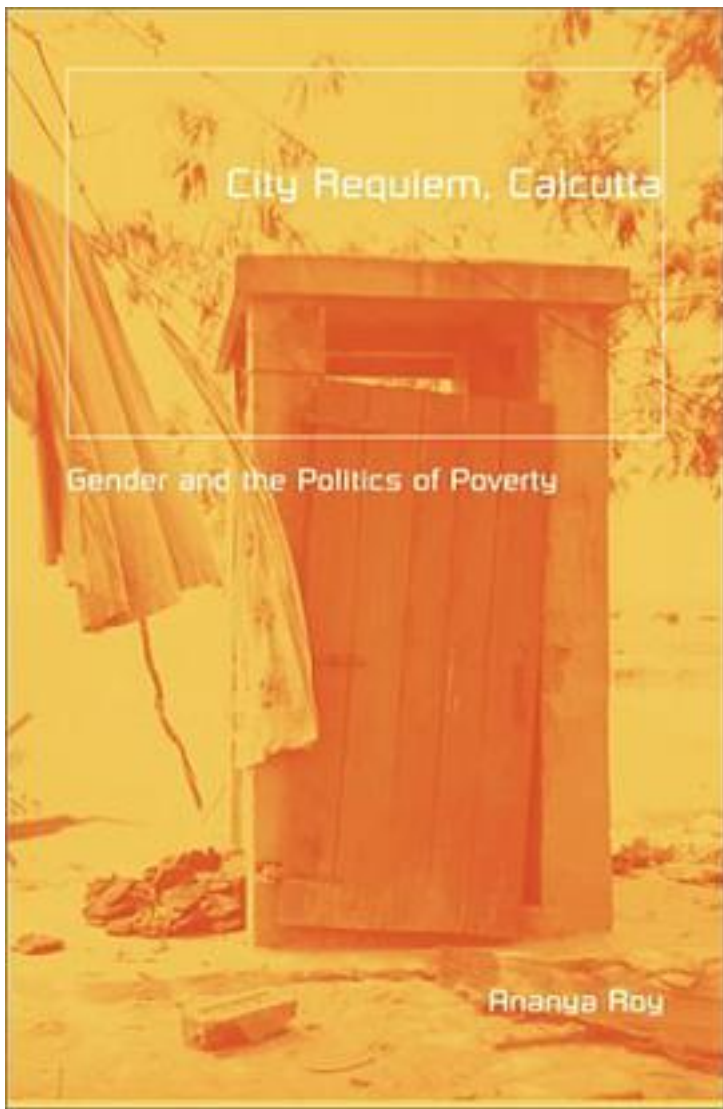


City Requiem, Calcutta



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出版者:Univ of Minnesota Pr

出版时间:2002-10

装帧:Pap

isbn:9780816639335

Housing developments emerge amid the paddy fields on the fringes of Calcutta; overflowing trains carry peasant women to informal urban labor markets in a daily commute against hunger; land is settled and claimed in a complex choreography of squatting and evictions: such, Ananya Roy contends, are the distinctive spaces of a communism for the new millennium -- where, at a moment of liberalization, the hegemony of poverty is quietly reproduced. An ethnography of urban development in Calcutta, Roy's book explores the dynamics of class and gender in the persistence of poverty. City Requiem, Calcutta emphasizes how gender itself is spatialized, and how gender relations are negotiated within the geopolitics of modernity and through the everyday practices of territory. Thus Roy shows how urban developmentalism, in its populist guise, reproduces the relations of masculinist patronage, and, in its entrepreneurial guise, seeks to reclaim a bourgeois Calcutta, gentlemanly in its nostalgias. In doing so, her work expands the field of poverty studies by showing how a politics of poverty is also a poverty of knowledge, a construction and management of social and spatial categories.

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