

**Tribhuvan University**

**Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences**

**Rewriting the Subaltern in Amitav Ghosh's *The Calcutta Chromosome***

**A Thesis Submitted to the Central Department of English**

**Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur, Kathmandu, Nepal**

**in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the**

**Degree of Master of Arts**

**in English**

**By**

**Umesh Kumar Yadav**

**Central Department of English**

**Kirtipur, Kathmandu, Nepal**

**July, 2007**

**Tribhuvan University**

**Central Department of English**

**Letter of Recommendation**

It is certified that Mr. Umesh Kumar Yadav has prepared this thesis entitled  
**"Rewriting the Subaltern in Amitav Ghosh's *The Calcutta Chromosome*"** under  
my guidance and supervision. I recommend this thesis for approval to the Research  
Committee.

-----  
Dr. Arun Gupto

Central Department of English

Tribhuvan University

Kirtipur, Kathmandu

July, 2007

**Tribhuvan University**

**Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences**

The thesis entitled **Rewriting the Subaltern in Amitav Ghosh's *The Calcutta Chromosome*** submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, by Mr. Umesh Kumar Yadav has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

**Members of the Research Committee.**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Internal Examiner

\_\_\_\_\_

External Examiner

\_\_\_\_\_

Head

Central Department of English

Date: - \_\_\_\_\_

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to express my profound gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Arun Gupto who guided my steps by providing constructive suggestions and concrete assistance for the preset dissertation work. Without his inspiration and encouragement this thesis could not have appeared in this shape. He gave flesh and blood to my thesis. I am deeply indebted to him. Any attempt to express my gratitude to him in words is bound to be inadequate.

I am thankful to Dr. Krishna Chandra Sharma Head of the Central Department of English, for his mentioning provisions. I also express my heartfelt gratitude to all my teachers of CDE, T.U. for their academic support. Specially, I am highly indebted to my respected Guru Mr. Saroj Ghimire who has provided me constructive guidelines and invaluable suggestions. I am happy to acknowledge the invaluable assistance I have received from, Mrs. Kadambini Ghimire, who provided me a homely environment and support I needed in the course of my thesis writing. I owe a debt of gratitude to Mr. Devi Gautam, Mr. Hem Sharma and Mr. Rajendra Panthee who provided the praise-worthy instructions on thesis writing during the writing classes.

Sincere thanks goes to "Wowids Computer System" Kirtipur for their efficient computer service.

My special thanks go to elder sister Nirmala, friends Mr. Ram Sebak Thakur, Mr. Sanjeev Kumar Goit, Mr. Sanjay Sah, Ms Sunita Sah and nephews Mr. Ashok Yadav and Rakesh Yadav for their warm co-operation. Finally, I must mention my family whose consideration at all times made this work possible.

July 2007

Umesh Kumar Yadav

## Abstract

The present thesis entitled "*Rewriting the Subaltern in Amitav Ghosh's The Calcutta Chromosome*" covers the issues of resistance against the British Imperial power and its cultural hegemony. Ghosh depicts this resistance through subaltern characters like Murugan, Mangala and Laakhan against British scientist Ronald Ross and his colleagues. Ross, while making scientific research in India about the malaria parasite during the colonial period is supported and assisted by Mangala, Laakhan and their followers. But the colonial scientific community denies the role played by Mangala and her associates. It subsidizes their actions and deeds for in the elite colonial historiography, the Indians are ignored and marginalized. While resisting the western monopoly over scientific discoveries and inventions, Ghosh through Murugan traces the agency of a mysterious group of subalterns, owing allegiance to Mangala, Laakhan and their tradition of counter science. Amitav Ghosh, in *The Calcutta Chromosome*, subverts the hegemonic elitist discourse of the colonial historiography by making his character Murugan investigate into the late-nineteenth century malaria parasite research in India. Murugan, in his investigation, reveals the sensational fact that Ronald Ross, the accredited scientist, was brought into the right direction by an Indian woman, Mangala -- a high priestess of a secret medical cult. By deconstructing the colonial historiography Ghosh constructs the alternative subaltern history in which the subaltern might, can and does speak.

## Contents

	Page No.
<b>Acknowledgement</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>Abstract</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>I. Subltern Can Speak: Resisting the Elite Domination in <i>The Calcutta Chromosome</i></b>	
<i>Chromosome</i>	<b>1</b>
<b>II. Subalternity: Resistance against Elitist Representatiuon</b>	<b>9</b>
Subalternity and Its Concept	9
Woman as a Subaltern	21
<b>III. Rewriting the subaltern in <i>The Calcutta Chromosome</i></b>	<b>28</b>
Elitist Domination	28
<i>The Calcutta Chromosome</i> as a Subaltern Text	32
Women as Subaltern	44
<b>IV. Conclusion</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>Works Cited</b>	<b>52</b>