This talk will look at the April history and topography of a space in the heart of the city of Calcutta, a meeting-place for many cultures and ethnic groups placed between the strict limits of the colonial Black Town, or native quarter in North Calcutta, and White Town, or European quarter in the south. Familiarly referred to as the ‘grey town’, and extending for no more than a mile or so in each direction behind the grand colonial hub of Dalhousie Square (now Binoy-Badal-Dinesh Bag), this area was settled by communities from all over the world, including Chinese, Portuguese, Armenians, Jews, Ismaili Shias, Bohra Muslims, and Parsis. It continues to house their places of worship and their educational institutions, and to flourish as a trading centre, though it bears the marks of cultural loss, urban decay and of the gradual migration away from the city of the communities that once prospered here. By examining the unique character of this urban district, I hope to say something about the changing history of Calcutta as a space of cultural encounter, and of constant flows. My analysis will extend to other conceptualisations of urban spaces, as well as their re-purposing and transformation. The talk will use maps, photographs, art-work, and film clips (including Satyajit Ray’s *The Middleman*).

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