



**Calcutta Under the Skin: Image, Space, and Tension in Amitav Ghosh's
*The Calcutta Chromosome***

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Abstract

Amitav Ghosh's *The Calcutta Chromosome* (1995) is at once a postcolonial thriller, a science fiction novel, and a layered meditation on urban space. Set across temporal registers - Victorian Calcutta, late twentieth-century New York, and a speculative near-future - the novel deploys the city of Calcutta not merely as setting but as a living epistemological field, dense with historical memory, subaltern resistance, colonial anxiety, and uncanny energy. This article undertakes a multi-theoretical analysis of the image and tension of Calcutta as constructed in the novel. Drawing upon Henri Lefebvre's theory of the production of space, Michel Foucault's concept of heterotopia, Homi Bhabha's notions of hybridity and the third space, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's subaltern studies, Sigmund Freud's concept of the uncanny, Fredric Jameson's political unconscious, and elements of New Historicism and Gothic literary theory, the article argues that Ghosh's Calcutta functions as a palimpsest of power - a city whose surfaces conceal subterranean circuits of knowledge, resistance, and transformation. The novel systematically deconstructs the colonial production of scientific truth by relocating epistemic agency in the margins of the urban underclass, thus revealing the city as a site of perpetual ideological and ontological tension.

Keywords: Postcolonial Urbanism, Heterotopia, Subaltern, Spatial Theory, Gothic, Palimpsest, Hybridity, Science Fiction.