

## **Preface**

Representing Kolkata has always been elusive. Till now, the rhetoric of colonial magnificence or a day in the life of a rickshaw puller, extreme metaphors, have been representative of the city. Yet, another city exists which breathes in the by- lanes, neighbourhood bazaars and rooftops from where kites are flown during the summer months. The urban folklore revolves perhaps, around an architecturally insignificant balcony or a raised platform of an old house front, lives of ordinary people living ordinary lives, with usual frustrations and optimism. This insignificance, this ordinariness is the subject of this thesis. These older residential areas, which may not necessarily have city level artifacts often lose their territorial definition by merging into one another in a larger continuum, but their remarkable 'placeness' represent the Kolkata metaphor which prompted me to take up this work. It was felt that these patterns of 'place' had to be evaluated to understand the future of these areas within the context of constant transformations. It was naturally a way of understanding the future of the city of Kolkata.

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