads)







WORKING through 'WASTE'-II and new theorization



# WORKING through 'WASTE'-III



#### FROM PRETTY DRAWINGS TO TEXTURED COLLAGES TO OPEN UP THE POLITICAL QUESTION



Benjamin 1988 (?) Lamayuru bordering Zanskar . Water Color on brown card



#### THEMAHINDU

» TODAY'S PAPER » DOWN TOWN

October 7, 2016

irce Segregation Residents illustrate power of 'Coopetition'

Residents of Kumarasami Nagar illustrate power of 'Coopetition'



Residents and housekeeping staff of a gated community in Kumarasami Nagar-Elcot Avenue where source segregation is practised.





Discovering the EVERYDAY as politics to then connect to exploring with autonomy and agency, to 'meta' themes

artist K.M. Adimoolam once observed that the Constitution was the first canvas of the modern Indian masters. KGS' strong idea of what is right and what is wrong, his profound empathy and respect for human dignity, and his abhorrence of all forms of humiliation came from, it seems, watching the crafting of the Constitution by Bose and his team. His illustrated works for children exemplify his unwavering commitment to the founding principles of the republic. I have the privilege of translating one such work for the Tamil audience: The Tale of the Talking Face, set to be released next year.



art exploration for the Asian Art Archive 2016, 15 Invitations Program

practices. Our script for a two act play relatres to two stage-sets: Wan Chai in HK island, and Langham Plance Kowloon's Mongkok. In this perspective the adjoining columns that frame this particular 'background' one, can be seen to be a formative script. The idea is to move beyond the passive journalistic reporting or even more passive, the extracts from the offical dossiers and bureacratic reports. Instead the intent is to re-animate

八部份食店已通走,更顺荒凉。「夏天有冷氣熱到似落施,之前仲有班馬快、续女幫機、呢一 ... 2.7不停掃黃『洗太平地』,生意好難做!」由開耳穩營茶槽至今,17年來親精紅煙蛋轉發的媒體一譜面磁熱食市 随语直言:「早幾年夜市仲有7,000较餐業額、年前收締于並進上大掃黃・餐業額得當一半・得偶需字!」

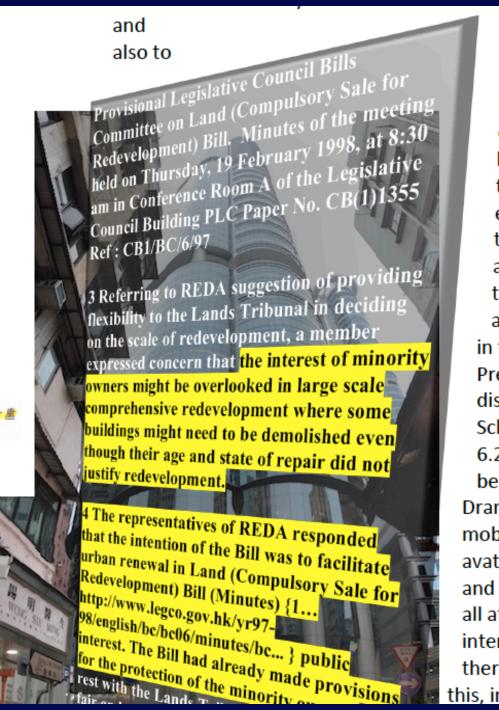
瑞典股份时代開始

these into a politisized lift form, and via that exploration also explore the connection between critical approaches in art practice and urban studies. These

례或商場,淨化肝角區不良形象、標誌新時代開始!」

build on particular materilitaties of our two chosen sites in HK Island & Kowloon that are shaped by varied

exploration for the Asian Art Archive 2016, 15 Invitations Program

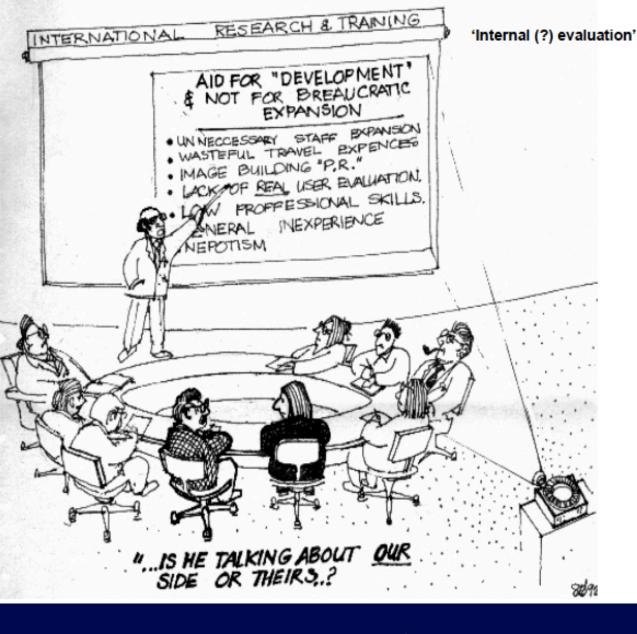


Pre

dis

Scl

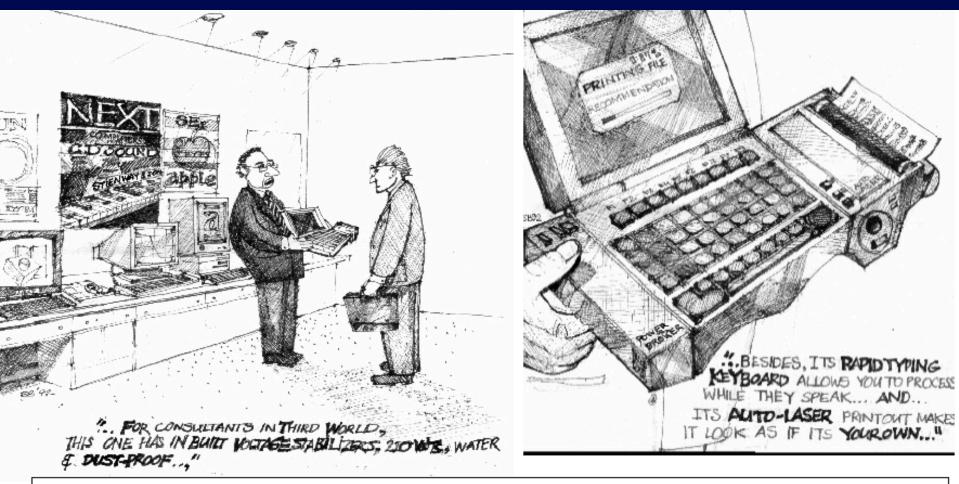
6.2



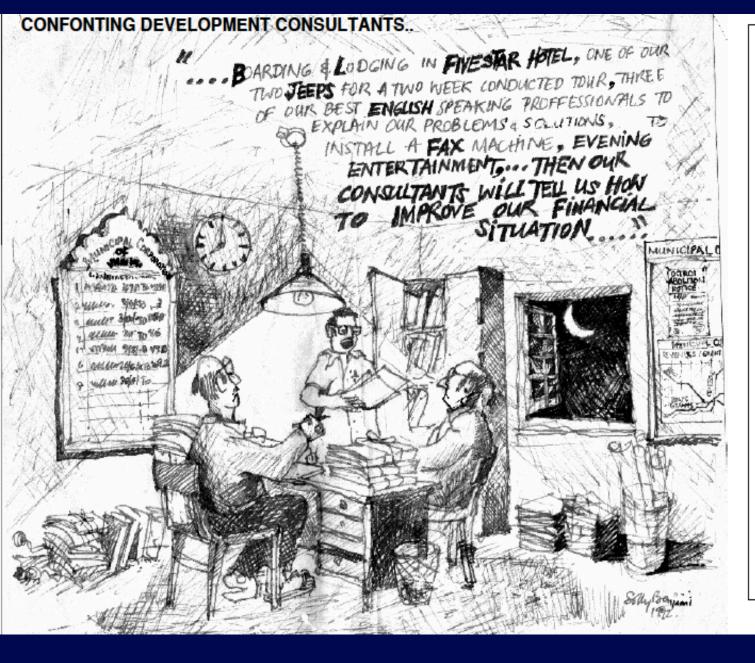
This cartoon, drawn in 1992, like 12 other in the series, came out of our experience as faculty at the research institute. We were set in a research and training relationship an partnering institute of housing studies in the Global North. The style of the cartoon, set in the Northern Institute, was purposely kept crisp, in contrast to the muddy, messy and highly textured Indian context ones. The various characters drawn around the table bore a strong resemblance to many of the consultants hired by Northern Institute.

Along with the other cartoon, on the Baroda Municipal Corporation (next in this series) confronting 'development consultants', this too found its way via a bureaucratic error, into the brochure on the International program evaluation conference.

1992-93: HSMI – Tuesday Afternoon Cartoons to reflect a post – colonial dependency in the Dutch- UN- SAARC Aid Program



New 'Power Broker' Computers for High Powered International Consultants (1992) This cartoon came out of our research meetings with visiting consultant-faculty from our Northern partnering institute who would type into their laptops concepts as we spoke to them about realities in the field. While we had a longer 'processing time' given the limited time for academic writing and rationed use of usually non-functioning department computers, we discovered those concepts turning up in research papers and book chapters with no acknowledgement. Not only that, the important political aspects were missed out or confused. For an example of this, look at Fig. 1 & 2 in Baross P., 'Sequencing land development: the price implications of legal and illegal settlement growth' Ch. 4 in <a href="The Transformation of Land Supply Systems in Third World Cities">Third World Cities</a> Baross, Paul and Jan van der Linden. 1990 (Aldershot, England). Not only was the concept 'lifted' but its politics diffused to allow an interpretation that sets the issue in a binary of legal - illegal development and a development trajectory that allows for a World Bank friendly policy prescription of cost recovery. In a more current context, this would also fit into Hernando Desoto's pressure for land titling.



This cartoon came out of my research visit to the Baroda Municipal Corporation in 1992 to study their water management system. Municipal officials complained how they felt burdened by high-powered consultants dumped on them under 'aid' programs.

In the cartoon, on the notice board at the right of the image, the two charts 'Octroi abolition notice' and the 'Revenues and Grant' refer to USAid's and DFic (then ODA) reform advisory to cut down Octroi funds as a way t ensure free markets and a level playing field. These policy prescriptions were also central to pushing municipalities such as Baroda to cut down on 'de-facto' water connections, and engage in competitive PPPs.

Along with the other cartoon, 'Internal (?) evaluation' (above), this cartoon found its way via a bureaucratic error into the brochure of our joint program evaluation conference.

#### An "academic" illustrations

The dominant tone of the literature on land's territorial politics misses conceptual complexities by neglecting historical constructions of land practices. An alternative understanding intertwines social and political elements emphasised in the non-dualistic, beyond dialectics, tongbian philosophy. This views everything as consisting of two mutually embedded, opposite poles—different yet without

Received: 10 August 2022

Revised: 12 August 2023

DOI: 10.1111/tran.12643

ARTICLE

Land, property, and territory: Mutual embeddedness as understood by the tongbian philosophy

Wing-Shing Tang<sup>1</sup> | Rupali Gupte<sup>2</sup> | Prasad Shetty<sup>2</sup> | Solomon Benjamin<sup>3</sup>

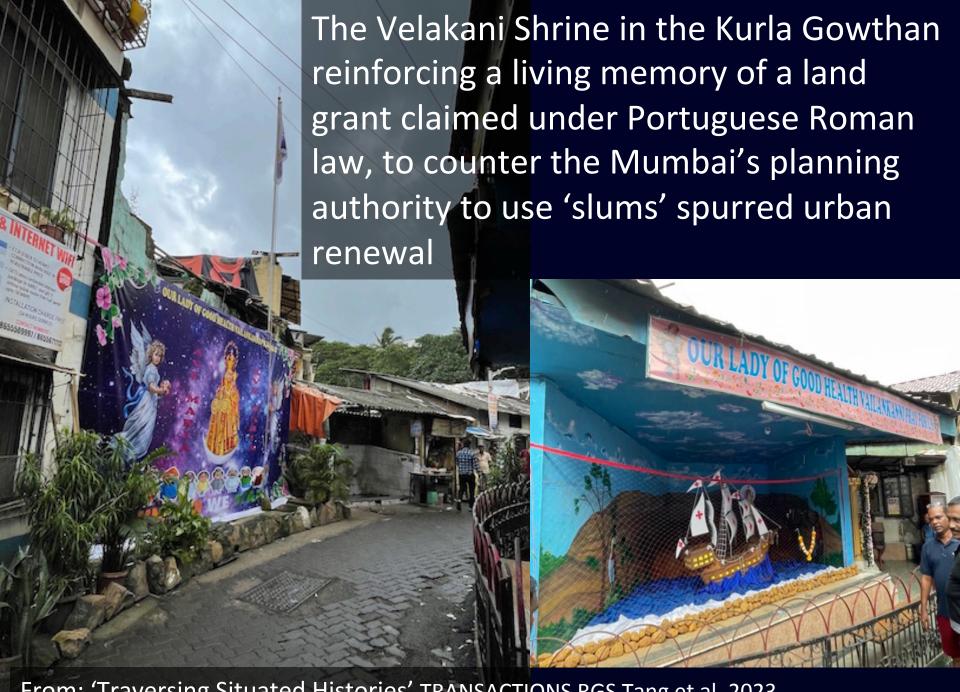
on as processes of becoming, continuity WILEY I relationship via a spatial story deciphers territory (LaT) and land as property (LaP). intensive real estate change (Hong Kong's eveals subtleties of historical antecedents implex institutional entanglements reveal

both diachronic and synchronic interactions wherein the dynamics of control, shifts in power, growth or decline in time and space co-join LaT and LaP. Such political complexities question views of land's transformation being contingent on archaic ideas of the Westphalian state and uni-polar framings of capital moving from the North to the South. The tongbian philosophy allows the exploring of ideas of difference without alienation, embracing epistemic and ontological equivalence in theory and fieldwork, and between the North and South-themes seldom taken up in the geographical literature. Finally, the paper proposes a study of land dynamics using the concept of land occupancy via the spatial story approach.



Solly, Rohit, DeSouza with Lawyer Vincent traverse Kurla Gowthan's paths of situated Portuguese and British colonial situated Land histories materializing contemporary conflicts, contestations





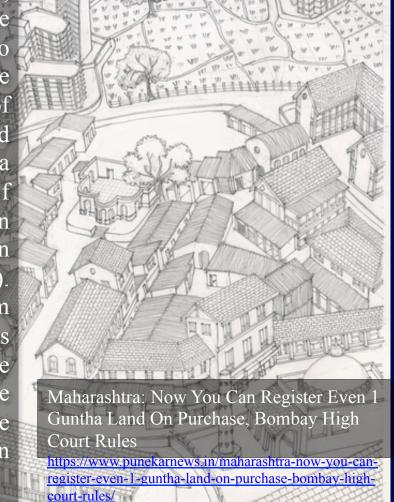
From: 'Traversing Situated Histories' TRANSACTIONS RGS Tang et al. 2023

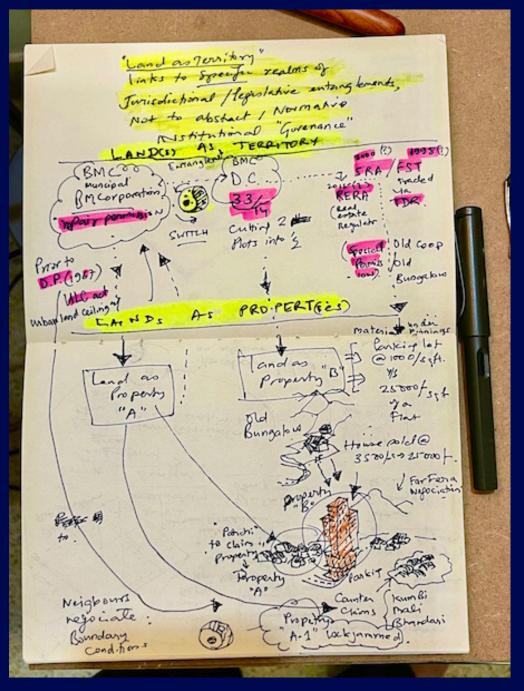


#### BOMBAY TALKIES AND OTHER STORIES OF MALAD

#### PRASAD SHETTY

Aurangabad, 7th May 2022: The Bombay High Court's Aurangabad bench has struck down Rule 44(1)(i) of the Maharashtra Registration Rules, 1961, which required a person seeking registration of sale deeds for lands of a specific size to get a No Objection Certificate (NOC) from the appropriate body for land fragmentation. In light of section 8B of the Maharashtra Prevention of Fragmentation and Consolidation of Holding (Amendment) Act, 2015, a circular issued by the Inspector General of Registration and Controller of Stamps (IGRCS) on July 12, 2021, mandated the enclosure of permission from the concerned authority based on Rule 44(1)(i). The circular prohibited Sub-Registrars from registering any sale or transfer deed unless there was no objection from the appropriate authority. The asserted Rule was adverse to section 34 of the Registration Act, 1908, and expressly outside the powers provided under section 69 of the Registration Act, 1908.

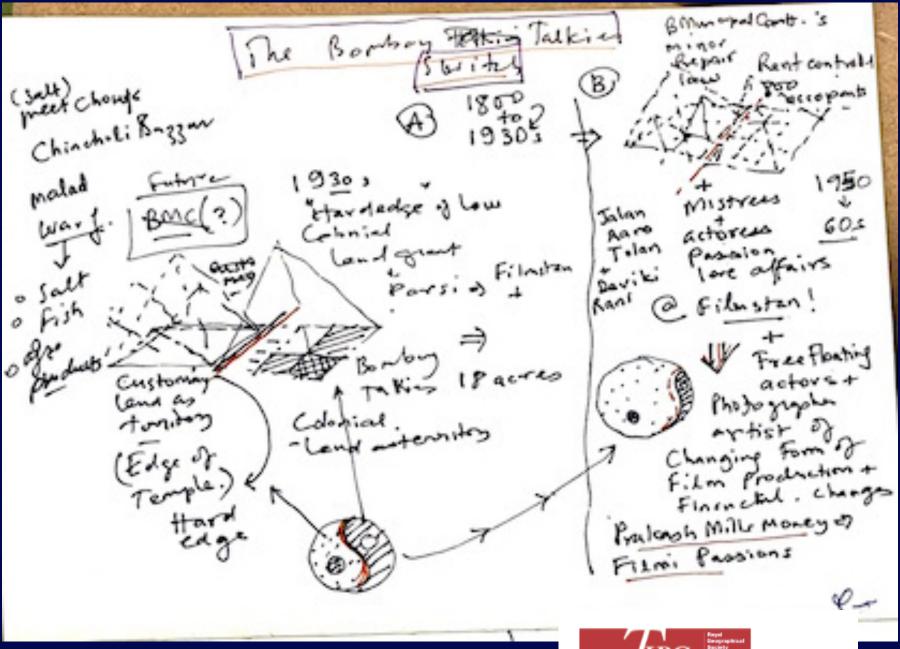












IBG - Regal Bangangahkat Bangan

Wiley





Varied Landscapes held in Ontological and Epistemic Equivalence Land's Situated Histories disrupt binaries of Pre-Colonial – Colonial – Post Colonial



#### CIRCULAR

Sub.: Policy for grant of repair permission for the existing unauthorised structures of releasted extegory by word Offices. Circular issued under no.

Ref.: CHE/3295/DPC of 1/3/1997

A comprehensive circular in respect of policy for grant or repair permissions for the existing unauthorised structures of tolerated category was issued and 1/3/97 u/No. CME/3295/OPC wherein guidelines were given to ensure that such proposals are properly scrutinized and do not give rise to excess/unsufficient construction or reconstruction under the guise of repairs. One of the conditions in these guidelines was that repairs. One of the conditions in these guidelines was that repair proposals partaining to only ground floor structures covered under tolerated at ward Officers level. However, as per another condition in E.E.B.P. (City) R & R enty. As such, the practice of issuing repair permissions at ward level has been stopped totally in City Area.

In view of the inconvenience being caused to the residents of cessed/noncessed old buildings in city area, in getting the repeir permissions from the office of E.E.B.P.(City) R&R, even for tenantable repair such as re-plastering, repairs to flooring filing, plumbing, replacing roof etc. the above policy has been reviewed.

These are bureaucratically negotiated spaces just as the ones for chawls, opened up via section 33(7), 33(7)A And 33(7)B of the Redevelopment of Old Buildings And Housing Societies connect to the further spatiality, Yang reinforcing, 'tenable repairs' for dilapidated structures under Section 353B allowing occupants to 'renovate at will', building on the spatiality opened up, via section 342 of BMC Act, 1988 (amended till date), the following "tenantable repairs". The 'yin' as a seed, can be thought of the D.C.R 33(14)D (Permanent Transit Tenement) are constructed in situ by giving incentive FSI, or then it's 'fungible FSI' – that fuel the 'slum redevelopment scheme'.

#### **Shop Talk:**

Here, the materiality of land as territory is revealed via the 'shop talk' of small-time builders, bank officials certifying property documents via senior managers to local field agents, brokers, lawyer consultants, architects with numerous resident co-op societies. Importantly, this shop talk is not a clinical law, but of it's spatiality where indeterminate gaps and ambiguity suggest possibility, but also contests with other counter moves. Thus, the focus field involves the following: For the yin, it's 'governance' of North American derived planning instruments like FAR morphing into other instruments to 'fix' property under PPPs, especially TDR by the Mumbai city corporation. However, it's the Yang that overpower, and importantly, enjoys its power centre within that same institution: legislation of the 'Small Repairs Law' (Scrutiny of Repairs DC regulations of 33-6) allow lease-based occupier tenants, and landlords to 'improve' property.

Data bereft of it's societal embedding and connected to the politics of everyday practice often lays the ground for systemic violence



#### 'Rowdy-sheeter:

An Essay Subalter and Polit Our analysis of the figuration of the 'rowdy' or 'lumpen' in the contemporary Indian imaginary hinges on two interlocking sets of intuitions:

The figure of the 'rowdy' acquires semantic and ideological elasticity in the imaginary of the middle-class by becoming the focus of their anxiety about what they see as the 'criminalization' of politics ('goondaraj') and its threat to their precarious class-privilege. This very ideological social description then feeds into the everyday discourse of the ideologues.

VIVEK DHARESHW R. SRIVATSAN

social description then feeds into the everyday discourse of the ideologues of the middle-class, from Left to Left-liberal to liberal-Right, who invoke 'lumpenization of politics' as an explanation of all that they find disturbing in the social and political life of the nation.<sup>3</sup>

2. While narratives of nation, secularism, citizenship, public sphere are perceived as eminently suitable foci of our theoretical inquiries and

are perceived as eminently suitable foci of our theoretical inquiries and deconstructive energies, the disciplinary and ideological structures that organize the space of our everyday and that differentiates 'us' from the subaltern classes, remain out of focus. If we take the term 'subalternity' as a shorthand for the critique of various 'norming' and exclusionary narratives, such as the nation, secularism, citizenship, etc. can one use that critique to interrogate the everyday practice of 'citizenship' (or 'democracy') that sustain and define our conception of the public sphere? In other words, can subalternity, as a critical category and as an approach, help destabilize existing political identities and conceptualize new ones?



# Utopian Academia: Lefebvre's Academia of Enjoyment

- An emancipatory potential relates to spaces of creation: as individuals and as groups
- diverse ways to explore and think, shape an institution's socialization

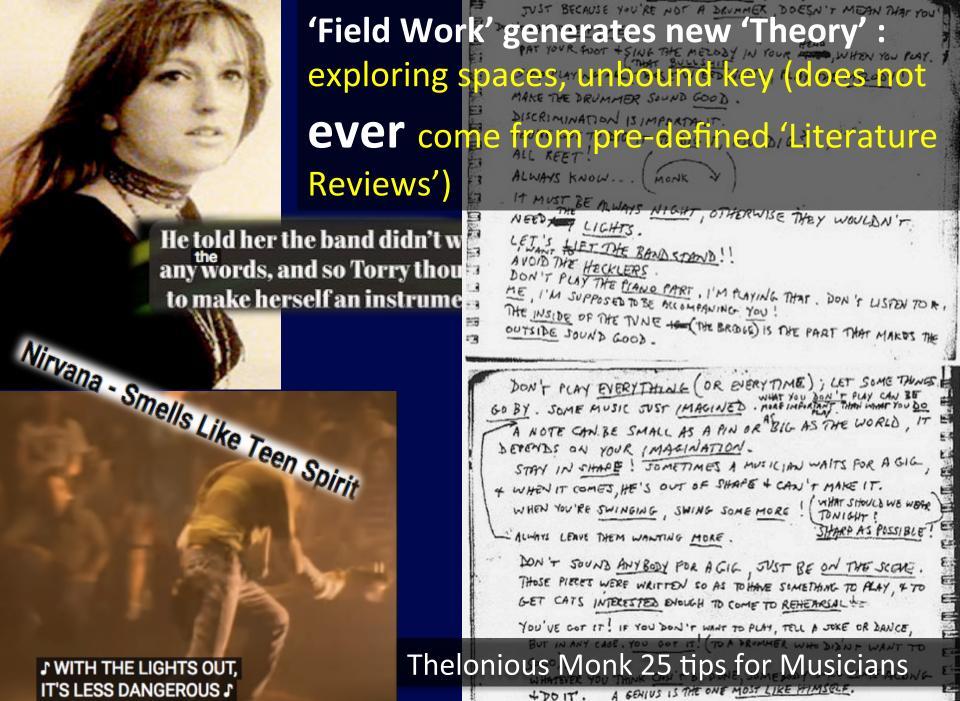
Is about psycho-material that denotes how individuals and mostly in various groups appropriate spaces within the "commodity" process.

## **DECOLONIZING THE UNIVERSITY**

sociology of emergences.

Decolonial theories, for example, have been successful in accomplishing the negative, deconstructive work. Because it has been carried out inside Eurocentric epistemic communities and research institutions, this work has enjoyed some visibility. The epistemologies of the South are mainly concerned with the positive, constructive work that is much harder to carry out. To begin with, such work must be carried out both inside conventional research institutions and outside them, in the very social fields in which the resistance against capitalist, colonialist, and patriarchal domination is taking place. To the extent that it is carried out in conventional research institutions, it is bound to be looked upon with suspicion, considered a non-rigorous, politically motivated and therefore unreliable kind of research. At a time when the old common sense of research institutions, based on curiosity and disinterest, is being replaced by the new common sense of the relevance of knowledge measured by the latter's market value (usefulness for solvent social demands), the positive tasks called for by the epistemologies of the South will be either fiercely resisted or utterly discarded as "not belonging." Indeed, the post-abyssal researcher is at the antipodes of the consultant. The latter is someone whose knowledge has a specific utility with a price tag and for which there is a solvent demand. The post-abyssal researcher is 





Academia's Existential Crisis: Disconnected, Depressed, & Disciplined

- Politics of this conceptual crisis: Lack of Space for Substantive
   Field Work to the divide between theory and 'data' collection;
- Arm Chair types creates "theory" based on 'data' contracted out to the 'native informants'
- P@R (Persons at Risk in both the "North and South"): M-Phils; Doctoral; Post Docs; Asst. Prof. ...

